

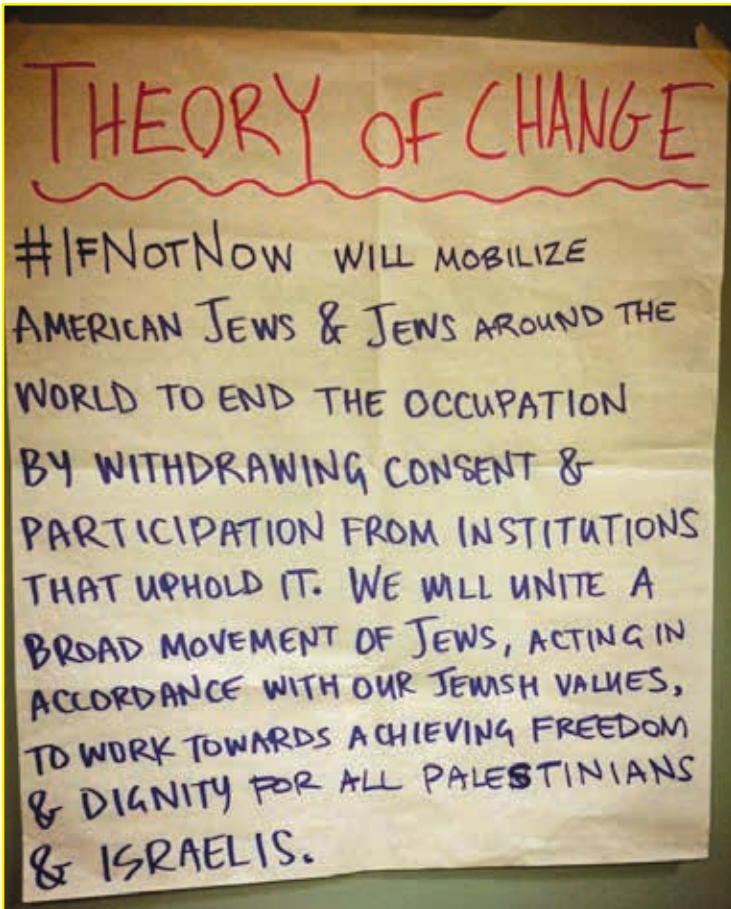
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Violence at Home, Violence Abroad

THERE HAS BEEN SO MUCH TALK IN THE NEWS OF late about the way some football players have abused women. It all came to a boiling point when Ray Rice, the Baltimore Ravens’s star running back, was videotaped slugging his then fiancée and knocking her out in an elevator. (She later married him.) Violence against women is wrong. About that there can be no debate. But athletes are only a small part of the problem.

Daily we hear news of new wars flaring up, some that involve the US. We are presently bombing ISIS in Iraq and Syria, threatening again to put “boots on the ground” in Iraq and elsewhere. Congress has voted to spend lots of money for Syrian rebels, though no-one seems to know who the different groups represent or what they stand for, and for training the Kurds, all in hopes of defeating ISIS. Meanwhile Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Turkey are allowing the US to spend the money and if necessary do the fighting. Then there is the Ukrainian-Russian border conflict and the bloody Israel-Gaza cease fire, both of which threaten to be no more than temporary truces while the real problems remain ignored.

How can we select one situation — domestic abuse by

football players — and dwell on it when our whole society is focused on violence? Watching television in the evening and searching for a program *not* based on violence is no easy task. How do we expect our young to grow up and not believe that the way to solve a problem is through violence? How do we expect football players, who are trained to be violent on the field of play, not to take that home with them?

Football is a violent game and some players may find it hard to distinguish between the playing field and home. And men and women who return from the battlefield have a difficult time fitting back into society and living normal lives. They have seen the horrors of killing, both of their own and those we call the enemy. Can we finally come to a place someday where wars are outmoded?

I look at the history of the violence against women, children, the disabled and elderly and wonder how will it all end. But what we need to do is begin to have a national conversation about the attack on the weak and vulnerable. Until then, trying to fix the very real problem of violence in our society, when we have one war after another, is like commanding ocean tides to stop as the waves wash over us. ✧

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Sarah Posner

The Collapse of the American Jewish Center

LAST SUMMER, A GROUP OF YOUNG AMERICAN JEWS gathered outside the New York offices of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, the umbrella organization founded in the 1950s and which claims to speak for a consensus of the American Jewish community. The young Jews outside, though, were challenging that organization's claim to speak in their name. They read aloud the names of Palestinians and Israelis killed in the latest military escalation between Israel and Hamas in the Gaza Strip, and they recited the Mourner's Kaddish.

A few days later, the group delivered a letter to the Conference's CEO, Malcolm Hoenlein, demanding "that the Conference of Presidents join our call to stop the war on Gaza, end the occupation, and forge a path forward for freedom and dignity for all people in Israel and Palestine." Nine activists were arrested for civil disobedience.

Hoenlein called the protest "very insignificant" and the protesters "Jewish kids who are misguided."

Known as #IfNotNow (a use of the well-known words of the first-century rabbinical sage Hillel), the group is made up of Jewish activists, some of whom are veterans of J Street, the inside-the-Beltway advocacy group launched in 2008 that describes itself as "the political home for pro-Israel, pro-peace Americans."

Carinne Luck, a former J Street chief of staff and vice-president for field and campaigns, who is part of #IfNotNow, said it is "not a direct response to or turning away from J Street," but #IfNotNow's existence "does speak to the lack of spaces in our community to take these actions and speak

with this kind of voice."

Rising tensions between the supporters of Israel's use of military force and the dissenters has led to an unprecedented polarization in the American Jewish community as Israel's



Young American Jews gather outside the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, challenging its claim to speak in their name.

Operation Protective Edge continued without a permanent cease-fire, much less visible prospects for the moribund peace process.

While #IfNotNow's actions and protests thus far have been tiny — numbering in the hundreds — they are reflective of a burgeoning discontent with institutional Jewish reaction to the current Gaza conflict. That institutional reaction, these dissenters charge, not only unquestioningly supports the official Israeli narrative that Hamas left Israel no choice but to attack — and no choice but to target locations packed with civilians —

but fails to acknowledge and address the ongoing violence and repression inherent in the Occupation.

That institutional reaction, additionally, fails to reckon with countervailing evidence to the official Israeli narrative of the immediate causes of the current escalation. That includes evidence that the Israeli government knew the three Israeli students kidnapped in the West Bank in June had been murdered, but still ginned up emotions, in Israel and the Diaspora, for a search the government knew was futile to find them alive. The *Jewish Daily Forward's* J.J. Goldberg has meticulously documented the series of events leading up to an "unnecessary war" that "nobody wanted." The government claim to be searching for the three kidnapped students, was, Goldberg wrote, "simply put, a lie."

The institutional reaction, its critics further charge, fails to reckon with rising anti-Palestinian racism in Israeli government and society, or of military and police brutality against Palestinians, such as that brought down on Tariq

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Abu Khdeir, an American citizen and cousin of Mohammed Abu Khdeir, who was burned alive by Jewish Israeli citizens.

Increasingly, the American press is covering these societal and governmental trends, along with growing repression of left-wing and dissenting voices in Israel.

The current Israeli government, said Nathan Hersh, managing director of Partners for Progressive Israel, an American group allied with Israel's liberal Meretz party, "is the furthest-right government that I've seen in my lifetime." Americans, he said, have become more conscious of "terribly racist" and "more blatant" comments tolerated by government officials. "That's a driving force to the center and the left" among American Jews, he said.

The polarization of American Jews, said Dov Waxman, professor of political science, international affairs, and Israel studies at Northeastern University, has increased with each large-scale eruption of fighting between Israel and Palestinians. Since the Second Intifada, which started in 2000, he said, with each escalation — Operation Cast Lead in 2009, Operation Pillar of Defense in 2012, and this summer's Operation Protective Edge — there has been a shift of pro-two-state solution activists to the left; at the same time, though, the right becomes strengthened and entrenched.

J-STREET GOES MAINSTREAM, ITS LEFT FLANK GETS A BOOST

On July 11, J Street released a statement supporting Operation Protective Edge, adding to a list of additional statements that "too many communal and organizational reactions to the present crisis" fail to express, including grief over the loss of innocent Palestinian life, as well as condemnation of racist incitement of violence by both Palestinians and Israelis.

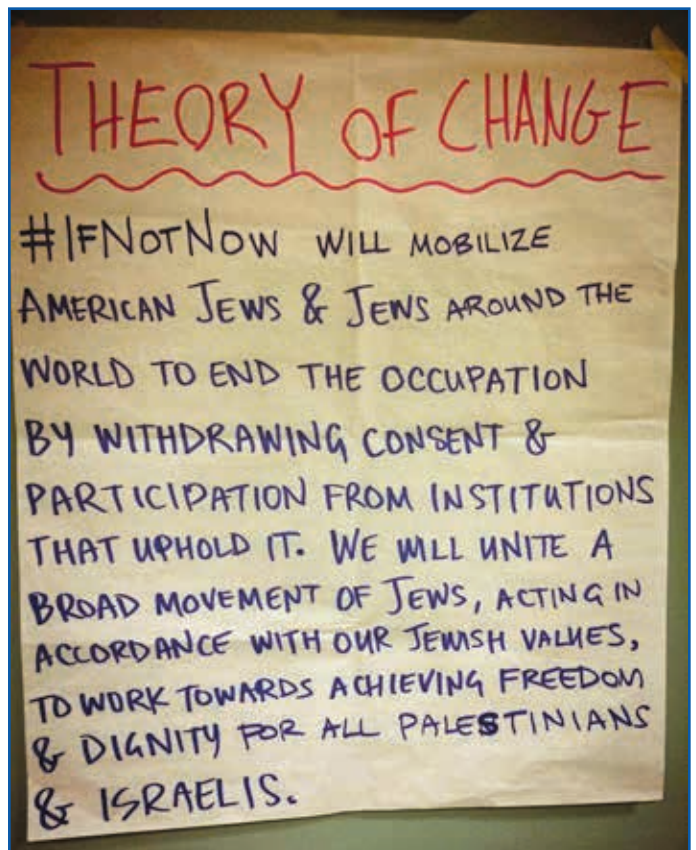
Rachel Lerner, J Street's senior vice president for community relations, said that while the group did field some criticism over the decision, "we have a very diverse constituency, we were also hearing from folks who were very supportive of our stance and strongly urged us to express solidarity with Israel."

"I think that certainly we provided a voice that was asking some questions in a very tense and difficult moment, questions that were very much lacking in the organized Jewish community," said Lerner.

But that was not enough for many activists. Some J Street supporters were appalled by J Street's failure to marshal opposition to this newest Israeli military campaign. "Are we moving the community or are we becoming part of it?" one activist asked.

J Street, said Waxman, "was a left-wing alternative to the groups in the center" when it launched in 2008, billing itself as a Washington-focused alternative to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC). Now, he said, "J Street has to some extent become part of the mainstream."

Shaul Magid, a rabbi as well as holder of the Jay and Jeanie Schottenstein chair in Jewish studies at Indiana Uni-



#IfNotNow's 'Theory of Change' reflects 'burgeoning discontent with institutional Jewish reaction to the current Gaza conflict.'

versity, and a regular contributor to *Religion Dispatches*, served on the J Street rabbinical council before resigning over the organization's refusal to support the 2011 Palestinian bid to upgrade its status at the United Nations. He told me that someone once joked to him, "Everyone in J Street is to the left of J Street."

The activist added that "a growing conversation on campus is feeding the growth of #IfNotNow," representing a "growing desire by young people to hold Jewish organizational leaders to account," and expressing that "these people who claim to represent the Jewish community as a whole do not represent them."

J Street's own campus arm, J Street U, has itself been home to that conversation. Danny Blinderman, a regional co-chair for J Street U's New England region, charged in the *New York Jewish Week* that American Jewish communal leaders have failed to provide "meaningful support" for a two-state solution. "It is time for our leaders to rally around the cause of peace with at least as much fervor as they have around Israel's latest war," he wrote.

Simone Zimmerman, a former president of the national student board of J Street U, and an #IfNotNow organizer, said the group was motivated by "a sense of helplessness, seeing so many in the Jewish world completely filing in lock step in support" of Israel's military action.

“So many folks felt called to [#IfNotNow] because they are Jewish,” said Zimmerman, adding that supporting the Israeli government’s action “is not my Judaism.”

The organizers prepared a statement called a “Theory of Change,” pledging that #IfNotNow “will mobilize American Jews and Jews around the world to end the occupation by withdrawing consent and participation from institutions that uphold it.”

Further left, previous military escalations in Gaza, said Waxman, historically have given a “huge boost” to Jewish Voice for Peace, a left-wing group founded in 1996, but widely seen as outside the mainstream of the Jewish community.

The scope and scale of civilian casualties in Operation Protective Edge, particularly of women and children — coupled with minute-by-minute coverage on social and traditional media by reporters on the ground for major news outlets — have intensified the opposition.

Jewish Voice for Peace, because of its rhetoric casting Israel as an aggressor, and because of its support for the Palestinian-led boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) movement, has largely been vilified by Jewish organizations as not representative of communal Jewish life.

The Anti-Defamation League has deemed the JVP “the leading Jewish anti-Zionist group in the United States, working to steer public support away from Israel and convince the American public that opposition to the Jewish state is not anti-Semitic” — a move seen even by liberals who find JVP too far left as yet another instance of ADL’s attempts to marginalize Jewish groups who refuse to toe the party line.

Naomi Dann, a media fellow with JVP, said that the organization has seen a large uptick in new supporters and formation of local chapters since Operation Protective Edge, noting that in three weeks fifty thousand new people signed up for its email updates. She said the ADL characterization is “deeply disturbing to us,” adding “we are part of the Jewish community, our values are rooted in Jewish values.”

Still, though, JVP may not fill a gap. Left-wing critics of J Street, which was once “the place to be,” Magid said, may not be comfortable with BDS, and thus not comfortable with JVP.

J Street, said Waxman, “actually does have a strong claim to represent a plurality of American Jews” with its opposition to the Occupation and support for a two-state solution. Ultimately, though, he added, the greatest strategic damage to J Street will be the collapse of the peace talks led by Secretary of State John Kerry, and “growing despair over the two-state solution.” Without a viable political solution that is the centerpiece of J Street’s political agenda, he said, frustrated supporters of an end to the Occupation will be drawn further to the left.

The center, said Magid, “hasn’t done any creative thinking in the last six or seven years.”

THE DEMISE OF LIBERAL ZIONISM?

Waxman has called this spring’s collapse of Kerry’s peace initiative “a bitter blow for liberal Zionists,” who now

“must either abandon their liberalism or their Zionism, or just learn to live with the constant tension between them.”

This tension is slowly but increasingly finding its way into the public discourse via prominent public intellectuals, including journalist Peter Beinart, who led the way with his 2012 book *The Crisis of Zionism*, warning of drift away from and even hostility toward the establishment by young American Jews, and *New York Times* columnists Roger Cohen and Thomas Friedman, whose critiques are laced with laments over the decline, in Israel, of the liberal Zionism they grew up with and still cherish.

Beinart now writes for Israel’s leading left-leaning newspaper *Haaretz*, where this summer he has repeatedly questioned Operation Protective Edge, both morally and strategically. In one column, a rejoinder to right-wing opponents who accuse him of being a Hamas sympathizer, Beinart argued, “Hamas does have unwitting allies among our people,” particularly “the Israeli and American Jewish leaders who convince Palestinians that nonviolence and mutual recognition are futile. They bolster Hamas’ greatest asset, which is not rockets and tunnels. Hamas’ greatest asset is the Palestinian belief that Israel only understands the language of force.”

Most frequently cited to me in conversations with activists, though, was *New York* magazine correspondent Jonathan Chait’s “Israel Is Making It Hard to Be Pro-Israel.” The Gaza operation, Chait wrote, “is not Netanyahu’s strategy in excess; it is Netanyahu’s strategy in its entirety.”

“The liberal Zionist, two-state vision with which I identify, which once commanded a mainstream position within Israeli political life,” Chait went on, “has been relegated to a left-wing rump within it.”

If you’ve lost Chait, the “pro-Israel” camp is in big trouble, reasoned pro-peace activists. Without a solution that ends the Occupation and the second-class status of Israel’s Arab citizens, it will be increasingly difficult, if not impossible, to be a liberal Zionist.

The reality, though, is that these shifts have been taking place even before Chait issued his *cri de cœur* — his prominence as a figure with unassailable “pro-Israel” credibility and a widely read platform merely brought them to the fore as photographs of dead Palestinian children and grieving families dominated newspaper front pages around the world.

Lisa Goldman, director of the Israel-Palestine initiative at the New America Foundation, who worked for a decade as a journalist in Israel and the Occupied Territories, noted a growing and “real unease among a whole slew of male liberal Zionist columnists.” This shift, she said, has been developing over the past five years, as realities on the ground — including the daily brutality of the Occupation and growing repression of left-wing dissent — have become more well-known.

These writers, said Goldman, are realizing “this isn’t quite what they told us [about Israel] in summer camp, and this doesn’t mesh with our humanist values.”

The horrific murder of Mohammed Abu Khdeir, a Palestinian teenager and resident of East Jerusalem, created an “opportunity for us to have a very serious conversation,” said Goldman. That the opportunity came and went, and discussion of rising racism and violence in Israel was swallowed by the push to “stand with Israel” when Operation Protective Edge began.

“I’m really afraid that Israel as an idea rather than Israel as reality has become such an essential totem that people are afraid to examine because it would mean reassessing their entire identity,” said Goldman. The failure to examine, she said, “is a moral failure, a tragedy.”

Benjamin Sax, a theologian and the Jewish scholar at the Institute for Jewish and Christian Studies, said, “what’s missing in all of this is Judaism. People talk about Judaism and Jewish values, but strangely, the state of Israel has replaced that for liberal Jews,” who maintain a “romantic view of the state.”

In the last Gaza war, said Sax, there was discussion of Israel’s “noble military.” But in Operation Protective Edge, the military’s use of “warning” bombs and leaflets to alert Gazans to evacuate is starting to be increasingly seen “as either a form of *hasbara*” — Israeli public diplomacy, or “explaining” — “or psychological warfare and none of those things are worth defending.” This critique is not limited to academia; Jon Stewart has popularized it.

QUESTIONING *HASBARA* AND GOD

“When will American rabbis go beyond ‘feeling sympathy’ for the Gazans?” asked Charles Manekin, a philosopher and director of the Joseph and Rebecca Meyerhoff Center of Jewish Studies at the University of Maryland, who blogs under the pseudonym Jeremiah Haber.

In an interview from Jerusalem, Manekin criticized Americans who claim to support Israel but spend little time educating themselves beyond “unquestioning adherence to the narrative of Israeli spokespeople.” (He strongly recommended reading *Haaretz*, not because of its political leanings, but because of its unvarnished and ongoing coverage of the realities of the Occupation.) While American Jews may be critical of right-wing Israeli groups and trends, he said, “when it comes to official Israel, it shows no skepticism.”

Rabbi Arik Ascherman, president and senior rabbi of the Jerusalem-based Rabbis for Human Rights, wrote, “[M]y country’s attitude towards the killing of Palestinian civilians is deeply troubling.” (Israeli support for Operation Protective Edge exceeded ninety percent in polling.)

Many Israelis, Ascherman wrote, “deal with the contradiction between their unconditional support for the war and saying that they wish Gazans no harm by saying that they are heartbroken by the death of innocent civilians, but that Hamas is to blame” because it uses civilians as human shields. Some have even said civilians who voted for Hamas can be legitimate military targets.

Rabbi Rick Jacobs, president of the Union for Reform Ju-

daism, the largest Jewish denomination in North America, told me the “overwhelming sense of our movement is support for Israel and [for] the military response in the face of these tunnels,” referring to the tunnels Hamas built from Gaza into Israel.

The URJ, along with the Conservative Movement and the Jewish Federations of North America, supported a “Stop The Sirens” campaign after Hamas rocket attacks “to raise and distribute funds to provide emergency aid and alleviate the pain and suffering of our Israeli brothers and sisters. At times such as these we especially feel connected to our people.”

At the same time, said Jacobs, there is a “deep sadness” for the death of Palestinian civilians. “The majority of Jews worldwide, and the overwhelming majority of our movement has been supportive of Israel, and at the same time not developing any casualness or callousness over the severity of the death toll of Palestinians.”

He added that he has seen no shift within the Reform movement of young people to a more radical position. Teen and young adult leaders in the movement, he said, are “supportive and understanding of Israel’s defense of her people” and “to do so honestly in ways that were simply mandatory if they were going to be responsible protectors of their people.”

While American rabbis have acknowledged disturbing trends in Israel, they frequently treat it as a fringe phenomenon they oppose. But Ascherman argued that respected religious figures in Israel are responsible for it. “Sadly,” he wrote, “some rabbis even desecrate God’s Name by sanctioning this unjustifiable equation of civilians with combatants.” He cited statements by influential rabbis, including Dov Lior, who “wrote two weeks ago that Israeli military commanders may punish Palestinian civilians and destroy Gaza entirely”; Shlomo Aviner, who “recently wrote on his Facebook page that while it is normally wrong to harm an innocent Arab for another’s sin, ‘war is war’”; and Yisrael Rosen, who “cites the 11th-century Torah commentator Rashi on starving an enemy population to death, and advocates making Gazans suffer until they turn on Hamas.”

In expressing solidarity with Israel, American Jewish groups are supporting a populace that has largely lived in a bubble during the current conflict. *Haaretz* reporter Chemi Shalev has observed that during Operation Protective Edge Israelis “have been living in a parallel universe to most of the rest of the world,” shielded from the “ever-increasing doses of scenes of horrendous suffering in Gaza” seen elsewhere, including the US.

This poses risks for American Jews offering Israel that unquestioning support: that supporting the state has superseded supporting liberal values, and, more crucially, Jewish values, leading to a failure to reckon with the ways in which Israel’s current trajectory is an existential emergency. Rabbis, wrote Ascherman, “must not be cheerleaders for war’s logic.” Instead, “like Abraham, we must argue tenaciously with the powers-that-be.” ☆

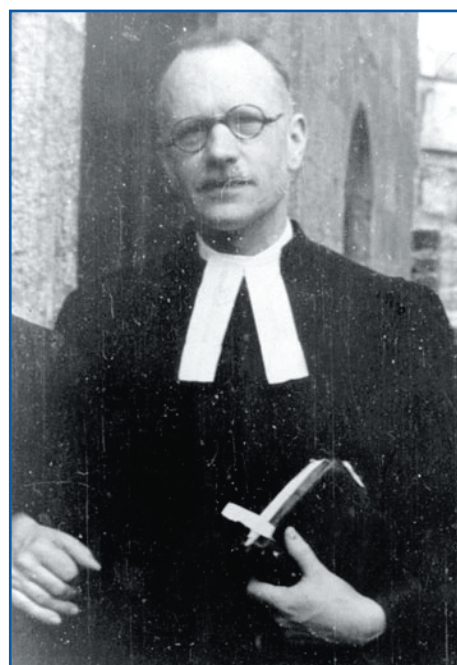
Patrick Henry

Weapons of the Spirit

The rescuers of Jews during the Shoah

No matter how many times one sees Pierre Sauvage's film masterpiece, *Weapons of the Spirit*, it never fails to move us deeply. It is a living monument and the most compelling document we possess regarding the rescue of Jews during the Shoah on the Plateau Vivarais-Lignon in south-central France. In addition to putting the rescue mission in its historical context, Sauvage introduces us to some of the rescuers, and as we look into their faces we experience first-hand their peaceful demeanor, their modesty, simplicity, and serenity and, forty years after the events in question, their absolute astonishment that anyone could possibly consider what they did anything other than normal human behavior. No written account could ever have more convincingly passed this information on to future generations.

Sauvage's personal story adds greatly to the poignancy of the film. Many of the most important accounts of rescuers in films and books have been produced by individuals who would not be alive had not one or both of their parents been rescued. This is the case, for example, of Lisa Gossels, co-producer and co-director of *The Children of Chabannes*, whose father was hidden in the south of France; Eva Fogelman, author of *Conscience and Courage: The Rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust*, whose father was a rescued Russian Jew, and Nechama Tec, author of many books including *When Light Pierced the Darkness: Christian Rescue of Jews in Nazi-*



'We only know men.'
André Trocmé,
pastor in the
French town of
Le Chambon-
sur-Lignon.

occupied Poland, who, along with her parents, was hidden and rescued by Polish Christians.

Sauvage focuses on Le Chambon-sur-Lignon, but wisely directs our vision to neighboring villages as well. Today, historians are studying not only Le Chambon-sur-Lignon but all twelve villages on the plateau, all fifteen Protestant pastors in those villages, and the thousands of farmers, city people, policemen, storekeepers, field workers, and men and women of all social classes who were actively involved in different ways in the sheltering of Jews in boarding houses, dormitories, private homes and farms from 1934 until the end of World War II. No other communal effort on this scale occurred for this length of time anywhere else in Occupied Europe.

The scope of this rescue mission was acknowledged by Yad Vashem which, in addition to awarding Righteous Gentile medals to about eighty people living on the plateau, offered homage and the title of "righteous" to the people of the plateau in general. Situated in a small garden, the Yad

¹ The revised new twenty-fifth anniversary edition of *Weapons of the Spirit* is available from the Chambon Foundation (www.chambon.org) in both its full-length version (93 minutes) and short version (38 minutes).

PATRICK HENRY, Cushing Eells Emeritus Professor of Philosophy and Literature at Whitman College in Walla Walla, Washington, wrote 'We Only Know Men': The Rescue of Jews in France during the Holocaust, and is the editor of Jewish Resistance Against the Nazis (The Catholic University of America Press, 2014). This is a version of a speech delivered at The Ninth International Conference on Holocaust Education at Yad Vashem, in Jerusalem, on July 8, 2014.

Vashem engraved stone reads: “And your people, all of them, are righteous.’ Isaiah 60: 21. To the people of Le Chambon-sur-Lignon and the neighboring villages who saved the lives of a great number of Jewish people.”

That such a rescue mission would occur anywhere in Occupied Europe is impressive; that it happened in France at a time when the Vichy government created a climate of extensive collaboration and accommodation with the Germans and where anti-Semitism and informing on Jews was deemed not only acceptable but patriotic is truly remarkable. It is certainly not an accident, however, that it occurred in this isolated, largely Protestant community which had been a place of refuge for the persecuted for centuries. In 1940, France had forty million inhabitants, ninety-seven percent of whom were Catholic and two percent of whom (roughly eight hundred thousand) were Protestant. Jews constituted almost one percent of the population (between three hundred and twenty-five and three hundred and fifty thousand people). Yet, ninety-five percent of Le Chambon-sur-Lignon’s twenty-seven hundred people were Protestant and thirty-eight percent of the twenty-four thousand people living on the Plateau Vivarais-Lignon were also Protestant.

Against this background, *Weapons of the Spirit* relates the history of the persecution of French Protestants. From the early 1500s until Henry IV issued the Edict of Nantes in 1598, Protestants did not have the right to practice their religion openly. Then, in 1685, Louis XIV revoked the Edict of Nantes and, until the French Revolution in 1789, French Protestants were once again persecuted, a period they refer to as “The Desert.” During that time, tens of thousands of Protestants emigrated to Germany, Holland, England, the United States and Canada. Those unable to do so lived for reasons of safety in inhospitable regions such as the Vivarais-Lignon plateau. Amazingly, there were more Protestants in France in 1560, when one million of the sixteen million French people were Protestant, than there were in 1940.

Unlike their Catholic contemporaries, these Protestants were daily readers of the Bible and, as a persecuted people, they identified with the Jews. Patrick Cabanel, a French Protestant historian, wrote this extraordinary sentence: “The Hebrews had been there for four centuries by the time the Jews arrived.” Unlike most places, where the doors of compassion had been shut to Jews, these mountain people welcomed them with open arms. But the plateau was also a sanctuary for all the persecuted. Among the estimated five thousand people hidden on the plateau during World War II, roughly thirty-five hundred were Jews. The rest were Communists, anti-Nazi Germans, Spanish Republicans, and Frenchmen seeking to avoid mandatory factory work in Germany.

By presenting Madeleine Dreyfus in *Weapons of the Spirit*, Sauvage points to the fact that Jews were themselves rescuers of Jews here on the plateau during the Holocaust era. Philip Hallie’s earlier ground-breaking 1979 ethical study, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed. The Story of Le Chambon and How Goodness Happened There*, made no mention



Madeleine Dreyfus, OSE rescuer and member of the Garel resistance network.

of either Madeleine Dreyfus or the Jewish Children’s Welfare Organization for which she worked. Hallie’s book limited itself more or less to the village of Le Chambon-sur-Lignon and to a relatively small group of rescuers who worked with longtime pacifist Pastors Trocmé and Theis in and around that village. Nor, parenthetically, did Hallie mention that Jewish refugees such as Pierre Fayol, who appears in the full-length version of *Weapons of the Spirit*, were leaders in the local armed resistance.

The organization Madeleine Dreyfus worked for, Oeuvre de secours aux enfants (OSE), was founded in Russia in 1912 by a group of young doctors committed to offering poor Jews sanitary protection and health benefits. It moved in 1917 and later opened offices in Poland and, in 1923, in Berlin, where a certain Albert Einstein was its first president. In 1933 it moved to Paris and, in 1940, to the south of France where, with its two hundred and eighty official employees, it became the principal Jewish organization concerned with the welfare of foreign Jews in the internment camps in the region, evacuating Jewish children from those camps and placing them in non-Jewish homes and institutions. This work was legal until August 1942, when the Vichy government decided to deport Jewish children who, incidentally, the Germans never asked for. At this point, OSE began its illegal activities. Andrée Salomon and other key OSE camp workers lied about the ages of the children, disguised them for purposes of evacuation and rescue, paid off guards, fabricated false exit passes, and did everything possible to get the children out of the camps. These camps, where three thousand Jews died during the Occupation, were run entirely by French personnel. But as of August 1942 it was no longer possible to keep large numbers of Jewish children in places like Chabannes, where four hundred Jewish children had been housed together. Jewish children now had to be placed individually in homes, on farms, in non-Jewish



Tuvia Bielski: "We have to save lives. To save a Jew is much more important than to kill Germans."

institutions, or even smuggled out of the country.

Madeleine Dreyfus was one of OSE's Jewish fieldworkers. With her husband Raymond and their two boys, Michel and Jacques, she settled in Lyon after Raymond lost his job in Paris due to anti-Semitic legislation. She began working for OSE in August 1941 as a psychologist, helping adolescents adjust to new lives after having been uprooted from their homes and schools in northern France. As of October 1942, without false papers and with the most readily identifiable Jewish name in the country, she began this illegal work, which lasted thirteen months, during nine of which she was pregnant and four of which she was breast feeding her daughter Annette, born in August 1943.

Working in the Garel resistance network, Madeleine Dreyfus managed to place over a hundred Jewish children into non-Jewish homes and institutions, mostly in this Protestant countryside. She was arrested on November 23, 1943, at the School for Deaf Mutes, in a suburb of Lyon, where she had hidden two children. She was deported yet survived Bergen-Belsen. She was immediately replaced at OSE and in the Garel network by André Chouraqui, the future deputy mayor of Jerusalem and translator of the Hebrew Bible into French. Although it is not always recognized, Jewish people in fact played an important role in the rescue of fellow Jews in every area I have examined in France: on the Plateau Vivarais-Lignon, in Chabannes, and on the French border where thousands of Jewish children were smuggled into Switzerland. These rescue missions were so successful precisely because Christians and Jews worked together. The rescue of Jews in France during the Holocaust constitutes the most successful ecumenical endeavor ever undertaken on French soil.

More generally, Jews were rescuers of Jews in every occupied country in Europe during the war years. 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 the case of Tuvia Bielski who, with his brothers Asael and Zus, saved twelve hundred Jews of all ages in the forests of Belorussia. When asked about his activities, which straddled both armed resistance and rescue, he clearly expressed his preference for rescue over combat against the Nazis. "So few of us are left," he said. "We have to save lives. To save a Jew is much more important than to kill Germans." In truth, as regards hidden children, the first rescuers of Jews 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 they 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.

Three million Jews survived the Holocaust in Europe. It has been estimated that between five and ten percent of them were rescued, something approaching a hundred and fifty thousand to three hundred thousand people. What did not matter in the choice to rescue was gender, age, nationality, ethnicity, level of education, profession, economic status, political persuasion, family size, social status or belief in an afterlife. In France, on the Plateau Vivarais-Lignon, religion did largely matter but, surprisingly, in Poland, then and now the most fervent Catholic country in Europe, only twenty-seven percent of the rescuers interviewed by Nechama Tec mentioned religion as a motivating factor whereas ninety-five percent of those same persons affirmed that "compassion for Jewish suffering mattered greatly."

There is no common motivating factor that can be identified. What all rescuers share is the fact that they risked their lives to save Jews and that in order to do so they disobeyed the laws of the government under which they lived. Rescue was basically a function of character and core values, but it also depended upon situational factors. Many studies mention common traits and clusters of traits often found among rescuers: self-reliance, self-confidence, the ability to act according to one's values regardless of what others were doing and parents who taught them to be altruistic and to tolerate differences. But these traits, commonly found among rescuers, were neither necessary nor sufficient. Some, like Oscar Schindler, did not have those traits yet rescued thousands, while others had them but rescued no one.

In this regard, five points must be considered:

§ Although much altruism can be explained in terms of self-interest, the pure life-threatening altruism of most of the rescuers cannot be explained in such terms. The punishment for hiding Jews during the Nazi era ranged from concentration camps, to death, and to the death of one's entire family. The reality of such pure altruism should convince us that concern for others is another primary motivator of human activity. It is this primary, altruistic instinct that we must identify as such and activate in ourselves and others. If we wish to form individuals who resemble the rescuers, as well

as communities that will produce such individuals, we must emphasize altruism as a foundational motivation of human behavior. Today's general view that narrow self-interest is at the heart of all human activity is the greatest tool for the maintenance of the status quo and the ultimate justification of bystander behavior.

§ However multidimensional the phenomenon of rescue may have been, most rescuers had already developed altruistic personalities before the Holocaust. This explains why so many did not feel that what they did warranted much attention. They were simply continuing to be attentive to those in need.

§ Most of those who claimed to have had an altruistic personality before the Holocaust said that they were taught to be altruistic by parents or role models who taught by example.

§ The altruism of the rescuers was in large measure an altruism extended universally. The great majority of rescuers, free of any sense whatsoever of "us" and "them," and armed with a firm belief in a common humanity, helped the needy regardless of their ethnic origins or religion, whether they knew them or not.

§ Finally, there are issues of similarity and difference. Hitler preached a doctrine of radical, racial differences between human beings. The official handbook of the Hitler Youth organization stated, "The foundation of the Nationalist Socialist outlook on life is the perception of the unlikeness of men." Aryans headed the list on which the Jews were at the bottom. Most rescuers, however, were driven by the belief in a common humanity. This is precisely why what was happening to Jews was so unacceptable. The great majority of the rescuers were not celebrating diversity when they hid Jewish people in their barns. On the contrary: confronted with a vicious doctrine of racial hatred, and at the risk of their lives, they were affirming the fundamental similarity of all human beings. This is what André Trocmé meant when, on August 10, 1942, he told the Vichy official who asked him to turn over the names of the Jews hiding in the village, "We don't know what a Jew is, we only know men."

The behavior of the rescuers shows that in a world obsessed with differences, one can make a difference only by insisting on the essential similarity between all human beings. This does not mean that we should negate differences, which are real and need to be respected. But we must also always remain conscious of our fundamental similarity to all other human beings. In this regard, my favorite writer, the sixteenth-century French essayist Michel de Montaigne, wrote: "If our faces were not similar, we could not distinguish man from beast; if they were not dissimilar, we could not distinguish man from man." Genocide occurs when this balance is shattered and one can only see the difference of others. Soon that marginalized group is no longer considered human, but rather "vermin," "cockroaches," or "microbes,"

and it gradually becomes easier and easier to do away with them.

In addition to teaching about the victims, the perpetrators, and the bystanders, we must teach about the rescuers so that, as Rabbi Harold Schulweis affirms, "the evidence of goodness will not be buried in anonymity or lost in a footnote or damned with faint praise which would help twist history into a metaphysical fatalism that ordains anti-Semitism as an eternal recurrence and hide the fact that there were and always are alternatives to passive complicity with cruel powers." How will our students ever know this, if they only hear the names of Hitler, Himmler, Mengele and Eichmann, and not those of André Trocmé, Irena Sendler, Raoul Wallenberg, Varian Fry, and Madeleine Dreyfus?

Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel offered two profound reflections on the Holocaust. First, "Since Auschwitz, the mark of Cain has overshadowed the image of God on the face of man." This is certainly true, but teaching about the rescuers when we teach the Holocaust enables us also to present faces like those of the rescuers in *Weapons of the Spirit* that do not reflect the mark of Cain because they are of those who were their brothers' keepers. Secondly, and once again with his characteristic ability to turn our received ideas upside down, Heschel observed that "It wasn't God who died at Auschwitz, it was man; and ever since Auschwitz, we have been frantically seeking proofs for the existence of man." In this regard, the rescuers constitute our best proof for the existence of man.

The medal awarded the righteous by Yad Vashem is inscribed with the Talmudic saying, "Whoever saves a single life is as one who has saved the entire world." The rescuers have earned this praise because they rescued not only tens of thousands of Jewish people, but also the concept of the human being as a being capable of self-transcendence even in the most desperate situation and against the most improbable odds. At a time of almost complete moral collapse, they stood their ground, acted according to their consciences and exhibited the highest possible form of human freedom and responsibility by assuming responsibility for that which most people would never have held them responsible. In the war against the Jews, the rescuers represent the Lamed-Vav, the thirty-six unknown just persons whose task is to do good for their fellow human beings and who, the Talmud asserts, are required for the survival of the world. While the rescuers richly merit this level of esteem, it is nonetheless essential not to regard the rescuers as heroes operating outside our moral sphere. This would run the risk of our becoming passive admirers — bystanders, as it were. By envisioning the rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust as ordinary men and women like ourselves, we allow them to bequeath to us their greatest gift: the ability to conceive of ourselves as human beings capable of rescue. ☆

Clancy Sigal

Goodnight, Betty Perske

IN THE LAUREN BACALL OBITS I'VE SEEN THERE ARE only fleeting glances at her politics. She had the guts and stamina of a classic New York-born Jewish left-liberal. So see her not only as Bogie's sultry siren in *To Have and Have Not* and *The Big Sleep*, but as a kickass fighter, the only child of a divorced, dirt-poor, single immigrant mother. During the 1950s blacklist purges, aimed more at Jews and liberals than "reds," when so many in Hollywood ran for cover, the originally named Betty Joan Perske Weinstein-Bacal, pushed her new husband, Humphrey Bogart, into establishing the Committee for the First Amendment to damn the blacklist and protect its victims. CFA was a cross-section of the plucky, upstanding Hollywood left: Danny Kaye, John Huston, Bette Davis, Frank Sinatra, Katharine Hepburn etc.

Bacall, a mere ingénue just starting out, risked her virgin career to stick her neck out, as did Bogart, who wanted to vote Republican until his new Yiddish wife corralled him otherwise. Anyone who has seen Bacall in her non-sultry roles, as the rich, destructive lesbian in *Young Man With a Horn* or the disabled young dowager in *Harper* or the demanding psychiatrist in *Shock Treatment* can understand just how fiercely imperious Bacall could be on screen — and in real life, too, if my all-too-brief meeting with her is any evidence. *Brrr*.

CLANCY SIGAL is a novelist and screenwriter. He is perhaps best known for his autobiographical novel *Going Away*.

I was one of her husband's agents during the worst of the Hollywood blacklist. The pressure on him and Bacall to recant and retreat was overwhelming — from the government, Warner Brothers studio, his agents, and an atmosphere of compromise and informing. ("What's the point? It'll blow

over.") You never knew when your best friend might turn and rat on you. Or your union brother — Bogart and Bacall's Screen Actors Guild president, Ronald Reagan, was FBI informant "T-10."

The just-married Bogart, tied hand and foot to a studio bossed by a fanatic blacklister Jack Warner (trying to live down his few "liberal" movies), wasn't a young man any more — nearly fifty — when he took his brave stand in Washington DC.

In the end, faced by waves of spy mania and a cowardly Truman White House bent

on out-witch hunting the hunters, most of CFA's members resigned. The Hollywood Ten's off-putting harangues to the House Committee on Un-American Activities gave the weaker spirits a perfect excuse.

But except for a single article in a national magazine denying he was a Communist — all the big stars like Edward G. Robinson and John Garfield had to write the same "I was a dupe" piece to get FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover off their backs — Bogart never betrayed his blacklisted or "tainted" friends. In real life, aside from hard drinking, the tough-guy Bogie was a rather gentle soul, so I suspect his New York Jewish liberal wife had a lot to do with his political backbone.



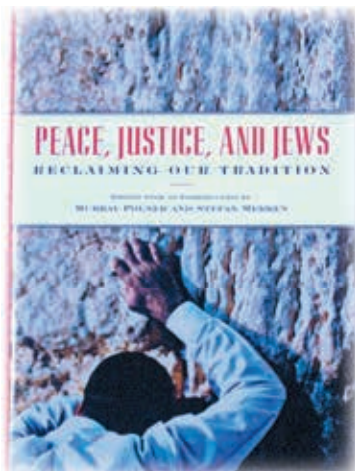
'Play It Again, Harry.' Actress Lauren Bacall sits atop the piano while Vice President Harry S. Truman plays at the National Press Club Canteen to entertain American servicemen, February 1945.

The Gestapo wasn't putting a gun to our heads. (I'd been blacklisted by Columbia Pictures.) But Hollywood is such a small village that bad news travels fast, and it didn't take more than a word here or there — an unsourced rumor, a hesitation to make the mandatory box-office-dud anti-Communist film — before your phone stopped ringing. Many otherwise good people couldn't stand the idea of being exiled from what they felt to be the only game in town if not the universe. Not to work in Hollywood was to be condemned to a lonely lower circle of Hell.

Facebook and Twitter didn't exist then, but electrified gossip could kill you. The chief targets were "reds" (that is,

you signed a petition years ago), interracial romances (Sammy Davis Jr. and Kim Novak, shock horror) and homosexuality. It's no accident that the Rupert Murdoch of his day, the spreader of career-killing gossip in the magazine *Confidential*, had been a pornographer, and his chief editor was a former reporter for the Communist *Daily Worker*. What a crew!

For the whole of her life Lauren Bacall stayed a true-blue New York left-of-center liberal Democrat lobbying for Adlai Stevenson and Bobby Kennedy. Or as she proudly boasted in a late interview, "I'm anti-Republican. A liberal. The L-word!" ✨



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