

Graffiti for intellectuals



SIMON SAYS



DECEMBER
15
2008



By Si Frumkin

THE GOOD NOOSE AND THE BAD NOOSE

Do you REMEMBER THE JENA SIX? LET ME REFRESH YOUR MEMORY. IT REFERS TO THE SIX BLACK HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS, IN THE SMALL LOUISIANA TOWN OF JENA, WHO BRUTALLY BEAT A WHITE CLASSMATE IN DECEMBER 2006. THEY WERE ARRESTED AND CHARGED WITH SECOND DEGREE ATTEMPTED MURDER.

Media reports were almost unanimous in blaming the arrests on racism in Jena and its high school. The defendants were presented as righteously reacting to the racism of symbolic nooses that were hung at the high school and were supposedly meant to be a representation of nooses of lynch mobs.

The news stories told us that on August 31, 2006, a group of black students sat under a large oak tree which was a frequent meeting place for white students. The next morning, three nooses were discovered hanging from the tree. Three white students were suspended for the incident. On November 30, 2007, the school was set on fire and over the next few days, various altercations, including the savage beating of the white student took place.



The trial was scheduled for September 20, 2007. On that day, tens of thousands of angry demonstrators from all over the United States came to Jena to express their opposition to the charges. Not surprisingly, Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton were there to pose for the TV cameras. Over \$500,000 was collected to pay for the Jena Six defense. On September 10, 2007, the potential Presidential candidate, Barack Obama, said: "When nooses are being hung in high schools in the 21st century, it's a tragedy. It shows that we still have a lot of work to do as a nation to heal our racial tensions. This isn't just Jena's problem; it's America's problem." He also included Jena in his now famous Philadelphia speech on Reverend Wright and race.

After further investigation that was prompted, in part, by the people of Jena who were outraged over being pictured as racists, the story drastically changed. It seems that the tree was never a meeting point for white students but rather a gathering place of high school athletes, many of them black. The nooses were placed there not as a reference to lynching or a threat to blacks, but as a reaction to recently lost games and poor performance by the school team. The white student was beaten by a gang of 6 known troublemakers some of whom had previous criminal records. The charges against the six were eventually dropped. And Jackson, Sharpton and Obama, without apologizing for what they had said previously, removed Jena from their teleprompters.

I am very disturbed by the spreading epidemic of identifying more and more words, pictures and objects as symbols of racism, sexism, ageism and all those other -isms. Some are funny – I have heard a professor on a talk show seriously identifying "socialism" as a code word for African-Americans. I know that no one – except for blacks themselves - dares to use the scary "N" word or make jokes about water melons, reasons for muscular physiques of black athletes or rap lyrics.

On the other hand, some symbols are powerful and meaningful. A swastika on a synagogue or a gravestone is repulsive. And so is a noose in a location or situation where its lynching subtext is unmistakable.

And so, I am upset by the lukewarm reaction by the media, law enforcement, community leaders and the quick-to-be-offended elite to the recent

noose incident in West Hollywood, a small independent city within Los Angeles. It was not symbolic – it was realistic; a crude representation of an execution of a real woman hanging by a real noose. The identity of the victim was immediately obvious: it was the candidate for the vice-presidency of the United States, Sarah Palin. In addition, on the roof from which Palin's effigy was hung, there was an effigy of Senator McCain on fire, surrounded by paper flames.

The reaction of spokesmen for various law enforcement organizations, the city of West Hollywood, the ACLU, and various media pundits was, "Well, yes, it was bad taste, but bad taste isn't a crime – there is nothing we can or should do..."



Now here is what I am sure of. I am sure that if the effigy were one of Barack Obama, all hell would be breaking loose. There would be media interviews with Jackson and Sharpton, demands for justice, congressional hearings, accusations of hate and calls for quick and meaningful prosecution. There would be accusations of incitement to murder, of unforgivable racism and of McCain's campaign support of lynching.

I am still waiting. I am not sure if the definition of hate crime includes only racism and homophobia, or if sexism and ageism are covered as well. Ms. Palin is a woman and McCain is a senior citizen; I think that their pseudo-executions are enough to warrant, at least, detentions for hate crimes, an investigation, a few days or weeks in the pokey before release on bail and a whole lot of money for lawyers from the pockets of the two West Hollywood yahoos.

As I said, I am still waiting but I am not holding my breath. ¥



WHAT COSTS ALMOST \$2 MILLION WEIGHS 30 TONS, STANDS 11 METERS HIGH AND IS MADE IN ISRAEL?

HINT: IT ISN'T A WEAPON AND IT DOESN'T SAVE LIVES By M. P. Levitt, J'lem Post, 10/31/08

STILL DON'T KNOW? A SNOWMAKER, OF COURSE. FAR FROM BEING JUST ANOTHER SNOW GUN, THIS INNOVATION CAN MAKE SNOW IN ANY TEMPERATURE - EVEN IN HOT, ARID CLIMATES. IN FACT, THE NEW INVENTION WAS DISCOVERED, QUITE BY ACCIDENT, UNDER THE BLISTERING South African sun by a team of engineers from IDE Technologies. Originally founded in 1965 by the government to solve acute water shortage problems, the company is best known for successfully desalinating seawater and providing drinking water to Eilat.

But to understand how IDE Technologies went from making drinking water with the famous Zarchin process to building multimillion dollar all-weather snowmakers, you have to start at the beginning.

After successfully vacuum freezing seawater in the late 1960s, the company diversified and branched out into the separation, concentration and/or purification of aqueous solutions. Today, it

lays claim to a long list of cutting-edge, innovative technologies and machines that are

in use all over the world, including mechanical vapor compression, multi-effect distillation, vapor compression concentrators, reverse osmosis and vacuum ice machines.

It is with the latter that the snowmaking story begins. For many years, mines around the world pumped chilled water into deep shafts to cool down the passages. The process was expensive and cumbersome as it required pumping the water back up to the surface, sometimes as far as four kilometers.

Fifteen years ago, IDE came

up with a solution to the problem. Its vacuum ice machines put water in a vacuum under triple point conditions in which vapor, liquid and ice coexist. Part of the water evaporates, while the remaining liquid freezes. Under controlled conditions, the frozen water forms ice crystals that are lighter than water and easier to transport back to the surface. This saves energy, making cooling the mine shafts much more efficient and far less expensive.

"The idea of snowmaking crossed our way by accident," says Moshe Tessel, the manager of IDE's Refrigeration Department. In late 2005, after IDE had finished installing a VIM for a gold mine in South Africa, one of the senior Russian engineers on the team noticed that the quality of the ice resembled snow.

"I can ski on this," he declared. "Find me some skis!" Eventually, a rental ski equipment store was found in Johannesburg. Strapping on his boots, securing his poles and clicking into his skis, the engineer proceeded to test his claim on the artificial snow mound. After skiing down the mound of left-over slush, he pronounced it excellent quality. His Israeli colleagues, most of whom had never skied, looked on in sheer amazement.

"He was so insistent about it that we invited an Olympic coach from Finland down to South Africa to ski on it too and see if it was really high-

quality snow," Tessel says. Once the Finnish coach gave the artificial snow a thumbs-up, IDE's CTO and executive vice president, Avraham Ophir, took a trip to the Alps.

"With global warming, the ski resorts were suffering from a loss of business. The one thing they must have to operate is snow," explains Tessel. Of course, having snow early in the season means making more money but traditional snowmakers require temperatures below freezing to operate.

With IDE's snowmaker, resorts can be guaranteed snow even if the weather isn't cooperating. At first, the resort owners in the Alps were skeptical. They couldn't believe that an Israeli company was going to sell them high-quality, environmentally friendly snow. But after a handful of them flew to South Africa to see the snow with their own eyes, several resorts ordered an IDE snowmaker.

In late November, the first IDE snowmakers will be put into operation at two resorts in the Alps, one in Switzerland and one in Austria.

The IDE snowmaker can produce up to 1,900 cubic meters of snow per day relatively inexpensively. It doesn't require a lot of manpower thanks to a fully automated computerized system, and it just needs water.

Next year, IDE is hoping that resorts in the US will also place orders. You may be wondering why they aren't installing one at

the Hermon, and the answer is simple. The Hermon has a local monopoly on skiing and no water source for the snowmaking ma-



chine. According to Tessel, the government refuses to finance a pump to bring the water in and the resort management is opposed to the idea.

"Our real clients are big ski resorts," says Tessel. "For them, snow is equal to money. In the past, if there was no snow and warm weather, they didn't have much to do other than pray. Now, we can guarantee them snow even without cold weather."

As ski resorts all over the world wait to see how the first IDE snowmakers will perform this season, the skeptics remain. On a recent trip to Canada to talk to resorts there, Tessel had difficulty even entering the country. "The immigration officer almost wouldn't



let me in when I told her what I was doing there. 'An Israeli selling snow to the Canadians?' she asked with disbelief." In the end, after

proving his official business with documents and photographs, Tessel was allowed to enter. Nevertheless, the incredulity is still widespread.

After all, who could blame the immigration officer for having a hard time believing his story? Israel selling snow to the Swiss sounds as ludicrous as someone trying to sell sand to Saudi Arabia.

If nothing else, IDE's snowmaker is certainly one of the most unexpected Israeli innovations to slide onto the slopes in a long time. Ω

**Sand to Saudi Arabia?
Snow to Switzerland?
Ridiculous?... Read on!**



ISRAEL'S FIRST YOUNG ADULTS CONFERENCE—Tomorrow's Future

Former Prime

Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is at this stage the one most likely to become the next Prime Minister of Israel in the upcoming February elections. Netanyahu, head of the opposition party Likud, urges us to examine and learn from the success of others. He says that merely pouring more money into a system rarely yields the desired results. Much of the funding apparently gets absorbed into "fatty tissues" rather than reach the intended recipients.

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Netanyahu proposes a five step plan to improve the educational system in Israel: increase the basic salary of teachers in Israel, since it is at a very low starting point; give more power to school principals; focus on core subjects and increase the number of hours these subjects are taught; add "values" to the curriculum, which in Israel's case include both Bible and Zionism, to define our hold on and connection to Israel; and add prestige by making the teaching-like the medical-profession "most desirable." Despite sounding counterproductive, to elevate the profession, the number of people admitted into it must be limited.

Netanyahu proceeds to explain that there will not be a need to fire any of the existing professional teachers. With a normal rate of 3-4% of the workforce retiring each year, almost half of the profession would have naturally evolved into a brand new, more advanced workforce within a decade.

Netanyahu's message resonates: A crucial investment one can make in the future is to invest today in education. We entrust the lives of the most precious possession, the children, in the hands of teachers that shape them into what they become. These teachers instill in them the knowledge, skill set and values that some day will open the doors for them and enable them to be productive members of society.

As Israel prepares for a tsunami wave of the global financial collapse, Netanyahu expects that Israel is better positioned to withstand the destructive forces and will be able to escape to the safety of higher grounds faster and more easily than others. To achieve that, Netanyahu insists that the pie, the source of all funding in Israel, must grow. Already the first signs of layoffs are visible, creating an added burden, as a natural rate of growth has to be addressed as well. Growth is the solution, requiring drastic, immediate measures. One cannot wait until the February elections to take care of these needs.

Netanyahu spoke last week at the General Assembly of the Jewish Federations held once every five years in Jerusalem. Had the

4,500 delegates from the USA been given the task of electing the next Prime Minister of the State of Israel, there is no doubt that overwhelming support in the GA would have gone to "Bibi." The least warm reception was awarded to Foreign Minister Livni, head of the ruling Kadima Party. Ehud Barak received lukewarm reception.

Netanyahu was the closing speaker of today's 1st Annual Young Adult Conference held at Tel Aviv University. Unlike last week's long standing ovation, he was not as well received today. Israelis do not give as much credence to anyone and are very stingy—equally to everyone—in giving compliments.

The segment of Young Adults, ages 18 to 35, who account for slightly more than 1/3 of the total population, show some worrisome trends:

Overall distrust in the system - every second person does not trust the Supreme Court; an ongoing deterioration of trust in the Knesset (from 52% in 2003 to 29% in 2008), the police (from 66% in 2003 to 33% in 2008) and the IDF

Two thirds of those surveyed express very negative opinions about politics (there are too many small parties and too many "sectorial" parties representing a very narrow sector or special interest groups)

Low voter turnout in the most recent elections (the percentages of those electing not to vote are very high, to such an extent that a plan to institute mandatory voting is being considered)

Only 52% of those reaching 18 years of age join the military, an 8% decrease over the past eight years - one of two do not join due to "His Belief His Profession" (Ultra-Orthodox), Arabs, "mental health" reasons,

etc. Most everyone from the peripheries have migrated to the center of Israel, reinforcing the gaps that already exist between the regions (center vis-à-vis the Negev in the south and the Galilee in the north)

There are 260,000 young immigrants in Israel, perceived incorrectly to be weak members of society

In a day long conference, panel after panel discussed the importance of today's young adults as a resource and an asset and the burden upon them to become tomorrow's leaders. Israel's young adults embody in them both the present and the future of the State. As I was listening to the speakers, I was reminded of the late Eli Urman of Beverly Hills, who said that if we do not teach and train today's youth, we will not have tomorrow's leaders. It was a quarter of a century ago, when most of those in attendance today were not born yet, that Eli Z"L put this theory into practice, investing in my generation.

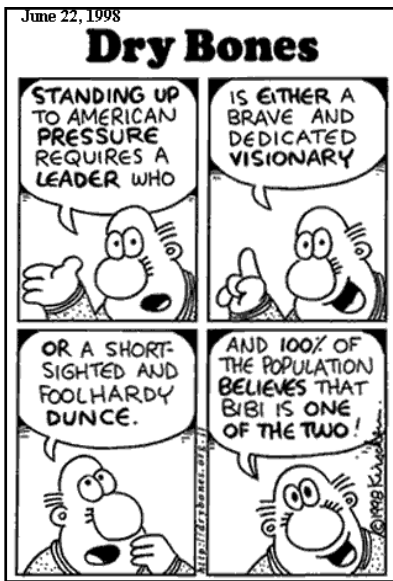
It seems that Israel is trying to find its own Barack Obama who will mobilize the masses, captivating their imagination, promising a better future, a hope for tomorrow. Israel is looking for a trigger to appear, hoping for a miracle, and thus a myriad of politicians have turned to the pool of young adults calling them to get involved in politics - or at the very least get out and vote - and encouraging them not to lose sight of what is important: This country is our home. To make a long term influence, we must act now, investing in education and getting involved in politics.

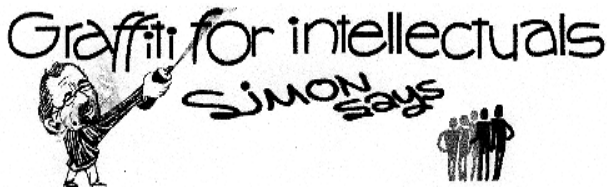
Today's day-long conference, the fruits of a year of planning, was the opening shot, a call to action.

Ari Bussel is an Israeli-born community activist, entrepreneur, writer, broadcaster and relentless fighter for good causes. He shares his time between California and Israel. His website/blog is web.me.com/bussel



Former Israeli P.M. Bibi Netanyahu





DECEMBER 15 2008

NON- PROFIT ORG. U.S.POSTAGE PAID STUDIO CITY CA PERMIT NO.62

Southern California Council for Soviet Jews publication (affiliate member of Union of Councils for Soviet Jews) P.O.Box 1542, Studio City, CA 91614 (web: www.sifrumkin.com)

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PACIFICORP AGREES TO REMOVE DAMS OR THE QUADRUPLET IS STILL MISSING!

A few weeks ago I wrote "The Missing Quadruplet" for the 10/13/2008 "Graffiti". (You can read it on my website www.sifrumkin.com.)

Here is an article from the November 14, Wall Street Journal. It is a news story of yet another hydro electric dam being shut down in order to save fish while spending your tax money - if you live in about to go bankrupt California - increasing reliance on more expensive energy and causing hardship to people (tax payers) who depend on the irrigation water to make a living.

Here it is without further comment except that it is yet another example of the insanity that pervades us:

ELECTRIC UTILITY PACIFICORP HAS TENTATIVELY agreed to remove four dams from the Klamath River, in a deal that would end one of the West's most rancorous water disputes' and could serve as a settlement model for similar fights.



Under an agreement in principle announced Thursday, Pacific Corp., based in Portland, Ore., would tear down the dams on the Klamath River in Oregon

and California by 2020. That would open up 300 miles of river to salmon and steelhead runs that could help restore depleted fisheries in Oregon and California. The dams, which were put in over the past century, prevented the fish from migrating farther upstream.

The hydroelectric power that the dams produced which amounts to about 160 megawatts, or less than 2% of the utility's total capacity-would be re-placed with energy from solar, wind or other renewable energy sources. PacifiCorp, unit of Berkshire Hathaway Inc., would pay up to \$200 million of the

estimated \$450 million cost of the removal, passing on its portion to ratepayers.

The state of California would pay for the rest.

The framework of the deal "ensures that our customers will be protected at every step along the way," Greg Abel, PacifiCorp's chairman and chief executive, said in a prepared statement. The deal between PacifiCorp, the Interior Department and California and Oregon was reached after three years of negotiations with environmental, tribal and farmer groups. The parties hope to finalize the agreement by June. The dams' removal is subject to approval by federal officials, after reviews that are expected to take four years.

"This marks the first step in a future process, but it's a giant step," Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne said at a news conference Thursday.

Oregon Gov. Ted Kulongoski added, "While many months of work [lie] ahead, this historic agreement provides a path forward to achieve the largest river and salmon restoration effort ever undertaken."

Most groups didn't get every-thing they wanted. The American Rivers environmental group, for example, was pushing for the dams to be removed by as soon as 2015. And farmers who depend on irrigation from the river stand to get less water in dry years than they do now.



But most of. The parties sounded pleased that a deal could be reached to end the dispute. The conflict turned so ugly in 2001 that federal marshals had to be called in after angry farmers seeking water turned on spigots that the U.S. government had closed during a drought year.

In 2002, environmentalists became enraged after tens of thousands of salmon died in the river when the government diverted more water to the farmers.

"The bottom line is we tried to find common ground and com-promise, and that is the only way something like this could have happened," said Martin Goebel, president of Sustainable North-west, a Portland-based environmental group.