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The Land of Israel in Exchange for Goldstone: By Moshe Feiglin

If it were not so dangerous, it would even be amusing. There is certainly an element of poetic justice in the fact that the same people who gleefully destroyed the homes of over 8,000 Jews in Gush Katif are now being labeled as international war criminals.

In the summer of 2005, Israel's Left waged a war against the settlers. All the forces in Israel allowed to use violence were drafted for the battle. The goal of the war, as so accurately defined by Yair Lapid was "to teach them a lesson." Not peace, not security, not anything else. The State was simply drafted to wage war against the Left's internal ideological adversary.

As far as I am concerned, anybody who took part in the crime of Expulsion is a war criminal. True, there are varying degrees of crime; beginning with Sharon and Olmert, on through the Supreme Court justices and the writers, journalists and anchormen who enthusiastically encouraged the crime, the Likud ministers who voted in favor of the Expulsion, the rabbis who gave the *halachic* go-ahead to carry it out and down to the soldiers who obeyed their orders. Ultimately, all of them were polluted by this war crime in some measure.

Did anyone really listen to Netanyahu's speech in the UN? What was the nucleus of his speech – after he dispensed with all the melodrama? Netanyahu's speech was directed at neutralizing the danger of the Goldstone report. In other words, he wanted to ward off the danger that an entire slice of political and military leaders will not be able to go shopping at Marks and Spencer. In his speech, Bibi said that - with his support - the State of Israel took unilateral action and expelled the Jews from Gush Katif. And if you don't get this Goldstone off our backs, we will not be able to continue to expel more settlers and to establish a state of terrorists in Israel's heartland. Like it or not, that was the crux of Netanyahu's speech: The Land of Israel in exchange for Goldstone.

The danger at our threshold is much broader than the question of how our threatened leaders will behave. Historically, physical destruction has always come on the heels of demonization. Gush Katif could not have been destroyed before the demonization of the settlers that preceded the actual expulsion. Even though I was just a young boy in 1967, I still remember Nasser's propaganda against Israel that preceded the Six Day War. All the pogroms and the holocausts that we suffered in the exile were preceded by poisonous propaganda that negated the Jews' very right to exist.

It makes no difference how many Israeli soldiers were killed and will be killed, G-d forbid, in our attempt to wage war according to the values of the Western world. We will always be the bad guys - the robbers – in the story. When in 1967 we did not do what we did in 1948 - and left the Arabs in our land – we proved that we accept the principle that this land actually belongs to them. When we drove out the Jews who nevertheless believed in this land and made it flourish, we irreversibly proved the claim that this land is not ours.

I was there, in Gush Katif, when it happened. There was more foreign press there than there were grains of sand. The entire world watched in anticipation to see if it would really happen. The Jews drove themselves out of their land and from that point and on, we are robbers/colonialists – also in Tel Aviv and in Haifa. Furthermore, whoever fires missiles at us from Gaza is a freedom fighter. You can send them one thousand text messages before you invade – but you will still be a war criminal. The Goldstone Report would never have seen the light of day without the Expulsion.

So there is no reason to be amused. The international demonization that we are experiencing threatens more than Ehud Barak's next weekend in London. It threatens us all with physical annihilation.

Nevertheless, there is something positive that is coming out the Goldstone debacle. The State of Israel has its back to the wall and is being forced to re-think its basic assumptions. The 'normalcy' idea is officially bankrupt. The commentators and pundits are still attempting to blame the IDF or Israel's diplomatic efforts. "We should have cooperated with Goldstone," they say. But here and there, we already see individual journalists, like Ari Shavit in Ha'aretz, who at least understand that the problem is not tactical, but rather the essential negation of Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state.

Understandably, the solutions that they suggest are the very same "political processes" that have brought us to this crisis. Their horizons are as broad as an ant's. But as the crisis continues, wider and wider circles in Israeli society will begin to listen to the voices outside the media bubble. Policies that base their justice on Judaism will become Israel's lifeline.