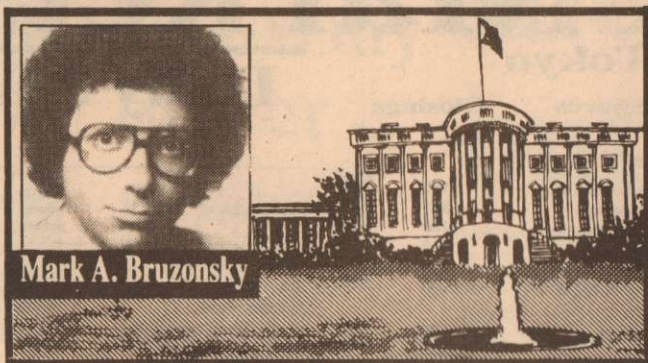


From



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Washington

ON September 6, just a month from now, the Palestinians will finally get to tell the American audience about the Intifada that began back in December of 1987, about their painful quest for national dignity and basic rights, about the struggle that is taking the lives of young Palestinians practically daily.

At least that is how it was supposed to be — a 90-minute documentary about the young generation of Palestinians and their Intifada.

The vehicle allowing the Palestinians finally to speak for themselves is a rather unique documentary conceived and produced by an American who has a long-standing interest in the Mid-east as well as a substantial track-record at documentary production.

Aware, as everyone in the US is, that there is no lack of books, movies, documentaries, and spokesmen telling things from an Israeli point-of-view — or for that matter from a joint Israeli-American viewpoint — Jo Franklin-Trout purposefully set out to give the Palestinians a chance to speak up for themselves.

There was no hidden agenda or theatrical subterfuge. The very title of the documentary is very straight-forward: **Days of Rage: The Young Palestinians.**

But the US is littered with Jewish pressure groups competing to protect Israel's image and negate the Palestinian struggle. And **Days of Rage** has become the victim of what one of the critics for the *L.A. Times* calls "Days of Overreaction".

And so what is now going to happen on September 6 isn't

quite what was planned by the documentary producer, or for that matter what was originally planned by PBS when the film was first scheduled for showing last year.

Instead of just showing the documentary, PBS now has scheduled two and a half hours on the evening of September 6 devoted to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The hour and a half documentary will itself be packaged in a kind of Zionist sandwich before and after.

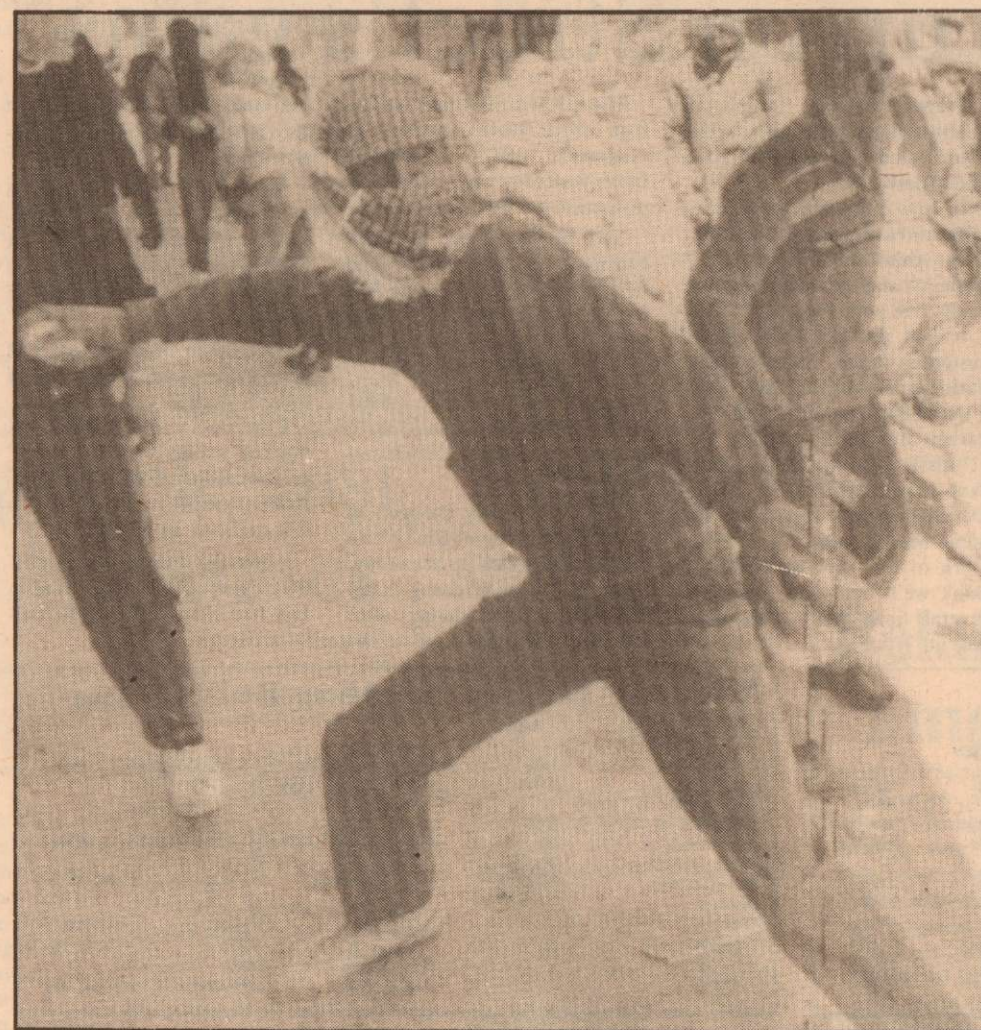
First there will be a 10 or 15 minute opening segment devoted to the Israeli point-of-view. PBS cameras are right now in Israel preparing this opening that will put **Days of Rage** in a "perspective" less threatening to the Israelis. This "balancing" is one of the ways PBS is dealing with the pressures coming from the Israelis and the American Jewish groups.

American bias

Then after showing **Days of Rage** there's going to be a panel discussion for another 40 minutes or so. And, of course, it's a rigged panel by any standard other than the typical American bias and lack of courage that we've all come to understand when matters affecting Israel are concerned.

Though there are five panel members, PBS had the audacity — following a documentary that is specifically about the Palestinians and the Intifada — not even to include a Palestinian or a Palestinian American!

Instead, they've invited the President of the Presidents' Conference of Major American Jewish Organisations, Seymour Reich; and Walter Ruby, correspondent for the *Jerusalem Post*



along with American Jewish newspapers. Two Zionist apologists par excellence and Ruby a dual American-Israeli.

Next they've invited two former Reagan administration officials — both professional apologists for American foreign policy in recent years. Richard Murphy is bad enough, though his mild manner and soothing

'Days of Rage' is not outrageous, nor is it a brilliant documentary in technical terms. But there has been such paucity of information telling people what the Palestinian Intifada is really about, and such an uneven imbalance of information and pressures in a pro-Israeli sense, that 'Days of Rage' is a most refreshing, and very disturbing, glimpse of reality — reality as felt and experienced daily by the Palestinians themselves.

Shame on US television

fractured and at odds squabbling among themselves that they hardly knew what was happening.

Others, however, did have the smarts to not get involved in such a panel and such an effort to water-down the punch of **Days of Rage.**

The producer herself, Jo Franklin-Trout, declined an invitation to appear on the panel telling the PBS persons in charge she thought it was totally unacceptable the way they were handling this. So too Karen Elliott House of the *Wall Street Journal*, though her reasons for declining to appear are not known.

Actually, Franklin-Trout blew up at overall PBS's handling of **Days of Rage** a few months ago, last June. At that time the documentary was scheduled to be shown, on its own, the evening of June 6. Indeed a press release had been issued featuring **Days of Rage** as part of the new wind of summer programming at PBS.

That's when one of the New York City PBS channel that was to be the "presenting" channel withdrew its willingness to show **Days of Rage** charging that it was nothing but propaganda.

"It's one-sided. It makes no mention of how the Jews got to Israel, no mention of the holocaust, no mention of how the Palestinians treated the Jews nor how Arabs treated the Palestinians. It's a pure propaganda piece that I'd compare to Leni Riefensahl's *Triumph of the Will*, said Chloe Aaron, the Jewish VP of Channel 31, WNYC making a far-out comparison to the famous Nazi propaganda film of the 1930s.

At that time Anthony Lewis

Days of Rage

wrote in *The New York Times* chastising the PBS system for caving into pressure and for misunderstanding what the First Amendment and journalistic freedom were really all about in the country.

The idea that television should only show "balanced" programme, as suggested by the vociferous Jewish critics of **Days of Rage**, is "a notion deadly to freedom of expression," Lewis wrote.

"The first Amendment ... was designed to protect the press as a 'neutral forum' for "balanced discussion". To the contrary, those who wrote the amendment meant to protect expression of strong views: one-sided, outrageous, whatever," Lewis concluded.

Paucity

Days of Rage is not outrageous, nor is it a brilliant documentary in technical terms. But there has been such a paucity of information telling people what the Palestinian Intifada is really all about, and such an uneven imbalance of information and pressures in a pro-Israeli sense, that **Days of Rage** is a most refreshing, and very disturbing, glimpse of reality — reality as felt and experienced daily by the Palestinians themselves.

And so Lewis concluded last May, "Another New York public station, WNET Channel 13, has agreed to present **Days of Rage**, PBS has rescheduled it for September 6. We shall see whether public television has the backbone needed for freedom.

Sadly the answer is in the negative. **Days of Rage** will in the end be shown; but in such a way that discredits American public television.