



Letters to the Editor



In response to Muller and MacDonald

Not a student at Grinnell College, but a close and interested neighbor, with more than a little first-hand experience of the Israel/Palestine conflict, my response to Alex Muller's denunciation of the "Geneva Initiative," and Andrew MacDonald's denunciation of Muller is: you are both, sadly, opposite sides of the same false coin.

How does someone living here ... dare to so sharply criticize Yossi Beilin, a deeply committed Israeli Zionist, whose service to his people and to the cause of peace began when you were a toddler?

and must be recognized as such. While it is a pity that too many badly informed, hypocritical Western "radicals," with more than a drop of perhaps unconscious anti-Semitism, pick and choose which deserving people's struggle to support (Kurds have been fighting for self-determination much longer than Palestinians, and suffered more) one must not deny recognition to either. And, Mr. Muller, how does someone living here, who one may assume has not yet made a major contribution in this area, dare to so sharply criticize Yossi Beilin, a deeply committed Israeli Zionist, whose service to his people and to the cause of peace began when you were a toddler?

Your extremist positions reflect the problem, not the solution.

To Muller I would say, it does not matter when a people find its identity, when it invents itself. Ancient Israel found itself at Sinai two millennia ago. Those living in the British Mandate land the Romans called Palestine, whose ancestors, a hundred years ago, would not have considered themselves anything but a part of the greater Arab nation, ironically, partly as a response to modern Zionism, became Palestinians,

To MacDonald I must point out, if he doesn't know it and uses such terms simply to score political points, that nothing but genocide is "tantamount to genocide." Although there are less than a handful of Jews in Grinnell whose lives were personally affected by the Holocaust, any decent, thinking person should understand that while genocide can certainly be used to talk about, for example, what was directed by white Christian Europeans at native Americans, and racism is what was practiced by too many of the same kind of people against blacks, and long after slavery, the war the Semites—Arabs and Jews—calls for a different vocabulary. Like Muller, your sources, as you limit yourself, are biased. By all means read Edward Said, but also read Bernard Lewis or Shlomo Avnery. The Jews who returned to the land out of which they had been forced were by no means "colonists." Zionism began after Israel's first Exile, when they sat by the waters of Babylon and wept for Jerusalem. Zionists didn't hire "natives" to do the dirty work, they gloried in doing it themselves. And half of the Jewish population of Israel today is Afro/Asian, not European, in origin.

To work for peace, in the Middle East or anywhere, is a worthwhile task. To support propaganda which paints one side heroic and pure and the other as demonic leads not to peace and justice but to war and destruction.

—I. M. A. Lederer

Money where our mouths are

To the Grinnell College senior class,

Once a semester you may notice a group of about 30 alumni on campus wearing nametags, trying to talk to a lot of you, browsing in the bookstore, holding a career-development event in the Forum and generally looking pretty happy to be back in Grinnell. Who are we? We're the members of the Alumni Council.

Our group spans class years from 1951 to 1998. We come to campus twice a year—in mid September and early March—from as far away as Canada and Hawaii, from both coasts and all points in between. Among others, our number includes a couple of writers, a company president, an astronomer, a stay-at-home mom, a college teacher, an expert on affordable housing, a few lawyers, a caterer, a doctor—our professions and interests range from soup to nuts. But the one thing we all have in common is abiding affection for our alma mater—Grinnell College. We come together to advise the College and work on projects such as reunion planning, alumni awards, volunteer management and fundraising, including the Stephen Kent '67 Memorial Senior Challenge.

You may have heard of the Challenge last year and maybe you wondered at the time, "Who was Stephen Kent?" Kent came to Grinnell from Plainfield, Ill.; at Grinnell he majored in History and was active in SGA. After graduating in 1967 he went on to law school at the University of Chicago. He was a strong supporter of Grinnell and was his class's the class fund director.

While serving on the Grinnell Alumni Council, Steve was disheartened to realize that very few young alumni donated money to Grinnell's Annual Fund (now the Pioneer Fund). As a result, he personally challenged the class of 1988: for every senior who donated any money to Grinnell that year, Steve would donate \$5 of his own money. When Steve tragically passed away the following year at the age of 44, the Challenge was renamed in his honor. Since then, the Alumni Council has sponsored the Challenge and donated our own money (more than the original \$5 per gift) to encourage senior participation. Grinnell made a very large difference in our lives and we're willing to put our money where our mouths are.

Frankly, the Alumni Council takes the Steve Kent Senior Challenge very seriously; we love Grinnell, we benefited from the gifts of alumni before us and we want the cycle of generosity to continue. Grinnellians support a wide range of worthy causes, but one that is too often forgotten is our own alma mater, the place that for many of us helped to shape our sense of social commitment.

The Pioneer Fund supports the operating budget of the college, which is what keeps Grinnell going year in and year out. Almost everything associated with the college has an annual expense and the Pioneer Fund helps meet those costs. Last year alone, the Pioneer Fund raised the equivalent of \$2,000 per student at Grinnell College.

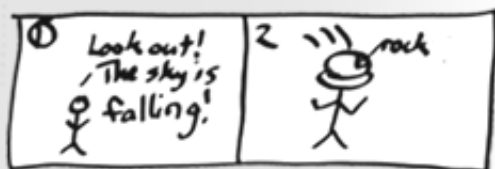
The Steve Kent Challenge now sets a goal of 70 percent participation among seniors and in the past 10 years, that goal has been met seven times. We believe this shows that even though we may sometimes disagree with specific people or policies, devotion to Grinnell College remains strong.

As the Senior Challenge prepares to kick off for 2004, we encourage members of the senior class to volunteer to help with the Stephen K. Kent '67 Memorial Senior Challenge by contacting the Office of Alumni Relations and Development. And when a Senior Challenge committee member asks, please make a gift.

—The Grinnell College Alumni Council

CARTOONS

WANTED



©2004 Alex Lorch

The S&B is looking for a steady cartoonist.* Submissions are due by Tuesday, January 27th.

*not that we won't consider the occasional oddball.



the scarlet & black

Columnists Wanted!

If you're interested in a paid position as a regular writer, submit a 600-800 word sample via email to [anderseb], by **NOON ON MONDAY, JAN 26.**

just a few ideas:

investigative / humorous / party review / campus commentary / political / social / advice / how to do useful stuff / business management / accounting



IN SPITE OF THE TENNIS

