

Palestinian Authority by John G. Hall, a volume that is part of the series *Creation of the Modern Middle East*, published by Chelsea House (2003).

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In addition to its being poorly written, with numerous grammatical and mechanical errors, I find this book to be nothing but sheer propaganda for a terrorist organization. It is driven by a hatred of the Jews and is laden with lies and omissions, with misrepresentations and misleading characterizations, with misstatements and contradictions. Perhaps some of the factual and historical errors in the book can be attributed to its having been authored by someone whose credentials are in African American Studies, and not in Palestinian or Middle East Studies. But this lack of learning is no excuse for the antisemitism that oozes from between the lines of almost every page.

The book is full of false, misleading, antisemitic, and pro-terrorist remarks, as well as glaring omissions and contradictions.

False Statements of Fact

1. Hall asserts as a matter of fact that the Palestinian Arabs are descendants of the Canaanites (p. 29), a point that is hardly accepted as fact; there is, for example, a well-known tradition that says the Arabs are descendants of Ishmael, who was not a Canaanite. And in the Palestinian testimony before the Anglo-American Committee in 1946, they traced their ancestry only to the time of the Muslim conquest in the 7th century.
2. In what is hopefully a typo, the author states that the British Mandate of Palestine was established after World War II; it was actually established after World War I (p. 31).
3. With respect to their motives for immigrating to Palestine, Hall lumps Christians and Jews together, saying that “unlike their Muslim counterparts,” they “came, not as refugees seeking sanctuary, but as Crusaders, Salvationists, and Redeemers (p. 40). This is utterly false: when did Muslims go to Palestine seeking sanctuary, and when did Jews go as Crusaders?
4. Hall wrongly identifies Zion as “the easternmost hill of the city of Jerusalem, known today as the Temple Mount” (p. 43). In fact, the Temple Mount is Mount Moriah; Mount Zion is southwest of the Old City, near the Zion Gate.
5. Hall mistranslates *Narodnaya Volya* as “Land and Freedom” (p. 44); the phrase means “The Will of the People.”
6. Hall titles his chapter covering the interwar years “Palestinian Resistance to Israeli Occupation” (pp. 59ff); none of the terms in this title is truthful. At that

- time, a “Palestinian” was anyone living in Palestine; since there was no Israel, there were no Israelis; and since the British were in charge of the region, they, and not the Jews, were the ones who occupied it.
7. Hall states that “in response to Arab attacks on Jewish settlers and British authorities in the 1930s, Palestinian Jews formed a militia called the Haganah” (p. 85). Once again, he has his facts wrong; the Haganah was established in 1920 in response to the Arab riots against the Jews.
 8. Hall indicates that the Biltmore Conference “came a year” after the U.S. entered the war (p. 94); the conference convened on May 11, 1942, six months after the U.S. entered the war.
 9. Hall says that only in 1942, at the Biltmore Conference, did the Zionists declare publicly for the first time “their intention to establish a Jewish homeland or commonwealth in Palestine” (p. 95). This intention was made known publicly at the first Zionist congress in 1897.
 10. With regard to Israel’s war for independence, Hall says that “the Palestinian and Arab forces were severely out-numbered, out-armed, and out-trained. Jewish forces had tanks, armored cars, fighter planes, and field guns” (p. 98). And, he maintains, “beginning in April 1948, the Jewish military launched massive assaults against Palestinian forces” (p. 98). Once again Hall indulges in outright lies. First, he just stated on the previous page that the Jews were a minority of only 31% of the population in Palestine; how can a minority severely out-number a majority more than twice its size?
 11. Hall refers to the 750,000 “refugees in east central Palestine, later known as the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and neighboring Arab countries” (p. 102). This creates the false impression that the West Bank and Gaza were part of a country called “Palestine,” when in fact the West Bank was part of Jordan, and the Gaza Strip was part of Egypt.
 12. Now on a rant, Hall says the “Palestinians left their homes and villages on short notice, and most assumed their leaving would be temporary, just like a hundred times before when the never-ending conflict between the two opposing communities erupted into violent confrontation” (p. 102). The Jews forced them from their homes a hundred times before? This is not only a lie; it is ridiculous. And if they thought they were leaving temporarily, it was because the Jews were vastly outnumbered and had no reasonable hope of winning.
 13. Here is another lie from Hall: “Palestine had been an Arab country for hundreds of years” (p. 105). There has never been a government, an army, a currency, or anything else that ever belonged to the Arab country of Palestine.

14. Hall asserts that the Jewish immigration to Palestine “was accomplished with strategic intervention of European colonial powers” (p. 105); he also says that Israel “by definition is a settler colony” (p. 106). Wrong again. Since *by definition* a colony is a settlement established by a sovereign state in a foreign territory either claimed or controlled by that state, the Jewish settlement of Palestine cannot be construed as a colonization: Israel was never the colony of a European country or any other country. From here Hall goes into a rant for half a page on the Native American Indians and Africans and makes absurd and inaccurate comparisons to the Israelis and Palestinians (p. 105).
15. Hall claims that after 1971 the PLO abandoned terrorist tactics in favor of political persuasion (p. 117); this is simply not the case. The PLO has always either engaged in (through the Al Aqsa Martyrs’ Brigade, for example) or has encouraged terrorist actions.
16. Hall states that in 1996 Arafat was elected president of the Palestinian Authority by “an overwhelming majority” (p. 119); what he fails to point out is that Arafat crushed all opposition to him by any means necessary, including murder. He then says, “It was at this moment that Palestinian Authority, an independent state, governed by the will of the Palestinian people, was born” (p. 119). The PA is clearly *not* an independent state; nor is it “governed by the will of the Palestinian people.” This political entity governs by fear and terror, the result of which has been chaos characterized by daily gun battles among warring Palestinian factions.

Misleading Assertions

1. Hall defines the word *Hebrew* to mean “those who pass from place to place” (p. 23). This is not the meaning of the word; the actual meaning is “one who crosses over.” Hall’s definition is calculated to add to the impression that the Jews just wandered into Palestine, as the next place in their millennial wanderings.
2. Hall notes that one of the negative aspects of the impact of “European settlement” in Palestine was the introduction of “religious equality” for Christians and Jews, “thus overturning the foundations and structure of Muslim society” (p. 33). But he does little to explain why religious freedom is a bad thing. Next, he maintains that “European intervention created the conditions for the gradual and inevitable destruction of Palestine” (p. 36); but then he lauds “the increase in modern education” (p. 36) introduced by the Europeans as a key factor in the “birth of Arab and Palestinian nationalism and Islamic consciousness” (p. 37). So which is it? Was the influence of European education negative or positive?
3. Hall describes Arabs whose land was purchased by the Jews as Arabs “who were deprived of their land by Jewish settlers” (p. 47), as if purchase meant deprivation and was not a legitimate means of acquisition.

4. He maintains that “the Britain promised to support Arab independence” (p. 55) in the letters exchanged between British high commissioner Sir Henry McMahon and Hussein in 1915-1916; however, McMahon made it very clear that Syria and Palestine would not necessarily go to the Arabs, since those regions had mixed populations. And Hussein appeared to understand that. Further, the Sykes-Picot agreement of 1916 was perfectly consistent with those letters; the Triple Entente, therefore, did not “blatantly contradict the agreement the British had made with the Arabs” (p. 56).
5. Hall falsely identifies Herbert Samuels as a Zionist (p. 57); since Samuels was a Jew, not a Zionist, Hall seems to use the word *Zionist* as a synonym for *Jew*. Samuels appointed the infamous inciter of Jew hatred, Hajj Amin al-Husseini mufti of Jerusalem and curtailed Jewish immigration to Palestine—not the actions of a Zionist.
6. Hall notes that the political platform of the Palestine Arab Executive condemned the Balfour Declaration and the idea of a Jewish national home in Palestine; it also advocated the establishment of a national government in Palestine. “This last point was significant because Palestine, like Syria and Iraq, was designated by the League of Nations to establish a national government with legislative and administrative structures” (p. 75). This is a half-truth. The League of Nations supported the establishment of national Arab governments in Syria and Iraq, but in Palestine they supported a national *Jewish* entity.
7. Hall’s description of the “confrontation between Arabs and Jews” on August 23, 1929, is very misleading (p. 80). He fails to identify this “confrontation” by its most famous name: the Hebron Massacre, during which the Arabs rendered Hebron *Judenrein*, at the incitement of the Arab leaders. He notes that nearly 250 “people” were killed, but fails to note that almost all of them were Jews: when Arabs are killed, he identifies them as Palestinian victims of the Zionists; when Jews are killed they are simply “people.” He also leaves out the part of the Shaw Commission’s report that identified “racial animosity” among the motives behind the Arab slaughter of the Jews.
8. Hall carefully words his misleading statement about Ramsay MacDonald’s letter to Chaim Weizmann (whom he never mentions) dated February 13, 1931; he says that the letter “in effect” reversed the policy recommendations of the Passfield White Paper (p. 81). In the letter MacDonald assured Weizmann that the British would adhere to the conditions defining the mandate as outlined by the League of Nations, namely that Jewish immigration would not be halted; he also insisted, however, such immigration must not cause an economic hardship on the people already living in Palestine—which was in keeping with the Passfield White Paper. After making this misleading statement, Hall goes on to say that MacDonald’s letter “confirmed how much power and influence the Zionists exercised over the British government” (p. 81), a statement that feeds into general antisemitic claims about “the world Zionist conspiracy.”

9. Hall makes absurd comparisons between Palestinian terrorists and American revolutionaries (p. 86, for example), in a transparent move to gain the sympathy of the American school child.
10. Hall says that under U.N. Resolution 181 the Jews were allowed 55% of the land, while the Arab majority was left with only 45% (p. 97). This is extremely misleading. The British mandate included all of Transjordan (Israel and Jordan). When Jordan annexed the West Bank in 1950, this placed 80% of the land in Arab hands and 17.5% in Jewish hands, with Jews constituting about one-third of the population.
11. Hall refers to the Palestinian Arabs as “the indigenous people of the sacred and historic earth known as Palestine” (p. 104). In fact, there was a massive Arab immigration into Palestine in the 1920s and 1930s, and the “indigenous people” have always included Jews. Further, what exactly makes Palestine the Arabs’ “sacred and historic earth”? Is it the fact that the Arabs drove the Christians out of the land in the 7th century and again in the 12th century or what? There is no mention of it as a “sacred” land in their religious tradition.

Glaring Omissions

1. When relating the story of al-Hajj al-Husseini’s escape from the British (p. 91), Hall fails to mention that al-Hajj went on to join up with the Nazis in the hopes that the Nazis would solve the “Jewish Problem” in Palestine; he even recruited Muslims for the Nazi SS, whose primary mission was the extermination of the Jews.
2. Hall refers to the Jews as “immigrant-settlers” and to Arabs as “indigenous Palestinians” (p. 94), as if the only indigenous people were the Arabs and the only immigrants were the Jews. As already noted, in the 1920s and 1930s the number of Arabs immigrating to Palestine exceeded the number of Jews, and Jews have been indigenous to the region ever time the time of Abraham.
3. On p. 98 Hall omits the fact that all of the Arab countries surrounding the Jews were threatening to drive them into the sea; he also fails to mention that in May 1948 five Arab countries—Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt—attacked the Israelis, who were outnumbered by about 80 to 1. Since there was no “Palestinian people,” there were no Palestinian forces; the Israelis were faced with the Arab High Command based in Damascus.

Antisemitic Remarks

1. Hall describes the Zionist movement as “an organized movement of world Jewry” (p. 41), subtly playing on the antisemitic fear of a worldwide Jewish conspiracy. The First Zionist Congress had about 200 delegates from 17 different countries; Jews inhabit a few more than 17 countries in the world.

2. In keeping with the general antisemitic tone of the book, Hall claims that the “Zionist leaders” worked with “the Nazi government” to “establish training camps in Germany to prepare immigrants for their futures in Palestine” (p. 82). This is a lie maintained by the Institute for Historical Review and other Holocaust revisionists.

Pro-Terrorist Remarks

1. Hall justifies terrorism by saying, “A passion cannot be dismissed or denied by calling it by another name, “*terrorism*” is the one most often used” (p. 104). The truth is that *terrorism* cannot be dismissed or denied by calling it a “passion.”
2. Hall treats organizations such as Fatah and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (p. 112) as “militant movements,” when in fact these are known terrorist organizations whose stated aim is the destruction of the State of Israel.

Phony Photos

The problems do not end with the text; the photos, too, are problematic and phony:

1. The deception that runs throughout the book begins with the photo on the cover; it shows a young Palestinian standing in front of an Israeli tank, ready to confront it in battle. This photo is actually known to be phony. The tank is not moving, and there is no one inside of it, as one can tell by the absence of the tank commander from the position he would normally hold. To the left of the tank, in the portion of the photo that has been cropped, there are some trucks, with Israeli soldiers milling around. The Palestinian is superimposed on the photo.
2. The Palestinian Police Force wanted poster on p. 108 was issued by the British; it is in English, not Arabic, and, since the word *Palestinian* did not refer to Arabs but to any inhabitant of the region, the police are Palestinian police.
3. And on p. 110 there is a photo of two women *smiling and hugging*, with a caption that reads, “Arab and Jewish Mothers of Children Killed in the Violence.”