



Member's Report: Waging Peace in Israel and Palestine

My wife, Carol and I traveled to Israel and Palestine for 15 days last January to witness the tragic conflict there and meet with human rights activists who are waging efforts for peace. We were part of an independent seven member delegation of secular Jewish New York civil rights and anti-war activists. We were invited by Israeli and Palestinian leaders who some of our delegation had met last year. What we learned was that in Israel there is a much more discussion about the morality and ethics of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza than in our country.

Consider Rabbi Arik Ascherman, 44, and the father of two children, who has lived in Israel since 1981. His wife is the first female rabbi ordained in Israel. He is Executive Director of Rabbis for Human Rights. RHR is composed of over 100 rabbis and rabbinical students from Orthodox, Conservative and Reform denominations.

He said that "RHR's founder, Rabbi Abraham Heschel, challenged rabbis to do

more than perform traditional religious acts; he said that Judaism requires Jews to struggle for universal human values and social justice for all people." He said that "there is a great hypocrisy among many religious Israelis who don't share this view. RHR tries to get humanistic values into the Israeli dialogue." Because of his high public profile he has received death threats.

Rabbi Ascherman has spoken in hundreds of synagogues in the United States and Canada, including several in New York City and Brooklyn. He said that individual Jews and mainstream synagogues in North America support RHR, which has seven full-time staffers. He added that polls show that 32% of Israelis support RHR's work: "I don't feel like we are a persecuted minority here because we have good relations with large sections of the Jewish community, including the Knesset and the media...and we are members of the Jewish community by right and not just by grace."

He said that "RHR opposes terrorism and

does not regard all Palestinians as saints. It supports a humanistic, moral Zionism out of love for Israel. It also supports the United States law that prohibits aid for Israeli settlements in the West Bank or Gaza. We also support a lawsuit in the International Criminal Court against Israel's human rights violations in those areas."

When Rabbi Ascherman joined a non-violent protest last year against the demolition of a Palestinian's family's house in East Jerusalem, he asked Israeli soldiers for 10 minutes to help the family remove their belongings. When they refused he said, "then I will not move from your bulldozers and you will have to carry me away." He was arrested and charged with disobeying governmental orders. His trial on January 14, 2004 was adjourned. Before the trial, over 400 rabbis signed a joint letter urging Israeli authorities to dismiss the charges against him on humanitarian grounds

He urged our delegation to meet American rabbis when we return and to ask them to work with us on issues of mutual concern. He reminded us that polls show that most Jews in both Israel and the US support a two state peace plan based on Israel's 1967 borders. They also oppose Israel's destruction of Palestinian homes and land, construction of the "Security Wall" and the West Bank and Gazan settlements (many occupied by Orthodox Jews from Brooklyn).

As we said goodbye he told us that later that week he was taking Hillel students from the United States to see Palestinian homes demolished in Hebron and East Jerusalem and to dedicate a medical clinic in an Israeli Bedouin village.

-Charles Horwitz

About 40 persons attended Carol and Charles Horwitz's "Eyewitness report from Israel and Palestine" on Sunday, February 15 and about 30 participated in a photo presentation and discussion afterward. BSEC members decided to organize a study group and additional activities concerning the Mid-East crisis. Life and Ethics classes on Saturdays, April 24, May 1, and May 8 will also address this issue. This is the first of several articles on human rights leaders in Israel and Palestine that will appear in the BSEC newsletter.

March Platforms

March 7: *Female Values Across Generations: Conversations Among Community-Involved Mothers and Daughters*; What has it meant to bring a woman's awareness to the larger community? Members Rita Wilson and her daughter Tywana, and Diane Kirschner and her mother Ethel lead a community reflection on how their different generations have viewed women's leadership in the larger community and its issues and ethical challenges. Music provided by the Brooklyn Women's Chorus, directed by Bev Grant.

March 14: *Women Moving Disaster-Stricken Areas From Charity Relief To Development* The true face of world poverty is a female with children, easily pictured as a victim. At the same time, after a local disaster, grassroots women and their partners have used temporary world attention and relief monies to catalyze needed community participation and development. With Suranjana Gupta, Instructor in International Affairs at the New School University, who has also worked with GROOTS international (www.groots.org) and in India with the South Asian development organization Swayam Shikshan Prayog.

March 21: *Gandhi's Path to Peace and Development*

What nonviolent theories and practices might be applicable to our present runaway militarism and materialism? Melanie Jameson from the War Resisters League (www.warresisters.org) will introduce practical principles and activities of the Gandhian nonviolent tradition of organized resistance to war and the causes of war worldwide.

March 28: *Personal, Favorite and International Poetry*

A BSEC tradition of poetry readings, coordinated by Constance Pigozzi

April 4: *American Democracy 2004: Our Nations' Values Will Be Our Legacy Also*

At the heart of ethical living is the decision to live with responsibility. But taking responsibility for our location in the world's most powerful nation is a stretch for a lot of us. Are there core values in this nation worth fighting for or sharing with others, and what version of citizenship and self governance or democracy do we espouse and wish to pass on to coming generations? With BSEC Leader Lisel Burns

Platforms are held Sundays at 11pm at the BSEC Meetinghouse, followed by a buffet or potluck lunch.

**THE BROOKLYN SOCIETY
FOR ETHICAL CULTURE**

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Ethically Speaking is published 6-10 times a year by BSEC. This month's issue was produced by Martha Hoffman, Maureen Egginton, Lisel Burns, Bob Strock, Rita Wilson, Roger Kaufman, Ruth Pikitch, and Tracey Jindyeh.

The Pledge Secretary reminds all members to please complete your pledges. Money is greatly needed to continue the excellent work being done on the basement, preparing the space to be rented out.

April 1: Feast of Fools! Bob Strock and Martha Hoffman, along with Theatre Group Dzieci, will host their annual benefit Feast of Fools. It's a feast and concert and clowning and auction all rolled into one. Contact Martha at mhof@mindspring.com or 718/369-3165 to receive an invitation.

Items for this page can be forwarded to Martha Hoffman at mhof@mindspring.com or to the BSEC Office to my attention. Space considerations may limit our ability to include all items.

BSEC Member Emeritus Marshall Dubin died January 29. We have long missed his presence at Sunday platforms and extend our deepest sympathy to family and friends. A memorial service will be held on May 8th, 1-3pm, in the Main Meeting Room of Labor Union #1199, 310 W. 43rd Street between 8th and 9th Avenues. All are welcome. Condolences can be sent to:

Jonathan and Denise Dubin	-or-	Jason Dubin
515 Stablers Church Road		201 Eastern Parkway #1R
Parkton, MD 21120		Brooklyn, NY 11238

AEU Board Development Committee

Dear BSEC Members,

As part of an AEU strategic plan, Arnold Fishman, our new AEU President, has created a new AEU Committee called The AEU Board Development committee. He appointed me to be the Chair. Our mandate is to develop a pool of suitable candidates to serve on the Board. To do that, our committee members each selected three Societies to poll regarding their views. As one of my three, I plan to create a focus group and want to meet just once to discuss these questions:

1. Who in BSEC would make a good candidate for the National Board? What do you believe should be the criteria for a candidate? What is the incentive on the local level to put forward candidates from our Society?
2. Do you feel there is enough candidate information when representatives vote in Assembly for Board candidates? What are your feelings about the representative system that we have?
3. Should we develop a "qualifications" list of Board candidates, what should they be?
4. When can we meet?

I am proposing that we pick a Sunday either before or after Platform in order to include as many members as possible.

Thank you, Martha Gallahue

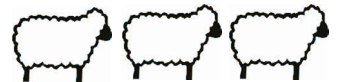


Membership News

February birthdays did not make it into the last newsletter! Apologies and belated good wishes for a happy birthday to Bea Garber (11), Selma Richman (12), Vijay Rao (15), Michael Wagnerman (21), Stephen Klips (28)

March member birthdays: Blanca Nebbia (11), Bob Stock (11), Ruth Pikitch (12), Marie Yoleine Gateau (16), Diane Kirschner (25), Xena Brooks (27), Lisel Burns (29), Mary Buchwald (29)

Melanie Richardson has been elected to serve on the Board of Trustees to fill Vijay Rao's term. Vijay has gone back to school and therefore could not continue to serve.



There will be a timesharing co-founders group meeting at Lisel's house 7pm, Thursday, March 18.

Reflections Group meets first Saturday in the afternoon, 3-6, at Lisel's.

Reminder to Members: All members are always invited to come to Board of Trustees meeting which meets on the first Thursday of each month at 7 pm. If you wish to place an item on the agenda, you may call the President, Constance Pigozzi, at 718/331-1137.



Report from Israel and Palestine, Part 2: Interview with Ghassan Andoni

Ghassan Andoni is a physics professor at Birzeit University, the most respected Palestinian university. He is also one of the founders of the main nonviolent, direct action organization in Palestine, the International Solidarity Movement. We met in his office at the Palestine Center for Rapprochement in Bethlehem. He says that he was a militant before he converted to nonviolence.

In his unheated second floor office, Andoni, a soft spoken man in his mid-50's, told us that the ISM was founded in 1987 after the first Intifada and has since attracted over 4,000 international volunteers from Europe and the United States. About 20% are Jewish.

The ISM arose in response to the arrests, since 1967, of over 600,000 Palestinians, one third of the Palestinian population, and with the IDF's (Israel Defense Forces) confiscation of olive groves and farms to expand settlements. The response was stone throwing, strikes, nationalistic slogans on walls and waving of the Palestinian flag. This immediately provoked severe Israeli reprisals and the cycle of violence which continues until today. The Israelis then agreed to discuss peace proposals in Oslo. But even during this period Israel increased its settlements in the West Bank and Gaza. As the Oslo proposals failed, frustrations led to the second Intifada in 2001 with deadly suicide bombings and armed attacks against the IDF and Israeli civilians. The response was just as bloody: Amnesty International reported that 80 Palestinian children were killed by the IDF in the first three months of the second Intifada.

The ISM is committed to nonviolence, not just as a strategy or tactic, but as a philosophy. Andoni and two other ISM leaders we met in a Brooklyn-based Israeli-Palestinian-American Dialogue group, talked about studying Thoreau, Gandhi, Rev. King and Bishop Tutu. ISM volunteers are required to undergo two days of training before they can work with the organization. Anyone, even members of Hamas, can join their demonstrations if they complete the training and commit to nonviolence while engaged in ISM activities. He added that "if an ISM volunteer throws stones at the Israel Defense Forces, ISM will disengage and become observers but we will stay on the scene."

Nevertheless, Andoni says that ISM is attacked by the Israeli media and by right wingers for allegedly supporting violence against innocent civilians. Human rights activists in Israel and Palestine strongly defend ISM against these allegations although a few criticize some of the volunteers. When some volunteers challenged ISM orders recently they were dis-

missed and now Andoni says that ISM is calling for "mature volunteers." "Age diversity is the key," he says, "because until now, almost all internationals were young and a few were reckless."

ISM does not align with any political party and does not take positions about the various peace proposals. It tries to remain above the battle on this issue. On the other hand, while it is nonviolent, it recognizes international laws that permit persons in occupied territories to resist military occupation by armed resistance and won't condemn people who do that. But Andoni condemns suicide bombings and attacks against civilians because that they are inhumane and are prohibited by international law. He said that the ISM helped internationals see and experience injustice and they should share that with people in their own countries.

Andoni said that "ISM believes you must oppose the occupation even though the Palestinians and their leadership are not perfect. Most people don't want to take sides and most people love peace but they don't want to wage peace. One has a duty to obstruct injustice."

Andoni said that it is currently difficult for ISM to organize because the IDF frequently attacks peaceful, nonviolent demonstrations and two volunteers have been killed. Also, the Israelis are stopping ISM volunteers from entering Israel [news stories reported that some Palestinian farmers that we had just met were arrested in Dubrus and were charged with illegally hosting international visitors without permission]. In addition, he said, Yasser Arafat, President of the Palestinian Authority, suppresses dissident Palestinian groups, including the ISM. The PA has tried to suppress new Palestinian leadership after the second Intifada began in 2001.

Aron Trauring, an American-Israeli peace activist, reported on a talk by Andoni a few years ago at a peace panel. He wrote that:

"Andoni said that the logic of occupation is a form of madness because it leads to violence which breeds violence without end. Andoni is trying to change that ...by transforming the Palestinian resistance into a popular uprising. He argues that colonial oppression ends when two conditions occur: the price of colonialism exceeds its benefits [and] within the occupying power an anti-colonial peace movement grows which opposes the colonialism on moral and pragmatic grounds. But to achieve this, the...price extracted of Israelis should ...not be in body bags. Nonetheless, there will continue to be Palestinians who demand to extract a price in blood. Israelis and their American Jewish cousins, because of their colonial arro-

gance and sense of victimhood, cling to the logic of occupation and fail to understand the transformations taking place on the Palestinian side. We do so at great peril."

- Charles Horwitz



Ethics for Children

This season the children have been focusing on "What is Ethical Culture," discussing and doing art projects around questions like, "What are the 8 commitments of Ethical Culture?" and learning our Statement of Purpose. Children have also been baking in the Ethical building with assistant teacher Emily Newman and toddler teacher, Simba Yangala. The kids had a great time and learned how the parts of a cookie or a community can be even better when put together with, as Audrey put it, the 4 C's: Cooperation, Collaboration, Community and Cleanliness! They also got a chance to see Tony and Bruce cooking up Lunch for the Bunch.



There are 2 more chances to see the hilarious, beautiful musical for young audiences to support the CSA, "How the First Word Was Written," directed by Arie Kreith. The last 2 performances will be Saturday, March 6th at 1pm and Sunday, March 7th at 3pm. Suggested donation is \$8/children and \$10/adults. Please tell your friends.

National Service Conference

The Faith and Ethics Caucus for the International Criminal Court invites you to participate in an expert meeting entitled *Societies in Transition: The significance of The International Criminal Court in Justice and Reconciliation*, to take place March 11-12, 2004, at the Church Center for the UN, 777 United Nations Plaza (1st Ave & 44th St). The National Service Conference has been active in planning this second in a series of expert meetings that were initiated by the Center for Justice and Reconciliation in The Hague. The ICC is the most effective tool we have to end genocide, an atrocity most frequently committed in countries by leaders in that country. With the ICC, we will not have to go to war to topple the Pinochets and Husseins of the world and democratic countries will no longer have any incentive to support dictators out of self-interest. If you wish to attend, please contact Martha Gallahue at 212-932-7809 so she can send in your name.

The Revolution Will Not Be Televised

March 4: The BSEC Ethical Action Committee will co-sponsor a benefit screening of the documentary film *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised* concerning Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez and the April 2002 attempted coup against him. The Irish filmmakers Kim Bartley and Donnacha O'Brian were inside the palace making a routine documentary about Chavez when the coup began. Using television news clips, they show the privately owned Venezuelan media attacked the president and proclaimed the coup a success despite a million Chavez supporters gathered in the streets outside demanding that their leader be restored. *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised* offers a fascinating inside perspective on both Chavez's popularity and the way that media can distort the truth for political gain.

7:30-11:00pm, film at 8:00 pm at the BSEC Meetinghouse; \$10.00. Proceeds benefit a CISPES delegation to monitor March elections in El Salvador; contact Lisel Burns and Charles Horwitz for more information.

The BSEC Ethical Action Committee's quarterly meeting will be held on March 13, 2004, Saturday, 12:30 to 3 pm, at Lisel Burns' house.

Father Joseph of Haiti Fonkoze asks for help with food aid as prices have doubled there in the crisis. Donors can contact Charley Horwitz.



NYC Bill of Rights Defense Campaign

On February 4, 2004, heeding the sustained grassroots outcry, an overwhelming majority of NYC Council Members voted in favor of Resolution 60 (previously named Resolution 909), which calls upon government officials to uphold civil rights and civil liberties when prosecuting the war on terrorism. And thus NYC became the 250th legislative body in the country to pass a Bill of Rights resolution. More than 43 million people are now represented by these "civil liberties safe zones." BSEC is a member of the NYC Bill of Rights Defense Campaign.

ADVERTISING IN THE BSEC NEWSLETTER

In order to defray the costs of our newsletter production and distribution, we are offering advertising to members and friends beginning in the April edition of *Ethically Speaking*. We hope you will take advantage of this opportunity to further a cause or a business opportunity or give personal greetings. \$20 each business card size advertisement per insertion up to 4 times with a choice of months. 3 1/2" x 2" black and white. \$15 each for 5 to 10 insertions. Please see the Advertising Request Form enclosed with this issue or contact Maureen Egginton, brooklynethicalsociety@yahoo.com or 718/638-4767 for more information.

Quality Leadership Clinics

Quality Leadership consultant and trainer Linda Bankoski will lead two organizational management clinics this month, on March 21 and March 22. Outstanding, funny and practical approaches to values- and quality-based management in congregations, nonprofits or organizations. Sunday 1:30-4pm and Monday 9-4pm. Sunday is free or contribution. Monday costs \$20-100, sliding scale. Applicants from the larger community welcome. Please apply to Lisel Burns.

Lively Arts Adventures

In March, Joan Klips will again lead small groups on museum tours.

Thursday, March 18 and Saturday, March 20, both days at 1:00pm: Brooklyn Museum of Art Gallery Tours, followed by a meal in the Museum's Cafe, which is open until 4 pm.

Sunday, March 21, 3-6pm: Brooklyn Museum of Art shows free movies by women in honor of Women's History Month. Meet at 2 PM at BSEC and walk to the museum.

There is a \$ 5.00 fundraising fee for each event. Also, the Brooklyn Museum requires a small donation - people can pay what they wish to enter the museum.

NOTE: Phone reservations required by 10pm the night prior. Call Joan at 718-748-1127.

SAVE THE DATE
SUNDAY, APRIL 25, 2004
MARCH FOR WOMEN'S LIVES
WASHINGTON, D.C.

In support of reproductive freedom. To register for the march and/or sign up for transportation, visit www.ppnyc.org

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Brooklyn Society for Ethical Culture
53 Prospect Park West
Brooklyn, New York 11215

March Good Coffeehouse

March 5

Since her last show at the Good Coffeehouse, singer songwriter *Janie Barnett* has been busy singing sessions, completing songs with her collaborator Margaret Dorn for a family musical, producing albums, and performing at shows including some with the Bacon Bros (aka Kevin and his brother Michael), including a duet for the film *The Red Betsy*. Recently Michael and Janie collaborated on some music for a film Kevin is directing. In between that Janie is joining with other songwriters in setting poet Marsha Pelletier's poems to music for a June 2004 release.

Bev Grant's songwriting and performance reflect a life of social activism that reaches back to the 1960s and is still going strong. Bev's work is described in *Sing Out* magazine as "unhesitatingly fervent, unflinchingly personal and reflecting the diversity of a real person's musings." Her song "Inez" was recently released on the Grammy-nominated Smithsonian/Folkways Best of Broadside.

March 12 World Music concert:

There is a new movement growing in the music world: new music with deep roots in African music. Come hear two exciting musical explorers: *Imaginary Homeland* delves deep into various Ghanaian musical traditions and bursts forth with a fresh blend of American fiddling and jazz sax. And get ready for the world's most famous African-Hungarian jazz band, *Dallam-Dougou*. Gypsy fiddle grooves with layers of African marimba melodies will make you realize that we all dance together.

March 19 Third Friday with the Park Slope Food Coop:

Jenny Hill and Liquid Horn offer original jazz, with a mixture of Brazil and the funky side of Brooklyn, featuring Jenny Hill on saxes and flute.

Guitarist *Tomas Rodriguez* celebrates the release of his new CD, *Dialogue*, offering a cross-cultural musical celebration, paying homage to musical treasures from Venezuela, Columbia, Puerto Rico and Spain, and introducing new original compositions echoing the soulful musical dialogue of the Americas.

March 26

Burning Barn is two brothers from Mississippi. One went to Louisville, the other to Baltimore. Somehow they arrived in New York at the same time. They had little to say to one another until they played together for the first time in their lives. And when the woman joined them, the harmony began and the folk music, the rock 'n' roll, and the blues came alive.

Singer/multi-instrumentalist *Bruce Markow* brings passion, playfulness and well-seasoned craftsmanship to his eclectic songwriting, with stirring melodies, engaging stories and colorful lyrics that linger with you long after evening's end. A CD of Bruce's folk, rock, jazz and world-flavored songs – about hope, healing and the joys and trials of becoming fully alive – is due out in mid-2004.



March 2004 at the Brooklyn Society for Ethical Culture



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
7 10am-12:30pm: Children's Assembly 10-11am: CSA Parents Meeting 11am: Platform: <i>Female Values Across Generations</i> 12:30pm: Lunch with the Bunch	8 1 7pm: Storytellers workshop	9 2 7:30-9pm: Brooklyn Women's Chorus	10 3 7pm: T' ai Chi	11 4 7:00pm: Board of Trustees Meeting 7:30pm: <i>The Revolution Will Not Be Televised</i>	12 5 8pm: Good Coffeehouse \$10 donation	13 6 7:45-9:45am: T' ai Chi 12:30-3pm: Ethical Action Comtee (at Lisel's)
14 10am-12:30pm: Children's Assembly 11am: <i>Women Moving Disaster-Stricken Areas From Charity to Development</i> 12:30pm: Lunch with the Bunch	15 22 9am-4pm: Quality Leadership Clinic	16 23 7:30-9pm: Brooklyn Women's Chorus	17 24 7pm: T' ai Chi	18 25 1pm: Lively Arts Adventures Br'klyn Museum 7pm: Personnel Committee Meeting	19 26 8pm: Good Coffeehouse	20 27 7:45-9:45am: T' ai Chi 1pm: Lively Arts Adventures Br'klyn Museum
21 10am-12:30pm: Children's Assembly 11am: Platform: <i>Gandhi's Path to Peace and Development</i> 12:30pm: Lunch with the Bunch 1:30-4pm: Quality Leadership Clinic 3-6pm: Lively Arts Adventures: Films by Women	22 29 9am-4pm: Quality Leadership Clinic	23 30 7:30-9pm: Brooklyn Women's Chorus	24 31 7pm: T' ai Chi	25 7pm: Finance Committee Meeting	26 8pm: Good Coffeehouse	27 7:45-9:45am: T' ai Chi
28 10am-12:30pm: Children's Assembly 10-11am: CSA Parents Meeting 11am: Platform: <i>Personal, Favorite and International Poetry</i> 12:30pm: Lunch with the Bunch	29	30 7:30-9pm: Brooklyn Women's Chorus	31 7pm: T' ai Chi			