

d Israelis. The speaker, New York University professor, was to appear locally in a speech sponsored by several groups. "South Mountain Peace Action is NOT a co-SPMA chair Paul Surovell wrote in an e-mail to supporters. DECLINED an invitation to co-sponsor the event, essor Judt's rejection of a two-state solution in Israel and and his advocacy instead of a secular, unitary state that olve the dismantlement of Israel as a Jewish state and the n independent Palestinian state...on the West Bank and

a position antithetical to that of South Mountain Peace  
— ROBERT WIENER

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plans to highlight ANSWER's positions on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Maplewood activist Amy Higer, a member of the South Orange-Maplewood Committee to Stop the War, acknowledged that ANSWER's stance on the conflict troubled Israel's supporters. "But I don't think that's a reason not to participate and to get as many people down there as possible to make the statement against the war in Iraq," she said. "I think you have to let some things go if you want to have a broad-based movement."

Higer, who is Jewish, describes herself as a supporter of Israel and said she "personally does not agree

"Theirs is more broad-based," she said of the South Mountain group. "We wanted to focus just on the war in Iraq and on stopping this war."

Higer said her organization "has no position whatsoever on the dispute between Israel and the Palestinians," and "we don't even have a unified position on the war in Iraq. Some of us think the U.S. should pull out immediately, and some of us think that would be a mistake. Our focus is we need to think about the best course of action to stop the killing and stop the people dying over there."

Higer called the injection of Israeli and Palestinian politics into her movement "just unfortunate. It

the war.

"Based on my intuitive response, the overwhelming majority of Jews whom I've spoken to about Iraq are against our being there," he said. "They feel it's really against the interest of Israel because it is encouraging and becoming a source of recruitment and finance for terrorists, many of whom will probably be directing their terrorism at Israel."

Higer, who said her group has "a lot of Jewish people...and a lot of non-Jews," agrees. "We all feel similarly on the issue. This war was wrong. It was illegal. It was immoral. And it is bad for everybody, including Israel. I don't see how you can make the argument that it is good for Israel. The further militarization of the Middle East and the creation of more recruits for Al Qaida is the wrong way to go."

Madelyn Hoffman, executive director of the statewide New Jersey Peace Action, which includes SMPA under its umbrella, was keen to tamp down appearances of conflict within the local antiwar movement. She declined to discuss whether Israeli-Palestinian politics should be injected into the antiwar campaign.

But from her office in Montclair she observed that growing numbers of her fellow Jews continue to enlist in the movement.

"Times have changed since immediately after 9/11, and there are a lot of people who have come out against the war in Iraq because of the large number of casualties," she told NJJN.

"The main focus of the mobilization is to bring the troops home from Iraq. The main message is that — but there will be other people who have other messages," she said. "The overall message of [the Sept. 24] march is resoundingly on the issue of Iraq and bringing the troops home and the need for us to stop the bleeding."

Representatives from ANSWER failed to respond to numerous telephone calls from NJJN.

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