



Jewish Advocate – Letters to the Editor
June 16, 2010

A Muslim rises to Jacobs’ defense

The rabbis who signed a letter in last week’s *Jewish Advocate* condemning the work of Americans for Peace and Tolerance are dead wrong in claiming that Charles Jacobs is “waging a destructive campaign against” and “spreading calumnies” about Muslims. I was educated at Egypt’s Al Azhar University and lead the reform Islamic movement known as Ahl-al-Quran. For my work in fighting Muslim extremism, I was persecuted and jailed in Egypt. After I received asylum in the US and was accepted into Harvard Law School’s Scholars at Risk program, I came to Boston and looked for a place to pray. In Cambridge, I encountered the Islamic Society of Boston’s old mosque, where I found the same hateful ideology that was used to justify my persecution in Egypt. Since then, I have worked hand-in-hand with Charles to fight this ideology here in America. The rabbis do truly reform-minded Muslims no favors by defaming our work and embracing ideological movements hostile to all free people – Muslim and Jewish alike.

DR. AHMED SUBHY MANSOUR
President, The International
Quranic Center, Springfield, Va.

Attack on rabbi was offensive

We, the undersigned, are colleagues of Rabbi Eric Gurvis. We know him to be an intelligent, thoughtful and caring person of great probity who has selflessly devoted many hours to communal leadership. We are offended by the op-ed piece in the June 4 issue of *The Jewish Advocate* [Charles Jacobs’ “What’s up with Patrick?”], which mocked him, maligned his motives and excoriated him for reaching out to the Boston Muslim community. We call on the *Advocate* – and on your editorialists – to show greater respect for our community’s leaders, and to desist from such gratuitous condemnation (sinat hinam).

RABBI ALFRED BENJAMIN
RABBI MILTON FEIERSTEIN
RABBI SUSAN P. FENDRICK
RABBI JEFF FOUST
RABBI WESLEY GARDENSWARTZ
RABBI JONAS GOLDBERG
RABBI GEOFFREY J. HABER
RABBI WILLIAM HAMILTON
RABBI RAPHAEL KANTER
RABBI EARL KIDECKEL
RABBI DAVID KLATZKER
RABBI DAVID LERNER
RABBI ABE MORHAIM
RABBI CARL M. PERKINS
RABBI BARRY STARR
RABBI STEPHEN E. STEINDEL
RABBI SARA ZACHARIA

We ignore Jacobs at our peril

The New England community is fortunate to have the benefit of Charles Jacobs' leadership. He has championed causes such as freeing slaves from Sudan, educating people to advocate for Israel and exposing radical Islamists in the community. His founding of the David Project filled a tremendous void. Its mission was educating college students and others "how to effectively" advocate for Israel. Mr. Jacobs has become the de facto leader of hundreds of grassroots Christians, Jews, Hindus and Muslims who are fighting for Israel and against terrorism. The mainstream Jewish leaders ignore his research and findings at the Jewish community's peril.

KAREN WEINSTEIN
Salem, N.H.

Rabbis' letter lowered dialogue

I'm dismayed to see that the level of communal dialogue has sunk to a new low with the publication of a malicious letter signed by 70 rabbis. The rabbis express their disapproval of his comments about Rabbi Eric Gurvis, but Jacobs is a spirited community activist sounding the alarm bells about Islamist radicals – not a rabbi. For rabbis to use a Biblical narrative as a basis for a public excoriation is not only over-the-top but shameful. Ironically, people who are so concerned about interfaith

dialogue appear to be blinkered when it comes to intra-faith dialogue. Ultimately, this is not about two individuals, but rather about how we conduct ourselves in dealing with fellow Jews with whom we disagree, and how we as a community deal with Islamist radicalism. This is an issue of real concern to many in the Jewish, Christian and Muslim communities. As Barry Shrage noted, “I think we need to listen to Jacobs.” We must face up to the challenge that Jacobs has set for us “to crack the code” on what to do about Islamist radicalism.

PAUL SASSIENI

Newton Centre

Critics miss Jacobs’ point

With all due respect, I invite the 70 rabbis who signed the open letter “Rabbis come to defense of a colleague under fire” to reexamine Charles Jacobs’ assertions in his article. Jacobs’ main point was not to discredit Rabbi Eric Gurvis’ past service to the community or to wage a “destructive campaign against Boston’s Muslim community.” Rather, Jacobs’ main point was to bring to light the danger of closing one’s eyes to specific leaders’ support of indicted and jailed terrorists, such as Aafia Siddiqui. We mustn’t falsely accuse or limit freedoms of any Muslim citizen simply because he/she is Muslim. But every political and community leader – indeed every citizen must be on the alert for those who are found to support acts of terror and anti-Semitism.

REV. FUMIO TAKU

President, Christians and Jews United
for Israel

A champion of ignored causes

By exposing those Muslim leaders who are attempting to radicalize Boston’s Muslim community, Charles Jacobs provides an opportunity for genuine moderate Muslims to come to the fore. Charles Jacobs has a stellar record as a community activist raising awareness for numerous causes that were all but ignored. In the early ’90s when very few people were talking about slavery and torture in the Sudan and Mauritania, Mr. Jacobs founded American Anti-Slavery Group. Mr. Jacobs was also one of the founders of Boston’s CAMERA and The David Project, disclosing media biases against Israel and anti-Israel propaganda being promoted on college campuses. Given Mr. Jacobs’ record, the rabbis who signed the letter denouncing him would do well instead, to take heed of his warnings.

RABBI GERSHON SEGAL

Congregation Beth El Atereth Israel
Newton

Maligning a ‘thoughtful rabbi’

I am writing in support of Rabbi Eric Gurvis who has been unfairly maligned these past couple of weeks in *The Jewish Advocate* and in interviews with Charles Jacobs. Rabbi Gurvis, who is the senior rabbi at Temple Shalom in Newton, has been a board member of the Jewish Community Relations Council for several years, first as a representative of the Mass. Board of Rabbis and then as a community representative. Rabbi Gurvis has always been thoughtful in his analysis and review of all issues local and international. Rabbi Gurvis has been an important representative of the Jewish community in all interfaith matters.

As Barry Shrage eloquently said in a recent d’var torah in his synagogue: “Words are sacred and have the power to build and to destroy. And they must be used with great care.” We can and must come together and raise questions of concern in a civil, thoughtful manner. My experience with Rabbi Gurvis is he has always done just that!

NANCY K. KAUFMAN
Executive director JCRC

Look at the proof

The June 11 letter in defense of Rabbi Eric Gurvis would be more helpful if the 70 signers had suggested just which of Charles Jacobs’ facts qualify as “spreading calumnies.” Have they examined his evidence? Many in the Jewish community, me included, live in hope that Charles is wrong, but it looks to me, sadly, that his facts and documents are on the mark. Our community has good reasons to be fearful – precisely because Charles and his staff have spelled it out so well.

RABBI JOSHUA L. SEGAL
Congregation Betenu
Amherst, N.H.

We should know the cost of silence

I was born in the year after WWII. When I learned about the details of the war in high school the question that I continually reflected on was, “Where were the voices of outrage and protest in Germany.” Unfortunately, silence is the outcome when we choose not to know what we wish not to know. Such ignorance is folly.

Heroes are those who at personal risk take on endeavors for the greater good. In this context, Charles Jacobs stands the test. His careful and critical research tempered with wisdom and a clear sense of justice has provided us with a window into the arena of one of today's greatest dangers, namely the insidious threat among us of radical Islamists and their supporters within the Muslim community who parade themselves as friends but are not. We do well to join with him to be the voices raised in order that we do not again fall prey to the evil that is afoot in the world.

GAIL THOMAS

Woburn

Not Published:

Bishop-Basher Backs Jacobs

Several years ago I criticized the Episcopal bishops in Boston – my own bishops – for their ignorant and dangerous anti-Israel incitement, after they demonstrated outside the Israeli consulate downtown, holding signs decrying “Destruction in Bethlehem” and calling for a “Christian-Muslim Alliance.” In return, I was called a bigot by Episcopal leaders and laypeople, who refused to see the facts about the Israeli-Arab conflict, insisting on the Muslim narrative of “occupation” and “oppression.” I believe that Rabbi Eric Gurvis and those who have joined him in denouncing Charles Jacobs are of a type with the bishops of the Episcopal Church. Trust me: this is not a compliment. Like the Bishops, Rabbi Gurvis and his colleagues are so determined to occupy the moral high ground, to be considered “tolerant” and “multicultural”, that they will ignore all of the evidence about the leaders of the Roxbury mosque and the dangers that they present, not only to Jews, but to Christians and moderate Muslims as well. This is especially disturbing in the case of Rabbi Ronne Friedman, of Temple Israel Boston, who has already been fooled by these people once before, by mosque trustee Walid Fitahi – who was spreading poisonous anti-Semitic propaganda in the Arab press at the very moment he was engaged in “interfaith dialogue” with Rabbi Friedman’s congregation. The old saying applies: fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me.

Dennis Hale

Human Rights Coalition Backs Jacobs

We are an organization of Christians, Jews, Sikhs, and moderate Muslims, who are victims and targets of Jihad. We are a rainbow coalition, black, brown and white. We stand with our brother Charles Jacobs, who works hard to rally forces against radical Islam which are penetrating our society with the help of misguided people who embrace them -- out of ignorance or fear. Rabbis of all people should first and foremost protect the Jewish community at a time when, according to the Jewish Anti-Defamation League, Islamic Jew-hatred poses the largest and an existential threat to the Jews since WWII. That 70 Rabbis in N.E. attack and defame Jacobs for exposing the threat to their communities is appalling. But perhaps this controversy will finally force the Jewish community to confront what it fears but has hidden from. They should not repeat the appeasement and capitulation of the 1930s with their Messianic illusions as they now twin with and support radical mosques, especially those spewing hatred against the infidels, such as Charles Jacobs has so clearly documented.

Yours for truth and justice,

Human Rights Coalition Against Radical Islam