Rose City Antifa Statement:

Anti-Semitic Sources in *Turning the Tide*

It has come to our attention that *Turning the Tide* has published pieces from authors and sources that promote anti-Semitism, Holocaust-denial, and Left-Right collaboration. We are aware of three such articles; one was published in 2001, while the other two were printed in the Fall 2009 and April-June 2010 issues of the paper. As committed anti-fascists, we believe that it is important to be familiar with anti-Semitic sources and narratives so as to effectively oppose them, as well as to engage in criticism in a way that builds a stronger anti-racist movement.

Dissident Voice

Turning the Tide, Fall 2009 (Volume 22, Number 3), published "Boycotts as a Legitimate Means of Resistance: As Determined by the Oppressed People" by Kim Petersen. The article originally appeared on the *Dissident Voice* website,[1] of which Petersen is a co-editor.[2] This piece, amongst other things, suggested that critics of the boycott campaign against Israel are unfairly using the "anti-Semitism smear" against their opponents. Petersen in particular criticized Israeli writer and activist Uri Avnery: "Avnery argues that boycotting Jews will remind them of Nazism, but when Jews use Nazi-type techniques what should they be reminded of?"[3] The suggestion seems to be that, because "Jews" allegedly "use Nazi-type techniques," therefore it is right that "Jews" be reminded of the Nazi boycott against Jewish businesses.

One could try to explain Petersen's choice of phrasing as merely clumsy and cluelessness, were it not for the rest of Petersen's politics and associations. *Dissident Voice*, which Petersen co-edits, portrays itself as Left-wing and "a radical newsletter in the struggle for peace and justice." However, *Dissident Voice* promotes anti-Semitism that operates under only the barest cover of "anti-Zionism," while defending neo-Nazis and Holocaust-denial, as well as promoting Left-Right crossover. Perhaps the clearest example of this is *Dissident Voice*'s publication of several articles by Daniel A. McGowan, the executive director of Deir Yassin Remembered (not to be confused with US eco-radical and political prisoner Daniel G. McGowan.)

In his December 30, 2006 article for *Dissident Voice*, Daniel A. McGowan recounts a prison visit with Ernst Zündel,[4] the notorious neo-Nazi and Holocaust-denier,[5] who McGowan presents as "a man with strong convictions and the courage to express them."[6] Elsewhere on the site, McGowan's February 17, 2009 article "What Does Holocaust Denial Really Mean?" argued that "the Holocaust narrative of systematic, industrialized extermination was an important neo-conservative tool to drive the United States into Iraq," while his article simultaneously promoted the ideas of Holocaust-deniers such as Zündel.[7] A McGowan article on *Dissident Voice* from a few months earlier, discussing the Bernard Madoff case, stated: "While Mr. Burston found Madoff's bilking of 'fellow Jews, even Holocaust survivors' particularly outrageous, there are those who find divine justice in seeing one fraud defraud another."[8]

Another extreme Jew-hater deemed worthy of publication by the *Dissident Voice* editors is Mark Green, editor of the anthology *Persecution, Privilege, & Power: Reconsidering the Zionist Narrative in American Life*[9] and former host of the "Flashpoint" cable access TV show, who is now involved with "MarWen Media." Green has talked before a meeting of the Institute for Historical Review[10]—probably the most important Holocaust-denial organization in the English-speaking world—and has interviewed Kevin MacDonald,[11] a white supremacist professor at California State University Long Beach who is now a leader with the racist American Third Position Party.[12] Mark Green's article, "'Holocaust Fundamentalism' and the War on Dissent: Two British Writers Languish in Obscurity in a California Jail. Their Crime? Satire, Mockery & Disbelief" was published on the websites of anti-Semitic conspiracy theorists Jeff Rense[13] and David Icke[14] before appearing on *Dissident Voice*.[15] Green's "War on Dissent" piece defended the so-called "Heretical Two," English extreme-Right activists Simon Sheppard and Stephen Whittle, who fled to the United States in a poorly-fated attempted to claim political asylum after they were convicted in the UK of numerous charges of inciting racial hatred.

More recently, *Dissident Voice* has published articles explicitly arguing for political collaboration between Leftists and the far-Right, one of which was republished by Chuck Munson on the well-known anarchist site *infoshop.org*.[16]

Palestine Think Tank

The April-June 2010 issue of *Turning the Tide* (Volume 23, Number 2) contained the article "International Campaign in Support of Palestinian Political Prisoners" by Yousef Abudayyeh. This article was originally published on the *Palestine Think Tank* website[17] where Abudayyeh is a regular contributor.[18] *Palestine Think Tank* is not just a project that promotes Jew-hating under the guise of "anti-Zionism," but the site has published a direct attack against Rose City Antifa and the Anti-Racist Action Network written by the webmaster for Eugene, Oregon's Pacifica Forum, another anti-Semitic project.[19] The *Palestine Think Tank* website itself was founded in 2008[20] by Mary Rizzo of the Tlaxcala translation collective,[21] "uprooted Palestinian blogger" Haitham Sabbah,[22] as well as Gilad Atzmon, a "former Jew"[23] who no longer writes for the site but who is defended and praised by Rizzo. Gilad Atzmon has, amongst other things, circulated Holocaust-denial, pro-Zündel material by Paul Eisen, the head of the UK branch of Deir Yassin Remembered;[24] written that "throughout the centuries, Jewish bankers bought for themselves some real reputations of backers and financers of wars and even one communist revolution," and that the 2008 economic crisis provides a "glimpse into Political Zionism's sinister agenda" (the article in question was pulled from *Palestine Think Tank* but remains on Atzmon's personal site);[25] and has also promoted Israel Shamir (see below) as a "very important writer."[26] Atzmon's influence continues to be apparent throughout the *Palestine Think Tank* website.

One particularly disturbing aspect of *Palestine Think Tank* is its promotion of the "Israeli organ harvesting" allegations, a modern-day variant of the earlier Blood Libel that alleged that Jewish people killed Christian and Muslim children to use their blood in religious rituals. This latest version of the Blood Libel was put forward in an article by Swedish journalist Donald Boström published in the *Aftonbladet* tabloid in August 2009, which heavily suggested that the Israeli Army was active in snatching Palestinian youths from their homes to kill them for their organs. Two early English translations of Boström's article

were made, in an effort to spread the story further—one appeared on Rizzo's *Tlaxcala* translation website,[27] while the other was posted on Kevin McDonald's *Occidental Observer* site.[28] *Palestine Think Tank* tried to expand the buzz around the *Aftonbladet* piece by publishing two articles by Kawther Salam on the same theme, "The Body Snatchers of Israel"[29] and "Israel Stole Palestinian Bodies from Their Graves"[30] on August 24 and 25 of that year. On August 26, the site featured an interview with Boström,[31] and since then the site has continued to spread the story, including yet another Kawther Salam piece that asks "Is Israel a State or An Organ Harvesting Mafia?"[32]

Yousef Abudayyeh, whose article was selected for publication in *Turning the Tide*, clearly signed on to *Palestine Think Tank*'s promotion of the "organ harvesting" Blood Libel. A *Palestine Think Tank* editorial written by Abudayyeh, Mary Rizzo and three others, claimed that "a blatant example of the deafness to the Arab voice is when the Organ Harvesting crime was exposed. For many years, Palestinians have been talking about this issue and it was no secret."[33] *Turning the Tide* therefore not only published an article from a website that has truly earned its reputation as anti-Semitic, but also published an author who has gone on the record advocating for one of the website's worst stances: its constant insinuation that the Israeli Army functions as a murder-for-organs racket.

Israel Shamir

In its Summer 2001 issue (Volume 14, Number 2), *Turning the Tide* printed the article "Ode to Farris" by Israel Shamir. Admittedly, this was close to a decade ago—the issue is only being raised now because it fits with a pattern of publishing decisions by *Turning the Tide*, and also because of the political links and ideological affinities between Shamir and the other authors and websites published more recently in *Turning the Tide*. It is also true that Shamir was celebrated at the time by many on the US Left, although this is ultimately of little relevance—one is equally wrong when one promotes a fallacious belief alongside many others, as when one proclaims it alone or as part of a small minority. Several individuals, including Ali Abunimah of the Electronic Intifada project, had already raised the alarm about Shamir's politics and anti-Semitism[34], before Shamir even wrote the article that was eventually reprinted in *Turning the Tide*.[35]

Those who have the patience for such matters, may investigate Israel Shamir's various identities and the different ways he has presented himself over the years. However, one has to judge Shamir primarily by his own writings, in which anti-Semitism is a constant theme. In their 2001 critique of Shamir, Ali Abunimah and Hussein Ibish had already made the key points: that Israel Shamir promotes traditional Christian anti-Semitic theme of Jews as "Christ killers;" that he portrays Jewish people as "virus" without a legitimate tie to any particular land who infect and undermine host populations; and that he suggests that there is truth to the Blood Libel (Abunimah and Ibish generously assumed that Shamir had been misquoted in the last instance).[36] It is Shamir's vision of Jewish people as a "virus" that seems to have led him towards friendship with the German neo-Nazi (and former Red Army Faction anti-imperialist) Horst Mahler, who Shamir now praises on his website.[37] Shamir's website also contains a defense of Holocaust-denier David Irving, who Shamir claimed "was sentenced for denial of Jewish superiority" rather than actual Holocaust-denial[38]— interestingly, Irving himself claims that Israel Shamir attempted to sell him Nazi documents in 1998[39].

Shamir's article published in *Turning the Tide* was not as plainly bigoted as several of his other writings. For most of its length, the article merely made the argument that the Palestinian people should be envied for their courage instead of pitied. However, at points the article's content connected with Shamir's more explicitly anti-Semitic themes and Jew-hating discourse in general. In his "Ode to Farris" published by *Turning the Tide*, Shamir wrote that:

> In the genetic labs of Tel Aviv, the researchers of the 'Jewish DNA' proudly produce every result, tenuously confirming the blood relation of Jews and Palestinians. They know that our Jewish claim to the proud name of Israel is at least dubious.

This obviously ties in with Shamir's theme of Jews as "virus" without a healthy blood and soil relationship to the land. Shamir also writes in the article of "cheap commercial hedonism […] abundantly supplied by American pop-culture," but immediately ties this hedonism back to Israel through cutting to discussion of "Israel's master plan" in the following sentence of the article. Later in the article Shamir again implies that the Israeli population is "hedonistic." While on one level, Shamir's comments may be seen simply as Christian moralism, they also play into the standard anti-Semitic denunciations of Jewish people as morally decadent. Apart from being less bigoted than many of his other writings, Shamir's article seems to have little to recommend it for publication.

We hope to have adequately described the troubling nature of these three articles, their authors, and/or the sources where they first appeared. We believe that the decisions to print these articles in *Turning the Tide* were political errors, and we welcome discussion about *why* these errors were made, a topic outside the scope of this current writing. We welcome a printed retraction as a positive first step in correcting these errors, which shows a commitment to the Anti-Racist Action Network as a consistently anti-fascist organization.

-   *Rose City Antifa, August 2010*

Endnotes

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