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Interior of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque ("The Blue Mosque"), Istanbul, Turkey. Photo by Bjørn Christian Tørrissen, via Wikimedia Commons.

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Stefan Merken

Swimming Uphill

Being a pacifist sometimes seems like swimming against the Pacific Ocean (I live in Seattle). When I was about to turn 18 my local draft board ordered me to register for the draft. I complied, not giving it much thought. But once I stepped inside my local draft board I knew I couldn't be part of the military.

I can't put my finger on why I felt that way. It was late 1962 and there was not much happening that would have educated me. However, as the years have rolled by I honestly think it had nothing to do with my political feelings, but was based entirely on my Jewish upbringing and education. There were other Jewish 18-year-olds who didn't feel the way I felt. So why was I so adamant against even signing my name to the bottom of a blank form? And why was I so sure that I was only going to fill out the Conscientious Objection form and apply for a CO classification?

My feelings have not changed over the years. At times I feel like a fish out of water in relation to the mass culture around me. Let me give you some examples. When Memorial Day (formerly known as Decoration Day) is celebrated on the last Monday in May, there are parades with speeches and military bands, all to give thanks for those who have served our country in the military. But the truth is that I and many other Conscientious Objectors also served the country by giving two years of our lives doing our CO service. In lieu of being in the military I worked two years for a non-profit organization at a home for children with learning difficulties. In our militarized culture there seems to be little mention of the COs who have served time in prison, have done meaningful work in, say, mental hospitals, and have actually been part of the military as medical personnel. We should have a day dedicated to these people as well. Their contributions have been admirable.

However, there is a saving grace for all of us: the Jewish Peace Fellowship. Since I was 20 I have found like-minded people in the JPF. On one of my first trips to New York City, I attended a JPF board meeting and met Rabbi Isidor Hoffman. He was one of the three founders of the JPF in 1941 and for many years the Hillel rabbi at Columbia University. Later he and I walked across town on 59th Street in Manhattan, and I will never forget that day. We spoke of peace issues that were central to both of us, and he was unswerving in his beliefs and how he looked at the world. He helped me to secure a better understanding of why I felt so alienated at age 18 and why the views of the JPF are the true values of Judaism.

Marines and Sailors march in the Little Neck Memorial Day Parade in Queens, N.Y. at the 17th Annual Fleet Week 2004 on May 31, 2004. **Photo: Wikimedia Commons.**

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Please share Shalom with friends and family. It's free and we only need their e-mail address.

Think about writing something for Shalom. We are always looking for new articles, letters, events, reviews. We value your input.

Send the JPF a donation to allow us to continuing issuing Shalom.

P.S. As I write this, the Utah State Senate is considering a measure that would declare the .45-caliber handgun (Browning M1911) as the official state firearm. This would be the first time any state has declared an official state gun. Is this the message we should be sending to our young people, or to the rest of the world for that matter? ✡

Rabbi Victor H. Reinstein

That We May Know Each Other, The Neighbor I Am to Love

Rabbi Victor Hillel Reinstein is spiritual leader of the Nehar Shalom Community Synagogue in Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts. Committed to interfaith dialogue, he is particularly involved in building bridges between Jews and Muslims. He is also a longtime member of the Jewish Peace Fellowship.

There is a sura (chapter) in the Qur'an in which God speaks to humankind in regard to our own creation, the purpose of our own being: "We created you from a single pair of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know each other…." A Muslim colleague pointed to the first part of that verse and, speaking primarily of immigrant Muslims, said with a weary smile, "I have so much trouble getting them to look at the second part of the verse, 'that you may know each other.' They look at the first part and say, 'You see, we have to stay together, to be a tribe.'"

Mufti Reading in His Prayer Stool. Painting by Jean-Léon Gérôme. Photo: Wikimedia Commons.

I am struck by the beauty of the verse, a beauty that depends on both parts being taken together as two parts of a whole. In relation to each other, the two parts of the verse illustrate the dynamic tension between the universal and the particular. We are indeed meant to celebrate our own uniqueness, whether as individuals, nations, tribes, religions, etc.; but we are not meant to stay there, only among ourselves. God calls us to reach out, to share, to celebrate each other's uniqueness, creating the wholeness among people that God can only envision and encourage. Making it our own and fulfilling God's vision depends on us.

There is a similar tension that emerges from one of the most beautiful and familiar verses in the Torah: "And you shall love your neighbor as yourself" — *v'ahavta l'rey'a'cha ka'mocha*. As with the sura from the Qur'an, it seems amazing that anyone would not see the beauty and the wholeness of that verse, or that in reading it, eviscerate the simple words of its power and fullness. Inhering in the three Hebrew words of the verse is the entire tension between the universal and the particular, whose fine-tuning depends on us in order to produce harmonious sound. The importance of the particular, whether of individual or group, is rooted in the third word, *ka'mocha* — "as yourself" — which is understood to mean, "as you love yourself." I cannot truly love another if I don't love myself; I cannot love all people if I don't love and attach to my own people. A key question emerges from the same word: "Who is the neighbor I am to love?" Our answer to that question determines whether we are in tune or out of tune with all of the players in God's symphony, whether our way of being in relation to others produces dissonance or harmony.

A young boy wearing prayer shawl and holding book, standing outside a building, East Side, New York City. Photo: Bain News Service, via Wikimedia Commons.

The hope and the challenge, the questions and the tensions that emerge from these verses and others from Torah

and Qur'an were the subject of discussions among Jews and Muslims, imams and rabbis gathered for the fourth such program of "Building Bridges through Learning." Coming together in common study of each other's sacred texts, the theme for this gathering was "Love of Neighbor." The topic had grown out of the tensions that flared in Boston between our communities once again last spring and summer, fomented by some who fear the challenge of dialogue with the Muslim community, and who have not tasted the sweetness of its fruit. It was a powerful program, blessed by a palpable sense of ease that has begun to emerge through growing familiarity. That ease allowed us for the first time to explore some of the more difficult questions that are an inevitable part of the equation when considering self in relation to others, the tension in real terms between the universal and the particular.

A congregation of worshipers attentively listens to a Friday sermon delivered in the Dar es Salaam Mosque. **Photo: Muhammad Mahdi Karim [www.micro2micro.net], via Wikimedia Commons.**

In the Torah portion read during the week of our gathering, *Parashat Vayigash* (Genesis 44:18-47:27), that tension plays out in the seeking of a separate neighborhood, as it were, by Yosef's family when they come down into Egypt. Reflected in their choosing to dwell apart in the land of Goshen, the vulnerability of the stranger impels them to seek safety among their own, to emphasize the "tribal," the particular, even as it is emphasized by the Muslim immigrants of whom my colleague spoke. From the first word of the Torah portion, from which its name derives — *Vayigash*, "and he approached" — a vision is offered that looks beyond fear. Confident of our own identity, we are able to approach and embrace the other in the fullness of their identity.

It had been a week of swirling interplay for me between the universal and the particular. On Saturday night, immediately following Shabbos, taking the first hopeful steps into a new week, I spoke as part of a panel with a priest and an imam in regard to a play that churned with the human drama in the tormented relationship of Israelis and Palestinians. On Sunday, we enjoyed a wonderful synagogue Hanukkah party, the holiday whose essence is often forgotten, which is that all have a right to be who they are. On Tuesday, we celebrated a *b'ris* in our community, welcoming a baby boy into the Covenant of the Jewish people, praying that he will reach out to all people with pride and sensitivity as a Jew. On Wednesday was the "Building Bridges" gathering, bringing Jews and Muslims together.

On Friday afternoon, with the week wending home towards Shabbos, I attended the Masjid Yusuf, a mosque in Brighton, where I had gone at the invitation of my dear friend and coordinator of the "Bridges" planning committee. Of holy days at week's end, Ismail had invited me to come to hear his Friday sermon. It was an extremely moving experience, sitting at the back of the humble room filled with Muslims at prayer. Ismail spoke passionately of the essential link between means and ends, whether in our personal or collective lives, emphasizing that all of our ways in life must be "unblemished and legal." At the end of the prayers, he welcomed me so warmly, asking worshipers to be sure to say hello. Quite a number of people came up to me, exchanging greetings, inviting me to come again, "*Salaam aleikum, aleikum salaam*." Among those who greeted me was a young man who startled me, asking in Hebrew if I spoke Hebrew. When I responded yes, he told me in excellent Hebrew that he was from Saudi Arabia and had learned Hebrew at Brandeis. Our hands clasped, he said, "*L'hitra'ot,*" see you again.

The string of connection was finely tuned, hearing myself in the voice of the other, nations and tribes that we may know each other, the neighbor I am to love. ✡

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Bernard Avashai

Arab Nazareth, Israeli Democracy — Bundist Dreams

Bernard Avishai is adjunct professor of business at Hebrew University, and splits his time between Jerusalem and Wilmot, New Hampshire.

Earlier this winter, Sidra and I took a little road trip to the Israeli Arab town of Nazareth, where we spent the weekend in a funky little inn, the Fauzi Azar. I haven't stopped thinking about it since. When you get away from the headlines that force your attention to the foreground, the more ultimate truths of the background come into relief. The case of Nazareth is both fascinating and disturbing.

The city, it is true, didn't change my mind about things I and others have written about in the past. But it did make those things so vivid that I haven't been able to see the most familiar parts of Israel in the same way. The question, you see, is really not whether Israel can remain democratic; really, what's new about that worry except for the fact that it is finally dawning on people who call you anti-Zionist for saying it before it dawned on them?

Nazareth. **Photo: Chris Yunker, via flickr.com.**

No, the real question is whether any democracy can implement the kind of visionary federal arrangements Israel will need — not only with a Palestinian state, but with its own Arab minority — to survive as a vital, global and Hebrew democracy. The answer is yes, at least in principle. When you think about it, Europe's biggest national Jewish movement of the interwar period might serve as inspiration, if not as a model. But is there the time, let alone the will, to try in today's Israel, with its growing Orthodox right? Can Israelis be expected to muddle through by themselves?

A number of my students had done a business plan for the Fauzi Azar last year and I was curious. It seems that the stately building in which the inn was established was the family home of a scion of a large, established Christian family that had been divided by 1948 war, with some cousins staying put, and others escaping the violence to Syria and Jordan, and who then found themselves unable to return. The building had meanwhile declined into disrepair, after the parents of the Azar branch died in the 1980s. Until, that is, a young Israeli Jewish entrepreneur, Maoz Inon, approached the younger generation of the family with a proposition:

The children, whose father had stood up to the government when its lands were threatened, would agree to lease Inon the building at no cost for years into the future; he would renovate the entire property, creating an international inn and youth hostel. Profits, such as there were, would be taken by his company, but there would be jobs for the family if they wanted them. Understandably, the children were skeptical at first, but his good-natured idealism eventually won them over. One daughter, Odette Shomar, eventually became chairman of

the board. (I am oversimplifying the terms of the agreement a little, but never mind.)

The inn is now an international phenomenon. Volunteers from all over the world come to its hostel, where they are given a free room to sleep in and breakfast; they, in return, serve the hotel guests — walking them around the old city of Nazareth, bringing them extra pillows, playing them music, making them tea. Not coincidentally, the old city of Nazareth has been reviving wonderfully since the inn got started. Everywhere you go in the old city today there's the musty-sweet smelling dust of cement bags and hammer sounds of renovation: new places to eat, boutique-like stores and food emporia, crafts shops and open-air fruit vendors.

The atmosphere is not like the old city of Jerusalem, which takes for granted how central, contentious and beautifully pathetic it is; the old city of Nazareth, also lovely, is rather a kind of backwater human experiment. Nobody doubts it will remain in Israel. Like the rest of Israeli Arab towns, it is a hybrid between Hebrew commercial culture and Arab domestic culture. Yet here there are also bright-eyed evangelicals with a need for missionary work (also for clean beds and toilets) filling the negative spaces. You have a delicious little portent of what peace might feel like in this country, with Israeli Jewish tourists — bikers from Tel Aviv coming for a rest-stop, *moshavniks* from the Valley of Jezreel coming for olive oil and embroideries — sharing a dreamy Sabbath sunset in an Israeli Arab town.

Members of Tsukunft, the Bundist youth group, putting up election posters, Baranowicze, Poland, ca. 1930. **Photo: YIVO Institute for Jewish Research.**

Of course, most Israeli Jews, not to speak of American Jews, would not even recognize Nazareth as "this country" — any more than a Polish nationalist or priest, visiting mainly Yiddish-speaking Bialystok in 1920, would have recognized that city as it was as a part of the new Polish state. On the contrary, Nazareth — for all its rivalries among Christians, Muslims and Druze — would be lumped into the scare phrase "demographic problem," or be seen as a symptom of what is threatening Israel's character as "Jewish and democratic" — with "democratic" pretty much boiling down to "more of us and fewer of them (so we can feel less guilty about giving ourselves privileges they don't have but presumably would have in their state, that is, if we ever get around to agreeing to end the occupation)."

And when you emerge from the little bubble of the old city of Nazareth, stronger realities assault you. Upper Nazareth, which was conceived as a Jewish town to look down on the Arab town, is an increasingly tense place, with Christian Arabs moving in, at times to avoid unpleasant confrontations with Muslims; and Russian Jews who were settled there in the 1970s, unsure about whether to stay or leave, rent to Arabs or refuse to do so.

Staying a couple of days in Nazareth, in short, feels a little like taking a vacation to a foreign (if curiously familiar) country. (Wherever we went in Nazareth, Sidra and I first defaulted to English, as if we were walking through Ramallah — or Athens, for that matter — only to find our interlocutors stumped and frustrated; then we'd switch to Hebrew, the language of Yehuda Halevi, and see the relief coming over their faces.) And our drive only reinforced the feeling of familiar foreignness. We left the central thruway and drove up to Sakhnin for its "olive festival" (which we pretty much missed, alas); then El-Arabeh, then took the back road to Kefar Kana, and from there another back road to Nazareth. When we left Nazareth, we headed straight across the Emeq to Wadi Ara, where we skirted past the cities of Um-el-Fahm, Baka el-Garbieh, and the other cities of the Little Triangle, which border the Palestinian territories to the east.

We drove, that is, through six or seven Arab cities, more or less contiguous with one another, running from the Western Galilee down to the center of Israel, to the area where the Hebrew megalopolis of Tel Aviv starts spreading north and east. Roughly, we drove in and past Arab cities containing at least 600,000 people, as many people who were in the Jewish Yishuv and rose against the British in 1948.

The Arab cities are handsome in their way, since the architecture of their family compounds are handsome. But they are also suffering from serious infrastructure and edu-

cational deficiencies, inevitable in a country that spends less than half per capita on its Arab citizens than on its Jewish ones. They are hemmed in by state land policy. You hear of youth gangs growing, problems with drugs and petty thefts, maniacal driving habits. And we haven't even gotten to the feelings of rage inspired by such things as a public letter drafted by rabbis who suggested that the Jewish religious law mandates refusal to rent apartments to Arabs in Israel's larger cities.

I don't mean to imply that this Arab population will rise against Israel, not in the short-term, not if things can remain "quiet." By any measure, polls show Israeli Arabs, including Israeli Arab youth, more liberal and tolerant of Jews than the other way around — what you'd expect from a minority. Up to 80 percent of Israeli Arabs express positive attitudes towards integration (a willingness to have a Jewish friend, and so forth), but just under 50 percent of Jews do. On the other hand, if, say, Jerusalem were to explode in violence tomorrow, or missiles were to start flying into northern cities from Lebanon, sympathetic rioting in these cities seems inevitable — a replay of events in 2000 and 2006.

Yet, again, it is not the short-term that is troubling and exciting. The long-term question these hybridized Israeli Arab cities prompts is: What kind of democracy can Israel become, with and without the state of Palestine, given such facts on the ground? The assimilation of Israeli Arabs on, say, the French model seems unrealistic; these cities are not just transitional suburbs, and they are a 40-minute drive from the rest of the Arab world, though no one knows what they will look like after another generation of network technology. Nor can they become part of the Palestinian state — they are too advanced, democratized, and Hebraized for that; aside from the triangle they are not abutting Palestine.

When you look at the West Bank, irrespective of the facts created by Jewish settlers, the case for some kind of federal arrangement seems pretty compelling. (My friend Sam Bahour and I made the case last year.) Is there a federal model that will have to be considered here, too? This has been batted around in think tanks like the Adallah Institute for some time now, but the question no longer feels merely hypothetical — not to me, anyway, not anymore. Just as it would be vain to try to make peace with Syria before the Palestinian issue is resolved, it may be vain to imagine making peace with Palestine while ignoring the festering problems of Israeli Arabs.

Perhaps it is perverse to raise the point in this context, but the situation of Israeli Arabs is in fact curiously like that of the Jews of Poland during the interwar period, in that the Yiddish-speaking Jews represented an indissoluble minority that was culturally distinct and would remain fiercely so, at least over a couple of generations; a minority with a centuries-long history and sense of place; a minority living in the interstices of a Polish nation with a quite distinct religious culture; a new Polish state, born out of deep historical grievance, and an equally fierce, once-repressed nationalism. How to absorb this growing, noisy Jewish minority, something over 10 percent of the population, into the new Poland?

And the strongest political movement in the interconnected Yiddish towns and cities (or parts thereof) was the Jewish Labor Bund. What this movement demanded was recognition as a national minority within the Polish state, constitutional equality, protection for its language and educational system, and more. Bundists ran as separate, Jewish national political parties. In December 1938 and January 1939, in the last Polish municipal elections before the start of the Second World War, the Bund received the largest segment of the Jewish vote. In 89 towns, one-third elected Bund majorities.

As socialists, Bundists sought "fraternal" relations with Polish workers, much like Israeli Arabs seek cordial commercial relations with Jews. But Bundists mainly sought a kind of recognized autonomy in Yiddish towns and, as individuals, full rights in the great Polish cities, like Warsaw and Krakow. And much like the rights of Israeli Arabs have become the crucial cause for Israeli Jewish progressives, so the rights of Jews were critical for Polish liberals.

Sadly, it has become commonplace for Israelis, and American Jews, too, to look at the fate of Polish Jewry and consider the Bund hopelessly naïve. But this view is itself naïve — and cruel. The fact is, the Bund was suggesting an experiment in democracy that the Nazis — not the Poles — ended, though there was a substantial Polish ultramontane right that was relieved to see it end: to see Polish Jews and progressives both put out of their sight, if not put to death. We simply do not know if the Bund's experiment could have worked, or how it could have been managed over several generations, particularly if there had been no war and if Poland had slowly begun to enjoy the benefits of European integration.

In any case, it is terribly wrong for us to look at the burgeoning cities of Israeli Arabs and see only a Fifth Column or a frightening birthrate. In any peace, Israeli Arabs will be a natural bridge to commercial, scientific and cultural opportunities in the Arab world. They are also a lovely chance for Israeli Jews to get into the car and change the national gestalt without leaving their country, sort of like residents of Ottawa spending time across the river in Hull. Israeli Arabs are asking Israeli Jews something difficult: that little Israel become a Hebrew republic spacious enough, democratic enough, to absorb and acculturate another, even smaller people.

It might have worked in Poland, eventually. It had better work, with adaptations, in Israel. ✡

This essay first appeared on Bernard Avashai Dot Com (http://bernardavishai.blogspot.com).

Jerry Haber

Saying Goodbye to the Wall – in Bil'in

Jeremiah (Jerry) Haber is the nom de plume of an Orthodox Jewish studies and philosophy professor who divides his time between Israel and the United States.

American Jewish visitors to Israel have made a tradition of saying goodbye to the Western Wall. The custom was mocked by Meir Kahane, who was annoyed that so many Jews would willingly leave the Land of Israel for somewhere else. Zealots like him have been the exception rather than the rule in Jewish history. We have testimony of voluntary exodus from biblical times (two and a half of the 12 tribes ended up on the other side of the Jordan; most of the Babylonian exiles did not come back) through the second Temple period, when most Jews lived outside of the Land of Israel, and even in the Middle Ages, when many pilgrims to the Land of Israel came, took in the sights, and left. Maimonides wrote in his code of Jewish law that it is better to live in the Land of Israel among idolaters than outside of it. He wrote those words after he had left the Land of Israel and had taken up residence in Fustat, Egypt.

The house of Abdullah Abu Rahmeh, which serves as the headquarters of the Popular Committee in Bil'in. Photo: Jerry Haber.

I recently returned to the U.S. to teach the spring semester, so I said goodbye to the Wall. No, not the Kotel/Western Wall; I mean the other wall — the Separation Barrier that Israel has built in order to separate Palestinian villages from their lands so that Jewish settlements can expand, or in order to uproot Palestinians. Since the call went out for even more Israelis to get to Bil'in, where Jawahir Abu Rahmeh died recently from tear gas inhalation, I decided to make my leave-taking from the Wall there. (I could have walked 10 minutes from my home to the Haas Promenade in East Talpiyot, from which one sees the Separation Barrier. Actually, there it is a wall, unlike the barrier in Bil'in, which is composed of two high security fences.)

The real reason I went to Bil'in, aside from my natural desire to express solidarity with one of the longest-running protests on the West Bank, was to check for myself the lay of the land. How was it that somebody like Jawahir Abu Rahmeh, who was not that close to the Security Barrier, but closer to the village — 500 meters, somebody wrote — could be fatally hurt from CS tear gas?

I went in a bus chartered by the Sheikh Jarrah activists that left from Jerusalem's Liberty Bell Park (how appropriate) for the weekly demonstration that began at 12:30 p.m. On the bus, which was full, the leader asked how many people were going to Bil'in for the first time. Over half of those on the bus raised hands. We drove on 443, the road that cuts through Palestinian lands, but on which no Palestinian can effectively drive, despite a High Court decision. After being let off by the side of the road, we walked to Beit Ur, where Arab minibuses picked us up to take us to Bil'in. Unfortunately, there was an Israel Defense Force (IDF) roadblock to ensure that no Israelis or internationals reach the demonstration. So the bus stopped before the roadblock and we hiked for around 15 or 20 minutes over the rocks of the terraced hills until we met up with the bus beyond the roadblock.

In Bil'in I was shown the fresh grave of Jawahir Abu

Rahmeh by activist/blogger Joseph Dana, and then I entered the house of Abdullah Abu Rahmeh, still jailed in Israel despite his having served his year-long sentence for organizing nonviolent demonstrations. Yes, nonviolent — he was not charged with violence or inciting to violence; the fact that some people threw rocks was not at all a factor in his arrest and charges. That house serves as the headquarters of the Popular Committee in Bil'in. We heard in Hebrew a briefing on the history of the Security Barrier in Bil'in, how it was planned to separate the village from 50 percent of its agricultural land, how much of that land had been used by settlers for new real estate development, how the High Court had ordered the state to change the route over three years ago, how the Barrier still had not been changed, how the High Court had not returned land to Bil'in where apartments had already been built, how they would still lose 30 percent of their land with the new route. We were also told how to react to the weapons used by the army. But, most importantly, we were told to stay away from the handful of young stone throwers, and that the action was absolutely intended to be nonviolent. (Although we were exhorted not to throw stones or engage in violence, there was no condemnation of the *shabab* who threw stones. Indeed, who could condemn the ones I saw at Bil'in? Even if one disagreed with the tactic, it was mostly a symbolic gesture of defiance, and much less lethal than the tear gas fired against the protesters.) The IDF reported, according to *Haaretz*, two soldiers "slightly injured" by the rock throwers.

"I was far away from the machines and the spray, but the wind blew the stench up the hill." **Photo: Jerry Haber.**

We then marched in protest through the village and towards the Separation Barrier. At Bil'in, there is a long road leading through agricultural lands to the wall.

I am not sure, but it seems that the fence was less than a mile from the village. As the hundreds of protesters stretched along this road, the IDF took up positions on the other side of the fence. They then sprayed protesters who got near the fence with chemicals that stink but are not lethal. They stink up one's body and clothes for days and sometimes weeks. I was far away from the machines and the spray, but the wind blew the stench up the hill.

By the way, the spray was there to disperse people and had nothing to do with stone throwers; the stone throwers, I figure, constituted less than a tenth of a per cent of the crowd. Then, the IDF started firing tear gas canisters, and the gas, because of the wind, went up to where I was staying, so I walked back with others until the effects wore off and then I went back. Those closer were whisked away by Red Crescent ambulances. Some of the time I spent on a little hill watching the action and chatting with Palestinian-American Ahmed Moor, who has been blogging about Palestine for Mondoweiss. At no time was I close enough to the action to be in danger; but, then again, I left the protest at 1:30, when it officially ended. (Of course, it continued for longer, but the bus was going back to Jerusalem). Things heated up a bit after I left.

Only after I returned did I learn that the IDF had operated much differently the week before, when Jawahir Abu Rahmeh died. The army had taken up positions on the road much closer to the village in an attempt to keep demonstrators from getting within hundreds of meters of the Separation Barrier. If that was indeed the case, and the IDF fired huge amounts of canisters, then there would have been a large concentration of CS tear gas close to the village. Somebody could be 500 meters away from the Separation Barrier, where the *shabab* was trying to tear parts of it down, and could be choking from the tear gas. A week later, when the IDF was very sensitive to the interests of the international community, and toned down its reaction, many people were treated for tear gas inhalation. I just shoved a wet rag in my mouth and stayed away.

By the way, among the hundreds of Israelis and internationals, some of my fellow bloggers from the +972 Webzine, including Yossi Gurvitz, Joseph Dana, Noam Sheizaf, and Yuval Ben Ami, were at the protest.

The writer Bernard Avishai was also there — his first time, too. He looked at me after we both had traversed the terrain and said, "These protests aren't for people of our age."

What I would do to see Gary Rosenblatt, Jeffrey Goldberg, Peter Beinart, Leon Wieseltier, Ron Kampeas, J. J. Goldberg, etc. — respected American Jewish journalists and writers all — at such protests against the Separation Barrier within the West Bank. It took me six years of protests, 43 years of occupation, and 30 years after my aliyah to get me to Bil'in. The next generation of Jews won't wait that long. ✡

This essay originally appeared on the Web site The Magnes Zionist (*http://www.jeremiahhaber.com/*),

E. James Lieberman

Caring in the Back Wards

E. James Lieberman, M.D., is Clinical Professor of Psychiatry, Emeritus, at George Washington University School of Medicine. This article originally appeared in Metapsychology Reviews.

***Bedlam: An engraving by William Hogarth for his "A Rake's Progress,"* via Wikimedia Commons.**

Steven J. Taylor's *World War II, Mental Institutions, and Religious Objectors* (Syracuse University Press) is a large undertaking in many ways. Taylor, who is Professor of Cultural Foundations of Education at Syracuse University and co-director of the university's Center on Human Policy, Law and Disability Studies, came of age in the Vietnam era and opposed the war, though he did not understand the Conscientious Objector position during World War II, nor did he apply for that status, thinking he would go to Canada or to jail if drafted. He was passed over in the Vietnam draft lottery. As a sociology graduate student he studied a back ward for severely mentally retarded ambulatory young men. His thesis was on attendants' work in state mental institutions. What he saw was much like the "Bedlam" article that appeared in a 1946 issue of *Life* magazine, which reported squalor, neglect and abuse. He helped with exposés and became active in the deinstitutionalization movement, "trying to understand how society can dehumanize, marginalize, and systematically discriminate against people with real or presumed intellectual, mental, or physical differences."

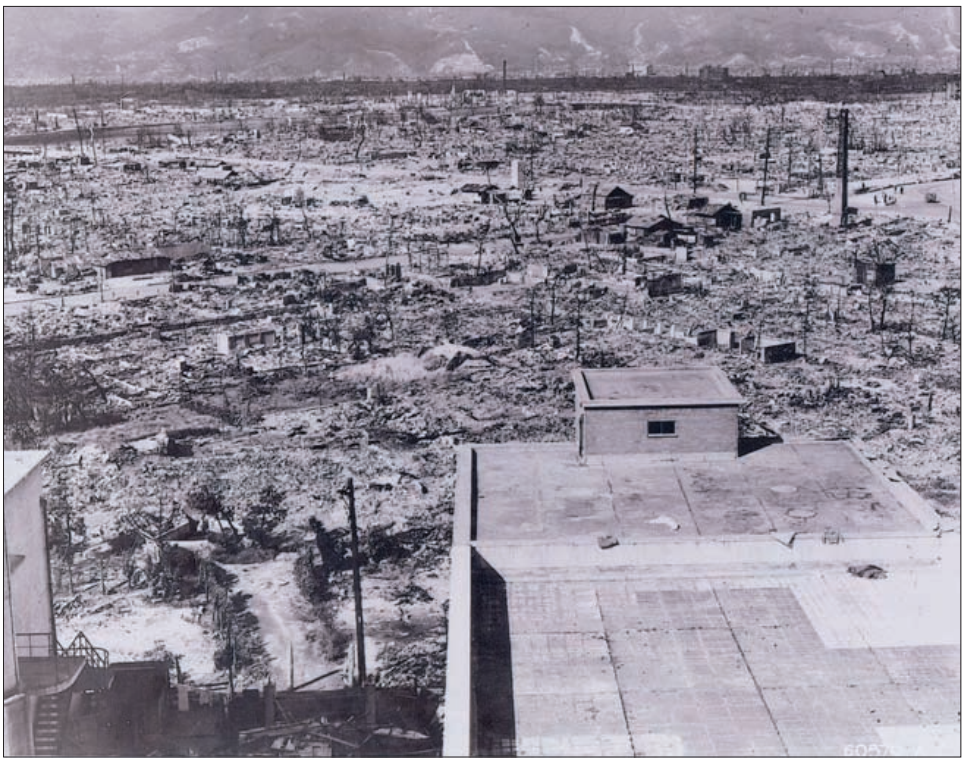
Taylor writes with grace and energy about the role of the National Mental Health Foundation (NMHF), started by four Conscientious Objectors who had no mental health expertise. The NMHF eventually merged with professionally dominated mental health organizations that took a different path, mostly ignoring the priorities set by amateurs working in the back wards: to educate the public about conditions in institutions, to improve the training and status of attendants, and to reform mental hospital commitment laws. Although the goals of the NMHF were submerged in the politics and finances of psychiatry and social welfare, Taylor rightly praises the efforts of hundreds of Conscientious Objectors whose pacifism was so alien in their country in those years.

I came to the National Institute of Mental Health as a young psychiatrist in 1963 and watched deinstitutionalization — the closing of mental hospitals in favor of community mental health programs during and after the Kennedy administration — fail. Federal funds were drained away by the war in Vietnam and states did not transfer tax dollars from hospitals to clinics. Shelters, streets and jails became the new mental "institutions." About one third of jail inmates are or should be mental patients. The recent film *The Soloist* reminds us that 90,000 people are homeless in Los Angeles on a typical day.

One can hardly cite a nobler juxtaposition than that of able pacifists with disabled and abused fellow citizens. Conscientious Objectors worked at home against a socially tolerated, almost invisible evil: the often ignored back wards in mental hospitals. The vast majority of their fellow citizens and all their leaders focused instead on a war against an external enemy, to preserve our way of life with — alas! — such flaws intact. ✡

Lawrence S. Wittner

Apocalypse Never



Hiroshima, Japan, 1945. Photo: Wikimedia Commons.

Lawrence Wittner is professor of history at the State University of New York–Albany and a contributing editor to Shalom. *His latest book is* Confronting the Bomb: A Short History of the World Nuclear Disarmament (*Stanford University Press).*

Tad Daley's *Apocalypse Never: Forging the Path to a Nuclear Weapon-Free World* (Rutgers, 2010) is a spirited, ringing call for nuclear weapons abolition, including why it is imperative and how it can be achieved.

According to Daley, a former member of the international policy department of the Rand Corporation, as well as a former speech and policy writer for members of Congress, he did not "intend to create an academic work for scholars, nuclear experts, and policy wonks." Instead, he sought to "write a book for ordinary folks," people who would come away ready and willing to bring an end to the danger of nuclear annihilation. Through colorful writing and a convincing argument, Daley accomplishes this task quite nicely.

If nuclear weapons are not abolished in the near future, Daley contends, nuclear catastrophes are likely to erupt in any (or all) of the following ways.

Nuclear terrorism, he argues, provides the likeliest of the forthcoming disasters. Although unscrupulous U.S. politicians have inflated the dangers of terrorism to further their own political careers, there is nevertheless a genuine danger of terrorist attack. And there remains little doubt that terrorists have attempted (and continue to attempt) to obtain nuclear weapons and weapons-grade material to implement such an assault. According to Physicians for Social Responsibility, if a single nuclear weapon of the Hiroshima type were exploded in Los Angeles, more than 117,000 people would perish instantly and another 111,000 would die sooner or later from radiation exposure. Moreover, that is a small nuclear weapon by today's standards. The U.S. government has a nuclear warhead with nearly a hundred times the explosive power of the Hiroshima bomb. As long as nuclear weapons and weapons-grade material exist in national arsenals, terrorists and other madmen will have the opportunity to obtain them through theft, black market operations or bribery.

In addition, as Daley reminds us, there is a great danger of "accidental atomic apocalypse." Humans, after all, are prone to errors. As former California governor Arnold Schwarzenegger once remarked: "Mistakes are made in every other human endeavor. Why should nuclear weapons be exempt?" With thousands of weapons set for "launch on

warning," the stage is set for a catastrophe of immense proportions. During the cold war, numerous accidental nuclear wars were narrowly averted. Even in the aftermath of the cold war, there have been some very narrow escapes. Daley reports that in 1995 Russian technicians at the Olengrosk early warning radar site spotted what seemed to be a nuclear-tipped ballistic missile, apparently fired from a U.S. submarine, headed directly for their country. Russia's president, Boris Yeltsin, "spent eight frantic minutes deliberating on whether or not" to launch a retaliatory attack before the incoming weapon arrived. Fortunately, Russian radar officers determined that the rocket was carrying not a nuclear warhead but a Norwegian weather satellite. But they did this with only three minutes to spare. Other kinds of nuclear accidents occur all the time. In February 2009, the British submarine HMS Vanguard and the French submarine Le Triomphant, each armed with nuclear missiles, smashed into each other in the Atlantic, causing heavy damage. Of course, the damage to the world would have been inconceivably greater if the missiles had exploded or had been launched.

There is also the problem of "nuclear crisis mismanagement." The Cuban missile crisis is the best known example of nations slipping and sliding towards a nuclear war they did not want. But there have been others. In 1983, for example, a NATO military training exercise, "Able Archer," was misinterpreted by Soviet leaders as preparation for a U.S. nuclear attack on the Soviet Union. In response, Soviet nuclear weapons were readied for action. The situation might well have spiraled totally out of control had it not been for a Western spy in the KGB who reported on the very alarming Soviet developments, thus leading the U.S. government to ratchet down its military maneuvers. Daley asks: "Can we really expect, if we retain nuclear weapons for another twenty or thirty or fifty years, that not a single nuclear crisis will ever descend into nuclear war?"

Finally, there is the prospect of "intentional use" of nuclear weapons. The U.S., of course, employed them intentionally back in 1945. And Daley notes that "someday the leadership of another nuclear state may make a similar decision, concluding, not from fear and panic but after a sober, calm, detached cost-benefit analysis that they ought to start a nuclear war." As Daley points out, the administration of George W. Bush gave serious consideration to using U.S. nuclear weapons against nonnuclear threats. There is no reason to assume that the same will not be done by governments of other nations, including the dozens of additional countries that are expected to build nuclear weapons — at least if there is no agreement to ban them in the coming decades.

Daley remarks: "Abolitionist advocates are often called naive and idealistic, but what then should we call the notion that humanity can keep nuclear weapons around for another half century or so, yet manage to dodge all four of these nuclear bullets every time the trigger is cocked?"

One of the strongest objections to developing an international treaty for a nuclear-free world is that a nation might break out of this binding agreement by hiding nuclear weapons or secretly building them and, then, conquer the world. Confronting this "breakout" issue, Daley points out that U.S. conventional military strength, plus the military strength of other nations, is so great that "any leaders choosing to roll the breakout dice would be inviting both national and personal suicide." Furthermore, a government that "cheated" would "come under enormous political, economic, and moral pressure from the rest of the world." Indeed, "any state in a post-abolition world that tried to bully its way to some geostrategic objective with a nuclear club" would become "the planet's greatest pariah." Daley also reminds us that the coercive value of nuclear weapons is highly overrated. After all, "each of the original five nuclear weapon states has lost a war to a non-nuclear weapon state. . . . Their nuclear monopoly in relation to the other party did not enable them to achieve their objectives."

If, as Daley contends, there are more advantages than disadvantages to a nuclear weapons-free world, how can it be established? He maintains that the best way to accomplish this is by transforming the nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) into a nuclear abolition agreement. Article 8 of the NPT provides for a conference of state parties to the NPT that can then alter the treaty. In case the nuclear powers are reluctant to call such a conference into session, Daley suggests that civil society and nonnuclear nations join together to insist that nuclear nations "move the issue to the top of their agendas." Even if the nuclear nations continued to object to such a conference, it could be convened, under the provisions of Article 8, if one third or more of the parties to the NPT requested it.

Concluding this informative, insightful and powerful book, Daley argues that "abolishing nuclear weapons . . . is probably the single most important task the human race can pursue right now to ensure our long-range survival."

Most people, if pressed on this point, would probably agree with him. And as my recent book, *Confronting the Bomb*, indicates, over the decades the public has played a key role in staving off nuclear war since 1945. But, curiously, many people now seem sunk in a strange torpor, unable to challenge the existence of thousands of nuclear weapons that menace their future and that of generations to come. Hopefully, *Apocalypse Never* will help jolt them awake. ✡

Murray Polner

Past, Present and Future

Murray Polner, coeditor of Shalom, *is author of* No Victory Parades: The Return of the Vietnam Veteran; Rabbi: The American Experience; Peace, Justice and Jews *(with Stefan Merken)*; Challenge of Shalom *(with Naomi Goodman), and* Disarmed and Dangerous *(with Jim O'Grady), a dual biography of Daniel and Philip Berrigan. He is a book review editor for the History News Network.org.*

In the late Sixties, Hubert Humphrey, then running for the Democratic Party's presidential nomination, claimed that while he backed free speech, he questioned the rights of many dissenters to speak and act against the Vietnam War. I wrote and asked him to define the kind of dissent he did favor. His reply? "Responsible dissent" — whatever that meant. I then asked if he would reserve the right to disagree only for people with whom he agreed. I never received a reply. In Fritz Stern's *Five Germanys I Have Known* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux), he writes that he once gave a speech quoting "so radical a Marxist as Rosa Luxemburg [who] cried out weeks before her death [murdered by an early Nazi Freikorps gang], 'Freedom is always freedom for the man who disagrees with you.' "

I recalled my brief if unsatisfying exchange with the liberal icon Humphrey because during the Age of Reaganism he had written a *New York Times* op-ed in defense of liberalism, then and now under bitter assault by a legion of liberal-haters. For Stern, the liberal path has been one of "America's noblest traditions," which created "the American Revolution, Declaration of Independence, the Constitution and the Bill of Rights." Not to mention Social Security, Medicare, the GI Bill, et. al. (which is not to say that liberals have not committed memorable self-inflicted and unforgivable wounds, most significantly Vietnam, and many of whom are now mired in supporting a continuing war in Afghanistan and voting in Congress for massive increases for the Empire's military.).

Today, Stern remains an outspoken liberal, tolerant in the face of intolerance on and off the campus, his life forever marked by the destruction of the liberal if flawed Weimar Republic in his native Germany. *Five Germanys* includes analyses of Weimar, the Third Reich, West and East and united Germany, and is a valuable recognition of the absolute necessity for democratic societies to accept and welcome open debate and the questioning of authority. Stern only hints at the possible similarity with Bush II's American policy and mass media opinion makers who have created so much damage at home and abroad, though he is quite serious about their incompetence and intolerance, characteristics his family witnessed in the destruction of the short-lived democratic Weimar Republic.

Fritz Stern. **Photo by Hans Weingartz, via Wikimedia Commons.**

Weimar struggled to survive onslaughts by the punitive Versailles Treaty, hyperinflation, far-right groups and the Communists. (In those years, acting on Moscow's directives, the latter excoriated the Social Democratic Party, the only group strong enough to counter Hitler, as "Social Fascists.")

Still, liberals, Catholic Centrists, Socialists, pacifists, free labor unions, even Communists were all doomed when the Nazis won a plurality of the electoral vote. About Germans, Stern shrewdly comments, "Their submissiveness, perhaps servility or fervent complicity, sealed the fate of the first victim — and ultimately the fate of the country. Never before had a modern, educated, proudly civilized class so readily abandoned, betrayed, and traduced the most basic rights of citizens. Why? Fear? Willing acquiescence and complicity? Indifference? The questions haunt us still. There are no simple answers."

Born in Breslau (now Wroclaw, Poland) in 1926 where his family had resided for many generations, Stern, University Professor Emeritus of History and former provost of Co-

lumbia University (where he was a notable figure in defending the university during student unrest in 1968), and author of the seminal *Gold and Iron: Bleichroder and the Building of the German Empire*, Stern was the child of a professional and intellectual class destroyed by the Nazis. Most of his clan became Protestants, though Nazi racist policies would define them as Jews.

His father, an eminent liberal physician, had been a loyal officer in the kaiser's army during World War I, and his mother was a physicist who later became prominent in the Montessori-style educational movement. The family and their formerly Jewish friends and relatives lived comfortable lives before and after that war, and contributed much to the well-being of their fellow Germans as scientists, physicians, artists, lawyers and journalists. Five years later. the Sterns fled to the U.S. Still a student, his mother took him along for a meeting she had with Albert Einstein in Princeton, New Jersey. Stern recounts that Einstein asked him what he'd like to study in college. Medicine or history, the teenager answered. "That's simple," said the famous man. "Medicine is a science, and history is not. Hence medicine."

For Stern, the collapse of Weimar symbolized the vitriolic attacks against liberalism and moderation by reactionary and anti-Semitic German writers, dating to the late 19th century, and is echoed in the "pseudo-religious attraction" many American now seem to have for a "new authoritarianism" in the so-called "age of terror" and attacks on liberalism by the extreme left and right. "I was born into a world on the cusp of avoidable disaster, and I came to realize that no country is immune to the temptations of pseudo-religious movements of repression such as those to which Germany succumbed."

He rightly singles out contemporary bellicose and heavily subsidized neocons, "illiberal ideologues" who, until their illusions of a painless victory in Iraq were destroyed and their imperial dreams of endless wars shattered (temporarily?) have nevertheless achieved "wealth and power" — but have also, I would add, led directly to the death and maiming of hundreds of thousands of Americans and Iraqis, while they and their families remain safely behind the walls of their inflexible think tanks.

Who knows how it will all turn out? Another invented "cakewalk" against Iran, as the neocons and Israelis are now demanding? Or perhaps an exhausted superpower, its moral bearings lost to arrogance, economic failures, war and ignorance? ✡