



Jerusalem 7:07; Toronto 8:42

Commentary...

Judges Play Soldier By Evelyn Gordon

A ruling that satisfies both petitioners and respondents seemingly has much to recommend it. Nevertheless, one cannot overlook certain problematic elements of last week's High Court ruling on the separation fence.

To its credit, the court unequivocally recognized Israel's right – anchored in the 1907 Hague Regulations and the 1949 Geneva Convention – to build a defensive barrier in the West Bank. Nor was this mere lip service: It approved sections of the fence that lay east of the Green Line, while disallowing others that followed the Green Line closely.

Its assertion that the fence's benefits must nevertheless be balanced against Palestinian rights was equally unassailable. All democracies accept such tradeoffs, and Israel is no exception.

The court's method of striking this balance, however, was extremely problematic.

First, it consistently framed the conflict as one between "military considerations" and "humanitarian law" – i.e. between the army's tactics and Palestinians' inalienable rights. The real conflict, however, is not between rights and tactics, but between competing rights: Israeli and Palestinian. Since the fence's primary purpose is to protect lives, Israelis' right to life is obviously at stake. But equally relevant are Israelis' right to a livelihood and freedom of movement – the very Palestinian rights that the court viewed as decisive.

Many of Israel's almost 300,000 unemployed are jobless because of the intifada. Repeated bombings at malls, restaurants and nightclubs have led many Israelis to prefer staying home, causing thousands of such businesses to close and throwing tens of thousands of people out of work. If the fence succeeds in stopping bombers, this trend will reverse. If it fails, high unemployment will continue. Thus Israeli livelihoods are at stake in this dispute as surely as Palestinian livelihoods are.

Furthermore, the ruling disallowed a key section of fence designed to protect Route 443, the main Modi'in-Jerusalem highway, which has suffered numerous fatal shooting attacks. Since a reasonable fear of being shot is quite as effective a deterrent to travel as the delays caused by physical roadblocks, thousands of Israelis in the Modi'in region now commute to schools and jobs in Jerusalem via the main Tel Aviv-Jerusalem Highway – a much longer route.

The resulting increase in traffic has also significantly lengthened commuting times on the Tel Aviv highway. If, as the court ruled, longer travel times caused by the fence infringe on Palestinian freedom of movement, then longer travel times caused by failure to protect Route 443 similarly infringe on Israelis' freedom of movement.

The fence's original route might still harm Palestinian rights more than moving it would harm Israeli rights. But one cannot strike a proper balance without considering both. That, however, is precisely what the court did: In a verdict laden with rhetoric about Palestinian rights, there is not one word about competing Israeli rights.

Moreover, having eliminated Israeli rights from the picture, the court inevitably awarded Palestinian rights virtually absolute status: Rights usually trump mere tactics. Thus, for instance, when Beit Anan residents claimed that the fence would separate them from 6,000 dunams (about 1,500 acres) of cultivated land and uproot 18,000 olive trees, while the army claimed that it would separate them from only 1,245 dunams of land and uproot 3,500 trees, the justices declared this factual dispute irrelevant, since in either case, the damage is "great." Their failure even to mention what percentage of Beit Anan's total land these figures represented – something crucial to determining the degree of harm – is itself a telling indication of their absolutist approach. Yet whatever the percentage, a fivefold gap between the residents' claims and those of the army – which is the difference between, say, 10 and 50 percent of their lands, or 20 and 100 percent – can be irrelevant only if you deem virtually any harm to Palestinian rights unacceptable.

Most worrisome, however, was the court's unprecedented willingness to overrule the army's judgment on purely military matters. The justices themselves acknowledged that the army willingly altered the fence's route whenever it thought an alternative would provide a lesser but still reasonable degree of security; it refused only when it believed that alternatives did not provide even minimally adequate security.

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In one section, for instance, the army deemed it essential that the fence be built on a topographically dominant hilltop, since otherwise gunmen would be able to fire from this hill both at soldiers patrolling the fence and at Route 443. In another, it said the proposed alternative route was so steep that vehicles would be unable to patrol the fence.

Nevertheless, the court disallowed some 30 kilometers of the 40-kilometer stretch in question – in each case, on the grounds that alternate routes did provide reasonable, albeit reduced, security.

Thus the justices – despite declaring that they "are not experts in military affairs" and therefore "do not substitute our discretion for that of the military commander" – overruled the army's judgment on the purely military question of what constitutes a minimally adequate level of security.

If they did so based on their own inexpert judgment, that is obviously problematic. More likely, however, they relied on the Council for Peace and Security (CPS), a group of retired military officers that proposed alternate routes to the court.

Yet that is no less problematic – because it would violate what the court itself deemed the long-standing principle of giving greater weight to experts who bear bottom-line responsibility than to experts who bear no such responsibility. This principle is rooted in a fundamental law of human nature: that people invest far more care in decision-making when they are responsible for the consequences than when they are not.

If the fence proves a security flop, the government and the army will be blamed, not the court or the CPS. Thus whether the justices relied on their own judgment or that of the CPS, this ruling set a dangerous precedent of allowing people who bear no responsibility for the outcomes of their decisions to overrule the military judgment of those who do. And that precedent is liable to have far-reaching consequences for Israel's security. (Jerusalem Post Jun 6)

So Ahmed, We'll Meet in Kfar Malal? By Chaim Misgav

The prime minister is resolute: he wants to carry out his plan to evacuate all the Jews from Gush Katif at any price. What will happen afterwards, he doesn't really know. But that, apparently, is not all that important to him.

There are hundreds of thousands of "refugees" who have been in the Gaza Strip for decades, whose only desire is to "return" to the homes that they left in 1948, in Ashkelon, Ashdod, Beer Sheva, who will not likely view the Jews fleeing as a gesture of good will. The "Egyptian advisors", much like those "Soviet advisors" who were in Egypt on the eve of the Yom Kippur war, doubtless have no intention of making life harder for those who wish to continue the war of independence of the "Palestinian nation", until all of the "conquered lands" are freed. What is happening now in Sderot will happen tomorrow, in all likelihood, in Ashkelon after the disengagement becomes a painful reality.

The entire Arab world will view this as fleeing under fire, a sign that the Jews can be driven out, essentially, from any place, if enough pressure is applied. The "refugees" that are still living in the "refugee camps" for more than 60 years after our war of independence, will understand undoubtedly that the Jews who returned to their lands after many years of Diaspora still don't really believe in their right to this place.

The "refugees", who hold the keys to the homes that they abandoned in Jaffa and Haifa, in Ramle and in Lod, will start to believe that the "right of return" is not just an empty promise by the leaders who abandoned them, or some dream; rather it is a reality that is taking shape before their very eyes. The images of trucks upon which the Jews who refuse to be evacuated from their homes will be heaped by force, will be broadcast around the world. Everyone who sees them will see the similarities between what happened to the Jews in World War II and what is happening to them today now at the hands of their own brethren.

Ariel Sharon must realize all this – but he "can't see further than the bridge of his nose", all those who have been trying to explain to him that in the Middle East, "evacuation plans" are not widely seen as gestures of good will on the path to peace, but rather as acts of cowardice and fear, a mental caving in that invites more pressure in hopes that more "fleeing" and more "gestures" will come before the "long awaited peace" arrives – without Jews, without Jewish sovereignty and without the "Zionist state", which banishes innocent Arabs from their land, Arabs who never wanted anything but to

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live alongside the Zionists.

Many people will counter, of course, that Ariel Sharon, who was a glorious general in his youth, cannot be so stupid as to believe that if he exiles Jews from the Gaza Strip, he will raise the level of security in Sderot and in the western Negev, or that the settlements in northern Samaria are only just a security burden. But it's happened in the past. It happened in other countries and it's happening before our eyes right now. Generals get older, and sometimes wish to strike from their resume all sorts of questionable episodes in their career, and they do all they can to end up their lives with some kind of accord of general agreement.

It hasn't worked anywhere else in the world, and it's not going to work for us either. David Ben-Gurion loved the "Arik-hero-of-Israel" thing despite the fact that he was caught lying, and not just once. Ben Gurion, as we all know, also worshipped Moshe Dayan - and kicked Yigal Allon out for him to take his place - despite the fact that he was also a "wild card". These two glorious stallions made a name for us amongst our neighbors all those years ago - but they also broke a lot of rules in the process. Much has already been written about Moshe Dayan in this area; Ariel Sharon, however, has only recently had his activities more closely scrutinized.

In a book of conversations with Shimon Peres that I published recently (called "Not the Same Sea") the aging leader, known for his friendship with Ariel Sharon, told me that on the eve of the Lebanon War, he met with then Prime Minister Menachem Begin as head of the opposition, and that his impression at the time was that the then minister of defense, none other than Ariel Sharon, was not telling the prime minister the whole truth.

Similar and contradictory stories like this about Ariel Sharon abound, but that is not what's important right now: We must now find, before it is too late, a coalition of 61 MKs who will send Ariel Sharon packing to Sycamore ranch. It won't be so bad. If he retires to there before the withdrawal from Gaza, then there is a chance that he will be able to live out his remaining years without the constant background whistle of incoming missiles fired from Gaza. If not, then he can always go home to his parent's house in Kfar Malal.

There, the Arabs may only get to in a couple of years. (Ma'ariv Jul 5)

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The Perpetual Motion of Theodor Herzl By Hillel Halkin

This week marks the 100th anniversary of the death of Theodor Herzl. Herzl died young, at the age of 44. Although it is tempting to speculate how much more he might have accomplished had he lived longer, it is more likely that he would have accomplished less. He only managed to do what he did in the nine hectic years between writing *The Jewish State* and dying of complications from a heart condition by living at an unsustainable pace.

"I gave my heart's blood for my people," he said to a bedside visitor not long before his death, and for once this greatest of political and diplomatic poker players, who bluffed his way through high-stakes pot after pot without a single strong card in his hand, was not exaggerating.

Herzl created the international movement called Zionism from practically nothing. There were Zionists long before him, of course, not only in the traditional sense of Jewish longers for and dreamers of Zion, but in the guise of several thousand modern Jewish colonists in Palestine and their supporters. Yet the latter represented a tiny fraction of the Jewish people, and were taken seriously by few. Even their one major backer, the French-Jewish philanthropist Baron Edmond de Rothschild, considered them more a charitable cause than a revolutionary movement. They had no masses of Jews behind them, no effective organization, no political clout, no long-term strategy, no publicity no international interest. Nor did it occur to them that they might create a reality based on such things.

It occurred to Herzl. Yet what made him unique was not so much his belief in this reality, which led him to declare prophetically at the First Zionist Congress, organized by him in 1898, that there would be a Jewish state within 50 years. His genius, long before radio and television, lay in understanding that in an age of rapid mass communication, of telegrams, daily newspapers and commercial advertising, reality was created through illusion.

Any normally sensible person could have told him that if you wanted to build a successful Zionist movement, you had to spend years, country by country, in organizing Zionist branches, recruiting members, raising funds, building an infrastructure. Herzl saw it differently. First, he thought, announce a gala congress to celebrate this non-existent movement's success; and then, at breakneck speed, use the electrifying effect of the announcement to get the branches, members, funds and infrastructure to materialize in time.

He was a prestidigitator, a jongleur. He knew that if you juggle three balls in the air they look like five; that five look like 10; that seven, if you can manage them, look like 20 - and that none, as long as they remain in the air, can be examined to see if they are real.

The Turkish sultan owned Palestine and didn't want Jews but needed international loans? Then convince him you could deliver those loans even if you didn't have a penny to your name, and then convince Rothschild you were the sultan's best friend. Kaiser Wilhelm didn't give a hoot for Zionism but was eager to expand German influence in the East? Then make him believe that the loan you were obtaining for the sultan could lead to a German protectorate over millions of Palestinian Jews. It didn't matter that Rothschild, the sultan, and the kaiser all laughed and thought you were mad. You had gotten to speak to one

of them, had an audience with another, and met the third face-to-face - three more balls in the air with which to hold your audience spellbound. What mattered was to keep the balls moving.

There was a time when, like certain Zionist intellectuals of his day, I tended to be dismissive of Herzl. He was a performer, a theatrical artist, even a bit of a clown - certainly not a heavyweight Jewish thinker. Jewishly speaking, indeed, he was an am ha'aretz. He knew no Hebrew, was unversed in Jewish culture, had only a superficial knowledge of religious tradition. Although I didn't much care for Herzl's contemporary Ahad Ha'am and his "cultural Zionism" with its disdain for Jewish power, I agreed with Ahad Ha'am's criticism of Herzl as a Westjude - an assimilated Viennese Jew out of touch with the deeper currents of Jewish life and history. To a serious Jew, Herzl was something of an embarrassment.

And was he really so important? After all, the Jews didn't need him to tell them about anti-Semitism. They didn't need him to tell them that their situation was desperate. They didn't even need him to tell them that they needed a state of their own to protect them. Zionism would have become a mass movement in the Jewish world without Herzl, too, and Jewish settlement in Palestine - the details of which never interested him much because he was fixated on the larger picture - would have proceeded apace. Perhaps it would have taken a bit longer, perhaps a few more years would have been required, but a Jewish state in Palestine would have been established in the end anyway.

Today, this seems to me shallow thinking. Its fallacy lies in the seemingly innocent phrase "a few more years." It assumes that, in the period between 1898 and 1948, the Jewish people had a few more years. It didn't. Zionism was a race against time, and one that was almost lost. (In terms of the Holocaust, it was lost.) Let us imagine for a moment that there had been no Herzl, and that the first Zionist congress had been held not in 1898 but in 1910. This would have meant that the Zionist movement would not have been strong enough to elicit the Balfour Declaration from the British in 1917; that the gates of Palestine would not have been opened to Jews after the British conquest of the country in 1918; that even if they had been, they probably would have been shut again soon under Arab pressure; and that, in any case, the Jewish population of the country would not have reached the critical mass that it had in 1948, when Israel was established with international approval - after which, the British decolonization of the Middle East and the creation of independent Arab Palestine would have put an end to the Zionist dream for good.

Every year in this race counted. Even if Herzl's jump-starting of the historical process saved only a decade, that decade was crucial. He was indeed an illusionist - and the illusions he created made all the difference. He had to stay in constant motion to maintain them, and this is what he did until he dropped. (Jerusalem Post Jun 5)

Solidarity With Terror By Lee Kaplan

This June I attended a "training session" of the International Solidarity Movement (ISM), an organization of volunteers whose purpose is to obstruct Israeli defense forces attempting to protect the civilian population from terrorist acts. The ISM was set up by the Palestinians after Arafat broke off the Oslo peace talks and launched the second intifada. Its organizers were Ghassan Andoni, a physics professor from Bir Zeit University in the West Bank, and Palestinian activists George Rishmawi and George Qassis. The idea was to bring in international volunteers, mostly radical students from the United States, Canada and Europe, as "nonviolent peace activists" who would interfere with the Israeli army's anti-terrorist operations. If the volunteers were injured or arrested, the international repercussions would be detrimental to Israel, a propaganda win for the PLO. The operation costs the Palestine Authority very little since many of the radical volunteers pay their own transportation costs and live in the homes of Palestinians during their stays in the Middle East.

The ISM made international headlines when one of its activists, Rachel Corrie, a college radical from Olympia, Washington, was killed while attempting to block an Israeli bulldozer. The bulldozer was attempting to destroy tunnels from the Gaza strip through which the terrorists imported weapons and explosives. Corrie became a martyr to the cause, and inspiration to other radicals to follow.

The most visible American figure in the International Solidarity Movement is Adam Shapiro, a Brooklyn Jew and college radical, who became a human shield for Yasser Arafat when the Israeli army surrounded Arafat's Ramallah compound following the massacre of 30 Israelis - some of them Holocaust survivors -- at a Passover seder, shortly after the Intifada was launched. When I interviewed him last year, Shapiro told me point blank that he does not consider himself a Jew. He is married to Huwaida Arraf, a Palestinian-American activist from Michigan whose father holds Israeli citizenship. They have become the spokespeople for the ISM in the United States. In articles on the ISM website where they discuss their goals of dismantling Israel by supporting Palestinian terrorists they use euphemisms such as "legitimate resistance" or support for "legitimate armed struggle" while claiming that they are nonviolent. The ISM uses as its motto "by any means necessary."

Such means include the hiding of terrorists like Shadi Sukiya, who was arrested in an ISM office in the West Bank. An arms cache was also found in an ISM office. Two suicide bombers gained entry for their murderous

agendas under the auspices of the ISM. These Pakistani Muslims from Great Britain entered Israel through Jordan as clients of the Alternative Tourism Group, an operation set up by Andoni to aid ISM volunteers coming to Israel. They then met with the ISM at their offices for an entire day in Gaza before proceeding on to Tel Aviv where they bombed a popular beach bar, Mike's Place, killing three people.

In the last three years the ISM has developed an extensive presence in the United States, while operating under several organizational names to avoid unwanted scrutiny of its operations. One of these entities, Al Awda (the Return in Arabic), is also known as the Palestine Right to Return Coalition (PRRC). It is led by Mazen Qumsiyeh, a Yale geneticist. There are Al Awda chapters all over the United States, particularly in the vicinities of U.S. college campuses. Other ISM groups under the name SUSTAIN (Stop U.S. Taxpayer Assistance to Israel Now) operate in Los Angeles and New York. In New Jersey, the ISM supporters call themselves Palsolidarity. When the volunteers go to the Middle East to aid the PLO they go under the umbrella name of the International Solidarity Movement. When they hold events in the U.S. and Canada they call themselves the Palestine Solidarity Movement.

The party line, however, is always the same. The right of so-called Palestinian refugees to return to Israel is "unconditional" and Israel itself must become "Palestine." The number of actual refugees from that part of the former Ottoman empire where Israel was established in 1948 was 600,000, most of whom are no longer alive. The number of refugees the Palestine Authority now recognizes is close to 5 million. The population of Israel is 6 million, including 1 million Israeli Arabs. The math is simple and the desired result: the liquidation of the Jewish state.

At the Palestine Solidarity Conference held at Ohio State last year, Adam Shapiro told me that the ISM has Palestinian "handlers," or undercover supervisors at all demonstrations against Israel. These supervisors direct attacks against the separation fence that is being built to keep suicide bombers and armed terrorists from infiltrating into Israel and other targets. One of the handlers leading the current attacks on the security fence at the start of this summer's campaign is a veteran of the Marxist terrorist group PLFP named Hisham Jam Joun. The ISM website, www.palsolidarity.org, openly proclaims that the organization is "Palestinian-led."

I signed up for the ISM training session, after seeing their Internet announcement calling for volunteers for their new campaign, which they called "Freedom Summer 2004," after the nonviolent campaign of the civil rights movement in the American south in the 1960's. There were similar announcements on local websites run by the ISM all over the United States.

The phone number I dialed put me in touch with Paul LaRudee, a 68 year-old retired Berkeley professor who, along with his Lebanese wife, has been a leader of the ISM movement in the Bay Area. LaRudee assured me that they welcomed everybody, no matter how old or inexperienced. "Most of our volunteers are in their sixties," he said. I was advised if I wanted to train with the ISM I needed to attend an orientation lecture at The New College of San Francisco which was being given by an Arab-American named Jess Ghannam, a psychoanalyst and professor at the University of California Medical School.

Ghannam's lecture was a two hour diatribe, reviewing the history of the Middle East. It was so pathologically anti-Israel that it even reversed the famous slogan of the PLO, originating with Arafat's uncle the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem that the goal of Palestinian liberation was to "drive the Jews into the sea." In Ghannam's version it was the Jews who intended to drive the Arabs into the sea, though how this could be done with 200 million people he failed to explain.

Ghannam concluded his lecture by telling a story about an Israeli soldier who asked him for his ID card when he was at a checkpoint in the West Bank. The young soldier noticed that Ghannam was from the San Francisco Bay Area and, being friendly, mentioned he'd gone to Mt. Tamalpais High School near Ghannam's home. "Imagine!" Ghannam said indignantly, "This soldier, a Jew born in the United States, had the nerve to ask me for my ID on my land!" Yet Ghannam had told us in the beginning of the lecture that he was also born in the United States.

The following Saturday morning, June 12th, I arrived for my actual training. The session was held at 2263 Mission Street in San Francisco, a ratty storefront theater in a rundown area of the city that had a folding grid gate barring the entrance from the public.

About ten of us showed up, counting both volunteers and trainers. Before we were allowed to enter the storefront, however, we had to go through a simulated interrogation by an "Israeli border guard" impersonated by a woman named Jamie, who was a social worker for the city of San Francisco.

Jamie took her role very seriously. We learned later that she was an ISM veteran, having been a volunteer in Israel two years earlier as a member of San Francisco's Jews For A Free Palestine (JFFP) and would be going again this summer. Jamie went through my belongings and, on finding my notes from the ISM orientation lecture, asked me why an Arabic name like Jess Ghannam appeared in my notebook. Playing the game, I replied that I thought Jess was a Christian name and that I had no idea that Ghannam was an Arab. She asked me what hotel I was staying at in Israel, to which I replied the Sheraton. She allowed me to pass inside, and then turned to the next sign-up.

After everyone passed through the interrogation ritual, the gate was secured with a big padlock so nobody could get in or out. We were told we were in there for the entire day with just a brief break for lunch, a potluck meal which we had all been asked to contribute to.

Now that we had entered "Israel," Jamie continued with the instruction. She

had us form a circle and then led a discussion of the "border checkpoint" we'd just been through. I was told I did the right thing to get past the guard by lying that I had not realized Ghannam was an Arabic name and making up the hotel, since I would be actually staying with Palestinians. In other words, the ISM training session began with the idea of breaking the law to enter a democratic country by deceiving its border guards. In fact, everything we were instructed to do in the course of our training while we were in Israel would involve some form of breaking Israeli law.

Jamie then handed out ISM training manuals, big thick white notebooks containing eight sections, a text designed for would be infiltrators and subversives. Inside were articles authored by radical groups like the War Resisters League, Act Up, Direct Action and a several "anti-global" organizations. There were also internal ISM documents. They contained valuable information on how to disrupt the Israeli law enforcement and defense officials as effectively as possible. Jamie admonished us, "You see what it might be like when you try to enter Israel. Don't bring your manuals with you!"

We then introduced ourselves. The first in the circle to do so was Mahera, a Palestinian-American woman in her late twenties who we were told would also be training us.

Mahera told everyone she works for the San Francisco office of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC). I learned later that our orientation lecturer, Jess Ghannam, was on the Board of Directors of the San Francisco chapter of the same organization, which bills itself as a non-profit civil rights advocacy group for Muslims and Arab-Americans. Glancing through my manual I noticed it referred us to "the ADC reader."

Many will be familiar with the ADC through its communications director, Hussein Ibish, who frequently appears on television talk shows, and promotes the ADC as a civil rights organization for Muslim-Americans in no way involved with aiding Middle East terrorism.

As Adam Shapiro had informed me earlier, the group was told that the ISM is a Palestinian-led movement and that we were under the leadership of the Palestinians who had professional handlers to oversee what we would be doing. Once we were in the West Bank there would be veteran ISM leaders to guide us, but that the Palestinian handlers had ultimate control.

The first woman in the circle identified herself as Barbara Miles, who said her maiden name was Zakasia and that she was Lebanese-American. Barbara described how she had visited Syria to support of the regime there. She asked if having "Syria" stamped on her passport would prevent her from getting into Israel. "Get a new passport," Jamie advised. "It's easy."

The next to introduce himself was Ian Trenallio who was from Lake Tahoe and wore a T-shirt that said "anti-hate, anti-capitalist, anti-Zionist." Ian told us he formerly had lived in San Pablo, a suburb of Berkeley. He had recently been to Tijuana, he said, to protest economic globalization and now he wanted to "help the Palestinians." "Don't say to the border guard you are there to help the Palestinians!" Jamie interjected. "The goal is to have the Israeli guards think you are a tourist. The Israeli economy is hurting because the war has killed tourism and we want to take advantage of that."

Next to contribute was Christina Cruz, an Argentine national who was a student in the U.S. She expressed concern that she would have to go into debt to join "Freedom Summer." She wanted to "help" people and further the cause of human rights. It was still hard for me to understand the equation - helping terrorists and human rights.

Because of my interest in pro-Palestinian bias of university faculties, I was especially interested in the next volunteer. Scott identified himself as Jewish and even claimed to have family in Israel. He said he was a supporter of Israel until he attended classes in Middle East Studies at Stanford University. "I used to support Israel until I took some classes with Joel Beinin who set me straight," he volunteered. Beinin is a former president of the Middle East Studies Association and a self-proclaimed Marxist and supporter of the Palestinian struggle to liberate Israel by dismantling the Jewish state.

The next speaker was Jeff who said he'd been to Israel before but was now looking forward to go there to "stir things up." He was a Bay Area radical involved in environmental issues. He was followed by Ken, a semi-retired consultant for the Food and Drug Administration who introduced himself as someone who was sick and tired of what the "Zionists" had been doing and wasn't afraid to do something about it "even if the CIA is after me."

Nui introduced herself by explaining she was part Lebanese and part Thai-Chinese. She was going to help the Palestinians and "find her roots." No one asked her to explain this.

Next came Meredith, who said she was going to Palestine to assert herself as "a queer Jewish woman." She quickly explained that she was really only half-Jewish, and that by helping the Palestinians she was asserting her identity. She was evidently oblivious to the fate of gays living in the Moslem world.

Arlene, a 62 year-old Jewish woman from Oakland, was more vocal than the others. She told us that she had a lifetime of activism. "During the Vietnam War I went to visit and support the 'comrades' who told me to go back home and fight the war against America from here for them." She told us that she was estranged from her parents and had used the excuse of their funeral to get into Israel the last time she was there. Despite her age she was ready to do things to attack the Israeli soldiers such as throwing tear gas canisters back at them during riots and putting sugar in the gas tanks of their

security vehicles. She lamented a loose bladder due to her age but vowed it would not stop her from “helping” the Palestinians with all the other ISM volunteers. She also expressed grief for the Israeli execution of Sheik Yassin, the former head of Hamas who was responsible for the murders of over 350 people inside Israel including some American citizens. “We’re going to win,” she glowed. “Like Dr. Ghannam said at the lecture the other day, the demographics are on our side.”

Once the introductions were complete, Jamie shared with us the experiences and methods used by previous ISM volunteers to fool the Israeli border police. “Make a reservation in a hotel in Israel even if you don’t use it.” “Bring guidebooks for Israel that look dog eared.” “Give them the name of a hostel if you are young enough, these will fool the border guards.”

She continued, “If you use the name of someone in Israel as being the reason for your visit, they will call that person. Make certain you have a story thought out who that person is.” If that person were an Israeli leftist, the task was a lot easier. Mary Erwin, another trainer from Oakland, interjected at this point that our allies from the Israeli anarchist and communist movements were ready to lie to the border guards when called on the phone. They were available to verify false stories given to the border guards in order to get the ISM volunteers into Israel. She offered to provide us with the names and numbers of leftists in Israel who would say they knew us.

“If the border guards become suspicious, an Israeli contact will be set up to lie and say you are visiting them,” Mary summarized. She mentioned the leftist Israeli group B’tselem as providing such false witnesses. B’tselem is one of the most active leftist groups in Israel working to aid the PLO. Among its leaders is Anat Biletzki, the former head of Israel’s Communist Party.

Once we were inside Israel we were told we could make our way to the West Bank even though we were also informed that to go there is illegal. Jamie told us to email ourselves instructions so we would not need our manuals. We were assured the “ISM corps” was working on legal proposals to challenge the Israeli government at every turn if illegal entrants were discovered. “We are asking also if people are willing to resist if they are caught and told they will be deported.” Anything to be a nuisance and break the law was the goal.

We were also given alternative ways to get into Israel besides through Ben Gurion Airport. “You can take a taxi from Amman in Jordan to the Allenby Bridge (Jordan’s border entry). Even if you are turned back from that entry, you can go to the other border crossing because they usually don’t know you were turned away from another one first,” Jamie counseled. “Rehearse your story,” she continued. “They will interrogate you also when you leave. If they interrogate you, you can miss your plane. Don’t buy anything because it will give them things to look through.”

As for luggage, she told us if could pass as students we should just use a backpack. “A duffel bag on wheels does well at the airport. Remember that Israel needs tourists. Their economy is in shambles and they are anxious for tourism. And they are not organized.”

“Most of all, be patient. If they ask you questions such as ‘What are you doing here? Don’t you know there’s a war?’ you should reply, ‘I thought it was better now.’ Or say, ‘I had my ticket for a long time and my Israeli friends said I should come.’ If you are Jewish, know your Hebrew name if they ask you what it is. Know your story. Wear your Star of David especially if you are Jewish.”

We were told once we were on the West Bank and under the Palestine Authority we were to attend another mandatory two-day training session where we would be assigned to “affinity groups.” She then began making a bulletin board of how we were to function by setting up rules. The first rule was “Confidentiality.” Volunteers would be assigned to unknown affinity groups where they would function as teams to disrupt the Israel soldiers in military zones.

We were then instructed to say to the media if we were interviewed: “We support the Palestinian right to resist the occupation provided by international law.” If the interview were more extensive, we were told to say: “We call for an immediate end to occupation and immediate compliance and implementation of all relevant UN resolutions.” Apparently to the ISM, international law is whatever they want it to be, since their agenda is to break laws to enter a democratic country in order to further violate its laws.

When one of the trainees asked if we as ISM volunteers favored a two-state solution to secure peace, Brian Malovany, another senior trainer from Oakland who had just joined us explained, “The idea of a two-state solution is pretty much dead.” This was an interesting dismissal of all the peace plans ever proposed by the United Nations, the United States, or the official negotiating parties of the Palestinians themselves. “There can only be one state called Palestine,” explained Molvany echoing the line of Hamas and other terrorist organizations. “And the Right of Return is non-negotiable. If people ask you about a two-state solution just tell them it’s a human rights issue. Whatever you do though, do not dictate to the Palestinians what they should not do.”

In other words, if the Palestinians shoot at Israeli soldiers don’t tell them it is wrong to do so. Apparently being non-violent peace activists only applies to the end of dismantling Israel and providing cover for the people who will commit the violent acts.

I asked Molvany, “But what if we see kids throwing stones at tanks or putting themselves in danger. Shouldn’t we tell them not to and urge them to stay away?”

Brian Malovany responded: “We can’t tell kids not to throw stones! It’s not our place to tell them what to do.” Obviously the same rule applied to suicide bombers as we were advised that we might be used as human shields inside

houses slated for demolition by the Israeli army because they were used as bomb making factories.

During the lunch break I looked at my manual and found this ISM wisdom:

“Some pacifists are uncomfortable with property damage. For myself...I see it as a great tool.”

“[Some] settle for tactical nonviolence, but given the right historical circumstance, armed struggle would be justified...”

“When VIOLENCE is mentioned, say RESISTANCE or RESISTANCE TO INJUSTICE.”

“When TERRORISM is mentioned, emphasize STATE TERRORISM.”

“Instead of OCCUPATION say MILITARY OCCUPATION to make people think the occupation is a MILITARY DICTATORSHIP.” The only military dictator in Israel and the West Bank is Yasser Arafat. The page this appeared on was supplied by the Muslim Public Affairs Council, yet another purportedly Muslim “civil rights group” like the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee.

The most cynical section of the manual was the last chapter written by Paul LaRudee, the Northern California ISM leader who provided my first contact over the phone: “You may well hear Palestinians talking ‘about the Jews’ when they really mean ‘Israelis’ or ‘the Israeli army’ or the ‘Israeli government.’ It is useful to remember the context; talk about “the Jews” is not the indication of bigotry that it would be in the United States or Europe.”

LaRudee also provided this whopper for “queer activists” who want to go on the Freedom Summer 2004 tour: “Palestinian society is as diverse in attitudes about gender and sexuality as is U.S. society.” In fact, over 100 homosexuals who had lived under the Palestine Authority recently took refuge in Israel for fear of being killed.

Apparently the ISM doesn’t care what they say as long as they get anyone over there to make trouble and risk their lives for the cause. Now I understood the recruitment of Meredith. To these radicals the strategy is to tie any cause, any idea, any gender, environmental or social issue to the destruction of Israel.

After lunch, we were given the activities schedule for the “Freedom Summer” anti-Israel campaign (see the ISM website for details). It included marching onto an Israeli army base to free captured terrorists and trying to tear down the security fence. Violent attacks by the “nonviolent” ISM had already begun when we met. Every member of our group knew that what they were really being asked to do was illegal. They just didn’t care.

Or perhaps it’s that radicals don’t fear the Israeli police in the same way they don’t fear the police in the U.S. because they know in a democracy they will be treated fairly. That might explain why they weren’t training for sit-ins in Tiananmen Square or in Teheran where the authorities might kill them. As if conceding the point, the ISM manual stressed that the volunteers were not in any real danger from Israeli security forces and advised them to inconvenience and disobey them in every way possible. The manual also advised those who were arrested to contact the Bay Area chapter of the National Lawyer’s Guild, an organization created by the American Communist Party with a half century of legal experience in supporting Communist and totalitarian causes.

After the break we were told how to deal with Israeli soldiers. If advised to leave an area designated a closed military zone where the IDF is fighting terrorists, we were told to demand their orders in writing. “The soldiers can only detain you. They have to call the border police to arrest you,” counseled Jamie.

A list of instructions was given on how to deal with possible arrests since we would be doing our best to break the law. If a Palestinian was arrested for something serious like throwing a Molotov cocktail, we were told to show “prison solidarity” with him. We were told that international demonstrators usually get released quickly by the police once they reach the police station. But if we refused to leave without our Palestinian companion, the police might release him also just to get rid of all of us.

“Carry only a photocopy of your passport if they ask to see yours. If they hold it, you have to remain like they tell you. But if it’s a photocopy you can escape while they are busy handling other demonstrators. If the soldiers tell you to back up ten feet, back up only five.” Anything and everything to interfere with the soldiers trying to do their jobs was our goal.

Jamie told us a story of how 100 “internationals” had surrounded six Israeli soldiers and besieged them at a roadblock set up to prevent suicide bombers from getting into Israel. The soldiers, all young boys and conscripts in the Israeli army, tried to control the mob until they ran out of non-lethal weapons and were forced to withdraw. The trainers all snickered at the story.

Not once all day, in any way, did members of our group – trainers or trainees – express a negative word about suicide bombings, or the shooting of women and children by Palestinian terrorists. But we were told repeatedly not to tell the Palestinians how to “resist.”

At the conclusion of our session, Jamie used her training as a social worker to prepare us to deal with long term trauma once we returned to the Bay Area. I thought it was an interesting lesson for people going to the Middle East to engage in “nonviolent” activities for peace. “Be ready for lots of violence,” she said. (FrontPageMagazine.com Jul 2)

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