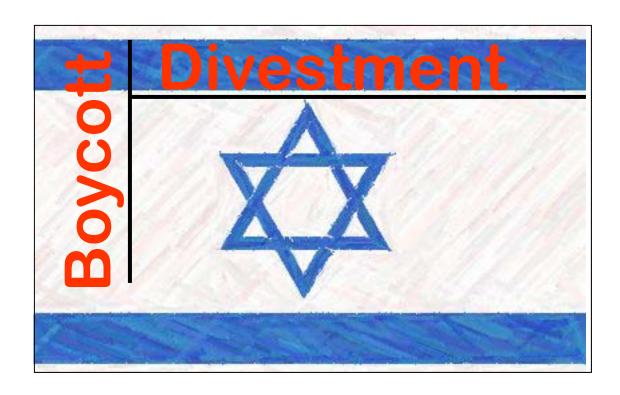
The Link

Published by Americans for Middle East Understanding, Inc.

Volume 42, Issue 4

Link Archives: www.ameu.org

September-October 2009



ENDING ISRAEL'S OCCUPATION

BY JOHN F. MAHONEY

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About This Issue

The working title for this issue was "BDS: An Update."

The BDS stood for Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions; the update referred to a 2006 *Link* article by David Wildman entitled "Why Divestment? And Why Now?"

Much has happened since then. We thought of listing all the BDS groups actively protesting Israel's 42-year occupation of Palestine. Instead, we opted to focus on a few of them, to look behind the billboards and banners and put a human face on what is a worldwide human rights campaign. (A list of companies and corporations profiting from the occupation has been compiled by an Israeli group, the Coalition of Women for Peace, and is carried on its website, www.whoprofits.org.)

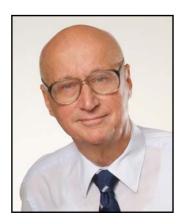
Our *Link's Link* interview is found on page 13. David Hosey, director of media interests for the US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation, answers questions about his group's website.

Our book catalog on page 14 features our latest additions. Among the new books are "In Search of King Solomon's Temple" by George Buchanan, which challenges the accepted wisdom that the ruins of the Third Temple are under the Dome of the Rock and Al-Aqsa Mosque. Also available is Baylis Thomas's "The Dark Side of Zionism," which documents Israel's 'soft apartheid' within its pre-1967 borders and its 'hard apartheid' in the Occupied Territories.

A listing of AMEU's Board of Directors and National Council members is found to the left of this column. We are pleased to be able to add two new directors: Rod Driver and David Grimland.

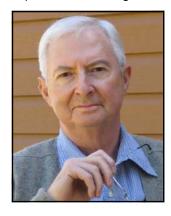
Rod Driver was professor of Mathematics at the University of Rhode Island from 1969 to 1998. From 1987 to 1994 he served in the Rhode Island House of Representatives. Last year he was reelected to the House of Representatives. As a member of Amnesty International, Rod

Rod Driver



has long advocated for the rights of Palestinians, often using his own financial resources. *Link* readers may remember his feature article "Politics *Not* as Usual" that appeared in 1998.

David Grimland is a retired U.S. foreign service officer with some 30 years of experience in Bangladesh, India, Cyprus,



David Grimland

Turkey and other nations with large Muslim populations. Now living in Montana, he remains active in explaining Islam to American audiences.

Finally, on page 15, along with our video selections, there is an application form for giving someone a \$20 gift subscription to *The Link*. We find that often these recipients will renew their subscription themselves after a year. Please join our "BGS" campaign: Buy a Gift Subscription. It's how we survive and grow.

John F. Mahoney Executive Director

Ending Israel's Occupation

Drive along Indian School Road, between University Boulevard and US-25, in downtown Albuquerque, on April 8, 2009, and you'd be hard-pressed not to catch sight of a particular billboard displaying a young Palestinian girl on one side and an Israeli tank on the other.

Turn left onto University Boulevard, then left again onto Candalaria Road, then right onto 2nd Street, and you'd come across a similar billboard, and you might read the message between the images: "Tell Congress: Stop Killing Children. No More Military Aid to Israel."

And were you to continue north on 2nd Street and turn right onto Montano Road, then merge onto I-25S, then onto I-40W until you came to Coors Boulevard NW, you would come upon yet another billboard with the same message, and you might have noticed that it was sponsored by Stop \$30 Billion.com.

The signs – 10 of them in all – definitely caught commuters' attention. Lamar Outdoor Advertising, which owns the billboards, and whose graphics department helped design the ads, reported hundreds of responses, although it never gave a breakdown of those for and those against.

Then, three weeks later, with five weeks left of a two-month contract to display the message, Lamar Outdoor Advertising covered or removed all 10 ads, charging they were misleading and factually inaccurate. Specifically, said a company official, "We know money is going to Israel but it is not going there with the purpose of killing children."

A spokeswoman for the Coalition to Stop \$30 Billion to Israel, sponsor of the advertisements, countered that they were not saying that U.S. monetary aid is being sent to kill children. "We're saying it is killing children."

On May 18, the Coalition and Lamar's corporate officers agreed to a modified redesign. The new message did not mention killing children, but said "Tell Congress Stop Giving Weapons to Israel with Our Tax Dollars."

A week later, Lamar rescinded its agreement. Why? Company Vice President of Governmental Relations Hal Kilshaw said the reason was simple: We made a mistake—twice! The first ad was misleading because Congress is not killing children; the modified design was offensive because it still had a picture of a young girl and a tank.

If the first design was so misleading, asked the Coalition, why did Lamar accept it in the first place, even assisting in the design? And why did it remain up for three weeks? Kilshaw's answer: "We might have had an over-

zealous ad salesperson. But we took it down after it was brought to the attention of the General Manager in Albuquerque."

And the second design, also created with the help of company executives? "We erred again," said Kilshaw. "There was some interim wrangling, we agreed to change it, and then upon rethinking, decided the revision was offensive." Asked what was so offensive about the second design, Kilshaw said there is no black and white way to define what is offensive, "but like the Supreme Court once said about pornography, I know it when I see it."

Meanwhile, freedom of speech advocates were slamming Lamar on the Internet. Whether this had anything to do with the company's next move is unclear but, surprisingly, after two confessions of bad judgment, Lamar executives offered the Coalition three alternative designs. All lacked images. The Coalition asked Lamar to include a tank image with the three choices offered. It also said that an image would not be necessary if the design included the phrases "military aid" and "tax dollars." Lamar refused, despite the fact that the United States has, in fact, agreed to give Israel \$30 billion dollars of taxpayer money over 10 years for military spending, 76% of which Israel must spend on U.S. manufactured weapons.

By July, negotiations had reached an impasse. Lamar's offer, said the Coalition, was next to meaningless as far as its goal went "to end the cycle of military violence in this conflict."

Who makes up this Coalition? It is a group of 12 grassroots organizations: Albuquerque Unitarian Universalist Fellowship Social Concerns Committee; Amnesty International, Chapter 101, Albuquerque; Another Jewish Voice, Albuquerque; Another Jewish Voice, Santa Fe; Middle East Peace and Justice Alliance; Stop the War Machine; United Nations Association, Albuquerque Chapter; Veterans for Peace, Albuquerque; Veterans for Peace, Santa Fe; Muslim Women Outreach; Irish Freedom Committee; and New Mexico People's Weekly Forum.

The two co-founding members of the Coalition are Lori Rudolph and Rich Forer, both of whom are Jewish.

Lori Rudolph holds a doctorate in counseling, is a visiting professor at Highlands University in Las Vegas, New Mexico, and teaches at the University of New Mexico. She first became aware of the plight of the Palestinians while living as a teenager in a kibbutz in Israel. Today she travels frequently to Palestine, serving as a consultant, trainer and fundraiser for the Ibdaa Health Committee at

Dheisheh Refugee Camp in the West Bank. She also has taught at Al-Quds University in Abu Dis as a Visiting Professor in the Community Mental Health Program.

Rudolph's reaction to Israel's invasion of Gaza motivated her founding of the Stop \$30 Billion to Israel campaign. She writes: "The deaths of more than 1,400 Palestinians in Gaza due to the recent Israeli assault were aided and abetted by U.S.-manufactured weapons. The Israeli siege and occupation—and the humanitarian crises they are causing—are enforced with U.S. weapons, making every single U.S. taxpayer an accessory to Israel's crimes." Dr. Rudolph can be reached at lori@unm.edu or by phone at 505-550-9553.

Rich Forer came to the Coalition by way of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), the most powerful pro-Israel lobby in the United States. He joined AIPAC, he said, because he had been brought up to believe that the Arab world was anti-Semitic and had the same goals as Hitler. He left, he said, when a childhood friend, also Jewish, convinced him that what Israel was doing was wrong: its collective punishment, its stealing of land and water resources, and its "monstrous" invasion of the Gaza Strip. "The United States must end its military aid to Israel," he says, "and demand that Israel begin sincere and honest negotiations with the goal of a peace treaty that restores dignity to both sides of the conflict." Rich Forer can be reached at richforer@yahoo.com or by phone at 505-265-1898.

Meanwhile, the Coalition members have not given up. Buoyed by the positive responses they have received across the state of New Mexico, across the country, even as far away as Morocco, they have gone back to Lamar Outdoor Advertising with yet new design proposals. Stay tuned.

The Saar 4.5 Class Corvette Gunboat

Stop Arming Israel is an umbrella organization made up of various human rights groups and individual campaigners. Founded in England, in 2006, following Israel's attack on Southern Lebanon, its aim is to highlight the United Kingdom's complicity in providing Israel the component parts for U.S.-supplied weapons that Israel then uses in contravention of the Consolidated European Union and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria.



On April 21, 2009, British Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary David Miliband admitted that equipment used by Israel in its Dec. 2008-Jan. 2009 Gaza invasion "almost certainly" contained U.K.-supplied components. Specifically, he cited F-16 combat aircraft, Apache attack helicopters, Saar-Class Corvette gunboats, and armored personnel carriers.

Stop Arming Israel immediately called for a total embargo on all military equipment sales destined for Israel, including all component parts. A two-page briefing paper on the embargo was made available on its website (www.stoparmingisrael.org), and an extensive postcard campaign was launched to get constituents to lobby their Members of Parliament.

It worked—in part. On July 14, The Wall Street Journal reported that Great Britain had revoked a handful of licenses for the sale of weapons to Israel, saying it had determined they were used in ways that contravened weapons export rules during the Gaza war. The revoked contracts all related to replacement parts for the Israeli Navy gunboat, the Saar 4.5 Class Corvette.

Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman dismissed the British decision in an interview on Israel Radio. "Israel has known many cases of embargo in the past," he said. "We always knew how to get by and there is no need to get excited about this."

The decision affected five of the 182 licenses held by British companies for the export of military equipment to Israel. Foreign Secretary Miliband pledged a full review of British military sales to Israel.

As for the impact the stoppage would have on Israel's operational capabilities, military experts called it slight. Diplomatically, however, the action was more serious. According to Reuven Pedatzuer, an Israeli defense expert at Tel Aviv University, "The British can't hurt Israel from a military point of view, but politically and symbolically this hurts."

Motorola

A mid the bombing debris left behind after Israel's Gaza assault—code named, appropriately enough, Operation Cast Lead—Human Rights Watch researchers found shrapnel inscribed with Motorola serial numbers.

A global communications leader, headquartered in Schaumburg, IL, Motorola has been the target of boycotts by human rights groups in the past, particularly by the US Campaign to End the Occupation. [See interview, page 13.]

Motorola is singled out because it supplies Israel's army of occupation with a custom designed Mountain Rose communication system that supports a network of over 600 checkpoints in the West Bank. It also supplies the army with a Wide Area Surveillance System consisting of radar devices and thermal cameras to "protect" Israel's illegal settlements and its 490-mile concrete, razor-wire apartheid wall that the International Court of Justice has ruled illegal.

Motorola products and services for the settlers include mobile phones, exclusive service plans, and mobile phone transmission towers. Motorola sells the Israeli military microprocessors for unmanned aerial vehicles that are used to drop bombs on civilian population centers, most recently in Operation Cast Lead.

On July 11, 2009, 20 members of the New York Campaign for the Boycott of Israel (NYCBI) called for a boycott of Motorola outside a Sprint store on Steinway Street in Astoria, Queens that sold Motorola cell phones.

Holding Palestinian flags and signs proclaiming "Goodbye Moto, Goodbye Apartheid" and "Boycott Motorola, Free Palestine," advocates handed out hundreds of flyers, while entertaining shoppers with songs and street theater, all calling for the boycott of the electronic giant. That day 42 people signed pledges not to buy Motorola products and many oth-

ers, according to NYCBI, expressed support for the campaign. NYCBI plans to repeat the protest at least three more times this summer. Such protests are now part of a growing worldwide boycott movement.

On April 1, 2009, two days after a Global Day of Action by BDS activists, Motorola Israel, Ltd., a wholly owned subsidiary of Motorola that makes bomb fuses for the Israeli military, announced that it was selling its Government Electronics Department to Aeronautics Defense Systems for \$20 million. According to the US Campaign to End the Occupation's website, the sale, while giving the appearance of a Motorola withdrawal from the weapons business, is really a streamlining of Motorola's business with Israel. The boycott remains in force.

Caterpillar

The date was March 16, 2003. A 23-year-old American, Rachel Corrie, was trying to prevent the demolition of the home of a Palestinian pharmacist, his wife and three children living in Gaza's Rafah refugee camp near the Egyptian border.

According to eyewitnesses, Israeli D9 bulldozers had been in the area all day, plowing up the land in front of the buildings and making occasional runs at houses. From a distance, Rachel and her human rights colleagues stood and at times sat in the bulldozer's path indicating their intention not to move. The bulldozer would approach but always stop in time to avoid injuring them. Eventually, the bulldozers retreated from the area and the activists felt they had been successful.



Demonstration in Brooklyn by the New York Campaign to Boycott Israel, March 30, 2009.

But then they returned. One of them began a straight run at the pharmacist's home, a home Rachel had visited many times. Wearing her fluorescent orange jacket with reflecting striping, Rachel knelt down well in front of the bulldozer and began waving her arms and shouting, just as her colleagues had done earlier in the day.

This time, however, the bulldozer, with two operators on board, didn't stop. It ran over her, backed up, then ran over her again. No charges have been brought against the operators.

Rachel's parents, Cindy and Craig Corrie, filed a lawsuit against the American company, Caterpillar, the manufacturer of the armored bulldozer that crushed their daughter. In it they alleged that Caterpillar sold the D9 bulldozers to Israel knowing full well that they would be used to unlawfully demolish homes and endanger civilians in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. The case was dismissed in November 2005.

The Corries appealed and, in July 2007, they argued before a judge in a Seattle, WA court that corporations must be held accountable for their corporate behavior. Lawyers for Caterpillar argued that Israel's home demolitions were legal and that American judges do not have the jurisdiction to pass judgment on the state of Israel.

Lawyers for the Corries countered that the U.S. Government has publicly condemned Israel's policy of building settlements, and that their case was not about the U.S. Government. Instead, they said, the suit was about a corporation's selling equipment to a foreign country that was known to use that equipment in human rights abuses.

In August 2007, the federal appeals court rejected the Corrie's appeal.

Meanwhile, Caterpillar has continued to sell armored bulldozers to Israel, and Israel continues to use them to demolish Palestinian homes, to destroy ancient olive gardens and to build Jewish-only roads, Jewish-only settlements, and an apartheid wall, all on confiscated Palestinian land.

Today, however, the tactics against Caterpillar are boycotts (the company makes an upscale line of clothing, from boots to baseball caps) and divestment (urging investors to take their money out of "CAT Inc").

On June 10, 2009, Caterpillar held its annual share-holder meeting in Chicago. As they have done for the past five years, members of various divestment movements—including the US Campaign to End the Occupation, Jewish Voice for Peace, the Sisters of Loretto, and Chicagoans Against Apartheid in Palestine—gained access to the meeting through the purchase of corporate shares, while

others rallied outside the building, educating passersby about the crimes Israel is committing with Caterpillar heavy equipment.

Inside the meeting, Matan Cohen of Hampshire College Students for Justice in Palestine presented a resolution requiring Caterpillar to report on all foreign sales of weapons-related products. The resolution failed, but it, along with the protests, was reported in The Wall Street Journal, Forbes, Reuters and other international media.

During the Q&A portion of the meeting the human rights activists demanded to know why the company continues to risk legal action and alienate investors by providing Israel with the machinery of occupation and apartheid. Repeatedly, Caterpillar's CEO Jim Owens told those in attendance that if they didn't like the way Caterpillar operates, they don't have to hold its stock. On the way out of the meeting, one shareholder, previously unfamiliar with Caterpillar's complicity in Israel's occupation, said he would follow Jim Owens's advice and divest.

Meanwhile, across the Atlantic, in England, another shareholder had divested from Caterpillar. Only this time it was the Church of England, and the amount was \$3.3 million. The announcement came just prior to the scheduled publication of a letter to the British Guardian in which 23 church clergy members said: "We believe that given the events in Gaza as well as the continued illegal occupation of whole swathes of Palestinian land and the illegal land grabs by settlers, supported by the Israeli Government, that the Church of England must make good on its policy of divestment and withdraw its investments from those who profit from the misery of millions of Palestinians immediately."

While \$3.3 million sounds like a lot of money, Caterpillar, Inc., a *Fortune 500* company, has assets in excess of \$30 billion dollars. What the campaigners know, however—and what Caterpillar's CEO should know—is that there is more involved here than money.

Veolia Transport

The Geneva Conventions have been accepted by 194 countries, including the United States. The Fourth Convention, written in response to Nazi atrocities in WW II, outlaws torture, collective punishment and the resettlement by the occupier of its civilians on territory under its military control.

In 1967, Israel occupied the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, as well as the Gaza Strip and Syria's Golan Heights. Its policy of settling its citizens in these territories has long been regarded by most governments, including the United States, up until President Reagan, as violations

of the Fourth Convention.

In 2004, the International Court of Justice, in an advisory opinion, confirmed the illegality of Israel's settlements.

On May 27, 2009, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton stated President Obama's policy on the settlements: "He wants to see a stop to settlements—not some settlements, not outposts, not 'natural growth exceptions'."

On July 19, 2009, Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu rejected the demand "out of hand," adding: "We cannot accept such restrictions." He was referring, in particular, to Israel's decision to construct 12 new housing units in the Sheikh Jarrah area of occupied East Jerusalem. Twenty-eight Palestinian families face eviction orders as part of the occupier's plan to implant a new Jewish settlement close to the Old City. On August 2, Netanyahu made good on his rejection. Nasser Ghawi, along with 38 members of his family, were forcibly removed from their homes in East Jerusalem. As soon as they were out, Jewish settlers moved in. Robert Serry, the U.N. Special Middle East Coordinator, called the evictions "totally unacceptable."

Since 1967, Israel has moved over 200,000 settlers into East Jerusalem. They are scattered about in clusters of settlements such as Pisgat Ze'ev (pop. 45,000), Giv'at Shapifa or French Hill (pop. 10,000) Neve Yaahov (pop. 25,000) and Gilo (pop. 30,000).

Now Israel wants to tie these settlements even more firmly into the state by building a light rail tramway system that will link West Jerusalem to the illegal settlements in East Jerusalem, with one of the stations, Ammunition Hill, to operate as a feeder station for settler traffic from Ma'aleh Adumim, a large Israeli settlement in the West Bank, and from Jewish settlements in the Jordan Valley.

That's where Veolia Transport enters the picture. It is the international transport service division of the Frenchbased multinational company Veolia Environnement. In 2007, the company posted revenues of around \$7 billion. BDS activists launched a worldwide campaign against the company.

In November, 2006, ASN, a Dutch bank, broke off financial relations with Veolia because of its Jerusalem contract.

In Ireland, where Veolia runs Dublin's light rail contract, John Flannery, the rail's trade union representative, announced that his drivers will not allow the Dublin system to be used to train drivers for the new tram system in the illegal Israeli settlements in East Jerusalem. "It's not going to happen," he said.

In Switzerland, Palestine solidarity activists based in

Basel demanded Bank Sarasin divest from Veolia Environnement. In August 2008, the bank agreed, saying that while the Jerusalem tramway may be significant from a local perspective, its construction was a clear violation of international law, and that the bank had no choice but to evaluate Veolia's actions from that perspective.

In Sweden, the Stockholm community council announced on January 20, 2009 that it would not renew its contract with Veolia to operate the subways in Stockholm's county. The decision followed intense debate on Veolia's involvement with the Jerusalem project. The Stockholm contract was worth over \$4 billion.

In Bordeaux, France, following an intense debate on Veolia's Jerusalem project, the Greater Bordeaux local government announced, in April 2009, that it would not award a \$1 billion contract to Veolia Transport to manage France's biggest urban transportation network.

Also in April 2009, in Ireland, the Sligo County Council, identifying Veolia as "a leading partner in the consortium contracted to build a light railway system linking Israel to Illegal settlements in occupied East Jerusalem," called on the County Manager "not to sign or renew any contracts with Veolia."

In Australia, after four months of campaigning and the distribution of over 100,000 pamphlets, the Victoria State Government announced on June 2, 2009 that it was dropping Veolia (operating under the name of Cannex) as Melbourne's train system operator.

In England, where Veolia Environmental Services runs waste collection and recycling for several local authorities, and where Veolia Water and Veolia Transport also have contracts, local campaigners asked their borough councils not to sign or maintain contracts with Veolia. At the same time, local shop owners were petitioned to switch from Veolia to another refuse collector.

On June 5, 2009, Le Monde reported that Veolia was losing a lot of money for its shareholders because of its complicity in a project that constitutes a major violation of international law, if not a war crime.

On June 8, 2009, the Israeli press reported that Veolia was abandoning its Jerusalem rail project. Then, several weeks later, the company advertised a job opening for the project in the Israeli press. Derail Veolia activists ratcheted up their efforts. In late July, Veolia lost a \$3.5 billion contact with an Australian desalination project.

Whether or not Veolia ultimately abandons its Jerusalem project, activists say they will continue to boycott the company in light of recent news that its subsidiary, Veolia Environmental Services, owns and operates the Tovlan

Landfill in the occupied Jordan Valley and uses captured Palestinian natural and land resources for the needs of Israeli settlements.

Burger King

There have been other successes. In the summer of 1999, Burger King opened a restaurant in the West Bank settlement of Ma'ale Adumim. At the time Ma'ale Adumim was the largest Israeli colony on the West Bank with a population of around 24,000—today that number has grown to 35,000. Burger King, owned by the British firm Diageo, a company formed from the merger of Guinness and Grand Metropolitan, is the second largest fast-food restaurant chain in the world.

In early August 5, 1999, a coalition of 10 pro-Palestinian American organizations announced a worldwide campaign to boycott Burger King.

The fast-food giant's initial response was to argue that it was but one of a number of global brands with a commercial presence in the West Bank. The coalition replied by noting that the number one fast-food chain in the world, McDonald's, had explicitly ruled out doing business in the occupied territories, and that Ben & Jerry's had even refused to allow its Israeli subsidiary to use water drawn from the territories. The boycott would remain.

Next, Burger King said that the fault was not theirs but their Israeli franchisee Rikamor Ltd., which had broken its promise to operate only inside Israel proper.

The coalition's response was to insist that Burger King leave the settlement. By this time the boycott had reached the attention of the Arab League, whose members were considering what action they might take. Burger King had 130 restaurants in the Middle East and was hoping to open ones in Jordan and Lebanon.

On August 26, 1999, Burger King said it was canceling its Israeli franchisee's right to operate a food court in Ma'ale Adumim and had ordered the Burger King logo removed from the premises.

The decision drew praise from the campaigners, but criticism from pro-Israel groups. The Anti-Defamation League called it "a blatant capitulation to the outrageous guerrilla tactic employed by American Arab and American Muslim groups."

Meanwhile, the Miami-based corporation continued to do business in Ma'ale Adumim.

In July, 2000, Palestinian human rights groups, charging the company with reneging on its promise, called for a renewal of the boycott. Two months later, Arab League

members threatened to end their countries' contracts with the company.

Not long after that, Burger King shut down its Ma'ale Adumim franchise.

One marketing consultant, reflecting on Burger King's decision to open a franchise on occupied Palestinian territory, concluded it was "a whopper" of a mistake.

The Yes Men

First, a confession. Before undertaking this article, I hadn't the foggiest idea who The Yes Men were. A click on Wikipedia, the online encyclopedia, told me they are a group of "jamming activists" — whatever that means—who impersonate heads of corporations in order to embarrass them publicly. In a word, they are pranksters.



Last November, for example, they stood on the

streets of New York and Los Angeles and handed out 80,000 copies of a fake edition of The New York Times. The front page read: "Iraq War Ends." Inside articles included "President George W. Bush Accuses Himself of Treason for Actions during His Years as President."

Many of their pranks were recounted in their documentary "The Yes Men." A second film, "The Yes Men Fix the World," came out this year and was premiered at Sundance. It was also scheduled to show at the 2009 Jerusalem Film Festival.

But The Yes Men said No. Andy Bichlbaum and Mike Bonanno, co-directors of the film, explained their reasons in a letter dated July 1, 2009. It read:

Dear Friends at the Jerusalem Film Festival,

We regret to say that we have taken the hard decision to withdraw our film, "The Yes Men Fix the World," from the Jerusalem Film Festival in solidarity with the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign (http://www.bdsmovement.net/).

The decision does not come easily, as we realize that the festival opposes the policies of the State of Israel, and we have no wish to punish progressives who deplore the state-sponsored vio-

lence committed in their name.

This decision does not come easily, as we feel a strong affinity with many people in Israel, sharing with them our Jewish roots, as well as the trauma of the Holocaust, in which both our grandfathers died. Andy lived in Jerusalem for a year long ago, can still get by in Hebrew, and counts several friends there. And Mike has always wanted to connect with the roots of his culture.

But despite all our feelings, we cannot abandon our mission as activists. In the 1980s, there was a call from the people of South Africa to artists and others to boycott that regime, and it helped end apartheid there. Today, there is a clear call for a boycott from Palestinian civil society. Obeying it is our only hope, as filmmakers and activists, of helping put pressure on the Israeli government to comply with international law.

It is painful to do this. But it is even more painful to hear Israeli policies described as "fascist"—not just from the ill-informed and the clueless, not just from the usual anti-semitic morons, but from well-informed Jewish activists within Israel. They know what they're talking about, and it's painful to think that they could be right.

As we're sure you know and deplore, the Israeli government has recently authorized the construction of new units in an illegal West Bank outpost—one that is illegal even according to Israeli law. On Monday, nine Palestinians were injured as Israeli authorities demolished their East Jerusalem home. Tuesday, the Israeli Navy stopped a ship from delivering medicine, toys, and other humanitarian relief to Gaza, and detained over twenty foreign peace activists, including a Nobel Peace laureate. Meanwhile, a U.N. commission was in Gaza investigating much worse abuses committed early this year.

Whatever words are applied to such actions, our film mustn't help lend an aura of normalcy to a state that makes these decisions. For us, that's the bottom line.

There is certainly another way to do things in Israel/Palestine, and that is what we must fight for, however feeble our means. As for our film, there is another way for it to be seen in Israel ... and in Palestine, so that the people most in need of comic relief, who would never have been able to see it at the Jerusalem Film Festival anyhow, will be able to see it. Within the next few months, we will make this happen.

To those who want to see our film, savlanut and sabir (patience)! And for all the rest of us, a little LESS patience, please.

L'shanah haba'ah be-yerushalayim,

Andy and Mike, The Yes Men

Andy and Mike are not the only celebrities involved with the BDS movement.

Ahava Cosmetics

They call themselves CODEPINK: Women for Peace. Earlier this year they tried to think up ways to protest the brutality of Israel's Gaza blockage, its occupation of the West Bank, and its demolition of homes in East Jerusalem. They decided to boycott Ahava Dead Sea Laboratories, an upscale, worldwide Israeli cosmetics company, whose spokesperson is the Sex & the City actress Kristin Davis, and whose main manufacturing plant and showroom are located in the Jewish settlement Mitzpe Shalom. "Ahava, which means 'love' in Hebrew, is hardly loving in the Occupied West Bank," said Nancy Kricoron, the main organizer of the boycott which she calls STOLEN BEAUTY.

Their first action was at the Ahava store at the Hilton Hotel in Tel Aviv. Some of the women put on bikinis and wrote on their bodies with mud: NO AHAVA/NO LOVE. That evening they made the Israeli news.

A week later, Kristin Davis was at Lord & Taylor on Fifth Avenue in New York City promoting Ahava products and signing autographs. Two CODEPINK women handed her a letter suggesting she stop letting Ahava use her beautiful face and good name to cover up their crimes. Davis did not appreciate the interruption; the two women were escorted out of the store.

In July 2009, the women showed up in bikinis and mud at the Cosmoprof North America Trade Show in Las Vegas. To date CODEPINK has mailed out letters to over 100 retailers requesting that they stop stocking Ahava products.

Most recently, Rabbi Lynn Gottlieb, one of the first practicing women rabbis, came out against Ahava's profiting from the occupation, saying "There is a Jewish teaching: 'Thou shalt not derive personal pleasure or benefit from any product created through exploitation.'"

This August the CODEPINK women—and there are men involved—plan to demonstrate in front of selected drugstores and department stores across the country. For further information, check their website: www.stolenbeauty.org.

The Roses

That would be Hilary and Steven Rose. She is professor of social policy at the University of Bradford in England; he is a neurobiologist and director of the Brain and Behavior Resource Group at the Open University in England.

In the spring of 2002, Israeli forces moved into the West Bank. The infrastructure of many cities was reduced to rubble, with many civilians killed, most wantonly in the city of Jenin.

The Roses drafted a letter which they sent by email to friends and colleagues. It called for an academic boycott of Israeli scientific and cultural institutions "until Israel abides by U.N. resolutions and opens serious peace negotiations with the Palestinians."

The letter generated such a positive response—including support from South Africa's Bishop Desmond Tutu—that the Roses created a website for collecting more signatures; then they published their letter in the April 6, 2002 edition of The Guardian. By April 11, several hundred signatures had been collected, including 10 from Israeli academics.

The Guardian letter also triggered hate mail. The Roses were accused of being anti-Semitic, even though they are Jewish, and of being Holocaust deniers, even though both lost relatives in the Holocaust. Another emailer wrote: "You should have been Auschwitz'd."

Their Guardian letter is often cited as the start of the worldwide academic boycott against Israel. Other boycott calls followed, most notably from the British lecturers' union NATFHE, which urged its 12 colleges and universities in the U.K. to review their use of Israeli products in catering, their collaboration in student exchanges, and their seminar invitations to Israeli academics—all measures similar to the academic boycott of South Africa.

In Australia, an appeal similar to the Roses' was spearheaded by John Decker, a Jewish writer at the Australian National University, and Ghassan Hage, a Christian-Lebanese anthropology lecturer at Sydney University. It garnered 90 signatures. And in the United States, by October, 2002, the call for divestment had circulated at over 50 campuses. At the University of California more than 7,000 students and faculty members signed their support.

During this time, much attention was given to whether the Rose boycott violated the freedom of academics to express their views without fear of recrimination. Steven Rose pointed out that their boycott was not against individuals but institutions that abetted the occupation,

e.g., Bar Ilan University which had opened a branch in a West Bank settlement. Hilary, who had pulled out of a European conference on science and gender because an Israeli delegation had been invited, put it more bluntly. Faced with Israel's brutal treatment of the Palestinian people, she wrote in The Guardian of May 24, 2007, "Israeli academics, excepting a handful of brave dissenters, have remained silent—less surprising if we understand that Israeli academics serve in the military. Even within Israel itself, the universities, sitting on occupied Palestinian land, share institutionally in the general discrimination against Arab-Israelis (20% of the population)."

One of those handful of dissenters Hilary mentions is Ilan Pappe who, up until recently, was a professor of history at Haifa University. Pappe endorsed the academic boycott of his own institution because, he said, Israel's academic institutions were, by their silence, giving respectability to the longest military occupation in modern history, not unlike the tacit consent given to Hitler's occupations by the German intellectual class. The choice, according to Pappe, the Roses, and all who signed their petitions, was either to do that or to do nothing. And nothing was unacceptable.

So the campaign continues. On May 30, 2007, the British Union of Colleges and Universities imposed an academic boycott against Israeli academic institutions. The union, representing 120,000 university teachers, urged its members to consider the moral implications of ties with Israeli academic institutions.

The Tipping Point

Throughout this issue we have stressed the illegality of Israel's actions towards the Palestinians. But what about the moral implications cited by the British Union of Colleges and Universities? This, of course, is the special domain of the religious establishment. So, one might ask, where are the churches in the BDS movement?

Internationally, the **World Council of Churches**, in 2005, urged its 340 member churches, with 550 million Orthodox and Protestant Christians in over 100 countries, to consider non-violent, economic measures, such as divestment from international corporations, like Caterpillar, and from Israeli companies that profit from and perpetuate the occupation and human rights violations.

Here in the United States, the **Presbyterian Church**, with its historic ties to the Middle East, particularly with the American University of Beirut, has received the most media attention. [One of AMEU's co-founders and the first editor of *The Link* was The Rev. L. Humphrey Walz, former Associate Executive of the Presbyterian Synod of the

Northeast, who worked on behalf of Jewish refugees during and after WW II, and did the same for Palestinian refugees after 1948.]

In July 2004, at its 216th General Assembly, the Presbyterian Church USA adopted a resolution that called on its Mission Through Investment Committee "to initiate a process of phased selective divestment in multinational corporations operating in Israel . . . and to make appropriate recommendations to the General Assembly for action."

The Anti-Defamation League, the American Jewish Committee, the Simon Wiesenthal Center, among other Jewish organizations, decried the resolution.

In November 2004, the Mission Committee selected five corporations for phased divestment: one, Citigroup, because it transferred funds to families of Palestinian suicide bombers; and four others: Caterpillar, ITT Industries, Motorola, and United Technologies, because they abetted the military occupation of Palestinian territory.

By the time its 217th General Assembly came around in June 2006, enormous pressure had been exerted by pro-Israel groups to halt the corporate action. A letter signed by 12 major Jewish organizations was sent to the over 700 Presbyterian commissioners, charging that their policy "undermines peace, promotes extremism, exacerbates conflict."

After heated discussions the General Assembly both acknowledged the hurt felt by many in the Jewish community, yet reaffirmed its policy of corporate engagement to end the occupation; the new resolution now urged "that financial investments of the PCUSA, as they pertain to Israel, Gaza, East Jerusalem, and the West Bank, be invested in only peaceful pursuits, and affirm that the customary corporate engagement process of ... our denomination is the proper vehicle for achieving this goal."

Many in the mainstream media interpreted the new resolution with its "apology" and "urging" as toothless. On the other hand, the US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation and Jewish Voice for Peace applauded the Presbyterians "for standing fast to their principles while also showing that they are willing to go the extra mile to maintain positive relationships with Jews across the spectrum of our community."

In the three years since the 217th General Assembly, Israel has conducted a brutal 22-day assault on Gaza, confiscated additional Palestinian land, built more settlements and continued to erect an apartheid wall. Meanwhile, the Presbyterian Church USA—part of a coalition of Protestant churches with an investment portfolio in America of approximately \$110 billion—has, of this date, divested not one cent from any of the five corporations it identified.

The **United Methodist Church**, too, has faced the question To Divest or Not Divest.

In June, 2009, the California-Nevada Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church resolved that their Israel-Palestine Task Force shall, within the next 12 months, "examine and submit" to investment managers for the United Methodist congregations and institutions in the Conference a list of companies that "support in a significant way the Israeli occupation."

The resolution further stated that before placing a company on the list, the Task Force shall "write to that company, explain the committee's concerns, and request a change in the company's relationship to the Israeli occupation." Finally, "if no change in policy is reported within 90 days as being taken or contemplated, the company's name shall be placed on the divestment list along with explanatory details and shared with all congregations and institutions in the California-Nevada Annual Conference." A resolution similar to this one also was passed in June by the Western Ohio Annual Conference.

These resolutions were similar to ones taken at several conferences held between 2007 and 2009. While none of these resolutions has resulted in divestment action, engagement with the companies and corporations charged with abetting the occupation is still ongoing.

Other mainstream denominations in the U.S. have avoided the path to divestment. The **Evangelical Lutheran Church in America** rejected a pro-divestment resolution in 2005, and the House of Bishops of the **Episcopal Church** in the U.S., at its July 17, 2009 meeting in Anaheim, CA, rejected several resolutions, not only one calling for divestment, but also ones calling for dismantling the wall, ending the confiscation of Palestinian land, and the creation of a Palestinian state—all on the grounds that they were not "balanced." As far as **Catholics** are concerned, while some religious orders and local parishes have been very active in the BDS movement, both the Vatican and U.S. bishops have avoided the divestment question.

Why are the churches so cautious? Certainly, the immorality of the Holocaust has made Christians hesitant to judge the moral behavior of the Jewish state. Just as significant, though, is the effort made by pro-Israel supporters to establish Christian-Jewish dialogue groups on a local, state and national level—it is always harder to criticize what Israel is doing if you are good friends with the local rabbi. Perhaps most effective, however, is the effort made by pro-Israel groups to bring Christians over to the "Holy Land," where they can see for themselves the "miracle" that is Israel—but where they seldom see a Palestinian.

Back in 1994, the best-selling author-and later

AMEU board member—Grace Halsell went on a Jerry Falwell-sponsored tour to the Holy Land. On her return she wrote the feature story for our January-March 1995 *Link*, "In the Land of Christ Christianity is Dying." In that issue Grace focused on Educational Opportunities, the largest wholesaler of Christian pilgrimage packages to Israel. Founded by James Ridgway, a retired Methodist minister, E.O. arranged most of the Holy Land tours for the United Methodist churches.

By 1995, an estimated 300,000 U.S. Christians, had traveled with E.O. the vast majority of whom had Israeli guides, stayed in Israeli hotels, and, unless they specifically asked, saw few, if any, Palestinians. The image they—and, indeed, most Americans—had of Israel was that of a fledgling democracy heroically fending off attempts of Arab hordes to

inflict on them a second Holocaust. What this bestowed on the Jewish state was a cloak of moral impunity. It could do no wrong.

That is changing, in large part because so many Israeli and American Jews are speaking out, as we have seen in many of the protest actions mentioned in this issue.

And our digital age is making it harder to conceal the truth. When Israel denied it had acted immorally in the recent Gaza attack, a group of Israeli veterans came forward with damning testimonies from soldiers who said they were ordered to use Palestinians as human shields, a clear violation of the Geneva Conventions.

When President Obama called on Israel to stop all settlement building, it did not help Israel's image in the U.S. to see Jewish settlers on the West Bank announcing plans to build a new settlement that they intended to call "Obama Hillside." Nor did it help to hear Rabbi Yigael Shandorfi, leader of a religious academy in the settlement of Nahliel, call Mr. Obama "that Arab they call a president."

It is not surprising that an April 2009 World-PublicOpinion.org poll found that three-quarters of Americans believe that Israel should not build settlements, up 23 points from 2002. "Americans are showing increasing impatience with Israel for building settlements," said the poll's director, Steven Kull. "Even the third of Americans who sympathize with Israel more than the Palestini-



ans oppose the settlements."

The last issue we did on this subject was by David Wildman, the Executive Secretary for Human Rights & Racial Justice with the General Board of Ministries of the United Methodist Church. From 1976 to 1994 David was active in the South African anti-apartheid movement and, since 2001, has served on the steering committee of the US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation. His *Link* article of August-September 2006 "Why Divestment? And Why Now?" answered the ten most frequently raised objections to the BDS campaign to end the Israeli occupation. Now, three years later, David believes the campaign is working. "We have not reached the tipping point," he says, "but we are close."

Fearing that possibility, Howard Kohr, the executive director of AIPAC, the pro-Israel lobby in Washington, announced at a May 2009 Policy Conference that the growing movement for boycott, divestment and sanctions against Israel could fundamentally change U.S. policy towards the Jewish state. He concluded: "No longer is this campaign confined to the ravings of the political far left or far right, but increasingly it is entering the American mainstream: in ordinary political discourse on our TV and radio talk shows, in the pages of our major newspapers and in countless blogs, in town hall meetings, on campuses and city squares."

Our survey would seem to confirm Mr. Kohr's worst fears. ■

From The Link's Links

http://wwww.endtheoccupation.org

David Hosey is director of media interest for the US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation. The Campaign's website is www.endtheoccupation.org. His interview was conducted by John Mahoney.

Your home page invites visitors to join the Olive Branch Club and receive a poster signed by Archbishop Desmond Tutu. What that's about? The Olive Branch Club is our monthly giving program for those who want to sustain the important work of the US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation. Currently we're offering people a chance to win a poster signed by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who endorsed our national anti-apartheid speaking tour last year, and who has been a vocal critic of the Israeli occupation and apartheid policies. He will soon be honored by President Obama, so it's a great time to win this poster.

You have a National Congressional Report Card that includes a user interface. How does that work? The Congressional Report Card grades members of Congress on major pieces of legislation and Congressional "Dear Colleague" letters on Palestine/Israel in the current Congress. The user interface allows supporters to select their state and see how their elected representatives voted on relevant legislation. Each state page includes descriptions of the legislation that we scored, and each Congressperson is given a score based on their votes on key bills and letters.

How many visitors come to your site? Of course this varies from day to day, week to week, and month to month. During the height of Israel's December-January assault on the Gaza Strip, we averaged around 3,000 visitors a day, as people were very concerned with the situation and wanted to know what they could do. During the past few months we've continued to have hundreds of "unique" visits to our site every day.

Visitors can also sign up for e-mail alerts. What information do they usually receive? Our e-mail action alerts let supporters know how they can take action around our various campaigns, such as challenging U.S. military aid to Israel or holding corpora-

tions such as Motorola and Caterpillar accountable for their complicity in Israel's occupation of Palestine. Our e-mail alerts have information and online tools that supporters can utilize to take action.

You encourage visitors to your site to send personalized letters to members of Congress on the Appropriations Subcommittees with jurisdic-



David Hosey, director of media interest for the US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation.— Photo by H. Brown.

tion over military aid programs. Do you know how many have done so, and why is this important? Approximately 9,000 people sent members of Congress on the Appropriations Subcommittees on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs a total of 250,000 letters this year opposing the President's request for \$2.775 billion in military aid to Israel in FY2010. These subcommittees have jurisdiction over budget requests for military aid programs and have the power to recommend to Congress additions, subtractions, or conditions to these military aid programs.

Do you have any site programs under construction that you'd like to mention? We're in the process of building up the Media section of our site, where people can scan media coverage of the U.S. Campaign as well as headlines about boycott and divestment and Israeli apartheid. We'd also like to use this section as a resource for journalists who want to find out more about the work of the U.S. Campaign. We also have a blog on which we post unique content, video news, commentary from members of our Advisory Board and Steering Committee, and analysis. You can check it out at http://endtheoccupationblog.blogspot.com.

If someone wanted to phone or e-mail you, can you give a number or address? Contact us by phone at (202) 332-0994, or use our handy web form to send comments and questions: http://tinyurl.com/l3vvwn.

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