

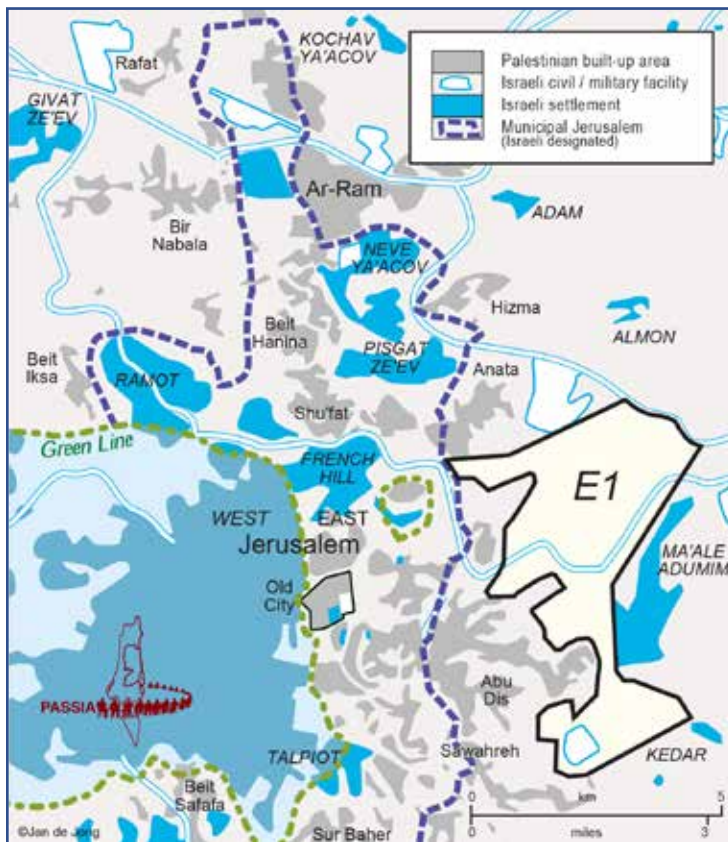
SHALOM

Jewish Peace Letter

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Akiva Eldar

Netanyahu's Christmas Present

ISRAEL'S DECLARED INTENTION TO BUILD SETTLEMENT housing in the E-1 area could destroy the possibility of the two-state solution. There are two possible US responses. The first would be akin to President George H. W. Bush's consistent and tough settlements policy. The other would resemble President Bill Clinton's incoherent and soft settlement approach. The history surrounding these two presidents and their Mideast policies offers insight into the bold but high-risk maneuver of Israel's current prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu.

In the early 1990s, soon after the Madrid Middle East Peace Conference, President Bush warned Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir that expansion of Jewish settlements in the occupied territories would hamper negotiations on the future of those territories. Bush told Shamir that if he wanted \$10 billion in loan guarantees (needed by Israel for the absorption of Jewish immigrants from the former Soviet Union), he would have to freeze the settlements project. Shamir rejected the American ultimatum and asked America's pro-Israel lobby to mobilize Congress against the administration so that Israel could get the aid without conditions. Bush knew he needed Jewish support in his forthcoming reelection campaign, but he refused to bend on a position he considered in America's national interest. In the end, he lost his reelection bid.

But so did Shamir. His public confrontation with Bush during Israel's 1992 election campaign contributed to the defeat of his right-wing Likud party, which was replaced by a Labor government headed by Yitzhak Rabin. The result was

AKIVA ELДАР is a former chief political columnist and editorial writer for Haaretz. This article originally appeared in The National Interest, www.nationalinterest.org.

a new seriousness in the peace process. In September 1993 the new US president, Bill Clinton, witnessed the signing ceremony of the Oslo agreement on the White House South Lawn.

Five years later, with Clinton still in the White House and Israel involved in negotiations over what was supposed to be the final-status agreement with the Palestinian leadership, Netanyahu, then the newly elected Likud prime minister, approved construction of the new settlement of Har Homa, between Jerusalem and Bethlehem, which was annexed by Israel after the 1967 Six-Day War. Palestinian President Yasser Arafat and other Arab leaders protested this provocative move, designed to separate East Jerusalem from the West Bank. Clinton joined European leaders in demanding that Israel avoid unilateral action. They argued this violated the commitment to refrain from creating "facts on the ground" that could prejudice the final status agreement. Netanyahu ignored the international pressure and the presidential entreaty. Although the second-term Clinton faced no more elections, he contented



E-1 Development Plan, 1998.

himself with a verbal denunciation of the provocative action. American reluctance to use its leverage in this case eroded the Palestinian trust in the United States and in the peace process. The thirteen thousand Jews who live today in Har Homa are a living message to the Israelis that the noise of settlement bulldozers is stronger than any noise from the White House.

The planned construction in the E-1 area ("Mevaseret Adumim"), which lies north of the built-up area of Ma'ale Adumim, is a repetition of the Har Homa project. Both of them were designed to create a continuity of Jewish land between Jerusalem and the West Bank. Both of them jeopardized

dize the possibility of a two-state solution. Both were initiated at a critical junction of the peace process.

The decision to build three thousand units in area E-1 is described as a “punishment” for the UN General Assembly’s vote to upgrade Palestine to the status, in the UN view, of a non-member observer state. Israel argues that the unilateral UN move is proof that Mahmoud Abbas, the leader who has extended his hand to negotiations, is a “non-partner.” But this ignores the fact that the Palestinian initiative is based on the two-state principle, which has been fully embraced by Israeli and Palestinian negotiating teams and accepted, at least publicly, as an obligation by all Israeli governments going back decades. The initiative could serve as a driving force for the renewal of political negotiations based on those

agreements. Instead, the E-1 construction and additional projects declared by the Israeli government as punitive measures punish Israelis along with Palestinians. That’s because they strike a blow against prospects for a two-state solution and hence prospects for peace.

They also punish the Obama administration, which considers the settlements to be an impediment to the two-state solution — and which considers the two-state solution to be an American vital interest as well as an Israeli one. So the question is: Will Obama adopt Bush’s superpower approach or Clinton’s lip-service policy? And, either way, what will be the impact on the relationship between Israel and the US, as well as between the peoples of those two countries?—☆

— December 6, 2012

M. J. Rosenberg

Obama’s Middle East Cynicism

THE US VOTE AGAINST RAISING THE STATUS OF Palestine at the United Nations was a deeply cynical move. It was cynical because there is not a chance that President Obama believes that he did the right thing. It is also cynical because, in the name of friendship for Israel, Obama led Israel closer to the cliff.

The last thing a true friend of Israel would have done would be to stand by as Israel demonstrated its almost complete international isolation. Just eight countries backed the Israeli position – the US, Panama, Palau, Canada, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Czech Republic and Micronesia — while one hundred and thirty-eight voted with the Palestinians. Was this display helpful to Israel?

But Obama was not trying to be helpful. The administration enabled this “disaster” (from Israel’s point of view) because Obama seems to truly not care about Israelis or Palestinians.

Take the two most recent examples. The first was his absolute refusal to express a word of sympathy for the Palestinians killed in the Gaza war. Under previous administrations — certainly under every Democratic administration, sympathy was expressed for the dead and injured on both sides, along with a call for an end to the fighting. But Obama would not do that. Even when asked directly his spokesperson at the State Department would only speak of Israel’s pain. (To

her credit, Secretary of State Clinton did say that she felt for both sides.)

But not Obama. He is determined not only to demonstrate that there is “no daylight” separating the two countries but that no amount of darkness separates us either.

The argument that he has to behave this way because of the power of the Lobby doesn’t hold up. I would be the last person in the world to deny that the Lobby is a powerful force in the making of US Middle East policy. But unless there is some mysterious element to the Lobby’s power that I am missing, its ability to intimidate ends when a president is re-elected.

Believing that Obama is worried about Congressional Democrats being punished in 2014 is just as inaccurate. First, that is two years away. Second, Obama, like almost all recent presidents, has rarely demonstrated much concern for the Congressional wing of his party. And third: the November 6 election demonstrated yet again that Jewish voters do not cast their ballots (or make campaign contributions) based on Israel. Nor do Israel’s fundamentalist Christian backers. Jews are overwhelmingly liberal Democrats, and Christian Zionists are conservative Republicans. Those facts seem never to change.

Besides, does Obama really believe that he would lose votes or campaign contributions from Jews and other pro-Israel Americans if he expressed sympathy for dead Palestinian children? Or called on both sides to stop the violence. I hold no brief for the lobby but Obama could have said what he no doubt

M. J. ROSENBERG is a veteran political commentator and columnist.

felt without losing anyone's support. Even the Lobby does not demand that politicians withhold human sympathy.

As for the UN vote, Obama could have prevented the huge embarrassment inflicted on both Israel and the US by telling Israel to "chill." I am glad he didn't because I think the vote will be seen by history as a significant step toward Palestinian statehood. But it also delegitimized Israel in the eyes of the world, which is a terrible defeat for those of us who care about Israel ultimately achieving peace and security alongside the Palestinians.

And it could easily have been averted if Obama had told Israel that the US would vote for the resolution and that Israel should, too. In that case, the vote for Palestine's elevated status would have been unanimous which would have rendered the Palestinian victory meaningless. Unanimous backing for any measure almost always demonstrates the measure's insignificance. Instead, Israel's hysteria and America's arm-twisting against the resolution gave the Palestinians a big victory, a victory that the US and Israel both elevated to historic proportions.

So why did Obama behave as he did? I am afraid it is because he does not think Israelis or Palestinians are worth the hassle. If he can avoid dealing with Netanyahu and his vocal backers here, he will. He has more important fish to fry — like the domestic economy and preserving the social safety net.

I understand that; but ignoring the Israeli-Palestinian issue — by simply parroting the Israeli line — has done terrible damage to America's standing in the world. Look at the UN vote which was neatly summed up by the front-page *New York Times* headline: "UN Assembly, In Blow To U.S., Elevates Sta-



President Barack Obama and Vice President Joe Biden talk with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel prior to his departure from the White House, July 6, 2010.

tus of Palestine." Perhaps it is of no concern of Obama's that Israel appears utterly isolated, but so does the US. To put it in crude terms: We look like Israel's tool.

I will not conclude by expressing the hope that Obama will now do the right thing for Israel, Palestine and, most importantly, the US by convening negotiations and acting as an "honest broker." I doubt he can do that anymore both because he has entirely lost the trust of the Arab world and because events have demonstrated, in

large part due to this administration, that history can move on without us. But primarily because I do not think President Obama cares enough to invest any time or energy in Middle East peacemaking. He seems not to care that resolving conflict in a vital region of the world is not just some favor we do for people six thousand miles away; it is something we do to defend America's interests. It's sad. But above all, it is just cynical.

Postscript: Prime Minister Netanyahu reciprocated President Obama's misplaced kindness when he announced that he will build three thousand new settler housing units in the E-1 corridor of the West Bank. This housing, designed to permanently separate the southern West Bank from the northern part and to separate both from Jerusalem would destroy any chance of achieving the two-state solution. It also breaks a specific promise Netanyahu made to Obama.

Additionally, AIPAC is rushing to get Congress to "punish" Palestinians for going to the UN by blocking aid. Netanyahu and his Lobby now believe (probably correctly) that Obama will permit them to do whatever they want to do. This is what the US gets for its "no daylight" policy and what we taxpayers get for \$3.5 billion a year in aid.—☆

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Patrick Henry

‘The Worst Place in the World To Be a Woman’

RAPE. *WEAPON OF WAR AND GENOCIDE*, EDITED BY John K. Roth and Carol Rittner (Paragon House) is not easy reading. As the various academics and scholars analyze rape as a weapon of war and genocide in numerous regions throughout the world, the amount of suffering becomes incalculable and unimaginable. Rape is everywhere depicted as torture which destroys the individual, demolishes one’s “trust in the world,” and thereby shatters the community as well. A thirty-page detailed chronology (1937-2011) of war and rape from Nanking to Sierra Leone and Libya accompanies the thirteen chapters of the book. Each chapter combines documents and essays, is oriented around a text (document, trial transcript, or victim’s account), and offers suggestions for further reading and questions for discussion.

After Carol Rittner’s comprehensive overview, ironically entitled “Are Women Human?” Eva Fogelman and Dagmar Herzog, relying on survivor testimony, study rape during the Holocaust. Fogelman sees the rape of women by the Nazis as a form of terrorism but not intentionally or systematically a weapon of genocide or ethnic cleansing. Interestingly, Fogelman spends time on “entitlement rape” practiced by Nazis as well as liberators, and concludes that rape during the Holocaust was much more widespread than normally understood. Herzog analyzes “rape as punishment” handed out to male homosexuals in German concentration camps.

SHALOM Contributing Editor PATRICK HENRY is Cushing Eells Emeritus Professor of Philosophy and Literature at Whitman College in Walla Walla, Washington. His recent book, We Only Know Men: The Rescue of Jews in France During the Holocaust (Catholic University of America Press, 2007) appeared in French as La Montagne des Justes (Editions Privat, 2010). He is the editor of the forthcoming Jewish Resistance to the Nazis (Catholic University of America Press, 2013).

She points out that between ten thousand and fifteen thousand male homosexuals were sent to concentration camps for same-sex activities which would remain criminal offenses in West Germany and Austria until 1969 and 1971, respectively.

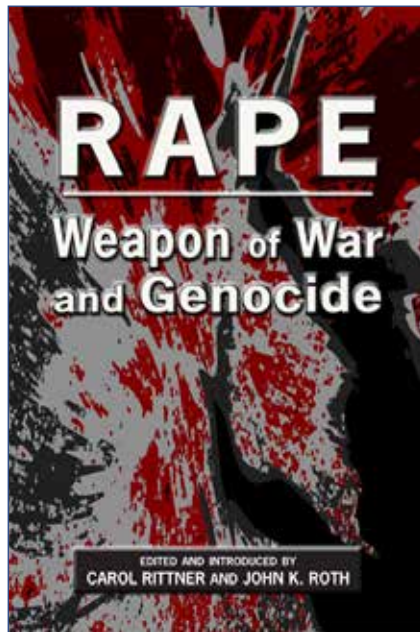
The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia estimates that during the Bosnian War (1992-1995) Serb, Croatian, and Bosnian soldiers raped between twenty thousand

and fifty thousand mostly Muslim women and girls. Using survivor testimony and a trial transcript, Christina M. Morus and Tazreena Sajjad relate these horrors where rape is clearly a weapon of genocide. They stress too that many of these rapes took place in “rape camps” where women were held captive and raped repeatedly.

Jessica A. Hubbard reports on the hundred-day period from April 6 to July 16, 1994 in Rwanda when the Hutu-led genocide took the lives of between eight hundred thousand and one million Tutsis and moderate Hutus. During that time, between two hundred and fifty thousand and half a million women and girls were raped, approximately seventy percent of whom were thereby infected with HIV and AIDS. As in Bosnia, rape was the rule, not the exception, and it was central to the

genocide. Carl Wilkens, an aid worker with the Adventist Church who was the only American to remain in Rwanda throughout the catastrophe, adds his thoughtful reflections about helping others during this genocide. James E. Waller begins by speaking about the situation in Rwanda but, in “Rape as a Tool of ‘Othering’ in Genocide,” shows, more generally, how in genocidal situations the common ground between perpetrators and victims is deliberately obliterated by systematic “us-them” thinking, moral disengagement, dehumanizing and then, finally, blaming the victims. Here and elsewhere, as Waller concludes, “it is safer to be a soldier than a woman.”

The picture remains bleak as the scene shifts to Guatemala and the Congo. Roselyn Costantino analyzes the rape



campaign in Guatemala, primarily from 1960-1996, when tens of thousands of mostly Maya women were tortured, raped, and murdered “as state-sanctioned political acts.” Costantino elucidates the phenomenon of *femicide* and explains the “profound and traumatic shame and guilt” created by sexual violation in Hispanic Roman Catholic and Maya cultures. Lee Ann De Reus reports on rape as a weapon of war in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), a failed state and one of the poorest countries in the world, where the UN estimates that “at least 200,000 women and girls have been raped” since hostilities began in 1996. De Reus paints the terrible picture of the abandonment of the victims of rape by their husbands, families and villages, leaving them alone to deal with their trauma. In 2009, Human Rights Watch labeled the DRC “the worst place in the world to be a woman.”

Today, across the globe, rape is intentionally and systematically used as a weapon of war and genocide, a deliberate policy that attempts to violate, dehumanize, contaminate, and render useless the “property” of others. Many of the authors, however, stress that some progress has been made in combating this gruesome situation. Although late, it is nonetheless significant that international law now accepts the fact that rape can be a genocidal weapon for which individuals are responsible. The key came in the 1996-1998 case against Jean-Paul Akayesu, the Hutu mayor in Rwanda, who was found guilty of committing genocide and using rape to do so. Also, in 2001, three Bosnian Serb leaders were found guilty of war rape, now deemed, along with sexual torture and enslavement, crimes against humanity, and in 2008 in Guatemala, a Law Against Femicide and Other Forms of Violence Against Women was passed. These are important developments but much more needs to be done to enforce such laws and to destroy the mindset that makes systematic rape possible. For one, as Julie Kuhlken insists, by citing repeatedly the 2007 “Report of the United Nations’ Secretary-General on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict” (United Nations/2007/643), the UN must enforce its own principles established to protect all civilians during wartime.

Word must be spread about this horrific situation. The authors are doing just that, as are the recent films discussed in Paul R. Bartrap’s informative contribution (*Black Sun, A Woman in Berlin, Vukovar, Savior, A Sunday in Kigali, and Calling the Ghosts*), and journalists, such as Nicholas D. Kristof of *The New York Times*, who has often decried the desperate situation in the Congo (and is cited by co-editor John K. Roth in his concluding piece). Voice must be given to the victims and solidarity established with them. The Internet can inform millions, help to lobby officials, and spur appropriate legislation. All efforts must be made to enhance women’s public presence worldwide, to empower women globally, to create gender equality and improve women’s peacetime status so as to preclude the “us-them” thinking that has ruled during wartime. Individual nations, the UN, and the international community must assume responsibility for this tragic worldwide condition. Nothing, perhaps, could be greater, in these war-torn areas, than waging a full-time campaign for peace. ✧

Shrouds of Fire

People are murdered.
At the time
some are innocent of “the
cause” - some are not.
Together
theirs is a fiery death.
More often than not
death comes to them out of the sky.
It is sudden. Without warning.
There is no
time for final preparations
no time for prayer – no
time to say good-by.

Some call this
terror
others
the war on terror.
Burned bodies
of grandmothers and children
are their own witness.

How difficult it is
in this world of normalcy
to know right from wrong!
How hard
to hold onto the
lesser of two evils.

Many on the ground
in the killing
fields
are running to or
from
the scene of a new crime.
Some call this homicide
war
and the fist of judgment.
Some call it
vengeance
and the hand of God.

The dying
in shrouds of fire
are invocations of history.

– DAVID SPARENBERG
15 November 2012

DAVID SPARENBERG is author of *Life in the Age of Extinctions, Episodes of a Sentient Soul*. A free e-book version of the book will be available to all from OVI Books at OVI Magazine.com.

Murray Polner

Those Wonderful, Glorious, Frustrating Sixties

WE CAN'T SEEM TO SHAKE THE 1960S. THEY HAUNT our politics and presidential campaigns. They are echoed in ideological battles in *The Weekly Standard*, *National Review*, *The New York Review of Books* and *The Nation*, and in countless Web sites and blogs. The issues raised by the Sixties always reappear when we engage in wars and then clash over the meaning of “American exceptionalism” and the extent of its imperial stretch.

We have always had underground papers both legal and illegal. William Lloyd Garrison’s abolitionist *The Liberator*, Elizabeth Cady Stanton’s and Susan B. Anthony’s early feminist *The Revolution* and Ida B. Wells’ anti-lynching *Free Speech* stand out, and there were also anarchist, trade union and a variety of left- and right-wing papers. And preceding the Sixties presses there were aboveground troublemakers such as *The Village Voice*, Paul Krassner’s *The Realist*, and Bobby Seale’s *Black Panther*.

The Sixties underground press was confrontational and uncompromising and found its voice in spontaneous and argumentative independent papers. Nearly every city and college town had its alternative presses. They were often communal efforts, sometimes amateurish but always passionate. Marxist, Maoist, libertarian, liberal, New Leftish, they were brash, utterly disrespectful, and openly provoked, challenged and alarmed traditional centers of power and our guardians of “law ‘n order.” “Question Authority” proclaimed one well known bumper sticker. Above all, if they had a common denominator it was hatred for the Vietnam War.

Many of the leading actors of that era, from J. Edgar Hoover and Ronald Reagan to Mario Savio and Abbie Hoffman are gone, their legacies left to memoirists and historians. But thanks to veteran editor Ken Wachsberger’s prodigious efforts in *Insider Histories of the Vietnam Era Underground*

Press, Parts 1&2 (Michigan State University Press) we now have a treasured resource in those publications and the reminiscences he has amassed. The writers in these volumes range from the countercultural, gay, feminist, Latino, Native American, Black, leftwing, Southern and New Age scenes with a helpful bibliography appended. The virtue of this extraordinary collection is that it includes contemporary accounts by ordinary people awakened by the war, the draft and other causes meaningful to them.

“Warts and all, the underground press was the dissident brave enough to see through the Empire’s New Clothes,” wrote Abe Peck, professor emeritus at the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University and a close observer of the underground press. It might be excessive and ridiculous, he wrote, even at times wide of the mark. “None of their utopias came to fruition,” but the best of them “also unveiled vistas of What

Might Be, offered an honestly subjective record of life during wartime as an antidote to Official Reality” and “helped to stop a war and unseat two warrior presidents.”

Even the Deep South had them.

“Yes, there was an underground press in Mississippi in the sixties,” begins David Doggett, former editor of *Kudzu*, named after an annoying and prolific southern vine. In a state which Ole Miss professor James Silver once described as “a closed society,” it’s easy to forget the state’s repressive-



Abbie Hoffman visiting the University of Oklahoma to protest the Vietnam War, circa 1969.

MURRAY POLNER co-edits SHALOM

ness in the Sixties. Mississippi was then under the control of the most lawless elements. It's a police state, someone in Vicksburg told me while I was in Mississippi researching a book about the state's Jews during the era of lynching and segregation. Phones were tapped. Mail opened. Faculty fired. Clergy warned. The Ku Klux Klan was omnipresent. Yet the state also nurtured the genius of William Faulkner, Richard Wright and Eudora Welty. And in that storied bastion of white supremacy a group of white kids, "descended from rednecks, slave owners and Bible thumpers" as Doggett describes them, published *Kudzu* for four years in Jackson, the state capital and home of incredibly racist politicians and an unforgiving, thoroughly biased newspaper and local TV station. *Kudzu* survived disdain and constant harassment, but also drew some whites to its side. In 1970, after Cambodia was illegally bombed and invaded and unarmed Kent State students murdered and wounded by National Guardsmen exempt from the draft, Mississippi cops killed two defenseless African-American students at Jackson State. To Doggett's understandable pride, *Kudzu* was "the only paper in Jackson that presented the students' accounts of the killings." Unknown to northerners, two hundred Southern white students joined *Kudzu's* staff members in a protest march.

Many of the other essays are outstanding. JoNina M. Abron, the last editor of the *Black Panther* newspaper, wrote persuasively about the impact of Huey P. Newton's murder. Paul Krehbiel became disgusted working in a filthy, ear-splitting upstate New York factory and decided to establish *New Age*, a progressive paper for his fellow workingmen and -women. Harvey Wasserman contributed "The Joy of Liberation News Service," about the outlet which became a highly regarded news service for Sixties readers and resisted suspected FBI stalking and infiltration.

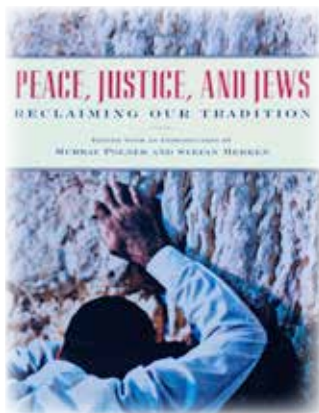
One special target of the military and FBI was the extraordinary proliferation of anti-military papers widely distributed secretly in GI coffee houses and on military bases, many written by draftees and short-term enlistees. Harry W. Haines' gripping article recalls his role in *Aboveground*, printed for two years outside Fort Carson in Colorado. It had a large print run, with pieces on the growing number of war casualties. One of its issues was partially paid for by a Viet-

nam War widow from her late husband's military insurance policy.

The military papers' formats ranged from mimeographed sheets to photo-offset papers, their subjects predictable: demonstrations, riots in army camps, lists of sympathetic lawyers and outside groups. *Fun, Travel, Adventure (FTA)*, out of Fort Knox, Kentucky, once ran a two-part series on the fort's stockade after one GI wondered, "Isn't there one newspaper that cares enough about us to haunt the stockades and report what goes on?" Articles were usually anonymous for fear of punishment. I remember that a soldier-editor of *Fatigue Press* (Fort Hood, Texas) was picked up on a heroin charge, and also that Roger Priest, who produced *OM: The Liberation Newsletter* in Washington, DC, was court-martialed by the Navy. Much like their civilian counterparts, it was a way for antiwar servicemen to get back at the untouchables by embarrassing them and making fun of rigid military society.

The underground press had to contend with three major TV networks and daily newspapers — almost all supportive of the war until the late Sixties — whose coverage and opinions dominated the media and influenced public opinion. One problem the underground presses and Sixties people in general encountered was that too often they offended people they should have tried harder to reach. Like it or not, many Americans, if not a majority, were appalled by their appearance, use of four-letter words, more relaxed approach to sex, and their rare political violence; yet these were also the same Americans who ignored extensive police and military violence. But more significantly, until Vietnam, most Americans believed "politics stopped at the water's edge" — that once the shooting began wars were beyond debate. For proof we need only remember that Americans overwhelmingly elected and re-elected Richard Nixon who hated the rebels' guts and once publicly called them "bums."

The underground press is gone, but a new generation now has the Internet, social media, cable and independent online investigative sites such as Pro Publica, which once again are inviting the children and grandchildren of the men and women who produced so many valuable publications to take another crack at the powerful and unaccountable.—☆



Peace, Justice and Jews: Reclaiming Our Tradition

Edited by Murray Polner and Stefan Merken

A landmark collection of contemporary progressive Jewish thought written by activists from Israel, the U.S. and the U.K.

Publishers Weekly called it "literate, thought-provoking" and "by no means homogeneous" and which looked at "from all angles, the idea that editors Polner and Merken believe reflect the most basic attitude in our Jewish heritage."

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