

Letters to the Editor published in the New Mexican or SF Reporter, 2015-16

Joe Weiser, July 29, 2016, New Mexican

Sometimes the bits and pieces of life come together to form a moment of clarity: for example, in the article by David Dishneau (“Deaf teacher’s quest for armed service inspires students,” June 26) about a teacher and students at the Maryland School for the Deaf who are preparing for service in the U.S. military. In the story we read that their model for service is the Israel Defense Forces which have “always recruited deaf volunteers.”

There are over 100 deaf soldiers in the Israel Defense Forces, and it announced a “sign-language course to help commanders communicate better.” Wow! Deaf soldiers. We have read about computer geeks and nerds managing the cyberwarfare program and autistic soldiers contributing to data analysis. Women flying F-16s and leading combat infantry units is old news. LGBT contributions are even older news. It seems to me that, in Israel, everyone is important. Everyone is valuable. There is talent everywhere that should be embraced and nurtured. I think we would all be better if we followed this plan.

Jacob Amir, July 19, 2016, New Mexican

Gerald Rosen (“Breaking Silence,” Letters to the Editor, July 14) ignores the irrefutable fact that, in 1947, the Palestinian Jewish community, under the leadership of the Zionist movement, accepted the United Nations partition plan that called for the establishment of two states in Mandatory Palestine, one Arab and one Jewish. But the Palestinian Arabs and the Arab states not only rejected the U.N. plan but started a war against the Palestinian Jewish community one day after the U.N. vote — on Nov. 29, 1947 — in the hope of aborting the emergence of the Jewish state and perhaps destroying that community. They lost the war and brought nothing but disaster to the Palestinian Arabs. What happened to them is something they brought upon themselves with their own decisions and actions. Even Mahmoud Abbas, the president of the Palestinian Authority, admitted recently that the Arab world erred in rejecting the U.N. partition plan.

Had they accepted the plan and had not started the war, there would have been no refugees, their state would have been 68 years old today and thousands of lives, on both sides, would have been spared.

Ruth Anne Faust, May 19, 2016, New Mexican

It is so refreshing to read something positive about the many wonderful things Israel does in the world ("[Cyber oasis rises in Israel's desert](#)," May 15). It is a great example of how Israel's efforts help the world. Israel offers innovation and humanitarian aid far beyond any other country its size or in its situation, often being first in line, the most organized and the most giving when tragedy and needs arise throughout the world. Thank you.

Joan Less, May 4, 2016, New Mexican

William Scoular ("Instability is profitable," Letters to the Editor, April 25), responding to Bill Stewart's column ("What's fueling Palestinian violence?," Understanding Your World, April 15), identifies Palestinian violence as "stemming from a disparity between Israel's relative prosperity and security and Palestine's relative poverty and insecurity." If the government of Hamas would invest in building schools, colleges, hospitals and homes in Gaza, its people would have the opportunity to achieve the relative prosperity and secure lifestyle that eludes them now. Instead, Hamas invests in weapons and building tunnels, leaving the people frustrated and hopeless. Surely many other factors influence the Middle East troubles. But shouldn't the Palestinian government in Gaza share the blame for failing its people time and again?

Gary Katz, April 14, 2016, New Mexican

As a lawyer, Jeff Haas ("[Why don't the Palestinians 'go gentle into that good night?'](#)" My View, April 3) presents his cause in the best possible light. He distorts the facts, omitting whatever would prejudice his position. For example, despite frequent Palestinian terrorist attacks against Israeli civilians, stabbings, shootings, indiscriminate rocket barrages and cars plowing into Israeli pedestrians, Haas holds the Palestinians blameless. In Haas' view, the victims (Israelis) deserve it.

The Palestinians have denied Israel's right to exist and want to circumvent direct negotiations by going to third parties (U.N., European Union) for imposed solutions. Haas supports the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement that hurts Palestinians as much as Israelis: The SodaStream factory closing in the West Bank caused 500 Palestinians to lose their jobs — even Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas opposes BDS. Haas' negative opinions offer no viable solutions. Peace will come only with direct negotiations, something the Palestinians have refused for five years.

SF Reporter Letters re: Lena Griffith's Letter, April 20, 2016

See more [here](#) or at <http://www.sfmew.org/take-action-write-to-the-sf-reporter-editor-to-request-an-apology-and-change-in-editorial-policy/>

I want to thank Lena Griffith for taking the mask off the endemic hatred of Jews and Israel masquerading as criticism of Israeli policy. She doesn't even pretend to base her distaste for Israel and Jews on what Israel did after being attacked by Jordan in 1967, but calls "Jewish Zionists and Jewish Israelis" the "new Nazis" because of the last seven decades, making it clear that for her the very existence of the Jewish state is the crime.

Then comes her grand finale, blaming increasing anti-Semitism on the Jews themselves. Thank you, Lena. All intelligent, well-meaning people who read your letter now know the truth behind the demonization of Israel.

**Alan Stein
Netanya, Israel**

Don't Incite Violence

In her letter to the editor, Lena Griffith writes, "This time, Jews are doing it to themselves." Whatever her intention is, she needs to realize that this will be heard as a call for violence against our Jewish community. As we saw in a Paris supermarket, bus bombing in Bulgaria, and a JCC in Kansas, the possibility of attacks against Jews is very real. Let us not wait for an incident like that in Santa Fe, God forbid, before we start working to stop bloodshed and terror of any sort.

If we are to disagree, let us do it in an atmosphere where are all safe from violence. The Reporter needs to take responsibility for publishing incitement.

**Daniel M Israel,
President Kol BeRamah
Torah Learning Center Santa Fe**

Why Print It?

I can't understand why you would publish such a profoundly anti-Semitic letter. Everyone is entitled to their opinion, but not to their own facts. To compare the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to the genocide of 6,000,000 Jews and millions of other undesirables is simply untrue. If Israel systematically rounded up the Palestinians and gassed them, then this would be a fair analogy. But as the world knows, no such genocide has or will occur.

Further, the Jews that were murdered by the Nazis had done nothing to deserve their fate other than being Jewish. By comparison, Palestinians have sent thousands of rockets at population centers and hundreds of suicide bombers and terrorists to murder Israelis. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is complicated, and statements like this letter do nothing more than inflame hatred.

History has shown that if you tell a big lie often enough, people come to believe it. The Nazis convinced millions of Germans, Poles and other Europeans that Jews are rats and vermin. Many of these people were already profoundly anti-Semitic; nonetheless, this lie became reality and allowed hundreds of thousands of people to directly or indirectly participate in the genocide with a clean conscience. We can all agree that killing rats and vermin is a good thing.

I have visited Santa Fe and hate to think this represents your community.

**Audrey Kadis
Brighton, Mass.**

Where are Standards?

Has SFR abandoned all pretense of journalistic standards, or editorial oversight, of what appears in its pages?

Otherwise, what could explain printing Lena Griffith's blatantly biased, abysmally ill-informed, grossly anti-Semitic letter? Space hardly would suffice to point out all its factual errors. One, though, "medical denial," was ludicrously perverse. ... When Palestinian officials, or family members, are desperately ill, they head to Israel for treatment. That includes close relatives of Palestinian Authority head, Mahmoud Abbas, and Hamas head, Ismail Haniyeh.

Many ordinary Gazans, West Bank Arabs, even Syrians have been treated in ... one of Israel's many world-class hospitals. One recent example epitomizes Israel's giving medical ethos. A Syrian toddler, with life-threatening injuries, was evacuated to Israel. It was discovered that she had another life-threatening condition, requiring access to a close relative. An Israeli special forces team was able to enter Syria and bring one back to Israel.

Israel is among the first to send medical rescue teams, as now in Ecuador and Bhutan, as formerly in Haiti and Nepal, to countries, experiencing natural disasters, around the world. This is one of its greatest strengths, so, naturally it is one at which haters of Israel, like Griffith, aim their greatest lies.

**Richard D Wilkins
Syracuse, NY**

- See more at: <http://www.sfreporter.com/santafe/article-11910-letters-to-the-editor.html#sthash.r3ivTsUv.dpuf>

Hateful Expressions

The Anti-Defamation League ("ADL") is a 103-year-old civil rights agency dedicated to stopping the defamation of the Jewish people and securing justice and fair treatment to all. We were shocked and dismayed to read the letter published on April 20, which expresses virulent anti-Semitism, hate and bigotry in the context of a protest against Israel. Political protest is protected by the First Amendment, and in

the United States, even hate speech is constitutionally protected. For this reason, it is imperative to call out and condemn bigotry of all kinds when freedom of speech is used to advocate for hate.

The letter holds all Jewish people responsible for alleged “crimes done in the Jewish name,” describes “Jewish Zionists” and “Jewish Israelis” as “Nazis,” and implies that “Jews” are responsible for an increase in “global hatred for Jews.” Such unabashed bigotry is not a political protest against Israel. ... These are all hateful expressions of unbridled anti-Semitism.

Legitimate criticism of Israel or any country is fair; hate speech against Jews or any group of people is dangerous. To use political protest as a vehicle for bigotry, anti-Semitism and hate undermines the efforts of all who support peace in the Middle East.

Suki Halevi Regional Director, ADL New Mexico