

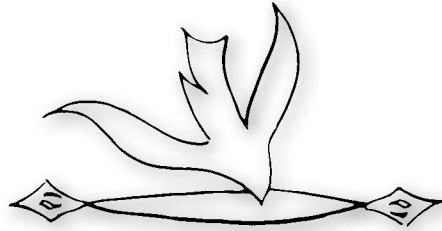
SHALOM

Jewish Peace Letter

Vol. 41 No. 9

Published by the Jewish Peace Fellowship

DECEMBER 2012



A JPF Statement on the Israeli/Gaza War

THE Israeli attack on Gaza and the missile assault by Hamas on Israel not only murder noncombatants but have the potential of bringing much of the Middle East to the brink of a wider war. The continual resort to war and violence by Israelis and Palestinians have never led to peace and never will. Above all, beyond the propaganda, bombs and missiles, there are human beings on both sides who desperately need to live in peace.

The JEWISH PEACE FELLOWSHIP has always believed that the perennial struggle between Israel and Palestinians is a mutual tragedy that can only lead to more deaths, more alienation, more hatred, and more injustice. Beyond stopping the attack, a fair and negotiated settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian question would be a major step towards peace.

Shalom and *Salaam*—if indeed these words are spoken—cannot be heard above this terrible noise of such a horrifying conflict. ☆

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Stefan Merken

An Open Letter to Mori Rothman

AN ISRAELI YOUNG MAN NAMED MORI ROTHMAN is currently claiming Conscientious Objector status after receiving orders to report for duty with the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF). This information was brought to our attention by our friends in the Israeli group New Profiles, which works with men and women who have been imprisoned because of their refusal to serve in the IDF. At this writing Mori is serving his second ten-day imprisonment term. Letters of support to Mori and others, and their addresses, are below. You can also send copies to New Profile via e-mail to: messages2prison@newprofile.org.

An Open Letter to Mori Rothman

To:

Mori (Moriel) Rothman

Military ID 5410557

Military Prison No. 6

Military Postal Code 01860, IDF

Israel

Fax:++972-4-9540580

Dear Mori Rothman,

Other than our Jewish heritage, we share a great deal in common. When I was eighteen during the Vietnam War I applied for Conscientious Objector status. I was morally and religiously unable to serve in the military. I am sure that if anyone were to understand the reasons you cannot serve in the IDF and why I could not serve in the US military the answer would be based on the same values we both inherited from Judaism.

Our religion teaches us about the value of all life as well as how to act ethically. These values are taught through Bible stories, and from the Torah, the Talmud, and our families and traditions. I was steeped in these lessons as a child, as I am sure you were.

Several young boys who went through *heder* with me had no hesitations about joining the military. On the other hand, I could not bear the idea of taking part in any mil-



itary machine created to train people to kill and control others. I applied for CO status. After many meetings with my draft board, I was finally granted CO status and then completed two years of alternative service.

Understandably you may have many conflicted feelings. Whatever they may be, they surely revolve about reaching a decision about potentially taking the life of another human, or being part of a military engaged in fighting Palestinians and perhaps others in seemingly endless warfare.

What you write about your choice of nonviolence as a way of life is wise and memorable:

But it cannot be said lightly, the time has long passed for gentle language and “hear-able” rhetoric: The Occupation—which is the IDF’s primary function these days—is cruelty and injustice manifest. The Occupation is anti-God, anti-Love and staggeringly, constantly violent. The Occupation is based on a system of racial/ethnic separation that does, in fact, resemble South African apartheid and segregation in the southern United States until the mid-1960s. And this “temporary” Occupation is not “on its way out,” but is rather growing in strength every single day. There is almost zero political will within Israel’s government to end it, and the Israeli public has largely accepted the status quo, in which the Occupation is basically a theoretical question, and one of which many have grown tired. But the Occupation can only be theoretical if you are not occupied, and thus my

STEFAN MERKEN is chair of the Jewish Peace Fellowship.

refusal to support the Occupation by serving in the IDF is also an act of solidarity with Palestinians living under Occupation.

Mori, please keep your spirit up. Keep believing in the good that you are doing in resisting participation in violence and killing. Know that we hear your words, agree with you, and that you have our unwavering support.

Shalom,
Stefan Merken, *Chair,*
JEWISH PEACE FELLOWSHIP

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

1. *Send Letters of Support*

Please send Mori Rothman letters of support to the prison address above and via e-mail to: messages2prison@newprofile.org.

2. *Letters to Authorities*

Mr. Ehud Barak
Minister of Defense
Ministry of Defense
Hakiryia,
Tel-Aviv 61909
Israel
E-mail: sar@mod.gov.il or pniot@mod.gov.il
Tel.: ++972-3-6975220 • Fax: ++972-3-6962757

Copies of your letters can also be sent to the commander

of the military prison at:

Commander of Military Prison No. 6
Military Prison No. 6
Military Postal Code 01860, IDF
Israel
Fax: ++972-4-9540580

Another useful address for sending copies would be the Military Attorney General:

Denny Efroni
Chief Military Attorney
Military postal code 9605, IDF
Israel
Fax: ++972-3-569-45-26

New Profile also informs us that it may be especially useful to send your appeals to the Commander of the Induction Base in Tel-HaShomer. It is this officer who ultimately decides whether an objector is to be exempt from military service or sent to serve yet another round in prison, and it is the same officer who is ultimately in charge of the military Conscience Committee:

Gil Ben Shaul
Commander of Induction Base
Meitav, Tel-HaShomer
Military Postal Code 02718, IDF
Israel
Fax: ++972-3-737-60-52

Please circulate Mori's message as widely as possible through e-mail, Web sites, social networks, conventional media, word of mouth, etc. ☆

Yes! Here is my tax-deductible contribution to the Jewish Peace Fellowship!



\$25 / \$36 / \$50 / \$100 / \$250 / \$500 / \$1000 / Other \$ _____

Enclosed is my check, payable to "Jewish Peace Fellowship"

Phone: _____

E-mail address: _____

(Please provide your name and address below so that we may properly credit your contribution.)

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY / STATE / ZIP _____

Below, please clearly print the names and addresses, including e-mail, of friends you think might be interested in supporting the aims of the Jewish Peace Fellowship.

Mail this slip and your contribution to:
Jewish Peace Fellowship ☆ Box 271 ☆ Nyack, NY 10960-0271

Robert C. Koehler

Empire and Its Consequences

EVER NOTICE THE WAY CERTAIN basic human values quietly transform into their opposite on their way to becoming national policy?

At the human level, the immorality of murder is fundamental, and most people understand the insanity of armed hatred. Keeping these dark forces under wraps is essential to the existence of human society. So why is it, then, that at the abstract level of nationalism, those forces are honored, worshiped, saluted, extolled as glorious, and given command of an enormous budget?

Why is it that their perpetuation via increasingly sophisticated technology is equated with national security and no one talks about the completely predictable negative consequences of basing security on murder and hatred?

And why does it feel so naïve to be asking such questions?

It's as though the arrangement was settled four or five millennia ago. Killing is wrong, but we have to kill one another, you know, in self-defense, in order to survive. And hating people is wrong — mocking them, dehumanizing them — but some people ask for it. They do it to us, so we have no choice but to do it back. Hate, dehumanize, eliminate our enemies and . . . voilà, we're safe, at least for the time being. What don't you get about that?

Criticism of such policy is generally couched in terms

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Air Force recruits during basic military training at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas.

that remove the alleged naïveté of the criticism, but I'm wondering if it isn't time to stare directly at the fundamental wrongness of war. Let me put it as nakedly as I can: A policy of murder and hatred is, in itself, morally wrong as well as strategically untenable. Anything that flows from such a policy, even if it seems to be beneficial — such as regional dominance, access to oil, suppression of an enemy's power or plain old revenge — is inherently unstable and doomed to disastrous failure. This may be the way empires act, but it's bad policy. If it creates "collateral damage," it's bad policy.

I put it this way because I'm haunted by the statistic that US military veterans are committing suicide at the rate of eighteen per day and that the term for the condition of many, maybe most, veterans and soldiers after their deployments in Afghanistan and Iraq is moral injury. Their lives have been seriously damaged not just by physical and psychological injury but by something

else as well: by having transgressed a fundamental spiritual threshold and severed the connection that unites us. We can't dehumanize others without doing the same to ourselves, and waking up to the reality of such a state is sometimes unbearable.

And it's not just the deployment — the participation in an inhumane occupation and war — that dehumanizes. The military training that precedes deployment is where it starts. The training is not simply in the craft and technology of killing, but in the dehumanizing of self and other. The US military, whatever else it is, is a cult of hatred with a virtually unlimited budget. This has been born out in the testimony of numerous vets over the years, testimony that could fill volumes. For example:

"I joined the Army on my eighteenth birthday. When I joined I was told racism was gone from the military," Mike Prysner said during the 2008 Winter Soldier hearings. "After 9/11, I [began hearing] 'towel head,' 'camel jockey,' 'sand nigger.' These came from up the chain of command. The new word was 'hadji.' A hadji is someone who takes a pilgrimage to Mecca. We took the best thing from Islam and made it the worst thing," Prysner was part of a panel called "Racism and War: the Dehumanization of the Enemy."

Military recruits march to cadences that celebrate killing children in the marketplace and cry "kill" before they can eat a meal. They're told they're animals, stripped of "sentimental" feelings, trained to kill on command with cold efficiency. In that condition they serve US foreign policy.

The argument, of course, is that we have enemies out there who despise us and want what we have, and our only protection is a layer of ruthless, well-armed killers who patrol the perimeter and keep our communities and our children safe. The argument is that our foreign policy is ultimately humane, that it spreads democracy, that it targets only bad guys and protects decent people everywhere.

But this argument breaks down when you look at what we have done, from Dresden and Hiroshima to My Lai and

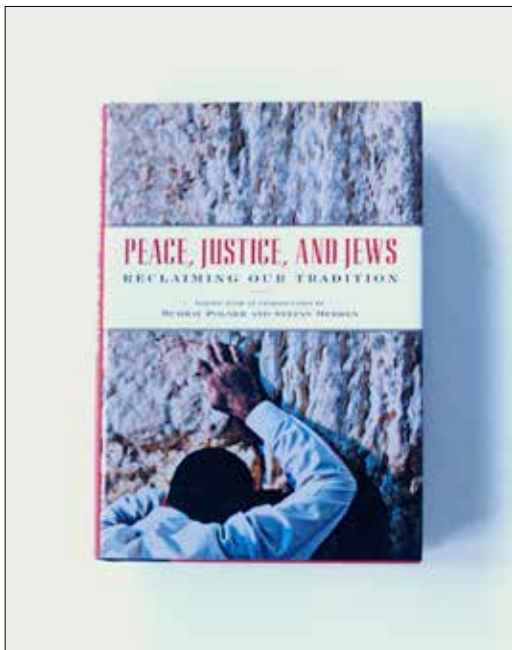
Fallujah. It breaks down when you read about the rationale of our massive bombing of Baghdad at the start of the Iraq war, as spelled out by Harlan K. Ullman and James P. Wade in the 1996 Defense Department publication, "Shock and Awe: Achieving Rapid Dominance":

The intent here is to impose a regime of *Shock and Awe* through delivery of instant, nearly incomprehensible levels of massive destruction directed at influencing society writ large, meaning its leadership and public, rather than targeting directly against military or strategic objectives. . . .

The employment of this capability against society and its values, called "counter-value" . . . [consists of] massively destructive strikes directly at the public will of the adversary to resist.

This is the morality of empire, the morality of domination. We didn't invent it; we just carry on the tradition, which goes back through colonialism and slavery to the Inquisition ("kill them all, let God sort them out") to Rome ("they create a wasteland and call it peace") and beyond, to the dawn of civilization.

I think the consequences have finally caught up with us. ☆



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."

Publishers Weekly concluded: "There is much to learn here for anyone, Jew or Gentile, interested in global issues of peace and justice."

\$25.00 per copy, plus \$5.00 for shipping

Jeremy Kuzmarov

Hillary Clinton Visits Laos

*An Opportunity for Historians to Shed Greater Light
On the Devastation Bred by the Vietnam War*

THE RECENT VISIT OF SECRETARY OF STATE HILARY Clinton to Laos, the first by an American official in over four decades, has raised badly needed attention on one of the darkest episodes of American history: the clandestine bombing of Laos during the Vietnam War. Clinton made the trip to Laos as part of the U.S. “pivot” strategy in Southeast Asia, pledging nine million dollars in support of bomb clearance initiatives. For many years the US refused to pay any reparations to Laos for war damage or accept any responsibility for civilian casualties and environmental devastation. During Clinton’s stay, she met with victims of the secret war such as Phongsavath Souliyalat, who lost his eyesight and both hands to a previously undetonated cluster bomb on his sixteenth birthday just a few years ago. “So many survivors are without help. Their life is very, very hard,” Souliyalat reportedly told her.

From 1964-1973, the United States Air Force dropped over two million tons of bombs, including white phosphorus, predominantly along the Ho Chi Minh Trail and on the northern Plain of Jars, with the aim of interdicting supply routes and breaking enemy morale. Laos became enmeshed in the Vietnam War because of ties between the Communist Pathet Lao and Vietnamese revolutionary movement. The Pathet Lao were driven underground after they had won a majority of seats in the 1958 elections, with the US claim-

ing that the North Vietnamese had invaded Laos to justify escalation of war. The CIA created a secret anticommunist army among the Hmong, and the Pentagon ran the air war from bases in Thailand. On the Plain of Jars, countless villages were leveled and thousands of civilians were wounded or killed as part of an explicit strategy designed to destroy the “material basis of the civilian society” in Pathet Lao-controlled zones. Their livestock and cattle depleted, peasants survived by living in underground caves and farming their fields at night. Over a quarter of the population was forced to flee to refugee camps, where malnutrition and disease were



Secretary Clinton places lotus flowers on the lap of the Buddha sculpture at Ho Phrakeo, July 12, 2012.

rampant. Expressing himself in verse, one refugee lamented, “What terrible sadness, so many loved ones killed, because of the huge bombs the airplanes rained down upon us, so many loved ones forced to leave their native villages, leaving behind spacious ricefields and gardens now turned to dust.”

By the end of the war, much of the northeastern part of the countryside had been turned into a “wasteland” reminiscent of “the pocked, churned earth in storm-hit areas of the North African desert,” according to the journalist T. D. Allman. Fred Branfman, an International Voluntary Service employee, whose book, *Voices from the Plain of Jars*, is one of the few written from the perspective of the Lao peasants, characterized it as a “lake of blood” where “after a recorded history of seven hundred years, civilized society had ceased to exist.” He added: “[A] new type of warfare had been developed, fought not by men but machines and which could erase distant and unseen societies clandestinely, unknown to and even unsuspected by the world outside.”

JEREMY KUZMAROV is J.P. Walker assistant professor of history, University of Tulsa. and author of The Myth of the Addicted Army: Vietnam and the Modern War on Drugs. A version of this essay appeared in History News Network.org.

For all the devastation, the bombing attacks did little to diminish the strength of the revolutionary movement, whose cadres hid deep in the forest and made use of effective spy networks. The CIA's clandestine army meanwhile was decimated and forced to recruit child soldiers for a "one-way helicopter ride to death," as Allman characterized it.

At the end of the war, *New York Times* columnist Anthony Lewis characterized the secret bombing campaign in Laos as "the most appalling episode of lawless cruelty in American history." Since that time, however, it has been predominantly forgotten in American society and written out of the history books. John L. Gaddis' triumphalist history of the Cold War, for example, does not bother discussing it. And while the Vietnam War has been the subject of countless monographs, many historians have neglected to consider the viewpoint of the Indochinese peasants, focusing more on Washington politics. Some authors continue to demonize the revolutionary movement and whitewash the US war record. This is most apparent in so-called postwar revisionist histories.

With the exception of Alfred W. McCoy's writings, the few books published on Laos are of varying quality and generally do little justice to the victims of US bombing campaigns. Timothy Castle's book, *At War in the Shadow of Vietnam*, provides important information and recounts the author's flying over the Plain of Jars in 1990 and seeing massive bombing scars still visible. However, Castle writes that "the steady stream of Vietnamese trucks that I saw ... were a quick reminder of why the area had been such an important target" — ignoring documentation which shows that Vietnamese involvement in Laos was constantly exaggerated by US policy-



June 2009: Ruins of Muang Khoun, former capital of Xieng Khuang province, destroyed by US bombs in the late 1960s.

makers and escalated sharply only after the bombing attacks had begun. Meanwhile, Jeremi Suri's much acclaimed biography, *Henry Kissinger and the American Century*, gives Kissinger a complete pass, claiming that he was in no way responsible for mass killings that resulted from policies he and Nixon implemented. Suri ignores Kissinger's role in the bombing attacks in Laos, paralleling those in Cambodia. Branfman and another IVS volunteer, Walter Haney, pleaded with Kissinger to halt the bombing as a result of its near-genocidal consequences

— a plea Kissinger refused to consider. (A member of his staff responded in cold, bureaucratic language that the North Vietnamese were the aggressors in the war, and US bombing was defensive.)

Such works contribute to amnesia surrounding the Vietnam War and absolve US policymakers of any responsibility for its devastation. These works in turn help to reinforce nationalist myths surrounding America's supposedly virtuous foreign policy intentions, turn attention away from the plight of the victims and contribute to a political climate where more wars can be fought and more bombing or drone attacks ordered.

Although Clinton's recent visit is the product of efforts to cultivate new allies to undermine the Chinese, it has had the effect of casting attention on bombing attacks from a generation ago, which have resulted in the killing or maiming of an estimated twenty thousand Laotian people since the Vietnam War ended. Clinton's visit in turn provides an opportunity for historians to rectify past failures and contribute to a more meaningful and honest public debate about the Vietnam War and its consequences. ☆

SHALOM *Jewish Peace Letter*

Published by the Jewish Peace Fellowship • Box 271 • Nyack, N.Y. 10960 • (845) 358-4601

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Established in 1941

E-mail: jpf@forusa.org • **World Wide Web:** <http://www.jewishpeacefellowship.org>

Signed articles are the opinions of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the views of the JPF.

Murray Polner

War Crimes: Who Is Accountable?

IN OCTOBER 1944, GENERAL TOMOYUKI YAMASHITA was assigned to lead the Japanese forces in the Philippines. Ten days later US army units began landing in Luzon and Leyte to open the campaign to liberate the Philippines. Before and after Yamashita's arrival the Japanese had carried out the identical brutality they had too often meted out to civilians and POWs throughout Asia and elsewhere. Filipinos and foreigners living in the islands were singled out, especially in Manila where a bloodbath had been carried out,

It was called the "Manila Massacre," which Yamashita insisted he never ordered. He was arrested soon after the Japanese surrendered. In the first war crimes trial of the Pacific war, he was tried by five generals, found guilty, and executed by hanging. His chief counsel, the American Colonel Harry Clarke, objected, saying he was not found guilty for having done something specific but rather "solely with having been something," in this instance commander of troops who had committed war crimes. When the case was appealed to the US Supreme Court and judgment denied, two justices, Frank Murphy and Wiley Rutledge, described the verdict as unjust.

What is most significant is that the Supreme Court has never rejected this principle, which holds that a military commander can be blamed for murder, rape and other horrible crimes carried out by troops under his command even if he had not ordered them to do so. Since then the "Yamashita

Standard" as it is known, has been upheld as the law of the land.

Allan A. Ryan relates the entire story in *Yamashita's Ghost: War Crimes, MacArthur's Justice and Command Accountability* (University Press of Kansas, 2012). He once clerked for Supreme Court Justice Byron White, was a US Marine Corps judge advocate, chief prosecutor of Nazis who fled to the US and lied about their criminal past, and has written an impressive and important book about the case in which he is unashamedly sympathetic to Yamashita and critical of the military judges and their superior, the imperious Douglas MacArthur.

Ryan sums up the case this way:

"But Yamashita's ghost lingers in the law. Born in an unprecedented and ambiguous charge by a vindictive American general, nurtured by a misbegotten trial by his subordinates, deferentially upheld by America's highest court, shaped by two panels

of American judges at Nuremberg, and incorporated into official American policy and international tribunals, it has loomed over the international law of war for too long."

Yamashita's Ghost notes that the general was the conqueror of Malaya and Singapore in 1942. Somehow, he alienated the hawkish Hideki Tojo and his war party who exiled him to northern China, by then hardly a war zone. After the fall of Tojo he was sent by the successor military regime in Tokyo to the Philippines, a lost cause as American forces had destroyed the Japanese navy and was on the brink of invading the islands to retake them.



October 1945: Japanese General Tomoyuki Yamashita, flanked by his counsel, at his trial at Manila.

MURRAY POLNER co-edits SHALOM.

To Ryan, Yamashita “was a dignified and thoughtful man” respected by the American military lawyers who defended him in court. Yamashita, he agrees, never ordered the “Manila Massacre” and instead had ordered his officers to leave the city when invading American forces approached. The breakdown of communications and an aggressive Japanese naval command allowed the slaughters and rapes to proceed.

Why, then, did MacArthur insist that Yamashita be tried? “What motivated MacArthur?” asks Ryan? Admittedly no one knows, not even his biographers. The chief prosecutor speculated that MacArthur wanted people to learn about the atrocious crimes committed by the Japanese. MacArthur explained the execution of Yamashita this way: He “failed his duty to his troops, to his country, to his enemy, to mankind; has failed entirely his soldier faith.”

We can only guess that MacArthur’s domineering personality and the fact that he was the son of the early twentieth-century American commander of the islands may have played a role. Or perhaps it was the earlier loss of the Philippines in 1942, one of the greatest single defeats in American military history. What we do know is that MacArthur wanted Yamashita (and General Masaharu Homma, the man who defeated the American general in ’42) executed as quickly as possible.

The military judges MacArthur selected were answerable to him. They were without legal experience and during the trial accepted hearsay and even double hearsay as evidence. When Frank Reel, a defense lawyer, protested the court’s acceptance of a suspected Japanese collaborator’s testimony that he heard another collaborator, Artemio Ricarte, claim he had personally heard Yamashita’s order to kill, General Russell Reynolds, the presiding judge, asked Reel to explain “if all hearsay is excluded in court testimony.” Reynolds’ lack of legal knowledge astounded all the lawyers present. “Imagine the judge asking the defense counsel what the law is,” later wrote Lieutenant George Mountz, a defense lawyer. In any event all their objections were rejected. Robert Trumbull, who covered the trial for *The New York Times*, could only conclude “the rule of evidence set forth in General MacArthur’s directive can be boiled down to two words: anything goes.”

A prosecution witness stated that the late Artemio Ricarte’s grandson, fluent in Japanese, had actually interpreted Yamashita’s remarks ordering the carnage, a statement contradicted by the fourteen-year-old grandson who was reared in Japan and testified in Japanese. Time and again the boy vehemently denied ever having heard such a remark. “I know that any talk that my grandfather and General Yamashita talked together [hearing the orders being given] is a lie, and I came here today hoping to prove that.” His testimony stunned the court though it never altered the ultimate unanimous verdict. “In ten minutes,” Ryan comments, “the defense had obliterated the only evidence so far that, how-

ever dubiously, had actually linked Yamashita personally to the horrors that Japanese soldiers had committed.” The case, Robert Trumbull wrote in one of his reports, was “entirely in MacArthur’s hands.” No one in Washington objected.

Ryan also poses a very difficult question: To what extent can the Yamashita Standard be used to prosecute those who instigated and led the US invasions of Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan, where there may well have been war crimes? Had the Yamashita Standard been used in these wars, what high-ranking generals and political leaders might have been held responsible for My Lai, Abu Ghraib and torture? Is no one at the top ever accountable?

In the midst of the My Lai investigation General Telford Taylor, who had been a chief counsel at Nuremberg, published his book, *Nuremberg and Vietnam: An American Tragedy*, which raised the implications of the Yamashita ruling. Punishing only junior officers and enlisted men was hardly the point. According to Taylor, the chain of command from generals in the field up to the Joint Chiefs of Staff should be accountable for the behavior of troops in Vietnam. Of course, no American general or politician will ever be convicted because troops may have tortured and killed enemy prisoners. “The United States,” Ryan angrily concludes, “devised the Yamashita precedent, but it has never lifted the chalice to its own lips.”

A quarter of a century after he argued Yamashita’s case before the Supreme Court, Frank Reel, a Yamashita defense lawyer, wrote a letter to *The New York Times* quoting Taylor that “Under the Yamashita rule as set down by the United States Supreme Court, [Vietnam War General] Westmoreland would be convicted.” Now he was absolutely not urging that American generals or presidents be tried under the Yamashita Standard [because] “the concept of punishing a man, not for anything he has done but because of a position he has held is abhorrent. It smacks of totalitarian tyranny rather than Anglo-Saxon law.” In effect, he was reminding Americans of the injustice of Yamashita’s trial and punishment.

Ryan’s challenging and brilliant book cites Dick Camp’s “Talking with the Enemy,” published in *Leatherneck* in 2008, in which Marine Major Harry Pratt, the Yamashita trial’s chief interpreter, described the experience as “very worrisome. War crimes trials are a function of the victors. I could then and still find, that this law of command responsibility might well be charged against our own commanders under circumstances beyond their control.”

Before he was hanged, Yamashita thanked his captors and lawyers “for their tolerance and rightful judgment,” adding, “I don’t blame my executioners. I will pray God bless them.” MacArthur sent three generals to observe the hanging.

And before Homma, a general held responsible for the Bataan Death March — which he denied — was killed, he told the officer in charge of his firing squad, “I’m being shot tonight because we lost the war.” ☆

Patrick Henry

Jewish Resistance to the Nazis

ALTHOUGH THE MYTH OF JEWISH PASSIVITY DURING the Holocaust has been thoroughly discredited in the scholarly world, it lives on in the popular mentality and is often expressed in such phrases as “the Jews were led to the slaughter like sheep.” The Nazis played a major role in the dissemination of this myth; in the twisted Nazi psyche, blaming the victim somehow exculpated the killers from their crimes. This myth also served to justify the bystanders. If the Jews did nothing to save themselves, why should others have risked their lives to help them?

The reality of Jewish resistance to the Nazis, however, has been elucidated not only in specialized monograph studies but even in the most general works on the Holocaust. In 1968, for example, Yuri Suhl edited, translated, and published an anthology of texts, *They Fought Back: The Story of Jewish Resistance in Nazi Europe*, which document concrete examples of Jewish resistance to the Nazis. Almost forty years later, the Museum of Jewish Heritage published *Daring to Resist: Jewish Defiance in the Holocaust*, which contains many first-hand accounts written during the Shoah by courageous Jews, male and female, who were fighting back in the ghettos, forests, and camps.

The Jews were victims, objects of hateful Nazi ideology,

PATRICK HENRY is *Cushing Eells Emeritus Professor of Philosophy and Literature at Whitman College in Walla Walla, Washington. He is the author of We Only Know Men: The Rescue of Jews in France during the Holocaust (Catholic University of America Press, 2007), and editor of the forthcoming Jewish Resistance to the Nazis (Catholic University of America Press, 2013). He is a Contributing Editor of SHALOM.*

but they were also subjects, with extremely limited choices, seeking ways of survival for themselves and their families in a situation rife with collaboration and structured overwhelmingly for their demise. For one thing, when it was still possible, Jews fled for their safety from countries such as Poland, Germany, Austria, and France: well over four hundred thousand German and Austrian Jews left their countries between 1933 and 1939; in Germany itself, unbelievably,



Naliboki, Poland, 1943: Armed partisans from the Bielski unit.

eighty-three percent of Jews under the age of twenty-four managed to escape by 1939; among them were roughly ten thousand children who left on *Kindertransports* to England and the Netherlands. Over three hundred thousand Polish Jews fled to Soviet-occupied Poland and many other Jews in France and Italy sought refuge in Spain and Switzerland and, during the first years of Nazi rule, the number of Jews in the *Yishuv* (“settlement,” the organized, pre-state of Israel Jewish community in Palestine)

doubled from two hundred thousand to four hundred thousand. The first major form of Jewish resistance was flight and there is nothing passive about flight.

Jews offered armed resistance in ghettos, camps, forests, and in organized resistance movements throughout occupied-Europe. Within the ghettos of Eastern Europe, where the populations were weakened by starvation and disease, in addition to armed revolts in dozens of ghettos in occupied Poland and the Soviet Union, there were two major uprisings. These revolts, in the Warsaw and Bialystok ghettos, were undertaken without any hope of forcing the Germans to change their plans regarding Jews. The only hope was that some of the ghetto dwellers might escape to join the partisans. Generally these heroic and futile acts of resistance against insurmountable odds were immediately crushed, although the Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto held out for four months, longer

than some national armies did.

There were also Jewish underground resistance groups in many of the concentration camps, including Maidanek, Dachau, and Buchenwald, and three major armed revolts within the death camps. "In every instance," notes Primo Levi, these armed uprisings "were planned and led by prisoners who were privileged in some way and, consequently, in better physical and spiritual condition than the average camp prisoner." At Treblinka in August 1943, seven hundred and fifty prisoners escaped but only seventy survived the war. At Sobibor in October 1943, more than three hundred prisoners escaped, many of whom were later killed. The Germans liquidated the camp after executing all the remaining prisoners. Finally, in October 1944, in Auschwitz II Birkenau, a group of Jewish *Sonderkommandos*, prisoners assigned to work inside the gas chambers and the

crematoria, aware that they were soon to be liquidated and having only explosives for weapons, blew up Crematorium 4. All participants were executed, including the women who provided the explosives. This was an act of pure rebellion with death to the participants assured in advance, an act of heroism, of choosing to die otherwise than as their captors planned, and of leaving a legacy of resistance. About to be hanged, one of the women, Rosa Robota, shouted, "*Hazak V'Amatz*," (Be strong and courageous), the Biblical words that Moses had said to Joshua as he assumed leadership. With one exception, these Jewish-initiated uprisings were the only uprisings against the Nazis in the camps.

In Eastern Europe, Jews escaped from the ghettos to join guerilla outfits struggling against the Germans. In these partisan forest brigades, Jewish resistance was successful and thousands of Jewish participants survived the war. It has been estimated that roughly thirty thousand Jews fought in partisan units in the forests of Belorussia and western Ukraine alone. Jewish partisan groups also fought with the partisans in Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Greece. All of these groups derailed trains, destroyed bridges, and committed various acts of sabotage that took the lives of thousands of Germans.

In Western Europe, where there were few ghettos and where the Jewish population was much smaller than in Eastern Europe, there was, proportionately speaking, a large percentage of Jews in the underground Resistance in France, Italy, Greece, and Belgium. Jews also joined the Resistance in North Africa in large numbers. They were soldiers in every army fielded by the Allies. Finally, there were over half a million Jews in the United States armed forces during World War II and, among the Allies, Jews constituted by themselves an army more than a million and a half strong.



Rosa Robota: "Hazak V'Amatz" (Be strong and courageous).

When we consider the extent of Jewish resistance throughout Occupied Europe (in every Nazi-occupied country, in the forests, the ghettos, and the camps) and the hopelessness of the situation in most cases (the lack of arms, of training, of a home country, the general indifference or hostility of the surrounding populations of non-Jews) and the vicious, stunningly disproportionate reprisals taken by the Nazis, it is less surprising that not all Jews resisted than it is that so many did in so many different places and in so many different ways.

One major goal of our forthcoming volume has been to expand the notion of resistance to include not only violent resistance but nonviolent resistance as well. Resistance mounted by Jews against the Nazis and their collaborators included many different types of actions. While some were violent and confrontational in nature, many were nonviolent, de-

fensive, or clandestine. In all cases of resistance, armed and nonviolent, we consider Jewish resistance to be resistance by Jewish persons in Jewish organizations and by Jewish persons working within non-Jewish organizations.

In the ghettos of Eastern Europe, where people were starving to death and diseases were rampant, Jewish organizations promoted educational and cultural activities. Here, more generally, nonviolent forms of resistance would have included any life-sustaining activities or actions that fostered human dignity in the face of a cruel machine designed to extinguish it: smuggling in and sharing food, clothing, and medicine; putting on plays, poetry readings, and art exhibits; creating orchestras, orphanages, study groups, and other morale building acts of solidarity; publishing underground newspapers, founding schools, establishing religious activities, and documenting one's experiences (in diaries, for example).

In the camps too, but much more strikingly, any attempt by sick, starving human beings to stay clean, to care for the dying, to pray, to observe Shabbat, to say Kaddish for their fallen relatives and friends, to read, or to remain physically, intellectually, culturally, theologically, and morally alive constituted resistance to Nazi restrictions, which were designed to demolish individuals, to destroy their souls and their wills, and as Primo Levi has written, to "annihilate us first as men in order to kill us more slowly afterwards...to kill [us] first in our spirit long before our anonymous death." It was only by fierce rebellion against the laws of life in the camps, the intractable laws of anonymity and conformity, that Jews were on occasion able to create communities of resistance.

Outside the camps, nonviolent resistance focused large-

ly, although not exclusively, on rescue. Throughout all of Nazi-occupied Europe, Jews, particularly Jewish children, were sheltered in non-Jewish institutions, homes, and farms, and smuggled into neutral countries such as Switzerland, Spain and Sweden. It has been estimated that somewhere between five and ten percent of the three million Jews who survived the Shoah in Europe were rescued. Despite all the attempts to save children, however, a million and a half Jewish children were slaughtered by the Nazis. Only eleven percent of European Jewish children alive in 1939 survived the war. As regards hidden children throughout occupied Europe, we can never overemphasize the fact that the first rescuers were Jewish parents. Separating oneself from one's children on the mere hope of their being rescued (and, for reasons of safety, almost always without knowing where one's children would be hidden) was at once the most courageous and anguished choice Jewish parents had to make and the ultimate act of resistance against the annihilation of European Jewry.

Here in the realm of rescue, particularly when compared to the acclaim granted non-Jewish rescuers, the tremendous role played by Jews in the rescue of other Jewish persons, often working in Jewish organizations and in conjunction with non-Jews, has not received sufficient academic study and appropriate public recognition. Even armed resisters recognized the importance of rescue and other forms of unarmed humanitarian resistance which, in the final analysis, saved more Jews than armed resistance. Take, for example, the case of Tuvia Bielski who, with his brothers Asael and Zus, saved twelve hundred Jews of all ages in the forests of Belorussia in what became known as "Bielski's Shtetl." When asked about his

activities, he clearly expressed his preference for rescue over combat against the Nazis: "So few of us are left, we have to save lives. To save a Jew is much more important than to kill Germans." In addition to the depiction of the Ghetto Fighters and the Forest Warriors, perhaps future iconography of Jewish resistance to the Nazis will include images of Jewish couples entrusting their children to Jewish humanitarian workers in the internment camps and ghettos throughout Europe, workers who risked their lives to find shelter for those children, as well as images of Jewish men and women, crossing borders and leading other Jewish people to safety in places such as Switzerland, Spain, Sweden and Turkey.

OUR VOLUME CONTAINS TWENTY-THREE ESSAYS THAT investigate the myth of Jewish passivity and the reality of Jewish resistance to the Nazis in France, Belgium, Italy, Greece, the Netherlands, Scandinavia, the Yishuv, Germany, Austria, Croatia, Poland, Romania, Ukraine, Belarus, Slovakia and Hungary. Other essays examine Jewish resistance in the ghettos and the camps. Still others study children as resisters and music as resistance. Our goal is not only to put to rest the myth of Jewish passivity and to demonstrate that Jews resisted everywhere, but to indicate that how they resisted was contingent upon many factors, including temporal ones, geography, shifting Nazi policies, and the disposition of indigenous non-Jewish populations toward them. Our ultimate goal was to produce a reasonably comprehensive handbook on Jewish resistance to the Nazis, an indispensable guide for Holocaust scholars and general readers. ☆