

Word Tour of UN

UNITED NATIONS (WUP) -- "There's nothing new under the sun," concluded the wise Solomon ages ago -- a truth that hits home each morning as I enter this world organization through the Delegates' entrance and ascend the escalator to the second floor fronting the huge General Assembly Hall.

It's at this juncture of my walk, in the hallway to the doors leading into the Assembly, that I am unavoidably confronted with a 2,700 year-old statuette of Osiris, the Egyptian god of the underworld and judge of the dead. Encased in glass and standing on a pedestal some six feet high, it represents the gift of the Egyptian Government. What an appropriate setting for the recent doings here! How fitting, a "god of the underworld and a judge of the dead" to the continuous negative actions of an Assembly that had allowed the killer Arafat to spew his venom from its rostrum against the people of the God of Jacob and which, in hatred, had equated Zionism with racism.

My destination is my little Jewish-Israeli niche, the WUP Bureau, situated on the third floor press section in the glass and marble

Secretariat Building, whose walls and book-cases grace numerous symbols of Hebraica such as a mezuzah, a menorah, photos of Jerusalem, several skull-caps including one from India and another from a Druze Sheikh. There everything spells monotheism, Torah, human rights, brotherhood, universality -- the very essence and spirit of the Hebrew Bible which has an honored place here.

But I am still in the Assembly Hall, and, as I quickly take leave of Osiris and move on towards the Conference Building -- housing the three chambers of the Economic and Social, Trusteeship and Security Councils -- I am again confronted by another idol, Ashtar (Astarte or Ashtoreth), the Philistine-Phoenician goddess of fertility and sexual love -- an idol also worshipped by the Babylonians and Assyrians but vehemently condemned by the Hebrew Prophets.

The sculpture, a replica of the original on display in Damascus, is a gift of Syria. During the presentation last year, the Syrian Ambassador, in hailing the symbolism of the idol as representing fertility and love, couldn't restrain his inner hatred of the people of the One God and, almost as if mesmerized by the idol, branded the Israelis as "alien invaders... we must get rid of..." The invited audience, including the Secretary - General who accepted the gift, appeared shocked that he should have injected a sour political tone into the gift presentation.

The deity Ashtoreth is cited many times in the Bible as having caused the ancient Israelites to depart from the true worship of the One God of Moses and the Prophets.

As I pass this despicable 'lady' seen with a dog at her feet, I get a feeling of revulsion in the thought that she should have been given an honored place in this international center. But then what can we expect from a house dominated by a 'tyranny of the majority.'

As I proceed to the Conference Building linking the Assembly structure with the Secretariat edifice where my office is located, a little light emerges. I am faced with another scene, a garden area, a sort of patio made up of finely-polished stones, a mosaic of slabs covering the ground as seen from the corridor windows of the Conference Building. Here the thought of the idols fades away.

These stones, which emit a pink hue in contrast to the grey of the Secretariat building, represent the gift of Israel to the UN. They have been quarried in the Jerusalem region at the site of Kastel and to me they symbolize the other positive side of the world organization. Thus, to my delight, we have here at the UN a little bit of Israel, a symbol of the eternal city of Jerusalem and all that this name signifies. Interestingly, the Israeli garden area is situated in a central site so as to give the impression that this Holy Land area stands as a bridge linking the three main structures of the United

Nations complex.

Here, too, in one of the Conference Building corridors, I find further comfort in a unique gift from Iran -- a replica of King Cyrus' edict in the form of a disc decreeing the right of all peoples, including the Jewish exiles, to return to their homelands -- an act recorded in the Bible.

Thus, despite the presence here of the ancient idols and notwithstanding the actions of the UN majority mirroring the idolatrous past, there still remain, as in antiquity, a spark of truth, a little light, a 'David' always on hand versus the dark forces. The name Israel still resounds in all chambers here and the enemy is forced to acknowledge its reality. The conflict between good and evil still persists.

Reaching my Jewish - Israeli niche in Room 373, I enter a new world, a Biblically-inspired atmosphere, remote from the wrangling and bitter debates, and as the leaders busy themselves with the Middle East, I recall at this time what I had noted a little over a year ago, a matter quite applicable to the present doings.

I can only marvel, I stated then, at the current feverish activities so greatly preoccupying kings, dictators and presidents of nations great and small on the question of tiny little Israel -- how to slice her once again to appease the ravenous appetites of the Arab feudal lords.

Surely, it is as if these rulers have no other problems that beset them in their home countries. No, nothing bothers them much. It is the Jewish State that disturbs them most and it is this State they must indict for having had the audacity to defend itself in four wars against hordes of Arabs who, in murderous onslaughts, failed to achieve their goal of annihilation.

Thus, it appears, that to these kings, dictators and presidents Israel's unforgivable sin lay in the fact that she refused to die at the hands of her attackers; that she had beat them back on each of the four occasions and, as a result, had re-taken the West Bank from Jordan, which had no legal claim to it, and the Gaza Strip from Egypt, which also could claim no legal status there.

And if the world's politicians would insist on the settlement of the Sinai and the Golan Heights and argue on this score, then they should be told to accept a procedure that has been followed after all wars in history between the victor and the loser, namely, let the defeated sue for peace; let Egypt and Syria sue for peace and pay the price of their aggression, as Nazi Germany and Italy had to do after World War II.

Why should an exception be made in the case of the Jewish people?

Judging by the one-sided decisions adopted here at the UN, the majority insist that an exception be made in the case of Israel. The victim of aggression, these decisions demand, must not only withdraw to the insecure 1967 borders. She must also, in a second stage, move back to the 1948 Armistice lines. And, in a third stage, allow the murderous PLO terrorists to entrench themselves in Samaria and Judea.

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