

Graffiti for intellectuals



Simon Says



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Dr. Si Frumkin

THREE HATS AND A BONUS

A few weeks ago I was honored at the Israel Independence Day Festival. There were kind words, plaques and resolutions. I was on stage with an impressive assortment of friendly politicians and community leaders. About 50,000 people had come that Sunday. (Apparently the crowd wasn't large enough to deserve any mention whatsoever by our beloved Los Angeles Times, but that's another topic for another time...)

I knew that I was going to be asked to say a few words but until I stepped up to the mike I really didn't have anything coherent in mind. I spoke, got a good hand - I might even say, modestly, an almost ovation - and that was that.

I thought nothing of it except for the business with the bonus and what a friend of mine - an important politician - told me at a



1945—Si Frumkin, age 14, in refugee camp in Italy, leaning on a Jewish Brigade truck

meeting a few days later. "Quite a speech," he said. "Great! It will go down in history as Frumkin's Three Hat speech. We discussed it at our meeting later that day - you made quite an impression."

I don't have the actual text - I spoke from the heart, not notes - but here is what I tried to explain to the people who came to celebrate Israel's 58th birthday.

I wear three hats. I wear them with pride. Each hat is different and important - and I wear all three because I am a Jew.

The first hat is that of a Holocaust survivor. I was a 10-year old kid in 1940 Lithuania when I was sentenced to death. The sentence could be carried out at any time, without warning or notice. My death sentence was annulled when I was 14. American tanks rolled through the gate of my concentration camp and gave my life back to me. Since then I - and other survivors - have built new lives for ourselves, got an education, worked, raised children and did all those things that 6 million victims had not had a chance to do.

I am grateful. But there is more than just not being a little pile of fertilizer in Eastern

Europe. I have an obligation. It is to do whatever I can to make sure that there are no more Holocausts - not only against Jews but also against any innocents who are threatened, for unfathomable and evil reasons, by cruel, fanatical and merciless human beings. I, like most survivors, have a sense of guilt - and gratitude - for having survived and I do what I can to meet the obligation that comes with it.

My second hat is that of a Soviet Jew. I was born in independent Lithuania which was annexed by the Soviets before being occupied by the Germans. Many years later, as an adult in California, I learned of the fate that would have been mine if I had been repatriated to the Soviet Union instead of eventually making my way to the U.S. I became involved in helping the Jews in the Soviet Union who were stuck, unable to leave that awful country for a better future elsewhere, anywhere, for themselves and their children. It took a while but we won. Against all odds we defeated the Soviet superpower and achieved emigration for the Jews. And almost two million former Soviet Jews now live in freedom.

My third hat is that of a proud American. Americans saved my life and the lives of millions of others. They rebuilt Europe from the devastation of the war. And then they kept Europe free from another tyranny that would have enslaved it.

They did it by going to war - and yes, war is often the only answer. They did it because historically, if America doesn't do it - no one else will, not Europe, not the U.N., no one! . And then Americans go

home - without occupying and enslaving those they had liberated. Can you imagine what the world would be like if there was no America? I can. It wouldn't be a world you would want to live in - a world of oppression, of gulags, of prisons, of tyranny. America isn't perfect - no country is - but is there another country where a black, a woman, a Latino, a handicapped person, a homosexual or a senior citizen has the opportunities and privileges that America provides? And is there another country where Jews have achieved as much and are as accepted? And would there have been an Israel if there was

no America? There are those who say that our foreign policy is based on oil; why then is the U.S. so constantly supportive of little Israel where there isn't a drop of oil and no other natural resources?

And so I say, God bless America and Am Israel Hai - and I wear my three hats proudly.

Oh yes, the bonus. I told the audience that I got a very real reward for my Soviet Jewry work - I found a Soviet Jew all my own, my

lovely wife Ella who had come from Moscow just 13 years ago. I asked Ella to stand and take a bow - after all, what's the point of having a beautiful wife if you can't show her off - and then I said that she was my Soviet Jewry bonus. To judge by the applause, I had made the right choice. Later several people came up to Ella, smiled and said, "Hi bonus!" I guess she is stuck with her new nickname. ●



Israel Independence Festival—May 7, 2006



2006—Si, age 75, at the Festival, with Dennis Prager

NEVER AGAIN!

By Charles Krauthammer, May 5, 2006

THE CREATION OF THE ZIONIST STATE WAS SUPPOSED TO PROTECT THE POST-HOLOCAUST JEW FOREVER

When something happens for the first time in 1,871 years, it is worth noting. In the year 70, and again in 135, the Roman Empire brutally put down Jewish revolts in Judea, destroying Jerusalem, killing hundreds of thousands of Jews and sending hundreds of thousands more into slavery and exile. For nearly two millennia, the Jews wandered the world. And now, in 2006, for the first time since then, there are once again more Jews living in Israel — the successor state to Judea — than in any other place on Earth.

Israel's Jewish population has just passed 5.6 million. America's Jewish population was about 5.5 million in 1990, dropped to about 5.2 million 10 years later and is in a precipitous decline that, because of low fertility rates and high levels of assimilation, will cut that number in half by mid-century.



When 6 million European Jews were killed in the Holocaust, only two main

centers of Jewish life remained: America and Israel. That binary star system remains today, but a tipping point has just been reached. With every year, as the Jewish population continues to rise in Israel and decline in America (and in the rest of the Diaspora), Israel increasingly becomes, as it was at the time of Jesus, the center of the Jewish world.

An epic restoration, and one of the most improbable. To take just one of the remarkable achievements of the return: Hebrew is the only "dead" language in recorded history to have been brought back to daily use as the living language of a nation. But there is a price and a danger to this transformation. It radically alters the prospects for Jewish survival.

For 2,000 years, Jews found protection in dispersion — protection not for individual communities, which were routinely persecuted and massacred, but protection for the Jewish people as a whole. Decimated here, they could survive there. They could be persecuted in Spain and find refuge in Constantinople. They could be massacred in the Rhineland during



the Crusades or in the Ukraine during the Khmelnytsky Insurrection of 1648-49 and yet survive in the rest of Europe.

Hitler put an end to that illusion. He demonstrated that modern anti-Semitism married to modern technology — railroads, disciplined bureaucracies, gas chambers that kill with industrial efficiency — could take a scattered people and "concentrate" them for annihilation.

The establishment of Israel was a Jewish declaration to a world that had allowed the Holocaust to happen — after Hitler had made his intentions



perfectly clear — that the Jews would henceforth resort to self-protection and self-reliance. And so they have, building a Jewish army, the first in 2,000 years, that prevailed in three great wars of survival (1948-49, 1967 and 1973).

But in a cruel historical irony, doing so required concentration — putting all the eggs back in one basket, a tiny territory hard by the Mediterranean, eight miles wide at its waist. A tempting target for those who would finish Hitler's work.

His successors now reside in Tehran. The world has paid ample attention to President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's declaration that Israel must be destroyed. Less attention has been paid to Iranian leaders' pronouncements on exactly *how* Israel would be "eliminated by one storm," as Ahmadinejad has promised.

Former president Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, the presumed moderate of this gang, has explained that "the use of a nuclear bomb in Israel will leave nothing on

the ground, whereas it will only damage the world of Islam." The logic is impeccable, the intention clear: A nuclear attack would effectively destroy tiny Israel, while any retaliation



launched by a dying Israel would have no major effect on an Islamic civilization of a billion people stretching from Mauritania to Indonesia.

As it races to acquire nuclear weapons, Iran makes clear that if there is any trouble, the Jews will be the first to suffer. "We have announced that wherever [in Iran] America does make any mischief, the first place we target will be Israel," said Gen. Mohammad Ebrahim Dehghani, a top Revolutionary Guards commander. Hitler was only slightly more direct when he announced seven months before invading Poland that, if there was another war, "the result will be . . . the annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe."

Last week Bernard Lewis, America's dean of Islamic studies, who just turned 90 and remembers the 20th century well, confessed that for the first time he feels it is 1938 again. He did not need to add that in 1938, in the face of the gathering storm — a fanatical, aggressive, openly declared enemy of the West, and most determinedly of the Jews — the world did nothing.



When Iran's mullahs acquire their coveted nukes in the next few years, the number of Jews in Israel will just be reaching 6 million. Never again? ☆

VIVA MEXICO!

By Si Frumkin

I admit it - I am jealous! I am jealous because I remember that the largest demonstration on behalf of Soviet Jews was in Los Angeles over 30 years ago - we drew about 10,000 people.

But just a few weeks ago, about 500,000 people went into Los Angeles streets on behalf of illegal immigrants. I watched it on television and all I could say was "Wow!"

There were giant demonstrations all across America and you can bet your bottom dollar that no matter what the opposition and the criticism, the politicians have been impressed and will do something about fixing the problem. After all, we never had crowds nearly as large and the politicians were eagerly helping us to save Soviet Jews. So, with millions demonstrating, attention will be paid.

But there was something about all this that amazed me even more. It would have been unthinkable - obscene - to wave Soviet flags at our demonstrations. It would have been just as unthinkable to have immigrants from Germany carry nazi flags to protest that U.S. borders were closed to refugees from Hitler. I doubt that Ethiopian Jews in Israel carry Ethiopian flags or yell the equivalent of "Viva Ethiopia!" when they demand that Israel lets in more Ethiopians. And in California, when a store in Orange County flew a communist North Vietnamese flag, it was demolished by Vietnamese refugees who had been lucky enough to get into the U.S.

So why were the recent demonstrations on behalf of people who wanted to leave Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador and the rest displaying thousands of flags of those supposedly awful places and yelling "Viva!" to them?

I have written in the past that my definition of what is the most important difference between a good and a bad country is validated by those who vote with their feet: a good country is one that is faced with hordes of people who would like to come in and has to protect itself from an unmanageable influx, while the bad country's population would like to leave, at any price, but is not allowed to do so. By these criteria,

North Korea, Cuba, China, the former Soviet Union, East Germany and the rest of the East European bloc were bad while the U.S. and the West were good.

But this presents a problem: what about Mexico? On one hand, it doesn't stop its people from leaving; in fact, it pressures its northern neighbor to admit them unconditionally. But on the other hand, when it comes to treating its own immigrants is probably more cruel, inconsiderate, discriminatory and unfair than just about any other country - certainly much worse than the U.S.

Here are some of Mexico's current laws - according to the 1917 Constitution, later amended, and officially translated by the Organization of American States - on illegal and legal immigrants who had the misfortune of having landed in Mexico.

Article 33: Foreigners may not, in any way, participate in the political affairs of the country. This is interpreted as banning, among other things, the participation in demonstrations and expressions of opinions about domestic politics.

Article 32: Given the equality of other criteria, Mexicans shall have the priority over foreigners for all classes of concessions and for all employment, positions or commissions of the government where citizenship is not mandatory. In any case, no foreigner may serve in the armed forces or in police or security forces in peacetime. All foreigners, legal immigrants and naturalized citizens are banned from serving as military officers, crews of Mexican-flag ships or aircraft, and chiefs of airports or seaports.

Article 55: Immigrants may not become federal lawmakers - a Mexican senator or congressman must be a Mexican citizen by birth. Article 91 puts the same ban on becoming a member of the Cabinet, a justice

of the Supreme Court (Article 95) and a member of the clergy (Article 130).

Article 27: Only Mexicans by birth or naturalization and Mexican companies have the right to acquire ownership of lands, waters and their appurtenances or to obtain concessions for the same. I guess there goes my hope for buying a farm or a house in Mexico...

Article 11 guarantees protection against "undesirable aliens resident in the country" and *article 16* gives private citizens the right to make citizen's arrests: "...any person may arrest illegal aliens and hand them over to the police for

prosecution."

And on deportation, here is article 33: *The Federal Executive shall have the exclusive power to compel; any foreigner whose remaining here may be deemed inexpedient to abandon the national territory immediately and without the necessity for previous legal action.*

Mexico currently deports about 160,000 undocumented immigrants yearly. They come mostly from Central America with a smaller number from Asia, Africa and the Middle East - all on their way to the U.S. The cost ranges from about \$1500 to as much as \$10,000 for Asians and Europeans. Half of the money is usually paid in advance with the balance due after arrival in America. According to the Mexican National Human Rights commission, they are vulnerable to maltreatment by both criminals and the authorities - robbed, sexually exploited, extorted, beaten and even killed.

So, should they scream "Viva Mexico!" and wave flags of the countries they escaped from? ¥





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John McCain: *Make cable go a la carte!*

The fix for soaring cable-TV bills is competition and channel choice, say the Arizona Republican senator and FCC chairman Kevin Martin on the recently proposed for consideration by U.S. Senate CHOICE Act

American consumers have little choice when it comes to cable television. If you want ESPN, you must pay for 60-plus channels that you may never watch. If your child loves Nickelodeon, your family must pay for the same 60-plus channels, some of which may not be suitable for young children. Now, imagine deciding for yourself which TV channels you want to purchase. You could select the channels you want to pay for, and opt out of those you don't. In fact, right now millions of TV viewers outside the U.S. have these choices. They buy their television channels individually or in smaller bundles — and get better deals as a result.

Why can't Americans do this now? Because there is too little competition, too much regulation and not enough consumer choice in the cable TV business. As a result, in just the last two years alone cable prices have increased at twice the rate of inflation — and more than 90% since 1995. Cable companies explain away their skyrocketing prices by saying they are giving you more and more channels. At no time, however, have the cable companies actually asked if you want those additional channels. You have to pay for them whether you want them or not.

The solution to high cable bills isn't price controls or additional government regulation. It is more competition and more choice. For that reason, Congress should pass the proposed Consumers Having Options in Cable Entertainment Act — the CHOICE Act — which is being introduced today. It would allow cable companies to compete nationally for your business (rather than only at the local level) in exchange for agreeing to offer channels a la carte, either individually or in smaller bundles.



The Government Accountability Office has found that cable rates are 15% lower when a community has at least two companies competing for consumers. The Federal Communications Commission found that consumers could lower their monthly cable bill by as much as 13% if they had a la carte programming options.

And parents would never be forced to purchase a slew of channels, some not suitable for young children, simply to receive those channels that their family enjoys watching together.

Real-world examples illustrate the benefits of greater choice and more competition coming through our TV sets. In Hong Kong, viewers can select and pay for only the channels they want. A family that wants to watch sports, movies, news and children's programming can receive 15 free channels plus a selection of 11 additional digital channels (including ESPN, HBO, CNN Headline News, National Geographic Channel, Animal Planet and Discovery Channel) for only \$27.50 a month. To

get a package that includes those channels in Washington, the cost is \$82 per month — almost \$1,000 a year. That's quite a difference.

Similarly, in Canada, digital subscribers can buy channels individually or enjoy significant savings on a "5 pack," a "10 pack" or a "15 pack" of their own choosing.

Interestingly, the same companies that oppose selling channels individually or in smaller packages in the U.S. offer their programming a la carte in other countries. Their threats of financial ruin and a loss of diverse programming have proved hollow. American consumers want these companies to offer such choices. According to a recent AP-Ipsos poll, 78% of respondents said they would prefer to choose and pay for their own tailored selection of channels.

Today, cable choice and competition have been successful around the world. Consumers in Hong Kong, Britain, India and Canada are reaping the rewards of greater choice from channels being offered on an a la carte basis. So why not increase competition in the U.S. and at the same time make sure that companies offer us true choice in cable programming? φ