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Sarah Palin Goes to Israel

Michael Sean Winters | Mar. 21, 2011 Distinctly Catholic

Maybe Sarah Palin has simply long desired to see the Holy Land. Then again, maybe she is just checking off another box in anticipation of a planned run for the presidency. But, she has gone to Israel [1]and is demonstrating her capacity to give dog whistles in Hebrew as well as English.

It is one of the defining features of the modern Religious Right that they have embraced Israel. Anti-Semitism used to be the provenance of the right, but in today's America, it is more often found on the left, and a large part of the reason for that has to do with the politics of Israel.

There is an irony here, of course. The Religious Right embraces Israel largely because of the passage from the Book of Genesis that we all heard at Mass yesterday, in which God sends Abraham to the Promised Land and further pledges to "bless those who bless you, and curse those who curse you." This religious motivation has precisely nothing in common with the secular Zionism that created the modern State of Israel. One wonders if Palin, who is fond of denouncing her opponents and especially the President as "socialists," knows that Israel was, in fact, founded by socialists, real ones, not imagined ones.

Still, one of the principal accomplishments of Jerry Falwell and others who fashioned the modern American Christian Right is that they rid conservatism of its anti-Semitic past. That is no small accomplishment.

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[1] http://www.politico.com/blogs/bensmith/0311/Palin_in_Israel_She_knows_that_we_are_right.html?showall