

Controversial Professor Speaks Of Revisionism

By JOSEPH PUDER

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SWARTHMORE — Joseph Massad, associate professor of Modern Arab Politics and Intellectual History at Columbia University was the featured lecturer recently at the Swarthmore College Lang Cinema as part of the weekend long Palestinian Student Society of America Inaugural Conference. Nearly 80 students, mostly Arab-Palestinians, were in attendance. Massad titled his talk as "Notes from a Settler Colony."

Massad was mired in controversy recently when he insulted Jewish students in his class. He mocked students that attempted to question his pre-ceptions and made them unwelcome in his classes. Columbia University set up a committee of inquiry that later whitewashed the solid evidence presented by the students. At the same time, Columbia University accepted a \$200,000 gift made by the United Arab Emirates to the Edward Said chair in Middle East Studies.

Using intellectual sophistry to point out essentially that "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter," Massad denounced the American and Israeli usage of terrorism as it applies to Palestinian groups and Al-Qaida, charging that those in power have arbitrated the usage of the word terrorist. Massad added: "Terror is the discourse of a colonial entity," accusing both the U.S. and Israel of using state terrorism. "It is not the act of terror that confers the identity of the terrorist," he posited, "but those who define it."

He clearly justifies Palestinian methods of resistance to Israel, including suicide bombers.

Massad delved into the Arab-Israeli conflict by attempting to co-opt leading Zionist figures he claimed "admitted" that the Jews "stole" Palestinian lands, including Zeev Jabotinsky, Menachem Begin, David Ben Gurion and Leah Rabin.

"Israel is a racist state not because of Jewish nationalism but because of its legally institutionalized racism where only Jews have rights and privileges," he said.

Using a radical Palestinian narrative, Massad's employs clear historical revisionism. He excused the Arab Revolt of 1936-39 in which Jewish civilians were targeted, as well as British troops, as the "Arab's lack of legal appeal" conveniently ignoring the 1929 attack by an Arab-Muslim mob on the ancient Jewish community of Hebron, in which the entire Jewish community was destroyed.

In fact, The Shaw Commission of Inquiry, named after Sir Walter Shaw, who chaired the commission to investigate the 1929 Arab riots, found that the violence occurred due to "racial animosity on the part of the Arabs, consequent upon the disappointment of their political and national aspirations and fear for their economic future."

Massad's charge that the "Arab's lack of legal appeal" is contradicted by the actions of the British mandatory government. The first British White Paper in 1922, in reaction to the Arab riots of 1920-1921, tore 77% of mandatory Palestine to create the Hashemite Kingdom of Trans Jordan, creating in effect the first Palestinian state.

Naturally, Massad failed to mention the Mufti of Jerusalem, who already in 1920 instigated the riots against the

Jews and the British. When asked by this writer about Haj Amin El Hussein, the Mufti of Jerusalem — who became Adolph Hitler's partner in the Final Solution of the Jews, and planned the murder of every Jewish man, woman, and child in the Arab Middle East including Palestine with Nazi help — Massad attempted to co-opt again, saying, "Of course the Mufti was bad, but did not the Zionist deal with Hitler too?"

The answer is, of course, no.

The Jewish Agency in Palestine at the time sought to arrange the safe departure of German Jews to Palestine and the negotiations were limited to transport and logistics. The Nazis in the mid-1930s sought to get rid of the Jews before settling on the Final Solution.

Labeling Israel as a racist state, Massad clearly ignores the history and reality of the Arab-Muslim world and that of dar al-Islam — the domain of Islam, that denies sovereign rights to any non-Muslim entity or people. His native Jordan is largely "Judenrein" as are most of the Arab-Muslim states. He obfuscated the history of the Zionist movement, though he admitted that Jews purchased land from Arab owners who willingly sold it. Yet, he deliberately overlooked the existence in pre-Mandatory Palestine of ancient Jewish communities. In Jerusalem alone, Jews were a majority already in the 1830s, and there were additional communities in Tiberias, Safed, and Hebron long before political Zionism emerged. Moreover, Jews lived in communities in the Galilee like Pkeiin, from time immemorial. In Massad's "selective scholarship" there is no his-

torical connections between Jews and the land of Israel.

Massad considers the Oslo Accords as "Arafat's capitulation" and believes that "Arafat was not initially corrupt but was bought off by Saudi money after 1973."

Asked by this writer whether he believes in a two-state solution, Massad responded emphatically: "NO." Massad would like to see Israel abolish the "law of return," constituted in the aftermath of the Holocaust, to provide Jews with a refuge from persecution. Massad's likely message to the Palestinian Student Society in America conference will be to advocate a "one state solution" and for Israel to remove its "racist" laws as a way to accommodation.

Inherent in this point of view is the dissolution of the Jewish State through the "right of return of Palestinian refugees" that would then become a majority through democratic means. Jews would then be subjected to the same treatment they "enjoyed" in all the Islamic states, namely that of a Dhimmi or a "tolerated third class citizen." That, of course, assumes that a Palestinian majority with access to weapons will not massacre their Jewish neighbors first?

Massad thinks that the U.S. is a party to the conflict and therefore cannot be an honest mediator. "The United States," according to Massad, "has had a consistent policy since World War II of fighting all regimes across the Third World who insists on controlling their national resources, whether it be land, oil, or other valuable minerals. This extends from Iran in 1953 to Guatemala in 1954 to the rest of

Latin America all the way to present-day Venezuela... Why would the United States support nationalist regimes in the Arab world who would nationalize natural resources and stop their pillage by American capital absent the pro-Israel lobby... Finally, the United States government has opposed and overthrown or tried to overthrow any regime that seeks real and tangible independence in the Third World and is especially galled by those regimes that pursue such policies through democratic elections.

Massad was once again at odds with the truth. The Bush administration that he labeled "un-elected" sought and is still seeking democratic elections and democracy throughout the Arab world. It was the Bush administration that insisted that Hamas participate in the recent Palestinian elections, and it called upon the Gulf States, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt to hold fair and democratic elections. The U.S. has also ended Saddam Hussein's reign of terror against the Iraqi people and under the U.S. guidance, the first ever truly democratic elections were held in Iraq.

Lance Silver, a Philadelphia businessman who attended the lecture, had this to say about Massad's lecture: "This was a lecture of hate, revisionism, and racism by Joseph Massad; a very dangerous individual." In his almost blind hatred for the Jewish state, Massad delivered a "sugar coated poison pill" to the impressionable audience of mostly young Palestinian students. Massad's message was not a message of peace, reconciliation and accommodation between Arabs and Jews in historical Palestine. His was a call to destroy the Jewish State in the guise of academic sophistry.