

SHALOM

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It's Getting Draft-ier

WE ARE LOSING a whole generation of peace activists and there is no one to take their place. This is a critical problem for all well-established and respected peace organizations. Younger people are just not stepping up to join and get involved in preventing future wars. Why? I've asked myself this question many times.

It could be the draw of the Net. Like minds can find each other without joining or attending meetings. It could be a lack of interest in world affairs and how the peace movement offers a viable alternative to militarism and war.

Whatever the reason, the JPF has fewer young people joining our ranks. And you can help to correct this. Reach out to young people around you and explain why you take an interest in the JPF and the reasons you have stayed connected over the years. Talk to your rabbi or youth group and try to get them interested in finding young people to join our ranks. We need them to help run the organization and deal with the burning issues sure to arise in the com-

ing years.

As I write this, the US Senate Armed Services Committee (ASC) has joined its counterpart in the House of Representatives in adding a provision to the pending National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2017 that would extend the authority of the president to order women as well as men to register for the draft. The ASC is about to begin to debate this funding bill for the coming year. This attachment to the bill is an amendment to require women, for the first time, to register with the Selective Service System. We have no idea what will result. At the moment we are not drafting anyone for the military. Still, registration would keep current a list of all those eligible, both young men and young women, to be drafted.

Several years ago, the JPF published a booklet about the rules and regulations of applying for a Conscientious Objector classification, and another about Judaism and nonviolence. Both of these are available from the JPF office for a small fee. Please feel free to order a handful and make them available to young people and their groups. ☆

STEFAN MERKEN *is chair of the Jewish Peace Fellowship.*

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Charles Glass

Andrew Bracevich & Our War in the Greater Middle East

THE CONVICTION that invasion, bombing, and special forces benefit large swaths of the globe, while remaining consonant with a Platonic ideal of the national interest, runs deep in the American psyche. Like the poet Stevie Smith's cat, the US "likes to gallop about doing good." The cat attacks and misses, sometimes injuring itself, but does not give up. It asks, as the US should,

*What's the good
Of galloping about doing good
When angels stand in the path
And do not do as they should*

Nothing undermines the American belief in military force. No matter how often its galloping about results in resentment and mayhem, the US gets up again to do good elsewhere. Failure to improve life in Vietnam, Lebanon, Somalia, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Libya stiffens the resolve to get it right next time. This notion prevails among politicized elements of the officer corps; much of the media, whether nominally liberal or conservative; the foreign policy elite recycled quadrennially between corporation-endowed think tanks and government; and most politicians on the national stage. For them and the public they influence, the question is less whether to deploy force than when, where, and how.

Since 1979, when the Iranians overthrew the shah and the Soviets invaded Afghanistan, the US has concentrated its firepower in what former US Army Colonel Andrew Bracevich calls the "Greater Middle East." The region comprises most of what America's imperial predecessors, the British, called the Near and Middle East, a vast zone from Pakistan west to Morocco. In his new book, *America's War*

CHARLES GLASS, former ABC News chief Middle East correspondent, recently published *Syria Burning: A Short History of a Catastrophe* (Verso). This essay first appeared online at *The Intercept* (theintercept.com).



Andrew Bracevich

for the Greater Middle East, Bracevich writes, "From the end of World War II until 1980, virtually no American soldiers were killed in action while serving in that region. Within a decade, a great shift occurred. Since 1990, virtually no American soldiers have been killed anywhere *except* the Greater Middle East." That observation alone might prompt a less propagandized electorate to rebel against leaders who perpetuate policies that, while killing and maiming American soldiers, devastate the societies they touch.

Bracevich describes a loyal cadre of intellectuals and pundits favoring war after war, laying the moral ground for invasions and excusing them when they go wrong. He notes that in 1975, when American imperium was collapsing in Indochina, guardians of American exceptionalism renewed their case for preserving the US as the exception to international law. An article by Robert Tucker in *Commentary* that year set the ball rolling with the proposition that "to insist that before using force one must exhaust all other remedies is little more than the functional equivalent of accepting chaos." Another evangelist for military action, Miles Igotus, wrote in *Harper's* two months later that the US, with Israel's help, must prepare to seize Saudi Arabia's oilfields. "Miles Igotus," Latin for "unknown soldier," turned out to be the known civilian and Pentagon consultant Edward

Luttwak. Luttwak urged a “revolution” in warfare doctrine toward “fast, light forces to penetrate the enemy’s vital centers,” with Saudi Arabia a test case. The practical test would come, with results familiar to most of the world, twenty-seven years later in Iraq.

The Pentagon, its pride and reputation wounded in Vietnam as surely as the bodies of a hundred and fifty thousand scarred American soldiers, was slow to take the hint. The end of compulsory military service robbed it of manpower for massive global intervention. Revelations of war crimes and political chicanery from the Senate’s Church Committee and the Pike Committee in the House added to public disenchantment with military adventures and intelligence meddling in other countries’ affairs. It would take years of effort to cure America of its “Vietnam Syndrome,” the preference for diplomatic before military solutions.

In the Middle East, President Gerald Ford saw no reason to rescind his predecessor’s policy, the Nixon Doctrine of reliance on local clients armed by the US to protect Persian Gulf oil for America’s gas-hungry consumers. Nothing much happened, though, until one of the local gendarmes, the shah of Iran, fell to a popular revolution and the Soviets invaded Afghanistan.

Change came with the Carter Doctrine, enunciated in the president’s January 1980 State of the Union address: “An attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the US of America, and as such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force.”

Carter’s combative national security adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski, wrote later, “The Carter Doctrine was modeled on the Truman Doctrine.” Bacevich comments that the Truman Doctrine of ostensibly containing the Soviet Union while absorbing the richer portions of the decolonizing French and British Empires “invited misinterpretation and misuse, with the Vietnam War one example of the consequences.” Carter’s doctrine, modified but not rescinded by his successors, led to similar consequences in Afghanistan and Iraq.

George W. Bush took the Carter Doctrine to fresh lengths when he made the case, prepared for him by national security adviser Condoleezza Rice, for preventive war in a speech at the US Military Academy on June 1, 2002: “If we wait for



“Miles Ignotus” aka Edward Luttwak

threats to fully materialize, we will have waited too long.” Bacevich quotes the Nuremberg court’s view of preventive war: “To initiate a war of aggression is the supreme international crime differing only from other war crimes in that it contains within itself the accumulated evil of the whole.” After the failures to impose order in Afghanistan and Iraq, President Barack Obama rather than abandon the policy, merely moved its emphasis from Iraq to Afghanistan without achieving any military or political objectives.

Bacevich, a West Point graduate and Vietnam veteran, while conceding his “undistinguished military career,” is more willing than most journalists to question the justice and utility of expanded military operations in the Middle East and to challenge the media-hyped reputations of some of America’s favorite generals, Stormin’ Norman Schwarzkopf, Colin Powell, Wesley Clark, and David Petraeus foremost.

One general who comes out well in Bacevich’s assessment is British, Sir Michael Jackson, who resisted Wesley Clark’s order to block a runway at Pristina airport against Russian flights into Kosovo. His answer, worthy of General Anthony McAuliffe’s reply of “Nuts” to the German demand for surrender at Bastogne: “Sir, I’m not starting World War III for you.”

This tour de force of a book covers the modern history of American warfare with sharp criticism of political decisions and rigorous analysis of battlefield strategy and tactics. As such, it should be required reading at the author’s alma mater. It would not hurt for those aspiring to succeed Barack Obama as commander-in-chief to dip into it as well. None of them, with the possible exception of Bernie Sanders, is likely to reject the worldview that led to so many deaths around the world. Watch for more military missions. Be prepared for more assassination by drone, of which even former Afghanistan commander General Stanley McChrystal said, “They are hated on a visceral level, even by people who’ve never seen one or seen the effects of one.” McChrystal pointed out that drone strikes are great recruiters, not for the US military, but for the Taliban, al Qaeda, and ISIS.

Ignoring Bacevich and heeding the call of the intellectual warmongers who guided Bush, Obama’s successor, like Stevie Smith’s cat, is likely “to go on being / A cat that likes to / Gallop about doing good,” expanding rather than limiting the projection of armed might into the Greater Middle East. ☆

John Medaille

The Stone Mirror of War

*Moral obtuseness led us into the delta in Vietnam
—and later the deserts of the Middle East*

I HATED IT when first I heard of it. I hated that they would dig us a trench in the ground; that they would erect a black wall. That would be our memorial. “How like the war,” I thought. “How pointless.” And so I took no interest in the Vietnam Memorial. Later I heard that they would cast a bronze statue of the soldiers. “At least,” I thought, “people will know what we looked like.”

On the day of the dedication of the memorial, I happened to be channel surfing and chanced to come upon the ceremonies. I watched for a while. One thing I had to admit: Our military may not know how to mount an operation, but they do liturgy better than the Catholic Church, and it has the power to move one. The mass display of flags, the precision close-order drill to doleful drums, the lone trumpet crying out “Taps,” and the sudden “crack” of the guns, these can still reach us. I found myself crying. I do not say “I cried”; I found myself crying. I cannot quite describe the experience. So I did what any sane man would do under the circumstances: I changed the channel. And for fifteen years I thought no more about the memorial, or the war, for



Statue of the Three Servicemen: Vietnam Veterans Memorial, West Potomac Park, Washington, DC.

that matter.

Then in 2007, I found myself in Washington with my son, and like all good tourists, we went to the mall and to the Lincoln Memorial, just a few steps from the Vietnam Memorial. Crowded around its entrance were vendors selling

the insignia of the units that served in the war. I stopped to show my son “my” insignias: the peculiar eight-pointed star (octofoil) with the circle in the middle that stood for the Ninth Infantry Division, an arrangement that earned it the title, “The Flaming Asshole”; the sword in the breach for MAC-V, the Military Assistance Command-Vietnam. These symbols I wore. My son showed polite interest. How does one explain these things to the young? The war for them is ancient history, before his time, a chapter in a book. It was neither more nor less real than the Civil

War or Troy. Maybe even less real, since Troy had Brad Pitt.

But we were near the memorial; we should see it. We passed the sculpture on our way in. “Yes,” I said, “we looked like that.” Even the bronze color was appropriate; it was our color, smoothing out the differences in race, differences that should have made no difference, but frequently did.

The monument itself is a kind of symbolic account of the war. You descend into it, just as we descended gradually into the war. It begins around your ankles, with low granite panels and you must bend down to read the names. Small panels; just a few names, just a small war. These are the names of the first to die. On other war memorials, the names are filed alphabetically, so that even in death, the soldiers are just as

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trapped in a bureaucratic filing system as they were in life. But on this monument, the names are listed in the order that they died. They are placed in their proper history, and surrounded by their comrades. Each veteran has some panels that are more his than anyone else's; each mother, each lov-

"We are training the Vietnamese Army, and as Asian boys stand up, American boys will stand down." Some Asian boys did stand up, including a single division that held up the entire North Vietnamese army for a week outside of Saigon; they gave their lives to give us time, time that was largely

The same bodyguard of lies that led us into the Delta led us into the Desert. And it will have the same end: another ditch, another stone wall, another question, "Why did I go? What did I accomplish?"

er, each son and daughter has a place on the wall that is their place in the history. It really is an historical memorial, not a stone filing cabinet of names.

The war rises to meet you. Panel by panel, you descend into the roster of the dead. Soon you are in over your head. "Now I understand," I thought, "why they dug a ditch." You look up to squint at the names on the top lines. And you notice something unusual about the names. On other monuments the names are carved into the stone, carefully chiseled deep into the granite and then polished and then perhaps even gilded. But not here. The names are scratched into the stone, barely breaking the polished surface, so that the wounded stone reveals the names. You touch the names; you feel the rough surface. It is like putting your hand into the wound. One wonders how such scratches will stand up to time and weather. Will the names fade, and the memorial become a monument to oblivion? By then none will remain with any living connection to the names; it might as well say "Septimus Servius Brutus," for all anyone will know of them; let them fade.

I read the names, as many as I can, and am embarrassed that I remember so few. A sergeant from this panel, a private from that one, a lieutenant over there. For each, I try to say a Hail Mary. I would like to say one for each one there, but I cannot say fifty-eight thousand Hail Marys; even on a good day, I can barely manage fifty. This day, I can't even do that. There are just too many. And as I read the swarm of names, my eyes lose focus, until I am no longer looking at the names, but at myself standing among them. For the black, polished surface forms a stone mirror, and soon one sees oneself standing among the roll call of the dead, a token, no doubt, of the time when your own name will be called and you must answer, in a loud, clear voice, "Present!" And then the company will be, once again, all present and accounted for. What stories will we tell each other then!

I could not avoid thinking about the new wall that must be built, the wall for the Iraq war, so much like this now ancient war. How many panels will it take, how much stone will have to be polished and scratched to list the names? How similar were the arguments, arguments that so many of us fervently believed? "We must fight them there so we don't have to fight them here!" "We are making progress; we have turned the corner; there is a light at the end of the tunnel!"

squandered. But there were not enough of them; it had become "our" war, not theirs. We were the foreigners; it was the enemy who shared their race, their language, their history.

So the same bodyguard of lies that led us into the Delta led us into the Desert. And it will have the same end: another ditch, another stone wall, another question, "Why did I go? What did I accomplish?" And, I am afraid, the same sad answers. Those who fought with us will suffer at the end, and with all our power we will be powerless to prevent it. Another group of refugees and no doubt another panicked airlift.

By a strange coincidence, at almost that same moment, as I was reflecting on the connection between the war in the Delta and the war in the Desert, our "Great Decider" was doing the same. His reflections were not mine. He was repeating the Myth of the Premature Retreat that Lost Us the War We Would Have Won. In this mythical world, a victorious nation, at the behest of Jane Fonda, resigned its victory and embraced defeat; "If only," they say, "if only we had held out a little longer!" Never mind that we held out fifteen years and fifty-eight thousand American deaths. (Vietnamese deaths will never be properly counted, but they run into the millions.) Never mind that we had more than half a million men in a country half the size of Iraq, and had trained and equipped dozens of Vietnamese divisions. The myth says we "lost" because of possibly the stupidest woman on earth, hankering as we were, no doubt, for more of her pointless movies and useless exercise tapes.

But in truth, we did not lose this serious business because of a stupid woman; rather we lost it because serious men made the business stupid. And America was patient with these men; for fifteen years, mothers watched their sons die, and young women — girls, really — reached out in longing for lost lovers, or greeted changed and crippled men who did return. Their men had taken the last train to Clarksville, and it was the last time that many of them saw their young men alive. Fifty-eight thousand body bags; I asked, somewhat bitterly, "Was that a no-bid contract?" And still they stayed with the war, these mothers, these girls, until they could stay no longer. In the end, it was neither the antics of a screen actress nor the protests of the college students, but the real grief of real women that brought the troops home, home from a contest that could not be won.

Or rather, it could not be won by us. Such wars are not won by foreigners. As outsiders, we can help one side or the other. But the wars must be won and lost by the people in the country. If Iraq really is a country and not merely an abstraction of the British Colonial Office, then the Iraqis must by their own arms decide their own fate. We can place arms in their arms, and what can be accomplished by training or logistics or the like we can accomplish for them. But they themselves must win their own battles. And ever was it thus.

This has happened in Iraqi Kurdistan, a prosperous and free corner of Iraq, free because they freed themselves. There have been comparatively few American soldiers fighting in the province, and I suspect that if there were a similar number in Baghdad, Baghdad would sort itself out in short order. And if they will have problems, as they certainly will, they are problems they will learn to deal with by means they will have to choose. In truth, every nation has one of two courses of study open to it: they can either study how to defend themselves or they can study how to be slaves.

Kurdistan is successful because we left it alone; Iraq is unsuccessful because we cannot leave it alone; and Vietnam is successful since we left it alone. This is the lesson. The problems that will arise are not problems that can be solved by scratching more names on a stone wall. They are problems caused by men who largely have no comrades on the stone mirror, and who cannot see themselves or their sons among the dead; they avoided the last war; "I had other priorities," said Dick Cheney, and the Great Decider decided not to make his National Guard meetings. But mostly, it is a war of men who cannot admit a mistake, a tragic mistake. Instead, we had a Harvard-trained MBA distinguished only by his managerial incompetence, and a corporate executive whose smirk is the very face of cynicism. That is to say, the problem is not a stone wall, but stony hearts. I would hope such hearts could be softened in the stone mirror, by a grief that identifies with weeping mothers. As I walked the wall

with my son, I imagined, for one terrible instant and without meaning to do so, seeing his name on such a wall. And for that terrible moment, I felt such a pang of grief, and all I could think of was, "What will I tell his mother?"

We need to pray for the dead, if for no other reason than for the sake of the living, and especially those living with daily danger of sudden death, death in a cause that is not our cause, and which in no case can "we" decide, no matter how great our "decider" is, no matter how much blood and treasure we decide to expend. I cannot say fifty-eight thousand Hail Marys. But what a wonderful war protest it would be if thousands gathered to take some names and pray for each one. Each one with twenty-five, or fifty, or a hundred names, whatever they could tolerate, each with a Hail Mary for that one soldier. Or for those who would prefer not to say a Hail Mary, it doesn't matter; a psalm, a sutra, a surah, or something will do as well, as long as the souls of the dead are remembered, our guilt is confessed, and God is praised. It is too late to gather to prevent the need for a new wall, but not too late to gather to see that there is no need to let the new wall grow any larger, the ditch any deeper.

What wall should we build for the new batch of dead? I suggest a labyrinth, one where visitors would enter and then spend panicked hours among the names of the dead trying to find a way out. Or perhaps we could dig some catacombs and relocate all the dead into the niches. Then we could wander among the bodies of those whom our political indifference and moral obtuseness had killed.

As we climbed out of the wall, the last man to die was at our ankles, as the first man had been. We were facing directly into the Washington Monument, its tall obelisk directing us heavenward. We circled the park to catch the whole view of the memorial, and here we saw that the wall formed a "V" which embraced the whole site in its arms. We left as we came, and passed again the bronze photograph at the entrance.

"Yes," I said, "that is what we looked like." ☆

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Murray Polner

An American Jewish-Israel Break Ahead?

DOV WAXMAN'S *Trouble in the Tribe* (Princeton) is a fair and thorough account of a growing schism between America's Israel Lobby and American Jews who refuse to remain silent about Israeli policies they find objectionable. Waxman, who teaches political science, international relations and Israel studies at Northeastern University, offers a reliable definition of the Israel Lobby, which has designated itself as "pro-Israel," implying that its critics are anti-Israel. Its permanent members include the formidable AIPAC, the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, the Zionist Organization of America, the Anti-Defamation League, and assorted miniscule clusters. It also comprises the hawkish, secular, and mainly Jewish neoconservatives, Christian Zionists, and politicians in both parties eager for Jewish money and votes.

"Only those groups and individuals that endorse Israel as a Jewish and democratic state are allowed within the communal tent — something that senior officers within the organized Jewish community have publicly stated," writes Waxman. For them, there is an inflexible "red line," ostracizing and attacking anyone who paints Israel as racist, colonialist or as an apartheid state. Interestingly, a new off-off Broadway play, *The Forbidden Conversation*, explored the growing divide, which its playwright, Gili Getz, said deals with "the difficulty of having a conversation about Israel in the American Jewish community."

The late Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg, an historian of Zionism, understood precisely what was happening when he shrewdly pointed out in 1990 that American Jewry was "an organized and aging half moving right and a younger, more liberal group increasingly abandoning Jewish organizations." As Waxman writes, "the era of uncritical American Jewish support for Israel — 'of Israel right or wrong' — is now long past," while the relatively new situation "is driven not only by changes in Israel and in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (as media reports often suggest), but also by changes within the American Jewish community itself." Assimilation, secularism, emphasis on the Jewish prophetic tradition, as well as concerns about Israel and its occupation of the Palestinian West Bank and its ever-expanding settlements have led many American Jews to question seriously

and reject their older generation's routine veneration for Israel.

Much earlier, my immigrant family, at least those who survived the mass murder of Jews during Russia's post-First World War civil war and the Second World War's Nazi invasion of Russia, fervently supported the emergence of a Jewish country promising democracy and freedom and security for Jews. I, too, was thrilled, dancing the hora with friends on the Staten Island ferry on May 14, 1948, the day the State of Israel was proclaimed. And when Israel's military decisively defeated Arab armies, millions of proud American Jews were deeply affected. After the victorious Six-Day War in 1967, I saw posters in local stores which depicted General Moshe Dayan dressed in a Superman costume.

When Israel's Prime Minister Netanyahu preaches about "existential" dangers facing Israel and reminds everyone that Israel resides in a very perilous region, he draws on endemic fears of renewed anti-Semitic attacks. In truth, though, most American Jews were never Zionists, as Jack Ross's searching *Rabbi Outcast: Elmer Berger and American Jewish Anti-Zionism* makes clear. Most American Jews were instead New Dealers, Communists, Socialists, Territorialists, Bundists, conservatives, and classical Reform Jews. But when they learned about the Mengeles, Eichmanns, Babi Yars, the murder of one and a half million children, Zyklon B, and that no messiahs, real or spiritual, had arrived to rescue them, that all changed. For American Jewry after the Holocaust, Israel became synonymous with hope, redemption, security and intense loyalty, hence the founding of AIPAC to promote Israel's interests in Washington.

Yet there always were dissenting, though generally ignored, Zionist voices. In 1891, Ahad Ha'am (Asher Ginsberg), the pre-Israel Zionist and Hebrew essayist, visited Palestine and wisely cautioned early Jewish settlers that a revival of a Jewish nation was advisable and worthwhile only if the Jews did not behave as other xenophobic nationalists had and did not treat local Arabs as less than human. During the Thirties the philosopher Martin Buber and the pacifist Rabbi Judah Magnes, Hebrew University's first chancellor and later president, and other Israeli Zionists formed short-lived groups in favor of forming a bi-national state of Arabs and Jews. Today, small Israeli groups, such as Gush Shalom, support a viable Palestinian state alongside Israel; but they grow smaller and less influential with each passing year as Israe-

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li's governments turn further right.

Peter Beinart, an American Jewish liberal Zionist, has reflected the growing disquiet about Israel and the organized American Jewish establishment in his book, *The Crisis of Zionism*, and other writings. He has observed that American Jewish organizations have abandoned once-traditional support for working people, minorities, and civil liberties, pivoting instead to defending Israel against groups supposedly intent on "delegitimization" — a vague and pet word in the Israel Lobby's vocabulary. Most shockingly, and truthfully, Beinart told fellow Jews they need "to accept that in both America and Israel we live in an age not of Jewish weakness, but of Jewish power, and that without moral vigilance, Jews will abuse power just as hideously as anyone else."

Waxman wonders if Beinart has inflated the number of American Jews alienated from Israel, but he rightly points out that no one in the Israel Lobby has effectively challenged Beinart's portrayal of the "American Jewish Establishment, particularly groups like the Conference of Presidents, AIPAC, and the ADL as merely a mouthpiece of Israeli governments, and acting like 'intellectual bodyguards for Israeli leaders who threaten the very liberal values they profess to admire.'"

A classic example of the continuing struggle in the US dates to 1973 when Bob Loeb founded Breira ("Alternatives"), which called for recognition of Palestinian statehood, or what is now more commonly called the two-state solution. This was heresy to a community and its guardians which had rarely criticized Israel. Breira was bitterly assailed as "pro-PLO" and its members as "self-hating Jews." It reluctantly disbanded in 1977. In recent years the struggle has often centered on college campuses with fights over BDS (the boycott, divestment and sanctions movement) and Israel. Claiming that Jewish students are suffering from anti-Semitism today, AMCHA Initiative, one of several such groups supportive of Israel, has published a list of more than 200 "Anti-Israel Middle East Studies Professors" in US colleges and universities whom it considers biased against Israel for having signed a petition "to boycott Israeli academic institutions." A few of the signers had Jewish surnames.

Jeremy Ben-Ami, founder of the opposition center-left organization J Street, which claims to be "pro-Israel" and "pro-peace," is quoted by Waxman as describing the crackdown on Jewish dissidents: "All across the country rabbis, Hillel directors, and other organizational leaders are forced to consider whether they can or want to deal with the headaches, slander and vitriol from conservative voices in their community before they think of giving a platform to views outside the party line." Waxman illustrates the absurdity of the censorship when writing about "the



Peter Beinart: "[I]n both America and Israel we live in an age not of Jewish weakness, but of Jewish power, and that without moral vigilance, Jews will abuse power just as hideously as anyone else."

performance of a feminist punk rock group at a music festival organized by the Washington, DC, JCC [Jewish Community Center] which was cancelled because its lead singer was critical of Zionism." To all this, the novelist Anne Roiphe memorably reminded her fellow Jews (in a magazine I once edited) that, "Not since Holland's Jews read Spinoza out of the people, have Jews so quickly drawn lines of who is acceptable and who is outside, and used those lines one against another."

Backing for every Israeli action and policy may be eroding when one considers two recent confessional articles written by former leaders of organized Jewry after publication of Waxman's book. Seymour Reich, a onetime chair of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, writing in the *New York Jewish Week*, the nation's largest Jewish-interest newspaper, condemned Israel's "assault on democratic values and its use and support of legislation and incitement to strike down dissent. Speech, press, religion and academic freedoms are under relentless attack and are being eroded.... The same damage is being inflicted by Israel's policies regarding Palestinians." And David Gordis, president emeritus of Hebrew College, professor of rabbinics, and former head of the American Jewish Committee, pointed out in the Jewish magazine *Tikkun* that Israel has "subordinated" Judaism's values to its "cruel and oppressive occupation, an emphatic materialism, severe inequalities rivaling the worst in the Western world and distorted by a fanatic, obscurantist and fundamentalist religion." He concluded: "So, sadly, after a life and career devoted to the Jewish Community and Israel, I conclude that in every important way Israel has failed to realize its promise for me. A noble experiment, but a failure."

Trouble in the Tribe is a valuable road map to an ongoing and very important conflict. ☆

Lori Clune

The Rosenberg Lie

SIXTY-FIVE YEARS AGO this season, Judge Irving Kaufman settled into his courtroom chair, turned to Julius and Ethel Rosenberg and sentenced them to death. They were traitors, he explained, guilty of “putting into the hands of the Russians the A-bomb years before our best scientists predicted Russia would perfect the bomb.” And by empowering the Soviets they had caused Communist aggression in Korea — where American casualties topped fifty thousand and increased daily. A jury — hardly of their peers since there were no Jews on it — had convicted the New York City couple of conspiracy to commit espionage. In June 1953, after nearly two years of appeals, prison officials executed the Rosenbergs in the Sing Sing Prison electric chair, making orphans of their two young sons, Michael and Robert.

Truman administration officials were convinced that the couple needed to die because they handed “the secret” of the atomic bomb to the Soviet Union and, empowered with the bomb, the Communists had encouraged North Korea to invade South Korea in 1950. US and UN troops countered this aggression in a bloody police action. Most Americans believed their government officials. So did Judge Kaufman, who used the charges to justify the death sentences. The only problem was, the accusations were false.

Judge Kaufman, a prickly, demanding adjudicator, took the packed courtroom on a lengthy trek to rationalize the death sentence. He argued that espionage — “sordid, dirty work” which included “the betrayal of one’s country” — de-



Ethel and Julius Rosenberg, separated by heavy wire screen as they leave U.S. Court House after being found guilty by jury.

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served the maximum sentence. He explained the penalty for espionage was up to thirty years in prison — or death if committed during wartime — and since the prosecution proved the conspiracy began during World War II, the judge argued, the executions were justified. Kaufman focused, however, on a different war — the “life and death struggle” of the Cold War — to defend the harsh treatment of the “traitors in our midst.” Soviet Communism threatened “our very existence,” Kaufman argued, and he chose a severe sentence as a warning to others engaged in espionage. Leniency towards the Rosenbergs, he explained, “would violate the solemn and sacred trust that the people of this land have placed in my hands” and be interpreted as a sign of weakness overseas.

The judge admitted that sentencing a young mother to death required further explanation. While Julius “was the prime mover in this conspiracy,” Kaufman explained, “let no mistake be made about the role which his wife, Ethel Rosenberg. Instead of deterring him from pursuing his ignoble cause, she encouraged and assisted the cause. She was a mature woman, almost three years older than her husband, and” — despite much evidence to the contrary — “she was a full fledged partner in this crime.”

But Kaufman saved his strongest argument, the final nail in the Rosenbergs’ coffin, for the end: Korea. In justifying his decision, he blamed the “arch criminals in this nefarious scheme” for instigating North Korea’s invasion of South Korea. He considered their crime “worse than murder” and predicted “millions more of innocent people may pay the price of your treason.” The jury had declared the couple guilty of conspiracy to commit espionage, but the judge appeared to be sentencing them to death for treason.

The Rosenbergs did not hand an atomic bomb to the Soviets. The information Julius provided came from his brother-in-law, David Greenglass. An army mechanic, Greenglass did not have an advanced understanding of nuclear physics and could only supply rudimentary material. While scholars continue to debate the importance of the atomic information Julius Rosenberg forwarded to the Soviets, they probably got little to nothing that was new.

Historians continue to debate what likely prompted North Korea to launch a sizeable offensive into South Korea in June 1950, but evidence indicates that the invasion was *not* the result of the Soviet Union’s plan to expand Communism. Stalin had repeatedly rejected North Korea’s plan for invasion, including just after the Soviet’s first successful atomic bomb test in August 1949, presumably when Stalin was feeling strong and confident. The Soviet leader finally relented in January 1950, crediting the importance of the Communist victory in China the previous year. Mao and his troops were now ready, willing, and able to provide support in Korea if necessary. Stalin also doubted any US intervention, agreeing with North Korea that they would enjoy a quick victory before the Americans had time to get involved. After Secretary of State Dean Acheson gave a speech in early 1950 that appeared to exclude Korea from the US “defense perimeter,” American involvement seemed even less likely. The evidence

does not indicate that Stalin ordered the invasion because he was emboldened by possession of atomic weaponry. Yet that is the narrative that US government officials believed.

The 1951 trial was a mess, plagued with irregularities and illegalities. Truman’s Justice Department prosecution team committed acts of misconduct, the judge violated the judicial code of ethics, the defense performed with minimal competence, and the US Supreme Court’s subsequent review of the case proved inadequate. After President Eisenhower twice denied clemency, prison officials electrocuted the couple on June 19, 1953.

Julius Rosenberg did not hand atomic bomb blueprints to the Communists or cause the Korean War, as Judge Kaufman had asserted. He did, however, run a sizable spy ring that funneled military secrets to the Soviet Union from 1944 to 1950. We know now that Kaufman, in consultation with the Justice Department, handed down the death sentence to pressure Julius into confessing — he would name his fellow spies and they would spare the life of his wife and the mother of his children. This effort failed. Up until Julius and Ethel’s final moments the FBI was prepared to listen. The couple called their bluff and went to their deaths instead — and dead spies don’t talk.

The executions also tarnished America’s image abroad. While the majority of Americans believed the Truman administration’s assertions, recently discovered State Department documents expose a widespread protest movement that erupted in eighty-four cities in forty-eight countries around the world. Allies across the globe — even those who accepted the couple’s guilt — saw the executions as senseless violence motivated by paranoid anti-Communism. During the Cold War, American administrations worried about the spread of Communism at home and overseas, and were horrified at the prospect of leaving the homeland vulnerable to a devastating nuclear attack. Protesters accused U.S. government officials of allowing those real fears to cloud their judgment regarding the Rosenbergs.

Cold War terror and paranoia drove federal officials to prosecute the only spies they could get their hands on. Federal officials, most Americans, and Judge Irving Kaufman, all subscribed to the false narrative that Julius and Ethel Rosenberg handed the secret of the atomic bomb to the Soviets and thus emboldened Stalin to order North Korea to invade its neighbor to the south. But they were wrong. ✧

*Our next issue of SHALOM will appear in September.
With best wishes to all for a peaceful and refreshing summer,
The Editors*

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Roots of Jewish Nonviolence

Not by might, not by power, but by my spirit, says the Lord of Hosts. — *Zechariah 4:6*

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger of good tidings who announces peace. — *Isaiah, 52:7*

Our theology, our ethics, our history, and our vision of the world's purpose all bind us to the belief that we must make the world a better place.

— *Rabbi Philip Bentley, Honorary Chair, JPF*

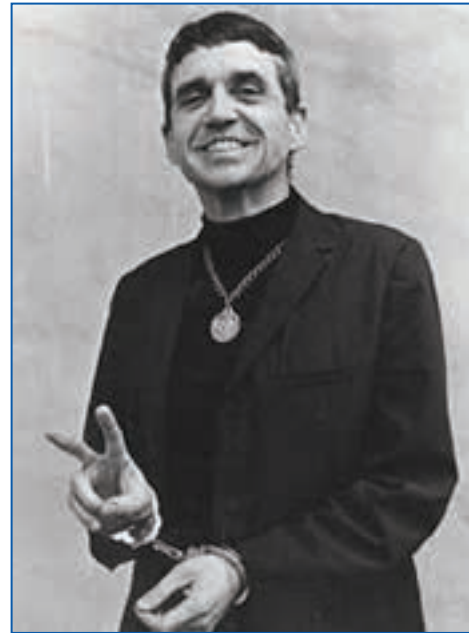
Nothing will end war unless the people themselves refuse to go to war. — *Albert Einstein*

And in fond memory of peacemaker Daniel Berrigan, S.J., here is Dan himself:

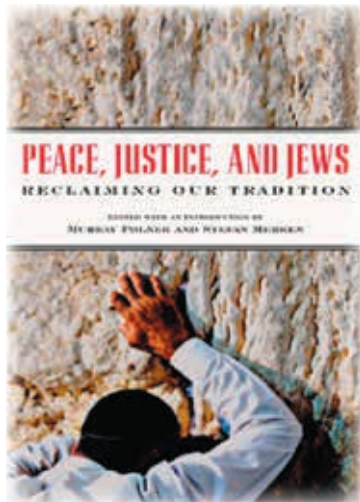
The only message I have to the world is: We are not allowed to kill innocent people. We are not allowed to be complicit in murder. We are not allowed to be silent while preparations for mass murder proceed in our name, with our money, secretly.

To which Dan's friend John Dear, S.J., wrote in his moving essay "The Life and Death of Daniel Berrigan":

Thank you, Dan. May we all take heart from your astonishing peacemaking life, and carry on the work to abolish war, poverty and nuclear weapons.



The Rev. Daniel Berrigan (1921-2016)



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