

SYRACUSE PEACE COUNCIL'S  
**Peace Newsletter**  
Central New York Voices for Peace and Social Justice February 2010 #791



**SPECIAL SECTION:  
WAR AND PEACE  
IN PALESTINE &  
ISRAEL, SEE PAGE 7**

International March for Freedom in Gaza, 12/31/09, stopped in Cairo by Egyptian Government. Photo: [www.indybay.org](http://www.indybay.org)

## **Israeli Peace Movement – Alive, active and totally committed**

Pat Carmeli

After CNY Working for a Just Peace in Palestine/Israel showed Anna Baltzer's documentary, *Witness in Palestine*, people commented that they were "amazed" that a Jewish American woman would advocate against policies of the Israeli government. They noted her bravery in standing alone against the tide of Jewish voices supporting the military agenda of the Israeli government.

It is not surprising that US citizenry sees the Israeli public as one voice. While living in Israel and active in the peace movement, I rarely encountered US media covering demonstrations. If they had, the US public would have seen the dissent within Israeli society. Groups, religious and secular, work daily with Palestinians to achieve a just peace.

One of the oldest organizations is **Shalom Achshav** (Peace Now). Founded in 1978, they support the rights of Palestinians to live in their own state and have set up **Settlement Watch** to monitor illegal building and land expropriations.

Uri Avnery founded **Gush Shalom** with others in 1993. Considered the "hard core" of the Israeli peace movement,

they opposed "the repressive measures introduced by the new Labor party government of Yitzak Rabin." Long before others in the peace camp, Gush Shalom members advocated for the establishment of a Palestinian State, Jerusalem as the capital of the two states, negotiation with the PLO, and the acceptance of the right of return for Palestinians.

**Ta'ayush** (Arabic for "coexistence") is made up of Israelis, Jews, Muslims and Christians, who "strive to end the Israeli occupation and to achieve full civil equality through daily non-violent direct-action." They help Palestinian farmers who face harassment from settlers and make frequent visits to the Bedouin of the Hebron Hills threatened with evacuation.

**New Profile**, an organization comprised of Palestinian and Israeli feminists, is based on the theory of "refusal" and devoted to the de-militarization of Israeli society. Refusal: to fulfill roles that are expected of women during wartime; to go on enabling the State by obediently and uncritically supplying soldiers to the military; to remain ignorant and silent of the abuses of the

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## PEACE NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

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## PEACE NEWSLETTER INFORMATION

**Submissions:** Please send articles, graphics or ideas to the Editorial Committee at: [pnl@peacecouncil.net](mailto:pnl@peacecouncil.net) or call 472-5478.

**Advertising:** We welcome paid advertising. See [peacecouncil.net/pnl/ads.htm](http://peacecouncil.net/pnl/ads.htm) for dimensions and prices. Please contact us a month in advance.

**Calendar:** To submit an item for the March PNL calendar, please send the information by February 15.

ISSN 0735-4134

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## Upcoming Shows at May Memorial UU Society

(800 East Genesee St., Syracuse)

### Emma's Revolution

Feb. 5 / *Pat Humphries and Sandy O* comprise this duo of award-winning, activist musicians.

### Tracy Grammer

Feb. 19 / *The songs of Dave Carter and much more from this Falcon Ridge Folk Festival favorite.*

### Girlyman

Mar. 5 / *Clever, catchy tunes and unforgettable harmonies from this pop-folk trio, making their Folkus debut!*

Shows above start at 8 p.m. / Details at [www.folkus.org](http://www.folkus.org)

Also, Second Saturday Series at the Westcott Community Center:

**Tony Trischka** (Feb. 13), **John Cadley and the Lost Boys** (Mar. 13)

Words and Music Songwriter Series at Jazz Central: **Joe Driscoll** (Feb. 20), **Isreal Hagan** (Mar. 25)



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# Educate, Agitate, Organize: SPC IN ACTION

compiled by Andy Mager

## NOON Keeps Up Busy Pace

Neighbors of the Onondaga Nation began the new year with a flurry of activity—primarily work to stop hydrofracking in NYS and prepare for the Onondaga Land Rights & Our Common Future II series (see below). Public concern and opposition to hydrofracking, a dangerous natural gas drilling process, continues to grow. However, defeating the gas and oil industry is always an uphill battle so we need to continue expanding our efforts. Other active projects include working to correct historical markers and getting the Syracuse Common Council to pass our “Resolution of Respect for and Reconciliation with the Onondaga Nation.” Contact Andy.

## Resist the Drones at Hancock

Reaper drones are currently flying missions over Afghanistan, being controlled from the Hancock Air National Guard Base in Mattydale. This puts the Syracuse area on the front line of the wars. SPC’s Antiwars Committee is organizing to protest both the new technology and the wars themselves. Our plans are to:

- Produce and distribute an educational leaflet on drones.
- Vigil twice monthly at the Base entrance (E. Molloy Rd. between Thompson and Town Line Rds.). Upcoming vigils are **February 9 and 23, from 4:15-5 pm**. Carpools leave SPC at 4 pm.
- Organize a public educational event for early March.

Please join us at the events or help with the organizing—we need you. Contact Carol.

## Back to School

SPC’s Youth and Militarism group has already kicked off a busy semester of work: we continue staffing tables in the



Young people were well-represented among the 70 opponents rallying against hydrofracking at the Thornden Park Water Tower, January 19. Fifteen year-old Leyana Dessauer (center) was one of the key organizers. Photo: Kristin Mosher

city high schools (upcoming dates include **Corcoran on February 10 and Henninger on February 12**), have begun outreach to community centers and youth programs, are developing resources for Participation in Government classes and continue to seek ways to encourage youth activism in the schools. We welcome people of all ages to support our work. Our next committee meeting will be **Tuesday, February 2 at 2:30 pm**. Contact Andy or Jessica.

## Bowl Us Over

We now have eight people on our annual Bowlathon organizing committee! We hope to recruit 40-50 teams to participate in this year’s event, to be held **Sunday, February 28 from noon-5 pm** at Flamingo Bowl in Liverpool. As a new incentive to encourage pledges, anyone who raises \$50 or more in pledge money will win a free Strike for Peace t-shirt. We will once again award

prizes for most creative costume, best team name and most team spirit. We hope to see you there. You can download registration and pledge forms at [peacecouncil.net/bowl](http://peacecouncil.net/bowl) (please register your team by February 19). You can also connect with us on Facebook; be sure to invite others to join you at the

continued on next page

## SPC MONTHLY PROGRAM

### *Why Immigration Rights Matter and What You Can Do About It*

**Thursday, February 25 at 7 pm**  
Artrage Gallery (505 Hawley Ave.)

A panel discussion on the need for humane immigration reform. Local activists will share stories about the lives of immigrants in CNY. Speakers will also discuss the status of relevant federal legislation and how you can get involved. Contact Aly.

Free. Refreshments provided.  
Handicapped accessible.

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## SPC in Action / from previous page

Bowlathon. Contact Jessica with questions or to register by phone.



Karen Sayers, Eli Mager and Mara Sapon-Shevin were part of the Jews for Peace "Extinguishing the Flames of War" team at the 2009 Strike for Peace Bowlathon. Photo: Caragh Frye

## Brighten the Chain: Treaty Commitments

The educational series Onondaga Land Rights & Our Common Future II kicks off on **Monday, February 8 at 7 pm** at Syracuse Stage with a program titled "Brighten the Chain: Treaty Commitments." The evening features a showing of "Brighten the Chain," followed by reflections from Jake Edwards, Joe Heath, Sid Hill, Audrey Shenandoah, Jeanne Shenandoah and Stephanie Waterman on progress made in environmental preservation and restoration and social healing since the filing of the Onondaga Land Rights Action in March, 2005. The year-long series, a major collaboration involving 12 colleges and universities and several community groups, is coordinated by NOON. See [peacecouncil.net/noon](http://peacecouncil.net/noon) or contact Andy.

## SPC's 2010 Steering Committee

We're very happy to welcome Rae

Kramer, Kim McCoy and Julienne Oldfield to SPC's 2010 Steering Committee and give a belated welcome to Ursula Rozum, who joined in the fall. Returning members are: Jessica Azulay, Carol Baum, Jake Eichten, Andy Mager, Jessica Maxwell, Carole Resnick, Peter Sinatra, Rich Vallejo, Rose Viviano and Wendy Yost.

The Steering Committee is responsible for SPC's political direction and financial health. SPC supporters are welcome to attend – if possible please contact SPC first so you can find out what's on the agenda. Supporters are also welcome to suggest agenda items. Meetings are the third Tuesday of the month at 7 pm. Contact Carol.

## Jerry Berrigan turns 90!

Stalwart activist for peace and social justice and longtime SPC supporter Jerry Berrigan celebrated his 90th birthday with a packed gym of friends and family on January 16. SPC folks were delighted to be among those recognizing the contributions of this very special peacemaker.

## PNL Welcomes Guest Editors for Special Section

This issue of the *Peace Newsletter* has a first. The CNY Working Group on a Just Peace in Palestine and Israel, a group coordinated by SPC, took complete charge of this month's special section on Palestine and Israel. Thanks to Debra George and Carole Resnick for organizing the section, and to Andy Mager for layout.

The PNL Editorial Committee invites Peace Council projects as well as closely allied groups to consider organizing a special section of the newsletter. Contact Carol for details.

## March on Washington, DC March 20

March 20 marks the seventh anniversary of the US invasion of Iraq. The US military is still there and war is escalating in Afghanistan. Mark your calendars to go to Washington, DC on Saturday, March 20 to demand "US Out of Iraq and Afghanistan Now!" SPC is organizing a bus, leaving

Saturday around 1 am and returning about 24 hours later. More details to come. Contact Carol.

## Activist Appreciation: Sue Eiholzer

It's difficult to summarize the myriad ways that Sue Eiholzer contributes to the work of SPC's Neighbors of the Onondaga Nation project. She coordinates our historical markers committee and is active in organizing the Onondaga Land Rights & Our Common Future II series and the campaign to get the Syracuse Common Council to pass the resolution of "Respect for and Reconciliation with the Onondaga Nation." She also staffs outreach tables and makes presentations.

In addition to all that, Sue is always thinking about how things are going with the group and looking for ways to bring new people into the work. Thanks much, Sue.



Sue Eiholzer wearing one of her many figurative hats with NOON staffs a NOON outreach table at the From the Earth Craftsair at the Onondaga Nation School. Photo: Andy Mager

## SPC Turns 75 Next Year

That's right, 2011 is SPC's 75th birthday. We can't let this diamond anniversary pass without special attention, but haven't yet figured out how to celebrate. Some ideas are: a major musical celebration/fundraiser, special speaker, larger than usual birthday dinner, art/history exhibit. Consider joining this once-in-a-lifetime committee. Contact Andy.

## Interns Aplenty

SPC recently bid adieu to interns Mary Williams (OCC) and Breanna Rolland (Wells

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# Creative Dissent: The Art of Protest

Kimberley McCoy

At 3 am on 14 December 2009, the Danish police arrived and broke the locks of Ragnildgad, the city-sanctioned convergence space that housed a thousand activists during the UN Climate Conference in Copenhagen. They came to stifle the power of these protesters. But as a hundred riot police entered the building, awaking the sleeping activists, they did not arrest suspected leaders. Instead they confiscated the art materials.

The arts have the power to inspire, communicate and engage in ways that can challenge our perceptions of reality. Often with few words, art can break through our defenses and open us up to our emotions. Through art's symbolism we are able to grasp "big picture" concepts and make sense of the world around us. To the great benefit of humanity and the earth, artists, more often than not, are fighting for a world of peace and justice.

Despite the harassment by the police, the arts were a strong force for change in Copenhagen. Artists from around the world organized public art in many forms such as sculpture, street theatre, poster campaigns, light displays and installations. Art played such a vital role that the *London Telegraph* published a 28-photo online photo essay ([telegraph.co.uk](http://telegraph.co.uk)). Featured in the essay is Danish sculptor Jens Galschiot's piece "Survival of the Fattest," a 9-foot bronze sculpture installed beside the internationally known "Little Mermaid" sculpture. Galschiot's work depicts an obese Justitia, (the goddess of justice) holding the scales of justice, sitting on the back of an emaciated African man. Written beside the sculpture is the message, "I'm sitting on the back of a man. He is sinking under the burden. I would do anything to help him. Except stepping down from his back." The man is crippled under the weight of the woman, just as the global South is disproportionately affected by climate change due to the actions of the North.

In an equally haunting work, British sculptor Mark Coreth created a work in bronze and ice known as Ice Bear Project.

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*Kimberley is currently pursuing her Master's degree in Arts Administration from Boston University while interning at ArtRage Gallery. Her interest in the arts dates back to 1982 when she received her first box of crayons.*



"Survival of the Fattest" by Jens Galschiot was installed in the Copenhagen harbor during the United Nations Climate Change Conference. Photo: Peter Dejong

To the viewer, the Ice Bear began as a life-size ice sculpture of the endangered animal. If viewed on the opening day of the conference, one might assume the work is a loving homage to the creature that has come to symbolize the movement for climate justice. But as time passes and its audience is invited to touch the ice, a darker truth is revealed. Touching the sculpture hastens the melting of the ice and the audience becomes sculptor, revealing a horrifyingly realistic bronze skeleton. The World Wildlife Fund, the project's sponsor, says this is "symbolic of how we all have the power to affect our delicate environment."

Political art and artists exist all over the globe and are linked to almost every movement for peace and justice. Here in Syracuse we are home to an art gallery whose sole purpose is to exhibit political art. ArtRage Gallery, one of just several like it in the country, uses art to inspire change, promote social awareness and to expand the traditional art viewing audience.

The current exhibition, "Breach of Peace: Eric Etheridge's Photographs of the Freedom Riders," is a look at the Civil Rights Movement in America through the eyes of the Mississippi Freedom Riders, those who traveled to the South in 1961 to purposely violate segregation laws. As a result many were arrested and jailed. Etheridge's exhibition juxtaposes the activist's mug shots with contemporary portrait photography that tell the story of

lives lived with purpose.

Part of the exhibition is a photo installation of all 328 mug shots of the Freedom Riders. Once property of the state, these photographs are elevated to high art as Etheridge redefines the way in which we view them. As Etheridge writes in his book *Breach of Peace*, "Once made, the mug shots were treated like documents, which is to say stapled, hole punched and filed. And as documents they are powerful symbols of the repressive surveillance state. But in the same way the Freedom Riders were using the power of the state's criminal system against itself, they were hijacking the booking process, enabling the state to record its own strategic blunder, its own tragic actions. With assistance from the Sovereignty Commission's inadvertent archivists, the mug shots now comprise a rich historic record. Here is the picture of the emergent civil rights movement plunging forward, adeptly taking its strategy of nonviolent direct action to the national stage." Once symbols of oppression, the mug shots are now both the face of the Civil Rights movement and visual proof of the state sanctioned racism.

Just as Etheridge creates art out of oppression, art can allow us to reshape the environment in which we live. Art as activism is infinite in its expressions of resistance, which is its strength in the struggle for environmental and social justice. Despite the 3 am police raids, the energy of art can never be stolen. ♣

# Dr King: From Charity to Justice

In the late '90s, Apple Computer, Inc. launched an advertising campaign called "Think Different" which used the image and likeness of inspirational leaders in order to sell their product. One of those leaders was Martin Luther King, Jr. The message was clear: the advertisers were trying to link the great social revolutionary to their brand. I remember then thinking about how domesticated the image of Martin Luther King, Jr. had become. This was a man who, at the time of his death, was excoriated not just by conservatives, but by the liberals of his time (including fellow Civil Rights leaders) for being too strident a critic of what he termed the "triple evils of racism, extreme materialism, and militarism." Since he so often called out the capitalist system, it is absurd to think that Martin Luther King, Jr. would have lent his likeness to a corporate advertising campaign.

This brings us to the "Day of Service" campaign associated with Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. For sure, there is great value in teaching citizens the value of service. However, King was a radical organizer. He was less interested in charity than he was in justice. He wanted to correct the structural injustices of society, not

provide a band-aid for them. He organized systematically against systems of power. It is important to remember that the last campaign he worked on was called the "Poor People's Campaign" which was designed to unionize those at lowest strata of the US. In the great class war that has always been raging throughout human history, King was decidedly on the side of workers.

As we think about how to celebrate the legacy of Dr. King, it is important for us to remember that he was considered a dangerous man at the time. Far from the "cuddly bear" image that has been promulgated by those in power, King was a man who deeply terrified the elites because of his capacity to organize large numbers of disenfranchised people, remind them of their inherent worth as human beings, and demand the basic rights we are all owed: a fair wage, health care, and a meaningful voice in the democratic debate. It was his ability to think beyond individual charity towards a justice rooted in love that made him one of the greatest citizens this country has produced. May we be worthy of the legacy he left us.

– Aly Wane



Far from being a simple do-gooder, Martin was a radical organizer who was willing to put his life on the line to confront the structural injustices of poverty, racism, and militarism. Photo: [gandhiking.ning.com](http://gandhiking.ning.com)

**Celebrate African American History Month!**

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## SPECIAL SECTION

# War and Peace in Palestine and Israel

We hope that the articles presented by CNY Working for a Just Peace in Palestine & Israel in this special section of the *Peace Newsletter* offer both information and inspiration to those who read them. Our intention is to provide an overview of the issues and realities of the Israeli Occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. In addition, since the US media provides no coverage of the peaceful resistance to the Occupation among Israelis and Palestinians, as well as in the US, we are including articles highlighting the movement for peace. The US government is deeply complicit in Israeli military policy by providing enormous amounts of US tax dollars as aid, and by failing to support UN sanctions and the recent findings of the Goldstone report on war crimes committed both by Israel and Hamas.

Please join us in the work of changing US policies which support the Israeli Occupation, supporting the Israeli and

Palestinian peace movement, and providing education to those in our communities. There is an international movement to end the Occupation, exemplified by the Freedom March for Gaza, which was attended by 1300 activists from all over the world, including Tim Rodriguez from Cortland. On 12/31/09 this march was refused entrance to Gaza from Cairo, Egypt, the only possible point of entry. While the march didn't

get through, the message of international support rang clear. Solidarity marches were held in cities around the world, including the one in Syracuse on 12/28. This is an



About 40 people marched in downtown Syracuse to support the Gaza Freedom March, December 28, 2009. Photo: Andy Mager

issue of vast international concern. Please join us in our work. Call Andy Mager at SPC, 472-5478, for information about meetings and activities. ♻️

## CNY Working for a Just Peace in Palestine & Israel

Founded in the wake of the December '08 Israeli attack on Gaza, CNY Working for a Just Peace in Palestine and Israel is a community educational and organizing project. Coordinated by the Syracuse Peace Council, CNYWJPPi includes people active in the NCNY United Methodist Conference Task Force on Peace with Justice in Palestine/ Israel, the Islamic Society of Central New York, Al Huda Muslim American Society Mosque, and Syracuse Jews for Peace.

The following are the principles of agreement which form the basis of our group. The people of Israel and Palestine must themselves ultimately decide how to resolve their protracted struggle. We aim to be among those, regionally and internationally, helping them find a just resolution, one that provides self-determination and security to all peoples in the region.

By providing economic and military support for illegal and aggressive policies of the Israeli government, the United States historically has played a destructive role in the region. Each year US taxpayers provide roughly three billion dollars in military aid to Israel. The US

repeatedly vetoes UN Security Council resolutions condemning Israel's inhumane policies toward Palestinians.

Given the lack of accurate information readily available to people in the US about the nature of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the CNYWJPPi aims to provide grassroots education—and political pressure—needed to re-orient US policy toward a just peace in the Middle East.

In order to understand Palestinian experience and perspectives, the *Nakba* (loss of Palestine) and events of 1948 are critical. In order to understand Israeli experience and perspectives, the history of Western anti-semitism and the Holocaust are critical.

Committed to nonviolence and negotiation, we oppose militarism. We oppose terrorism—political violence directed at civilians—whether small or large scale, whether on land or from the air, whether carried out by individuals, non-state groups, or governments and militaries.

We insist on:

• compliance with international law and respect for the human rights of all peoples in Palestine and Israel. We support

UN Resolution 194 calling for the right of return for Palestinian refugees.

- freedom of movement for Palestinians within the Occupied Territories and between Gaza and the West Bank (during their transition to self-determination), including the abolition of checkpoints within the West Bank.
- the complete end of the Israeli occupation and economic blockade of the Occupied Territories. This includes the immediate end of home demolitions, the release of all political prisoners, and the timely removal of Israel's wall and Israeli settlements from the West Bank.
- negotiations for a just peace by the freely-chosen representatives of both Israelis and Palestinians, including an equitable distribution of water resources.
- the immediate end to all US military aid to any Middle East nation, including Israel, which violates human rights or international law.

**Israeli Peace Movement / from cover**

Palestinians both within Israel and the Occupied Territories.

Hundreds of Palestinian homes have been destroyed. **The Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions** works jointly with Palestinian groups to oppose the Israeli government's policies which allow the bulldozing of homes as means of collective punishment. ICAHD members have physically blocked bulldozers sent to demolish homes and have rebuilt those homes as acts of resistance.

**Anarchists Against the Wall** was established in 2003 in response to the construction of the separation wall. This group has participated in hundreds of demonstrations against the wall and the occupation. "It is the duty of Israeli citizens to resist immoral policies and actions carried out in our name."

**Resistance Within the Military**

**Combatants for Peace** has a membership of ex-Israeli soldiers and former Palestinian militants who have vowed to put down their guns for peace. They are committed to achieving peace and ending the occupation through non-violent means and are dedicated to the establishment of a Palestinian state living in peace and security alongside Israel. I traveled to Rochester recently to hear two "Combatants" engage an audience in a synagogue. While one was the grieving father of a 10-year old daughter shot to death by an Israeli sniper, and the other a former Israeli officer, they spoke of their great friendship despite the tragedies of the past and their devotion to the cause of peaceful coexistence.

Another organization comprised of military personnel is **Courage to Refuse** (aka Refusniks). In 2002 a group of combat soldiers and officers penned the Combatant's Letter, declaring that while they would do everything in their power to safeguard their families at home, they would refuse to serve in missions which prolong the occupation. To date, approximately 700 combatants and others have signed the letter. They continue to do reserve duty when summoned, but refuse if their orders include service in the occupied territories. Many of the members have been

*Pat lived in Israel from 1990-2004. She now lives in Cazenovia and is an active member of CNYWJPP.*



*Longtime Israeli peace activist Uri Avnery demonstrates at a-Ram checkpoint, 2002. Photo: Gush Shalom*

court marshaled and sentenced to periods in jail for their refusal.

**Yesh G'vul** is an organization established to provide support to soldiers who refuse to serve in the Occupied Territories.

The **Shministim** are 12th grade high school students who refuse compulsory military service in protest against Israel's 40-year occupation. Often punished with 21-28 day jail sentences, those who refuse to wear their military uniform are held in solitary confinement. Because they still "belong" to the military until discharged, the Shministim are redrafted; when they refuse, they are again incarcerated. In 2009 about 100 Israeli students signed the letter of refusal.

**Women Resist the Occupation**

**Women in Black** is an international organization formed in 1988, a month after the first Palestinian uprising. Every week, at various intersections in Israel, groups of women (and men) stand silently, dressed in black, holding their trademark signs. When I demonstrated with Women in Black at weekly vigils in Kibbutz Gan Shmuel, a young Palestinian/Israeli man from a nearby village showed up every week and stood with us holding one of our signs: a black hand with the words "End the Occupation." During the 1990s there was a monthly Women in Black Vigil in Syracuse in solidarity with the Israeli vigils.

**Bat Shalom's** (daughter of peace) membership consists of Jewish and Palestin-

ian women working together for a genuine peace grounded in a just resolution of the Israel-Palestine conflict, respect for human rights, and an equal voice for Jewish and Arab women within Israeli society.

**Machshom Watch**, in existence since 2001, is a group of female peace activists who document activities at checkpoints throughout the Occupied Territories. Often mistreatment of the occupied population isn't reported to the Israeli public. Machshom Watch disseminates their findings broadly and their presence as silent witnesses has mitigated many tense exchanges.

**Religious Opposition**

**Rabbis for Human Rights**, founded in 1998, has a philosophy which "entails a love for the Jewish people, a passion for its well-being and a commitment to justice and equality." These activists-rabbis are seen daily working among Palestinian farmers helping in very tangible ways: assisting in the olive harvest, rebuilding demolished homes, and protesting against increased settlement activity.

**Information and International Outreach**

**The Alternative Information Center** is a Palestinian-Israeli organization serving as an outlet for the dissemination of information, research, and analysis of the conflict.

In 1982 when the Lebanon War divided the Israeli public, the **Israeli Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace** decided to begin printing an English-language newsletter to provide voice to the activities of the Israeli peace movement since these events elicited scant coverage in international media. *The Other Israel* until recently printed a quarterly newsletter, but has now gone paperless.

A group of academics, attorneys, journalists, and Knesset members formed **B'tselem** in 1989. It functions primarily to document and educate the Israeli public about human rights violations in the Occupied Territories, to combat the phenomenon of denial prevalent among the Israeli public, and help create a human rights culture in Israel.

Many Israelis, after witnessing first-hand abuses against their Palestinian neighbors, have valiantly stood up in opposition to their government's policies and the norms of Israeli society to give voice to the oppressed, educate on the issues, and insist on human rights for all.

# Palestinian Activism As a Human Rights Struggle

Debra George

Usually the only image that Americans see when Palestinians resist occupation and annexation of their lands by Israel is when there is violent reaction. However, for a surprisingly long time there has been a healthy supply of Palestinians who have demonstrated peaceful resistance. Mazin Qumsiyeh, a professor at Bethlehem and Birzeit Universities in Occupied Palestine, leads nonviolent struggle which, despite the facts on the ground and the headlines, has yielded results.

“It started in the 1880s immediately after European Zionist Jews started building colonial settlements (in Palestine),” Qumsiyeh pointed out. “Christian, Muslim and Jewish natives raised objections to the idea of transforming a multi-ethnic multi-religious society into a ‘Jewish state.’ There were regular nonviolent demonstrations from 1918-1921.”

In the years that followed, he said, there were uprisings that averaged every 9-15 years.

“The uprising of 1987-1991 was the most notable in expanding the repertoire of methods of civil resistance. In my own hometown of Beit Sahour, there was a refusal to pay taxes and the Israeli army sought to set an example to break the will of the natives. For 42 days in 1989, the town was besieged and subjected to curfews that were brutal. The officials would pillage the homes, businesses, and farms taking personal and business property. The town people defied curfews and many were arrested and beaten, some were killed. At one point, the town people invited internationals—including Israelis—to come sneak into town and join the people to hold a demonstration breaking the curfew. Actions in Beit Sahour were the start of the International Solidarity Movement.”

Presently, the peace talks between Palestinians and Israelis are stalled due to expanding Israeli settlements in Palestinian

territory. With this setback, it is difficult to recognize where there could be any success claimed. But Qumsiyeh had no problem pointing out accomplishments.

“The biggest success of civil resistance is that today, 130 years after the first Zionist colony, there are 5 million Palestinians in Palestine (between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean). The Zionist plans from the 19th century until today were clear about the notion of creating a ‘Jewish’ state. Massive resources were devoted to this from the World Zionist Organization with support from great powers (Britain and France from 1917 until today, USSR in 1947-1948, and the US after 1947). Billions of dollars were diverted from such needs as Holocaust victims to the Zionist political and military infrastructure that created the fourth strongest army in the world. Yet, military might was not able to accomplish the complete ethnic cleansing desired.”

Qumsiyeh is organizing the human rights struggle for Palestinians as he partners with Israeli Jewish groups like Zochrot and the Israeli Committee Against Home Demolitions. “Joint Israeli Palestinian groups also exist like the Alternative Information Center. We are now building One Democratic State Group to include Israelis and Palestinians.”

How do human rights differ from peace activism? Qumsiyeh replied “A durable and genuine peace cannot exist without human rights. Without human rights you may have what is called pacification, Israelis feeling secure and comfortable in all the lands they confiscated and the refugees continuing to live as refugees. But history shows that any calm without justice is merely a lull between episodes of instability. Amnesty International argued the same thing when they stated on numerous occasions that no durable peace can be achieved when ignoring human rights. They explained that the absence of putting human rights in the equation is perhaps the pivotal reason why previous ‘peace processes’ failed.”

There are voices in the international peace community that are now calling for



Mazin Qumsiyeh is a leading human rights activist in the West Bank. Photo: brennacussen on flickr.com

a one-state solution, and Qumsiyeh’s is one of them.

“There can never be peace without recognizing and allowing Palestinian refugees to exercise their internationally recognized right of return to their homes and lands. The most logical scenario to do this and guarantee rights of other people—including Israeli Jews who immigrated here and had children and grandchildren—is in a democratic state that protects individuals’ rights. The nature of such a state (bi-national, federation, confederation, one democratic secular state, etc.) should be explored but in all cases, basic rights should be recognized. There can never be racist or discriminatory laws such as Israeli laws that currently allow any Jew from anywhere in the world settle here and get automatic citizenship while a Palestinian born here is denied their right to live here simply because he/she is Muslim or Christian.”

Many working for peace had much hope with the election of Barack Obama

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*Debra is a second generation Palestinian-American who has worked on MidEast peace issues for twenty years.*

continued on next page

*Palestine / from previous page*

as the US president, but Qumsiyeh was never convinced.

“President Obama’s politically significant act before the election was to speak in front of the powerful Israeli lobby in Washington (AIPAC) promising them support. His first appointment after he won the election was Rahm Emanuel for Chief of Staff. Emanuel, while living in the US decided during the Gulf War to go volunteer, not with the US Army in the Gulf, but with the Israeli Army that was then occupying South Lebanon. Then Obama said he wanted a settlement freeze consistent with Israel’s obligations under the US sponsored “Road Map” but had to back down and support the status quo. If Obama wanted peace, he could simply threaten to cut off billions of dollars in annual US military aid or to simply withhold the US veto power at the UN Security Council that shields Israel from International law.”

With this disappointment, American peace activists have their work cut out

for them. Qumsiyeh believes that their role is crucial in educating on the conflict and participating in programs supporting political resolution.

“I lived in the US many years and remain a US citizen who still pays taxes even though I relocated to Palestine over a year ago. These taxes help fund an apartheid racist regime, Israel has already cost the US over \$3 trillion and this is not counting the trillions spent on the war on Iraq (a war Israel supported). This US foreign policy supports colonization, violence, and oppression. The misguided policy is antagonizing hundreds of millions of people in the Arab and Islamic world. In short I think US citizens need to know that this is not good for them. Of course many of them are also concerned about the attacks on Palestinian civilians, like in Gaza a year ago when 1400 were killed. We also need to expand the growing movement of boycotts, divestments, and sanctions. This is analogous to the struggle against apartheid in South Africa.”

When asked to predict the future for

Israel, Palestine and the rest of the region, Qumsiyeh said, “We can look at the past as guidelines for what happens when certain forces move in certain directions. We do notice that increasing Israeli repression and militarization did not bring security to Israel. Military forces have actually become obsolete in achieving political goals. The latest examples of this are the Israeli attacks on Lebanon in Summer 2006 and on Gaza in Winter 2008/2009. I think we will perhaps see one last Israeli attempt to ‘crush’ the armed resistance in Lebanon or in Palestine before the world community gets tired of cajoling Israeli hegemony. Israel is also trying to crush nonviolent resistance here and is failing. The US economy will continue to deteriorate as will the value of the US dollar; we have \$12 trillion in debt and nearly \$1 trillion in government budget deficit adding yearly to the debt. When and if the American public wakes up and revolts, a new US foreign policy will materialize to apply pressure on Israel. This will be good for Israelis, for Palestinians, for Americans, and for all of humanity.” ♣

## Organizations in the US Working for Peace

The **US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation** is a diverse coalition working for freedom from occupation and equal rights for all by challenging US policy toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. [www.endtheoccupation.org](http://www.endtheoccupation.org)

The international campaign for **Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS)** was initiated in 2005 in response to a call from a diverse group of Palestinian non-governmental organizations. In the US, campaigns have focused on the Motorola and Caterpillar Corporations. [www.bdsmovement.net](http://www.bdsmovement.net)

**Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP)** is a diverse community of activists inspired by Jewish tradition to work together for peace, social justice, and human rights. JVP opposes the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza and supports the aspirations of Israelis and Palestinians for security and self-determination. [www.jewishvoiceforpeace.org](http://www.jewishvoiceforpeace.org)

The mission of **American Muslims for Palestine** is to educate the public about the just cause of Palestine and the rights of self-determination, liberty and justice. Through networking with individuals and

organizations that support peace, AMP seeks to raise awareness of the issues pertaining to Palestine and its rich cultural heritage. [www.ampalestine.org](http://www.ampalestine.org)

Founded in 2002, **Rabbis for Human Rights - North America (RHR-NA)** is an organization of rabbis from all streams of Judaism dedicated to expanding support for the mission and work of RHR in Israel, and to education and advocacy on human rights issues in North America. [www.rhr-na.org](http://www.rhr-na.org)

**The Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions – USA (ICAHD-USA)** supports the work of ICAHD in Israel through education and advocacy in the US, addressing both the realities of the occupation and the role of the US in financing and supporting Israeli military actions and human rights violations. [www.icahdusa.org](http://www.icahdusa.org)

**The American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC)**, which is non sectarian and non partisan, is the largest Arab-American civil rights organization in the US. It was founded in 1980 to protect the civil rights of people of Arab descent in the United States and to promote the cultural heritage of the Arabs. [www.adc.org](http://www.adc.org)

**Americans for Peace Now (APN)** was

established in 1981 to mobilize support for the Israeli peace movement, Shalom Achshav (Peace Now). APN engages in grassroots political activism and outreach to the American Jewish and Arab-American communities, and the public at large, providing a pro-Israel, pro-peace, American Jewish perspective on issues and legislation. [www.peacenow.org](http://www.peacenow.org)

**Churches for Middle East Peace** is a coalition of 23 churches and faith traditions—Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant. The work of Churches for Middle East Peace focuses on Washington in the knowledge that sound United States policy is crucial to achieving and maintaining just and stable relationships throughout the Middle East. [www.cmep.org](http://www.cmep.org)

Sabeel is an international peace movement initiated by Palestinian Christians in the Holy Land who seek a just peace based on two states—Palestine and Israel—as defined by international law and existing United Nations resolutions. Sabeel promotes theological, moral, and legal principles for peace. **Friends of Sabeel-North America (FOSNA)** works in the US and Canada to support Sabeel’s vision. [www.fosna.org](http://www.fosna.org) ♣

# The Olive and the Occupation

Neil and Marilyn Stevens

Olive picking may sound like a pretty benign activity, but if you are a Palestinian farmer in the West Bank it's the only time in a year or more that you are allowed into your orchards by Israeli settlers and soldiers.

Palestinian farmers must apply for a permit each time they wish to enter their olive orchards if they are near one of the settlements. The olive harvest occurs each autumn but the trees must be pruned, the land tilled and fertilized throughout the year. To submit to the process of getting permission to access their own property, from the very people who illegally separate them from their land, is demeaning at best. Often, the permission is refused. When farmers try to enter their fields without permission, and even sometimes with, they are subjected to harassment and beatings by some settlers. The Israeli Army supports the settlers either directly or by conveniently ignoring what is going on.

In October, 2008, on behalf of our Task Force, we traveled from Syracuse to the West Bank to participate with other volunteers from England, Holland, Norway, Scotland, Sweden, and the U.S. in peaceful support for Palestinian farmers by helping them harvest their olives. The farmers were usually, though not always, allowed into their orchards with us. We believe that creating a major incident in the presence

*Neil and Marilyn are members of the NCNY United Methodist Conference Task Force on Peace with Justice in Palestine/Israel.*

of an international group of people on a peaceful mission would be too embarrassing to the Israeli army and political leaders.

Even with us accompanying them, farmers had to negotiate with the army to access their own land. In most cases we were allowed into the orchard, although sometimes there was a long delay while "higher authorities" were contacted. In one case where we just approached and then entered the orchard, we were quickly "guided" by over 30 soldiers, trucks and jeeps.

We met different kinds of settlers. Some we encountered were very arrogant and provocative, but we were able to hold peaceful conversations with others. Many settlers there had little financial resources and were given large stipends by the government to move to the settlements. Others are "ideological settlers" who hold fundamentalist beliefs that they have a divine right to the land. One settler strutted around with his machine gun to make the point that he could go where he wanted to, and indeed he could. The army presence did nothing to restrict his movements or any other settler's. However, it was made explicitly clear that neither the farmers nor we could move about at will.

At times we were able to talk to the soldiers. Those we talked with seemed to have the same lack of information that our



*A Palestinian landowner (right) sits amongst his destroyed olive trees in Khoruba, West Bank. Photo: Christian Peacemaker Teams*

own general public has concerning Israel's occupation and growing annexation.

One orchard we found stood empty with no olives to pick. The trees were in sad shape because the farmer and his family were unable to prune or otherwise take care of them. Since it was readily accessible to the Israeli settlement, we were suspicious that what olives were available had already been picked.

Our presence there was always much appreciated by the Palestinians with whom we came into contact. We had many long conversations with the Palestinian family we stayed with in Beit Sahour. Our experience taught us firsthand the daily struggles of these people who desire only peace and the opportunity to care for their families.

## Recent History of the Occupied Palestinian Territories

The West Bank and Gaza are Palestinian territories that have been occupied by Israel since 1967. Gaza's borders have been completely sealed off; neither goods nor people can come or go since its election a few years ago of Hamas, which refuses to recognize Israel as a sovereign nation. This fuels continued sporadic fighting between the two sides. Exactly one year ago Israel's attack on Gaza resulted in devastating loss of civilian lives and damage

to infrastructure.

The West Bank, which is controlled by the Palestinian Authority, recognizes Israel through its attempt to reach a peace agreement, but still suffers land loss. B'tselem, an Israeli monitoring organization, reports that from 1967-2007 Israel established 121 settlements and at least 100 outposts in the West Bank. Israel rejects the UN's position that taking land for "settlements" or "outposts"

is in violation of international law, based on the 4th Geneva Convention. Israel's military guards the settlements and the Gaza border. In June 2002, Israel began the construction of a physical barrier, separating itself from the West Bank to prevent Palestinian entry into Israel. Referred to as "The Wall," this barrier often cuts into Palestinian land and can separate a family from their orchard or fields.

*—Debra George and Carole Resnick*



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# UNIVERSITY LECTURES

# Drones and Death: The Israeli Connection

Ed Kinane

Drones are remote-controlled airborne robots. They come in all shapes and sizes. These unmanned high-tech weapons are remarkably versatile. From thousands of feet in the air some reportedly have heat-detecting and surveillance instrumentation that can distinguish between an automatic weapon that has been recently fired and one that hasn't.

Unlike the people of Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Palestine, most US Americans are oblivious to drones. But we'd better wake up. Drones are poised to become tools of domestic surveillance.

Col. Kevin Bradley, local Hancock Airbase drone commander, looks forward to having drones used for domestic police work (18 Dec. '09 Syracuse *Post-Standard*). The Houston police are now secretly experimenting with drones (see [youtube.com/watch?v=2tHk9Q3Fv6g](http://youtube.com/watch?v=2tHk9Q3Fv6g)). ACLU and NYCLU please take note.

In Upstate New York we're beginning to learn about the Reaper drone in our midst – "piloted" via satellite out of Hancock on the outskirts of Syracuse. Syracuse's Reaper now flies surveillance and assassination missions over Afghanistan. The Pentagon proudly describes the Reaper as a "hunter/killer." But the US isn't alone in developing and deploying drone technology. During Israel's December 2008/January 2009 invasion of Gaza I became aware of its use of drones. Israel mostly deploys two types of hunter/killer: the "Hermes," produced by Elbit Systems Ltd, and the "Heron," produced by the government-owned Israeli Aerospace Industries.

Recently – by Googling "Israeli drones" – I learned that Israel pioneered the drone and that Israel purveys that cutting edge

*Ed's recent PNL articles include "Life in the Bubble: At Home in the Israeli Settler State" (July-August 2009) and "Drones and Dishonor in Central New York" (October 2009).*

weaponry throughout the world. As far back as 1982 Israel used drones against Syria. In the early nineties Israeli drones were used in the Kosovo campaign. Israeli drones invade the skies over Lebanon and patrol occupied West Bank and Gaza. Israeli drones reportedly can reach Iran.

Even Israel acknowledges that, during the Gaza invasion, it killed well over 1000 Palestinians. Such was the butchery that over 100 Palestinians were killed for every Israeli killed. Among the wide range of weapon systems deployed in and over Gaza, drones accounted for the deaths of at least 87 civilians, many of them children.



Muhammad al-Habbash holds photos of his daughter Shaza and niece Isra, both killed by an Israeli drone-launched missile strike on their home in al-Sha'f, Gaza City on January 4, 2009. Photo: Marc Garlasco / Human Rights Watch

The cold-bloodedness of it all struck me as I read the 39-page, June 2009 Human Rights Watch report. "Precisely Wrong: Gaza Civilians Killed by Israeli Drone-Launched Missiles." (<http://www.hrw.org/en/reports/2009/06/30/precisely-wrong>). Frequently those killings had no combat or defensive justification whatsoever. Like aerial warfare generally, those killings were out-and-out state terrorism.

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Israel's drone technology is so "good," and now so well demonstrated in Gaza, that other nations are lining up to put in orders. These exports generate enormous revenue for Israel's weapons industry, an enterprise boosted by \$3 billion a year in US military aid to Israel.

Israel's known drone customers include: Turkey (\$185 million for 10 Heron drones); Brazil (\$350 million drone deal for border and police work); India (occupying Kashmir and long hostile to Pakistan); Georgia (used Israeli drones against Russia in 2008). Russia, very impressed with Georgia's drone performance, has acquired three different types of Israeli drones (\$50 million) for reverse engineering to kick start its own drone industry.

To better service Pentagon contracts, Israel even has drone factories in the US – in Starkville, Mississippi and Columbus, Ohio. The US uses Israeli "Skylark" drones in Iraq. Brits, Germans, and Canadians use Herons over Afghanistan. They assassinate those perceived, correctly or not, as enemies. Given the flimsiness of the legal cases against most Guantanamo prisoners, we know that an informant or bounty hunter's word that someone is a "terrorist" or "enemy combatant" is dubious.

In an ominous indicator of how easily lethal misjudgments can be made by those whose god-like job it is to select drone targets, the aforementioned Col. Bradley sees domestic anti-drone protesters as a "threat" to his pilots (18 Dec. '09 Syracuse *Post-Standard*). Such attitudes help explain how the drone's "precision" strikes can kill so many civilians. These deaths, whether in occupied Gaza or elsewhere, defy international humanitarian law.

One might suggest that much of US mainstream media is itself "occupied" by the nation's highly militarized power structure. Otherwise, why aren't the nation's newspapers editorializing against the killer drones that worldwide rile up hatred against the US? And that subject US military and intelligence facilities to deadly reprisal?

Why doesn't our media admit that much of the "terrorism" it constantly invokes is blowback from the kind of US policies that deploy hunter/killer drones? Why doesn't

continued on next page

Israeli Drones / from previous page

our media point out that those in the chain of command responsible for these extra-judicial executions are *war criminals*?

Why doesn't it call those nations deploying armed drones against civilians what they are: *rogue states*? And why doesn't it describe their cowardly airborne killings what they are: *terrorism*? ♣

**Connecting Drones Locally and Beyond**

The Pentagon trains foreign military in "anti-insurgency" tactics at schools such as the US Army's School of the Americas at Ft. Benning, Georgia. In a further "anti-insurgency" initiative, at Ft. Huachuca, Arizona the US Army trains soldiers to operate drones. Similarly, since at least 2005 Israel has been training many of the world's drone operators and maintainers. Some of these operators have gone on to deploy in Iraq and Afghanistan. Of particular concern to us in Syracuse, Hancock Airbase is becoming the national headquarters for training Reaper drone maintenance crews from all service branches.

**Saving Whose Lives?**

Corporations and militarists in the US and Israel promoting killer drones claim that as an unmanned weapon the drone *saves lives*—i.e. no pilots are shot down in action. This is specious: for every pilot saved, many other humans are killed or maimed.

Drone boosters further argue that, with its extraordinary surveillance capability, the drone's laser-guided missiles are more precise killers than those of (say) a manned F-16 fighter jet. However, "[D]rones, much like sniper rifles, are only as good at sparing civilians as the care taken by the people who operate them. The accuracy and concentrated blast radius of the missile can reduce civilian casualties, but in Gaza, Israel's targeting choices led to the loss of many civilian lives." [HRW, p.3]

The Heron hunter/killer even has camera-bearing missiles that relay images in real time. This allows a pilot on the ground far away, suddenly realizing that noncombatants are about to be slain, to divert the missile at the last moment. But such capability makes the killing of children and other non-combatants

—whether in Gaza, Iraq, Pakistan or Afghanistan—all the more detestable. No more blaming such "collateral damage" on the "fog of war." Because the surveillance capability of these killer drones is so remarkable, when obvious noncombatants are targeted, the pilots have to know exactly what they are doing. This means the chain of command also knows exactly what is being done.

Because the drone cameras provide live footage of the strike, and since such footage is archived, the circumstances under which the killings occur are well documented. Such evidence needs to be presented to domestic or international war crimes tribunals. Problem is, just as Israel refused to cooperate with the UN's Goldstone investigation, it refuses to release the footage. If the Human Rights Watch Gaza investigation was somehow flawed, such footage would refute its damning conclusions.

The US should insist that Israel release the footage. More: US military aid to nations like Israel that flaunt international law should cease.

SPC in Action / from page 4

College). Mary did a variety of office-related tasks throughout the fall and into January. Breanna did the same during the first couple of weeks of January.

Evan Braun (Bennington College) started in early January and will be with us through mid February. Evan is focusing on hydrofracking and youth and militarism, among other things. Erin O'Neill continues her work with NOON, focusing on publicity for the Onondaga Land Rights educational series. We look forward to welcoming Danielle Dean (SU, NOON), Marjory Elwell (SU, youth and militarism), Kara Kieffer (SU, video projects), Glenda Nunez (SU, anti-wars organizing), Katherine Raymond (Oswego, PNL and anti-wars) and Samantha Salvato (Le Moyne, bowlathon and youth and militarism) when their semesters start. ♣

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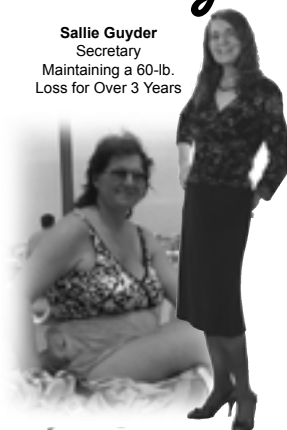
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## MUHAMMAD YUNUS



Muhammad Yunus has worked for nearly four decades to eradicate poverty through micro-lending. His personal loans of small amounts of money to destitute basket weavers in Bangladesh in the mid-1970s planted the seeds for the Grameen Bank Project, which was then established in 1983. The objective of the Grameen Bank is to help poor people escape from poverty by providing loans without collateral to support income-generating activities. The Grameen Bank has advanced to the forefront of a burgeoning world movement toward eradicating poverty through micro-lending. The bank now has eight million borrowers, 97 percent of whom are women, and has lent more than \$8.26 billion with a nearly 100 percent repayment rate. Yunus is the recipient of the World Food Prize (1994) and the Sydney Peace Prize (1998) and in 2006, he received the Seoul Peace Prize and the Nobel Peace Prize. This August, Yunus was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Barack Obama. Yunus was professor of economics and director of the Rural Economics Program at Chittagong University in Bangladesh from 1975-89. He is the author of *Banker to the Poor* (PublicAffairs, 2003) and *Creating a World Without Poverty* (PublicAffairs, 2008).

### **Muhammad Yunus**

NOBEL PEACE PRIZE RECIPIENT AND FOUNDER AND MANAGING  
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