

Israelis and Palestinians.  
Two peoples. One future.



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January 24, 2008

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Jack Rosen  
American Jewish Congress  
National Headquarters  
825 Third Avenue  
New York, NY 10022

Dear Mr. Rosen:

**Board of Advisors**

Ed Asner

Rabbi Buzz Bogage

Professor Daniel Boyarin

Professor Judith Butler

Debra Chasnoff

Rami Elhanan

Nurit Peled-Elhanan

Ronnie Gilbert

Goapele

Rabbi Lynn Gottlieb

Adam Hochschild

Melanie Kaye/Kantrowitz

Tony Kushner

Professor George Lakoff

Aurora Levins-Morales

Rela Mazali

Robert Meeropol

Adrienne Rich

Professor Avi Shlaim

Rabbi Laurie Zimmerman

Professor Howard Zinn

As a Jewish feminist and Director of one of the premier progressive Jewish peace organization in the United States with over 20,000 supporters, I find it outrageous that the American Jewish Congress would draw the conclusion that Ms. Magazine is “hostile to Israel.” As we know, making that accusation in the current political climate is akin to accusing Ms. of anti-Semitism. Your efforts suggest that any body or institution that does not agree with the American Jewish Congress or the American Jewish establishment regarding Israel immediately opens itself to accusations of anti-Israelism or anti-Semitism. Such a dynamic endangers our vibrant civil society which significantly contributes to the safety and comfort, along with the power and privilege, that Jews experience here in the United States. The AJC itself is, of course, a reflection of that vibrant civil society.

In choosing not to run the AJC’s ad, Ms. Magazine acted consistently within their policies. Following your accusations, Clare Kinberg, editor of Bridges (the progressive Jewish Feminist Journal) researched Ms Magazine by looking at every page of every issue to determine if they acted consistently when they rejected the ad. Ms. Kinberg found that Ms Magazine has never published a country ad, nor an article that was anti-Israeli, anti-zionist, pro-Palestinian, or pro-Israeli.

The AJC’s attack reflects a pattern in contemporary American life: those entities that defy the self-proclaimed dominant though not popular Jewish institutional line on Israel, for whatever reason, will be attacked and browbeaten by those same institutions. What makes this particular case even more disappointing is that Ms. Magazine is a critically important progressive institution that promotes work for social justice around the globe, including on issues of religious freedom and safety from military threats - issues close to AJC’s own agenda. Your attack on Ms. attempts to weaken and distract the important work of this magazine.

In keeping with Ms. Magazine’s focus on the unjust conditions women and girls face and our struggles for equality around the globe, the magazine has reported on the gains women have made and their ongoing struggles for equality in Israel.

Equally important is that US Jewish feminists join with Israeli and Palestinian feminists to support nonviolent civil society promoting improved life opportunities among women and girls. Ms Magazine has consistently supported these efforts.

I would urge you to recant your statement about Ms. Magazine and engage with the magazine as an ally in the ongoing efforts to bolster strong and democratic civil society in the U.S. and in Israel. I also beseech you to reconsider your deployment of the anti-semitism card; towards this end, I am enclosing a copy of Jewish Voice for Peace's book Reframing Anti-Semitism. The book systematically deconstructs and addresses the dangerous assumption that opposition to the policies of the Israeli government is anti-Semitism. Finally, I invite you to join with JVP to support civil society among and between Israelis, Palestinians and American Jews.

Sincerely,  
Rachel Pfeffer  
Jewish Voice for Peace  
[www.jvp.org](http://www.jvp.org)