

The Berkeley Daily Planet:
Anti-Semitism and
Journalistic Malfeasance

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I. Introduction

The *Berkeley Daily Planet*, as we will show, is a fount of anti-Jewish and anti-Israel expression. It defends itself from the ugly charge of anti-Semitism by professing, instead, adherence to a very strict interpretation of the rights of free speech. However, while we have found all manner of anti-Semitic hate speech in the pages of the *Daily Planet*, in a thorough review of all past issues, we have found only one expression of hate speech directed at any other group. That other group is police officers. Since Michael and Becky O'Malley purchased the paper in early 2003, we have not found a single expression of hate speech directed against gays, Muslims, blacks, or any other ethnic or religious group. Neither have we detected any misogyny.

We readily admit that we were originally drawn to our subject by the shameless Jew bashing and Israel bashing at the *Berkeley Daily Planet*. However, we are also Berkeleyans, and as such are almost equally appalled by the unfair way that the *Berkeley Daily Planet* treats other topics as well.

By issuing this report, we hope to act as a mirror by which the O'Malleys might look at themselves and thereby be persuaded to reform the content of their paper. We fondly hope that it might become a first class local paper of which all Berkeleyans might be proud. As it is, vast swaths of the public have long ago turned their back on the *Berkeley Daily Planet* in disgust. In time, however, and with a showing of good will on the part of the O'Malleys, perhaps trust might be restored.

The author of this report is also the editor of a website which monitors the *Berkeley Daily Planet* on an ongoing basis, and at which further details and full references for this report may be found:

www.DPWatchDog.com

II. Examples of Anti-Semitic Tracts in the *Daily Planet*.

Regular readers of the *Berkeley Daily Planet* will not be surprised that the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) in a June, 2009 report has announced that anti-Semitism in the Bay Area is way up, led by a surge of anti-Semitism from the hard left. Anti-Semitism formerly was the province of the far right. Here, organized by themes, we will examine various examples of anti-Semitic tracts that have been published by the *Daily Planet*.

The Jews Got What They Deserved in The Holocaust

Here's a pop quiz. From where is this quote taken:

"One should ask why anti-Semitism has persisted throughout the centuries. Let us go back to 539 BC, when Cyrus the Great, King of Persia, went to Babylonia and liberated Jews. One can ask why Jews were enslaved by Babylonians. Also, one can ask why Jews had problems with Egyptians, with Jesus, with Europeans, and in modern times with Germans? The answer, among other things, is their racist attitude that they are the 'Chosen People.' Because of this attitude, they do wrong to other people to the point that others turn against them, namely, become anti-Semite if you will."

- (a) Mel Gibson's drunk driving police report
- (b) Mein Kampf
- (c) The Hamas Charter
- (d) The *Berkeley Daily Planet*

Sadly, if you guessed (d), The *Berkeley Daily Planet*, you would be correct. This quote, essentially blaming the Jews for all that has befallen them, including the Holocaust, appeared in an August 8, 2006 *Berkeley Daily Planet* Commentary written by Kurosh Arianpour, an Iranian living in India.

Predictably, a hail of letters came into the *Daily Planet* decrying such blatant expressions of anti-Semitism, including from Jerry Brown, Berkeley Mayor Tom Bates, a number of city council members, the local Jewish community and the Anti-Defamation League. Chip Johnson criticized the *Daily Planet* in his San Francisco Chronicle column. Dutifully, the *Daily Planet* owner and executive editor, Becky O'Malley, published some of the letters. Here is the letter representing the feelings of the local organized Jewish Community:

On behalf of the Berkeley Jewish community, we are writing to express our pain and disappointment at your use of your newspaper as a forum for promoting hatred against Jews. A commentary by Kurosh Arianpour, which you printed on August 8, was intended to antagonize and intimidate Jewish readers and to stir up animosity toward them. Our only solace is that we have heard from many Berkeley citizens who were as offended as we were by your decision to provide a platform for this bigotry.

In his commentary, Arianpour claims that Jews were enslaved by the Egyptians and Babylonians (sic) and persecuted and murdered by the Nazis because “they do wrong to other people to the point that others turn against them...” A week before this letter appeared, a gunman broke into a Jewish institution in Seattle, killing one person and severely injuring several others. The next day, the white supremacist organization Stormfront posted on its website: “Jews deserve everything they get...we should support all of our friends who shoot/kill Jews!”

Arianpour’s message is not only hurtful and hateful, but dangerous. Throughout our history we have seen how similarly despicable words can create a climate that leads to hateful and violent actions. It is bad enough to read such a message on the website of an extremist group; it is a serious breach of public trust to read it in a paper that professes to support the community. In order to share our feelings, we recently requested a meeting with the *Daily Planet* Executive Editor Becky O’Malley. Ms. O’Malley refused to meet, stating “you won’t convince me of your position.” Our “position” is that a Berkeley newspaper is no place for hate commentaries and that it should be a place for respectful dialogue.

Our city has always prided itself on its commitment to promoting an open, accepting environment where people from all backgrounds feel welcome and included. We believe you have attempted to disrupt the harmony we all enjoy here in Berkeley. You owe us and the rest of the community an apology.

— Loren Basch, CEO, Jewish Community Federation of the Greater East Bay
Rabbi Andrea Berlin, President, East Bay Council of Rabbis
Jonathan Bernstein, Executive Director, Anti-Defamation League,
Central Pacific Region
Rabbi James Brandt, Executive Director, Center for Jewish Living and
Learning, East Bay

Donald Brody, President, Jewish Community Federation
of the Greater East Bay
Rabbi Yonatan Cohen, incoming rabbi, Congregation Beth Israel, Berkeley
Rabbi David J. Cooper, Kehilla Community Synagogue
Carol Cunradi, President, Congregation Netivot Shalom, Berkeley
Sandra Curtis, Regional Board Member, New Israel Fund
Myrna David, East Bay Regional Director,
Jewish Community Relations Council
Sanne DeWitt, Chair, Israel Action Committee of the East Bay
Rabbi Stuart Kelman, Congregation Netivot Shalom, Berkeley
Julie Kennedy, President, Congregation Beth El, Berkeley
Hilda and Seymour Kessler, Founders, Bridges to Israel-Berkeley
Rabbi Jane Litman, Rabbi-Educator, Congregation Beth El, Berkeley
Rabbi Harry A. Manhoff, PhD , President,
Board of Rabbis of Northern California
Rabbi Ferenc Raj, Congregation Beth El, Berkeley
Avi Rose, Executive Director,
Jewish Family & Children's Services of the East Bay
Rabbi Yair Silverman, Congregation Beth Israel, Berkeley
Beth Sirull, President, Jewish Community Center of the East Bay
Leslie Valas, President, Congregation Beth Israel, Berkeley
Ernest H. Weiner, Executive Director, American Jewish Committee,
Bay Area Chapter
Adam Weisberg, Executive Director, Berkeley Hillel

Here was the Anti-Defamation League's missive:

With a free press comes responsibility. We must recognize that words can be more than words—especially when they justify or condone violence.

ADL has seen time and time again how hateful words can lead to ugly, violent acts. We saw it less than a year ago in San Francisco where several men making anti-Semitic jokes ended with two young men being brutally beaten. We saw it in Rwanda where hateful propaganda on the radio stations and in the newspapers led to genocide.

Finally, we saw it just two weeks ago when a self-identified angry Muslim man

walked in to the lobby of the Seattle Jewish Federation with a gun to the head of a 14-year old girl. He was disgruntled over the conflict in the Middle East and decided the employees of the Federation were an appropriate target for his rage. One woman was killed, four others were seriously injured and an entire community was left shocked, confused, and terrified. Time and time again we have seen rhetoric and speech galvanize people to action and even violence.

Kurosh Arinapour is not merely offering thoughts on the current conflict or showing support for the Palestinian and Lebanese people, he is justifying slavery, hatred, and genocide by engaging in scapegoating and blaming the victim. Speech like Mr. Arinapour's is dangerous and hateful and can lead to acts of discrimination and violence. Sadly, we saw that two weeks ago in Seattle. Does Mr. Arinapour think the staff at the Jewish Federation deserved or even earned their fate just like the slaves in Babylonia or the six million Jews in the Holocaust? We have a free press to encourage discourse and share ideas, but spreading hatred is not the job of the press or the *Berkeley Daily Planet*.

O'Malley did publish a letter rising in her defense by one, Rio Bauce. Nowhere was Bauce identified as a reporter for the *Daily Planet*, which he was. The letters section of a newspaper is not the place for its staff to defend it, especially without attribution.

Responding to the firestorm of criticism for her decision to publish the Arianpour piece, O'Malley refused to apologize for running the op-ed, citing the First Amendment (August 11, 2006). She explained that "what you don't know can hurt you," apparently meaning that Berkeley's marketplace of ideas should include a spirited debate about whether Jews are marked by characteristics which cause others to hate, expel and exterminate them.

O'Malley must have concluded that the Berkeley community would tolerate her decision to publish the anti-Semitic Arianpour piece and join her in interposing the First Amendment between the *Daily Planet* and those who would criticize it. This conclusion is passing strange in a city whose official seal champions diversity. Indeed, an African-American minister's condemnation of homosexuality earned a front-page denunciation in the *Berkeley Daily Planet*. On February 7, 2006, the *Berkeley Daily Planet* printed a self-congratulatory editorial praising its decision *not* to publish the famous Danish anti-Muslim cartoons on the grounds that they were produced by individuals outside of Berkeley. The same logic did not apply to an Iranian hurling anti-Semitic canards from India.

Of course, the specific charge of anti-Semitism would be mightily diluted if the *Daily Planet* treated all religions, or least some other religions, as shabbily. On the contrary, Islam, for one, is treated with kid gloves. For example, in O'Malley's July 29, 2005 editorial, written right after the London bus bombing, she meekly concedes "that the bombers have some general connection to the Islamic religion," but then goes on to give Islam a free pass before turning to Israel as the real culprit in the final paragraph. She listed by name the countries that have suffered from terrorism, though somehow O'Malley overlooked Israel from that list, which has suffered more per capita than any country other than Iraq. In O'Malley's May 14, 2004 editorial she wrote, "This week we received a particularly vicious letter attacking the Islamic religion from a correspondent who was not ashamed to sign his name and telephone number, and we are finally fed up with this discussion. We're not going to print it, at least for now." She never did. She also published a front-page article condemning a Peace and Justice Commissioner for disseminating a perceived Islamophobic YouTube video (May 15, 2007).

In summary, in the name of free speech, in the *Daily Planet* Jews may be demeaned as "cockroaches," Rwanda-style, while hate speech against any other group is, as it should be, banned.

Israelis are Nazis

We learn that Israelis are Nazis in an August 4, 2006 letter from Linda Stewart:

Anyone in Congress who supports this genocide does not represent me and many others in this country. Destroying a country's infrastructure, killing millions of innocent civilians, including children, is inexcusable. I will never vote for anyone who supports this insanity. What Israel is doing to Lebanon is worse than what Hitler did in Germany. Hezbollah is merely an excuse for Israel to wipe out Palestine.

Millions? That would be worse than Bosnia, Congo, Rwanda and Darfur combined. The actual number of Palestinian civilian deaths from the outbreak of the Second Intifada in 2000 through the recent operation in Gaza, by anyone's count, is in the low thousands. Similarly, in an October 2, 2008 letter, Marc Saper makes the case that it is okay to paint swastikas on Jewish stars since this is clearly aimed at Israel and not at Jews, and is therefore not anti-Semitic:



Recent Hard Left Demonstration in San Francisco

When someone's graffiti equates the Star of David with the Nazi swastika, anyone may voice their strong disagreement with that equation. They are free to disagree. But the attempt to label that equation anti-Semitic is a ruse, a lie.

Here is another letter that equates Zionism with Nazism (Ronald Branch, July 29, 2005):

Doesn't anybody care that arch Zionazi Henry J. Kaiser dumped his Richmond factories of death and destruction into the bay creating what is now known as the Albany Bulb? Walk along the shoreline at low tide and check out the tons and tons of heavy industrial waste that was dumped as close and as cheaply as possible.

If the crude equation drawn between Zionism and Nazism did not give Becky O'Malley pause before publishing this letter, perhaps the fact that Henry Kaiser was neither a Jew nor a known Zionist might have. Facts never seem to get in the way when it comes to O'Malley's monomaniacal anti-Israelism.

The *Berkeley Daily Planet's* foreign affairs analyst, Conn Hallinan (who, incidentally, is a life long Communist), also makes the equation between Israel and the Nazis. Here, for example, are two titles he has chosen for articles that condemn Israel on fallacious evidence:

“Israel Treated Gaza Like Its Own Private Death Laboratory,” intentionally evoking the memory of Joseph Mengele; and

“Ethnic Cleansing and Israel,” here evoking the specter of Bosnia, the closest brush Europe has had with actual Nazism since World War II.

We will analyze these articles elsewhere in this report.

Nor is Becky O’Malley loathe, herself, to draw a comparison between Zionists and Nazis. The companion website to this report, www.DPWatchDog.com, has been likened by O’Malley to Goebelles (June 4, 2009).

Reasonable criticism of Israel for this or that policy is, well, reasonable. No country is perfect, and Israel lives in a very rough neighborhood. However, a crude equation between Israel and Nazism is utterly false, and it is maliciously false. If Israel is a Nazi state, then surely it is unremittingly evil. There would be no reason to negotiate with it and no reason to compromise with it. It would have to be destroyed, pure and simple. This is exactly what those who make this equation mean. The Nazis killed Jews because they imagined that they were each and every one of them born purely evil. The hard left would destroy Israel using the same imagery of pure evil, though now, cunningly, couched in the post-Nazi term for such pure evil, namely, Nazism itself.

Worse than simple anti-Semitism, as in not-in-our-country-club, this is an actual call to genocide. For if Israel is a Nazi state then any and all means must be used to destroy it. This is why *Daily Planet* columnist, Conn Hallinan, who likens Israelis to Nazis, as we will show elsewhere, seems to relish the thought of Iran attacking Israel with nuclear weapons. In the alternate universe of Hallinan and O’Malley, no more tears need be shed over the incineration of Tel Aviv than over Dresden.

Is Israel a Nazi state? If so, surely it would not have its free press or its independent judiciary; it would have long ago rounded up of its leftist citizens; its Arab citizens would have been denied employment, the right to vote, and the right to serve in the Knesset, its parliament. Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem would be the site where organs were harvested from murdered Arabs; gays would be murdered instead of allowed to serve openly in the armed forces; and, of course, the landscape would be dotted with extermination camps. If it were merely an Apartheid state, rather than a Nazi state, then surely there would be no Arabs in Israel’s universities or army (there are plenty in both); no Arab doctors or patients in its hospitals (there are plenty of both); and Arabs would have separate water coolers (absurd!).

We could go on and on defending Israel against the ludicrous charge of Nazism and Apartheid. But why? One cannot argue with this as though it were a rational argument. It is not. It is naked and irrational hatred. One way we know this is that it is leveled by people who would never dream to use the term, “Nazi,” against, say, Sudan, which has launched two very real racial and genocidal wars, causing the deaths of hundreds of thousands, namely, against Christians and animists in the south, and more recently against blacks in Darfur. Nor is the term ever leveled by the *Daily Planet* against Hamas, whose Charter repeatedly calls for the “obliteration” of Israel, actually quotes from the infamous “Protocols of the Elders of Zion,” and reads exactly like “Mein Kampf.” No, the term, “Nazi,” is used only against democratic, free, and liberal Israel.

The hard left and the far right have very much in common in their endless construction of enemy lists, their willful ignorance of facts, their diffuse white knuckled hatred spewed in all directions, and their conspiracy theories. When the extreme right labeled Dr. George Tiller a Nazi for providing legal abortion services, it was, in effect, placing a death sentence upon him. We now see right wing demonstrators equating Barack Obama with Adolph Hitler because he is trying to foist “death panels” upon the innocent citizenry. Not surprisingly, the Secret Service has registered more threats against President Obama’s life than against any prior president. When Berkeley’s hard left and the *Berkeley Daily Planet* employ this same Nazi equivalency are they not also inviting, even seeking, a violent outcome?

Is Becky O’Malley required to publish calls to genocide in the name of free speech? How are Berkeley’s Jews, or at least its Zionist Jews (a large majority) any different from the “cockroaches” denounced on Radio Rwanda? Counter to O’Malley’s faulty understanding of the Constitution, there is no absolute right of free speech in America. Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes famously wrote that the right of free speech stops when it comes to incitement to violence or yelling “fire” in a theater. The *Daily Planet*’s insistence on equating Israel with Nazism is just this sort of yelling “fire” in the crowded theater of Berkeley.

Zionist Occupation Government (ZOG)

The *Berkeley Daily Planet* published a cartoon by Managing Editor, Justin DeFreitas on April 16, 2004 that shows an American flag, with its pole stuck like a spear into the back of a prostrate Palestinian peasant representing the as yet unborn Palestinian state.

Critically, a single Star of David has replaced the 50 stars in the flag. DeFreitas employed the



age-old anti-Semitic theme that Jews control America (or, often, the whole world). The neo-Nazis therefore call our federal government the ZOG, standing for “Zionist Occupation Government.” This is clearly implied by the 50 stars of Old Glory being replaced by a single Jewish star. Hitler used similar iconography as in this cartoon from Der Stürmer:



“Where one is ruled by the Jews, freedom is only an empty dream.”



(<http://futurenewstoday.blogspot.com/2009/01/israeligirl-violates-digg-tos.html>)

Similar images can be found at innumerable neo-Nazi websites.

Most disturbingly, as anti-Semitism has migrated recently from the far right to the hard left, so has its iconic imagery. Take, for example, the image from a hard left website (*above*).

It is impossible to know whether DeFreitas received his inspiration from the hard left, or took it directly from the Nazis or the neo-Nazis. One thing we know that **did not** inspire Defrietas was current events. Nothing was happening among the parties, Israel, Palestine, and the U.S. in March-April 2004 that could reasonably have led DeFreitas to pen such a cartoon.

Despite the protests of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) and others, O'Malley's response was to re-publish Defreitas' cartoon eight months later as one of the year's best.

Jews Are Not Real Americans; They Are Spies and Fifth Columnists

On August 2, 2005 the *Daily Planet* published a piece by frequent contributor, Joanna Graham (a self described Marxist, but also one of the *Daily Planet's* most persistent anti-Semites), in which we learn that Jewish American supporters of Israel's right to live within safe and secure borders may be spies, or worse:

It is worth asking: To what country does John Gertz owe his loyalty?... Would he spy for Israel? (It's been done.) Would he perjure himself for Israel? (That's been done too.) Would he threaten a political candidate with slush funds and slur campaigns? (Threats like Mr. Gertz's are not idle. They've been carried out successfully many times.) Would he protect Israel when it had deliberately killed American citizens? (Sadly, this too has been done.) Would he carry a bomb onto the New York subway or BART, if Israel deemed it necessary? How far would Eric Alterman go? How far would John Gertz go?

This dual-loyalty, fifth column canard is classically anti-Semitic. Gertz's response to this libelous calumny can be read in the August 5, 2005 issue and in part reads:

As for the canard that I am not a real American because I am pro-Israel (I actually identify with Israel's left wing and, for example, very enthusiastically support the impending withdrawal from Gaza), well you should know I am also pro-Free Tibet, and pro-Free Burma. I also love Great Britain, and have a soft spot for France and Italy, too. Ms. Graham, I assure you that I am as American as you, born, bred and proud to be so. . . .No, Ms. Graham, I will not assassinate anyone, nor blow up City Hall, even if, as you may in your conspiratorial delusions believe that Israel is ordering me to do so.

In the April 23, 2004 edition letter writer Mark Dewhurst queries, "Am I an Anti-Semite for pointing out that these leading Neo-Cons—all Jewish—are all rabid, right wing Israel backers? Is their agenda really in the best interests of U.S. citizens here at home." To answer his question, maybe he *is* an anti-Semite.

The Jews Should Admit That They Killed Christ.

In a long article by Marc Winokur (April 9, 2004), the author complained of misplaced Jewish sensitivity to Mel Gibson's "The Passion of the Christ." The writer draws upon a literal reading of the gospels to argue that it is irrefutable that the Jews killed Jesus. Here are several passages:

To insist that Jews of first century Judea were not engaged, at least in some way, in the crucifixion of Christ, is taking refuge in a moral comfort zone that serves only to punctuate inveterate denial.

His [Jesus'] exhortations and orations must have put a great deal of pressure on both the ordinary and well-appointed Jews to change their ways—no small matter for any prophet to sustain without an inevitable backlash. Again, to pretend, under these circumstances, that some of the Jews did not have an interest in his departure from the social-political landscape simply flies in the face of human nature. Ask yourself, what possible purpose does it serve to support this cloak of innocence, given that the people who felt threatened by his challenge to the status quo were only behaving as human beings behave, even to this day? Although, complicity with the capture, and likely mutilation of one's own ethnic, corporeal relation is not a laudable evocation of the best in human nature, it was not, and is not, a weakness specific to the people of Judea, or Jews in general. The roots and residue of treachery go far back, and way beyond that of the Jews in Christ's time. After all, the Bible, particularly the First Testament, is fraught with horrific acts of betrayal, violence and human iniquity. For Jews to consistently proclaim their impeccability in this matter only sets up a kind of transcendental ethic that we are implicitly ascribing to ourselves.

Any doubt whatsoever about a [Jewish] cultural collaboration to put one of its best to death for political purposes demands serious scrutiny and collective redress.

This article is a plain, if softly worded, restatement of the age-old canard, "Christ killer." It raises many issues, including these:

First, this has to be about the only positive review of Mel Gibson's anti-Semitic "The Passion of Christ" ever published in a progressive newspaper.

Second, this is the only example we can find of theology being published in the *Berkeley Daily Planet*. We can find no articles examining the Islamic doctrine of jihad, the Christian concept of the Trinity, or Hindu polytheism—just this solitary "Christ-killer" article.

Third, the author is dead wrong that it is historically self-evident that the Jews were complicit in the killing of Jesus. Not only has the Catholic Church abandoned this position, but the world's foremost authority on the historicity of Jesus, John Dominic Crossan, has concluded in his classic book, *Who Killed Jesus*, that the Jews were utterly innocent of the crime. According to Crossan, the Jews were framed by the synoptic

Gospel writers. They wrote after the temple priests, the Sadducees, had been completely destroyed in the revolt against Rome of 68-72 CE, and at a time when early Christians were in very stiff competition for the future of Judaism with the Pharisees, who had risen to fill the void left by the Sadducees. During this period of mutual antagonism and competition between the Pharisees and early Christians, Christian polemicists pinned the murder of Jesus on these early pre-Talmudic rabbis. However, the Pharisees were country preachers, who had held absolutely no authority in Jerusalem at the time of Jesus' death. Jesus himself was either a Pharisee or closely aligned with them. Even the Sadducees would have had absolutely nothing to do with sentencing anyone to death. In any event, Crossan concludes, there would have been no trial in the first place. Romans routinely carted off troublemakers to the cross without any formalities. Crossan concludes that the Romans alone were responsible.

Judaism Is a Gutter Religion

Nation of Islam leader, Louis Farrakhan, famously called Judaism a "gutter religion." Regular *Daily Planet* contributor, Joanna Graham, heartily agrees (October 23, 2008):

American Jews can enjoy the fruits of assimilation or the 'solidarity of the Jewish community.' Right now, they are desperately trying to have both...If you really want a 'Jewish community,' you need to observe the 613 mitzvot which regulate every aspect of Jewish life...spend one full day a week doing nothing but reading prayers in a language you don't understand, have (and refrain from) sexual relations with your spouse on a religious schedule, stop having lunch with your goyishe friends (it's forbidden); let your most intimate decisions be made for you by rabbis ...and get very angry and upset when some kid spray paints [a swastika] on a [pro-Israel] poster.

Graham goes further to rejoice that, although her parents were born Jewish, they assimilated out of the religion, and that she herself therefore had the good fortune to be able to marry a blue eyed, blond haired gentile. She argues that the only choice available to those who were misfortunate enough to be born Jewish is to fully assimilate like her parents or to follow her perverse definition of ultra-Orthodox Judaism. In fact, virtually none of Berkeley's Jews are ultra-Orthodox, and neither are very many American Jews outside of some areas of New York. The very few Berkeley Jews who actually spend Saturdays reading nothing but Hebrew actually, counter to Graham, do understand

what they are reading. She utterly demeans these Orthodox Jews, misunderstanding their beliefs almost entirely. Her argument that one cannot be a Jew if one does not practice its most rigorous forms is much the same as arguing that only those who speak in tongues and kiss poisonous snakes may be considered Christians. This person, who, through happenstance, was born to Jews who had renounced their religion, reminds us that some of the cruelest inquisitors of 15th century Spain were priests of Jewish ancestry. We cannot find a single example of any other religion being subjected to such cruel attacks in the pages of the *Berkeley Daily Planet*.

Finally, so there can be no doubt of the author's anti-Semitism, elsewhere (February 9, 2007) Graham describes Arianpour's anti-Semitic screed as being "eloquent." Ms. Graham would no doubt also consider *Mein Kampf* to be "eloquent." In the same spirit, when queried as to why the *Daily Planet* persists in publishing an avowed anti-Semite like Graham, O'Malley replied that it is because Graham is a "good writer" (email communication).

Jews Look Funny.

In an August 2, 2005 letter Mark Richey accuses someone who had written a pro-Israel letter of wearing "the funniest looking yarmulke I ever saw." As it happens, the Jew in question is secular and does not wear a yarmulke, except in synagogue. We cannot find a single example of this kind of ethnic slur directed against any other group in the pages of the *Berkeley Daily Planet*.

So Few Jews, Such a Big Jewish Problem.

In the May 28, 2009 issue Joanna Graham claimed that Jews represent only 4% of Berkeley's population at the very most, and therefore Jewish concerns of anti-Semitism in Berkeley's local paper, the *Daily Planet*, can be safely ignored.

Is it also true that blacks comprise only 4% of Berkeley's population? Of course not. Nor is Berkeley's population 80% Burmese, nor 75% Algerian, nor is it only 1% white. We would have hoped that Becky O'Malley would instantly recognize such hoaxes and have the good sense to throw away submitted articles or letters that make preposterous claims such as these. O'Malley's alleged addiction to "free speech" does not require the *Daily Planet* to publish false information.

Moreover, when the *Daily Planet* receives patently false information does it not make its editor wonder what would be the motive? Would not racism be at the core of a letter

that claimed that only 4% of Berkeley's residents are black; especially if the author had a history of making racist remarks? If the *Daily Planet* were to publish such a letter, would we not wonder if, in turning a blind eye to this falsehood, it was not also complicit in this racism?

Any Berkeley resident should instantly know Graham's 4% figure to be false. Graham even lays out her erroneous logic, namely that Jews represent only 2% of the American population, and therefore even if you double this, that gives 4% at most. In fact, Jews are estimated at 3% of the U.S. population, but, much more importantly, Jews don't live everywhere with remotely similar frequency. They are represented in much higher relative numbers in the Bay Area than in, for example, Kansas. Then, in the Bay Area, there are vastly more Jews in some areas than in others. For example, there are many more in Berkeley than in Richmond or Antioch. The leading authority of American Jewish demography, the recently deceased Gary Tobin, put Berkeley's Jewish population at about five times Graham's claim. The Jewish Federation of the East Bay estimates that 100,000 Jews live in the East Bay, with about 25,000 living in Berkeley, and many more within the *Daily Planet's* area of distribution. If you live in or near the Berkeley Hills, in Rockridge, around Solano, around College Ave., or are a student at CAL, you are either Jewish yourself or know quite well that many or most of your neighbors are.

Four percent at the very most? Then who are all those people standing in the long lines of Berkeley's annual Jewish Film Festival, and who are those people that attend Berkeley's annual Jewish Music Festival in droves? Why are there at least twelve Berkeley venues for High Holiday services? How can the local Jewish bookstore, Afiqomin, stay in business when Cody's, Black Oak, and B&N have closed? How can there be over 1000 attendees at the annual local AIPAC dinner? Why does Hillel estimate that there are over 4,000 Jewish students at UCB (that would be 4% of Berkeley's population right there)?

Finally, if there are virtually no Jews in Berkeley, why does the *Berkeley Daily Planet* expend so much ink on Berkeley's Jewish problem?

Israel Has No Right To Exist

Frequent *Berkeley Daily Planet* contributor, Joanna Graham, writes (March 19, 2009) that "Israel . . . has no borders and no citizens and is not even quite a real nation. Zionism is an ideology based on obsolete 19th century race thinking and a wholly discredited vision of the state as the territory of a 'volk.'"

This is blatant delegitimization of Israel. The claim that of the 192 member nations of the U.N., Israel and only Israel should not exist, and that Jews and only Jews are a people (“*volk*”) without a right to a homeland, is a hallmark of anti-Semitism. We will see this theme taken up again in the writings of Hallinan and O’Malley.

III. Is the *Berkeley Daily Planet* Taken as a Whole Anti-Semitic?

Without any doubt, the *Berkeley Daily Planet* is Jew obsessed and Israel obsessed. Here is a Google survey of hits for various countries in the *Daily Planet*. This was conducted on February 3, 2009, but the relative results have not changed much since:

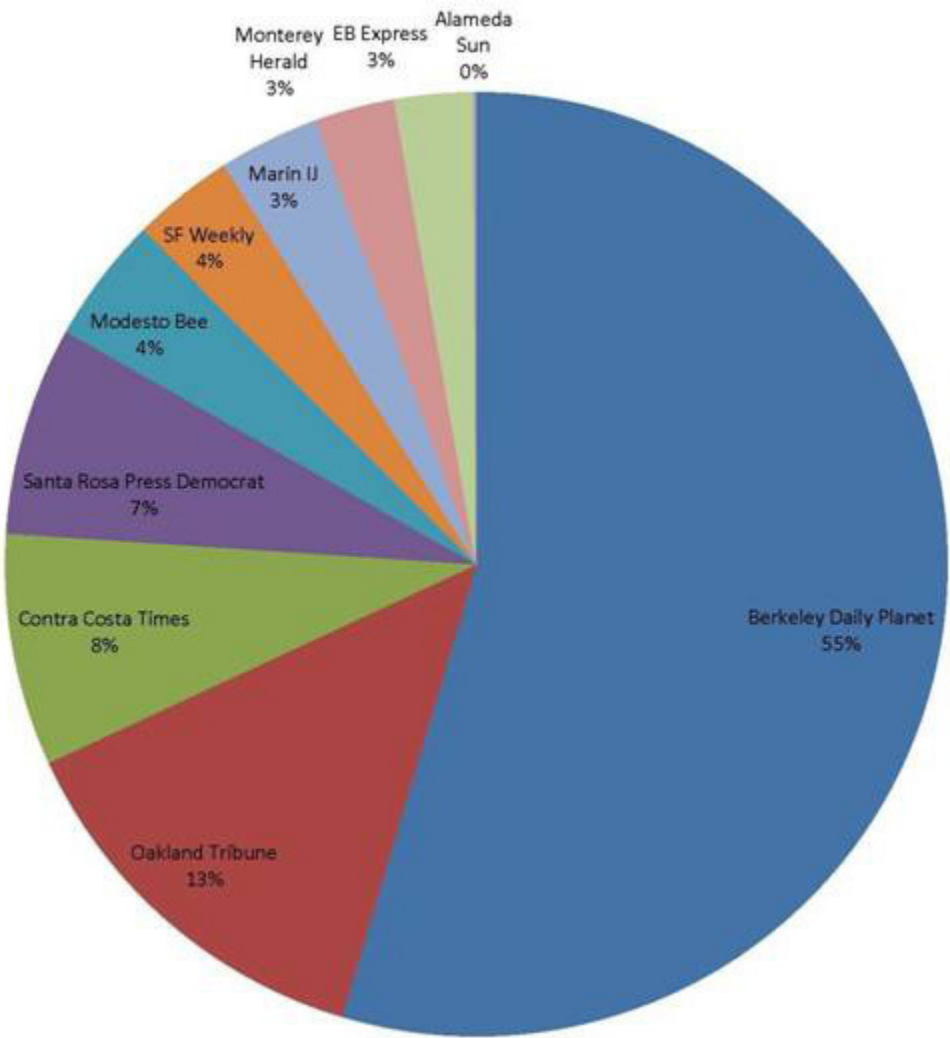
Keyword	Hits
Israel	2110
Palestine	1460
Jews	1010
Darfur	162
China	1630
Tibet	291
Burma	144
Zimbabwe	142
Congo	92

Looking beyond the mere hit counts, we examined the content of the top ten hits for each keyword. 10 out of 10 of the hits for “Israel” and “Palestine”, and 8 out of 10 hits for the word, “Jews,” concerned the Israel/Palestine conflict. Contrast that with only 2 out of the top 10 hits, respectively, for the Congo and Zimbabwe being related to their conflicts. The other hits were cultural, AIDS-related, or irrelevant. For China, not one of the top 10 hits related to human rights. One was critical of Taiwan, one remembered Mao’s birthday fondly, and the rest were cultural or irrelevant (i.e., China Camp, Marin). Of the top 10 hits for Darfur, not one was from an article concerning that subject. All were references to Darfur in articles on other topics.

This so-called local newspaper actually has vastly more to say about Israel/Palestine than about the adjacent communities of Albany, Emeryville, or El Cerrito, where the paper is distributed. If one subtracts simple addresses, as in the Calendar listings, there are very many more hits for Palestine than for any of these communities supposedly served by the *Daily Planet*. The *Berkeley Daily Planet* writes more about Palestine than 10 other similar local Bay Area newspapers **combined**.

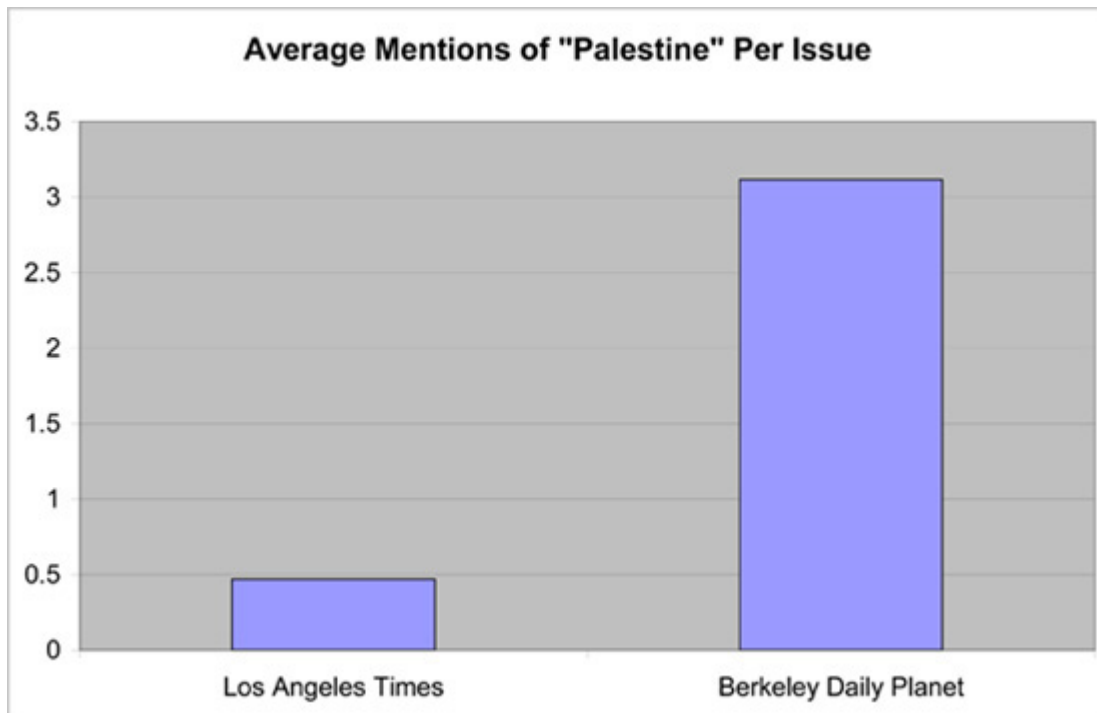
If the preoccupation with Israel/Palestine is, in fact, an East Bay phenomenon, rather than being an invention of the O’Malleys, then surely other East Bay newspapers would

Palestine Search Hits in Local and Regional Newspapers



have to respond to this demand. However, the *East Bay Express* mentions “Palestine” only 5% as often as the *Berkeley Daily Planet*. If one must obsess on Palestine if one is to be a good far left newspaper, then why does the free *San Francisco Weekly*, which largely shares the far left orientation of the *Daily Planet*, only musters 6% of the *Planet*’s all-consuming obsession with Palestine?

Perhaps the most damning comparison of all is between the total online archive search hits for “Palestine” in the *Los Angeles Times* with the *Berkeley Daily Planet*. We compared the two going back to April 1, 2003, the date the O’Malleys began publishing. Consider first that the *LA Times* is the largest circulation daily west of the Mississippi, serving a metropolitan area with over 13 million residents and with an estimated circulation in the range of 1,000,000. Consider also that the *LA Times* is well known for its keen interest in all matters related to Israel and Palestine, has extensive international news coverage, and has dedicated foreign correspondents located throughout the Middle East. Nevertheless, the *Berkeley Daily Planet* with only one-seventh the number of issues (daily versus weekly), a self reported (and probably exaggerated) print run of only 19,000, and a mere 28 pages long, manages to far exceed the frequency of references to Palestine found in the *Los Angeles Times*.



There are at least as many African-Americans as Jews living in Berkeley. So one would think

that the *Berkeley Daily Planet* would have some interest in Africa. But almost nowhere in its pages is there mention of the several million people who have died in the Congo conflict, the hundreds of thousands of black Muslims who have been murdered by Arab Muslims in Darfur, or the untold tens of thousands or more who have perished in Zimbabwe. Congo, Darfur, and Zimbabwe together received less than 20% of the hits as Israel, and even then, the African hits are largely incidental to the problems besetting that region. Since O'Malley took over the *Berkeley Daily Planet* in 2003 at least 500 times more blacks have died in the conflicts of the Congo, Darfur, and Zimbabwe as have died in the Israel/Palestine dispute. Yet one would never know this by reading the *Berkeley Daily Planet*. Likewise, there are lots of Chinese and other Asian Americans in the *Berkeley Daily Planet* readership area, but very little in its pages about repression in Tibet, China, or Burma. In the place of this lacuna, the *Berkeley Daily Planet* focuses almost exclusively on Israel/Palestine.

On December 18, 2008, Becky O'Malley issued a statement as to why this is so:

The *Daily Planet* does not state just one side of this issue [Israel/Palestine]. In fact, the Planet itself rarely makes any statement at all on the issue, but with the exception of the occasional editorial cartoon or Conn Hallinan column, merely publishes the views of its readers in the form of commentaries and letters.

Unfortunately, our findings show that this statement is completely false!

The *Berkeley Daily Planet*'s own employees share an obsession with Israel, starting with O'Malley herself. Contrary to O'Malley's assertion that she does not write about Israel, to date (October 2009) the *Berkeley Daily Planet* has published 24 editorials written with Becky O'Malley's own hand and which concern the topic of Israel or the Jews. She has written on virtually no other part of the world, except, once or twice on Iraq. These editorials can be found in the following issues:

12/19/03

01/06/04

03/26/04

05/14/04

07/20/04

10/05/04

02/11/05

07/29/05

08/12/05

04/11/06

07/21/06

08/11/06

09/12/06

12/22/06

04/13/07

05/18/07

10/16/08

11/20/08

02/05/09

03/19/09

06/04/09

06/25/09

07/30/09

09/10/09

Conn Hallinan writes a regularly appearing foreign affairs analysis column for the *Berkeley Daily Planet*, under the byline, “Dispatches From the Edge.” Hallinan is in fact from the very edge of the American body politic, being a lifelong Communist. He is a contributor to various anti-Israel websites, such as PalestineThinkTank.com. At least 15 of his columns to date entirely or mostly concern Israel, while many more bring Israel into articles written chiefly on other topics. Taken as a body, his work is, of course, condemnatory:

12/09/05

09/01/06

09/15/06

12/22/06

10/12/07

12/07/07

05/08/08

09/11/08

11/06/08

12/04/08

01/15/09

02/19/09

03/05/09

07/16/09

09/10/09

Managing editor, Justin DeFreitas, has published at least 13 cartoons concerning Israel or the Jews, but only a small handful about all the other situations in the world.

Additionally, there have been numerous “news” articles concerning Israel. For example, when an anti-war activist, an ex-pilot in the Israeli air force, came to Berkeley to deliver a pacifist message before a small handful of people, it was painstakingly recorded by the *Berkeley Daily Planet* (March 1, 2005). However, when one of Israel’s most well known reporters, Hirsch Goodman, gave a talk several weeks later to a very much larger audience, the *Berkeley Daily Planet* refused to cover it. When explicitly requested to cover Goodman for the sake of fair balance, O’Malley responded by email that this would be of no interest to *Berkeley Daily Planet* reporters. The *Berkeley Daily Planet* covered the first “national” convention in Oakland of a very small pro-Palestinian group calling itself Jewish Voice for Peace (April 20, 2007), but has never yet sent a reporter to

cover the local annual AIPAC dinner, even though many national and local politicians plus more than 1000 Berkeley and Oakland supporters of Israel attend, and typically over a million dollars is raised. By admission and implication, the *Berkeley Daily Planet*, while obsessed with Israel, is only interested in one side of the story.

On July 20, 2007, consistent with its pattern of being an outlet for every manner of hysterical anti-Israelism, the *Berkeley Daily Planet* ran an article condemning Israel for a traffic accident in the West Bank in which a Bedouin child was run over by a garbage truck. The accident is labeled a “crime” and all of Israel indicted, tried, and found guilty. But the author gives the reader not one scintilla of corroborating evidence. We do not learn whether the child recklessly ran in front of the truck or whether the truck was careening wildly. All we learn is that the villagers soon arrived on the scene and set the truck on fire. We do not learn whether the driver was a Jew or an Arab. The writer wants us to believe that the driver was a Jew, since the word “Israeli” is used all over the article. But, in fact, it is very unlikely that Jews drive garbage trucks through Arab villages in the West Bank. For all we know, and for all that we can rely upon the *Berkeley Daily Planet*, the whole incident might have been a hoax.

One of the true hallmarks of hysterical anti-Israelism is a willful misstatement of facts. O’Malley repeatedly aids and abets in this by publishing anti-Israel material that she either knows to be factually inaccurate, or should know to be inaccurate with just a modicum of normal fact checking. For example, the *Berkeley Daily Planet* allowed an anti-Israel letter writer call two pro-Israel writers “liars” on the basis of misquotes and fabricated evidence. First, the letter published in the September 13, 2005 issue under the headline, “Why Lie?”:

Even after Gerald Schmavonian in his Aug. 16 commentary rebutted John Gertz, David Altschul, and Lawrence White for their purposeful distortion of history, John Gertz and David Altschul are at it again. They obviously can’t help themselves from lying. Gertz writes (Sept. 2) “The War (1967) began when Nassar sent his armies into Sinai.” But as Mr. Schmavonian pointed out Sinai was then and is now part of Egypt. To say what Mr. Gertz is saying is akin to saying that WWII began when the U.S. stationed troops in California.

David Altschul (Sept. 6) writes that after the U.N. Partition Resolution of 1947 “The armies of Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq invaded Israel.” In fact, those armies never entered Israel but only the land taken by Israel from the

Palestinian state that was supposed to be created by that same U.N. Partition Resolution of 1947 (but never was due to Israeli aggression against it).

I cite the Encyclopedia Britannica that the Israeli army learned that the British planned to withdraw ahead of the scheduled date of May 14, 1948, and the Israelis attacked first in order to “gain strategic objectives in advance” conquering much of what was to become the new Palestinian state. The “Arab hordes” of five nations, that Gertz and Altschul want to frighten and alarm readers with, numbered less than 10,000 poorly-equipped soldiers in total who fought bravely against a Western-equipped Israeli army of 50,000 soldiers.

Gerald Schmavonian urges readers to consult any encyclopedia, including the Jewish Encyclopedia, for the facts. Why don’t Gertz or Altschul ever ask readers to do that? How is it that the U.S. public alone, among all the world’s publics, is under these misimpressions and deceptions? Dare we call it conspiracy? Because Gertz and Altschul and their pals know as Anne Cromwell pointed out (Aug. 23) that if you can control the sound bites, you can control the message.

Otherwise why would they continue lying? Would it weaken Israel’s claim that its armed forces are ludicrously called IDF (Israeli Defense Forces) if people knew they always attacked first (Israeli Offensive Forces) in all their wars.

— Janet Sakamoto, Albany

Gertz’s response (September 16, 2005):

Ms. Sakamoto calls David Altschul (who I don’t know) and myself “liars” for respectively asserting that the Arabs started the 1948 War and the Six Day War. Harsh stuff. She bases her accusations on information she uncovered in the Encyclopedia Britannica (EB). Fearing that Altschul and I have been deprived of new cutting edge research, I ran to Berkeley’s new downtown library. The entire EB contains only a few scant sentences on either war, mostly in an entry entitled, “Arab-Israeli Wars.” This is a mere half-page article covering all of the wars (no wonder the last time I relied on the EB was in the sixth grade). First, the 1948 War. Contrary to Sakamoto, the EB does not say that Israel started the war, but states the order of events as (1) the Arab armies occupied Palestinian areas, then (2) they attacked and destroyed the

oldest part of Jewish Jerusalem, and then (3) they marched down the valley that leads to Tel Aviv, where they were repulsed. Elsewhere, in the entry under "Israel," the EB clearly indicates who did start the war : "On May 14, 1948, the State of Israel was proclaimed and Egypt, Transjordan (later Jordan), Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq declared war on the new country. Israel won the war." Altschul is vindicated.

But has Sakamoto also wronged me?

When one places a person's written words within quotation marks, it is accepted practice to use the exact words, especially when the quote is used to justify an accusation of lying. Ms. Sakamoto explicitly calls me a liar based upon the following made up quote: "The War (1967) began when Nasser sent his armies into Sinai." My actual words published in the *Daily Planet's* Sept. 2 issue were:

"Arafat's attacks on Israel began in 1965 precisely because he did not recognize that [armistice] line, and the 1967 war was precipitated by the Arabs who felt that Israel's true border should be the sea. The war began when Nasser famously boasted 'I will throw the Jews into the sea.' He then blockaded Israeli shipping (an act of war) and sent his armies into Sinai."

The venerable EB backs me up. Under "Palestine" EB writes that the PLO was created in 1964 and was dedicated to "the destruction of Israel." There is only one short paragraph about the Six Day War in the half page "Arab-Israeli Wars" entry. It reads in its entirety: "In early 1967 Syrian bombardments of Israeli villages had been intensified. When the Israeli Air Force shot down six MiGs in reprisal, Nasser mobilized his forces near the Sinai border. During this war Israel eliminated the Egyptian air force and established air superiority." A brief entry under "Nasser" indicates that "war broke out after Nasser had requested the U.N. to remove its peacekeeping troops from the Gaza Strip and Sharm ash-Sheikh [i.e., Sinai], then closed the Gulf of Aqaba to Israeli shipping." For those who desire more details than these about the lead up to war, I recommend Michael Oren's definitive history, *Six Days of War*, or simply go back to archived news accounts of those days, especially the period of May-June, 1967.

With a score of 2-0, I believe that Sakamoto owes Altschul and me a published retraction and apology.

The key point is that the *Berkeley Daily Planet* could have easily cross-checked Gertz's quote in question and seen that it was a misquote, and could just as easily have checked the letter writer's reputed source, the Encyclopedia Britannica.

Here is another example: Steve Reichner wrote on December 11, 2008:

So John Gertz is upset that someone has called him a racist. The poor fellow. John Gertz, who plays whack-a-mole with the Mideast, slapping down with charges of anti-Semitism anyone who stands up to disagree with him on Israel. John Gertz, who believes views that disagree with his own should not be published. John Gertz, who accuses the *Daily Planet* of bias against Israel though they publish every mean-spirited tirade he can muster against those who disagree with him. John Gertz, who casts all Palestinians into the same mold, as bomb-throwing, Israel-hating terrorists. Cry me a river, John Gertz.

Gertz immediately responded as follows, but O'Malley refused to publish it:

The problem with this letter is that it is factually wrong in each and every allegation. I have not denigrated anyone with the charge of anti-Semitism because of their anti-Israel stance. Indeed, in scrutinizing the *Berkeley Daily Planet* archives to search for anyone who I have accused of anti-Semitism, the results show the following: four years ago, I took issue with one of Defreitas' cartoon which clearly employed classic anti-Semitic imagery of the Jews controlling the world (though Defreitas claimed the use was inadvertent). And I have also critiqued that now infamous op-ed that the *Berkeley Daily Planet* published by Kurosh Arianpour, "an Iranian student living in India." Even editor Becky O'Malley acknowledges this commentary to be anti-Semitic, but which she says she printed anyway "in the interests of free speech." Should anyone doubt me on the above, do please examine the newspaper's archives which can be found online. If I have called someone an anti-Semite for their anti-Israelism, just who would that be?

As a point of fact, the *Berkeley Daily Planet* does not publish my every "mean-spirited tirade" as Reichner asserts. Personally, I don't think they are mean-spirited tirades, but well reasoned tomes. Nevertheless, tirades or tomes, some of my best pieces have been left unpublished. The *Daily Planet* only publishes about a half to two-thirds of what I submit.

Finally, readers will search the archives in vain for any instance where I have “cast all Palestinians into the same mold, as bomb-throwing, Israel-hating terrorists.”

In sum, Reichner’s accusations are complete fabrications and fictions.

My core complaint here is not against an unhinged letter writer, but with the *Daily Planet* that would print such a calumny, when its editor has her own archives at her very fingertips, and could have ascertained in a moment that the charges leveled were false in every way. So why publish hateful defamation? Is this a responsible use of the power entrusted in Berkeley’s paper of record? Remarkably, in the very same issue, O’Malley wrote in her editorial, “if citizens can’t engage in rational civil discourse in print, all that’s left is shouting at one another over the radio. Some have high hopes for the Internet, but a quick glance at the quality of the reader comments on sfgate.com will disabuse you of that fantasy.” I ask O’Malley, pointblank: just how does Reichner’s letter in any way rise to the standards you claim for the *Daily Planet*?

Perhaps the ultimate bias in reporting came when O’Malley placed an article by journalist, Henry Norr, in the news section of the *Daily Planet* instead of in the commentary section where it belonged. Norr is not just a journalist, he is a well-know anti-Israel activist and a leader of the International Solidarity Movement (ISM), and admits this in his article (August 30, 2005). In publishing this as news, O’Malley broke a cardinal rule of journalism, namely, that a reporter should not be part of the story that he or she is covering.

Moreover, any claim that O’Malley benignly keeps hands off the malicious content of her newspaper is belied by a recent charge by her ex-reporter, Judith Scherr. Scherr stated that she resigned because of editorial changes O’Malley would repeatedly make to news stories in order to slant them in a direction that accorded with O’Malley’s own political points of view: “I could no longer be part of a newspaper with such a lack of journalistic integrity.”

In summary, counter to O’Malley’s assertion that “the Planet itself rarely makes any statement at all on the issue [of Israel/Palestine]” the *Berkeley Daily Planet* has run very many O’Malley editorials, news stories, news analyses, and cartoons of its own directed against Israel. Apart from Hallinan’s column, it has run almost no articles about any

other conflict in the world. Both Becky O'Malley and Conn Hallinan equate Israel and its supporters with the Nazis. This in itself is a very strong indication of anti-Semitism, while *Daily Planet* cartoonist, Justin DeFreitas, has used imagery in depicting Israel that is indistinguishable from Nazi and neo-Nazi propaganda.

In part, the European Union draft definition of anti-Semitism reads: "Applying double standards by requiring of it [Israel] a behavior not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation."

We ask readers to now answer our leading question for themselves, is the *Berkeley Daily Planet* in its totality an anti-Semitic newspaper?

Our answer is a strong PROBABLY.

IV. Is Becky O'Malley Herself an Anti-Semite?

The Early Life of Elisabeth Warren Peters (aka Becky O'Malley)

Becky O'Malley was born in 1940 in St. Louis and grew up in Pasadena, California. Her given name was Elisabeth Warren Peters. She came from a wealthy, old line, blue-blooded family. Her middle name, "Warren" was meant to evoke an illustrious ancestor, famed Revolutionary War hero, General Joseph Warren, who fell at Bunker Hill. Family members were proud Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR).

Elisabeth Warren Peters was among the twenty-one carefully selected "young beauties" for the 1957 Debutante Ball at the super-exclusive Valley Hunt Club in Pasadena, then an ultra-reactionary and overtly racist and anti-Semitic enclave of blue blooded snobbery.

The Valley Hunt Club was the pinnacle of Pasadena high society and of Jewish exclusion. It was reserved for "prominent families" only. According to a 1972 Los Angeles Times article, there was not a single Jew or black among its 700 members:

Prospective members are carefully screened. No blacks or Jews are included on the rolls. A member who once attempted to introduce a black as a guest was reminded that the feelings of her co-members and the guest should be considered and that no one should be offended or embarrassed. By way of explanation, a member said: "There are some very fine colored people, of course, but we must avoid discomfiture."

Over the years, no "discomfiture" has occurred among the club's members, though there once was, as one member put it, "a narrow escape." A woman applied for membership and, after lengthy debate, was turned down. Several years later she married a black. "There was little we could have done if she had been admitted," said the member. "Once people get in, it is very unpleasant to try and get them out."

The Valley Hunt Club remains an elegant white oasis in increasingly black Pasadena — a place where older families, older fashions, older codes prevail.

This is confirmed also in the Pasadena Star-News (September 19, 1973):

Pasadena's elite Valley Hunt Club of some 750 members [...] has no black members. When asked if blacks could join, the manager, Mr. Taylor, [...]



Valley Hunt Club Debutante Ball, Pasadena, 1957. Becky O'Malley is on the top right (LA Times, 12/30/57).

indicated that membership requires several sponsors and the cost of initiation and dues is high. Membership is handled by a committee and a board of directors, he said. Taylor would not indicate if club policies exclude blacks from membership or explain why there are not blacks among the club membership.

Elisabeth Warren Peters attended the exclusive Mayfield School for Girls long before the “threat” of forced busing and integration created so much demand for private schools in Pasadena in the early 1970’s. The school’s atmosphere was described in 1961 in the LA Times described as follows:

At Mayfield (Senior) School (for girls) in Pasadena, coeds checked into uniform—pastel shirtwaists and white oxfords—and began classes in the beautiful estate of the late John H. Eagle at 500 Bellefontaine St.

And over at Mayfield (Junior) School at 417 S. Euclid Ave. the younger girls rustled from recess to classroom in freshly starched brown and white checked gingham pinafores.

This is how Becky O'Malley described her 50th high school reunion (October 9, 2007):

Oh yes, and how was the reunion? That's another story for another time, but let me just say here that they were all nice girls in our youth, not a mean one in the whole bunch, and they don't seem to have changed much. It wasn't Berkeley, that's for sure—a real vacation, in other words.

“A real vacation”? O'Malley missed this opportunity to speak more candidly about her upbringing.

Here is what the LA Jewish Journal (9/18/03) wrote about the Pasadena of that era:

Home to the Rose Bowl, Pasadena is a tony suburb northeast of Los Angeles. It is located in the San Gabriel Valley, a place that for years accommodated hostility toward blacks and Jews. The American Nazi Party had its headquarters in nearby El Monte. The virulently right-wing John Birch Society made its home in neighboring San Marino. In Pasadena there was a 'gentleman's agreement' among real-estate agents not to sell property to Jews in certain neighborhoods, according to Steve Sass, president of the Jewish Historical Society of Los Angeles.

Here is how a recent blogger describes Pasadena of today (<http://pasadenasucks.blogspot.com>):

Elitist, Racist Old Money Snobs. As one of the first affluent areas of Southern California, Pasadena is home to scores of old money snobs. These people trace their ancestors back to the first settlers of California (or in some cases, the Mayflower). They belong to the California Club and play tennis at the Valley Hunt Club. They have pretentious names like Dex, Buzz, Mitzi, and Talley. Their raison d'être is to restore their 15,000 square foot Craftsman homes that bear the name of some irrelevant architect only Pasadena's highbrows would know. They find places to “summer” and are in quest of the perfect pate with truffles. I have spent time with people who are on the Forbes 400 list of wealthiest people in the world, people with 50 to 100 fold the wealth of these Pasadena people, and they were never as snobbish as Pasadena blue bloods. Pasadena's upper echelon hire minorities to clean their houses, tend to their

azaleas, and sometimes be their doctors. On the surface they appear nice to minorities, but behind closed doors they denigrate them freely. I know. I've been behind those doors.

Children of Elitist, Racist Old Money Snobs. The only thing worse than an elitist, racist old money snob is the child of an elitist, racist old money snob. Take all of the flaws of the group above, square them and you'll have the personality of their children. The offspring of Pasadena's chosen few have been afforded every advantage in the world. They attend Westridge School, have private tutors and coaches for whatever sport their precious hearts desire to pursue. They strut around like they have accomplished rarefied feats, yet they are only half as able as the children of immigrants who have to wait tables when they are not in school.

Becky's country club universe was crafted by her parents. Her father, Warren A. Peters, Jr., arrived at Princeton University in the year 1930, which happened to coincide with the strictest enforcement of the notorious anti-Jewish quotas:

The representation of "Hebrews," as they were called in the Freshman Herald, also dropped; just 11 entered in 1930, compared to 227 Presbyterians and 224 Episcopalians.

Perhaps not coincidentally, at a university which gave us the "Gentleman's C" and whose president coined the phrase, "Better to have gone and loafed than never to have gone at all," the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT, ironically first developed and tested at Princeton) "witnessed the unpleasant spectacle of the SAT scores of Princeton freshman dropping to record lows in the early 1930s." In fact, an astonishing 79% of those who applied were admitted into the class of 1930 from which it is not unreasonable to infer that a significant percentage of the 20% rejected were deemed as "undesirables" due to their Jewish heritage.



Becky O'Malley, Anti-Semitism, and The *Berkeley Daily Planet*

The status quo has always been the battle cry of her privileged class. Prior to purchasing the *Berkeley Daily Planet* at the beginning of 2003, O'Malley had made her name in Berkeley fighting every form of development and progress. As a member of the Landmarks Commission, in particular, she most vehemently fought against the building of a synagogue, Beth El. The Northern California Jewish Weekly, the "J", reported how she fought the synagogue in its January 19, 2001 issue:

Although the hearing proceeded, much of the time it was less than orderly. O'Malley continually interrupted, spoke over other commissioners and had to be told repeatedly by Edwards that she was out of order. She passed notes to commissioners who were not disqualified, made faces, shook her head and, at one point, left her seat, walked in front of the commissioners' table and got a speaker's card.

This is how the old *Daily Planet* reported O'Malley's opposition to the synagogue in its January 10, 2001 issue:

Before the commission opened the public hearing on the 2526 Dwight Way project, an obviously uncomfortable Edwards asked the four commissioners to leave the dais. Commissioner O'Malley asked Vivian Khan, the interim deputy director of the Planning and Development Department, what would happen if they refused to leave.

Kahn was explaining that they had never been faced with that situation when O'Malley said "Well you're faced with it now."

The four remained at the dais and Burton proceeded with the meeting while the disqualified commissioners sat back with their arms folded.

O'Malley continued to interrupt the hearing during discussions of protocol. A frustrated Burton twice threatened to adjourn the meeting. "You're out of order," Burton said repeatedly. "This is exactly why you were asked to step down from the dais."

O'Malley responded that the whole meeting was "null and void anyway so we might as well go home and get some sleep."

Commissioner Richard Dishnica said O'Malley comments were inappropriate. "I find it disrespectful not only to us but to the members of the public," he said. "Especially the constant and belligerent attitude towards the chairman."

Do these two newspaper accounts of her opposition to the building of a Jewish synagogue sound like someone who is merely concerned about zoning, setbacks or the placement of a culvert? Her opposition to a synagogue seems overwrought, even hysterical, beyond anything the situation could have warranted.

When the opportunity arose, O'Malley bought the very newspaper that had previously panned her boorish behavior.

Examining Becky O'Malley's tenure as editor of the *Berkeley Daily Planet* and her possible connection to anti-Semitism, let's start with the proposition that she may not be an anti-Semite. There is evidence for this. O'Malley denies that she is an anti-Semite. This is important. Anti-Semites sometimes admit outright that they hate Jews, as one can readily determine by visiting skinhead and neo-Nazi Internet sites. If O'Malley is an anti-Semite, she is of the "some-of-my-best-friends-are-Jews" country club type.

In an October 9, 2008 editorial, O'Malley insisted, "we [the *Berkeley Daily Planet*]

don't publish unsigned or anti-Semitic letters." Of course, this is false, but just possibly O'Malley really believes this, and exists in a mental state of self-absolution.

On the other hand, and in utter contradiction to her statement that she would never publish anti-Semitic pieces, O'Malley also believes that hate speech needs to be printed, lest it build pressure underground. This was her defense for publishing the now infamous anti-Semitic screed by the Iranian living in India.

However, it is very troubling that, apart from one solitary diatribe exonerating the killing of Oakland police officers, we have not found a single case where O'Malley has published hate speech directed against any group other than Jews or Israelis. On the contrary, O'Malley wrote on March 26, 2004 that she would decline to publish defenses of Israel if they came from outside of her paper's distribution area. But a hateful piece of anti-Semitism written from India presented no problems. In her May 14, 2004 editorial O'Malley brags that she refused to publish something she had received that she regarded as Islamophobic, admitting, in effect, that the only allowable target in her newspaper will be Jews and Israelis.

O'Malley once called Binyamin Netanyahu "odious" and encouraged her readers to heckle such figures when they come to Berkeley (October 5, 2004). At the time, Netanyahu was a former prime minister of Israel. Then, as now, he headed the Likud party, roughly equivalent to the American Republican party. The Likud, under Menachem Begin, negotiated the Camp David Accords that returned all of Sinai to Egypt, and Begin received a Nobel Peace Prize for this. As Prime Minister, Netanyahu tended to talk to the right, but govern from the middle, being responsible for returning sovereignty to Palestinians in parts of the West Bank, and he is now known to have secretly offered the entire Golan Heights to Syria in exchange for a peace treaty. "Odious" is a word normally reserved for figures like David Duke, Ahmadinejad, Robert Mugabe, or Slobodan Milošević, not for the duly elected head of a vibrant democracy such as Israel. When Netanyahu came to Berkeley to speak, pro-Palestinian "hecklers" made it so dangerous that his talk had to be cancelled, a clear case in which hate speech was allowed to trump free speech. "Free speech absolutist," Becky O'Malley, was unbothered.

O'Malley has called the author of this report an "extremist" (and worse), even though he is a life long liberal Democrat and a left-leaning Zionist. However, she describes anti-Israel propagandist, Conn Hallinan, as "pro-Israel" (June 4, 2009). This is all Orwellian newspeak. In O'Malley's lexicon a center-right Zionist is "odious," a center-left Zionist is an "extremist," while an anti-Zionist is "pro-Israel."

On May 19, 2004 the *East Bay Express* ran a front page article entitled, "Berkeley Intifada: As

students embrace the Palestinian cause, UC Berkeley has lost whatever reputation it may once have had for tolerance.” The article documented cases of anti-Semitism on the UC Berkeley campus. O’Malley immediately rushed to print two front-page stories attempting to counter this claim. The first appeared on May 25, 2004 under the headline “UC Lecturer’s ‘Intifada’ Comment Brings Death Threats.” This article gave a clean bill of health to an Arab professor who called for an intifada in and against the United States. The *Berkeley Daily Planet* accepted at face value the professor’s claims that he had received 1000 critical emails, 9 voice mail death threats, and had been mistreated by Bill O’Reilly. Oddly, the reporter never asked to see the emails, never listened to the death threats nor checked with the police department to determine whether a proper report had been filed. After all, who among us would not report nine death threats to the police? Nor did he even bother to watch a tape of the O’Reilly show in question. However, this was just a warm up for a June 8, 2004 front page *Daily Planet* article that examined the thesis directly as to whether there is anti-Semitism on the UC Berkeley campus. The clear slant was to argue that there is no such thing, though the *Berkeley Daily Planet* found that there is anti-Arab discrimination. To make its case, the *Berkeley Daily Planet* selectively interviewed an atypical Jew who happened to be prominent in the pro-Palestinian cause. Obviously, such a person would feel no anti-Semitism from her Arab colleagues.

In her March 26, 2004 editorial O’Malley condemns Israel’s targeted killings of Hamas leaders. O’Malley has thrown a protective cloak over Hamas on other occasions as well. For example, in the August 13, 2009 issue, she deleted a direct quotation from the Hamas Charter calling for death to all Jews from a letter that she did otherwise publish. Here is the setup. The previous edition had featured a letter quoting some Israeli extremists who had made clearly racist remarks about Arabs. No one can deny that there are Israeli extremists. Gratefully, they represent a very small proportion of Israeli society. Faith Meltzer responded with the following letter:

I must take exception to Hassan Fouda’s “Propaganda from Kensington” in the August 6th issue of the *Daily Planet*. It has always perplexed me that Israel is judged only by its worse representatives and that any obscure quote from an obscure figure from history, politics or popular culture can be turned into “evidence” of Israel’s inherent immortality. The essence of prejudice is the moving from the specific to the general- and that is precisely what Mr. Fouda does, when he quotes extremists that have been widely condemned and rejected by Israeli society.

Should we be as quick to judge the people of Gaza, who have elected a government whose very charter includes this incitement to genocide?

“The Day of Judgement will not come about until Muslims fight the Jews (killing the Jews), when the Jew will hide behind stones and trees. The stones and trees will say “O Muslims, O Abdulla, there is a Jew behind me, come and kill him.” Should we be as quick to judge the people of Gaza who have elected a government that categorically rejects peace? “There is no solution for the Palestinian question except through Jihad. Initiatives, proposals and international conferences are all a waste of time and vain endeavors.”

I urge people of conscience and Mr. Fouda to look beyond the extremists on both sides, to reject those that reject compromise, and to embrace the true peacemakers on both sides of this conflict. This is the path of justice and of lasting peace.

The problem is that high-minded “free speech absolutist,” Becky O’Malley, deleted the words in bold print, and did so without the permission of the author. O’Malley was perfectly willing to print hate speech uttered by an extremist Jew the week before, even though such people are on the far right fringe of Israeli society and have the whole body of Israeli law stacked against them, but she deletes hate speech by Palestinians, even though that hate speech forms part of the very charter of a main Palestinian political party, Hamas, and is proudly displayed on Hamas’ own website. Moreover, this is the only known example of O’Malley editing a letter. What could have possessed her? We can only believe O’Malley’s hatred of Israel has trumped her alleged love of free speech. There is never a level playing field at the *Berkeley Daily Planet*.

Returning to O’Malley’s March 26, 2004 editorial, O’Malley goes on to say that she had received many letters in support of Israel from outside the East Bay but she would not publish them for that very reason. She did admit to receiving a few letters in support of Israel’s policy of killing Hamas leaders from within the Berkeley area that she said she would publish. But then, true to form, she never did. Refusing to publish letters from out of the area would be a reasonable policy, except that it only seems to apply to Israel’s supporters. Please recall that the most infamous anti-Semitic screed published by the *Berkeley Daily Planet* was penned by an “Iranian student living in India.” More recently, an anti-Israel article in the February 12, 2009 issue by a well-known anti-Israel activist, Annette Herskovits, who O’Malley has called her Middle East advisor, elicited a veritable storm of letters in support. Nineteen letters of support from all over the state and country were published, contrary to O’Malley’s argument that she only publishes

local writers. They were very similar in content, and they were obviously the result of an orchestrated campaign. Nevertheless, O'Malley published them anyway. Three articulate Berkeleyans have shown us pro-Israel articles that were submitted to the *Berkeley Daily Planet* but rejected, the last as recently as August 2009.

In an April 11, 2006 editorial O'Malley wrote that she does publish a handful of pro-Israel writers, but she is afraid that they are "boring" her audience. Apparently, she never finds her stable of anti-Israel writers to be boring.

The headlines that O'Malley chooses sometimes speak volumes about her prejudices. In the August 8, 2006 edition there appear two op-eds. The first, written by Howard Glickman, argues persuasively (though not without some misstatements of fact) that O'Malley has uncritically embraced Hizbollah propaganda. Glickman went on to point out that O'Malley appeared to know little about the American Revolution when she insisted that, like Hizbollah, American troops hid among civilians (they did not), and that the British did not, however, bombard civilians in return (they did). Somehow, O'Malley chose the curious headline for this article, "Criticizing Israel = Anti-Semitism." This would seem an odd choice, since Glickman did not accuse O'Malley or the *Berkeley Daily Planet* of anti-Semitism. In fact, the term appears nowhere in Glickman's article. It was merely a point-by-point refutation of O'Malley's recent anti-Israel editorial. O'Malley's headline was apparently meant to discredit the author by this logic: All of Israel's supporters believe that anyone who criticizes anything about Israel must be driven by anti-Semitism (this is totally untrue). Reasonable people know that criticism of Israel is not always anti-Semitic. Therefore, anyone who criticizes someone who criticizes Israel must be a paranoid Zionist, and reasonable people should not listen to him or her. O'Malley thus inoculates herself. After a number of people pointed this out to O'Malley she answered that it was all a mistake—that this headline was actually meant for some different article. However, no such article to which the headline might reasonably have been applied was published by the *Berkeley Daily Planet* in that issue or in any immediately preceding or later issue. Would O'Malley lie to us?

The following headline graced an anti-Israel article in the September 23, 2005 issue: "A Scholar Asks: Who Speaks for the Jews." The fine print at the end of the article indicated that the author, H. Scott Prosterman, has a master's degree. A master's degree does not usually qualify one to be deemed a scholar in bold print, especially in Berkeley, home of innumerable Nobel laureates, MacArthur "genius" fellows, members of the National Academy of Sciences, and so forth. All but one person in the office of our website, www.

DPWatchDog.com, has at least a master's degree, and yet O'Malley has never once called our website "scholarly." Why bother to become an actual "scholar," when all one needs to achieve the status is to write an anti-Israel article for the *Daily Planet*?

In O'Malley's editorial of May 4, 2004 she may have hit the lowest blow of all. There she cunningly and falsely linked Israel to the Abu Ghraib torture scandal. Here is the passage (the brackets are O'Malley's):

Seymour Hersch in the May 10 New Yorker article quotes a February report on the allegations of torture in an Iraq prison: 'I suspect,' [General] Taquba concluded, that [army intelligence officers] Pappas, Jordan, [and CAIC International, Inc. employees] Stephanowicz and Israel 'were either directly or indirectly responsible for the use at Abu Ghraib.'

This was a very, very odd choice for a sole excerpt from Seymour Hersch's 10 page long article.

Why would O'Malley choose to quote this short passage from among all others? We submit that O'Malley's intent in isolating this single passage was that the casual reader might assume from this passage that Israel was somehow tied up in the whole Abu Ghraib mess, which it most certainly was not. Reading the full Hersch article, one finds that the "Israel" referred to was "John Israel," that is, someone who just happened to bear the last name of "Israel." We believe that it may well be a blind hatred of Israel that caused O'Malley to do this. We cannot say whether this was a conscious or a sub-conscious act, but it could not be more telling.

Does all of this add up to a charge of anti-Semitism? If an irrational and unyielding hatred of Israel is anti-Semitic, then O'Malley would appear to be guilty. But let's give O'Malley the last word. In her July 20, 2004 editorial she actually wrote a love note to Israel:

For most of us around here, Israel is not 'everyone else.' Our expectations are simply higher for Israel, and that's a mark of respect for Israel's history and its meaning for Jews, and not disrespect or anti-Semitic prejudice. Why do some of us criticize Israel? For the same reason we tell our kids when we think they've made a mistake: because we care about you.

O'Malley loves Israel just like it were her own child. Like an overbearing parent she expects only perfection from it. On July 30, 2009 O'Malley wrote:

It's people like the signers [anti-Israel Jews] who will eventually save Israel, if it's still possible to save it.

O'Malley in her editorials often returns to this theme of the “good Jews” and the “bad Jews.” Naturally, some of her best friends are Jews, but they are all of the “good Jew” variety that hates Israel. Anti-Israel Jews do exist, but are extremely rare. Even in far left Berkeley, they number in the hundreds, not thousands. (O'Malley also claims to adore Holocaust victims—August 6, 2009).

There are 192 member states of the United Nations. The very survival of only one is debated in the pages of *Berkeley Daily Planet*. We have to say that after all that O'Malley has written or published on the topic we have a strong sense of where she would like the story to end—and it ain't pretty.

In her desire for Israel's perfection, O'Malley eagerly ignores even the worst possible behavior from Israel's neighbors, such as honor killings, the indiscriminate bombings of civilians in Israel, the use of human shields, the murder of gays and Christians, kleptocracy from Fatah, theocracy from Hamas, the stoning of rape victims ostensibly for causing their own rapes, female genital mutilation, summary executions of “collaborators” as well as for those selling land to Jews, civil war between Hamas and Fatah, and on and on.

From the way that O'Malley willfully ignores every act of Arab wrongdoing it might reasonably be surmised that O'Malley is actually a racist. Taken to its fair conclusion, O'Malley is arguing that Jews must act at all times in a fashion that is demonstrably superior to those pathetic little brown people that surround Israel, from whom every manner of benighted behavior is merely to be expected. In other words, she is returning to her country club origins with conscious or sub-conscious logic like this: Jews are far beneath me, but at least they are white.

Examine for yourself the two dozen (to date) articles that Becky O'Malley has written about Israel and/or Jews. Try to detect any sign that O'Malley knows anything about the Palestine/Israel conflict. She almost never cites facts, and when she does, she almost always gets them wrong. This conflict does lend itself to the taking of sides. Many intellectuals pick their facts to bolster an innate preference for either the Palestinian narrative or the Israeli narrative. However, we do not complain that O'Malley has chosen the Palestinian

narrative over the Israeli narrative. With O'Malley it is something altogether more sinister, for she shows not the slightest evidence that she has ever attempted to learn about and understand either narrative. While lashing out at Israel, nowhere does she show real interest in, knowledge about, or genuine care for the Palestinians. Instead, she heaps epithets devoid of content upon Israel as an apparent stand in for those uppity Jews she would prefer to thrash with her own riding whip if she but could.

So, what is Becky O'Malley: an anti-Semite, an anti-Arab racist, both or neither?

V. Miscellaneous Examples of Journalistic Malfeasance

Judith Scherr had been editor of the *Berkeley Daily Planet's* under its previous ownership, but left before the paper was sold to the O'Malleys. The O'Malleys successfully lured Scherr back. According to a story in the UCB's *Daily Californian* at the time, Scherr "had initially been skeptical that Becky O'Malley would be able to separate her political philosophy from the paper's content." She quit abruptly in September 2008, sending an email to her many friends, which has been widely circulated since. It reads in part:

2.5 years of being insulted, berated and lied to by the *Daily Planet's* executive editor — and having my stories distorted by the deletion of quotes from persons Becky O'Malley hates and the addition of her nasty remarks about such people. [full text below]

O'Malley describes her paper as practicing "advocacy journalism." However, when mangled quotes, persistent misstatements of fact, and raw opinion masquerade as "news," this is not advocacy journalism but pure propaganda.

In this section we will look at a few examples of journalistic malfeasance that do not concern Israel/Palestine or anti-Semitism.

The Sad Case of George Beier.

George Beier ran against incumbent Kriss Worthington in the November 2006 election for the District 7 City Council seat. Though O'Malley had never met Beier, she lambasted him without mercy in issue after issue of the paper leading up to the election. His crime, of all things, was to be modestly wealthy. O'Malley believed that Beier was buying the election. Take for example, this piece of post-election crowing (November 10, 2006):

And speaking of nasty attacks, let's hear it at home for Berkeley Councilmember Kriss Worthington, who survived having a mountain of money and a pack of lies dropped on his campaign for re-election. His opponent, George Beier, who tried on the roles of Mr. Clean and Superman in a couple of his many campaign mailers, ended up being stuck with the Daddy Warbucks image. The bagmen and bagladies at the Chamber of Commerce PAC put expenditures on his behalf over the \$100,000 mark, an obscene amount in a council election, particularly when a lot of it was spent with the

Chamber's non-union Carlsbad mailing house instead of with local Berkeley printers.

This is one of O'Malley's oddest assertions, possibly a type of psychological projection, since she herself is the one person who has most influenced Berkeley's politics with her money. Her anti-Beier campaign, for example, was worth much more in advertising dollars to O'Malley favorite, Kriss Worthington, than anything that Beier could have spent.

But here is the real scandal, if it is true. The *Berkeley Daily Planet* has never been home delivered, except once, but then only to George Beier's district, and only on those days just before the 2006 election when the *Berkeley Daily Planet* contained scathing denunciations of him. We have heard this from one reliable source, O'Malley has declined to deny the story when put to her, and *Berkeley Daily Planet* reporter, Richard Brenneman, has told us that it is the paper's official position to neither confirm nor deny it.

Thanks to O'Malley's shenanigans, Beier lost by less than 200 votes.

Laurie Capatelli's Near Miss

What happened to City Council candidate, George Beier, almost happened to sitting member, Laurie Capatelli, in his tight race against newcomer, Sophie Hahn. O'Malley, favoring Hahn, was all set to pull every dirty trick she could muster, when she was busted by one of her own reporters, Judith Scherr. In a truly heroic whistle blowing action, Scherr resigned with this open letter:

Sept. 18, 2008

Hello friends —

A number of you have asked why I've left the *Planet*. Excuse the mass response.

After 2.5 years of being insulted, berated and lied to by the *Berkeley Daily Planet*'s executive editor — and having my stories distorted by the deletion of quotes from persons Becky O'Malley hates and the addition of her nasty remarks about such people — I have left the Planet.

The last straw was O'Malley's assigning me to do a (kind of silly — but I was

used to that) story on complaints by two candidates around various groups' endorsement processes.

She insisted that I interview candidates Shirley Dean and Sophie Hahn. (I also interviewed their opponents.)

Criticisms of the endorsement process were in a story published Sept. 11. What I didn't know until after the story appeared in the paper, was that one of those candidates had participated in the very practices she was condemning in my story — Sophie Hahn packed the Wellstone Club with her friends on endorsement day. This kind of thing — unfortunately — is more or less business as usual in local electioneering. What infuriated me was that O'Malley was aware of what Hahn was doing when she assigned the story. When she assigned the story, O'Malley had in her possession a flyer written by Sophie Hahn in which Hahn urges her supporters to join the Wellstone Club in order to secure the club's endorsement and offers to pick up Wellstone membership forms, dues and voter proxies.

I could no longer be part of a newspaper with such a lack of journalistic integrity. Please note, I'm in no way calling for people not to read or support the Planet. Unfortunately, it's all we have — which is why it took me so long to leave.

You can always reach me at judithscherr@gmail.com.

Best,
Judith

Tree Sitting

On December 5, 2006, the *Berkeley Daily Planet* published its first story about what would become the farcical attempt of a small cadre of Berkeley radicals to save a grove of oak trees on the UC Berkeley campus. The grove was slated for removal so that the campus could expand services. These people commandeered the trees and sat in them for many months. Their most notable support came from Becky O'Malley. The first of many articles begins with a loving ode to the protest organizer:

In the wee, dark hours of Big Game, a Wolf [Zachary Running Wolf] made like a Butterfly and took to the trees. . . . He's acquired some impressive support.

The article goes on to interview four such supporters, but not one University official, nor any other person who favored University development. The impression given was that all of Berkeley was up in arms about these trees, which of course was totally untrue. As a result of the *Daily Planet* supported tree sitting misadventure, the University was forced to spend vast sums of money they could hardly afford to solve the legal and security problems created, while the City of Berkeley yet again became the laughing stock of the world. The trees came down in the end.

Landmarking and Development.

O'Malley has a strong anti-development bias, which she advances not just in the defense of tree sitting, but at every opportunity. By most accounts, she purchased the *Daily Planet* with this single motivation in mind. Not satisfied with editorializing against development, she slants the entire news department against it. Here is a typical example, chosen almost at random. On January 21, 2009 the *Daily Planet* reported on the departure of anti-development Planning Commissioner:

Ferrazares was perhaps the most independent member and the least predictable vote on a strongly divided panel. She asked incisive questions and often spotted implications in proposals that slipped by most of her colleagues. Uniquely on the commission, she would often vote with the majority after deeply questioning the proposals she would ultimately vote for.

Key here is to understand that, if it can be believed, this is taken from a “news” story, and not from an op-ed or editorial. Similar “news” can be found in almost every issue of the *Daily Planet*.

Here is Zoning Adjustment Board (ZAB) member Terry Doran’s recent take on the *Daily Planet*’s systemic bias (February 11, 2009):

Ms. O'Malley describes the Planet as “professionally reported news,” but is it? ...Let’s just look at one article as an example from this same edition of the Planet [January 29, 2009], “Zoning Board Approves Kashani’s Ashby Ave. Condos.” This project was approved by the Zoning Adjustments Board (ZAB) by a 7-1 vote. So what should a “professional journalist,” working for a “newspaper” write? What is the story that the readers would welcome as “news”? (Full disclosure: I am one of the seven board members voting yes, and

am a retired journalism teacher).

I would think, as a “news story,” that the overwhelming vote by ZAB should be in the article. It was not. I would also think that the reasons ZAB approved this project should be in the article, but not one ZAB member was quoted or cited. And I would think the public would be interested in knowing how this project affects Berkeley, being one of the largest residential structures proposed for West Berkeley in recent history. What was at this site before this project, how does it fit into Berkeley’s General Plan, San Pablo Avenue Plan, Berkeley’s Climate Action Plan, or help or hurt the housing needs of Berkeley? None of this was in the article.

Instead, the few critics, supported by one ZAB member in the end, were highlighted in the first two paragraphs of the article and the bulk of the article was devoted to their objections. Again, seven out of eight members supported this project and yet not one thing was mentioned in the article, until the very last paragraph, about “any” benefit to Berkeley when many were discussed at the meeting, by board members and the public.

Elephant Pharmacy

Until its recent bankruptcy, Elephant Pharmacy was the *Berkeley Daily Planet*’s largest advertiser. At reputable newspapers there is a solid wall between advertisers and content editors, but not at the *Daily Planet*. When Elephant Pharmacy founder, Stuart Skorman, published a book on his entrepreneurial experience, he was allowed to promote it in the *Daily Planet* in the fashion of a book review (February 27, 2007). Skorman reviewed his own book favorably. In accordance with accepted practice, such a promotion taking the form and look of a news article should have been encased in a line with the words “Paid Advertisement.” Similarly, a routine break in at the Elephant Pharmacy rated an article of its own rather than a brief mention in the “Police Blotter,” like any other Berkeley break in. In fact, it received more coverage than most local murders. Finally, turning to the August 5, 2005 issue, a puff piece was written about Elephant Pharmacy, in effect an ad.



Shuttered up and bankrupt, advertising in the *Daily Planet* did not help Elephant Pharmacy.

Dellums Sycophancy

Until recently, J. Douglas Allen-Taylor was the *Berkeley Daily Planet*'s reporter covering Oakland City Hall. However, he also writes a regular op-ed column in which he consistently praises Dellums. We take no issue with that, insofar as he is entitled to express his editorial opinion. But every Journalism 101 class in the country teaches students to separate reportage from opinion. First he reports on Oakland city politics, and then he defends the mayor's every action in his editorial column. So how in the world can a reader rely upon the accuracy of the reportage?

O'Malley defends her newspaper by stating that she merely practices "advocacy journalism." There is nothing wrong with advocacy journalism, per se. There are many responsible journals of opinion in America, such as *The New Republic*, *The Weekly Standard*, *The Nation*, and *Commentary*. However, these magazines never masquerade

as newspapers. Reputable newspapers advocate, but only on their opinion pages. When advocacy controls the news department, the generally accepted term for this is “propaganda.”

Perhaps in response to our complaints, on October 21, 2009 O’Malley announced that Allen-Taylor would cease reporting and concentrate on his opinion column.

The *Daily Planet* Publishes a Plea to Kill Cops

In a move so audacious our jaw dropped, the *Daily Planet* published a long commentary in its April 2, 2009 edition that nearly upended one of our core contentions, namely, that the *Daily Planet* reserves its fullest measure of venom for Jews and Israel. If Becky O’Malley is merely a radical free-speecher, as she claims, then why are there never hateful articles aimed at Muslims, blacks, gays, or others?

But now comes an article filled with pure hate, but aimed neither at Jews nor Israel. It is directed instead at the police.

The April 2, 2009 edition begins with two warm acts. First, J. Douglas Allen-Taylor pleads with us to understand the circumstances of parolee and serial rapist Lovell Mixon’s recent murder of four Oakland police officers from his point of view. Are not the Oakland police of today just like those strike-breaking police of 100 years ago? Then comes an article by Jean Damu, asking aloud just why it is that when the news broke of the murder of the four police officers, attendees at a Hip Hop convention erupted in spontaneous cheering. But, as said, these were just the warm up acts.

The real deal came in a lengthy commentary entitled, “The ‘Karmic Justice’ of Lovell Mixon’s Act,” by Joseph Anderson. It is so breathtaking, that our meager attempt to summarize would barely do it justice. So let the article speak for itself in these excerpts:

Most people of color know that the cops, and police departments as institutions, historically represent the street enforcement arm of white American racism. Indeed, the police were born out of the white slave patrols....

American flags were officially flown at half-staff for those killed cops—summarily tried, sentenced and executed in the streets, just like they do with people of color. . . .

This is especially noteworthy given that a cop who was wounded (but not

killed) by Mixon was Sgt. Pat Gonzales, who narrowly escaped karmic justice
...

While the cops and the media come up with suspiciously last-minute (and technically unconfirmed) stories to try to tell us just “how bad” Lovelle Mixon was (how about research into those dead cops’ background to see how abusive and dirty they were?), many of us see it as karmic justice, regardless of what person killed the four (and almost five!) cops, all in a brief afternoon’s work.

Lovelle Mixon’s name will be legendary in the Bay Area—long after people forget the names of the four cops he killed in one afternoon. And it’s karmic justice that just as many blacks in America have been murdered by cops during a “routine” traffic stop, these cops were killed during a “routine” traffic stop.

When contacted for comment, the Oakland police department would only say, “we have no comment on anything written in that piece of crap newspaper.” That was probably comment enough.

A hater is a hater. It is a sickness that rarely limits its objective to a single victim. Thus, those who hate blacks often hate Jews or liberals, or others with an equal fervor. So we were not at all surprised to learn that cop-hater, Anderson, is also a well-known anti-Semite. We received the following from reader and freelance local journalist, Dan Spitzer:

In Feb. 2004, police threw Anderson out of a lecture at UC Berkeley by Dr. Daniel Pipes for disruptive behavior. Before he was escorted out of the hall, Anderson screamed at the largely Jewish audience, “You’re all a bunch of filthy Jewish liars.” After I reported this in my letter published in the Feb. 13, 2004 issue of the *Daily Planet*, on Feb. 24 owner/editor Becky O’Malley actually apologized to Anderson for printing my letter and gave him better than a half page to rant against Zionists, saying in no uncertain terms that whenever anyone he considered biased came to Berkeley to speak, they should be disrupted.

Most tellingly, Anderson has succumbed in such great measure to his anti-Semitism that he now regularly rails against virulent anti-Israeli leftists such as Noam Chomsky and Norman Finklestein. In early 2008, he even alienated

the heads of the Middle East Childrens' Alliance when he disrupted a talk by Finklestein and was ordered to be tossed out of the hall by the moderator. Knowing members of the leftist audience were not surprised—even they understand that Anderson is so overtly anti-Semitic that he has now targeted prominent anti-Israel activists like Chomsky and Finklestein if they happen to be born Jewish.

Junk Science and Just Plain Junk

Becky O'Malley has the very odd habit of describing her publishing policies in terms that are self-serving and grandiose, but also patently false. Here are three examples:

First, O'Malley has often made the bold claim that she is a First Amendment or free speech “absolutist.” But this cannot be, because she has elsewhere insisted that she would never deign to publish anything that was homophobic or Islamophobic, or, as below, junk science. The evidence suggests that she only exercises free speech absolutism in the furtherance of anti-Semitism.

Second, in her October 9, 2008 editorial, O'Malley insisted, “we [the *Berkeley Daily Planet*] don't publish unsigned or anti-Semitic letters.” Based upon all of the evidence we have gathered, it is absurd for her to claim that she does not publish anti-Semitic tracts. What is more, O'Malley, herself, in other editorials has admitted that the Arianpour article, at least, was blatantly anti-Semitic, but that she published it anyway in the furtherance of free-speech “absolutism.”

Third, O'Malley started her November 5, 2009 editorial with this little piece of self-congratulation:

In the last week we've been deluged with press releases and even proffered op-eds from quasi-medical providers who want to publicize their contrarian views on the need for swine flu vaccine, hopefully creating a profit opportunity for themselves in the process. This just in: the Planet is open to all legitimate opinions, but not to junk science, not even junk science embellished with strings of faux footnotes.

There are not two equally valid points of view on many scientific topics: not on planetary motion in the universe, not on the general shape of the earth, not on evolution, not on climate change, or even on the need for susceptible people to

get vaccinations to be protected from the H₁N₁ virus.

But this could not possibly be true, since O'Malley had already published in her August 27, 2009 issue a paranoid plea from Michael Baucé to shun the swine flu vaccine, based upon exactly the sort of junk science and conspiracy theories that she claims above, with the greatest of fanfare, she would never publish:

As it looks now, the proposed Swine Flu vaccine may be more dangerous than the swine flu.

We are being told that it has the possibility of killing “hundreds of thousands” as it runs its deadly course. However, so far it has remained a relatively mild disease, no different than any other flu epidemic. Worldwide, there have been 311 deaths from swine flu, with 70,893 reported. One might wonder why all the hoopla.

The government has contracted with two corporations to produce the vaccine (Bayer and Novartis) and they are now battling for the billions of dollars at stake. No matter what happens with the development of the swine flu, the ball is in play. The money will continue to flow.

In addition, modern scientists who have been studying the virus have been debating whether this virus was genetically modified or not. It is known that scientists around the world are now developing and experimenting with genetically altered viruses in the laboratory.

If they can create a virus that the human body has no acquired immune defense, they can also create the vaccine that everyone will need.

One part of the vaccine, that is most suspect, is made from squalene oil, a substance implicated in autoimmune disorders. Coincidentally, Novartis' scientists are the ones entrusted to conduct the safety tests and reports. It's not surprising that their results yielded no dangers whatsoever.

If you are truly interested in your health, be suspect of corporate health claims. Take responsibility for your own health through diet and lifestyle. Your life may now depend on it.

While on the topic of junk science, if O'Malley is sincere about not publishing it, why

does the Daily Planet feature a weekly horoscope? Does O'Malley not know that astrology does not enjoy one scintilla of scientific corroboration? The publication of horoscopes should be regarded as an insult in Berkeley, home to one of the world's finest universities and astronomy departments.

There is a dizzying array of contradictions in all of the above. If O'Malley is a free speech absolutist, why does she refuse to publish junk science and junk conspiracy theories? If she refuses to publish junk science, why does she leap to publish junk history, junk theology, and junk conspiracy theories when it comes to Israel and the Jews?

VI. The Peculiar World View of Conn Hallinan

The *Berkeley Daily Planet* publishes a bi-weekly foreign affairs column by Conn Hallinan, entitled, "Dispatches From the Edge." His columns are devilishly difficult to fact check and analyze, often relying on esoteric and obscure sources. Or, when citing a common source, like the BBC, Hallinan masks his sources by with statements like "according to the BBC..." Since the BBC broadcasts on TV and radio and in several languages, 24/7, there is little hope of checking the veracity of his statements.

When one reads syndicated columnists published in the San Francisco Chronicle, the ones on the right (e.g., Deborah Saunders and Pat Buchanan) can be easily distinguished from the ones on the left (e.g., Paul Krugman and E.J. Dionne). Because Hallinan often deals with esoterica and conspiracy theories, it is not easy recognize that he writes from the perspective of a life long Communist.

In the 1970's Hallinan was the editor of the Communist Party USA's magazine, *Peoples Weekly World*. His recent articles continue to appear in this magazine, as well as in its Canadian counterpart and other Communist journals, such as *Dissent Voice*. Although for many years he was an active member of the Communist Party USA, that political party disbanded not long after the dissolution of its patron, the Soviet Union and the KGB, which funded it. However, its magazine, *Peoples Weekly World*, persists, and, as stated, Hallinan's writings continue to appear there. Hallinan has lectured in journalism at UC Santa Cruz, a campus famous for its Communist faculty members, such as Angela Davis and Betina Aptheker. He is the son of Vincent Hallinan, a well-known radical attorney, who once defended Communist Longshore Leader Harry Bridges and was jailed in that case for contempt of court. Vincent also ran for president as the candidate of the Progressive Party. He is the brother of Terrance Hallinan, a recent and controversial San Francisco's District Attorney. Hallinan is not the only Communist writing for the *Berkeley Daily Planet*. For example, frequent op-ed writer, Kenneth Thiesen, is a member of the extreme radical Revolutionary Communist Party, founded by Maoist, Bob Avakian; and frequent anti-Israel contributor, Joanna Graham, is a self-identified Marxist.

By correctly identifying Conn Hallinan as a Communist we do not mean to demean him. He has every right to be a Communist, just as others have a right to be Democrats or Republicans. Our concern is not so much that O'Malley has chosen a life long Communist to write her foreign affairs column, but that both she and Hallinan fail to

let us know this. Proper notification is necessary in this case, because this core fact is obscured by Hallinan's blizzard falsified data, dubious polls, and quotes taken out of all reasonable context. O'Malley's actions in allowing Hallinan to write for the *Berkeley Daily Planet* are tantamount to allowing a devout Christian Scientist to write a medical advice column, a fundamentalist Christian to write a science column, or a Scientologist to write a personal advice column. They would have every right to do so, but the public would also have a right to understand exactly which unique and unusual perspective most informs them.

Like other *Berkeley Daily Planet* writers, Hallinan is obsessed with Israel. Very many of his columns concern Israel in part or in whole. They are, of course, taken as a body, highly condemnatory. His non-Israel articles often deal with a defense of the Soviet Union and its clients—well, actually, we mean Mother Russia, what remains of the Soviet Union. Parenthetically, Hallinan writes in the deadly dull and humorless style of a party apparatchik, yet another difficulty in reading him.

In this chapter we will attempt to decode some of Hallinan's *Berkeley Daily Planet* columns. What we believe we have uncovered is a disturbing pattern of journalistic malfeasance, grossly distorting quotes, polls, statistics, geography, and historical facts to suit his purpose.

Hallinan on Russia, Its Former Allies, North Korea, and Sundry Communists

After considering every manner of whacky conspiracy theory, Hallinan concludes in his December 22, 2006 article that the only party that certainly would not have been responsible for the polonium poisoning death of former KGB agent and then fierce KGB critic, Alexander Litvineko, were the Russians.

There is overwhelming evidence of Russian involvement, including that the accused culprits have been shielded by Russia from extradition. This is an example of an article that would be impossible to understand without knowing that Comrade Hallinan was a member of the CP USA, which was not just Communist, but very closely aligned with the USSR and funded in part or in whole by the KGB.

One has to know that Hallinan is a Russophile Communist to understand why in his August 21, 2008 column he argues that Russia had no choice but to attack aggressor, Georgia. Hallinan also calls for the dissolution of NATO in this article, Russia's nemesis.



Alexander Litvinenko on his death bed

There are not many Marxist-Leninist guerrilla groups remaining in the world. Colombia's FARC is one of the very few. The United States, Canada, and the EU have deemed the FARC to be a terrorist group. But Hallinan, unmoved by years of their murdering, kidnapping, and drug smuggling professes his support, and expresses loathing for the duly elected "right wing" president of Colombia, Alvaro Uribe (March 14, 2008). Uribe has gone after the FARC in its sanctuaries in Ecuador, has managed to rescue many of its foreign and Colombian hostages, and has reduced the FARC to a remnant of what they once were. Rather than to honestly state that he supports the FARC, Hallinan feigns a humanitarian concern for FARC's hostages and defends the territorial integrity of Ecuador (though he cared nothing of the territorial integrity of Georgia when Russia invaded). On these grounds, he pleads that Uribe must leave the FARC alone.

In the July 2, 2009 issue of the *Berkeley Daily Planet*, Hallinan begins by allowing that North Korea is repressive. But here, as often, Hallinan is being fundamentally dishonest, allowing the obvious in order to lower our guard. For the real point of his column is to blame the West for the failure of negotiations with North Korea and most particularly to beg the West to leave misunderstood North Korea alone: "In short, more sanctions, more threats, and searching ships on the high seas is likely to make the situation worse, not better."

Remarkably, although Hallinan has written almost 100 columns for the *Berkeley Daily Planet*, and has heaped repeated scorn on democratic Israel, he seems to have nothing to say about China and Cuba.

Hallinan lives in a Soviet time warp. In his world, Syria is still a Soviet client state and therefore worthy of his special protection. In his December 4, 2008 column, Hallinan examines and basically embraces various wacky conspiracy theories as to why the U.S. had recently bombed a remote compound in Syria, near its border with Iraq. The U.S. had said it was a safehouse used by al Qaeda to sneak suicide bombers into Iraq.

Among these conspiracy theories, his favorite is that the U.S. intentionally bombed a house filled with innocent construction workers, rather than al Qaeda operatives, because:

Damascus has improved its relations with the European Union (EU) as well, and Syrian President Bashar al-Assad recently met with French President Nicolas Sarkozy. Lastly, with Turkey as a middleman, Syria and Israel have been discussing a peace treaty and a return of the Golan Heights. In short, Syria is beginning to break out of the isolation imposed on it by the U.S. and the EU. Which may be why it was targeted. A number of hawks in the Bush Administration, in particular Deputy National Security Advisor for the Middle East, Elliot Abrams and Vice-President Dick Cheney, have long advocated "regime change" in Syria. . . . Abrams has long been close to Benjamin Netanyahu, who may be Israel's next prime minister and who is implacably opposed to negotiations with either Syria or the Palestinians. . . .

One problem with the above analysis is that Hallinan stated in his December 22, 2006 column that Israelis lust for war with Syria, and predicted that Israel would invade Syria in less than a year (still waiting). Now we learn from Hallinan that Israelis are actually peacemaking with Syria. Which is it? Hallinan thus transfers the war lust he formerly attributed to all Israelis to presumed incoming prime minister, Benyamin Netanyahu. However, Netanyahu is known to have made a generous offer of peace to the Syrians during his first term as prime minister. He has been prime minister now for some months, with not so much as a single saber rattle in the direction of Damascus.

The one theory Hallinan refused to even consider in this column is the straightforward, non-esoteric possibility that the U.S. actually did want to kill suicide bombers along with their handlers in Syria before they could act in Iraq.



The Syrian secret nuclear site bombed by Israel

In his January 15, 2008 column Hallinan insisted that a Syrian nuclear reactor, which had been recently bombed by the Israeli air force, was merely an empty building. As usual, Hallinan considers every kind of conspiracy theory, yet nowhere does he explain why the Israelis would want to risk losing their airplanes and possibly igniting a war with Syria for the sake of bombing a lot of nothing. Furthermore, nowhere does he examine the plethora of credible evidence that this really was a nuclear reactor under construction, including the discovery of uranium at the site by the UN's IAEA, which was detected by them despite Syria's extensive efforts to scrub the site clean.

In his December 22, 2006 column, Hallinan predicted that Israel would invade Syria by the end of September 2007. Lo these several years later, we are still waiting for that invasion. Part of Hallinan's stated reason for believing that Israel would invade Syria was that the Israeli public itches for war:

If the Olmert government does decide to attack Syria, it will find that the Israeli public—at least for now—supports it. A recent poll by the Tami Steinmetz Center for Peace Research found that only 18 percent of Israelis

thought that long-term peace with Syria is possible and 67 percent reject returning the Golan Heights in exchange for peace. Slightly over half think there will be another war with Syria.

Hallinan's analysis is, of course, false on its face. Just because the Israeli public feels that peace with Syria is a distant prospect does not, perforce, mean that Israelis are eager to invade that country. The status quo has served Israel quite well over the last 35 plus years. Israelis value their children too much to throw them into such a war of choice. By analogy, a poll of Americans would likely find that most Americans view peace with North Korea as a far off possibility. That is hardly the same as pollsters asking Americans if they favor an American invasion of North Korea. Finally, even if nearly half of Israelis believed that another war with Syria is possible, it hardly follows that the same group must believe that Israel should initiate it. It is no doubt because his analysis was so fatally flawed that Hallinan's prediction never came true.

Hallinan on Israel

In his December 9, 2005 column, Hallinan incredibly called Israel's pullout of every single last Jew from Gaza, of all things, a land grab. His thesis was that then Israeli prime minister, Ariel Sharon, was giving back Gaza just so that Israel could hold on to the West Bank. However, he totally ignored the fact that only a month earlier Ariel Sharon had formed the Kadima Party with a platform that explicitly called for the unilateral withdrawal of Israeli settlements from the West Bank.

Hallinan and the *Berkeley Daily Planet's* enduring quest to delegitimize the State of Israel took a bizarre turn in an article on January 19, 2007 entitled, "Iran: Thinking the Unthinkable." One would have thought that Hallinan was about to alert readers to the fact that Iran is thinking the unthinkable, namely, that for the holy purpose of bringing on their messiah, the 12th and hidden imam, they would rain nuclear-tipped missiles upon Israel, "wiping it off the map." Alas, if it can be believed, Hallinan expressed the very opposite concern, namely, that Israel might preemptively attack Iran's nuclear facilities. He even worries aloud that Israel will use low yield nuclear weapons to bust Iran's bunkered nuclear facilities. To Hallinan, Iran's deeply bunkered nuclear weapons sites are more important than Israel's entire population. Hallinan then proposed a chain effect that this would, according to him, inevitably produce. To hear him tell the story, the chain reaction would start with a Shiite uprising in Iraq (which was in full force anyway at the time he wrote the piece) and end in nuclear war between Pakistan and

India. Nowhere does Hallinan mention that failing to deal with Iran's nuclear weapons would more likely set in motion an entirely different set of events: nuclear war between Iran and Israel, triggering a worldwide nuclear winter; the very end of the concept of non-proliferation, with Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and others rushing to join the nuclear arms race; and nuclear weapons inevitably ending up in the hands of terrorists who might explode them in the port of Oakland, obliterating Berkeley, the *Daily Planet*, and Conn Hallinan. Hallinan did not even seem to be bothered in the slightest by a nuclear-armed Iran, and did not even suggest diplomatic alternatives.

On August 27, 2009 Conn Hallinan wrote in the *Berkeley Daily Planet* that the UN's IAEA saw no evidence that Iran is trying to build a bomb. Strictly speaking, Hallinan was correct. They saw no evidence because Iran would not allow them to inspect their most sensitive sites, nor to inspect any sites without warning as they had demanded. And that was just the known or declared sites. There are unknown or undeclared sites as well.

As a consequence, there have already been three UN Security Council resolutions against Iran. "On all other issues relevant to Iran's nuclear program ... there is (a) stalemate," El Baradei told the IAEA board on September 7, 2009, just after Hallinan had gone to press saying the opposite:

"Iran has not suspended its enrichment-related activities or its work on heavy water-related projects as required by the Security Council, nor has Iran implemented the Additional Protocol," which would open its nuclear facilities to unannounced and more intrusive inspections.

"It is essential that Iran substantively re-engage with the agency to clarify and bring to closure all outstanding issues," he said.

"Iran needs to respond fully to all the questions raised by the agency in order to exclude the possibility of there being military dimensions to its nuclear program," he added.

Apart perhaps from Hugo Chavez of Venezuela, Conn Hallinan stands virtually alone in being prepared to give Iran a clean bill of health.

In a February 19, 2009 reprint of an article that originally appeared on the anti-Israel site, PalestineThinkTank.com, Hallinan accuses Israel of war crimes. The title says it all: "Israel Treated Gaza Like Its Own Private Death Laboratory." As usual, his sources were very narrowly selected for an anti-Israel bias to support a pre-determined outcome.

For example, he quoted Dr. Mad Gilbert as an authoritative witness to alleged Israeli war crimes. However, Gilbert is a well-known pro-Palestinian activist, who, according to Wikipedia, endorsed al Qaeda's 9/11 attack upon America. Hallinan accepted Hamas supplied casualty figures as facts, when they are widely disputed by both Israel and doctors who were on the scene. For example, in order to arrive at their figures, Hamas listed all teenage combatants as "children" and all women as civilians, even if they had been photographed holding weapons.

According to CNN (3/26/09), Israel Defense Forces spokesman's office claimed their figures contained the names of 1,166 Palestinians killed in the conflict, called "Operation Cast Lead."

The Israeli military said 709 of them were "identified as Hamas terror operatives, among them several from various other terror organizations."

The remaining, the statement claims, were comprised of 162 names who "have not yet been attributed to any organization."

"Furthermore, it has come to our understanding that 295 uninvolved Palestinians were killed during the operation, 89 of them under the age of 16, and 49 of them were women."

Elsewhere, *Ha'aretz* reports (3/25/09) that the fatality list presented by the Palestinian Health Ministry in Gaza has numerous inaccuracies and contradictions. For example, Tawfiq Ja'abari, the commander of the Hamas police, and Mohammed Shakshak, a personal assistant to the head of Hamas' military wing, Ahmed Ja'abari, are both described as dead children on the Palestinian list.

Hallinan simply accepted Hamas' accounting at face value. More yet, he went even beyond Hamas and stated flatly, without even bothering to cite a source for his certitude, that the "the overwhelming number of [casualties were] civilians," when all objective evidence indicates otherwise. Hallinan refused to examine the vast evidence that Hamas' used its civilian population as a large human shield by, for example, bunkering its leadership in the basement of hospitals.

So who is correct, Hallinan and Hamas, or the IDF? We cannot say for sure, except we do know that the IDF has the better track record for honesty.

In his March 10, 2009 piece, entitled, "Ethnic Cleansing and Israel," Hallinan leveled the charge that Israel is contemplating the ethnic cleansing of its Arab population. The evidence, according to Hallinan:

1) **There are extremists in Israel, who preach “transfer.”** Hallinan locates a few and quotes them. Of course, there are extremists in Israel, just as there are extremists in America who want to send Mexicans back to Mexico or blacks back to Africa. Every society on earth has its extreme elements. The issue is whether these extremists are the prevailing force in their societies. In Israel they are not.

2) **The concept of Arab population transfer has gone mainstream in Israeli society.** This is simply not true. To arrive at this conclusion, Hallinan cynically confused population transfer (i.e., ethnic cleansing), with the redrawing of borders. Israel has no eastern border recognized by its neighbors. Instead, it has an armistice line, the so-called green line. After the Six Day War in 1967, Jewish settlers moved over the green line into the West Bank and also into the Gaza Strip, establishing facts on the ground. That was then. Now, a basic premise of the “peace process” is that not a single Jew may live as a loyal citizen of the to-be-created State of Palestine (i.e., Jews must be ethically cleansed). Indeed, all Jews have already been ethnically cleansed from Gaza. However, some of the settlements on the other side of the West Bank green line are considered too large to cleanse. They are in fact full-fledged cities. Complicating the “peace process” further, it has become axiomatic that Palestine should consist of no less land than it had before the Six Day War. One proposed solution has been to draw permanent borders so that some Israeli Arab towns and villages, which are adjacent to the West Bank, would become part of Palestine, while some Jewish towns and cities currently on the West Bank would be placed within Israel.

According to these plans, not one single Arab would be “transferred” from his or her home, but instead of residing within the borders of Israel, their residences would now become part of Palestine. Jewish settlers, of course, would prefer to remain citizens of Israel than of Palestine. However, the inverse is not necessarily true. Umm al-Fahm is the largest Arab town that might be affected by this “transfer.” Hallinan states that this town is “near Haifa.” It is not close at all to Haifa by Israeli standards (it is a small country). Haifa is on the sea. Umm al-Fahm is way inland, adjacent to the West Bank, quite near to Jenin. We believe that this was no mere mistake in Hallinan’s knowledge of geography. We believe that it was a crafty attempt to confuse his readers into believing that Israel would transfer the population miles away from their homes by the sea, which is false. Umm al-Fahm is governed by the Islamic Movement, an Islamist party, closely aligned with Hamas. Because the party advocates the destruction of Israel, one would think that the citizens of Umm al-Fahm would be delighted to live in Palestine. Not so. When the idea of transferring the town to Palestinian sovereignty first surfaced, the

mayor at the time, Sheikh Raed Salah, vehemently objected. He was famously asked on Israeli TV why, if he hates Israel, would he object to becoming a citizen of Palestine. His response was that, to be sure, he does hate Israel, but at least in Israel he is free to express that hatred. In Palestine they would kill him.

3) **The next generation of Israelis hates Arabs.** To support this thesis, Hallinan dragged out a poll of Israeli high school students. High school students everywhere hold simplistic ideas, and this poll was conducted during the Gaza War, a time of deep emotional turmoil for Israelis at large and for high school students in particular, as they will be drafted after graduation into the army. However, the biggest problem with this “poll” is its source, the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI). This is no Gallup organization. It is an extreme radical group:

(<http://www.israelnationalnews.com/Articles/Article.aspx/3469>)

As further evidence, Hallinan quoted one poll that is reliable, from the newspaper, Ha'aretz, which found that among high school students, “the left-wing Meretz party came in dead last.” Hallinan neglects to mention that Meretz basically came in dead last in the national elections as well, garnering less than 3% of the vote. The far left wing tends to lose in the U.S. also. Witness what happened to Ralph Nadar or Dennis Kucinich (roughly equivalent to Meretz). Only communists, like Hallinan, tend to fare worse at the polls.

4) **Hallinan writes that “all the major parties voted to remove two parties—United Arab List-A and Balad—from the ballot because they opposed the Gaza War.”** This is a false statement. These Arab parties were expelled because they advocated the destruction of Israel. The Israeli Supreme Court properly and immediately reversed the ban. Politicians do what politicians do, and courts, in a vibrant democracy like Israel, are there to undo what politicians do. Arab party advocacy for the destruction of Israel resonates much like flag burning does in the U.S. It is a severe test of the maturity of a democracy. Think also of how Rev. Wright’s “goddam America” almost sunk Obama.

Conn Hallinan: Distinguished Journalist or Con Artist?

In this section we want to consider only the question of Hallinan's accuracy. Is Hallinan an honest journalist? Does Becky O'Malley fact check her paid contributors (we know she does not fact check her unpaid contributors)?

In the April 9, 2009 *Berkeley Daily Planet* Hallinan published a piece, "The Afghan Rubrik's Cube," which has nothing to do with Israel, and which does not come to any distinct conclusion with which we might disagree, but merely leaves one with a vague sense that Hallinan wants the U.S. to leave that hapless country.

Hallinan's article is chock full of statistics and quotes that we felt we could check for simple accuracy. We picked at random seven passages from his article where we would have had no a priori reason to suspect foul play. Did he quote people accurately and within proper context? Did he get his statistics right?

Wow, did Hallinan flunk this examine!

Passage #1: "As former British Foreign Service officer Rory Stewart argues, 'when the decision to increase the number of troops in 2005 was made, there was no insurgency.'"

Here is the full paragraph from which the Stewart quote was taken:

When the decision was made to increase troops in 2005, there was no insurgency. But as NATO became increasingly obsessed with transforming the country and brought in more money and troops to deal with corruption and the judiciary, warlords and criminals, insecurity in rural areas and narcotics, it failed. In fact, things got worse. These new NATO troops encountered a fresh problem — local Taliban resistance — which has drawn them into a counterinsurgency campaign.

[Sources throughout may be found at
<http://www.dpwatchdog.com/afghanistan.html>]

By selecting his quote carefully, Hallinan implies causation. The added troops caused the insurgency. Reading the fuller quote, you can see that Stewart did not intend to state simple cause and effect. Moreover, if you read the full NY Times op-ed, you will see that Stewart is not arguing that the mission is wrong, merely that it needs to be properly executed and placed within a fuller regional and strategic context.

Passage #2: “As Brig. Gen. Mark Carleton-Smith, Britain’s top military officer in Afghanistan, bluntly told the Sunday Times, ‘We’re not going to win this war.’”

We asked ourselves whether this was the full quote or also taken out of context. Here, in fact, is the full quote:

Carleton-Smith, commander of 16 Air Assault Brigade, which has just completed its second tour of Afghanistan, said it was necessary to “lower our expectations”. He said: “We’re not going to win this war. It’s about reducing it to a manageable level of insurgency that’s not a strategic threat and can be managed by the Afghan army.”

Once again, Hallinan selects his quote from a larger context leaving a false implication. Hallinan wants us to believe that if we cannot win this war, then surely, we are going to lose. Reading the full quote, we learn that Carleton-Smith is merely arguing, in complete accord with classic counter-insurgency theory, that full victory generally takes decades, but that functional victory can be defined as simply reducing the threat to an acceptably low level such that the local military can handle it.

Passage #3: “According to the Congressional Research Service, Afghanistan has cost \$173 billion and is on track to eventually cost \$1 trillion.”

It turns out that the \$173 billion was not for Afghanistan alone, but for Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) of which Afghanistan is part. To date, OEF has encompassed six separate operations: Afghanistan, Philippines, Horn of Africa, Trans Sahara, Kyrgyzstan, and Pankisi Gorge.

The trillion dollar figure cited by Hallinan is made up of whole cloth. To be sure, according to this report, Iraq, Afghanistan and the Global War on Terror together will cost more than \$1 trillion. The report does not break out a separate figure for Afghanistan, but it might reasonably be assumed that it is the smallest leg of the three, and would amount to far less than \$1 trillion.

Passage #4: “The 2005 surge not only revitalized the Taliban, it spread the war to Pakistan and created the Pakistani Taliban that has driven the Pakistan Army out of the Swat Valley and most of the Northwest Territory and Tribal Regions. This border war has killed some 1,500 Pakistani soldiers, innumerable civilians, and cost Islamabad at least \$34 billion.”

We have no idea from where Hallinan took this \$34 billion number. Hallinan cites no source. But something seemed amiss. How could impoverished Pakistan spend \$34 billion? Sure enough, it turns out that Pakistan's entire annual military budget is vastly less than \$34 billion. One source gives it as \$4.3 billion in 2005, while Wikipedia lists Pakistan's 2008 military budget as \$7.3 billion.

Passage #5: "Back then [2005] the Taliban controlled 54 percent of the country. Today that figure is 72 percent and rising."

By placing this right after the Stewart quote in #1 above, it is implied that Stewart is the source. He is not. Think about these numbers for a moment. Such precision regarding such a mushy concept as "control" raises suspicions from the get-go. What definition of control was employed? Does the Taliban control a town if its mayor is Taliban, or would they "control" it if they were just given money to go away? If Hallinan had said that the Taliban had controlled half and now they control three-quarters of the countryside, we would still want to know his source, but we would allow that these are approximations. But how could anyone be sure that in 2005 the exact figure was 54% and not, say, 51% by day and 55% by night? And did the Taliban control 54% of the geography or 54% of the population? If this calculation is geographic does the 54% allow for the fact that mountainous regions have more acreage per square mile than flat regions? Students of topography would do the calculations in three dimensions. Enough jokes. It turns out that Hallinan falsely used the word "control." The study in question never claimed to measure "control" and never used the word. Once again, Hallinan has deceived us. The study simply reported on areas of Afghanistan that had recorded one or more Taliban attacks per week. Simply because there is a roadside bombing somewhere does not mean that the Taliban "control" that particular piece of countryside. By the same reasoning, the Palestinians "controlled" Israel during the Second Intifada simply because their suicide bombers were blowing themselves up hither and thither.

Passage #6: "And, ominously for the allies, a poll of Afghans shows a significant rise in anti-occupation sentiment, with a majority now supporting a negotiated end to the war, even if that means a coalition government that includes the Taliban."

Hallinan's source was an ABC News/BBC/ARD poll which was based on in-person interviews with a random national sample of 1,534 Afghan adults from December 30, 2008 to January 12, 2009. The results have a 2.5-point error margin. It can be found at:

<http://www.cmi.no/pdf/?file=/afghanistan/doc/1083a1Afghanistan2009.pdf>.

This is a long and complicated poll. Hallinan cherry picked a single factoid and took it out of all context. Yes,

64 percent of Afghans say the government should negotiate a settlement with the Taliban in which they're allowed to hold political offices if they agree to stop fighting. But among those who support negotiations, most by far, seven in 10, say talks should occur only if the Taliban stop fighting first.

The public had other apparent preconditions that would in effect kill any deal with the Taliban. For example, "this poll finds continued broad support for women's rights, which were denied under the Taliban. Ninety-two percent support girls' schools and 91 percent favor women voting." So, who are the good guys and who are the bad guys in the eyes of the Afghans: "Fifty-nine percent think the Afghan government is making progress in providing a better life for Afghans, 75 percent express confidence in its ability to provide security and stability, as many express confidence in their local police, and nearly as many in their provincial government." As for the Taliban, "the resurgence of the Taliban is a key element of the public's alarm: Fifty-eight percent of Afghans see the Taliban as the biggest danger to the country, measured against local warlords, drug traffickers or the U.S. or Afghan governments."

In summary, everywhere we look with Hallinan we found deceit.

Hallinan on Islamic Fundamentalists and Terror.

Hallinan's pantheon of heroes does not end with communists or former Soviet client states. Oddly, it also includes Islamists such as Hamas, Hizbollah, the Taliban, the Janjaweed, and Somalia's Islamic Court Unions.

By reading Hallinan's columns closely, one finds that Hallinan believes that the Taliban should be made a partner in the government and integrated into the Afghan army; that the Islamic Court Union is a force for stability in Somalia (i.e., the Islamists); that Darfur is a second rate tragedy (i.e., nothing compared to Gaza), thus exonerating the Janjaweed; that Hizbollah won a great and glorious victory over Israel; and that while Israel is guilty of every imaginable crime in Gaza, Hallinan has only words of comfort for Hamas. In sum, over many columns he shows only succor for Islamic fundamentalists.

The key, we believe, is to remember that Hallinan is not just a Marxist, but also a Stalinist. He stuck with the Soviet Union until the very day it died, long after the truth about

Stalin's gulags was completely known.

Here is our theory. In a world almost devoid of Hallinan's beloved Marxism-Stalinism, the next best thing is Islamic fundamentalism. It has:

Totalitarianism—it may not be the dictatorship of the proletariat, but at least it is a dictatorship with lots of good old fashioned mind control.

Religion—It may not be Marxism, the true religion, and it may not have *Das Capital* or Mao's *Little Red Book*, but at least the *Koran* is scripture.

Revolution and Mayhem—In a post-communist world, at least bin Laden fights on.

If it is hard to believe that Berkeley's Marxists would embrace Islamic fundamentalism, think again. The May 21, 2009 issue of the *Daily Planet* featured a loving ode to Mahmoud Ahmedinajad, written by apparent Marxist, Carl Shames (for Shames' connection to Marxism see, for example,

<http://www.autodidactproject.org/other/sn-9-10-activity.html>).

VII. Advertising in the *Berkeley Daily Planet*

The *Berkeley Daily Planet*'s advertising is most notable for its paucity. Much or most of what advertising there is has been placed by the *Berkeley Daily Planet* itself, as in pleas for donations (as though it were a non-profit, which it is not), ads for *Berkeley Daily Planet* mugs and tee-shirts (as though that would be a fashion statement), and denunciations of our website, www.DPWatchDog.com.

To quantify this paucity, we measured and compared advertising in the May 13, 2009 issue of the *East Bay Express* and the April 23, 2009 issue of the *Berkeley Daily Planet*:

	<i>East Bay Express</i>	<i>Daily Planet</i>
Total Pages	96.00	28.00
Total Pages of advertising	56.25	5.79
Pages of Text	39.75	22.21
Percent advertising	58.50	20.70

The difference is stunning. The *East Bay Express* had 10 times more pages of advertising. Even adjusted for total page number of text pages (the *Express* had almost twice as many pages of text), the *Daily Planet* had vastly less advertising. We also analyzed the June, 2009 issue of *East Bay Monthly*. The results, in terms of percent of total pages covered by ads (18.9 pages of ads to 32 pages total), was identical to the *East Bay Express* at 59%.

Since these measurements were taken in April, the *Berkeley Daily Planet* has done nothing but shed advertisers. For example, the September 17, 2009 issue of the *Berkeley Daily Planet* had 3.1 pages of advertising, barely half of what it had in April. That same week's *East Bay Express* had 12 times more advertising. More recently, *Daily Planet* advertising has dropped below a mere two pages.

There are two possible reasons advertisers are flocking to the *East Bay Express* and shunning the *Berkeley Daily Planet*. First, the *East Bay Express* is a much better paper, without being a purveyor of hate. Second, the *Berkeley Daily Planet*'s core demographic, Berkeley's aging radicals, is of only marginal interest to most would-be advertisers.

Although O'Malley has no explanation for why her newspaper had so few advertisers before we launched DPWatchDog.com, the losses she has suffered since—about

60%, according to her (October 22, 2009), is due either due to the economy, in one version of her story, or to the efforts of a handful of fanatic Zionists who are out to destroy her fine paper, in another version (June 4, 2009).

When a local group with which we have no association, the Israel Action Committee of the East Bay (IACEB) launched a petition drive and posted almost 500 names in a full page ad in the *East Bay Express* (September 16, 2009), O'Malley actually wrote that DPWatchDog paid for the ad, even though the ad clearly stated that it was paid for by IACEB. DPWatchDog never even linked to this petition, much less pay for it. O'Malley further contended that of the 500 names, only ten were local, which is preposterous (September 24, 2009). O'Malley simply refuses to admit that vast numbers of Berkeleyans loathe her journalistic practices.

The chief villain in O'Malley's pantheon of fanatics is not me, but rather a man named Jim Sinkinson. Sinkinson has sent letters to *Daily Planet* advertisers suggesting that it is an unsound business practice to advertise in an anti-Semitic newspaper, especially in a town that is 25% Jewish. Simple enough reasoning, and, oddly, reasoning that has recently been fully embraced by none other than Becky O'Malley.

Here is the setup. The Berkeley City Council recently passed a downtown master plan. A successful petition drive against the plan has forced it on to the June, 2010 ballot. The Berkeley Chamber of Commerce favors the plan. Becky O'Malley, opposing virtually all development in Berkeley, of course, does not. Here, then is what O'Malley wrote on September 21, 2009:

If we'd had the chance to tell the new CEO [of the Chamber of Commerce] what the most critical features of the recent political landscape were, we'd have said that the appearance of a glossy flyer featuring three core apparatchiks in what some sarcastically call "the machine", with the notation that it was paid for by the "Chamber of Commerce PAC" was, to put it politely, a public relations disaster. For the local chamber of commerce to be perceived as coming out flat-footed against what proved to be a very popular referendum movement (9,200 signatures) is just not what you learn in Marketing 101. All of those 9,200 consumers will now probably think twice before shopping with local merchants. And the saddest thing is that most local merchants probably didn't even know that the Chamber was linked to the campaign against the petitions.

Now allow us to rewrite O'Malley ever so slightly, as though it were from the pen of Jim Sinkinson. In fact, the result is indistinguishable, in our opinion, from letters Sinkinson has previously sent to advertisers:

If we'd had the chance to tell the new advertisers in the *Berkeley Daily Planet* what the most critical features of the recent political landscape were, we'd have said that it is the appearance of repeated instances of anti-Semitism in the *Daily Planet* that is being paid for by its advertisers. To put it politely, this is a public relations disaster. For the local advertisers in the *Berkeley Daily Planet* to be perceived as coming out flat-footed against the 25,000 Jewish residents of Berkeley is just not what you learn in Marketing 101. All of those 25,000 consumers will now probably think twice before shopping with local *Daily Planet* advertisers. And the saddest thing is that most *Daily Planet* advertisers probably do not even read the paper before deciding to advertise in it, and probably do not know that the *Berkeley Daily Planet* makes a routine habit of publishing anti-Semitism, other forms of hate speech, and is otherwise journalistically malfeasant.

Could O'Malley and Sinkinson be more in agreement? Harmony returns to pacific Berkeley.

VIII. About the Author: Anatomy of an Extremist

The *Berkeley Daily Planet* attacks myself, and the website I edit, www.DPWatchDog.com, non-stop in its pages.

I have been called a racist, fascist, wingnut, Nazi, liar, extremist, Israeli spy, crazy, crackpot, Republican, right wing Zio-con, commie-baiter, and thief. Oh, did I forget “twerp”? It is as if by thaumaturgy or voodoo, that is, by the mere incantation of ugly names, that I will be magically swept away.

I have been chided for wearing a funny looking yarmulke and for being a religious extremist, despite the fact that I am completely secular and only wears a yarmulke on the very rare occasions I attend synagogue.

The *Daily Planet* has printed a call for the boycott of my business, Zorro Productions.

Becky O'Malley has repeatedly threatened me with lawsuits, and once with violence. I have been denied any right to respond to *Daily Planet* attacks in its pages. “Free speech absolutist,” Becky O'Malley, has placed a spam blocker on me, to prevent me from submitting op-eds, letters, or responses to personal attacks.

The *Berkeley Daily Planet* has even printed my address next to my picture in a transparent invitation to its radical minions to commit an act of violence. The publication of my address served no legitimate news purpose.

For those who want further details, they can be found in “The War Zone” section of DPWatchDog.com. Mud wrestling has its fans.

In the *Daily Planet*'s infamous June 4, 2009 condemnation of [DPWatchDog](http://DPWatchDog.com) I am called “one of the East Bay's most militant Zionists.” No particular evidence is provided, or at least none that is not easily and effectively refuted.

So what makes me such an extremist? I have never in my life attended a pro-Israel street protest, counter-protest, or rally, and I have never even gotten around to joining the 50,000 or so people who annually attend “Israel in the Park” in San Francisco.

I have attended several East Bay AIPAC dinners, but then I am in the company of about a thousand other people, including a lot of local politicians like Tom Bates and Barbara Lee. I have no idea why I would be considered the most militant person there. I am a life long liberal Democrat, an avowed secularist, and, although an admitted Zionist, I

identify with left wing Israeli parties (Labor or Kadima). I have no idea why the *Daily Planet* calls me a religious extremist Republican “Zio-con” (whatever that is).

So allow me to make O’Malley’s case for her, as best as it can be made. Here now is the sum total of what has earned me the label, “one of the East Bay’s most militant Zionists.” Berkeley is more or less the American center of anti-Israel activity and of hard left anti-Semitism. There is some in other parts of the Bay Area, in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and Michigan (with its large Arab population); and wherever there are pockets of white supremacists there is of course far right anti-Semitism. That is about the extent of the American concentrations of this poison. There is much more anti-Semitism of both the hard left and far right varieties in parts of Europe. Though in the United States the phenomenon is still small, at some point, quite bluntly, I got fed up with having to deal with its persistence in my face locally. So I have taken action. I have written two articles in the Open Forum section of the SF Chronicle; and quite a few commentaries and letters in the *Daily Planet* until I was banned from further publishing after I announced plans for DPWatchDog.com. My targets have been Berkeley’s foreign policy making body, the Peace and Justice Commission (perhaps, partially as a result of my writings, the P&J today is not as crazy as it once was), gullible politicians who should know better than to pass one-sided anti-Israel resolutions (chiefly, Kriss Worthington and Linda Maio), and the *Berkeley Daily Planet*.

Look as you might, this is the only evidence for my militancy that you will find, and it is all in the public record. In sum, I am called “one of the East Bay’s most militant Zionists” because I have stood up and cried “foul” to the *Berkeley Daily Planet*’s journalistic malfeasance and to its brutish owner and editor, Becky O’Malley.

