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THE WORLD WILL SURVIVE KING GEORGE

When King George V died, we got a day off from school as a sign of mourning. Palestine was then a part of the British Empire, which ruled the country under a League of Nations mandate. To this very day, a central street in Tel-Aviv, not far from my home, bears the name of King George.

George V was followed (after a brief interlude) by George VI, who was until recently the last George in our life. Now we have a new King George, not British but American.

The relationship between the United States and Israel is difficult to define. The USA has no official mandate over our country. It is not a normal alliance between two nations. Neither is it a relationship between a satellite and the master country.

Some people say, only half in jest, that the USA is an Israeli colony. And indeed, in many respects it looks like that. President Bush dances to Ariel Sharon's tune. Both Houses of Congress are totally subservient to the Israeli right-wing - much more so than the Knesset. It has been said that if the pro-Israeli lobby were to sponsor a resolution on Capitol Hill calling for the abolition of the Ten Commandments, both Houses of Congress would adopt it overwhelmingly. Every year Congress confirms the payment of a massive tribute to Israel.

But others assert the reverse: that Israel is an American colony. And indeed, that is also true in many respects. It is unthinkable for the Israeli government to refuse a clear-cut request by the President of the United States. America forbids Israel to sell an expensive intelligence-gathering plane to China? Israel cancels the sale. America forbids a large-scale military action, as happened last week in Gaza? No action. America wants the Israeli economy to be managed according to American precepts? No problem: an American (circumcised, to be sure) has just been appointed as Governor of the Central Bank of Israel.

As a matter of fact, both versions are right: The USA is an Israeli colony and Israel is an American colony. The relationship between the two countries is a symbiosis, a term

defined by the Oxford Dictionary as “an association of two organisms living attached to each other or one within the other” (from the Greek words for “living” and “together”).

Much has already been said about the origins of this symbiosis. American Christian Zionism preceded the founding of the Jewish Zionist organization. The American myth is almost identical with the Zionist Israeli myth, both in content and symbolism. (The settlers fleeing from persecution in their homelands, an empty country, pioneers conquering the wilderness, the savage natives, etc.) Both are countries of immigration, with all that this implies for good or ill. Both governments believe that their interests coincide. On Independence Day in Israel, many American flags are to be seen next to the Israeli ones – a phenomenon that is without parallel in the world.

The inauguration of George Bush last week therefore had a special significance for Israel. The state-controlled TV channel broadcast it live. In many respects, the President of the United States is also the King of Israel.

George Bush is a very simple, very violent person with very extreme views, as well as being very much an ignoramus. This is a very dangerous combination. Such people have caused many disasters in human history. Maximilian Robespierre, the French revolutionary who invented the reign of terror, has been called “the Great Simplifier” because of the terrible simplicity of his views, which he tried to impose with the guillotine.

The ideologues who govern the thoughts and deeds of Bush are called “neo-conservatives”, but that is a misleading appellation. Actually they are a revolutionary group. Their aim is not to conserve but to overturn. Mostly Jewish, they are the pupils of Leo Strauss, a German-Jewish professor with a Trotskyite past who ended up developing semi-fascist theories and propagating them at the University of Chicago. He illustrated his attitude towards democracy by citing the story of Gulliver: when a fire broke out in the city of the dwarfs, he put the fire out by urinating on them. This is the way, in his view, the small elite group of leaders must treat the ignorant and innocent public, which does not know what is good for them.

In his coronation speech, Bush promised to bring freedom and democracy to every corner of the world. No less, no more. He cited the two countries in which he has already achieved this aim: Iraq and Afghanistan. Both have been devastated by American planes that dropped the message from their bomb doors. Recently, the American soldiers wiped a large city from the face of the earth in order to convince the opponents of “American values”. Now Falluja looks as if it had been struck by a tsunami.

It is no secret that the Neo-Cons intend to “bring democracy” to Iran and Syria,

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thereby eliminating two more traditional enemies of the USA and Israel. Dick Cheney, the Vice-President (certainly no Virtue-President), has already prophesied that Israel may attack Iran, as if threatening to unleash a Rottweiler.

It could have been hoped that after the total debacle in Iraq and the less obvious but equally serious failure in Afghanistan, Bush would shrink from more such actions. But as almost always happens with rulers of this type, he cannot admit defeat and stop. On the contrary, failure drives him on to more extremes, vowing, rather like the captain of the Titanic, “to stay the course.”

There is no way to guess what Bush may perpetrate, now that he has been re-elected by his people. His ego has been blown up to giant proportions, reaffirming what the Greek fabulist Aesop said some 27 centuries ago: “The smaller the mind the greater the conceit.”

He has kicked out the hapless, feeble Colin Powell (as David Ben-Gurion eliminated Moshe Sharett in preparation for his 1956 onslaught on Egypt) and appointed Condoleezza Rice, his personal servant (as Ben-Gurion replaced Sharett with Golda Meir.)

Now the order is “clear the deck for action”. On this deck, Bush is a loose cannon, a danger to everyone around. The results of these elections may be viewed by history as a worldwide catastrophe.

In domestic affairs, he may cause similar disasters. In the name of “American values”, he is about to destroy one of the foremost American values: the separation of Church and State. His is the religion of a “born again” convert, a primitive religion without morality and compassion. Imposing this religion on all fields of life - from the prohibition of abortions and same-sex marriages to the revision of schoolbooks - may push society centuries back and void the constitution. After four more years of this, America may be a very different country from the one we loved and admired in our youth.

A friend of mine asserts that there are two souls residing in the American nation, a good and a bad one. That may be true for every nation, including even Israel and Palestine, but in America it is much more extreme. There is the America of Thomas Jefferson (even if he liberated his slaves only on his death), Abraham Lincoln, Woodrow Wilson, Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Dwight Eisenhower, the America of ideals, the Marshall Plan, science and the arts. And there is the America of the genocide perpetrated against the Native Americans, the country of slave traders and the Wild West myth, the America of Hiroshima, of Joe McCarthy, of segregation and of Vietnam, the violent and repressive America.

During Bush's second term, this second America may reach new depths of ugliness and brutality. It may offer the whole world a model of oppression. I would not want my country, Israel, to be identified with such an America. Any advantage we can derive from it may well turn out to be short-term, the damage long-lasting, and perhaps irreversible.

One of the advantages of the US constitution is that Bush cannot be re-elected for a third term. As the popular Israeli song goes: "We survived Pharaoh, we shall survive this, too." Perhaps this could become an anthem for the whole world.