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(Continued from Page 1.)

ers indefinitely without trial. The statement called for either trial or release of hundreds of Palestinian prisoners. It had already been published in a major Israeli newspaper with the endorsement of five prominent Israeli authors.

But *The Providence Journal* still had to get it "reviewed" by the lawyer. This time the "no" came in just two days:

"The newspaper won't run editorial content in a display ad."

Now I was getting angry.

If this really were the paper's policy, it would come as a surprise to other political activists, labor unions and businesses which routinely present their points of view in display ads. The lawyer at the paper would not return my calls.

The question now was: Were the ads being rejected by the top management of the paper, or just by some officer in the legal department? So I asked for the publisher and chairman of the board. He was away. And the president was away. So they put the lawyer on the line. I may not have been very polite in telling him that he was not the person I wanted to speak with at this point.

A day later I got through to the executive editor. After a short discussion he agreed that the paper would publish my ad provided I used a type face different from the one the paper uses, put a border around the ad, and repeated the word ADVERTISEMENT several times across the top of the ad.

My reputation for making a nuisance of myself may have given me an edge over others who might try to run a "politically incorrect" ad. In the 1970s, thanks to the ACLU, I had won a court case against the CIA for opening my mail. During eight years as an elected member of the Rhode Island House of Representatives, I had exposed and challenged disreputable practices of the state legislature. In 1996, I went to court to stop the state Lottery Commission from introducing a new type of gambling without voter approval. The governor later joined my lawsuit, the TV

bingo game was blocked before it began, and the Lottery Commission had to pay refunds to thousands of ticket holders.

Anyway, the ad based on B'Tselem's text finally appeared five weeks after the process began. Having in mind a series of ads, I labeled this one "Untold Stories No. 1." [Editor's note: Ad is reprinted on page 7.] This was the beginning of an effort to open peoples' eyes via paid advertisements. Today it includes television. But let me start closer to the beginning.

WHY BOTHER?

Why would anyone spend his or her money to advertise about the mistreatment of Palestinians?

The Providence Journal and other papers had already published several of my commentaries on the subject. But there was never enough space to report more than a fraction of the abuses. It is difficult for an outsider to get more than one column or letter per month published in a major newspaper. And after submitting a column or letter, the writer waits with no idea when or whether it will appear.

Meanwhile, each day's e-mail included six to eight messages about new cruelties visited upon the Palestinians. These were rarely covered by the news media in Rhode Island, so the public didn't know what was happening. Occasionally the paper inserted one or two column inches mentioning a tragedy. Twice last year it even ran pictures of families whose homes were being bulldozed or confiscated. But these infrequent little stories were buried on inner pages of the paper and were dwarfed by daily stories of the holocaust and other Jewish suffering.

Most Americans would not permit a dog or a cat to be thrown out of its home, beaten, imprisoned without charges, or tortured. So I have to believe that the horrors being inflicted on human beings in Palestine would not continue if the American people, who pay Israel's bills, learned of them.

But it hadn't occurred to me until last summer to buy newspaper ads to report

what the news media wouldn't.

THE AD SERIES

When my first ad about the Palestinians was finally accepted by *The Providence Journal*, I signed a contract with the paper to spend a total of \$10,000 on ads within a year. This resulted in a slightly lower rate per column inch. Advertising rates usually relate to the size of the expected audience. *The Providence Journal* has a circulation of about 180,000.

Ten thousand dollars may sound like a lot. But, to put it in perspective, it is a little more than what I was annually putting into a voluntary retirement plan.

And how does it compare with the life savings lost, the dreams shattered and the anguish inflicted on just one Palestinian whose home is demolished, whose land is confiscated or whose father, mother, husband, wife, brother, sister, son or daughter is killed, crippled or imprisoned?

During a visit to the West Bank in January 1997 my wife and I met Palestinians who had been shot, beaten or interrogated by the Israelis. One victim was a two-year-old boy beaten by an Israeli soldier. We visited Palestinians whose homes had been demolished or stolen; and we happened to be there and stood helplessly alongside members of one family as an Israeli bulldozer uprooted their olive trees and took more of their land. This strengthened our appreciation of Palestinian suffering.

Untold Stories No. 1 included my name, address, home phone number and picture. This was intended to draw attention to the ad and to help dispel the attitude that one dare not be publicly identified with any criticism of Israel. I put the word "CENSORED" at the top of the ad in a further effort to attract readers' attention.

PALESTINIAN 'COOPERATION'

Daily e-mail messages from Palestine tell of home demolitions, violence against Palestinians by Israeli settlers and soldiers, restriction on travel for Palestinians and denial of water for their crops. So one need not look far for topics to write about. I thought it would be easy to write "untold stories" — even on a weekly basis.

It wasn't! While trying to confirm the details of a story or to obtain pictures for use in the ads, I encountered unexpected problems:

(1) The Palestinians whom I called were willing to say they would do it "tomorrow." But apparently "tomorrow" is a meaningless word. After watching my mail each day for two or three weeks, I'd phone them again. And again they would promise to send the material "tomorrow." Sometimes it took two months and

many phone calls to get a picture or other item. Often they never sent it at all.

(2) It was difficult to determine whether two stories were really different stories. Palestinians may have several different names, and they sometimes use one and sometimes another. Arabic characters must be transliterated into English letters and different translators use different systems of transliteration—if they use systems at all. Similar problems can arise with respect to village names.

(3) Palestinians and Americans working with them were often careless about details. Perhaps, with all the tragedies they see, it didn't seem worth determining whether an Israeli who killed a Palestinian had been fined one agora (one-hundredth of a shekel), or was just "under investigation," or had been forgotten. Perhaps it seemed unimportant to report that certain homes were demolished on February 16 when the demolition really occurred on February 17. But this can make a person in Rhode Island believe he is hearing about two or more different incidents rather than one, especially when the problem is compounded with name discrepancies.

In attempting to get some video footage that had been shown on Israeli and Palestinian television, I was told repeatedly that Reuters had it, or perhaps AP. After more than a dozen phone calls, I discovered that neither agency had it. It would have been so much easier if someone in Palestine had made the phone calls for me. Instead I was usually told to simply make more trans-Atlantic calls—with all the complications of a seven-hour time difference. My phone bill has ranged from \$100 to \$175 per month since I began this project.

Jewish human rights activists in Israel, especially those at B'Tselem, are often more responsive than Palestinians. I also spoke three times, more than an hour altogether, with a spokesman for the Israeli forces in the Occupied Territories to obtain Israeli figures on home demolitions.

After a couple of months I had pictures of home demolitions suitable for use in ads No. 2 and No. 3 plus information I could trust. Without objection, the paper ran these ads, each a quarter page or more, showing pictures of Palestinian families and the furniture they had rescued before their homes in Bir Naballa were demolished. One family, three adults and five children, had only half an hour to remove its possessions.

RESPONSES

I had spent days and weeks checking and cross-checking to make sure everything I said was correct. But each ad drew angry responses from Israeli apologists who made up stories with no regard for the truth. They simply sent them to the newspaper, and their letters or

columns seemed to get onto the editorial pages almost immediately.

Itzhak Levanon, the consul general of Israel to New England wrote, and *The Providence Journal* published, a column complaining about my "misleading advertisements." His column, he said, would "provide readers with a clarification of the rules and regulations surrounding Israel's decision to destroy homes." What followed was an outrageous assortment of fabrications.

He declared that: "In Bir Naballa, the houses demolished were those of terrorists who blew themselves up on Ben Yehuda Street and Mahane Yehuda market, leaving more than 40 women, children and elderly civilians dead."

Nothing could be further from the truth. The paper published my response under the heading **MORE LIES BY ISRAEL** two weeks later. The proof of Mr. Levanon's deceit requires only a simple calendar. My ads about Bir Naballa actually appeared before the Israelis destroyed four homes in retaliation for the suicide bombings—and these were in Asira Ashamaliya village—far from Bir Naballa. The homes in Bir Naballa, and dozens more, were bulldozed by the Israelis in the spring and summer of 1997—weeks and months before the bombings of July 30 and Sept. 4 that Levanon offered as an excuse. The reason the Israelis themselves gave for destroying homes in Bir Naballa was that they were built "without a license."

What truly amazed me about Mr. Levanon's response, however, was his readiness to defend the destruction of homes occupied by wives, children, mothers, fathers, and siblings of "suspected terrorists." Mr. Levanon claimed "the Palestinian families of these suicide bombers gave them refuge, help and food in advance of their vile criminal act."

"What civilized society carries out such collective punishment?" I asked in my column. "Imagine the United States destroying the homes of families or acquaintances of Ted Kaczynski or Craig Price (a teenage killer in Rhode Island). Israel doesn't destroy the homes of Israeli killers such as Baruch Goldstein or Yigal Amir. Only Palestinian families suffer such cruelty."

EFFECTIVENESS

It is difficult to measure the effectiveness of advocacy advertising. Who knows how many people see an ad and are affected by it, but don't bother to respond? I had expected more responses than I got to the first three ads. Many of my most sympathetic friends simply had not seen the ads.

Perhaps placement was the problem. I had always

requested placement "upper right." But each of these three ads was printed "lower left." In my paranoia, I wondered if this was entirely by chance.

After I complained about placement, the paper gave me an excellent position, page three, for ad No. 4. This ad recounted the killing of a Palestinian by an Israeli "undercover squad," or "death squad." (It had taken months to get someone in Palestine to visit the victim's family and get me a picture of the victim, Muhammad al-Hilu.) Once again Zionists directed protests at me and the newspaper.

Since the newspaper was under attack for running the ad, I decided to visit the vice president for advertising at the paper. When he saw the extensive documentation behind the ads, he was well satisfied that I could back up everything.

Ad No. 5 featured a picture of a two-year-old Palestinian boy standing crying in the ruins of his newly-demolished home. [*Editor's note: See ad on page 8.*] This had been the cover photo of *The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, December 1997. I paid the newspaper an extra 25 percent to place this ad on the op-ed page for greater visibility.

The paper soon published a column by the president of the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island attacking the ad. In addition to more fabrications, the writer objected that the picture of a child crying amid the rubble "plays on our most basic emotions."

And he noted, rather accurately, that, "We rely on gatekeepers—newspapers and magazines, broadcasters and analysts, friends and academics—to help select our information for us." My ad, obviously, had not been stopped by his "gatekeepers."

Ad No. 6 was the strongest of all—describing some of the methods used by Shabak and other Israeli interrogation agencies to extract "confessions" from Palestinians. [*Editor's note: See facing page.*] In hopes of preempting any possible rejection by the paper, I decided not to submit this ad through the advertising representative for my account. Instead I went directly to the vice president for advertising and showed him documentation from Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International and the U.S. State Department.

He accepted the ad and ran it as submitted—again on the op-ed page. It is reasonable to suppose that this ad would not have been accepted if it had been the first one submitted.

When the ad appeared, a woman called to tell me I was anti-Semitic. She told me that if Palestinians had been arrested they must be guilty (of something) and deserved to be punished (tortured, I presume).

ADVERTISEMENT

ADVERTISEMENT

Interrogation by Shabak

You didn't see this on the news.

Thousands of Palestinians have been interrogated by the Israeli agency Shabak (also known as GSS or Shin Bet), by the Israeli army and by Israeli police.

A thick, rancid hood is fastened over the prisoner's head making breathing difficult. It may smell of human waste or gasoline. The victim is handcuffed in a painful and unnatural position and left this way for hours or days. He is slapped or shaken when he appears to be falling asleep. During the actual interrogation he may be beaten, shocked or burned on sensitive parts of his body.

After several days he is given a "rest" in a tiny windowless cell with continuous noise and bright lights to prevent sleep. Then he is hooded again, chained to a pole and made to stand or

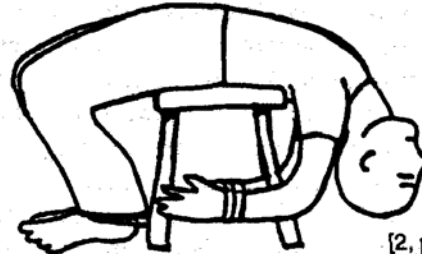


[1, p. 133]

squat for days. His hands swell up from the tight handcuffs; he vomits from the prolonged contortion. He wants to go to the bathroom and he desperately wants to sleep. Sometimes he is put in a tiny chamber know as the "refrigerator" and subjected to forced cold air in winter or heat in summer.

During interrogation he may be told that members of his family will be tortured and raped. He may be told of Palestinians who have

died or gone insane during interrogation. He may be tied in the "banana position" -- stretched backwards over a chair.



[2, p. 5]

This is "moderate physical and psychological pressure" under Israeli law. It is used to extract "confessions" from Palestinian detainees. Israeli courts routinely allow such "confessions" as evidence; and they dismiss complaints about the abuse of prisoners.

Family members, lawyers and Red Cross representatives are denied access to detainees under interrogation. Families often do not even know where their loved ones are being held.

When an interrogator is told to go beyond "moderate physical pressure," he grabs the victim by the shoulders or by his collar and shakes him violently for seconds or minutes. On Nov. 10, 1993, after violent shaking, Bassem Tamimi fell unconscious. He underwent nine hours of surgery for a cerebral hemorrhage and remained in a coma for five days. On Dec. 6 he was released without charge [1, p. 20], [2, p.8].

On April 22, 1995 Abd al-Samad Harizat collapsed in a coma after violent shaking. He died three day later. An autopsy revealed that he died of a "subdural hemorrhage" due to the shearing of small blood vessels bridging the space between the brain and the inner surface of the skull. The men who killed him continued working as interrogators [2, pp. 11, 12].

Why doesn't the Palestinian Authority cry out against these atrocities? Perhaps because it too has a horrific record of torturing Palestinians.

You may be told that the above is untrue and should not have been published. Tragically it is entirely true! Only the American taxpayers who pay Israel's bills do not hear about it.

Please check the references:

- [1] Human Rights Watch, *Torture and Ill-Treatment, Israel's Interrogation of Palestinians from the Occupied Territories*, 1994. Internet: www.hrw.org
- [2] Amnesty International, *Under Constant Medical Supervision; Torture, Ill-treatment and the Health Professionals in Israel and the Occupied Territories*, Aug. 1996. Internet: www.amnesty.org
- [3] Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1996*, released Jan. 30, 1997 and for 1997, released Jan. 30, 1998. Internet: www.state.gov (look for "Israel" and "occupied territories")

UNTOLD
STORIES
No. 6

Is this how we want our tax money spent?



I'd like to hear from you. Call or write

Rod Driver
PO Box 156, West Kingston, RI 02892
(401)-539-7985.

A second call came from a fundamentalist Christian who told me that the Jews had been expelled from their land by the Romans in 78 AD, and Palestinians had no right to be there. So I suggested that we shouldn't be here because this land belonged to the Native Americans. "No," he explained, "God gave land to the Jews. God didn't give any land to the Indians." And suffering inflicted on the Palestinians is punishment from God, he added.

A week after Untold Stories No. 6 appeared, Mark Patinkin, a regular writer for *The Providence Journal*, wrote a column headed **A LESSON FOR PROFESSOR ROD DRIVER**. Although I had included a statement in the ad—using bold type—that the Palestinian Authority "has a horrific record of torturing Palestinians," Patinkin said I had overlooked that fact, and he made this "oversight" a refrain throughout his column. His thesis, apparently, is that it is okay for the Israelis to torture Palestinians because the Palestinians torture Palestinians. My response, printed four weeks later, included this passage:

"I am painfully aware of the Palestinian abuse of Palestinians. And I can't explain it any more than I can explain why an abused child grows up to be a child abuser, or why Jews whose parents were brutalized by Nazis now brutalize Palestinians."

Putting the ads on the op-ed page was worth the extra cost. Starting over again, I would pay the 25 percent premium to place them all there where they are most likely to reach the right audience.

During 20 months of writing columns and ads—9 months for the ads themselves—I have had supportive calls or letters from about 60 people. I also keep meeting people who have seen one or more of the ads and thank me for them, although they had not bothered to call or write.

WHY NOT TELEVISION?

A few months ago, I first saw the "infommercial" titled "On Wings of Eagles," then running on a local TV station at 6 a.m. on Sundays. Professionally produced, this 30-minute program asks the viewer to contribute \$300 or \$600 or more. Each \$300 will "rescue" one Russian Jew and bring him or her "home to Israel," it says.

It occurred to me that those of us who care about the abuse and suffering of the Palestinians could learn from the Zionists. Why couldn't we produce TV commercials to begin to tell Americans how the Israelis use the billions of dollars we give them to destroy Palestinian homes, take Palestinian land and otherwise oppress the people who have lived on their land for generations?

Isn't TV the medium to reach people who simply don't see letters and newspaper ads?

Some video that I thought would be especially good for use in a TV spot was filmed in 1995 by Reuters Television, Jerusalem. It shows Israeli police and soldiers forcibly removing a Palestinian family from its home in East Jerusalem, shooting and arresting neighbors who come to help the family and then bulldozing the home.

It took a few weeks to find someone to help me get permission to use it—but not as long as it might have taken if I hadn't learned from past experiences. Based on my earlier troubles getting information and pictures, I had decided that if you want something from Palestine, you call. Then you call again tomorrow and again the next day until something happens. When I got to the right party, Reuters kindly gave me permission to use the footage.

While wrestling with the problem of editing five minutes of dynamic video down to a 30-second spot, I also started inquiring about buying air time on local TV stations.

One station asked to see the spot. Since it didn't yet exist, I faxed a preliminary version of the script to the station. That was enough! A few days later, I got a familiar message:

"The station won't accept the spot."

"Why not?"

"We're not required to give a reason."

This was reminiscent of *The Providence Journal's* initial response to me in August 1997. That problem had been resolved when I made a nuisance of myself with top management at the paper.

RUNNING FOR CONGRESS

In the case of television, there is a different solution: Under federal law, a bona fide political candidate can buy advertising time on television; and a station cannot reject the ads—unless it rejects advertising from all candidates in the race in question.

So early in May I filed papers with the Federal Elections Commission to become a candidate for the Republican nomination for Congress in Rhode Island's second district.

I finally got the TV spot edited down to 30 seconds. It would have started airing on May 20 on a local station. But the station decided that my permission letter from Reuters did not have quite the right wording. Reuters promptly faxed me a revised letter, and the spot began running on May 26 on one broadcast station and several cable channels. [Editor's note: See text and graphics from the

spot on page 12.]

On television, as in newspapers, the cost of advertising depends on the size and nature of the audience you are reaching. The programs I selected are not the ones with the biggest audiences in Rhode Island and hence not the most expensive. Conventional wisdom about advertising says that a viewer must see a spot several times before it "registers." (Think how many times you have seen ads for Tums, Toyota, Total, Slim Fast, or Pepsi Cola.) By staying with the lower-priced air times, I hoped to achieve adequate repetition, with a select group of viewers, for a few thousand dollars.

Editing the commercial cost about \$1,000, plus many hours of my time. I paid another \$9,000 for the initial buy of broadcast time. For that amount of money in this "market" one could get about five spots of local air time during "60 Minutes," or about eleven spots during "48 Hours." Instead I opted to have more spots on less popular local programs. I plan to put in more money to run the ad on another station. (The \$1,000 federal limit on contributions to a campaign does not apply to a candidate's contributions to his own campaign.)

The ad is dramatic. It shows family members resisting and screaming as Israeli police forcibly remove them from their home. Soldiers shoot and arrest neighbors who come to help the family; then the home is bulldozed.

The television station that first broadcast it decided to precede the spot with a disclaimer. White letters on a

black background and an announcer's voice warn the viewer that:

THE FOLLOWING POLITICAL ADVERTISEMENT CONTAINS SCENES WHICH MAY BE DISTURBING TO CHILDREN. VIEWER DISCRETION IS ADVISED.

This added four-second announcement, which I did not have to pay for, probably attracts attention to the ad. The spot is obviously having an impact. Apparently this is an ad that makes an impression the first time one sees it—let alone the ninth or tenth time. Several people have told me they were shocked to learn what the Israelis are doing.

The broadcast station and the cable channels that ran the ad soon began to feel the heat. They wanted to talk with me about it. They had not kept track of the number of hostile calls, but they were obviously alarmed.

The broadcast station decided to explain its position on the 6 o'clock news. So on June 5 it spent more than three minutes showing excerpts from the spot and explaining to its audience that, under federal law, it had no choice but to run the commercial—that it could lose its license for refusing.

The station then read a statement from the Anti-Defamation League saying that, "The A.D.L. supports (Driver's) right to free speech, but we urge audiences to take a critical eye to his propaganda." (Free speech was alive and well only because Zionists had not succeeded in knocking the ad off the air with their protest calls to the television stations, Reuters and the Republican party.)

GOP ASSAILS TV SPOT

On June 9, *The Westerly Sun*, which serves southern Rhode Island and eastern Connecticut, carried a press release from Joan Quick, chairwoman of the Rhode Island Republican Party, declaring that my TV ad "offends millions of Jewish Americans in its pro-terrorist portrayal of ongoing conflict in the Middle East between Palestinian terrorists and the State of Israel."

I called Ms. Quick and asked if she had been getting complaints about my ad. Yes, indeed she had! I asked where she got the notion that the people seen in the ad were "terrorists." She said the wording for the press release came from the national GOP. I then faxed a rebuttal to AP and newspapers throughout the state. *The Westerly Sun* used part of it, but I have not heard that it was used anywhere else.

On June 11, *The Providence Journal* ran a front-page story about the TV ad. The headline stated:

CANDIDATE AIMS TO DISTURB WITH VIOLENT ANTI-ISRAEL AD.

Beneath that was a sub-heading: **RICHMOND'S DRIVER**

ADVERTISEMENT ADVERTISEMENT ADVERTISEMENT

Israel Censored

adminis

You didn't see this on the news

ISRAEL, July 24, 1997—Five of Israel's most prominent authors today published an open letter to Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai urging an end to administrative detention. It reads in part as follows:

"Dear Minister, Today some 250 Palestinians are being held in prisons in Israel, without trial, under administrative detention. Some of them have been in detention for more than a year; some have been detained for two, three and even five years.


"The administrative detainees do not know the reason for their detention: the information against them is classified. Hence, neither the detainees nor their lawyers are able to confront the allegations. Moreover, none of the detainees know when they will be released; theoretically, their detention can be prolonged indefinitely. ...

"Out of deep concern for the protection of moral and legal standards in Israel, we call upon you to act urgently in one of two ways: if there is evidence against the administrative detainees, bring them to trial without delay; if not, release them at once. We cannot allow human beings to rot in Israeli prisons for years without trial!"

Source: B'Tselem, the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories.

Untold Stories—No. 1

Rod Driver
PO Box 156, West Kingston, RI
02892
401-539-7985



MAKES NO APOLOGIES FOR EXPLOITING AN EXEMPTION TO RULES ON ADVERTISING CONTENT.

In the same issue, columnist M. Charles Bakst, who frequently writes in praise of Israel, took aim under the heading, **RI DOESN'T NEED DRIVER'S CAMPAIGN FOR U.S. CONGRESS**, and alleged that the ad "has high-voltage rhetoric about home demolitions and bitterly disputed data on what has been going on over there, or perhaps has gone on in exactly that fashion only in Driver's mind."

Bakst quotes Itzhak Levanon, Israel's consul general in Boston, as saying that the TV spot "revolts me" and makes "false allegations." (Levanon is the man who earlier used absolute falsehoods in responding to my ads about home demolitions.) Bakst consulted and quoted others to buttress his attack. The one person he did not contact was the person he was writing about.

On June 12, the Waterbury (CT) *Republican-American* carried an AP story under the headline, **MAN RUNS ONLY TO GET AD ON THE AIR**. The same story ran in the *Westerly Sun* (and goodness knows where else). The article says, "The commercial depicts what (Driver) claims are Israeli police dragging Palestinians from their homes."

Although none of the stories has been complimentary, they have called attention to the effort. In the immediate aftermath, I got nine calls of support, including five from "new" people.

The *Providence Journal* articles resulted in a five-minute interview on one radio program, a 50-minute participation in another station's call-in talk show, and a

one-hour interview on a local cable program.

On the evening of June 11, and in a rerun the following Sunday, the local PBS station's weekly program "The Lively Experiment" gave me a good going-over—in my absence, of course. One of the panelists, Thomas L. DiLuglio, a former lieutenant governor of Rhode Island, said:

"It doesn't add up that he would want this kind of ad aired in Rhode Island. This is an international matter! Who is he aiming at? What is the purpose of it unless these numbers add up to bigot?" He went on to suggest that airing this ad (about an international matter) in a congressional campaign is "bizarre and erratic behavior."

I am seeking an opportunity to appear on the program to respond.

I hope to put together another TV spot based on the al-Atrash family's persistent, but non-violent response to the Israeli "security" forces that demolished their home near Hebron in 1988. They rebuilt and their new construction was again turned to rubble on March 3, 1998.

Still the family refused to give up. On March 22, their Palestinian neighbors and peace activists from Israel and the U.S. labored alongside Mr. and Mrs. al-Atrash and their ten children as they continued to rebuild. This time Israeli forces, who came to the site to confiscate a small cement mixer, responded violently. Seventeen-year-old Manal al-Atrash was beaten so severely she was hospitalized for a week. Her parents, Yusef and Zuhuur, and an older brother Hosham, were brutally

ADVERTISEMENT

ADVERTISEMENT

ADVERTISEMENT

CENSORED!

Two-year-old Mohamed Ali Abu-Swai cries amid the remains of the house where he lived with 9 other family members. This house, in Ras Al-Amoud in East Jerusalem, was one of 200 Palestinian homes demolished by Israeli authorities in 1997 for being "built without a license." (The Israelis rarely give Palestinians permission to build on their own land.)

A few days after this home was demolished, the first three Jewish settler families moved into the Ras Al-Amoud neighborhood.

UNTOLD STORIES
No. 5

The American taxpayers give more money to Israel each year than to any other country.



Photo by Khaleel Ziphari



I'd like to hear from you. Call or write

Rod Driver
PO Box 156, West Kingston, RI 02892
(401)-539-7985.

You didn't see this on the news.

arrested, and a 14-year-old, Wilah', was left in charge of her seven younger brothers and sisters.

Although the authorities left the site without destroying the home, they returned on June 11. The family had been working until 3 that morning to finish the cement floor. By 10:30 a.m., the Israeli forces had demolished the home for yet a third time. It is the March 22 footage of the violence of the arrests and beatings that I hope to acquire for my new TV spot. Maybe viewers will begin to understand just who the "terrorists" are.

THE RACE

The race for Congress will be difficult. It is hard for any Republican to unseat an incumbent Democrat in Rhode Island. Secondly, the incumbent, Bob Weygand, plans to spend one million dollars on his re-election campaign. And thirdly, in boldly questioning the use of our tax dollars to oppress Palestinians, I am going where—to my knowledge—no other candidate for congress has gone before.

The campaign does offer a chance to raise public discussion of a tragedy which, for 50 years, people have been afraid to mention. And it will raise the question: Should the American taxpayers be required to continue giving Israel more than \$3 billion per year?

I plan to put on a major campaign and will talk about many other issues besides Palestine. One cannot win an election by talking only about the plight of the Palestinians.

If I win the Republican primary on Sept. 15, there will be opportunities for debates with Rep. Weygand in the general election campaign. Since taking an Israeli-guided tour, Weygand has been willing to jump as the Israeli lobby AIPAC requires it. He signed a recent letter telling President Clinton not to pressure Israel to return any land or rights to the Palestinians unless Israel wants to.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The general theme of letters and columns in the newspaper by Israeli apologists is that criticism of Israel is "anti-Semitic." As far as they are concerned, Israel's abuse of human rights is not a problem. But, to them, reporting about Israeli atrocities is virtually criminal. Their tack is to intimidate and silence the messenger.

As one who did not hesitate to criticize my government for its actions in Southeast Asia and Latin America, I have trouble understanding why so many American Jews cannot tolerate any criticism of Israel.

A recent publication of a Rhode Island Jewish organization referred to the "unfortunate" letters and ads by

Rod Driver. Again, it is the publicity that is "unfortunate" — not the underlying atrocities.

The editorial/letters section is one of the most widely read parts of a newspaper—perhaps after sports and comics. The Zionists are well aware of this, and make good use of it. So I seldom miss an opportunity to urge people to write to their newspapers. Much of what is well known to readers of *The Link* and other alternative sources of information is unknown to the American public—unless we tell them.

But anyone who publishes letters, columns or ads telling of the Israeli abuse of Palestinians must expect angry rebuttals in the paper plus a little anonymous hate mail. There also may be some anonymous phone calls. But these are minor annoyances compared to the terrible abuse which Palestinians experience all the time.

Letters in the paper defending Israeli actions are routinely filled with misinformation. But the public cannot be expected to recognize this. The misinformation requires prompt correction by those who know better. And the corrections cannot always come from the same person. The challenge is to get more people to respond with letters presenting a humanitarian point of view.

Unfortunately, most Americans, including Arab-Americans, can come up with excuses for not writing. The real reasons, I believe, are fear or laziness.

Some who have written to the paper get discouraged. Letter writers must realize that their effort is not wasted. Not all submissions are published. Major papers get far more letters and columns than they can publish. But from among the letters that bombard him or her, an editor will usually try to publish a representative sample. So if several people express similar concerns in their letters to the paper, the chance that one will be published is much greater than if that one alone had been submitted. Short letters have a better chance of publication—generally speaking 250 words is tops; 100 or 150 is better.

PRO AND CON

I always hope to inspire a vigorous give-and-take in the letters columns of local newspapers. I don't mind the personal attacks if it means that more people are drawn to discovering for themselves the truth about what Israel has done and is doing to the Palestinians. Here are a few excerpts from letters, starting with the anti-Driver crowd:

- Mr. Driver falsely charges that we "try to suppress news that reflects badly on Israel." — Alex Safian, associate director of the Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America (CAMERA).

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- [Rod Driver] castigates Israel for destroying houses belonging to Palestinians. In addition to this terrible behavior, he notes that "Israel builds and expands settlements in occupied Palestine" in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention. Occupied Palestine? The only time that this area was known as Palestine was under the British mandate from 1919 to 1949 . . . — Gerald P. McOsker, Middletown.
- Has Rod Driver lost his credibility. Previously, his credentials included being "a member of Amnesty International," but his latest diatribe against Israel . . .

is a repetition of previous statements that makes no mention of A.I. Has A.I. disowned Rod Driver.— Charles Swartz, East Providence. [The newspaper added this editor's note: *Mr. Driver is still a member of Amnesty International.*]

And here are a few that back me up:

- [Replying to Mr. Safian of CAMERA.] . . . Safian then goes on to declare that Israeli undercover units have killed only 30 people since Oslo - as though this is something to be proud of. The undercover Israeli

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Americans need to know about these Israeli outrages

(Published April 9, 1997, as editorial commentary
by *The Providence Journal-Bulletin*)

By Rod Driver

American-educated Benjamin Netanyahu is an accomplished television performer. But the Israeli prime minister could not lead the United States around the way he does if the people knew how Palestinians are treated under Israeli occupation.

Here's an example unknown to Americans because it has not appeared in U.S. news reports. It is in the Israeli press:

Last fall, B'Tselem, an Israeli human rights organization, reported that Israeli police were raiding Palestinian homes in Hebron and strip-searching women and children. What could be more degrading to a Moslem woman or more terrifying to a child?

To justify the practice and to discredit B'Tselem, Israeli policemen asserted that one woman they had searched had a pistol in her vagina. No, I am not making this up! (See *The Jerusalem Post* International Edition, Jan. 11, 1997, page 6, available in the URI library. I'll send a copy of the article to anyone who asks.)

The U.S. State Department, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International issue reports on the detention, "interrogation" (torture), beating and murder of Palestinians.

In January, my wife and I, who were visiting Palestine, met Palestinians who had been imprisoned, "interrogated" or beaten by the Israelis. The youngest beating victim was 2-1/2.

Our presence—or rather the presence of our camcorder—stopped soldiers from beating some young boys on a street in Hebron. It is dangerous for a Palestinian to "intervene" as we did.

For instance, Azzam Maraka secretly videotaped Israeli soldiers beating unarmed Palestinians on Oct. 10. When the tape was shown on Israeli television in November, Mr. Netanyahu and other officials declared that such beatings were isolated events and are not tolerated. But both the chief of the Israeli border police and Israel's attorney general confirmed Palestinian assertions that the only thing unusual about the beating was the existence of Maraka's videotape.

The sequel was not publicized: Azzam Maraka and his brother were themselves subsequently beaten by the police. Maraka was arrested and his brother hospitalized.

On Feb. 25, in the village of Hizmeh, near Jerusalem, Muhammed al-Hilu pleaded with Israeli undercover soldiers to stop beating his son-in-law. The Israelis shot al-Hilu in the leg; then, while he was on the ground, they clubbed him to death. Neither al-Hilu nor his son-in-law was armed. (Since the *intifada*, Israeli military death

squads have killed 161 Palestinians, including 19 children.)

The abuse that most often triggers violence is the continued confiscation of Palestinian land and the destruction of Palestinian homes.

In November, Atallah Amireh, a 36-year-old father of seven, protested against the seizure of his land in the village of Deir Qadis, near Ramallah. Israeli soldiers shot and killed him. *The New York Times* ran a small article about his death, Nov. 11, 1996, on Page A-7. The *Times* omitted the fact that Amireh was the owner of the land! (Other American papers omitted the entire story.)

There is little or no penalty for Israeli abuse of Palestinians. Last November, a military court fined four Israeli soldiers one agora—a hundredth of a shekel—for killing unarmed 18-year-old Iyad Badran. (At a bank in Jerusalem, I was told that no one agora coin is made. If it were, it would be worth a third of a U.S. cent.)

How are Palestinians expected to react when their land is stolen, their homes and crops destroyed, or their wives, sisters and children violated? How would you or I react?

Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Clinton decried "terrorism" when a desperate young Palestinian reacted with a suicide bombing in Tel Aviv on March 21—the first such bombing in a year. Musa Ghanimat's father, his widow, Maysun Ghanimat, and his brothers were taken in for "interrogation." Maysun, the mother of their four small children, who is not suspected of any involvement in the bombing, suffered a nervous breakdown.

As the Israelis took all her valuables and destroyed her home, Peter Jennings matter-of-factly announced that this was Israeli policy for dealing with terrorism. But is it? The Israelis did not destroy the home or arrest the family of Baruch Goldstein, who had murdered 29 Palestinians at prayer, or other Israelis who killed Palestinians or even of Yigal Amir, who killed Yitzhak Rabin. (Israeli acts of violence are not considered "terrorism.")

If Palestinians don't like the way they are treated, they are told to "negotiate" with Mr. Netanyahu—the man who has violated almost every aspect of the Oslo accords, the man who asserts that only Israel will decide what land and what rights Palestinians may have.

President Clinton offered a feeble statement of disappointment at the Israeli policy of building more illegal settlements on stolen Palestinian land. Then he dutifully vetoed U.N. resolutions condemning the practice, and he renewed the annual gift of \$3.5 billion to Israel from the American taxpayers.

(Continued from page 10)

soldiers who killed Iyad Badran did not even go to jail, Safian says, because Palestinian witnesses failed to come forth to testify against the soldiers. What a callous thing to say! I lived under German occupation in the 1940s. My countrymen and I would have had to be crazy to go into a German military court to testify against the occupation forces.—Leonard F. Quaedvlieg, Westerly.

- To get a permit to build a house on his own land, a Palestinian in my town must pay the Israelis more than the cost of the house itself, and even then the permit may be denied. But the Israelis come freely to take the land for their own use.—Walid Ali, West Warwick.
- I am encouraged that the Journal-Bulletin has lately printed news stories and photos . . . that dare to suggest that the Palestinians may have a just case against the Israeli occupation (and destruction) of their land and homes. . . . —Betsy Lincoln, Wickford.

DISTURBING DISCOVERIES

Several months ago, in my naiveté, I tried to open a dialogue with Jewish organizations in the state. Surely, I thought, anyone who learned what the Israelis are doing to the Palestinians would demand that it stop. The Jewish organizations I contacted simply did not respond. A Jewish friend did arrange a meeting for me with a group of about 16. But they would not let me show a 25-minute video, nor would they accept the printed material I offered. Two or three were outspokenly hostile about my “unfortunate” or “anti-Semitic” articles.

Again, it was publication of the information that they found to be the real problem, not the facts themselves. Others present were quiet, with the exception of one person who agreed with me.

I expected a few anonymous hate letters. What I had not expected—and what is perhaps more disturbing—is

(Continued on page 12)

My Path to the Palestinians

I have been involved with other issues where the facts were slow in reaching the general public, sometimes as the result of our own government’s concealing and massaging the facts.

In the early 1960s I was unaware of what my country was doing in Vietnam. Friends tried to tell me about Vietnam’s struggle for independence and reunification, and about the roles of Harry Truman and Dwight Eisenhower in thwarting it. They tried to tell me that under John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson the United States was bombing human beings with flaming jellied gasoline and with fragmentation weapons designed solely to kill or maim people. And they told me of American complicity in gruesome torture of the residents of Vietnam.

I thought my friends had “gone overboard” in their animosity toward our government. Their reports were too incredible to accept. I even believed Lyndon Johnson’s 1964 Tonkin Gulf tale at first.

It was President Johnson’s shameless invasion of the Dominican Republic in 1965 that led me to question other aspects of our foreign activities. As I learned more, I became an active opponent of the war in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos as well as the Dominican Republic.

One of the finest sources of information was *I.F. Stone’s Weekly*. That remarkable

little paper presented articles from publications around the world that were unknown to most Americans. Always skeptical, I checked the primary sources of everything that I wanted to quote in letters to the editor. I.F. Stone’s versions were always accurate right down to the commas.

After becoming convinced that U.S. policy in Southeast Asia in the 1960s and 1970s was cruel and inexcusable, I no longer accepted at face value government explanations of our activities in El Salvador, Nicaragua, Chile, Guatemala, Cuba, Haiti, Indonesia, Iran or the Philippines. When the wars in Southeast Asia wound down, I became involved in opposing U.S. actions in El Salvador and Nicaragua.

I never physically went to any of these places. But when American and South Vietnamese forces dropped napalm on villages or sealed 100 living human beings inside a cave or machine-gunned farmers from helicopters “I was there.” And “I was there” when the American-sponsored contras were committing unspeakable atrocities against the people of Nicaragua.

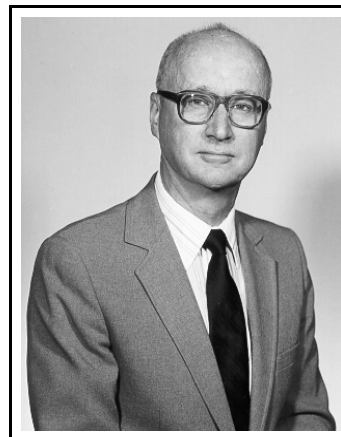
During the wars in Southeast Asia and in Latin America, I wrote hundreds of letters to newspapers and produced and distributed several pamphlets. A major effort, “Misinformation About Vietnam,” was entered into the *Congressional Record* by Senator Mark Hatfield. I also made a couple of attempts to run for Congress.

My first awareness of the American-supported abuse of the Palestinians also may have been due to I.F. Stone. I heard him speak at a big rally in Washington against the wars in Southeast Asia in the early 70s. He told his audience that he had “nothing to say about Southeast Asia that you don’t already know”—an overly generous assumption on his part. He took the opportunity instead to warn his audience about the suffering of the Palestinians. (The next speaker on the program promptly criticized Stone for bringing up the Palestinians at a rally for the Vietnamese.)

The U.S. wars and interventions in Southeast Asia, Latin America and the Middle East had one particularly troubling aspect in common:

I was paying for them.

Among all the bad things happening in the world, I am most troubled by the ones I am sponsoring through my tax dollars.



(Continued from page 11)

the greater number of anonymous letters of support! People write to me saying how much they appreciate the ads, but give no name or address. Two people sent cash—\$15 from one, \$40 from another—and there was no way I could thank or contact the senders.

One anonymous letter writer thanked me and worried that my life might be in danger. Someone else sent me a copy of Paul Findley's book, *They Dare to Speak Out*. There was a nice letter inside the package, and there was a name and a return address on the outside. The name and address looked phony, but I wrote a thank you note anyway. A few days later my letter came back marked "Addressee Unknown."

At first I had doubts about putting my name, address, phone number and picture in the ads. But when I started getting unsigned letters of support, I knew the decision had been right. Those of us who feel the pain of the Palestinians must speak out, and we cannot do it anonymously if we are ever to change U.S. policy.

THE ONGOING PROJECT

The efforts described in this article are part of an ongoing project (in the Rhode Island media market) at awakening Americans. Anyone who wants to try some part of it elsewhere or who has had other ideas or experiences is welcome to contact me.

As for running for Congress, it may be too late for 1998 in many parts of the country. Rhode Island happens to have a particularly late filing deadline. But if you are considering it and are unfamiliar with federal election laws, please call. p

Editor's Note: We will update Link readers on the results of Rod Driver's campaign following the primary

(Continued on page 13)

30-Second TV Spot: Home Demolition

Voice: "Imagine a bulldozer arriving to demolish your home."

"Israeli police drag innocent Palestinians out of their home in East Jerusalem."

WOMAN STRUGGLES AND SCREAMS

"Soldiers beat, shoot and arrest family members and neighbors who resist."

"Israel, supported by the American taxpayers, has destroyed thousands of Palestinian homes — more than 200 last year alone."

On-Screen Captions:
Is this how we want our tax money spent?

Call (401) 539-7985
Rod Driver
A Conscience for Congress

Video by Reuters Television, Jerusalem

Paid for by Friends of Rod Driver

Photo Not Available For Website.

Photo Not Available For Website.

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election on Sept. 15. He can be contacted at: P.O. Box 156, West Kingston, RI, 02892, 401-539-7985. The tape of Mr. Driver's 30-second TV spot and all six of his "Untold Stories" newspaper ads are available through AMEU; see page 16.

Group Tour

Elaine Hagopian, ADC member and former AAUG president, is planning an educational and cultural group tour to Syria, Jordan, and Palestine/Israel from June 4 to June 21, 1999. The tour will include cultural site visits and meetings with local educators, health practitioners, media people, women's groups, religious leaders and foreign policy specialists. It is open to individuals of all ages and all interests. She can be contacted at 385 Mass. Ave. #33, Arlington, MA 02174-6721, or at <ehagopian@simmons.edu>.

The original *Link* issue used this page to list books being offered for sale at discount prices by Americans for Middle East Understanding. Please consult AMEU's book catalog elsewhere on this website.

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Video-Cassettes (VHS)

Middle East Council of Churches, **Disabled for Palestine** (1993, 21 minutes). A Palestinian doctor shows cases of Palestinian civilians who have been maimed for life by Israeli bullets, beatings and tear gas. List: \$25.00; **AMEU: \$10.00.**

Middle East Council of Churches, **Christian Families of Palestine** (1993, 34 minutes). Documents expropriation by Israeli settlers of the land of two Christian Palestinian families. Good for church groups and tourists preparing to visit the Holy Land. List: \$25.00; **AMEU: \$20.00.**

IRA, **Children of the Cradle** (1996, 30-minute report on embargo of Iraq). **AMEU: \$3.00.**

Masri, M., **Hanan Ashrawi: A Woman of Her Time** (1995, 51 minutes). One of Palestine's most articulate representatives shows that Israel's occupation is far from over – and far from benign. List: \$65.00; **AMEU: \$35.00.**

Munayyer, F. & H., **Palestinian Costumes and Embroidery: A Precious Legacy** (1990, 38 minutes). A rare collection of Palestinian dresses with accessories modeled against the background of Palestinian music, with commentary tracing the designs back to Canaanite times. List \$50.00; **AMEU: \$12.50.**

AIC, **Seeds of War in Jerusalem** (1997, 20 minutes). The struggle to save Abu Ghneim and Arab East Jerusalem. **AMEU: \$17.50.**

PHRM, **Jerusalem: An Occupation Set in Stone?** (1995, 55 minutes). Graphic account of Israel's plan to uproot Palestinian presence from Jerusalem. **AMEU: \$20.00.**

DMZ, **People & the Land** (1997, 57 minutes). This is the controversial documentary by Tom Hayes that appeared on over 40 PBS stations. **AMEU: \$25.00.**

Rice Productions, **Checkpoint: The Palestinians After Oslo** (1997, 58 minutes). Documents the post-Oslo situation with off-beat humor and historical insights provided by Palestinian and Israeli activists like Naseer Arad and Hanan Ashrawi. **AMEU: \$27.00.**

Kelley, D., **The Bedouin of Israel** (1998, 2 hours). Never-before seen film of how Israel has treated its Bedouin citizens, including interview with the notorious Green Patrol. **AMEU: \$30.00.**

Driver, R., **TV Political Ad** (1998, 30 seconds). This is the powerful 30-second spot that Congressional Candidate Rod Driver has been airing on Channel 12 in Rhode Island. Also included are his six "Untold Stories" newspaper advertisements. **AMEU: \$8.00.**

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