

SHALOM

Jewish Peace Letter

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Peter Eisenstadt



If I Am Not For Myself, etc. *The AHA debates BDS*

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Stefan Merken

When Will It Ever End?

WE HAVEN'T HAD a draft since 1973, when President Richard Nixon shut it down.

But since President Jimmy Carter's time in office, young men have been required to register for the draft thirty days prior or thirty days after their eighteenth birthday. They are asked on college applications and grant and loan applications whether they've registered. Some states have even enacted harsh penalties. Why, then, if we have no draft, do we still require young men to register? The most common answer is that the US is trying to stay prepared in case a draft is needed in the future.

Since women have recently been accepted for combat duty, there is serious talk of requiring the same registration for young women — a frightening thought for any parent with an eighteen-year-old — for a possible draft and an ensuing war, given all the panic-stricken talk about putting more and more "boots on the ground" (human beings!) in the Greater Middle East and elsewhere. In Mark Kurlansky's incisive book, *Nonviolence: Twenty-*

Five Lessons From The History of a Dangerous Idea, Lesson #2 is on the mark: "Nations that build military forces as deterrents will eventually use them." And then there's Lesson #18: "People motivated by fear do not act well."

The Jewish Peace Fellowship was founded in 1941 in response to Jewish men who refused to kill but had nowhere to turn. The JPF has always supported men and women looking for nonviolent alternatives to military service.

For anyone interested, JPF's *Wrestling with Your Conscience: a Guide for Jewish Draft Registrants and Conscientious Objectors* is available for purchase. It outlines the legal rules and regulations for registrants and potential COs, asks and answers "What if a draft is reinstated?," "Can a Jew be a C.O.?", "The Jewish Pursuit of Peace," and other relevant topics and also discusses non-violence and pacifism.

It's never too early (or too late) to educate yourself about these issues. And I hope you'll read this issue's essays by Edward Hasbrouk, Mariko Terasaki Miller, and Murray Polner, which address draft registration, militarism, and war resistance — issues which, unfortunately, haven't gone away. ✧

STEFAN MERKEN is chair of the Jewish Peace Fellowship.

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Peter Eisenstadt

If I Am Not for Myself, *etc.*

LAST JANUARY I attended the American Historical Association (AHA) annual convention in Atlanta. Historians, as a rule, are not a particularly raucous bunch, and the thirty-five hundred or so historians generally went about their business quietly, delivering papers, buying books, trying to cadge free food at various receptions, and the like. But there was one exciting moment. At the business meeting, there was a vote on a resolution, introduced by an organization called Historians Against the War (HAW), condemning Israeli interference with higher education and academic freedom on the West Bank and Gaza, and calling on the AHA to monitor Israel's behavior. This resolution was tailored to garner as much support as possible, and unlike earlier resolutions introduced by HAW, it did not explicitly call for a boycott of Israeli academic institutions. Still, it was an attempt to get the AHA on record against Israel's educational policies, and perhaps use it as a toehold from which to launch stronger BDS (boycott, divestment, and sanctions) resolutions.

The resolution was trounced a hundred and eleven nays to fifty-one yeas. I was a naysayer. I don't doubt the basic truth of the assertions in the HAW resolution, though it was lacking in nuance and in places too simplistic. Israel's general ham-fistedness certainly extends to its educational policies in the Occupied Territories. However, for me the claims in the statement were irrelevant to the matter at hand, which was whether or not, even by implication or indirection, the AHA should take a stand

PETER EISENSTADT's books include *Rochdale Village: Robert Moses, 6,000 Families, and New York City's Great Experiment in Integrated Housing; Affirming the Covenant: A History of Temple B'Rith Kodesh Rochester, New York, 1848-1998, and most recently, Black Conservatism: Essays in Intellectual and Political History.*

on Israel and Palestine. I think not. The organization should be dedicated to scholarship, not political advocacy, and with so many contending opinions on what should be done about Israel and Palestine — options to the right of me, options to the left of me — it would be the height of foolishness for the AHA to get into the business of favoring or proscribing particular political positions. And I think that though Israel's educational policies in the territories are unjustifiable, it is hardly the only country in the world that discriminates on



February 15: Historians Against the War demonstrate in New York City.

the basis of ethnicity and religion, and for the AHA to single out Israel in this way is no way to begin a serious discussion of an important issue

But this resolution, and others like it, has been discussed exhaustively, and I do not need to add to the exhaust. Rather, I want to discuss two other issues the debate raised that have perhaps not been sufficiently acknowledged. First, the vast majority of those voting against the resolution were somewhere left of center: liberals, progressives, even radicals, whatever you call them. To be sure, there were some unam-

biguous conservatives among the nay voters, but the vast majority were not. Their scholarly work, in one way or another, revolves around the holy trinity of race, class, and gender. They voted for Obama; if they could vote in Israeli elections, they would not have voted for Benjamin Netanyahu. They support J Street, not AIPAC, and support B'tselem and Breaking the Silence rather than Im Tirtzu. They oppose the settlements, and wonder with pained apprehension about the democratic future of Israel. Those opposing the resolution represented a range of opinions, of course, some more to the center. But none of us take our marching orders from Sheldon Adelson and anti-BDS organizations. The fight against BDS in scholarly organizations is primarily being waged and won by left-of-center academics. And the right-wing panjandrums who control the organized Jewish community in North America have taken little notice of this.

There was one more striking aspect of the debate. As even the outgoing president of the AHA, Vicki Ruiz, noted, the debate over the HAW resolution was remarkably interethnic. Most of the participants in the debate, pro and contra, were Jewish. To be sure, there were Palestinian speakers in support of the resolution, and a few persons who spoke who, using my Jew-dar, seemed to be unambiguously gentile. But most of the speakers, and as far as I could tell, most of the people voting, were Jewish. This is perhaps not too surprising. You can't be an American Jew, in 2016, without having a strong position on Israel. Rather than Orthodox, Conservative and Reform, the most important taxonomy in American Jewish life has become Meretz, Labor, and Likud. All Jews are deeply concerned about Israel, and support or opposition to BDS are two distinct, but in some ways overlapping, ways

of expressing this concern.

A corollary of the above is that liberal and progressive non-Jews, including most of the ninety percent of AHA members who did not vote on the HAW resolution, would rather be stuck in a traffic jam on one of New Jersey Governor Chris Christie's bridges rather than talk or vote about Israel. Everyone knows the routine: — whatever you say, your head will be bitten off by one side or another. There is no safe or neutral position. And those without skin in this particular game would prefer to stay on the sidelines. They see all the parties — Israel, the PA, and Hamas — as having contributed mightily to their collective misery. "Israel exhaustion" is a widespread phenomenon. To the extent the resolution seemed to single out Israel and Israeli academic institutions, they opposed it. To the extent the supporters of the resolution seemed to be making excuses for the occupation, they opposed this as well.

I have long wondered what, if I hadn't been born Jewish, my position on Israel and Palestine would be. I strongly suspect that I wouldn't care about Israel and Palestine as much as I do. And I suspect that I would be less interested in finding ways to balance my love of Israel with my hate of the current direction of the Israeli government. And this balancing act is becoming increasingly difficult, and the tightrope on which we must stand is becoming ever more slippery. Israel, and increasingly, the very idea of Israel, whether in a one- or two- or many-state version, has lost the support of most left-of-center Americans. They simply do not care. And if Israel continues on its current course, several years hence Jewish (and non-Jewish) historians who voted no in Atlanta might find themselves on the other side the next time the AHA debates a BDS resolution. ✨

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Edward Hasbrouck

Will Women Be Drafted?

WHEN THE SUPREME COURT of the United States upheld males-only draft registration in 1981, it based its ruling at that time on “deference” to the decisions of the Department of Defense and the Commander-in-Chief not to assign women to combat positions. The facts underlying the Supreme Court’s decision have now changed, with the announcement last December 4 that women in the military will be eligible for all combat jobs.

In 2003, when the Pentagon announced that it would begin considering women for some combat positions, several lawsuits were filed challenging males-only draft registration. It’s unclear which of these, or new, lawsuits, will be the first to be decided. But it’s highly likely that males-only draft registration will be found unconstitutionally discriminatory. Such a ruling would then force Congress to choose between extending draft registration to women, or letting stand a court decision that would effectively end all draft registration.

Under current law, the courts can’t order women to register. Only action by Congress can do that. So unless Congress extends the registration requirement to women, registration of men will have to end if courts find that the current law is illegally discriminatory. On the other hand, the current males-only draft registration could be ended by presidential proclamation, by Congress, or by the federal courts if they find it unconstitutional.

EDWARD HASBROUCK *was one of twenty non-registrants prosecuted before the US government abandoned enforcement of draft registration. He was convicted and served a six-month sentence in a federal prison camp.*

Any proposals for legislation will originate in Congress, the White House, or the Pentagon, not with the Selective Service System (SSS). But in an interview in January 2016, the director of the SSS said he had been told that Congress could hold hearings this year on whether to amend the Military Selective Service Act to require women to register. (Women are included in plans and preparations for a draft of health care workers. But the Selective Service Systems plans to rely on



professional licensing lists as the basis for induction orders, rather than to try to get doctors, nurses, and other medical workers to register. And nobody can actually be drafted under this or any other scheme without further action by Congress.)

Regardless of whether Congress or the president think that young women “should” be ready and willing to be drafted, the only realistic choice for Congress is not to extend draft registration to women, but to end it for everyone.

Congress could enact a law extending draft registration to women. But registration isn’t self-implementing. Extend-

ing registration to women would require getting women to comply with the law, and then enforcing the law if women don't do so voluntarily.

Is there any reason to think that young women would be more willing to sign up to be drafted than young men have been? I doubt it. When President Jimmy Carter announced his proposal to reinstate draft registration in his 1980 State of the Union address, some of the strongest initial grassroots opposition came from women. Many women remained active in the resistance, including in the National Resistance Committee, even after the bill Congress approved was narrowed to require only men to register.

Women share many of men's reason not to register, and have other reasons of their own. Today, people of all ages and genders question why the US is supporting the fundamentalist (and supremely sexist) monarchy in Saudi Arabia, or the dictatorship in Yemen, among others.

Extending draft registration to women will provoke at

least as much resistance as did draft registration for men in 1980. It will force the government, once again, to choose whether to turn the country into a police state to round up all those who fail to register on demand, or to try (probably unsuccessfully) to coerce them into compliance through show trials and incarceration of a few people targeted as "leaders" of the resistance.

Draft registration of men has been a fiasco for the government since its resumption in 1980. But the government has never been able to find a face-saving way to end registration and shut down the Selective Service System without admitting that its scare tactics failed, or to deal with the implications of young people's insistence on making their own choices about which wars they are willing to fight.

The likelihood and imminence of a court ruling that males-only draft registration is unconstitutional provides the perfect opportunity for Congress to end draft registration entirely. ☆

Women & War – II.

Mariko Terasaki Miller, with Cole Miller

A Child of Two Empires

I AM A CHILD OF TWO EMPIRES, the Japanese and the American. My mother was born among the famed rolling hills of east Tennessee, in the small town of Johnson City. Her great-grandfather had roamed the hills as an itinerant fire-and-brimstone preacher. My father was born in Tokyo, more than six thousand miles away, the son of a prosperous merchant of the samurai class, and educated at the elite Ichiko prep school and Tokyo Imperial University. It's hard to imagine two more culturally remote beginnings. They met at the Japanese embassy in Washington, DC,

MARIKO TERASAKI MILLER is the daughter of *Hiderari Terasaki, a Japanese diplomat and Gwen Harold Terasaki, a native of Johnson City, Tennessee, who met at the Japanese Embassy in Washington and were married in 1931.* **COLE MILLER** is the founding director of *No More Victims (NMV), a nonprofit that secures medical sponsorships for children injured by US forces abroad.*

in 1930, and the remarkable union sparked by that chance encounter eventually led to the creation of a book, *Bridge to the Sun*, a memoir of love and war. And, of course, to my birth, which occurred, again quite by chance, as a typhoon scattered smaller ships to sea, breached the levies in Shanghai, and lifted enormous ocean liners onto coastal thoroughfares. My own beginnings had a touch of Fellini.

On December 7, 1941, my father, Hidenari Terasaki, was first secretary at the Japanese embassy in Washington, DC. As my mother recounts in her book, he opened an unauthorized back channel to President Franklin Roosevelt just a few days before the Pearl Harbor attack. Everyone knew war was imminent, and the only speck of hope left to avert war rested on a direct appeal from the president to Emperor Hirohito. As a result of that initiative, Roosevelt sent a cablegram to the emperor on December 6, 1941. The cablegram was held up for ten hours by Japanese military authorities, and the last-ditch effort failed. My parent's youthful dream of building bridges

between their two countries came to an end.

We were interned at Greenbriar Hotel and repatriated to Japan in the summer of 1942, where we remained for the duration of the war. The stress for my father was immense: he knew that if military authorities and the *Kempeitai*, Japan's secret police, ever learned of his role in the cablegram, punishment would be swift. He would be executed, and my mother and I would probably be killed as well. After Pearl Harbor, my mother noticed a slight quiver in his little finger that she'd never seen before.

I am still amazed when I think about the predicament my parents faced. The *Washington Times Herald* edition that publicized their wedding also reported on the Japanese invasion of Manchuria, an event viewed by many as the first step on the long path to the Pacific War. Fear that their two countries might go to war plagued them throughout the Thirties, when we were stationed in Shanghai, Havana and Peking.

My father knew Japan did not stand a chance in a war against the US. He had too much knowledge of America's immense material resources to imagine otherwise. War against the US would inevitably lead to Japan's destruction and unimaginable suffering for her people. But the [American] embargo caused economic strangulation, giving militarists the upper hand, and that most dangerous of viruses, nationalism, swept the land. I would live to see many outbreaks of this virus during my lifetime, including the virulent and potentially terminal one that plagued my mother's country for more than decade.

The poverty, injustice, and human misery I witnessed in China as a child has remained with me throughout my life. We lived luxuriously, cocooned inside the international section of Shanghai, with a dozen servants taking care of our needs and whims, while every night untold numbers of Chinese died of starvation on the streets of Shanghai. Carts scoured parts of the city in the early morning hours, picking up corpses. That daily harvest persisted for decades, while the imperial powers that dominated China reaped other harvests. Western imperial powers had been feeding on China for generations; the Japanese were relative newcomers to the feast.

In the spring of 1936, we prepared to leave Shanghai for Havana, where my father had been posted as *chargé d'affaires*. Among the workmen who arrived to help pack and transport our possessions to the ship was a young man whose hands were raw and blistered. He was not yet accustomed to heavy work. We learned he was a scholar whose personal and family fortunes had been ruined by war. He had been reduced to destitution, and the odds of his survival in war-ravaged China were not good.

When lunchtime came, the other workers left, but he

lingered alone in the hallway, waiting for them to return. He didn't have money to buy his lunch. Our cook had prepared our lunch, and my father invited him to join us. His raw hands trembled as he ate. Though half starved, my father took note that he forced himself to eat slowly.

Some nine years later I would be reminded of what we had for lunch that day.

When we finished, my mother casually remarked that she liked a ring the workman wore. It was a silver puzzle ring made of four separate bands adorned with silver flowers. She regretted the compliment, because he promptly took it off and gave it to her. She tried to refuse, but he insisted. "I want you to remember me," he said.

In 1941 we visited Tokyo on our way to the US from Shanghai. I was eight years old. I remember enormous crowds waving little Japanese flags. Japanese had been steeped from early childhood in their nation's founding myths and taught obedience to authority. I imagine many readers have vivid recollections of reciting the Pledge of Allegiance in public school. Patriotic indoctrination begins when we are tiny children. It continues throughout our lives, often with lethal consequences. These crowds of well-meaning people cheered and waved little flags as Japanese militarists plunged them into a war that would kill millions and leave

their country in ruins.

Today, most have forgotten the rage against the military that swept Japan after the war. A new generation of nationalist militarists led by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is undermining Article Nine of Japan's Peace Constitution. As we marked the seventieth anniversary of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the drums of militarism were resounding once again in Japan. And the US, which has garrisoned the globe with bases and undertakes military operations in countries on virtually every continent, is encouraging this awful development. There is strong opposition among the people of Japan. I support it wholeheartedly.

I WAS NINE YEARS OLD when the Pacific War began, a spoiled child accustomed to a posh existence as the daughter of a rising Japanese diplomat. The outbreak of war between my mother's country and Japan was a terrible personal defeat for my father, one from which he never really recovered. It also marked the end of my idyllic childhood. By the time the war was over, I was a jaded adolescent who had seen enough human suffering and iniquity to last a dozen lifetimes.

By the summer of 1945, during the massive carpet-bombing of Japanese cities, we were clinging to survival on a mountainside near the remote village of Tateshina, in the Japanese Alps. We had never before experienced hunger. Now every day was a struggle to get enough calories to keep ourselves



*"Terry" & Mariko 1937: Taken while Hidenari was *chargé d'affaires* in Havana, Cuba.
© Mariko Terasaki Miller.*

alive. Famine stalked Japan, and unless something changed, we knew we would starve to death. Memories of starving people in China came back to me in sharper focus.

My father suffered from severe hypertension, the illness that would eventually kill him. His blood pressure was in the stratosphere, and there were no medications to control it. My mother's fingernails were cracked and bleeding, and she was often too weak to get out of bed. In desperation, my father and I tried our hands at farming. We cleared a little garden plot near our cabin. He couldn't bend over to pick up the stones because it would increase his blood pressure, so we went about clearing the rocky turf as a team. He would pry rocks loose with a shovel, and I would pick them up and put them in a burlap sack.

One day he stopped and gazed off at the mountains. He knew we were engaged in a hopeless task. Anguish and amusement played upon his features like the patterns of light and shadow drifting across the pines. He asked me whether I remembered the distinguished young man who had moved our furniture in Shanghai.

"Yes, I remember him. I wonder what happened to him," I said.

"Do you remember what we ate for lunch?"

I drew a complete blank.

"No," I replied.

"We had two salads, one western and one Japanese," he said. "And warm bread, creamed vegetable soup, tomato aspic, poached salmon, rice, tea, and lemonade." We smiled at each other, aching from the sensations his words evoked.

Japan was suing for peace, but during the second week of August my father received word that a mysterious new bomb had destroyed two Japanese cities. Japan had been immaculately defeated before the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. That was obvious to me as a thirteen-year-old child. One of my jobs was to gather wood. I loved to climb trees, and from my perches I could sometimes see silver birds flying in perfect formation. These gleaming silver birds flying over our cabin were stark visual proof that Japan was finished. They were American B-29 bombers, and they flew in perfect formation because they encountered no resistance of any kind. Japan's undefended wood-and-paper cities were in flames. At night the horizon radiated a hellish crimson light. Hundreds of thousands of civilians were killed.

The atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which ushered in the age of nuclear terror, were carried out against defenseless civilians. My uncle Taira Terasaki, a surgeon stationed at Kure naval base, led the first medical team to reach Hiroshima some three hours after the bomb struck. What he witnessed beggars description. He saw infants fused to their mothers. He saw people walking with flesh dripping



Mariko with her mother Gwen Terasaki.
© Mariko Terasaki Miller.

off their bodies like candle wax. The atomic attacks on those two defenseless cities were unforgivably cruel and, despite notions cultivated by decades of propaganda in the US, entirely superfluous.

AS I SAID, I am a child of two empires, the Japanese and the American. The Japanese experiment in Western-style imperialism ended in near-total destruction. I demonstrated against the Vietnam war. I supported the solidarity movement against US-supported death squads in Central America during the Reagan years. America is addicted to war and militarism, and today we terrify children with our drones in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen, Iraq. The devastation we impose on other people is a disgrace, and simply cannot be tolerated.

I first heard Roosevelt's famous "*day that will live in infamy*" speech while sitting on the steps of the circular staircase at the old Japanese Embassy in Washington. I was nine years old. I would encounter those words again in March 2003 in a *Los Angeles Times* opinion piece written by the esteemed establishment historian Arthur Schlesinger Jr, who served in President John F. Kennedy's White House. Schlesinger wrote, "Franklin Roosevelt was right, *but today it is we Americans who live in infamy.*" The occasion was the American invasion of Iraq, which initiated a war of choice against a country that posed no threat to the US. The United Nations declared the invasion illegal. Secretary General Kofi Anan stated, "I have indicated it was not in conformity with the UN Charter. From our point of view and from the charter point of view it was illegal." The UN Charter was forged to create a bulwark against aggression "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind." We have committed terrible crimes — aggression, torture, detention without trial, the use of chemical weapons and depleted uranium against civilians, continuous drone terror — yet no one has gone to jail and there are few signs that our rampage will end any time soon.

We're now in late summer. The year is 2015. I'll soon be eighty-three years old. My memories of the distant past grow ever sharper and more distinct, while finding my glasses is one of the day's pressing challenges. Much as I would like to believe otherwise, the portents for those I must soon leave behind are not promising. Our "leaders" have again turned a blind eye to the dangers we face. Nuclear war continues to threaten our survival. Fukushima continues to bleed nuclear waste into the ocean. Japan was able to rebuild after the war, but we are fast approaching ecological and climate-tipping points from which our best scientists warn there will be no return. Vast resources are wasted on the "military-industrial-congressional complex," to paraphrase President Eisenhower's warning, while the imperatives of empire and the

corporate state threaten the liberties that our massive armaments are theoretically intended to defend. War and aggression remain constants in international relations.

If left unchallenged, the institutional logic of the corporate state will destroy human liberty and our fragile planet. There is no magic leader who will step in to save the day. We must build people's movements to confront these menaces to human survival. There are encouraging developments in Japan and the US, and I hope that environmental and peace organizations in both countries will reach out to each other and join forces. Such bridges would be worth building.

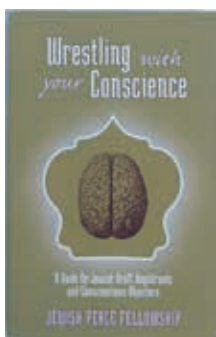
Japanese and Americans are remarkably obedient to authority. "Go along to get along" is the standard American phrase; "the nail that stands up gets pounded down" is the graphic Japanese equivalent. Obedience to authority is a weakness we can no longer indulge given the dangers we face. We must overcome this weakness, or it may prove to be a death sentence for the human species. Only informed and determined public resistance to our destructive systems of power and exploitation can change our present self-destructive course. Time is running out.

When I turned twenty-one, my mother gave me a precious gift: the puzzle ring that the Chinese scholar had given her in 1936. I have worn it at least once a week for more than sixty years, and every time I put it on I think of that scholar. My mother never forgot him, and I will carry his memory into my grave. I see acts of generosity and human solidarity every day. They give me hope. And so does the story contained within my mother's book, *Bridge to the Sun*.



Mariko Terasaki Miller, speaking at Laramie County Community College, Cheyenne, Wyoming. 2015.

She chose to return to my father's country knowing that her own far more powerful country was poised to destroy it. She had every expectation that the three of us would die together in Japan. My father tried to persuade her to stay in the US, but she refused to let the family be divided by war. Love triumphed over fear. That decision revealed her fierce devotion to the human bonds that make life meaningful. These bonds transcend the divisions of nationality, race, and creed that leaders exploit to divide the human family into warring factions. These bonds will continue to make life meaningful in the dark times ahead. I think this is what gives *Bridge to the Sun* lasting value. It is a celebration of love. ☆



Wrestling With Your Conscience:
A Guide for Jewish Draft Registrants and Conscientious Objectors

Features the most recent Selective Service regulations, plus articles on Can a Jew Be a CO?; the Jewish Pursuit of Peace; Judaism and War; Registration at 18; What if the Draft is Reinstated? Israeli Refusers; What the JPF can do for you, and much more.

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Murray Polner

A Few Women vs. the Superpower

Before one more mother's child is lost.

— Cindy Sheehan, whose son was killed in Iraq-neocon war.

MANY WOMEN have always played crucial roles supporting, worrying about, and grieving for their family members, while many others have actively opposed our historic addiction to war. Some of the women I write about here are fairly well-known, but others are not.

NAOMI GOODMAN. My wife, Louise, says we can only hope to grasp glimpses of another's life, especially their hidden, private inner life. Naomi Goodman, my friend and colleague, died at age eighty-five in 2005 and I delivered a eulogy at her memorial service. Louise, I think was right about Naomi, whose public life was well known in feminist and antiwar, anti-draft circles; but little was known about her innermost feelings until her poetry, about which I knew nothing, was published soon after she died.

I first met her during the Vietnam years when she was serving with the National Council to Repeal the Draft, a coalition of left and right groups trying to end conscription, which only whetted the appetite of our war-makers. I stopped by to ask her about some young men — really, boys — I was draft counseling. We then went to a nearby luncheonette and I told her that I'd been a pacifist since the day I was honorably discharged from the army. I had nothing against the army or my fellow soldiers, only the psychopaths in Washington and elsewhere who loved war so long as they and their kids never served. I also told her I was looking for a Jewish group which closely reflected my views and which counseled Jew and non-Jews alike.

I learned she was “an active pacifist and feminist historian,” as someone described her to me, and that she was involved with the Jewish Peace Fellowship (JPF), a group founded in 1941 to defend the interests and rights of Jewish Conscientious Objectors who had been condemned by most



Naomi Goodman.

were Martin Buber and Rabbis Judah Magnes, Abraham Joshua Heschel, Abraham Cronbach, Isidor Hoffman and Leo Baeck, Berlin's last rabbi before the cattle cars arrived.

For many years Naomi was the JPF's president, where she favored a two-state solution for the interminable, intractable Israeli-Palestinian conflict. She and I were invited to Brandeis University and schools and synagogues and churches to present our views. We co-edited two books, *The Challenge of Shalom: The Jewish Tradition of Peace and Justice* and *Nonviolent Activist: The Heart & Mind of Edward Feder*. She and JPF member Henry Schwarzschild worked against the death penalty, and she always fought for political and peaceful solutions. During President Ronald Reagan's undeclared war in Central America, when the former actor was calling Central American murderers “freedom fighters,” she would only buy coffee made from beans grown in Nicaragua. More importantly, her friends came in all skin colors.

Outwardly quiet and unassuming, she was never intimidated and insisted that, while American Jews need to maintain their ties with Israel, the plight of Palestinians could not be dismissed. My wife and I and hundreds of thousands of others marched with her in demonstrations and parades pro-

American Jewish organizations and often abandoned by their families. The JPF was committed to active nonviolence, drawing on the Torah and the Talmud and Jewish ideals and experience which offered inspiration for a nonviolent way of life. Among its founders and early supporting members

MURRAY POLNER is co-editor of *SHALOM*, and Senior Book Review Editor of the *History News Network*.

testing our many wars, Naomi always proudly carrying JPF's banner. Elsewhere, she stood for "Pacifism, not Passivism — Feminism, Not Pseudo-Machismo." She also took time to celebrate the memory of Jeanette Rankin, the sadly forgotten pacifist Republican congresswoman from Montana, who, together with fifty-six members of Congress, opposed entry into the First World War, and later stood alone against war with Japan.

Percival, Naomi's loving husband, was an eminent architect of synagogues and community centers across the US, the designer of New York's Jewish Museum, and a pioneering and daring urban planner who, with his polymath brother Paul, addressed the ecological and human needs of ordinary women and men in their book, *Communitas*. Yet I also remember her telling me that in all the years of meetings and parties and engagements with the prominent, primarily male, intellectuals she interacted with, no one ever asked for her opinion.

But of course she had plenty of opinions. As a member of the Institute for Research in History she published *Images of Women in Judaism: Male Control of Women's Reproductive Functions as Documented in the Old Testament*, in which she argued that Hebrew Scriptures considered the main function of women to be producing children. (Naomi had a son and daughter.) Women, however, were powerless, since the males developed such controls to fortify their male-only religious system.

In her friend Taylor Stoehr's preface to Naomi's slim volume, *On Borrowed Times: Poems of Two Centuries* (Fithian Press), he wrote that superficially her poetry seemed obsessed with death and despair and the wrench of loss and subsequent loneliness. But, Stoehr shrewdly added, "Naomi has not spent her life brooding." Peace, freedom for political prisoners, racial justice, women's rights, biblical scholarship, he continued, remind us of "the courage necessary to affirm life and humanity in world full of suffering and death."

Two of Naomi's poems illustrate her rich life.

"A Saint Sat in Our Living Room" recalls a visit by Thich Nanh Hanh, self-exiled leader of Vietnam's pacifist Buddhists, to her West 77th Street apartment in Manhattan:

*Squirring on the foam-cushioned, comfort-angled chair
And said: You have many things of beauty
He spoke without envy
He spoke without judgment
And left me with guilt.
Guilt for the curve of the tropical palm leaf
Growing greenly in the artificial heat.
Guilt for the life, the extras, the leisure
That permitted the creation of art objects
Amid the improbable plants
Sixteen stories above the dirty street
I was embarrassed for our ease.*

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"Women Must Live Longer"

*To have equal time
Since they have so much more to do;
Years of bearing,
Years of caring for the children
(Birth is not an equally opportunity employer),
And for the others:
Fathers, sisters, brothers, friends,
Husbands, nieces, nephews, cousins;
They haven't spent time in dailyness,
Drowning in the details
Of others' lives,
Mothers have to live longer
To have the same time men have
For themselves.
So...
"Choose Life
So that you and your children
Will live."*

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SISTER MEGAN RICE. After spending two years in prison for entering and defacing a nuclear facility, eighty-five-year-old Sister Megan Rice, a nun of the Roman Catholic Society of the Holy Child, and her co-defendants, army veterans Michael Walli, sixty-six, and Greg Boertje-Obed, fifty-



Michael Walli, Sister Megan Rice and Greg Boertje-Obed.

nine, were released in May 2015 by order of the US Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit.

Their crime: cutting a hole in a barbed wire fence in one of Oak Ridge's ultra-secret national security sites on July 28, 2012, and then crossing into prohibited ground, hammering on the Highly Enriched Uranium Material facility, and spraying some biblical graffiti, leaving behind Isaiah's subversive adage about beating swords into plowshares.

The trio were tried and found guilty in Knoxville and fined \$52,053 — which the government will obviously never

collect since in all probability a nun, a house painter and an unemployed activist do not usually own stocks, bonds or have a hedge-fund account.

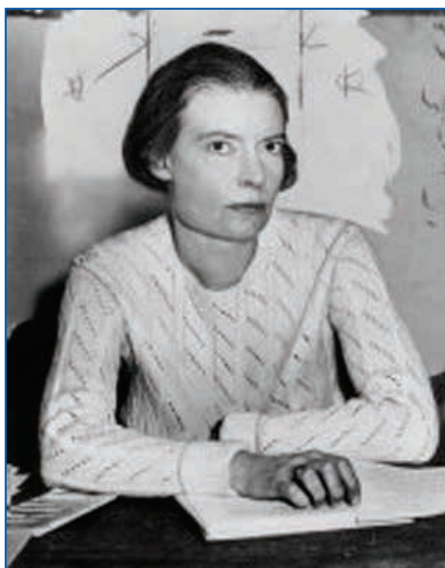
Jim O'Grady and I wrote *Disarmed and Dangerous*, a biography of Daniel and Philip Berrigan, and the Oak Ridge trio's project was born of Phil's idealistic Plowshares brainstorm, which flatly rejected the nuclear arms race. Since the early Eighties and Nineties some one hundred men and women have hammered on and spray-painted MX missiles, Trident submarines, B-52 bombers and components of the strategic nuclear triads, for which many have been sent to prison, even as they were ignored by a distracted and apathetic nation.

During their trial, the judge said he hadn't found the defendants "contrite." Kathy Boylan, a long-time peace worker, testified on their behalf and alluded to the Holocaust, quoting Dorothy Day: "If we wouldn't put people in gas chambers, why would we fling gas chambers at them?" Interviewed after her release, Sr. Megan Rice told *The New York Times* that should the feds appeal the verdict and win, and she is returned to prison, "It would be an honor. Good Lord, what would be is better than to die in prison for the anti-nuclear cause?"

And a few more, including Daddy Warbucks' Women:

MAGGIE, JILL, MOLLY AND VALENTINE. Inspired by the Berrigans and the destruction of draft board files in 1968, in Catonsville, Maryland, by nine antiwar activists (two of whom were women, Mary Moylan and Marjorie Melville), Maggie Geddes, Jill Boskey, Molly Finnegan and Valentine Green dubbed themselves "Women Against Daddy Warbucks" and, in July 1970, raided eight New York City draft boards (one of them in Rockefeller Center), where they mutilated and destroyed several thousand files, and sent other files to the head of Dow Chemical and General Lewis Hershey, director of Selective Service. As Jim O'Grady and I wrote in *Disarmed and Dangerous*, they told the two very important men "they were holding in their hands a piece of someone else's life. The fact that they were female was deliberate. It was the first shot of the modern female antiwar movement. The women were never punished since the investigators spent their time hunting for the men they believed had directed the women."

DOROTHY DAY. Anarchist, pacifist, protestor against injustice, saving angel to the desperately poor and homeless, and co-founder of the Catholic Worker movement, Day is now being considered for sainthood by the Catholic Church. She was initially troubled by the draft board raids, unhappy about the secrecy in which they were hatched and their



Dorothy Day, 1934.

potential for inciting violence. But in the end she praised the Catonsville raid as "an act of liturgy...an act of prayer," adding, "I have to admire all those who have been participating... they are laying down their lives and going to prison."

MOLLY RUSH. A married mother of six children, a grandma, and a member of Phil Berrigan's Plowshares movement, she pounded on a warhead nose-cone in General Electric's nuclear weapons factory and was sent to prison. Molly co-founded the Thomas Merton Center in Pittsburgh, which is dedicated to raising interest in social justice, militarism, poverty, the rights of working people and, of course, nuclear arsenals. In an article for *Christianity and Crisis*, she explained, "It is not in nuclear weapons that I place my trust. It is not in that world of blindness and fear and hatred where I place my trust."

BARBARA SONNEBORN. I regret that I never met Barbara. But Jeff Hurvitz, her husband, was killed in Vietnam in 1968, and in her exquisite and poignant 1999 film, *Regret to Inform*, she portrayed the anguish of war widows like herself, Vietnamese and American. Of her film she said, "Making this has been Jeff's gift to me. It has expanded my understanding of sorrow and suffering, of love and joy. I want people to see war differently than they've seen it before. I want them to look war in the face, to ask themselves, 'Am I going to allow this to happen ever again?' I want people to so deeply realize the humanity of other human beings that they won't be able to kill them."

MR. AND MRS. X. For my book *When Can I Come Home?* I spent time with parents whose twenty-three-year-old son had fled to Canada rather than serve in a war [Vietnam] he despised. His mother, Mrs. X., was completely sympathetic with her son's decision. She told me how the draft had brought so much misery to families she had since encountered, people who had never spent much time worrying how a distant foreign-policy elite's policies might possibly affect their kids. *Congressional Quarterly* would later report that only a handful of House and Senate members had a son or grandson on active military duty.

RIVKA POLNER. Mom knew best. She had lived through vicious pogroms and the post-World War I Russian-Polish-Ukrainian civil war and was permanently scarred by her experiences. One day, in 1944, after trying to comfort our next door neighbor whose son had been killed somewhere in Europe, she turned to me and said she could never support any war and hoped I would someday feel the same way too. "Only plain people like us get hurt." ☆