

Middle East Notes
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
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Note: *This issue of Middle East Notes includes only one article due to a summer break for our staff. The next full issue will be coming in September.*

Commentary: The Bible story of the true prophet Elijah is recorded in the 1 Kings 18:16-39 account of his confrontation with the 450 false prophets. His prayer was answered by fire from the Lord which consumed his offering rather than those of the false prophets.

Gideon Levy, the Palestinian affairs columnist for *Haaretz*, is a modern-day Elijah, an Israeli Jew, a prophet of truth and reality who speaks with and for the Palestinians. He continues to confront and challenge his government's much publicized and conflated narrative that any criticism of the Israeli government's repressive and oppressive treatment of the Palestinian People is anti-Semitic and a threat to the existence of Israel. Which narrative is closest to truth and reality?

Debates over words only seem to confuse rather than convince. The fire of truth mentioned in the Elijah story gives a clear and practical way of determining who are the false prophets. The clarifying "fire" to determine which narrative is true and which is manipulative propaganda is to live among the Palestinians for a period of time: sharing their daily lives in the West Bank, or Gaza, or East Jerusalem, or even among the Palestinian citizens of Israel and experiencing with them their repression and oppression. If such a visit is not possible, listen to a trustworthy and trusted friend.

The article below is written by Gideon Levy, an Israeli prophet who knows and speaks the truth.

[Listen to Mandela, by Gideon Levy, Haaretz, July 18, 2019](#)

"Let's assume that indeed all critics of the occupation are anti-Semites, as Israel's efficient propaganda machine claims; and that all BDS supporters seek Israel's destruction; and that Israel isn't an apartheid state, and that even its brutal occupation in the territories is no such thing.

"What will the Zionist propagandists say in response to the remarks of Chief Zwelivelile Mandela, the grandson of Nelson Mandela and perpetuator of his legacy? Will they accuse him of anti-Semitism and claim he is motivated by malevolent interests? That perhaps he's getting money from ISIS? That he's serving Qatar? That he's a neo-Nazi like Jeremy Corbyn?" ...

..."But it would be far more worthwhile to listen to Chief Mandela. Any decent Israeli cannot remain indifferent to his words. It's hard to lay on him those accusations that Israel directs at all people of conscience who dare to criticize it."

... “With a keffiyeh on his neck and a Palestine bracelet on his arm, he is carrying on Mandela’s legacy. Whoever accuses him of anti-Semitism would have to similarly blame the greatest statesman of conscience in the 20th century, his admired grandfather, whom many brave South African Jews joined in the struggle, and were wounded, exiled and jailed with him.

“Mandela speaks decisively when he says that the Bantustan enclaves didn’t work in South Africa and will never work in apartheid Israel. Not only is he convinced that Israel is an apartheid state, he sees it as the worst form of apartheid he has ever witnessed. Yes, worse than South Africa. He lists the components of apartheid formerly in his country – statutory discrimination, movement restrictions, land expropriation, group areas, military rule, roadblocks, humiliations and home searches. All of these happen in Israel.”...

“The younger Mandela sees support for BDS as a moral obligation, as the boycott of his own country was. He is cheerful and optimistic, like his grandfather. “In the end justice will prevail,” he said. “Today South Africa, tomorrow Palestine. This gathering right here reminds us of our date with history.”