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Citizens Opposed to Propaganda Masquerading as Art

The Fabricated Tantura Massacre - A Vicious Lie About Israel, Brought To You By Theater J - Supported By Your Donations

Dear Friends,

Is it possible that the leadership of the Federation and the DCJCC have themselves been duped into supporting Theater J without fully appreciating the extent of the anti-Israel agenda being pursued by that Theater? Is there still time for the leadership of these organizations to exercise independent judgment and take responsible action?

Theater J has in practical effect hijacked the DCJCC's theater and the Jewish community's charity funds to stage what amounts to a vicious lie against Israel and its heroes who fought for statehood in 1948. According to Ari Roth, Theater J's Artistic Director, *"The Admission"*, a play already scheduled for the theater's Voices from a Changing Middle East Festival in 2014, was inspired by the alleged massacre of Palestinian Arabs by Israeli forces in the village of Tantura in the 1948 war. Roth stated in an interview with the Jewish News Service that *"The Admission"* is all based on **"actual research done by three historians,"** and **"not a fictitious 1948 massacre."** <http://www.jns.org/latest-articles/2013/9/22/where-do-jewish-federations-draw-the-red-line-on-opinions-about-israel>

In Roth's own blog he writes:

"At least three Israeli historians wrote different versions of the

conquest of Tantura: from the right, Yoav Gelber; from the center, Benny Morris, and from the left, Ilan Pappé.”

<http://theateriblogs.wordpress.com/2013/09/16/yom-kippur-talk-on-the-dramas-of-admission-part-2/>

What Roth doesn't tell his readers is that 2 out of the three historians thoroughly discredited the third historian's version, and the third historian has admitted that he makes no effort at historic accuracy, is biased in favor of Palestinians against Israel and has expressed the wish that his own sons might grow up in a world without Israel. Apparently Roth himself shares that historian's lack of concern with historical accuracy.

***The massacre did not occur. The allegation is a lie.
The “Admission” is nothing more than propaganda
masquerading as art.***

The story of the alleged Tantura massacre started with a master's thesis written in 1998 by a student named Theodore Katz for the University of Haifa. The thesis created quite a stir, and members of the IDF brigade accused in the thesis of participating in the massacre (the Alexandroni Brigade) actually sued for libel. Katz's defense received major financing by Faisal Husseini, then the Palestinian Authority's representative in Jerusalem. During the trial Katz signed a confession agreeing to having misrepresented the facts, admitting that no massacre had ever taken place and apologizing for having libeled the IDF forces. The District Court accepted the admission and apology and entered its findings on the record. The case eventually reached the Israeli Supreme court in 2003, which then upheld the ruling of the District Court.

***The Israeli Supreme Court upheld the District
Court's findings in favor of the libeled soldiers.***

In 2002, The University of Haifa itself undertook a review of the thesis, and the Academic Committee found that the thesis was filled with fabrications and distortions. It disqualified the thesis.

<http://www.ee.bgu.ac.il/~censor/katz-directory/05-12-14gelber-palestine-1948-appendix-III-the-tantura-blood-libel-english.pdf>

Both the District Court and the Academic Committee at the University of Haifa listened to the cassettes of interviews on which the thesis was

based and found that those interviewed on the tapes did not say what Katz had written. Not one person interviewed alleged there had been a massacre.

The university sponsoring the thesis found it to have arrived at false conclusions.

Ari Roth himself states that the play is based on the work of three historians, Yoave Gelber, Benny Morris and Ilan Pappé.

Really, Ari?

Let's examine exactly what these three historians have stated.

First, Yoave Gelber entitled his essay on the affair, ***"The Tantara Blood Libel"*** and noted that Ilan Pappé has *"spread lies about an imaginary Tantara massacre, a lie that has found its way into nearly every anti-Semitic web-site and Neo-Nazi magazine."* <http://www.ee.bgu.ac.il/~censor/katz-directory/05-12-14gelber-palestine-1948-appendix-III-the-tantara-blood-libel-english.pdf>

One down, two to go, Ari.

Second, Benny Morris in his 2011 essay, *"The Liar as Hero"*, wrote that he:

"...decided to look into the matter myself, starting with the archives...There is not a single piece of written evidence from 1948 asserting a large-scale massacre (and 250 dead would have constituted the largest massacre to have occurred in the 1948 war)." <http://www.newrepublic.com/article/books/magazine/85344/ilan-pappe-sloppy-dishonest-historian>

In a book review by Morris, also in The New Republic, he wrote:

"Unfortunately, much of what Pappé tries to sell his readers is complete fabrication." <http://hnn.us/article/4479>

Two down, one to go, Ari.

The third and only historian who supports Roth's theatrical propaganda piece is Ilan Pappé, a notorious Israel hater. The following is a revealing profile of Ilan Pappé. Note the quote of Pappé

himself declaring that factual accuracy and truth seeking are NOT among his goals:

*“Pappe is a notorious fabricator, someone who claims proudly that facts and truth are of no importance. **‘Indeed the struggle is about ideology, not about facts. Who knows what facts are? We try to convince as many people as we can that our interpretation of the facts is the correct one, and we do it because of ideological reasons, not because we are truthseekers.’** the French newspaper Le Soir, has cited Pappe as saying.*

Pappe is an expatriate Israeli who devoted one of his ‘books’ to his sons with the wish that they may grow up in a world without Israel. His own University of Exeter recently chastised him for his infamous habit of playing fast and loose with facts. Pappe is best known as a fulltime anti-Israel propagandist who has done more than any other anti-Israel Israeli to promote the moral equivalence of “Nakba denial” with Holocaust denial. (For those who are unaware, “Nakba,” meaning “catastrophe,” is the term Arabs use to refer to Israel’s birth.) He is a “new historian” in the sense of pseudo-historian. His mission in life is to invent an imaginary Palestinian historic “narrative.” Nearly all those beating the “Nakba” drum today cite Pappe and his books about the supposed “ethnic cleansing” of Arabs by Israel in its war of independence.

Pappe was a lecturer in political science at the University of Haifa, but moved to resume a pseudo-academic propagandist position at the University of Exeter in the UK. Even other anti-Zionists have repudiated Pappe as a liar and fabricator. He openly calls for Israel to be exterminated and endorses Hamas terrorism. He considers Noam Chomsky insufficiently anti-Israel.” <http://www.think-israel.org/archives/1201issue/plaut.harvardacademicpogrom.html>

See also <http://www.discoverthenetworks.org/Articles/ilanpappeprofile.html>

Ilan Pappe is a virulent anti-Zionist who is a leader in the international boycott Israel campaign, calling on other universities to boycott Israeli academics so that they may be, in his words, “part of a historical movement and moment that may bring an end to more than a century of colonization, occupation and dispossession of Palestinians”.

<http://hnn.us/article/11873>

Pappe, in his book, *"A History of Modern Palestine: One Land, Two Peoples"* admitted to being biased and to playing fast and loose with historical facts:

"My [pro-Palestinian] bias is apparent despite the desire of my peers that I stick to facts and the 'truth' when reconstructing past realities. I view any such construction as vain and presumptuous. This book is written by one who admits compassion for the colonized not the colonizer; who sympathizes with the occupied not the occupiers." <http://www.meforum.org/897/a-history-of-modern-palestine-one-land-two-peoples>

In reviewing Pappe's book, Efraim Karsh in Middle East Quarterly wrote:

"More serious is the book's consistent resort to factual misrepresentation, distortion, and outright falsehood. Readers are told of events that never happened, such as the nonexistent May 1948 Tantura 'massacre' or the expulsion of Arabs within twelve days of the partition resolution." <http://www.meforum.org/897/a-history-of-modern-palestine-one-land-two-peoples>

The lies about an Israeli massacre at Tantura spread by Pappe have been used by foes of Israel to fuel the BDS movement, as in the 2005 British Association of University Teachers vote to blacklist Israeli academics.

So, Ari is left to rely on an anti-Zionist who believes facts are irrelevant.

One must ask: Why are Theater J, the DCJCC and the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington promoting a discredited and defamatory lie against Israel?

Is this what you want your charitable donations to the Jewish Federation to support? Let the Federation know of your opposition to its continued support of Theater J at the DCJCC. Write to Steve Rakitt, Executive Director of the Federation (steve.rakitt@shalomdc.org), telling him of your opposition to the Federation continuing its funding of a theater that denigrates and vilifies Israel.

As we've indicated previously, The Washington Jewish Week, which is owned by former and current leaders of The Jewish Federation, has notified us that they will no longer run display ads from COPMA. The Jewish Week ran the Federation's own full page "Open Letter" responding to our email campaign but has placed a ban on further paid ads from our organization. We therefore need your help in forwarding this email to your friends and colleagues who share your interest in the welfare of Israel. Thank you.

***Citizens Opposed to Propaganda
Masquerading as Art (COPMA)***

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<http://www.COPMA.net>

info@copma.net

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