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Letters to the Editor / Instruments of murder

Last Update: 03/12/2004 01:44

Regarding "Soldiers force Palestinian to play violin at West Bank checkpoint," November 25

Advertisement



Your article and accompanying photo regarding the Israeli soldier who demanded that a Palestinian "youth" at a checkpoint play his violin omitted the following relevant details.

On August 9, 2001, another Palestinian "youth," this one the son of a well-to-do restaurant owner from Jenin, managed to slip through a checkpoint on the border of West Jerusalem and stroll to the city center with a guitar slung over his shoulder. He entered the Sbarro pizzeria and saw a room crowded mostly with children out for a light lunch. Then, with the explosives hidden in his guitar, he murdered 15 Israelis in cold blood.

Among those victims was my daughter, Malki, and her friend - two sweet 15-year-old girls with hearts of gold. There are many more stories of eternal pain wrought by that guitar.

To ignore the context of those searches at the checkpoints - four years of barbaric terror attacks on innocent Israelis - is dishonest. But in this case, what exactly is MachsomWatch criticizing? The soldiers in Horit Herman-Peled's photo, which Haaretz chose to print, not once but twice in one issue, do not appear to be gloating or enjoying the Palestinian's music. Rather, they seem intent on confirming, without dismantling and damaging it, that this was indeed nothing more than a violin.

The fact that an army spokesperson apologized for the soldier's conduct without mentioning the above facts is disconcerting. It highlights the destructive pressure that MachsomWatch is exerting on the people entrusted with defending us and our children.

One day, an uncertain soldier at a checkpoint may be forced to make a split-second choice between inconveniencing a Palestinian and being thorough. The intimidating presence of someone like Herman-Peled on the scene may push him to err on the side of leniency toward another Palestinian like my Malki's murderer.



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Top Articles
Short-lived schadenfreud

The next time the local councils need a recovery program, in 15 years or less, perhaps the Knesset will understand that there is no choice but to approve the plan to merge them.

 By **Meirav Arlosoroff**
The big modern bang

Even 77 years later, it is hard not to marvel at the exhibition now reproduced at the WIZO Academy of Design and Education in Haifa. In 1927, it was considered the "big bang" of modern architecture, marking the birth of a new architectural movement and of a new world.

 By **Esther Zandberg**
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07:49 BBC poll: Nearly half of Britons never heard of Auschwitz

Frimet Roth

Jerusalem

Equal conversions for all

Regarding "Second-class Jew," December 2

[Jewish Theological Seminary] Chancellor Ismar Schorsch is quite correct when he states that Conservative Jews are second-class citizens in Israel. The situation is even worse than that because any Jew in Israel who does not identify with the Chief Rabbinate is a second-class Jew and suffers from a lack of religious freedom. I know of no other country in the free world in which a Jew does not have the right to be married by a rabbi of his or her choice or to have a religious divorce by the rabbi of his or her choice.

As for conversion, the Ne'eman commission failed to reach an agreement because of the intransigence of the Chief Rabbinate. The Conservative Movement did become a partner in the Joint Institute that was later established, but only on condition that its membership did not prejudice its right to continue its own conversions as well.

We are partners in that institute because we feel the need to convert tens of thousands of non-Jewish Russians was a national need that could only be met by a government-sponsored institute and that a conversion recognized by all would be of benefit to those converts. We also welcomed the opportunity to expose the candidates to the various streams in Judaism and to a more open, pluralistic approach than that received in courses offered by the Chief Rabbinate. Although the institute has succeeded educationally, it has run into difficulties with the rabbinate in the conversion process. Hopefully those difficulties are being overcome with the new conversion process the government sponsors under Rabbi Druckman.

At the same time, the Conservative Movement continues its own conversion program for those who want it and will do so in the future as well. Fortunately the government of Israel does recognize our conversions performed in Israel as well as those performed in the Diaspora, but only because the Supreme Court ruled that it must do so. It is to be hoped that the court will similarly dismiss the government's position of not recognizing our conversions for purposes of the Law of Return and will bring equality to all our conversions for all purposes.

Regardless of the legal problems that the Conservative Movement faces here, we have taken a strategic decision to build from the grass roots up at the same time that we struggle for legal equality. Therefore we continue to build congregations, schools and educational institutions, youth movements and camps that serve thousands in the Israeli public.