

Date and Time: Friday, May 3, 2024 4:33:00PM EEST

Job Number: 223447207

## Documents (87)

1. ['The Jews' get-away- with-genocide-free-card'](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type  
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to  
Dec 31, 2009

2. [SORRY BRUNO, PLANET FASHION IS MUCH CRAZIER THAN THIS!](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type  
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to  
Dec 31, 2009

3. [The year that was](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type  
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to  
Dec 31, 2009

4. [World Briefs](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type  
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to  
Dec 31, 2009

5. [Arabs tackle free speech taboo Across the Middle East, what would never happen in polite company now appears on broadcasts of The Doha Debates - discussion of controversy.](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**  
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

6. [Arabs tackle free speech taboo](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**  
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

7. [Letters](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**  
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

8. [How masters of chaos thrive on bombs and charity Guerrillas are exploiting the divisions caused by ineffectual and corrupt government to rebuild the Taleban's influence, writes James Hider](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**  
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

9. [How masters of chaos thrive on bombs and charity Guerrillas are exploiting the divisions caused by ineffectual and corrupt government to rebuild the Taleban's influence, writes James Hider](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**  
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

10. [The art of political avoidance](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**  
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

11. [2009 A YEAR TO REMEMBER In the latest of his popular reviews of the year, DAN O'NEILL looks at what was making the headlines in the first months of 2009](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**  
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

12. [The battle of the boycotts](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**  
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

13. [FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH Who stands on guard for citizens? The Canadian passport requests assistance and protection" for citizens abroad. So why was her own government unprepared to protect and assist Suaad Hagi Mohamud?](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**  
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

14. [Financing our own demonization](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**  
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

15. [Matters of the heart](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**  
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to  
Dec 31, 2009

16. [War by other means As the Tamil Tigers face the failure of their armed struggle a new separatist campaign is under way. By Shyamantha Asokan](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**  
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to  
Dec 31, 2009

17. [Behind the veil: Why Islam's most visible symbol is spreading Embraced or banned, a prayer or a prison, the Muslim veil is spreading: Who wears it - and why?](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**  
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to  
Dec 31, 2009

18. [Letters to the editor](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**  
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to  
Dec 31, 2009

19. ['Our life, our identity is in the land. We won't leave it': Palestine produces some of the finest olive oils in the world, not to mention dates, nuts, tomatoes - even wine. Now, despite the conflict, farmers are finding ways to export their produce - and show the world that their country is still the land of milk and honey. Joanna Blythman reports](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**  
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

20. [\*Observer Food Monthly: 'Our life, our identity is in the land. We won't leave it': Palestine produces some of the finest olive oils in the world, not to mention dates, nuts, tomatoes - even wine. Now, despite the conflict, farmers are finding ways to export their produce - and show the world that their country is still the land of milk and honey. Joanna Blythman reports\*](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

21. [LETTERS TO THE EDITOR](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

22. [A code for peace](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

23. ['The revolution in Iran has just begun'](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

24. [Settling their differences](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**

**Narrowed by**

News

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

25. [War By Other Means](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**  
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

26. [Letters to the editor](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**  
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

27. [Netanyahu's proposal for 'lasting peace' - and a human rights response](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**  
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

28. [EYES ON THE WORLD The past 10 years in photographs](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**  
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

29. [The Jewish Beduin](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**  
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

30. [\*What Tony did next Is the former prime minister a philanthropist or a hustler? John Arlidge jets to Africa and Israel with him to discover the truth about Blair Inc Tony, the globetrotting messiah making a mint\*](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

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News

**Narrowed by**  
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

31. [\*To the brink and back again A generation of British Islamists have been trained in Afghanistan to fight a global jihad. But now some of those would-be extremists have had a change of heart. Johann Hari finds out what made them give up the fight\*](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**  
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

32. [\*Hamas crackdown\*](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**  
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

33. [\*Hamas exerts its power\*](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**  
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

34. [\*Hamas video showing captive Israeli soldier\*](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**  
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

35. [Hamas shootout leaves 13 dead](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**  
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

36. [Gaza Strip. Israel , Hamas agree to prisoner exchange](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**  
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

37. [Hamas orders headscarf for Gaza lawyers](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**  
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

38. [Hamas orders women lawyers to wear headscarves](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**  
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

39. [The great Gaza cover-up Hamas launches 'virtue campaign'](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**  
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

40. [Hamas video shows captured Israeli soldier looking thin](#)



**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

41. [Prisoners set to be released](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

42. [Pakistan : First swine flu deaths reported in Gaza](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

43. [the soldier](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

44. [Israel in prisoner swap proposal](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

45. ['Free honeytrap killer'](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

46. [Choose Israel](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

47. [19 freed by Israel for video of soldier](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

48. [World - Israel swaps Shalit video for 19 female prisoners](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

49. [Video of kidnap soldier IN THE NEWS](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

50. [Video of kidnap soldier IN THE NEWS](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**  
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

51. [CAPTIVES DEAL](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**  
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

52. [19 freed over vid](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**  
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

53. [FILM HOPE FOR ISRAELI PRISONER](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**  
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

54. [19](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**  
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

55. [Israel frees 19 after seeing film of soldier world newsbulletin](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**  
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

56. [Yesterdays](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

57. [Investigation of civilian shootings urged](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

58. [FAST NEWS](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

59. [Lockerbie to kick off Doha Debates season on Oct 12](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

60. [On this day](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

61. [Video of Israeli soldier released](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**  
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

62. [Video of Israeli soldier released](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**  
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

63. [Iran the world leader in abuse of human rights](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**  
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

64. [Noam Schalit meets with Sarkozy. Gilad's father still has low expectations for son's release](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**  
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

65. [Gaza zookeepers paint donkeys as zebras](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**  
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

66. [Prisoners freed as video shows Israeli soldier alive](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

67. [\*Crucifixion just the first offence for Safran\*](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

68. [\*Video shows Israeli captive; Proof soldier is alive delivered after 20 Palestinian prisoners are freed\*](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

69. [\*No Headline In Original\*](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

70. [\*No Headline In Original\*](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

71. [\*No Headline In Original\*](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**  
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

72. [No Headline In Original](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**  
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

73. [No Headline In Original](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**  
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

74. [No Headline In Original](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**  
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

75. [No Headline In Original](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**  
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

76. [No Headline In Original](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**  
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

77. [No Headline In Original](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

78. [No Headline In Original](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

79. [No Headline In Original](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

80. [No Headline In Original](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

81. [No Headline In Original](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

82. [No Headline In Original](#)



**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

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News

**Narrowed by**

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

83. [No Headline In Original](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

84. [No Headline In Original](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

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News

**Narrowed by**

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

85. [No Headline In Original](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

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News

**Narrowed by**

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

86. [No Headline In Original](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

87. [Mahnwache der „Women in black“](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** Hamas

**Search Type:** Natural Language

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to  
Dec 31, 2009

## 'The Jews' get-away- with-genocide-free-card'

The Jerusalem Post

July 19, 2009 Sunday

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**Section:** OPINION; Pg. 13

**Length:** 1505 words

**Byline:** NOAM SCHIMMEL

**Highlight:** On a recent visit here, Naomi Klein invoked pejorative stereotypes about Jews in general - and Jewish students in particular. The writer served as an intern with the Office of the Prosecutor at the UN International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and advocates for the human rights of genocide survivors, indigenous peoples, street children and the economically disadvantaged in the developing world.

### **Body**

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Recent statements Naomi Klein made in public and to the media on her visit to Israel and the Palestinian Authority territories raise a number of concerns as to Klein's perception and depiction of Jews, Israel and the Jewish students at the recent UN Durban Review Conference in Geneva.

How Klein reconciles racial and religious defamation and hate speech with her purported commitment to human rights and social justice confounds me. At her Ramallah lecture she said, "[Some Jews] even think we get one get-away-with-genocide-free-card." This is the most perverse of aspersions on Jews, an age-old stereotype of Jews as intrinsically evil and malicious, eager to murder innocent people because they are bloodthirsty.

It is not just an insensitive, crass, and highly offensive statement. It is a violent and unethical one, laced with antipathy toward Jews. The fact that Klein prefaced it by explaining that she is a Jew does nothing to minimize the pathology it manifests.

The facile distinction between Israel's citizens and the State of Israel that Klein makes when advocating a boycott of Israeli institutions, government and businesses is neither logical nor practical. Boycotting the State of Israel is an attack on its citizens, collectively. The state is constituted by its citizens, and for someone who argues, rightly, against collective punishment, the bizarre notion that the collective punishment of Israelis is ethical is hypocritical.

One can and should advocate for the rights of Palestinians, as Klein does. But when one's advocacy for the rights of one people comes at the expense of one's capacity to empathize and show solidarity with others who also suffer and experience injustice - including many Israelis - then one compromises both one's morality and one's humanity.

HUMAN RIGHTS are universal. If Klein is genuinely committed to that principle and to the principle of equality, she would, along with her fierce criticisms of Israel, issue vigorous criticisms of Hamas's policies of murdering innocent Israelis and deliberately targeting civilians in violation of international human rights law.

Whatever the power dynamics and asymmetries in this conflict - and Klein reduces them to David and Goliath terms that obscure a more complex reality and context - the weak have no right to murder the innocent by virtue of their relative powerlessness.

## 'The Jews' get-away- with-genocide-free-card'

Klein has stated that boycotts are a tactic and not a dogma. Perhaps in an ideal world they can be characterized this way, but in the real world they are very much both a tactic and a dogma.

Boycotts generate powerful pejorative emotions; they often rely on stereotypes and demonizations of an entire society and human community. In this way, they can lay the groundwork for dehumanization. Often these stereotypes are implicit and not a formal part of boycott campaigns; nevertheless, they form a significant component of them and become a part of popular perception which motivates the boycotting action.

Many of the campaigns to boycott Israel have become projects of hatred and ideological orthodoxy, self-righteousness and refusal to engage in dialogue beyond a tiny circle of individuals who agree with the commitments and tactics of the boycotters. Until those demanding boycotts address this tendency, their calls will be stained by the cascade of violent emotions that it has unleashed and legitimized.

Klein claims that "the decision isn't to boycott Israel but rather to oppose official relationships with Israeli institutions." This distinction is itself problematic and largely untenable. Boycotting is a very blunt tool and you do not bring justice with a bludgeon.

By boycotting Israeli academic and cultural institutions one inevitably boycotts Israelis as individuals and Israel as a whole.

Klein should be more honest about this. She is hedging because she knows that she cannot reconcile her justified aversion to boycott Israelis as a people with her commitment to boycotting for the sake of pressuring Israel to alleviate the suffering of the Palestinians and lay the groundwork for a just solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

COMMENTING ON the UN Durban Review Conference held in Geneva in April, Klein says that she was disturbed by "the Jewish students' lack of respect for the representatives from Africa and Asia who came to speak about issues like compensation for slavery and the rise of racism around the world." Again, Klein speaks in broad pejorative stereotypes about Jews, only this time, Jewish students in particular.

As a Jewish student who attended the conference, I reject this reductive characterization of a diverse group of more than 200 students from countries around the globe. Many of the Jewish students I spoke to attended the conference in large part out of their interest in and concern for human rights and social justice. To caricature them and demean them as being unconcerned with these issues is unfair and inaccurate.

The same Jewish students that Klein speaks of so disparagingly were engaged in advocacy for the rights of Rwandan genocide survivors, for the victims of genocide and mass atrocity in Sudan, for women and religious and ethnic minorities in Iran and around the world, for gays and lesbians, for indigenous peoples and for the poor and the marginalized in the developing world. Africa, Asia and Latin America were definitely concerns for some of these students and priorities for some as well. We met with ambassadors, attended plenary sessions, advocated on these issues, among others, and educated ourselves about them.

In an interview with Haaretz, Klein described the Jewish students who protested against Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's speech at the conference as "truly awful" - in the same breath as she described Ahmadinejad as "truly awful." Is there really a moral equivalency between Jewish student protesters protesting his speech with clown outfits, and his anti-Semitic tirades and calls to destroy Israel? When the Jewish students wore clown outfits and plastic noses to say that Durban is a joke, they were protesting the masquerade nature at the heart of the Durban conference, including but not exclusively Ahmadinejad's speech and the anti-Semitic statements of the Iranian delegation. They were not mocking the rights and claims of African and Asian representatives seeking redress for historical injustices

Nations that engage in the most egregious human rights violations, including Iran, used the conference as an opportunity to deflect responsibility for their human rights violations and to project it onto Israel and the West, rather than to confront all human rights violations alike, including their own.

'The Jews' get-away- with-genocide-free-card'

I did not wear a clown outfit or a red nose, but I am grateful to the student activists who did because without their protests the moral hypocrisy at the heart of the conference would not have been exposed.

KLEIN SEEMS to believe that the statements released at the Durban conference actually made a tangible difference for individuals and communities suffering from human rights violations.

They did not.

Durban, like much of the UN apparatus, was a self- congratulatory and self-serving exercise in the banality of language; it was a rhetorical echo chamber. There was no substantive budget provided to address human rights violations and no meaningful mechanism of accountability for human rights violators.

Conferences like Durban do more harm than good to the world's poor and vulnerable: They salve the consciences of the powerful and the wealthy by allowing them to use words to create the illusion of doing something about inequality and injustice. However, meaningful action was not an outcome of that conference nor will it be. The conference was designed to preclude that.

Rwandan genocide survivors implored delegates to do something to help Rwandan women who survived the genocide and are dying of HIV, as did indigenous peoples suffering from stigmatization and marginalization, Baha'is in Iran who are persecuted by the dictatorial theocratic regime, and Dalits in India suffering from persecution and discrimination.

They wanted action and justice. Instead, they got words and platitudes.

It is time that Klein brings greater analytical integrity to her writing and advocacy, greater humility, self-criticism and self-reflection to her observations and conclusions about complex social and economic issues, and greater nuance to her arguments.

Naomi Klein is brilliant, perceptive and extremely analytical and insightful in many of her writings. She is also, sometimes, wrong.

Were she to temper her stridency and the prejudices that sustain it she would find herself a more successful advocate for justice and peace. She would find Israelis and human rights activists better able to engage her arguments and concerns, knowing that they stem not from ideological dogmatism and hostility to the human rights and well-being of Israelis, but out of concern for the rights and well- being of Palestinians and Israelis alike and the universality of human rights.

## Graphic

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2 photos: A JEWISH STUDENT protesting Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's speech in Durban is hustled away by security guards. Naomi Klein derided the demonstrators for 'lack of respect for the representatives from Africa and Asia.' (Credit: AP. Bloomberg)

**Load-Date:** October 4, 2011

## ***SORRY BRUNO, PLANET FASHION IS MUCH CRAZIER THAN THIS!***

DAILY MAIL (London)

July 3, 2009 Friday

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**Length:** 1473 words

**Byline:** BY LIZ JONES

### **Body**

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SACHA BARON COHEN'S FASHION INDUSTRY SATIRE IS HILARIOUS, SAYS LIZ JONES, BUT IN REAL LIFE THE MODEL SAREEVEN DIMMER, THE CELEBRITIES MORE VAIN AND EVERYONE'S MUCH NASTIER

WHENEVER you tell anyone vaguely normal that you work in the fashion industry and once edited a glossy magazine, they immediately stare at you enviously, more often than not remarking on how your life must be 'sooo glamorous -- you must meet so many beautiful people, get given so many clothes and handbags. How exciting going to the fashion shows in Paris!'

The people who say these things, bowing and scraping and trying to get their mitts on your 40 per cent discount card for Topshop, have obviously

a) never worked in fashion and b) never seen Sacha Baron Cohen's new satirical movie, Bruno. Because if they had, they would never, ever envy you again. In fact, they would run away screaming, in fear for their sanity.

Bruno is an Austrian stylist-slash-TV presenter who has a predilection for lederhosen, tight Lycra shorts worn with socks, hats, and a deep, deep tan.

He has a thick accent -- always a plus in fashion; no one ever has anything interesting to say and so it helps if you are unintelligible -- and an equally thick brain.

When he travels to the Middle East to try to initiate a road map (fashion people, let's remember here, don't need maps; they just shout rudely at the limo drivers, rolling their eyes when the poor man admits he has never heard of Bottega Veneta), he cannot understand the problem with **Hamas**.

'Perhaps,' Bruno slurs disingenuously, 'they are just using the wrong type of pitta bread?'

Now, while this scene is funny, hilariously so, the problem with lampooning the world of fashion stylists, celebrity wannabes and egomaniacal designers is that the reality is so achingly, cringe-makingly more ridiculous and extreme than a lampoon could ever be.

The film begins in Milan, where Bruno is trying to gatecrash the ready-to-wear shows; seriously, it is easier to gain access to Britain from a French refugee camp than to be admitted to a fashion show without the prerequisite carefully calligraphied stiffy.

## SORRY BRUNO, PLANET FASHION IS MUCH CRAZIER THAN THIS!

I was in Milan during filming when Sacha Baron Cohen suddenly burst on to the catwalk of the Agatha Ruiz de la Prada show -- poor Baron Cohen; he must have got it confused with the Prada show, a different, more elitist beast altogether.

Clad in a black cloak entirely made of Velcro (he kept getting stuck to the curtains and the security guards), you would have thought, judging by the reaction of the magazine mavens in the front row, that once again the members of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals had fooled the PR girls with walkie talkies, clipboards and officious airs at the velvet rope and brought proceedings to a halt.

THE LIGHTS went down. No one laughed. Having a sense of humour, it has to be said of the obsessive, crazed, credit cardwielding morons who edit the fashion magazines of this world, is not a prerequisite when it comes to penning their CVs.

There was lots of loud tut-tutting, and grabbing of the capacious, expensive freebies at their Louboutinshod feet.

Fashion people, you see, become very cross if someone 'normal' -- ie, a film star famous for his ability to prick even the most pompous of egos -- dares to breach their world: it is as if the lie is so tenuous, it will not stand investigation.

I was shocked when, as the editor of Marie Claire, I first sat in the front row of an Armani show. My God, I thought to myself, the clothes are hideous. None of the big (tiny) models are in the show. Why is everyone, including all the big (tiny) editors of the fashion magazines, applauding?

I soon found out: I was later told off for reading a novel on my lap instead of being in raptures and applauding wildly, and threatened with an advertising boycott.

Ah. I see. It was all about money. The glossy magazines, which are ever more dependent on advertising revenue now that their readers have abandoned them for the internet, cannot afford to upset the big brands. And you really thought they were on your side?

Fashion definitely deserves to be lampooned. While I loved the scene in the film where Bruno is interviewing a ravishing but brain-dead model backstage at a show about how draining and difficult the turns at the end of a catwalk are, the reality is that models are much, much dimmer.

Oh My God, I've come across newts at the bottom of my pond who have more personality.

I once dated a male model called Christopher. He was Sicilian, with almost waist-length black hair. I say 'dated', but I think he was so stupid he had no idea I was trying to go out with him, and failed to tell me he was gay.

The final straw was when I told him I'd been watching the news and Pinewood Studios had burnt down. 'Oh no!' he said with faux gravitas. 'All those trees!'

DURING the film, there is a fabulous scene where a mother, super keen to have her tiny tot land a fictitious modelling assignment, says that getting her child to wheel someone Jewish into an oven or lift heavy machinery is 'not a problem'.

I don't have a great deal of time for the models who make it on to the cover of Vogue and land the lucrative advertising contracts, but I do give a thought to all those wannabes from Eastern Europe who don't get to the top; but who, instead, are exploited by the industry, spat out after merely months when they get a little tired, or old, or spotty, or 'fat'.

I remember once employing a photographer, probably the most famous photographer in the world, to shoot a fashion story, and he told me not to send any models up to his hotel suite for their 'go see' -- fashion speak for an audition -- if they had a boyfriend. He made me sick to my stomach.

## SORRY BRUNO, PLANET FASHION IS MUCH CRAZIER THAN THIS!

The problem with the world of fashion is that it is so predatory, so greedy for new, young flesh, that a satire doesn't really come close to exposing its peccadillos, to ripping apart its awful artifice.

Designers are ridiculous creatures who inhabit a bubble where the wants and needs of real women, other than 16-year-olds with the bodies of adolescent boys, are ignored -- ridiculed, even.

While this film is about the horrors of homophobia, I think, too, it should have highlighted how fashion fails women. No, strike that. How fashion insults and exploits women.

How it is all about extravagance, and consumption, and a sort of camp depiction of femininity that isn't about empowerment, but about a cartoon version of how women should be, how we should look.

I remember emerging from an exquisite collection by Jasper Conran during London Fashion Week, a collection that was wearable, grown up, curvy and utterly delicious, when a male fashion editor of a newspaper colour supplement whined: 'I've just never seen the point of Jasper Conran.'

I don't know, but a film that exposed the people who are truly oppressed by fashion -- ie, women like you and me -- would perhaps not have been quite as funny, but it would have been more helpful, and more groundbreaking, and way, way more dangerous.

Bruno travels to Los Angeles to try to become famous for doing very little indeed.

In a scene that has now been pulled in the U.S., he interviews LaToya Jackson, but I can't help but think that reality has, once again, with the death of Michael Jackson, a lifelong anorexic who recently found himself in thrall to Balmain, trumped Baron Cohen.

We all know that celebrities are vain, vacuous creatures: we really needed to be taken that little bit further. Whenever I shot covers with the biggest stars in the world, I was always shocked at their insecurities.

There was an actress who injected heroin between her toes, a supermodel who always needed buckets of Touche Eclat to eradicate the telltale purple marks of a thumping she had just received from her boyfriend. I remember I once had to Photoshop the image of a female movie star for the cover of my magazine, eradicating the tell-tale light bouncing off her scalp: she had taken so many slimming pills, most of her hair had fallen out.

I remember the female pop star -- OK, it was Geri Halliwell -- who was so terrified of being near carbs despite the fact that, stood butt naked before me, she had the physique of a 12-yearold, she faxed me a list of her dietary requirements before the shoot.

Her publicist actually told me I had to guarantee the fat content of her latte before I gave it to her.

When the reality of the celebrity and fashion worlds is this ludicrous, all you have to do is roll the camera.

And while at the screening of the film I attended, both Little Britain star David Walliams and Jonathan Ross had their heads in their hands, almost unable to believe the depravity and sheer, shocking dirtiness of the fashion and celebrity business, there is no need for Baron Cohen, really; all we have to do is hold up a great big shiny mirror.

c Bruno is released in cinemas on Friday, July 10

**Load-Date:** July 2, 2009



## *The year that was*

The Irish Times

December 29, 2009 Tuesday

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**Section:** WORLD; Review of 2009; Pg. 1

**Length:** 1872 words

### **Body**

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Compiled by **DAVID SHANKS**

#### **JANUARY**

Russia turns off gas supply to Europe through Ukraine. Ethiopian military begins Somalia withdrawal. Riots rock Bulgarian and Latvian capitals as economic strife grips eastern EU. Saving all 150 passengers, US pilot Chesley Sully Sullenberger (57) ditches bird-stricken plane into Hudson river.

Barack Obama inaugurated as 44th US president. Israel ends Gaza invasion; death toll is 1,400. Obama signs an order to close Guantánamo. Indonesian ferry with 267 aboard sinks.

New US secretary of state Hillary Clinton signals new policy initiative in the Middle East. Icelandic government and banks collapse.

#### **FEBRUARY**

Worst-ever Australian bushfires kill hundreds. Obama's \$838bn stimulus package narrowly approved by Senate. Morgan Tsvangirai sworn in as powersharing Zimbabwe premier. Russia welcomes US offer to press the reset button. Obama asks Iran to unclench its fist. Venezuelans lift term limit for President Hugo Chávez. Obama says all combat troops will leave Iraq by August 2010.

#### **MARCH**

Donors pledge \$4.5bn aid for Gaza. Sudan's president Omar al-Bashir indicted for war crimes by the ICC; in retaliation he expels NGOs. Chávez seizes part of US agriculture company Cargill. US lifts stem cell research funding ban. President Nicolas Sarkozy returns France to Nato after 40 years. Former Marxist guerrillas elected in El Salvador. Madagascar president overthrown in coup.

Pope criticised during African tour for saying condoms aggravate the Aids problem. Josef Fritzl (73) jailed after having seven children by his imprisoned daughter.

Binyamin Netanyahu forms an Israeli government and promises to negotiate peace with the Palestinians.

EU presidency in disarray as Czech premier quits.

#### **APRIL**

## The year that was

Hundreds of African migrants drown off Libya. Obama hails historic \$1tn G20 global fiscal stimulus. Fourteen die in third mass US shooting in a month. Obama calls for a new era in transatlantic relations on his first official visit to France and Germany. Anders Rasmussen agreed as new Nato head at 60th anniversary summit. North Korea alarms US and Asia with long-range rocket launch. Italian earthquake leaves hundreds dead and ruins ancient buildings in L Aquila. US and five other powers invite Iran to meet on its nuclear programme after Washington drops opposition to direct talks. Algerian president Abdelaziz Bouteflika (72) wins a third term. Asian summit postponed because of protests supporting Thailand's ex-PM Thaksin Shinawatra. Michael Dwyer (25) from Tipperary shot dead in Bolivia amid accusations he was part of a hit-squad to kill the president. Iceland's new pro-EU government wins election. The WHO raises its global swine flu alert level, warning a pandemic is imminent.

**MAY** In Turkey 44 people shot dead at Kurdish wedding. Obama expresses deep regret over civilian deaths in an air strike in Afghanistan as he meets Afghan and Pakistani presidents. Jacob Zuma elected South African president following ANC's election win. In Bethlehem the pope supports an independent Palestine. Four Kuwaiti women elected MPs. Amid reports of a civilian massacre, Tamil Tiger rebels admit defeat, ending Sri Lanka's 25-year war. British Commons speaker joins resigning MPs and ministers in expenses scandal. Manmohan Singh (77) returns as India's leader. Obama nominates first Hispanic to the supreme court. **JUNE** Three young Irish doctors among 228 on disappeared Air France flight. In Cairo, Obama calls for a new beginning in relations between the West and Islam. British Labour MPs support for Gordon Brown revives after Labour's worst election in almost 100 years. In a major policy shift, US abandons its insistence that big developing countries must make greenhouse gas emissions cuts. North Korea warns of a nuclear war in defiance of new unanimous UN Security Council sanctions. UN and humanitarian agencies call on Israel to end Gaza blockade. Terrified civilians say a UN-backed mission against Rwandan rebels is killing villagers. Two weeks of often violent protests, larger than those in the 1979 Iran revolution, follow re-election of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad; dozens killed. Nato and Russia agree to re-establish military ties. **JULY** Sweden assumes EU presidency. Obama and Russian counterpart Dmitry Medvedev agree a one-third cut in their strategic nuclear weapons arsenals. China's President Hu cuts short his trip to Italy for the G8 summit because of Han/Uighur ethnic violence, the worst in 20 years. G8 pledges \$20 billion for sustainable farming in poor countries, a US initiative. Obama, in Africa, calls on Africans to seize control of their future by building democracy and eliminating corruption. President Denis Sassou-Nguesso wins Congo Republic election boycotted by opposition. Colleagues of murdered Russian human rights activist blame Chechnya's leader. Kyrgyzstan election giving president a landslide is deeply flawed, says OSCE. **AUGUST** British military deployment in Iraq ends without ceremony. More than 700 killed in a radical Islamic uprising in Nigeria. Venezuela revokes licences of dozens of radio stations. Iran's supreme leader says Ahmadinejad is a brave, hard-working and wise man as protesters clash with security forces during his inauguration. Bill Clinton secures North Korean release of two American journalists. Lockerbie bomber freed. Wildfires threaten Athens. Fighting between ethnic Chinese groups and Burmese forces drives 10,000 refugees into China. Japanese voters end long rule by the Liberal Democratic Party.

**SEPTEMBER** The commander of US forces in Afghanistan asks for 40,000 more troops; commentators warn of Obama's Vietnam. Iraqi reporter who hurled his shoes at then US president George Bush is released. UN Goldstone report blames Hamas for firing missiles into Israel but condemns Israel's Gaza offensive as a deliberately disproportionate attack. Moscow praises Obama's decision to scrap US missile defence shield plan. In a serious blow to Obama's Middle East policy, envoy George Mitchell leaves without a deal on an Israeli settlement freeze. At UN general assembly, Obama commits the US to a new era of engagement with the world. Honduran forces besiege Brazilian embassy where ousted president Manuel Zelaya is holed up. World leaders interrupt G20 summit to say Iran is building a secret uranium enrichment facility. US announces major Burma policy shift involving engagement with generals. German Chancellor Angela Merkel returned to power with Free Democrats. Some 120,000 attend a papal Mass in the Czech Republic. Iran says it test-fired a medium-range missile. Oxfam says drought is driving 23m east Africans towards destitution. **OCTOBER** China celebrates 60th communist anniversary. Peru's ex-president Alberto Fujimori (71) jailed. Indonesian earthquake kills more than 1,000. Burma court upholds guilty verdict against Aung San Suu Kyi. Ireland passes the Lisbon Treaty. Hundreds killed in floods in Philippines and India. Greek socialists win. About 800,000 Romanians strike against pay cuts. China persuades North Korean leader to rejoin nuclear disarmament talks. France arrests Eta leader. Poland's premier agrees to take part in a new US missile defence programme. Two Sudanese women sentenced to 20 lashes for wearing

## The year that was

trousers. Goal aid workers freed in Darfur. Iraq arrests dozens of security officials suspected of collusion in bombings. **NOVEMBER** Hillary Clinton says Israel's refusal to agree a settlement freeze should not obstruct negotiations, provoking Palestinian fury. Czech president Václav Klaus signs Lisbon. Judges order legal counsel for Radovan Karadzic, who has boycotted his trial. Honduras powersharing deal collapses. Tsvangirai calls off cabinet boycott. Thousands remember fall of the Berlin Wall. Obama's healthcare Bill passes another hurdle with tight House majority. Prime minister Gordon Brown apologises for a botched letter to the mother of a British soldier killed in Afghanistan. Irish Columban priest freed in the Philippines. Russia and EU agree gas deal. Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas vows to seek UN backing for a unilateral declaration of independence, despite EU opposition. Belgian premier Herman Van Rompuy named president of the European Council and Catherine Ashton as foreign policy chief. President Hamid Karzai sworn in following August's deeply flawed election. British Iraq war inquiry opens. Máire Geoghegan-Quinn to be EU research and innovation commissioner. Palestinians reject Israel's 10-month partial freeze of settlement building. Swiss vote to ban new minarets. Rancher Porfirio Lobo is declared Honduras's president. Trial opens of John Demjanjuk (89), accused of helping to murder almost 28,000 Jews. **DECEMBER** Obama announces another 30,000 troops for Afghanistan; allies promise 7,000. Israel bars Gaza visit by Minister for Foreign Affairs Micheál Martin. Russian nightclub fire kills 113. Zuma reverses SA's Aids policy. Tear gas used on Athens protesters marking the anniversary of the police killing of a 15-year-old boy. Evo Morales re-elected in Bolivia. Baghdad bombs kill 130. Obama accepts Nobel Peace Prize. Irish priest murdered in Kenya. Romania's constitutional court orders a recount in rigged election. EU leaders agree EUR 7.2bn climate change package for developing countries. US special envoy gets North Korean agreement to co-operate on resolving remaining differences. Binyamin Netanyahu condemns attack on a West Bank mosque. Italian PM Silvio Berlusconi injured by attacker. Management consultancy giant Accenture ends sponsorship of golfer Tiger Woods, who has admitted being unfaithful to his wife.

**LEST WE FORGET:**

RAUL ALFONSIN, 1980s president of Argentina (82).

CORAZON AQUINO, post-Marcos Philippines president, right (76).

GERTRUDE BAINES, world's oldest person, who voted for Barack Obama (115).

JG BALLARD, English novelist (78).

BERNARD BARKER, Watergate burglar (92).

WALTER CRONKITE, former CBS newscaster,

right (92).

RALF DAHRENDORF, German-British social theorist and politician (80).

KIM DAE-JUNG, South Korean president, author of Sunshine Policy (85).

GUILLERMO ENDARA, president of Panama 1989-1994 (73). MARILYN FRENCH, writer and feminist (79). CLEMENT FREUD, British broadcaster and politician (84). JADE GOODY, reality TV star who died of cancer (27). MICHAEL JACKSON, legendary American performer and singer, left (50). MAURICE JARRE, film music composer (84). JACK JONES, former British trade union leader (96). EDWARD KENNEDY, liberal lion of US Senate, left (77). EUNICE KENNEDY SHRIVER, founder of the Special Olympics (88). CARDINAL STEPHEN KIM, South Korean pro-democracy champion (86).

BÉLA KIRÁLY, 1956 Hungarian uprising leader (97). ROBERT McNAMARA, left, Vietnam war era US secretary of state (93). LESZEK KOLAKOWSKI, Polish political philosopher (81). CLAUDE LÉVI-STRAUSS, French social anthropologist (100). KHALID BIN MAHFOUZ, Saudi banker infamous for Irish passports-for-investment scheme (60). GAAFAR NIMEIRY, 1969 - 85 president of Sudan (79). HELEN SUZMAN, left, South African politician (91). MARY TRAVERS, singer-songwriter of Peter, Paul and Mary fame (72). JOHN UPDIKE, US writer, (76).

The year that was

**Load-Date:** December 29, 2009

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End of Document

## World Briefs

Windsor Star (Ontario)

October 9, 2009 Friday

Final Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. C2; World Briefs

**Length:** 1699 words

**Byline:** Star News Services

## **Body**

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### EUROPE

#### LURID BOOK SPELLS TROUBLE FOR MINISTER

PARIS French Culture Minister Frederic Mitterrand said Thursday he would not resign over a book he wrote that describes paying boys for sex and insisted it was not an apology for sex tourism or pedophilia.

"I absolutely condemn sexual tourism (and) I condemn pedophilia in which I have never in any way participated, and all the people who accuse me of that type of thing should be ashamed," he told TFI television.

When the book, titled *The Bad Life* and described by its publisher as a "novel inspired by autobiography," was published in 2005, Mitterrand confirmed he had paid for sex in Asian brothels, but rejected rumours of pedophilia.

He said he had met with President Nicolas Sarkozy earlier in the day and that the French leader who appointed him in June to his right-wing government had "confirmed to me his confidence."

Mitterrand said he "never" considered resigning since the controversy erupted this week after the minister's staunch defence of fugitive filmmaker Roman Polanski, arrested in Zurich on a U.S. warrant on child sex charges.

He said Thursday he had never paid for sex with a minor, and insisted that he had "never done any wrong against anyone in my life, never."

But he also said that "I think I have committed an offence against the idea of dignity, human dignity."

#### ISRAELI SOLDIER MADE HONORARY CITIZEN

PARIS - Paris mayor Bertrand Delanoe on Thursday awarded honorary citizenship of the French capital to Gilad Shalit, the Israeli soldier kidnapped in Gaza more than three years ago, city hall said.

The honour was accepted by his father, Noam Shalit, who was due to meet with French President Nicolas Sarkozy later on Thursday.

Three militant groups seized 23-year-old Gilad Shalit, who also holds French citizenship, in June 2006 after they attacked an Israeli army post.

## World Briefs

A video showing him looking gaunt but apparently in good health was broadcast by the Palestinian Islamist group **Hamas** on Oct. 2.

## Slow justice may benefit Italian PM

Rome Silvio Berlusconi may escape conviction on corruption charges because Italy's slow judicial system is likely to delay them beyond the statute of limitations.

Judicial experts said the complex legal process meant he could avoid a trial despite being stripped of his immunity from prosecution in a court ruling on Wednesday.

It could be months before he is ordered to appear in court in two reactivated trials.

Even then, he can avoid court appearances by insisting that he has government duties to fulfil, further prolonging the whole tortuous process, possibly until the end of his term in office in 2013.

Two trials involving the 73- year-old media tycoon are to resume after the Constitutional Court threw out a law that Berlusconi introduced shortly after being elected last year, giving himself immunity from prosecution while in office.

In the most high profile, he is accused of paying a US\$690,000 bribe to his former tax accountant, David Mills, as a reward for him providing false testimony during two other trials in the 1990s.

Mills, the estranged husband of Tessa Jowell, the Minister for the Cabinet Office, was convicted in February and sentenced in absentia to 41/2 years in prison.

He will begin an appeal against the sentence on Friday and says he wants Berlusconi to be called as a witness because he had not appeared in the original trial.

In the second case, Berlusconi is accused of committing tax fraud in the purchase of film rights in the United States by one of his companies, Mediaset.

## 'TIRED' GORBACHEV CUTS TRIP SHORT

MOSCOW - Former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev has cut short a trip to Europe and returned to Russia due to fatigue, his spokesman Vladimir Poliakov said Thursday.

"He came back. He landed yesterday (Wednesday)," Poliakov told AFP.

Gorbachev, 78, "has nothing special. He is simply tired. That is why he wanted to shorten his trip," the spokesman said.

He underwent some tests at a hospital but "everything is completely normal," he added.

"The trip was rather intense. It tired him, because he is quite old, 78 years old," Poliakov said. "He is resting for a few days."

The Soviet Union's last leader was scheduled to participate in an event today in Turin, Italy, organized by the World Political Forum, which he founded.

He was hospitalized in Moscow in December 2008 to undergo treatment on an eye, forcing him to miss a meeting of Nobel Peace Prize laureates.

## SOUTH AMERICA

## TV HOST ACCUSED IN MURDERS FLEES

RIO DE JANEIRO A Brazilian TV presenter accused of ordering murders to boost the ratings of his hit crime show has fled and remains a fugitive from justice, after a judge order him jailed this week, authorities said Thursday.

## World Briefs

Authorities said they have no clue as to the whereabouts of TV star Wallace Souza, who had remained free despite the serious charges against him because he enjoyed parliamentary immunity as a deputy of the Amazonas state assembly.

When a judge in the northern city of Manaus issued a preventive detention order against him at the beginning of the week, however, Souza went on the lam and has not been seen since.

"I issued an arrest order against Souza on Monday, but he has disappeared," said Judge Mauro Antoni, adding that another magistrate now has issued another warrant for his arrest.

"It is up to the police to find him now," Antoni said.

Police in Manaus told AFP that Souza's lawyer, Francisco Balieiro, may be trying to negotiate terms under which the television star would give himself up. AFP was unable to contact the attorney Thursday.

Souza made his television debut in 1989 and rose quickly to become a television sensation. He also is one of his region's most popular elected leaders.

Charged on July 30 with murder, drug-trafficking, and a host of other offences, Souza is accused of ordering the paid assassinations of at least five drug traffickers to bolster viewership of his crimewatch show Canal Livre on Manaus television.

Police reportedly became suspicious of Souza's program last year, after one report aired showing the body of a suspected drug dealer burning in the woods long before police arrived on the scene.

## TIP LEADS TO RETURN OF STOLEN LUNG

LIMA - Organizers of a travelling exhibition about the human body breathed a sigh of relief on Thursday after an anonymous telephone tip off led to the recovery of a stolen lung.

The caller, who did not claim the posted US\$2,000 reward, directed staff at Bodies Revealed to a parking lot, where the organ was found in a plastic bag.

"They only told us that it was in a black plastic bag in the parking area of the same shopping centre where the display was exhibited," said Susan Hoefken one of the curators.

The lung was stolen on Monday, but organizers said there was little concern it may rot or otherwise spoil, thanks to chemical treatment.

"The organ is preserved under an innovative process of polymerization that maintains the organs in a good state after coming under chemical treatment," said Hoefken.

The exhibition, billed as "a phenomenal exhibition about the amazing and complex machine we call the human body,"

## ASIA

## EX-PRESIDENT REMAINS IN JAIL

TAIPEI - A Taiwan court early today ordered ex-president Chen Shui-bian remain behind bars, after its judges were told to reconsider an earlier decision to reject a bail application, local media said.

The High Court's decision, made public just minutes after midnight, means the 58-year-old former leader looks set to stay in prison while preparing his appeal against a life sentence for graft.

The announcement set off protests by Chen supporters who had been waiting for hours outside the court building, as riot police with shields looked on, several television networks reported.

## World Briefs

The High Court cited the severity of his crimes as well as the risk that he might escape abroad as reasons for again denying bail.

The decision came just hours after the island's Supreme Court ordered the High Court to conduct a new hearing on whether to keep Chen locked up, saying the reasons not to let him out were insufficient.

Chen was convicted last month of embezzling state funds, laundering money, accepting bribes and committing forgery. His wife also received a life sentence on related charges.

## AFRICA

## 934 WOUNDED IN PROTEST CRACKDOWN

CONAKRY, Guinea - The Guinean minister of health on Thursday said 56 people died and 934 people were injured during a bloody crackdown on a protest in Conakry on Sept. 28.

The United Nations and aid organizations say at least 150 people were killed when soldiers opened fire in a crowded stadium in the Guinean capital.

Local human rights organizations say 1,200 people were injured including many women who were raped by soldiers during the crackdown.

"After the sad events of Sept. 28, the government has liberated (US\$100,000) to care for the 934 wounded of whom 97 are in hospital," minister Cherif Abdoulaye Diaby said.

Kenyan activists say threatened for demanding reform

## RIGHTS GROUPS CLAIM THREATS

NAIROBI - Kenyan rights groups said Thursday they were being threatened by officials who wanted to silence their demands for reform following last year's devastating post-election violence.

The International Commission of Jurists-Kenya, Kenya Human Rights Commission and Transparency International-Kenya said some of their members had received threatening phone calls, faced attempted carjackings and had their movements and conversations exposed.

Such acts "could only have come from public institutions charged with surveillance, and attempted carjackings clearly not of a criminal but a political nature," they said in a statement.

"We demand that all public officials and institutions ... cease and desist from acts of intimidation against human rights defenders."

The threats are "aimed at silencing voices that have exposed injustices committed by public officials," they said.

Kenya has come under pressure recently to implement reforms agreed on by President Mwai Kibaki and Prime Minister Raila Odinga in a power-sharing deal that ended the bloodletting in February 2008.

Former UN chief Kofi Annan who brokered the deal on Wednesday called for faster reforms if the country is to avert a relapse into the violence sparked by the disputed December 2007 presidential election.

## Graphic

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## World Briefs

Colour Photo: Jay Directo, Agence France-Presse ; Getty Images; GRIM CARGO: A boatman transports three empty wooden coffins above flood waters on the edge of the Laguna Lake east of Manila on Thursday. The floods killed 298 people and submerged 80 per cent of the capital. At least 400,000 squatters blocking key drainage channels of a giant lake on the edge of the Philippine capital need to be uprooted to fix Manila's flooding crisis, a government official said. ;

**Load-Date:** October 9, 2009

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**Arabs tackle free speech taboo; Across the Middle East, what would never happen in polite company now appears on broadcasts of The Doha Debates - discussion of controversy.**

The Christian Science Monitor  
September 16, 2009 Wednesday

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**Length:** 1683 words

**Byline:** Caryle Murphy Correspondent

## **Body**

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That is the theme of The Doha Debates, the five-year-old hit show on BBC World News. Produced eight times a year in Doha, capital of the tiny Gulf emirate of Qatar, the program features speakers debating such controversial questions as "Does political Islam threaten the West?" "Does the face veil hinder Muslim integration?" "Do Gulf Arabs value profit over people?" "Are Muslims failing to combat extremism?" "Is Arab unity dead and buried?" and "Should Muslim women be free to marry anyone they choose?" Moderated by former BBC interviewer Tim Sebastian, the debates follow the format of the prestigious British debating club, the Oxford Union. After four speakers (two on each side) argue for and against a motion, the panelists are questioned by Mr. Sebastian and the audience, which then votes electronically to determine the winning side. Through the BBC, The Doha Debates can be seen in some 300 million homes in 200 countries. But its greatest legacy may be in the Middle East, where authoritarian regimes stifle free speech, newspapers are heavily censored, children are raised to obey without question, and school systems reject critical thinking in favor of rote learning. Amid this smothering environment, The Doha Debates is perhaps the freest public forum for probing tough issues that deeply resonate in the Arab world. "It offers an opportunity for free speech and expression of an opinion, which is very much in demand and very highly appreciated," said Asaad al-Asaad, an English instructor at Riyadh's Yamamah University, who accompanied his Saudi students to Doha for a taping. One student, Mishaal al-Rasheed, said the program has taught him that "you don't need at the end of the debate to agree with me. But at least respect me for my ideas." He is impressed, he added, that Qatar "took the lead in having debates in our Islamic world.... In another Arab country, [the debaters] might be in jail right now." One of the show's failings, Mr. Asaad said, is that it lacks Arabic subtitles, which would make it more accessible. Asked about this, moderator Sebastian, who also founded the program, said in an e-mail that he wasn't aware of any "full-length BBC current affairs show [that] carries subtitles in any foreign language." But, he added that starting in October the program will start an Arabic website that will carry subtitles on streamed video of the debates. Free tickets to the live tapings are given mostly to students from all over the Middle East attending universities or high school in Qatar. For an hour, they have the rare experience of being able to say whatever they like without fear of reprisal. At times, their pent-up frustration explodes on air. During a recent program, a young Egyptian was urged by a debater to make his views known. "How can I voice out my opinion if my leaders are actually oppressing me to not talk?" he shouted back. "My leaders are in power [for] 27 years and I

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In March 2007, for example, Ilan Pappé, of Haifa University, and Yossi Beilin, a former peace negotiator and Knesset member, spoke on opposite sides of the motion that "Palestinians should give up their full right of return." Israeli debaters also have included former Foreign Minister Shlomo Ben-Ami and Deputy Education Minister Michael Melchior. President Shimon Peres was a special guest. When another program debated whether Palestinians "risk becoming their own worst enemy," the audience agreed by 71 percent. And in March, the program tackled whether "it's time for the US administration to get tough on Israel" during a taping at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. (The audience said, "yes," by 63 percent.) On another show, senior Hamas official Mahmoud al-Zahar got a harsh grilling from young Palestinians. "He kept answering questions by talking about what the Israelis are doing and the students kept telling him we expect something better from you," recalled Sebastian. The program's birthplace, Qatar, is a feisty Arabian Gulf nation of 200,000, whose natural gas exports gives it one of the highest per capita incomes on earth. The show arose from a 2004 conversation that Sebastian, former host of the BBC interview program HARDtalk, had with Qatar's ruler, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, and his wife, Sheikha Mozah. She is chairwoman of the Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development, which funds worthy causes. The couple asked Sebastian to suggest projects the foundation might sponsor. "I said, 'What about town-hall debates?' " Sebastian recalled. Given a green light, he hired Willis away from the BBC to be his producer. They showed tapes of the initial debates to BBC executives, who agreed to broadcast the show after realizing "this was something quite special ... in the Arab world for people to speak out this way," Willis recounted. The program is "an independent unit" of the Qatar Foundation, which provides the funding. But "they have no say in what we do, who we invite, or the topics we choose to debate," Sebastian said in a phone interview. "And they've never sought to have any say. One of the biggest favors they've done us is to let us entirely alone." There's no better place to see the impact of The Doha Debates than Yamamah University, a private college in Riyadh's sprawling desert outskirts. Seated in his campus office, Asaad said that when he decided to teach debating his only model was Arabic TV shows, where discussions "turn into more of a rooster fight than an actual debate." Initially, his students "were shouting at each other or answering a question with a question," Asaad recounted. "I said, 'Hey guys, we ... should be doing some things in a different way. There should be some quality. There should be some research. We should go a little bit deeper beyond what people say in the coffee shops or the bus stops.' " Then Asaad found The Doha Debates website. "As a teacher, it provided me with everything I needed," including the ability to download past debates and read transcripts. "We discussed the format, the role of the moderator, and I said, 'Fine, can we try a debate like this?' " Their first public debate in the university's auditorium took on the motion "This house believes coeducation improves education." (The audience of both male and female students gave the idea a thumbs down.) His students were so taken with debating that Asaad organized what he believes is the first debating club at any Saudi university. It now has about 25 regular participants. "You could say that our debate club is the legitimate child of The Doha Debates," said the Syrian-born instructor, adding that Yamamah now offers a course in debate. "By preparing the students to become good debaters, you're preparing the future community leaders to become better negotiators." Saud Al-Thonayan, a club member, said that before he discovered The Doha Debates, "when anyone talked about debating in Arab countries, I said it's not debating, it's fighting." He recalled being "shocked" during a taping when the "sensitive issue" of political Islam was discussed before an audience of conservatives and liberals. "All of them were debating and asking questions in a new way for Arab countries," he said. "In a friendly way." Learning this "new way" has been a personal struggle for Mr. Thonayan. "There is an important thing that I love in debating: How to be calm. Because I face a lot of problems in this case. I get angry. I always debate with extremists, with religious people about some Saudi issues, like women's rights. And we always end up fighting because I get nervous and angry." But, he added, "I have learned how to be calm, how to control myself." Saudis generally aren't used to formal debate. The older generation often admonishes young people not to bring up certain topics - like the ban on women driving - because it's regarded as impolite to discuss contentious issues in public,

Arabs tackle free speech taboo Across the Middle East, what would never happen in polite company now appears on broadcasts of The Doha Debates - discussion of c....

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**Load-Date:** February 19, 2010

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## *Arabs tackle free speech taboo*

Christian Science Monitor

September 13, 2009, Sunday

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**Section:** Cover Story; Pg. 17

**Length:** 1685 words

**Byline:** Caryle Murphy Correspondent

**Dateline:** Doha, Qatar; and Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

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## Arabs tackle free speech taboo

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## Arabs tackle free speech taboo

**Load-Date:** September 16, 2009

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## Letters

The Jerusalem Post

September 2, 2009 Wednesday

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**Section:** OPINION; Pg. 14

**Length:** 1640 words

**Byline:** Angela Levine, David Geffen, David Herman, M. Van Thijn, Yonatan Silverman, John Fitzgerald, Thelma Jacobson, Olga P. Wind, Linda Silverstone

**Highlight:** Readers' Letters

### **Body**

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Mike Ronnen

Sir, - I will remember Meir (Mike) Ronnen with gratitude and deep respect. In 1985, as Arts editor of The Jerusalem Post and at the height of his influence at the paper, he gave me a job, joining the team of art critics (Ronnen and Gil Goldfine) which would for a further 20 years deliver a two-page weekly coverage of the local art scene.

Nurtured by Mike, I came to appreciate not only the breadth and accuracy of his knowledge in a great many fields, but also his integrity, his refusal to court cheap popularity by writing positively about artists whose work he could not bring himself to admire.

Above all, I will remember him for the high professional standards he set for himself, expecting the same from those who worked with him ("Meir Ronnen, 1926- 2009," August 31).

ANGELA LEVINE

Ra'anana

Sir, - I spent a lot of time around the Post newsroom in the 1980s and frequently saw Meir Ronnen granting court to editors and writers. He seemed to know everything.

I once got lucky and found in an Israeli magazine a photo of a young soldier in Jerusalem in 1949 or 1950. Some old-timer at the paper said, "Show it to Mike."

Timidly, I went up to him with the picture. He glanced at it briefly, then swept it up and left quickly, shouting back to me: "Thanks - that soldier is me!"

DAVID GEFFEN

Jerusalem

Guy von Dardel's

search for Raoul

## Letters

Sir, - Holocaust survivors and admirers of the lost hero of the Holocaust, Raoul Wallenberg, were greatly saddened to hear of the death in Geneva of Raoul's half- brother, Guy von Dardel, at the age of 90. He spent much of his life in a vain search for Wallenberg and for clues to his mysterious fate.

In the course of his research, he compiled a vast amount of documentation, but unfortunately, despite many visits to Russia, he was unable to unearth definitive evidence about Raoul's fate.

His daughters, Louise and Marie, gave him great support in his search activities. They will carry on his work, together with the Jerusalem Working Group for Recognition of Leading Rescuers during the Holocaust and other Wallenberg organizations, until the truth of what really happened to the Swedish diplomat who saved 100,000 Jews in Budapest in 1945 - only to disappear into the Soviet Gulag - becomes known.

DAVID HERMAN

Jerusalem

But war?

Sir, - Never before have I thought of myself as a pacifist, but I couldn't help considering the possibility when I read the analysis by Yaakov Katz, who daily shows he is well-informed about the Israeli army ("Assassinating Ashkenazi would likely have led to war," September 1).

The understatement that such a hit "would likely leave Israel with no choice but to respond" is granted - but war? Thousands risking life and limb; hundreds on both sides, fighters and civilians, getting killed or maimed; daily calm and the economy taking a nosedive for who knows how long, just because our security was faulty and we are bad losers?

Katz sees this as a likely scenario because the abductions of Eldad Regev and Ehud Goldwasser led to the Second Lebanon War. But if there was anything to be learned from that campaign, it was that it was needless, senseless and too costly.

In the case of a similar assassination attempt, God forbid, let us hope that instead of seeking revenge, someone at the helm will strive to improve the protection of our highest officials and gain satisfaction by trying to catch and punish the attacker and his handlers.

M. VAN THIJN

Jerusalem

Real root cause

Sir, - I beg to differ with Herb Keiron's statement in "Reframing the conflict" (August 28) that "the root cause... is the refusal of the Palestinians to acknowledge or recognize Israel as the nation state of the Jewish people." It most decidedly is not.

The tragically petrified and embedded psychological root cause of the problem is that the Palestinians hysterically, and with insane persistence, insist the land of Israel has no connection whatsoever with the Jewish people and, in fact, is a Palestinian Islamic wakf from the days of the caliphate under the Ottomans. In other words, they are striving for Israel to be Palestine.

If all they did was refuse to recognize Israel as the Jewish state, there still might be some room to negotiate over the future allocation of land and sovereignty in this neck of the woods. But the Palestinians seem adamant, wanting nothing but to displace the Jews.

## Letters

That is the root problem. And no negotiations will bear fruit until something is done to demoralize the Palestinian leadership, bring their heads down from out of the hallucinatory clouds and knock a measure of reasonableness into them - a recognition, at least, that the State of Israel's existence also has a measure of justice.

As things are now, whether Israel builds in the settlements in Judea and Samaria or not has no influence whatsoever on the core problem.

YONATAN SILVERMAN

Tel Aviv

Blueprints for death

Sir, - The presentation to the Israeli prime minister of the architectural blueprints of the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp was an event of great poignancy and historical significance. Apart from exposing the crazy claims of Holocaust deniers, it must also serve as a reminder of the crimes that evil or fanatical regimes are capable of ("Hinting at Iran, PM urges world to avoid Shoah-era apathy," August 27).

I stress are, not were, because right now another Nazi-like regime is growing militarily stronger and more menacing by the day.

Iran, a country governed by a de-facto doomsday cult, is engaged in developing nuclear power and a capacity to build viable nuclear weapons, while at the same time threatening openly to "wipe Israel off the map." Its armed forces are updating and perfecting their missiles and missile delivery potential at a ferocious rate and make no secret of their ambitions.

When you add to these factors the non-stop supply of sophisticated weaponry and training by Iran to Hamas and Hizbullah - two organizations dedicated to the total destruction of the Jewish state - you have abundant evidence of Iran's intention toward the nation founded a few short years after the liberation of the death camps.

But the Jewish people are not going to be pushed around this time. They will not have to wait helplessly for the present-day blueprints for annihilating Israel to be implemented.

I believe Israel has a right to exist, and the Jewish people have a right to prevent an Iranian "Final Solution."

JOHN FITZGERALD

Co. Kilkenny, Ireland

We didn't elect Obama

Sir, - Gershon Baskin's articles fascinate me. In one of the first sentences of "President Obama: Pro-Israel, pro-Palestinian, pro-peace" (September 1), he hit the nail right on the head. Read further, and he misses all the remaining nails, and even the wall they are in.

Baskin is absolutely right: "Obama does not face elections in Israel." In other words, nobody here elected him to be responsible for our safety. We elected a supposedly right-wing government, and not out of an inexplicable outbreak of obstinacy. The obstinacy has been rocketed into us. It's been mortar-bombed into us. This is what happened when we gave away Gush Katif for nothing.

Eighteen years ago, when the first Oslo Agreement was signed, many of us walked around with a sense of doom, for which we were called all sorts of nasty names. We didn't know how very right we were. More than 1,000 of our citizens were subsequently blown up in our pizza parlours, in our restaurants, on our streets.

Baskin now advocates giving away the Temple Mount, Judaism's most holy site, to our implacable enemies. Enemies? Read the statements that came out of the Fatah conference in Bethlehem just a couple of weeks ago. Baskin makes this offer as if all of the above had never happened.

## Letters

No one, not even Obama, has the right to force us to relive those terrible times. Certainly no one who lives elsewhere. Certainly no one whom the Israeli people did not democratically elect.

THELMA JACOBSON

Petah Tikva

Crime prevention

begins in school

Sir, - A plan to curb crime will be successful only when it begins in the schools, though home rules are important too. A teacher should be formally addressed, and not just by his or her first name. Similarly, pupils should not be called yeled (or yalda) - they have names.

A dress code would help more than we think, in and even out of the classroom. The idea is to instill self- respect and respect for others.

With the New Year almost here, let's hope for more enforcement, and positive reinforcement ("Netanyahu presents 5-point program to combat 'intolerable violence,'" August 31).

OLGA P. WIND

Holon

'Friends'

Sir, - I read Herb Keinon's "Facebook reality" (August 30) with a wry smile. I too couldn't see any benefits to joining Facebook. If I wanted to contact friends and family, I e-mailed or phoned them. What did I need to put messages on Facebook for? Nor did I need to be "friends" with people I see regularly. Until my 16-year-old grandson in England stepped in, and Grandma was "forced" onto Facebook.

I don't want to be "friends" with the world and his wife, but I was able to contact an old friend I had lost touch with, and that is a big plus.

With regard to school reunions - Herb, don't ever go there! I went to one five years ago. I had attended an English girls' grammar school and left at 16; the gap was 50 years!

I was shocked at the "old women" who walked into the hall. Where was that dare-devil who hid in the cupboard the whole of the French lesson? She had turned into a grey- haired, retired schoolteacher, as were most of them. My best friend, a lively Catholic girl, had been a civil servant, in the same job for 30 years!

Having lived here for many years, I had very little to talk to them about apart from a few shared school memories. When another reunion was suggested, to be held in five years, I shuddered.

Best to keep the happy school-day memories intact.

LINDA SILVERSTONE

Herzliya Pituah

**Load-Date:** October 4, 2011

**How masters of chaos thrive on bombs and charity; Guerrillas are exploiting the divisions caused by ineffectual and corrupt government to rebuild the Taliban's influence, writes James Hider**

The Times (London)

September 25, 2009 Friday

Edition 1, National Edition

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# THE TIMES

**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 26,27

**Length:** 1872 words

**Byline:** James Hider

## Body

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But the hovels they live in are barely fit for the sheep that they once herded in their troubled homeland far to the south, now a battleground between British troops and Taliban guerrillas. The men cluster round visitors, begging for money to feed their families or look for their kidnapped children. One shows a photo of dead infants, relatives killed in a US airstrike. The 800 families in the camp live entirely off charity, with no running water, sanitation or other facilities.

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But in one thing they have not changed since they swept in from the refugee camps and madrassas of Pakistan and Kandahar 15 years ago: they are still masters at exploiting the chaos, division and corruption that have blighted Afghanistan for decades.

For years, the Taliban have been taking advantage of an impoverished population disillusioned with the corruption of Mr Karzai's Government, which is propped up by Western troops whose very presence is an affront to many in this insular country. According to the gloomiest estimates, the Taliban now have a permanent presence in 80 per cent of the country.

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General Stanley McChrystal, the overall US commander in Afghanistan, said in his recent strategy review that "the insurgents control or contest a significant portion of the country, although it is difficult to assess precisely how much due to a lack of [Nato] presence".

The drawn-out fiasco of last month's elections has only bolstered the Islamists, with evidence of massive fraud undermining the concept of democracy in the eyes of millions of Afghans who once dared to hope for better times ahead. "The political paralysis helped us a lot," said Mullah Ghulam Muhammad Akhund, a Taleban commander in Helmand. "The Government will be too busy dealing with their own problems, giving us time to create plans and recruit more people and attack government facilities." Several Taleban leaders said that the movement was already attracting more recruits and was drafting plans fully to exploit the post-election power vacuum. They declined to specify them, but hinted that part of their strategy was to expand into the north to attack Nato supply lines from Central Asia. On the ground, the Taleban have refined their guerrilla warfare, avoiding many of the stand-and-fight battles that they had been losing so heavily to Nato's superior firepower. Instead they have become a sophisticated insurgent force, relying heavily on roadside bombs, ambushes and the intimidation of anyone suspected of collaboration, including the use of death threats known as "night letters".

They have studied Western counter-insurgency tactics that emphasise defending the population and winning over hearts and minds - the very change in approach adopted recently by US forces. This summer, the Taleban produced a 13-page "code of conduct" ordering fighters to avoid civilian casualties where possible and abstain from the summary executions that lost them so much popularity in the past.

With the Afghan Government incapable and often uninterested in providing even basic services in rural areas, the Taleban have stepped into the breach, copying the successful "bombs and charity" approach pioneered by Hezbollah and Hamas.

David Kilcullen, the Australian counter-insurgency expert who advised the US military in Iraq and Afghanistan, warned that the Taleban's shadow government - calling itself the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan - is providing a parallel system of courts, clinics and policing. They even have an ombudsman's office near Kandahar, where people can complain about excesses by Taleban commanders. "Sometimes they fire or even execute Taleban commanders for breaking the code of conduct," he said. "A government that is losing to [an insurgency] isn't being out-fought, it is being out-governed ." The exact command structure of the new Taleban remains shrouded in mystery. Many analysts and Taleban field commanders say that overall strategic planning comes from the Quetta Shura, the council of exiled Taleban leaders in Pakistan, including Mullah Omar. But day-to-day attacks are firmly in the hands of local commanders. Arsalan Rehmani, a former Taleban fighter who joined the Government and who now negotiates with his one-time comrades, said that the Quetta Shura was influenced strategically by al-Qaeda.

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Efforts to rehabilitate former Taleban fighters have had limited success, in part because the economy means there is little for a fighter to come back to: when unemployment and poverty are the norm, the prospect of three square meals a day and a modest salary as an insurgent often seems a better prospect.

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With the Taleban gaining strength, however, they may be less inclined to negotiate. British commanders say rapid results from a military surge are essential.

#### The recommendations

The Taleban will not surrender any time soon. The leadership live in relative security and comfort in Pakistan and must be targeted there. Nato has enjoyed some significant successes so far in killing more extreme leaders, but little progress has been made in offering others a way out apart from victory or death. They must be offered a third, real choice: reconciliation.

As in Iraq, deals may have to be done with very dangerous people with blood on their hands. One of those unsavoury characters could be Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, now aligning himself with the Taleban but who has ideological differences with them.

Efforts must be made to woo footsoldiers with promises of reconciliation and jobs. Approaches must likewise be made to their leaders inside Pakistan: Islamabad can open channels to offer the guerrilla leaders a political option if they renounce violence.

Building up Afghanistan's armed forces is the most direct way of tackling the insurgency and creating jobs. But they must be better trained: Afghans are wary of their security forces, often accusing them of theft and taking bribes. There is a clear need for more troops - and better commanders - but they also have to be put to better use to deny the Taleban the freedom to move in a friendly environment. Politicians in the West have to understand that many Pashtuns - the country's largest ethnic community - see the Taleban as a way of restoring their group's prestige.

In a country that has suffered such profound social breakdown as Afghanistan, people look to traditional ethnic and tribal structures for stability. More must be done to address problems through these means.

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Taleban activity Heavy Light Substantial Kabul Helmand province Source: International Council on Security and Development

2009 2008 2007 80% 17% 3% 21% 7% 38% 8% 72% 54%

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The Taleban use the threat of violence and the promise of home comforts to win hearts and minds, particularly in refugee camps, left

Photographs by Peter Nicholls

**Load-Date:** September 25, 2009



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Photographs by Peter Nicholls

**Load-Date:** September 25, 2009

## *The art of political avoidance*

The Irish Times

July 13, 2009 Monday

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**Section:** FEATURES; Pg. 10

**Length:** 1860 words

**Byline:** PETER CRAWLEY in Tel Aviv, Israel

### **Body**

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In Israel, all art may be political, but there is a reluctance to linger too long on sensitive issues – no wonder its theatre moves swiftly on to the next hot topic

The door of the Great Synagogue on Allenby Street, in Tel Aviv, is grandly proportioned, richly decorated with etchings, but was never designed to inspire. Nonetheless, on a hot day in Israel, a visitor wouldn't think twice to see a young woman in a T-shirt raising her eyes from behind enormous sunglasses to sketch the door's details. Rising cheerfully to assist a couple of tourists, uncertain if their summer attire is modest enough to gain entrance (it is), she is asked if she is an art student and laughs with amusement.

Oh no, she smiles at the mix-up. I'm a soldier. The 21-year-old is in the third year of her mandatory service in the Israel Defence Forces, on a reconnaissance exercise with her company; her sketch might be good, but it's art in the service of security.

In the same week, a large delegation of international journalists in Israel might have wondered similarly whether the theatre, dance and music programme curated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs ever had a similar agenda. All art is political, as George Orwell once dryly noted. Caught between rival historical and spiritual claims to the land; fraught with internal and external tensions; laden down with the millennia-old history of Jewish persecution and the horror of annihilation; undermined by the most intractable and bloody conflict in the Middle East; currently facing the consequences of last year's Gaza bombardment for which both Hamas and Israel have been accused of war crimes by Amnesty International – any art in the 61-year-old state of Israel that seeks to reflect society is intensely politicised. Any art that does not, seems even more so.

Savyon Liebrecht's parents survived the Holocaust and never spoke about it. The gravity and consequences of those events have come to define the work of the novelist and playwright. She is certainly not alone in this. The Holocaust is a frequent topic of discussion in Israeli art. Yes, very much so, agrees the director of the Beit Lessin Theatre. But over the last three or four years it is the Holocaust from the point of view of the second- and third-generation [survivors]. In the 1950s, he says, when the first survivor testimonies were likely to be heard from the stage, nobody wanted to deal with it.

Liebrecht's engagement is such a constant in her writing that the enormity of the Holocaust seems like a form of heritage drama. I write a lot about the Holocaust, she tells me. About second-generation survivors and how the Holocaust affects our lives.

## The art of political avoidance

She is similarly inclined to see the past in the present, making often unexpected leaps. If we look at the 20th century, we see that three of the names who changed the world were Freud and Einstein and Marx, all German Jews. In the same century we have Auschwitz, another meeting point between Jews and Germans. The range is so wide.

Her play, *The Banality of Love*, which depicts the relationship between Hannah Arandt, the controversial Jewish political theorist and her long-term lover, Martin Heidegger the infamous Nazi philosopher, is essentially a historical drama with a twist. Arandt, self-exiled in America and unpublished in Hebrew, was a staunch critic of Zionism, prophesying an Israel so involved in self-defence it would find little time to create anything. Liebrecht's memory play, so basic in construction as to be almost theatrically inert, seems to conspire to that analysis with its backwards glance and conservative form, yet in making sense of history and attempting to move it forward, it stands as a significant act of cultural creation. In art and politics, contradiction can be a useful place to begin.

Daniella likes whatever they play on the radio, sings a young man at the grand piano in a basement music club, and the radio plays whatever Daniella likes.

The singer is Shlomi Shaban, a flamboyant player with a rich understanding of classical technique and witty lyrics, and in the satisfyingly dark Levantine 7 venue, the young musicians criticise the dreadful conservatism of the Israeli mainstream, implying that they represent a better alternative. Israeli contemporary music is necessarily hybrid, they argue, by virtue of geography, history and culture. But while the acts stand in sharp contrast, I presume, to the contestants on Israel's Got Talent, such diverse acts as the ferociously loud Screaming Peacocks and the ferociously seductive Efrat Gosh owe much to global trends in pop. No review of The Screaming Peacocks could be more eloquent than their T-shirts: Radiohead, Faith No More and, in a witty concession to self-reflexivity, The Screaming Peacocks. Gosh, meanwhile, hip, theatrical and playful, is equal parts Billie Holiday, Joanna Newsom and CocoRosie, but set apart by one crucial difference: none of the above ever sings in Hebrew.

I can't stand on the stage and not mean what I say, Gosh tells me. You know, it's my language and I write a lot of my own songs. I can sing in other languages but I like Hebrew.

Hebrew is itself deeply political, instituted by Ben Yehuda as the official language of the State over Yiddish, which has all but died out in Israel. Derived from the Bible and routinely updated by scholars to accommodate any new terms ( *mison* , for instance, is the Hebrew for *sms* ), Hebrew proceeds with extreme caution. As a result, Gosh's music may be hybrid in form, but her lyrics are not.

IF THE TENSION between aesthetic hybridity and ideological conservatism can be the grace note of a song, it is more pronounced in the Habima, the National Theatre of Israel. Like the Abbey Theatre, the Habima was a national theatre before there was a nation. Founded in Russia over 90 years ago as the first Hebrew-speaking theatre, it migrated to Palestine in the 1920s and 30s, long before the State of Israel gained independence.

A national theatre for a relatively young and exceptionally diverse nation built on

successive waves of immigration, it has more discrete constituencies with more complicated histories to serve than most national theatres could fathom, which is one reason that 80 per cent of Israeli theatre revolves around new work, less engaged with mining a canon than in creating one.

Although chronically underfunded, theatre holds a special place in Israeli art, attracting large audiences and constantly generating original work. We have a very enthusiastic audience, director Avishai Milstein tells me. Everyone wants to see theatre. So we have to write them plays. We create classics for the future generations.

Drama deals with conflict and Israelis have many conflicts, so that's the place to go and to digest them. This is the reason why the exchange between the stage and audience is so vivid and so immediate, always.

The most obvious and immediate of these conflicts, however, has apparently become harder to find on the Israeli stage since the days of the great artist engagé, Hanoch Levin. The new trend is not to detail the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Milstein continues. It's not that popular any more. Israelis are a bit fed up with it. It was very popular

## The art of political avoidance

during the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s. All Israeli authors had written about this conflict, but now they find new conflicts, generational conflicts, religious conflicts, minorities and so on. The daily politic is at the centre, but not so much the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Given the magnitude of such conflict, its priority on the news agenda and the focus it draws from the world, this may sound extraordinary, perhaps even callous, but it makes a sombre sense. What happens when a nation's political, territorial and violent conflict outpaces, outlasts then outstrips its drama? If it can't be solved, people would prefer not to want to see it.

In contrast, though, Habima's current co-production with Berlin's Schaubuhne theatre is a piece entitled *Third Generation*, featuring four Israeli, four Palestinian and four German performers, while the Akko Theatre Centre, in the historic and multi-cultural enclave of Haifa, is home to a company comprised of Israeli and Palestinian members. Encouragingly, The Palestinian National Theatre, founded in 1984, is based in East Jerusalem. Less encouragingly, the Gaza City international theatre festival, launched in 2005, has not been repeated due to travel restrictions imposed on inhabitants and visitors.

It's a political show, in case you were wondering, says Rina Yerushalmi, artistic director of the Itim Theatre Ensemble, following her uninterrupted 28-minute synopsis of the new production, *Dybbuk*. For anyone familiar with Yerushalmi's *Mythos*, a piece which projected the Israeli-Palestinian conflict upon the Oresteia, which came to the Dublin Theatre Festival in 2005, this was hardly surprising. But Itim are the exception among Israeli theatre groups by looking to the classics to shed light on the present. From my childhood I never liked anything new, says Yerushalmi. Not my clothing, not the buildings, nothing. What I always intuitively wanted was to connect to the world. I felt that Israel isolated itself. Even though it's an old nation, it wants to be new. I'll tell you another forbidden story. I was originally a dancer and came back from Europe. We were paid to create folk-Israeli dance – can you imagine? – so that [Israel] could have one of its own. They [The Ministry of Culture] brought a group from Africa, women, to show us how to do a rain dance, which was beautiful in its simplicity, but it was made so complicated you had to take classes in folk dance to learn it.

IN REACTION, Yerushalmi's work, borne out by her extraordinary production of *The Dybbuk*, crystallises the tension between creation and conservatism, defiance and defence, at the heart of Israeli culture. Based on a Yiddish folk tale, it uses both Hebrew and Yiddish. Hybrid in performance style and exacting in execution, it merges text, dance, puppetry, design and a maelstrom of music to achieve a narrative flow. Focussing on the Kabbalah as a cult in which sexual desire is sublimated into religious extremism with tragic consequences, it is deftly satirical, stridently critical and universally recognisable. (Had it opened in Dublin, say, in the aftermath of the Ryan report, one would have thought it was tailor-made for an Irish audience.) Such a work points to the immediacy and intensity of contemporary Israel, underscoring the fact that defence and creation are not irreconcilable impulses, that culture can both commemorate and question the past and that a better future is possible if it can be imagined.

Remembering the girl soldier with the sketch pad, I ask about the tension involved in making art within a conservative, security-obsessed society. The response is mildly chastising: The same Government that supports a very conservative military thinking can at the same time support very avant garde, rule-breaking theatre, because that's the kind of country this is. You want to keep it alive even though it's a big contradiction.

**Load-Date:** July 13, 2009

**2009 A YEAR TO REMEMBER; In the latest of his popular reviews of the year, DAN O'NEILL looks at what was making the headlines in the first months of 2009**

South Wales Echo

December 24, 2009 Thursday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 10

**Length:** 1793 words

**Byline:** DAN O'NEILL

## **Body**

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THE old year ends with Christmas Day tragedies. Surviving conjoined twin Faith dies a month after sister Hope. "The way of the Lord," say parents Laura and Aled Williams. And as she plays with her presents four-year-old Emily May Hughes dies when her father trips and drops the TV he is carrying on to her head. Rob Scott Jones is found hanged, the 25th Bridgend person aged between 17 and 27 suspected of killing themselves since January 2007. And Christmas carnage in California when Bruce Pardo, 45, dressed as Santa, shoots ex-wife and eight of her family then himself after bitter divorce.

LOCAL SOUTH Wales wakes to a New Year's Day with temperatures below zero. A high street freeze as well when the last Welsh Woolworths closes in the firm's centenary year with news that totemic store M&S is shutting 27 stores nationwide with 1,200 job losses.

Craig Hodson-Walker, a 29-year-old from Barry, is shot by armed robbers at the post office near Worcester run by his father Ken. Four men are charged. And Merthyr mother Kelly Marie Pocock, 24, is convicted of cruelty to a child after allowing her three-year-old son to smoke. Her 40-week jail sentence suspended for two years. Another mother in the news when Gav 'n' Charlotte announce the birth of baby Dexter, a brother for Ruby.

At 14, Paralympic gold-winning swimmer Swansea's Eleanor Simmonds is youngest to be awarded OBE.

NATIONAL WILDCAT strikes cripple oil refineries after British workers are denied jobs in favour of Italian and Portuguese workers. And widespread disgust at news that four Labour peers promised "clients" they'd change laws for cash - being paid up to pounds 5,000 per day for "consultancies".

It happened three years ago, but Prince Harry is forced to apologise for calling fellow trainee officer a "Paki" and referring to "ragheads". He then splits with girlfriend Chelsey after five years.

She never lives to see her baby born but Jayne Soliman, stricken by a brain haemorrhage, survives on a machine long enough to deliver two-pound Aya. Danger of internet chat is highlighted again when 15-year-old Laura Stainforth is found in France a week after leaving home with Robert Williams, 49, whom she met via computer. Karen Matthews, mother of "missing" Shannon, gets eight years for kidnap along with Shannon's step-uncle Michael Donovan.



2009 A YEAR TO REMEMBER In the latest of his popular reviews of the year, DAN O'NEILL looks at what was making the headlines in the first months of 2009

Three Liverpool teenagers involved in the killing of 11-year-old Rhys Jones in 2007 get just five years between them but despite cheers at sentence there are calls for longer terms.

INTERNATIONAL TV'S biggest ever audience sees Barak Obama sworn in as 44th US president - twice. First time a mistake in wording means the oath is repeated the following day. Then an air strike he orders kills 22 including women and children in Pakistan.

Six British servicemen die in Afghanistan, making it 142, and more conflict when Israeli bombs devastate Gaza after Hamas rocket attacks. After 22 days, 1,300 dead before cease fire.

New year horror when fireworks trigger a blaze, killing 59 in Bangkok night club and 250 die when Indonesian ferry sinks. But incredibly, no deaths when a jet makes forced landing on River Hudson in the heart of New York.

As it floats 155 passengers perch on the wings and captain Chesley B Sullenberger is hailed as hero and given the keys to the city.

And five Somali pirates find they can't take it with them when their boat overturns as they flee with ransom from a Saudi tanker. One washed ashore with \$153,000 in his pockets.

Better luck for shipwrecked Burmese fishermen who drift off the Australian coast for 25 days in an icebox the size of a desk. Man face-painted as the Joker from Batman kills two toddlers and a teacher in a Belgian creche, wounds 10 other children.

And a woman in California gives birth to six girls and two boys.

SHOWBIZ DOCTOR Who? He's little-known actor Matt Smith, 11th (and youngest) succeeding David Tennant as the 903-year-old Time Lord. Kelly Brook, sacked from Britain's Got Talent, walks away with pounds 200,000 golden goodbye after just six days.

And gold for Kate Winslet, who almost breaks weeping record set by Gwyneth Paltrow when picking up two Golden Globe awards. Slumdog Millionaire takes best movie.

New Countdown team Rachel Riley and Jeff Stelling take a bow and Boy George (George O'Dowd) gets 15 months for abduction and attack on male escort Auden Carlsen.

SPORT FINALISTS in 2008, but after a fighting 1-1 draw against fabled old Final adversaries Arsenal at home, Cardiff City crash to a 4-0 defeat in the replay at the Emirates. No Happy New Year either for Liverpool captain Stephen Gerard, charged with assault in a Southport nightclub while celebrating 5-1 win over Manchester City, whose alleged pounds 100m offer for Milan's Kaka is turned down. Nigel Clough, 42, in to manage Derby County, the club dad Brian led to European glory. Ronaldo crashes pounds 200,000 Porsche but cheers up when voted World Footballer of 2008.

Kevin Pietersen out as England cricket captain and Moores as coach after bust-up between them. South Africa beat Aussies, the first Test series lost at home for 22 years. Ronnie O'Sullivan wins Masters for fourth time and triple gold cyclist Chris Hoy becomes Sir Chris.

Bad news for rugby, though. England's Mike Tyndall banned for drink-driving, Bath prop Matt Stevens fails drug test.

DEATHS BILL Stone, one of three World War I survivors, 108, Dai Llewellyn, 62, John Mortimer, 85, Patrick (Prisoner) McGoochan, 80, sixties songster Dave Dee, 66, TV's David Vine, 74, and Reg Gutteridge, 84, author John Updike, 76, cricket scorer Bill Frindall, 69, and anti-apartheid campaigner Helen Suzman, 91.

2009 A YEAR TO REMEMBER In the latest of his popular reviews of the year, DAN O'NEILL looks at what was making the headlines in the first months of 2009

LOCAL AIR cadets Katie-Jo Davies, 14, and 13-year-old cousin Nikita Marie Walters, pupils at Tonyrefail Comprehensive, die when two training planes collide over Porthcawl. Instructors Andrew Marsh, 24, and 63-year-old Hylton Price also killed.

Three-month-old Jaden Mack killed by bull terrier and Jack Russell in grandmother Denise Wilson's Ystrad Mynach home. And 13 years after killing 34-year-old Karen Skipper as she walked her dog by the River Ely, Cardiff labourer John Pope, 60, gets minimum 19 years after DNA evidence.

Coroner finds that 14-year-old Rhydfelin schoolboy Shaun Jones died in October 2008, 12 hours after treatment for acne and there are calls for sunbed ban after teenager Kirstie McRea suffered third degree burns in unattended bed.

Wales wipeout when heaviest snow for 18 years brings blizzards, closing 600 schools and causing chaos on roads and rail.

NATIONAL BLIZZARDS in England as well, usual chaos with protest over foreign workers and even more over billion-pound pay-offs to bank bosses after bail-outs.

"Free Speech Dead" is slogan after Dutch MP Geert Wilders is refused permission to show film linking Koran to terrorism in House of Lords. Two-year-old Sabnam Navsaarke dies following 197 injuries inflicted in four weeks by mother Zhabeena and boyfriend Subvhan Anwar. And Ivan, David Cameron's six-year-old son afflicted since birth by cerebral palsy, dies.

North Wales family David and Michelle Statham and their four children, aged 10 weeks to 13, died when Portuguese driver Paul da Silva's 40-ton lorry hit their car on the M6 in October 2007. Protest at leniency when da Silva gets just three years for death by dangerous driving, and also when Labour peer Lord Ahmed is given only 12 weeks for dangerous driving - he was using mobile before the crash that killed Martyn Combar, 28.

INTERNATIONAL AS they try to siphon petrol from an overturned tanker, 115 Kenyans die when it explodes. And 84 children killed by teething syrup in Nigeria, 200 in Australia's worst-ever heatwave as bush fires wipe out thousands of homes, PM Kevin Rudd says arsonists should be charged with mass murder.

A plane crash in New York State kills 49 but 126 survive when a Turkish jet crashes at Amsterdam's Schiphol airport.

When Nadya Suliman gave birth to octuplets, it was "a miracle". Until America discovered she's already the mother of six and had fertility treatment.

A woman suicide bomber kills 39 pilgrims in Iraq, more die in Pakistan and four Brit soldiers killed in a single day bring Afghan total to 149.

SHOWBIZ WITH only weeks to live, cancer victim Jade Goody, 27-year-old reality TV star weds Jack Tweed, 21, earning an estimated pounds 1m from magazine. Tweed, 21, convicted of assault, allowed to break curfew for ceremony.

Duffy is a three-time winner at Brit Awards and Slumdog Millionaire gets eight Oscars, best film and director, Danny Boyle. Kate Winslet wins best actress (The Reader), Mickey Rourke best actor (The Wrestler), Heath Ledger best support for Joker in Dark Knight.

Carol Thatcher fired by BBC after likening black tennis player to a golliwog and Jeremy Clarkson apologises for calling Gordon Brown "one-eyed Scotch idiot".

Peaches Geldof plans divorce six months after marrying US musician Max Drumney in Las Vegas.

And it's farewell to Wendy Richard of EastEnders and Are You Being Served?, victim of cancer at 65.

2009 A YEAR TO REMEMBER In the latest of his popular reviews of the year, DAN O'NEILL looks at what was making the headlines in the first months of 2009

SPORT A LOSS to France (21-16) blasts Wales' dream of a Grand Slam repeat but we beat England, Italy and Scotland with Ireland to come. Disgrace, though, for Gavin Henson, Andy Powell, Rhys Thomas, Jonathan Thomas, Mike Phillips and Lee Byrne, forced to apologise to Welsh management for drunken "celebrations" after England win.

Joe Calzaghe announces retirement after 11 years as unbeaten world champ and it could be the finish for Olympic swimming sensation Michael Phelps when photographs show him smoking weed.

Red faces at ITV when a commercial break misses Everton goal that beats Liverpool in FA Cup.

"Big Phil" Scolari sacked by Chelsea after seven months, pounds 8m pay-off as Guus Hiddink takes over. And Portsmouth fire Tony Adams.

Disaster for England, all out for 51, third lowest ever score as they lose by innings and 23 runs to West Indies.

Next Test abandoned after only 10 balls on appalling pitch but worse news when "billionaire saviour" of the game, American Alan Sanford, is reported on the run after \$8bn fraud charges.

In an epic repeat of their Wimbledon final, Nadal beats Federer to take the US Open at about the same time Pittsburgh Steelers were beating Arizona Cardinals in the 44th Superbowl.

Tony McCoy seals his greatness by becoming the first jump jockey to reach 3,000 winners, while David Beckham equals the great Bobby Moore with his 108th England cap. And it's farewell Gerwyn Williams, Wales full-back in the side that beat the 1953 All Blacks. He was 84.

DEATHS SWEDISH World heavyweight champ Ingemar Johansson, 77; jazz great Blossom Dearie, 82; Olympic triple gold winner Glen Davis, 74; actor James Whitmore, 87; Welsh poet Eluned Phillips, 94.

TOMORROW:

## Graphic

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President Barack Obama sings the national anthem at the end of swearing-in ceremonies at the US Capitol in Washington on January 20. In the background is First Lady Michelle Obama Eleanor Simmonds was the pride of the nation after her Paralympic success Having fun in the snow at Penrhiwfer in the Rhondda. Right, Joe Calzaghe announced his retirement MAIN Matt Smith is the new Doctor Who

**Load-Date:** December 24, 2009

## *The battle of the boycotts*

The Jerusalem Post

September 25, 2009 Friday

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**Section:** FEATURES; Pg. 18

**Length:** 4136 words

**Byline:** Yocheved Miriam Russo

**Highlight:** A call by Ben-Gurion University professor Neve Gordon to boycott Israel has led donors to question their funding of the institution

### **Body**

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On August 20, an opinion column published on page A-31 of the Los Angeles Times unleashed a firestorm that continues to blaze in California, and in the normally placid city of Beersheba, home of Ben-Gurion University of the Negev (BGU).

The op-ed, entitled "Boycott Israel," was written by Neve Gordon, head of BGU's Department of Politics and Government. Gordon's published plea was for "all foreign governments, regional authorities, international social movements, faith-based organizations, unions and citizens to suspend cooperation with Israel."

"Nothing else has worked," Gordon lamented. "The most accurate way to describe Israel today is as an apartheid state."

Such allegations, when made by Israel's foreign enemies, are hardly unique. But when the denouncement comes from a Jewish Israeli who, just last January, was promoted to head BGU's Politics and Government Department, battle lines form quickly.

It's hardly the first time "post-Zionist" academics have clashed with the traditional Zionist crowd, but Gordon's op-ed pushed the debate into new territory. Gordon's words even closer to home in that his proposed boycott would do irrevocable harm to a popular university, specifically one which pays his salary.

When the horrified "traditional Zionists" turned out to be wealthy Jewish Americans who donate tens of millions of dollars to keep BGU alive and growing, the dispute was raised to a new level. Many of the donors find themselves saying, "If BGU professors feel free to invite the world to boycott Israel, then perhaps the time has come to boycott BGU. Next time around, maybe we should sit on our checkbooks."

Ari Bussel, for years a pro-Israel, pro-BGU activist and a leader in the local chapter of American Friends of BGU, was among the first to spot Gordon's LA Times op-ed.

"It was Thursday morning," the Beverly Hills-born Bussel recalls. "The LA Times was delivered to our doorstep as usual. I saw Gordon's piece, read it, and at first I wasn't all that surprised. It's not unusual for the LA Times to print this sort of anti-Israeli rhetoric. I've come to expect it. But a few minutes later, I began to see that there was something qualitatively different about this article."

## The battle of the boycotts

"The local reaction was unbelievable," he continued. "An absolute avalanche of opposition erupted, and our phones were ringing off the hook. People who, on August 19, wouldn't have given each other the time of day, were calling each other and everybody else they knew. They all asked the same question: 'Who's giving money to BGU?' There are some big donors in this area. Very big. I've never seen anything like it.

"Before this hit, I'd never heard of Neve Gordon," says Bussel, who lived in Israel for years and served in the IDF during the First Gulf War. "For an American, even for someone involved in Israeli affairs, Gordon hadn't seeped into the American national consciousness. But this anti-Israel commentary hit home.

"For some of us, it may be the first blossoming of the idea that President Obama has become our downfall," he speculates. "Clearly, things are changing. Something is happening to alter people's perception and approach to this kind of Israel bashing. And it's not over - people are still calling, talking and writing. Three weeks afterwards, the LA Times was still printing readers' reactions. Something important happened when this piece was published."

Unless one is a news junkie, an academic, or closely involved with BGU, the name Neve Gordon may not ring many bells among mainstream Israelis, either. Even so, within 48 hours, 4,000 emails protesting Gordon's remarks had landed in the inbox of BGU President Rivka Carmi. Several days later, Carmi responded to her department head's call for a boycott through her own LA Times op-ed, admitting that she was "shocked" at what Gordon had written, suggesting that even she hadn't been fully aware of what she called Gordon's "destructive views."

"We are shocked by Dr. Neve Gordon's irresponsible statements, which are morally deserving of full condemnation," she wrote. "We vehemently shake ourselves free of the destructive views [advocated by Gordon], who makes cynical use of freedom of expression in Israel and Ben-Gurion University."

NOT EVERYONE was shocked. For years, watchdog organizations like Campus Watch and IsraCampus had monitored Neve Gordon's words and activities, even before Gordon made international news during the "Siege of Ramallah," when, in 2003, he joined Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat, holed up in his Ramallah compound. Defying IDF orders which forbade his entry to Ramallah, he moved in to protect Arafat, taking up a position as a "human shield." During the height of the intifada, when suicide bombers belonging to the military wing of Arafat's movement were blowing up Israeli cafes and buses, a photo of Gordon and Arafat, hands joined and held high in solidarity, splashed across the front pages of Israeli newspapers.

According to documents compiled by watchdog IsraCampus ([www.IsraCampus.org.il](http://www.IsraCampus.org.il)), Gordon's dissident career was politically consistent. Calling Israel an "apartheid" state had long been part of his anti-Israel rant. Last December, at the height of Operation Cast Lead, as Hamas rockets and missiles slammed into Israel - including striking the BGU campus - Gordon again spoke out, denouncing not Hamas but Israel.

Over the years, Gordon's commentary attracted an unusually diverse crowd of supporters. Despite being Israeli and Jewish, he regularly published his highly controversial views on websites and magazines accused of Holocaust-denial, and ultimately became a regular columnist for Al Jazeera, a Qatar-based Arabic media outlet. From there, he preached that Israel was opposed to peace and was plotting to steal Arab lands.

Some of Gordon's antics went beyond theory. In one incident, Gordon defended Azmi Bishara, the disgraced former Israeli-Arab MK, a man still wanted by the Israeli authorities for alleged spying and assistance to the terrorist group, Hizbullah. In his impassioned defense of Bishara, Gordon falsely accused his former Army commander, Aviv Kochavi, a decorated officer, of being a war criminal. As a result, Kochavi's career was sidelined when he was barred from entering Great Britain where he'd previously been accepted for study.

In left-wing circles and academia, all of this was well known, but none of it seemed to matter to BGU. Shortly after the public hand-holding with Arafat, Gordon was promoted at BGU and granted tenure. Just last January Gordon was again promoted, this time to department head, immediately after completing a highly controversial sabbatical year at the University of Michigan. In Michigan, according to local students, Gordon exacerbated anti-Israel tensions by always referring to Israel as an "apartheid regime," suggesting Israel may be even worse than South Africa.

### The battle of the boycotts

During "Palestinian Awareness Week" Gordon gave a talk "From Colonization to Occupation," in which he expressed support for a "one state solution."

THROUGH ALL this, Gordon remained popular at BGU, both with the administration and among his fellow professors. When he occasionally attracted unfavorable publicity, Carmi defended him as a "serious and distinguished researcher into human rights," lashing out at his detractors by calling them "Kahanists."

Nor was Gordon alone in his views at BGU. Shortly after the BGU president pleaded in her op-ed response for the continued support of the university despite the "egregious remarks of one person," evidence emerged to the effect that Gordon wasn't just "one person." Prof. Fred Lazin, who teaches political science within that department, acknowledged that before Gordon submitted his op-ed to the LA Times, Gordon submitted his remarks to the department as a whole, offering to step down as chair if they thought his words would prove too embarrassing. "There was a unanimous decision not to let him do that," Lazin said.

David Newman, Gordon's BGU colleague, championed Gordon's remarks. "This is something which Israel's universities can be proud of," Newman wrote in a Jerusalem Post op-ed. "It is this level of democracy, pluralism and freedom of speech which few in the world, not least many of those proposing boycotts from abroad, can share."

Indeed, other BGU departments - geography, history and sociology - also harbor professors who share Gordon's anti-Zionist, anti-Israel views. Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin, who teaches in BGU's Department of Jewish History, had also denounced Israel as an "apartheid regime" in Tikkun magazine.

Students were supportive, too. A contingent sent their own letter to Carmi, expressing support for Gordon's "welcome efforts to bring important issues to the public regarding the future of Israeli society - issues that are absent from the legitimate public dialogue."

"We are taught history but it seems we are not allowed to learn from it," the student letter read. "We're allowed to learn, but not to think, not to reach practical conclusions"

Nor is Gordon's support limited to just BGU. Petitions supporting Gordon began circulating not only at Beersheba University, but at other academic institutions as well. At one point, over 185 Israeli professors, from several institutions, signed petitions defending Gordon.

ON THE other side of the ideological divide, among both Israelis and Americans, the reaction to Gordon's comments ranged from pure fury to thoughtful consideration of what could be done.

Haifa-born Nurit Greenger, now living in Beverly Hills, for many years a BGU supporter, was among those who were furious. In a letter to fellow Israel supporters, Greenger wrote, "For years this Israeli citizen, Gordon, walked a marginally seditious line, but with his call to boycott Israel he crossed that line monumentally."

"His call," the letter went on, "to boycott Israel raises the question: How many more 'Gordons' live in Israel and are teaching the next generation to undermine their own homeland's existence?"

In a phone interview, Greenger spoke bluntly. "I'm very angry about Gordon's call to the whole world to boycott Israel. It's a very serious problem."

Greenger is among those calling for a boycott of BGU. "It's an oxymoron," she says. "BGU comes to us all the time, asking for money - 'Support the University! Support BGU! We make the Negev bloom! We have all these wonderful projects to help our beautiful Israel' - but then they allow professors to publish articles in the LA Times, begging the world to boycott Israel? That's crazy! Then they get upset when we question them? They want our money, but at the same time they're telling us we shouldn't look at what their professors are doing and saying? The time for that is long over."

Encouraging "key donors" to support other Israeli institutions instead of BGU is one of Greenger's missions. "It's time for us to exercise some 'academic freedom' of our own," she says. "We need to decide which of Israel's academic institutions we wish to support. The way to cure anti-Israelism is to redirect benefactors' funds from the

## The battle of the boycotts

kind of places that hire people like Neve Gordon, and channeling it instead to educational institutions that hold strong Zionist sentiments, Ariel University, the Jerusalem College of Technology, the Sami Shamoon College of Engineering."

There were students among the traditional Zionists, too. "Im Tirtzu" ("If You Will It"), a pro-Israel student organization at BGU, began circulating a petition against Gordon. Within two days, 54 instructors at BGU had signed.

The petition criticized Gordon for exploiting academic freedom and freedom of speech, noting the BGU's funding comes from the very country he's asking the world to boycott. They characterized Gordon's view as that of a "fringe group of daydreamers among Israeli academia in general, and BGU in particular," adding that Gordon's leftist activities made them ashamed to have him on the staff.

THE IMMEDIATE impact of the Gordon piece resulted in community meetings where BGU supporters - and former BGU supporters - gathered to discuss strategy. They also contacted Israel's Consul-General in Los Angeles, Yaakov (Yaki) Dayan, who ultimately sent a letter Carmi, advising her that Gordon's statements were proving "detrimental" to the university.

"Since the article was published I've been contacted by people who care for Israel," Dayan wrote. "Some of them are benefactors of BGU. They were unanimous in threatening to withhold their donations to your institution. My attempt to explain that one bad apple would affect hundreds of researchers turned out to be futile."

PART OF what irks traditional Zionists about Gordon's tactics is his demand for complete freedom of speech for himself, but not for anyone who disagrees with him. Gordon went so far as to file a SLAPP suit (Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation), designed to discourage critics, against University of Haifa professor Steven Plaut.

For anyone lucky enough to be watching from the sidelines, the Gordon vs. Plaut litigation ranks as one of the more entertaining chapters in the annals of Israeli legal history. Not so for Plaut, presumably, since he was paying his own legal bills.

It began when Plaut, himself a tenured professor and a long-time critic of Gordon's politics, took Gordon to task by publishing an op-ed on the website of a now-defunct California organization. Plaut criticized Gordon's long history of publishing in Holocaust-denial websites and magazines.

"It was right after the Ramallah incident," Plaut says. "I called him a 'Judenrat wannabe.' I didn't attack him personally - I attacked his politics. Look, Gordon writes his own columns, he's a public figure. Criticizing his politics is what freedom of speech is for. I also called him 'a groupie of the world's leading Jewish Holocaust denier, Norman Finkelstein.'"

Gordon could hardly dispute that, Plaut notes. "Gordon had compared Finkelstein to the prophets of the Bible. But somehow Gordon came across my internet column, hired an Arab lawyer to represent him, and filed suit for libel. He didn't like being in the same sentence with the words 'Holocaust denier,' even though I'd said that about Finkelstein, not about him."

Plaut, like Gordon, believed himself to be exercising his basic right to freedom of speech. "In Israel, there's supposed to be absolute freedom of speech in terms of criticizing another person's politics. No one has ever been punished for that. I was just making fun of his politics."

Although lawsuits are normally filed in the hometown of either the plaintiff or defendant, Gordon filed his suit in Nazareth. "Gordon lived in Jerusalem, teaches in Beersheba, and I live in Haifa," Plaut says. "I can only suppose that by filing in Nazareth, Gordon hoped to get a favorable Arab judge - which he did. When the decision came down, I think everyone was astonished to see how Judge Reem Naddaf used her decision to attack Israel.

"She wrote into her opinion that all of Israel - all, not part - was built on land stolen from other people," he continues. "Then she went on to justify Holocaust revisionism. In her decision, the judge wrote things not even Neve Gordon had said."

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She also imposed a whopping fine. "Gordon hadn't alleged any financial losses," Plaut says. "But in a libel suit, Israeli law permits the award of NIS 50,000. She fined me NIS 100,000."

That's when Harvard professor Alan Dershowitz, a major player in the US legal community, jumped in with his incisive commentary. In a column published in the Jerusalem Post on November 8, 2006, Dershowitz addressed the issues and then wrote, "It is my opinion that Neve Gordon has gotten into bed with neo-Nazis, Holocaust justice deniers, and anti-Semites. He is a despicable example of a self-hating Jew and a self-hating Israeli, whose writing consists of anti-Israeli propaganda designed to 'prove' that the Jewish State is fascist."

Then Dershowitz issued his own make-my-day challenge to Gordon: "Sue me, too."

Gordon didn't sue Dershowitz, brushing off his challenge as "a cheap dare," while Plaut appealed the Nazareth decision. In a stunning reversal, a three-judge panel rejected every demand made by Gordon and agreed to almost all of Plaut's. Legal decisions are rarely characterized by speculation, but one of the appellate judges, Judge Abraham Abraham, offered unique commentary in his written opinion. "Even if Plaut had described Gordon as a 'Jew for Hitler,' (which Plaut had not) he would have been within his rights," the judge wrote.

While the most recent court decision was a victory for Plaut, the litigation continues, with the case set to be heard by the Supreme Court on October 13.

SOME COMMENTATORS claim that the real danger of this internal Israeli call for a boycott against Israel is that it encourages and provides cover for anti-Israel sentiments in the international community.

Gerald Steinberg, a political science professor at Bar-Ilan University who heads the Jerusalem-based NGO Monitor, sees Gordon's call for a boycott as part of a series of events designed to "demonize" Israel.

"Neve Gordon and his pro-boycott article is another example of the Durban [an anti-Racism conference which was largely seen as anti-Israel] demonization strategy based on total international isolation of Israel through boycotts and sanctions in order to follow the South African anti-apartheid model," Steinberg said, referring to Israel's recent clashes with Sweden over their "stolen organ" blood libel and Great Britain, whose funding of "Breaking the Silence" encouraged Israeli soldiers to admit to IDF war crimes.

There were those who, while angered by Gordon's call for boycott, took a more philosophical approach, seeking a way to balance "academic freedom" with the best interests of the community.

In any communal organization, no one enjoys unrestricted rights, they note. Just as the right to swing your arms stops where the other fellow's nose begins, why can't there be some limit on the things anyone - professor or not - is entitled to say, if his words will prove detrimental to the community as a whole?

The Zionist Organization of America has not yet issued a policy statement regarding the Neve Gordon/BGU affair, but Jeff Daube, Director of the Israel ZOA office and a life-long Zionist activist, articulated a common sentiment. "My desire is not to constrain anyone's freedom of speech," Daube said. "But I think there's nothing at all wrong with a university saying, 'This is a Zionist institution. Statements (like Neve Gordon's) do actual harm to the collective, to the Jewish people living in Israel. Just as most societies limit free speech when the speech will prove harmful - libel or slander - then if some speech brings harm to the society as a whole, why can't that be limited as well?'"

Other suggestions were put forward, such as encouraging BGU to hold a public meeting on the topic, to allow everyone to have a right to exercise their freedom of speech, or establishing campus "Zionist Centers" to teach Zionist principles. Daniel Gordis of the Shalem Institute advocated a wholesale revision of the education system.

"A century ago, who could have imagined that the Jewish state would one day have a world-class army but a failing, collapsing education system?" he wrote. "(Israel) needs a liberal arts college, and the young people prepared to speak constructively about Jewish sovereignty, its challenges, its failures and its future that only that kind of college can produce."



## The battle of the boycotts

THE CALL to "boycott BGU" threw university officials into a panic, resulting in a flurry of commentary, as well as a quickly-scheduled trip to the US by Carmi and other faculty members hoping to stem the tide of opposition.

Their position: Boycotting BGU - or any other Israeli educational institution - isn't the answer.

Ronni Strongin, another member of the American Associates of BGU, stressed that since Gordon "has tenure and cannot be fired," the university finds itself in an impossible position. The University, she noted, includes some 25,000 students, faculty and staff with many different missions. To inflict collective punishment by withholding funds from the university as a whole "allows the fulfillment of Gordon's wishes." Within a week, BGU issued statements to the effect that Gordon will not be fired, although BGU officials are still considering their options regarding removing him as department head.

Carmi insists there's little the university can do to a tenured professor. "Like it or not, Gordon cannot be readily dismissed. The law in Israel is very clear, and the university is a law-abiding institution," she wrote in her LA Times response, and in a later statement to YNet, she said that "the demand for (Gordon's) resignation (as department head) is legitimate and I hope that after this tough week he will reach the right decision."

University Rector Jimmy Weinblatt, following a meeting with the professors who had signed petitions supporting Gordon stressed that Gordon's status as faculty member will not be compromised, and that the university administration will not violate his civic and academic freedom of expression. Weinblatt, who said he believes "it is not appropriate that Gordon continue in his position" and hopes "he (will) reach the proper conclusions," said of university policy, "we are a democratic country with freedom of expression for everyone, even if his opinions are unacceptable to the rest.

"We support freedom of expression and academic freedom which are at the heart of any university," he added.

Jonathan Rosenblum was among those who upheld the legitimacy of a donor boycott. In a Jerusalem Post op-ed, he wrote that "while an academic has the right to his opinions, private donors who find his views or research repugnant are equally entitled not to support that research. Given the fungibility, of money that might mean withholding support from the university that employs him."

Professors, Rosenblum suggests, cannot be held immune from criticism. "Professors, like everyone else, should expect to have their work evaluated. Just as parents and students have an interest in knowing which professors have a tendency to get too friendly with female students, so do they have a right to form judgments about which professors are using their classrooms for political indoctrination."

"In general," Rosenbaum continues, "it would be foolish to refrain from contributing to a university based on the views of one faculty member one finds repugnant. Doing so would eliminate virtually every potential recipient. But Neve Gordon is not a solitary rogue professor on the BGU campus. The BGU Department of Politics and Government, which he chairs, fits the description of former Minister of Education Amnon Rubinstein of academic departments in Israel, in which no traditional Zionist could be appointed."

NEITHER SIDE is happy. BGU officials rue the fact that they're under pressure from two sides. "We have heard the calls by those who demand that the university ignore Israeli law and fire Gordon, a tenured faculty member," Carmi said, "And we are also under attack by others who champion Gordon on the basis of freedom of speech."

Given the fact that BGU officials insist Gordon will remain as a member of the faculty, those who oppose Gordon's continued presence on the teaching staff at BGU were also unhappy.

Jeff Daube suggests the tension is far from over. "It's obvious that President Carmi would very much like to sweep this whole affair under the carpet, move on to something else, make believe it never happened - up until the next insult. From here on, it's only going to get worse. If those who hate Israel see they can get away with this kind of speech, I hate to think what else they'll do next.

"Once you've called for an international boycott, what's left?" Daube asks. "Maybe a call for the unilateral dismantling of the State? Followed by that line, 'Would the last one to leave please turn off the lights?'"

## The battle of the boycotts

Nor does Ari Bussel believe any significant donor boycott of BGU will take place. "The major donors will be persuaded to go on giving money," he says. "It will be life as usual. The difference this case made is that it set off a fundamental change in the attitude of American Jewry. Now the red line has been crossed. So the next time this happens - which it will - it's going to be much more difficult to persuade donors to keep supporting BGU.

"There's only so much one person can do," Bussel laments. "I know that at the end of the day, people pay the price for what they do - we all will. But one thing I know for sure. The next time I go to someone and ask for money for Israel, I know it's going to be that much harder. How are we - how are any of us - going to fight the next call for divestment, or for a boycott, if Israel itself is calling for it?"

## Graphic

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18 photos: PRO-ISRAEL advocate and fundraiser, Ari Bussel. 'This anti-Israel commentary hit home.'

**Load-Date:** October 4, 2011

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**FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH Who stands on guard for citizens?; The Canadian passport requests assistance and protection" for citizens abroad. So why was her own government unprepared to protect and assist Suaad Hagi Mohamud?**

The Toronto Star

August 15, 2009 Saturday

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**Section:** INSIGHT; Pg. IN01

**Length:** 1791 words

**Byline:** Oakland Ross, Toronto Star

## **Body**

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What is navy blue, contains 24 pages, costs \$87, takes an average of 16 days to process - and turns out to be utterly worthless if Canadian officials in some other country decide they don't think you look like your picture?

No prizes for the correct answer.

The article in question is, of course, the standard, machine-readable, adult version of the Canadian passport, a document issued in something resembling its current form since 1921, a stretch of nearly nine decades during which it has experienced several bouts of negative publicity - as when Mossad secret agents from Israel used forged Canadian passports to travel to Aman in neighbouring Jordan in an ultimately unsuccessful 1997 plot to assassinate Khaled Meshal, leader of the militant Islamist group Hamas.

That was a sorry episode, but the Canadian passport's most recent fling with notoriety might be even sorrier still.

Just ask Suaad Hagi Mohamud, whose three-month ordeal in the Kenyan capital Nairobi - an ordeal nearing its end - has hinged on the failure of her now canceled four-year-old Canadian passport to do her any good whatsoever.

Officials at the Canadian High Commission in Nairobi seized and voided the document this past May, and Mohamud has been suffering the consequences ever since, including a harrowing, eight-day sojourn in the Langata Women's Prison, the seizure of her luggage, and the payment of \$2,500 U.S. to post bail.

She has also received a thudding blow to her sense of dignity, self-esteem, and independence, combined with a prolonged separation from her 12-year-old son in Etobicoke.

"I never knew Canadians have different classes, different levels, as a Canadian citizen," Mohamud told the Star's Michelle Shephard this week in Nairobi. "I thought we all had the same right to freedom."

Apparently, she will have to think again, as will many others in this nation of 33 million disparate souls, a country that has long prided itself on its democratic and egalitarian values, the sort of ideals that should have prevented the spectacle that has unfolded in East Africa since May 21, when Mohamud was prevented from boarding the KLM flight that should have borne her safely on the first leg of her journey back to Canada.

FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH Who stands on guard for citizens? The Canadian passport requests assistance and protection" for citizens abroad. So why was her own governme....

What follows is an exploration, admittedly tentative and in some ways speculative, of what went wrong in the now infamous case of a Canadian denied what must be among the bedrock rights of this or any other land - the right to come home.

It is also an examination of the now dubious value of that familiar navy-blue booklet carried by more than half this country's population, a document that solemnly invites "in the name of Her Majesty the Queen, all those whom it may concern to allow the bearer to pass freely without let or hindrance and to afford the bearer such assistance and protection as may be necessary."

In the wake of Mohamud's soul-searing experience, these venerable words - presented in elegant calligraphic script on the inside cover of every Canadian passport - begin to seem less a source of genuine reassurance than just another empty, bureaucratic exercise in gutless bafflegab.

Combined with a couple of thousand dollars in borrowed U.S. funds, those words might just spring you from a Kenyan jail, where you should never have landed in the first place.

But what they won't do is ease your way home to Canada, not if a small-minded, vengeful, or possibly racist compatriot in a far-away land decides this is not going to be your day, seizes the document in question, and uses a punch to perforate its pages with an orderly arrangement of little holes that collectively spell out the word "Void" - the fate of Mohamud's now useless document.

"There was no reason to cancel her passport," said Raoul Boulakia, Mohamud's Toronto lawyer.

But cancel it they did.

Before proceeding to assess whether the Canadian officials in question had any right to take this action - the short answer, it seems, is, no, they did not - let us pause to consider a few matters of context, for not everything related to the production, distribution, and verification of Canadian passports has suddenly gone kaboom.

When a KLM employee declined to clear Mohamud to board an aircraft at Nairobi's Jomo Kenyatta International Airport in May - apparently because she did not seem to him to closely resemble the picture in her passport - he was putting the 31-year-old woman in a position familiar to many of her fellow Canadians who venture abroad.

She was now a Canadian traveller in distress.

According to Emma Welford, a spokeswoman for the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, this is hardly an uncommon condition, no surprise when you consider Canadians collectively made 50 million visits abroad during 2007 alone.

If you have that many people trekking through foreign climes, some of them are bound to get into trouble.

"Every minute of every day, there are three requests for assistance," Welford said. "As of Aug. 12, there were 25,759 active cases."

Many of these distress calls involve lost or stolen passports, and most such cases are dealt with to the satisfaction of all concerned.

A poll conducted last year by Environics Communications for Passport Canada - the government agency responsible for issuing, replacing, and sometimes revoking Canadian travel documents - found that fully 96 per cent of its clients were satisfied "to some extent" with the service they received, an improvement of 7 percentage points on the previous year.

If this is not exactly a shining endorsement of Passport Canada's performance, neither is it a scathing indictment.

For the most part, it seems, Canadian agencies that minister to the needs of an itinerant population do their jobs reasonably well, without causing inordinate dismay or scandal. In that light, it seems only fair to point out that what

FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH Who stands on guard for citizens? The Canadian passport requests assistance and protection" for citizens abroad. So why was her own governme....

has happened to Suaad Hagi Mohamud at the hands of Canadian officialdom in Kenya is more the exception than the rule.

Granted, this is an easier observation to make if one happens to be a Canadian-born white male who speaks with a North American accent, none of which applies to Mohamud, who was born 31 years ago in Somalia and has lived in Toronto for the past decade.

Did her skin colour and original nationality play a role in her misfortune?

We may never know for certain, but it is at least possible they did.

"Canadians who were not born here and have accents or are visible for their skin colour are subject to more scrutiny when they enter," said Obiora Okafor, an associate professor of law at York University's Osgoode Hall Law School. "That's beyond question."

After Mohamud was barred from boarding her plane in Nairobi, she wound up spending the night at the airport. At some point before the following morning, Mohamud herself or Kenyan immigration officials acting on her behalf made contact with Canadian diplomats, either at Canada's High Commission on Limuru Road in Nairobi or at the Foreign Affairs Department's Emergency Operations Centre in Ottawa, whose number - you might want to mark this down - is 1-613-996-8885. Collect calls accepted. A pair of Canadian diplomats visited Mohamud at the airport that morning, a Friday.

"They summarily say they don't believe she is who she says," said Boulakia.

It was at this point, he said, that the Canadians relieved Mohamud of her passport.

The beleaguered woman remained at the airport over the weekend, stranded if not yet incarcerated.

The following Monday, Kenyan officials accompanied Mohamud to the Canadian High Commission, where things did not go well.

"She says they were very rude to her," said Boulakia. "She was kicked out."

On May 28, after conducting what she described as "conclusive investigations," Liliane Khadour, an official at the high commission, wrote a letter to Kenyan immigration officials labeling Mohamud an "imposter."

By this time, Mohamud's passport had been canceled. For all intents and purposes, she had become a stateless person, as well as a suspected criminal, and so she went to jail.

Who is responsible?

You might think this would be a question easily answered, but it evidently is not.

In a speech in Kitchener this week, Prime Minister Stephen Harper seemed to blame the Canada Border Services Agency for mishandling the file.

On behalf of Public Safety Minister Peter Van Loan, he called for "a full accounting of their actions in this case."

But on its website, Passport Canada identifies its own Security Bureau as the body that "gathers facts and determines whether those facts seem consistent with the conditions for refusing or revoking a passport."

Welford at Foreign Affairs said Passport Canada and the Foreign Minister share responsibility for revoking passports, but often act on the advice of law enforcement authorities.

Passport Canada says its regulations allow for the summary revocation of a passport in cases that don't involve national security, as long as "reliable information is available and can readily be verified."

FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH Who stands on guard for citizens? The Canadian passport requests assistance and protection" for citizens abroad. So why was her own governme....

Such action, it says, is typically taken in cases involving people who are incarcerated, on parole, or subject to a Canada-wide arrest warrant, none of which applied to Mohamud.

"It's very hard to see how this person was handled fairly," said Audrey Macklin, a professor of law at the University of Toronto. "There's no indication here that any fair process was employed."

There's no indication, either, that Canadian officials felt any sense of urgency to repair the damage, especially after it was clear mistakes had been made.

"This should have been handled in a day," said Okafor.

In depriving Mohamud of her passport, some might say Canadian authorities were only reclaiming what was already theirs, for this country's passports are formally the property of the Canadian government, which deems their issuance a matter of "royal prerogative" rather than a question of individual right. But Macklin questions this long-standing assumption, which she says is based on legal circumstances that prevailed before the signing into law of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982.

"One of the singular rights of a citizen under the Charter is the right to enter and remain in Canada," she said.

"What they are in effect doing is violating the person's right to enter their country of citizenship."

This is what happened to Suaad Hagi Mohamud - who was able to prove her Canadian identity only by means of a DNA test - and it could happen to any of us.

It all depends, it seems, on the unpredictable discretion of some Canadian official in another land.

"This is the essence of the violation of the rule of law," said Macklin. "This is arbitrariness." "Canadians who were not born here and have accents or are visible for their skin colour are subject to more scrutiny when they enter. That's beyond question."

## Graphic

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illustration by dusan petricic for the toronto starrick madonik toronto star filesThe document, left, and what it says inside the front cover, above. A series of cases where Canadian citizens have been abandoned raises questions about whether the government is living up to its obligations.The document, left, and what it says inside the front cover, above. A series of cases where Canadian citizens have been abandoned raises questions about whether the government is living up to its obligations.

**Load-Date:** August 15, 2009

## *Financing our own demonization*

The Jerusalem Post

July 24, 2009 Friday

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**Section:** OPINION; Pg. 24

**Length:** 1967 words

**Byline:** David Horovitz, with reporting by Ariel Zirulnik

**Highlight:** Editor's Notes

### **Body**

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Day after day, the pages of this newspaper feature news and comment articles detailing or asserting bias against Israel on the part of human rights groups, the media, filmmakers, international governments and other global opinion-shapers.

Last Wednesday, our lead front-page story reported that the government was determined to fight back against NGOs that it felt misrepresent the country. Referring to the recent fund-raising trip to Saudi Arabia by Human Rights Watch, which two weeks earlier had issued a report blasting Israel's conduct in Operation Cast Lead at the turn of the year, a spokesman for Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu declared bitterly, "A human rights organization raising money in Saudi Arabia is like a women's rights group asking the Taliban for a donation."

Another senior Israeli official vowed to "expose the inconsistencies... and problematic use of questionable data" in the work of HRW, Amnesty International and others.

A few days later, we quoted government officials explaining why Israel would not be cooperating with Judge Richard Goldstone's UN inquiry into purported war crimes in the course of the Israeli assault on Hamas - because, said the Foreign Ministry, rejecting Goldstone's claims to the contrary, the inquiry was skewed from the start, working from a mandate which guaranteed that the result would be yet another exercise in UN-initiated, unwarranted Israel- bashing.

Israel-based human rights groups critical of Israel regularly provoke angry reactions from officials in our pages for alleged disproportionate criticism of Israel and for ostensibly acting against the interests of the state. One such group, Breaking the Silence, which is funded in part by the British and Dutch governments and the EU, last week presented a report containing anonymous testimony asserting Israeli crimes during Operation Cast Lead. Israeli military officials, in response, asserted that Breaking the Silence was not truly seeking an investigation of alleged misdeeds, but rather that "the organization's real motive was to slander the IDF."

We've recently carried reports of American Jewish filmmakers withdrawing from the Jerusalem Film Festival in solidarity with a Palestinian-led international campaign to boycott Israel, and of pro-Palestinian activists disrupting Israeli cultural activities in the UK - persuading a theater in London to cancel an Israeli event because of the participation of an IDF entertainment troupe, and convincing a festival in Edinburgh to return sponsorship funding from the Israeli Embassy.

## Financing our own demonization

We regularly feature columnists in these pages complaining, with greater and lesser justification, about perceived anti-Israel bias in the foreign and sometimes the local media - criticisms of newspapers, radio stations, TV channels, Internet sites and documentary films.

CNN ignited a firestorm here when it gave more screen time to the mother of a May 2002 suicide bomber than to the victims of the attack he carried out in Petah Tikva in which an Israeli woman, Chen Keinan, lost both her mother and her 15-month-old daughter. The BBC is a frequent target of charges of bias. So, too, Britain's Guardian daily, cited in an opinion piece in our pages this week as standing on the cutting edge of a new wave of efforts to delegitimize our country.

Official Israel has been grappling for years to counter what, often for good reason, it regards as misrepresentation of Israel in print and on screen. Coordinating bodies designed to ensure a rapid response to erroneous or exaggerated breaking news of alleged Israeli misdeeds have come and gone, been reconstituted, refined and generally found wanting. Media experts have been called in to train spokespeople in more effectively conveying their message. Whole departments in the Foreign Ministry, the army, the Justice Ministry and beyond are devoted to trying to ensure Israel gets a fair break.

Under our last foreign minister, Tzipi Livni, great play was made of efforts to entirely "rebrand" Israel. We didn't want the world to think of us as a war zone, beset by shootings and bombings, as all-too-often documented on TV and in the papers, but rather as the uniquely wonderful tourist destination we so often can be. To graphically illustrate the point, the men's magazine Maxim was invited to fly in for a photo shoot two years ago featuring female former soldiers in, and largely out of, uniform.

Admirably, at this month's Jerusalem Film Festival, the showcase opening movie, often a major crowd-pleasing international release in previous years, was instead A Matter of Size - a gentle, understated, local comedic production. If hardly an advertisement for Israel as world class tourist destination - it is set in Ramle - it is emphatically an advertisement for Israel as a country of normal human beings, with all the flaws and qualities of ordinary, decent people everywhere.

Without wishing to give away much more than can be gauged on the poster, it revolves around a self-effacing, under-employed middle-aged chef with an overbearing mother and commitment problems, who is wrestling - literally - with serious weight issues.

Panned by some critics, beloved by others, it offers nuanced glimpses of our wider Israel - the feistiness of our society, class divides, homophobia, changing attitudes from generation to generation. If you were to see it in a cinema overseas, you'd feel at least an intermittent warm glow of appreciation, a satisfaction that those in the seats around you, perhaps less familiar with our country, were gaining a small insight into some of what makes us tick.

Unfortunately the same festival also featured an evening of sequenced short films about Jerusalem - Jerusalem Moments - that contained just about every imaginable one-sided, context-deficient, unbalanced misrepresentation of Israel rolled into one nasty package, precisely the kind of skewed misportrayal so gallingly common to our least fair-minded critics.

JERUSALEM MOMENTS was produced by Ir Amim, an Israeli non-profit and self-styled "nonpartisan organization" that works, according to the Cinematheque program, "toward an equitable and stable Jerusalem with an agreed political future." Its seven shorts were the work of "seven young directors, Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem and Israelis" who, the program said, "courageously confront the delicate and charged issues and present personal and political points of view about the complex reality in Jerusalem, between East and West."

But if that variety of Israeli, Palestinian, and, in one case, joint Palestinian-Israeli filmmaking teams implied a range of theme and tone, perhaps an examination of Jerusalem's problems from dramatically diverse and conflicting perspectives, the opposite was the case. This was an exercise in the bludgeoning documentation of Palestinian victimhood and of allegedly mindless Israeli cruelty and aggression.



## Financing our own demonization

It began with a eulogy to the late PLO representative Faisal Husseini - who happened to be cited by Likud Deputy Prime Minister Dan Meridor this week as being the one Palestinian leader to have acknowledged that there could be no "right of return" - and headed mainly downhill from there.

We got to meet a Shuafat refugee camp rap pack, one of whose members made a casual lyrical reference to Israel's unexplained purported killing of a mother and father. We saw footage of the complexities of travel into and across Jerusalem, with a soundtrack that included the voice of a pregnant Palestinian woman discussing how Israeli security forces allegedly threatened to kill her if she would not get undressed for a security check at a roadblock, and the voice of a man discussing how he had been unable to save a dying Palestinian woman blocked en route to the hospital by hard-hearted Israeli security personnel at another roadblock.

We heard about the alleged intolerance of the Wiesenthal Center's Museum of Tolerance being sited at a city center Muslim cemetery. This came complete with outrageous declarations by the Palestinian mufti of Jerusalem and others that Israel routinely builds parking lots and shopping malls over Muslim sites in a systematic effort to erase Islamic history.

And in the most powerful of this succession of mini- features, we followed a group of Palestinian laborers as they sought to make their way into the city to earn the money to feed their families. The camera tracked the hapless young men risking life and limb to scale walls, crawl through barbed wire and dash across highways pre-dawn - all in the hope of finding honest work, and all in a desperate cat-and-mouse game with the Israeli security forces.

The final images were of uniformed Israeli troops chasing down a trailing member of the group and catching him. There he stood in all his cornered misfortune, his face a study in despair, his hands ripped and bloodied by Israel's barbed wire.

Israel was unhappy because CNN failed to give equal or more time to the Petah Tikva suicide bomber's victims? This incendiary Palestinian propaganda onslaught gave next-to-no hint of a dissenting narrative, with the short entitled The Little Western Wall constituting the only relative exception.

There was no meaningful explanation of why it was that Israel, defending against waves of suicide bombers, constructed the security barrier in the first place. There was no mention of the attacks at roadblocks, often carried out by the most innocent-looking civilians, that necessitate Israeli security precautions there. There was no suggestion, in the short on those feisty refugee camp rappers, that contrary to the casual assertion of murder, Israel does not actually go around capriciously killing the parents of young Palestinians in refugee camps. There was no discussion of the protracted efforts to find a compromise over the Museum of Tolerance.

And there was no reminder, in the emotive section on young Palestinians infiltrating Jerusalem at great risk to find work, of the fact that hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were working in Israel, entering and leaving the city freely, until Yasser Arafat rejected Ehud Barak's peace terms at Camp David in 2000 and came back to foster the second intifada - the terror war that has so blighted lives on both sides of the Israeli-Palestinian chasm.

To the dismay of some in the audience, Jerusalem Moments was warmly received at the Jerusalem Film Festival, and will presumably go on to play to similar effect at other festivals and screenings around the world. CNN has already done a report on it, now available on YouTube: "The Israeli-Palestinian conflict as told through film."

OH WELL. What can you do? Ours is a free society, and we rightly aspire to the most elevated democratic values and the fullest possible freedoms of expression. I don't mean that cynically. We must indeed strive to maintain those values, even though those freedoms are sometimes exploited by those who denigrate and demonize us. That's the way it is with free speech, and we have the equivalent freedom to endorse and oppose, to applaud and object, as and when we see fit.

My only question is, do we actually have to participate in the more extreme demonization? Do we ourselves have to directly contribute to the kind of dimly skewed, toxic, decontextualized attack that prompts official complaint and widespread frustration when practiced by others? Do we have to finance it ourselves?

## Financing our own demonization

For Ir Amim's Jerusalem Moments was made, in part, with NIS 200,000 of funding from the Cinema Project of the Tel Aviv-based Rabinovitch Foundation for the Arts, which gets its funding, in turn, via the Israeli Film Council, from the Ministry of Culture and Sport.

Jerusalem Moments was relentless Palestinian Israel- bashing, interspersed with near-relentless Israeli Israel-bashing. And we paid for it.

## Graphic

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2 photos: 'A MATTER OF SIZE.' Israelis as normal, flawed human beings. 'Jerusalem Moments.' Israelis as vicious, murderous oppressors.

**Load-Date:** October 4, 2011

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## *Matters of the heart*

Daily Times

July 14, 2009 Tuesday

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**Length:** 1907 words

**Dateline:** Pakistan

### **Body**

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Pakistan, July 14 -- Netanyahu appointed a bloated government in which a third of all Knesset members serve as ministers or deputy ministers, many of them without any apparent duties. Two of the three most important ministries were allotted to totally unsuited persons

Every German child knows the story of the Captain of Koepenick. The scene is 1908 Germany, with the Second Reich at the peak of its power, ruled by a Kaiser who is almost always decked out in a splendid military uniform. A shoemaker named Wilhelm Voigt is released from prison, after doing time for fraud. He needs a passport to get a job, but felons cannot obtain a passport. The shoemaker goes to a masquerade shop and puts on the uniform of an army captain.

He commandeers a squad of soldiers that happens to be passing in the street. They do notice some irregularities in his outfit but dare not disobey an officer. The "captain" marches the soldiers to the little town of Koepenick, a suburb of Berlin, arrests the mayor and confiscates the safe, which contains blank passports. Later the police have no great difficulty making out who committed the outrage, and it is not long before he is arrested. When an adjutant announces the news to the Kaiser, the court holds its breath. After a tense moment or two, His Majesty bursts out laughing. All of Germany laughs with him, along with the rest of Europe. The "Hauptmann von Koepenick" became a legend, because his adventure threw into relief the very essence of the regime: in the militarist Germany of the time, just before World War I, military rank meant unquestioned authority. Perhaps it is true that every country has an episode of this kind, highlighting with one stroke the main foibles of its regime. In Israel it was - until this week - the affair of the "Ramat Gan Light Bulb". In March 1982 the Economy Minister Yaacov Meridor, a leading member of the Likud, announced that a scientist by the name of Danny Berman had come up with an invention that would cause a revolution throughout the world. By a simple chemical process he was able to produce energy sufficient to light all of Ramat Gan with one single light bulb. Ramat Gan is a sister town of Tel Aviv, and almost as big. Yaacov Meridor (no relation of the current minister Dan Meridor) was not just anybody. He had been the commander of the Irgun before the arrival of Menachem Begin, and later had set up major economic enterprises in Africa. He was the No.2 Likud leader and it was no secret that Begin considered him his heir and successor. Before Meridor's announcement, a senior reporter of my news magazine, Haolam Hazeh, came to me and told me breathlessly about the wondrous invention. I responded with one word: nonsense. My years as an investigative magazine editor had honed my nose for detecting phoney stories. But the whole country was ecstatic. In the following days, the revolutionary invention was exposed as a simple fraud. Berman, the genius who posed as a former air force officer, was exposed as an impostor with a criminal record. Meridor lost his political future. But a small band of True Believers, including my senior reporter, continued to swear that Berman was indeed a misunderstood genius. How could a completely nonsensical story, without any foundation at all, capture a whole country and elicit general acceptance, at least at the beginning? Very simple: it expressed one of the deeply-held beliefs of the Israeli public -

## Matters of the heart

that Jews are the most intelligent people in the world. That, by the way, is a conviction held both by many Jews and by anti-Semites. The infamous tract "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion", which discloses a Jewish conspiracy to take over the world, relies on this belief. There are many theories that profess to explain the alleged superiority of the "Jewish Brain". One asserts that in the thousands of years of persecution, the Jews were compelled to develop their brainpower just in order to survive. Another theory goes like this: in medieval Catholic Europe, the most intelligent men became priests or monks whose vocational celibacy prevented the transmission of their genes to offspring, while it was the habit in the Jewish communities for rich parents to marry their daughters to the most outstanding young scholars. This week, the Ramat Gan Light Bulb was trumped by an even more magnificent invention: the Heart Sticker. The economic supplement of Haaretz published a sensational scoop: a virtually unknown Israeli company had sold a third of its shares to a Taiwan-British corporation for 370 million dollars, raising its own value to a billion. All this owing to a revolutionary invention: a small sticker that, when put on the breast, can foretell a heart attack a crucial half-hour before it actually happens. The sticker sends out warnings by cellular phone and satellite, thus introducing the possibility of saving countless lives. That evening, one of the chiefs of the happy firm appeared on TV and disclosed that the wonder-sticker could do much more: for example, it could measure the amount of sugar in the blood without invading the body. My nose immediately began to twitch. And indeed, a day later the media started to investigate the matter, revealing one curious fact after another. Nobody had actually seen the wonder sticker. No patent had been registered. No cardiologist or other expert had examined it. No scientific paper had mentioned it. And, it seems, no scientific experiment had been conducted. The Taiwan-British company had sent no representative to Israel to examine the invention for which it had allegedly paid a huge sum. The negotiations had been conducted entirely by email, without any personal contact. The lawyers involved refused to show the signed agreement. When reporters contacted the foreign company, they denied any knowledge of the matter. It appeared that the inventor had registered a computer domain with a similar name and thus actually sold the shares to himself. At this stage, the house of cards started to fall apart. It was revealed that the inventor had twice done time in prison for fraud. But his partners still insisted that the matter was serious and that within days, if not hours, the genius of the invention would be revealed to all, and the critics would be compelled to eat their hats. The hats remained uneaten, and the partners deserted the ship one after the other. What transformed the affair from an amusing "sting" operation into a matter of national importance was the readiness of the whole country, for a whole day, to accept the story as another proof of Jewish genius. No less typical was the identity of its heroes. No.1 was the inventor himself, who continues to protest that this time, this of all times, he is not an impostor. No.2 was his partner, the businessman, who was or was not an accomplice to the fraud. But the interesting characters are the other two main protagonists. No.3 has been for many years the closest friend of Binyamin Netanyahu, and especially of his wife, Sarah (known to everybody by the childish diminutive Sara'le). At the height of the scandal he resigned his job as CEO, after failing to obtain a copy of the famous contract. If it is assumed that this friend of Netanyahu's is indeed innocent, his level of intelligence must be subject to grave doubts. However, it may not be intelligence that the Netanyahu family looks for in close friends. That is even more true for No.4: Haggai Hadas. The exact nature of his involvement is not entirely clear. At the beginning, he vigorously defended the invention and seemed to be involved from head to foot, but when the thing blew up he desperately tried to distance himself from it. Why is this any more important than the usual gossip? Because Haggai Hadas, apart from enjoying Netanyahu's confidence and being, reportedly, a personal friend of his wife, has served in the past as chief of the operations department of the Mossad, the third most important post in the spy agency. He could by now have been the Mossad chief, if the incumbent had not actively prevented everybody else from coming even close. Some weeks ago, Netanyahu appointed Hadas to one of the most sensitive positions in the security establishment: to coordinate all the efforts to free the "kidnapped" soldier Gilad Shalit. If we do not want to assume that this man, a confidante of the prime minister and a former senior officer of the Mossad, who has been responsible for life-and-death decisions, was an accomplice to a vile fraud, there is no escape from the conclusion that his judgement is grievously impaired and that he fell into a trap that any person with common sense could have spotted a mile off. How can such a person possibly be entrusted with such a sensitive task as the negotiation for a prisoner exchange with Hamas, in which sophisticated Egyptian mediators are involved? And what does this say about the judgement of Netanyahu, who appointed him to this task, especially assuming that his wife had demanded it? This week also marked a milestone: the end of the first 100 days of Netanyahu's second term as prime minister. The Kadima people have invented a catchy slogan: "100 days, 0 achievements". To start with, Netanyahu appointed a bloated government in which a third of all Knesset members serve as ministers or deputy ministers, many of them without any apparent duties. Two of the three most important ministries were allotted to

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totally unsuited persons: the Treasury to an economic toddler and the Foreign Office to a racist who is openly shunned by many of the world's most prominent leaders. Then there came a series of laws and measures that were announced with great fanfare, only to be dropped very quietly. The latest example: the levying of VAT on fruits and vegetables, which was abandoned at the last moment. But the epitome of inefficiency was the inability to put together the prime minister's staff. The Advisor for National Security, Uzi Arad, is not interested in peace with either the Palestinians or the Syrians, and wants to deal only with the Iranian issue. (This week President Barack Obama issued a public and unequivocal prohibition on any Israeli military attack on Iran.) The Chief of Cabinet, the Director General of the Prime Minister's office, the Political Advisor and other members of the staff detest each other and do not make any effort to hide it. The Press Advisor has already been replaced, and this week a **female** friend of Sarah Netanyahu was appointed as advisor for "Branding the State". (Anyone know what that means??) In the meantime, Sara'le has returned to the spotlight. A former airline stewardess who met Netanyahu in an airport duty-free shop when he was still married to his second wife, she was universally disliked and served as a butt of jokes during her husband's first term. This time, efforts were made to keep her in the background. When the prime minister still insisted on taking her with him to Washington, Michelle Obama avoided meeting her. When he was due to visit several European capitals, she was struck from the list at the last moment. But it seems that she is very active behind the scenes, especially as far as crucial senior appointments are concerned. Perhaps this country really does need a wonder sticker. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily Times. For more information on news feed please contact Surit Das at [htsyndication@hindustantimes.com](mailto:htsyndication@hindustantimes.com)

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**Load-Date:** July 14, 2009

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**War by other means; As the Tamil Tigers face the failure of their armed struggle a new separatist campaign is under way. By Shyamantha Asokan**

Financial Times (London, England)

October 17, 2009 Saturday

Europe Edition 1

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**Section:** FT WEEKEND SUPPLEMENT - LIFE & ARTS; Pg. 19

**Length:** 2459 words

## **Body**

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Bala Muhunthan has that high-class hip-hop look: Dolce & Gabbana jeans, tight polo shirt, chunky silver ID tags worn as pendants and an ever-present, ever-beeping BlackBerry. Privately educated in Denmark and the UK, the 22-year-old lives in London and attends a leading business school. Muhunthan spends his weekend nights at members' bars or parties in Mayfair. Saturday afternoons, he plays golf or football with his friends. "I love London. I love the fast life," he says.

But at the start of April, Muhunthan took a step outside the fast life: alongside thousands of fellow Sri Lankan Tamils, he stood in front of the Houses of Parliament, demanding a ceasefire in Buddhist Sri Lanka's bloody offensive against Hindu Tamil separatists, which was reaching a violent climax after 25 years of on-off fighting. To Londoners accepting pamphlets from the protesters - whose actions were replicated over the following weeks in Paris and New York - it may have seemed a clear-cut case of might versus right. But the Tamil struggle for an independent state in Sri Lanka has been spearheaded by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) - deemed by the west to be one of the world's most sophisticated terrorist groups.

In the end, the protests were in vain. In May, Mahinda Rajapaksa, Sri Lanka's president, declared the final defeat of the Tigers and the conclusion of one of Asia's longest-running civil wars. The armed struggle for independence had been crushed: in the course of a five-month-long military surge, the Tamil separatists who once controlled swathes of the island's north and east had lost all their territory. Their infamous leader, Velupillai Prabhakaran, was dead.

But that ending was also a beginning. Muhunthan, who devoted so much time to the protests that he had to retake the final year of his degree, has, along with many other young Tamils overseas, experienced a political awakening. As one generation of the Tamil diaspora sees its struggle for Eelam, an independent homeland, end in failure, their sons and daughters - who have spent their formative years in the west - are taking up the struggle. But they will fight it on their terms, using their strengths, fomenting a BlackBerry revolution.

"Literally every spare minute I have, I spend on this," Muhunthan said when we met for a cappuccino a month after the downfall of the Tamil Tigers. We first shook hands at the chaotic Westminster protest, where matronly **women** in saris had guided me to the front of the mêlée to meet him. Two of his fellow protesters were on hunger strike, wrapped in blankets in Parliament Square.

We sat down to talk at Cass Business School, where Muhunthan is studying for a master's degree in banking and international finance. He said the recent reversal in the Tigers' fortunes had taken the diaspora by surprise. "A lot of

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Tamils felt that the LTTE was their voice in the war. A lot of people are asking: 'What are we going to do now?' People looked to Prabhakaran like he was a god."

But Muhunthan, the son of an accountant and a doctor, had responded to the Tigers' apparent defeat with optimism - seeing it as a second chance. While disappointed to have lost a powerful ally, he felt free to pursue the non-violent means he had always preferred. He also saw an opportunity to present his ethnic group as something other than terrorists, a label he found frustrating when dealing with fellow students. "You always have to explain: 'Look, Tamil people are suffering'," he said.

Muhunthan is one of a group of young people who now want to move the separatist struggle into a more diplomatic, PR-friendly - and, they hope, successful - phase. He has recently set up the Tamil Solidarity Movement, a campaigning group that rejects violence. The movement hopes to rely on "networking" with MPs and discouraging western companies from investing in Sri Lanka, rather than on chanting in Parliament Square.

As the young man laid out his pragmatic thinking and negotiable aims, it seemed unlikely that they could have co-existed with the Tigers' suicide bombers and child soldiers. When militants spearhead a cause, they do not countenance shades of grey. But when they fail, hardliners fall away and negotiators can emerge. Analysts point to the Middle East's Gaza Strip, controlled by the armed movement Hamas, as a territory where such would-be negotiators still lack room to breathe.

Muhunthan is certainly upbeat. "At every step, I'm looking at it like a business. It's about getting any small Tamil groups together to have more power - like merging to form a big company," he explained. "Then it's about networking with as many MPs as possible. When I go to see David Miliband, I want to have a huge folder of the names of the people behind me - and I want some big names in there." He says he has so far convinced more than 140 British MPs to support his campaign. In April, Simon Hughes, a London MP, took him to meet officials at the US State department. Muhunthan hopes his parliamentary backers will persuade the British government to put economic pressure on Sri Lanka until it releases the estimated 280,000 Tamil civilians still held in displacement camps and, ultimately, allows them their own state. Such pressure would include cancelling Sri Lanka's status as a "GSP+" state, a designation bestowed after the 2004 Asian tsunami and intended to assist recovery by waiving certain taxes on exports to the European Union.

The EU is aware of these calls for a change in policy, and has already launched a probe into Sri Lanka's human rights record. And, with a preliminary EU report last month condemning the displacement camps as a "novel form of unacknowledged detention", even Sri Lankan officials now doubt that GSP+ status will be renewed.

Muhunthan may be on to something: the tax waiver was one issue he had raised when he met Benita Ferrero-Waldner, the EU foreign affairs commissioner, in Strasbourg this year.

In a church hall behind Euston station, near the curry house strip of Drummond Street, the Tamil Solidarity Movement is holding one of its first meetings. It's a simple affair, with plastic chairs and slices of homemade cake wrapped in clingfilm. But Muhunthan's fellow TSM members are young, focused, well-qualified and business-minded.

Raadhu, an accountant with KPMG, is keen to think of ways to put pressure on the western companies active in Sri Lanka. HSBC has a Sri Lankan division with total assets of \$1.4bn, about twice the total foreign direct investment in the country last year. And Sri Lanka's main export, textiles, has created links with many western fashion retailers. Colombo officials cite Marks and Spencer as a prominent client; M&S says it sources textiles from two retailers in Sri Lanka but refuses to disclose figures.

The last thing Colombo needs is an economic cold shoulder. Having pushed up military spending in recent years to defeat the Tigers, Rajapaksa's government is in the red and hoping foreign largesse will speed its recovery. Sri Lanka's public debt is now more than 80 per cent of GDP.

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The TSM is still in its early stages, with just under 110 young people on board, and Muhunthan often sounds naively optimistic. He says that if he can get the UK to take a tough stance on Sri Lanka, "the US will follow; everyone knows they're friends". Still, the movement shows a shift in thinking on how to bring attention to the cause. In a similar vein, a second-generation Tamil activist, Jan Jananayagam, ran as an independent candidate for London in last June's European parliamentary elections. She campaigned on not only a two-state solution in Sri Lanka but also on more transparency in derivatives markets.

"I am very positive about the second generation," Jananayagam says of the Tamil diaspora's chances of securing more western intervention. "They are so sure of their status in their country - they were born as citizens there - and they will just ring their MPs or senators to ask for these things."

The Tamil diaspora's often middle-class profile is a legacy of Sri Lanka's colonial era. Although historical accounts vary slightly, both the north Indian Sinhalese and the south Indian Tamils are thought to have migrated to Sri Lanka more than 2,000 years ago. In 1815, Britain gained control of the whole island (previously split into one Tamil and two Sinhalese kingdoms) and chose to favour the Tamil minority. It was a classic "divide and rule" strategy that pitted ethnic groups against each other to prevent a united fight for independence.

Sri Lanka's Tamils enjoyed education and status superior to that of their Sinhalese peers, and were seen as "career-oriented, intellectual and -passive", according to Neil DeVotta, a US-based professor of political science and author of *Blowback: Linguistic Nationalism, Institutional Decay and Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka*. DeVotta writes in a separate academic paper that, in 1946, Sri Lankan Tamils made up 11 per cent of the island's population but accounted for more than 30 per cent of the judiciary, top civil servants and university students. Today, Tamils account for 9-13 per cent of the island's 20m inhabitants; exact numbers are difficult to confirm as census researchers have not been able to access Tiger territories since 1981.

When Sri Lanka gained independence in 1948, the Sinhalese majority sought to regain dominance. A new government passed bills that enshrined Sinhalese as the official language, and in the 1970s, universities introduced positive discrimination quotas for Sinhalese candidates.

Many well-to-do Tamils headed west, and the diaspora soon became an important crutch for the Eelam campaign. They were able to assist the Tigers in times of financial difficulty. Today, up to 250,000 Tamils live in Canada, 200,000 in the UK and 130,000 in the US, although estimates vary widely and these numbers include Indian Tamils. However, donations have not always been voluntary - Tamil communities are rife with stories of "when the Tigers come knocking". Representatives of the group were known for turning up on migrants' doorsteps and threatening to harm relatives back in Sri Lanka unless money was forthcoming. This created a complex relationship between many Tamils and the Tigers, who became both a guardian against Colombo and a predator on their own community.

Despite such reports of intimidation, many first-generation Tamil migrants openly supported the Tamil Tigers at this year's protests.

So, following the group's defeat, how do the older members of the diaspora feel? Do they, like some of their children and grandchildren, see recent events as a release from a violent strategy that often made them its victims and that arguably was not working anyway?

The London Tamil Sangam, one of Britain's longest-established Tamil community centres, is entered through a nondescript doorway in Manor Park in the east of the capital. A Tamil enclave, its streets are lined with greengrocers selling jackfruit and branches of India's ICICI Bank. Saravana Bhavan, a Tamil restaurant chain known for its *dosa* pancakes, proves a popular draw. Malathy Muthu, the centre's manager, paints a sombre picture of the older generation, who seem to believe that their cause has been lost. "We have seen a lot of mental health problems - like depression - among the elders," she says. "This was their dream." Muthu says several elders are refusing even to leave their houses. "They will not engage with anything. They just stay in watching TV programmes about the 'at-home problem'. I think they are depressed, although they have not registered it with the GP as they will not talk to anyone."



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For those in the diaspora wedded to the armed struggle for independence - sometimes called "the old way" - prospects do indeed seem gloomy. Colombo's military surge against the Tigers this year coincided with a western crackdown on the overseas activities of the group, which has been banned in ever more countries as the post-9/11 "war on terror" mentality has taken hold. The man alleged to be the Tigers' UK head, Arunachalam Chrishanthakumar, was jailed for two years in June for supplying the group with electronic materials and military manuals. Karuna Kandasamy, the alleged US leader, is due to be sentenced in New York next month after pleading guilty to charges of making funds available to a terrorist group.

Some terrorism experts refer to the Tigers' proven ability to come back from the brink, and say they could soon resume sporadic guerrilla attacks. But few think they can recreate their former, sophisticated operation.

Early attempts seem to be foundering: in August, Colombo said Selvarasa Pathmanathan, the new head of the Tigers, had been arrested. For many first-generation migrants, the task of reinventing a 25-year struggle in their declining years is too great.

The first generation recognises that their children's "new way" presents a ray of hope. "The young ones are passionate about the struggle in a way that has surprised their parents," the engineer said. "And their approach is very different - they want to use democratic and diplomatic means. It's good. They should not make the mistakes that we did."

In recent months, Sri Lankan officials have been on promotional trips to the US, Britain, Malaysia and Singapore to lure foreign capital to what they say is now a peaceful island. Trips to the Middle East are planned for early next year. "This is an ideal time to look at the investment opportunities in Sri Lanka," Gamini Lakshman Peiris, international trade minister, told investors at a London briefing this year. "Terrorism is the only thing that has held us back." The government now hopes to profit from land wrested back from the Tigers by offering long leases on plots in the north and east.

Sri Lanka's strategic location, at the crux of vital shipping routes to south-east Asia, is undeniable and China has snapped up the rights to develop the island's once sleepy Hambantota harbour. The country's central bank has upgraded its 2009 economic growth forecast from 2.5 to 4.5 per cent.

Colombo officials insist that economic growth is for the "benefit of all citizens", and that it is not in the interest of Tamils "at home or overseas" to thwart such progress. But while Sri Lanka refuses to release Tamil civilians from camps, or allow journalists into these sites, there is much to stoke the separatist cause. President Rajapaksa had promised a postwar settlement with the Tamils, but he has so far made barely any moves on this front.

Whether it is through continuing to fund the Tigers in some form, or through the next generation's "new way", it seems that the struggle for Eelam is far from over.

Shyamantha Asokan is a former FT journalist. She is now a freelance writer based in Nigeria

**Load-Date:** October 16, 2009

**Behind the veil: Why Islam's most visible symbol is spreading; Embraced or banned, a prayer or a prison, the Muslim veil is spreading: Who wears it - and why?**

The Christian Science Monitor

December 12, 2009 Saturday

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**Length:** 2640 words

**Byline:** Caryle Murphy Correspondent

## **Body**

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It liberates. It represses. It is a prayer. It is a prison. It protects. It obliterates. Rarely in human history has a piece of cloth been assigned so many roles. Been embroiled in so much controversy. Been so misjudged, misunderstood, and manipulated. This bit, or in some cases bolt, of fabric is the Islamic veil.

For non-Muslims, it is perhaps the most visible, and often most controversial, symbol of Islam. From Texas to Paris, it has gained new prominence and been at the center of workplace misunderstandings, court rulings, and, in Europe, parliamentary debates about whether it should be banned. The veil's higher profile stems from several factors, including greater awareness and curiosity about Islam since 9/11, US military interventions in Muslim countries like Iraq and Afghanistan, and the rising visibility of Muslim immigrant communities in the United States and Europe. It has also become a magnet for trouble in times of distress, as Illinois resident Amal Abusumayah discovered when a woman upset about the Fort Hood, Texas, killing spree tugged Ms. Abusumayah's head scarf in a grocery store. "The veil has become a clichéd symbol for what the West perceives as Muslim oppression, tyranny, and zealotry - all of which have little to do with the real reasons why Muslim women veil," says Jennifer Heath, editor of the 2008 book "The Veil: Women Writers on Its History, Lore, and Politics." All this attention on the veil brings immense chagrin to Muslims because their faith means so much more to them than what women wear on their heads. But the veil - in its many manifestations - also gives rise to disagreement among Muslims. And their contemporary debate about it, while not yet widespread, raises fundamental questions relating to free will, women's status in society, and even how to interpret Islam's holy book, the Koran. IN ITS BROADEST SENSE, the "Islamic veil" refers to a large variety of coverings. The most widely worn is the head scarf. Covering hair and neck, it can be black and simple, or colorful and sweeping, as in Cairo, where scarves are tightly wound around women's heads and then cascade luxuriously to their waists. The head scarf is often referred to as hijab or hejab, an Arabic word meaning a covering or a screen. Mujahabat means "women who are covered." There is sweeping consensus among Islamic religious scholars around the world that Muslim women are required to, or at least should, cover their hair. So the head scarf, or some type of head covering, is widely viewed as mandatory in Islam. Other coverings worn by Muslim women also fall within the category of "veil." Depending on the country, these outfits can be regarded as either optional or compulsory. Often they are said to be required on either religious or cultural grounds - categories that overlap in most Muslim countries. Iran's traditional covering, for example, is the chador, an ample black cloth that fits over the head and reaches to the ground. Women often hold part of it over their face in mixed company. The more modern Iranian cover is a head scarf accompanied by a longish, coat-type garment. Women in Saudi Arabia wear an oblong black scarf flipped twice over their heads, along with the abaya, a loose black robe. Many add the niqab, a square piece of cloth that covers the mouth and nose, or sometimes hides the entire face with only a slit for the eyes. The most restrictive covering by far is the burqa of Afghanistan, a long

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billowy smock that totally covers a woman from head to toe, including her face. She sees the world only through a small square of cloth webbing. NON-MUSLIMS TEND TO REGARD VEILING as a sign of women's repression. That is true in highly patriarchal societies like Iran and Saudi Arabia, where women have second-class status and are required to cover both head and body when outside the home. But most Muslim women, including most in the US, voluntarily opt to wear the head scarf out of religious commitment. They believe they are following God's wish, and reject suggestions that their head covering means they have less autonomy at home or on the job. "It's something that you love to do because it makes you feel that you are closer to Allah, that you're doing the right thing," says Reem Ossama, an Egyptian mother of three who covers her head when she leaves her home here. "Allah ordered us to wear the scarf ... to protect our dignity, to protect women, [so we would] not be looked at just as a beautiful body, a beautiful face, [so others would] look at our minds and our personalities." In addition to religious reasons, many Muslim women have adopted the head scarf to show pride in their faith, particularly in times like these when Islam is under attack from non-Muslims. It's a way for women to say, "I'm proud to be a Muslim and I want to be respected." This is an especially strong sentiment in Muslim countries where people feel their Islamic identity is threatened by the global spread of Western culture. For many women in these countries, being "authentic" means wearing the Islamic head scarf. Other reasons for veiling involve less freedom of choice. Some women, especially in developing countries, say they put on the head scarf to avoid harassment and stares from men, especially in crowded spaces such as public transportation systems. More commonly, there is family pressure from fathers, husbands, or brothers who want their female relatives to be seen by society as a "good girl" or "good woman." These men are responding to their societies' prevailing norms, which presume that veiled women are obeying Islam's prohibitions on dating and extramarital sex. Some men ask their relatives to veil because they "are jealous," says Ms. Ossama's husband, Mohamed Gebriel. "They don't like other men to see their wives." Mr. Gebriel, who is managing director of a Riyadh business consultancy, isn't one of these men. But he says that, like the "vast majority" of Muslim men, he respects women who cover because "we see that as a sign that she appreciates herself, that she has some dignity, that she's not into that materialistic thing and trying to be a sex symbol." At the same time, Gebriel stresses that he has "many Muslim friends, female friends, who are not wearing hijab and it doesn't bother me ... because at the end of the day, it's one small thing that represents the entire entity ... of this human being." GENERALLY, ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS SCHOLARS cite two verses in the Koran to support their consensus that Muslim women must, or should, cover their hair. The first is Verse 33:59, addressed to the prophet Muhammad and his family: "O Prophet! Tell Thy wives and daughters And the believing women, That they should cast Their outer garments over Their persons (when abroad): That is most convenient, That they should be known (As such) and not molested." Verse 24:31 states, "And say to the believing women That they should lower Their gaze and guard Their modesty; that they Should not display their Beauty and ornaments except What (must ordinarily) appear Thereof; that they should Draw their veils over Their bosoms." But, writes sociologist Ashraf Zahedi, a scholar in residence at the University of California, Berkeley Beatrice Bain Research Group, "[T]hese citations emphasize modesty and covering the bosom and neck. There is no reference to covering female hair or to the head veil." Ms. Zahedi is among a small but growing number of female Muslim scholars questioning the long-held consensus on head covering. Leila Ahmed, Amina Wadud, and Asma Barlas, to mention others, argue that because most interpretations of the Koran throughout the ages have been done by men, the holy book's support for gender equality has been obscured. As Ms. Barlas, a professor of politics at Ithaca College in New York, said in a 2006 address at the University of Groningen in the Netherlands, "I am among those ... who argue that the reason the Koran has been read as a patriarchal text has to do with who has read it, how, and in what contexts. To make it clear, historically only male scholars have read the Koran ... always within patriarchies. That is why I call the dominant reading of Islam a misreading, which implies, of course, that I believe there can be a correct reading of Scripture." In a phone interview, Barlas noted that the Koran also calls on men to be modest (Verse 24:30). But, she said, "we never talk about Muslim men's sexual morality.... That's why I get upset sometimes with all the discussion of the head covering because it seems to me that men benefit from this a lot. "It basically lets them off the hook from having to talk about what might constitute good behavior on their part...." she said. "There's no discussion of how they should be dressing or behaving.... Why is the onus always on women to be the custodians of the community's morality or identity?" Other Muslim women are using the political arena to challenge the dominant view that Islamic modesty requires a head covering. Last May, four women made history when they were elected to Kuwait's National Assembly. Conservatives, outraged that two of the women - Rola Dashti and Aseel Al Awadhi - do not wear head scarves, petitioned a court to bar them from parliament because they violated Islamic

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law by not covering their heads. In October, Kuwait's highest constitutional court handed the women a legal victory when it dismissed the petition, ruling that the country's Constitution guarantees gender equality and freedom of choice in religion. MODERN HISTORY OFFERS MANY EXAMPLES of how men and male-dominated political regimes have used veiling as a way to control women, and by extension society, as well as a means to promote ideologies, whether secular or Islamic. In the first half of the 20th century, for example, secular-oriented leaders in Turkey and Iran who were keen to modernize their countries along Western lines banned the veil in public - to the great distress of many devout Muslim women. In Iran, women who refused to unveil were forcibly removed by police from public establishments. Many refused to leave their homes, Zahedi noted in her study of veiling in the fall 2007 issue of the Journal of Middle East Women's Studies. Today, Turkey still forbids head scarves at state-run universities. In Iran, the 1979 Islamic revolution reversed the veil ban and went to the opposite extreme, requiring a complete cover of head and body for all women, even non-Muslims. The point was to vividly demonstrate that Islam - not the West - was the controlling reference point for Iranian society. Zahedi noted that Iran's revolution brought to the fore deep-seated notions about the erotic nature of female hair. One conservative male writer had opined that "it has been proven that the hair of a woman radiates a kind of ray that affects a man, exciting him out of the normal state." Veiling was justified by "the need to control female sexual power," Zahedi added. And instead of "questioning the ... uncontrollable sexual appetite of some Iranian men," she wrote, "the regime forces Iranian women to conceal their hair and bodies to protect those men." Similar rules were imposed when the Taliban took power in Afghanistan in 1996. They made the burqa, long worn by traditional women for both cultural and religious reasons, required for all Afghan women. During Algeria's bitter civil war in the 1990s, radical Islamists killed unveiled women. And in Hamas-controlled Gaza, schoolgirls have been told to don head scarves. (Meanwhile, a few miles away in Israel, the Orthodox Jewish community requires its married women to cover their hair.) Barlas also accuses Westerners of politicizing the veil when they use it as a symbol for Islam, usually to critique women's repression in Muslim societies. "I have been challenging many Western audiences to tell me what they think a 'typical' picture of a US-American woman would be," she wrote in an e-mail. "When they find it hard, I ask why they pick only a 'veiled' woman to represent all Muslim women." TODAY, IT IS THE MOST severe forms of the veil - the niqab and the burqa - that are generating heated debate in Europe and some Muslim majority countries. Islamic religious scholars disagree on whether Muslim women must cover their faces. In Egypt, Sheikh Mohammed Sayyed Tantawi, head of Cairo's Al Azhar University, a renowned center of Islamic learning, recently reprimanded a girl for wearing a niqab when he visited her school. He ordered her to remove it, saying that it "has nothing to do with Islam and is only a custom." Indeed, the niqab was never an indigenous form of dress in Egypt. But in recent years, it has been adopted by young women who have turned to a more conservative, Saudi-style practice of Islam. The Egyptian government, citing security, has banned it from female dormitories at universities. "We all agree that niqab is not a religious requirement," Abdel Moati Bayoumi, an Al Azhar affiliated scholar, told the Associated Press. Noting that the "Taliban forces women to wear the niqab," Mr. Bayoumi added that "the time has come" to confront the idea that the niqab is mandatory. Even in Saudi Arabia, where the niqab has deep roots in tribal customs and is widely worn, women have different opinions about it. "What is the most beautiful part of a woman?" asks Saudi newspaper reporter Laila M. Bahammam. "It is her face and her hair. So this beauty should be covered." But Ahlam A. Al Qatari, a Saudi physician, says that she "would launch a campaign against the niqab" if she could. While she is "a hundred percent" with covering hair, she adds, the niqab "is different.... It's a tradition rather than an Islamic ritual or rule. In Islam, you cover your hair, not your face, and I think for civilized communication between different nations, different people, to know others actually, you have to expose yourself face to face, with eye contact." In Western countries, the face veil has become problematic for a variety of reasons. In an age of increased security, it is necessary for policemen, airline ticket agents, judges, and even teachers in schoolrooms to identify those in front of them. Also, it challenges the widespread assumption in Western culture that masks usually denote deceit or something to hide. In societies where high stock is placed on face-to-face communication, the face veil can be a high barrier to assimilation, not to mention a cause for anxiety. Former British Foreign Minister Jack Straw has called the niqab a "visible statement of separation and difference" that is "bound to make better, positive relations between the two communities more difficult." Several European countries have considered proposals to ban the niqab and burqa in public, and a leading Muslim organization in Canada recently urged the government to pass such a ban. In France, where the Islamic head scarf (and other "conspicuous" faith symbols) was banned from state schools in 2004, President Nicolas Sarkozy says there is "no place for the burqa" in his country. But after studying the issue, the French parliament last month decided not to formally ban the burqa,

Behind the veil: Why Islam's most visible symbol is spreading Embraced or banned, a prayer or a prison, the Muslim veil is spreading: Who wears it - and why?

though it may recommend against its use in some public places, news agencies reported. The Islamic head scarf, however, is another matter. As the most common type of Islamic veil, it now occupies a prominent place in both Western and Muslim majority countries as a statement of religious values. Not to mention as a fashion statement, as Reem Ossama is eager to demonstrate. She opens a drawer to retrieve several issues of "Hijab Fashion," a Cairo-based glossy magazine full of models in colorful, ankle-length dresses and pantsuits - all with elaborate matching head scarves. "We have fashion of our own, we Muslim ladies," Ossama says while flipping pages. "You can cover and be beautiful."

**Load-Date:** February 19, 2010

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## *Letters to the editor*

The Australian

October 6, 2009 Tuesday

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**Section:** FEATURES; Pg. 15

**Length:** 2640 words

### **Body**

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MOST TALKED ABOUT

TURNBULL'S TROUBLES

Political saviours must be made of sterner stuff

ACCORDING to Glenn Milne ('`Liberals' rising star hobbled by Nationals', Commentary, 5/10), Peter Dutton is a possible future Liberal Party leadership contender. Where's the evidence for that? Dutton has done little, if anything, to merit such great press.

He was a lacklustre junior minister in the Howard government who rarely rated a mention. He has been unable to lay a glove on Nicola Roxon in the health portfolio, in fact he often fails to even appear in parliament when Roxon introduces legislation. On a similar note, he walked out of the House of Representatives during the Stolen Generations apology, an act exhibiting a severe lack of grace and compassion. All Dutton seems to have done is ride the Howard tide up in 2001 and 2004; and down in 2007, as well as score endorsements from other mediocrities such as Malcolm Turnbull.

Lately, having lost confidence in his ability to defend his own seat of Dickson, he couldn't convince branch members on the Gold Coast that he was worth preselecting for the safe seat of McPherson. Here's the kicker -- having failed, he now appears ready to give up on politics altogether. Saviours are made of sterner stuff.

Ian Hutcheon

Seven Hills, Qld

WHEN the government is emphatically returned at the next federal election, it will doubtless claim to have a mandate for every loony tune the Left has ever played, but the reality will simply be that the ineffectual rabble masquerading as the opposition was wholly incapable of providing any, with or without Peter Dutton.

Richard Fisher

Sinnamon Park, Qld

MALCOLM Turnbull clearly spends too much of his time on the ETS, which his Queensland Liberal National Party allies take to be the Embarrass Turnbull Scheme.

Letters to the editor

Vivian McDonnell

Cook, ACT

WOW! A great practical demonstration of Karen Andrews' mechanical engineering skills to expertly remove the wheels from Peter Dutton's fast-track re-election vehicle and replace them with skids.

Andrew Wyminga

Bicheno, Tas

WAS the Liberal National Party preselection for the Queensland seat of McPherson meant to be an example of succession planning or secession planning?

Peter Wall

Ascot, Qld

I'VE heard of some women who are too posh to push when it comes to the travails of giving birth, but is Peter Dutton too slight to fight in the perfectly good seat he already had? What sort of a ``potential" Liberal leader refuses to stand against the odds and fight honourably for a difficult seat but runs around looking for the easy option? Future leader indeed.

Judy Hardy-Holden

Balgol Beach, Qld

MALCOLM Turnbull and the media are mortified that Peter Dutton missed preselection for McPherson, but nobody bothered to ask the constituents. I, for one, am delighted that a local candidate won the right to represent the electorate instead of a blow-in who is interested only in the Liberal Party and furthering his political career in that party. A great win for the people.

William Hill

Benowa, Qld

The ``Death Wish" Liberals are hard at work again, this time refusing to give the winnable seat of McPherson to Peter Dutton. I guess it wasn't ``his turn", because that's how these turkeys work. Labor has nothing to fear from these clowns who, if they keep chucking out talent like Peter Dutton, will have nothing left but party hacks and will be totally unelectable. When John Howard left the parliament, so did the Liberals' last brain cell.

C. Dicker

Bracken Ridge, Qld

YOUR editorial (``A passionate belief", 5/10) suggests that Malcolm Turnbull ``has shown he is passionate about his belief in man-made climate change ...". Yes, about as passionate as he was a few years ago about the need for Australia to become a republic. His reaction to losing that cause was to walk away. I expect that he will do the same on climate change.

E.L. Fisher

Kambah, ACT

MALCOLM Turnbull has at last made his position crystal clear: he leads the Coalition down the road to a sensible approach to an ETS, or he goes off to get a real job, and I doubt he will have much difficulty there.

## Letters to the editor

What would probably happen then is that the Coalition would be comprehensively beaten at the subsequent election and much of the deadwood eliminated from the next parliament. Hopefully, some new blood would emerge and eventually we would have the real opposition that we badly need. It almost sounds like an attractive outcome.

Peter Arlidge

New Farm, Qld

IF Malcolm Turnbull cannot carry his party in key public policy areas, how can he hope to win the support of the broader electorate at the next general election? His threat to resign as leader of the Liberal Party if he doesn't get his way on emissions trading policy, is a desperate ploy -- a bluff that one day may be called by those in the party who oppose him. Leadership by coercion is no formula for political longevity in a democracy.

Michael Gamble

Belmont, Vic

All the alarm bells rung by

Ebony's case were ignored

EBONY, a seven-year-old autistic girl starved to death in 2007. She had suffered chronic neglect and severe maltreatment at the hands of her parents ("No mercy for grisly killing of daughter", 3-4/10).

We would all like to believe that all children in Australian homes are loved, nurtured and cared for as is their right. This case highlights the sad reality that some parents are not capable of caring for their children and keeping them safe. In fact, the vast majority of cases of child abuse, child sexual assault and neglect are perpetrated in the domestic domain by those charged with the child's care.

The federal government's National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children states that protecting children is everyone's business. In Ebony's case, neighbours had alerted authorities and a number of NSW government departments had been alerted. Yet no one intervened appropriately and removed the starving child to safety.

There's no doubt that Ebony's parents failed her in the cruellest and most fundamental of ways. No jail sentence for the parents could ever match the sentence Ebony received in life, or in death. However, it's the systemic failure of our child protection system to protect another of the most vulnerable children in our society, in a case which rang all the alarm bells, which must be addressed.

Cathy Kezelman

Chairperson, Adults Surviving Child Abuse

Bellevue Hill, NSW

THE (unregretted) absence of a death penalty in Australia leaves life imprisonment without parole as the most severe judicial penalty. Logic then requires that it be reserved for criminals who have committed the worst crimes and who have the least chance of reform. This sentence was recently passed on a drug-addicted mother who starved a child to death, while Leigh Robinson, as noted by Lauren Wilson ("The killer and his crime are all too similar", Focus, 3-4/10), joins a list of girlfriend killers who have re-offended.

Years on a parole board convinced me that probationary officers are under-resourced, so parolees get inadequate supervision and little in the way of rehabilitation. I wonder whether the possibility of life-long orders for violent offenders with a high risk of recidivism has ever been considered. Any further conviction could result in a long prison sentence.

Under this regime, Robinson would probably have been in prison for some of the violent offences he continued to commit and his latest victim saved from a terrible death.



## Letters to the editor

As an aside, I wonder whether the mother convicted of murdering her child is at any risk of recidivism if in prison for long enough to be beyond the child-bearing years. If there is no or minimal risk, what is the point of keeping her in prison for the rest of her life?

David Pincus

Chapel Hill, Qld

The value of anonymity

THE spectacular success of the Melbourne Storm NRL team throughout the mere decade of its existence bears testimony to the value of anonymity ("Storm troopers end Eels fairytale", 5/10). As Victorians treat rugby league with the same contempt the rest of the football-playing world treats Australian Rules, the Melbourne Storm has relished the benefits of its personnel being able to function away from the glare of the media and public adulation. There has to be a lesson to be learned from this experience, a valuable lesson that various sporting codes could benefit from.

Based upon the Melbourne Storm experience, I expect the following to happen: the NZ Warriors to relocate to Flinders Island; the Sydney Roosters to Rottnest Island; the Queensland Reds to Norfolk Island; Collingwood to the Sahara Desert (and take Eddie McGuire along as well; in order to retain The Ashes, the English cricket team should relocate to Ankara; and, to win the 2011 World Cup, to be played in New Zealand, the All Blacks should pack up their jockstraps and hakas and immediately jet off to Murmansk.

The original intent of basing an NRL team in Melbourne was to spread the word of the rugby league gospel to the AFL Bible belt of Victoria. This has been an abysmal failure. Some savages are simply beyond redemption. However, a quite accidental benefit has been that Sydney-based rugby league teams can rarely get their hands on the NRL premiership which, in itself, is something for the rest of Australia to rejoice about.

Crispin Walters

Chapel Hill, Qld

There's no equivalence

YOUR correspondents' criticism of Israel's nuclear stockpile and the claim that this somehow entitles Iran to weapons of mass destruction (Most Talked About, 3-4/10)

is fallacious in that it ignores a number of

key factors.

Benjamin Netanyahu is not a meglomaniac dictator who has called for the destruction of all Islamic states (compare with Mahmoud Ahmadinejad), nor is he in a position to be overruled by a superstitious theocratic absolute ruler with no lesser hatred of Israel (Ali Khamenei). And before people start trying to invoke Israel's at times unacceptable treatment of Gaza or Lebanon, let us remember that the terrorist organisations which invoked such responses from Israel -- **Hamas** and Hezbollah -- are both Iranian proxies working to further the latter's plans of Middle East domination. This goal has other Middle Eastern Islamic states such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia worried, so Iran is not simply a small-minded concern of Israel and the West.

If Israel is to be held responsible for Iran's actions because of her own in the Palestinian territories, let us not forget that it is the Iranian President who has, this year alone, stolen an election and murdered, imprisoned, tortured and raped hundreds of his own people for the "crime" of questioning his insane desire to repress them, stamp on their right to democracy and then demand that they spill their blood in order to avenge terrorists and their victims in Palestine.

Francis Cardell-Oliver

Chapel Hill, Qld

### Obama's Afghan dilemma

I WAS very impressed by Paul Kelly's analysis of the dilemma faced by the US, and by extension Australia, in Afghanistan ("Obama to confront spectre of Vietnam", Focus, 3-4/10).

Those of us who lived through it cannot help but see clear and ominous parallels between the Vietnam war and the current situation in Afghanistan: the reasons for invasion then were hysteria about the spread of radical communism, the reasons now are hysteria about the spread of radical Islam; untold money and lives were squandered in futile attempts to prop up corrupt governments which were despised by the local population and made the Viet Cong look more attractive, which currently appears to be happening in Afghanistan after the farcical "democratic election".

But by far the most tragic parallel lies in the hatred and non-cooperation of the local population; they distrust and dread the foreign invaders, who are perceived as infidels and apologists for Zionism, more than they do the local extremists. In this climate there can be no winning of hearts and minds, and there can never be a military victory without merciless and morally unthinkable destruction of towns and villages and the killing of thousands of hapless civilians in the attempt to flush out and defeat the stated enemy.

I suspect the military chiefs and hardline war supporters know this and are ready to justify the means to achieve their holy grail of victory over the Taliban. But in the end, that is never going to happen. The enemy is not a regular armed force and there is no defined battlefield, as we have seen in Vietnam and the so-called war on terror. Al-Qa'ida comprises terrorist cells worldwide, and the Taliban almost certainly thrives throughout at least the sub-continent.

Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos suffered heart-wrenching chemical attacks and "carpet" bombing, and still threw out the hated invaders. Thus I believe the parallels are clear, and the US and its allies have just got to rethink their whole mindset. Revenge for the September 11, 2001 attacks has to be set aside, and the military and intelligence gurus set the task of protecting people from terrorists by closely monitoring potential cells among migrants in our own communities. Accept, basically, that we cannot force people in other countries to follow the democratic principles that we live by, least of all by invading them.

Therein lies Obama's dilemma. He wants to withdraw and rethink, but his country is likely to see that as weakness rather than strength and wisdom.

H. Neill

Southport, Qld

First Byte

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When surveyed about health preventative initiatives, a majority of Australians " ... disliked the prospect of their health being micromanaged by government", according to Julie Novak of the Institute of Public Affairs ("Backlash looms on smoking, drinking", 3-4/10). Good. If we can avoid having to micromanage their long-term healthcare as well, we should be able bring the state and federal budgets back into surplus by 2011.

Peter Hallahan

Coorparoo, Qld

Coincidence? The 2009 NRL grand final was won by the same team that won it a couple of years ago, defeating a team that hasn't won it for decades. The 2009 AFL grand final was won by the same team that won it a couple of years ago, defeating a team that hasn't won it for decades.

Letters to the editor

Jonah Jones

Princes Hill, Vic

Christopher Hitchens should not presume to speak for all atheists (or those indifferent to all things religious) in Australia or elsewhere. Even among atheists, there are diverse opinions about the meaning of life, what constitutes a good society and the blueprint for its betterment. So, let's not assume that killing God and religion would lead to a utopian society. It's been tried before and the experiment failed.

Hendry Wan

Matraville, NSW

The "l'affaire Polanski" is not about culture, it's about language and "no" meant "no" in 1977, every year before that and every year since. No exceptions.

Pamela Attwood

Glenside, SA

Could The Australian please lead the way for other media and start spelling Brasil with an "s" instead of "z" to conform with the way it's pronounced?

David Stark

Fairfield, Qld

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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**'Our life, our identity is in the land. We won't leave it': Palestine produces some of the finest olive oils in the world, not to mention dates, nuts, tomatoes - even wine. Now, despite the conflict, farmers are finding ways to export their produce - and show the world that their country is still the land of milk and honey. Joanna Blythman reports**

The Observer (London) (England)

September 13, 2009

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# TheObserver

**Section:** OBSERVER FOOD MONTHLY; Pg. 52

**Length:** 2708 words

## Body

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PHOTOGRAPHS BY SUKI DHANDA

Two members of olive farmer Asad Salaw's extended family. In Palestine the tradition of farming goes down through generations

I'm standing in what remains of Taysir Sadia Yaseen's olive grove, looking up at a 12ft-high wire fence. It arrived in 2000 when the Israeli army, without any notice, bulldozed a trench on this rocky, precipitous hillside and erected it on his land, declaring it part of a "security buffer zone". He points to the Israeli settlement that the fence protects. It resembles a suburban dormitory town, like something out of The Truman Show, only fortified and on a hilltop. It is encircled by twice the area of land and served by a new road, exclusively for the use of Israeli settlers and prohibited to Palestinians. This road in turn is guarded by another, military, road with routine patrols - we can hear army trucks whizzing by - and, finally, the fence.

Before the fence was built, Taysir was the proud owner of 1,000 olive trees, which had been in his family for as long as anyone can remember. Now he is left with 400. The other 600 are lost to him - on the other side where he is not allowed access. As a Palestinian farmer, if he tried to do so, Israeli soldiers, who keep watch from an observation tower, might confiscate his tractor or arrest him. "My feelings are of bitterness and sadness," he says. "The Israelis grabbed my land, the land we rely on for our livelihoods." In this village of Anin, near Jenin, in the Israeli-occupied West Bank of Palestine, the unemployment rate is 30% and olive trees are the only source of income.

Taysir's mother, Rahmeh, insists on joining us, even though she is 83, hobbling up the hill with the help of her grandsons and a stick. She shows me her hands. "As a girl I planted many of these trees with my own hands. I carried the saplings on my head. When the fence was put up I wept because I felt I had lost all my efforts." Like so many Palestinians, her family's grief and deep sense of injustice at the confiscation of their land is palpable, yet their attachment to it remains strong. "Our life, our identity, is in the land - even our destiny," says Taysir. "We won't leave it."

'Our life, our identity is in the land. We won't leave it': Palestine produces some of the finest olive oils in the world, not to mention dates, nuts, tomatoes ....

That tenacity in the most challenging circumstances has produced results. It started with a trickle of extra-virgin olive oil available from activists and church groups. But now organic olive oil from Palestine, certified by the Fairtrade Foundation and sold under the Equal Exchange label, is finding mass distribution on supermarket shelves. Earlier this year the Co-op started stocking it, followed by Sainsbury's, representing a massive triumph for beleaguered farmers like Taysir. "It makes us happy to know that British consumers are appreciating our oil. It allows us to present an alternative picture to the propaganda that portrays us as fanatics or hopeless victims who must rely on aid. It shows that we are a peaceful, productive people." Fairtrade, he says, has been a vital support. "It guarantees us a market, and the extra profit we get from it means we can reinvest and improve the quality of our oil."

Don't think for one minute that Palestinian olive oil is a "solidarity" product to buy out of compassion or to show support for the Palestinian cause. It may come from a UN conflict zone, but its sheer quality puts it up there with Europe's finest. Palestine has the world's most ancient olive groves, but agricultural statistics show that more than 1m olive trees have been uprooted or destroyed by Israelis since 1980 to make way for settlements. Yet still that oil keeps coming. There's the Nabali olive which produces a buttery, attractively peppery oil or the Rumi, which gives an oil that is quite fruity but more robust. These oils are smooth, persuasive ambassadors for a remarkable range of Palestinian foods that are slowly becoming available in the UK, US and Europe.

Palestine typically features in the headlines in the context of upheaval and violence, but in the West Bank it remains a productive and fertile farming region. Palestine is the biblical Canaan, a fabled land of milk and honey with a long tradition of artisan farming, so organic production is a snug fit for the Palestinian farmer. The foods they now export include whole black and green olives, pickled in the national tradition with oil, sea salt and lemon, or tree-ripened then salted and smothered in oil; sun-dried tomatoes and capers in oil; velvety tahini; particularly large almonds that are much sought after by Italian chocolatiers; aromatic honey; and several varieties of luscious dates like the hayani, barhee and medjool. UK importers are also bringing in za'atar, Palestine's breakfast speciality, a unique blend of crushed wild marjoram, toasted sesame seeds, sea salt and sharp sumac berries that is

traditionally mixed with oil and served with freshly baked flatbreads.

In the desert-like landscape of Jericho I see another demonstration of the resilience and resourcefulness of the Palestinian people, most especially its women. With the help of the go-ahead Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committee, a co-op of 40 women has taken over a disused date warehouse to make maftoul. Somewhere between couscous and cracked wheat in texture, maftoul is a hand-rolled grain, traditionally eaten at special occasions, which takes a whole day to make from scratch. Women sit cross-legged on the floor rubbing a mixture of local white and wholemeal organic wheat flour and salty water together with their fingers until it forms small particles, steam it, then sun-dry it in a greenhouse in a fierce 60deg. C heat. The technique is ancient and highly skilled.

The idea of making this most traditional Palestinian speciality into an income-generating enterprise originally came from women's co-ops in Gaza, but since 2007, with the election there of a Hamas government and the subsequent Israeli blockade and bombardment, they were forced to give up. Now in Jericho production has been restarted by women whose families have been living in the UN refugee camp Ein Al-Sultan refugee camp for over 30 years. Now the Palestinians are left with less than 12% of pre-1948 Palestine, and women make up 67% of the refugee population. "We are immigrants in our own land," explains Hamda Bilal, who speaks for all when she says that they still hope one day to return to their original homes. In the meantime, they doggedly produce a ton of maftoul every day.

I am invited to lunch with the ladies of the co-op to taste this morning's batch of maftoul. Free-flowing, nutty and full of flavour, it is served with chicken roasted on the bone with lemon and sumac and a lightly spiced broth full of vegetables. Food production is the backbone of the Palestinian economy, and two-thirds of the work is done by women. In this co-op the majority are breadwinners in their large families because their husbands can't find work or are dead. These women take an entrepreneurial pride in their maftoul and are delighted to think that consumers in the UK can taste the fruit of their endeavours. "For us it's a cultural exchange. This traditional food explains who we are and what we do," says Fathia Abu Shakar.

'Our life, our identity is in the land. We won't leave it': Palestine produces some of the finest olive oils in the world, not to mention dates, nuts, tomatoes ....

The switchback road from Ramallah, Palestine's capital, to Nablus, its largest town, is extremely beautiful. Reminiscent of the Mediterranean, centuries-old olive groves are built in vertiginous terraces with honey-coloured limestone walls. For five years, until this spring, there was no way to drive through Nablus. Considered by Israel to be a hotbed of Palestinian anti-occupation groups, particularly the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, it was encircled by Israeli checkpoints through which the population could only pass on foot. Today it looks like a normal bustling city where people are doing what people do when they have something to celebrate: stocking up for a feast.

The signature dish of Nablus is a toothsome cake called kunafa. I watch it being made and instantly appreciate why the speed and deftness of these bakers is admired throughout the Arab world. They steam semolina and thinly spread it on a round tin tray, about 3ft wide, stud it with a goat's milk cheese - somewhere between a mozzarella and a halloumi - cook it on one side over a naked flame, flip it like an enormous pancake, then douse it with rosewater syrup and sprinkle it with crushed pistachios. The resulting confection is worth getting fat for. The semolina is addictively gritty and caramelised. The cheese adds chewy bits to the texture. It's sweet but not cloying; no wonder a long queue of Nablus citizens snakes out the door. The central food market is also rammed with people. It reminds me of markets you find in Sicily or Istanbul, where the produce is impeccably fresh - prickly pears, grapes, green almonds, plump aubergines, ripe figs, red-green tomatoes, crunchy cucumbers, cherries and more - all naturally grown in hot sun, endearingly deaf to the body-fascist horticultural specifications of global supermarkets. On the corner a baker with a wood-fired oven is turning out hot, blistered flatbreads in record time. Next door the butchers are boning out lamb for mansaf, the quintessential Palestinian dish

of rice served with a sauce made with dried yoghurt and tender meat, or chopping chicken to top the celebratory dish, musakhan, which consists of flatbread covered with a layer of onions softened in stock then dusted with sumac and toasted pine nuts.

Palestinians love to eat, and their legendary hospitality is boundless. Somewhat counter-intuitively, given that Palestine's main religion is Islam, many Palestinians also like a drink. Historically Palestine has been a diverse, pluralist, tolerant culture, a mix of Muslims, Jews and Christians with Bedouin and Ottoman influences. Attitudes to alcohol are relaxed, and Palestinians make a range of beers at the Taybeh microbrewery, between Ramallah and Jericho, along with wine and brandy at the Cremisan vineyard on the outskirts of Bethlehem, an area with a history of wine-making dating back to the Iron Age.

Anywhere other than Palestine, Cremisan winery, with its magnificent chateau-like building that dates back to 1885 and its painstakingly constructed terraced vineyards, would be a heritage site with Grade A listing, and its wines - especially its "hock", which is made from Palestinian grape varieties and resembles a good Austrian Gruner Veltliner - would earn favourable mentions in international wine magazines. But since currently Palestine is neither a country nor a state in the usual sense, it enjoys no such protection.

Cremisan is sandwiched between two Israeli settlements. It is earmarked to become part of Israel behind the infamous "separation wall". More than twice the height of the Berlin wall in all its 25ft-high, brutal, grey concrete and razor-wire ugliness, complete with sniper towers, electric sensors, thermal imaging, surveillance cameras and checkpoints patrolled by young Israeli

soldiers with guns, it is only 60% complete. Once finished, it will encircle the winery and cut it off from its neighbouring Palestinian village, although it is much closer to it than the settlements. The only thing holding up its completion is the opposition of the Italian Salesian fathers who currently run the winery using a Palestinian workforce, and the intervention on their behalf of the Vatican. "We can speak out more than the Palestinians with the Israeli authorities," explains Cremisan's Sara Faustinelli.

Papal influence notwithstanding, in order to export its wines Cremisan still has to negotiate all the obstacles placed in the way of Palestinian food and wine producers by Israel. Water supply is unreliable because so much of it is siphoned off from deep aquifers for Israeli settlements. The Palestinian Hydrology Group says that Palestinians use only a fifth of the water used by Israelis, but pay four times as much for it. So Cremisan's growers, like many Palestinian farmers, are building rainwater-collection systems in order to be more self-reliant. The whole business

'Our life, our identity is in the land. We won't leave it': Palestine produces some of the finest olive oils in the world, not to mention dates, nuts, tomatoes ....

of getting Palestinian goods to market is slower than it should be because they have to be driven to an Israeli checkpoint by a Palestinian in a van that is half empty (so it can easily be searched), offloaded, then picked up on the other side by a driver with Israeli number plates. When Palestinian goods arrive at an Israeli port, they undergo further rigorous security checks. The net effect of this system is to double the cost to Palestinian exporters.

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Palestinian foods, see [www.zaytoun.org](http://www.zaytoun.org) or [www.equalexchange.co.uk](http://www.equalexchange.co.uk)

Asad Salaw's daughter-in-law makes flatbread. Above: date farmer Zioane Eanoz with some of his crop

The separation wall outside Jerusalem. The conflict makes trading almost impossible for the Palestinian. Above: farmer Tysir Sadia Yaseen and his mother Rahmeh

Maftoul being made in a women's co-operative



'Our life, our identity is in the land. We won't leave it': Palestine produces some of the finest olive oils in the world, not to mention dates, nuts, tomatoes ....

**Load-Date:** September 12, 2009

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**Observer Food Monthly: 'Our life, our identity is in the land. We won't leave it': Palestine produces some of the finest olive oils in the world, not to mention dates, nuts, tomatoes - even wine. Now, despite the conflict, farmers are finding ways to export their produce - and show the world that their country is still the land of milk and honey. Joanna Blythman reports**

The Observer (London) (England)

September 13, 2009

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# TheObserver

**Section:** OBSERVER FOOD MONTHLY; Pg. 52

**Length:** 2632 words

**Byline:** Joanna Blythman

## Body

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I'm standing in what remains of Taysir Sadia Yaseen's olive grove, looking up at a 12ft-high wire fence. It arrived in 2000 when the Israeli army, without any notice, bulldozed a trench on this rocky, precipitous hillside and erected it on his land, declaring it part of a "security buffer zone". He points to the Israeli settlement that the fence protects. It resembles a suburban dormitory town, like something out of The Truman Show, only fortified and on a hilltop. It is encircled by twice the area of land and served by a new road, exclusively for the use of Israeli settlers and prohibited to Palestinians. This road in turn is guarded by another, military, road with routine patrols - we can hear army trucks whizzing by - and, finally, the fence.

Before the fence was built, Taysir was the proud owner of 1,000 olive trees, which had been in his family for as long as anyone can remember. Now he is left with 400. The other 600 are lost to him - on the other side where he is not allowed access. As a Palestinian farmer, if he tried to do so, Israeli soldiers, who keep watch from an observation tower, might confiscate his tractor or arrest him. "My feelings are of bitterness and sadness," he says. "The Israelis grabbed my land, the land we rely on for our livelihoods." In this village of Anin, near Jenin, in the Israeli-occupied West Bank of Palestine, the unemployment rate is 30% and olive trees are the only source of income.

Taysir's mother, Rahmeh, insists on joining us, even though she is 83, hobbling up the hill with the help of her grandsons and a stick. She shows me her hands. "As a girl I planted many of these trees with my own hands. I carried the saplings on my head. When the fence was put up I wept because I felt I had lost all my efforts." Like so many Palestinians, her family's grief and deep sense of injustice at the confiscation of their land is palpable, yet their attachment to it remains strong. "Our life, our identity, is in the land - even our destiny," says Taysir. "We won't leave it."

That tenacity in the most challenging circumstances has produced results. It started with a trickle of extra-virgin olive oil available from activists and church groups. But now organic olive oil from Palestine, certified by the

Observer Food Monthly: 'Our life, our identity is in the land. We won't leave it': Palestine produces some of the finest olive oils in the world, not to mention....

Fairtrade Foundation and sold under the Equal Exchange label, is finding mass distribution on supermarket shelves. Earlier this year the Co-op started stocking it, followed by Sainsbury's, representing a massive triumph for beleaguered farmers like Taysir. "It makes us happy to know that British consumers are appreciating our oil. It allows us to present an alternative picture to the propaganda that portrays us as fanatics or hopeless victims who must rely on aid. It shows that we are a peaceful, productive people." Fairtrade, he says, has been a vital support. "It guarantees us a market, and the extra profit we get from it means we can reinvest and improve the quality of our oil."

Don't think for one minute that Palestinian olive oil is a "solidarity" product to buy out of compassion or to show support for the Palestinian cause. It may come from a UN conflict zone, but its sheer quality puts it up there with Europe's finest. Palestine has the world's most ancient olive groves, but agricultural statistics show that more than 1m olive trees have been uprooted or destroyed by Israelis since 1980 to make way for settlements. Yet still that oil keeps coming. There's the Nabali olive which produces a buttery, attractively peppery oil or the Rumi, which gives an oil that is quite fruity but more robust. These oils are smooth, persuasive ambassadors for a remarkable range of Palestinian foods that are slowly becoming available in the UK, US and Europe.

Palestine typically features in the headlines in the context of upheaval and violence, but in the West Bank it remains a productive and fertile farming region. Palestine is the biblical Canaan, a fabled land of milk and honey with a long tradition of artisan farming, so organic production is a snug fit for the Palestinian farmer. The foods they now export include whole black and green olives, pickled in the national tradition with oil, sea salt and lemon, or tree-ripened then salted and smothered in oil; sun-dried tomatoes and capers in oil; velvety tahini; particularly large almonds that are much sought after by Italian chocolatiers; aromatic honey; and several varieties of luscious dates like the hayani, barhee and medjool. UK importers are also bringing in za'atar, Palestine's breakfast speciality, a unique blend of crushed wild marjoram, toasted sesame seeds, sea salt and sharp sumac berries that is

traditionally mixed with oil and served with freshly baked flatbreads.

In the desert-like landscape of Jericho I see another demonstration of the resilience and resourcefulness of the Palestinian people, most especially its women. With the help of the go-ahead Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committee, a co-op of 40 women has taken over a disused date warehouse to make maftoul. Somewhere between couscous and cracked wheat in texture, maftoul is a hand-rolled grain, traditionally eaten at special occasions, which takes a whole day to make from scratch. Women sit cross-legged on the floor rubbing a mixture of local white and wholemeal organic wheat flour and salty water together with their fingers until it forms small particles, steam it, then sun-dry it in a greenhouse in a fierce 60deg. C heat. The technique is ancient and highly skilled.

The idea of making this most traditional Palestinian speciality into an income-generating enterprise originally came from women's co-ops in Gaza, but since 2007, with the election there of a Hamas government and the subsequent Israeli blockade and bombardment, they were forced to give up. Now in Jericho production has been restarted by women whose families have been living in the UN refugee camp Ein Al-Sultan refugee camp for over 30 years. Now the Palestinians are left with less than 12% of pre-1948 Palestine, and women make up 67% of the refugee population. "We are immigrants in our own land," explains Hamda Bilal, who speaks for all when she says that they still hope one day to return to their original homes. In the meantime, they doggedly produce a ton of maftoul every day.

I am invited to lunch with the ladies of the co-op to taste this morning's batch of maftoul. Free-flowing, nutty and full of flavour, it is served with chicken roasted on the bone with lemon and sumac and a lightly spiced broth full of vegetables. Food production is the backbone of the Palestinian economy, and two-thirds of the work is done by women. In this co-op the majority are breadwinners in their large families because their husbands can't find work or are dead. These women take an entrepreneurial pride in their maftoul and are delighted to think that consumers in the UK can taste the fruit of their endeavours. "For us it's a cultural exchange. This traditional food explains who we are and what we do," says Fathia Abu Shakar.

Observer Food Monthly: 'Our life, our identity is in the land. We won't leave it': Palestine produces some of the finest olive oils in the world, not to mention....

The switchback road from Ramallah, Palestine's capital, to Nablus, its largest town, is extremely beautiful. Reminiscent of the Mediterranean, centuries-old olive groves are built in vertiginous terraces with honey-coloured limestone walls. For five years, until this spring, there was no way to drive through Nablus. Considered by Israel to be a hotbed of Palestinian anti-occupation groups, particularly the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, it was encircled by Israeli checkpoints through which the population could only pass on foot. Today it looks like a normal bustling city where people are doing what people do when they have something to celebrate: stocking up for a feast.

The signature dish of Nablus is a toothsome cake called kunafa. I watch it being made and instantly appreciate why the speed and deftness of these bakers is admired throughout the Arab world. They steam semolina and thinly spread it on a round tin tray, about 3ft wide, stud it with a goat's milk cheese - somewhere between a mozzarella and a halloumi - cook it on one side over a naked flame, flip it like an enormous pancake, then douse it with rosewater syrup and sprinkle it with crushed pistachios. The resulting confection is worth getting fat for. The semolina is addictively gritty and caramelised. The cheese adds chewy bits to the texture. It's sweet but not cloying; no wonder a long queue of Nablus citizens snakes out the door. The central food market is also rammed with people. It reminds me of markets you find in Sicily or Istanbul, where the produce is impeccably fresh - prickly pears, grapes, green almonds, plump aubergines, ripe figs, red-green tomatoes, crunchy cucumbers, cherries and more - all naturally grown in hot sun, endearingly deaf to the body-fascist horticultural specifications of global supermarkets. On the corner a baker with a wood-fired oven is turning out hot, blistered flatbreads in record time. Next door the butchers are boning out lamb for mansaf, the quintessential Palestinian dish

of rice served with a sauce made with dried yoghurt and tender meat, or chopping chicken to top the celebratory dish, musakhan, which consists of flatbread covered with a layer of onions softened in stock then dusted with sumac and toasted pine nuts.

Palestinians love to eat, and their legendary hospitality is boundless. Somewhat counter-intuitively, given that Palestine's main religion is Islam, many Palestinians also like a drink. Historically Palestine has been a diverse, pluralist, tolerant culture, a mix of Muslims, Jews and Christians with Bedouin and Ottoman influences. Attitudes to alcohol are relaxed, and Palestinians make a range of beers at the Taybeh microbrewery, between Ramallah and Jericho, along with wine and brandy at the Cremisan vineyard on the outskirts of Bethlehem, an area with a history of wine-making dating back to the Iron Age.

Anywhere other than Palestine, Cremisan winery, with its magnificent chateau-like building that dates back to 1885 and its painstakingly constructed terraced vineyards, would be a heritage site with Grade A listing, and its wines - especially its "hock", which is made from Palestinian grape varieties and resembles a good Austrian Gruner Veltliner - would earn favourable mentions in international wine magazines. But since currently Palestine is neither a country nor a state in the usual sense, it enjoys no such protection.

Cremisan is sandwiched between two Israeli settlements. It is earmarked to become part of Israel behind the infamous "separation wall". More than twice the height of the Berlin wall in all its 25ft-high, brutal, grey concrete and razor-wire ugliness, complete with sniper towers, electric sensors, thermal imaging, surveillance cameras and checkpoints patrolled by young Israeli

soldiers with guns, it is only 60% complete. Once finished, it will encircle the winery and cut it off from its neighbouring Palestinian village, although it is much closer to it than the settlements. The only thing holding up its completion is the opposition of the Italian Salesian fathers who currently run the winery using a Palestinian workforce, and the intervention on their behalf of the Vatican. "We can speak out more than the Palestinians with the Israeli authorities," explains Cremisan's Sara Faustinelli.

Papal influence notwithstanding, in order to export its wines Cremisan still has to negotiate all the obstacles placed in the way of Palestinian food and wine producers by Israel. Water supply is unreliable because so much of it is siphoned off from deep aquifers for Israeli settlements. The Palestinian Hydrology Group says that Palestinians use only a fifth of the water used by Israelis, but pay four times as much for it. So Cremisan's growers, like many Palestinian farmers, are building rainwater-collection systems in order to be more self-reliant. The whole business

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**Load-Date:** September 14, 2009

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Australian

July 10, 2009 Friday

1 - All-round Country Edition

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**Section:** FEATURES; Pg. 13

**Length:** 2589 words

### **Body**

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Mass adulation of Jackson exposes modern values

MOST TALKED ABOUT

MICHAEL MANIA

CLEARLY the world is in a moral dilemma and would appear to have lost its values. Last week and this we have had the spectacle of the "Michael Jackson Show" and no one could escape the mass hysteria.

Precisely what was it that Jackson contributed to society that elicited this fanatical breast-beating in the wake of his death? He could sing and dance, yes. He was a hypochondriac, yes. He was accused, but not convicted, of pedophilia, yes, largely due to monies having changed hands with the parents of children he came into contact with.

To place him above all others for mass adulation says volumes about the decline of the social fabric, not only in the US, but around the world.

Ian McDonald

Mindarie, WA

THE Hollywood-style hoopla surrounding Michael Jackson's memorial service contrasts with another Hollywood funeral almost 32 years ago. Great as he was, Jackson's accomplishments are dwarfed by Bing Crosby, who had the most number one pop music hits ever (38), was the number one movie box-office attraction five years in a row (1944-48) and in the top 10 a total of 15 times and was a major US radio star from 1931 to 1954.

Believing a man had a right to "die in privacy", Crosby was buried at 6am (when the blue of the night meets the gold of the day) on October 18, 1977. Only his immediate family and closest friends were allowed to be present. Crosby revolutionised popular music in the 1930s but is now largely forgotten. Will Jackson's achievements suffer the same fate?

Graham Pascoe

Bathurst, NSW

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

I HAVE been appalled at the media coverage given to the death and funeral/memorial of Michael Jackson. Please read Robert M. Kaplan's piece ("A talent for lies and abuse", Opinion, 8/7). Notable and very worthy people receive less than a fraction of the adulation given to Jackson, who really deserved nothing on the scale of the "reverence" shown to his memory.

Alan Cole

Mount Warren Park, Qld

ROBERTM. Kaplan seems to be a lone voice amidst the plethora of inane reactions to Michael Jackson's death in your newspaper. What a sordid, sick and predatory person Jackson was and what a wonderful example he set for young people. He was not worth one column inch of your newspaper.

R.H. Elgar

Kawana Island, Qld

ROBERT Kaplan wrote an interesting article but it's absolutely untrue. I worked with Michael Jackson and the rest of the family for several months during the CBS TV series The Jacksons in 1979-80. Although it was 30 years ago, I have a vivid memory of Michael, who was the undisputed head of the family at age 21. Mentally, he was a child.

Michael combined the whims of a child with an unswerving drive to dance, sing and perform. He showed no sexual preference, in keeping with his childish mind, and was focused on practice. He would spend most of his waking hours in a rehearsal hall in front of the mirror imitating the moves from Fred Astaire movies and inventing his own. He loved stories about children because that's who he was, a child.

Although I lost contact with him after the TV series, I followed his moves in the business and cheered his successes but was appalled by his butchery of his face.

I firmly believe that the Neverland ranch was a child's fantasy, like building a chocolate-and-ice cream factory. Inviting children into that fantasy was a natural extension for him, and although I can never be sure, I can easily believe that he was innocent in his heart. I have never met anyone like him in that respect. I think the pedophile accusations and the defence of his innocence destroyed him and drove him to the drug excesses and his final demise. He led a sad, lonely, tortured life, more like an alien from another planet. He was never one of us.

Bill Davis

Belleville, Ontario, Canada

IN the past week we have heard so much about Michael Jackson that one could be forgiven for thinking that he must have been a member of royalty. One might even believe that here was a fellow who had done no wrong, despite the accusations of pedophilia and his paying of millions of dollars to his alleged victims. We have heard a lot about his life and how his bizarre behaviour was a result of his topsy-turvy upbringing. But other people have had a less than perfect upbringing and they don't exhibit such behaviour.

The memorial service in Los Angeles saw the famous perform in Jackson's honour and copious tears were shed all around. Of course we can sympathise with any family which loses a loved one, but the way the world has carried on over the passing of Jackson is something most extraordinary. Perhaps the media is to blame for some of it but not all. Is there any hope for America when millions idolise the memory of such as he?

Jay Nauss

Glen Aplin, Qld

MY first thoughts on the news of Michael Jackson's death were a sense of relief and release for him, a tortured soul. It was a ridiculous life inside a spectacular career. Even his loyal fans must feel robbed by his stunted artistic

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

growth. Many such figures have died young, not so pretty and leaving behind all those questions. May he rest in peace, though the Jackson industry will rev

up afresh.

Phil Pryor

Turramurra, NSW

Arrest of Rio Tinto China

staff is a reality check

GIVEN the controlling mind-set of the Chinese government, which sees corporate and state activity as essentially one and the same thing, it would be very difficult for Chinese authorities to recognise the difference between spying and legitimate commercial research and activity by any foreign corporation. The many foreign businesses operating in China may have been given an important reality check by the arrest of Rio Tinto personnel ("Beijing accuses Rio of spying", 9/7).

Thomas Watson

Wagga Wagga, NSW

THE Chinese government must think we Australians are fools. A business deal goes bad so they arrest a Rio Tinto executive and accuse him of spying -- something they are quite the expert on. But should we be that surprised at this appalling behaviour? After all, we saw how badly Chinese authorities treated journalists during the Beijing Olympics. The latest incident is more evidence that Australia must resist Chinese investment or place its sovereignty at risk.

John Redding

Marleston, SA

In 2006 I wrote, in an academic discussion paper, that China has the death penalty for over 60 offences including a vast range of non-violent offences, adding that "Australian businessmen and women wishing to become partners with China in the economic boom of that country could be caught in situations where they could be accused of white collar crime. It's entirely possible, in such circumstances, that an Australian will face execution in China for a 'crime' which would attract no more than several years' jail in Australia."

With the arrest of Stern Hu, the general manager for China operations at Rio Tinto's iron ore division on spying charges, it will be interesting to see what happens next.

Vic Adams

Reid, ACT

ALEC van Gelder's piece ("Don't throttle trade", Opinion, 9/7) was typical of what we come to expect from free trade proponents. It would have made for more interesting reading if he had pointed out the futility of Australia entering into a so-called free trade agreement with China when it continues to artificially deflate its exchange rate to keep its exports super-competitive. Hardly free trade, is it?

Jerome Appleby

Fullarton, SA

No decision yet on Uluru



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

CONTRARY to your headline ("Garrett to ground Uluru climbers", 9/7), neither I nor anyone in the Rudd government has made a decision to close the Uluru climb.

As your story identifies, the Uluru Board of Management this week released a draft management plan for the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park for the coming decade. It addresses a range of issues in the management of the park, one of those being the Uluru climb and whether it should be closed for visitor safety, cultural and environmental reasons. Public feedback on the entire draft plan, including the climb, will now take place over the next two months. I encourage anyone who wishes to have their voice heard to be part of that process.

Peter Garrett

Federal Minister for the Environment,

Heritage and the Arts

DOES opposition environment spokesman Greg Hunt not know there is already an explanatory sign at Uluru asking people not to climb? This is an Aboriginal sacred path of spiritual significance taken by only a few Aboriginal men. Would Hunt enter a temple in Asia with his shoes on if asked to remove them? Respecting culture is a universal requirement for peace and goodwill.

Victoria O'Connor

Lennox Head, NSW

Shameful treatment

THE reported judgment by a federal magistrate separating a 19-month-old girl from her primary-carer mother with the comment that "children are sometimes forced to adjust to changes of this nature, for example if a parent dies" exposes the true value these shared-parenting laws place on the best interests of children ("Mother must give daughter to father", 9/7). Every qualified psychologist, psychiatrist and child development expert in Australia can testify to the potentially life-long devastating effects the death of a primary carer can have on a young child's well-being, yet the comparison somehow justifies a conscious judicial decision to devastate this infant's psychological health.

The declared motivation is to educate the mother on the importance of the child's relationship her father; the infant's well-being is to be subordinated to this legal project, with the final insult that it is supposedly in the child's best interests. Thanks to The Australian for exposing the family law system's shameful treatment of children.

Elspeth McInnes

Adelaide, SA

CAROLINE Overington's article shows how family law has finally recognised fathers as parents and that it hurts children when mothers believe they have a right to arbitrarily negate the father-child relationship.

Recognising fathers' rights as parents recalls the days when women were given the vote and allowed entry into the workforce. Perhaps it is the turn of women to adjust to a level playing field in an area which was once their traditional "domain"?

Jason Thompson

Maleny, Qld

'Disarray' headline unfair

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

I WAS disappointed to read your reporting of the Rudd government's efforts to tackle homelessness ("Homeless plan in disarray", 7/9). The government has made an unprecedented commitment to tackling homelessness in Australia with combined investments totalling more than \$7.8 billion over and above those previously provided.

The fact that negotiations to maximise the benefit of the additional funding has taken additional time with three jurisdictions in no way justifies the grossly inaccurate headline your newspaper chose to use. These negotiations are directed at maximising the additional funding contributions from the states and territories. Attempts by the federal government to ensure the highest possible funding commitments by governments at all levels to homelessness are a necessary part of meeting the targets to reduce homelessness.

Tanya Plibersek

Federal Minister for Housing

Tactic to stifle dissent

THE Australian has carried an extraordinary attack by Ilan Grapel on Green Left Weekly and its monthly Arabic insert, the Flame ("A willing ally to Hamas's hatred", Opinion, 1/7). Both publications are guilty of a "radical anti-Israel stance", Grapel said. But the Flame, "unknown to its English readers", also allegedly "supports terrorist groups and promotes violence". Grapel claims that, through the Flame, GLW is "openly promoting extremism".

Grapel relies on a few selected quotes that defend the right of Palestinians to resist Israel's illegal occupation -- a right recognised by international law -- to argue the Flame promotes terrorism. The issue of the Flame he takes these quotes from was produced in January, as Israel's bombs, including banned chemical weapons, rained down on Gazan civilians. Apparently this is not "terrorism" to Grapel. The Flame and GLW both disagree.

Grapel relies on selected quotes, minus their context, translated from a language most readers of The Australian don't speak to suggest something sinister. He is playing on anti-Arab sentiment that exists in some quarters to feed suspicions anything in Arabic is likely to promote fundamentalist extremism. In fact, the team of Sudanese refugees who produce the Flame themselves fled from persecution at the hands of the repressive Islamic regime in Sudan. They are victims of the sort of Islamic fundamentalism Grapel disingenuously accuses them of supporting in Palestine.

The Flame's only crime is to support the Palestinian people against oppression and occupation. This is the same position that GLW holds. This is not extremism. Israel's illegal occupation is in violation of international law and hundreds of UN resolutions. Supporters of Israel regularly seek to deflect legitimate criticism of Israel's appalling human rights record by labelling detractors as supporters of terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism. Such tactics are designed to intimidate and stifle dissent.

Soubhi Iskander

(Editor of the Flame)

Stuart Munckton and Emma Murphy

(Editors of Green Left Weekly)

FIRST BYTE

[letters@theaustralian.com.au](mailto:letters@theaustralian.com.au)

You have to admire the chutzpah of Kevin Rudd. Fancy him lecturing world leaders on fiscal responsibility ("World needs to be saved from spending spree: PM", 8/7). He was right about the need for an exit strategy, though. He has one. Just lose the election after next and then spend the next 10 years criticising and obstructing as the conservatives clean up the mess.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Frank Pulsford

Aspley, Qld

If the display of grief and theatre surrounding Michael Jackson's passing is any guide, what can we expect when Elvis dies?

Jim Kearney

Scarborough, Qld

With so many TV cameras gathered in Los Angeles, where was Kevin Rudd?

Colin Goodwin

Mornington, Vic

If it's acceptable to discuss Joe Hockey's size (First Byte, 9/7), perhaps he should ask Therese Rein for advice on her weight-loss program?

David Crommelin

Strathfield, NSW

So you had a wonderful feeling of taking back your community from intolerant people, Mark Howard (Letters, 9/7)? Where I grew up, lobbing incendiaries into your neighbour's yard because you didn't like their religious beliefs was called cruelty, vandalism and, oh yes, intolerance.

Helen Jackson

Higgins, ACT

Peter Ellerton's letter about the role of parents in their children's education ("Where are the parents?", 9/7) hit right in the bull's-eye!

Michael Pyper

Bunbury, WA

Barry Hall will need specialised training if he decides to take up boxing because his opponents will be facing him.

Ron Stone

Townsville, Qld

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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**Load-Date:** July 9, 2009

## *A code for peace*

The Jerusalem Post

November 4, 2009 Wednesday

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**Section:** FEATURES; Pg. 15

**Length:** 2938 words

**Byline:** Yitzhak Rabin

**Highlight:** 'We are striving for a permanent solution to the unending bloody conflict between us and the Palestinians and the Arab states,' said Yitzhak Rabin in his last speech to the Knesset

### **Body**

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Excerpts from the speech the prime minister gave before the Knesset on October 5, 1995, weeks before his assassination, asking to ratify the Israel-Palestinian Interim Agreement.

Today, the government presents to the Knesset the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The government will seek the Knesset's approval and will view the Knesset's decision as a vote of confidence in the government.

The Jewish people, which has known suffering and pain, has also known how to preserve its faith, its heritage and its tradition during thousands of years of exile, and has realized the dream of generations. We have, with our own eyes, been privileged to see the return to Zion, the return of the children to their borders.

Here, in the land of Israel, we returned and built a nation. Here, in the land of Israel, we established a state. The land of the prophets, which bequeathed to the world the values of morality, law and justice, was, after two thousand years, restored to its lawful owners - the members of the Jewish people. On its land, we have built an exceptional national home and state.

However, we did not return to an empty land. There were Palestinians here who struggled against us for a hundred wild and bloody years. Many thousands, on both sides, were killed in the battle over the same land, over the same strip of territory, and were joined by the armies of the Arab states. Today, after innumerable wars and bloody incidents, we rule more than 2 million Palestinians through the IDF, and run their lives by a Civil Administration. This is not a peaceful solution.

We can continue to fight. We can continue to kill - and continue to be killed. But we can also try to put a stop to this never-ending cycle of blood. We can also give peace a chance.

The government chose to give peace a chance. The government chose to do something to achieve it.

Members of Knesset, the agreement before you is the continuation of the implementation of the agreements which were signed between the government of Israel and the Palestinians. The first agreement which was brought to you was the Declaration of Principles, which was signed in Washington on 13 September 1993.

The second agreement which was presented to you is called the Cairo Agreement, which was signed in Cairo on 4 May 1994. Both of these agreements were ratified by the Knesset.

## A code for peace

Both of the previous agreements, and the third which was submitted today, separately and together, give expression to the policy of the current government, and to its path of promoting peace in the Middle East. As is known, when we formed the government, over three years ago, we said that we would aspire to reach a permanent solution to the Palestinian Arab-Israeli conflict. And today, this government brings, in addition to the signing of the peace treaty with the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan - which would not have been achieved without the agreement with the Palestinians - a significant breakthrough in resolving the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, and an attempt to put an end to decades of terrorism and blood.

We are striving for a permanent solution to the unending bloody conflict between us and the Palestinians and the Arab states.

In the framework of the permanent solution, we aspire to reach, first and foremost, the State of Israel as a Jewish state, at least 80 percent of whose citizens will be, and are, Jews.

At the same time, we also promise that the non-Jewish citizens of Israel - Muslim, Christian, Druse and others - will enjoy full personal, religious and civil rights, like those of any Israeli citizen. Judaism and racism are diametrically opposed.

We view the permanent solution in the framework of State of Israel which will include most of the area of the Land of Israel as it was under the rule of the British Mandate, and alongside it a Palestinian entity which will be a home to most of the Palestinian residents living in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

We would like this to be an entity which is less than a state, and which will independently run the lives of the Palestinians under its authority. The borders of the State of Israel, during the permanent solution, will be beyond the lines which existed before the Six Day War. We will not return to the 4 June 1967 lines.

AND THESE are the main changes, not all of them, which we envision and want in the permanent solution:

A. First and foremost, united Jerusalem, which will include both Ma'aleh Adumim and Givat Ze'ev - as the capital of Israel, under Israeli sovereignty, while preserving the rights of the members of the other faiths, Christianity and Islam, to freedom of access and freedom of worship in their holy places, according to the customs of their faiths.

B. The security border of the State of Israel will be located in the Jordan Valley, in the broadest meaning of that term.

C. Changes which will include the addition of Gush Etzion, Efrat, Beitar and other communities, most of which are in the area east of what was the Green Line, prior to the Six Day War.

D. The establishment of blocs of settlements in Judea and Samaria, like the one in Gush Katif.

Members of Knesset, this government, with the Labor Party at its center, this party made its positions known through its party platform, which it made known to the public. Even before the elections to the current Knesset, we made clear and we emphasized to the electorate, at every opportunity, that we preferred a Jewish state, even if not on every part of the land of Israel, to a binational state, which would emerge with the annexation of 2.2 million Palestinian residents of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

We had to choose between the whole of the land of Israel, which meant a binational state, and whose population, as of today, would comprise 4.5 million Jews, and more than 3 million Palestinians, who are a separate entity - religiously, politically and nationally - and a state with less territory, but which would be a Jewish state. We chose to be a Jewish state.

We chose a Jewish state because we are convinced that a binational state with millions of Palestinian Arabs will not be able to fulfill the Jewish role of the State of Israel, which is the state of the Jews.

Members of Knesset, we reemphasize that the Palestinians were not in the past, and are not today, a threat to the existence of the State of Israel.

## A code for peace

Despite this, the primary obstacle today, to implementing the peace process between us and the Palestinians, is the murderous terrorism of the radical Islamic terrorist organizations, **Hamas** and Islamic Jihad, which are joined by the rejectionist organizations.

Terrorism wounds civilians and those serving in the IDF, the police, the Border Police and the other security forces, without distinguishing between them. It is clear that murderous terrorism has wounded and wounds Israelis' sense of personal security within the area of the state, and Israelis who live in the area of Judea, Samaria and Gaza.

The PLO, those in it subject to the authority of its chairman, Arafat, has stopped the terror against us, as they committed themselves in the Declaration of Principles. And yet, other terrorist organizations, continue to attack us, because it is their political aim to murder Israelis, because they are Israelis, through acts of terror, in order to cause the cessation of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. Because this is their aim, we have no intention of shirking from the efforts toward peace, even if the acts of terrorism continue to harm us. We, on our side, will make every effort against the terrorists.

We are well aware of the seriousness of terrorist acts, and in all of our considerations on the road to achieving a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We are taking the necessary and permissible steps, in accordance with Israeli law, in order to fight it. This terrorism will not achieve its political goal.

We are also repeating our demand that the Palestinian Authority fulfill its obligation, in accordance with the agreements that we have signed with it has signed to be more severe, to step up, and to intensify its actions against the murderers and enemies of peace in the area under its control. We know the Palestinian Authority has taken a series of measures that have foiled attacks, but they can do more, much more, against the terrorist organizations - the enemies of peace.

MEMBERS OF Knesset, the Interim Agreement that has been placed on your tables, is based upon much work by teams with many members, and is spread over 300 pages, with many sections dealing with security matters and the daily life of Israeli citizens in Judea, Samaria and Gaza, and of the Palestinian residents.

The way in which Israel will implement the agreement so as to achieve its political goals regarding the permanent solution and the security of the settlements and Israelis in the territories, will ensure the continuation of daily life and security, both for the Israeli side and for the Palestinian side.

The first stage of this redeployment of IDF forces will be carried out in three areas, in order to enable the Palestinians to hold elections for the Palestinian Council, and for its chairman, without the IDF being permanently present in Palestinian communities:

Area A: The redeployment of IDF forces will be carried out in three areas - will include the municipal areas of the six cities - Jenin, Nablus, Tulkarm, Kalkilya, Ramallah and Bethlehem. Responsibility for civilian security in this area will be transferred to the Palestinian Authority.

Area B includes almost all of the 450 towns and villages in which the Palestinians of the West Bank live. In this area, there will be a separation of responsibilities. The Palestinians will be responsible for managing their own lives, and Israel will have overall responsibility for the security of Israelis and the war against the terrorist threat. That is, IDF forces and the security services will be able to enter any place in Area B at any time.

The third, Area C, is everywhere that is not included in the areas that have been mentioned until now. In this area are the Jewish settlements, all IDF installations and the border areas with Jordan. This area will remain under IDF control.

I must bring it to the attention of the Members of the Knesset, that we have committed ourselves to an additional redeployment, in three stages, beyond the redeployment that I have already mentioned. The redeployment will be carried out according to a timetable, with each stage being carried out after the previous stage. The first will be approximately six months, beginning from the establishment of the Palestinian Council after the elections.

## A code for peace

I must emphasize that we have not committed ourselves, and I repeat, we have not committed ourselves to the scope of the redeployment at each stage.

Most importantly, it was defined in the agreement that the restrictions on the completion of the redeployment are issues that will be discussed during the negotiations on the permanent settlement, as is stated in the agreement itself.

We are aware of the fact that the Palestinian Authority has not - up until now - honored its commitment to change the Palestinian Covenant, and that all of the promises on this matter have not been kept. I would like to bring it to the attention of the members of the house that I view these changes as a supreme test of the Palestinian Authority's willingness and ability, and the changes required will be an important and serious touchstone vis-a- vis the continued implementation of the agreement as a whole.

The relevant article speaks about this: "The PLO undertakes that, within two months of the date of the inauguration of the council, the Palestinian National Council will convene and formally approve the necessary changes in regard to the Palestinian Covenant, as undertaken in the letters signed by the chairman of the PLO and addressed to the prime minister of Israel, dated September 9, 1993 and May 4, 1994."

Members of Knesset, an examination of the maps and of the paragraphs of the agreement regarding the additional stages of the redeployment shows that Israel retains complete freedom of action, in order to implement its security and political objectives relating to the permanent solution, and that the division of the areas gives the IDF and the security branches complete security control in Areas B and C, except for the urban areas.

Here before you are additional details from the agreement which was achieved through great effort:

- \* The passage of police forces from Area A, which is entirely under the control of the Palestinians, to Area B, in which there are authorities shared by Israel and the Palestinians, requires the permission of the joint coordination apparatus, the DCO. This means that there will be no passage of Palestinian police without Israeli approval.

- \* The passage of Palestinian police forces in uniform and/or armed from the 25 Palestinian villages in which police stations will be located, to the rest of Area B, will require coordination and approval from the Joint District Coordination Office.

- \* There will be a deployment of Israeli-Palestinian liaison offices in the area. These liaison offices will employ joint mobile units for needs which will arise on the ground.

I should further emphasize that activity for providing security measures for the Israeli communities - fences, peripheral roads, lighting, gates - will continue on a wide scale. Bypass roads will be built, whose purpose will be to enable Israeli residents to move about without have to pass through Palestinian population centers in places which will be transferred to the responsibility of the Palestinian Authority. In any case, the IDF will not carry out a redeployment from the first seven cities, before the bypass roads are completed. In all, investment in the bypass roads will be about NIS 500 million.

The responsibility for external security along the borders with Egypt and Jordan, as well as control over the airspace above all of the territories and Gaza Strip maritime zone, remains in our hands.

THE ROAD to reconciliation leads through the prisons. In our prisons, there are currently more than 5,000 Palestinian prisoners who, in accordance with the government's decision, will be released. Detainees and prisoners who are included on condition that they fall into the following categories: **female** detainees, and prisoners who have served more than two- thirds of their sentence, detainees and/or prisoners accused of or imprisoned due to security crimes that did not result in death or serious injury. What follows from this, is that murderers of Jews or those who have wounded them seriously will not be released. Detainees and prisoners accused or convicted of non-security criminal offenses, and also citizens of Arab states held in Israel until implementation of expulsion orders against them.



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We will also examine the release of prisoners and detainees over 50 years of age, and 18 years of age or less, who have remained in prison 10 or more years and prisoners and detainees who are infirm and unhealthy.

But, consistent with the categories which I described before, no detainee or prisoner will be released unless he signs a commitment to obey the law, to not commit acts of terrorism and involvement in them. We have had experience, following the Cairo Agreement, and hundreds remained in jail because they refused to sign.

Recently, the question of the extradition of fugitive murderers has arisen in all its intensity. We are not dealing lightly with this problem and we are continuing to demand the extradition of such murderers, according to the agreement which was signed.

Ten days after the signing of the agreement in Washington, the redeployment will begin - in the first stage, the withdrawal of Civil Administration representative offices will begin in 14 Palestinian communities. The overall timetable will be completed within two weeks after the signing of the agreement.

The agreement includes hundreds more details, among them, elections, including the manner of voting by the Palestinians in united Jerusalem who did not want Israeli citizenship as proposed to them by Israeli governments, water, electricity, expansion of the Jericho area by 10% without affecting the lives of the residents of the Jordan Valley, safe passage and more. In the time available today, we cannot relate to every detail separately and you will see that all of these matters are addressed in the agreement before you.

Mr. Speaker, Members of Knesset, the agreement, with all its articles lies before you. There are no secret appendices or letters. This is the agreement that dozens, perhaps hundreds, of civil servants, and IDF officers led by foreign minister Shimon Peres worked on, and to all of them I say - thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Today we may be opening a new stage in the annals of the Jewish people and the State of Israel. We know the chances. We know the risks. We will do our best to expand the chances and reduce the risks.

From the depths of our heart, we call upon all citizens of the State of Israel, certainly those who live in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip, as well as the Palestinian residents to give the establishment of peace a chance, to give the end of acts of hostility a chance, to give another life a chance, a new life. We appeal to Jews and Palestinians alike to act with restraint, to preserve human dignity, to behave in a fitting manner, - and to live in peace and security.

We are embarking upon a new path which could lead us to an era of peace, to the end of wars.

That is our prayer.

That is our hope.

## Graphic

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3 photos: Yitzhak Rabin. The monument at the site of Rabin's assassination in Tel Aviv. Yitzhak Rabin, Bill Clinton and Yasser Arafat shake hands after signing the Declaration of Principles, on September 13, 1993. (Credit: David Brauner, 1985)

**Load-Date:** October 4, 2011

## *'The revolution in Iran has just begun'*

The Jerusalem Post

July 5, 2009 Sunday

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**Section:** FEATURES; Pg. 8

**Length:** 2675 words

**Byline:** RUTHIE BLUM LEIBOWITZ

**Highlight:** ONE ON ONE. Israel Radio's Farsi broadcaster Menashe Amir believes that the uprising in Iran has not died down. Interview

### **Body**

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"There were two days a couple of weeks ago when the call-ins stopped," says Menashe Amir, Israel Radio's Farsi broadcaster, whose shows have attracted millions of listeners in Iran for the past 50 years. "But then they resumed."

The going-on-70-year-old, who officially retired five years ago, yet continues to transmit on a daily basis, attributes this to the courage of his former countrymen (Amir made aliya in 1959).

In a September 2006 interview in these pages, Amir asserted that a majority of Iranians opposed their regime, yet were helpless in the face of the repression under which they were living. Amir quoted Iranians who told him that if they had someone to lead them in their struggle, "it would be possible to topple the regime very quickly."

This week, in light of the popular uprising that began in the streets of Teheran after the results of the June 12 election were falsely called in favor of incumbent President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad - when the real victor was reformist candidate Mir Hossein Mousavi - I asked Amir for his latest assessment.

In our last interview, you said that the Iranian people would not go against the regime without a leader. Is Mousavi now that leader?

That's still unclear. I'm doubtful about whether Mousavi will be able to hang on. Also, don't forget that Mousavi is part of the regime, so he certainly does not want to bring about its collapse. However, a combination of circumstances has caused him to stand and struggle, which is something I couldn't have anticipated.

Two things got him really angry - one political, the other personal. Politically, he is certain he won the election - and I can confirm that he did. According to all the information I have received, he garnered twice the amount of votes as Ahmadinejad, for whom he has great contempt. He thinks Ahmadinejad has destroyed Iran, both internally and in terms of its foreign relations.

On a personal level, he is furious because Ahmadinejad dishonored his wife. During the televised election debate, Ahmadinejad produced documents supposedly proving that Mousavi's wife received her doctorate fraudulently, and took advantage of her husband's standing to achieve her position in academia. And this is while Ahmadinejad and his henchmen are the epitome of those who take advantage of their positions to further their interests. The elections are a perfect example of how Ahmadinejad manipulated the system in order to declare himself the winner.

'The revolution in Iran has just begun'

Do you think that the popular uprising turned Mousavi into an unwitting leader of a movement that began one way and turned into something else? Has it caused him to change his perspective on actual freedom for the people who are rallying around him?

There are two levels on which figures like Mousavi operate - internal Iranian issues and foreign relations. Where foreign relations are concerned, I don't see a big difference between Mousavi and Ahmadinejad. Furthermore, it is not the president who determines policy. That is done by the Supreme National Security Council. The president's role is to carry out its decisions. On the nuclear issue, for example, it makes no difference whether the president is Mousavi or Ahmadinejad. In any case, even Mousavi declared openly that, if elected, he would continue Iran's nuclear program, as well as its policy of supplying weapons to Hizbullah and Hamas.

But where Iran's internal affairs are concerned, there is a big difference between Mousavi and Ahmadinejad. Mousavi believes that Iran's economic policy has to be completely overhauled, and promised to give women greater freedom and more rights. His own wife is an intellectual, after all. He also promised greater rights for the young, and things like that. He even hinted that he would lower Iran's involvement in international conspiracies.

Is this because Iran's international involvement costs so much money, and he wants to try to rescue its economy?

That's certainly part of it. I would say that the real battle in this election was over the economy, not freedom and equality.

From an economic standpoint, who is Ahmadinejad? The one who failed to solve Iran's economic difficulties, in spite of the fact that during his four years in office, Iran earned more money than in all eight years of [Seyed Mohammad] Khatami's presidency [1997-2005]. Where did the money go?

So who received more sympathy among the people during the campaign? The one who headed Iran's government for eight years [as the fifth and last prime minister of the Islamic Republic], from 1981 to 1989, during its war with Iraq - and during a period of austerity. Indeed, Mousavi managed, with almost no money, to handle the Iranian economy. That was the source of his popularity, and what tipped the scales in his favor.

You say that it was Mousavi's economic policies and prowess that gained him public support, but as soon as he was declared the loser of the election, he suddenly became the leader of a spontaneous revolution whose focus is freedom for the Iranian people. Is it that he hadn't meant for this to happen, but once it did, he took the ball and ran with it?

Yes, but the root of the problem is that those who determine policy in Iran decided a year ago that Ahmadinejad was going to win the election. To this end, the interior minister - who is in charge of executing the election law - was replaced, and other such things, all of which were approved by [Supreme Leader Ali] Khamenei.

As election day approached, they pulled a trick to raise voter turnout. Why? Because there is a new president in the White House, and he has to be shown that the Iranian regime enjoys the support of the people. So they set up a televised debate, in which each candidate freely raised issues and expressed criticism, thus creating the illusion that this time the elections in Iran would be free ones - something they have never been in Iran. This raised the expectations of the people, and brought a whopping 85 percent of the public to the polls. Well, the level of disappointment was as great as the level of expectation. This 85% of the public turned out to vote, and afterward felt the victory had been stolen from them. This is what caused the people to protest, en masse. And these people today have a leader in Mousavi.

The protests have been extremely sophisticated as a whole. Half a million people who took to the streets and didn't even chant slogans, so as not to give the security forces an excuse to kill them. This has made it necessary for the regime to create a justification to suppress the demonstrators, so it sends in its Basij militia, as well as plainclothes police, to destroy homes and go after protesters, some of whom have been killed. Of course, we know all this, thanks to the technology that has been enabling the citizens to document the goings on there with the cameras on their cellphones.

'The revolution in Iran has just begun'

But then came Khamenei's Friday sermon, in which he declared his complete support for Ahmadinejad. At that moment, the people understood they had no chance - that change cannot come about through demonstrations, because when the supreme leader rules, his ruling cannot be appealed. What Khamenei said was, "If you people have complaints, submit them through the legal channels."

But what are the "legal channels" in Iran? The legislative council that is Khamenei's puppet, which itself was complicit in the election fraud. This is why Mousavi said that this body wasn't acceptable to him, and that he would only trust a neutral committee.

Over the past two weeks, I have been asked by every reporter from every TV and radio station and every newspaper whether the protest is petering out. And my answer is always a decided no. And it won't peter out as long as Mousavi remains steadfast.

But you yourself began by questioning whether Mousavi would persevere, and also said the Iranian people understood they had no chance once Khamenei declared his support for Ahmadinejad. Are you saying that this protest won't die out in spite of all that?

Yes, it won't die out, in spite of all that. Because something else has happened, as well. The people have seen that with this regime, nothing is possible. It won't make the slightest compromise. Thus, since that speech of Khamenei's, the slogan has become, "Death to the dictator," and the demand has become to change the regime.

In this case, the "dictator" is not only Ahmadinejad, correct?

During the first few days, it was directed at him. But after that Friday sermon, it became directed against Khamenei.

Do you think Ahmadinejad and/or Khamenei will be assassinated?

Assassinations won't solve the problem. It's hard to predict the future, but there are many efforts going on there to try to solve the problems, and I don't see how they can be solved. Khamenei climbed a tree from which he can't come down, by saying that everything was OK in Iran; Mousavi did the same, by saying that nothing in Iran was OK; and in between them is [Ayatollah Ali Akbar Hashemi] Rafsanjani, who is very worried about his own personal fate, the fate of his family and fortune, on the one hand, and on the other, he is worried about the future of the regime, that might collapse. So, he's saying, "Come and let's find a solution involving a compromise that will satisfy everyone."

That's impossible, because if Khamenei makes even the slightest concession, it will harm his status. A supreme leader can never make a mistake, and if he admits to one, it will bring about the end of his reign. Then there's Ahmadinejad, who is a merciless fanatic. One of his past jobs was as a final executioner. He would fire the last bullet into the heads of people put to death. His nickname is "the man of a thousand bullets," since he used to boast that he had shot bullets into the heads of 1,000 executed people. He will not concede on anything. Nor will he ever forgive Mousavi or his family.

Already, they are holding Mousavi responsible for the deaths of innocent citizens, killed during the protests. It's a case of turning the victim into the aggressor. And Mousavi knows that if he gives in on anything, his life will be in danger.

This is why I keep saying that the events in Iran have not begun to die down; they've only just begun. This is because the Iranian people have proved that they finally understand the nature of their regime, which is why their demand has become regime change, rather than reforms.

In the 30 years since the last revolution, during which I have been following Iran closely - and understanding the psychology and mentality of its people - I have come to the conclusion that what mainly interests the people is their ability to make a living. And, with the events going on there now, coupled with a bad economy that will only get worse, the next time the people take to the streets, it will not only be the students and middle class doing so, but also the farmers and lower classes. The soldiers of the revolution of 1979 were the lower classes. If this time around, they join the middle class and students - and have a leader - the current regime is sure to collapse.

'The revolution in Iran has just begun'

Is that a good thing? The last time there was regime change in Iran, the ayatollahs came to power. Who and what will replace the current regime?

It's impossible to predict what will happen. There are a few possible scenarios. One is that the Iranian people will revolt, the regime will fall and then free elections will be held, under international supervision, and the people will elect democratic leaders. That one's not easy.

Another scenario is that the members of the current regime will fear for their lives - because if they are toppled, they will have nowhere to run - and they will respond by reaching some kind of compromise or agreement, and this will put an end to the current crisis.

A third possibility is that there will be massive intervention on the part of the Revolutionary Guards, who will lead a military coup, and instate a reign of terror that will eliminate any remaining freedoms the Iranians enjoy today.

Since the first scenario would seem to be the most desirable, why have the people been shouting "Allahu akbar" ["God is great"] from their balconies?

It's a political maneuver. If they shout slogans against the regime, they'll be killed. But no one can do anything against a religious cry. And it is the very same cry that the Ayatollah Khomeini shouted to rally the masses around toppling the shah. So this is like saying that history is repeating itself.

Speaking of history's repeating itself, let's talk about US President Barack Obama. Do the Iranian people feel betrayed by him for his lack of outright support against the regime?

Obama worries me very much. Watching him on TV on June 12, when the election in Iran was held, I was amazed to hear him praise the welcome process going on in Iran. Here I am, a small fry with no access to classified material, who simply reads what is going on, and I have known for an entire year that these would be fraudulent elections. Since then, I have briefed the Mossad, as well as written and lectured extensively to this effect.

So, I ask myself, if I understood the situation, how is it that the leader of this superpower doesn't get it? It's true that he retracted his statements a few days after the election, when he saw he was wrong, but still...

And then there's Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, whom I greatly respect. But, when asked why the US would want to engage in dialogue with Iran, she said, "We'll have to wait and see what the regime wants and expects."

Now tell me: Do we not know what Ahmadinejad wants and expects already? Furthermore, I would like to warn the American policy-makers that there is a group in Iran who will never, ever allow open talks between the US and Iran. All attempts by previous American administrations to engage in dialogue have failed because of this. And even now, Ahmadinejad has said that until Obama apologizes for statements he made "against the Iranian people" - as though it was the Iranian people who fixed the elections and killed protesters - "we won't begin talks."

But even if such talks were to begin, which they won't, they won't bring about any real results that could serve American interests.

I blame president Jimmy Carter for being among those responsible for the 1979 revolution and the toppling of the shah's regime. And I sincerely hope and pray that Obama won't be another Carter.

Speaking of former presidents, what is your view of George W. Bush?

I actually met him a year and a half ago in Los Angeles, on the eve of the congressional elections, and told him the following story: After the US invaded Iraq, during our broadcasts to Iran, we received numerous call-ins from listeners, saying: "Please ask Bush to come and rescue us."

In response, I asked them, "Haven't you heard of the Persian saying, 'Only my own fingernails can scratch my back'? Why don't you do the job yourselves?"

'The revolution in Iran has just begun'

The answer was: "Saddam Hussein fell only after foreign intervention; the Taliban regime in Afghanistan fell only after foreign intervention; we, in Iran, need active support from the US in order to change the regime. And the head of the snake is Iran, not Iraq. It's Iran that's stirring up the entire region, and thus Bush should have taken care of Iran first."

So, when I met Bush, I told him that I had a message from the Iranian people, who ask that he intervene to rescue them. Bush opened his eyes wide, as though someone had handed him the heavens on a silver platter. He then cracked a broad smile and said, "But, sir, surely you are aware of the difficulties we are having dealing with Iraq."

Anyway, American intervention is the expectation of the Iranian people. I am not in favor of a military operation. But the US could be helping the uprising in many other ways.

As I said, what is going on in Iran has only just begun. And if the world grasps the enormity of this moment, and does what it can to help the Iranian people in their struggle, it will not be necessary to bomb the nuclear facilities, because the Iranian people will rise and do the job themselves.

## Graphic

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Photo: MENASHE AMIR. 'I sincerely hope and pray that Barack Obama won't be another Jimmy Carter.' (Credit: Ariel Jerozolimski)

**Load-Date:** October 4, 2011

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## *Settling their differences*

The Jerusalem Post

October 16, 2009 Friday

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**Section:** FEATURES; Pg. 10

**Length:** 3052 words

**Byline:** LAUREN GELFOND FELDINGER

**Highlight:** For the first time, neighbors from Palestinian and Israeli villages in the West Bank are meeting on a regular basis. They study religion, though politics is never far away

### **Body**

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At least once a month, Palestinian lawyer Abed Eriqat, 29, passes through the one exit out of Abu Dis where there is no security barrier, gritting his teeth at the soldiers manning the checkpoint on the road where most of his life he had traveled freely to neighboring Jerusalem.

To help him get through the wait and then interrogation, moments that he describes as the most humiliating and hopeless of his life, he sometimes uses an unusual tactic: remembering meetings with Israelis, even settlers, as a source of hope.

"I still think it's an international crime that Israel settles the West Bank. But I'll meet a settler as a neighbor. It's an opportunity to expand my point of view and to help Israelis understand how I think."

In search of Israelis for dialogue, Eriqat posted an ad on the list server of Israel's Bohemian Mideast Rainbow gatherings list last year. "I wanted to see which Israelis are really interested to know and commit to speaking to a Palestinian. If you believe in peace, why not speak with Palestinians about everything, to know the two sides of the story?"

As the days and weeks passed, only one Israeli would respond - a woman in next-door Ma'aleh Adumim.

As Eriqat clicked open this e-mail, his eyes widened. "You are living on my land," he muttered to himself.

While Ma'aleh Adumim is generally described by Israelis as a suburb of Jerusalem built on unpopulated lands that in biblical times stretched between the Judah and Benjamin tribes, Israel's largest Jewish settlement in the West Bank is considered by many Abu Dis residents as stolen Palestinian land that would have been used for their own community's natural growth.

But the next week, Eriqat traveled through the checkpoint and made his way from east to west Jerusalem to meet Leah Lublin, "the settler."

PALESTINIANS often tell Lublin, 53, that they cannot have normalization with settlers. Eriqat, too, rushed to tell her the same at their first meeting.

"I'm not a settler," she explains. "I don't consider myself Left or Right. I'm apolitical. I'm just someone who wants to live in peace in the country that I love. I moved to Ma'aleh Adumim to be close to my ailing father."

## Settling their differences

In the mid- and late 1990s, though, Lublin did go to gatherings of Kach, a movement now outlawed by Israel as a Jewish terror organization. "I was a militant right-winger; I hated Palestinians because I didn't know them and I feared them," she says.

But in the gatherings, Lublin and her husband found that they could not find common ground with Kach members: "It was negative energy. We didn't fit in."

By 2001, Lublin fell into a state of despair. "The intifada was a very dark period. My kids were traveling on buses. We were calling each other all the time after suicide bombings. My teenage daughter had a boyfriend who was killed. My second daughter had a youth counselor who was also killed. It was really painful. The suicide bombers would do their thing; then we were dishing it back, pounding their communities, and I didn't see any end in sight or that any of these solutions were going to work."

In 2002, as she was flipping through The Jerusalem Post, an article about the Interfaith Encounter Association caught her eye, and in a moment of impulse she picked up the phone to call its director, Yehuda Stolov. A modern Orthodox Jew who founded the IEA's dialogue groups shortly after the second intifada broke out in 2001, Stolov traces his non-political, interfaith relations-building approach to Jewish sources: Rabbi Avraham Yitzhak Hakohen Kook's teachings about universalism and the teachings of the Merkaz Harav Yeshiva, where he studied for six years. He also told Lublin about research in recent years, such as that of Dr. Ben Molloy of Bar-Ilan University, which found that non-political interfaith meetings, where people get to know each other, help lessen prejudice and the risk of participating in or supporting violence towards "the other."

Inspired by her conversations with Stolov, Lublin headed out that weekend to the Tantur Ecumenical Institute on the border between Jerusalem and Bethlehem for her first interfaith retreat run by IEA. "I went with all these preconceived notions of Palestinians. Seeing 25 young Arabs, I thought, 'Oh no, they are going to blow the place up or follow me home and stab me,'" she says.

"Up until that point, I had thought that we Jews were the only victims; but that weekend, I realized they were also victims, that many innocent Palestinians were also killed in this conflict, and that we were both in pain. That weekend I also got friendly with an artist from Ramallah. He picked up a fistful of soil and ran it through his fingers, saying 'I love this land.' And I said, 'You know, I love it, too.' It was a wonderful revelation that they could love this land as much as we do and that they are going to stay, and we are going to have to find a way to live together and to get over the fear of each other," she says.

"When [the Palestinians] left [the retreat] they told us, 'Don't take buses.' I said Tfilat Haderech [the traveler's prayer] for them. I was [no longer] just worried about Jews - I also started worrying about them every time the IDF went into Nablus. We had become compassionate toward each other."

After that, Lublin began attending any interfaith events that were not political. "When I went once to a left-wing meeting, I found it angry and insular; the political arena is not for me. These [interfaith] meetings are happy gatherings. When I see Muslims, Christians and Jews studying religious texts together or socializing together, I feel this is the kind of world I'd like to help create for my children and grandchildren, where there's tolerance and respect for one another. I believe that if a lot of people get involved [in dialogue], the politics will simply fall into place."

Lublin told her friends about her new-found beliefs and activities. "They were shocked," she says. "Some said 'Don't tell me' or 'Grassroots movements won't help.' One couple stopped inviting us to their home."

Six years after becoming the coordinator of the IEA's interfaith groups in Jerusalem, she thought to herself: "I can do more; we are preaching to the converted."

So when she saw Eriqat's note on the Rainbow list, she rushed to respond.

At the YMCA in Jerusalem, Lublin and Eriqat sat over coffee and chatted about family, work and life in their communities. And when Lublin suggested they start a group from neighboring Palestinian Abu Dis and Israeli



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Ma'aleh Adumim to study common themes in Islam and Judaism under the umbrella of the IEA, Eriqat was surprised.

"Religion?" he said. "It seems to be what divides us."

ERIQAT SOON opened up to the idea of gatherings that weren't political or exclusively social; and he and Lublin joked that meetings where Jews made chicken soup for Palestinians and Palestinians made knafe pastry for Israelis could not be the end goal.

Though the IEA was having 4,000 participants a year meeting for non-political interfaith dialogue, despite incursions or terror attacks, this would be the first group where Palestinians and Israelis from neighboring Muslim and Jewish communities in the West Bank would meet on a regular basis.

Eriqat's openness was an unusual result of the Palestinian uprising. His father, appointed in the early 1990s by Yasser Arafat as chief assistant of east Jerusalem governance, was a leader in the local Fatah movement and had been jailed two times by Israel because of his Fatah ties. The younger Eriqat, as a child, threw rocks as a symbol of resistance against occupation. Arabic-language TV stations in Israel and the West Bank would interview his 12-year-old sister as the youngest Palestinian jailed for throwing rocks at Israeli soldiers, he says.

Eriqat's father, a couple of years after being released from prison, where he learned Hebrew, decided to try a new tactic. He signed his son up for a Seeds of Peace summer camp in the US, shocking family and friends. "My mother cried. I said no, I was afraid," explained the younger Eriqat. The family thought it was a big mistake. Not one of his friends encouraged him. "But my father said, 'You will find Abed [Eriqat] a new man afterwards, and I want to invest in the peace process.'"

Since his camp days as a teen, Eriqat has indeed joined and sponsored dozens of events with Israeli groups. Last year he launched an organization that introduces Palestinians to meditation as a tool to "make peace internally and circulate this [peace] into Palestine," he says, calling these his new tools of resistance.

But this would be his first interfaith venture with Jews that would focus exclusively on religion and exclude politics. And unlike meetings with Peace Now and other left-wing Jewish activists, the Israeli Jews he would meet through the IEA have diverse political affiliations and are primarily religious. He also considered them settlers.

Convincing the neighbors on both sides of the checkpoint to participate in such a meeting continues to be a challenge.

Through Israeli eyes, Abu Dis is generally considered a hotbed for extremists. Three suicide bombers during the intifada came from the village, and Al-Quds University was known for supporting groups affiliated with Hamas and Islamic Jihad. The campus was also home to the Abu-Jihad Museum honoring Palestinian "martyrs" and had just celebrated a week-long event honoring the life of the late Palestinian engineer of the suicide bomb, Yahya Ayyash.

So when Lublin told her neighbors and posted an ad repeatedly on a local e-mail site inviting Ma'aleh Adumim residents to her home for meetings with Abu Dis residents, four people did sign on. But reaction from most went from cool to hostile.

Nearly a dozen e-mails from Ma'aleh Adumim residents over the first months accused her of ruining the neighborhood or opening it up to terror. Though it has been mostly quiet in the last months, Lublin still occasionally hears an antagonistic remark.

A short drive away into Palestinian territory, Eriqat also suffers the searing looks of some neighbors. The building and expansion of Ma'aleh Adumim, including the accompanying checkpoints, security barrier route and the stalled E-1 plan, infuriate Palestinians, who argue that building in occupied territory under Israeli rule not only breaks international and Israeli law and agreements but also interferes with Palestinian freedom of movement, civil rights, natural growth and plans to build a Palestinian state on contiguous land in the West Bank.

Yet some of Eriqat's neighbors, like him, were curious.

## Settling their differences

"SO CRAZY. So weird. So scary," were the first thoughts of Majdi Abed, 33, when, as a physics major at Al- Quds University in Abu Dis last year, he heard about the interfaith meetings in Ma'aleh Adumim.

"In a settlement?' I thought. Settlers are so extreme in their thoughts, even in their actions. And you need a permit [from Israel] to travel each time, and the checkpoints are so scary. The whole thing makes me go crazy and feel so scared, so bad," he says. "But I said yes - to see the place, to see what kind of people live there. What do they believe? What do they believe about us?"

Some of Abed's friends in Jenin, where he was born and now teaches general science, were also potentially interested in the idea of meeting Jews and discussing each other's religion in an intimate, home environment. But, he says, "They all refuse the meeting place, Ma'aleh Adumim - a settlement."

Abed and Eriqat's first meeting with MA residents was at a Hanukka party at Lublin's home, replete with traditional holiday jelly doughnuts, potato latkes, candle- lighting, songs, and stories about the miracle of the oil and the ancient Jewish Maccabees who resisted the Greek Hellenists who tried to convert them.

"Hanukka was so wonderful. It was the first time I was invited as a human being - not a worker - into a Jewish home," says Abed. "It was very intimate. Everyone was very friendly. Even the cakes were so wonderful."

In the following months as the group was formally established, they were able to gather a small group of Israelis and Palestinians to join meetings for celebrating Jewish and Muslim holidays and discussing topics such as women's roles in religion, religious sects, war, prayer, rituals and ethics in the respective religions.

Abed, who now drives three hours each way when he can for meetings, had worked with Jews in the past but had little knowledge of their traditions and beliefs, he says. "Such meetings give a precious cultural, political and historical understanding to the nature of the conflict. It also empowers my knowledge of Islam and helps us introduce Islam to other nations and wipe out bad stereotypes of Islam."

Are Jewish stereotypes also changed? "Exactly," he replies. "When you hear about [Jewish] history, culture and religion from [Jewish people] themselves, it leads to understanding about a lot of things - like how they feel about the Holy Land."

"Abed is a teacher and he is so special," says Lublin. "I can imagine that in his own casual way, he will teach his children and students not to hate."

Still, the Palestinians face hurdles and, sometimes, mixed emotions.

TO CROSS the border between the Palestinian West Bank, under Palestinian civil rule, and the Jewish West Bank, under Israeli civil and military rule, Palestinians must get permits from the IDF to enter Israel. The process of applying two weeks in advance of each meeting includes taking time off work during business hours to pick the permits up at the IDF's District Coordinating Office and waiting sometimes up to a full workday for them to be turned over, the participants say. Sometimes permits are denied without explanation.

For those times when the Palestinians receive approval and the permits are issued as planned, they also worry about being interrogated at the checkpoint at the entrance to Ma'aleh Adumim by security guards, surprised to see a group of Palestinians who are not day laborers.

"The police sometimes call me [from the entrance]," says Lublin. "They ask, 'Did you invite these people? What are their names?' I told the head of security once, 'Why don't you come on over and check us out? We are studying the Torah and the Koran together.'"

The experiences of getting permits and going through checkpoints, coupled with memories of the intifadas, where his family home was twice destroyed by the IDF and classmates killed, says Abed, creates a painful contradiction for him. "It's an eternal, complicated feeling of pain, with contradictions inside of me, to be in my friend's house and to be in a settlement."

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Also, he adds, "I don't tell [Palestinians] where the group meets anymore; they will have a negative impression of me."

Jewish participants struggle with their own complications.

Of her first meetings, Esther Frumkin, 48, of Ma'aleh Adumim, says she learned new information every time, found observing and talking to Palestinians a new and interesting experience, and discovered that the Palestinians also have a great love for their own religion and interest in and respect for Judaism.

"But I also found myself disturbed because I started to see a lot of things, like news items, in a new light once I personally knew people who were affected by those events. I couldn't stay as detached," she says. "I have told my family. But they are all skeptical, including my children. I was surprised and distressed to see how much anti-Arab feeling they have unconsciously absorbed from their environment. I don't tell a lot of people that I go to the meetings. I guess I feel embarrassed, and I don't want to draw any attacks from people who don't approve."

SITTING IN the Aroma Cafe on Mount Scopus in a pressed Oxford shirt after the first dozen or so interfaith meetings in Ma'aleh Adumim, Eriqat pauses and plays with his silver wedding band when asked about normalization with Israelis.

"I have family and friends who are not satisfied with my work. They call me 'normalization man.' Sometimes this makes me angry. This stereotype could have destroyed my relations with my wife. People were telling her that I 'work with the enemy.'"

Eriqat's picture was once plastered across the Al-Quds University campus, charging: "Israelis kill Palestinians, and Palestinians shake hands with Israelis" after he arranged a dialogue between Al-Quds University and Tel Aviv University students, he says.

"It was very hard. The posters were everywhere. I was scared. I picked up the phone and called [Al-Quds University president] Sari Nusseibeh. He said, 'If you do not believe in what you do, then stop your project. If you do believe, then continue on in what you believe.'"

Nusseibeh's practical advice helped refocus his commitment, Eriqat says. "After that, I started many new projects. But I also made some enemies."

Enemies notwithstanding and despite the mixed feelings he has about crossing the checkpoint to spend time in a Jewish settlement, his relations with the Jews he met at the Ma'aleh Adumim interfaith meetings are so strong that he invited them to his wedding earlier this year.

The former Palestinian intifada activist who once threw rocks and the former right-wing militant describe each other as the dearest of friends.

Beyond the surprising friendships Eriqat has discovered, he sees the meetings as a real source for change.

"[In Ma'aleh Adumim] I feel hopeful; I see it as an opportunity," he says. "I want to show that Palestinians are regular people, nice people, and not terrorists. I want to show Israelis how the checkpoints, the wall and occupation influence us, because the media does not show this reality. When you say 'Israeli,' Palestinians think soldiers; occupation. They don't know anything else, so how can they change their minds? But if they could sit with an Israeli, they would change their minds 100 percent. They would be able to see an Israeli as a human being. I want Palestinians to see that not all Israelis are enemies. And I don't want Palestinians to be terrorists. This is a great opportunity. We forget nationality and find many things in common," he says.

Ultimately, can such dialogues between Palestinians and Israelis influence politics and security by influencing people to support different ideas, different choices and different leaders?

"I hope," says Eriqat. "I hope, I hope, I hope."

## Graphic

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9 photos: Abed Eriqat. Majdi Abed at a Hanukka party in Leah Lublin's home in Ma'aleh Adumim. Abed Eriqat and Leah Lublin. Abed Eriqat, Majdi Abed and Yehuda Stolov. The security barrier at Abu Dis. Reality check. Though the group has to deal with day-to-day issues, politics is not its focus. Religion both divides and unites the IEA group. Zone of contention. While locals see Ma'aleh Adumim as a neighborhood of Jerusalem, Palestinians associate it with the security barrier, checkpoints and the E-1 plan. (Credit: Lauren Gelfond Feldinger. Ariel Jerozolimski)

**Load-Date:** October 4, 2011

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## War By Other Means

Financial Times (London, England)

October 17, 2009 Saturday

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**Section:** FT MAGAZINE; Pg. 30

**Length:** 3291 words

**Byline:** Shyamantha Asokan

**Highlight:** Cover Story - Inquiry

As the Tamil Tigers face up to the failure of their armed struggle, a new PR-friendly separatist campaign is getting under way - led by the young Sri Lankan diaspora

### **Body**

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Bala Muhunthan has that high-class hip-hop look: Dolce & Gabbana jeans, tight polo shirt, chunky silver ID tags worn as pendants and an ever-present, ever-beeping BlackBerry. Privately educated in Denmark and the UK, the 22-year-old lives in London and attends a leading business school. Muhunthan spends his weekend nights at members' bars or parties in Mayfair. Saturday afternoons, he plays golf or football with his friends. "I love London. I love the fast life," he says.

But at the start of April, Muhunthan took a step outside the fast life: alongside thousands of fellow Sri Lankan Tamils, he stood in front of the Houses of Parliament, demanding a ceasefire in Buddhist Sri Lanka's bloody offensive against Hindu Tamil separatists, which was reaching a violent climax after 25 years of on-off fighting. To Londoners accepting pamphlets from the protesters - whose actions were replicated over the following weeks in Paris and New York - it may have seemed a clear-cut case of might versus right. But the Tamil struggle for an independent state in Sri Lanka has been spearheaded by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) - deemed by the west to be one of the world's most sophisticated terrorist groups.

In the end, the protests were in vain. In May, Mahinda Rajapaksa, Sri Lanka's president, declared the final defeat of the Tigers and the conclusion of one of Asia's longest-running civil wars. The armed struggle for independence had been crushed: in the course of a five-month-long military surge, the Tamil separatists who once controlled swathes of the island's north and east had lost all their territory. Their infamous leader, Velupillai Prabhakaran, was dead.

But that ending was also a beginning. Muhunthan, who devoted so much time to the protests that he had to retake the final year of his degree, has, along with many other young Tamils overseas, experienced a political awakening. As one generation of the Tamil diaspora sees its struggle for Eelam, an independent homeland, end in failure, their sons and daughters - who have spent their formative years in the west - are taking up the struggle. But they will fight it on their terms, using their strengths, fomenting a BlackBerry revolution.

"Literally every spare minute I have, I spend on this," Muhunthan said when we met for a cappuccino a month after the downfall of the Tamil Tigers. We first shook hands at the chaotic Westminster protest, where matronly women in saris had guided me to the front of the melee to meet him. Two of his fellow protesters were on hunger strike, wrapped in blankets in Parliament Square. The demonstrators returned to the square every day for almost three months, their numbers peaking at 20,000.

## War By Other Means

We sat down to talk at Cass Business School, where Muhunthan is studying for a master's degree in banking and international finance. He said that the recent reversal in the Tigers' fortunes had taken the diaspora by surprise, leaving them bereft. "A lot of Tamils felt that the LTTE was their voice in the war. A lot of people are asking: 'What are we going to do now?' People looked to Prabhakaran like he was a god."

But Muhunthan, the son of an accountant and a doctor, had responded to the Tigers' apparent defeat with optimism - seeing it as a second chance. While disappointed to have lost a powerful ally, he now felt free to pursue the non-violent means he had always preferred. He also saw an opportunity to present his ethnic group as something other than terrorists, a label he found frustrating when dealing with fellow students. "You always have to explain: 'Look, Tamil people are suffering,'" he said.

Muhunthan is one of a group of young people who now want to move the separatist struggle into a more diplomatic, PR-friendly - and, they hope, successful - phase. He has recently set up the Tamil Solidarity Movement, a campaigning group that rejects violence. The movement hopes to rely on "networking" with MPs and discouraging western companies from investing in Sri Lanka, rather than on chanting in Parliament Square.

As the young man laid out his pragmatic thinking and negotiable aims, it seemed unlikely that they could have co-existed with the Tigers' suicide bombers and child soldiers. When militants spearhead a cause, they do not countenance shades of grey. But when they fail, hardliners fall away and negotiators can emerge. Analysts point to the Middle East's Gaza Strip, controlled by the armed movement Hamas, as a territory where such would-be negotiators still lack room to breathe.

Muhunthan is certainly upbeat. "At every step, I'm looking at it like a business. It's about getting any small Tamil groups together to have more power - like merging to form a big company," he explained. "Then it's about networking with as many MPs as possible. When I go to see David Miliband, I want to have a huge folder of the names of the people behind me - and I want some big names in there."

He says he has so far convinced more than 140 British MPs to support his campaign. In April, Simon Hughes, a London MP, took him to meet officials at the US State department. Muhunthan hopes his parliamentary backers will persuade the British government to put economic pressure on Sri Lanka until it releases the estimated 280,000 Tamil civilians still held in displacement camps and, ultimately, allows them their own state. Such pressure would include cancelling Sri Lanka's status as a "GSP+" state, a designation bestowed after the 2004 Asian tsunami and intended to assist recovery by waiving certain taxes on exports to the European Union.

The European Union is certainly aware of these calls for a change in policy, and has already launched a probe into Sri Lanka's human rights record. And, with a preliminary EU report last month condemning the displacement camps as a "novel form of unacknowledged detention", even Sri Lankan officials now doubt that GSP+ status will be renewed.

Muhunthan may be on to something: the tax waiver was one issue he had raised when he met Benita Ferrero-Waldner, the EU foreign affairs commissioner, in Strasbourg this year.

In a church hall behind Euston station, near the curry house strip of Drummond Street, the Tamil Solidarity Movement is holding one of its first meetings. It's a simple affair, with plastic chairs and slices of homemade cake wrapped in clingfilm. But Muhunthan's fellow TSM members are young, focused, well-qualified and business-minded.

Raadhu, an accountant with KPMG, is keen to think of ways to put pressure on the western companies active in Sri Lanka. HSBC has a Sri Lanka division with total assets of \$1.4bn - about twice the total foreign direct investment in the country last year. And Sri Lanka's main export, textiles, has created links with many western fashion retailers. Colombo officials cite Marks and Spencer as a particularly prominent client; M&S says it sources textiles from two retailers in Sri Lanka but refuses to disclose figures.

## War By Other Means

The last thing Colombo needs is an economic cold shoulder. Having pushed up military spending in recent years to defeat the Tigers, Rajapaksa's government is heavily in the red and hoping foreign largesse will speed its recovery. Sri Lanka's public debt is now more than 80 per cent of gross domestic product.

The TSM is still in its early stages, with just under 110 young people on board, and Muhunthan often sounds naively optimistic. He says that if he can get the UK to take a tough stance on Sri Lanka, "the US will follow. Everyone knows they're friends." Still, the movement shows a shift in thinking on how to bring attention to the cause. In a similar vein, a second-generation Tamil activist, Jan Jananayagam, ran as an independent candidate for London in last June's European parliamentary elections. She campaigned on not only a two-state solution in Sri Lanka but also on more transparency in derivatives markets.

"I am very positive about the second generation," Jananayagam says of the Tamil diaspora's chances of securing more western intervention. "They are so sure of their status in their country - they were born as citizens there - and they will just ring their MPs or senators to ask for these things."

Articulate and driven, Jananayagam confirms the stereotype of the Tamil diaspora: she used to work as a bond trader at the investment bank Credit Suisse and ran her own hedge fund. She is now busy planning for next year's British general election; she hopes to persuade MPs to show a commitment to the Tamil issue, and the Tamil community to use their voting power accordingly.

The Tamil diaspora's often middle-class profile, typified by both Jananayagam and Muhunthan, is a legacy of Sri Lanka's colonial era. Although historical accounts vary slightly, both the north Indian Sinhalese and the south Indian Tamils are thought to have migrated to Sri Lanka more than 2,000 years ago. In 1815, Britain gained control of the whole island (previously split into one Tamil and two Sinhalese kingdoms) and chose to favour the Tamil minority. It was a classic "divide and rule" strategy that pitted ethnic groups against each other to prevent a united fight for independence.

Sri Lanka's Tamils enjoyed education and status superior to that of their Sinhalese peers, and were seen as "career-oriented, intellectual and passive", according to Neil DeVotta, a US-based professor of political science and author of *Blowback: Linguistic Nationalism, Institutional Decay, and Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka*. DeVotta writes in a separate academic paper that, in 1946, Sri Lankan Tamils made up 11 per cent of the island's population but accounted for more than 30 per cent of the judiciary, top civil servants and university students. Today, Tamils account for 9-13 per cent of the island's 20 million inhabitants; exact numbers are difficult to confirm as census researchers have not been able to access Tiger territories since 1981.

When Sri Lanka gained independence in 1948, the Sinhalese majority sought to regain dominance. A new government passed bills that enshrined Sinhalese as the official language, and in the 1970s, universities introduced positive discrimination quotas for Sinhalese candidates.

Many well-to-do Tamils headed west, and the diaspora soon became an important crutch for the Eelam campaign. They were able to assist the Tigers in times of financial difficulty - for example, after the tsunami, which severely damaged their territories. Today, up to 250,000 Tamils live in Canada, 200,000 in the UK and 130,000 in the US, although estimates vary widely and these numbers include Indian Tamils. There are also smaller pockets in Australia and continental Europe.

"The Tamil diaspora in the US and the UK are not riffraff. You have doctors, you have engineers," says Peter Lehr, a lecturer in terrorism studies and south-east Asia specialist at the University of St Andrews. "When the Tigers are desperate for money, they have a wealthy group to tap."

However, donations have not always been voluntary - Tamil communities are rife with stories of "when the Tigers come knocking". Representatives of the group were known for turning up on migrants' doorsteps and threatening to harm relatives back in Sri Lanka unless money was forthcoming. This created a complex relationship between many Tamils and the Tigers, who became both a guardian against Colombo and a predator on their own community.

## War By Other Means

Despite such reports of intimidation, many first-generation Tamil migrants openly supported the Tamil Tigers at this year's protests. "The Tigers will crush them [the Sri Lankan government]," V.K. Vavanathan, who moved to the UK in the 1970s, told me confidently at the Westminster protest, pounding his palm with his fist as he spoke. Over in New York, S.K. Dhayaparan, a wiry and bright-eyed doctor, stood under the streetlights of 7th Avenue and gave passers-by his pamphlet on the Tigers' "good intentions".

So, following the group's defeat, how do the older members of the diaspora feel? Do they, like some of their children and grandchildren, see recent events as a release from a violent strategy that often made them its victims and that arguably was not working anyway?

The London Tamil Sangam, one of Britain's longest-established Tamil community centres, is entered through a nondescript doorway in Manor Park in the east of the capital. A Tamil enclave, its streets are lined with greengrocers selling jackfruit and branches of India's ICICI Bank. Saravana Bhavan, a Tamil restaurant chain known for its dosa pancakes, proves a popular draw. Malathy Muthu, the centre's manager, paints a sombre picture of the older generation, who seem to believe that their cause has been lost. "We have seen a lot of mental health problems - like depression - among the elders," she says. "This was their dream." Muthu says several elders are refusing even to leave their houses. "They will not engage with anything. They just stay in watching TV programmes about the 'at-home problem'. I think they are depressed, although they have not registered it with the GP as they will not talk to anyone."

For those in the diaspora wedded to the armed struggle for independence - sometimes called "the old way" - prospects do indeed seem gloomy. Colombo's military surge against the Tigers this year coincided with a western crackdown on the overseas activities of the group, which has been banned in ever more countries as the post-9/11 "war on terror" mentality has taken hold. The man alleged to be the Tigers' UK head, Arunachalam Chirshanthakumar, was jailed for two years in June for supplying the group with electronic materials and military manuals. Karuna Kandasamy, the alleged US leader, is due to be sentenced in New York next month after pleading guilty to charges of making funds available to a terrorist group.

Some terrorism experts refer to the Tigers' proven ability to come back from the brink, and say they could soon resume sporadic guerrilla attacks. But few think they can recreate their former, sophisticated operation. Early attempts seem to be foundering: in August, Colombo said Selvarasa Pathmanathan, the new head of the Tigers, had been arrested. For many first-generation migrants, the task of reinventing a 25-year struggle in their declining years is too great.

"The older people think there is no more hope - they are coming to the end of their lives and they think the fight is over," explained one migrant to the UK, a 57-year-old engineer who did not wish to be named (he was worried about retribution against relatives in displacement camps, which are rife with reports of human rights abuses). "Whether their means were right or wrong, [the Tigers] were the only people who fought for us. They were the voice for Eelam, and look what they did - they built their own air force, navy, everything. We had those things when no one else would help us."

However, the first generation also recognise that their children's "new way" presents a ray of hope. "The young ones are passionate about the struggle in a way that has surprised their parents," the engineer said. "And their approach is very different - they want to use democratic and diplomatic means. It's good. They should not make the mistakes that we did."

In recent months, Sri Lankan officials have been on promotional trips to the US, Britain, Malaysia and Singapore to lure foreign capital to what they say is now a peaceful island. Trips to the Middle East are planned for early next year. "This is an ideal time to look at the investment opportunities in Sri Lanka," Gamini Lakshman Peiris, international trade minister, told investors at a London briefing this year. "Terrorism is the only thing that has held us back."

The government now hopes to profit from land wrested back from the Tigers by offering long leases on plots in the north and east. These areas contain a region known as "the rice bowl of the country". Meanwhile, a 350-acre economic zone is planned in the area of Kilinochchi, a Tiger town that fell in January - once the landmines have



## War By Other Means

been cleared. Sri Lanka's strategic location, at the crux of vital shipping routes to south-east Asia, is undeniable and China has snapped up the rights to develop the island's once sleepy Hambantota harbour. Beijing is spending \$1bn on the construction of a major port, according to Sri Lankan officials, as well as building a 900-megawatt coal power plant in the north-west. The country's central bank, showing its faith in the investment drive, has upgraded its 2009 economic growth forecast from 2.5 to 4.5 per cent.

But amid the bullish statements at the London and New York briefings, Colombo's ministers have also been reminding the west of its role in securing the fragile peace. Peiris told his London audience that the international community had a "continuing duty" to prevent the diaspora from funding the Tigers' recovery. This posed the only threat to the island's "new investment opportunities", he said.

Other Colombo officials insist that economic growth is for the "benefit of all citizens", and that it is not in the interest of Tamils "at home or overseas" to thwart such progress. But while Sri Lanka refuses to release Tamil civilians from camps, or allow journalists into these sites, there is much to stoke the separatist cause. President Rajapaksa had promised a postwar political settlement with the Tamils, but he has so far made barely any moves on this front.

Whether it is through continuing to fund the Tigers in some form, or through the next generation's "new way", it seems that the struggle for Eelam is far from over. "Yes, of course, I am disheartened, but we have to reinvent and reorganise ourselves now," says one campaigner, back in the church hall in Euston, where everyone is packing away the plastic chairs and heading out for a curry on Drummond Street. "And this time we have to do it from outside. From another country."

### How the Tigers turned to suicide

Modern suicide bombing came to international attention in 1983 when Hizbollah activists rammed a truck laden with explosives into a US Army barracks in Beirut. Four years later, a Tamil Tiger named Vallipuram Vasanthan emulated this attack, driving an explosives-filled truck into a school used by the Sri Lankan Army and causing huge casualties.

Vasanthan became known as the first "Black Tiger", a deadly division of the Tiger armed forces whose remit was to perform high-risk missions including suicide bomb attacks. The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) pioneered suicide attacks as a means of assassinating politicians and wreaking destruction on the battlefield. The Tigers developed techniques which are today synonymous with terrorism. Before the Iraq war, they were responsible for more suicide bomb attacks than any other group worldwide.

And while Hizbollah was the first group to popularise the use of the suicide bomb, the Tigers invented the "suicide belt", which is packed with explosives and hidden beneath clothing. According to Peter Lehr, an expert on terrorism at St Andrews University, the belt "was then copied by all terrorist organisations, notably al-Qaeda and other Islamist organisations".

**Women** made perfect candidates to wear the belt. "**Women** [in Sri Lanka] are basically untouchable," says Lehr, meaning "that they can pass through most security gates without being patted down". In 1991, former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was killed by an LTTE **female** suicide bomber wearing a loaded belt.

But while such tactics had military value, they subsequently helped brand the Tamil Tigers as terrorists in the eyes of foreign governments following 9/11. Second-generation Tamil activists will almost certainly aim to distance themselves from the taint of suicide bombing as they look to engage with the west.

Alex Cardno

**Load-Date:** October 16, 2009

## *Letters to the editor*

Sunday Business Post

September 13, 2009

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**Section:** LETTERS

**Length:** 3409 words

### **Body**

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Israel's envoy replies

Senan Hogan's article Backs to the Wall (Agenda 6/9/09) contains much misinformation and is disappointingly biased.

Despite the inaccurate reference to the security barrier between Israel and the West Bank as a "wall", and the selective use of photographs showing sections of high wall, more than 97 per cent of the barrier consists of a chain-link fence with an intrusion detection system.

The short concrete sections are designed not only to stop terrorists from infiltrating, but to block them from shooting at vehicles travelling on the highways near the border and at nearby residential areas. Throughout the article, Israeli explanations are treated with the dismissive phrase "Israel claims . . .", as if the facts were not available.

In 2000, the Palestinian leadership took a strategic decision to use violence rather than negotiation to advance their agenda.

Between 2000 and 2006, more than 1,100 Israeli citizens - Jewish and Arab - were murdered in attacks by terrorists.

Some 525 of these deaths resulted from suicide bombers infiltrating into Israel from the West Bank and Gaza. The security barrier was built in line with Israel's democratic duty and obligation to protect the lives of its citizens.

Since the erection of the barrier, fatality figures from suicide bombings have fallen from several hundred a year to thankfully zero today.

In November 2006, even Islamic Jihad leader Abdallah Ramadan Shalah acknowledged that the separation fence had become an obstacle to suicide bombing.

Contrary to the article's assertion that Bethlehem is a no-go area for tourists, last Christmas, record numbers of tourists visited the city. An estimated 1.3 million tourists visited the West Bank in 2008. The International Monetary Fund predicts growth of 7 per cent in the West Bank economy this year.

## Letters to the editor

The security barrier was built solely on the basis of security needs. It is a temporary defensive measure, not a border. Final borders between Israel and a future Palestinian state will be determined by direct negotiations.

Neither has the barrier anything to do with "apartheid" or racism, as alleged. Israel does not wish to rule the Palestinians; it is eager to conclude a peace deal with them.

The barrier is the result, not the cause, of hostility and terror campaigns directed against Israel by Hamas and other groups that seek to kill Israelis and, ultimately, to destroy Israel itself. They incite hatred in their societies by mobilising the kindergartens, education system, youth movements, mosques and media for anti-Israel indoctrination.

The thousands of victims killed and injured by suicide bombers are the outcome of this hatred. Israel wishes to resume negotiations for peace; without the fence, terrorists would succeed in their aims, making such negotiations impossible.

Zion Evrony Ambassador of Israel, Dublin 4

Red faces among the Greens?

After the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change published its last report, Ciaran Cuffe of the Green Party issued a statement on April 6, 2007 predicting that Ireland would experience "winter flooding and summer droughts".

That year saw the wettest Irish summer in ten years, with Leinster experiencing more summer rainfall than for the previous 50 years.

Last year, summer rainfall in Ireland was above normal everywhere and more than twice the normal level in the east and southeast. Now that the summer of 2009 has come to an end, Met Eireann has confirmed that, for the third successive year, every station in Ireland reported above-normal rainfall and Valentia saw the wettest summer since records began in 1866.

After cutting public transport in Dublin, supporting third level fees, building a motorway through the Tara-Skryne valley, withdrawing the light bulb ban and proceeding with an incinerator in Dublin, isn't it now time that the Green Party also did au-turn on climate change?

John Hamill Castleblayney, Co Monaghan

George Lee and the 'one opinion'

George Lee is correct when he says that 46 economists came up with "one opinion" on Nama. That exactly is what it is, nothing more nor less. That they could only come up with an "opinion" and not a direction suggests they have no idea of what to do next.

This copperfastens the ordinary person's belief that we must trust the government on this. To add insult to injury, Lee tells us that Fine Gael has a magic solution that would be less painful and more effective than that proposed by the government. Either he is very naïve or he is trying to take us all for fools.

Tom Flynn Westport, Co Mayo

GNI tells the whole story

The CSO's recent review of economic and social progress for 2008 incorporates EU-wide comparisons based on GDP (gross domestic product) and GNI (gross national income). For Ireland, these measures differ by about 14 per cent.

In many situations, the lower GNI is the most appropriate measure of Ireland's output, as it excludes the huge profits generated by multinationals.

## Letters to the editor

Surely domestic and international studies should assess Ireland's performance based on GNI as well as GDP, even if only in footnotes?

For example, the projected exchequer deficit for 2009 is 10.8 per cent of GDP and is extraordinarily high by international standards. If based on GNI, it rises to 12.7 per cent and points to an even more serious position.

Brian Flanagan Blackrock, Co Dublin

Voting rights for Irish diaspora

I agree with David McWilliams' article about the Irish diaspora (30/8/ 09).

It is a great injustice that Ireland does not give its citizens living abroad the right to vote.

I am not writing about the millions of descendants of Irish emigrants from previous generations, but about this generation, the thousands of citizens born in Ireland who have studied, lived, worked and already voted in Ireland, who now live abroad.

Ireland is the only country in the European Union that disenfranchises its own citizens.

If I had been born in Newry and not in Dundalk, the British government would give me a postal vote, even if I lived in a hut in Patagonia.

As it is, I live on mainland Europe, just across the sea in Paris, where the Irish embassy is the only embassy in the city that never has to double as a polling booth.

Ciara'n Mac Guill Paris, An Fhrainc

Mullaghmore media scrum

As a Mullaghmore resident and local historian, I was bemused by the media scrum on the 30th anniversary of the death of Mountbatten.

Most people will remember that he was not the only victim of the troubles in Mullaghmore.

Margaret Perry was killed - in the most brutal of circumstances - in the woods under Mountbatten's holiday home, Classiebawn Castle, in June 1992 on the instruction of police informer Gregory Burns.

Two other RUC informers, Aidan Starrs and John Dignam, carried out the killing. Afterwards, there was a cover-up by RUC Special Branch.

Yet no one ever comes to grieve or to put flowers on the spot where she died. Why is it that one human life is more valued than another?

Joe McGowan Mullaghmore, Co Sligo

In praise of the Red Army

Andrew Lynch, in his review of *The Red Flag* (Agenda, 23/8/09), said:

"The Adolf Hitler invasion of Russia backfired in spectacular fashion, allowing the Kremlin to counter-attack and take over big swathes of Eastern Europe in the process." Hitler did not invade Russia; he invaded the Soviet Union, a multinational state.

The invasion backfired because the Red Army - at huge cost - defeated the Wehrmacht in two of the greatest battles of the Second World War, Stalingrad and Kursk in the Ukraine.

It can be argued that the Soviet Union and the Red Army saved European civilization.

## Letters to the editor

Sean Whelan Nenagh, Co Tipperary

Readers' views on Lisbon II

For

Defining our role in Europe

Whichever way one looks at it, the vote on the Lisbon Treaty on October 2 will define Ireland's future relationship in Europe.

Ireland first applied to join the EU in 1961, and our political and economic policies for the past 49 years have been directly interlinked with the work of the European Union.

60 per cent of everything we produce in Ireland is sold in Europe. People who create jobs in our economy and who invest in Ireland want a Yes vote. They want to see Ireland at the very top decision making tables in Europe.

The fact that Ireland now retains a full time Commissioner and has secured legal guarantees protecting articles in the Irish Constitution concerning the right to life, education and the family provide key assurances to issues raised during the referendum on the Lisbon Treaty last year.

Ireland should not have an ambiguous relationship with the European Union.

We should be a fully committed member of the European Union leading from the front on key political and economic issues.

It makes clear economic sense for our country to stay at the very heart of the European Union project.

Pat 'the Cope' Gallagher MEP Dungloe, Co Donegal

\* I am a strong believer in the European Union and in the Lisbon Treaty. This is born of knowledge of the EU, its treaties and the history of Europe. I would like to see the Irish people vote Yes in the forthcoming referendum, and would prefer if that vote were prompted by an idealism and vision for Europe.

However, if it has to be pragmatism and self-interest, so be it. Consider a fact: if we vote No, it is a quite strong possibility that the international bond markets will respond negatively and make it impossible for the Irish government to borrow the EUR 20 billion-plus it will need in 2010. This will mean nurses, teachers and gardaí not being paid next year.

People should weigh carefully the practical consequences of a No vote.

Conor Sexton, Rathfarnham, Dublin 14

\* I don't regard myself as a deceiver and manipulator as Vincent Browne suggested (6/9/09). I found the article long on emotion and speculation about the future. I strongly advocate a Yes vote in the forthcoming referendum on October 2.

My take on Lisbon II is that the EU - with Irish representatives included - agreed a technical administrative document to improve the running of the EU. Most of the EU countries have agreed it.

They are now asking us formally to agree with them. If we don't agree, they will regard us as having made a decision to reject the document and their collective wisdom and they will act like any GAA or other club in the circumstances.

They will seek an alternative method of achieving what they believe is necessary - and we won't be asked to participate next time.

## Letters to the editor

"Thank you, Ireland, for causing us a lot of grief in your belief that Lisbon is am mistake. We will now get on with business we believe to be necessary to prepare for the future."

It is spurious and unrealistic to say that things will continue as they are. They won't. In ten years, if Lisbon is not passed, I can guarantee you the EU will have found alternative ways to implement what the majority want. Ireland will be allowed to freeze outside, and there will be many subtle ways of ensuring we lose influence in framing policy and benefiting financially.

On top of our current financial problems, a rejection of Lisbon would justify the judgment of those who originally felt the Irish couldn't be trusted to run their own affairs.

John McMahon Rathgar, Dublin 6

\* You have consistently underlined the absolute strategic and tactical necessity of ratifying Lisbon.

There cannot be any question about our commitment to the EU, yet we are taking a huge risk by sending onto the campaign pitch as captain a player (the government) who is patently unfit, and is perceived as such by the other players, namely ourselves, the plain people of Ireland.

According to figures in the recent MNS/ MRBI poll, if the Don't Knows transfer to No in the same proportion as they did at the same stage last year, then Lisbon II is lost.

That is before we factor in the own goals, skeletons and mere accidents to which this government is eminently prone, before the possibility - if not probability - that the deep and simmering anger and frustration boils over just sufficiently to swing the result to No.

When the Dáil re-convenes on September 16, it can postpone (temporarily) what will be a non debate on the banking crisis, and accept or require the resignation of Brian Cowen and his cabinet, subject to the decision of the President to exercise her prerogative not to hold a general election.

It can nominate an alternative Taoiseach from the opposition benches, supported by 'National Fianna Fáil' and the Greens, as happened when deValera, Lemass, Lynch, Haughey and Ahern resigned before the end of Dáil terms.

We can carry Lisbon and begin the recovery together. But not without thinking and doing the unthinkable: making the crucial substitution.

Maurice O'Connell Tralee, Co Kerry

Against

Time to stop and think

\* The Constitution requires that citizens be adequately informed of the pros and cons of the issue in any referendum, so any violation of the imperative of fairness be avoided. The courts established unfair referendum practices in the McKenna and the Coughlan cases.

The purpose of referendums is to take decisions on amending the fundamental law out of the hands of the organs of state, such as the courts and legislature.

The role of politicians is to debate the need for a referendum, promulgate an appropriate bill and subsequently to comply with the decision of the citizens. This time, they've decided, that's not good enough, so we're told we have to vote again on the Lisbon Treaty, as with Nice.

As citizens, we must have the fullest relevant and accurate information available, and the facts must be presented in a fair and balanced way.

## Letters to the editor

Since the 1995 McKenna Supreme Court ruling, the state is not permitted to use public funds preferentially to fund one side in a referendum. Under the 2000 Supreme Court Coughlan ruling, free airtime allotted by RTE must be equal for both sides in campaigns.

The imperative of fairness requires that the Referendum Commission, or similar body, be given the role of ensuring that all aspects of the process are monitored to prevent the use of irrelevancies, speculation, lies or intimidation by either side.

The referendum is, in effect, a court case modifying the fundamental law of the country. The voters are the jury, but there is no judge to ensure a fair trial of the arguments. Who does one believe when participants take diametrically-opposed views on most points?

We must take into account the credibility of the proponents of the Yes and No cases, and the motivation behind their arguments. As far as I can determine there's been little or no attempt to do that.

I've been involved in politics for 50 years (the first 25 very active in three parties consecutively), and in dozens of NGOs. At 72, I'd far prefer not to have to be involved in these issues. I wouldn't be if I didn't firmly believe, from very close observation of the development of the EEC/EU and reading much of its literature, that Ireland and Europe needs to stop the train for reflection before it's too late.

John Fitzgibbon Dun Laoghaire, Co Dublin

\* According to A Leavy from Sutton (Letters, 23/8/09)), the contention that the European Union is "undemocratic and fraudulent" does not stand up to scrutiny.

What does he make of the fact that the EU's accounts for the last 15 years have never been signed off by the EU's Court of Auditors, because they are full of "irregularities"?

Marta Andreasen, the EU's chief accounting officer, found the EU's accounting system so chaotic and open to fraud that she recommended proposals for its reform. This earned her the sack.

As for democracy, the EU may well suit most of Europe's politicians, but its centralised power structure means that Europe's taxpayers have no say over issues which have a profound impact on their lives.

Margaret Curran Dorking, England

\* The Irish Constitution, which was adopted by referendum in 1937, was so highly regarded internationally that it was used as a template by 68 other countries, such as India, for their own constitutions. It grounds sovereignty and lawful authority in the Irish people, who adopted the Constitution by referendum and they alone can amend it by referendum.

France and Germany have many enviable qualities which we Irish could learn from, but, under Lisbon, we would be subordinating our Irish Constitution to a new EU constitution and our Supreme Court would be subservient to the European Court of Justice.

For me, that's a step too far, especially when Lisbon gives the larger EU member states a greater, and disproportionate, say in our destiny. Germany, France, Britain and Italy would have over 53 per cent of the overall vote, and little ol' Ireland would have less than 1 per cent.

I say go back to the drawing board with Lisbon.

James Scott Mullingar, Co Westmeath

\* It seems impossible to refer to the "guarantees" under Lisbon II, without the addition of the word "legal". MEP Brian Crowley does so twice in his letter of August 9. I am unclear as to who exactly said these "guarantees" were "legal".

## Letters to the editor

It cannot have been the European Court of Justice (ECJ), as neither the "guarantees" nor the treaty itself have been put before it.

There are also other problems with the "guarantees", including:

1. What happens if the treaty is put before the ECJ, before any new treaty takes effect and becomes law? The ECJ can only consider what is the law, not what might be the law.

2. What if the Irish people themselves reject a future treaty incorporating the "guarantees"?

Donal O'Driscoll Blackrock, Co Dublin

\* A gentle reminder to the Irish Labour Party and its supporters. A large chunk of the No vote in Lisbon 1 was made up of women and lower paid workers. The leader of the party, Eamon Gilmore, declared, immediately after this vote that the Lisbon Treaty was dead.

In the year after that resounding No to Lisbon, according to Barry O'Leary, chief executive of IDA Ireland, direct foreign investment actually increased. This belies the notion that a No vote in October will make investors lose confidence in us.

The EU is becoming more militarised. Ireland will, inexorably, be dragged into that. The treaty exhorts all member states to increase military spending. The so-called guarantees are like so-called political promises made by all-too-corruptible politicians.

The whiff of getting into a future government with Fine Gael has contributed to the Irish Labour Party losing its political way. It has been taken over by electoralism and those anxious for power, no matter what the price.

Joe Kelly Montpelier Gardens, Dublin 7

&As a long-serving Conservative MP in the United Kingdom Parliament, I am aware that Ireland is the only EU country in which people have a democratic vote on the Lisbon Treaty.

I can certainly say that all measures of British public opinion show an overwhelming demand for a referendum and that the result would be a No vote. Irish Eurosceptics are not alone.

Ireland is being forced to vote again on exactly the Lisbon Treaty which it has already rejected. Is this true democracy at work? The EU knows that the treaty would be rejected in most EU countries, not least since the virtually-identical EU constitution was voted down by the citizens of France and the Netherlands.

This is a politicians-versus-the people fight in which only the Irish people have a voice. If Ireland stands up for the disenfranchised nations of Europe, it is being neither selfish nor obstructive. It would be wonderful if a small but proud country were able to exercise this influence which larger European countries do not have the courage to use.

Because the Republic of Ireland is within the straitjacket of the euro, the Dublin government cannot devalue its currency and has no alternative but to deflate, to raise taxes, to slash spending and to suffer the worst of all recessions.

A No vote will undoubtedly provide a chance for a more democratic Europe - a Europe of free nations and peoples, not a centralised superstate.

Sir Nicholas Winterton MP House of Commons, London

\* EU members of parliament are not elected according to normal electoral equality but according to what the German Constitutional Court describes as national contingents. These contingents are, in fact, a contradiction of EU law, which does not permit discrimination based on nationality.



Letters to the editor

An MEP from Malta represents only 67,000 citizens, while an MEP from Sweden represents 455,000 Swedes and an individual German MEP represents some 857,000 people.

No wonder the German Court ruled that Germany's future lies, not in a united Europe, but in Germany.

Michael McHale Foxford, Co Mayo

**Load-Date:** September 13, 2009

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## *Netanyahu's proposal for 'lasting peace' - and a human rights response*

The Daily Star (Lebanon)

August 20, 2009 Thursday

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# THE DAILY STAR

LEBANON

**Length:** 4042 words

**Byline:** Chibli Mallat

## **Body**

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If one were standing here in the middle of the 19th century, one would not be raising such issues, because one would not believe that there would be anything here. There were thirty, or at most, forty thousand Jews in the entire Land of Israel. No one would have dared to believe that what has happened here could actually happen here.

For the State of Israel as the nation-state of the Jewish people

By Benjamin Netanyahu

For a Federal Israel-Palestine: A human rights response

By Chibli Mallat, Muhammad Aburdaini, Sharhabeel Al Zaeem

Editor's note: The following is a detailed response to the Israeli Prime Minister's important speech at the Israeli National Defense College Graduation Ceremony on August 3, when he explained his "foundations" for a "lasting peace." On today's law page, two Palestinians and a Lebanese - Muhammad Aburdaini, Sharhabeel Al Zaeem and Chibli Mallat - discuss his proposals, while putting forward alternative foundations in a fresh initiative based on human rights and a federal future for Palestine/Israel. Mr. Netanyahu's words are reproduced in full, minus a few deletions relating to the occasion, with our response following each part of his speech.

Benjamin Netanyahu [BN]: ... If one were standing here in the middle of the 19th century, one would not be raising such issues, because one would not believe that there would be anything here. There were thirty, or at most, forty thousand Jews in the entire Land of Israel. No one would have dared to believe that what has happened here could actually happen here.

A hundred years later, the number of Jews grew to six hundred thousand, and today we are close to six million. For the first time since the period of the Second Temple, the majority of Jews will live in their homeland. These things required vision, daring and great faith, and also our ability to concentrate our capabilities in the economy, in education, in culture, in science, in technology, in agriculture, and above all in security, in security and in faith.

Muhammad Aburdaini, Sharhabeel Al Zaeem, Chibli Mallat [MAR, SZ, CM]: The mirror story is less happy: in 1860, there were eight to nine to times more non-Jews in the historic land of Palestine, some 400,000 total population to

## Netanyahu's proposal for 'lasting peace' - and a human rights response

the 30 to 40 thousand Jews, living together relatively well under Ottoman rule. A hundred years later, in 1948-9, the descendants of the non-Jewish inhabitants were uprooted in five massive waves of violence described by historian Benny Morris, as a phenomenon that qualifies today as ethnic cleansing. In 1948, only one-third of the population of historic Palestine was Jewish. Of the 800,000 non-Jewish inhabitants of the land that came under Jewish control as the State of Israel, 90 percent were expelled or fled before the violence, and were subsequently prevented from returning to their homes. They have grown to some 4-5 million inhabitants most of whom live in miserable camps in Gaza, the West Bank and outside the historic borders of Palestine. The 100,000 Palestinian Israelis who remained have grown to 1.3 million, they constitute one fifth of the overall population and almost one fourth when compared to the Jewish population according to official Israeli statistics - since about 5 percent of the population is neither "Jewish" nor "Arab." So the fuller, actual "vision" is this: against the six million Jews who enjoy peace and equality among themselves, 4 million non-Jews are refugees living forcibly outside Israel, 3 millions are under various degrees of siege (Gaza) and direct occupation (the West Bank including Jerusalem, walled in and relentlessly colonized), and the remaining 1.3 million continue to be denied basic representation in government: their political, social and economic rights are systemically curtailed by Israeli law and governmental practice. They are de jure and de facto discriminated against in land ownership, marriage, work opportunities, service to and by the state, and right to family reunion. They never had one important ministry, one key judicial position, and were never allowed to head a meaningful committee in parliament.

BN: I have great faith that we will be able to surmount these hardships, and establish a future of peace between us and our neighbors. But any such faith, like Zionism itself, requires correct detection of the problem and quick provision of the right solution.

We can see the problems from here. Climb one of the towers, look east, and you will see the Dead Sea, and the Jordan mountains. If you choose a higher tower and look west, you will see the Mediterranean Sea. At its maximum breadth, the Land of Israel is very small, and if we make peace agreements, the borders will be moved. Therefore, our first problem that makes it difficult with regard to our national security is that we have a very small country.

This in itself does not mean that there are security problems - Monaco has no security problems. Neither does Luxembourg have any security problems. Both these countries are smaller than we are. But when you combine the smallness and the country's dimension and look at some of our neighbors, their activities and their stated intentions - this combination of such minute dimensions and neighbors, some of whom negate the State of Israel's existence and use all means in order to abrogate our existence - this creates problems of national security which don't exist in any other country or for any other people.

MAR, SZ, CM: It is one thing is to deny the existence of the State of Israel, which is, we agree, a non-starter. It is quite another to question the legal morality of the State exclusively defined as Jewish.

Security of Israel cannot be achieved if the State of Israel is meant as the nation-state of the Jewish people only, so long as this definition denies or discriminates against the rights of non-Jews.

One fundamental right is that of equality, which does not exist, in law and in fact, for non-Jews across historic Israel-Palestine. Another fundamental right is the universal right of a refugee to return to the place from which he or she was ejected by the onset of violence. Luxembourg and Monaco do not have the equivalent of Palestinians inside their country or around it.

BN: In order to provide a response to this issue, given our attempts to achieve peace with the Palestinians, we need to respond to two problems: on the one hand, the problem of the denial of our right to exist, and on the other hand, the problem of security which stems from Israel's geographic dimensions.

MAR, SZ, CM: Agreed so long as it is mutual.

BN: The way of dealing with the denial of the State of Israel's existence is the recognition of the State of Israel's right to exist. This is the first foundation. This is a demand which we state in the clearest, most direct manner to our neighbors. This is not in order to receive their approval, which we do not need. We need this in order for the Palestinians to internalize this right.

## Netanyahu's proposal for 'lasting peace' - and a human rights response

MAR, SZ, CM: The right to exist is naturally granted, and does indeed not need approval. The problem is the political and constitutional regime of the State of Israel as presently exists. No less than in Arab countries, we need regime change in Israel, achieved with non-violent means. As for internalizing a fact perceived to be unjust by the victims, which is becoming a hollow motto: Jews in Israel should stop asking Palestinians to "internalize a right" that negates their suffering.

BN: If we are asked, which we are, to recognize the Palestinian state as the nation-state of the Palestinian people - and we are willing to do so - it is only natural that we ask our Palestinian neighbors to recognize the State of Israel as the nation-state of the Jewish people.

This is not only natural - it is necessary, just and logical, and it is the first foundation of peace.

MAR, SZ, CM: How would the Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist or non-believer citizens of America react to a request for the United States as the nation-state of Christians? We can accept the State of Israel as "the nation-state of the Jewish people" only by adding "also" to your request. The legal response that includes us all as equals, individually and collectively, we need to articulate together.

We propose against your exclusive concept a Federal Israel-Palestine for its Jewish and non-Jewish peoples on the whole of historic Palestine, which encourages interaction and intermarriage, equates between all its citizens individually, and offers to the Jewish and non-Jewish communities alike collective standing.

BN: Two additional foundations the second and the third are derived from the foundation or principle of recognition. The second foundation is that the Palestinian refugee problem will be resolved outside the borders of the State of Israel. It is not possible to maintain this small state as a state with a clear Jewish majority if the State of Israel is flooded with refugees and their descendents. This is also unjust.

MAR, SZ, CM: We accept that a massive flooding of non-Jewish refugees can lead to injustice if it threatens the Jews of Israel, yet two rights are apposite here: one is the right of the refugees to return, which is universal and supported by international law and leading human rights groups, including Amnesty International. The other is the right of Jews not to be imperiled as a collective group. We need to find together a way to reconcile both rights.

We propose to engage with you, in terms that we all feel comfortable with, in a structured conversation to resolve the Palestinian refugee problem that accommodates those two rights: the right for Jews in Israel to defend security and demographic developments they perceive as existential threats, and the appropriate means to accommodate the right of Palestinians to live on the land they were forced to leave and continue to be prevented visiting. At the center of this accommodation would be a staggered and continuously enhanced principle of free movement, for both Israelis and Palestinians, including Jewish Israelis in the rest of the Middle East, within a joint and detailed humanist plan that develops heuristically over ten to twenty years. This conversation, and the action we can design together, will give a particular attention to the concerns of the Jewish community, as well as the subhuman conditions of refugee life in camps in the West Bank, Gaza and outside the 1948 historic Palestine boundaries.

BN: This is unjust because the Arab attack upon the State of Israel's existence in 1948 created two refugee problems. The first one is the Palestinian refugees which the entire world knows about. The second refugee problem is of the Jewish refugees who were forced to leave the Arab countries. But no one recognizes this problem because Israel with its limited resources, with a sliver of land, without oil resources, resolved this problem, whereas the first problem continues to exist to this day.

MAR, SZ, CM: The 1948 military intervention of the neighboring Arab countries would qualify in 21st century language as "Right to Protect." But let's look to the injustices of the past with an eye to the future. We and many colleagues across the Arab world have long advocated the need to reverse the legacy of the pogroms against Jewish Arabs that followed the establishment the State of Israel in 1948. We have openly acted for these historic grievances to find their fullest redress, and will continue to do so irrespective of the Israeli government position. One of the greatest losses for Arab countries was their time-honored Jewish communities.

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BN: The third foundation to reaching an end to the conflict - is the end of the conflict. When we sign a peace agreement with the Palestinians, which I believe will happen - we want it to be a final agreement - an end to the conflict, an end to the conflict's claims.

MAR, SZ, CM: Agreed.

BN: We are not expecting a situation whereby a Palestinian state established within the borders of the State of Israel will continue to demand the entry of refugees, or that there will be national claims towards the territory and population within the borders of the State of Israel. An end to the conflict means an end to claims.

MAR, SZ, CM: We agree, but must emphasize that only the Palestinians concerned can end these claims. The Israeli government must sit with them to negotiate an end to their claims, in good faith. Some will be satisfied with compensation, some with a place in the new Palestinian unit within the Israel-Palestine federation, some with a right to freedom of visit and work as aliens in the new state, some with exile in Europe and the US, many with a mixture of the above in a plan to be developed universally. But no one, including other Palestinians, can abandon the individual refugees' claim in their stead. We think that a major breakthrough for peace would be achieved if, as a first step, you announce your readiness to sit with Palestinian refugees without preconditions.

BN: I have highlighted three foundations in my speech: recognition of the State of Israel as the nation-state of the Jewish people, resolving the refugee problem outside our borders, and an end to the conflict. These are all connected to the question of recognition of the State of Israel. We raise these matters in an explicit and clear manner with the aim of reaching an agreement. These are the fundamental and necessary conditions, not for starting negotiations - we are not attaching any conditions to opening negotiations, but these are fundamental conditions for the successful completion of a real peace agreement.

MAR, SZ, CM: Here is our counteroffer: we sit together, that is Arabs with claims against Israel, and Israelis with claims against Arabs, without pre-conditions. Our departing foundations are the following: recognition of the State of Israel as Federal State that accommodates, on equal individual and collective terms, its Jewish and non-Jewish inhabitants; resolution of the refugee problem in a long-term, staggered plan that includes Jews of Arab countries and Palestinians of the present territory controlled by the State of Israel and of the Palestinian diaspora.

BN: The next two foundations are connected to security. Even if the first three foundations are implemented, and I believe that they will be achieved, it will still take an entire generation of Palestinians to internalize recognition and the permanent legitimacy of the State of Israel.

MAR, SZ, CM: Agreed. However we must be candid again about this "internalization": Palestinians, like all colonized people, will continue to grieve for the sixty years of misery chiefly inflicted by the establishment of the State of Israel, and we expect that Jewish Israelis killed over sixty years will continue to grieve for their loved ones killed in battle, bombs and other attacks. But we all accept that such grievances will not deter our absolute rejection of violence in any future, inevitable, disagreements, on the road to perfecting our inevitably common destiny.

BN: For the foreseeable future, we need to ensure that peace will be maintained. In order to maintain peace, the first foundation is security, and the first foundation of security in the case of the arrangement proposed here is demilitarization.

None of us want a repeat of what happened in Gaza, or in South Lebanon. We want to ensure that any territory which we vacate within the framework of an arrangement will not be seized by terrorists or by Iran's representatives. This is the fourth foundation.

This is not a theoretical discussion for us. We know exactly what happened in the north, and what happened in the south. Heaven forbid that this should happen in the center of the country, on the mountains and the hills that overlook the majority of the State of Israel's population, on the strategic installations on which you depend and which are vital for our protection - this would undermine our security and naturally also invalidate the peace.

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Therefore, our demand for effective demilitarization is a fundamental demand for establishing a real and stable peace with the Palestinians. I use the term effective demilitarization because we desire practical and effective arrangements. We all have experience with ineffective demilitarization. Effective demilitarization means that there will not be a foreign army west of the Jordan. A police force, a counter-terrorism mechanism by all means, but there is no reason for such a force to have tanks, artillery or other types of weapons. The second thing is that we will have control of our airspace. This is vital for ensuring our security.

The third component is to prevent rockets, missiles and other types of weapons from being brought into this territory. The Palestinians' self-determination does not require that there be, in any shape or form, Kassams or rockets which can be launched on Tel Aviv, on the coastal plain, cities or on other areas of the State of Israel.

The fifth and final of the foundations for peace is international recognition of the very demilitarization arrangements which we have talked about. I wish to clarify that we are not talking about American or NATO soldiers defending us and doing the defense work of the State of Israel. We have never requested this, nor are we requesting it now.

We are talking about an international guarantee, headed by the United States, for the demilitarization arrangements that we will establish. We wish them to make it clear that these arrangements will be completely legitimate, and that there will also be total legitimacy for any action deemed necessary to preserve them. The purpose of this guarantee is that it adds a layer of deterrence against the intentions of those who may, in the future, wish to invalidate, or violate the demilitarization arrangements.

Recognition of the State of Israel, resolving the refugee problem outside Israel, an end to the claims as part of the end to the conflict, effective demilitarization and international recognition of the demilitarization arrangements - these are the five foundations which are essential for peace, and also have widespread consensus among the Israeli public. This is also the shared base of the unity government which the Minister of Defense, the other factions and I established.

As long as we unite behind these conditions, the chance of implementing them increases, because the international community respects a clear, solid, logical and just stance, which they also represent.

MAR, SZ, CM: Fine on all points so long as the historic, mutual, grievances are resolved jointly. Most of the security components are moot if the Federal State we propose is established. We can even go further: we are actually ready to consider the military protection by NATO of an agreement reached by Israelis and Palestinians on the basis of equality within a Federal State that is also a nation-state for the Jewish people.

BN: I think that there is an additional foundation which can assist us in reaching peace arrangements and in keeping them.

I have just come from a tour of the Allenby Bridge. A directive has been given to extend the terminal's operating hours at the bridge, for both goods and pedestrians. This is part of the policy which we are carrying out in order to make the lives of the Palestinians easier where possible, in fact to improve the flow of the Palestinian economy.

The Minister of Defense has removed a significant number of road blocks, and we are working together in the government in order to remove obstacles for economic projects which could advance the Palestinian economy. We are doing this because we are convinced that economic progress and development will help achieve both diplomatic and political peace.

MAR, SZ, CM: On the Allenby directive you mention: any move along these lines is welcome. In legal speech, it is called the freedom of movement and establishment, as developed in the careful case-law and legislation of the European Union. Again, we propose that such a right to free movement be a central element of the agreement, to be refined further in the way successfully charted by the Europeans since the Treaty of Rome in 1957.

BN: We are convinced of this because there is a struggle here, as in other parts of the world, with dark, radical forces, where the last thing that they want is progress. I say that our real test, here, with the Palestinian Authority, is whether they can move closer in Dubai's direction, or whether they will retreat in Gaza's direction. I am not saying

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that it will be like Dubai here tomorrow, or even the day after tomorrow, but they are growing as a result of the things that they have done and that we are doing.

MAR, SZ, CM: Dubai is not a democratic country. For a Federal Israel-Palestine to work, it must be first and foremost democratic.

BN: The Palestinian economy here in Judea and Samaria is currently growing at a rate of more than 7percent, and it can grow even higher. I want you to imagine what will happen when the skylines of Ramallah, Jenin and Hebron start to be filled with skyscrapers, when malls, cinemas and restaurants are opened, and when the Palestinian youth know that they have a future.

MAR, SZ, CM: On the lighter side: a skyscraper and mall definition of peace may not be that alluring humanly or esthetically. We hope we can together spare Jerusalem the skyline of Tel Aviv.

BN: I am not ruling out the need for diplomatic agreements; on the contrary, I claim that economic peace will assist diplomatic peace. In the struggle between darkness and terror and progress and prosperity, I have no doubt that the vast majority of the world's Muslim population will choose progress and prosperity. We saw this a month ago in Teheran, we saw this six months ago in Hebron, Jenin and Ramallah during "Operation Cast Lead," and I tell you that we will see it in Gaza tomorrow.

The very fact that the **Hamas** regime, an offshoot of the Iranian tyranny, is forcing **women** to wear veils - I can tell you - is not winning it favor among the Palestinians in Gaza, and if they had the power to overthrow this regime, they would do it - and it will be in their power. This is why advancing economic peace and development is integral for helping to promote peace.

Eventually radical Islam will be defeated by the global information revolution, by the freedom of ideas which are breaking out, through technology and through ideas of freedom. This won't happen immediately, but it will happen, and it will happen here as well.

The only thing that can postpone and disrupt the rate of the extinguishing of radical Islam is the possibility that it will be armed with a nuclear weapon. Today, this is so dangerous that I would go so far as to say that understanding of this danger is permeating governments, leaders, public opinion shapers, and even armies.

If there is one mission that we are partner to, it is to ensure that the forces of moderation, of progress, prosperity and peace will win this struggle.

I now turn to the representatives of several countries who are here with us. We all have the same mission, we are all on the same mission - to make sure that the forces of dark radicalism, of medievalism are held back.

I am certain of our ability to achieve this goal, and I want to thank the National Defense College alumni for all that they have done to ensure security, prosperity and peace for the State of Israel, and for what they have yet to do.

On the summit of Mount Scopus, we will guarantee peace for Jerusalem and for the State of Israel.

MAR, SZ, CM: The above is mostly rhetorical. Once the State of Israel is the state of all of its inhabitants, including Jews, rhetoric can more easily match reality. We believe that the achievement of any common humanist vision is premised on non-violence as the exclusive means for achieving it.

Benjamin Netanyahu is prime minister of Israel. Chibli Mallat is a former candidate to the Lebanese presidency, an attorney and law professor in the US and in Lebanon. He is the editor of The Daily Star law page. Muhammad Aburdaini is a Palestinian survivor of the 1982 Sabra and Shatila massacres. His family was decimated in the killings. He lives in London. Sharhabeel Al Zaeem is a leading Palestinian lawyer who lives in Gaza.

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## *EYES ON THE WORLD; The past 10 years in photographs*

The Sunday Times (London)

December 27, 2009

Edition 1, National Edition

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Section: SPECTRUM;FEATURES; Pg. 21,48

Length: 4774 words

### **Body**

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#### THE DECADE POLITICS

It was a truly momentous decade - captured in images on these pages by some of the world's foremost photographers. Dictators fell, terrorists brought death and destruction. In return we bombed and sent troops, but always seemed short of a long-term solution. While we debated global warming, storms wreaked havoc in Asia. And all the while, our most loved, and loathed, celebrities partied on regardless

#### ON THE COVER:

The body of 2nd Lieutenant James Cathey, killed in an explosion in Iraq in August 2005, arrives at Reno airport in Nevada. Marines drape a flag over his casket as the plane's passengers look on

#### FIRST LINE OF DEFENCE

Below: President George "Dubya" Bush, flanked by his vice-president, Dick Cheney (left), and Donald Rumsfeld, his defence secretary, outside his ranch in Texas in 2004. Four years later Bush is back in Texas permanently, while Cheney and Rumsfeld are writing their memoirs. Below right: Bush's successor, Barack Obama, and his family are showered with confetti following his acceptance speech in November 2008

#### TIMELINE

#### EVENTS OF THE DECADE

Some of the top stories from 2000 to today

#### MAY 11, 2000

India welcomes its billionth citizen, making it the second country whose population has reached 10 figures (China's now exceeds 1.3 billion). The baby girl, Astha (left) - Hindi for faith - is mobbed by journalists after her birth in New Delhi

## EYES ON THE WORLD The past 10 years in photographs

MAY 24, 2000

In accordance with a promise made by Ehud Barak, the Israeli prime minister, the country's forces withdraw from southern Lebanon, ending 22 years of occupation. Hezbollah, the Shi'ite Muslim group, holds victory celebrations

JUNE 26, 2000

The Human Genome Project announces that it has assembled a 'working draft' of the sequence of the human genome - the genetic blueprint for a human being. Bill Clinton and Tony Blair say it marks a new era of medical discovery

AUGUST 12, 2000

A torpedo explodes aboard the Russian submarine the Kursk, causing it to sink during a military exercise in the Barents Sea. All 118 crew members (some pictured left) die after the Russian government refuses foreign offers of help

NOVEMBER 7, 2000

Hillary Clinton is elected to the US Senate. The only first lady to hold elective office in US history, she is also the first **female** senator to represent New York state. She later resigns her seat to become Obama's secretary of state in January 2009

DECEMBER 13, 2000

George W Bush (left) is finally declared the 43rd president of the United States following a legal battle with Al Gore over vote-recounting in Florida. Bush says he is 'thankful that we are able to resolve our electoral differences in a peaceful way'

DECEMBER 18, 2000

The singer-songwriter Kirsty MacColl, 41, is killed in a boating accident in Mexico. While swimming with her two sons, she is hit by a speedboat owned by a Mexican supermarket millionaire. The boat hand convicted of the killing is later fined around £60

JANUARY 26, 2001

A huge earthquake strikes Gujarat in India and parts of Pakistan, killing tens of thousands of people and injuring many more (left). The quake coincides with Republic Day, a national holiday when many people take to the streets to celebrate

JUNE 1, 2001

Nepal's King Birendra and Queen Aiswarya are shot dead in Kathmandu, along with seven other members of the royal family. The assassin is their son, Crown Prince Dipendra, whose killing spree begins after a family row. He later shoots himself

DECEMBER 2, 2001

With losses running into billions, Enron files for bankruptcy. The Texasbased business, one of the world's largest electricityand-gas companies, subsequently becomes the focus of a criminal investigation and a byword for crooked accounting

JANUARY 1, 2002

Millions of Europeans in 12 countries begin spending their new currency, the euro (left). The name 'ecu' had been briefly considered, but was rejected because it sounded too much like Kuh - the German word for cow

## EYES ON THE WORLD The past 10 years in photographs

OCTOBER 12, 2002

In Indonesia's deadliest terrorist attack, three bombs explode in Bali, killing more than 200 people, most of them foreign holidaymakers (a memorial, left). Members of the Islamic group Jemaah Islamiyah are later sentenced for the attack

FEBRUARY 1, 2003

On re-entering the Earth's atmosphere, the space shuttle Columbia suddenly disintegrates, killing all seven crew members aboard (six of them are pictured right). It is the first accident during re-entry in more than 40 years of US spaceflight

MARCH 20, 2003

The US launches Operation Iraqi Freedom, its war against Iraq, with the aim of removing Saddam Hussein. Thousands of bombs and missiles hit Baghdad, and the ground invasion begins with troops crossing into southern Iraq from Kuwait

MAY 1, 2003

President Bush, speaking on the flight deck of the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln, makes the famously premature announcement that 'major combat operations in Iraq have ended'. He does this in front of a 'Mission Accomplished' banner

AUGUST 14, 2003

It is feared that Al-Qaeda has struck again, but mercifully it is only a power cut - albeit on an enormous scale. Vast tracts of the United States, including New York City (left) and parts of Canada, are plunged into darkness

OCTOBER 7, 2003

Ozzy Osbourne falls off a quad bike at his home in Buckinghamshire, breaking his collarbone, eight ribs and a vertebra in his neck. Later, the rock legend tells a reporter, 'I've finally grown up. The bloody thing nearly killed me. I am lucky to be here today'

FEBRUARY 4, 2004

The social-networking site Facebook (left) is founded by Mark Zuckerberg and a group of fellow students at Harvard. Initially limited to college students, it soon expands to include everybody else, and now boasts more than 350m active users worldwide

FEBRUARY 10, 2004

French MPs vote resoundingly in favour of a law banning Muslim head coverings (right) and other overtly religious symbols from being worn in French state schools. The ban is hugely contentious and seen as an attack on Muslims

FEBRUARY 29, 2004

The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King wins all 11 Academy Awards for which it is nominated. The final instalment in the Peter Jackson trilogy, it is the first fantasy film to scoop the best-picture Oscar. The trilogy cost almost \$300m to make

MARCH 11, 2004

Bombs on trains in Madrid (right) kill 191. Al-Qaeda claims responsibility after Spain's centre-right government blames Basque separatists. Spaniards later vote in the Socialist Workers' party, which says it will withdraw Spanish troops from Iraq

## EYES ON THE WORLD The past 10 years in photographs

NOVEMBER 22, 2004

Thousands of Ukrainians take to the streets in the Orange Revolution, showing support for the opposition leader, Viktor Yushchenko, who claims to have been poisoned by his opponents. He goes on to become president

FEBRUARY 15, 2005

The video-sharing website YouTube is launched by three former PayPal employees. The site began in humble surroundings above a pizzeria and Japanese restaurant in San Mateo, California. It was bought by Google in 2006 for \$1.65 billion

APRIL 19, 2005

In Rome, just over two weeks after the death of Pope John Paul II, the German cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (left), 78, is elected as pope, taking the name Benedict XVI. He is the oldest pope to be elected since Clement XII in 1730

JULY 8, 2005

At a summit in Gleneagles, Scotland, the leaders of the G8 industrial nations pledge to increase aid to developing countries by \$50 billion a year by 2010 and to cancel the debts of the poorest nations. But they fail to set firm targets for reducing CO2 emissions

SEPTEMBER 26, 2005

Lynndie England, the American soldier who was photographed holding a naked Iraqi inmate on a lead in Abu Ghraib prison in Baghdad (left), is found guilty of 'maltreating detainees' and sentenced to three years in prison

OCTOBER 8, 2005

Around 79,000 people in Pakistan-administered Kashmir are killed by an earthquake with a magnitude of 7.6. It also hits Indian Kashmir, killing a further 1,400 people. Tens of thousands of people are injured and over 3m left homeless

NOVEMBER 27, 2005

Surgeons in France perform the world's first partial face transplant. Isabelle Dinoire (left), 38, severely disfigured after being attacked by her labrador, is given a graft consisting of the nose, lips and chin of a brain-dead female donor

JANUARY 25, 2006

Supporters of Hamas (right) celebrate winning a large majority in the first Palestinian parliamentary election to take place in a decade, unseating the more secular and moderate Fatah. The hardline Islamic group wins 76 seats out of 132

MARCH 11, 2006

The former Serbian and Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic, branded the 'Butcher of the Balkans', is found dead in his cell at the detention centre for the UN war crimes tribunal in the Hague. He had died of a heart attack

MAY 27, 2006

A 6.3-magnitude earthquake about 15 miles from the Indonesian city of Yogyakarta kills more than 5,000 and leaves hundreds of thousands homeless. The Asian Development Bank pledges £32m in aid and loans to help those affected

JULY 28, 2006

## EYES ON THE WORLD The past 10 years in photographs

Mel Gibson (left) is charged with drink-driving after being stopped in Malibu. The actor asks the policemen if they are Jewish, and remarks that 'Jews are responsible for all the wars in the world'. Gibson later apologises to the Jewish community

AUGUST 23, 2006

A teenager held prisoner in an Austrian cellar for eight years manages to escape from her captor. Natascha Kampusch (right) vanished on her way to school in 1998. Her abductor, Wolfgang Priklopil, jumps under a train soon after her escape

AUGUST 24, 2006

Pluto, formerly regarded as the ninth planet in the solar system, is relegated to 'dwarf planet' status by the International Astronomical Union. The decision is based on the fact that its orbital path overlaps with asteroids and the planet Neptune

DECEMBER 30, 2006

Saddam Hussein, having been found guilty of crimes against humanity after a 12-month trial, is hanged at a compound in the Baghdad suburb of Khadimiya. The former Iraqi president was convicted of the murder of 148 Shi'ite Iraqis

JANUARY 1, 2007

Ban Ki-moon (left, being sworn in) replaces Kofi Annan as secretary general of the United Nations. The South Korean was not initially regarded as a strong contender, but became the favourite by travelling to each country in the UN Security Council

MARCH 16, 2007

Russia mourns after a huge underground explosion kills more than 100 workers in the Ulyanovskaya mine complex in southwestern Siberia. It is thought to have been caused by the spontaneous combustion of methane or coal dust

APRIL 3, 2007

During high-velocity trials on an extension to the French railway network, a TGV train smashes the world speed record for a train on conventional rails, exceeding 357mph near the city of Reims. Time for champagne - plenty of it is produced locally

APRIL 16, 2007

In the worst civilian shooting spree America has ever seen, a mentally unstable 23-year-old murders 32 people at Virginia Tech. The South Korean-born student Cho Seung-hui (left) ends the massacre by turning the gun on himself

JULY 7, 2007

Live Earth concerts to raise international awareness of climate change take place around the world, in locations including London, Sydney, Rome and Antarctica. Performers include Madonna, Kasabian (right), Bon Jovi and Alicia Keys

APRIL 4, 2008

Beyoncé Knowles and Shawn Carter, aka Jay-Z, (right) get married at the rapper's lavish New York penthouse apartment. The 'low-key' celebrations, for guests including Gwyneth Paltrow, involve a marquee decorated with 60,000 flown-in orchids

## EYES ON THE WORLD The past 10 years in photographs

AUGUST 1, 2008

Violence begins to flare in the breakaway Georgian region of South Ossetia. Russia sends troops to support South Ossetia and moves to support another rebel region, Abkhazia. The troops eventually withdraw after a Frenchbrokered peace deal

AUGUST 24, 2008

The 2008 Olympic Games end in Beijing (right). Although America's haul of 110 medals is the largest, China has won more gold medals, with 51. The US swimmer Michael Phelps takes home eight gold medals, beating Mark Spitz's 36-year record

SEPTEMBER 7, 2008

The US government steps in to prevent the collapse of the mortgage giants Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae - otherwise known as the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation and the Federal National Mortgage Association

SEPTEMBER 10, 2008

Deep below the Franco-Swiss border, the Large Hadron Collider (LHC), the world's biggest particle accelerator, goes into action. It is hoped that it will detect the Higgs boson particle, a holy grail of physics. But a magnetic fault shuts it down

SEPTEMBER 15, 2008

The US sees the largest bankruptcy in its history, as the investment bank Lehman Brothers collapses. Saddled with a mountain of bad debt, its chairman and CEO, Richard Fuld (right) has been refused help by the US government

NOVEMBER 4, 2008

The US elects its first African-American president. 'If there is anyone out there who still doubts that America is a place where all things are possible... tonight is your answer,' says Barack Obama in his victory speech the following day

DECEMBER 14, 2008

At a Baghdad news conference during his farewell visit to Iraq, President Bush (left) becomes the target for a pair of shoes thrown by the television journalist Muntadar al-Zaidi, who is jailed - and becomes a hero to many Iraqis

JANUARY 14, 2009

In a 22-minute audio recording posted on Islamic websites, a man purported to be Osama Bin Laden threatens President Bush's successor with a renewed jihad. He also suggests that the financial crisis will erode America's influence around the world

JANUARY 15, 2009

After its engines become disabled, a US plane flying from New York to Charlotte, North Carolina, is successfully ditched in the Hudson river (left) by its 57-year-old pilot, Chesley B Sullenberger III, saving the lives of all 155 people on board

FEBRUARY 11, 2009

Morgan Tsvangirai is sworn in as prime minister of Zimbabwe by his longstanding nemesis, President Robert Mugabe, creating a 'unity government'. 'It is not a perfect arrangement,' admits Tsvangirai, 'but it is still a workable one'

## EYES ON THE WORLD The past 10 years in photographs

MARCH 19, 2009

Josef Fritzl (right) is jailed for life in Austria, after the 73-year-old is found guilty of incarcerating and repeatedly raping his daughter Elisabeth over 24 years in the basement of the family home, and of killing one of the seven children she bore him

JUNE 25, 2009

Millions of fans mourn after Michael Jackson dies of a heart attack at the age of 50. The singer's body is found to contain a cocktail of prescription drugs. His 11-year-old daughter, Paris (right), pays tribute to him at a star-studded memorial service in July

JUNE 29, 2009

Bernard Madoff is sentenced to 150 years in prison after perpetrating the biggest swindle in American financial history. The financier had robbed thousands of investors to the tune of £40 billion, using a fraudulent investment operation

JUNE 30, 2009

A national holiday in Iraq (right) marks the muchtalked-about withdrawal of US troops from Iraqi cities. 'We feel confident in the Iraqi security forces continuing the process of taking over,' says General David Petraeus, the US forces commander

SEPTEMBER 26, 2009

The 76-year-old film director Roman Polanski is arrested in Zurich after travelling to collect an award. The United States is demanding his extradition, as he fled the country in 1978 after admitting to having sex with an underage girl

NOVEMBER 19, 2009

The Belgian prime minister, 62-year-old Herman van Rompuy, is elected as the first permanent president of the European Council. Van Rompuy has been dubbed the 'Belgian Waffler', but he did outflank Tony Blair for the job

NOVEMBER 27, 2009

A minor car crash is the inauspicious start to the unravelling of the life of Tiger Woods, who later admits to a string of infidelities. To appease his incandescent wife, Elin Nordegren, Woods announces he will temporarily give up golf

DECEMBER 1, 2009

President Obama announces a deployment of 30,000 more troops to Afghanistan over the next six months, but says all troops will begin to return home in 18 months (July 2011). Nine days later, Obama accepts the Nobel peace prize (right)

DECEMBER 13, 2009

An attacker strikes Italian prime minister Silvio Berlusconi in the face with a metal replica of Milan's cathedral, fracturing his nose and two teeth. The assault takes place at a political rally in the city as he is signing autographs

THE DECADE WAR

FORCES TO BE RECKONED WITH

War in Iraq dominated the headlines, and at the end of the decade we're still arguing over whether we were right to send in troops. Top: US soldiers take up defensive positions against the Taliban in Afghanistan's Kunar province in

## EYES ON THE WORLD The past 10 years in photographs

May 2009 - one in his "I love NY" boxer shorts. Right: a prisoner in an outdoor solitary confinement cell at Abu Ghraib prison in Baghdad, Iraq. His garb is redolent of the infamous Abu Ghraib "torture" images. Above: Saddam Hussein undergoes a medical examination in Baghdad shortly after his arrest in 2003. He would be hanged on December 30, 2006

## EYEWITNESS

DR MOWAFFAK ALRUBAIE, IRAQ NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER, ON SADDAM'S EXECUTION

"Saddam was a few inches away. He radiated the same arrogance and disdain he had shown toward the people who refused to bow to his tyranny. I asked him if he felt remorse, if he wanted to pray to God to forgive him. He said, pointing to the gallows, 'This is for men, doctor: do not be frightened.' I wanted to remind him that I was not the one about to be executed. He expressed no sign of apology. Then the trap door was opened, Saddam dropped and with an audible crack his neck snapped. It was the final symbol of Iraqi emancipation. We could breathe freely"

## THE DECADE RUSSIA

RUSSIAN ROULETTE Far right: Vladimir Putin, the Russian prime minister, inadvertently becomes a macho gay icon in 2009. Right: a hostage slumps against a bus window in 2002 after Russian special forces storm a Moscow theatre in which Chechens are holding 850 people. The Russians pump an unidentified gas into the building to poison the gunmen; over 100 hostages die as a result. Above: a man holds a dead relative after a Russian plane bombs the town of Gori, near Georgia's breakaway province of South Ossetia in 2008

## EYEWITNESS

LARISA SIDAKOVA, SURVIVOR, ON THE BESLAN SCHOOL SIEGE IN NORTH OSSETIA, 2004

'I held my daughter Aida in the first minutes of turmoil inside the gym. I thought, we were together, all would be fine. I was unaware that the terror was only beginning. We're still waiting for positive change in our lives. Aida lost an eye, but she is doing well. She likes to do the same things as any other 12-year-old. After the attack I began to look at Beslan with different eyes. We have been torn apart into those who lost and those who survived'

## THE DECADE MIGRATION

## GROUNDED

Men, women and children from poorer countries continued to leave their homes for the dream of a better life in Europe. Here a tourist comforts one of the 46 African migrants washed up onto a Tenerife beach when their boat runs aground in 2006. Thousands of would-be immigrants, most from Morocco and sub-Saharan Africa, were intercepted off the Canary Islands that summer. The unluckiest drowned in the treacherous waters of the Atlantic

## EYEWITNESS

NELSON PIQUET JR, FORMULA ONE CHEAT

"I cannot believe I agreed to carry out the order to crash my car, but when it was put to me I felt I wasn't in a position to refuse. I had been living with the knowledge of what had happened for a year before everyone else found out, so when it all came to light a few months ago, it was a weight off my shoulders. I'm glad that the truth is now known. I have had criticism, but I have also had a huge amount of support. I would love to have another opportunity in Formula One. There will be no driver as determined as me to prove myself. My actions over the next decade will define me to a greater extent than the last"

## THE DECADE SPORT

## THE GLORY DETAILS



## EYES ON THE WORLD The past 10 years in photographs

Usain Bolt wins the 200-metres gold medal at the 2008 Beijing Olympics. Far left: the Brazilian racing driver Nelson Piquet Jr walks away from the car he has crashed deliberately in September 2008. Below left: France's Zinedine Zidane is sent off at the 2006 World Cup final for head-butting Marco Materazzi in the chest

## THE DECADE MIDDLE EAST

## PHOTO OPPORTUNITY

Lebanese friends drive through a devastated part of Beirut in 2006. Top right: Jewish settlers clash with Israeli troops as they clear a West Bank settlement in 2006. Bottom right: student Neda Agha-Soltan lies dying after being shot during protests in Tehran, Iran, in 2009. Her death is broadcast on YouTube

## EYEWITNESS

## HALEH ESFANDIARI, ACADEMIC, ON IRAN

"I was in prison for 105 days. What kept me going was a strict regimen. I would get up at six, shower and change, then pace up and down the stairs writing two books in my head: a story for my grandchildren and a biography of my grandmother. I read the Koran cover to cover twice. I saw it as an education. The last decade has been a struggle for Iran, between the advocates of democracy and the hardliners who don't have a problem with crushing it in brutal ways. There has to be a change in the coming decade. There will be demands from a younger generation who want access to western education, employment, a better economy. I'm confident we will see new attempts by Iranians to redirect the country"

## THE DECADE WILDLIFE

DEATH IN THE CONGO Anti-poaching rangers transport a dead mountain gorilla in Virunga National Park, Congo, in July 2007. Henry Chiriza, of the charity Gorilla Organization, says over a dozen gorillas were killed in the park that year. 'The authorities investigated and some rangers and a former conservation director were arrested. Rangers risk their lives every day to protect the gorillas, for \$30 a month. Corruption runs deep. But we are optimistic'

## THE DECADE TERROR

## IMAGES OF CONFLICT

Left: the unrepentant Bali bomber Abdul Aziz chats with his daughter during a prison visit in October 2007; he will be executed by firing squad. Far left, below: the terrorist Ajmal Qasab saunters through Mumbai's railway station. Below left: Benazir Bhutto speaks in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, in December 2007. Soon after, she is assassinated. Right: crowds in Zaragoza in March 2004 protest against the Madrid bombings

## EYEWITNESS

## SHERRY REHMAN, BENAZIR BHUTTO'S SPOKESPERSON, ON PAKISTAN

"Benazir Bhutto was the bravest person I've had the privilege of knowing. She knew that she might face death when she rushed back to Pakistan from seeing her children in Dubai after General Musharraf imposed a state of emergency on November 3, 2007. But she wanted people to know she was with them at that dark hour. After her bus was blown up [on October 18, 2007], she was advised to stay indoors. But she fiercely rejected that as cowardice. She had weighed up her life on the scales of history. She talked as if she had a premonition almost, and had come to terms with giving up her life for the sake of her vision. We would talk late into the night about how we would fight terrorism, because she was obsessed with saving Pakistan from this evil"

## THE DECADE SPACE

## THE X FACTOR

## EYES ON THE WORLD The past 10 years in photographs

Views from the Hubble Space Telescope (yellow), the Spitzer Space Telescope (red) and the Chandra X-ray Observatory (blue and violet) combine to produce an unprecedented image of our galaxy's core, using infrared and x-ray light to see through the dust. The bright-blue blob below is an emission from a double star system possibly containing a black hole

## EYEWITNESS

## COLIN PILLINGER, THE MAN BEHIND THE BEAGLE 2, ON ITS MISSION TO MARS

'Beagle 2 was not a failure, though we never received a signal after it landed on Mars. The team that built its instruments were funded by the Wellcome Trust on the understanding that we would use our skills for medical research. We've now reached the point where we'll soon be able to diagnose TB in one day. Next year, we'll ship out instruments to Africa and save countless lives'

## THE DECADE NATURE

## ELEMENTAL FURY

Mother Nature proved to be a harsh parent. Above: a rescuer arranges school bags, found in the debris of a primary school. Bereaved parents claim them following an earthquake that killed at least 70,000 in China's Sichuan province in May 2008. Right: a woman mourns a drowned loved one in Tamil Nadu, India, in December 2004. The Boxing Day tsunami, the worst in history, killed 230,000 people in 11 countries, left thousands more orphaned and inflicted lasting damage to the marine environment

## EYEWITNESS

## CHRISTOPHER COLERIDGE COLE, WHO WAS WITH HIS FAMILY IN KHAO LAK, THAILAND, ON THE TSUNAMI

"We'd just left our villa when we saw the wave. There was no time to feel anything - we just turned and ran. The current carried me, my two sons and daughter into a swamp. It was like being in a big washing machine. We grabbed tops of trees to save ourselves. It was 36 hours before we discovered my wife was safe. It puts everything into perspective"

## THE DECADE CELEBRITIES

## KISSING AND SELLING

Top left: Janet Jackson "accidentally" exposes her breast onstage with Justin Timberlake in February 2004. Left: Britney just has to kiss Madonna - or was it vice versa? - at the 2003 MTV Video Music Awards in August 2003. Above: Jack Nicholson, looking a tad lardy, entertains female companions on his friend Tony Rizzo's yacht, in the Med in July 2007. Top right: a shaven-headed Britney tries to smash up a car outside ex-boyfriend Kevin Federline's house in LA in February 2007. Right: an overexcited Tom Cruise jumps for joy, professing his love for Katie Holmes, on Oprah's sofa in May 2005. Far right: the artist Daniel Edwards's sculpture Brangelina Forever is unveiled in December 2009

## EYEWITNESS

## JAY LENO, TALK-SHOW HOST, ON ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER

"I've never seen a politician keep a real secret. Usually it's 'I'll give my opinion on that...' when you know well what the answer is. So we are talking at the top of his segment [in August 2003] and he is doing the 'Maria joke'. Arnold always comes with a couple of jokes about his wife, Maria, running the house. He's always funny. People love him. 'Okay, now the big question: are you running for governor of California?' And he says: 'Yes, I am.' I was stunned. I saw his people go 'What?' It wasn't fake. They had nothing in place press-wise, so it was a complete surprise. It worked out well for him"

## EYES ON THE WORLD The past 10 years in photographs

## THE DECADE AFRICA

## ON THE ATTACK

Above: Joseph Duo, a Liberian militia commander loyal to the government, is exultant after firing a rocket-propelled grenade at rebel forces at a strategic bridge in Monrovia in July 2003. Right: Masai warriors with bows and arrows fight members of the Kalenjin tribe in western Kenya in March 2008. The battles begin at dawn and are waged from a distance. The tribes have clashed over land disputes following botched local elections in December 2007. Below: in readiness for an attack, a Somali pirate, Abdul Hassan, 39, carries a rocketpropelled grenade near a small boat with some of his crew on board, in October 2008. He is nicknamed The One Who Never Sleeps. His pirate group, the Central Regional Coast Guard, comprises 350 men and a squadron of 100 speedboats. In 2008, they attacked 39 ships, and made \$10m

## THE DECADE KATRINA

## FIRES OF HELL

Buildings ablaze in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, in New Orleans, September 2006. Wind speeds had reached 200km/h. The levee system catastrophically failed, leaving 80% of the city under water. The flood waters lingered for weeks, with some people refusing to leave their homes. More than 1,800 people died in the hurricane and the subsequent floods

## EYEWITNESS

## KATHY ZEITOUN, HOUSEWIFE, ON HURRICANE KATRINA

'I left New Orleans with my children before Katrina destroyed our home, but my husband stayed to look after his business. After the hurricane we heard he'd been arrested on terrorism charges. He was trying to help our neighbours, delivering food in his canoe, when he was stopped by the military. His first name is Abdulrahman.

He was born in Syria. That was enough for them to throw him in jail. The charges were eventually dropped. You can't allow yourself to focus on the negative. This is where we built our lives together, and we are going to stay put'

## THE DECADE WATER

## THE BEAR FACTS

This was the decade in which the polar bear became the symbol of the threat of global warming. We saw the bears clinging to tiny ice floes, and heard that they were drowning from exhaustion. Meanwhile, the climatechange debate still rages - denialists insist there is no such thing as man-made global warming. Above: chinstrap penguins gather on a blue iceberg near Candlemas Island, Antarctica, in January 2006. Left: a polar bear dives underwater in the Arctic Ocean in January 2003. Below: viewed through a magnifier in 2008, seawater teems with life. The planktonic soup includes bug-like copepods, long arrow worms and a larval crab the size of a rice grain

## Graphic

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EYES ON THE WORLD The past 10 years in photographs

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**Load-Date:** December 27, 2009

## *The Jewish Beduin*

The Jerusalem Post

December 11, 2009 Friday

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**Section:** FEATURES; Pg. 16

**Length:** 5045 words

**Byline:** LAUREN GELFOND FELDINGER

**Highlight:** Living with Beduin and uncovering a looming public health disaster started British-born Ilana Meallem on a journey as a Jewish emissary into the Muslim world. Interview

### **Body**

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She could never have expected to drop her crusade for marine biology to live among the Beduin in Israel. Growing up Orthodox and Zionist, she could never have imagined any of the Middle East desert adventures that were to follow.

Ilana Meallem, 32, grew up in London underneath an Israeli flag tacked to the wall over her bed. Her Egyptian father of Iraqi descent filled her childhood with stories about fleeing repression in Egypt, and adventure tales of Israel's pre-state underground forces working against the British. On public buses, she watched as her non-Jewish peers taunted her siblings in their Jewish day school uniforms. England was for her just a random country housing her family until she could grow up and escape to her spiritual homeland in Israel.

After volunteering for two years in the IAF as a reconnaissance photographer, and then studying biology and environmental studies at Hebrew University, she spent most of her early 20s traveling. She started in Cairo to find the cousins she had never met. In South America and Asia, she volunteered in disadvantaged communities and interned at conservation societies for dolphins, whales, turtles, coral reefs and nature reserves. Later, when she signed on for graduate studies at the Arava Institute of Environmental Studies and Ben-Gurion University's desert studies program, she came armed with a proposal dedicated to dolphin welfare.

But the people she met there, combined with a sustainable-development field trip to unrecognized Beduin villages in the Negev, made her realize that she didn't need to look for people and projects to help all over the world when there was so much to be done at home and in the region.

Are you a Beduin?

My friends call me a techo-beduin, because I'm hooked up to wireless Internet through a cellphone modem. But I have been nomadic for the past 12 years, and in the last six it has been extreme, moving all over the Middle East and the world with my laptop and drum. In the last two years my lifestyle took a major upgrade, and now, when in Israel, I use a camper, not as a car but as my home, parked alone in forests, deserts, by riverbanks, beaches, in friends' backyards and in Beduin villages.

The van has a kitchen and bed, but I don't sleep in the van unless it's raining. Sleeping under the stars and waking up with the sun helps me feel grounded, connected, inspired and rejuvenated. I love to light a fire at dawn and await the new day. I make bread on a Beduin sajja [a metal plate over a fire] and I shower in nature at any water source, or

## The Jewish Beduin

simply from a two-liter water bottle with holes in the lid. I live as close to nature and people as possible with minimal impact on the environment and maximum freedom.

What was the first thing that happened in your travels that influenced your lifestyle?

Through a cetacean training at the Phuket Marine Biology Research Center in Thailand, I joined a one-month river dolphin survey in Bangladesh's Sunderbans, the largest mango forest in the world, famous for its man-eating Bengal tigers. I was the only Jewish person with 29 Muslims, one Christian and a Hindu.

On the boat, I frequently hung out below deck, talking, singing and playing my drum with the crew. These workers - fisherman, guards, cooks, the captain - were blown away. Even the Bangladeshi researchers rarely came below deck - workers and researchers are always segregated. Soon all of us were having cultural nights on deck, dancing, singing and praying together in Bengali, Arabic and Hebrew. I was the first Jew any of them had met and they started to call me "the healer."

I always loved being in nature, but this was the beginning of my journey in trust and faith, and seeing myself on a mission to bring a positive Jewish example into the Muslim world.

What was one of the most unexpected things that happened in your travels?

I was staying in Dacca, the capital of Bangladesh, with the family of a friend from the survey. They were in love with the movie Fiddler on the Roof - they grew up with it and knew all the songs. I would never have dreamed that I would arrive in this far away place, surrounded by a population of some 12 million Muslims, and that they would be watching this and that I would be watching with them, singing with them and explaining things, like what is a kippa and what all the customs are. They were so excited to meet a Jew.

Why did you leave all your adventures to go to graduate school?

I came back to Jerusalem for my sister's wedding and, by chance, heard about the Arava Institute for Environmental Studies, an interdisciplinary program training Palestinians, Israelis, Jordanians and internationals as the region's next environmental leaders. I realized that to solve environmental problems it is not enough to know science - you also have to fund-raise, understand cultural, political, social and gender aspects and how to establish or work with NGOs. It became clear I needed more training. I wrote my application while volunteering in a shanty town in Chile.

A few months later I was working in the Pantanal Nature Reserve in Brazil, leading safaris on horseback, swimming with piranhas and anacondas, helping set up an ecological center and training hunters as guides. I had to travel one hour to a phone for my interview.

Once accepted to study, you intended to focus on the Israeli bottlenose dolphin population. What happened?

We had a field trip to Wad el-Nam, an unrecognized Beduin village in the Negev, next to the Ramat Hovav toxic waste treatment facility. These people were living without electricity, in tin shacks under huge high-voltage lines from the power station, and were getting sick from the pollution. And I was touched by these tribal women. I had seen the makeshift villages surrounded by garbage, but never thought about why they live like this.

This began a journey to understand how government policies forcing these once proud, healthy and vibrant semi-nomadic people off their traditional range lands to relocate and urbanize, left them without traditional livelihoods, with scarce possibilities and with huge public health problems. I was struck - I had been all over the world volunteering and right under my nose in a place I love so much was something so unjust and volatile.

Wasn't this also the first time you met Palestinians?

I never had a deep connection with a Palestinian. Like many Israelis, I was afraid of them and believed they wanted to throw all us Jews into the sea. At the Arava Institute, it was my first time to hear personal stories of hardship faced by Palestinians and Jordanians and Arabs living in Israel. I trusted these accounts - they were not from books

## The Jewish Beduin

or newspapers but were personal histories from real people who had become my friends. Their stories opened my eyes to understand better the complexities of the region.

How did you come to live with the Beduin?

The more I learned, the more I couldn't believe what was happening there and the more I realized that Israelis don't know. So I told my adviser that even though I have no background in anthropology, sociology or Arabic, I have to live with the Beduin to understand. He connected me to an expert on Negev and Sinai Beduin, who introduced me to a Beduin family. I was also able to get several scholarships to research environmental health in Beduin communities.

What are your first memories about the Negev Beduin village of Umm Batin?

I first went to meet them during Ramadan. A respected sheikh in the village took me to a very bare tin home with asbestos ceilings. Everything was broken and poor. One of his wives spoke some English and we had an amazing conversation about her premarital life in a nearby Beduin township, before moving to live in the harsh conditions of this unrecognized village. We ate rice and I picked out the meat.

A few months later, I came back, this time to stay for a few months and conduct my study. My first day I hung out with the women and kids, drumming and dancing to songs on their transistor radio. The father has three wives, 15 kids and 13 grandchildren. He said: "You are like my daughter now; welcome to my home. You have my protection. Don't walk alone outside after dark, but know that you are safe." They were so warm to me.

I slept outside under a mosquito net on uncovered mats with the kids and the wife who was not having her alternating night with the sheikh. Lying under the stars, I would tell them about my world and straight away became a member of the family. I never once felt in danger, especially since I put on the head scarf. They were really touched by that. The most dangerous thing in a Beduin village is the dogs. I carried stones in my pocket. When I went to see my family for Shabbat, it was like going from the Sudan to Switzerland.

What did you do all day?

I conducted a pioneering field research into the public and environmental health impacts of waste disposal practices related to Israeli government policies of denying or providing inadequate basic municipal services to the Negev Beduin population. I observed and led interviews to learn about how their way of life changed, what do they buy, what do they use, what do they throw away and where.

After three months, I lived with another family and recruited a research assistant from the village. Using his non-roadworthy car, which we turned on with a knife, we drove all over Beduin areas, even in Tel Sheva, where even the police don't go. In these areas, it's the wild west. My identity made it easier to build trust - being from England with a Jewish Egyptian father and that I was learning Arabic. As a foreign woman, I also had access to the men's and the women's worlds.

What did your research find?

Despite having official documents of land ownership from the Ottoman Empire, the villagers of Umm Batin fought for recognition by Israel for decades, suffering from home demolitions and the spraying of herbicides on their crops until 2005, when they won the legal battle. Traditionally, lifestyles revolved around raising livestock and practicing rain-fed agriculture, and all the organic waste was put to use as food for livestock, fertilizer for land or energy sources for heating and cooking. Old clothes were reused as rags for sanitation or as patches for clothes and tents. Hides from slaughtered animals, wool and hair were used as stuffing for mattresses or pillows, to weave tents, make bags or decorations.

But in the past 25 to 30 years, government policies and the villagers' increased contact with modern lifestyles and Western consumer culture resulted in a shift from the traditional "waste free" lifestyles. Today consumption levels are much higher and the kinds and amounts of waste being produced and needing disposal include tin, aluminum, plastic, glass, metal, concrete and diapers. Yet without access to municipal waste disposal services, the villagers

## The Jewish Beduin

are literally being buried under their own waste. Burning of waste in the backyards is the most common disposal method. This is a serious health concern: New types of waste contain materials that, when burned, are explosive or produce toxic chemicals, such as dioxins and furans.

Add to this pollution, people placing contaminated wood and used plastic bags on the fire used for heating, cooking, washing, making tea and baking Beduin pita. All these pollutants can make people very sick - migraines, birth deformities, cancer and respiratory problems. For this reason, burning waste is illegal in Israel. For cultural reasons, women especially deal with the waste and are enclosed at home more, so they and their children are most at risk. There is minimal awareness of these hazards and safer options are often unavailable for economic reasons. The Hebron wadi, which runs for four kilometers through the heart of the village, was also polluted with hazardous chromium, and sheep and goats grazed on vegetation contaminated by this untreated sewage, meaning the meat can be toxic. There was also a huge stench that is horrific from the sewage and piles of rubbish, animal waste and on occasions, dead animal carcasses.

Is paying municipal taxes a factor in getting municipal services, like garbage removal?

In general, yes. But in the case of unrecognized villages, you cannot pay taxes if the settlement is not recognized. But even the seven legal Beduin townships get less funding from the national government compared to Jewish towns and, with their extremely high population density, less land is available to safely distance waste dumping from the homes. This encourages the use of informal and hazardous alternatives, like in some cases, garbage and animal waste burning seen in the middle of town.

Further worsening the situation is general poverty and absence of any real economic activity in the Beduin settlements, meaning municipalities collect extremely low levels of taxes. Since government grants supposed to compensate for this deficiency fall short, the level of municipal services is well below acceptable levels.

But this is a very complex issue with many political, economic and cultural power dynamics. Regardless, my research showed that the environmental and public health impact of the lacking municipal services in this community also potentially endangers neighboring Jewish communities. So this is really a transboundary environmental and public health issue that should be of concern to all.

The restriction on grazing in the village and the desire to keep raising livestock means that manure and soiled straw from animal pens piles up next to homes, attracting rats that bite children, flea infestation and waste that is so bothersome that residents often burn it and the fires sometimes smolder for weeks, creating choking smoke and hidden coals that children often stumble onto, burning hands and feet. In addition, the absence of electricity means diesel generators are prevalent, but very costly, so are operated only for a few hours, meaning refrigerators do not keep food fresh during off hours. Gas is prevalent for cooking and heating but also a big expense for this impoverished society, so there are cases of Beduin children dying of pneumonia in harsh winters.

What solutions have you proposed?

This whole issue of energy and waste is a big problem, but one solution is to turn this waste into a resource and use the human and animal manure to create biogas to fuel lights, cook on, run refrigerators, heaters and as a fertilizer by-product. I approached the Arava Institute, which helped me and Arab alumnus Mazen Zoabi to work together to develop a Beduin biogas project, in cooperation with many academic institutions and NGOs. We are developing an integrated biogas system adapted to arid lands. At a training course in China we met a Jordanian biogas researcher and have since developed a project for small-scale biogas digesters in Beduin communities in Jordan and Israel. We are now building our first pilot. It's an amazing solution that came out of my research.

Was your level of freedom difficult for the Beduin?

This is a big conflict in my life: For any woman, the way I live in my camper and traveling the world and sleeping outside is on the extreme side of free. I meet so many people who are more restricted than me. Some of my Beduin sisters have zero freedom. For most of them it's just a dream to travel, and I worry if it is fair that I'm sharing stories



## The Jewish Beduin

of my journeys. But I know each person has her path. I was born with a certain level of freedom and feel it is my obligation to maximize this, to live life to its fullest, because I can and so many people cannot.

Sometimes it has a certain level of influence. Three young Beduin girls in the family I lived with are now doing a year of community service in Beduin towns and villages. One will study environmental science and my research assistant even traveled to Turkey and Brazil. When in the village, I often find myself helping to prepare Beduin women for their wedding night - we have amazing late-night conversations about the feminine aspects of life. I gave one woman her first massage, she was crying out of gratitude. It is insane. How many times have I received a massage in my life?

Were there cultural difficulties for you?

Some women cannot go to the health clinic without being escorted by men, but some women go on to study medicine, so the independence of women really varies within Beduin society. Verbal and physical fighting seems common and there is a lot of tension between the wives. I saw a lot of difficult things, but was careful to keep a neutral position. I try to be true to who I am and how I act affects them. For example, the kids don't get a lot of affection but they know from me they will get a lot of hugs and love. I am myself and people see that and take what they want.

How did living with the Beduin influence you?

I learned a lot of Arabic there and it helped me to make friends and appreciate Arabic culture, something I was afraid of before. I have since visited Jordan 25 times and Egypt 10 times, and other places around the region, and Arabic is the key to connecting and feeling comfortable. Before if I sat at a bus stop and someone was speaking Arabic, I got nervous. I didn't know what they were saying, and now I can turn and speak to them. I also learned Arabic dance from the many weddings and to make bread on a sajj - very useful when you live outdoors.

Most of all, I learned about hospitality. Beduin are the ultimate hosts and as a Jew I learned that this was the trait of the patriarch Abraham/Ibrahim, the father of Isaac and Ishmael, the ancestor of all Jews, Christians and Muslims, that his tent would be open from all sides, welcoming all who came.

Through my camper and my nomadic life, I also try to create a sacred space that welcomes everyone. Last winter I hosted hundreds of people from all over Israel and the West Bank at the Dead Sea. I am sure I was able to create this welcoming space because of my years knowing the Beduin and learning to love part of the Arab culture and embodying this very positive aspect of their tradition.

You often sleep alone in the wilderness. Don't you get scared?

I love to feel a trust in the universe and in the creator. Lying under the stars, before I sleep, I always say the Jewish prayer, "afkid ruchi b'yadecha"- I place my spirit in your hands- and I mean it with all my heart.

When you travel alone in the Middle East alone, have you been threatened?

In Jordan, after meeting with King Abdullah to talk about Israeli youth, I went with a group of delegates to hear live oud music. As I was dancing, a 60-year-old man asked me where I was from. I said, "I am your neighbor." He said, "What? From Israel?" and he put his hands around my throat. I said, "It's okay; I love you" - it just came out. I even surprised myself with this automatic response. I knew it wasn't me he wanted to choke but all the stories and his suffering that at that moment I represented. I looked into his eyes and said it again and he let go and walked away. I couldn't believe it. Later he came back and started to talk to me. He told me he was a Palestinian refugee and I told him who I am, what I do, and we talked for a while. It was a powerful experience.

Things are not always what you expect. My Beduin family has half their family in Jordan and once when I went with their tribe to visit, I got off the bus in Amman and took a taxi. The driver saw that I had Hebrew written in my notebook and told me he was from the West Bank and had worked with Jews selling fruits and vegetables in Lod, before travel was restricted. He loved Hebrew so insisted on driving me for one hour to my destination instead of

## The Jewish Beduin

dropping me at the bus stop, so that we could talk in Hebrew. He also put in a tape of [Israeli singer] Zehava Ben. The next week he hosted me in his house in Amman to meet his family.

There is so much desire for connection if you meet people and are not fearful. Whenever I travel the Middle East, I have always told the truth about my roots, born in England to a Jewish family with a father from Egypt and now based in Jerusalem. But for a nomad like me, who has spent time in nearly 50 countries in the last 12 years, where I am from is a complicated question.

Recently I have started responding with a quote from the Koran, "Min blaad Allah el awasa"- I am from the magnificent country of God, which is the same source for all people, and always in the Middle East, people respond to this with, "waana kaman," - and me too. This always leads to a wonderful conversation about good and bad people in all religions and countries.

What have you been doing recently?

Since completing my research in 2006, which received two awards, I have been working at the Arava Institute on the Beduin biogas project and, with other alumni, on projects to encourage the network of graduates from all over the region to stay connected and involved in joint environmental projects in Israel, Palestine and Jordan.

Most recently, I also initiated several workshops in Jordan, Egypt, Turkey, Palestine and Israel that teach a holistic approach to activism. So many young peace and environmental activists from this region are burned out, exhausted and even depressed, so we encourage them to work together on overcoming personal and community obstacles, and to build personal, community and environmental sustainability, which we consider to be peace-building. We use tools from many traditions, from yoga to talking workshops and studying the earth-based wisdoms of the American Indians. Such tools are especially hard for activists from the Arab and Muslim countries to access, and doing it together with Israelis is very complex and challenging but ultimately very powerful. At the events held in Jordan, Turkey and Egypt, we have had young peace activists participate from countries including Iran, Iraq, UAE, Egypt and Afghanistan, together with Israelis.

I am also a core member of the Musaique Project, with musicians from around the Middle East, who meet to play, sing, perform and record together.

Don't you meet people in the Middle East who don't want to affiliate with an Israeli Jew?

At a UN energy training course in Amman, I was the only Jewish Israeli with six Palestinian and Jordanian Arava Institute graduates and 60 people from the Middle East, including Saudis, Kuwaitis, Syrians, Lebanese, Yemenis and Iraqis. Many participants were upset that an Israeli was there and determined to avoid contact with me. The next day I decided to sit next to a woman from Lebanon and immediately asked her about how her family was affected by the last war with Israel, saying that I was sorry for her suffering. I think this really shocked her and slowly she opened up and we connected.

On the third day we were supposed to watch Al Gore's film on the environment, and by mistake or serendipity, someone put on Encounter Point, a film made by the Bereaved Parents Forum, showing Palestinian and Israeli families who lost relatives in the fighting and were working together for reconciliation and change in their own societies. Nobody from any of these represented Arab countries would likely have seen such a program and they were taken by surprise.

Twenty minutes later, when the organizers came to check on us and saw the wrong film playing, they tried to switch it, but nobody wanted them to. Person after person came up to me afterward in tears and told me that after this film they were able to better understand where I might be coming from and that it was so powerful to meet their first Jew or Israeli. I developed deep and real relationships with many participants and presented my work on the Beduin and this was also a credential for me, that as a Jewish Israeli I went to live with and cared about Palestinian Beduin. The mutual love and respect between myself and the Arab Arava graduates also did wonders and gave a powerful message.

## The Jewish Beduin

With a young delegation at the Fourth Petra Peace Conference last year, most of the Arabs from Palestine, Syria, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, etc., boycotted the Jewish Israelis because 26 Palestinians had been killed in Gaza that morning and because participants from their delegations in the previous year had problems with all the publicity when they returned home. I was not aware of the boycott and just kept trying to connect. The people from Arab and Muslim states were not so responsive but on the last day, the Palestinian boycott organizers said, "Thank you, you never stopped smiling or trying to speak to us. This meant so much to us and the boycott was really was a mistake - you are the people we should have come to to get our story out." This is the real peace work.

What's next?

During the violence in Sderot and Gaza last January, it was clear to me that Palestinian and Israeli activists needed to maintain relations and support each other, so I organized two weekend gatherings at the Dead Sea. At the first event, 100 Israelis and Palestinians came, and the next, 150 came - about 60 percent were Palestinians from Ramallah, Jerusalem, Hebron, Nablus and Bethlehem and Beduin from across the Negev and the North. Everyone brought food, wood, tents, water. We had sharing circles, prayers, workshops and just hung out for a few days.

For so many Palestinian and Israeli organizations, it is difficult to find meeting places, let alone in a nourishing and rejuvenating environment. It is often humiliating and time consuming for Palestinians to get permits to enter Israel. So often we travel abroad to meetings in the US, Turkey and Jordan, spending thousands of dollars. But there is a common vision to build a permanent retreat center in part of the West Bank that has easy access to Israelis and Palestinians. It will be built in an ecological way, and use permaculture and other sustainability and renewable energy techniques, in a natural setting. This will be created by Israelis, Palestinians and internationals, some of whom will live on site in the community. This will be a place I could settle in, trade my caravan for a simple home and start creating my own tribe.

In the short term, in addition to my other Middle East projects, my next step is moving my home to its winter location at the Dead Sea for two or three months and continuing to hold joint retreats and gatherings in nature, including one in January for Palestinian and Israeli women.

How do you finance these projects?

Fund-raising is so time consuming and often filled with great letdowns. I wish to have access to enough funds to be able to run these events in peace and provide scholarships if needed. But maybe this is part of my inner work, to plan in the belief that things will work out; that somehow adequate funds will arrive as this good work is so needed.

Many people say that this kind of work is the work of hippies who live in their own world and are just small drops in the sea and have no influence. How would you respond?

First, peace begins with each of us, so I work on myself and see how my experiences have transformed me. Then I see all the people I have met and touched and helped to meet others, and I have seen their transformations when they put a face and story to the monster or when they simply begin to understand why people act and think as they do. I think focusing on the negative creates more of what we don't want. I seek out the good and I find it and slowly try to understand more sides, more aspects.

I have faith in the human spirit and the power of love. Hatred is learned, so it can be unlearned. As Gandhi said, we need to be the change we want to see. One Arava alumna from Amman used to wear a full black burka and financially supported Hamas operations against Israel. Now she works in Jordan for a joint Israeli-Jordanian youth initiative. Building this kind of trust happens one person at a time, one meeting at a time and over time. All year people - Israelis, Arabs, Beduin - are calling me to ask when the next gathering is. There is a hunger for connection and learning.

You grew up in an Orthodox, Zionist home and now you study and pray with shamans, sheikhs and clerics and citizens of every religion. How do you define yourself now?

## The Jewish Beduin

I'm a soul from the universe and from the same source as all beings, it's just been given so many different names. I was born into certain labels and I'm so grateful for all that has given me. Whatever conditioning I have received from my family and schooling, I am trying to observe and keep choosing what is true for me. When I'm representing Jews in the Arab world, my deep connection to Judaism comes up and I love the mystic and shamanic aspects that basically say the same things as all the other wisdoms. I am really trying to show this side of Judaism to the world.

Do you stay in touch with your Beduin family?

If I am in the country, which is not too often, I always go to visit, and even once my mum came, too. Last week, on the eve of Shabbat and the Muslim festival of Id al-Adha, I went to visit them. I received a beautiful welcome of kisses and hugs, and we sat around the fire, drinking tea, eating sweets and chatting.

Come sunset, I took two small candles out from my bag and told Hanan, the 19-year-old daughter, that it was my prayer time. She smiled and said, "Of course" followed by "Shabbat Shalom!" In her room, I lit the candles, praying for the light of the Shabbat to be with this family, this village, this tribe, all peoples and the world. I sang some songs from the Kabbalat Shabbat service and welcomed the special Shabbat angels to come.

My eyes shut, and in deep prayer, I became aware of someone behind me. It was Hanan, she had dressed in her prayer clothes and laid out her prayer carpet, and began the Muslim prayer. We continued, each in her own language, but to the same source, two women, one Muslim, one Jew, there in a small room, in the midst of a Beduin village, praying. To me this felt perfect - no need for compromise, no need for one of us to stop and give space to the other; no need to convince the other of another way, but together - with mutual respect. To me this is peace, this is unity. This is love.

What was the best advice you ever got?

When I left to travel for the first time, my older brother wrote me a farewell greeting, whose closing words were, "Trust everyone."

## Graphic

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9 photos: IN TEL SHEVA. 'The kids don't get a lot of affection but they know from me they will get a lot of hugs and love.' PREPARING TEA. 'Through my camper and my nomadic life, I try to create a sacred space that welcomes everyone.' WITH HER peace van. 'I have faith in the human spirit and the power of love. Hatred is learned, so it can be unlearned.' ILANA MEALLEM with a Beduin elder. 'When I went to see my family for Shabbat, it was like going from the Sudan to Switzerland.' PROMOTING PEACE. 'We use tools from many traditions, from yoga to talking workshops and studying the earth-based wisdoms of the American Indians.' HOME SWEET HOME. 'I use a camper, not as a car but as my home, parked alone in forests, deserts, by riverbanks, beaches, in friends' backyards and in Beduin villages.' (Credit: Ariel Jerozolimski)

**Load-Date:** October 4, 2011

**What Tony did next; Is the former prime minister a philanthropist or a hustler? John Arlidge jets to Africa and Israel with him to discover the truth about Blair Inc Tony, the globetrotting messiah making a mint**

The Sunday Times (London)

December 20, 2009 Sunday

Edition 1, Ireland

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**Section:** NEWS REVIEW;FEATURES; Pg. 1,2,3

**Length:** 7124 words

**Byline:** John Arlidge

## **Body**

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CORRECTION: "During Blair's third term in Downing Street, The Sunday Times revealed that senior Labour figures were offering peerages in return for donations to the party, which led to Blair being questioned by the police." has been replaced with: "During Blair's third term in Downing Street, The Sunday Times published reports alleging that senior Labour figures were offering peerages in return for donations to the party, which led to Blair being questioned by the police. Following the police inquiry the CPS decided not to bring any charges".

CORRECTION: In "What Tony did next" (News Review, December 20) we referred to the allegation that "senior Labour figures were offering peerages in return for donations to the party". As stated in the piece, Tony Blair was questioned by the police in the course of their inquiry into the allegation. A further eight officials or donors were also questioned. We should, however, have made it clear that no charges were brought against anyone. We are happy to set the record straight.

It may be dimly lit and humming with a billion mosquitoes, but the Milima restaurant in Kigali is the first place foreigners go when they step off the plane in Rwanda. On the terrace, fast-talking Nigerian entrepreneurs trade cloned mobile phones over plates of grilled Lake Kivu tilapia. Danish aid workers plan vaccination programmes. And wealthy jetlagged American tourists arrange to see the country's best attraction, the gorillas in the mist, in the morning, and its worst, the genocide museum, in the afternoon.

Today, there's a new — yet very familiar — face in this small-town Africa crowd. Sitting at a table sipping Inyange mineral water is Tony Blair. The former prime minister is having supper with an old friend, Rick Warren, America's most high-profile evangelical pastor, who gave the invocation — blessing — at President Barack Obama's inauguration in January.

To their right sits a wiry German banker with wiry glasses. Christian Angermayer heads a 45-strong group of European investors who are in town for the week. The talk is of government reform, privatising tea plantations,

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distributing mosquito nets through churches and, towards the end of the meal, the meaning of life. "The desire for spiritual awakening is the defining issue of our times," says Blair solemnly.

On the surface, this bunch of middle-aged white fellas in the heart of black Africa have little in common. But they are all actors in a new and intriguing drama: What Tony Did Next.

Since stepping down in June 2007, Britain's longest-serving Labour prime minister, who is still only 56, has said little about his plans for the future.

We know he is unrepentant about his decision to become America's staunchest ally in the invasion of Iraq, but insists he is committed to the cause of peace in the Middle East. He works in Jerusalem around 10 days a month as the representative to the quartet of major powers in the region — the US, the European Union, the United Nations and Russia.

We know he has signed lucrative advisory deals with private firms, notably the Wall Street bank JP Morgan, and national governments, including Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates.

He's told us he has established a Faith Foundation that is dedicated to encouraging people of different religions to work together to address some of the world's most pressing social problems.

And we know he makes lots of speeches for lots of money — up to £140,000 a pop, plus expenses.

The range and diversity of his roles, and his big pay days, have left many wondering what he is up to. Is he a politician? A businessman? A campaigner for religious tolerance? Or simply on the make?

Blair is all four, but, rather than seeing the roles as contradictory, as his many critics do, he says they are part of a compelling new political and personal movement that will end up giving him even more power and influence than he had when he was in Downing Street. As Labour leader, Blair claimed to have found a political "third way" in Britain — a path between left and right that emphasised co-operation between the public and private sectors rather than a stark choice between the two. Now he thinks it's time for a global third way that brings together the state, business and religion in what he says will be the world's first network of good governance charities, private-sector initiatives and faith groups.

"I'm a social entrepreneur now," he says defiantly. "I can engineer social change on my own terms, outside of a big government bureaucracy."

For some who remember his days in office this may sound like a typically Blairite effort to have several cakes and eat them. Other political leaders have contented themselves with more modest aims and fewer potential conflicts of interest when they have left office. They have set up political foundations (Margaret Thatcher, Ronald Reagan), used the contacts they've made in office to make money in the private sector (Henry Kissinger), done charity work (Bill Clinton, Al Gore) or gathered a few company directorships to safeguard their financial future (John Major). Blair wants to do all of the above — and then some.

Along the way, he figures he can make enough big-bucks speeches to pay the various mortgages on his four homes in Britain that each month burn a £40,000 hole in the pocket of his Richard James suits. He has a £4m stately home in Buckinghamshire, two houses in London, together worth millions, and a flat in Bristol — each one bought, with very un-Blairlike bad timing, at the very top of the market.

BLAIR'S new political philosophy takes small but neat form in one of Africa's smallest and poorest countries. The streaky morning sun is burning the mist off the tea plantations when the £35m blue-and-white Bombardier Global Express private jet he is travelling in touches down at Kigali airport, after stops for meetings in Israel, Abu Dhabi and Zurich. The pilot inches towards the VIP terminal. He's taking no chances.

The day before, a RwandAir jet careered off the runway and slammed into the arrivals hall.

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Blair, wearing a light grey suit, trademark blue shirt and "I've got work to do" RM Williams boots, steps onto the tarmac and roars off in a Mercedes with blacked-out windows. He's here for only two days and starts preaching his new gospel straightaway.

"Thanks to globalisation, the world today is all mixed together," he explains over a breakfast espresso at the Serena hotel, the best in town. This is coffee country and the brew is a rich, dark antidote to jet lag.

"Government, business, climate change, religion, migration — they're all part of everyone's lives, everywhere, every day. That can be scary, but it's also a positive thing. The trick is to find a way to make all the different pieces work together."

The way Blair sees it, the only things that matter in the modern world are good governance, hard cash and religion. He wants to help governments create the right conditions for business to grow and to encourage religious leaders to harness the power of faith to do good. In Rwanda, Blair's charity, the Africa Governance Initiative, pays for a nine-strong team of staff to work permanently in Kigali, many in the president's office, where they are supporting local ministers and helping to stamp out corruption. Blair also wants to encourage small businesses to grow, so he and his team spend a morning poking their noses into vats of gooey orange biofuel at Rwanda's Institute of Scientific and Technological Research; and he later unveils a £175m deal, with the UKfirm Eco Positive, to grow crops to make biodiesel.

Finally, he reveals plans to work with Rick Warren to use the faith network in Rwanda to distribute medicines and mosquito nets to fight malaria.

"There are hundreds more churches and mosques in Rwanda than hospitals, and we want to use them to meet healthcare needs," Blair says. "This is faith in action."

Blair is following the same threepronged approach in Sierra Leone — and soon Liberia — and in Israel and the West Bank. He thinks his new philosophy travels well and can spread across the world. On the surface it does.

Afew weeks after the Rwanda visit, Blair finds himself standing on the Ephraim border crossing, next to the forbidding 26ft-high slabs of concrete that Israel built after the second intifada to create an impenetrable — and impenetrably ugly — wall between Israel and would-be Arab suicide bombers. He's there to make sure the checkpoint is open, so that Israeli Arabs can cross from lush, green Israel into the arid, stubbled territory of the West Bank to trade and shop in local markets. "I drive these Israeli army guys crazy trying to keep checkpoints open, but it's vital to keep people and business moving," Blair says.

He believes that good governance — in this case, border checkpoints that are secure enough to ensure Israelis feel safe but open enough to enable Palestinians to go about their daily lives — helps to foster private enterprise and boost the economy of the West Bank, which will, in turn, encourage peace between Jews and Arabs.

"My theory of the Middle East, that I developed when I was in office but could not implement, is that Palestinian statehood has to be built from the bottom up. It is only if Palestinian institutions, governance and business work, and Israelis feel secure, that you will get a political deal."

With Rwanda, Jerusalem, the West Bank, Sierra Leone, Liberia, plus work trips to the UAE, Kuwait and Zurich, and regular speaking jaunts to New York, Washington and Yale, where he lectures on religion, Blair scarcely spends time in Britain. "I'm out of the country three weeks in four." On a recent visit to Washington he listed Jerusalem, not London, as his home in the visitors' book in the British embassy. He says he misses his nine-year-old son, Leo, terribly and can't remember the last time he took his wife, Cherie, out for dinner.

"There always seem to be conferences in Paris or he's visiting donor countries to get some more money, or going over to the US to see the State Department or the president," Cherie says ruefully, as she waits for her Ulysses to stop his wanderings.

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Blair does not miss the politics and the media here. Shortly after his trip to Rwanda, on a rare visit to London, he arranges to attend a conference on investment in Africa at the Queen Elizabeth II centre in Westminster.

By coincidence, it's the state opening of parliament.

Sitting in the Sovereign Room, waiting to talk to the president of Sierra Leone, he peers through the window and catches sight of the Queen's coach as it crosses Parliament Square. He throws his arms above his head and says: "Ah, the Queen's speech —and I'm not doing it! Yeeeeees!"

Not even the prospect of one last electoral heist with his old henchmen Alastair Campbell and Peter Mandelson can tempt him. He has not cleared his diary for next May, although he hastily adds he will play his part in the election campaign, if Gordon Brown asks him to. Fat chance. He's relieved not to have been elected president of Europe. "I love my new life as it is," he says with an "I never wanted that crappy low-paid bureaucrat's job" smile.

The truth is, after the vilification he has received over his decision to go to war in Iraq—vilification he has just reignited and intensified by saying he would have invaded Iraq even without evidence of weapons of mass destruction and would have found a way to justify the war to parliament and the public—he has largely given up caring what people here think of him.

"You get to a position where the criticism you get, you just have to live with. It's the way it is. When you are someone like me, you create a lot of controversy one way or another. You just decide to do what you are going to do and let that speak for itself."

His equanimity is handy since he's about to face the most uncomfortable questioning of his political life, in front of the Chilcot inquiry into the Iraq war, in the new year. He's convinced going to war was "the right thing to do" and will not stop trying to justify it inside and outside the hearings.

To the long list of reasons — critics say excuses — he has advanced, he has a new one. He says the emergence of political parties that cross the Sunni/Shi'ite ethnic division is paving the way for a sustainable peace across Iraq and much of the Middle East.

"It means you are breaking out of a divide that can very easily become sectarian.

That is probably the single most important development that has happened there—an extraordinary political achievement.

If you can get it to take root, its implications for the region are absolutely enormous."

He goes on to dismiss claims that it is the presence of foreign forces that has sparked the recent spate of deadly terrorist attacks in Baghdad. "The terrorism continues even as the Americans withdraw, which is an indication that it is not actually about American troops being there at all. It is to do with an attempt to destabilise the democracy. Democracy is a threat to groups who want to organise and run affairs on the basis of a narrow theocracy."

Blair dismisses critics who accuse him of manipulating intelligence to "trick" the country into going to war. Ken Macdonald QC, the former director of public prosecutions, said last week he was guilty of "deceit" and "subterfuge".

They are, Blair says, "doing it more for effect than anything else". Anyway, he has bigger fish to fry. He believes his new political project will end up being far more important than anything he achieved when he was prime minister, including the Iraq campaign.

"If we build it in the right way, it will definitely have more impact, because of its global reach," he says. "Some people in politics can't really conceive of having an impact unless you've got a political job with a bureaucracy behind you. But this is a different world and you can use what you have gained in politics to create something different .



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What I am able to do in Rwanda now is more important than what I was able to do for Rwanda as prime minister. Ditto in Palestine."

BLAIR is approaching his political afterlife with the zeal of a man who has not changed his core political philosophy and believes it is even more relevant now. To his Faith Foundation, African work, consultancies and speech-making, he's recently added two new roles.

He lobbies for the Climate Group, a business-backed organisation that encourages entrepreneurs to develop and market high-tech ways to combat global warming. And he's set up a sports foundation, to encourage people to "make the most of themselves through sport".

Retirement, or even taking a few days off, never crossed his mind. "Bill Clinton told me to go and relax and have a think about things. But then George Mitchell [the former US senator who, with Blair, brokered the Good Friday agreement in Northern Ireland] said, 'Keep going. Just get straight out into something new.' I would have gone crazy if I had tried to lie on a beach for a few months, so I started work in the Middle East the week after I left office. My motto is: don't retire, don't expire."

Neither is likely to happen any time soon. The hair maybe all grey now, but he's still full of puff. There has been no recurrence of the heart problem he suffered in government. He has lost weight. "I play football more." He's happier, too, and looks it. "I'm only doing the things that interest me." Take religion. He did not discuss faith when he was prime minister. "We don't do God," is the best-known quotation of Alastair Campbell, Blair's former press secretary.

Now, you can hardly get Blair to shut up about it.

There's Mammon, too. When he was prime minister, Blair was endlessly lampooned for his close associations with billionaires, from Bernie Ecclestone, the Formula One ringmaster, to Silvio Berlusconi, the Italian prime minister. Now, he can hobnob with gazillionaires with impunity.

He peppers conversations about JP Morgan with references to "Jamie". That's Jamie Dimon, the bank's fabulously wealthy boss. These days, nobody cares whose villa or yacht he snaffles for holidays.

Will it be a Bee Gee's mansion in Florida or Cliff's villa in Barbados this summer? Decisions, decisions.

Better still, he can finally make a tidy sum himself. When he became an MP he took a big financial hit for the sake of his political ambitions, seeing his income cut in half. Thanks to his disastrously timed house purchases, he left office in debt. He's wasting no time making up for lost earnings. JP Morgan pays him around £2m a year directly, more than 10 times his former prime ministerial salary. He gets another £2m or so directly from Zurich Financial Services, the Swiss insurer.

The coffers of his new private consultancy, Tony Blair Associates, are swelled by a total of £2m a year from the government of Kuwait and from Mubadala, an Abu Dhabi state-backed investment fund and green technology incubator. He advises both. There are deals in the offing in Saudi Arabia, too. Much of his work is spent using contacts to open doors. Senior Tesco officials approached him to help them open stores in the Middle East, but the deal fell through .

Blair is trousering another £4.6m for his memoirs, which will be out next year, once the last of the ink has flowed from his trusty fountain pen. In addition to the £140,000 plus expenses. that he gets for speeches, it was widely reported that he was paid a £600,000 signing-up fee when he joined the Washington Speakers Bureau. Finally, he is entitled to a taxpayer-funded pension of £63,468 a year, which he has deferred, and receives an annual £84,000 allowance to run a private office. Small wonder, since leaving office, he has amassed an estimated £15m.

What does Blair do for all that cash? He gives "global strategic advice" to JP Morgan and Mubadala. "I'm not a banker or a businessman but, because I am travelling the world, I can help to explain where I think politics is going. They are interested, for example, in relations between America and China and what implications that has for Europe and other parts of the world."

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He's helping Zurich Financial Services in its efforts to reduce the impact of climate change on the insurance business. Floods mean soggy profits. In Kuwait, he is advising the government how to implement its 30-year development plan.

Blair feels personally as intensely relaxed about being seriously rich as Peter Mandelson was in new Labour's heyday. But his critics may think there is something rather desperate, not to say questionable, about a former prime minister racing around the world making speeches to anyone who meets his terms, which, as well as big bucks, include a private jet and fivestar hotel rooms for him, his staff and sixstrong team of plain-clothes security men. One recent speech he gave was to open a methanol plant in Azerbaijan.

Labour MPs argue that a former Labour leader should be more sensitive to the party's links to the less fortunate. Others accuse him of cashing in on the contacts he built up in office, notably during the Iraq war. Khadr Musleh, a Palestinian political analyst, says: "In Arabic, there's a special word, egtina, which means 'selfenrichment through public office'. It doesn't imply anything illegal and in the Middle East it's considered totally normal. Yet it is a little surprising to see a former British prime minister behaving in the same way."

Blair admits to working his Rolodex like a whirling dervish but says there's nothing wrong with that. "I got out of politics early enough to have a second act in life. Why shouldn't a politician be able to do that? Others do. Nobody says Bill Gates is bad for moving from business to philanthropy. Why shouldn't a politician do a business model when they change their life?" He believes lucrative public speaking gigs are a perk of leaving office. "When leaders step down, they all do a certain amount of paid speaking and that is fair enough. If all I wanted to do was make speeches, let me tell you, I could make five times the number."

Doubtless. But the question remains: is he doing any good with all that money and all those private jets? From the moment he announced the creation of the Office of Tony Blair and his various charities, critics muttered that it was more about bolstering the ego of an ambitious, workaholic former prime minister with a lot of time on his hands than about getting much done.

IN the last days of his office in Downing Street, the rumour mill churned with stories that Blair was spending hours on the phone to GeorgeW Bush and Bill Gates to make sure that whatever he did when he walked out of No 10, be it working in the Middle East or in Africa, he would do it with a big title and in a manner to which he had become very accustomed.

Tony Blair is certainly enamoured of being Tony Blair. To get a sense of how much, you simply have to walk up the beige marble stairs, past a phalanx of UN security guards and through a steel security cage, to the fourth floor of the elegant American Colony hotel in east Jerusalem.

There, he runs a show that would make Donatella Versace blush. He's got all of the rooms permanently booked for use as offices and accommodation. In his suite he has his trusty guitar, which he can strum on the terrace as he looks out over the city. There are more rooms on the third floor, just in case the entire fourth is not big enough. Outside, in the courtyard, a fleet of shiny gas-guzzling black Toyota Land Cruisers with bulletproof windows and doors awaits his every move. It's a very big presence for a man whose influence, many say, is small.

Few in Israel or the West Bank publicly oppose Blair. As the EU and Britain are key powers in the region, it's not worth it. But, privately, many argue that far from being "a player", Blair is ineffectual. One senior Palestinian told The Sunday Times: "Everyone is very kissy-kissy with him on both sides because he is the former British prime minister. But, behind his back, both Arabs and Jews laugh at him. He flies in and out and talks to a lot of people but he has changed very little."

One western critic, Nicolas Pelham, who has reported on Israeli and Palestinian religious movements for the International Crisis Group, a global conflict resolution organisation, accuses Blair of failing to address key issues. "He has genuine religious concerns and undoubted bridgebuilding skills," says Pelham. "But he has not used them to reach out to religious movements on the ground, notably Hamas and Israel's religious right, who will be central players in any peace settlement. Instead, he has propped up secular leaders, deepening the rift between secular

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and religious factions on both sides. Also, while it's true that he has been active on the West Bank, he has abandoned the conflict's weakest group, the people of Gaza, to the Islamists, and left them sealed, under siege, and vulnerable to attack."

Blair's detractors argue that on the single biggest issue facing the Palestinian economy—which directly involves Britain—he has failed to deliver. A consortium led by BG Group, formerly part of British Gas, has a 15-year agreement to develop a £2.5 billion natural gas field off the coast of Gaza. It is the Palestinian Authority's biggest natural resource. But, so far, no gas has been extracted, because of disputes between BG and the Israeli government .

On the other hand, African leaders insist that Blair's "cadets", who help to run ministries from Freetown to Kigali, do have a real impact. President Ernest Bai Koroma of Sierra Leone has asked Blair to send more bright young things to Freetown. "He and his team have been an immense help in my office in State House and I have requested additional support in the ministries of agriculture, health and education," Koroma says.

In Kigali, President Paul Kagame argues that Blair has attracted investment which has helped Rwanda jump from 143rd to 67th position in the latest World Bank's 2010 Doing Business index.

Others, however, say Blair's efforts are more about Blair than Africa. Greg Mills is director of Africa's leading think tank, the Oppenheimer-funded Brenthurst Foundation, based in Johannesburg. "As with his Africa commission, Blair's work is fundamentally not about what African governments can do for themselves, but rather what the outside world can assist them with. And we know after 50 years' experience that development is unlikely to progress in this way," he says .

"But who said Blair's presence is about African development? His work keeps him in the limelight he craves and offers African governments another form of 'diplomatic' protection in the form of his high profile presence."

Everywhere he goes in Africa, he is lauded as some kind of saviour and he appears to enjoy it. After meeting him in Kigali, Anastase Murekezi, Rwanda's minister of public service and labour, goes on television to describe the encounter as "a blessing from God". In each African village Blair goes to, there are young children called Tony Blair. Spend time with him and you get an awkward sense that he sees himself as a bit of a 21st-century missionary saving souls—economically if not spiritually.

The religious piece of the new Blair puzzle is fraught with problems, too. Take Rick Warren. The roly-poly US pastor may be a good partner when it comes to distributing mosquito nets, but he is vehemently opposed to gay marriage, abortion and stem-cell research — all of which Blair endorsed while in office and promoted as proof that, under his leadership, Britain was becoming a more liberal and forward-looking country.

Worse, thanks to his own actions as prime minister, Blair's exhortations for people of different religions to live and work peacefully together fall on deaf ears in large parts of the world where religious conflict is greatest. His decision to become America's leading partner in the "war on terror" and the invasion of Iraq soured Muslims' view of him. Many in the Middle East and further afield regard his Faith Foundation as merely the latest attempt at western Christian proselytising. And then there is the big problem, the one that has caused Blair most headaches throughout his political life and continues to do so: money.

CRITICS say it can be hard to see where Blair's political work ends and his private endeavours begin. They single out one day, in particular, when he visited Abu Dhabi and met the UAE education minister in the morning, wearing one of his "make the world a better place" hats, and the finance minister in the afternoon, wearing his JP Morgan hat. Was he doing good with one hand and making money with the other?

Was one conditional on the other? It is certainly hard to escape the conclusion that one reason Blair is working at such a frenetic pace on "good works" all over the world is to maintain the kind of global profile he needs to charge top dollar for his after-dinner bons mots. Former prime ministers, even those as successful as Blair, have only a limited window to capitalise on their status.

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Then there is transparency. Blair is exploiting a little-known loophole in UK company law to keep his finances secret. He would normally have to publish company accounts detailing the millions flowing into his various commercial ventures. But he has set up a complicated artificial structure to avoid doing so.

His main financial vehicle is a so-called limited partnership called Windrush Ventures No 3 LP. Such partnerships must normally disclose figures or face criminal penalties. Blair has sidestepped the rules by inserting a second partnership as one of the notional partners in a way the regulations do not cover.

This second partnership, Windrush Ventures No 2 LLP, is a so-called limited liability partnership, a type of entity invented only in 2000, which the rules have not been updated to mention. The LLP in turn controls Blair's operating company, called Windrush Ventures Ltd, which means it does not have to publish accounts. Put simply, he is getting the benefits of running a British company without the drawbacks of unwelcome publicity. There are no full accounts for the Africa Governance Initiative, but accounts have been published for the Faith Foundation .

All we know for sure is that one of his companies pays the £560,000-a-year lease on his Mayfair office, a handsome 18th-century townhouse in Grosvenor Square on the site of the first US embassy in London; the Faith Foundation received donations of £3.6m in its first year of existence; and the Sainsbury charitable foundation and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation back the Africa Governance Initiative together to the tune of £3m.

Ask Blair a simple question, such as: who owns the Bombardier jet he used to hop across the Middle East and then fly to Rwanda and back at an estimated cost of £200,000 and he gets terribly shy. "I don't know. It's not mine. That's, er. You don't... the only... Er..." He has good reason to be coy. It turns out the plane is President Kagame's. Travelling the world on a jet used by the government of one of the poorest countries on Earth smacks of self-aggrandisement and self-enrichment and is about as far from a mission to save the world as it gets.

With little hard information, critics wonder who is funding Blair's projects and whether it is he — or the projects — who really call the tune. Blair insists he alone is in charge, and he has an explanation for the secrecy surrounding his finances that is born of bitter personal experience. "Let's be clear what the problem is when you start publishing the names of people who donate money: all they get is a load of grief," he says. "That's the truth. I've been through this. I know what happened to people who donated to the Labour party when I was in government and it's not something I would wish on anybody." During Blair's third term in Downing Street, The Sunday Times revealed that senior Labour figures were offering peerages in return for donations to the party, which led to Blair being questioned by the police.

He also dismisses suggestions that he should set out in detail the work he does for JP Morgan, Mubadala and Zurich Financial Services. "If people come to you for a piece of confidential advice, you have to respect that and there's nothing wrong with that. There is not a business out there that could function without that."

Blair knows his protestations will not placate his critics. He's all but given up trying to convince people in Britain he means well. "I've got a problem with the UK media. They don't approach me in an objective way," he says. "Their first question is how to belittle what I'm doing, knock it down, write something bad about it. It's not right. It's not journalism. They don't get it and they've got a score to settle with me. But they are not going to settle it."

He gets a better hearing abroad these days, which is one of the main reasons he spends so much time overseas. "It's not true that nobody likes me! Reading the papers in Britain, you'd end up thinking I'd lost three elections rather than won them. There is a completely different atmosphere around me outside the country. People accept the work that you are doing, as it is. They don't see anything wrong with being successful financially and also doing good work. If I did what these people who criticise me here wanted, I'd end up sitting in a corner, but that is never going to be me."

And so, he's on the move. Always. His latest mysterious private jet touched down in London from Tel Aviv's Ben Gurion airport on Tuesday at the end of his 40th foreign trip of the year. It's time for a rare, short "working break" with Cherie and their four children, Euan, 25, Nicky, 24, Kathryn, 21, and Leo. The family are spending Christmas in

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South Pavilion, their £4m grade I-listed, seven-bedroom country house in Buckinghamshire that was once owned by Sir John Gielgud. Blair will spend much of his time finishing his memoirs. "The publishers are really on my case."

The year is almost over. The Blair decade is done. Soon, if the opinion polls —which have shown Labour consistently behind the Tories for two years — are right, new Labour will be a memory, swept away by the "heir to Blair", David Cameron. Blair says he believes Labour can win and he "hopes very much" it does. But, talking to him, you feel that in his heart he knows that the game is up.

Ask whether he feels the polls herald an ignominious end to the most electorally successful Labour government in history and he replies: "The fact is — all governments, when they end, that's always what is said. The Labour government that was put out in 1951 was put out in difficult circumstances, but then people look back on it and say, 'Look at all these things that were done.' It's just the way politics is.

"We will have been in government more than twice the time of the previous longest-serving Labour government. We'd never won two consecutive full terms before, never mind three. There is a lot that has happened in that period of time. A lot."

What does the man who created "the Project" most regret about his time in Downing Street? It must be Iraq. His hesitant, stumbling answer suggests he knows it but is grasping for an alternative. "I think the, um, the thing that I, I, er, er, erm, miss, I think, is probably not being there to see through public service reform. We took it a certain distance and I'm sure in the end it will help in health, education, law and order and will stand the test of time."

And what did he get most right? "The biggest problem for Britain is that, because of the strength and richness of its past, it can find it hard to position itself for the future. I think I, we, helped to create a set of attitudes — be it about the minimum wage or equal rights for people who are gay or the emphasis on an open society—that left the country looking towards its future, not back to the past. That's what I'm doing."

He believes it, all right. But then he believes in everything he does, even the bits, like Iraq, that turn out to be a disaster. What's the truth? Is he a peacemaker and many-sided philanthropist? Or is he, as his enemies insist, an all-purpose big-bucks gob for hire and hustler supreme? It's hard to avoid concluding that Blair is politics' answer to Gordon Ramsay. He's incurably optimistic, charming, fasttalking, fun, loud and successful. He spends his entire time rushing around the world on private jets, popping up on television, getting richer than he ever imagined—but mainly being Tony Blair.

Tony Blair Inc

## THE QUARTET

As representative of the US, UN, EU and Russia, the four major powers trying to secure Middle East peace, Blair is helping the Palestinians to prepare for statehood. He is not paid for his work but the expenses. for his operations in Jerusalem, which run to millions of pounds a year, are paid by the quartet and other donors.

## TONY BLAIR ASSOCIATES

This commercial consultancy offers high-level strategic and political advice to private sector and government clients. It advises the government of Kuwait on how to implement its 30-year development plan for a fee of £1m a year. It is paid another £1m a year for giving "global strategic and political advice" to Mubadala, an Abu Dhabi, state-backed investment fund and green technology incubator. Tesco has approached TBA for advice on opening stores in the Middle East.

## BANKING

Blair has direct contracts with leading banks and financial services groups. He provides "global strategic and political advice" to JP Morgan, the Wall Street investment bank, for a fee of £2m a year. He is paid another £2m a

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year for helping Zurich Financial Services, the Swiss insurance giant, in its efforts to reduce the impact of climate change on the insurance industry.

#### THE TONY BLAIR FAITH FOUNDATION

It tries to encourage respect and understanding between the major religions and promotes faith as a force to help solve social problems. In Africa it uses networks of churches and mosques to fight malaria. Blair is not paid for his work. The foundation received donations, from undisclosed sources, of £3.6m in its first year.

#### THE AFRICA GOVERNANCE INITIATIVE

Teams of AGI staff work full time in Rwanda and Sierra Leone to promote good governance and attract foreign investment. Another will start work in Liberia in the spring. Blair is not paid for his work. AGI is funded, in part, by donations from the Sainsbury family and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Together, they have gifted a total of £3m.

#### THE CLIMATE GROUP

Blair lobbies on behalf of this big-business-backed organisation, which encourages entrepreneurs to develop and market hi-tech solutions to climate change. He is not paid for his work.

#### BREAKING THE CLIMATE DEADLOCK INITIATIVE

This campaign aims to persuade governments to move towards a low-carbon economy. Blair is not paid for his work.

#### THE TONY BLAIR SPORTS FOUNDATION

Works to increase opportunities for young people to take part in sport in northeast England where Blair was an MP for 24 years. Blair is not paid for his work.

#### YALE UNIVERSITY

Blair lectures on issues of faith and globalisation as a Howland Distinguished Fellow. The post comes with an endowment of \$10,000 which Blair donates to his faith foundation .

#### RANDOM HOUSE

The publisher is paying Blair £4.6m to write his memoirs which will be published next year.

#### WASHINGTON SPEAKERS BUREAU

Paid Blair a £600,000 signing-on fee. Organises speeches for which he is paid up to £140,000, plus private jet, limousines, five-star hotel accommodation for Blair, staff and six-strong security detail.

Blair has deferred his MP's and prime minister's pension of £63,468 a year but receives a former prime minister's allowance of £84,000 a year to run a private office. These take his earnings to at least £11.2m since he left office. Fees from speeches and other work by Tony Blair Associates raise the total to around £15m.

Now at last he can do God

The former PM tells John Arlidge faith will be the century's defining global issue

Although Tony Blair is the most openly devout British political leader since Gladstone, he did not "do God" in office, partly because Alastair Campbell told him not to and partly because any discussion of faith prompted snorts of derision from an aggressively secular electorate.

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Now, however, out of office and with Private Eye no longer lampooning "Rev Blair" in its spoof St Albion Church newsletter, he can speak, and act, freely.

In Rwanda, he prayed with the Rev Rick Warren, the founder of the vast Saddleback Church in the US and the country's most high-profile evangelist. Warren serves on the advisory council of Blair's Faith Foundation .

In Jerusalem, Blair set out his views on religion in the 21st century to The Sunday Times.

"Faith and its place in society is the issue of the 21st century. There's a lot more of it around than people imagine. We, in Europe, tend to think that, as people become wealthier, they push religion to one side. But the Christian Church in China and Africa is growing. The single richest country in the world —America—is still an intensely religious country.

"And even if people aren't part of organised religion, the spiritual yearning and the desire for spiritual awakening is as great as it has ever been. There is also very deep within people a sense of social obligation and compassion—a desire to be part of a society and a community. Without spiritual values, there is an emptiness that cannot be filled simply by material goods and wealth.

"At just the time that globalisation is breaking down barriers between peoples and nations, faith can play one of two crucial roles. It can encourage people to embrace this world that is opening up, to be part of it and to respect people who have a different faith, culture or historical tradition. To say, 'I can relate to them because we are both people of faith.' Or, it can shut people down, create ignorance and fear, and prompt communities to retreat into mutually antagonistic spheres. That is where the extremism comes from.

"I see both sides all the time in the work I do in the Middle East. There are some Jews and Muslims who believe the conflict is a cultural war. And there are others who think, 'This is a common heritage we have in this place. We should open up to one another and learn to live together.' "And it's not just the Middle East. If you look at the conflicts in the world today, the overwhelming majority have at least a dimension, if not the most important dimension, that is about religion: Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Somalia, Yemen, parts of Thailand, Northern Ireland, Mindanao in the Philippines, parts of India.

"And, yes, Britain. Religion defines many of the migrants that come to the UK. It is the easiest politics in the world to exploit that situation for political gain, as some in Britain now seek to do.

"We need to fight that by distinguishing the reasonable from the unreasonable. Migration is a good thing. Britain is better off for it. But it must be handled in an orderly fashion.

"At the same time, it is reasonable to say that there is a common space to which everyone in Britain must belong from wherever they come. It is unacceptable for anyone to say that there are cultural reasons why women are treated as second-class citizens or that they use to justify violence."

Life after Downing Street

June 2007

Resigns as prime minister after 10 years in office. On the same afternoon, he is appointed Middle East envoy

October 2007

Signs a deal with Random House to write his memoirs for £4.6m

December 2007

Leaves the Anglican Church to become a Roman Catholic

January 2008

What Tony did next Is the former prime minister a philanthropist or a hustler? John Arlidge jets to Africa and Israel with him to discover the truth about Blair....

JP Morgan and Zurich Financial Services confirm that Blair is joining in 'a senior advisory capacity'

March 2008

Yale University announces Blair will teach a course on issues of faith and globalisation as a Howland Distinguished Fellow. Launches his Breaking the Climate Deadlock initiative in partnership with The Climate Group

May 2008

At the launch of his Faith Foundation in New York, Blair says he wants religion to be a force for good in the world

January 2009

President George W Bush awards his closest ally in the 'war on terror' the Presidential Medal of Freedom, America's highest civilian honour, in a ceremony at the White House

February 2009

Blair beats Gordon Brown to become the first world statesman to meet President Barack Obama, as he delivers the keynote address at a Washington prayer breakfast. Obama calls Blair 'my very good friend'

September 2009

Appears on The Late Show with David Letterman in New York, saying it was 'right to stand shoulder to shoulder with America' during the war on terror

November 2009

Blair fails to be chosen president of Europe, much to his, and many Europeans', relief

"In each African village he goes to, there are young children called Tony Blair

'Most conflicts today have a dimension that's about religion'

## Graphic

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Blair strides out surrounded by staff and a security team in Brussels earlier this year

NICK DANZI

The busy Blair sees less of Cherie

Dancers greet Blair in Rwanda where some of his 'cadets' help run government ministries. The inset pictures show him during a recent visit to West Bank and Israel as Middle East envoy for the quartet of major powers. His effectiveness as a peacemaker has been questioned while critics fear the real purpose of his involvement in Africa is self-promotion

**Load-Date:** January 7, 2011



**To the brink and back again; A generation of British Islamists have been trained in Afghanistan to fight a global jihad. But now some of those would-be extremists have had a change of heart. Johann Hari finds out what made them give up the fight**

Independent Extra

November 16, 2009 Monday

First Edition

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**Section:** INDEPENDENT LIFE; Pg. 2

**Length:** 7745 words

**Byline:** Johann Hari

## **Body**

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Ever since I started meeting jihadis, I have been struck by one thing - their Britishness. I am from the East End of London, and at some point in the past decade I became used to hearing a hoarse and angry whisper of jihadism on the streets where I live. Bearded young men stand outside the library calling for "The Rule of God" and "Death to Democracy". In the mosques across the city, I hear a fringe of young men talk dreamily of flocking to Afghanistan to "resist". Yet this whisper never has an immigrant accent. It shares my pronunciations, my cultural references, and my national anthem. Beneath the beards and the burqas, there is an English voice.

The East End is a cramped grey maze of council estates, squashed between the glistening palaces of the City to one side and the glass towers of Docklands to the other. You can feel the financial elites staring across at each other, indifferent to this concrete lump of poverty dumped in-between by the forgotten tides of history. This place has always been the swirling first stop for immigrants to this country like my father - a place where new arrivals can huddle together as they adjust to the cold rain and lukewarm liberalism of Britain.

The Muslims who arrive here every day from Bangladesh, or India, or Somalia say they find the presence of British Islamists bizarre. They have come here to work and raise their children in stability and escape people like them. No: these Islamists are British-born. They make up 7 per cent of the British Muslim population, according to a Populous poll (with the other 93 percent of Muslims disagreeing). Ever since the 7/7 suicide bombings, carried out by young Englishmen against London, the British have been squinting at this minority of the minority and trying to figure out how we incubated a very English jihadism.

But every attempt I have made up to now to get into their heads - including talking to Islamists for weeks at their most notorious London hub, Finsbury Park mosque, immediately after 9/11 - left me feeling like a journalistic failure. These young men speak to outsiders in a dense and impenetrable code of Koranic quotes and surly jibes at both the foreign policy crimes of our Government and the freedom of **women** and gays. Any attempt to dig into their psychology - to ask honestly how this swirl of thoughts led them to believe suicide bombing their own city is right - is always met with a resistant sneer, and yet more opaque recitations from the Koran. Their message is simple: we don't do psychology or sociology. We do Allah, and Allah alone. Why do you have this particular reading of the

To the brink and back again A generation of British Islamists have been trained in Afghanistan to fight a global jihad. But now some of those would-be extremist....

Koran, when most Muslims don't? Because we are right, and they are infidel. Full stop. It was an investigatory dead end.

But then, a year ago, I began to hear about a fragile new movement that could just hold the answers we journalists have failed to find up to now. A wave of young British Islamists who trained to fight - who cheered as their friends bombed this country - have recanted. Now they are using everything they learned on the inside, to stop the jihad.

Seventeen former radical Islamists have "come out" in the past 12 months and have begun to fight back. Would they be able to tell me the reasons that pulled them into jihadism, and out again? Could they be the key to understanding - and defusing - Western jihadism? I have spent three months exploring their world and befriending their leading figures. Their story sprawls from forgotten English seaside towns to the jails of Egypt's dictatorship and the icy mountains of Afghanistan - and back again.

## I. THE IMAM

My journey began when, sitting in one of the grotty greasy spoon cafes that fill the East End, I heard a young woman in hijab mention that the imam of one of the local mosques was a jihadi who had fought in Afghanistan, but is now facing death threats from the very men he once fought alongside. His "crime"? To renounce his past and call for "a secular Islam".

After a series of phone calls, Usama Hassan cautiously agrees to talk. I meet him outside his little mosque in Leyton. It sits in the middle of a run-down sprawl of pound stores ("Everything only £1!!!"), halal kebab shops, and boarded-up windows at the edge of the East End.

Usama is a big, broad bear of a man in a black blazer and wire-rimmed glasses. He greets me with a hefty handshake; he has a rolled-up newspaper under his arm. He takes me upstairs to a pale-green prayer room. This building was once a factory, then a cinema; now, with Saudi money, it is a Wahabi mosque. Men are kneeling silently towards Mecca, rising and bending in reverential waves. "On Fridays, there are Islamists who stand outside and warn worshippers that their prayers won't count if they are led by me," he says as we squat in the corner, "because I'm supposedly an apostate. A fake imam." He looks away. "I get phone calls late at night. Threats. It's painful. You see, I was like them once."

And so Usama begins to tell me his story. He arrived in Tottenham in North London in the mid- 1970s, when he was five years old. His Pakistani father was sent here by the Saudi Ministry of Religious Affairs, which aims to spread its puritan desert strain of Islam to every nation. His family led a locked-down life, trying to adhere to Saudi principles in a semi-detached house in the English suburbs. "We weren't allowed music or TV or any contact with the opposite sex," he says. "We were very sheltered. I didn't go out a great deal." By the age of 10, he had memorised every word of the Koran in its original Arabic.

He had a strong sense of the Britain beyond his walls - the Britain where I was growing up - as a hostile, violent place. "You have to understand - it was the time of the Tottenham riots. It felt violent in the streets," he says. "I got used to expecting white people to use the Paki word. We used to have a fear of skinheads the whole time."

But Usama was offered a scholarship to the heart of the English elite - the City of London Boys' School, where he could practice cricket at Lord's. He bonded with the Jews at the school as outsiders and supporters of Tottenham Hotspur football team. He still speaks like the public schoolboy he was - in long, confident sentences.

Some berobed men are staring at us, so he takes me down to the mosque's office. "At that time, being a Muslim meant being an Islamist. It was taken for granted," he says. So when he was 13, he joined an Islamic fundamentalist organisation called Jimas. At big sociable conferences every weekend, they were told: you don't feel at home in Britain, but you can't go "home" to a country you have never visited. So we have a third identity for you - a pan-national Islamism that knows no boundaries and can envelop you entirely.

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It sounds familiar. This is the identity I hear shouted by young Islamists throughout the East End: I might sound like you, but I am nothing like you. I am Other. I belong elsewhere - in a place that does not yet exist, but that I will create, with my fists and my fury.

Jimas told their members they were part of a persecuted billion, being blown up and locked down across the world. "It was a bit like a gang," he says. "And we had a strong sense of being under siege. It was all a conspiracy against Islam, and we were the guardians of Islam. That's how we saw ourselves ... A lot of my friends would wear the army boots, and carry knives." I realise now that for a nebbish intellectual boy, it must have felt intoxicating to be told he was part of a military movement that would inevitably conquer history.

For his summer vacation in 1990 - as a break from studying physics at Cambridge University - he went to wage jihad on the battlefields of Afghanistan. He arrived with two friends from Jimas at an Arab-run training camp in the mountains of Kunar in Eastern Afghanistan. It was a sparse collection of tents and weapons left behind by the CIA in the snow and blood. They spent the days running up and down mountains learning how to fire Kalashnikovs and rocket launchers. "When you fire a Kalashnikov, it echoes all around the mountain," he says. "After this boring life, you feel the adrenaline pumping."

The Arab fighters wore four layers of clothes and still shivered. They had never seen snow before, so every now and then, they would lay down their weapons to have a long, gleeful snow-fight. Once they had all learned how to kill, they were taken to the front line to shell the communist hold-outs. "One of the shells landed very close to us, about 100ft away." He fired in retaliation. "I hope we never killed anybody," he says quickly.

Usama tells his story fluently and fast, and rides over these difficult moments - a killing - like a speed-bump. He thought an earthly paradise would rise from the rubble he was creating - and remake the world in its image. "The expectation was that Afghanistan would become this dream Islamic state," he adds, "which would then spread all over the world." He returned to Cambridge University determined to convert as many of his fellow Muslim students as possible to Wahabism. "It was relatively easy to persuade them," he says. "People were looking for group identity. They were very confused: what does it mean to live as a Muslim in society like this? We had easy answers. Go back to the original sources, and [follow it] literally."

At the centre of this vision was the need to rebuild the caliphate - the Islamic state under sharia law persisted from the time of Mohamed until 1924. "It was a very dreamy, romantic idea," he says. "If anybody asked questions about how it would work, we would just say - the people that will make it happen will be so saintly, they will make the right decisions." It was the old promise of the revolutionary down the ages: there would be a single revolutionary heave in which all political conflict would dissolve forever, and a conflict-free paradise would be born.

Usama's job was to persuade people to go to fight in Afghanistan and, from the mid-1990s, Bosnia. He was one of the best - and he says, again very fast, that one of his successes was to radicalise Omar Sheikh, the man now on death row in Pakistan for beheading Daniel Pearl. "I set him off on his path to Jihad," he says. He looks a little excited, and a little appalled. The first thing he remembers about Sheikh - who he met at a Jimas study circle - is the fresh lemonade he made in his university rooms. "It was delicious. And we drank and drank. My first impression of him was that he was a clean-shaven, well-educated British public schoolboy. A lovely bloke."

Sheikh was furious about the massacres of Muslims in Bosnia, and demanded the study group lay down their Koranic debates and act. Usama told him: "If you're really serious, you can go and fight. I know people who have gone and fought. I can introduce you to them." And so his journey to torturing and murdering a Jewish journalist - simply because he was a Jew - began.

Usama doesn't want to talk about him any more: he changes the subject, and I have to bring him back to it. "Nothing is proved against him. He's fighting extradition," he says, after a long pause. "But ... " He has an awkward smile. An embarrassed smile. He quickly carries on speaking, ushering us away from Daniel Pearl.

People come in and out of the mosque office, and Usama lowers his voice a little. He says that as he was persuading young men to go and kill, he noticed something disconcerting: the Afghan mujahedin he had fought for

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were not building a paradise on earth after all. Instead, they were merrily slaying each other. "This great, glorious Islamic revolution - it didn't happen, at all ... they just killed each other."

As he watched the news of the Luxor massacre in Egypt or Hamas suicide-bombings of pizzerias in Tel Aviv, "It just became more and more difficult to justify that." He found himself thinking about the Jewish friends he had made at school. "They were just like me - human beings. And we had a lot in common. The dietary laws, and the identity issues, and the fear of racism." As he heard the growing Islamist chants at demonstrations - "The Jews are the enemy of God," they yelled - something, he says, began to sag inside him.

The stifled language Usama is using to describe his past reminds me of a recovering alcoholic trying to piece together his fragmented memories and understand who he was. When he talks about anti-Semitism, he is clearly ashamed; he giggles almost randomly, looks away, and looks back at me with a puckered, disgusted look.

We have talked enough; we arrange to meet again. The second time I see him, in a cafe, he seems more guarded, as if he revealed too much. He shifts the conversation onto theology - the area where, I discover, every ex-jihadi feels happiest. He says the 7/7 bombings detonated a theological bomb in his mind: "How could this be justified? I began to wonder if parts of the Koran are actually metaphor, and parts of the Koran were actually just revealed for their time: seventh-century Arabia."

Once the foundation stone of literalism was broken, he had to remake the concepts that had led him to Islamism one-by-one. "Jihad has many levels in Islam - you have the internal struggle to be the best person you can be. But all we had been taught is military jihad. Today I regard any kind of campaigning for truth, for justice, as a type of Jihad." He signed up to the pacifist Movement for the Abolition of War. He redefined martyrdom as anybody who died in an honourable cause. "There were martyrs on 9/11," he says. "They were the firefighters - not the hijackers."

He says he found himself making arguments he once thought unthinkable - like arguing that women should be allowed to show their hair in public. Jihadi websites run by his old friends started to declare him an apostate, a crime that under their interpretation of sharia is punishable by death.

There have been demands that he should be ousted from the mosque, but his father is its founder and chief imam, so he is protected for now. He says - leaning forward, his voice losing its public school composure - that the threats have only made him more sure of the need for reform. He has started to call for Muslims to abandon the "medieval interpretation of the sharia" that calls for the killing of apostates and homosexuals. He has said there should be a two-state solution in the Middle East. He has reached the conclusion that evolution is "a scientific fact".

And for the first time in his life, Usama has begun to allow himself to listen to music. "I was taught to believe it shouldn't be allowed. But now, I listen on the car radio." I ask him what music he likes, and he lets out a high-pitched giggle. "You'll get me killed!" he says. "Everything in the charts." He gives me some names, but then calls later and asks me not to print them: "That would be a step too far."

As the threats against him rattle across the internet, I like to think of this as my last image of Usama - a 39-year-old man slowly slipping off the Puritan chains in which he has been bound and finally, in his fourth decade, beginning to dance, as he is circled by the angry ghosts of his younger self.

## II. THE PRISONER

The most famous former Islamist fanatic in Britain is Maajid Nawaz - a high-cheekboned 31-year-old who walks with a self-confident strut. I make an appointment with him through his personal assistant, and he strides into the hotel lobby where we have arranged to meet in an immaculate and expensive suit. He seems to blend perfectly into the multi-ethnic overclass who use expensive hotels like this as their base; I have to remind myself with a jolt that, not so long ago, he was caught up in a murder in London, helped to plot a coup in nuclear-tipped Pakistan, and served three years in the most notorious prison in Egypt.

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Maajid begins to tell me his story as if he is delivering a PowerPoint presentation. He has offered it before, and he will offer it again; it is his job now. He has distilled it into a script. When I try to poke beneath it with questions, he seems irritated, and returns to the comfortable form of words he has established as soon as he can.

His journey towards Islamism began, he says, at the sandy edge of Essex, in the dilapidated coastal town of Southend-on-Sea. It is an old, elegant Victorian resort town drooping under a century of disrepair, reduced to a smattering of tatty arcades and a long, neglected pier that reaches into a filthy sea. Maajid's parents were mildly prosperous first-generation immigrants from Pakistan. "My upbringing was completely liberal from the start," he says. "In fact, I didn't even have a Muslim identity." He went to mosque only once, when he was 11, and an imam hit him with a stick for speaking too loudly.

Asian families were a rarity there in the 1980s, but he had a large group of white friends and felt no different to them. Yet when Maajid turned 14, a strange political shift was taking place in Southend. It began - for him, at least - one evening when Maajid, his brother and his friends were at the funfair, leaping on and off the rides and eating candy floss. A group of young skinheads spotted them and started making Nazi salutes and shouting "Seig Heil".

Maajid and his mates "ran the hell out of there", but a white van pulled up and seven skinheads piled out, wielding machetes. They cornered Maajid and one of his white friends. To his astonishment, they turned to the friend and stabbed him repeatedly with a carving knife, shrieking: "Traitor! Traitor! Race traitor!" They drove off, leaving Maajid covered in his friend's blood.

The story of what happened next is buried in yellowing cuts from the local newspapers. A pack of unemployed young men who had been kicking around on Southend's beaches had joined the Neo-Nazi group Combat 18, named after Adolf Hitler's initials: A is "1" in the alphabet, H is "8". They targeted Maajid's friends one by one for befriending a "Paki". Over the next two years, three of his friends were stabbed, and one was smashed up with a hammer. Maajid began to distance himself from his white friends, out of guilt. He drifted instead towards a group of young black people who were also being terrorised by Combat 18. They would meet at house parties and marinate themselves in hip-hop, Public Enemy, and cannabis fumes. He says: "Feeling totally rejected by mainstream society, we were looking for an alternative identity, and we found the perfect, cool, fashionable identity through listening to hip-hop and speeches by Malcolm X."

One day, his brother came home bearing a sheath of leaflets saying Muslims were being massacred all over the world, from India to Bosnia to Southend. He had stumbled on a stall in the High Street manned by a group called Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT). They said he would never be accepted in irreparably corrupt, decadent and racist Britain: Combat 18 were the snarl hidden behind every net curtain. Western society was merely a purgatory for Muslims, and the only escape could be to migrate to a renewed and perfect caliphate somewhere in Arabia. He joined up that day.

Maajid climbed the ranks of HT fast, because - with his easy eloquence - he was especially good at recruiting new members. After a year, they sent him to live in London and conquer a sixth form college. Newham College is a sprawling glass-and-concrete school for 16- to 19-year-olds in the most depressed slab of London. There, Maajid found himself in a majority-Muslim environment for the first time. "I was like somebody who has been craving chocolate for a long time who ends up in Belgium. I thought: these are my people. I knew exactly how to manipulate their grievances. And I did it. We took over that college."

We are served tea by the kind of effusive waitress who works in high-end London hotels. Maajid does not acknowledge her. He says it was "unbelievably easy" to recruit young Muslims to Islamism at that time. He would start with lectures that "broke down the concepts they had been told they should hold dear - like freedom and democracy", he says. It was only in the second or third talk, once humanism lay in rhetorical rubble, that he would announce: "God is in a better position to set those limits than you are, because you'd always contradict yourself, being an imperfect human." So then he would announce: "Let me tell you what God says."

When Maajid enrolled, there were hardly any girls wearing headscarves; by the time he was thrown out a year later, most of them were. The stand-alones were jeered at and harassed.

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Maajid was elected President of the college's student union and he was prickling with a Messianic sense of mission. He saw Newham College as a microcosm of the changes that were swelling in the world. "It literally felt revolutionary. We had taken over the campus, and that we were soon to take over the world ... We really believed the caliphate would be established any day soon." On the school's open day for prospective pupils and parents, they staged a massive prayer demonstration. Dozens of them stood in the main hall, yelling to Allah for vengeance. "We wanted to show the parents that if you're sending your kids here, these are the people in charge," he says.

I ask if anybody was arguing for a more liberal form of Islam. Maajid laughs. "Absolutely not. No way. In fact, the only people who were young that were articulating any form of Islam were the Islamists."

The only substantial push-back came from rival religious groups - especially students with a Nigerian Christian background, known universally as "the blacks". There was a racist hysteria that they were muggers and rapists and "somebody had to stand up to them", Maajid says. "Along came us, these crusading Islamists, who didn't give a shit. We'd stand in front of them and say - we don't fear death, we don't fear you, we only fear God." Allah was in their gang, and they were invincible. Young jihadis from outside the college started to hang around there, to defend the Muslims from "the Christian niggers". A tall, aggressive recruit from Brixton called Saeed Nur was appointed as their "bodyguard". He intimidated everyone into silence.

The news reports from the time confirm what happened next. One afternoon, a row broke over the use of the college pool table, as Maajid stood watching. A Nigerian student wanted to push the Muslims off it, and began making derogatory remarks about Islam. Somebody called Saeed to "sort him out". As soon as he arrived, the Nigerian student pulled out a knife - and Saeed produced a Samurai blade and thrust it straight into the boy's chest. As he fell, the other Muslim students set on him with hammers and knives and pool cues. They beat him to death.

How did he feel about the victim? Did he think about his family? He prods the questions away with a grunt. Maajid says he felt "indifferent" to the victim, but was pleased "the Muslims prevailed in the end". He adds: "We were heroes in HT ranks." And he is back to his story. He doesn't want to retrieve his emotions.

He was expelled, and spent the next few years ascending the ranks of HT, while pretending to study at various colleges. But he wanted to be at the heart of the jihad - and in 1999 he found a way. Abdel Kalim Zaloom, the global leader of HT, issued a command from his hidden base somewhere in the Middle East. Pakistan had just unveiled its nuclear weapons to the world. Zaloom wanted them to seize Pakistan, so when the caliphate came it would be nuclear-tipped. Maajid enrolled at Punjab University as a cover - and jetted off to the country his parents had left a lifetime ago.

In the sprawling slum-strewn chaos of Karachi, Maajid found "the first crack in my ideological armour ... I thought - oh, my God. I had idealised Muslim societies, but the people here know less about Islam than we do. And look at how disorganised it is."

He met with a slew of junior Pakistani army officers who had been training at Sandhurst, Britain's elite officer training academy. "They seemed like quite decent, amiable chaps, who believed in our ideology," he says. They had been recruited by other members to HT, "and I told them to rise up the ranks of the army, and when we had an opportunity, to mount a coup and declare the caliphate in Pakistan."

And then, in the strangely bland CEO-speak these ex-Islamists often lapse into, he adds enthusiastically: "It was a very exciting project. We thought it would happen in the medium-term."

Maajid won't be drawn - not now, and not in our later conversations - on the details of this coup plot. Perhaps this is because he is worried about compromising his ability to visit Pakistan. The Pakistani military spokesmen say it's a lie. The officers were, Maajid says, quietly arrested by Pervez Musharraf's government in 2003, and are currently in prison. Maajid decided to move on to Egypt, and arrived to study in Alexandria on 10 September 2001. When he saw the news from New York City, he felt - that word again - "indifferent". HT technically opposed the attacks, on the grounds they were carried out by private individuals rather than by the army of a renewed caliphate. But Maajid says "There was a huge wave of internal sympathy for [Bin Laden], because he's an ideological comrade, isn't he?"

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He started to recruit other students, as he had done so many times before. But it was harder. "Everyone hated the [unelected] government [of Hosni Mubarak], and the US for backing it," he says. But there was an inhibiting sympathy for the victims of 9/11 - until the Bush administration began to respond with Guantanamo Bay and bombs. "That made it much easier. After that, I could persuade people a lot faster."

Then, at 3am one morning, a cadre of soldiers smashed into Maajid's bedroom bearing machine guns and grenades. He was taken, blindfolded and bound, to an underground bunker below the state security offices in Cairo. There were around 50 other men penned in. For three days, he kneeled, and heard the men around him being tortured with electric cattle prods.

"I thought, 'This is something I have been mentally preparing for, for a long time. I knew this day would come,'" he says. On the third day, the guards dragged him into an interrogation room with another British HT member. They punched him in the face and whacked him with batons. They produced the cattle prod. Maajid told them they wouldn't dare to torture a British citizen. "So they took the cattle prod and began electrocuting my friend in front of my eyes."

The British Embassy called looking for its citizens. The interrogation stopped suddenly, and transferred them to prison. Maajid felt no gratitude. "All I thought was - why did it take them three days to find us? They obviously didn't care about the rights of Muslims." He laughs now - a cold laugh, at his former self.

In Mazratora Prison, Maajid was held in solitary confinement for three months. It was a bare cell with no bed, no light, and no toilet: just a concrete box. Then he was taken out suddenly and told his trial for "propagation by speech and writing for any banned organisation" was beginning in the Supreme State Emergency Court. But Maajid's Islamist convictions were about to be challenged from two unexpected directions - the men who murdered Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, and Amnesty International.

HT abandoned Maajid as a "fallen soldier" and barely spoke of him or his case. But when his family were finally allowed to see him, they told him he had a new defender. Although they abhorred his political views, Amnesty International said he had a right to free speech and to peacefully express his views, and publicised his case.

"I was just amazed," Maajid says. "We'd always seen Amnesty as the soft power tools of colonialism. So, when Amnesty, despite knowing that we hated them, adopted us, I felt - maybe these democratic values aren't always hypocritical. Maybe some people take them seriously ... it was the beginning of my serious doubts."

For the duration of the trial, he was placed in a cramped cell with 40 of Egypt's most famous political prisoners. There were row after row of beds with only a thin crack between them to inch through. Maajid was thrilled to discover two of the men who had conspired to murder Anwar Sadat - Omar Bayoumi and Dr Tauriq al Sawah - had recently been moved to this dank cell. "This is like meeting Che Guevara - these great forerunners and ideologues who I can now get the benefit of learning from," he says. But "they were very fatherly, and they had been spending all these years studying and learning. And they told me I had got my theology wrong".

After more than 20 years in prison, they had reconsidered their views. They told him he was false to believe there was one definitive, literal way to read the Koran. As they told it, in traditional Islam there were many differing interpretations of sharia, from conservative to liberal - yet there had been consensus around one principle: it was never to be enforced by a central authority. Sharia was a voluntary code, not a state law. "It was always left for people to decide for themselves which interpretation they wanted to follow," he says.

These one-time assassins taught Maajid that the idea of using state power to force your interpretation of sharia on everyone was a new and un-Islamic idea, smelted by the Wahabis only a century ago. They had made the mistake of muddling up the enduringly relevant decisions Mohamed made as a spiritual leader with those he made as a political ruler, which he intended to be specific to their time and place.

Maajid's ideology crumbled. "I realised that the idea of enforcing sharia is not consistent with Islam as it's been practised from the beginning. In other words, Islam has always been secular, and I had been totally ignorant of the

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fact." But he says he found this epiphany excruciating. "I knew if I followed these thoughts wherever they would lead," he says, "I would go from being HT's poster boy to being their fallen angel."

His trial was finally ending with the inevitable verdict: guilty. When he emerged from Mazratora Prison into the damp half-light of Britain, he was dazed. HT hailed him as a hero. "After four years of ignoring me, they wanted me to be their rock star ... I was asked if I wanted to be the leader." But in March 2007, he sent out a mass email saying he was resigning from HT, threw away his mobile, and went home to Southend.

He spent a long summer eating his mother's cooking, watching television, and seeing the school friends he had shunned more than a decade before. "It amazed me. These were ordinary British guys and they knew what I had become - that I had hated Britain. And yet when they saw me, they showed me such warmth," he says. "They remembered me as I was. They didn't care what I had done. They had time for me."

In September 2007, Maajid appeared on Newsnight - the BBC's flagship current affairs show - to announce that he recanted not just HT, but Islamism itself. "What I taught has not only damaged British society, it has damaged the world," he said.

With a small band of other ex-Islamists, Maajid decided to set up an organisation dedicated to promoting liberal Islam and rebutting Islamism. They named in the Quilliam Foundation after William Abdullah Quilliam, an English businessman who converted to Islam in the late 19th century and set up the first British mosque. They are taking the organisational skills and evangelical fervour of HT, and turning it against them. They are also taking nearly £1m from the British government - the only way, Maajid says, to do their work effectively.

The last time I speak to Maajid he is on the refugee-strewn North-West frontier of Pakistan, touring the country's universities. He is lecturing to huge audiences about his own experiences, and arguing against literalism in Islam. The massed ranks of the neo-Taliban are not far away. "People here and in Britain keep saying - we've been waiting for something like this for such a long time," he says over the telephone. "They're so happy people are starting to speak out. They're terrified to do it themselves, but this emboldens them."

A large audience of young Muslims is waiting for him. Maajid says assertively: "You know, back when I was an Islamist, I thought our ideology was like communism - and I still do. That makes me optimistic. Because what happened to communism? It was discredited as an idea. It lost. Who joins the Communist Party today?" I can hear the audience applaud him as he walks onto the stage, and with that, Maajid hangs up.

### III. LOST IN LIBERALISM

As the summer arrives and London begins to swelter, I sit with most of the "out" ex-jihadis in a slew of Starbucks across the city. We sip iced lattes and discuss how, not long ago, they tried to destroy Western civilisation.

They have different backgrounds: one is a Yorkshire girl with Hindu parents, another is a Northern boy whose father was a Conservative ultra-Thatcherite. Yet they are startlingly similar: they have all retained the humourless intensity of their pasts. And when they describe their Islamist former selves, they are distant and cold, as if describing a rather unpleasant acquaintance they did not entirely understand.

They wreath their stories in clouds of pointless detail: they talk for hours about the intricacies of seventh-century Meccan society, or the fine distinctions in the hierarchy of HT, willing you to understand it. It's a way of avoiding answering the hardest question - why? But from their scattered stories, I can trace something that seems genuinely new: an ex-jihadi way of looking at the world, that carries lessons about how to stop Western Muslims sinking into jihadism.

As children and teenagers, the ex-jihadis felt Britain was a valueless vacuum, where they were floating free of any identity.

Ed Husain, a former leader of HT, says: "On a basic level, we didn't know who we were. People need a sense of feeling part of a group - but who was our group?" They were lost in liberalism, beached between two unreachable



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identities - their parents', and their country's. They knew nothing of Pakistan or Saudi Arabia or the other places they were constantly told to "go home" to by racists.

Yet they felt equally shut out of British or democratic identity. From the right, there was the brutal nativist cry of "Go back where you came from!" But from the left, there was its mirror-image: a gooey multicultural sense that immigrants didn't want liberal democratic values and should be exempted from them. Again and again, they described how at school they were treated as "the funny foreign child", and told to "explain their customs" to the class. It patronised them into alienation.

"Nobody ever said - you're equal to us, you're one of us, and we'll hold you to the same standards," says Husain. "Nobody had the courage to stand up for liberal democracy without qualms. When people like us at [Newham] College were holding events against women and against gay people, where were our college principals and teachers, challenging us?"

Without an identity, they created their own. It was fierce and pure and violent, and it admitted no doubt.

To my surprise, the ex-jihadis said their rage about Western foreign policy - which was real, and burning - emerged only after their identity crises, and as a result of it. They identified with the story of oppressed Muslims abroad because it seemed to mirror the oppressive disorientation they felt in their own minds. Usman Raja, a bluff, buff boxer who begged to become a suicide bomber in the mid-1990s, tells me: "Your inner life is chaotic and you feel under threat the whole time. And then you're told by Islamists that life for Muslims everywhere is chaotic and under threat. It becomes bigger than you. It's about the world - and that's an amazing relief. The answer isn't inside your confused self. It's out there in the world."

But once they had made that leap to identify with the Umma - the global Muslim community - they got angrier the more abusive our foreign policy came. Every one of them said the Bush administration's response to 9/11 - from Guantanamo to Iraq - made jihadism seem more like an accurate description of the world. Hadiya Masieh, a tiny female former HT organiser, tells me: "You'd see Bush on the television building torture camps and bombing Muslims and you think - anything is justified to stop this. What are we meant to do, just stand still and let him cut our throats?"

But the converse was - they stressed - also true. When they saw ordinary Westerners trying to uphold human rights, their jihadism began to stutter. Almost all of them said that they doubted their Islamism when they saw a million non-Muslims march in London to oppose the Iraq War: "How could we demonise people who obviously opposed aggression against Muslims?" asks Hadiya.

Britain's foreign policy also helped tug them towards Islamism in another way. Once these teenagers decided to go looking for a harder, tougher Islamist identity, they found a well-oiled state machine waiting to feed it. Usman Raja says: "Saudi literature is everywhere in Britain, and it's free. When I started exploring my Muslim identity, when I was looking for something more, all the books were Saudi. In the bookshops, in the libraries. All of them. Back when I was fighting, I could go and get a car, open the boot up, and get it filled up with free literature from the Saudis, saying exactly what I believed. Who can compete with that?"

He says the Saudi message is particularly comforting to disorientated young Muslims in the West. "It tells you - you're in this state of sin. But the sin doesn't belong to you, it's not your fault - it's Western society's fault. It isn't your fault that you're sinning, because the girl had the miniskirt on. It wasn't you. It's not your fault that you're drug dealing. The music, your peers, the people around you - it's their fault."

Just as their journeys into the jihad were strikingly similar, so were their journeys out. All of them said doubt began to seep in because they couldn't shake certain basic realities from their minds. The first and plainest was that ordinary Westerners were not the evil, Muslim-hating cardboard kaffir presented by the Wahabis. Usman, for one, finally stopped wanting to be a suicide bomber because of the kindness of an old white man.

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Usman's mother had moved in next door to an elderly man called Tony, who was known in the neighbourhood as a spiteful, nasty grump. One day, Usman was teaching his little brother to box in the garden when he noticed the old man watching him from across the fence. "I used to box when I was in the Navy," he said. He started to give them tips and before long, he was building a boxing ring in their shed.

Tony died not long before 9/11, and Usman was sent to help clear out his belongings. In Tony's closet, he found a present wrapped and ready for his little brother's birthday: a pair of boxing gloves. "And I thought - that is humanity right there. That's an aspect of the divine that's in every human being. How can I want to kill people like him? How can I call him kaffir?"

Many of the ex-Islamists discovered they couldn't ignore the fact that whenever Islamists won a military victory, they didn't build a paradise, but hell.

At the same time, they began to balk at the mechanistic nature of Wahabism. Usman says he had become a "papier-mâche Muslim", defining his faith entirely by his actions, while being empty inside. "Wahabis are great at painting themselves [an Islamic] green on the outside, but when it comes to that internal aspect, it's not there. You pray five times a day, but why? Because God's told you to pray five times a day. You pay your charity - why? Because God's told you to pay your charity. This God of yours is telling you a lot. And why does he tell you to do that? Because if you don't do it, you'll end up in a fire. It's all based on being frightened. There's nothing to nourish you."

They had to go looking for other Islams - and often they found it in the more mystical school of the Sufis. "Wahabi Islam is totally sensory: eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth," Usman says. "It lays out a strict set of rules to be followed here on earth, every moment of the day. Sufi Islam teaches instead that the realm of Allah is wholly separate and spiritual and nothing to do with the shadow-play of mere mortals. It is accessible only through a sense of mystery and transcendence." In this new Sufi Islam, Usman found something he had never known before: a sense of calm.

Ed Husain insists: "There are a lot of Muslims who agree with us. A lot. But they're frightened. They see what's happened to us - the hassle, the slander, the death threats - and they think: it's not worth it. But you know what? When I first spoke out, I was alone. I had no idea that, a year on, there would be this number of people speaking out, and many more who are just offering resources and support. Once a truth is spoken, it takes on its own life."

#### IV. NOT STRAWBERRY SEASON

Anjem Choudhary waves his hand angrily through the air, and says that in the world he wants to create, the people I have been interviewing will be put to death. "They are apostates. I don't consider [them] to be Muslim in any sense of the word," he says. "Everybody knows the punishment for apostasy." My facial muscles must involuntarily react, because he leans forward and asks suspiciously: "Are you Jewish?"

Anjem is one of the last of the famous Islamists from the 1990s still walking London's streets, free and furious. A decade ago, this city hosted a stream of fanatical Muslims who kept cropping up in the tabloid press as semi-comic pantomime villains. But gradually, one by one, they have been deported or arrested, leaving Anjem as their final public face. He has said the Pope and the Mohamed cartoonists should be executed, and has lauded the 7/7 bombers as "the Fantastic Four".

I wanted to see what the people the ex-jihadis have left behind make of them - and to sense if they are seen as a real threat. Anjem suggests meeting me in the Desert Rose Cafe in Leyton, not far from Usama's mosque. The 41-year-old lives here on social security benefits, paid for by a populace he believes should - in large measure - be lashed, stoned or burned in the hellfires. A long beard covers his chubby face, and long white robes cover his swollen form. I was surprised he agreed to meet me. He rarely speaks to print journalists. The last time he did, he stormed out, accusing the reporter of being a paedophile.

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He immediately launches into a lecture about how the ex-Islamists are all liars and charlatans. They are "government bandits, set up by them and funded by them to do their dirty work within the [Muslim] community ... They were never actually practising! They were ignorant of Islam."

When I read him statements by ex-Islamists, he spits: "This is heresy ... The Muslim must submit to the sharia in all of his life. If I start to say things like, 'I don't believe the sharia needs to be implemented,' then that's tantamount to denying the message of Mohamed ... To say that any part of the Koran is not relevant nowadays is a clear statement of apostasy."

Taking any part of the Koran as metaphor will, he warns, cause the text to turn to dust in their hands. "I can't pick and choose what I like from the scripture. This is not strawberry season, where you can pick your own strawberries. You abide by whatever Allah brought in the final revelation with the example of the Prophet. And if there's something that you don't like, then you need to correct your own emotions and desires to make sure they're in line with the sharia."

He describes what is going to happen to them with a grin: "After they've been burnt, their skin will be recreated, and they will suffer the same punishment again and again and again."

I wondered if Anjem's biography fitted with that of the ex-jihadis' - or was there something different about them all along? Anjem says he was born in Welling in South-East London in 1967, where his father was a Pakistani immigrant who ran a market stall. He first realised the One and Eternal Truth when, one day in the early 1990s, he happened to hear a lecture at a local mosque by the Syrian-born Islamist Omar Bakri. Until then, Anjem had been living a life of sin as a young trainee lawyer, known to his friends as Andy. The British tabloids have exposed that he had sex with white women and dropped LSD.

But as he tells it, in the flames of Bakri's rhetoric, Andy was burned away, and Anjem was born. "Yeah, obviously, I had a period where I was not practising ... I have no shame at all in saying that I didn't always use to be like this. And I have great thanks to Allah that he guided me."

Yes, I say - but you would whip and lash and execute the person you were 20 years ago. His eyes flare. He pushes back his chair, half-rising to leave. "What I used to be like and what I used to say before isn't under discussion. If you're going to continue to ask about that, then I'll just stop the interview."

He then launches into half an hour of theological gobbledegook, where any question I try to interject is waved aside with a sneer. He has no interest in persuasion: with dull Torquemada eyes, he advocates the execution of anyone who disagrees. Is he scared of the ex-jihadis and their arguments? He is certainly angry with them - but he is so angry at everyone that it is hard to tell what this means.

He begins to ask - jabbing his finger - what my alternative is. "In the United States, bestiality is legal in the privacy of your own home," he says. Paedophiles are rampant, with the Man-Boy Love Association on the brink of success. Compare that with the 1,300-year long caliphate. In all those years, he says, "there were only 60 rapes".

Do you really believe that if people are not suppressed by a tyrant-God, they will become paedophiles and start fucking animals? Are you so rotten inside? Does Anjem fear Andy that much?

He stares at me, flat and emotionless now. "That is your last question," he says. And as I leave and look back at him through the glass, jabbering on his phone and daydreaming of annihilation, I realise how far all my interviewees - and new friends - have travelled.

They have burned in this fire of certainty. They have felt it consume all doubt and incinerate all self-analysis. And they dared, at last, to let it go. Are they freakish exceptions - or the beginning of a great unclenching of the jihadi fist?

To the brink and back again A generation of British Islamists have been trained in Afghanistan to fight a global jihad. But now some of those would-be extremist....

**Load-Date:** November 15, 2009

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End of Document

## [Hamas crackdown](#)

The Guardian - Final Edition

October 8, 2009 Thursday

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the **guardian**

**Section:** GUARDIAN INTERNATIONAL PAGES; Pg. 23

**Length:** 194 words

**Byline:** Rory McCarthy

### **Body**

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The Palestinian Islamist movement **Hamas** has banned **women** in Gaza from riding on motorbikes. The ban, posted on the movement's website, seeks "to preserve citizen safety and the stability of Palestinian society's customs and traditions". Given that few **women** ride on motorbikes in Gaza the proclamation seems unlikely to have much effect, but it raises concerns that a new Islamisation campaign is starting up.

**Hamas** took full security control over Gaza in mid-2007, after a near-civil war with its rival, Fatah. For the first three years there was little sign of any effort to Islamise society. Instead, the group exerted military control, confronting criminal clans and Fatah.

But since the summer there have been signs of a socially conservative campaign. In July, a judge announced a dress code, saying **female** lawyers had to wear conservative robes and headscarves in court. Human rights groups called the decision illegal.

**Hamas** patrols have also reportedly tried to stop unmarried couples from mixing together in public and banned mannequins and the display of **women**'s underwear in shop windows.

Some recent polls have suggested the movement's popularity is sliding.

**Load-Date:** October 8, 2009

### *Hamas exerts its power*

The Advertiser (Australia)

July 9, 2009 Thursday

1 - State Edition

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**Section:** FOREIGN; Pg. 51

**Length:** 104 words

### **Body**

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JERUSALEM: An attempt by Hamas police to detain a young woman walking with a man along the Gaza beach has raised alarms that the Islamic militant group is seeking to match its political control of the coastal territory with a strict enforcement of Islamic law.

The incident was the first time Hamas has openly tried to punish a woman for behaving in a way it views as un-Islamic since seizing power two years ago.

But it follows months of quiet pressure on Gaza's 1.4 million residents to abide by its strict religious mores.

Officials have urged shopkeepers to remove foreign advertisements showing the shape of women's bodies.

**Load-Date:** July 8, 2009

***Hamas video showing captive Israeli soldier***

ITN

October 5, 2009 Monday

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Length: 131 words

## **Body**

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The family of an abducted Israeli soldier have published a **Hamas** video showing their son is still alive.

A **Hamas** proof of life video has been released by the Israeli government showing captive Israeli soldier Gilad Schalit reading a Palestinian newspaper dated September 14.

Israel received the video after it released 19 **female** Palestinian prisoners on Friday in an exchange that is the first tangible step toward defusing a key flash point in Israeli-Palestinian hostilities.

In the video, the apparently unharmed captured Israeli soldier speaks lucidly and in Hebrew.

He sends his love to his parents, asks prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu to bring him home, relates a family story - it is thought to prove it is indeed him - and says he has been treated well by his Palestinian captors.

**Load-Date:** October 5, 2009

## ***Hamas shootout leaves 13 dead***

Financial Times (London, England)

August 15, 2009 Saturday

USA Edition 2

Copyright 2009 The Financial Times Limited All Rights Reserved

**Section:** WORLD NEWS DIGEST; Pg. 2

**Length:** 154 words

### **Body**

---

**Hamas**, the Palestinian group that rules the Gaza Strip, battled Islamist radicals from a faction affiliating itself with al-Qaeda yesterday in a shootout in which at least 13 people were killed and dozens more wounded.

The clashes with Jund Ansar Allah, or Soldiers of the Followers of God, took place in the southern town of Rafah, near the border with Egypt, according to Rafah residents and medical workers. They said that civilians, including some **women** and children, were among those injured.

The battle was prompted after Abdel-Latif Moussa, the group's spiritual leader, attempted to defy **Hamas** by declaring Rafah an "Islamic emirate" in which theocratic rule would apply as he gave a sermon before weekly prayers.

A UN probe into Israel's actions during its invasion of Gaza at the turn of the year points to serious violations of international humanitarian law, the world body said yesterday.

Vita Bekker, Tel Aviv

**Load-Date:** August 14, 2009



**Gaza Strip. Israel, Hamas agree to prisoner exchange**

Ottawa Citizen

October 1, 2009 Thursday

Early Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. A6

**Length:** 126 words

**Byline:** Canwest News Service

**Body**

---

Israel will free 20 Palestinian women from jail as early as Friday in exchange for a videotape from Hamas proving an Israeli soldier held in the Gaza Strip since 2006 is alive, officials on both sides said on Wednesday. Egyptian and German mediators are continuing to work on a final deal to swap the soldier, Gilad Shalit, for hundreds of Hamas prisoners. "It is important for the entire world to know that Gilad Shalit is alive and well and that Hamas is responsible for his well-being and his fate," Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in a statement. Shalit, now 23, was spirited into the Gaza Strip by Islamist terrorists who tunnelled into Israel three years ago in a raid in which two Israeli soldiers and two of the attackers were killed.

**Load-Date:** October 1, 2009

## [Hamas orders headscarf for Gaza lawyers](#)

AlArabiya.net

July 25, 2009 Saturday

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Length: 117 words

### Body

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**Hamas** has ordered **female** lawyers in the Gaza Strip to wear the headscarf in court, Palestinian officials said on Sunday.

But the decision by Supreme Court Chief Justice Abdul-Raouf Halabi, which takes effect on September 1, was slammed by the territory's bar association. "We refuse to comply with the decision," said Salamat Bessisso, president of the association.

The headscarf, or hijab, is compulsory for **women** in Iran and Saudi Arabia and has seen an increase in recent years in other Muslim countries. It is considered a symbol of **women's** modesty in Islam.

The **Hamas** movement seized power in the Gaza Strip in 2007 but has since imposed few Islamic rules on the territory's 1.5 million inhabitants.

**Load-Date:** July 26, 2009

## ***Hamas orders women lawyers to wear headscarves***

Daily Times

July 27, 2009 Monday

Copyright 2009 Right Vision News All Rights Reserved

**Length:** 181 words

**Dateline:** GAZA CITY

### **Body**

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GAZA CITY, July 27 -- The ***Hamas*** rulers of the Gaza Strip have ordered ***women*** lawyers to wear headscarfs in court, Palestinian officials said on Sunday. But the decision by the president of Gaza's high court, which takes effect on September 1, was slammed by the territory's bar association, according to AFP. "We refuse to comply with the decision," said Salamat Bessisso, president of the association. AP reported that Supreme Court chief justice Abdul-Raouf Halabi said ***female*** lawyers would be required to wear a headscarf and a long, dark collared cloak under their billowing black robes when the court returns from its summer recess in September. Halabi said his order was designed to ensure that ***women*** dress in accordance with Islamic law, which requires ***women*** to cover up in public, wearing loose garments and only showing their hands and faces. "Showing a woman's hair is forbidden (in Islam)," the ***Hamas***-appointed Halabi told AP. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily Times. For more information on news feed please contact Surit Das at [htsyndication@hindustantimes.com](mailto:htsyndication@hindustantimes.com)

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**Load-Date:** July 27, 2009

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End of Document

***The great Gaza cover-up Hamas launches 'virtue campaign'***

The Daily Telegraph (London)

July 29, 2009 Wednesday

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# The Daily Telegraph

**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 12

**Length:** 125 words

**Byline:** Dina Kraft in Tel Aviv

## Body

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Shopkeepers in the Gaza Strip have been ordered to remove lingerie from their windows as part of a **Hamas** "virtue campaign".

The Islamic group has also told **female** lawyers to wear headscarves in court and teenagers have been ordered to stop playing "suggestive" modern music. The campaign was started despite previous promises not to impose strict Islamic laws on the Gaza Strip's 1.5 million people.

**Hamas** has also been patrolling the beaches asking men to cover up bare chests and preventing groups of single people from congregating. The Gazan

religious affairs ministry is in charge of overseeing the campaign.

Abdullah Abu Jarbou, the deputy religious affairs minister, said: "We have to encourage people to be virtuous and keep them away from sin."

**Load-Date:** July 29, 2009

***Hamas video shows captured Israeli soldier looking thin***

Kamloops Daily News (British Columbia)

October 3, 2009 Saturday

Final Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. A12; World Today

**Length:** 66 words

**Byline:** Associated Press

**Dateline:** JERUSALEM

**Body**

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In the first glimpse of him since his capture more than three years ago, a thin but healthy-looking Israeli soldier said in a video released Friday that he is being treated well by his Palestinian captors and appealed to Israel's leader to bring him home.

Israel received the two-minute video of Sgt. Gilad Schalit from **Hamas** militants after it released 19 **female** Palestinian prisoners earlier Friday.

**Load-Date:** October 5, 2009

## **Prisoners set to be released**

Right Vision News

September 2, 2009 Wednesday

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**Length:** 135 words

**Dateline:** Pakistan

### **Body**

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Pakistan, Oct. 02 -- Israel will free 20 Palestinian **women** from jail as early as Friday in exchange for a videotape from **Hamas** proving an Israeli soldier held in the Gaza Strip since 2006 is alive. Egyptian and German mediators are continuing to work on a final deal to swap the soldier, Gilad Shalit (pictured) for hundreds of **Hamas** prisoners. The negotiations are part of international efforts to ease Israel's blockade of the **Hamas**-run Gaza Strip. 'It is important for the entire world to know that Gilad Shalit is alive and well and that **Hamas** is responsible for his well-being and his fate,' Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Right Vision News. For more information on news feed please contact Sarabjit Jagirdar at [htsyndication@hindustantimes.com](mailto:htsyndication@hindustantimes.com)

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**Load-Date:** October 1, 2009

## **Pakistan: First swine flu deaths reported in Gaza**

Daily the Pak Banker

December 7, 2009 Monday

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**Length:** 154 words

**Dateline:** GAZA CITY

### **Body**

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GAZA CITY, Dec. 07 -- Two **women** have died in **Hamas**-run Gaza after contracting swine flu, the first deaths from the virus in the densely-populated Palestinian territory, officials said on Monday. Hassan Khalaf, a spokesman for the **Hamas** health ministry, declined to give details but said the condition of three other people who on Sunday had been confirmed to have contracted A(H1N1) was improving. The five cases reported on Sunday marked the first A(H1N1) cases in the Gaza Strip, which Israel and Egypt have kept under a blockade allowing in only essential humanitarian aid, since the Islamist **Hamas** seized power in June 2007. In the occupied West Bank, at least 1,250 cases of swine flu have been reported, with nine deaths, according to government figures. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily Pak Banker. For more information on news feed please contact Sarabjit Jagirdar at [htsyndication@hindustantimes.com](mailto:htsyndication@hindustantimes.com)

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**Load-Date:** December 7, 2009

*the soldier*

The Toronto Star

November 24, 2009 Tuesday

Copyright 2009 Toronto Star Newspapers, Ltd.

**Section:** NEWS; Pg. A03

**Length:** 61 words

## **Body**

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Sgt. Gilad Schalit, 23, was captured by **Hamas** in a 2006 raid near the Israel-Gaza border. Schalit's captivity touched a raw nerve in Israel, where people hold regular vigils for his release. Israel freed 19 Palestinian **women** from prison in exchange for a proof-of-life video, right, last month, adding pressure on Israel to meet **Hamas's** demands for Schalit's release.

**Load-Date:** November 24, 2009

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End of Document



**Israel in prisoner swap proposal**

Financial Times (London, England)

October 1, 2009 Thursday

London Edition 1

Copyright 2009 The Financial Times Limited All Rights Reserved

**Section:** WORLD NEWS DIGEST; Pg. 6

**Length:** 71 words

**Body**

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Israel said yesterday it would free 20 Palestinian women from its jails in exchange for a videotape from Hamas proving that Gilad Shalit, the Israeli soldier kidnapped by the Islamist group more than three years ago, was alive.

The announcement may signal a breakthrough in talks being conducted through mediators on a possible swap of Mr Shalit for hundreds of Hamas inmates being held by the Jewish state.

Vita Bekker, Tel Aviv

**Load-Date:** September 30, 2009

**'Free honeytrap killer'**

Sunday Express

December 13, 2009 Sunday

U.K. 1st Edition

Copyright 2009 EXPRESS NEWSPAPERS All Rights Reserved

**Section:** NEWS; 45

**Length:** 139 words

**Body**

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A PALESTINIAN woman jailed for luring an Israeli schoolboy to his death is among 450 detainees Hamas is demanding be freed.

Amneh Muna, dubbed "the Delilah of Ramallah", is at the top of the list submitted by Hamas in exchange for Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit, who has been held since 2006.

In 2001 Muna, then 24, used an internet chatroom to groom Ofir Rahum, 16, before persuading him to skip school and meet her in Jerusalem with promises of sex. She then drove him to Ramallah where he was shot dead by two Fatah gunmen.

Muna later told police she was proud of her role in the teenager's murder.

She was jailed for life after judges branded her "the lowest form of humanity with absolutely no morals". She has since become a leader of the women's cell blocks.

Israel has agreed to free 900 prisoners but insists Muna will not be included.

**Load-Date:** December 14, 2009

## **Choose Israel**

The Calgary Herald (Alberta)

October 8, 2009 Thursday

Final Edition

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**Section:** Q: QUERIES - QUIBBLES - QUIRKS; Pg. A15; Inbox: Your Space - Your Time

**Length:** 136 words

**Byline:** Kim Libin, Calgary Herald

### **Body**

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Two news stories grabbed my attention spelling out exactly which team Canada should be on.

In Gaza, **Hamas** leaders banned **women** from riding on the back of motorcycles as part of **Hamas'** Virtue Campaign. **Women** found riding on these motorcycles have been arrested and beaten. Right next door, Israeli chemist Ada Yonath won the 2009 Nobel Prize for chemistry, only the fourth woman to have done so. Yonath's research has led to the development of new antibiotics saving lives the world over. Israel operates in a culture of "can do" without barriers. The Muslim world promotes a culture of "don't you dare" and "for shame." Does Canada stand for **women**'s rights, scientific advances and saving lives with medical advances? You bet we do. Israel deserves Canada's full support in every way we can provide it.

Kim Libin,

Calgary

### **Graphic**

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Photo: Ada Yonath ;

**Load-Date:** October 8, 2009

## *19 freed by Israel for video of soldier*

The Sun (England)

October 3, 2009 Saturday

Edition 3, National Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 22

**Length:** 137 words

### **Body**

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ISRAEL released 19 Palestinian women prisoners yesterday - after a video was delivered showing that a kidnapped Israeli soldier is still alive.

Gilad Shalit, 23, was seized by Hamas extremists three years ago.

In the video, he is shown sitting in a chair reading a prepared statement tucked behind an Arabic-language newspaper, showing the date September 14.

Shalit said he was in good health and that his captors were treating him "excellently".

The women were freed and taken by Red Cross jeeps to the West Bank.

Israeli officials said the video had been viewed and the swap was given the green light.

A copy was given to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Jerusalem.

It was also later screened by Israeli TV stations.

Hamas is demanding freedom for 1,000 Palestinian prisoners as their price for the eventual release of Shalit.

### **Graphic**

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Shalit ... on video

**Load-Date:** October 5, 2009

19 freed by Israel for video of soldier

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End of Document

## **World - Israel swaps Shalit video for 19 female prisoners**

Morning Star

October 3, 2009 Saturday

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**Length:** 184 words

### **Body**

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**Hamas** officials gave Tel Aviv a video showing a healthy looking Israeli soldier held captive since 2006 in exchange for the release of 19 Palestinian **women** prisoners on Friday.

As vans carrying 18 of the **women** entered the West Bank they were greeted by hundreds of cheering people waving Palestinian flags.

The former prisoners, wearing the headscarves of devout Muslim **women**, blew kisses to the crowd through the vehicles' open windows.

None of them has been implicated in the killing of Israelis.

They are members of either **Hamas**, Fatah, Islamic Jihad or the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

Another former detainee returned to her home in Gaza and yet another will be released to Gaza on Sunday, bringing to 20 the total number of **women** freed as part of the exchange.

An Israeli official who saw the video of Sergeant Gilad Shalit reported that the 23-year-old looked good and spoke lucidly about something from his past.

Palestinian authorities want Israel to trade up to 1,000 Palestinian prisoners for him, including some who have been convicted by Israeli courts of deadly attacks on Israelis.

**Load-Date:** October 5, 2009

**Video of kidnap soldier; IN THE NEWS**

The Times (London)

October 3, 2009 Saturday

Edition 1, National Edition

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# THE TIMES

**Section:** EDITORIAL; Pg. 2

**Length:** 41 words

## **Body**

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Israel freed a group of Palestinian women prisoners in a swap for a two-minute videotape showing one of their soldiers looking healthy. Gilad Schalit has been held captive by the Islamist group Hamas for more than three years. World news, page 41

**Load-Date:** October 3, 2009

**Video of kidnap soldier; IN THE NEWS**

The Times (London)  
October 3, 2009 Saturday  
Edition 1, Scotland

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# THE TIMES

**Section:** EDITORIAL; Pg. 2

**Length:** 41 words

## **Body**

---

Israel freed a group of Palestinian women prisoners in a swap for a two-minute videotape showing one of their soldiers looking healthy. Gilad Schalit has been held captive by the Islamist group Hamas for more than three years. World news, page 41

**Load-Date:** October 3, 2009



## **CAPTIVES DEAL**

The Sun (England)

October 1, 2009 Thursday

Edition 1, Ireland

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 2

**Length:** 68 words

### **Body**

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ISRAEL is set to release 20 Palestinian women in return for proof a captured soldier is still alive.

A government statement said it is expecting video footage from the captors of Gilad Shalit - who was seized by Hamas militants in 2006.

The statement added this deal was proposed by international mediators as part of a "confidencebuilding measure".

Around 10,000 Palestinians are b e i n g detained in Israel.

**Load-Date:** October 1, 2009

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End of Document

**19 freed over vid**

The Sun (England)  
October 3, 2009 Saturday  
Edition 2, Scotland

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 25

**Length:** 80 words

## **Body**

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ISRAEL released 19 Palestinian women prisoners yesterday - after a video was delivered showing that a kidnapped Israeli soldier is still alive.

Gilad Shalit, 23, was seized by Hamas extremists three years ago.

In the video, he is shown reading a prepared statement behind an Arabic-language newspaper, showing the date September 14.

Shalit said he was in good health and that his captors were treating him "excellently".

The women were freed and taken by Red Cross jeeps to the West Bank.

**Load-Date:** October 5, 2009

## **FILM HOPE FOR ISRAELI PRISONER**

Daily Record

October 3, 2009, Saturday

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 2

**Length:** 79 words

### **Body**

---

A VIDEO of an Israeli soldier held captive by **Hamas** for more than three years was released yesterday.

The film of Sergeant Gilad Shalit was handed over in exchange for 19 Palestinian **women** prisoners.

Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu and defence minister Ehud Barak were among the first to see the video, along with military officials, who checked its authenticity.

A copy was then flown by helicopter to northern Israel where the relieved Shalit family watched it at home.

**Load-Date:** October 3, 2009

The New York Times  
October 4, 2009 Sunday  
Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section WK; Column 0; Week in Review Desk; Pg. 3; PRIME NUMBER

**Length:** 81 words

## Body

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THE NUMBER OF PALESTINIAN **WOMEN** RELEASED BY ISRAEL from its jails last week in return for a DVD of Gilad Shalit showing the 23-year-old Israeli soldier alive three years after his capture. Mr. Shalit, looking thin and wan, appeared on the video holding a Palestinian newspaper dated Sept. 14. The exchange, brokered by German and Egyptian mediators, was the most tangible sign of progress in negotiations for his freedom. **Hamas** has demanded the release of up to 1,000 Palestinian prisoners.

<http://www.nytimes.com>

**Load-Date:** October 4, 2009

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End of Document

**Israel frees 19 after seeing film of soldier; world newsbulletin**

The Western Mail

October 3, 2009 Saturday

First Edition

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**Section:** Pg. 8

**Length:** 106 words

**Body**

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ISRAEL freed 19 Palestinian women prisoners in exchange for a video proving a captured soldier was still alive and well yesterday.

The exchange was the first tangible step toward defusing a key flashpoint in Israeli-Palestinian hostilities.

An Israeli official who saw the video of Sergeant Gilad Schalit said the 23-year-old looked good and spoke lucidly.

It was the first glimpse of Schalit since his capture in 2006. Before yesterday, the only signs of life had been three letters and an audio tape. In the video, Schalit held up an Arabic language newspaper dated September 14, 2009 - Hamas proof the footage was taken recently.

**Load-Date:** October 3, 2009

## Yesterdays

Pretoria News (South Africa)

November 12, 2009 Thursday

E1 Edition

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**Section:** Pg. 13

**Length:** 128 words

### **Body**

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1923 Adolf Hitler is arrested for a failed attempt to seize power on November 8 in Germany's Beer Hall Putsch.

1970 A cyclone and tidal wave hits East Pakistan, killing at least 200 000 people.

1974 South Africa is suspended from the UN General Assembly over its racial policies.

2002 In an audiotaped message aired across the Arab world, a voice purported to be that of Osama bin Laden praises terrorist strikes in Bali, Indonesia and Moscow, and warns US allies against following the "oppressive American government".

2007 **Hamas** security forces open fire on a rally by the Fatah movement in Gaza City.

2008 Britain faces a sperm donor shortage after reversing confidentiality laws and limiting the number of **women** who can use sperm from one donor, fertility experts warn.

**Load-Date:** November 11, 2009

**Investigation of civilian shootings urged**

The Vancouver Sun (British Columbia)

August 14, 2009 Friday

Final Edition

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**Section:** CANADA & WORLD; Pg. B5; World in Brief

**Length:** 111 words

**Byline:** Canwest News Service

**Body**

---

Human Rights Watch called on Israel on Thursday to investigate seven incidents in which it said Israeli troops shot dead Palestinian civilians who were flying white flags during the war in the Gaza Strip in January. The New York-based lobby group said other governments should press for prosecutions under international law if Israel failed to act. Human Rights Watch said it had statements and other evidence indicating 11 unarmed people, including five women and four children, were shot dead while in groups waving white flags. Last week, Human Rights Watch said Hamas, the group ruling Gaza, was guilty of war crimes for shooting rockets at housing areas in Israel.

**Load-Date:** August 14, 2009

## **FAST NEWS**

The Courier Mail (Australia)

November 28, 2009 Saturday

1 - First with the news Edition

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**Section:** WORLD; Pg. 56

**Length:** 157 words

### **Body**

---

#### More mine deaths

BEIJING: A gas explosion in a southwestern China coalmine killed nine people, state media said yesterday. Search efforts were underway for a missing miner in the latest deadly accident to strike the country's notoriously dangerous mining sector, Xinhua news agency said, following the accident late on Thursday at the Zhenxing coal mine in Guizhou province.

#### Prisoners out

GAZA CITY: The **Hamas** movement ruling the Gaza Strip released 150 prisoners yesterday, including security detainees, in honour of the Muslim feast Eid al-Adha. Those released include at least 25 "security detainees" and 77 people held on criminal charges.

#### Students shot

BUDAPEST: A student at the Scientific University of Pecs in southern Hungary has opened fire on his classmates, killing one person and wounding three. A **female** student was killed in Thursday's incident. The 23-year-old gunman was detained by the police but his motives were still unclear.

**Load-Date:** November 27, 2009



## ***Lockerbie to kick off Doha Debates season on Oct 12***

Qatar Tribune

October 11, 2009 Sunday

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**Length:** 138 words

### **Body**

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DOHA The 6th season of the Doha Debates will kick off on October 12 with an episode on the release of the Lockerbie bomber, Chairman Tim Sebastian said on Saturday. A man who lost his daughter in the bombing will be among the guests of this episode. About the new and controversial issues that will be tackled this season, he said, "We are planning to have a special episode about the situation of Muslims in India, a one on one debate between Hamas and Fatah officials, as well as the situation in Iran after the presidential elections." After the success of the episode on marriage of Muslim women last year, more debates on social issues are planned this year, he said. The debates provide Arab youth chance to discuss critical issues affecting their daily life with thought leaders and politicians from all over the world.

**Load-Date:** November 23, 2009

## On this day

The Bolton News

December 30, 2009 Wednesday

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**Section:** LOOKING BACK

**Length:** 170 words

### **Body**

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1865: Rudyard Kipling, English author, was born in India where some of his best novels and short stories are set.

1879: The first performances of Gilbert & Sullivan's *The Pirates Of Penzance* took place in the Bijou Theatre, Paignton.

1887: A petition to Queen Victoria, with more than one million names of women appealing for public houses to be closed on Sundays, was handed to the Home Secretary.

1894: Amelia Bloomer, American social reformer, died.

1916: Rasputin, influential Russian mystic who was a favourite of Nicholas and Alexandra, was killed by a group of conservatives led by Prince Yusupov.

1922: Russia declared the USSR, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

1979: Richard Rodgers, one of the world's best-known composers of musicals, died in New York, aged 77. With Oscar Hammerstein II, he wrote *Carousel*, *South Pacific*, *The King And I* and *The Sound Of*

LAST YEAR: World powers called on Israel and Hamas to implement an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and southern Israel after Israel threatened prolonged attacks.

**Load-Date:** December 30, 2009

## *Video of Israeli soldier released*

ITN

October 5, 2009 Monday

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**Length:** 151 words

**Byline:** Palestinian militants have finally released footage of an Israeli soldier they captured three years ago.

### **Body**

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Palestinian militants have finally released footage of an Israeli soldier they captured three years ago.

The two-minute video showed Gilad Shalit reading a statement in Hebrew. He appeared to be healthy and coherent and even seemed to smile.

The 23-year-old was shown holding an Arabic-language newspaper dated September 14th - a message from his Palestinian captors to the Israeli authorities that he is still alive.

Israel received the video in return for the release of 20 Palestinian women prisoners from its jails as part of a deal with Hamas.

The women were driven from the Israeli Hasharon prison near Tel Aviv and were carried by International Red Cross vehicles to border crossings with the Palestinian enclaves in the Gaza Strip and West Bank.

Their release is the most positive move in three years of efforts to free Mr Shalit, who was taken prisoner by guerrillas in a cross-border raid in June 2006.

**Load-Date:** October 5, 2009

## **Video of Israeli soldier released**

ITN

October 2, 2009 Friday

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**Length:** 151 words

**Byline:** Palestinian militants have finally released footage of an Israeli soldier they captured three years ago.

### **Body**

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Palestinian militants have finally released footage of an Israeli soldier they captured three years ago.

The two-minute video showed Gilad Shalit reading a statement in Hebrew. He appeared to be healthy and coherent and even seemed to smile.

The 23-year-old was shown holding an Arabic-language newspaper dated September 14th - a message from his Palestinian captors to the Israeli authorities that he is still alive.

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**Load-Date:** October 2, 2009

*Iran the world leader in abuse of human rights*

Irish Examiner

December 2, 2009 Wednesday

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**Irish Examiner.com**  
a Thomas Crosbie Holdings company

**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 186 words

## Body

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Mr Rahimpour represents a country whose president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, has repeatedly called for Israel - a state 80 times smaller than his own with one-twelfth of its population - to be "wiped off the map".

His country supplies Hezbollah and **Hamas** with the rockets they use to attack Israeli civilians.

As the representative of a country that is a world leader in the abuse of human rights, the Iranian ambassador should hesitate before he invokes international law against a small democratic state forced to defend its citizens. Iran has ignored calls from the council of the EU to halt its wholesale use of the death penalty (317 people were executed in 2007 alone, the second highest figure in the world, including scores of juvenile offenders).

It has for many years persecuted its Baha'i religious minority and its Kurdish national minority as well as routinely imprisoning **women**'s rights activists and those who criticised the recent rigged elections.

Before he meddles in the Israel-Palestinian issue, the Iranian ambassador should address the welfare of his own citizens.

Pat O'Sullivan

South Circular Road,

Limerick

**Load-Date:** December 2, 2009

## **Noam Schalit meets with Sarkozy. Gilad's father still has low expectations for son's release**

The Jerusalem Post  
October 9, 2009 Friday

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 2

**Length:** 168 words

**Byline:** Jerusalem Post staff

### **Body**

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Noam Schalit, father of abducted soldier Gilad Schalit, seemed somewhat encouraged after meeting with French President Nicolas Sarkozy in Paris on Thursday evening. He said he considers the recent proof that his son is alive as a breakthrough, but does not foresee Gilad's imminent release from **Hamas** captivity in Gaza.

"The president reiterated his commitment and absolute dedication to the case," Schalit said after the meeting with Sarkozy. "He is acting relentlessly and incessantly for Gilad's release."

Earlier on Thursday, he told AFP that the Schalit family does not see light at the end of the tunnel.

Although the recent video-tape-for-**female**-security- prisoners deal was "a step in the right direction," it was "no breakthrough," he said.

Schalit also referred to the Israeli government's efforts to release his son, commending Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu on "increased activity" during his time in office, and criticizing former prime minister Ehud Olmert for issuing "statements without results."

### **Graphic**

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Photo: Noam Schalit (Credit: Ariel Jerozolimski)

**Load-Date:** October 4, 2011

## *Gaza zookeepers paint donkeys as zebras*

The New Zealand Herald

October 9, 2009 Friday

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**Section:** NEWS; World

**Length:** 162 words

### **Body**

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GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip ? Zookeepers in Gaza have found a creative way of drawing crowds to their dilapidated zoo.

They have been painting their donkeys to make them look like zebras.

The Marah Land Zoo's only two zebras died of hunger earlier this year when they were neglected during the Israel-**Hamas** war.

The popular animals were considered too expensive to replace so the keepers decided to paint a pair of donkeys as zebras instead.

Mohammed Bargouthi, the owner of the zoo said it would have cost more than \$40US,000 (\$53NZ,778) to bring in a real zebra via smuggling tunnels reports the BBC.

Instead, masking tape and black hair dye applied with a paint-brush were used to give the white **female** donkeys black and white patterns.

Hasan Yaseen said his three children had never seen a real zebra and they enjoyed the Gaza zoo version.

Aside from the two 'zebras,' the zoo also houses an aging tigress, two monkeys, and a selection of birds, rabbits and cats.

- AP, NZ HERALD STAFF

**Load-Date:** October 9, 2009

**Prisoners freed as video shows Israeli soldier alive**

The Daily Telegraph (London)

October 3, 2009 Saturday

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# The Daily Telegraph

**Section:** NEWS; International; Pg. 16

**Length:** 180 words

**Byline:** Adrian Blomfield in Jerusalem

## Body

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ISRAEL released 19 Palestinian women from prison yesterday after Hamas, the Islamist group that controls Gaza, handed over a video tape showing Gilad Shalit, the Israeli soldier it has held captive for over three years.

The first indisputable evidence that Cpl Shalit was still alive prompted widespread relief in Israel.

Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli prime minister, welcomed the development, saying: "Although the path to his release is still long and difficult the knowledge that he is healthy encourages us all."

Cpl Shalit, 23, who was captured in a cross-border raid in June, 2006, looked gaunt but otherwise seemed healthy and coherent in the two-and-a-half minute video. He read from a prepared text and held up a newspaper, dated Sept 14, as proof that he was still alive.

"I want to send my regards to my family and tell them that I love them and miss them and yearn for the day of my return," Cpl Shalit said.

The swap, brokered by Egypt and Germany, is seen as the first step in the release of hundreds more Palestinian prisoners in exchange for Cpl Shalit's freedom.

**Load-Date:** October 3, 2009



## **Crucifixion just the first offence for Safran**

The Age (Melbourne, Australia)

September 22, 2009 Tuesday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 4

**Length:** 173 words

**Byline:** MICHELLE GRIFFIN

### **Body**

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TELEVISION provocateur John Safran may well be condemned as well as crucified for his latest TV series, John Safran's Race Relations, which will air on ABC 1 from October 21.

His headline-grabbing crucifixion in the Philippines last April can be seen on a trailer the ABC released yesterday, but that's not the only controversy in the eight-part series about inter-racial sex and relationships.

The trailer also reveals Safran in blackface in Chicago, fighting with white men and using the word "nigger"; made up to look like the Elephant Man while meeting Asian women; dressed as a "ladyboy" male prostitute; spanking a blonde woman over his knee; and attending a Palestinian meeting in full Orthodox Jewish garb.

"I know what you obese 14-year-olds are tweeting," Safran says in the voice-over. "If he had any guts, he'd be testing it out on the hardcores from Hamas."

The series is still being edited, according to ABC sources. It is not known if the shows have been reviewed by senior ABC managers yet.

Safran did not return calls last night.

**Load-Date:** September 21, 2009

**Video shows Israeli captive; Proof soldier is alive delivered after 20  
Palestinian prisoners are freed**

The Gazette (Montreal)  
October 3, 2009 Saturday  
Final Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. A16

**Length:** 189 words

**Byline:** LAUREN MCNABB, Canwest News Service; Global News

**Dateline:** JERUSALEM

## **Body**

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A video of kidnapped soldier Gilad Shalit, who appeared tired but smiling, was broadcast yesterday, giving a relieved Israeli public its first glimpse of him since his abduction more than three years ago.

The video was provided in exchange for the release of 20 **female** Palestinian prisoners.

The swap, negotiated by Egyptian and German mediators, marked the first significant step in a stalled negotiation process that has seen Israel call for Shalit's freedom and **Hamas** demand the return of at least 1,000 more Palestinian prisoners, some convicted of deadly terrorist attacks.

Shalit was captured and dragged into Gaza during a cross-border raid in June 2006.

Since then, the International Red Cross has been barred from seeing him and, with the exception of a few letters to his family and one audio tape, news of his well-being has been scarce.

In the video, Shalit held a newspaper, marked with the date Sept. 14, and also walked toward the camera on his own.

Israel released 19 **female** Palestinian prisoners yesterday, with one more to be freed tomorrow. Most were deemed to be "low-profile" and near the end of their two-year sentences.

## **Graphic**

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Colour Photo: REUTERS; Gilad Shalit walked in the video to show he is healthy. ;

**Load-Date:** October 3, 2009

Video shows Israeli captive; Proof soldier is alive delivered after 20 Palestinian prisoners are freed

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## *No Headline In Original*

Pretoria News (South Africa)

October 08, 2009 Thursday

E1 Edition

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**Section:** Pg. 8

**Length:** 658 words

### **Body**

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NEW DELHI: India's defence minister yesterday accused Pakistan of encouraging Islamic militants to cross into the Indian-ruled section of the disputed region of Kashmir. AK Antony warned that the military was determined to stem the recent rise in infiltrations over the de facto border into Indian Kashmir, where a rebellion has claimed thousands of lives in the past two decades.

YANGON: Detained pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi met a minister from Myanmar's ruling junta yesterday for the second time in a week, in the first signs of a resumed dialogue between the two sides. The opposition icon met Labour Minister Aung Kyi, the official liaison between Suu Kyi and the government, for 30-minute talks at a state guesthouse in Yangon, a Myanmar official said.

JERUSALEM: An Israeli rides his self-made vehicle adorned with animal effigies during the Red Bull soapbox non-motorised racing event in Jerusalem yesterday.

MANILA: The Philippines warned yesterday that there was a high probability of epidemics among the 340 000 people crowded into poorly equipped makeshift evacuation centres following recent deadly floods. As the government also admitted it had no idea when those left homeless in the September 26 disaster would be resettled, international aid agencies stepped up aid efforts

GAZA CITY: The **Hamas** government has banned motorcycle riders from carrying **women** on the back seat - the latest in the militants' virtue campaign in Gaza. The ban was posted on the **Hamas** Interior Ministry website. It says the ban seeks "to preserve citizen safety and the stability of Palestinian society's customs and traditions". **Hamas** wants to impose a strict interpretation of Islam.

CAMBRIDGE, Massachusetts: Harvard University has acquired the manuscripts, correspondences and other papers of two-time Pulitzer Prize-winning author John Updike, a member of the university's class of 1954. Harvard's Houghton Library, the university's primary repository for rare books and manuscripts, will house the Updike archive. It is not known how much Harvard paid for the papers.

KAMPALA: Uganda released Somalia's state minister for defence yesterday, hours after arresting him because he did not inform Ugandan authorities of his visit, officials said. Yusuf Mohamed Siad was picked up on Tuesday in Kampala. He was released yesterday, said a Ugandan army spokesman. "The issue was discussed at diplomatic level and we have released him," he said.

## No Headline In Original

CONAKRY: Guinea's main opposition coalition is demanding that the country's military leader step down before it will participate in talks with the ruling junta. Ba Oury, a leading opposition official, said talks would go forward only if Captain Moussa "Dadis" Camara leaves office. The opposition is also calling for the arrest of soldiers who fired at pro-democracy protesters last week.

MILAN: The wife of an Egyptian cleric allegedly kidnapped from a Milan street in 2003 as part of the CIA's extraordinary rendition programme is seeking millions of euros in damages. Lawyers for Ghali Nabila told a Milan court yesterday she deserved e5 million (R54.7m) for her suffering after not knowing for years what had become of Osama Moustafa Hassan Nasr.

AMSTERDAM: Dutch trade unions staged work stoppages and protests yesterday against government plans to raise the pension age, in what could signal the start of a rolling industrial action campaign. Symbolic 65-minute work stoppages and public meetings were held after talks between unions and employers on a compromise to head off a state plan to raise the retirement age to 67.

VILNIUS, Lithuania: The trial of a suspected Irish Republican Army dissident resumed here yesterday behind closed doors. Michael Campbell, the brother of a senior Real IRA figure in Ireland, was arrested in January 2008 when he allegedly handed e10 000 to an undercover Lithuanian intelligence agent posing as a weapons supplier. Reporters were barred from yesterday's court session.

**Load-Date:** October 7, 2009

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## *No Headline In Original*

Pretoria News (South Africa)

September 07, 2009 Monday

E1 Edition

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**Section:** Pg. 6

**Length:** 648 words

### **Body**

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SEOUL: Six South Koreans camping along a river flowing from North Korea were swept away when it suddenly doubled in height yesterday, apparently because a dam in the North released a large amount of water without warning. South Korean officials said they had conveyed concerns about the dam's effect on the South in recent years, to no avail. There was no sign of the bodies after a 10-hour search.

ROME: Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi's support among practising Catholics has slipped to 50 percent from 55 percent in April since the row about his private life erupted, says a new poll. The wife of Berlusconi, 72, has said she wanted a divorce, accusing him of "frequenting minors" and of promoting attractive young women to political posts in what she termed a "trashy" system.

MELBOURNE: This white bejewelled glove that once belonged to Michael Jackson was sold at auction for US\$49 000 (R374 000) yesterday.

HONG KONG: At least nine people were injured when two people threw acid on passers-by on a busy Hong Kong street yesterday evening, police said. Two people appeared to have been the target of the attack as they walked through the inner city district of Mongkok, but acid splashed others in the vicinity. One man was later arrested. The case was the third of its kind since December.

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**Load-Date:** September 9, 2009

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September 07, 2009 Monday

E1 Edition

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**Section:** Pg. 6

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**Load-Date:** September 8, 2009

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September 07, 2009 Monday

E1 Edition

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**Section:** Pg. 6

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**Load-Date:** October 23, 2009

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September 07, 2009 Monday

E1 Edition

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**Section:** Pg. 6

**Length:** 648 words

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**Load-Date:** September 30, 2009

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## *No Headline In Original*

The Star (South Africa)

September 07, 2009 Monday

E3 Edition

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**Section:** Pg. 4

**Length:** 647 words

### **Body**

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SEATTLE: A cougar that apparently had lived in Seattle for more than two weeks and forced the city's largest park to close was captured yesterday and returned to the wild. It was sedated with a tranquilliser after hunting dogs had forced it up a tree. Wildlife officials said the animal "wasn't aggressive or stalking people, and it maintained its natural respect for the wild". The park reopened yesterday.

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DAKAR, Senegal: Flooding in West Africa has claimed about 70 lives and left hundreds of thousands facing health risks in the rainy season, a UN humanitarian official said yesterday. The flooding has hit impoverished Burkina Faso and at least five other countries, and has destroyed precious grain stocks, which could trigger a food-security crisis in weeks to come.

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JAKARTA: Rescuers searched for more than 30 people still missing after a landslide triggered by Wednesday's earthquake that struck Java island, but there was little hope of finding any survivors, officials said yesterday. The death toll stood at 70 yesterday after a magnitude 7.3 quake rocked West Java province. More than 890 others were injured.

RABAT: Morocco's prosecutor-general has ordered the police to investigate two publications for articles questioning the health of King Mohammed VI, officials said at the weekend. The prosecutor-general's office said the independent weeklies Al Ayam and Al Michael had published "lies and false information... contrary to the truth contained in the statement from the Royal Place".

**Load-Date:** September 30, 2009

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## *No Headline In Original*

The Star (South Africa)

October 08, 2009 Thursday

E3 Edition

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**Section:** Pg. 4

**Length:** 675 words

### **Body**

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NEW DELHI: India's defence minister yesterday accused Pakistan of encouraging Islamic militants to cross into the Indian-ruled section of the disputed region of Kashmir. AK Antony warned that the military was determined to stem the recent rise in infiltrations over the de facto border into Indian Kashmir, where a rebellion has claimed thousands of lives in the past two decades.

YANGON: Detained pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi met a minister from Myanmar's ruling junta yesterday for the second time in a week, in the first signs of a resumed dialogue between the two sides. The opposition icon met Labour Minister Aung Kyi, the official liaison between Suu Kyi and the government, for 30-minute talks at a state guesthouse in Yangon, a Myanmar official said.

LAHORE: People watch a fight between a monkey and a dog at a roadside in Lahore. These shows are usually seen in Pakistani rural areas, and spectators offer money to the owners of the animals. The fights are generally for entertainment and avoid serious injuries to the participants.

MANILA: The Philippines warned yesterday that there was a high probability of epidemics among the 340 000 people crowded into poorly equipped makeshift evacuation centres following recent deadly floods. As the government also admitted it had no idea when those left homeless in the September 26 disaster would be resettled, international aid agencies stepped up aid efforts

GAZA CITY: The **Hamas** government has banned motorcycle riders from carrying **women** on the back seat - the latest in the militants' virtue campaign in Gaza. The ban was posted on the **Hamas** Interior Ministry website. It says the ban seeks "to preserve citizen safety and the stability of Palestinian society's customs and traditions". **Hamas** wants to impose a strict interpretation of Islam.

CAMBRIDGE, Massachusetts: Harvard University has acquired the manuscripts, correspondences and other papers of two-time Pulitzer Prize-winning author John Updike, a member of the university's class of 1954. Harvard's Houghton Library, the university's primary repository for rare books and manuscripts, will house the Updike archive. It is not known how much Harvard paid for the papers.

KAMPALA: Uganda released Somalia's state minister for defence yesterday, hours after arresting him because he did not inform Ugandan authorities of his visit, officials said. Yusuf Mohamed Siad was picked up on Tuesday in Kampala. He was released yesterday, said a Ugandan army spokesman. "The issue was discussed at diplomatic level and we have released him," he said.



## No Headline In Original

CONAKRY: Guinea's main opposition coalition is demanding that the country's military leader step down before it will participate in talks with the ruling junta. Ba Oury, a leading opposition official, said talks would go forward only if Captain Moussa "Dadis" Camara leaves office. The opposition is also calling for the arrest of soldiers who fired at pro-democracy protesters last week.

MILAN: The wife of an Egyptian cleric allegedly kidnapped from a Milan street in 2003 as part of the CIA's extraordinary rendition programme is seeking millions of euros in damages. Lawyers for Ghali Nabila told a Milan court yesterday she deserved e5 million (R54.7m) for her suffering after not knowing for years what had become of Osama Moustafa Hassan Nasr.

VILNIUS, Lithuania: The trial of a suspected Irish Republican Army dissident resumed here yesterday behind closed doors. Michael Campbell, the brother of a senior Real IRA figure in Ireland, was arrested in January 2008 when he allegedly handed e10 000 to an undercover Lithuanian intelligence agent posing as a weapons supplier. Reporters were barred from yesterday's court session.

TRIPOLI: Libya's state-run news agency said a Libyan fighter jet crashed into a house during an international air show in the country's capital, killing the pilot and co-pilot. The report said three people on the ground were wounded when the Soviet-designed MiG-23 jet crashed early yesterday in a suburb of Tripoli, destroying most of the impacted house.

**Load-Date:** October 8, 2009

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**No Headline In Original**

Cape Times (South Africa)

November 04, 2009 Wednesday

E2 Edition

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**Section:** Pg. 2

**Length:** 218 words

**Body**

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Pakistan's government has averted a potentially destabilising coalition split by abandoning an attempt to get parliamentary approval for an amnesty from graft charges for the president and other senior politicians.

A Czech court dismissed a complaint against the European Union reform treaty, removing the charter's last legal hurdle and intensifying pressure on President Vaclav Klaus to sign it.

North Korea said it has reprocessed 8 000 spent nuclear fuel rods and extracted enough plutonium to bolster its atomic stockpile, raising the negotiation stakes with the US.

Fiji's military ruler, at loggerheads with the top diplomats from Australia and New Zealand, gave them 24 hours to leave the country, deepening a rift with the island nation.

Philippines troops attacked an Abu Sayyaf camp in the rebels' southern stronghold, triggering a five-hour clash in which five of the al-Qaeda-linked militants were killed, the military said.

The Gulf emirate of Dubai plans to appoint **female** muftis by the end of next year in an unprecedented step that could trigger opposition from Muslim conservatives, The National newspaper reported. Six Emirati **women** are to be trained.

**Hamas** has test-fired a rocket which can reach Tel Aviv from the Gaza Strip, an Israeli general warned. The rocket is believed to be Iranian-made.

**Load-Date:** November 4, 2009

**No Headline In Original**

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October 08, 2009 Thursday

E1 Edition

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**Section:** Pg. 2

**Length:** 219 words

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Turkish police fired tear gas and used water cannon for a second day to break up protests in Istanbul against the International Monetary Fund and World Bank yesterday.

New prime minister takes charge in Greece

Greece's new Socialist prime minister took charge yesterday, promising Greeks "time to breathe" before they face the realities of a rapidly cooling economy compromised by excess state spending and a soaring public debt.

Suu Kyi meets Myanmar junta minister

Detained pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi met a minister from Myanmar's ruling junta yesterday for the second time in a week.

The Philippines warned yesterday there was a high probability of epidemics among the 340 000 people crowded into poorly equipped makeshift evacuation centres following floods.

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Landslides kill 34 in western Nepal

Landslides triggered by torrential rains have killed at least 34 people in various parts of western Nepal, government officials said yesterday.

**Load-Date:** October 7, 2009

## *No Headline In Original*

Cape Times (South Africa)

October 08, 2009 Thursday

E2 Edition

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**Section:** Pg. 2

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## *No Headline In Original*

The Bismarck Tribune

July 4, 2009 Saturday

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**Section:** WIRE; Pg. 2A

**Length:** 704 words

**Byline:** RACHEL ZOLL, AP Religion Writer

### **Body**

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NEW YORK - Sayyid Syeed remembers an interfaith event several years ago when a Jewish leader went to embrace him, saw someone snapping a photo, then suddenly pulled back.

"He said to the man, 'Stop,'" Syeed recalled, "I'll lose my job."

Times have changed for the Islamic Society of North America and for Syeed, who leads the group's interfaith outreach. In a sign of growing acceptance of U.S. Muslims, one of the most prominent religious leaders in the country, evangelical pastor Rick Warren, will speak at the Islamic Society's annual convention this weekend. Representatives from the two largest streams of American Judaism, the Reform and Conservative movements, will also be there to highlight their recently formed partnerships with the Muslim group.

"The landscape of religion in America is changing," Syeed said. "America itself has reached a certain level of fulfillment in terms of diversity of faith."

The Islamic Society, an umbrella association for tens of thousands of Muslims, has worked for years to persuade leaders of other faiths to attend its convention, a massive family reunion in its 46th year that draws about 30,000 people.

Major American Jewish groups had largely stayed away from the event, mainly due to hostility between U.S. Muslims and Jews over Israel, the Palestinians and the role of **Hamas** in the region.

Many conservative Christians did the same. They viewed Islam through their experiences with Muslim countries where Christian minorities have been targets of violence and discrimination.

Also, suspicions over the origins of the Islamic Society lingered. The organization grew from Muslim Students Associations, campus groups that had received funding from Saudi Arabia.

In recent years, the society has prominently denounced terrorism, including terror by **Hamas**, and has endorsed a two-state solution for Israel and the Palestinians. The organization also elected its first **female** president, Ingrid Mattson, who participated in the National Cathedral service for President Barack Obama the day after his inaugural.

"In terms of acceptance of Muslim Americans generally, I do believe this has increased in some ways, despite the large segment of Americans who hold unfavorable views of Islam," Mattson said. "Muslim Americans have, in recent years, decided that they have the major responsibility to counter the extremists' views of Islam with their own

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mainstream views, and so have put time into public education and outreach to their neighbors, on a local and national scale."

Syed said that he and Warren, a Southern Baptist and author of "The Purpose Driven Life," have worked together on projects fighting malaria and advocating for people with HIV and AIDS.

The convention will not be the first time Warren has addressed an American Muslim group. Last December, he spoke at a meeting of the Muslim Public Affairs Council, a policy organization based in Los Angeles. But the Islamic Society gathering is by far his most dramatic display of friendship with U.S. Muslims. Warren would not comment ahead of the event.

Two years ago, Rabbi Eric Yoffie, president of the liberal Union for Reform Judaism, the largest American branch of Judaism, became the first major Jewish leader to address the convention. The two groups have pledged to fight extremism and build ties between mosques and synagogues nationwide.

This year, Conservative Judaism, the second-largest American Jewish movement, will show its support at the assembly. Rabbi Burton Visotzky, a prominent professor at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, the Conservative movement's flagship institution, will be a featured speaker. Conservative rabbis and the Islamic society have also been building relationships between local mosques and synagogues. Next year, along with Hartford Seminary in Connecticut, they plan a conference on Judaism and Islam in the United States.

"I think there has been a change in general perceptions," of American Muslims, said Mark Pelavin, associate director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism. "When you look at the kind of symbolic participation of Muslims in public life, and you see Rick Warren and Rabbi Yoffie coming, those are all things you wouldn't have seen five years ago."

**Load-Date:** July 4, 2009

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## *No Headline In Original*

Canberra Times (Australia)  
September 24, 2009 Thursday  
Final Edition

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**Section:** A; Pg. 18

**Length:** 890 words

**Byline:** The Canberra Times

### **Body**

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Flawed on Israel Richard Goldstone ("Forces must face justice", September 21, p9) admits that ***Hamas*** fighters in Gaza "mixed and mingled with civilians", but his report didn't condemn them for it, even though fighting from behind civilians is a recognised war crime.

This is but one example of just how flawed his investigation is. Israel dropped hundreds of thousands of leaflets, and made tens of thousands of phone calls warning residents to evacuate areas about to be bombed, even though these actions potentially jeopardised the military operations.

British Iraq and Afghanistan veteran Colonel Richard Kemp said, "By taking these actions and many other significant measures during Operation Cast Lead the IDF did more to safeguard the rights of civilians in a combat zone than any other army in the history of warfare," and that the level of civilian casualties was "an inevitable consequence of ***Hamas***' way of fighting."

Goldstone, however, was given a mandate which prejudged Israel guilty by a UN so-called Human Rights Council featuring such paragons of human rights as Libya, Cuba and Iraq, and he fulfilled it.

Manny Waks, Bruce Mental health I have an adult son with a chronic mental health problem and for years have paid for private health insurance for him "just in case".

During the past two years he has required hospitalisation twice but on both occasions he has not been able to get a bed at Hyson Green. Easy access to this facility is only possible if one is "part of the club" and can afford to regularly see a private "referring" psychiatrist. I've asked questions about this situation and the response is that "that is how it is".

This is inequitable and unethical. Why does Hyson Green not have to meet transparent quality standards in regards to its admission policy?

One wonders why it is the over- stretched public system that continues to pick up the bill.

R. Williams, Holder Steady state Question: What do Monday's editorial in The Canberra Times ("Economy must grow with people", September 21, p8) and Bernie Madoff have in common? Answer: They both sell Ponzi schemes.



## No Headline In Original

And so does every government and commentator who tries to tell us that we need ever increasing numbers of people to underpin the economy.

A Ponzi scheme relies on paying for the needs of its current members by taking money from new investors.

The moment the growth in new investors stops the wheels fall off the machine.

Australia needs to start the transition to a steady-state economy in which the current population pays its own way and makes provisions for its own future requirements.

If this means less consumption and more savings at an individual level, then so be it.

I, for one, will not miss the construction of another shopping mall or the installation of more traffic lights.

Brad Sherman, Duffy False hopes This has been a Labor Party reform from day one, says a breathless Simon Corbell, touting his support for the Greens' gay marriage bill ("ACT take plunge again on same-sex ceremonies", September 22, p1).

Corbell needs to inform his colleagues in the federal Labor Party of that, for in the same article, Federal Attorney-General Robert McClelland says that he will "not support any moves to undermine the institution of marriage".

Federal Labor (the only one that matters on this issue) believes that recognising gay relationships undermines marriage.

While personally in favour of gay marriage, I am very much opposed to the Assembly spending its time and our money falsely raising the hopes of gay people and pretending that this bill will be anything other than subservient to the operation of the Federal Marriage Act.

Mike Crowther, Watson Dim on light bulbs Paul O'Connor (Letters, September 21) is spot-on with his observation about initiatives that replace existing light bulbs with so-called environmentally friendly ones.

The failure rate and life expectancy of the high-tech bulbs falls far short of the claims, and is making fools of civic officials all round the globe (pardon the pun). The hype and advertising surrounding, in particular, fluorescent bulbs, draws on testing under controlled conditions.

As a former quality-control-testing technician with a major company, I know from years of lab experience that conditions can be tweaked to post impressive and robust, but grossly unrepresentative, results. Personal experience, and seemingly that of a great many consumers, is that "low energy" bulbs have a disappointing service life under many types of usage.

The worldwide scramble to actually trash working light bulbs and fit high- tech replacements is of dubious net benefit without a proper understanding of real-world operating conditions, and the energy inputs for manufacturing, distribution and replacement logistics.

Ross Kelly, Monash Women's sport Women's sport will never be taken seriously if reporters write articles about players being engaged to the coach, instead of focusing on the game itself ("Mixing business with pleasure", September 19, pB7).

Merryn Sherwood has been a breath of fresh air with her generally excellent coverage of women in sport, but she has blotted her copybook with her misty-eyed attention to the player who is now the fiancée of her soccer coach.

An equivalent article would never be written about a male player and nor should it have been written about a female.

Anne Bowen, Macquarie

No Headline In Original

**Load-Date:** September 23, 2009

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## *No Headline In Original*

Pretoria News (South Africa)

September 28, 2009 Monday

E1 Edition

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**Section:** Pg. 6

**Length:** 636 words

### **Body**

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BAGHDAD: The US military said yesterday a suspect had been arrested in the Iraqi province of Anbar for the murder of the Iraq National Tae Kwon Do team. The team were driving to a training camp in Jordan in May 2006 when their convoy was stopped between Fallujah and Ramadi. All 15 athletes were abducted. The remains of 13 were later found. Two members are still missing.

LIBREVILLE: Two policemen failed to appreciate the joke when a Gabonese cartoonist knocked off a sketch of them enjoying a Guinness in a Libreville bar. Instead they hustled Patrick Essono, who draws under the name "Pahe", into prison, where he spent 36 hours before he was released yesterday. "I wanted to give them the drawing, but in the end it did not amuse them," Pahe said.

Models wear creations which were part of the Dolce & Gabbana women's Spring/Summer 2010 fashion collection, presented in Milan, Italy.

GAZA CITY: A Palestinian man was killed and two were injured yesterday when a smuggling tunnel under the Gaza Strip border with Egypt collapsed. Ismail Abu Jalidan, 20, died of suffocation when the tunnel under the border at the divided town of Rafah collapsed on him, an emergency services spokesman in the Hamas-run government of the Gaza Strip said.

PORLAMAR, Venezuela: Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez and Libya's Muammar Gaddafi have urged African and South American leaders to strive for a new world order countering Western economic dominance. They spoke on the first day of a 28-nation summit at which it was agreed that a development bank for South America with \$7 billion in start-up capital be established.

BANGKOK: The passage of a US bill capping carbon emissions before a major UN climate conference in December would help the US extract concessions from other countries, though time is running out, the chief US negotiator at climate talks in Bangkok said yesterday. "We want significant action from other countries. The less we put on the table, the harder it is to achieve that outcome."

RAMADI, Iraq: A suicide car bomber yesterday killed four Iraqi policemen and wounded four others. The attack took place at about 10.30am 10km north-east of Ramadi, the capital of Anbar province, which was an al-Qaeda stronghold in the aftermath of the US-led invasion in 2003. "The suicide bomber blew himself up at the gate to the police station," an official said.

## No Headline In Original

STOCKHOLM: One person has been detained after Wednesday's helicopter raid on a cash depot in Stockholm. Police spokeswoman Carolina Ekeus said yesterday the suspect was being questioned. Masked gunmen broke through a window on the roof of a G4S cash depot, set off explosions inside the building and loaded bags of cash into the helicopter before taking off.

JERUSALEM: Israeli police used stun grenades yesterday to disperse Palestinian rioters at a volatile Jerusalem site holy to Jews and Muslims. The riot took place during a visit by a Jewish group to the compound in Jerusalem's Old City known to Jews as the Temple Mount and to Muslims as the Noble Sanctuary. Police spokesman Shmuel Ben-Ruby said about 150 Palestinians threw stones at the Jews.

ROSTOV-ON-DON, Russia: Gunmen killed a village chief and his son in Chechnya, the latest in a series of assassinations in Russian's violent North Caucasus. A Chechen Interior Ministry spokesman said the attackers sprayed Ali Artamov and his son with gunfire in the centre of Stary Achkoi on Saturday night. Artamov was shot in his car and his son in a building.

LONDON: Madonna secured her 11th British number one album yesterday when her greatest hits collection, Celebration, took the top spot in its debut week. The US singer is now one of the most successful album artists in British chart history, behind only the Beatles (15 number ones) and Elvis Presley (also 11), according to The Official Charts Company.

**Load-Date:** September 28, 2009

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## *No Headline In Original*

The Star (South Africa)

October 29, 2009 Thursday

E3 Edition

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**Section:** Pg. 4

**Length:** 690 words

### **Body**

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BERLIN: Germany's Lutheran Church has elected a woman to lead the nation's Protestants for the first time in its history. Margot Kaessmann was overwhelmingly voted into the church's top position yesterday. The 51-year-old bishop holds a doctorate in theology and has four grown children. She was ordained a priest in 1985 and is one of only two bishops in Germany's Protestant church.

LONDON: The days of fumbling in the dark for a bra strap could be over for good. An enterprising mother of two has created a collection of luminous lace lingerie. By day the knickers and bra look like a normal white set. But if they are held against a light for two minutes, they glow green in the dark. Designer Jan Hawley, 55, is based in Australia, and sells the garments online.

NEW YORK: A miniature portrait of Russia's Peter the Great in a diamond-encrusted frame is expected to fetch up to \$120 000 (R900 000) at a Sotheby's sale in New York on Monday. Pictured left is a portrait of the tsar. The reverse side, right, is engraved with a triple-crowned, imperial double-headed eagle. The piece dates from the early 18th century.

NICOSIA: A Mozambican national was killed yesterday while clearing landmines from Cyprus's UN-controlled buffer zone that splits the divided island. He was one of a 10-man team removing mines from the buffer zone south-east of Nicosia. The victim was 39-year-old Femisberto Novele, who the UN said was the first fatality since its mine clearance programme began in 2004.

GAZA CITY: The ***Hamas***-run interior ministry in the Gaza Strip said yesterday it would ban the holding of elections called for by Palestinian President Mahmud Abbas in the coastal territory. The ministry rejected the holding of elections in the Gaza Strip "because they were announced by someone who has no right to make such an announcement and because they came without national agreement".

TBILISI: Georgia has protested to Russia over 16 Georgians being held in the Moscow-backed separatist region of South Ossetia. Georgia accuses Russian troops who guard the boundary between Georgia and South Ossetia of kidnapping the villagers on Monday. South Ossetia says the Georgians were detained after illegally crossing the border while collecting firewood.

ATHENS: Gunmen who shot and wounded six officers outside an Athens police station fired almost 100 rounds in the drive-by attack. A police statement said 99 bullet casings from an automatic weapon were found outside the precinct, which came under fire by at least two gunmen on a motorcycle on Tuesday. The government referred to the assailants as "terrorists".

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LONDON: An EU counter-piracy force has arrested seven suspected pirates after a French fishing boat was attacked off Somalia. Pirates in two skiffs opened fire on the French vessel on Tuesday, but fled after security guards fired warning shots. A helicopter from a Spanish warship spotted the skiffs and fired warning shots. Crew from a German warship then boarded and arrested the seven men.

CONAKRY: A Guinean opposition group said tens of thousands of workers went on strike yesterday on the one-month anniversary of a bloody massacre in which troops shot at demonstrators. Human Rights Watch said dozens of women were seized from a stadium during the September 28 rally and driven in military vehicles to villas where they were gang-raped by uniformed men over several days.

ANTANANARIVO: Madagascar's leaders will meet in Addis Ababa next week for another attempt at sealing a power-sharing deal aimed at restoring constitutional order, the AU said yesterday. Ousted leader Marc Ravalomanana has continued to reject any deal that sees Andry Rajoelina hold on to the presidency on the island, eyed by major foreign companies for its oil and mineral resources.

BEIRUT: Lebanese troops yesterday found and dismantled four rockets near the border with Israel. The Katyusha rockets, three of them ready to be fired, were found in a building under construction in the Houla area, a Lebanese military official said. On Tuesday, militants launched a rocket into northern Israel, hitting near the town of Kiryat Shemona. No casualties were reported.

**Load-Date:** October 29, 2009

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E2 Edition

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**Section:** Pg. 4

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MOGADISHU: A medical official in Somalia said five people were killed in fighting after insurgents sent mortars towards the airport as President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed was arriving. Eleven others were wounded in the battles yesterday. Last week, insurgents fired mortars at the airport as the president was boarding a plane, sparking fighting that killed at least 24 people.

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## *No Headline In Original*

Pretoria News (South Africa)

October 29, 2009 Thursday

E1 Edition

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**Section:** Pg. 14

**Length:** 690 words

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BERLIN: Germany's Lutheran Church has elected a woman to lead the nation's Protestants for the first time in its history. Margot Kaessmann was overwhelmingly voted into the church's top position yesterday. The 51-year-old bishop holds a doctorate in theology and has four grown children. She was ordained a priest in 1985 and is one of only two bishops in Germany's Protestant church.

MOGADISHU: A medical official in Somalia said five people were killed in fighting after insurgents sent mortars towards the airport as President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed was arriving. Eleven others were wounded in the battles yesterday. Last week, insurgents fired mortars at the airport as the president was boarding a plane, sparking fighting that killed at least 24 people.

NEW YORK: A miniature portrait of Russia's Peter the Great in a diamond-encrusted frame is expected to fetch up to \$120 000 (R93 000) at a Sotheby's sale in New York on Monday. Pictured left is a portrait of the tsar. The reverse side (right) is engraved with a triple-crowned, imperial double-headed eagle. The piece dates from the early 18th century.

NICOSIA: A Mozambican national was killed yesterday while clearing landmines from Cyprus's UN-controlled buffer zone that splits the divided island. He was one of a 10-man team removing mines from the buffer zone south-east of Nicosia. The victim was 39-year-old Femisberto Novele, who the UN said was the first fatality since its mine clearance programme began in 2004.

GAZA CITY: The **Hamas**-run interior ministry in the Gaza Strip said yesterday it would ban the holding of elections called for by Palestinian President Mahmud Abbas in the coastal territory. The ministry rejected the holding of elections in the Gaza Strip "because they were announced by someone who has no right to make such an announcement and because they came without national agreement".

TBILISI: Georgia has protested to Russia over 16 Georgians being held in the Moscow-backed separatist region of South Ossetia. Georgia accuses Russian troops who guard the boundary between Georgia and South Ossetia of kidnapping the villagers on Monday. South Ossetia says the Georgians were detained after illegally crossing the border while collecting firewood.

ATHENS: Gunmen who shot and wounded six officers outside an Athens police station fired almost 100 rounds in the drive-by attack. A police statement said 99 bullet casings from an automatic weapon were found outside the precinct, which came under fire by at least two gunmen on a motorcycle on Tuesday. The government referred to the assailants as "terrorists".

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LONDON: An EU counter-piracy force has arrested seven suspected pirates after a French fishing boat was attacked off Somalia. Pirates in two skiffs opened fire on the French vessel on Tuesday, but fled after security guards fired warning shots. A helicopter from a Spanish warship spotted the skiffs and fired warning shots. Crew from a German warship then boarded and arrested the seven men.

CONAKRY: A Guinean opposition group said tens of thousands of workers went on strike yesterday on the one-month anniversary of a bloody massacre in which troops shot at demonstrators. Human Rights Watch said dozens of women were seized from a stadium during the September 28 rally and driven in military vehicles to villas where they were gang-raped by uniformed men over several days.

ANTANANARIVO: Madagascar's leaders will meet in Addis Ababa next week for another attempt at sealing a power-sharing deal aimed at restoring constitutional order, the AU said yesterday. Ousted leader Marc Ravalomanana has continued to reject any deal that sees Andry Rajoelina hold on to the presidency on the island, eyed by major foreign companies for its oil and mineral resources.

BEIRUT: Lebanese troops yesterday found and dismantled four rockets near the border with Israel. The Katyusha rockets, three of them ready to be fired, were found in a building under construction in the Houla area, a Lebanese military official said. On Tuesday, militants launched a rocket into northern Israel, hitting near the town of Kiryat Shemona. No casualties were reported.

**Load-Date:** October 28, 2009

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## *No Headline In Original*

The Forward

November 20, 2009

 **Correction Appended**

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**Section:** Forward 50; Pg. 17

**Length:** 3862 words

### **Body**

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Sherer. Zwiebel inherits a full plate of crises: fallout from business and child-molestation scandals, deep rifts with other Jewish denominations and a private school system swamped by an unending baby boom. The soft-spoken Zwiebel, a constitutional lawyer and ordained rabbi, has been handling crises for two decades as Agudath Israel's general counsel and government affairs director. Since becoming chief in January, he's moved swiftly to set a new tone. In September, he convened the first in a series of seminars on legal compliance procedures for school and charity administrators. In October, his staff reached a compromise with Congress that allowed the movement to drop its long-standing opposition to gay rights legislation, clearing the way for passage of a historic hate-crimes bill. Perhaps most telling, he attended and mingled with other agency heads, including liberal activists and Reform rabbis, at a reception for Jerry Silverman, the new chief of the Jewish Federations of North America.

Media & Culture

Roger Cohen

Roger Cohen has written a new chapter in the annals of acrimony between The New York Times and the Jewish community. For a February column, Cohen journeyed to Iran and reported at face value the claims by members of the country's beleaguered Jewish minority that life isn't half-bad in the Islamic Republic. I'm a Jew and have seldom

been treated with such consistent warmth as in Iran, the veteran foreign correspondent added for good measure. Moreover, he said, Iran's scurrilous anti-Israel

tirades can be understood as a provocation to focus people on Israel's bomb, its 41-year occupation of the West Bank, its **Hamas** denial, its repetitive use of overwhelming force. Furious critics compared Cohen to fellow British-born Timesman Walter Duranty, who infamously played down the depravities of Stalin's Soviet Union during the 1930s. Rather than back down, Cohen amplified his points in a series of columns and congratulated himself for tackling a Middle East debate taboo. It took Iran's farcical presidential election and the ensuing crackdown to elicit a partial mea culpa: I erred in underestimating the brutality and cynicism of a regime that understands the uses of ruthlessness, Cohen wrote. And in the days that followed, Cohen distinguished himself with risky reportage from the bloodied streets of Tehran. Since then, however, the 54-year-old pundit has resumed his role as a lightning rod in the charged debates over Iran and Israel.

Dara Horn

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This year, Dara Horn's place in the list of important contemporary Jewish and American novelists was cemented by her third novel, *All Other Nights*, a tale about the Jewish festival of liberation that took place during the Civil War. Horn, 32, has a doctorate in comparative literature from Harvard, but her accolades have been for her novels, not for her scholarly achievements. *In the Image* received a 2003 National Jewish Book Award, and *The World To Come* won the 2006 National Jewish Book Award for Fiction, the 2007 Harold U. Ribalow Prize and was chosen as one of the Best Books of 2006 by the San Francisco Chronicle. Revealing the vital Jewish involvement during a transformative time in American history, *All Other Nights* has made a larger claim for the wider relevance of Jewish American experience to the American experiment than Horn's previous books had made. As with *The World To Come*, her new book was selected as an Editors Choice by The New York Times Book Review.

Adam Kirsch

This year Adam Kirsch, 33, has cemented his position as this century's first pre-eminent Jewish man of letters. A widely admired poet and essayist, his mind is exercised both by Jewish particularity and the broader world of culture. Both are evident in, for example, his biography of Benjamin Disraeli or when reminding readers of the New York Times that Ayn Rand was born Alissa Rosenbaum. He wrote the weekly column *The Reader* on Jewish topics for *Nextbook* and is regular writer for its reincarnation: *Tablet Magazine*. When the *New York Sun*, for which he was the book critic, ceased publishing in September 2008, his writing appeared more frequently in what earlier had been occasional venues: the *New Yorker*, the *New York Review of Books*, the *New York Times*, *Slate* and *The New Republic* where he had been the assistant literary editor while still in his 20s and is now a senior editor. Yale professor Langdon Hammer writing in *The New York Times* praised the Harvard-educated Kirsch as a poet-critic akin to a previous generation of poets who won positions in American colleges as literary critics and even traced a lineage back to T. S. Eliot.

Sana Krasikov

A rising literary star, Sana Krasikov, 30, took home the Jewish Book Council's 2009 Sami Rohr Prize, a prestigious \$100,000 award that recognizes an emerging writer of Jewish-themed literature. Krasikov, a Ukraine-born, Georgia-reared émigré, received the award on the heels of the publication of her critically acclaimed short story collection, *One More Year*. The book's stories depict the traumatic transitions faced by Russian-speaking immigrants to America, and the author noted in a recent interview with the *Forward* that she is

drawn to what happens to people in the tumult of socioeconomic change of immigration. A graduate of the Iowa Writers' Workshop, whose early work appeared in the pages of the *Forward*, Krasikov is at work on her first novel. She has received an O. Henry Award and was named one of the five most promising writers under 35 by the National Book Foundation.

Ari Roth

Ari Roth, the ebullient playwright and director of Theater J in Washington, D. C., took a risk in the aftermath of January's Israeli military incursion into Gaza: In March, he staged a reading of Caryl Churchill's Palestinian protest play, *Seven Jewish Children: A Play for Gaza*, at Washington's Jewish Community Center. After 12 years at Theater J, during which time he consolidated and expanded its quality, reach and repertoire, Roth, 48, is still willing to go out on a limb. Not only did he stage the Churchill play this year garnering protests but he had previously staged Motti Lerner's *Pangs of the Messiah*, about the Israeli settlements, and Hillel Mittelpunkt's *The Accident*, about Israel's hypocritical intelligentsia. I don't program to offend the Jewish community, but to be in dialogue on issues that are extremely important, Roth said.

Lenore Skenazy and Ayelet Waldman

Forget Sophie Portnoy, Philip Roth's famous caricature of an overbearing Jewish mother. This was the year that the Jewish mother got a makeover. And that makeover is due, in no small part, to the work of columnist Lenore Skenazy and novelist Ayelet Waldman. In 2009, each woman authored a book that urged so-called helicopter moms and dads to embrace a more relaxed form of parenting. In April, Skenazy came out with *Free Range Kids: Giving Our Children the Freedom We Had Without Going Nuts With Worry*, based on her controversial 2008 *New*

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York Sun column about letting her 9-year-old son ride the subway by himself. And in May, Waldman published *Bad Mother: A Chronicle of Maternal Crimes, Minor Calamities, and Occasional Moments of Grace* four years after she had stirred debate with her New York Times essay declaring that she loves her husband (Pulitzer Prize-winning writer Michael Chabon) more than she loves her children. Skenazy, 49, and Waldman, 44, did more than publish provocative books; they launched a backlash against overbearing, anxiety-ridden parenthood. The pendulum is swinging the other way just a little, Waldman said earlier this year. It's just started, so let's not get too excited.

## Steven Spielberg

One of the most successful moviemakers of all time, Steven Spielberg received an award this year that didn't involve a statuette. The National Constitution Center presented its top honor, the Liberty Medal, to the three-time Oscar winner for his commitment, onscreen and off, to promoting the core constitutional values of freedom and justice. The medal recognized Spielberg's work on behalf of his Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation, which the director established in 1994, following the release of his Holocaust epic, *Schindler's List*. Since the foundation set out to document on camera the oral histories of survivors and other witnesses to the Holocaust, it has created the largest repository of its kind: 105,000 hours of testimonies in 32 languages. Spielberg's foundation is also planning to chronicle other genocides, and is now collecting testimonies from survivors and witnesses to the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. The Constitution Center said that Spielberg, 62, planned to donate the Liberty Medal's \$100,000 cash prize to the foundation.

## Politics

## David Axelrod and Rahm Emanuel

David Axelrod and Rahm Emanuel, two of President Obama's closest and most influential advisers, were accused by protesters in Israel and by right-wing bloggers of being self-hating Jews. News reports said that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu described the men the same way, but Netanyahu denied it. Over the summer, Chief of Staff Emanuel and Senior Adviser Axelrod took much of the heat directed at Obama from the Israeli government and its supporters over what they saw as unfair pressure on Netanyahu. Publicly, Emanuel, 50, and Axelrod, 54, stayed away from the controversy over settlements and left the debate to the administration's foreign policy staff. Privately, Emanuel kept an open door to Jewish leaders who were trying to convey their messages to the White House. Emanuel is not only the gatekeeper to the Oval Office, but also a leading force in domestic policy decisions. Despite his non-stop schedule, Emanuel whose extensive use of foul language has become legendary is seen frequently in synagogue and is close to local rabbis. Axelrod was involved in his Chicago Jewish community before moving to Washington. On the eve of Obama's inauguration, Axelrod thanked the Jewish community for its support, saying he was kvelling.

## Howard Berman

As the nuclear standoff with Iran took center stage in 2009, Howard Berman, chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, became a critical player in efforts to block Tehran's drive toward nuclear weapons. Berman, who became chairman in 2008, was faced with a challenge on the issue of sanctions against Iran: how to find a middle ground between the administration's call for congressional restraint, which would allow diplomacy to take its course, and the pro-Israel activists in the Jewish community, who pushed to move the legislation forward. By initially putting the bill on hold and later using it to set a deadline for the administration's diplomatic outreach effort, Berman managed to keep both sides satisfied. The California congressman, 68, is viewed as one of Israel's key supporters on Capitol Hill.

## Eric Cantor

With Senator Arlen Specter crossing over the line to the Democratic Party, and Norm Coleman losing the Minnesota senatorial race, Rep. Eric Cantor has become the only remaining Jewish Republican in Congress. But even as Jewish Republican representation declined this year, Cantor's political career soared. At 46, the five-term Virginia congressman was elected unanimously to be minority whip, making him the second-ranking Republican

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in the House of Representatives. As such, Cantor was challenged by Democrats to speak out against conservative talk-show host Rush Limbaugh for comparing President Obama to Hitler. Cantor declined. He did lead the Republican opposition to the administration's economic stimulus plan, and he has taken it upon himself to reshape the Republican message in light of surveys showing a steady drop in support for the party. Cantor's vision calls for a focus on small businesses and a free-market economy instead of the anti-Obama message that has taken over current Republican discourse. Succeeding in this mission could put Cantor one step closer to a possible presidential bid in 2012.

## Barney Frank

Massachusetts Rep. Barney Frank is often alone among congressional lawmakers in voicing what much of the country's left is supporting whether it's a call for cuts in military spending, the support of LGBT rights or the decriminalization of marijuana. Some would argue that his moxie and trademark outspokenness are what prompted his constituents to send him to Congress for the past 28 years. As

chairman of the House Financial Services Committee, Frank, 69, was a key player this year in shaping the Wall Street bailout. But it wasn't only his maneuvering

among lawmakers that was notable. He also took a brief star turn when a series of town hall meetings over health care reform devolved into anger. At an August meeting, Frank turned his famous temper on a popular misconception that was in desperate need of debunking the comparison of health care reform to Nazi policy. Lyndon La-Rouche followers showed up at the meeting sporting posters of President Obama with a Hitler mustache, and one of them referred to Obama's policy as a Nazi policy. Frank responded to her by asking, On what planet do you spend most of your time? He went on to say that continuing the conversation would be like arguing with a dining room table. A video clip of the exchange circulated widely on the Web, sucking the wind out of the wild rhetoric surrounding the health care protests.

## Al Franken

It took Al Franken eight months of a ballot recount and legal wrangling before winning Minnesota's Jewish seat in the Senate, a seat that has been held for the past three decades by members of the tribe. For a comedian-turned-politician, it was worth the wait. In July, Franken became not only the 13th Jew in today's Senate, but also more notably the Democrats' 60th member, giving the party its super-majority. Best known for his years on Saturday Night Live, Franken shifted slowly toward politics, emerging first as the author of a bestselling anti-Conservative indictment, then as a liberal talk-radio host and finally as a candidate. When he took on Jewish Republican Senator Norm Coleman in the Minnesota race, Franken said: I don't think Minnesota is ready for a gentile in this seat. As a member of the Senate, Franken, 58, has yet to make his mark. He is frequently a guest at events organized by Jewish organizations, and participants at those events have praised his seriousness and depth, while registering a singular complaint: Franken is no longer funny.

## Susan Sher

The close friendship between Susan Sher and Michelle Obama began in the 1990s, when the two women worked for Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley. It was Sher who tried to recruit Obama to City Hall. Obama returned the favor years later, when she called on Sher to join her at the White House. Sher, 61, came on board as an associate counsel to President Obama, and in June became the first lady's chief of staff. Along with Danielle Borin, Sher serves as the White House liaison to the Jewish

community. In practical terms, that makes her the community's point person inside the White House. Jewish activists have praised Sher and the Obama administration for their open-door policy. But there is one door that Sher had difficulty opening: When her husband, Neil, brought a plate of macaroons to the White House for its first-ever Passover Seder, it took help from the Oval Office to get the cookies past the Secret Service.

## Arlen Specter

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At age 79, Pennsylvania Senator Arlen Specter switched to the Democratic side of the aisle, depriving Jewish Republicans of their sole representative in the Senate. Specter was always known as a moderate Republican, but his vocal criticism of the Bush administration on constitutional issues eventually cost him the support of his Pennsylvania constituency. Facing a tough primary race against a conservative challenger, Specter crossed party lines in April, arguing that the GOP had shifted too far to the right. Finding a new political home when he was also preparing for a tough 2010 race has not been easy. The veteran senator lost his seniority rights when moving to the Democratic side and he is still struggling to find his place among his new colleagues. Specter, who has been fighting cancer for three years, has worked in the Senate to promote groundbreaking legislation that would provide compensation for organ donors. A staunch supporter of Israel and a regular visitor to Damascus, he also stands out as one of the few believers in the chance for peace between Israel and Syria.

## Religion

## Sarah Lefton

As founder and producer of G-dcast.com, an animated online series that tells the story of the Torah, 36-year-old Sarah Lefton is overhauling Jewish literacy. In its inaugural season, the series told the story of the Torah through 55 four-minute episodes, each written and narrated by celebrities and scholars. The free series is designed to expand the Jewish literacy of teenagers and adults who have no formal Jewish education. Lefton burst onto the scene with her Yo Semite T-shirts and other sassy, Jewish-flavored fashions from her T-shirt company, the Jewish Fashion Conspiracy. She and her team spent three years scraping together enough money to get the G-dcast.com site up and running. Now, as the site is reaching people in 95 countries, Lefton plans to stretch her shoestring budget to produce episodes subtitled in Spanish, Russian, and Hebrew, and to create holiday specials including one just in time for Hanukkah.

## Alysa Stanton

Alysa Stanton broke new ground this year when she became mainstream Judaism's first black female rabbi. Ordained in June, she leads the 60-family Congregation Bayt Shalom in the one-synagogue town of Greenville, N. C. The 46-year-old former psychotherapist and single mother of an adopted daughter converted to Judaism in the late 1980s. Soon after, she began her rabbinical studies at the Reform movement's Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati. Stanton faced no small measure of opposition in her journey toward becoming a rabbi, including racist discrimination here and in Israel and even death threats on the eve of her ordination. Even so, Stanton remains firm in her belief that a rabbi's life is her true path. Her spirit, courage, and fierce love of Judaism give her every chance to succeed in her chosen work.

## Steven Wernick

In July, Rabbi Steven Wernick took the helm of an institution in trouble. The new executive vice president of the United Synagogue for Conservative Judaism, Wernick, 42, arrived at a time of financial troubles and growing disenchantment among Conservative congregations. The organization's revenue dropped 12% this past year, and some congregations have stopped paying dues. To turn things around, in September he instituted a broad restructuring of the organization that included deep cuts in staff, a consolidation of its services, and a reduction in its board of directors from 180 to 75 members. Even more critically, he has spoken openly and, some in his movement would say, with reckless candor about the crisis of conscience facing Conservative Jewish leaders. As Wernick said last summer, I think that part of the problem of the contemporary synagogue is that we've over-institutionalized them and we've over-professionalized them. As such, we've turned congregants into audience members and passive participants, as opposed to active members of a community who really support each other.

## Eric Yoffie

Rabbi Eric Yoffie is no stranger to boos. But that's because the president of the Union for Reform Judaism isn't content with preaching to the choir. A decade ago, Yoffie was booed briefly when he argued for legal guarantees for gay couples in an address at the Rev. Jerry Falwell's Liberty University. In October, Yoffie garnered a few more boos, this time from Jewish doves at J Street's national conference as he assailed the U. N. inquiry into the

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Gaza conflict. Richard Goldstone should be ashamed of himself, Yoffie said to the audible disagreement of some of

the assembled. (Yoffie knew he would be facing a tough crowd; writing in the Forward 10 months before, he had labeled morally deficient and appallingly naïve a J Street statement criticizing Israel's military campaign in Gaza.) But Yoffie also directed his fire at targets more agreeable to his audience, criticizing Jewish groups that have their heads in the sand when it comes to recognizing the urgency of achieving a two-state solution. Whether scolding doves or hawks or skewering Israeli leaders or American Jewry's machers, the 62-year-old Yoffie doesn't pull his punches. In the process, he has given voice to an American-Jewish middle that is simultaneously critical of the West Bank settlement movement and fiercely protective of Israel.

## Sports

## Jason Lezak

To the world at large, Jason Lezak is best known for setting a world record in the 4x100-meter freestyle relay at the 2008 Olympics, winning gold for his team. But for those who follow the small world of Jewish professional sports, the 34-year-old power sprinter may be better known for turning down the opportunity to swim in the July 2009 international FINA swimming championships in Rome so he could compete instead at the Maccabiah Games in Israel. Lezak took home four medals from the Maccabiah Games, two for individual events and two for relays. He set a new Maccabiah record in the 100-meter freestyle race. Following in the footsteps of another Jewish Olympic swimmer, Mark Spitz, Lezak was inducted into the International Jewish Sports Hall of Fame.

## Dimitriy Salita

Between 1910 and 1940, one third of all boxers in America were Jewish, including such champions as Benny Leonard, Max Baer and Barney Ross. But following World War II, the concept of Jewish boxing came to seem more and more like a contradiction in terms. Now, however, things have come full circle with the recent rise of Jewish boxers from the former Soviet Union especially Dimitriy Salita, 27, born in Ukraine, and Yuri Foreman, born in Belarus. Salita, who moved to Brooklyn at age 9 and now fights under the American flag, is a practicing Orthodox Jew who refuses to fight on the Sabbath and Jewish holidays. He has amassed a record of 30-0-1. In the tradition of the American-Jewish boxers of the early 20th century, Salita fights with a Star of David on his shorts and is even known as the Star of David himself. Although both fighters have downplayed the religious tensions, Salita's identity will take on special significance in December, when he faces World Boxing Association Light Welterweight Champion Amir Khan, a Muslim, in a title match that will be held in Newcastle, England.

## Correction

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In the Forward 50, published November 20, the first name of Dimitriy Salita was misspelled.

**Correction-Date:** November 27, 2009

## Graphic

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IMAGE; KAREN LEON

IMAGE; TATIANA KRASIKOV

IMAGE; GETTY IMAGES

IMAGE; GETTY IMAGES



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IMAGE: UNION FOR REFORM JUDAISM

**Load-Date:** December 11, 2009

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## Mahnwache der „Women in black“

Süddeutsche Zeitung (inkl. Regionalausgaben)

Montag 28. Dezember 2009

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**Süddeutsche Zeitung**  
MÜNCHNER NEUESTE NACHRICHTEN AUS POLITIK, KULTUR, WIRTSCHAFT UND SPORT

**Section:** München; Bayern; München; S. 53

**Length:** 159 words

### **Body**

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Sie nennen sich „**Women** in black“, Frauen in Schwarz - und mit ihrer Mahnwache am Odeonsplatz wollten sie am Sonntag auf die „desolate Lage“ der Menschen in Gaza aufmerksam machen. Ein Jahr nachdem die israelische Armee als Reaktion auf die Raketenangriffe der **Hamas** auf israelisches Territorium den Gazastreifen bombardiert hatte, am 27. Dezember 2008. Die Mahnwache soll mit Beginn des neuen Jahres jeden zweiten und vierten Freitag im Monat von 13 bis 14 Uhr in der Fußgängerzone am Richard-Strauß-Brunnen stehen, zeitgleich mit der Mahnwache der „**Women** in black“ in Israel, die sich ebenfalls am Freitag um diese Uhrzeit regelmäßig in mehreren Städten treffen und dabei „für einen gerechten Frieden im Nahen Osten“ und „ein Ende der Besatzung“ eintreten. Bereits am 29. Dezember von 11.30 bis 14.30 Uhr wird es am Richard-Strauß-Brunnen eine weitere Solidaritätsveranstaltung geben, die an die Menschen im Gazastreifen erinnern soll. mai/Foto: rob

**Load-Date:** December 28, 2009