(te•kün) To mend, repair and transform the world.

TIKKUN

Questions People Ask About the Politics of Meaning

A BIMONTHLY JEWISH CRITIQUE OF POLITICS, CULTURE & SOCIETY MAY/JUNE 1996 $6.00

Prophets vs. Profits

Meaning in the Marketplace



Gar Alperovitz
Charles Derber
Frank Riessman
William M. Sullivan
Arthur Waskow

Ecological Healing
Paul Wapner

Eroticism and Jewish Spirituality
Mordechai Beck

Cynicism
Michael J. Bader

Sacred and Profane Time
Letty Cottin Pogrebin
Martha Mendelsohn

Israel Facing Terror
Wendy Orange

Psychoanalysis in the Inner City
Paul L. Wachtel

PLUS

Stew Albert on Right-Wing Militias

0 306775 8 05

Commemoration

We don't name our children for the living,
as if the named-for might
hurry the first to his end.
We commemorate losses instead.
My son's named for an uncle
I've never seen. My father says his
brother was a shy, silent man; in '44
he went up in a shaft of smoke.
And I have this uneasiness
as if maybe our renaming is
tinged with morbidity; or worse,
that the Hebraic names themselves,
Eli, Rachael, Sarah, Chaim,
might reconjure history: first the
oddly stilled villages and burnt fields—

When my father looks at my daughter
he sees his niece: a four-year-old
with goldish, hay-colored hair.
Then he tells a story (over and again):
It was winter, snow was everywhere,
the night was cold, sharp as ice.
Rachael walked close to her mother,
arm in arm, as their line swerved,
no, sharply branched to the left,
trees, tree-shadow obscuring them all.
Each time he tells it, I try to see her
more clearly (what is it I hope to see?).
She might have turned for a moment,
maybe waved and called to the others,
then quickened her step
like any child with somewhere to go.

—Paula Friedman

TIKKUN

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Letters

BAD MEDICINE

To the Editor:

Dr. Larry Amsel should be commended for calling attention to a litany of critical concerns about the quality of our health care in an environment of skyrocketing costs, and care increasingly controlled by large, for-profit managed care organizations ("Bad Medicine," January/February 1996). His concerns about diminished access, patient choice, physician autonomy, and restricted health-care benefits when it comes to psychiatric—and all health-care facilities—are real, and right on target. But, in his passionate review of these critical problems, Dr. Amsel sometimes loses sight of the real-life dynamics of the problems and cannot tell whom, or what, to blame.

As Dr. Amsel looks at the changes in the health-care delivery system, he fails to consider the mandate sent by our society—by the legislature, by public outcry, by the media—to address the upward spiraling of health-care costs. He does not give consideration to the dilemmas introduced by a graying population, our vast social and lifestyle problems or the arrival of wonderful (but expensive) new technologies. He does not address the mischief of American trial lawyers, ever engaged in litigious free-for-alls at the expense of their clients and the American public at large. He does recognize the deleterious role played in health care by insurance company executives who have put obscene profits and the welfare of their stockholders ahead of the health of their countrymen. He does not address the employers who consider price, price and price, when choosing the health coverage they will offer their employees. While he blames this nation's physicians, he does not take any cognizance of the advocacy of those physicians for patients—and against the "corporate oligopoly" and all the excesses that Dr. Amsel deplores.

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It is true that access to our system is incomplete, and we must continue to work toward a system of universal coverage that includes patients' choice of delivery system and doctor, and which puts physicians and patients in charge of the care decisions. In the meantime, physicians continue to give millions of dollars and thousands of hours of care to the indigent, the working poor and the uninsured. And American physicians continue to appear in state houses and in Washington, D.C., advocating for their patients. They are seeking adequate Medicare coverage, and Medicare coverage that preserves the patient's choice of physicians; they're advocating for programs that preserve the quality that Americans have every right to expect and demand from their health-care system.

The A.M.A. was, in fact, the first group to call attention to the problem of lack of coverage, when we convened a conference of experts in 1982, but found no consensus to address the problem. In 1990, when Bill Clinton was running for re-election as governor of Arkansas, the A.M.A. was the first major organization to announce a comprehensive plan for reforming our health-care delivery system, including universal coverage. And although we saw major elements of the A.M.A.'s model reform plan adopted into the administration's plan and into more than 230 other plans vying in this period for national attention, Congress ultimately failed to act on any of them. And, even as we watched, inexorable changes proceeded in the health-care marketplace, driven largely by the widespread demand to address costs.

In his outrage at the excesses of some managed-care plans, Dr. Amsel vilifies virtually all of private medicine. He uses anecdotes to "prove" the quality concerns of managed care while ignoring data that indicated some very positive effects of managed care. Managed-care systems have increased rates of immunizations, mammography and cervical screening in many populations. Managed-care systems have advanced the agendas of outcomes measurement and data collection and utilization for the purpose of informing patients about differences system-to-system, and even in some places, physician-to-physician.

Dr. Amsel asks whether the A.M.A. "really think(s) that fee-for-service medicine will thrive under these proposals." But the goal of the A.M.A. is not to preserve any one system, but to allow systems to have an opportunity to compete

1,800 people at the Summit on Ethics and Meaning... If you missed the Summit, you can still be a part of what's happening.

- **Join the Foundation for Ethics and Meaning.**
- **Read: *The Politics of Meaning: Restoring Hope and Possibility in an Age of Cynicism* by Michael Lerner (if it's not in your bookstore, have them order it from Addison-Wesley Publishing).**
- **Help circulate the Social Responsibility Initiative.**

To join the Foundation and receive a packet of information, select a level of membership and mail your dues to the Foundation for Ethics and Meaning, 251 W. 100th St., New York, NY, 10025.

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Internships are UNPAID, though sometimes full year internships lead to paid employment at TIKKUN. During summer, minimum time commitment is 25 hours per week. Year-long internships, minimum commitment is 16 hours per week. Send detailed, self-revealing letter telling about yourself, your relationships to the politics of meaning or other issues that emerge in TIKKUN, and your thoughts about the magazine's strengths and weaknesses.

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so that patients have a choice other than "capitalized giant health corporations."

If fee-for-service medicine can offer care that is the choice of an adequate number of patients, then it should be allowed to survive. As for malpractice reform being "worthless to physicians and dangerous to patients," the very reforms the A.M.A. is asking for in Congress have already lowered the cost of care in California, protected patients from billions of dollars worth of defensive medicine, and have certainly *not* encouraged "shoddy care."

Dr. Amsel is quite correct in singling out HMO "gag rules" as one particularly odious feature of today's managed care environment: a feature that the A.M.A. finds improper when imposed on physicians, unethical when obeyed by them, and above all, dangerous to the lives and health of American patients. By attempting to obscure existing, effective care if the plan does not pay for that care, and by attempting to hide the muzzle put on physicians to remain silent about the full range of a patient's medical options, many managed-care plans have attempted to destroy, for their financial gain, the trust that has always been the cornerstone of the physician-patient relationship. In doing so, they have in many cases, risked the very lives of patients.

The A.M.A. deplores these unacceptable restrictions. We will continue to expose them where they exist. We have instructed physicians not to obey them. In recent weeks, we have excoriated gag rules in meetings with plan administrators and payer groups. We have attempted to heighten the awareness of physicians and patients alike in more than 100 contacts and interviews with reporters, some broadcast live on national and local radio and television, and in letters to the editors of 300 American newspapers. And we will continue to peruse contracts and support physicians who refuse to comply, until gag rules become extinct.

And, even as we unearth the unacceptable practices within the managed-care arena of our delivery system, we continue to seek additional avenues of improving care, increasing patient choice, and enhancing access to care and coverage. We are working with legislators to provide antitrust relief so that physician-directed networks can offer alternatives to M.B.A.-directed systems. Even as two of the nation's largest Blue Cross organizations make plans to merge, with the blessing of the federal government, physicians are prohibited from coming together to offer a network alternative to their patients.

Furthermore, we are actively supporting and seeking passage of the Kennedy-Kassebaum Bill. It would ensure portability of insurance and guaranteed issue for many workers, currently trapped in their jobs for fear of losing coverage. It would also protect workers who are between jobs and now face the possibility of being uninsurable when they are next employed. And we continue to work with Congress on the issue of Medicare, even as many of our representatives seem preoccupied with reelection concerns.

The A.M.A.'s Medicare plan would protect the program from bankruptcy, retain (as an option) traditional Medicare, and provide America's elderly with more choice than they have had in thirty years in selecting physicians and health coverage to meet their needs. The A.M.A. did not, as Dr. Amsel states, "support ...(a) Republican Medicare plan to win ... legislation favorable to entrepreneurial physicians." Instead, it was the House of Representatives that put nearly 70 percent of *our* plan into *their* bill. We will continue to advocate for—and fight for—legislation that protects our patients, enhances their care, and increases their choices. And the Republican proposal was hardly "a bill that cuts back Medicare," but rather would have increased the per-person spending by $2,300 (from $4,800 to $7,100) over the next seven years.

We agree with Dr. Amsel about the importance of every American finding out how their health plan runs—and what their choice of other plans might mean in comparison. The cheapest out-of-pocket plan may be more costly in the long run. Absolutely, employees should speak to their benefits representatives and have a voice in how their health benefit dollars can be spent. And once the employer makes the choices, employees should notify the benefits manager when plans do not perform in the manner they promised on enrollment day. The benefits manager can be a powerful ally when discussing coverage problems with a plan. Politicians and political parties should, indeed, be encouraged to make health care a central part of their election campaigns, and physicians and physician organizations should share their concerns and expertise whenever possible; and patients and physicians should partner on issues that are of mutual interest. Finally the A.M.A. welcomes input—and complaints, when called for—from our patients.

The A.M.A. has been—and will remain—motivated first and foremost by the welfare of patients. So long as we measure our successes in terms of what is good for our patients, we shall not have lost our soul or our way. But we cannot move effectively toward the best possible system, and care that remains the envy of the world and the chosen destination of the world's sickest individuals, unless we are joined by enlightened patients. Patients must understand their health care options and be able to identify and reject the current threats and constraints that impact their health care. Such partnering by the American Medical Association, America's physicians and their patients, will be more effective when Americans are provided complete, correct information, and not just outrage and anecdote.

Nancy W. Dickey, M.D.
Chair, Board of Trustees
American Medical Association
Chicago, Illinois

Larry V. Amsel responds:

Dr. Nancy Dickey's response to my article is remarkable for how clearly it demonstrates that even after the health-care debacle of the last two years, the A.M.A. still doesn't get the point. Dr. Dickey claims to agree with most of my substantive points. She opposes skyrocketing costs, diminishing access, managed-care gag rules, and obscene salaries for health-care executives. She supports patient choice, physician autonomy, and the need to preserve Medicare and Medicaid. She even gives a nod to universal coverage. Dr. Dickey echoes my belief that many managed-care companies put profit before patients, and that the A.M.A. should define its mission as the welfare of patients. Dr. Dickey even goes along with my suggestion that doctors and patients should unite and use their joint economic and political power to apply pressure to benefit managers at work sites and politicians at the polling booth. So far, there would seem to be a lot of agreement.

Yet Dr. Dickey chairs an organization that has done little of substance or spirit to support these positions. She seems to believe that merely by stating that the A.M.A. is motivated first and foremost by the welfare of patients, that this somehow makes it true. But the overwhelming impression of the American press and the public is that the A.M.A. has been primarily focused on physicians' economic interest in a narrowly defined and short-sighted way.

Had the A.M.A. in fact (rather than in press release) represented the welfare of patients first, had the A.M.A. in fact mobilized the intellectual and moral capital of America's physicians, the organization may have become a central player in the evolving health-care arena, instead of becoming the irrelevancy it is today. Had the A.M.A. represented a genuine alternative to profit-driven health-care corporations, the public might have rallied against these changes. Instead, at the height of the health-care debate, the A.M.A. distributed millions of pamphlets describing its contribution to health-care reform. There is no mention in these pamphlets of universal access, of health security, or portability. What is there is so transparently focused on physician income that the brochures became a laughing stock in physicians' offices, as was the A.M.A. in the health-care debate.

Had the A.M.A. really focused on patients, physicians would still be running the clinical side of health care today.

The fact is that with the A.M.A. as the representative of physicians, citizens saw little added danger in corporate health care, until it was too late. For the eighteen months of the debate surrounding the Clinton administration's health-care reform proposals, many citizens hoped that physicians would step forward to fill the leadership vacuum. No such thing occurred. No public health agenda, no real plan for universal health, no genuine preventive and behavioral medicine programs. Certainly the financial pressure created the opportunity for health care reform, but it was the lack of A.M.A. leadership that allowed the corporate takeover to occur without even a good fight.

By the looks of Dr. Dickey's letter, the A.M.A. is continuing on that path. Rather than recognize its failure to gain public confidence, rather than genuinely banding together with consumer health organizations, Dr. Dickey welcomes input—and complaints when called for—from patients.

What the A.M.A. leadership seems incapable of understanding is that what I am saying is the standard perception of the A.M.A. as depicted in most major newspapers, and is the accepted wisdom among political staffers.

Perhaps a key to understanding this perceptual deficit in the A.M.A. leadership is found in the incredibly condescending tone of Dr. Dickey's letter. I finally understand what my patients refer to as "White Coat Arrogance." Let me set the record straight. Dr. Dickey accuses me of not knowing whom to blame and she also states that I blame physicians for the current difficulties. But I do not blame the physicians in Physicians for National Health Care who advocate for health care as a right of citizenship. I do not blame physicians who work with the public health service; I do not blame Dr. James McDermott, a congressman who has been advocating for physicians to spearhead the universal access movement. I do not blame the hundreds of thousands of dedicated private practitioners who do their best for patients day in and day out. I don't even fault the A.M.A. for our current difficulties. I *do* fault it for its lack of real leadership and an absence of true patient advocacy, which have led to the erosion of public trust in organized medicine.

Dr. Dickey suggests that I fail to understand the systemic social processes that converged on health care. Yet the thrust of my article was to point out that corporate-run health-care has done little to alleviate these problems but much to reduce quality and access in American medicine. As for tort reform, I think it makes little sense now, when the courts and large punitive-damage judgments may be the only recourse society has to prevent managed care from taking calculated business risks with our lives.

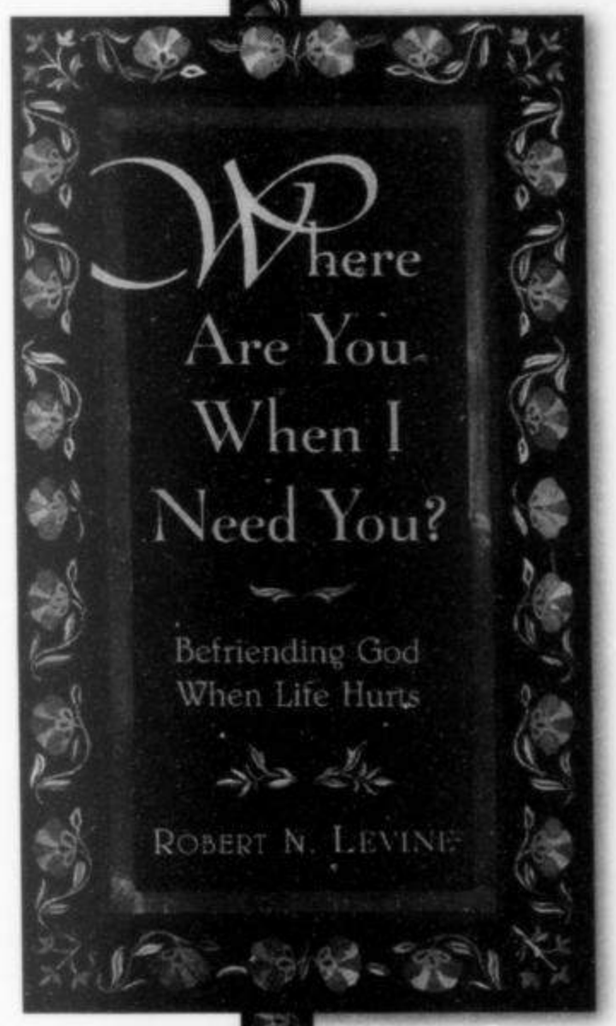
Dr. Dickey also criticizes me for using anecdotes to prove that managed care has adversely affected care. As a physician with a public health masters degree in biostatistics and research methods, I must respond to this canard. My anecdotes are not offered as proof, but merely as illustrations of what has been established by the overwhelming preponderance of the only evidence that counts in measuring quality of health care: patients' subjective experience.

In closing, Dr. Dickey dismisses my article as "just outrage and anecdote." In the current health-care environment, I prefer that position to Dr. Dickey's apparent stance, which I would characterize as just apathy and financial statistics.

Meaning and Economics

To the Editor:

The articles on the politics of meaning present an insightful critique of the spillover effects of the market economy into our interpersonal relationships, and on our personal feelings of worth and well-being. Especially thrilling to me was the analysis which discussed how, as we acclimate ourselves to a competitive market economy in the workplace,



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we risk bringing that ethic home at the end of the day, degrading even our relationships with loved ones into an exchange equation.

We have long known of the pernicious effects of the market economy on the economic well-being of those unable to effectively compete. Also apparent is the way that significant differences in income pollute our democratic political institutions, undermining the concept of one person, one vote, by giving greater weight to the views of those with greater financial resources.

But describing what is wrong is only the start. People are very change resistant, and unwilling to get rid of the devil they know, for a devil they don't. If we are to have any real chance at promoting the changes needed, we need to be able to show what we will replace the market-based competitive system with. And to convince people that it will work.

In attempting to create a viable alternative, our task is made more difficult by the fact that many of us now recognize that a market economy and competitive market forces have contributed to improvements in our quality of life. It was only competition that forced many hospitals into letting expectant fathers into the delivery rooms. Limited-income people, who formerly were forced to travel by Greyhound, are now able to fly budget airlines for almost the same cost. Many bureaucratic organizations that were formerly run on schedules most convenient to the staff have become customer responsive.

I believe we need to make a serious effort at developing alternative systems which retain the benefits of a market based competitive system while eliminating its deleterious effects.

Martin Henner
Eugene, Oregon

Freud Flap

To the Editor:

Michael Roth ("The Freud Flap," March/April 1996) cannot have it both ways. On one hand, he accurately portrays Crews and Swales as manipulative demagogues with no serious interest in Freud. On the other hand, he writes that "there is no consensus among scholars about whether [Freud's] impact has been due to the intellectual merits of psychoanalysis or to an enormous hoax … perpetrated by the founder and his followers." But to pose the question in this way is already to grant Crews and Swales their victory. What could the outcome of a debate framed around Roth's formulation be: Freud was not a crook?

It is not a question of excluding criticism. Those who have written critically on Freud include John Dewey, Mikhail Bakhtin, Jean Paul Sartre, Virginia Woolf, Albert Einstein, Karen Horney, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Michel Foucault, Thomas Mann, Jacques Derrida, and Simone de Beauvoir. But not one of these figures regarded Freud as anything other than a towering genius who had made an inescapable contribution to everything Western intellectuals care about.

Crews and Swales, by contrast, have added nothing to our understanding of psychoanalysis and it is clear that they have neither the interest nor the knowledge that would allow them to do so. On the contrary, their entire attack has been ad hominem, directed especially at the scholars who disagree with them, who they routinely and absurdly pillory as the "Freud establishment." Given that Roth is the curator for the exhibit, reading his characterization of what scholars are supposedly divided about leads me to think that Crews and Swales have already succeeded in their campaign to determine that the meaning of the Library of Congress exhibit be dominated by what they dishonestly term "controversies," and which is nothing more than another opportunity for them to gain center stage.

Eli Zaretsky
Visiting Professor, New School for Social Research
New York, New York

Michael Roth responds:

I am not sure why Professor Zaretsky thinks that the exhibition will stage a debate about whether Freud was a towering genius or a crook. This would not be very interesting. As I said in the article, the plan is to show that: "from Freud's time to our own his ideas have been subject to a variety of responses, including penetrating criticism, even while they have not become part of the fabric of their cultural lives." The lack of consensus about the validity of psychoanalytic claims has not kept Freud's ideas from being absorbed and diffused throughout our culture. As Professor Zaretsky says, they have become "inescapable," at least for now. However, there is no reason to assume that only those who think Freud a towering genius ought to be taken seriously, or to believe that only Freud's critics and not his defenders are using ad hominem attacks. There is no shortage of personal

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REGIONAL SUMMITS

Help build a regional summit for the Foundation for Ethics and Meaning. Here's what's currently in the works:

Seattle May 19-20. Contact Drora Setel (206) 328 7446

Minneapolis May 26. Contact Jackie Olenick (612) 222 6168

San Francisco May 29-30. Contact Rachel Levin (415) 695-9299

Los Angeles June 2. Contact Philip Boche (818) 374-2759 or Gina Ross (213) 934-0379

Ann Arbor June 6. Contact Heather MacKenzie (313) 995-8481

Portland June 8-9. Contact Judy and Stew Albert (503) 281-3664

Chicago Contact Julie Stevens (708) 827-4287

EDITORIAL

After the Summit: What's Next?



STEVEN M. CUMMINGS

Henry Louis Gates, Jr., (right) receiving TIKKUN's National Ethics Award from TIKKUN editor Michael Lerner.

More than one thousand eight hundred (yes, 1,800) people attended the Summit on Ethics and Meaning held April 14-16 in Washington, D.C. It was a historic event—a huge gathering of people committed to transforming America's public and private life, rejecting the ethos of selfishness and materialism, and committing themselves to a new ethos of caring and community. It had its impact on traditional political discourse as well. The Democratic Caucus of the House of Representatives invited us to present the politics of meaning perspective to a caucus retreat to be held after the Summit. And Rush Limbaugh spent hours denouncing the Summit on national TV and radio.

Though it was held in Washington, D.C. and featured many speakers from the D.C./New York/Boston corridor, participants included people from most states in the Union, plus Canada, England, Australia, and Israel. It was not a crowd of intellectuals, not a crowd of old-time conference-goers, not a crowd of Jews. As one seasoned activist put it, "This is the first time in twenty years that I've been at a gathering where I was meeting contingents from Texas or Missouri or Oregon or Minnesota whom I had never seen or heard about, and who had never been part of any gathering I've been going to over the years. How refreshing!" Another, commenting on the people who had come from her church community, said, "These are the people who rarely get involved, and yet here they seem to have a fire in their belly."

The Summit crossed many traditional political lines as well. David Gergen, the former White House communications director for both Reagan and Clinton, was only one of many attendees who one might not have expected to see among the participants. Overwhelmingly, the participants were those who had identified with the social change movements of the past decades, and who had then become disillusioned with their one-dimensionality and inability to address the psychological, spiritual and ethical dimensions of human experience.

While the Summit was organized primarily by Jews, Jews constituted less than 20 percent of the audience; it was a heavily Christian constituency that responded to the politics of meaning. Those who sought to explain these percentages came up with two possible explanations: "There's nothing to explain. Jews are 1.5 percent of the population, so if they were 20 percent of your conference, you should be asking what is it that draws so many of them to it" and "Jews have traditionally have been on the forefront of struggles for rights and for the separation of ethics and religion from the public sphere, fearful that any crossing of this boundary would lead to a new Christian assault on Jews." Our answer—that the Christian Right is *already* in the public sphere so that a First Amendment fundamentalism on the part of liberals no longer works to keep values out of public dialogue, but only works to keep progressive values out of that dialogue—has not been widely heard in the Jewish world. In fact, a crucial factor in the Jewish presence seems to have been the date of the Summit since it was held during Yom HaShoah (in large measure because our analysis of how to stop America's move to the Right developed in part from our analysis of what happened in pre-Nazi Germany, so we thought that it would be important to focus attention on the connections between what happened in Europe and what might happen here unless we develop a strategy to speak to the meaning needs that the Right has been manipulating and the Left has ignored). What we failed to estimate correctly was how many rabbis would have to be present in their own synagogues on the eve of Yom HaShoah, and

hence would find it too difficult to come to the Summit (we had imagined originally that their community services would take place on the day of Yom HaShoah, so they could attend the first two days).

A significant number of attendees were religious activists in a variety of churches, most notably in various branches of the United Church of Christ, the Methodist Church, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Quakers, Unitarian Universalists, and the Catholic Church. Many had criticisms of their own churches, in particular the way that many church leaders had fallen into the trap of agreeing to the condition that most liberal organizations traditionally place on religious people's participation: that they leave their religious baggage at the door before entering the places where progressive coalition-building takes place. Many of the attendees felt that this had been a bad deal for the religious world and a bad deal for the Left. It was bad for the religious world since it positioned many religious progressives as having to identify with a politics that was often militantly secular. No wonder, given this disability, that they were being out-organized in the religious world by a right wing that was explicitly committed to bringing *its* spiritual vision into the political arena. One of the messages of the politics of meaning is that the secular liberal and progressive worlds have much to learn from the religious and spiritual heritage of the human race—and that these lessons ought to be brought into the political arena. It was this message that reassured many Summit attendees and made them feel that for the first time in a very long time they could bring their full being into politics.

The result was a spirit of community and mutual connection rarely experienced in any political context. People talked about being reminded of the best days of the civil rights movement or of the early anti-war movement (before sectarian dissension and Weatherman-style violence turned the movement into a hostile environment for many participants) or the early days of the second wave of feminism in the mid-1960s.

Contributing to a tangible spirit of elation was the way the conference had been structured to deal with the most difficult issues that are normally avoided or obscured in progressive political circles. For example, the typical exculpatory rhetoric about why the Right has been growing was largely avoided. Instead of the normal excuses ("they have more money," "they are better communicators," "they play to people's prejudices and it's so much harder to say our complicated truths"), people were willing to acknowledge responsibility for our own failures to speak deeply enough to the needs of people the liberal camp hopes to reach. The failure of the Left isn't something that someone has done to us, but something that the Left itself has caused because it doesn't speak deeply enough and doesn't understand human needs fully enough. That kind of openness and willingness to take responsibility made people feel far safer than in Left gatherings, where people are expected to nod their heads, affirming half-truths that they know to be largely inadequate but are supposed to make everybody feel good. What the Summit proved, over and over again, is that people feel best when they can speak most honestly, free of having to fit into some "political correctness" framework.

To the extent that the strictures of political correctness were lifted, people were able to discover each other with all their complexities, and to feel recognized by others as substantial human beings. With political posturing unrewarded, and with organizers giving an explicit message to people that they should use some of their time to reach out to others (even if that meant not attending some of the sessions), more real conversation was possible. People explored political, spiritual, and ethical disagreements with a spirit of respect that most had rarely experienced previously, and this added to the sense that something historic was happening.

The atmosphere of probing difficult issues was part of the explicit structure of workshops. For example, in one workshop the attendees were asked to grapple with the following statement: "For several decades, liberals have sought to promote individual freedom as the highest goal of politics. But cultural liberalism has sometimes played into the values of individualism and selfishness fostered by the competitive market. Sexual experimentation has at times turned to compulsive sexual promiscuity, freedom to realize oneself has sometimes been used as an excuse to ignore traditional obligations to one's spouse or children, and opposition to censorship has sometimes translated into a reluctance to critique some of the values that one finds in some movies, music and TV (e.g., the occasional glorification of violence, degradation of women, anti-Semitism, and homophobia). Have we been too reluctant to impose standards and assert substantive values? What would a society look like that really did nurture the soul and promote loving relationships?" Or take the following workshop: "What is 'meaning' anyway? An opportunity to explore your experiences, expectations, concerns, and challenges that served as the impetus to draw you to this conference...and a time to discuss your doubts about the politics of meaning." Or take the following, addressed to a panel on the fate of African Americans: "How can we heal a growing despair among Blacks about the possibility of alliance with whites?" It's not necessarily that the answers given at the Summit were the full answers to these problems, but the safety generated simply by being willing to grapple with this kind of question gave the

Summit an extraordinary quality of hope.

At the Monday evening dinner at which TIKKUN's National Ethics Awards were given, AFL-CIO president John Sweeney spoke about the changes in the economy over the past fifteen years that have negatively affected the standard of living of working people. Sweeney spoke also of the values and the religious needs of some people. The 800 people who attended the dinner (the room could not hold more people seated at dinner tables, much as we tried to squeeze them in) rose to sing the old union song, "Solidarity Forever."

Sweeney's presence at the Summit was an act of courage for him. A week before the Summit, the right-wing daily The *Washington Times* had printed a column calling upon Sweeney to disassociate himself from this Summit. Probably more important, however, was the pressure from within the labor movement, where many traditionalists think that "it's the economy, stupid" and reject any focus other than "a good job at a good wage" (remember Michael Dukakis—this was his slogan). When I first met with Sweeney, I reminded him of my meeting with his predecessor, Lane Kirkland, in 1982, when Kirkland had proudly told me that "we" (the labor movement) would defeat Ronald Reagan on the basis of the obvious failure of Reaganomics, so the unions didn't need to get close to addressing family or ethical issues that we at the Institute for Labor and Mental Health were concerned about. Well, Reagan won—not only in the congressional elections in 1982 but in presidential race of '84, to be followed by a Bush victory in 1988. Yet many AFL-CIO staffers and labor union bureaucrats retain a simple economistic definition of human needs, and so they are unable to understand these defeats except in the narrowest technocratic terms (the other side had better p.r. or a better direct mail campaign or explanations of that sort). Not so Sweeney himself, who comes from a religious background and explicitly addressed the validity of religious and spiritual concerns when he ran for AFL-CIO president. Sweeney recognizes, also, that many of his members have deep religious roots and little cultural affinity with the largely secular and spiritually skeptical crowd that runs the AFL-CIO bureaucracy.

At the dinner, Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Marian Wright Edelman, Sister Joan Chittister, the Reverend Matthew Fox, and psychoanalyst James Hillman received TIKKUN's National Ethics Award for their contribution to the ethical and spiritual life of the country.

Besides more than thirty-eight workshops, the Summit also provided time for the presentation of platform ideas, most centrally the Covenant with American Families (developed by TIKKUN as an alternative to the Christian Coalition's Family Contract), and the newly developed Social Responsibility Initiative.

A detailed strategy emerged from the Summit. Here are some elements:

The Covenant with American Families

There were many suggestions for amending the Covenant with American Families. The current plan is to continue to solicit feedback from the various constituencies that might be interested in the Covenant, in part by asking unions and church groups to endorse it. Then it will be reconsidered in the early fall. One of the ideas currently being floated is to have a National Families Day in October, or perhaps, if it cannot be put in place that quickly, sometime in 1997. The idea of National Families Day is to counter the Right's claim to be the pro-families force by demonstrating that the real forces undermining families and loving relationships are rooted in the ethos of selfishness of so much of contemporary corporate life.

The plan is this: to have a combination teach-in/family picnic/celebration in every congressional district or any city or county where a Democratic majority would be in a position to support the event. The central focus of Families Day would be to honor people who have been building families and simultaneously to challenge the Right's analysis of why families are in trouble and present instead a politics of meaning analysis (that families are being undermined by the ethos of selfishness of the market and of "looking out for Number 1.") Families Day would publicly expose the illusory nature of the Right's Contract: its unwillingness to question corporate life and the impact that selfishness and materialism, so central to the values that drive the market, have on undermining loving relationships. Yet, since this day should be celebratory, along with the teach-in about families and the workshops on topics such as "Economic tensions and relationship tensions," "Shiftwork and families," "Stress at work and stress in family life," "Challenging selfishness in the culture and in family life," "Parenting skills," "Sexism in families," "Building homosexual families," "How religion can aid in strengthening families," and "Ethical issues in family life," there would also be musical entertainment, sports, games, and even family-supportive movies and films.

Families Day could be an effective method to challenge the assumption that the Right is the pro-family force. But to bring it to fruition, there would have to be widespread agreement between unions and religious communities. The Family Covenant offers the possibility of bridging differences, but it remains to be seen whether there is anyone else around besides John Sweeney at a level of power in a national organization who can understand the importance of linking economic and family and spiritual issues—and be willing to throw serious funding into it.

For the moment, the plan is to ask readers of TIKKUN and members of the Foundation for Ethics and Meaning to take the Covenant to their respective communities, get feedback, and return the feedback to the Foundation c/o TIKKUN, 251 W. 100, New York, NY 10025).

The Social Responsibility Initiative (SRI)

The SRI attempts to link individual and social responsibility. Its first point focuses on the way that much of what we don't want to see happening in the world is a result of some of our own choices, or our own unwillingness to attend to the consequences of our actions. For example, there has been far too much willingness to tolerate insensitivity to children in the name of "following one's own bliss" or "doing what feels right." The SRI commits its signators to taking more personal responsibility and to giving greater focus to personal integrity.

Yet the SRI moves on to discuss the equally pressing need for corporate social responsibility. The SRI calls for corporations to issue yearly Ethical Impact Reports, to refrain from polluting the environment or the ethical atmosphere, and for significant penalties to achieve compliance.

The SRI requires your individual signature. And many people at the Summit agreed to use the SRI as a vehicle for engaging people in a conversation about some of the fundamental ideas of the politics of meaning. Some people object to one or another part of the formulation in the SRI. Because we are not seeking to place the SRI on the ballot, people should feel free to make any and every change in wording (though not in concept), to shorten it, to republish it with illustrations or photos, etc. Copies are available from the Foundation.

Consciousness-Raising or Study Groups

Whatever you call them, the goal is the same: to encourage a personal grappling with the ideas. Some people feel safer when the group is called "a study group" because it seems to protect them from too much personal involvement or commitment, hence safety to explore without being forced to identify with a politics that you are not yet sure you fully agree with.

Consciousness-raising can be detached as well, but often it requires a fuller involvement of all of your emotional and spiritual energies.

Some study groups will probably form around the use of my book, now available from Addison-Wesley publishers, *The Politics of Meaning: Restoring Hope and Possibility in an Age of Cynicism*. I hope you'll buy and read it even if you don't form a study group around it. And let me know what you think of it.

Professional Groups

We broke into groups according to one's occupation. Attendees began to discuss the ways that their work situation would look different if money were not the only or real "bottom line." We asked conference attendees to answer the following question: "What would your workplace look like if the bottom line were no longer money and power, but were instead trying to produce goods or services in a way that encourages us to be more sensitive and caring?" Only one rule: No one can tell another that the ideas they are coming up with are politically "unrealistic," since it was to challenge this form of realism that we developed a politics of meaning. After the Summit, people returned to their work places, committed, at least in principle, to exploring a politics of meaning approach.

Even if you were not at the Summit, you could shape one of these work group discussions. Remember: don't allow "the reality police" to prevent you from thinking freely and deeply about how your work and/or your profession ought to be structured to bring out the most loving, ethically sensitive, and spiritually alive beings you and your coworkers could possibly be.

Task Forces

On Tuesday afternoon, and without enough time to get into them deeply enough, we explored the possibility of creating a set of national task forces. On page 70 of this issue of TIKKUN, you can find a list of the task forces. Read their descriptions and see if you are interested in joining. The task forces will be self-driven, since there is not enough staff money to hire a coordinator.

Regional Summits and Local Chapters

Many of the regions are already planning to hold regional summits to find a way to connect with others in their location. Those that are planned include: Seattle (May 19-20); Minneapolis (May 26); San Francisco (May 29-30); Los Angeles (June 2); Ann Arbor (June 6); Portland (June 8-9); and Chicago. (See ad, page 6.)

If you want, you might try to set up a Summit in your own area. It's often a perfect tool for reaching into sectors of the community to which you normally don't have access.

Local chapters of the Foundation for Ethics and Meaning are being formed by participants and by others who are writing to us for information everyday. The excitement about this movement has developed far more quickly than we had expected. No one was expecting or prepared for 1,800 people to show up at the Summit.

Media

The cynical media continued their pose of either ignoring or distorting much of what we had to say. Nor

was this confined to the Right. For months before the Summit, we begged The *Nation* to run an article about our approach, and we also submitted several op-eds to explain our thinking. Yet we were just as ignored by this magazine supposedly committed to free speech as we were by more establishment and conservative forums. We had similar experiences with virtually every other Left magazine or newspaper. We wish that FAIR would explore this behavior on the part of the Left media.

There were spots of encouragement. National Public Radio and Pacifica both gave fair coverage, and C-Span recorded and aired part of the Summit. The Portland *Oregonian* and the *Washington Times* ran front-page stories about the proceedings. Best of all, Rush Limbaugh gave us the denunciations we've come to expect from him!

We've asked as many of the participants at the Summit and readers of TIKKUN as can feel good about doing this to approach your own local media, and to make calls to the national media, asking them to give more attention to the politics of meaning. Whenever possible, we are asking people to write op-eds for local newspapers or letters to individual journalists, assignment editors, station managers, etc. to express concern that they broaden their conception of "political coverage" so that it includes our new paradigm as well. Please do let me know if you've sent a letter to the editor, made a phone call, or published an op-ed (even if in a college newspaper).

Feedback Please!

After you've read my new book on the politics of meaning, please write to me with your reactions. I will not be able to respond to each of you, but I will carefully read every letter sent to me (though not accompanying articles, books, etc.—I'm just one human being). The paperback can be changed or expanded to address issues you raise, and the work of the magazine itself can be influenced by your suggestions. Please do not tell me about who I should be contacting (you make the contact for us—I'm just one human being) or who might give us money (you make the contact—I'm just one human being) unless it's you yourself, in which case, do it (including convincing people to put us in their wills or estates, and convincing others to give gifts to TIKKUN to honor their departed family members or friends). □

Social Responsibility Initiative

We, the undersigned American citizens, commit ourselves to a campaign to help rebuild a spirit of community and mutual respect in our nation, qualities that have been on the decline in America the past several decades. We further commit ourselves to building individual and social practices that reflect an enhanced sense of social responsibility, caring, and commitment to the common good.

1. We start, first, with an understanding that social responsibility must begin in our own lives. We do not blame others for our own consumerist impulses that help drive many of the most destructive market forces that imprison us. We believe that a good society requires high levels of personal integrity, ethical sensitivity and ecological awareness on the part of each individual. We also believe there is a powerful interaction between our own individual ethical and spiritual lives and the ethical and spiritual life of the society. A society that rewards selfishness, materialism and cynicism often undermines our confidence in our own inner ethical and spiritual insights. We intend to work on changing both ourselves and our society simultaneously.

We recognize the need to reflect on the quality of our relationships to others and their needs. We commit ourselves to be more willing to make sacrifices in our own lives for the sake of the well-being of others and for the sake of the common good. And we will take more responsibility for our own roles in creating the world in which we live. Yet we will avoid a ruthless blaming of self or others that merely debilitates—understanding that in the process of self-transformation it is necessary to treat others and ourselves with compassion even as we simultaneously push ourselves and each other to live, as fully as possible, our highest ideals.

We also reject the tendency to justify irresponsibility to others in terms of "self-realization." Sometimes, we have to sacrifice for others—for an aging parent, for a child who needs our attention, for a partner or spouse who needs caring at times that might be inconvenient, for friends who sometimes make demands that interfere with our own proclivities. Similarly, we understand that living an ethical life sometimes requires us to choose against what feels good at the moment—and that the tendency in the society to reduce ethical obligations to matters of taste or personal choice can at times undermine the fabric of a community. Taking responsibility means accepting obligations to others.

We commit ourselves to treating other human beings as fundamentally deserving of respect and caring—*not* based on their accomplishments in the marketplace or how smart or sophisticated or good at satisfying our needs they are, but simply because they are intrinsically deserving of caring and respect. Some of us are religious people who talk about this "deserving" in terms of the way that every human being is created in the image of God. Some of us do not feel comfortable with that language and talk about the intrinsic value and essential commonalty of human beings. But we all agree that we must do more to convey to others a sense of respect. We want to send the message that we see each other as uniquely valuable and deserving of special care and concern.

We commit ourselves also to resisting the technocratic consciousness which teaches us to look at the world and each other in terms of "what we can get" out of things and people. We take responsibility for creating greater opportunities in our own lives to relate to the grandeur of the physical universe with awe, wonder and amazement. We intend to increase our reverence for the universe—and for each other, recognizing the miraculous and precious nature of every human being.

But we do not underestimate what we are up against in trying to make these changes in ourselves and each other. We live in a world that massively reinforces cynicism and despair and encourages us to believe that a world based on mutual caring is fanciful. Indeed, in our daily lives we often forget the hopefulness that we encounter in moments of community, idealism, and solidarity. We often tell ourselves that the possibilities we experienced at those moments were naive, that our hopeful ideals can never be actualized, and that therefore we would be more rational to settle for taking care of ourselves within a very narrow circle of friends and family. So part of our task is to take responsibility in each moment to not be dominated by a withdrawn and cynical stance, to reaffirm our highest hopes for a world based on mutual recognition, solidarity and caring, and to help give others confidence in their own best visions of what might be possible.

2. Economic institutions both reflect and shape the values of our society. As our existing economic institutions encourage and reward the aggressive pursuit of individual self-interest, materialism and opportunism, we commit ourselves to create economic institutions that reflect and reward life-affirming values of compassion, inclusiveness, ecological sensitivity, equality, cooperation, community and sustainability—as well as an awareness of the unique preciousness of every human being.

We live with the consequences of a market system in which our most pow-

erful economic institutions are accountable only to a global financial system detached from human interests and accountability. We seek to create a market system in which economic institutions function within a framework of community determined rules, values and relationships. We commit ourselves to the creation of such a framework by working for appropriate public policy measures through legislative action, voter-sponsored initiatives, and, if necessary, amendment of state and federal constitutions.

A. We will work for measures—such as tax policies, regulation, government procurement practice, and consumer campaigns—that reward those firms that operate by the principle of social responsibility, and that punish those that do not. We expect the socially responsible firm to:

i. Ensure that its operations do not intentionally or unintentionally harm environmental or public health.

ii. Treat each of its employees with dignity and respect and empower employees to participate in corporate decision-making and in shaping the conditions in their own workplace.

iii. Accept responsibility for the full social and environmental costs of its production by paying its fair share of taxes, maintaining healthful working conditions, protecting workers against arbitrary job loss, and paying an adequate family wage.

iv. Honor its long-term obligations to workers and local communities in its decision making.

v. Set aside an appropriate time each year during which the firm engages all its employees in assessing the ethical impact of the corporation and its activities in such areas as hiring, wages, working conditions, advertising, services and products on those who work in the firm, members of the community in which it is located, and the customers it serves. A published Ethical Impact Report should provide a public record of these assessments—and should reflect not only the opinion of management, but of workers and community groups. A community ombudsman, appointed by and responsible to the community and the firm's employees, should be empowered to raise and require the governing board to address concerns and complaints regarding the firm's ethical performance that have been raised by employees or the community.

B. We will work to reform the systems of finance to create a more equitable distribution of capital ownership, greater accountability of capital to people and communities, longer-term investment perspectives, and a more equitable sharing of work and opportunities for leisure. This will include support for policy measures and citizen and business initiatives to:

i. Encourage the socially responsible investment of pension and mutual funds.

ii. Penalize short-term financial speculation.

iii. Strengthen market competition through rigorous antitrust enforcement.

iv. Withdraw the charters of corporations that consistently engage in practices detrimental to the health, safety, and economic security of the community and impose criminal penalties on corporate directors and officers of corporations who fail to exercise due diligence in preventing willful socially irresponsible corporate behavior.

v. Increase broadly based worker and community participation in the ownership of productive enterprise.

vi. Give preference to locally owned businesses that provide local employment, play by local rules, reflect community diversity, pay their full share of local taxes, compete fairly, and otherwise contribute to the life and economic vitality of the community.

vii. Shorten the work week to reduce unemployment and underemployment and allow working people more time for family and community service.

3. Responsibility for Political and Governmental Institutions. We acknowledge that government has sometimes gotten so big and distant that its programs become inefficient and beyond effective control by the people it affects. We do not, however, support cavalier attempts to downsize government by the reckless dismantling of social programs for the poor and powerless and public controls on private profiteering at the expense of ethical or ecological sensibilities. Nor do we support an ethos of privatization that seems to suggest that caring for each other is no longer a shared responsibility but merely another voluntary market choice among many possible choices we might decide to pursue in personal life. We believe that caring for each other is a central defining moral obligation, and that our economic, governmental and civil society institutions must be shaped to maximize the ways that caring is given public expression.

Government can only be a vehicle for our collective caring for each other if its political institutions are democratically accountable and its administrative institutions are able to transcend the bureaucratic aloofness and insensitivity to the public that characterizes too many governmental bureaucracies (be they federal, state, or local). We wish to see government return to a spirit of public service which overtly manifests caring and respect for citizens—not just "objectively" (by delivering services or money) but "subjectively" (by the way it treats the people whom it deals with directly).

We commit ourselves to restoring both democratic accountability and a spirit of public service which overtly manifests caring and respect for citizens both in the efficient delivery of services and the ways in which it treats the users of those services. Specifically, we we will work to:

A. Restore political democracy through political campaign reforms to dramatically reduce the influence of money on politics.

B. Require more public service programming by media that use the public airwaves, including provision of ample free time to political candidates for substantive public debate and dialogue on important policy issues.

C. Decentralize governmental functions and support efforts to meet public needs through local community and voluntary organizations.

D. Reform hiring practices of public agencies to add as necessary qualifications for public service, alongside the requirement for professional competence, the capacity for genuine empathy, compassion and respect for all people.

E. Establish public service employment programs for the un- and underemployed, creating jobs that provide child-care, health education, assistance to the elderly, safety in schools, and other vitally needed social services that are not currently being met by our market system.

4. Though a strong spirit of voluntary civic responsibility and participation is deeply embedded in the American tradition, we have come to leave too much of our social responsibility to distant governmental bureaucracies. We believe that the size and cost of government can be reduced most effectively when our desire to give of ourselves and to care for others—a desire which is often marginalized, repressed or made invisible in the busy-ness of "making it" in a competitive market society—are effectively channeled and organized. As we work to regain control of our economic lives and simplify our consumption needs, one of our goals is to free more of our time for more direct involvement in voluntary community service. We will seek to create a new societal ethic supportive of such service as a normal and expected responsibility of every citizen. We will also support public and private initiatives that strengthen both the ethic and the practice of voluntary service, including:

A. A period of public service in a national service corps for all 18-20 year olds. This will give an opportunity for young people to realize their own desire to give to the community and to address problems that they have discovered are important to them—for example, the opportunity to actualize environmental commitments through participation in projects to save the environment; the opportunity to engage in meaningful social justice activity by helping in the rebuilding of inner cities and in providing homes for the homeless, food for the hungry, and medical, educational and child care services for those who do not have the resources to pay for them; and the opportunity to enhance the cultural and aesthetic lives of our communities through participation in worthwhile cultural, athletic and public education projects.

B. Placement programs that link potential volunteers, including the elderly, welfare recipients, the un- and under-employed, with opportunities to help meet pressing but otherwise unmet community needs.

C. Public funding for necessary supplemental costs of locally initiated voluntary public service activities.

While we envision a lean government, we know that the market is unlikely to live up to the spirit of social responsibility on its own. Instead of demonizing government, we need to change it in the ways envisioned here, and to give it a catalytic role in which government actively nourishes our already existing proclivities toward mutual caring and support, and offers incentives for corporate responsibility and the flowering of civil society.

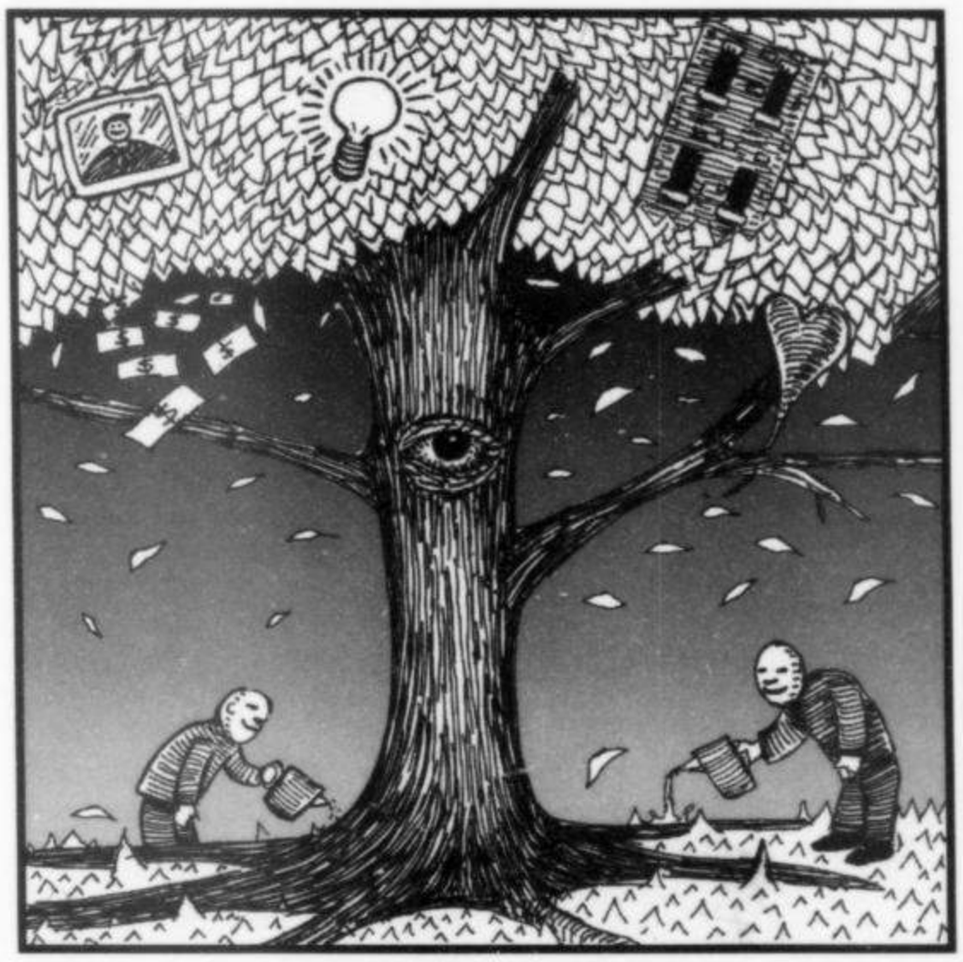
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While incomplete, this four point agenda provides a challenging point of departure for our commitment to creating a new national dialogue on the roles of individuals, markets, government and civil society in creating a more just, compassionate, ethically sensitive and sustainable American society. We commit ourselves to doing all that we can to bring these ideas into the public arena and to work on both in our personal and public lives to make them a reality. □

The Reconstruction of Community Meaning

Gar Alperovitz

Since the onset of this presidential campaign season, journalists, pollsters, politicians, and scholars have spent considerable energies plumbing the depths of America's discontent. Countless surveys, newspaper series, journal articles—as well as the tepid response of the Republican primary voters to "all of the above" except the demagogic Pat Buchanan—all point up the corrosive consequences of a society that atomizes individuals and makes millions fearful for their economic security: the flowering of a politics of fear, anger, and scapegoating. Many Americans have begun to recognize that, in practice, capitalism undermines the basis of community integration and wholeness. Given America's national political stalemate—and, too, the continuing decay of local economies—could there ever be a viable strategy of community renewal that might establish new institutional relationships which in turn (however agonizingly, slowly, and painfully) might ultimately alter the content and meaning of longer-term politics?



One way to gain perspective on America's deepening crisis is through the insights of Martin Buber, a philosopher whose most relevant work on the key issues dates from the late 1940s. Buber is most widely known as the author of *I and Thou*, first published in German in 1923, a treatise that explored the existential and religious importance of true dialogue. A central facet of Buber's larger body of writings, however, was the unyielding contention that restoring meaning to human relations had very specific economic and institutional preconditions. Indeed, he advocated nothing less than a total, root-and-branch political-economic rebuilding of society.

Writing shortly after World War II, Buber came to the conclusion that the world faced "the greatest crisis humanity has ever known." It was not simply the Holocaust, nor the war. What was in question was "nothing less than man's existence in the world."

Buber's religiously informed judgment was built around three secular axes: an analysis of the source of the modern crisis; a specification of the structural requirements of "community"; and a proposed strategic path of change in a world where both reform and revolution appeared stymied.

He began with a problem that is currently receiving widespread attention in political-economic theory and analysis: the breakdown of community. What bothered Buber most was something akin to (but far more fundamental than) Harvard political scientist Robert D. Putnam's concern in his now-famous 1995 article, "Bowling Alone"—what he and others loosely call the decline in "social capital." Putnam thinks that television may be the main cause of the growing isolation of so many Americans—and of a breakdown of civic associations and participation in community affairs. Buber's critique was historical and systemic. Even as he excoriated the tyrannical centralized socialism he called "Moscow," Buber also judged capitalist society "as a society" to be "inherently poor in structure and growing visibly poorer every day ..." In

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Paths in Utopia, he observed: "Under capitalist economy and the state peculiar to it, the constitution of society [has been] continually hollowed out, so that the modern individualizing process finished up as a process of atomization."

Putnam's proposed solutions to the dilemma of declining social capital have been very general. He urges that we as a society discuss the issue in the hope that this will lead to a renewal of "civic engagement" and participation in community affairs. Writing in a recent issue of The *American Prospect*, he warns that unless "America experiences a dramatic upward boost in civic engagement … in the next few years, Americans in 2010 will join, trust, and vote even less than we do today."

Putnam's call for engagement—and for asking the key questions "together, not alone"—can hardly be faulted, though this public debate can at best be a prelude to solving the problem. Other analysts, like Putnam's Harvard colleague Michael J. Sandel, have pressed similar themes. Sandel, in his recent book, *Democracy's Discontent*, also argues that hope for a democratic politics requires a revitalization of civic life in the nation's communities. Recalling the Jeffersonian tradition of a politics concerned with the institutional structure of economic life, he urges a "revived republican philosophy" which, unlike postwar Keynsianism, would reconnect politics with "attending to the character of citizens." Sandel hopes that ultimately a civic revival can reclaim the vision of "a political economy of citizenship" once present in late-nineteenth and earlier-twentieth-century challenges to corporate power.

At one level, Buber's argument seems to presage these contemporary calls for civic renewal. Like both Putnam and Sandel, for instance, he judged that "the structure of a society is to be understood [by] its social content or community-content: a society can be called structurally rich to the extent it is built up of genuine societies...." Yet Buber viewed a renewal of "civic associations" and "republican philosophy" as totally inadequate to the challenge confronting modern political-economic systems.

The central question for Buber was how to rebuild the social and, above all, economic institutions needed to restore, sustain, and nurture stable and cooperative human relationships. A nation could be a "community," he held, only "to the degree that it is a community of communities...." His radically decentralist socialist-communitarian vision stressed what he termed the "Full Cooperative"—i.e., consumer and worker cooperatives operating together in the same locality in such a manner as to alter the local culture. He also urged the importance of rural agricultural kibbutz cooperatives in Israel, and he speculated about urban analogues which emphasized cooperative land development.

Only if the day-to-day experience of individuals involved real equality and a sense of common ownership of the whole in the specific institutional settings in which they worked and lived did Buber believe it would be possible to build a different ethic—and upon this, a larger national politics and supporting policy framework.

In recent years we have begun a national discussion of the implications of America's prevailing corporate ethos: There is a growing public awareness of the degree to which corporate decision-making not only causes employment to rise and fall, but also shreds the social fabric, precipitates the disintegration of local culture, and unravels community. Yet most Americans rarely—if ever—face the positive, even more fundamental question at the heart of Buber's argument: With communities and individuals regularly uprooted by wave upon wave of dislocation, can there be any real hope of developing a serious process of positive long-term political-economic change without first creating the underlying economic institutions that foster, nurture, and sustain the experience that "We're all in it together"?

Almost certainly, the answer is no; important as they are, republican philosophy and civic associations are no match for corporate power and insecure individualism. The critical question, then, becomes how an economic-institutional rebuilding might ever be accomplished. Like many today, Buber was aware of the enormous difficulties facing a society in stalemate. He wrote sympathetically of the nineteenth-century French utopian Pierre Joseph Prodhoun's lament:

> All the traditions are worn out, all the creeds abolished but the new programme is not yet ready .... Hence what I call the dissolution. This is the cruellest moment in the life of societies…

Buber's fundamental strategic judgment was that a slow, steady and long-term "reconstruction" of underlying institutions was the only way to move through the stalemate; it was also the social precondition of future political change. This required—could not be achieved without—the evolutionary, organic build-up of new community economic institutions. "However long it may take the Full Co-operative to become the cell of the new society," he urged, "it is vitally important for it to start building itself up now as a far-reaching complex of interlocking, magnetic foci."

A "reconstructive" process differs in its basic thrust both from traditional liberal reform, on the one hand, and from "revolution" on the other. Reform, of course, mainly emphasizes politics and legislation within the existing institutional framework (e.g., regulate the cor-

porations, don't try to replace or eliminate them). Buber was in no way opposed to what he called "the political principle." But he thought it inadequate to the crisis, believing that reform would inevitably falter unless and until underlying social experiences and institutions were changed.

"Revolution" does assume the necessity of fundamental institutional change—specifically (for socialists) the elimination of the corporation—for there to be serious progress. But Buber believed "revolution" could only produce what he called a "pseudo-socialism, where the real life of man is but little changed....We see more or less from the Russian attempt at realization that human relationships remain essentially unchanged when they are geared to a socialist-centralist hegemony which rules the life of individuals and the life of the natural social groups."

Although the specific form Buber termed a "Full Cooperative" may no longer be of central relevance, a number of perceptive writers have begun to reach toward practical strategies that recall Buber's concept of a slow "reconstructive" developmental path between reform and revolution. The sociologist Charles Derber, for instance, has urged the concept of a "social market" with a strong "cooperativist" component. Derber's essentially Buberian judgment is that the "prospects for massive public investment are dim and ... the cooperativist movement may be closer at hand." He points to the success of the Mondragon community-based economic and social cooperatives in Spain as an example of what might be possible over time.

Similarly, David Korten, an economist, has emphasized the importance of "place" and the build-up of local community self-help efforts. In his book, *When Corporations Rule the World*, Korten offers a powerful challenge to corporate-dominated global "free trade" as inimical to the reconstructive process: "There is little room for ethical, spiritual, and ecological sensitivity in a global economy that defines success purely in terms of the financial bottom line...."

Ecological economist Herman E. Daly and process theologian John B. Cobb, Jr. stress the rebuilding of local community economic institutions from an ecological perspective. In their book, *For the Common Good*, they urge that a new economics must call "not only for provision of goods and services to individuals, but also for an economic order that supports the pattern of personal relationships that make up the community." Earlier in the century, W. E. B. Du Bois argued that the only hope for the African-American minority in a continental, largely white power-system also required building new collective community economic institutions. Recalling Du Bois, the African-American historian Harold Cruse, in his impressive book, *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual*, stresses that this "involves much more than sheer economics; ... It takes a certain community point of view ... in order to exert impact (political, economic and cultural) ... It means the studied creation of new economic forms—a new institutionalism—one that can intelligently blend privately-owned, collectively-owned, cooperatively-owned, as well as state-sponsored, economic organizations ..."

What are we to make of the concept of "reconstruction"? Most Americans respond positively to local cooperatives and grass-roots economic experiments. Most, however, also view such institutions as quite marginal—a second-order phenomenon not of any fundamental significance, and certainly not (at least at this stage) the precursors of serious longer-term change. The obvious questions involve the extent, developing trend, and, above all, the potential evolutionary trajectory of "reconstructive" possibilities.

In fact, there is a far greater amount of community-based experimentation going on around the United States than most people are aware of. Recent surveys by Dawn Nakano and Thad Williamson, research associates at the National Center For Economic and Security Alternatives, indicate that reconstruction is hardly "marginal": For instance, there are now nearly 10,000 worker-owned firms operating around the nation—up from only 1,600 in 1974. More Americans are currently involved in such firms than in private-sector labor unions. There are also more than 47,000 co-ops—including 4,000 consumer co-ops (of which 350 are food-related), nearly 6,500 housing co-ops, 12,600 credit unions, nearly 100 cooperative banks and more than 100 cooperative insurance companies; 1,200 rural utilities; and 115 telecommunications and cable co-ops.

There are between 2,000 and 3,000 neighborhood-based community development corporations (CDCs). The number of "fledgling" CDCs doubled in the brief period between 1991 and 1994 alone. By 1994, they had produced 9.7 million square feet of industrial space, 13.5 million square feet of commercial space, and more than 400,000 units of affordable housing. There are also some 300 "Community Financial Development Institutions" making community-oriented "micro-loans."

At another level, community-supported agriculture (CSA) provides a structural link between small-scale, organic food producers and consumers in many areas of the nation. (Through CSA an organic farm's operating costs are paid for in advance of the growing season by urban shareholders.) In 1986, there were two such agriculture operations in North America; today there are more than 450. In 1985 there were only 17 community land trusts; today there are more than 84 operating

trusts and another 23 in the developmental stages. Together, they operate more than 4,000 housing units.

The evolutionary trajectory from small-scale beginnings to larger operations is illuminating. Many of the developing economic institutions are beginning to achieve real scale. For instance, Quad/Graphics, Inc., headquartered in Pewaukee, Wisconsin, is a 9,000-person worker-owned printing operation that produces several major magazines; revenues have been increasing at an annual rate of 15 percent over the past two decades and reached $1 billion in 1995. The Community Development Corporation of Kansas City, Missouri, a non-profit CDC, recently opened a 56,000-square-foot addition to its existing 80,000- square-foot Linwood Shopping Center. The CDC also operates a concrete company producing 60 percent of the cement blocks used in the Kansas City area.

Republic Engineered Steels, based in Massilon, Ohio—a worker-owned firm with more than 5,000 employees—last fall began operating a new state-of-the-art, $165-million computerized continuous caster. The installation is expected to help the firm maintain its position as the leading domestic producer of carbon and alloy high-quality engineered bar, stainless, tool steels, and remelted specialty steels. Publix Supermarket, based in Lakeland, Florida—another largely worker-owned firm of 97,000—in 1993 was designated the top supermarket chain in the country by Consumer Reports. The Delta Foundation CDC in Greenville, Mississippi, owns and operates five manufacturing companies producing blue jeans, electro-mechanical switches, folding attic stairs, railroad spikes, and rubber products.

There has also been an evolution of state and local policies in aid of such efforts. For instance:

•Many municipalities give preferences to community-based firms in bidding for local government contracts. New York City, for instance, has bestowed government contracts on the Bedford-Stuyvesant CDC and assisted in the financial arrangements transferring an I.B.M. plant in Brooklyn to Advanced Technological Solutions, the largest predominantly minority worker-owned firm in the country. (The company has expanded from 180 to 270 employees and to annual revenues of $25 million; it is planning to open a plant employing fifty-five people in a depressed minority neighborhood in South Dallas.)

•Innovative forms of municipal ownership also are on the rise; these include such local public enterprises as cable television companies, land development, and methane recovery systems. (The community-owned Green Bay Packers football franchise is a widely cited precedent.) In San Bruno, California, the city-owned cable television company—one of roughly fifty nationwide—returns some $400,000 in profits annually (out of gross revenues of $4 million). Riverview, Michigan, operates a methane recovery system that converts emissions from landfills into energy sources.

•A number of local experiments also aim to improve the "local community multiplier" through various "buy local," "import substitution, and "local dollar" mechanisms that increase the turnover of money circulating in the community economy. An aggressive energy-saving program initiated by Osage, Iowa's city-owned utility, for example, keeps some $1.2 million annually (more than $900 per family) in town by preventing money from being spent to "import" gas and electricity.

•In some states, larger geographical "multiplier-enhancing" efforts are also underway. "Oregon Marketplace," a state-operated network that links local suppliers and buyers, was responsible for brokering nearly $25 million in new local contracts annually in the early 1990s. Through the "multiplier" effect, this in turn is estimated to have increased economic activity in Oregon by another $35-40 million per year.

A number of policies suggest themselves as obvious extensions of such approaches to helping stabilize the local community environment. Planning the location of significant-scale public institutions with the specific goal of achieving greater community stability is a likely next-step strategy. Relatively speaking, in most states the state capital and its many operating agencies are reasonably stable; they provide an economic anchor for communities in which they are located. State universities and extension systems can also serve such purposes, as can prisons. The targeting of contracts for such publicly important goods as mass transit equipment and renewable-energy technologies could also provide additional stability to localities.

In the long run, of course, such strategies begin to define the policy outlines of community-oriented economic planning arrangements, the goal of which is local stability and reconstruction of local community economies. Were such a supportive structure ever fully developed, it would probably require considerable decentralization—and probably, in the American context, a certain regionalist vision.

Ultimately, larger-scale economic activities might also include regional public enterprises—and a "reconstructed" mixed economy along the lines of the early vision of the "grass-roots" regional structure that once inspired the Tennessee Valley Authority before it was abandoned during World War II.

As impressive as some of the economic efforts are, the reconstructive trend is clearly only beginning to gather steam. Moreover, small, fragile local

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The Politics of Meaning as a Challenge to Neocapitalism

William M. Sullivan

We may be at the beginning of a sea-change in American politics, a moment of serious challenge to the twenty-year-long ascendancy of the neocapitalist creed that the market should determine both the worth and the destiny of persons and communities. As E.J. Dionne and others are suggesting, this could be a turning point analogous to the great shift a century ago from the brutal laissez-faire of the Gilded Age to the reforming era of Progressivism. Certainly, strong currents of outrage are swelling against what many perceive as the amoral destructiveness of uncontrolled market forces gone global.

Controversy over the morality and meaning of economic life has begun to figure more prominently in politics. Such a change in the public agenda offers new possibilities for advocates of a more humane form of politics such as the politics of meaning. But to respond effectively to this possibility will require trying to grasp the uncertainties of the present situation as well as its opportunities.



For the first time in more than a century, capitalism as an economic system is no longer under threat from forces mobilized to destroy it. A new global regime of finance and industry is emerging, less tied to national states and far less regulated by non-market institutions than the economic order of the postwar decades. Unregulated international financial markets and multinational corporations literally have the labor and resources of the world at their disposal. Spurred by a revived confidence in laissez-faire, the worldwide growth record of this neocapitalist system has been quite impressive. But the human cost of this economic order is often devastating: It generates wealth through increasingly brutal competition, producing a growing polarization between winners and losers, within as well as among nations. The social and political consequences for the future are likely to be ominous. Perhaps that is why so much apparent success elicits so few cheers.

Recently, political tremors have begun to warn that all is not well with this neocapitalist global order. Consider some of the events of the past winter. In France, the public supported the demands of striking transportation workers, despite paralyzing disruptions of everyday life, apparently believing that they too would face job loss if the conservative government's plans for national economic efficiency were carried out. In Switzerland, the yearly Davos Economic Forum, normally an exponent of global enterprise, featured Russia's resurgent Communist leader, Gennade Zyuganov, who warned of a coming backlash against globalization. In Britain, Tony Blair's revitalized Labor Party was poised to take power under the slogan of "One Nation" economic policies, explicitly rejecting the social polarization which has attended the Thatcherite program of neocapitalism.

These currents have recently burst upon the political scene in the United States as well. Pat Buchanan's right-

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wing populist run for the White House has opened to question free trade and corporate dominance of the economy, both central tenets of neocapitalist belief. And to the obvious chagrin of much of the American political class, these rhetorical forays strike a lively cord among many voters. The bitter experiences of job loss and economic insecurity are producing anger among the middle class at being treated as mere means to the profits of others.

So far, however, responses to these developments have lacked coherence. Clearly caught unprepared by the Buchanan version of economic nationalism with a populist tilt, the G.O.P. establishment is aghast, the national press sputters in incredulity, and rival candidates have been casting about for something cogent to say in defense of the status quo. Yet even corporate leadership is becoming defensive, sensing perhaps a change of national mood. The president of Chrysler Motors recently lamented the "ongoing demonization of corporate America by some of our most prominent politicians and news organizations." This aggrieved corporate statesman portrayed himself and his peers as victims of mean-spirited outsiders who fail to understand the necessity for the unprecedented shedding of employees—and presumably also the huge boost in compensation for chief executives—in order to be able to "serve all our constituencies."

Today's nascent challengers are raising in new ways a problem long endemic to capitalism. Left to its own devices, the tremendous economic dynamism of the market behaves like the sorcerer's apprentice who, put to work for society, conjures powers he cannot channel to constructive use. When the logic of the market comes to dictate a society's goals, those powers can threaten the society's own survival, as illustrated by the record of social and ecological damage attendant upon uncontrolled economic growth. This vision of capitalism as both enormously productive but potentially destructive of humane values was at the core of Joseph Schumpeter's theory that the market advanced through periods of "creative destruction" in which new productive powers and forms of organization oust established ones, as automobiles replaced animal traction and whole industries with it.

The development of the new global economy tends to confirm Schumpeter's view that creative destruction increases economic efficiency in the system as a whole, but at a terrible price for many of the people dependent upon it. Writing before World War II, Schumpeter feared that the political reaction to capitalism's brutality would finally stifle the creativity of the system. Instead, the development of the mixed economies of Europe and the United States in the postwar decades, proved successful, though only temporarily, in avoiding the sorcerer's apprentice outcome while maintaining economic dynamism.

In this latest phase of creative destruction, now on a global scale, there have been lots of winners, but many more losers, as whole classes, industries, and communities have been driven to the wall. But the political effects of these changes are equally staggering. As national states lose their ability to buffer their populations against the inexorable logic of the global market, income polarization and social dislocation threaten bonds of social trust. A growing secession of the successful from solidarity with their neighbors feeds individual alienation, inter-group conflict, and a political cynicism turned mean and even violent. Now, it seems that the losers are finding their voices and beginning to challenge the legitimacy of what is happening, maybe even neocapitalism itself.

At the same time, the understanding of capitalism is itself expanding. A number of influential thinkers today recognize that a functional market system depends upon non-market values and institutions for its stability and success. As it affects politics, this intellectual development means that today's economic question is less apocalyptic but also more complex than the old capitalism-versus-socialism debate. That debate has been largely ended by the collapse of communism as an economic alternative. Instead, the new debate can assume the value and indispensability of market exchange as one principle of modern society. But the key issues now concern the long-term performance and social effects of different ways of linking markets with other institutions, such as the family, religion, education, and government.

Today there are at least three alternative models of such institutional organizations of "capitalism," quite different in ethos and outcomes. There is the idea of the controlled "social market" which has become the European norm, versus East Asian managed national economies centered around partnerships between corporations and the state, versus the more adversarial, free-wheeling American-style markets in which corporations proliferate and absorb one another, partially checked by such "countervailing" forces as government and, at one time at least, organized labor. The looming, unanswered question concerns the best model for regularizing the burgeoning anarchy of global neocapitalism itself. These arguments potentially link technical issues closely with questions about the quality of life the different arrangements make possible and the moral norms which can be brought to bear on their operations. As a result, today's economic questions more and more spill over into social, moral, even broadly religious issues.

Advocates and apologists for neocapitalism sometimes try to avoid these questions, insisting that "growth" is a sufficient economic and social goal. But the more interesting, and popular, apologists are now presenting their arguments as visions of how the unfettered market, often allied with advanced technology, can offer a more satisfying way of life. Two recent best-selling books by prominent national figures promote this viewpoint. Bill Gates's *The Road Ahead* and Newt Gingrich's *To Renew America* each evoke the moral as well as the technical genius of the innovative, high-tech entrepreneur. By contrast, another neocapitalist proponent, Michael Novak, has taken a different tack in his latest book, *Business As A Calling.* He too emphasizes entrepreneurship, but argues for the virtues of markets by asserting that creative destruction does not really threaten the integrity of either social connections or personal morality. Moreover, Novak makes his case in explicitly religious terms.

In these books the insights and the myopia of the neo-capitalist understanding of life become all too apparent. For instance, while all three authors can be nearly rhapsodic about the "creative potentials" of today's business environment, particularly the benefits of technological innovation, they skirt the problems of the victims of this latest round of creative destruction. Briefly addressing these "personal tragedies," Michael Novak comments: "This is not a morally commendable aspect of capitalism. Its best defense is that the known alternatives are worse."

These authors do more than endorse the status quo in their accent on the positive, and their invocation of the quasi-mythical captain of enterprise. Gates and Gingrich appeal to long-standing American fascinations with heroic individualism and the technical fix to social problems. Novak bases his hopes for a humane capitalist future upon the strengths of American voluntarism, but nowhere takes up the much-discussed issue of the apparent decline in America's voluntarist civic life during the past several decades—the very time in which Novak's brand of neocapitalism has been on the rise.

The central motif of these visions is the struggle of the courageous, self-reliant individual who challenges great odds to vindicate his vision of a more expansive future. In these calls to renew our national faith in self-reliant economic individualism, complemented in Novak's view by the civilizing effects of associational life, one can hear the wish to return America to an idealized vision of a past conceived as prosperous, benign, and free from the entanglements of complex organizations, above all free from big government. Here is the mythical core of neocapitalism.

The moral point of Gates's book, like Gingrich's, is a familiar one. Both trumpet an individualism that admires strength and worships success but also fears weakness and denigrates losers. This ethic obscures the social dimension of personhood and meaning, minimizing the interdependence that lies at the basis of human selfhood. These books reveal neocapitalism as the cult of an adolescent kind of freedom that is threatened by the ties of interdependence woven by the very market they celebrate. Their visions of the future would provide individuals with ways to escape from such ties, rather than embracing them as opportunities for growth into a richer and more mature kind of life. Given these cultural understandings, it is perhaps not surprising that the heroics of business have until quite recently been considered an exclusively masculine preserve.

Enter, at this juncture, Michael Novak's kinder, gentler argument for the moral worth of neocapitalism. In *Business As A Calling*, Novak tells us he is writing for persons in business who are seeking a moral meaning for what they do. By asking how business might be undertaken as a calling, Novak has posed one of the most important questions of our time. By arguing that business can be pursued in a morally serious manner, and invoking the ethical traditions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam to make his case, Novak is providing a valuable corrective to the amoral cynicism of much current thinking. Had Novak taken more seriously the question of what social and cultural conditions could make it possible to pursue business as calling, this could have been a very valuable book.

Novak tries to calm the reader's moral qualms about the propriety of today's business activity. He wants to assure the reader that a career in business can be ethically as well as financially rewarding. But he also goes further, arguing that one can indeed have the cake of civilized community and still enjoy with good conscience the hot stuff of creative destruction. Thus, Novak's entrepreneurs are not so much the frontier adventurers of Bill Gates's or Newt Gingrich's imaginings, but such joyful "creators of economic value" as Andrew Carnegie—builders of corporate communities and philanthropists who provide benefits for generations to come.

Capitalism gets defined here as primarily a form of cultural creativity. Repeatedly invoking Schumpeter as his guide, Novak develops the view that capitalism is essentially not about profit, as Karl Marx thought, nor even market calculation, as Novak construes Max Weber to have held, but about supporting "creative wit and the sheer joy of creating something solid, substantial, lasting, and worth losing one's shirt for." This

accent on bold creativity recalls Nietzsche's dictum that great creators must first be great destroyers. Schumpeter picked up this theme and used it as the centerpiece of his characterization of capitalism. By contrast, Novak's mild version minimizes the destructive features of the creativity it celebrates, changing the tragic accents of Schumpeter's Central European realism into the more agreeable tones of American optimism.

Novak's book, however, pays a heavy price for its romanticized view of the modern economy. Above all, Novak wants to show that life in the market develops rather than stunts character and supports rather than undermines neighborliness and public spirit. Yet he never quite makes this argument directly. Instead, he shifts from the way the market *system* works to the morals of *individuals* in the business world. The key implied premise is that these two will rarely conflict, or if they do, the resolution is not a big problem, with morality generally the clear winner. Expectations of trust and decency, after all, are the moral prerequisites for the practice of business as a calling. Yet it is in no small part the decline of these values in the world of the marketplace which is making the moral practice of business so difficult. By dismissing the need for institutional reform in order to maintain the ethical norms he endorses, Novak leaves the uneasy reader with only the thin reed of moralism as a support against the destructive economic winds now blowing.

Fortunately, we know what reasonably humane and successful modern societies are like. They do not conform to the constricted vision of neocapitalism. They depend upon a concert of institutions working according to common principles. The evidence is clear: Successful democratic societies depend upon the development of equitable and inclusive civic communities in which citizens are active in myriad associations, engaged with public issues, willing to work together across differences, and able to trust each other enough to cooperate for common ends. These expectations must be embodied in everyday practices so that citizens take pride in their common endeavors, recognizing each other as accountable and valued co-participants.

Although partially eclipsed during the neocapitalist ascendancy, these attitudes and aspirations are not unfamiliar to Americans. They are core values of the nation's civic tradition, usually a junior partner to the exuberant individualism for which we are famous, but particularly at times of national revitalization an essential alternative source of meaning. This is the tradition which the Progressive era drew upon, looking back to Lincoln for an example, and it was vital for the reforms of the New Deal. It is a tradition that has always received strength from elements of biblical religion. It certainly resonates with today's politics of meaning.

This tradition of American reform has not been mostly about "big government." Important as government is, civic community is primarily about public cooperation among a whole range of institutions, including corporations and unions as well as the "third sector." It also depends upon spirited and responsible leadership in all social sectors. Coming out of the national victory in World War II, elements of that civic tradition inspired the building of a more equitable and prosperous society as well as a regulated international economy. Though sustained by permanent mobilization for war, that order produced unprecedented economic and social improvement in the postwar era. It also generated sufficient social trust to permit a positive outcome to the struggle for African-American civil rights.

Today's situation is different from any of these past periods. Studying them nonetheless helps to make the present more comprehensible. It also can show that repeatedly in the nation's history, despite the threats of cynicism and despair, confidence in democracy as civic community has proved the most important American public resource. Civic energy is a renewable resource, one that is augmented by application and use. No one yet knows what kind of institutional innovations will enable the global economy to serve rather than subvert democracy, though figuring out how to proceed in this direction is among the most urgent and difficult of contemporary political tasks. But we do know that the primary means toward this objective is also its essential goal: the strengthening of civic community and the understanding of life which it embodies. It is in this struggle that the politics of meaning can make its most important contribution. □

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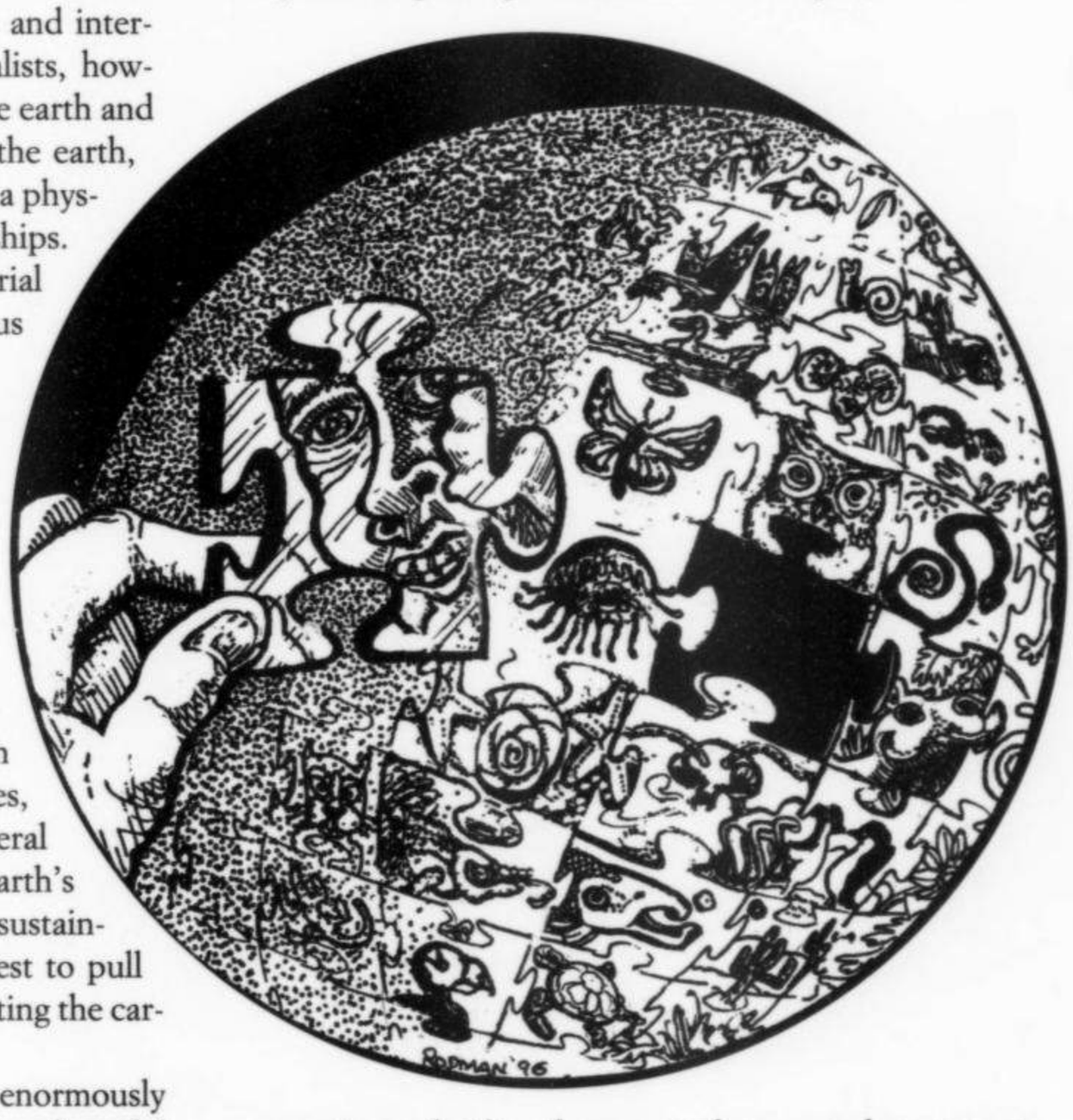
Toward a Meaningful Ecological Politics

Paul Wapner

The word "ecology" comes from the Greek root *oikos*, meaning "home." The idea is that the earth is a place of close relationships—that plants, animals, minerals, and humans matter to each other and together constitute an integrated whole. Ecology, as a scientific discipline, studies the interconnections between species and habitat. It arose from the insight that nature's character could not be understood by merely concentrating on individual parts but that one must also focus on nature's mutualities and interdependencies. Contemporary environmentalists, however, often forget the connection between the earth and the notion of home. They want to protect the earth, but they only concentrate on preserving it as a physical object, not as a set of intricate relationships. To them, the earth is merely a house: a material structure, a shelter, an abode to support us and our things.

Liberals, even of the greenest variety, often fall into this mind-set. The earth, according to liberals, is a storehouse of natural resources. It is made up of oil, timber, plants, animals, and other resources that we use to fuel our cars, build our houses, and feed ourselves. The earth is also an absorptive mechanism that we use to assimilate our wastes. Forests consume carbon dioxide, oceans dissipate toxic substances, and the earth's soil buries solid wastes. Liberal *environmentalism* is about using the earth's resources and its absorptive capacities in a sustainable manner. It entails figuring out how best to pull resources and emit wastes without overshooting the carrying capacity of the planet.

Liberal environmentalism has been enormously important in identifying and containing many harmful activities. The Clean Air Act, the National Forest Management Act, and the Clean Water Act represent liberal victories that go a long way toward safeguarding the environment. Moreover, in the present political climate, where the so-called "fiscally responsible" continue to push for the emasculation of environmental laws, liberal environmentalism stands as perhaps the most reasonable response. It argues that environmental protection is compatible with economic growth, corporate enterprise, and technological prowess. Policy makers need only see the profit potential of, for example,



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removing subsidies from petroleum, nuclear power, and unsustainable agriculture, allowing companies to trade pollution permits, and investing in green technologies.

Yet reasonableness and genuine environmental protection are different things. Liberal environmentalism is *so* compatible with contemporary material and cultural

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currents that it implicitly supports the very things that it should be criticizing. Its technocratic, scientistic, and even economistic character give credence to a society that measures the quality of life fundamentally in terms of economic growth, control over nature, and the maximization of sheer efficiency in everything we do. By working to show that environmental protection need not compromise these maxims, liberal environmentalism fails to raise deeper issues that more fundamentally engage the dynamics of environmental degradation. Liberal environmentalism is unconcerned with reflecting upon who we are, our place in the global ecosystem, and our relationship with the other species who also inhabit the earth—issues that strike at the core of a genuinely ecological politics.

Liberalism and Nature

It is no coincidence that liberalism assumes such a compromising position. At the root of liberal thought, nature is seen as an obstacle to what liberals prize most—namely, human freedom. As any good liberal will tell you, the core liberal value is liberty. Because humans have free will, they are endowed with certain rights to make choices about their lives. The history of liberal struggles is about protecting those rights—an effort that involves fighting forces of domination, be they governmental, economic, or social in character, and enlisting assistance for those unable for one reason or another to exercise freedom of choice.

The liberal focus on freedom has ecological ramifications as one realizes that the greatest constraint on human autonomy is often nature itself. The vicissitudes of nature—wind, cold, rain, drought, and so on—cramp our style; they restrict, rather than expand, our choices. To advance human freedom we need to subdue nature—to discipline its vicissitudes or at least protect ourselves from them. In the words of Francis Bacon, nature is something to be "hounded in her wanderings," "bound into service," and "put in constraint"—a position not unlike that held by John Locke and other key figures of liberal thought.

Liberalism can assume this approach to nature because it refuses to grant animals, rocks, or plants moral standing. Morality is fundamentally about how humans treat each other. It concerns itself with issues of duty, right conduct, and virtuous action between free, autonomous human beings. Plants, animals, and rocks are not free; they are part of the realm of necessity. And, insofar as there is no element of rational deliberation in their activities, they are undeserving of ethical treatment. Nature is a casualty of human freedom.

Having said this, liberalism can still generate an environmental sensibility and has done so. As mentioned, liberal environmentalism works to curb exploitation; the

A Platform for Meaningful Ecological Politics

Bio-regional awareness: One indication of our lack of ecological connection is a shared ignorance of our local ecosystems. How many of us know where our water comes from? where our electricity is generated? where our food is grown? where our wastes go? It is probably one of the great wonders of contemporary society that we can live lives completely oblivious to the fundamental networks that keep us alive. Moreover, this ignorance simply intensifies our ignorance of how keeping ourselves alive may adversely affect other species and parts of the earth. To counter this lack of awareness, an ecological politics would call on us to spend some time, if only a couple of days every few years, becoming familiar with and enhancing the biological requisites that support human societies and understanding the pressure these requisites generate on the non-human world. One can imagine, for instance, people briefly working at water treatment plants, landfills, local farms, and reservoirs to integrate themselves into and help maintain the systems so vital to our lives. Additionally, one can imagine people briefly working with each other in local parks, watershed areas, and streams to minimize land and water degradation. In the same way that jury duty serves a vital democratic function by integrating ordinary citizens into the justice system, ecological participation would incorporate ordinary people in the task of preserving our ecosystem.

Concretizing a biotic community: An ecological politics must ultimately recognize that environmental dynamics transcend political boundaries. Birds do not put on the brakes as they approach the Mexican border; air, water, and shifting soils do not situate themselves within national boundaries. As we develop a politics of respect for nature, the divide between political and ecological spheres must be softened at least to the extent that one can extend one's sense of caring beyond the nation-state. National sovereignty often undermines promising environmental action. At the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio, oil-rich states, for example, argued that petroleum was not an environmental hazard because it was less harmful to the atmosphere than coal. Likewise, timber-producing countries worked to water down a forest convention to a set of non-binding principles so

idea is to preserve the stock of natural resources and the absorptive capacity of the earth so human life can continue and even prosper. While certainly not wrong, such an orientation is limited. It still sees the earth as a physical entity whose vital functions need to be preserved only so far as they operate for human material well-being. It fails to see the earth as a set of relationships whose quality must be enhanced. Liberal environmentalism, in other words, is still minding the house when a deeper, more promising approach entails nurturing a home.

Human/Nature

A politics of the home begins with connection. It has to do with how we think about our place in the universe and how we relate with all that we find around us. So much of what we do is instrumental. So many aspects of our lives require us to treat other people, things, and ultimately the earth as objects to be utilized for personal gain. Much of this is, of course, unavoidable or at least understandable: we all must eat, secure shelter, and find livelihoods that require *using* the world. Moreover, we often do so with others in mind: We objectify and manipulate parts of the world to get things for our children, spouses, members of our community. The problem is that this orientation often filters down to the capillaries of our experience and informs our every move.

Connection is about being in the world in a different way. It sees our lives as webs of relations constituted by mutual support, respect, and care. Connection places us in the world and allows us to experience and concomitantly reinvigorate the networks of interdependence of which we are a part. By way of analogy, one could say that if minding the house involves vacuuming rugs, watering plants, and taking out the trash, cultivating a home entails acting in ways that create the kind of warmth of intimacy that results from extending our care to each other.

Ecologically, connection involves seeing the earth as an intricate weave of air, water, land, and species, and appreciating how we are braided into its very fabric. This involves understanding not only that we depend upon a well-functioning natural world to support us, but also that we are literally of the earth and intertwined with its life. Ecological connection is about the warmth of intimacy that develops as we no longer simply use the earth for our own gain but attempt to live with it with a sense of care and respect.

The history of environmental thought has danced around this orientation for decades but has yet to feel secure in expressing it clearly in its politics. The great debate has always been between anthropocentrists and biocentrists, with little middle ground. Anthropocentrists regard human beings as the central fact, or final aim, of the universe; nature is here for our benefit. This is essentially the principle underlying liberal environmentalism and responsible for seeing the earth's bounty

they could continue unsustainably to harvest wood. Finally, former President George Bush stated that he was "President of the United States, not president of the world and that [he] would do what is best for U.S. interests." In each case, leaders understood environmental facts as national in character rather than ecological and thus undermined any sincere attempt to protect the earth's ecosystem. To counter this narrowly nationalistic environmental perspective—if only symbolically—we might follow Daniel Deudney's suggestion that each country sew a picture of the globe in the corner of its flag to signify that the nation is part of a larger, more profound whole. The idea is not to proclaim that people of the world are all one—the flag itself works against this message—but that one's country is embedded in the larger ecological whole.

Participatory ecological practice: A final step along these lines would be to lace ecological globalism with participatory localism. A key element of a genuine ecological politics is to remind us that although we are not all equally responsible *for* environmental degradation—our friends at DuPont wreak much more damage than our friends at Tom's of Maine—we are all responsible *to* ecological well-being. If environmental protection were simply a matter of expediency, it might make sense to leave the job of safeguarding the earth to those best suited to address expediency issues—the technocrats, bureaucrats, and economic analysts. To the degree that environmentalism also involves "being with the earth," the task devolves to each of us. We each undertake the challenge of generating respect for nature and exercising non-manipulative, non-objectifying, and non-exploitative human capacities.

Citizenship involves responsibilities as well as rights. As members of a biotic community, we all assume the responsibility of enhancing communal life. In concrete terms, this step is perhaps the most difficult to translate. At a minimum, it calls for individual effort—planting trees, reducing personal waste, eating lower on the food chain, helping those who depend on environmental exploitation find other means of livelihood, and supporting organic farming. How such effort might find support in the family, school, neighborhood, and marketplace still needs to be thought out. An ecological politics is not something that can be delegated. It must be lived by all.

as a set of resources and its physiology as an assimilator of human wastes. Biocentrists, on the other hand, argue that life itself is the central principle and that humans are simply one among other species. Biocentrists claim that plants, animals, and—according to some—even inorganic matter (a position called "ecocentric") have the right to exist simply because they are part of nature. They are not resources for human consumption nor waste baskets for pollution but simply other entities with whom humans share the planet.

A politics of the home, a genuinely ecological politics, has affinities with biocentrism but ultimately tries to carve out a middle ground. It is impossible to be purely biocentric. Such a view would be unable to discriminate between different species and thus would have to privilege the Ebola virus as well as the humpback whale—a view that few people could sincerely maintain. Moreover, any time one worked to preserve the life of a given organism "for its own benefit," the value of doing so would itself be a human construct and thus ultimately derivative of an anthropocentric perspective. A more sensible approach, and the one underlying the politics being articulated here, is to infuse our anthropocentrism with a sense of respect for the natural world derived from the experience of being interconnected.

Generating Respect for Nature

The conservationist Aldo Leopold, writing before anthropocentrism and biocentrism found themselves at intemperate odds, claimed that there have been two stages in the evolution of ethical concern and that the world was due for a third. The first focused on the relations between individuals and aimed to establish principles for the way people should treat each other. Leopold used the Mosaic Decalogue—the Ten Commandments—as an example. The second stage concentrated on the relations between the individual and society; it addressed the way the individual is integrated into society and the rights and obligations that follow from such integration. The third stage, which Leopold thought would come about as the natural extension of the other two, would focus on the way humans relate to nature. Writing in the 1940s, Leopold saw that there was no informing ethic—which, for him, entailed a limitation on freedom of action—to guide human orientations toward the natural world. Human use of nature was a function of economic motives; one did not curtail his or her activities based on any other consideration.

The ethic Leopold ultimately offered placed human beings in the center of environmental dynamics, yet insisted that they see themselves not as conquerors of the earth but as citizens of a biotic community. It called on people to respect their fellow citizens, which included plants and animals as well as other people, and the community as a whole. Seeking to extend the sphere of ethical relevance, Leopold's intent was not to equalize humans, rocks, trees, and animals, but to heighten human regard for non-human existence and emphasize how tightly human life is entwined with the natural world.

Adopting Leopold's so-called "land ethic" can invigorate the contemporary environmental movement. Inviting humans to be part of a biotic community enlarges the meaning of environmental protection, and this in itself can inspire greater political effort.

Although certainly important, the liberal approach to the environment evokes little passion and rarely elicits long-term commitment, probably because it turns humankind's relationship to nature into a technocratic problem—a matter of maintaining a steady flow of inputs and absorbable outputs. While such a view presents a challenging puzzle, it displays a narrowness of vision that has little to attract most of us. Indeed, liberal environmental protection is probably best left to those who specialize in maximizing efficiency, engineering the sustainability of throughputs, and mastering technological innovation—the technocrats, bureaucrats, and systems analysts of the world.

In contrast, Leopold's land ethic, and the orientation being articulated here, go much further. According to this view, environmental degradation is not simply inexpedient but also, and perhaps more fundamentally, ethically wrong. It's wrong because it belittles and, in practical terms, frays and severs the interrelations that constitute the earth. As Leopold put it, "A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise." Thus, the reason we protect the earth is not simply because it makes economic or pragmatic sense, but also because it honors the human condition—defined as inextricably and essentially a part of nature.

Toward a Meaningful Ecological Politics

According to Lawrence Kushner, in his book, *Honey from the Rock*, the meaning of meaning is to be "connected with something that is itself connected with something." It is to be part of a constellation that is itself part of an even greater pattern of relationships. Liberal environmentalism is not meaningless. It derives its significance from being part of contemporary, industrial society. It makes sense because it is compatible with the broad principles that currently animate our lives—principles such as economic growth, control over

(Continued on p. 76)

Healing America, Body and Soul

Arthur Waskow

For many progressives, Pat Buchanan's campaign, with its appeal to Americans' fears of unemployment, has revived memories of the 1992 Clinton campaign's unofficial slogan: "It's the economy, stupid!" In so doing, it has cast new doubts on the argument of progressives such as Michael Lerner that cultural, communal, familial, and spiritual hungers are at the heart of the rightward rush of American politics.

In fact, the causal connections are not so simple. I want to argue that economic fears both create and are created by cultural/spiritual hungers, that both the economic and the cultural/spiritual emptiness gnaw in the bellies of increasing numbers of people. Perceiving this, Buchanan has crafted his appeals to both concerns in a proto-fascist way: that is, a national populism that snarls at "the establishment" while proposing no important changes in the corporate structure—yet promising jobs and demanding tight controls on art, sexuality, and corruptive foreign elements. Only if progressives integrate their own response to both economic and spiritual concerns can their response be politically effective and defeat this proto-fascism. The only complete healing is a healing of both body and soul.

How does economic fear create spiritual emptiness? By dividing America into the disemployed and the overworked—neither of whom have the time and energy to nurture loving families, neighborly neighborhoods, civic groups carrying on the deeds of citizenship, or religious congregations meeting real spiritual needs.

Some would-be workers cannot get jobs at all. They end up on the streets, or drugged-out, or in prison, or all three.

Great numbers of workers are fired from well-paying jobs, and can find only menial and ill-paid work.

Other workers are working harder, longer, and under greater strain. This increase (over the past twenty-five years) in hours and stress for those who do keep their jobs, and the massive shift of women from working at home to working in jobs, have together greatly reduced the amount of control that most people have over their own time and the pace of their work.

Neither the disemployed nor the overworked can focus on their families and their neighborhoods. Few people dogged by fear, despair, and exhaustion can be decent and loving spouses, life-partners, parents, neighbors, church members, or volunteer activists for the P.T.A., the local political party, the local labor union, or any other face-to-face context for love, community, or citizenly involvement.

Denied worthwhile work, economic security, and loving community, people become enraged. Scapegoating becomes easy. Surely it is the foreigners, the Blacks, the gays, the Jews, the uppity women who have deprived me of my safe job, my decent work, my loving family, my neighborly neighbors.

If I do not fall into scapegoating, in my fear and exhaustion, I will turn to TV. It jolts me out of my depression with massive doses of my own adrenaline, administered by showing stronger and stronger scenes of murder and destruction. Once I am jolted awake, it reminds me how to feel better: buy some pretty gewgaw. To do that, I need to work longer … and so the cycle continues.

This vicious circle spins into support for right-wing solutions: Put women back in their place, bash gay people, expel foreigners, scorn the poor, and dismantle the public schools (they are only breeding grounds for sex and violence anyway). And dismantle all aspects of government except the military, police, and prisons, because government is faraway, culturally alien, and demands taxes that go for benefits to the lazy and criminal classes.

Meanwhile, those who lose their jobs become hopeless or homeless or violent, drugged on crack or alcohol—not a new political insurgent energy, but politically irrelevant or worse. Indeed, they become walking arguments for strengthening police and prisons.

So in the society as a whole, the polarization between the overworked and the disemployed becomes a larger vicious circle, fueling a political cul-

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MAC MCGILL

ture that gets worse and worse.

And there is a second, similar dynamic between economic fears and environmental concerns. As economic pressures increase, it becomes easier to wave the banner of short-run jobs and business profits against long-range concern for the earth. Businesses that in a buoyant economy could with little trouble shoulder regulations to protect worker and consumer and global health and safety are convinced to oppose such regulations. And workers who, if they felt secure in their jobs, would fight for such regulations, instead blame the regulations for their insecurity.

Environmentally rooted diseases multiply. New plagues of cancer, infertility, and immune-system disorders are spreading, and old plagues like T.B. and cholera are reappearing in drug-resistant forms. But in an atmosphere of rising medical costs and spotty health insurance, the short-run response is to hang on to a job and oppose any environmental protections that might threaten jobs (or diminish the profits of the businesses that presumably provide jobs).

The earth is defined as separate from and hostile to human beings. Owls are pitted against workers, and both lose.

What political program would address these social needs, and what kind of organizing would bring people together with the mixture of passion, joy, and perseverance necessary to win?

The basic program must be that everyone is entitled to work, and everyone is entitled to rest. Everyone is entitled to a worthwhile job doing worthy work at a living wage. *Everybody*. That requires a societal decision to pay for work that needs doing: teaching and nursing and midwifing, building mass transit and bike paths and school buildings and sewers, cleaning up poison dumps. It also means paying for communal restfulness.

Jeremy Rifkin has called for a thirty-hour work week, combined with financial support for the "civic sector" of education, charity, religion, the arts, do-gooding in clubs like the Lions and Kiwanis—especially support for volunteers. (He suggests tax deductions for time volunteered to such groups.) This program makes sense. More jobs, more people employed, more people with free time to be participatory citizens.

The "family/community leisure" component makes this approach quite different from conventional liberal approaches, much better oriented to healing the present psycho-spiritual malaise. If we were to reduce the work week (as a number of European labor unions have demanded and achieved) with no reduction in income, that would simultaneously provide jobs for the disemployed and freer time for the overworked. It would allow workers the time to strengthen their families and participate in their communities.

But reducing formal work time is not enough to create the context of community and restfulness. It would be too easy to use that time to avoid community and family, not to enhance them—for the whole society seduces us in that direction. (That's the way we now often use "vacation" time—not to spend time with our neighbors, but to get as far away from them as we can, by auto or airplane, as quickly as we can.)

So to encourage the use of leisure time to enhance community, family, grass-roots politics, we would have to throw the weight of society in that direction instead of the opposite. Imagine, for example, setting aside the week of the Fourth of July for neighborhood festivals

and face-to-face town meetings. Imagine that on those days, *all* enterprises except for emergency services would shut down. Even gas stations and highways. Even airlines. Even television.

Imagine that we walk together in our neighborhoods, explore the places that we never visit, share our songs and stories with our neighbors, learn about solar energy and conservation, meet in small circles to talk about why we feel burnt-out and frightened, and about what we can do—politically as well as individually and communally.

Imagine that we make our churches, mosques, and synagogues, our union locals and the P.T.A., crystals of the future, foretastes in the present of what we want our society to become—*active* crystals, that both model the future and demand it—as the civil rights sit-ins were themselves a taste of racial integration and demanded it everywhere.

How do we begin? It is exactly the "civic sector," in neighborhoods and families, that will benefit most from this program; so it should begin there. Imagine that in a given neighborhood, churches and synagogues call together the whole network of local groups that still exist. They ask those among the neighbors who have a job to choose a week that they will use for their vacation. They ask everyone to avoid the use of cars that week, to turn off the TV, to organize block parties and close the streets. They ask artists, musicians, storytellers, workers to create ways of sharing their wisdom and their craft. They set aside time for both small groups and mass meetings.

Why begin with the religious congregations? Because if the tradition that both work and rest are sacred survives anywhere, that is where. The Bible teaches that all the landless, without exception, are entitled to glean in the corners of the fields. No dole, no giveaway; but an absolute right to access the capital means of production: land. And our religious traditions also have long taught the need for a rhythm of restfulness, the need for a Sabbath. This program and this strategy thus extend times of restfulness to the society as a whole, without religious discrimination.

The religious traditions also teach that the earth, as well as human beings, is entitled to rest. Not only the Sabbath of the seventh day, but the sabbatical year when the land lies fallow is necessary to both humanity and earth. (Indeed, biblical Hebrew—the language itself—teaches the intertwining of the two in the very words *adamah* (earth) and *adam* (human being, "earthling"). Each of them contains something of the other.

As the Bible warns and ecologists today repeat, if the earth is denied its rest it will rest anyway—on our heads. It will rest through drought, famine, catastrophe, and exile. We need a politics and economics that affirm and embody a rhythm of both worthy work and reflective rest for every *adam* and all of *adamah*.

How to organize? The groups we create to embody our own values must treat organizing as a communal, celebratory, and spiritual act—like the fervent Black churches that carried their prayers and songs into the streets during the years of the civil-rights movement, entering precinct-level party politics as well as sit-in politics.

Precisely because the political "means" always in fact become the real political "ends," creating such local centers of personal, communal, and political healing in the present can also help reshape the future of society. For there is certainly some truth to the "conservative" complaint, now echoed by millions, that bureaucratic governments can become totally divorced from the needs of the people they are intended to serve. The demand for localism and decentralization is fakery when it multiplies the military and leaves giant corporations "free" to poison the earth, disemploy workers, and impose speed-ups on the whole society. But there is a real need for locally rooted power that can both meet human needs on a face-to-face basis and challenge any institution—"public" government or "private" corporation—that becomes oppressive.

Thus, for an effective organizing base, we need local centers that are rooted in community-neighborhood-

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family-spiritual-ethical values and realities that can work in close-in, nuts-and-bolts electoral and non-electoral politics at the local level, just as the religious Right has, and can also meet people's needs in a hands-on way.

What would it mean to create synagogues, churches, mosques and priests, ministers, imams, rabbis like the Black Southern churches and ministers of the 1960s—congregations that meet the spiritual and practical and political needs of the community? And clergy who are community organizers?

Many Left folk will feel tightened throats as they wonder why God has to get mixed in with this political mobilization. I had this tightened throat myself, for many years of my adulthood. Indeed, to much of the Left it has come as a "comfortable horror" to see right-wing Christian (and even right-wing Jewish) energies leading the march to the political Right. "Comfortable" because it fits the preconceptions and stereotypes of many Left intellectuals to see religion as retrogressive. Conversely, many Left intellectuals have found it easy to half-repress their memories of the Black Southern church congregations that prayed and sang and marched and sat-in, forming the heart of the civil-rights movement. Some of them see those churches as simply the only safe vessel in that era for Black organizing and view it as an accident that Martin Luther King, Jr. was a preacher. (Or, some will say in private, that was exactly why he "lagged behind" the "more militant" activists and had become "irrelevant" until he was murdered.)

Many Left intellectuals are themselves in flight from what often felt to them—with good reason—the constrictive religious patterns of their own families. They may find it hard to see the progressive and liberatory potential in not just a few quotes from the Prophets but in some of the life-path practices of the traditions they left behind. Lapsed Catholics among them may be infuriated by the misogyny and homophobia of the Church. Secular Jews among them may be horrified by the blind support much of the Jewish community gave for so many years to any and all policies of the Israeli government. Protestants may have found no serious spirituality inside the church—and found even their ministers spiritually involved only when they walked out the church door into social action, or only when they used the language of Marx, not Jesus.

Such intellectuals tend to read TIKKUN with a baffled shrug or a genteel sneer at what to them seems Michael Lerner's religious idiosyncrasy, and perhaps read *Sojourners* feeling a formal respect but great emotional distance from its in-the-city prayer-meeting Christians.

For me, all this began to change in mid-adulthood, as I absorbed the example of the Black churches. It changed much more when I discovered I could myself take part in changing not only the images of that formerly constrictive God—who had been turned into an idol by many of those synagogues—but also the practices of my religious community.

It changed when we started talking not about divine commands from a Commander upstairs, but about connection-making as a process that both reaffirmed and recreated the truth of unity, the truth of intertwinedness. When we discovered that sexuality could be sacred or unsacred inside marriage, and could be sacred or unsacred outside marriage; could be sacred—or unsacred—between a man and woman, or between two men or two women. When we realized there were holy ways to eat, not only food but coal and oil and wood and paper. That there were ways to pray from the heart, not always from a book, and that the word "God" did not have to appear for prayer to happen and the real God (Who doesn't have a name and is willing to be called by many names) to be fully present.

I am not urging leftists for whom this is all abomination to do it anyway for the sake of political success. But I am suggesting that those on the Left who have never thought seriously about such possibilities look into their own life-experience, their own moments of sacred joy, and see whether the next generation of American progressivism might grow from the roots of just such moments.

Without an initiative along these lines by religiously rooted progressives in a number of religious traditions and communities, I think we are likely to see the continued erosion of a sense of American civic spirit and community, with even deeper divisions of our society between those exhausted in despair, those consumed by rage, and those embittered by fear and frustration. □

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Morality and the Market

Charles Derber

I find myself secretly cheering Pitchfork Pat Buchanan's determination to sling his new populist rhetoric all the way to the G.O.P. Convention in San Diego this August. If this great white demagogue decides to run as an independent after the convention, I'll be even happier.

Buchanan is, of course, Bill Clinton's dream come true—a Republican spoiler who splits the party not only on social issues such as abortion but on its core free-market doctrine. This is like splitting the Catholic Church on the issue of the divinity of Jesus.

By advocating protectionism, Buchanan is subverting the GOP gospel of laissez-faire and pitting his new blue-collar recruits against the party's business base. Buchanan has also made it clear that if Bob Dole picks Colin Powell as his running mate—his best hope to unseat Clinton—the man from "Crossfire" will bolt and try to take a few million of his supporters with him.

But the damage Buchanan is doing to Dole's presidential prospects is not the main reason I am happy to have him around. Clinton's re-election is still strongly preferable to a President Dole. But with Secretary of Labor Robert B. Reich's rumored departure from the Clinton administration and the ascendancy within the cabinet of the Wall Street-oriented Robert Rubin faction, who want the President to soft-pedal issues of economic insecurity, the differences between the Democrats and Republicans seem less than earth-shattering.

Buchanan's real contribution to this campaign season has been to shake up the terms of political conversation that have prevailed since Ronald Reagan redefined big government as the evil presence in American life. Since 1980, both political parties have embraced that view, with Clinton announcing in his State of the Union message that "the era of big government is over." With his attacks on "corporate butchers" and C.E.O. "executioners" who hike their own salaries as they lay off thousands of employees, Buchanan has inadvertently ended the Reagan era's overriding preoccupation with big government and turned the spotlight on the workings of big business.

Just as it was a hawkish Republican—Richard Nixon—who was able to make the first opening to China, it took a right-wing Republican like Buchanan to open the American mind to the reality of concentrated corporate power. It is no news when liberals such as Reich or Senator Edward Kennedy speak up for workers, but when an extreme conservative lashes into Wall Street plutocrats, people notice. Buchanan cannot be dismissed as anti-American or communist. His attacks on corporate power are interpreted as defenses of small business and of traditional American values.

Buchanan's presence on the scene creates two profoundly important openings for progressives. The first is to sustain a critical focus on corporate America. Buchanan has assailed American business elites as the new robber barons. Progressives now need to educate the nation about the astonishing parallels between the 1890s—the height of the robber baron era—and the 1990s. In both periods, big business emerged as the overriding force in America; corporations grew vastly larger because of radical shifts in market scale and technology. Then as now, business was able to demolish labor and discredit government, effectively killing the main countervailing forces that can make business socially responsible. The results, then and now: devastating economic insecurity, government to the highest bidder, and the heartless morality of Social Darwinism.

The aim of such an approach is neither to demonize business nor to revive nineteenth-century Marxism. A program of big government is a non-starter for progressives in the current era. But America urgently needs a thoughtful analysis of the power and accountability of global corporations. Without the revitalization of government, labor, community groups, and other non-market forces that can challenge the power of corporations, poverty will spread like measles, and democracy and civil society will fade.

Buchanan has said that "When go-go global capitalism is uprooting entire communities and families, I ask conservatives what it is we are trying to conserve." He lambastes corporations not only for picking the American worker's pocket, but undermining family life

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Charles Derber's new book, The Wilding of America: How Greed and Violence Are Eroding Our Nation's Character, *is published by St. Martin's Press.*

and the morals of the country. This is the beginning of a new conversation about our crisis of values and constitutes the second great opening that Buchanan has handed to progressives.

When Newt Gingrich captured Congress for the Republicans in 1994 with the notion that poverty programs created poverty and the welfare system was creating a culture of dependency, he was putting the capstone on the last quarter-century's discourse about values and responsibility, which helped create the Republican majority. The American consensus has shifted toward Reagan's view that big government is the source of moral decline. Ironically, Buchanan has offered an electric challenge to his former boss's paradigm about the causes of eroding American values, suggesting it may actually be the market itself that is the problem.

Buchanan has relentlessly attacked the values of business, especially on the issues of greed and patriotism. He harangues corporations as moral criminals for downsizing, fleeing abroad in search of cheap labor, and other breaches of faith with American workers. He has made it almost fashionable in the mainstream media to attack corporate values: witness the recent *Newsweek* cover story on corporate "hit men," with its cover line—"Corporate Killers"—in huge, blood-red letters.

Over the last quarter-century, liberals and leftists have largely ceded to the Right the debate about "family values" and personal responsibility. Buchanan has practically issued an engraved invitation to progressives to step up to the plate on the values question. Progressives have, of course, long had a critique of the unfettered market as a threat to families and communities and subversive of compassion, responsibility, and plain old decency and integrity. But they have never known how to communicate this to a population that distrusts government panaceas and cannot connect to technocratic talk about the market.

The time is right for reframing the debate about the market's contribution to our moral problems. One of the characteristics of a robber-baron era is that the elites throw off their normal rhetorical deference to virtues of civility and social responsibility, modeling outrageous forms of greed and betrayal. Corporations now hire professional "terminators" who deliver pink slips to long-term employees on Friday afternoon with messages about the empowering effects of self-employment—and tell them to clear out their office in two hours. They are teaching a new generation of Americans about how the market really values respect, loyalty, and compassion.

Progressives need to show how this corporate morality is throwing employees and communities into deadly competition for survival. Concern for others is the first and greatest casualty. This nightmare of Hobbesian individualism—which I have described elsewhere as a national crisis of "wilding"—is the moral face of robber-baron capitalism. Corporate elites brazenly model economic wilding—that is, antisocial forms of profit-seeking—and create brutally competitive conditions that drive everyone toward a preoccupation with money and self.

America is in search of a new politics. Economic populism is not enough, nor are sermons on personal responsibility. Buchanan has attracted attention by hawking an economic nationalism directed to pocketbook issues and tied to a passionate if bigoted moral message. Progressives can do better. They can offer a less xenophobic agenda that deals honestly with the economic nightmare, coupled with a new moral message about solidarity, tolerance, respect, and justice.

This magazine has spent a good deal of time critiquing liberalism for its economism and its failure to take seriously the cultural and psychological wounds that plague our existence. Buchanan has credibility, partly because he speaks to moral issues and resonates to the spiritual vacuum in American politics. The lesson, however, is not to refocus away from economic matters. The most imaginative aspect of Buchanan's politics has been his success in bringing a colorful and uncensored message about corporate exploitation to conservative Protestant fundamentalists and ethnic blue-collar Catholics. His repackaging of religious sensibilities to target the morality of the market hints at the promise of a more enlightened politics linking economic populism with deeply moral and even spiritual discourse.

Buchanan's dangerous proto-fascist social message—which recreates the racism, anti-Semitism, and know-nothing nativism of his 1930s Catholic ancestor, Father Charles Coughlin—is alarmingly clear. In contrast, his economic message is fraught with confusion. On the one hand, he acknowledges that "capitalism, totally unbridled, is the law of the jungle." But he rejects raising the minimum wage, supports right-to-work laws, and embraces virtually the entire corporate agenda beyond protectionism. Instead of market reforms, he proposes downsizing government. But if "the law of the jungle" arises from the unbridled market, nothing short of a restructured market will solve our problems.

Bill Clinton increasingly displays some of the same confusion. He also acknowledges market-driven economic insecurity and moral decline. He uses his bully pulpit to sing the praises of service to the community—and, more recently, to applaud socially responsible companies. But he, too, offers no serious alternatives to

free-market dogma, espousing the balanced-budget and free-trade agendas that are the staples of an even harsher market morality in a world economy.

As in the 1890s, both parties are fundamentally tied to business and cannot espouse a meaningful populism. Their allegiance to corporate interests keeps the Buchanan phenomenon alive, but it also gives life to progressives who can offer a vision of a "social market," that speaks simultaneously to economic and moral decay.

The social market—a third path between capitalism and socialism—builds social costs and values into our national accounting system. In our current economy, the social and human costs of pollution, downsizing, and temp work are treated as "externalities"—that is, their cost is borne by others and is not factored into the calculations made by corporations. Only when these factors are "internalized" and become part of the rationality of the market can we expect any serious change in either our economic or moral circumstances.

How to restructure the market to achieve these ends is the great political challenge of the new millennium. It requires a marriage of economic and moral discourse, because the new accounting is not simply a technical exercise; we will have to rethink the purposes of corporations and the larger common goals that bind us together.

In the short term, however, there are some policy directions that will clearly advance social market morality. One is employee ownership, which offers hope for a new kind of community in the workplace. Although not a panacea, it marries the self-interest of the worker to the collective interest of the firm and creates a countervailing force within the corporation itself that can foster a different corporate morality. United Airlines, America's largest employee-owned company and biggest airline, recently rejected a proposal to buy U.S. Air, despite promising projections that the new, merged company would see a rise in market share and stock price. Employee-owners, who now sit on the board of directors, argued successfully that the human and moral costs of the merger, including debt, layoffs, and loss of seniority among some employees, had to be built into the equation. This new way of thinking is not hurting the bottom line; since embracing employee ownership, United has posted big increases in efficiency, profits, and market share.

Employee ownership doesn't ensure accountability of either the company or the business world to the larger community (beyond employees), but a new pension-fund policy could. The $4 trillion in pension funds within the United States could be committed to companies that invest in domestic jobs and community development and conform to high environmental, labor, and ethical standards. Such "internalization" of social/moral criteria into the money markets could become the most important economic base for new values.

Many other institutional elements in the social market could transform our moral climate. Democratic senators Tom Daschle of South Dakota and Jeff Bingaman of New Mexico have proposed a new corporate tax code that would provide public incentives for companies committed to social responsibility. Their new "R Corp" would be federally chartered and taxed at 11 percent rather than 18 percent. Such companies would be obligated to reduce CEO-to-worker wage ratios from the current 160 to 1 to 50 to 1. They would also be required to offer a portable pension plan and employee training, bear half the costs of employee health insurance, and sponsor profit-sharing or an employee ownership plan.


MAC MCGILL

Government has a major countervailing role to play in creating jobs and negotiating the morality of trade. Brute protectionism isn't the answer, but some economists are proposing a "social tariff," which taxes countries for unethical practices such as child or prison labor. Globalization will drive every country in a race

toward the bottom—the lowest common economic and moral denominator—unless some form of global social charter regulating corporate conduct is backed and enforced by the United States and other governments.

Social market alternatives would reduce inequality, increase productivity and wages, and retain jobs. But beyond these merits, they would catalyze a conversation in the country about values. They would help redefine the meaning of both corporate and personal responsibility—one of the contributions of a larger politics of meaning.

Is any of this politically feasible? The good news is absolutely, yes. A silent majority is feeling burdened by economic insecurity and the sense of moral collapse. According to a recent *Business Week*/Harris survey, 71 percent of Americans now say that business has too much power and is morally responsible for the country's woes. Buchanan speaks to only a small minority of that majority—alienating the rest by his blatant bigotry and pseudo-solutions to workers' problems. The majority is primed for a different type of morally inspired populism.

This newly identified anti-corporate majority reflects the spread of insecurity to the middle class. They can buy some physical security in gated suburbs, but they cannot wall off the new threats to their jobs. Polls consistently report that more than 50 percent of Americans fear for their own jobs and living standards. Sixty-seven percent say that the American Dream is receding out of reach.

The most stunning finding in the *Business Week* survey is that a remarkable 95 percent of the population says that corporations have responsibility not only to shareholders but to workers and communities. This widespread sentiment provides a firm foundation for populists fighting for economic democracy and a new market morality.

Liberals and progressives have fragmented themselves in the current morass of identity politics. The new populism I am proposing could unify most of these splintered groups around a common agenda, for it is gender, minority, and other identity groups which are most burdened by economic downsizing and the current tide of sociopathic market individualism. Not all of the problems of women and racial minorities will be solved by the social market. But identity groups are groping for a new vision of inclusive social justice and all are plagued by economic insecurity that the social market would heal.

Identity politics, while it may have exhausted itself in its present mode, has something vital to offer the new populism. The women's movement, racial movements, and other identity groups politically mobilized millions of people by reaching beyond purely economic issues to deeply personal needs for respect and recognition. Identity movements have done for the Left one thing that Buchanan is doing on the Right: showing that the personal is political. Buchanan's economic message gets through because he speaks to working-class constituencies who feel invisible and "dissed." They sense that he is one of them and embraces them—precisely what identity movements have done for their own members.

The new progressive populism needs to offer its own politics of recognition. The social market agenda speaks to both the economic and moral aspirations of the new American majority—offering the prospect of accountable corporations and other institutional "structures of recognition" in which ordinary people can be heard. To win Americans over, however, progressives need to model in their own political practice the respect that their new institutions can help nurture. This means, among other things, abandoning the tone of moral certitude that so often distances activists from those they are trying to reach.

Populism needs a soul as well as an economics—and that means language and programs that speak to our shared needs for affirmation and community. As identity movements have found, these issues, no less than the issues of economic security and justice with which they are so intimately intertwined, are the ones that propel people into political action.

Finally, the new populism has to move beyond the increasingly sterile national debate about whether to focus on economic or social/moral issues. The Clinton administration continues to be hung up on this false dichotomy, with Reich and James Carville arguing for a campaign focus on economics, while Vice President Al Gore speaks for "values." In the administration's case, both the economics and the values discussions are largely symbolic and rhetorical. The President seems unwilling to seriously promote the new corporate social contract that Secretary Reich has begun to discuss. Much of Clinton's talk about "family values," school uniforms, and v-chips, encouraged by his adviser Dick Morris, is simply meant to show that he shares the moral sensibilities of the so-called "Reagan Democrats" whose votes are crucial to his reelection.

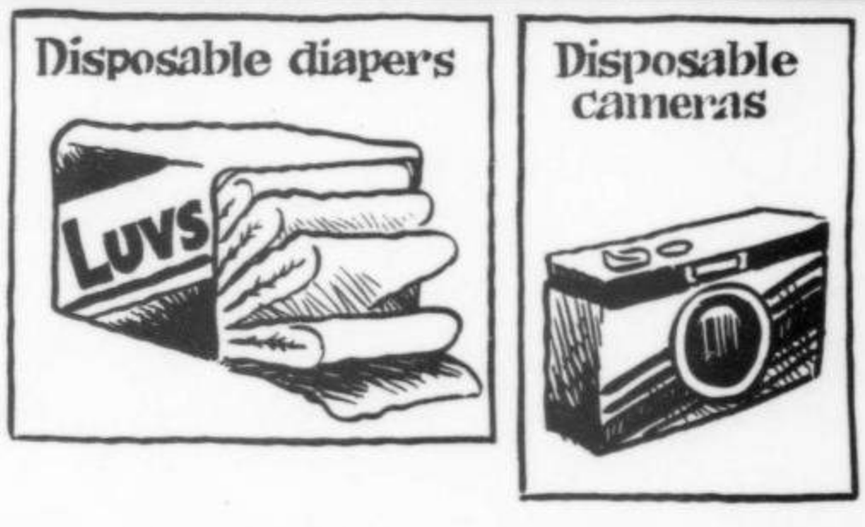
Progressives have never had a better opportunity to show how intimately moral decline and market dynamics are tied together. Now is the time to find common ground around the moral economy of the social market and its corollary politics of respect. In the process of building such a movement, we will not only help solve our nation's economic crisis, but create a meaningful conversation about the good life in America. □

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The Psychodynamics of Cynicism

Michael J. Bader



CYN MAURICE

At the risk of sounding New-Agey or flaky, I pose the following questions: Why is it that babies and toddlers can look us straight in the eye, yet adults can't look each other straight in the eye? And, what makes me feel that I had to preface these questions with a disclaimer about sounding "New Agey" and "flaky"?

There are lots of rational answers to these questions that you don't have to be a psychoanalyst to provide. But I think that there *is* an answer that goes deeper into our psyches, and it has to do with the psychodynamics of cynicism. In my view, we have to work through the psychological meanings of our collective cynicism in order to build a social movement. In fact, I think that cynicism is the biggest single psychological obstacle to the politics of meaning.

What is cynicism, exactly? We talk about it a lot in these pages, but what is its essence? Cynicism, it seems to me, is our attempt to avoid a painful feeling of vulnerability to rejection and to shame. So, in regard to my first question about babies and children, I'd say this: From open-eyed contact to the averted gaze, the course of normal development in our culture involves the gradual acquisition of a shame-based cynicism.

Children learn that the eyes are openings to the self, as well as means of connecting to other selves. And they learn that openness and connection mean vulnerability. They come to experience the possibility that they can reveal themselves, their longings and needs, to the other and be rejected or, worse at times, ignored. And when a child is expressing something authentic and the environment fails to mirror that child, at best, or rejects him or her at worst, the result is a private sense of humiliation and self-blame. The child thinks: something is wrong with me, something that makes me repulsive or insignificant. Children always assume responsibility for their own disappointment and rejection. So, they close their eyes, narrow their gaze, avert their desire for authentic connection, and develop the subtle but hard shell of "cynical realism" as they grow up.

I qualified my opening question with the preemptive comment about sounding New Agey and flaky because I didn't want to appear naively idealistic. After all, the kind of innocence that we accept in babies is surely rather foolish in adults, and appearing foolish would be quite shameful. I wanted to establish an alliance with the reader—in which we have a mutual understanding that I'm a "savvy psychoanalyst," fully aware of how ridiculous childlike vulnerability would be in the real, adult world.

Some of my reasons for this embarrassment about sounding too naive or idealistic stem from my personal experience. For instance, nothing took my father by surprise and, as far as I could see as his son,

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nothing seemed to shake him up or disrupt his "knowing" view of the world, even if that view tended to be pessimistic and rather cynical. But my father was also not unique. To many of us in this culture, there is nothing more foolish than naive idealism, nothing more shameful than to believe in something and be disappointed, nothing more humiliating than to need something and be rebuffed.

This kind of personal story gets played out so often in our society that it has resonance wherever we look. I guess this is why I have problems with Wolf Blitzer and Bill Schneider, commentators on CNN. These "in-the-know," savvy men, take moments of potential meaning—like a State of the Union address, reports of Serbian atrocities, the O.J. trial, the 1994 elections, and tell us what it all "really" means. And what it *always* "really" means is that nothing is as it seems: that our visceral and intuitive sensibilities are naive and unreliable, and everything that we see and experience is the product of cynical manipulation.

Idealism and ethics can seem embarrassing in public life. As Marianne Williamson put it, 'It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us.'

I can't stand this attitude. I saw it in my family, I see it in myself. I can almost sympathize with the fact that there is nothing that Bill Schneider or Sam Donaldson or David Brinkley would dread more than to be moved by the beauty or tragedy of something that they're covering. Their identities are organized around an unconscious pre-occupation with *never* appearing naively emotional or foolishly "taken in" by the positive or negative emotional meanings of anything that they cover. They are moved by the same psychodynamics of cynicism as I am when I make a self-deprecating joke about sounding flakey, or when a child learns to narrow his or her gaze.

So, it's not my father or yours. And it's not just TV's talking heads or a candidate's spin doctors. It's in all of us. It's personal and social. It's highly private and very public.

I have a friend who dreads the end of his Shabbat service because the rabbi always says to turn to the person next to you and say, "S*habbat Shalom*." My friend has the terrible anxiety that the person next to him won't want to reciprocate, that he or she will not respond when he puts his hand out. It's never happened, of course, and my friend knows it's irrational. But we can all imagine the embarrassment of putting a hand out in friendship and having it ignored.

These small and intimate moments of shame are real or potential dangers in much of everyday life, private as well as public. For example, a patient of mine was talking about her anxiety about climaxing; she fantasized that she was too visible when she was excited, that she would lose control of her excitement, and that unless her partner was at least as excited, she would feel ashamed, as if she were "on display."

I would argue that this dynamic is related to George Will's cynical determination never to be carried away with a passion for anything, or excitement about any "cause." His version of climaxing in public is for any social or political event to arouse his emotions too much. And weren't the "hit" pieces about Hillary Clinton—mocking her as "Saint Hillary," an adolescent moralist, under the sway of her "guru" Michael Lerner—really expressions of embarrassment about this woman talking about feelings and ideals *in public*?

The personal and the political. The one draws from the other. From the family to the culture and back again. I learned to feel ashamed of naive expressions of love or dependence in my family. I developed a tendency to be sarcastic, self-effacing, and cynical as a defense. Similarly, as a citizen, I have had my hopes repeatedly stimulated and dashed and so have developed a cynical defense in the civic realm as well. The Kennedys, Martin Luther King, Jr., the anti-war movement, the Left, Clinton—all elicited hope in me that was in some way unfulfilled. As a citizen, I'm lied to, manipulated, exposed to constant double-talk and cynical demagoguery. Cynicism comes naturally to me as a citizen as well as a child in the Bader family.

But whether it's personal or political, cynicism is the best solution that one can come up with to protect oneself from humiliation. Cynicism reflects a natural adaptation to conditions of danger. Whether the danger is to be encouraged by Bill Clinton, only to have to listen to him compromise on welfare and health care, or to be personally rejected by a loved one, cynicism is an attempt to make sense of the world in order to make the best of it and protect yourself from the ever-present dangers of relaxing your guard.

It's important to understand cynicism and to appreciate how it functions as the best personal solution to a social reality experienced as dangerous. It's rational within the constraints that we perceive around us. I mean constraints such as the *reality* that we *are*, in fact, being manipulated and exploited and betrayed all of the time by corporations and politicians. Similarly, it's rational to respond to repeated rejections or neglect

(Continued on p. 76)

Answering the Standard Objections to the Politics of Meaning

What are the central goals of the Campaign for a Politics of Meaning?

A. To build a society that encourages mutual recognition, caring, ethical and spiritual sensitivity, and ecologically attuned social practices.

But will this be imposed by government?

No. The politics of meaning is a political movement in the same sense that feminism is a political movement. Feminism does not seek to create legislation to regulate how people treat each other in their private lives, in the kitchen, or in the bedroom, but does seek to create a new ethos of mutual respect that would change how people act toward each other. It also turns to government in some rare instances to support its agenda (e.g. by seeking to rectify past discrimination in hiring, or to require equal pay for equal work). Similarly, the goal of a progressive politics of meaning movement is primarily the creation of an ethos in civil society, in economic life, and in our private lives that supports ethical and spiritual sensitivity.

Today, our economy supports the opposite. It rewards selfishness and marginalizes ethical and spiritual sensitivity. Similarly, the dominant consciousness in our political and social institutions reflects a technocratic attitude toward human beings that makes it difficult for us to recognize the sanctity in each other, dulls our sense of awe and wonder at the marvels of the universe, and creates skepticism about the possibility of living in a world based on loving and caring.

We want to build a different kind of world. Government can play a small part in this process, and where it can we welcome it. But just as the most important changes in the status of women were brought about by a movement of millions of women demanding that they be treated differently and working to implement their vision, so a politics of meaning will only be possible when there are millions of people challenging the technocratic, selfishness-oriented, materialistic and cynical norms that permeate contemporary social reality.

So, if someone says to you, "I don't want government imposing values or a particular vision of meaning on us," you can reply, "Neither do we. That's why we want to change a world that seems to assume that we are all isolated individuals, rewards us for being selfish, and treats us as though we were commodities rather than infinitely precious beings."

The Right, fearful of the potential power of a progressive politics of meaning, distorts our message by claiming that our goal is to expand government. In fact, we want to focus on civil society as the appropriate place to build a new societal ethos.

B. To change the definition of productivity or efficiency

Our society tends to define institutions as productive or efficient to the extent that they maximize wealth or power of those in control. We want a new definition: Institutions are productive or efficient to the extent that they tend to help foster ethical, spiritual, and ecological sensitivity and to strengthen our capacity to sustain long-term loving and committed relationships. By this definition, American society is extremely inefficient and unproductive.

C. To create a politics in the image of God, according to which all human beings deserve to be treated with full recognition of their infinite preciousness and sanctity.

In secular language, people are intrinsically valuable, deserving of care and respect, *not* because they are "human resources" or useful for society.

Do I have to believe in God to support the politics of meaning?

No. This is an approach that recognizes a sacred dimension to existence and calls upon us to develop our spiritual sensibilities. But some of those involved in building a politics of meaning are strongly critical of traditional religious communities. They do not accept any traditional conception of "a Supreme Being," or any other theological formulation. Yet they recognize that there is more to existence than can be described or understood by a reductionist empiricism.

At the same time, the vision of the politics of meaning does originate in the Bible, particularly its insistence that human beings live by more than bread alone—its vision of human beings as created in the image of God and hence deserving to be treated as such. It is a conception that is central to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, and there are other religious traditions with closely analogous beliefs.

For a very long time, religious people have been made to feel that if they wanted to be part of a progressive community, they had to leave their religious baggage at the door. We

say the opposite: The liberal and progressive world needs your religious sensibilities and insights, so please bring them into the liberal and progressive arena. Obviously, we do not intend to create a new religion or in any way replace existing religions. Rather, we advocate mutual tolerance among religions, and tolerance for the variants of atheism and agnosticism as well. But tolerance does not require disengagement. In a healthy society, we imagine that people will feel safe in contending for their different visions, no longer fearful that they will be putting themselves in danger if they advocate a religious vision that is unpopular. Our goal is not to establish any particular religious vision, but to change the society in ways that will make it more friendly to religious and spiritual sensibilities. At the same time, we are clearly on the side of "renewal forces" within each religious community—those forces that are actively engaged in rejecting racist, sexist, homophobic, or xenophobic elements in traditional religious visions.

We recognize that there will be people who are part of our community who have strong disagreements about specific issues. The politics of meaning is *not* a principle to resolve all such disagreements. Rather, it is a principle for how to think about reality. It says that our bottom line should be to maximize loving and caring relationships. This principle will help us resolve some but not all issues.

For example, if someone says that "as a society we can't afford to provide better education, health care, housing, or environmental cleanup," the politics of meaning is going to raise the question of how we decide what we as a society can afford. If we are told that "we can't afford these because to pay for them we'd have to raise taxes to such a high level that we would make corporations less competitive in the world market," we are probably going to ask whether there is another way to sustain the corporations, and if not, whether we really need the corporations' success as much as we need education, health care, housing or ecological sanity. In short, we are going to return continually to the "bottom line" we advocate—a society that builds loving and caring communities that encourage ethical, spiritual, and ecological sensitivity—and from that place determine all other kinds of policies.

On the other hand, someone might argue that from their theological or religious perspective, assisting someone to end their lives when they are suffering from a terminal illness is always wrong, while someone else might say that sometimes it is legitimate. If the person who says that it is legitimate argues that "we can't afford to keep people alive" we would probably weigh in against that argument, since from our perspective the bottom line has to be respect for the sanctity of every human being. But if someone argued that respect for sanctity means not letting them suffer overmuch, while another argued that it meant not cutting life short by human decision, we would have to argue that as a movement we do not have the answer (though any of us as an individual might have his or her own take on this). In short, the politics of meaning doesn't always tell us what position is correct. It only gives us criteria for assessing our choices. But those criteria won't always come up with a specific answer for every situation.

Nor should they. The politics of meaning is not a new theology or metaphysics. It's only a way to make sure that the dominant theology—the theology of materialism and selfishness—no longer has the field of public discourse all to itself.

Where does the politics of meaning come from?

The term was developed by Michael Lerner, and the underlying ideas were developed by Lerner and his colleague, New College president Peter Gabel. Lerner was director of the Oakland, California, Institute for Labor and Mental Health, and along with his clinical work as a psychotherapist, he directed a research project on the psychodynamics of middle-income Americans with special focus on the reason people were moving to the Right. He learned that many people were responding to the Right because they were in deep pain in their lives, stemming from the way that the world of work and the institutions of daily life interfere with our capacities to obtain mutual recognition and connection with others, lead us to believe that we cannot trust others and must look out only for ourselves, encourage us to treat others as objects, and reduce our capacities to respond to the world with joy and wonder, presenting us with a despiritualized outlook that is literally de-meaning. Lerner discovered that the Right spoke to that pain, while the Left did not. Together with Gabel, a psychologist and lawyer who had helped found Critical Legal Studies, Lerner began to propose a politics that might speak to that pain. Meanwhile, Gabel and his colleagues were attempting to shape New College of California as an institution that would embody the politics of meaning.

Yet the politics of meaning is, in the deepest sense, a continuation of the project that was articulated by the biblically based religions, and is an attempt to reconnect to the wisdom of all the world's religious and spiritual traditions. In this deeper sense, all the world's religions have recognized the oneness of all being, the interconnectedness of all beings in the universe, and the profound alienation that results when one part of the totality begins to act as though it has the right to appropriate more of the power, wealth, or recognition than other parts. The politics of meaning is an attempt to reclaim the oneness of the universe and to combat the hubris and lack of humility that is a central aspect of contemporary culture.

Ironically, those who wish to restore a sense of humility, to oppose the selfishness and to challenge the extreme individualism and selfishness, will be the subject of attacks by the existing elites of wealth and power, who will attempt to prove that it is we who want to change things who are selfish or individualistic, and that true humility lies in accepting the

existing system of power and the maldistribution of mutual recognition. We reject this.

Are you claiming to be on a higher moral ground than others who have been corrupted by the existing society?

Not at all. We believe that most Americans do not want a society that is based in selfishness and greed and materialism and cynicism. But they live in a world in which the institutions reward selfishness and ridicule idealism. Our goal is to change the social structures, not so that we can shape new human beings, but so that we can allow people to do what we already want to do.

On the other hand, all of us have been bombarded by a continuous stream of messages that tell us that such caring is impossible, that everyone is always going to be motivated by greed and materialism, and that if we don't act accordingly we are likely to get screwed by others. We hear this voice of "realism" telling us that we can't use our energies or risk our lives for what we really believe in, because that would be totally self-destructive.

This struggle goes on among the politics of meaning organizers as well as everyone else. And it will continue to plague us as long as the society is set up to reward selfishness and the media is involved in a systematic campaign to ignore or ridicule those who think that things could be different. There is a part of each of us that doubts whether things could really be different. And that part leads us to act selfishly or cynically.

So even the very people who will be involved in a politics of meaning movement will have these inner doubts and conflicts, and hence will at times be acting according to the very opposite principles from those they profess.

This is why we believe that a politics of meaning will be led by people who will be "wounded healers," that is, people who, while providing good ideas and direction for the movement, are nevertheless not yet the fullest embodiment of their own ideals. We believe that this kind of distortion is an inevitable component of trying to change things, and that the appropriate attitude toward such flawed leaders is both compassion and pushing them to go further toward their ideals. Compassion is central, because the social movement that we build is going to have many flawed people, and it could easily be destroyed if we were to focus excessively on those flaws in a hurtful way.

Don't be surprised, however, if elites of wealth and power delight in exposing the self-interest of our leaders or of all of us. They retain their power in part by convincing others that there is no way that the world can be different. So they think they've made their point if they show that even those who want to fight against the ethos of selfishness or materialism exhibit selfishness and materialism. But from our standpoint, it's no surprise that people growing up and trying to make a living in a society that validates selfishness and materialism are going to be shaped by that society to some extent.

Our point is that selfishness is only part of our nature—people also deeply hunger to leave the market mentality behind, to live in a spiritually and ethically coherent world, and that part often leads them to embrace religious or political movements that promise to address those needs. A politics of meaning movement enables them to find a way to address those needs without buying into the racism, sexism, homophobia, anti-Semitism or xenophobia of the Right, or the materialism, individualism, and cynicism about spiritual reality of the Left.

What the media do is "expose" the self-interest of people who are involved in social change, thereby discrediting their idealism and convincing everyone else that idealistic talk about building a different kind of society is simply a pretentious cover hiding the "real" selfishness or flakiness of the idealists. And, of course, the media can always succeed in finding the self-interest of public figures, since there is a part of all of us that focuses on self-protection and self-interest. But the result of the media's relentless "unmasking" is an atmosphere in which we all feel afraid to put ourselves forward as potential leaders of social change.

It's for this reason that we object to what the media and then the Republicans have done to Bill Clinton. We have plenty of criticisms of Bill Clinton based on his failure as President to pursue the agenda that he promised as a candidate in 1992. But that is quite different from condoning the witch hunt through the past of the President and the First Lady, the constant efforts to expose past misdeeds and dramatize them. We would not be surprised if there were past misdeeds, and we would not condone them. But the media and the Republicans used the possibility of past misdeeds (never actually documented) as the basis for shifting a huge amount of public debate and media airtime to a focus on these allegations, thus undermining Clinton's ability to lead the struggle for a more positive social-change agenda.

Similarly, we reject the attempt by the media to reduce our movement for a politics of meaning to the individual personalities of specific leaders. We reject their attempts at scapegoating, and refuse to do what other movements have sometimes done when their leaders were under attack, namely, abandon the leaders on behalf of the ideals. We know that in order to change the world the most important thing we need is to help people feel safe with each other so that we can create a "we" instead of an endless list of individual "I"s, and part of that process is letting those who have put forward leadership know that they won't be abandoned by the rest of us.

Does a politics of meaning deny the importance of economic needs?

Not at all. But it's not *only* economic issues that concern people. They also need the human bonds: love and caring, communities in which they can feel connected to others, in

their connection to some higher ethical and spiritual purpose besides "making it."

Moreover, the notion of economic needs apart from the meaning needs doesn't really hold up. Take, for example, people's fear of corporate downsizing and globalization. The fear is so powerful precisely because people "know" that they can't count on each other to take care of each other when economic changes befall us. If, for example, everyone knew that we had a societal commitment to create new jobs and to share equally what we had with anyone who is unemployed as a result of changes in the economy, people would be far less scared. Similarly, if people felt a level of mutual trust and solidarity, they would approach the corporations and tell them, "Don't you dare try to leave this country if doing so requires a potential or actual loss of employment for your community, at least until you've done everything that the community could reasonably ask to rectify the injustice that your departure might cause." In short, the very fact that corporations can get away with moving their resources without having to pay for the damage that they are doing to the ethical and social environment is not an economic fact, it is a meaning fact, a fact about the level of trust and mutual commitment that exists in the society. That's why we advocate the creation of "Ethical Impact Reports" that would require corporations to pay attention to the impact of their decisions on the moral life of the communities within which they function.

So what journalists and politicians call "economic facts" then, are often little more than a fancy way of articulating the current state of human relations: who has power, and who has been willing to go along with the status quo to avoid conflict or in order to show that one is mature and "knows what can be changed and what can't."

Shouldn't we be focusing on protecting the social support network for the poor rather than worrying about middle-income people and their spiritual alienation?

First of all, the deprivation of meaning is at least as important in the communities of the poor as in middle-class communities. The lack of solidarity and mutual recognition in those communities plays out in acts of violence and crime that lead poor people to be among the most vociferous in calling for a stronger and more effective response to crime.

Second, the focus on the needs of the poor by liberal and Left forces doesn't actually do much for the poor. The fact is that to help the poor, we need a cross-class alliance. And to get that cross-class alliance, you have to speak not only to the needs of the poor, but also to the needs of middle-income people.

Can't we build a cross-class alliance based on economic needs alone?

No. Liberals thought they could do this by offering middle-income people a set of economic entitlements, and then hoped that this would lead them to embrace big government programs for the poor as well. The basis of this thinking seems to go something like this: "We liberals can provide for your "real" (read: economic) needs by expanding governmental programs." But if people's real needs are simply economic, the elites of wealth and power offer a counter-deal: "We," the elites promise, "can offer you a better deal—an alliance between the rich and the middle class, based on gutting social services and dramatically reducing your tax burden." In this case, the cross-class alliance offered by the rich will win, because in fact they are prepared to put more dollars in people's pockets by dismantling government than the liberal ever could. So if it's really "the economy, stupid," then liberals trying to defend their programs for the poor will never be able to build a cross-class alliance.

Our strategy is far more subtle and will take some time to get across, but since it's based in reality, it could work: Show middle-income people that the things they really want most, e.g., loving relationships embedded in communities of meaning and purpose, are being systematically undermined by the ethos of selfishness and materialism of the competitive market.

"Fine," some people might say, "we will try to be less selfish in our personal lives, in our gated suburban communities. But we still want to pay less taxes—so screw the poor."

Our response: "You can't expect your families and relationships to work if you live in a society permeated by an ethos of 'taking care of Number 1'. Yet that is precisely what you just articulated when you thought that you could shut your ears to the cries of the poor and the oppressed, and that somehow the impact of doing that would not affect you. But it *does directly affect you*, because the more you turn your back on the fate of others, the more you contribute to the societal wisdom that this is what everyone does, and that cynical belief will jump the walls of your gated suburbs, corrupt the minds of your children and your loved ones, and they will act accordingly. You will face the ethos of selfishness in your most intimate life unless you can help build a movement that challenges this common sense. And that won't happen if you simultaneously support candidates or social movements that advocate selfishness toward others.

In short, the movement of energy either goes toward smaller and smaller circles of caring, so that eventually your husband, wife, child, or parent is only willing to look out for her or himself without regard to the impact on you, or it goes toward wider circles, in which case, be prepared to care for people who are differently situated, both in this country and around the world.

For the past several decades the trend in American political culture in both parties has been toward advocating smaller and smaller circles of caring. The days of big government are over, proclaimed President Clinton in this year's

State of the Union speech. More and more people have supported policies to downsize social support. The impact over the past two decades of the growing narcissism has been rampant divorce and increasing numbers of people looking for some form of salvation in various right-wing religious communities. People will not find their personal needs met in a society in which caring for others dramatically decreases.

In contrast, we are setting forth terms for a different kind of cross-class alliance, based on caring for others, recognizing the spirit of God in each other, and responding to the world with ethical, spiritual, and ecological sensitivity. It is because many middle-income people want to live in that kind of a world that they can come to understand that we must effect major changes in the society.

Isn't it unrealistic to imagine that you can change the way people have conducted their affairs for several thousand years?

It is unrealistic in precisely the way that it was unrealistic for the women's movement to imagine that they could change the fundamental inequality between men and women that had been central to the way societies conducted their business for the past several thousand years. Yet we have witnessed one of the most impressive revolutions of many centuries, and even though there is a long way to go to eliminate patriarchy, the successes that have already been achieved should give pause to anyone who claims to know that an existing system perceived as oppressive "cannot" be changed.

"But isn't it easier when you have a group of people who are oppressed, like women, than when you are talking about something as vague as meaning needs?"

There's nothing vague about the denial of meaning needs. Tens of millions of Americans have that experience every week, though they don't use these words to describe it. But the pain that they experience is as real and tangible to them as was the pain experienced by women who felt demeaned in sexist relationships.

Today, the reaction to the denial of the meaning needs gets expressed in a wide variety of behaviors, from alcoholism, drug abuse, and television addiction to random acts of violence to a generalized depression and reduction of people's level of vitality and energy (sometimes diagnosed as "depression") to acting-out behavior of all sorts (from divorce to the breakdown of friendships to the collapse of communities). We see it acted out also in people's willingness to grab on to communities of meaning that are inauthentic: They provide a superficial or a weekend meaning high, but then abandon people to the selfishness and materialism of the competitive market. Watch as fascistic or xenophobic or homophobic or anti-Semitic movements grow, and you will see people who have joined these movements to find, in perverted form, a way to connect with others and find a meaning that is being denied them by the discourse and practice of the dominant culture.

Aren't you claiming that there are some universal, morally objective truths? And isn't this precisely what multiculturalists showed was impossible?

Yes, we believe in universal, objective moral truth, though not at the level that the Right tries to impose on us.

The fundamental objective and universal moral truth is this: human beings are precious, deserve love, caring, compassion, and respect, and their capacities for free, conscious, creative, loving, and spiritually alive activity ought to be supported.

Now, exactly how this plays out at any given moment can be the subject of a great deal of debate, but we are not afraid to assert that there is a fundamental truth which anchors that debate.

One of the reasons that people have shied away from universal and objective moral truths is that the Right has tried to use that concept to justify much more specific and historically distorted assertions—for example, that a particular form of sexual behavior or family life is normative. It does not follow, however, that because some people have misused the concept of objective moral truths that therefore there are none.

Multiculturalists who have asserted that every attempt to create a universal truth is really an impulse to reimpose white male rule and that all discourse is incommensurable among different communities are deeply mistaken. The impact of this kind of moral relativism is to eliminate the one powerful weapon in the hands of the oppressed: their ability to appeal to values that transcend specific interests. Indeed, following the line proposed by this form of multiculturalist, a white suburb-dwelling conservative can respond to the appeal of the inner-city Black for support for welfare by saying, "Well, I understand why, from your standpoint, it seems moral to raise taxes to pay for the homeless. But, from my standpoint, I'd rather have the money to pay for my country club, and that is just the difference in our cultural suppositions about morality."

They do that anyway, say some multiculturalists. But the fact is, there have been shared communities of meaning in our society, for instance during the 1960s. At that point, many whites supported the African-American civil rights movement and voted for candidates who supported affirmative action, even when it did not seem to be immediately in their short-term economic interest to do so. It was only when the sense of shared community broke down that this changed.

It is our contention that one factor of that breakdown in the sense of shared community was the contention from sectors of the Left that we had no common purpose. To many in the larger society, then, it seemed as if the absence of a

larger shared vision meant that each of these particularistic groups fighting for a larger share of the pie were struggling not for some universal conception of social justice, but rather for a narrow form of self-interest. And if others were just out for themselves, then, well, hey, why not be out for oneself too? It was in this context that the Right was able to portray (we believe unfairly) many of the struggles against sexism, racism, and homophobia as nothing more than "special interest groups coming to get for themselves" without regard to the impact on others (in other words, part of the allegedly universal selfishness that then justifies everyone else in indulging their own selfishness.

"But," you might argue, "people don't need that justification—they are already motivated by selfishness." That claim, of course, is precisely what the politics of meaning is meant to deny. Ironically, those who make this kind of reductionistic or morally relativist claim often don't believe that they apply to themselves.

There's another aspect of this discussion that we also want to comment on. There has been for a long time in the Left a climate that made white men feel that they did not have a place, that they were the quintessential oppressors. We reject that kind of discourse. The fact of the matter is that in some respects virtually every oppressed group is also involved in oppressing others, and that no one is totally without blemish. Much of the demeaning of white men has stemmed from a materialistic vision of what oppression is—oppression is the denial of economic benefits or political rights. In that case, white men seem less victims than others. But if oppression also includes the denial of meaning needs, then it turns out that white men are also oppressed, and we take this form of oppression seriously as well. Instead of putting white men down, or putting anyone down for not being "as oppressed" as "the most oppressed," we intend to create a social movement in which the game of competing for who is the most oppressed is transcended. Instead of victimology, we want a movement based on mutual respect and caring, and a move away from the attempt to put people down because they belong to a group of people who historically oppressed some other group.

"But aren't you abandoning the economically or politically oppressed?" Not at all. The fact is that the Left and liberal forces have conveyed to the rest of the population an implicit message that said, "The pain you are in doesn't matter to us very much, because it's not real pain. The real pain is that of the people who are denied economic rewards or political rights." The impact of this message, played out over the course of the past twenty years, has been to push away from the liberal world a large sector of middle-income people who responded, either explicitly or implicitly, by saying "O.K.—we aren't so oppressed according to your categories. Still, our lives feel terrible to us, and yet not only do you seem not to understand that, but you want to make us feel worse by telling us that we are being selfish if we pay attention to our own pain. So, to hell with your movements. We will turn to the Right." Thus, the liberal world has been able to deliver less and less for the economically and politically oppressed.

On the other hand, a politics of meaning movement that seeks to address the pain of middle-income people will have a far greater likelihood of actually succeeding in building the kind of cross-class alliance that could help the poor. So, here is the irony: The people who harp on the pain of the poor may actually be doing the least to help alleviate that pain, while those who address the pain of middle-income people may be far better positioned to help alleviate the suffering of the poor.

Shouldn't we be building coalitions with all the oppressed groups and with all the multicultural constituencies?

Coalitions imply that we accept as equally valid all the different agendas, and build some kind of unity for its own sake. We don't accept that approach.

Instead, we believe that the immediate task is to define a whole new approach to politics, and to attract to it those people who actually agree with that specific vision. We will try our best to bring this message to a wide variety of ethnic and cultural communities, but we do not judge the success of the enterprise in its early stages on how representative it is, but rather how intellectually, morally, and spiritually coherent it is. We have seen many political movements more concerned with representation than with a shared and coherent vision, and we don't want to repeat that mistake.

Nor do we want to create a context within which the people who actually get involved feel constantly discounted because they aren't the right people, because they belong to the wrong ethnic group, gender group, sex, or whatever. Too many people have been lost to the progressive movement because they've been put off by others who looked around the room and thought they couldn't proceed because type X or Y wasn't adequately represented. We believe that every single human being is precious, that their needs are important, and we refuse to build a political movement that implicitly conveys a different message.

At the same time, we will attempt to deepen our understanding of class, racial, and gender oppression, and fight against the many ways that our society discounts and oppresses women, African Americans and other minorities, gays and lesbians, Jews, and immigrants. But we will not do that by making people who do not fit into these categories feel that they are inadequate or that their stories and needs are unimportant to us.

We will forthrightly challenge some versions of the "political correctness" tendencies that plague the Left and turn away many of the people who would otherwise be part of a socially transformative movement.

How does a politics of meaning differ from liberal and Left politics?

First, we reject the liberal and Left conception of what politics should address. They believe that economic well-being and individual and group rights are legitimate foci for politics, because these are areas that can be measured and objectively determined, whereas issues concerned with feelings, empathy, values, and spirituality are not objectively determinable and hence ought not to shape public discourse. We believe that feelings, empathy, values, and spirituality already do play a significant role in shaping how people approach the public realm, and that liberals and the Left simply are unaware of how this happens.

Liberals and the Left worry that if values, spirituality, and other related spheres are brought into public debate that it will be right-wing values and spirituality that prevails. We believe that the attempts to keep values and spirituality out of the public discourse have only succeeded in keeping liberal and Left values out of the public arena, and that right-wing values and spirituality already shape public life. Moreover, we do not believe it is possible to have public institutions that are not already value-laden, and that the call for neutrality in the public square only masks the way that public institutions already reflect the individualism, selfishness, me-firstism, and materialism of a market-dominated society.

So, for example, we believe that schools should teach empathy and college entrance requirements should place at least as much focus on how successful the school and particular applicant are in embodying empathy as how successful they are at mastering mathematics. But we don't believe that teaching empathy is an imposition on an otherwise neutral school system. Rather, we believe that American school systems already teach a different value—the value of competition and getting ahead at the expense of others. We want to replace that value with the value of cooperation and mutual support, and teaching people how to understand economic and social life as a reflection of the actual interconnectedness of all being, masked today by an ideology that misguidedly teaches that people are really independent and potentially self-sufficient.

Another reason why liberals and the Left want to keep spirituality out of the public arena is because they tend to think that anything in this realm is suspect at best, and probably flaky or distorted. We believe that the spiritual dimension of reality is central, and while we oppose any attempt to impose a particular approach to spirituality, and support tolerance among all the different religious and spiritual traditions that have developed throughout the course of human history, we believe that the spiritual realm ought to be validated in public discourse and in any discussion of creating institutions to satisfy human needs. One need not believe in a Supreme Being or any particular formulation of the realm of spirit in order to recognize that the spiritual realm is an important component of human reality and must no longer be relegated to the sidelines, as liberals and the Left often do.

Second, we reject the economistic reductionism that underlies so much of liberal and Left political strategy. The Left and liberals thought that if they delivered "objective caring" in the form of economic benefits to specific constituencies that they would earn eternal gratitude. They were wrong. Many of the governmental programs did succeed in delivering concrete benefits, such as welfare or mortgage assistance or educational benefits. But they were delivered without any attempt to develop a consciousness among the recipients that these programs were meant to be a public articulation of caring and a way for the people in society to show how much they respected and wanted to assist each other. Public employees, often initially attracted to government precisely because of their idealistic desire to serve others, were given little opportunity and encouragement to deliver services in a way that showed caring and concern, and eventually many of them found themselves in circumstances where showing such caring would have been seen as silly or misguided by the bureaucracies for which they worked. In short, there was no "subjective caring" being attended to by the programs that liberals and the Left supported, and that was because human beings were not understood to have meaning needs.

Government ought to provide an opportunity for people to experience their own generosity and the generosity of others around them. We need to recast government as an institution that we collectively set up and perpetuate to take care of each other and to communicate to each other how much we recognize that we are mutually interdependent. Communicating that message ought to be the first and foremost task of government, and all programs ought to be shaped with that message as their guiding principle in determining who to hire, how to organize services, and how to deal with the public. Without that view of interdependency, people begin to feel that government has little to do with them, has gotten out of control, and hence no longer deserves their tax dollars or support.

Moreover, government ought to be democratically responsive at every level. There ought to be far more opportunities for people who are affected by a particular governmental agency to shape its decisions and to choose or remove from office the bureaucrats who run that agency.

Third, we reject the excessive focus on government that has tended to characterize liberal and Left politics. In our view, government has gotten too big and too distant from ordinary people. We want to see many of the tasks of building a more caring society based not in government but in civil society. For example, we do not want to see government take upon itself the task of challenging the selfishness and materialism and glorification of violence that is visited upon the public by some of the media. Instead, we want to see a social

movement emerge that will organize consumer pressure in the economy and in civil society on firms that support the dissemination of these values. At the same time, we are aware of the danger of identifying with an assault on government, since at this historical moment such an assault is being waged by the Right not in order to promote more democratic movement in the larger society, but to further reduce the responsibility of the rich and the corporations to help alleviate some of the problems that they have caused, to reduce the pressure on corporations for ecological responsibility and for decent safety and wages and health benefits for their workers, and to further diminish public support for the poor, the hungry, the homeless, the sick, the unemployed and the under-employed. So, while we want to downsize government, we suggest that we start by dramatically reducing the defense budget, corporate welfare, and tax breaks for the rich.

Fourth, we reject the liberal and Left explanation for their own political isolation and failures. Liberals and the Left talk about the way that they have been under-funded, excluded from the media, and their messages have been distorted. All this is true. Yet liberals and the Left rarely acknowledge that in the late 1960s and early 1970s they had the attention of much of the country, and that tens of millions of people were listening to their message. The problem was that the message itself was inadequate and that the internal practice of liberal and Left movements—particularly the way that they tend toward fragmentation and denouncing each other for not being pure enough (anti-racist enough, anti-sexist enough, anti-imperialist enough, politically correct enough) in some way or another—turned people off. The continuing political correctness campaign inside the Left may be wildly exaggerated by rightists who wish to use this critique as an excuse to prevent liberals, leftists, or feminists from gaining influence in the universities, but it is nevertheless enough of a reality to alienate many people who approach liberal and Left causes with an initial openness and hopefulness. What liberals and the Left have been unable to do is to recognize that part of the reason for their failure to build a mass movement is that the liberal and Left analysis does not speak to real needs for mutual recognition and connection, for love and caring, for being part of a community that values people not for their accomplishments or "what they do," but simply because they are intrinsically valuable.

Isn't it utopian to think that American society could ever be based on love and caring?

America needs this kind of utopian politics. If the opposite of utopian politics is the bland leading the bland, we embrace utopian politics. If the Bible's call to love the stranger seems implausible within the context of a selfishness- and cynicism-drenched society, then we need to be the voice affirming the possibility that biblical values could be actualized in our times.

The politics of meaning movement will be ridiculed and marginalized during the next ten years, until it gains a critical mass of adherents (a few hundred thousand people who are strongly committed to its goals). Once it gains that critical mass, it will grow very rapidly, so that by the end of the second decade of the twenty-first century it will have the support of millions of Americans, and millions more will tell you that they always believed that the bottom line ought to be the maximization of ethical, spiritual, and ecological sensitivity. And then, in the ensuing decades, the real battles for social transformation will take place.

"But the women's movement had a ready constituency—all those women who were already oppressed as women."

True, it was easier for women to recognize each other than it is for people who are the potential base for a politics of meaning movement. On the other hand, it is also true that there are a huge number of people who are already oppressed by living in a society which lionizes selfishness and materialism and cynicism and undermines, ridicules, and marginalizes caring, idealism, and hopefulness. Today, these people become the constituency for psychotherapy, drug and alcohol and television abuse, various forms of "acting out" (including participating in perfectly healthy activities like aerobics, sports, politics, and religion, but doing so in a frenetic or pathological way), and of course, becoming attracted to racist, sexist, homophobic, or xenophobic campaigns. Moreover, there are tens of millions more who are potential candidates for this movement who do not identify themselves so quickly, but who internally feel isolated, lonely, hungry for spiritual and psychological and intellectual contact, and who would welcome a social movement that addressed these needs in a serious way.

How will a politics of meaning movement grow?

Like the women's movement: in many different directions. There will be endless debates about whether we should do X or Y or Z. And the correct answer will be: Do them all.

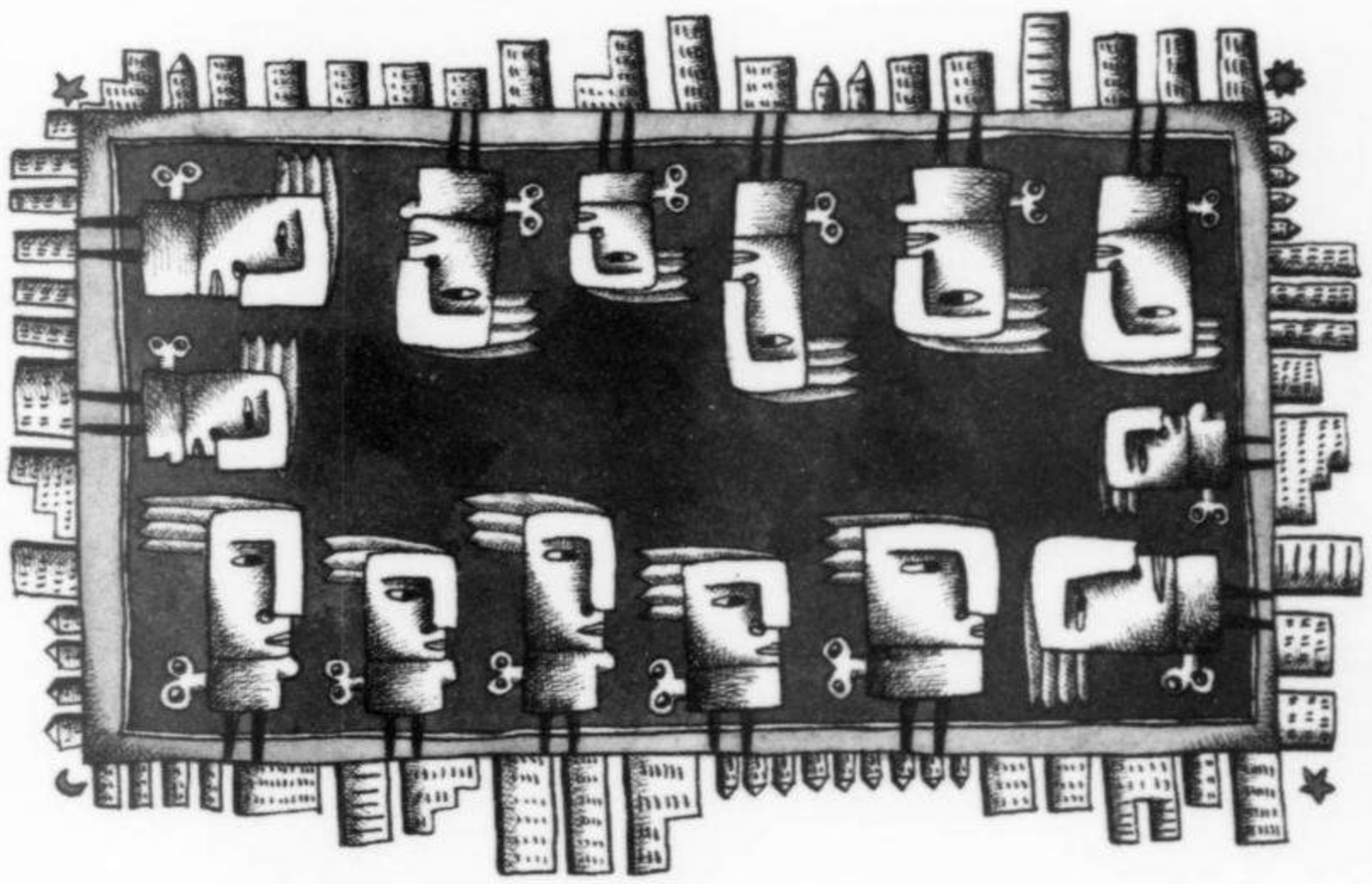
There will be organizations to help, like the Foundation for Ethics and Meaning, and there will be a major magazine to coordinate the discussion, TIKKUN, just as the women's movement had the National Organization for Women and *Ms.* magazine. But the truth is that many, many feminists never became part of NOW and never read *Ms.* Many took feminist ideas into their own institutions and fought for that perspective. We hope the same thing will happen with the politics of meaning. We imagine that within the next two decades many people will be fighting for these ideas in their unions and in their churches and synagogues and mosques, in their community organizations and in their workplaces.

We hope that local chapters of the Foundation for Ethics and Meaning will create study groups and

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Observing the Sabbath

Martha Mendelsohn



MAIRAV SALOMON

Every Saturday, on my way to the gym, I run into the Sabbath observers on their way to services. The bedecked, multiparous women wearing what look like "high holiday" outfits (I remind myself that, except for Yom Kippur, Shabbat is the highest holiday of all). Small boys with Ninja Turtle *kippot* anchored with bobby pins, girls in billowing party coats. The occasional posturer swathed in his *tallit* en route to shul.

At noon, returning from my treadmill workout, it's even harder to avoid the Sabbath traffic. As they make their way home from Lincoln Square Synagogue, B'nai Jeshurun, The Jewish Center, Young Israel, the Carlebach Shul, apartment *shtiebles*, and other institutions that attest to the verve of the Upper West Side's Jewish community, the Sabbath observers are everywhere, bucking the shoppers and drug dealers. No matter which direction they walk in, they're walking in a different direction from me.

Later, as I rush to the supermarket, they stroll home from languorous lunches filled with prayer and song (or so I imagine). Though I rarely go to synagogue, I observe the Sabbath, too. Every Saturday, I confront it, I'm up against it. It's a hobby for me, observing the Sabbath observers. As though I weren't Jewish, as though Shabbat were some exotic, alien ritual, some distant custom I'd just discovered.

But I grew up with *Shabbos.* Friday nights at an hour as uncompromising as an arrival time on a train schedule, my father released my sister and me from homework the way, an hour earlier, he had released his office staff and factory employees, few of them Jewish. Dropping my pencil—forbidden to pick it up for the next twenty-five hours—I felt lighthearted, emancipated, free.

As a child, I assumed that every Jew in New York walked to synagogue as we did each Shabbat morning. When I caught a Jewish friend and her mother hailing a cab one Saturday, I tried to stop them—surely they'd forgotten it was *Shabbos*! In my childhood, before I began hailing my own *Shabbos* cabs, the day of rest's travel prohibitions loomed large. When my cousins were bar mitzvahed on the West Side of Manhattan, to avoid the risk of inclement weather keeping us from the festivities, we left our East Side apartment on Friday afternoon, "travel" candlesticks and Kiddush cup in tow, to check into the Brewster Hotel, where our relatives from Brooklyn also spent the night. In our room, we found challahs and Danish pastries delivered from the local Hungarian bakery, courtesy of our hosts, and advance samples of the personalized bar mitzvah yarmulke.

When we celebrated our *simchas,* the West Side and Brooklyn branches took up residence in an East Side hotel. My mother sent over schnecken and flowers.

Riding on the Sabbath became my first chronic viola-

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tion. By the time I reached my teens, my father's emphasis on the letter of the law, on the crime of committing such offenses as turning on lights had turned me off. I viewed the seemingly endless list of prohibitions as a trap, a prison. I wanted to spend the weekend like everybody else in my largely secular circle. The prohibition against work? Well, it was too much work not to work.

My mother, less religious than my father, resented her own Sabbath restrictions. Abetting my transgressions, she'd coach, "Say you went for a walk," as I'd leave for a Saturday afternoon movie, dressed in jeans.

Free to break the Sabbath, I no longer gave myself a break. Now there was no day that homework didn't hang over my head, demanding completion. *Shabbos* became Saturday. As an adult, there's no day when I don't shlep home heavy bags or ignore the laundry. Who is freer on Saturday mornings? My husband and I, weighed down by pounds of groceries, or the shul-goers, holding each other's hands?

Like me, the Sabbath observers observe the oranges and peppers on special outside Fairway or the half-price sale on Gap jeans. But unlike me, they've been liberated; they don't have to go in.

Everywhere, the rest ethic has been laid to rest. Years ago, businesses respected the Christian Sabbath. Sunday was, at the very least, a day of leisure. There was no way to do a week's marketing; all the stores were closed.

Now that our beepers, e-mail, and faxes function full-time, Sunday isn't the Lord's Day anymore. Everything is "open" around the clock. Needing to do research for a term paper, my younger son is indignant to find the public library closed on Sunday. Growing up in a "twenty-four hours" world, "Closed" is a foreign notion to him.

In this long post-Eden stretch, the punishment has become the prize. Lack of a work ethic isn't the problem: the temptation is to spend all our time working. Stalked by technology, snared by our own creations, we have become our own worst taskmasters. We work late and work out weekends, honing our bodies, dulling our souls. Overtime is the norm. "I'm still at the office!" boasts a friend one Friday night at 10, in the tone she might have used in the past to announce she was in Paris or Hawaii. We worship a new idol: the God of Work. Should we relive the Exodus each Passover only to reenslave ourselves the rest of the year?

Studies conducted in a munitions factory during World War II showed that, beyond a certain point, factory workers lose their efficacy, that lengthening the workday two hours doesn't increase production. But where services are billed by the hour, who cares how productive those extra hours are? At a law firm interview, my older son is informed that lunch will be provided on the premises (if not on the house), so that he won't need to take time off to eat. Tethered to these glorified sweatshops, our health and family relations decrease while the bottom line increases. The financial gains are offset by losses that don't appear on the balance sheet. Corporate downsizing usually means upping employees' individual workloads. Economic necessity convinced our immigrant forebears to stay open on Saturday; the reasons are still economic, but these days the impetus is greed, not subsistence.

Non-stop work inevitably saps our emotional responses. A woman I know informs her boss she will have to be out of the office on a Thursday—the only time her doctor has available—to undergo ambulatory surgery. And she will need to stay home the next day—doctor's orders. "You'll be out of work two days," her boss objects, without inquiring about the procedure, "can't you have the surgery on Friday?"

The gaunt-looking president of a leading university peers exhaustedly from the cover of a national newsmagazine. His doctor has prescribed an emergency sabbatical. To be admitted to the college he spends night and day governing, high school students slave away, stuffing their schedules with often meaningless activities. Meanwhile, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome afflicts more and more young people, its baffling array of symptoms reducing them, ironically, to total inaction.

Clearly, the world needs a little *Shabbos* right this very minute. The concept of a holy rest day has never made more sense. It seems that only God can save us from ourselves. (Warnings from the Surgeon General never stopped my father from smoking, but on *Shabbos* he was miraculously free of his addiction.) The ancient world viewed the Sabbath with suspicion, as a waste of time and proof of Jewish laziness, but these days God has more clout: A Jew who doesn't work on Saturday for religious reasons can't be argued with. On the other hand, someone who stays home for other than religious observance is considered unambitious, a slacker.

Of course, the Sabbath, hardly a period of idle inactivity, requires considerable preparation. My mother had all day to make soup and chop liver, but today, with both men and women working outside the home, Shabbat meals must be a community enterprise. A rotation of homes and potluck contributions can help remove the potentially onerous aspects of Sabbath observance.

At last, I understand the importance of those inflexible candle-lighting times. What if I'd had the option of starting *Shabbos* whenever I wanted? A perfectionist, I might have felt compelled to finish one assignment,

(Continued on p. 76)

Time Is All There Is

Letty Cottin Pogrebin

Since turning fifty a few years back (*anno horribilus*, to quote the Queen), I have been obsessed with time. For most people of my generation, especially women, the major issue is age and aging, a reasonable focus, given the culture's pathological equation of beauty with youth. However dismayed I may be by my encroaching physical deterioration, I still don't think depression about one's expanding waistline can compare to the existential angst brought on by contemplating one's incredible shrinking future. If I'm lucky, I may live three more decades, but how many of those years will be healthy, sentient, and productive? Surely illness and frailty will alter my reality one of these days. How much time do I have left in which to enjoy my loved ones, do my work, be part of a community? How long will my senses let me read the newspaper, smell the potato latkes, taste a peach, listen to Mozart? Why is it that the people who most seem to cherish the time of their life are those who have faced death?



Such questions have aroused in me a sharp awareness of how glorious the ordinary is, yet how often we take it for granted; how precious every minute is, yet how many of us live in T.S. Eliot's "unattended Moment." Since the big five-oh, I've become both obsessed with time and *mindful* of it. I am studying time. If I really concentrate, I can feel it racing by. Sometimes, when I manage to live inside the attended moment, I can even slow it down and honor it.

Attentiveness is no more natural than good posture. Consciousness slips and slides and wanders off, forgetting its mission. Sometimes we need the urgency of Thomas Mann's admonition, "Hold fast the time! Guard it, watch over it, every hour, every minute! Unregarded it slips away, like a lizard, smooth, slippery, faithless … Hold every moment sacred. Give each clarity and meaning, each the weight of thine awareness, each its true and due fulfillment."

But how? The only moments I know that are measured so precisely and lived so watchfully are musical moments—that millisecond when the timpani must enter, or the cymbals clash—or the attenuated ten-second count in a boxing match, or the final seconds in a close basketball game when one feels time pass into a different dimension. If human destiny were to swing back and forth as precipitously as the score of a basketball game, we too might tune in to every second with rapt attention. Otherwise, it's impossible, if not insane, to attempt such vigilance as would be required to heed Mann's words and give each moment equal weight. By the same token, it would be unrealistic to hope to live each day with the "unambiguous happiness" that the author Robert Hine felt when he emerged from years of blindness, regained his

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Letty Cottin Pogrebin is the author of eight books including Deborah, Golda, and Me: Being Female and Jewish in America. *This article has been adapted from* Getting Over Getting Older: An Intimate Journey. Copyright ©1996 *by Letty Cottin Pogrebin. Reprinted by permission of Little, Brown and Co., Inc.*

ART BY MAIRAV SALOMON

sight, and beheld the world in all its glory—the same world the rest of us hardly notice when we wake up to it every morning. Short of returning from death or darkness, how can we see more clearly what we have while we have it?

I find my answer in the Jewish view of time, whose concepts are eminently transportable to secular life. Judaism's inordinate preoccupation with time is discernible throughout our texts and traditions. The Torah opens with, "In the Beginning," and the Talmud with the words, "From when?"—both of which, according to Jerusalem professor Debbie Weissman, suggest that "The main thrust of Torah is to teach us how to spend our limited time on earth wisely."

Time consciousness is woven into the fabric of Jewish life and Jewish death. The Jewish day is delineated by a set of prayers and time-bound obligations. The *brit milah* (ritual circumcision) takes place on the eighth day of the male infant's life. The bat and bar mitzvah happens on schedule, at age thirteen. The traditional year of mourning is divided into fixed segments—the first seven days (*shiva*) make different demands than the rest of the first month (*shloshim*)

I am learning to set aside moments of pure-time serenity, in which I can be intensely mindful of the present as it is unfolding, whether in stillness or in passion.

which makes different demands than the next eleven months. The Jewish year is freighted with six fast days, eight days to eat unleavened bread, eight days to light Hanukkah candles, seven weeks in which we "count the omer" to enumerate the days between the Israelites' liberation from slavery and the giving of the law on Mount Sinai. Counting is our way of noticing: It reminds us that a day counts or it doesn't. Counting imputes meaning; one does not count what one does not value.

"To live as Jews, we must experience time distinctively," writes Rabbi Irving Greenberg about the dual time consciousness of Jews who use the lunar Hebrew calendar as well as the Gregorian calendar. We are, Greenberg adds, " ... saturated with Jewish memory, value systems and common experiences even as we share the memory, history and time count of all humanity."

This is not to say that Jews are better than other peoples, only that we are heirs to a unique means of recording, sensing, and ordering time, all of which—given my Jewish identity, education, and upbringing—could not help but affect my thinking. I absorbed the Judaic view of time through ethnic osmosis and childhood religious practice, but what most profoundly altered my relationship to time was Abraham Joshua Heschel's remarkable book, *The Sabbath*.

Heschel says that most people look at time as "a slick treacherous monster with a jaw like a furnace, incinerating every moment of our lives." Recoiling in fear from its fierce appetites and its foreshadowing of our mortality, we turn our backs on time and take refuge in space, or rather in what Heschel calls "thinghood," substances that occupy space. Indeed, I realize that I spend much of my life producing *things*—magazine articles, vegetable soup, political petitions—things I can see, touch, read; things I can measure as the product of my waking hours; things that take up space in my life. As long as I have something to show for my time, I tell myself that I know where the time went and what it was for. I feel that I master time when I use it well, packing it to the fullest. But, insists Heschel, "One can only master time in time."

You don't have to be Jewish to see the paradox. While most of us try to control time by harnessing it to produce things that have a real presence in physical space, we miss experiencing time as a thing unto itself. Time *as* time can only be mastered in its own realm while we're inside it, attending to it, appreciating it, moving with and not against it. This, Heschel writes, is why we have the Sabbath—God's gift of time. ("I have given thee something that belongs to Me. What is that something? A day.")

The Sabbath is *pure* time: "The hours of the seventh day are significant in themselves; their significance and beauty do not depend on any work, profit or progress we may achieve." On that one day, we are supposed to enter time's realm and treasure time for its own sake. We are not only expected to desist from manual labor ("Labor is a craft, but perfect rest is an art") but to contemplate creation, the product of God's labor. We are supposed to empty the Sabbath hours of all mundane talk, thoughts, and behavior in order to approximate as best we can the splendor of post-messianic eternity. Rather than communicate through productivity, we are to communicate through inaction. Not working says something. Not writing, not driving, all this proclaims that humanity is connected to a source of productivity greater than its own.

Though I remain incapable of the rigors of strict religious observance, I have often envied those who, as the expression goes, "keep the Sabbath." I function in a milieu in which time-trapping and time-tension is the way of the world, but those who keep the Sabbath are keeping time in a much more organic and literal sense: They are spending one-seventh of the week within the very essence of time.

The novelist Mary Gordon once interviewed Alice Shalvi, a prominent Israeli feminist, founder and chair of the Israel Women's Network, who also happens to be an Orthodox Jew, a professor of English literature, and the grandmother of fifteen.

"How do you do it all?" asked Gordon.

The answer, said Shalvi, is the Sabbath. "How many women do you know who have twenty-four hours a week when they are not on call, [but are] forced to reflect and to be quiet?"

Though as fully engaged in worldly pursuits as anyone I know, Alice Shalvi has something in her life that most of us are missing. Heschel calls it, variously, "a palace in time … not a date but an atmosphere … *a sanctuary in time* … the opportunity to sanctify time, to raise the good to the level of the holy."

One evening, while speaking at a Harvard-Radcliffe Hillel event, I ventured that, had I been raised with the sacred time of Heschel's Sabbath instead of the shoulds and shouldn'ts of the Sabbaths of my own childhood, I might have been a different person with a different life. Instead of rushing from one project to another, wondering which activity should be the day's priority, I might have kept myself in better balance. I might have learned respect for the fullness of empty time.

A young graduate student in the audience identified herself as a Modern Orthodox feminist and asked in a genuinely puzzled tone, "But without Shabbat, how have you been able to distinguish the holy from the rest? When I had mononucleosis, I slept constantly. The weeks ran together and for a month I was too sick to keep Shabbat. Every day was the same. I had no way to measure holiness. Without Shabbat, all of life is like day after day of sleep."

Such blissful certitude is beyond me, but with some effort—a leap of consciousness, if not faith—I've been able to construct a vastly scaled-down version of the palace in time. I am learning to set aside moments of pure-time serenity, in which I can be intensely mindful of the present as it is unfolding, whether in stillness or in passion. I have not lost my need to produce "thing-hood," nor can I hold every moment sacred as Mann would have it, or even every Sabbath, as Heschel and my ancestors would wish. But I find that I can perform one small ritual that satisfies my need for mindfulness in the present. I can stop running long enough to honor those moments, ordinary or sublime, that seem to me deserving of elevation "to the level of the holy." I call these my *shehechiyanu* moments and I acknowledge them as gifts of time.

Observant Jews say a blessing over dozens of everyday acts, from waking up to washing, breaking bread, drinking wine, studying Torah, doing a good deed, even going to the bathroom. The blessings help them to acknowledge the wonders of creation and to notice things that might otherwise be done mechanically and without inner meaning. I have always been especially moved by one blessing in particular, the *shehechiyanu*, which is usually said at the start of a holiday, or upon doing or seeing something for the first time that gives one inordinate happiness. It is a brief sentence that simply thanks God for having sustained us and enabled us to live long enough to reach this special moment. It is also known as the Blessing over Time. I've taken to saying a *shehechiyanu* in situations that overwhelm me with awe and gratitude—moments of transcendent joy, love, humility, or peace, in which doing and being, an act and its meaning, are one and the same. Living in a *schehechiyanu* moment brings me as close as I have ever come in secular life to the realm of the sacred. The least I can do is to stop and say thank you. □

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Jerusalem Journal

Wendy Orange

Monday, March 11

"It's just like the Scud attacks," says Miriam, next to me on the El Al flight. "You never know where the next one will hit; you're just waiting. Sure it'll come, but where...." She pauses. "Everyone says, 'Why go home to Tel Aviv now? Stay in Chicago another month.' They don't understand: When there's death or war in Israel, I need to be there." Miriam, a Leah Rabin look-alike, talks of Peres. "He's all we've got. I voted Likud all my life. It was only in '92 when I realized we can't go on this way, our boys dying in Gaza and Nablus. For what? I'll vote for Peres this time too, but he put too much faith in Arafat. The crackdown now is too little, too late."

Just like Miriam, I too wanted to hop the next plane after the fourth bomb in Tel Aviv, the over-overkill that rattled so many of us. That Monday I'd arrived in New York, house hunting. I was looking at an apartment when a Jewish realtor asked: "You heard about the bus bomb in Israel?"

What planet does he live on, I thought, having just spent the second Sunday in a row checking by phone with friends and their kids in Jerusalem.

"Dizengoff," he continued, shaking his head.

"When?" I panicked, suddenly dizzy, shocked by the frequency and ferocity of these bombings.

"An hour ago," the realtor replied, motioning to me to resume negotiating with Sally, the owner of the building.

Before the news about Tel Aviv, we were talking of six things at once, checking each other out as tenant-landlord and potential neighbors. Now, back at the kitchen counter, I couldn't focus on bookshelves or garbage collection.

"My friends' kids all hang at Dizengoff Mall. Short of getting to Israel, I need CNN and a phone," I explained, distracted. Sally—an animated, patrician blonde—seeing my distress, exclaimed: "We *love* Jews here. Why don't they just get out of there? Give it up. Come to New York, Palm Beach, Miami?"

Leaning into our easy intimacy, I whispered, "Sally, let's keep that little thought to ourselves." She laughed, conceding, "I guess I don't know much about Israel. Is giving it up so far out?"



AP PHOTO/MATI

In Hebron, Palestinians whose house was demolished by Israeli bulldozers argue with I.D.F. soldiers.

This is a new one, I thought, remembering yesterday when I'd been inundated by calls from Jewish acquaintances in wild pain, with their more predictable reactions: "Decimate the West Bank"; "Time to give up"; "Oslo was a mistake." These usually rational types lost the gradations, reverting to the fantasy that every Palestinian is a terrorist, while I kept mumbling: "Yeah, but unfortunately there are a lot of decent people living there. We need to keep in touch with them, not decimate them."

Had I gone to Israel immediately after the Tel Aviv attack, would my mood now be different? I don't know, but something happened while waiting a week to make the trip. My initial urgency to see every bomb site, visit hospitals, attend funerals has given way to foreboding.

This is my first trip to Israel where I'm traveling in dread and fear, feeling fragile, imagining horrors. In my

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Wendy Orange was TIKKUN's Mideast correspondent in Jerusalem during Rabin's administration. She is writing a book about Israelis and Palestinians.

section of the El Al jet, we pass around magazines, ferreting for anything in the U.S. press on the current situation. Someone hands me an article by the Israeli novelist David Grossman on the current anxiety:

> Fear masters everything: when you walk down the street you inspect all those who pass you with, as we say in Hebrew, seven eyes. Any one of them could be our murderer (and to your surprise you discover that in almost all of even the familiar faces, you can discern some sort of sinister feature) … Should I stop for a drink at this stand, or wait until I reach the next one? … I find myself walking down a main street I have traversed since my boyhood … and my mind cuts that favorite landscape into little pieces. Everything is so fragile—the body, routine, family, the fabric of life."
>
> … Israel and moderate Palestinians must help each other *in every possible way*, because peace is the only state that can promise that at least our grandchildren—*I no longer believe it will be true for our children*—will be able to live a life of security, normality, regularity and happiness...(emphasis added. *Newsweek*, March 18, 1996)

Like sleepwalkers, Palestinians under curfew and house arrest move back in time to the intifada. Allegiance with moderate Israelis is too new; on both sides, terrorist acts instantly open old wounds, kindle familiar hate.

In another article, Sari Nusseibeh, a Palestinian moderate, echoes Grossman:

> I consider this one of the darkest and most shameful periods in my history as a Palestinian and as a Muslim....[the extremists] do not understand pain, not even if it is inflicted on them, let alone if they inflict it on others. (*Newsweek*, March 18, 1996)

Up and down, across the aisles, we hand around what little we find in the U.S. press, poring over these few articles the way visitors over the years shared Frommer's Israel guide books, reading eagerly to prepare ourselves psychologically, as if any of us can accurately anticipate what we're flying into.

I'd already gotten a most revealing glimpse into the current reality on "Nightline" three nights back. Dave Marash, a veteran TV journalist, did a half-hour piece on the bombings that left more than sixty dead and scores wounded. Crisscrossing borders, Marash moved his camera crew from sobbing Tel Aviv teenagers to Jerusalem bomb sites and hospitals, finally entering the Palestinian living rooms of the West Bank.

Although Marash showed compassion toward everyone he interviewed, he obviously identified most easily with naked Israeli pain. The Palestinians interviewed weren't from Hamas or from its radical Izza al Din-al-Qassam Brigade; they didn't openly support the killers. But they were a far cry from the clarity and level-headedness of Sari Nusseibeh.

Riveted, I knew exactly how Marash felt as he sat drinking heavily sugared tea among gracious people with strange takes and convoluted positions, a confusion of grief and anti-Israeli rage. He accepted cup after cup—impossible to refuse since they're proffered with such urgent hospitality, even as you fear an insulin coma coming on.

I watched him lose the narrative thread, unable to follow the logic of this Palestinian family, whose son and brother was a passenger killed in the first Number 18 bus explosion in Jerusalem. Adamant that their grief over his death should not abet Israeli rage or "propaganda," they move from sadness to surliness, to an anger that suggests Israeli complicity in the tragedy. These convolutions leave Marash confused, as he wasn't among the clear-cut, pure, and purely warranted Israeli pain.

Then came the most revealing incident—one that speaks volumes about where we've yet to go, how the current cycle of violence is sloping. At a pro-peace, anti-terror rally among Palestinians in Qalqilya, an Arab-American translates for Marash as several hundred people, mostly men and boys, wave banners and shout. Suddenly, the translator looks around in surprise. He jostles the men nearest him, burrowing into the crowd, ignoring Marash, shouting in Arabic as the cameras follow him. He's marking the signs they carry, imploring, scolding. What's transpired? These Palestinians have slipped from anti-terror into anti-Israel rhetoric. "Down with Occupation," they've begun to chant, as if by force of habit. The translator yells "No," trying to choreograph the crowd, looking for the leaders, "Not *against* Israel—*against* Palestinian terror. You're not marching *for* "the Engineer" Ayyash, but *against* his followers." The crowd looks confused, readily taking his orders, re-forming under his stage direction.

This moment showed that slippage from the "new

Middle East" back into the "old hostilities" is a knee-jerk response; that the distance between hope and hate is only a nanometer long. Palestinian reversion to intifada rhetoric doesn't reveal a congenital or impassable hatred for Israel as much as it shows the way terror attacks and counterattacks throw everyone back to square one. As Hamas fractures and Israelis go on the attack, even for Palestinian moderates the allure of rage is magnetic, automatic.

I don't know why, but I see that holding to a vision of peace and impulses toward empathy and creative coexistence are extraordinarily difficult. Like sleepwalkers, Palestinians under curfew and house arrest move reflexively back in time as soon as the Israelis seal them in their villages. Immediately, they feel under "collective punishment" and show no understanding of Israeli pain or reasoning. Initial rage against their "brothers'" terror reverts to rage against all Israelis: anger at the closure, their weakened economy, their immediate duress, as if Palestinian autonomy is a fantasy or has gone up in the smoke of the terrorist's bombs. Allegiance with moderate Israelis is too new; on both sides, terrorist acts instantly open old wounds, kindle familiar hate. "Not against occupation, against terror," the translator shouted, as the guys on the street slipped back to the intifada. The minute Israelis are back, blowing up houses and making arrests, ethnic loyalties surface, symmetrical with broad Israeli distrust and murderous rage at all Palestinians for the bombs and deaths.

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Tuesday, March 12

None of these previews, no subtle awareness helps when navigating the streets of Jerusalem. Right off the plane, I'm inside a mall, waiting on long lines at the motor-vehicle registry, suspiciously watching every face, truck, cardboard package. The streets of Jerusalem, usually jammed with cars and pedestrians at midday, are unnaturally quiet.

My friend Shimon, who grew up on a northern kibbutz in the 1950s dodging bombs, carrying dead soldiers in his arms by age twelve, is pro-peace. But like everyone here in Israel, he is now wary and weary. He says: "It's quiet because the Arabs aren't on the streets." But I think he's wrong: I see far fewer *Israelis*. In the extremes of jet lag, I desperately want to get to Shimon's home, safe inside—the only place vigilance abates.

"House arrest" takes on a new meaning. The Palestinians are forced again into theirs; Israelis have the choice to go out, but for many of us it's a Sarajevo moment: bread or death. I too now find the simplest decisions no longer simple: Do I go to the market at Machane Yehuda or skip it? Should I drive to Tel Aviv or play it safe? I want to go to the local café, but today, maybe it's best to take cappuccino to go? These questions will subside when the bombings stop, but now they disrupt our routines, forcing us into superstitious mind games. The anxiety is so contagious. Yet how can I come half way around the world to stay at home? On the eve of the international anti-terrorism summit at Sharm el-Sheikh, my body decides: I sleep for fifteen hours.

Wednesday, March 13

It's late afternoon, and after watching the highlights of the summit on TV with friends—("Charm the Sheiks," as someone says), I have to get outside. I walk to the local cafe on Azza Street. Because President Clinton is en route from Egypt via Tel Aviv up here to Jerusalem's Laromme Hotel, the streets are completely empty, quieter than on Yom Kippur. Police are everywhere; no cars are allowed on any roads, but no one is walking around either. The effect is surreal. I chat with a policeman "from up north," a guy with an angelic face (like many of the sensitive young Israelis in the army). He's smart, almost effete, the kind of kid you love the minute you meet him for his absence of guile or ambition, and for his depletion from day after day of fifteen-hour shifts.

After we talk on the corner, he follows me into the cafe. "How do you know who to trust?" I ask.

"It's all in the eyes. The body doesn't lie," he answers.

"Yes," I say, "but now *everyone's* afraid."

"The terror maniacs, their eyes are different," he answers. "They're cold. Their bodies are rattled."

We sit at the cafe counter, drinking coffee. The owner tells us business dropped by half the last week, but he knows it'll come back: "We just need another week with no bombings." As we three talk, a weirdo—thin black jacket, shifty eyes—comes in and sits two seats away from us. Everyone mocks me for saying that half the time I can't tell an Arab from a Jew, but I've noticed that others can't always tell the difference, either, even those who live here, not at first glance. I check this guy out while the policeman and the owner talk. He looks unsavory, at best.

"Check him?" I ask the policeman.

"It's not polite to check people, not right to pick on everyone who's strange," he replies softly. But I didn't mean frisking him or making a scene. Without looking around, he says: "That one's drunk, in a bad way, but he's no killer."

"But you didn't even look," I protest.

"I looked," he says quietly, as the guy orders two beers.

Jerusalem's Rechavia and surrounding neighborhoods are flooded with 10,000 police. Vans with flashing blue lights sit all along the streets—police and young soldiers (male and female) chat as they cordon off every intersection. A friend and I stop and talk with them, a three-subject conversation that repeats on every corner: The long hours are exhausting; any maniac can still get through "even if we have a million police and soldiers—all a killer has to do is get hold of one uniform and gun, it's that simple"; and "We're stuck politically. No way forward now, no way back. We can't really ever separate, yet we don't trust them and they don't trust us."

These youngsters light up only when TV anchor Haim Yavin drives up, following Clinton's limousine. "Haim Yavin," they all say, their faces breaking into wide smiles. He's their Walter Cronkite, giving them comfort in crisis.

Jerusalem feels safe tonight because Clinton's here and because there's no one on the streets except soldiers and police. With the American president at the Laromme, we walk without fear. But where is everyone?

Thursday, March 14

The home of "the Engineer," Yahya Ayyash, in the tiny hamlet of Ramat on the West Bank is being blown up, using the exact amount of dynamite the last suicide bomber used in Tel Aviv. Not an eye for an eye, but an explosive for an explosive. What I'll later learn is that this provocative action is a tedious event for the press,



AP PHOTO/EYAL WARSHAVSKY

Rescue workers comb through the wreckage of the March 3 suicide bus bombing in Jerusalem.

hour after hour, in the bone-chilling rain. My photojournalist friend Rina tells me the Israeli army kept delaying the explosion, measuring the area precisely, postponing the demolition, clearing out villagers, measuring again—a meticulous and time-consuming procedure. Everyone became so uncomfortable as they sat on the freezing cold hillside that politics all but dissipated. When the soldiers finally demolished the house, even the Palestinian journalists were relieved.

At the press conference held by Peres and Clinton today, I notice that Peres's skin has a decidedly gray pallor. His words are strong, but I think he looks sick, although no one agrees. Having been away since November, I see how much he's altered physically since Rabin's death.

As the two leaders talk and take questions, I watch Clinton. He must be exhausted, but I notice how well he paces himself: While standing erect, he meditates, head down, as if entering a beta zone. Journalists are lined up with questions at a microphone, but he remains in his waking nap. Then, asked a question, he stays quiet until the switch of his thought turns on. Only then does he look up, suddenly alert, responding in an honest voice: smart answers to all the expected questions—about the promised U.S. money and technical assistance, about Syria's Hafiz al-Assad, and especially about Israeli elections. He obviously likes the repartee, thinks well on his feet, his love for Israel encircling the mostly Jewish (Israeli, foreign, and White House) press

(Continued on p. 77)

And Adam Knew Eve: A Meditation

Mordechai Beck

Some years ago, I was approached by close friends with a request for a gift for their forthcoming marriage: to write a meditation for their new life together. Subsequently, other friends have made similar requests. Though each script I prepared was tailored to suit the particular couple (for example, concerning the month in which they were to be married), I offer here the essence of the meditation which can, of course, be further adapted.

All creatures yearn for intimacy. The loneliness of the discrete individual is transcended only through fusion with another, which is the principle of combination at the root of creation.

In his gloss on the opening lines of Genesis, that supreme rabbinic anthologist and commentator, Rashi (eleventh-century Alsace-Lorraine), raises a tantalizing possibility. In Hebrew, the first word of the Bible—*B'reshit*—is in the construct form, as if it stated: "In the beginning of ..." Surely, observes Rashi, if it is chronology we are being offered, the text should begin: "God first created the heavens, then the earth, then the light, etc." But this apparently is not the intention. The text tells us that the beginning sprang not from chronology but from the swirling energy of chaotic youthfulness: the first thing created was the heavens and the earth, that is, a couple.

This is a fundamental law of the cosmos. Each coupling worthy of the name is but a novel repetition and extension of this pristine connection. This is further hinted at in the very first letter of the holy Torah, *bet*, which is two, the primal couple.

Secure within each of us, the erotic combines mystery and science, the knowable and the hidden. When its rules are properly followed, it reaches all the worlds. As exalted as these worlds might appear, they are essentially within our grasp, even if they are beyond our understanding. All we need to travel are the appropriate directions, a map of our inner desires. In rabbinic Hebrew, this is known as *kavanna*, which stands for active intention, a willful bending toward the object of our contemplation.

There is no higher *kavanna* than the contemplation of God. This is the ultimate ecstasy, enclosing the whole even while opening us up to an endless infinity, which is a cipher for God. This is not to deny the human dimension, which is essential. This ecstatic state can be reached through the mind by way of study of the Divine Wisdom as distilled in the holy Torah. But its beauty is that it can be reached, too, through the body. The early sages knew this well and recommended that, during intercourse, couples should concentrate on the Divine name.

A hint of this is to be found in the rabbinic discussion regarding the recital of the *Sh'ma*—the Jewish credo of Divine unity—before we go to sleep. The Talmudic sage, Abba Binyamin, was wont to say this prayer on entering bed (*Brachot*, 5b). According to the eighteenth-century mystic, Rabbi Nahman of Breslov, this was because "he did not wish to separate saying the *Sh'ma* from having intercourse with his wife." (*Likute Mohoran*, 46). Both acts are designed to unify the extremes, the physical and the spiritual. Without the possibility of unity, the tensions between them would otherwise remain unresolved, or tear us asunder. Anticipating disapproval of his interpretation, perhaps, Rabbi Nahman was also wont to quote another sagacious saying: "One descends, only in order to ascend."

There is also the well-known incident related in the name of Rabbi Gamliel the Tanna (teacher in the mishnaic period, second century C.E.) who, on the first night of his marriage, recited the *Sh'ma*, despite the current trend to forego this nightly custom (*Mishna Brachot*, 2; 5). His reaction to his holy students—who were presumably within listening distance of their master—is exemplary. Even the delights of the marriage bed could not quench his hunger for the holy. For him there was no division.

A second reference to this same incident includes the observation that not all who are disposed to unify the Name on his wedding night are capable of doing so and should desist; the legitimate yearning for unity carries

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Mordechai Beck is a British-born writer and artist who has been living in Jerusalem since 1973. His article, "Dreaming of Tarshish/Living in Nineveh," appeared in the September/October 1995 issue of TIKKUN.

with it dangers of its own. The Tanna, in whose name this wise saw is quoted, is none other than Shimon ben Gamliel—the son of the Rabbi Gamliel of the first Mishna, and just possibly, since he was the eldest son, the fruit of his parents' first-night tryst.

The Tosefta (a contemporaneous text to the Talmud) notes that the celebrants of the first week's celebrations of a marriage are excused from all their prayers—except for the recital of the *Sh'ma*. Such is the contagious power of ecstasy.

The first line of the *Sh'ma*—"*Sh'ma Yisrael, Adonai Eloheinu, Adonai Echad*"—contains these hints. The word *sh'ma* is both hearing and understanding. This is a metaphor for Divine wisdom, which exists simultaneously on two levels, the transcendent and the immanent, and which is suggested by the two names given for God in this first line—*Adonai Eloheinu* (literally, the Lord our God). Prior to these comes *Yisrael*—the knower. Having passed through these two levels and realized that ultimately there is no division between the two, then *Adonai Ehad*, God is One. Unity prevails. This is the optimal moment for *zivug*—coupling, ejaculation, and reception of the seed. The word *ehad* (one) and *ahavah* (love) have the same *gematria* (numerical value)—thirteen, which is exactly half of the numerical value of the word *Adonai* (God). God is "created" by the bringing together of two individuals in the act of love.

On more than one occasion, the Talmud tells us that man is a microcosm, a small world. Yet how can this be, if each man or woman is a discrete entity? It can only refer to the coming together of two as one. In that tiny fraction of time in which the masculine seed is introduced into the female womb, that split second of conception, a new creation, a new world, is conceived. This is the knowledge shared by Adam and Eve after leaving Eden (Genesis 4:1). True knowledge can only be touched, but never possessed; that knowledge is always beyond the angel's swirling sword.

The tree of life lies beyond the tree of knowledge of good and evil. It is rooted in faith, which begins only where knowledge ends. The Zohar says that in Eden the tree of knowledge grows out of the tree of life. All our essential self is contained within our seed, which is a tiny, putrifying drop. Human vitality is most fully realized when it is offered to another. In this it simulates the Divine predilection to create the universe, which is an essence beyond Itself.

When asked by a Roman queen what God did after finishing the creation of the world, Rabbi Akiva replied that He took up the profession of match-making. But how does God bring together couples, as if He were an earthly *shadchan* (matchmaker)? In the Zohar, it is reported that the copulation of male and female elements within the Divine Being itself brings about the birth of souls that then descend into this lower world to inhabit and give vitality to human beings. In Gershom Scholem's words: "In God there is a union of the active and the passive, procreation and conception, from which all mundane life and bliss are derived." I have heard it said, though I have not had it verified, that it was the vision of this holy copulation that drove one of Akiva's contemporaries, Ben Zoma, crazy (*Hagiga* 14a).

In the kabbalistic tradition, the spiritual spheres—the *sefirot*—are identified with the limbs of the human body. We are God's wisdom incarnate. We have it within us to integrate the upper and lower worlds. On the simplest level, this is a cipher for the physical and spiritual nature present in all living creatures. The former drives us "downward" into the sensual world, the latter "upward" toward the higher delights of the intellect and soul. Trying to define these entities demonstrates the limits of human vocabulary, confined to the elemental dimensions of space, time, and causality. Ours is not the way of fantasy; that is the heritage of Midian, whose name, according to another hasidic mystic, Rabbi Mordechai of Ishbitz, is a perversion of the Hebrew word *dimayon,* which means imagination or illusion.

Real eroticism is anti-illusion. It is a clear grasping of the infinite through the medium of the finite. It is only through the corporeal tastes that we get to know that which is otherwise unknowable.

In the teachings of Habad Hasidism, the body, mind, and soul are inextricably linked. The intellect, the main vehicle for the soul, is identified with the Torah, which is divine wisdom; the body is the realm of *mitzvot*—the 613 commands which are addressed to our need to act in the tangible, sensual world. Whereas our intellects distinguish us, our bodies unite us.

In knowledge, everyone develops according to his or her capacity; in the realm of the body, all are equally obligated, all equally in need. Rabbi Haim Lifshitz of Jerusalem puts it another way: below the neck we are all the same, above it we are all different.

When we are in touch with ourselves, mind and body flow as one. In his book, *Ben Ish Hai*, the nineteenth-century Yemenite kabbalistic scholar of the same name observes that the functions of the soul are exactly reflected in our faces. The lowest function is that of the mouth, which absorbs food and drink in order to sustain us bodily. Above the mouth, the nose gives us the sense of smell of things which are otherwise invisible. Highest of all, the eyes allow us to see not only the physical world but are the gateway to spiritual vision.

The system of commands—*mitzvot*—is there to refine

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The Balanced Budget Myth

Frank Riessman

What if you woke up one morning to discover that all the talk about the need to reduce the debt and balance the budget was totally wrong—that, in fact, reducing the debt might very well lead to a recession or depression? Actually, this does seem to be the case. Historically, the six major depressions in the United States have followed six sustained periods of debt reduction. Fred Thayer, writing in the summer 1995 issue of *Social Policy*, outlined the historical correlations:

1817-21: In a period of five consecutive years, the national debt was decreased from $217 million to $90 million, a 29 percent reduction. The first real depression in U.S. history began in 1819.

1823-36: In a period of 14 consecutive years, the debt was reduced by 99.7 percent to $38,000. The second real depression began in 1837.

1852-57: In a period of six consecutive years, the debt was reduced by 59 percent, to $28.7 million. The third real depression began in 1857.

1867-73: In a period of seven consecutive years, the debt was reduced by 27 percent, to $2.2 billion. The fourth real depression began in 1873.

1880-93: In a period of 14 consecutive years, the debt was reduced by 57 percent, to $1 billion. The fifth real depression began in 1893.

1920-30: In a period of 11 consecutive years, the debt was reduced by 36 percent, to $16.2 billion. The sixth real depression, the Great Depression, began in 1929.

Perhaps equally surprising is the notion that the level of debt, when seen as a proportion of Gross National Product (GNP), rather than an absolute number, is not high (71 percent). In 1954, for example, the debt was 74 percent of GNP, while in 1992 it was 68 percent of GNP. The national debt increased more than six fold from 1941 to 1946, and it was larger than the GNP in 1945, 1946, and 1947.

If this thinking is correct, why have the American people swallowed the balanced budget mythology hook, line, and sinker? Part of the explanation arises from a confluence of interests between the public and the budgeteers: The public is concerned about the budget as a vehicle for reining in a burgeoning federal bureaucracy, while Newt Gingrich and the Republican crusaders want to smash the welfare state and all that it connotes.

But despite wide mainstream support for the balanced budget, I believe there are two reasons why the prevailing attitude toward the deficit will eventually disintegrate in the next two or three years.

First, as various groups are hurt by the loss of either benefits or jobs, new concerns will emerge about the dangers inherent in budget mania. Albert Shanker, the president of the United Federation of Teachers, has given voice to the already growing skepticism about the nation's enthusiasm for deficit-cutting: "What programs will get the ax? Which Americans are going to be the losers? And if we are so worried about reducing the deficit that we have to cut programs, why are we also talking about a tax cut?" Voicing serious concern about what will happen to education in this context, Shanker wrote last June in a *New York Times* column:

> It sounds good to talk about not leaving our children a country that is in debt, but how about leaving them able to pay their own debts? Well-educated people have better jobs, earn more money, and are better able to help the U.S. compete in a global economy than people with less education. They are also more active and knowledgeable citizens. Americans have always understood that education is an investment that a country makes in its future. Are we so eager to take care of the budget deficit that we are willing to create an enormous human talent deficit?

A second reason to anticipate that the bloom will fade from the deficit-cutting rose relates to the fact that maintaining a balanced budget inhibits responses to recessions through fiscal policy. As recessions arise—and there may be one immediately ahead, resulting in part from the Clinton deficit cut of 1993-94—it will be exceedingly difficult to maintain the deficit-cutting esti-

Frank Riessman is the founding editor of Social Policy.

mates that are currently projected. Another factor relates to the simplistic projections about income, inflation, growth, and recession that are the basis of the budget projections. Already, Medicare projections for next year are being revised.

Business Week reported last December that the "primary balance" (excluding interest payments) is actually in balance. In other words, if we didn't have to pay interest, the budget would be in balance. In my view, this is dangerous: Since 1969, the federal government has run a primary surplus on four prior occasions, each preceding or coinciding with a recession. A balanced budget requirement enforced during a recession would push us further into decline, by requiring cuts in spending or increases in taxes.

A basically antagonistic view of government undergirds the public's acceptance of deficit reduction. Government is not to be trusted; it is inefficient and controlling. Yet an objective review of both the present and the future leads one to the necessity for a larger role for government. For example, if Jeremy Rifkin is correct in the predictions in his recent book, *The End of Work*, about the effects of tremendous increases in productivity on the size of the work force, what will the remaining population do? In all likelihood, as Rifkin suggests, human-service work would be one of the leading prospects to fill this gap. And government might play a major role as an employer or as a subsidizer, perhaps with a reduction in government's direct role as a result of privatization. For these changes to occur, however, a new image of government—as empowering, efficient, accountable, and honest—will need to emerge.

What issues remain after the demystification and essential failure of the balanced budget strategy?

•If there is no real budget crisis, policy makers must conduct an open, national debate on spending priorities and the allocation of tax dollars. We need a position that is different from the traditional liberal and conservative views—one that doesn't turn a deaf ear to genuine public concern about budget issues.

•Government must behave differently to be accepted by the populace. The key issue here is what the government spends its money on and how it spends it. After all, the necessary deficits can result from producing bombs or roads; prisons or Head Start; meaningful jobs or welfare dependency. These endeavors can either empower consumers and workers or bureaucratically control them. A government program that serves its people well will win support when under fire, as the recent situation in France aptly demonstrates. In France, much more comprehensive social services are provided than in the United States and the programs are well administered with few complaints about bureaucracy. Thus, in 1995, when the French held a general strike, the sympathy of the majority of the population forced the government to back off planned cutbacks in social benefits. The total support of the strike reflected the French people's appreciation of their welfare state.

•The budget hoax is part of a larger economic strategy that up to a point seems to be working. Led by the financial markets, the present economic strategy focuses on low, steady economic growth and sharp control of inflation. This position requires the maintenance of official unemployment at 5.5 percent to 6.0 percent in order to control inflation. To implement this strategy, policy-makers have used a combination of monetary and fiscal interventions: the Federal Reserve manipulation of the interest rate—heightening it at any point where inflation appears troubling and lowering it if the economy sags. Balancing the budget is the central fiscal policy. Its economic aim is an anti-inflationary maintenance of unemployment. Its political goals include weakening the welfare state and its supporters and downsizing government. In fact, its negative economic

(Continued on p. 75)

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BOOK REVIEW

Militias and the Broken Heartland

Stew Albert

A Force Upon the Plain: The American Militia Movement and the Politics of Hate, by Kenneth S. Stern. Simon & Schuster, 1996. 303 pp. $24.

On April 19, 1995, a bomb blew the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City and 169 of its occupants to smithereens. Many Americans seized upon an eyewitness's claim that he had seen a dark-skinned man leaving the scene shortly before the explosion, jumping to the conclusion that "the Arabs" were to blame. But from the outset, Kenneth S. Stern, the author of *A Force Upon the Plain*, suspected that the perpetrators were homegrown. He, along with a loose network of private individuals and groups who monitor the ultra-Right, had little doubt that white-supremacist, anti-Semitic members of extremist militias caused the carnage. The explosion's date and its target suggested to Stern and others that the 5,000-pound car bomb carried a "made in the heartland" label.

The bombing took place on the anniversary of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms' bloody raid on the Branch Davidian compound in Waco, and on the scheduled execution date of an American Nazi who had been convicted of murder. Given the militia members' worldview, a central tenet of which is the U.S. government's satanic conspiracy against its citizens, the destruction of a federal building and its bureaucratic inhabitants would be an appropriate act of retaliation for the sins of Waco.

Indeed, Timothy McVeigh, the accused ringleader of the bombing plot, turned out to be a full-credential racist, a Jew-hater with militia ties. Through his examination of McVeigh and the Oklahoma City bombing, Ken Stern brings to light, in brilliant detail, the history, ideology, pathology, and modus operandi of the American militias. Stern argues that the militia movement is a genuine grass-roots, all-American fascist movement that has sprung up on the periphery of our political vision—one that represents a very real threat to our nation's democratic life.

Stern knows his subject quite well. The American Jewish Committee's expert on hate and hate groups, he is plugged in to a nationwide network of researchers who keep track of the militias through means that vary from reading their computer bulletin boards to infiltrating their ranks. And the portion of the story that he offers is lively, witty, insightful, and nuanced. Unfortunately, the portion of the story he's left out is the part we most urgently need to know.

Stern fails to approach the militia madness from a sufficiently broad historical perspective to allow us the political and psychological grasp of the phenomenon we need to formulate an effective strategy of total resistance.

Although he treats the militias as the spawn of specific events and narrow historical antecedents, in fact, their lineage is more complex: They are the offspring of the unraveling, since the 1960s, of the American social fabric.



AP PHOTO/DAN MCCOMB, THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

For Ken Stern, the passage of the Brady Bill, (which requires a five-day waiting period for the purchase of handguns), the Waco conflagration, and the FBI siege against white separatist Randy Weaver, resulting in the deaths of Weaver's wife and child, are the stations of the cross along which thousands of ordinary white Christian Americans traveled to the belief that the government is out to get them, hell-bent on taking away their freedom.

Initially, a mélange of hard-core racists, anti-abortionists, tax resisters, and assorted enemies of the environment formed the membership of the militias. Their ideology was an eclectic mix of old-time McCarthyite conspiracy paranoia, the John Birch Society's "Eisenhower is a Communist" perspective, the Minute Men's militarism, and the Christian Identity movement's love of a white God. Required reading for the militias' founders included that golden oldie anti-Semitic forgery, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and William Pierce's *The Turner Diaries*, a literary tract for revolution from a Nazi point of view.

But before long, into the militia's waiting arms came not Nazi ideologues and thugs, but Main Street Americans who love guns, hate taxes and property regulations, and believe that Waco was the federal government's dress rehearsal for dictatorship.

Stew Albert, a founding Yippie, and leader in the Black Panther Party Defense Committees, is a member of the Havurah Shalom Congregation in Portland, Oregon.

To describe the growth of the American militia movement, Stern uses the funnel analogy. It started out wide, with a diverse crew of malcontents, and as the space narrows, we start getting the Jew-haters and homophobes; at the narrowest point come the terrorist likes of Timothy McVeigh. Most militia recruits don't start out as racists. But as they make their way into the funnel and become part of the ultra-Right's global Internet exchange of paranoiac ideas, listening to fascist talk radio on the shortwave, they increasingly fall sway to a new view of reality. After a while, the belief that Jewish bankers are training Gurkha mercenaries to disarm straight-shooting Americans becomes plausible and a legitimate topic for discussion.

These folks believe that it's almost high noon for American freedom; if the real Christians don't arm themselves and prepare for all-out war, then authentic white people will soon wind up in concentration camps, where the guards will come from Hong Kong or Africa.

Since the militia movement—depending on how one defines it—has somewhere between 10,000 and 50,000 followers, Ken Stern believes it is time for the U.S. government and particularly the FBI to stop looking the other way. What would happen, he asks, if the Black Panther Party were forming an army? But it is here that Stern's book disappoints. His prescriptions are limited to new federal laws that would outlaw militias as criminal enterprises and moral calls to mainstream Americans and their politicians not to bestow respectability on the militias. Considering that Larry Pratt, whom Stern exposes as a founding father of the militia movement, recently turned up as a high official in Pat Buchanan's presidential campaign, I'd say we're in danger of being too late on both these counts.

But, more important, the suggested new laws, as they appear in the appendix of *A Force Upon the Plain*, frighten me. They could be broadly used, against such groups as the Panthers (in their current version), the American Indian movement, or militant trade unionists. Besides, strong laws already exist and somehow I can't bring myself to trust that the FBI will remember just who the new "bad guys" are.

Most disappointingly—if honestly—Stern admits he hasn't a clue as to what actually causes individuals to

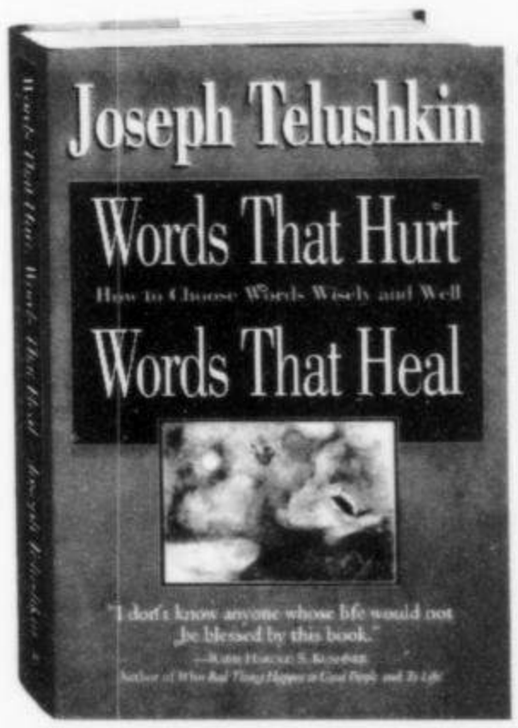
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hate or what really fuels hate movements. He calls on academics to create "hate study" departments and delve into these questions.

Maybe Americans hate their government for good reasons. However much Ruby Ridge and gun control may trigger anger for some, it is not the only source of their political rage. The American standard of living has been going down for the last twenty years (Stern ignores this), job security doesn't exist even for the college-educated, and by necessity most families now have two working parents and no time for dinner discussions. The government has been stealing from the poor and giving to the rich in the bad-faith belief that this policy would lead to increased investing rather than larger yachts.

Add to this economic deterioration the accumulating symbolic fiascoes: Vietnam, the Warren Commission's bungling, Watergate, Irangate, the FBI Counter-Intelligence programs against dissidents, *l'affaire* Rodney King, the O.J. trial, and Bill Clinton's precipitous slide from promises of sweeping health-care reform to championing public-school uniforms offer some good reasons for Americans to get very angry.

The political and economic decline has been masked by a culture of aggressive selfishness. Americans are encouraged to look out only for themselves and told that it's their fault if they sink down into the social abyss. Economic downsizing means broken communities, families, and individuals. Government programs, created to ameliorate suffering, wind up being arrogant, unfeeling, and bureaucratic in their implementation, encouraging their "beneficiaries" toward self-loathing.

Into the lower depths of social loneliness steps the fascist Right, bringing a message of absolving compassion. These ultra-right-wingers tell America's white victims that their failure is somebody else's fault. The armed extremist community offers recognition, hope, and a sense of belonging.

Militias are strongest in the Western states, and they champion that region's traditional culture. Eastern advocates of gun control view weapons as terrifying. But in the West, even modest gun control breeds overreaction. Many Westerners warmly remember learning to hunt and shoot as a rite of passage that confers recognition and dignity on young people. The bureaucratic regulation of guns (however ineffectual) is symbolically received as a profound violation of the West's communal soul.

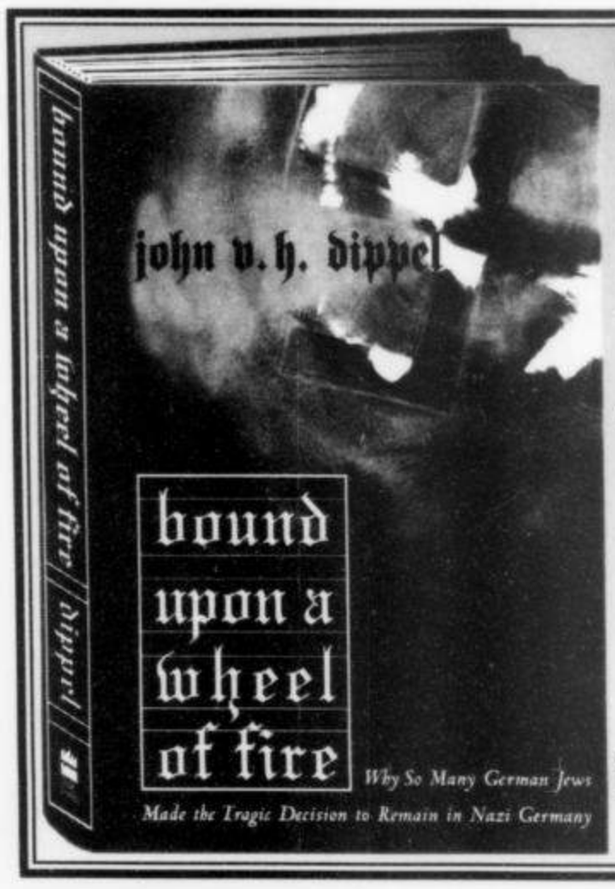
This sense of the federal government's callous intrusion and control takes on a special dimension in a region where the federal government owns and regulates huge tracts of land. In a moment and mood of disappearing economic opportunities, the militia leaders have little trouble portraying the government's attempts to protect wild life, timber, and natural resources from economic development and exploitation as a form of colonial dictatorship. Desperate individuals feeling no possibility for a good future for themselves, their family, and friends look for support, community, and answers. And some think they've found what they're searching for in the militias.

The problem is that the liberal political establishment has failed to offer these justifiably angry Americans a warm-hearted, rational, and transformative vision for remaking the status quo. So, instead of really learning how to repair ourselves and the world, Americans are being fed either unfettered free trade or nationalistic paranoia as a political program for salvation.

We've become a nation where the call for political class struggle comes most clearly from Pat Buchanan, of whom it has been said, "he reads better in the original German." Buchanan not only appeals to his supporters' economic anxiety: He also speaks to the heart—about family, a caring government, and values. Is it surprising that some significant number of workers might vote for him, or consider joining a militia?

Only a new kind of politics will defeat the militias by winning over its members before they have crawled too deeply into the funnel of fascism. TIKKUN readers are familiar with the "politics of meaning," the attempt to create a heartful progressivism that speaks to the soul's needs. We recognize that amidst the spiritual rubble of America, political allegiances can shift rapidly, and that those who today worship false messiahs are not eternally doomed to repeat their error.

It is the great achievement of Ken Stern's book that the reader, however disappointed by some of its formulations, comes away with a greatly enhanced sense that we don't have forever to formulate practical strategies and to start getting our message of hope and community out on our own Internet hook-ups and Web pages. □



"WE WILL STICK TOGETHER, LOYAL TO THE PRECEPTS AND HOPE OF OUR GERMAN JEWISHNESS."

—Chief Rabbi Leo Baeck, Berlin, Germany, 1935

In his important new contribution to the literature of the Holocaust, *Bound Upon a Wheel of Fire*, John Dippel explores the lives of six prominent German Jews, revealing the psychological, cultural, and patriotic ties that bound them to their homeland, and shedding new light on why they—and thousands of others—remained in Germany in the face of the rising Nazi terror of the 1930s.

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BOOK REVIEWS

The Inner City and the Inner Life

Paul L. Wachtel

The Analyst in the Inner City: Race, Class, and Culture Through a Psychoanalytic Lens, by Neil Altman. The Analytic Press, 1995. 188 pp. $29.95



AP PHOTO

Psychoanalysis has played a curious and distinctive role in our intellectual and cultural life. Depending on one's perspective, it can appear as a strikingly pointed and powerful critique of our dominant values or a near-perfect expression of them. And, perhaps the most interesting aspect of this divergence is that both perspectives contain a considerable degree of truth.

On the one hand, psychoanalysis was virtually born in opposition, the product of a highly original and independent man from a marginalized ethnic group and a point of view dedicated to plumbing the depths of our self-deceptions. This version of psychoanalysis, ably depicted by writers such as Russell Jacoby, attracted adherents who wished to challenge the social order, including some who viewed the intellectual revolution of which they were a part as a launching pad for an even more profound social revolution.

On the other hand, psychoanalysis was also, from its beginning, a profession, a way to earn a living. Moreover, Freud, for all his challenging of cherished assumptions, had a strongly conservative streak as well, and provided many handholds for the largely conservative turn which his creation has taken over the years. Today, Neil Altman suggests in his brave and honest book, *The Analyst in the Inner City*, psychoanalysis is to a disturbing degree an "exclusionary discourse," an approach and point of view whose very premises contribute to the invidious and hierarchical elements in our social order. Psychoanalysis, Altman contends, largely ignores class, culture, and race as powerful determinants of our psychic life, and it does so by being "unreflectively embedded in our society's arrangements with regard to these categories." Altman is himself an analyst, but one who has attempted to apply his discipline to the travails of the inner-city poor. In doing so, he was forced to reflect on the clinical guidelines he was taught as a student, and the conclusions he reached entail sharp criticism of mainstream psychoanalytic ideas:

> Classism, racism, and ethnocentrism embedded in our theory are manifest, at the level of practice, by the exclusion of non-mainstream members of our society as "non-analyzable." The excluded "other" also represents the psychically disowned. We have thus built psychic defense, projection, and introjection into every psychoanalytic interaction via the implicit acceptance of ground rules (e.g., "talk, don't act") that arise within an exclusionary discourse. In this sense, classism, racism, and ethnocentrism structure every psychoanalytic interaction in an exclusionary society.

Altman's book, however, is by no means a simple indictment of psychoanalysis. Altman indeed sees psychoanalysis as indispensable if we are to establish a foundation for challenging the economistic and reductionistic habits of thought that rationalize policies with destructive consequences for the lives of the poor—and, as he recognizes, with far from salutary consequences even for the human needs of those who are relatively privileged in economic terms.

An important key to whether psychoanalysis is a progressive or a regressive social force is whether it attempts to create a protected playpen in which the "irrelevant" influences of the larger social order are excluded or, in contrast, attempts to elucidate how the very distinction between public and private, personal and political is it-

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self a symptom of the deep schisms in our individual and collective lives. In order to understand the influences that can lead analytic thought in such disparate directions, it is useful to take a brief detour into the recent history of psychoanalysis and its emerging lines of cleavage. In some versions of psychoanalytic practice (and in the thinking that lies behind them), the psychoanalytic situation is likened to a kind of laboratory, in which the analyst, by remaining relatively anonymous, achieves a kind of rough equivalent of the experimental controls in more rigorous sciences; since the influence of the analyst's actual behavior or characteristics is minimized, the feelings and fantasies experienced by the patient are seen as revealing what was truly within him or her all along. Such a model—probably the most familiar one to the general public—has in recent years been labeled by a variety of critics within psychoanalysis as a "one-person" model. This characterization points to the way in which the patient alone is regarded as the domain of inquiry. The analyst is viewed as largely outside the field of investigation, observing but not taking part in the process observed.

The psychoanalyst today who follows in pure form this one-person view of the process is probably rather rare, but there certainly are differences among analysts in the degree to which they endorse the most prominent alternative, the "two-person" model that constitutes the set of psychoanalytic perspectives which have come to be labeled as "relational." In these relational or two-person models, the analyst is viewed as inevitably a part of the phenomenon being observed. One is observing not "the patient" but the patient in relation to oneself; who one is and what one does—or doesn't do, for that matter, for in this paradigm silence too can be a powerful relational event that has an impact on what emerges in the process—makes a difference.

The first influential proponent of such a view in the United States was Harry Stack Sullivan, whose interpersonal theory emphasized that the analyst was always a participant observer, never an observer alone. More recently, American relational analysts have attempted to integrate the interpersonal perspective with those of the British "object relations" school (for example, Melanie Klein, R.W.B. Fairbairn, and D.W. Winnicott) and with the "self psychology" of Heinz Kohut. These theorists differ in significant ways, and not all relational analysts draw upon all of their work or see all of it as compatible. But they share an emphasis on conceiving of psychoanalysis as the study not of an isolated individual but of a relational field.

Many of these "two-person" analysts are guided as well by postmodern theories of social critique. The postmodernist challenging of unexamined certainties is embodied in their challenge to the idea that the analyst can sit back and see the truth in the patient, uncontaminated by his or her own influence or point of view. For both postmodern theorists and relational psychoanalysts, truth is positional, a provisional glimpse that can never enable us completely to escape the effects of the vantage point from which we view it.

Such a view has the potential for providing a base for challenging the taken-for-granted verities of the social order. But much psychoanalytic discourse from a two-person or relational perspective has simply engendered a more sophisticated focus on what goes on in the office, with the influence of race, class, and other social, economic, and historical forces still not granted co-equal status in shaping the depths of the personality or the nature of the analytic relationship. Moreover, much in the relational approach to psychoanalysis retains the highly individualistic perspective that has dominated in almost all psychoanalytic work, with an emphasis on the "inner world" that can be hermetic and inwardly focused even when relational.

Altman, who is strongly identified with the relational approach, recognizes that its premises alone do not necessarily lead us deeper into the interface of individual psychodynamics and the social order. Consequently, he advocates adding a third perspective to the one-person and two-person approaches that have dominated psychoanalytic discourse thus far. A three-person, or group-process perspective, he suggests, entails a focus "not so much on the interaction of what the two people bring to the clinical situation, as on the way in which each person's subjectivity is constituted by the situation in which each finds himself." Institutional and authority relationships, economic circumstances, racial, class, and ethnic biases, and the mores of the larger society and the participants' subgroups all are important dimensions of that situation. The three-person perspective Altman advocates, however, is not an external or sociological perspective. Rather, it is a complementary part of the psychoanalytic account itself, an interweaving of the subjective and the societal, not a replacement of the one by the other.

For Altman, a key to this interweaving lies in the ideas of Melanie Klein, for whom concepts of projection and introjection, disowning and then identifying with intolerable aggressive impulses, were central organizing ideas. I have generally regarded Klein's ideas as fanciful and muddled, a distracting wrong turn for psychoanalytic discourse. It is thus a measure of Altman's achievement in this book that his neo-Kleinian perspective offered up numerous ideas I found intriguing and provocative. For example, in a book on the psychological dynamics of race relations on which I am currently working, I have been emphasizing the sense of "otherness" as an important feature of what we usually call racism. Altman's discussion of a similar concept offered a fresh perspective on the way in which we dichotomize into "black" and "white" a population marked in reality by enormous diversity along multiple dimensions. As Altman puts it, "the physical characteristics regarded as relevant to racial categories are continua, yet we treat them as dichotomies in the service of fitting our dichotomous racial categories....We do so in the service of creating a focus for projection and introjection. The 'opposite' race creates a category of people who are 'not me' into which we can project unwanted psychic content."

A related conceptualization underlies a particularly illuminating discussion of our society's preoccupation with the distinction between the public and private spheres and its disparagement of the former. The public sector, Altman suggests,

> ... becomes the repository, on the social level, for the "not me," for the disowned, the different, the degraded, the incomprehensible. The psyche, like a city or a society, has its "bad neighborhoods," populated by the aggressive, the dependent, the exploitative, the ruthless, the parts of ourselves that we define as bad or devalued. The

> psyche also has its idealized "good neighborhoods," which we try to protect and segregate .... The American struggle to shrink the public sector, to privatize everything, to reinforce our national borders, to bar languages that are not "standard" English—all this parallels our attempt to bar the return of the repressed or the dissociated.

Altman informs us that after many years of practicing in a public clinic in the South Bronx, he has turned to the more comfortable life of private practice. It is clear, however, that the cause of this shift was not a decline in idealism but the frustrations of attempting to provide a psychoanalytically informed treatment in a setting in which so much was stacked against such an effort. His advocacy of a "three-person" perspective, it is clear, derives not from theoretical considerations alone but from daily experiences with administrators, fellow clinicians adapting to the emphasis on quantity of cases processed rather than quality of care offered, and—Altman does not shrink from this dimension—the behavior of his mostly poor and minority patients that resulted from the privations our society has imposed upon them. Psychoanalysis must change to accommodate to these various influences, but Altman makes a good case that such change does not imply compromise or watering down or even alloying "pure gold" with baser materials. Rather, in the effort to explore the nexus where intrapsychic and social forces intersect, psychoanalysis is strengthened, not diluted.

Much of the pain in America today is a consequence of the (I hope temporary) success of the ideologues of the untrammeled market in mystifying the public. It is far from immaterial to the issues addressed in this review that market ideologies posit human beings of virtually perfect rationality and unlimited understanding of their own deepest desires. There is no room for self-deception in their mythology; what we buy we must want from the very depths of our being.

Psychoanalysis offers us a quite different image of the limits of our rationality and self-transparency. There can be few stronger arguments for the need for such a perspective than the America Neil Altman saw in the South Bronx, or the America seen by middle-class children in the suburbs as their parents, singly or in pairs, go off to shop in search of the American dream. □

Oratory, Exile, and Punning

Melvin Jules Bukiet

The Moor's Last Sigh, by Salman Rushdie. Pantheon, 1995. 435 pp. $25.

Imagine having to describe human existence from as strange a remove as a guru on a mountain top or the Count of Monte Cristo in his cell. That's the task that Salman Rushdie, isolated from normal life ever since Ayatollah Khomeini issued a *fatwa* or edict calling for his death in 1989, has set himself. What esoteric knowledge could he have gained by virtue of his death sentence, and what common knowledge has been denied him? Where can he start to recapture reality, at what level, in which domain: theology, history, family, anatomy? Written in hiding, Mr. Rushdie's new novel, *The Moor's Last Sigh*, touches all those levels, and becomes daunting for a critic; one feels blinded by the blazing illumination of its manifold visions from confinement.

Unlike most novelists who explore one single corner of the world, the world's most famous compulsory recluse has written a human forest of a book, and it's hard to see the whole for the multiplicity of the parts. *The Moor's Last Sigh* is a family saga...on the surface. And what a family the Da Gama/Zogoibys are: artists, exiles, financiers, politicians, mobsters. Our narrator is the Moor himself, Moraes, last of the line.

He commences the story with his maternal grandparents, Francisco Da Gama, "hero material from the day he was born," and the severe matriarch, Epifania Menezes. They have two sons who echo and extend their parents' dissension. Camoens, like his father, is a fervent "Congress" man in favor of independence, whereas Aires, like his mother, rather prefers Empire. The latter even names his pet bulldog Jawaharlal after Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first prime minister. When this dog dies, it is stuffed and mounted upon casters, so as to be literally dragged through the rest of the novel. This witty metaphor for the uses to which history is put is just one of the elements of *The Moor's Last Sigh* that has recently appalled Indian society and led to the author's second book ban. For Rushdie, history is not imposed from above; it emerges from his characters' debates and actions. And those actions are twisted by internal desires. We see this in Aires who, on his wedding night, dresses in a gown and disappears in a rowboat with a young man nicknamed Prince Henry the Navigator, who ferries him to uncharted sexual shores.

This is Rushdie's basic technique in the novel; he creates loosely representational figures, allows them a kind of political/philosophical center, and compels them to live out the tainted gift of remarkable stories, sometimes explicitly fantastical, sometimes bluntly realistic.

Francisco, for example, does not live up to his promise. As Moraes says, "Stars can fall; heroes can fail; Francisco da Gama did not fulfill his destiny." Anti-climax is a part of life, yet climax is too, so that as Francisco dies

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pathetically, his descendants triumph, abundantly if temporarily. A generation later, Camoens has one child, Aurora, the protagonist's mother. A bohemian genius, she paints a series of "Moor" paintings that simultaneously use and create her only begotten son. On canvas, she makes the Moor, and in his description of her burnt and scattered works, he remakes her. Still Aurora is more than a painter of mystically transmogrifying canvasses. As Moraes says, "[D]id I mention that she was irresistible? Listen: she was the light of our lives, the excitement of our imaginations, the beloved of our dreams."

Note, this takes place in a country where motherhood is particularly freighted. "Motherness," Moraes says, "excuse me if I underline the point—is a big idea in India, maybe our biggest: the land as mother, the mother as land, as the firm ground beneath our feet."

Oh, there are other women, the household aide Dilly Hormuz who initiates the Moor into the physical side of his existence, the traitorous human chameleon, Uma Sarasvati, with "her modernistically provisional sense of truth," and Moraes's sisters, Christina, Inamorata, and Philomina, a.k.a. Ina, Minnie and Mynah, supermodel, nun, and angry feminist attorney, yet none compares with blazing Aurora Zogoiby, the A to Z of womanhood.

The Moor's father, Abraham Zogoiby, a Jewish clerk in the Da Gama family spice empire, must deal with his own mother, Flory, before entering into his own huge tale of apostasy and corruption. "On one side, the synagogue … and history; on the other … his rich girl, the universe, the future—all things unclean." Of course, Abraham "preferred my mother's love to God's."

This is a decision that Flory must live with because her son is able to hold ancient miscegenation against his mom: The first of the Asian Zogoibys left Inquisitorial Spain with the child of a dispossessed sultan in her belly. Flory reveals that she understands that Abraham's is the necessary choice, as she "mumbled under her breath[,] 'There is no world but the world.' And then a little louder: 'There is no God. Hocus-pocus! Mumbo-jumbo! *There is no spiritual life.*"

It is the recurrent lack of Godly presence in a universe where millions die in God's name that infuses *The Moor's Last Sigh* with a mournful yearning tone highlighted by the giddiness of its literary gamesmanship (viz. again the Zogoiby siblings, Ina, Minnie, Mynah, and their brother, Moor). Every character is identified primarily with a religion—from Aurora's Christian heritage and Abraham's Jewish one to a Muslim gangster and, especially, subsequent Hindu antagonists. All of these faiths presumably have a moral core, yet none of them leads to moral lives. Faith invariably fails to satisfy or redeem its adherents. And human beings are just as contrary as the deities they profess to believe in; most characters' actions refute the moral tenets at the base of their faith.

But spirituality is in the eye of the beholder; one person's God is another's nation or art or bank account. Aurora pursues her career to worldwide renown, while Abraham takes the declining spice works and parlays it into an international crime syndicate that attempts to sell nuclear weapons to fundamentalist Islamic nations for use against Israel.

All of this loosely theological narrative takes place against the "torrential reality" of life in India where 750 million Hindus and 100 million Muslims are perennially at each other's throats. "A tragedy was taking place all right, a national tragedy on a grand scale, but those of us who played our parts were—let me put it bluntly—clowns. Clowns! Burlesque buffoons, drafted into history's theatre."

In a lesser book, these background or preliminary stories might succumb to either of the twin fallacies of most sagas. There are those wherein every generation is given equal weight and a reader therefore feels as if the episodes might be shuffled and redealt. Others toss in characters for the sake of lending specious ballast to the one necessary story. *The Moor's Last Sigh* walks a high-wire balance between giving each generation its due and subtly building to Moraes, the Moor in the flesh. The drama and narrative drive of each life is accorded serious attention, and then passes through to the next. Yet the effects wander backward and forward in echoes of the past and omens of the future, for each generation and relationship shapes each other.

Bearing his complicated legacy, Moraes arrives with less abstract problems. His right hand has "fingers welded into an undifferentiated chunk, the thumb a stunted wart." More ominously, he was born when Aurora was four and a half months pregnant, full term, for the Moor is doomed to live his life at precisely twice the speed of other human beings. Here is where the book really takes flight. This is not magic realism, because it does not tamper with scientific norms merely for the sake of metaphorical effect, but truly believes in its conceits. This is just the way it is for certain people. "I am going through time faster than I should," Moraes says, but, of course, we all are, and this is Rushdie's statement of the basic human condition.

Nonetheless, the Moor's predicament is not solely biological, for in addition to his supra-temporal pace, he has his family's and his nation's and a pantheon of deities' pasts and presences to face, and, most horribly, his own isolation. What does he do? He has no alternative except "by embracing the inescapable, I lost my fear of it." And then he extrapolates, "the idea of the norm... is bizarre, the notion that human beings have *normal everyday* lives." One cannot help but imagine that Mr. Rushdie's death sentence—finally no different from our own, but fearfully dissimilar as an elephant's trunk and its tail—has led to this sense of life.

It is difficult not to read *The Moor's Last Sigh* as an allegory for Rushdie's own bizarre circumstances. Although the *fatwa* calling for his extermination is no longer a priority for Teheran, it has not been rescinded. Apparently, there is no mechanism to revise Khomeini's rash verdict, so the Islamic zealot who pierces the protective cocoon over whatever hearth Rushdie currently calls his home can still expect the blessings of Heaven. Now, due to his new novel's "frog" characterization of a newspaper cartoonist turned powerful Hindu politician who happens to resemble the living, breathing former cartoonist turned leader of a Hindu political party, the author is likewise loathed by those on the opposite side of the Indian color line. Minimally less lethally minded leaders than their Iranian counterparts, Indian politicians have rested content with banning the product of his head rather than demanding that head on a plate.

All of them, and probably rabbis, too, infuriated with his portrayal of Abraham, as well as priests shocked at Aurora, would simply prefer that such a contentious man not exist. Yet Rushdie sits, mostly in England, and mulls over his native country's and his century's endless brutalities against which all he can balance is the single Moor's pas-

sionate individuality. Betrayed by his body and his loved ones and Gods of all denominations, the Moor, along with his creator, thumbs his nose, damning all houses, defying those who decreed his fate, and fate itself, by insisting on making the only things that can transcend worldly passage and attain true immortality—books.

How might the Moor respond? In Moraes's discussion of his mother's art he answers these questions with disdain. Aurora, he tells us, "was required by the public prints to speak ponderously of 'underlying motives' when she had had only whims, to make moral statements where there had been only ('only'!) play, and feeling, and the unfolding inexorable logic of brush and light."

Only (only!) the logic of brush and light, or in this case pen and language, that's where the heart of the novel lies, in the raging aesthetic secularism of a believer in just plain being. "In the beginning," he offers not Light, "and unto the end…" not Pearly Gates, but the frail, mortal "lung: divine afflatus, baby's first yowl, shaped air of speech, staccato gusts of laughter, exalted airs of song, happy lover's groan, unhappy lover's lament, miser's whine, crone's croak, illness's stench, dying whisper, and beyond and beyond the airless, silent void … A sigh isn't just a sigh. We inhale the world and breathe out meaning. While we can. While we can." Finally, "In the end, stories are what's left of us, we are no more than the few tales that persist."

Stories provide the only divinity worth worshipping. Some of these are tales of God, perhaps our grandest creation, some of nations, some of parents, some of selves. Some are tales of tales and they're all here. In its pandemoniac panorama *The Moor's Last Sigh*, like Rushdie's earlier *Midnight's Children,* (a book that I admired but did not adore) is bound to be compared to Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. Based on sheer imaginative profusion, such a comparison is not inaccurate. But I'd feel more comfortable placing it with American novels that also tell visionary tales in visionary ways: Thomas Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow*, which makes similar idiosyncratic jumps in and out of reality; Nathanael West's *The Day of the Locust*, with which "Moor" shares a central, prophetic painting; or even Mario Puzo's *The Godfather*, which it evokes at one point in discourse on loyalty and betrayal. All of these books address the shock of modernity and the yearning for anchorage.

The Moor's Last Sigh takes on traditional religions, renders (in both meanings of the word) secular faiths from communism to nationalism, and investigates the most elusive faiths in art and magic. Yet what makes this a novel rather than merely a brilliant meditation on notions of enduring value is that all of these notions play themselves out through centuries and across continents, in characters. It sets forth wide-ranging incidents from the heights of nirvanic bliss to apocalyptic catastrophe. It is rank with sex and money and, above all, spice, the literal cardamom, ginger, cinnamon, and pepper of the sub-continent (or, as one character speaking the jokey vernacular of the book calls it, the sub-condiment) together with the metaphorical spices—passion, lust, rage, envy—which flavor the broth of life. In doing so, Rushdie, the apostate to most every faith worth mentioning, discovers his own characteristic form of redemption.

Finally, *The Moor's Last Sigh* is a deeply moral book that insists that despite the violence at the heart of the sacred, and despite national agony, and despite the fact that filial love and romantic love come to nothing, the very wit and intelligence and compassion and pain of the well-told story itself define the only sane place a human being can live. Neither God nor Country is exalted, but the Individual among Individuals. "In a way I had been in Indian country all my life," the Moor says, playing with images of the American prairie, "learning to read its signs, to follow its trails, rejoicing in its immensity, in its inexhaustible beauty, struggling for territory … making my way through its dangers, hoping to find friends, fearing its cruelty, longing for its love … In Indian country, there was no room for a man who didn't want to belong to a tribe, who dreamed of moving beyond; of peeling off his skin and revealing his secret identity—the secret, that is, of the identity of all men—of standing before the war-painted braves to unveil the flayed and naked unity of the flesh."

Thus, Moraes Zogoiby, victim of and victor over the depredations of his personal, familial, national, and cosmological destiny, brings his own memoirs to a close, as if the only point of such an extraordinary life was to produce such an extraordinary work. It makes everything worthwhile. □

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Don't Ask Dr. Science

Michael Weissman

The Chicago Gangster Theory of Life: Nature's Debt to Society, by Andrew Ross. Verso, 1995. 308 pp., $17.95.
The Cultural Studies Times, Vol. 1, no. 3, Fall 1995.
Science, Nonscience, and Nonsense, by Michael Zimmerman Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995. 220 pp., $25.95.

"The aim of science is not to open the door to everlasting wisdom but to set a limit to everlasting error."
-Bertolt Brecht

A major rift has developed between the scientific community and the dominant movement of the academic humanities, loosely grouped under the heading "postmodernism" (henceforth PoMo). PoMos question the ability of science to provide worthwhile guidance on environmental problems and other crucial public issues, challenge the ability of scientists to describe nature, and often deny the idea of external reality itself. The PoMo attitude to science stems in part from awareness of the new perils of a highly technological society. In the snappy lingo of Andrew Ross's recent book, "With the technoscientific narrative of progress everywhere impeded by the toxic clouds of the ecological crisis, other nondystopian mythologies are clearly needed."

Clearly, we do have a problem. Human population growth at the current rate, for example, is not just a bad idea. It is a physical impossibility. If the world's population were to expand at a modest rate of one percent per year, much less than the current rate, all the matter in the galaxy would have to be converted to human flesh in about six thousand years. Shortly thereafter, the human ball (even expanding at the speed of light in all directions) would become so dense that it would collapse into a black hole. Thus it is a simple fact that in the not-so-long run, the percentage population growth rate will not be perceptibly greater than zero, regardless of human intentions.

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We have passed the point where our impact on the rest of living nature can be considered a minor perturbation. We are causing the biggest episode of species extinction in tens of millions of years. Whether the continued existence of our industrial civilization will destroy its own necessary natural base is an open question. This is the "ecological crisis" to which Ross alludes.

In light of that crisis, our relation to nature needs some rethinking. Andrew Ross provides a relatively moderate example of the PoMo version of that process, since he is willing sometimes to acknowledge an external reality. His book is based on in-depth research into the nature-society relation—from his initial excursions to neighboring SoHo boutiques, to grueling barhopping in Fiji, to poolside in Waikiki, to a truly exhaustive monitoring of American TV and movies. Ross has a disturbing tendency to find the involvement of capitalism (e.g., in market-based plans for limiting pollution) as prima facie evidence of wrong-doing, rather than making the case for the concrete harm such involvement may cause.

And when it comes to advice, Ross suggests that activist scholars can avoid the trap of "crystal-clear logic" by emulating "teenage metalheads in the wilds of suburbia" who may not accomplish much, but at least can trigger "parental hysteria." Like a kid who's still stuck at home, Ross directs every argument to the question of how bad the grownups are, not quite getting to what he will do when he's on his own.

For those who hold such convictions, knowable truths can become awkward. Scientific methods become an obstacle. Ross turns to this matter in a short piece, "Science Backlash and Technoskeptics," published in the fall of 1995 in The *Nation* and The *Cultural Studies Times*. Ross's central point is that the backlash against himself and other postmodern science scholars such as Bruno Latour, Sandra Harding, and Stanley Aronowitz is a right-wing put-up job, a front for "the Buchanans, Doles, and Gramms." Ross counterposes the postmodern forces of "pro-democracy approaches to objectivity," to the "sputtering.... intemperate" scientific corporate lackeys, who haven't done anything good since they helped discredit absolute monarchs centuries ago.

Ross accuses scientists of being motivated by money and prestige, then impugns them for selfishly keeping their knowledge secret. But, although scientists predictably continue to behave much like other members of the species, scientific knowledge somehow manages to get out.

Ross would prefer technologies "rooted in local knowledge." But that grand phrase conceals myriad conflicts. Some local knowledge urges caution in dealing with the environment. But the local knowledge in downstate Illinois, where I live, says to spray more herbicides to get bigger crops and to give more antibiotics to cows so they'll grow faster. Which "local knowledge" are we to follow? In fact, the current political scene is already crowded with advocates of "local knowledge" against a secular, rationalist elite. And some of the leaders, or at least cheerleaders, of that local rights movement are none other than "the Buchanans, Doles, and Gramms." The most intense fans of "local knowledge" can be found in your local militia.

How Ross wants democracy to work on technological issues is indicated by his rhetorical question, "How much do you need to know technically about nuclear fission to conclude that nuclear energy is a socially destructive idea?" Actually, some knowledge is a helpful thing when you have to decide between burning non-renewable high-pollution fossil fuels, using non-renewable and potentially risky nuclear fission, investing in a technical gamble on nuclear fusion, or pouring resources into renewable but land-consuming solar power. Scaling back the availability of utilities can be pretty "socially destructive," too. Why is the choice so obvious?

A quick survey of the ideas of Ross's intellectual allies helps to clarify why

even left-wing scientists often sputter intemperately about postmodern critiques of science. Despite the polite names Ross uses for their fields, their critiques usually include a crazed anti-realist philosophy.

A leading Edinburgh "sociologist," my colleague Andrew Pickering, recently affirmed (in response to my direct question) at a large gathering at the University of Illinois that the claims that the Earth circles the Sun and that it rests on a stack of turtles were of equal validity. Intellectually more consistent than most of the PoMos, Pickering refused to admit that the scientific attacks on Reagan's Star Wars claims were any more valid than were the promises of that born-again president.

In a recent appearance here, the "ethnographer" Latour, asserted that the question of whether a forest was expanding into a desert or vice versa was beyond the scope of traditional scientific paradigms, since scientists did not agree on the answer. I asked him if an objective answer could be obtained by simply watching for long enough. LaTour came up with a good PoMo response: "The objectivity is secreted by the collective."

Stanley Aronowitz, in an article in *Cultural Studies Times*, at least provides some comic relief from dry philosophy. His potted history of quantum mechanics is as funny (and as accurate) as the speech my father heard in *shul* seventy years ago, which praised Einstein for inventing relativity to show the *goyim* that the electron is the smallest thing. One of the few things Aronowitz gives science credit for is curing viral flu with penicillin. Don't try that trick at home!

The bill for PoMo intellectual methods will not just come due in the ecological long-run. Andrew Ross, who is fond of "alternative" medicines, writes, "We need to have scientific methods that are built around the experience of people in living environments, as opposed to the ... laboratory." Does that mean Alexander Fleming should have paid no attention when bacteria-free circles showed up on a Petri dish in his lab? The cause—penicillin—may not cure the flu, but it does save lives. Is Ross proposing to live without such lab-derived medicine?

One of Ross's fellow PoMos, Anthony Liversidge, argues that it is "beside the point" whether H.I.V. actually causes AIDS. He prefers to focus on the perceptions of someone faced with the grim news of infection. The outlook of young people who can still avoid infection—if they know why and how—and of those who might develop a cure or vaccine thus fades into the background. This is the core problem of PoMo "science study"—it seeks only to reinterpret miserable reality, not to change it.

Passivity can be a rational response to powerful forces beyond one's understanding. Sometimes scientific reactions to PoMo encourage that attitude. This becomes apparent in Norman Levitt's nasty response to Aronowitz in *Cultural Studies Times*. Levitt, the co-author with Paul Gross of *Higher Superstition*—a recent book denouncing anti-scientism in the academic Left—has a field day with Aronowitz's ignorance, illogic, and posturing. Unfortunately, Levitt also dwells almost exclusively on how much smarter he thinks scientists are than everybody else, and how little hope ordinary people therefore have to understand anything. "One has no right to play this game," he writes, "unless one can handle an array of terms—metric tensor, Lorentz manifold, Ricci curvature, Hilbert space, superposition, mixed state..." Levitt shows no sign of trying to encourage sincerely curious non-specialists to grasp what they can, which would go a long way toward answering the questions in which they are interested.

Levitt's arrogance is of more than personal significance. Ross et al. are not inventing the threat that a technological society poses to democracy. The more people rely in daily life on things which they don't understand, the more the underpinnings of democracy are weakened. In his own book, Levitt can't seem to find the space to explain any technical matter, lecturing instead on how little most people know. Scientists don't have to be falsely modest. Even the physicist Richard Feynman, who was surely innocent of that charge, took great pleasure in reducing ideas to simple forms accessible to non-specialists.

Michael Zimmerman's little book, *Science, Nonscience, and Nonsense*, provides a strikingly different approach to some of the same ecological and medical questions addressed by Ross and Aronowitz. Zimmerman points right away to the choices we

Mothers who are Torn in Two

Psychoanalysis has given us permission to hate our mothers —but what about mothers who feel hate for their children? Now at last, Rozsika Parker, a psychoanalytic therapist, addresses the issue of maternal ambivalence. In her groundbreaking study, ***Mother Love, Mother Hate***, she shows how mothers' positive feelings toward their children often coexist with the impulse to hurt and desert. Reassuringly, she finds that these common feelings, when acknowledged and properly understood, can actually have a creative impact on mothering.



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face: educated democracy, technocracy, or superstitious dark ages. Without any PoMo waffling, he supports educating the populace enough to support democratic control of technology. Zimmerman promises to provide his readers some of the background they acutely need to help them deal with technical questions, but he fails to do so competently. He does, however, provide concrete exposés of outrageous environmental behavior by corporations and their friends in government, and offers many ideas, both technical and political, for remedying the problems.

Unfortunately, while Zimmerman emphatically agrees with the general idea of limits, he sinks to the promise that "a society based on the concept of sustainability is not one that requires sacrifices of its citizens..." In the near future, most people will not be able to have more than two children surviving to reproductive age. Even if that limit is achieved without acute deprivation or coercion, many people will still view it as a major sacrifice. Various activities which will probably be necessary—intensive recycling, primary reliance on public transportation—are potential irritants. Whether one looks at the American political scene or the private behavior of friends and neighbors, it is clear that sustainable living will require some new and generally unpopular constraints. We can hope such limits will be less onerous than in earlier ages—that we will not have need for the old standbys of infanticide, war, harsh sexual repression, hunger, or plague. But we can't promise a lack of real sacrifice.

And here is the underlying reason that science is losing support on all sides: we can no longer promise that anything will be too cheap to meter, or that we can offer real cures, as opposed to palliation, of mankind's ancient problems. Putting aside the postmodern farce, we should take a sober look at where we've been and where we're headed.

The central question of whether an educated technological democracy can deal with environmental limits has not yet been answered. Environmental problems are not new—11,000 years ago, the first big wave of settlers in North America wiped out three quarters of the large animal species, a proportion close to that destroyed by the first humans in other isolated areas such as New Zealand and Madagascar. Settled societies have coped with our destructive powers by developing all sorts of taboos and customs—sacred cows and otherwise. Those taboos look irrational to an outsider but play crucial roles in the long-range stability of societies. Because, like most local knowledge, taboos are not rationally framed, they can become irrelevant or even destructive in altered circumstances. It does no good to worship yaks if you have just moved to a land of horses—thus the destructiveness of even hunter-gatherers in new lands.

Our central ecological problem today is that technology constantly brings us, in effect, to new lands. We have no ancient taboos to tell us when not to use antibiotics or which chlorine compounds not to dump in the stratosphere. As Einstein said of nuclear war, everything has changed except our way of thinking. We must rely instead on rational calculation and regulation, which lack the emotional force of the old customs. Even when the old taboos (e.g., against abortion or birth control) obviously run directly against our collective interests, they can persist.

It is very difficult for enthusiasts of scientific progress to admit that they cannot predict the harmful effects of new technologies. Some generalized distrust is needed. When X-rays were first introduced, some people refused to be exposed for childishly superstitious reasons, thereby saving themselves from a very real but at that time unknown risk of cancer. Zimmerman maintains some distrust without falling into rigid technophobia. It remains an open question whether most people can maintain his attitude.

Antiscientific mythologizing seems to come more easily than does technological caution. Here in America, the large creationist Right and the small PoMo Left preach converging gospels. Meanwhile, the Unabomber has turned early medieval times into a mythical golden age of individual autonomy, toward which he violently urges our return. And Vaclav Havel has recently embraced the Gaia hypothesis that the Earth is a self-regulating organism. The psychological comfort of such ideas is obvious, and some may even be the nucleus of some useful new social myths. But they directly deny how much our existence depends on particular environmental features which we are busily destroying.

For those who find both an oligarchy of expertise and a new age of irrationality equally horrible to contemplate, there is no choice but to fight for an educated democracy. Active citizens must be alert both to the benefits and dangers of technologies. We don't need to counterpose utopian myths to dystopian ones. Utopia is not Greek for "good place," but rather for "never-never land." □

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Objectivity and Ideology

David Biale

Re-Inventing the Jewish Past: European Jewish Intellectuals and the Zionist Return to History, by David Myers. Oxford University Press, 1995. 278 pp. $49.

Since its emergence in the beginning of the nineteenth century, the field of Jewish Studies has often mirrored the struggles of the Jewish communities in which it was practiced. As such, it was often as much ideological advocate as "objective" chronicler of the Jewish past. The Institute for Jewish Studies of the Hebrew University, founded in 1925 as the Zionist settlement in Palestine began its march toward statehood, has exemplified these tensions between ideology and objectivity.

In *Re-inventing the Jewish Past*, David Myers has undertaken a study of the history of the institute, but this is no mere institutional history. Myers has given us a shrewd portrait of a group of European Jewish intellectuals transplanted to the Middle East, through which we learn a great deal about the relationship between intellectuals, nationalism, and colonial movements in general.

Myers's central conclusion is that there was never such a thing as a monolithic "Jerusalem School" that held either one ideology, or one view of Jewish history and tradition. He asserts that no Zionist master-narrative emerged out of the institute. Nevertheless, some common themes or tensions characterized these Jerusalem scholars—and continue to reverberate in the field of Jewish Studies today.

The first of these tensions is that between scientific objectivity and ideological commitment. Trained in the German universities, many of the Jerusalem scholars were committed to a standard of objectivity that often bordered on a kind of naive positivism. Myers suggests that their exaggerated appeal to objectivity may have reflected insecurity about their origins as European Jews. In trying to legitimize Jewish Studies, they compensated for their sense of inferiority in relation to the canonical disciplines of the German university by attempting to outdo the scholarly rigor of their professors.

Yet, this dedication to *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, the "scientific" study of Judaism, concealed the deep ideological commitments of its practitioners.

The writing of Jewish history is really of a piece with the way nationalist historians generally have used history to 'invent the nation.'

Many believed that Zionism created the conditions for an objective historiography, since the Jewish scholars would no longer have to tailor their portrayal of Judaism to conform to Gentile expectations. Only by writing as members of a national majority was objectivity possible. Yet, we now know too much about the uses of history in nationalist movements to treat such claims without question. "Objectivity" here served as a code or a cover, as an ideological stance based on privileging Zion over the Diaspora. Thus, Ben Zion Dinaburg, the historian who became Israel's first minister of education, collected sources without interpretation, since he believed that the sources yielded an objective picture of the past that automatically supported his ideological assumption of the centrality of the Land of Israel in Jewish history. Many of the Jerusalem scholars also followed Gershom Scholem in claiming that Zionism had "returned the Jews to history." They believed that "returning to history" was the necessary precondition to the objective study of the Jewish past. Myers's subtitle is an ironic reference to this problem of the Jerusalem scholars' claim of nationalist objectivity, for he is acutely aware of the way nationalist historians invent the very past they study.

The legacy of hyper-objectivity has been hard for Jewish Studies to shake. The founding generation was generally conscious of the tension in its method between objectivity and ideology, even if they thought they had resolved it. Yet, the students of this founding generation were often so indoctrinated into the ideal of scientific objectivity that, lacking the ideological fervor of their European-born teachers, they fell into a reflexive positivism. Only now, with a third generation that has been influenced much more by intellectual trends outside of Israel, is this standard of objectivity coming under intensive criticism.

Myers argues that the first generation of Jerusalem scholars were much more indebted to their European origins than they themselves were willing to admit. They often caricatured the scholars of the nineteenth-century *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, but in their philological methods and standards of objectivity, they were not that far from these predecessors. They argued for a much more inclusive, nationalist concept of the Jewish past in which all of the features of Jewish

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life—and not only the religious—would be investigated. But this was, in fact, the ideal of the nineteenth-century scholars, even if they did not entirely fulfill it. Myers thus shows that this revolution in scholarship, like most revolutions, turns out to be rooted deeply in the past it claims to overthrow.

These scholars, including the most Zionist among them, never indulged fully in the rhetoric of *shelilat ha-gola* (the negation of the Diaspora). All of them were committed to the whole of the Jewish past, including that of the Diaspora, although they regarded the Diaspora as ultimately a dead end. The complex relationship to the Diaspora was also evident in the identities of the Jerusalem scholars. Myers borrows from such theorists as Homi Bhaba to argue that these scholars had hybrid or mediated identities, both European and Jewish. They were often out of place in Palestine, appearing more like colonial interlopers than members of the native population. Whether the colonialist model is useful in understanding the Jerusalem scholars seems to me somewhat doubtful, however, but certainly worthy of additional discussion.

A number of historians of modern Israel have tried to apply post-colonial theory to the formation of the State and have generated an enormous controversy. Myers does not take sides in this controversy, but his few cautious remarks suggest a willingness to see the history of the Jerusalem scholars not as entirely unique, but instead as one species of larger tendencies. He compares the foundation of the Hebrew University with the American University in Beirut, a clearly colonialist outpost in the Middle East. But what makes the Hebrew University model more complicated is the question of who were the natives: the Jewish immigrants or the Palestinian Arabs? The Jerusalem scholars were part of the immigrant population, but were not more native than were the vast majority of other Jews in the Yishuv. The complex, hybrid identities or split personalities that Myers invokes were just as true, if in different ways, for other Jewish immigrants to Zion. Indeed, one might say that Israel is the almost archetypical site for hybrid identity.

Finally, Myers suggests the tensions in the work of these scholars between immanent or internalist histories of the Jews and contextual histories. Did Jewish history proceed according to its own internal laws and dynamics, or was it part of its larger historical contexts? Here, I would argue that there was something like a master-narrative that united many of the Jerusalem scholars. In general, they adhered to an internalist model. Scholem famously argued that the seventeenth-century messianic movement around Sabbatai Sevi, rather than the external ideas of the European Enlightenment, ushered in the modern period. Dinaburg and others subscribed to a similar view. xScholem also held that Sabbatianism itself was the product of an internal history of ideas rather than external events. Yitzhak Fritz Baer's history of pietism emphasized an internal thread as well. In his *History of the Jews of Christian Spain*, he contrasted the wealthy elite, which had been corrupted by Spanish influences, against the poor, who remained true to Jewish ideals. Yet, Baer also showed the parallels between Jewish movements, such as the Ashkenazic pietists of the Middle Ages and Christian contemporaries, such as the Franciscans. It is ironic that it was Baer, who was personally much more traditional than the anarchistic Scholem, who could offer such radical interpretations of traditional Jewish movements.

If the Jerusalem scholars favored an "internalist" history of the Jews, David Myers himself has definitely departed from their historiographic perspective. He demonstrates that an ostensibly unique institution like the Hebrew University must be understood in the context of the role of universities generally in nationalist movements, just as the writing of Jewish history is really of a piece with the way nationalist historians generally have used history to "invent the nation."

This book belongs to a new tendency in Jewish Studies: to see beyond the belief in Jewish uniqueness toward an understanding of Jewish culture as one moment in human culture and to situate the Jews in their larger cultural environment as children of their age. What we learn by studying the often eccentric scholars of the "Jerusalem School" is not just what made them unique, but how their reinvention of the Jewish past was so similar to reinventions of national histories by historians of other emerging nations. □

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Kultur Kampf

Peter Eli Gordon

Culture and Catastrophe: German and Jewish Confrontations with National Socialism and Other Crises, by Steven Aschheim. New York University Press, 1996, 210 pp., hard cover, $40.

A generation ago, historians in search of Nazism's origins went rummaging through German books. Nazism, according to their premise, could be blamed on a "Germanic ideology," an illiberal disposition found in the work of a vast number of Central Europe's greatest thinkers. Today this older style of intellectual history feels a little crude. We can now see how for these scholars Germany became a foil for everything that seemed to be the opposite of cold-war liberalism. But perhaps the deepest problem in this historiography was that in ruminating excessively over Nazism's literary sources of inspiration, academics were indulging in a kind of magical thinking, as if the brute force of Nazism could be transformed into doctrines and ideas.

More recently, historians have largely abandoned the older views, attending less to the highbrow tradition and emphasizing instead Nazism's specifically modern character. This is a welcome change: as the language of the humanities falls away, one recognizes the familiar face of violence. The fact that the Nazis burned books may ultimately prove more instructive than the fact that they read them.

Steven Aschheim is an intellectual historian whose previous works were concerned with topics both Jewish and German (*Brothers and Strangers: The East European Jew in German and German-Jewish Consciousness*, and more recently, *The Nietzsche Legacy in Germany*.) His newest book is a collection of previously unpublished essays, ranging from the most general reflections (on the relationship between "culture" and Nazism) to the intellectual-historical (on the myth of "Judaization" in Germany, on Nazism and Nietzsche, and on the Weimar-era Jewish revolt against rationalism) to historiographical critique (on recent Holocaust literature with special attention to racial thought). Throughout the book, he is interested to provide his reader with a summary of the various ways that Nazism and the Holocaust have been treated in philosophical and historical literature, in national polemic and public commemoration.

A dominant theme holds all these essays together: Where liberal historiographers once emphasized the unmodern face of German culture, Aschheim takes the more recent line that the catastrophe was born of modernity itself. But old habits die hard: Aschheim's emphasis on modernity can itself begin to feel as unwieldy in its own way as the "anti-modernism" it was meant to replace. In one essay, Aschheim returns to the theme of his recent Nietzsche book, asking whether Nietzsche's thought somehow shaped the Nazi's genocidal vision. Pointing to Nazism's "bio-eugenic political and medical vision, its programmatic obsession with degeneration and regeneration," he affirms the link:

Nietzsche "helped to render such a possibility, such an act, conceivable in the first place." But then he hesitates: "…or, at the very least—given the relevant selective readings" Nietzsche could provide an "ideological cover." This "Nietzschean kind of thought, vocabulary and sensibility constituted an important (if not the only) long-term enabling precondition of such radical elements in Nazism."

The qualification here is only natural, testifying to Aschheim's scrupulous concern for how ideas become historically effective. But at times it's clear we are no longer talking about Nietzsche but only something like him, born of reading him in a particular, even selective fashion. It was, Aschheim argues, "the radically experimental, morality-challenging, tradition-shattering Nietzschean sensibility that made the vast transformative scale of the Nazi project thinkable." Still, why would this encourage Nazism more than another radical movement? In the earlier book, Aschheim observed that while "there were Nietzscheans of many kinds," they "almost all" shared "a general desire to challenge and go beyond accepted assumptions and conventions." But this is a rather large point of commonality; it embraces nearly all of modernism.

Such moods may simply be too vast to make useful explanations. For one thing, it is not certain why one particular thinker should be to blame, since "Nietzscheanism" is hardly found in Nietzsche alone. What Aschheim calls the "radically experimental" and "tradition-shattering" aspect of the "discourse" of degeneration was something thick in the cultural life of late Wilhelmine Germany. Pinning it all on Nietzsche confuses ideas and moods: It deduces from his prominent spot on the philosopher's shelf a similarly privileged place in the historian's arsenal of causes. But ideas make unruly, reluctant facts. The really worthwhile ideas for interpretation may well find their way into the larger turbulence of culture, but they'll tend to get absorbed in spite of—not because of—their uniquenesses. Maybe this is why "Nietzscheanism"—that big hotel haunted by all past Nietzsche interpretations—seems so capacious and so undiscriminating in its clientele. And maybe that is why Nietzsche himself might not live there at all.

In the final essay, Aschheim returns to the problem of what he calls the "triggering mechanism" that made anti-Semitism finally so murderous. He stresses above all the newer historiography on "racial hygiene," those practices and patterns of thought that made the Final Solution an expression of a biologistic vision that had become cultural currency throughout Europe. This, he says, indicates the "paradigmatic modernity" of Nazism: The

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Shoah was only possible given an ethic of technological efficiency, eugenicist theories of human inequality and population control, worst of all, an up-to-date factory-logic dedicated to the mass-production of death itself.

Yet for all its power, this nomenclature concerning modernity's successes and failures is still too brittle. Other scholars, trying to square the circle, have coined the paradoxical-sounding phrase, "reactionary modernism"—an apt term, but one that still creates problems. For example, some historians look for Nazism's modernity in its talk of races and biological health. It is true that racism tolerates few exemptions: Defining Jews racially meant that those last-ditch escape routes of assimilation and conversion were no longer options. But race is a cultural fiction, despite its real consequences. The novel aspect of quasi-scientific racism sometimes blinds us to the fact that even Nazi eugenic theories, with their odd definitions of *Mischlinge* (hybrids) couldn't help but refer to old records of synagogue attendance or baptism. There was just no other way to find out who belonged to what "race," so the question of who was to be killed and who was not fell back on these centuries-old habits of classification. There was nothing especially modern here, except for the horrible efficiency with which the death camps went about their work.

We'd be wrong, of course, entirely to dismiss Nazism's intellectual heritage. So we might still add Nietzsche—or Nietzscheanism—to the line-up of notorious ancestors. Others will insist that Martin Heidegger, the existentialist philosopher who joined the Nazi Party in 1933, belongs there, too. One used to point an accusatory finger at Hegel. And most recently, the discussion has come full circle, blaming philosophers long before Nietzsche, in a fateful line stretching "from Kant to Wagner." But while the history of ideas will continue to help us in understanding Nazism, it can just as often distract us from it. For, the mistake may lie in thinking that Nazism was ideologically coherent to begin with.

Ironically, it was Hannah Arendt—a philosopher schooled in the German tradition of high ideas—who first recognized this danger. She gave the horror its most effective name, a philosopher's name for a painfully unphilosophical phenomenon: she understood that when we busy ourselves with the larger taxonomies, we may miss the everydayness of the horror, we may forget that the offices and death-camps were staffed by ordinary men, and, in the somehow-consoling belief that catastrophe bears a literary pedigree, we may be neglecting the banality of evil.

There is a better alternative, but it doesn't leave intellectual historians with much to say about the nature of genocide. The first comprehensive study of the Shoah, Raul Hilberg's *The Destruction of the European Jews*, was written more than three decades ago, and yet its dryly bureaucratic style still makes it one of the most powerful studies to date. Its strength lies precisely in the fact that it demonstrates process, not ideology, emphasizing the horribly commonplace nature of the event. The recent book by Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men*, puts faces on the murderers, but they are, not surprisingly, ordinary faces. Confronted with such scholarship, the historian of ideas can feel a little foolish, like the ancient Greek philosopher Thales who, while contemplating the heavens, ended up falling into the gutter. □

Join a Task Force of the Foundation for Ethics and Meaning

Because we are seeking to build ongoing work groups that will sustain a politics of meaning movement, we are seeking applicants for the following (unpaid, voluntary) task forces that will help shape the work of the movement. Please indicate which task force you are applying for. Please send us a letter telling us about you, your background, and why you think you might contribute to the work of the task force for which you have applied.

Policy Task Force

The Policy Task Force will develop programs, policies, and legislative directions for a politics of meaning. Using *The Politics of Meaning: Restoring Hope and Possibility in an Age of Cynicism* as a basic framework, the Policy Task Force will explore and refine the programmatic implications of a spiritually and ethically focused approach to social reality.

The Policy Task Force will issue papers and reports on the best way to turn a meaning-oriented politics into concrete programs that could shape public debate.

To apply to be a member of the Policy Task Force, send us a résumé and write us a letter sharing your thinking about how to expand on some aspect of the programmatic ideas outlined by Lerner in his book, or share your thinking about some programmatic idea that has not yet been addressed by the politics of meaning community.

Spirituality and Religious Renewal Task Force

The Spirituality & Religious Renewal Task Force will work with existing efforts at renewal in the different religious communities, as well as to promote an integration of the teachings of the various religious traditions into a meaning-oriented politics. This task force will organize activities to publicly challenge the religious Right and will put forward alternative visions of what a God-centered life requires of us. It will also challenge the militant secularism and intolerance toward religious and spiritual orientations in traditional liberal culture and politics.

Public Intellectuals Task Force

The Public Intellectuals Task Force will encourage intellectuals to use their talents to address the needs of the communities in which they reside, and/or to address the central intellectual issues facing our society. We will encourage universities to include as part of the tenure and promotion process a focus on the degree to which the scholar uses his or her intellectual talents to help foster a public intellectual life outside narrowly academic circles.

Cynicism and Selfishness in the Media Task Force

We will coordinate a campaign to expose the ways that movies, television shows and news coverage, and print journalism tend to inculcate an ethos of selfishness and cynicism in the American public. Participants in this task force should be prepared to analyze various aspects of the media carefully, to uncover the hidden assumptions built into the perspective of the article or show, and then to be prepared to explain how those assumptions operate in a destructive manner. Participants will themselves be engaged in teaching others in the politics of meaning community how to recognize these hidden assumptions and biases that shape our consciousness. In addition, participants in this task force will dedicate a few hours per week to writing letters to local and national media challenging their messages of cynicism and selfishness.

Student Task Force

We hope to spread the word about the politics of meaning to a wide variety of campuses and to find there the people who are responsive to an ethically and spiritually oriented approach. Our task will be to coordinate student outreach efforts, promote campus study groups, organize an annual national gathering of students who wish to explore the politics of meaning, and encourage students to bring a meaning-oriented perspective into their classrooms and into the public life of the university. We will also seek to encourage campuses to invite politics of meaning speakers and to hold meaning-oriented symposia.

Development and Fundraising Task Force

This group will explore ways to build the politics of meaning movement and to find financial backing for that enterprise. It will also explore ways to make fund-raising activities consonant with the spiritual and ethical goals of the politics of meaning. It will address the ways in which a meaning-oriented politics can help people who have money who are ethically and spiritually sensitive, as well as how foundations can refocus their attention on the meaning issues. Applicants for this Task Force should send a letter describing their own ideas on these topics and the relevance of their background to addressing the relevant issues.

Social Responsibility Task Force

This task force will be responsible for work on promoting individual responsibility, as well as a focus on globalization and corporate social responsibility toward employees, the community and the environment. It will coordinate national efforts to promote the Social Responsibility Initiative, and to build public support for requiring public and private-sector institutions to issue a yearly Ethical Impact Report. It will organize a national demonstration for social responsibility in 1998, and it will coordinate local efforts to challenge the ethos of selfishness and materialism in the economy. And it will promote efforts to envision and institute a new way of conducting corporate life.

Families and Relationships Task Force

This task force will coordinate national efforts to circulate and build support for the Covenant with American Families. It will promote a national Families Day. It will promote the creation of family support networks in communities. It will publicly challenge the Right's claim to be the pro-families force. It will challenge the ethos of me-firstism and extreme individualism both within the dominant culture and within the liberal and progressive world—and it will promote loving commitments as an alternative to the primacy of "doing your own thing." It will support singles and challenge the meritocratic, market-oriented framework within which singles are often forced to operate. It will support gay and lesbian families and other alternative family forms, and, while challenging patriarchy and inequality in family life, it will oppose tendencies in the liberal world that demean traditional family forms.

Workplace Organizing Task Force

This task force will promote the creation of consciousness-raising groups in the workplace, or among members of a given trade or profession. It will coordinate efforts to create public intellectuals, and meaning-oriented doctors, lawyers, psychologists, teachers, social workers, union activists, etc.

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LETTERS

(Continued from p. 6)

nastiness and intellectual silliness in this field. Happily, the exhibit will not concentrate on this, but on how Freud's basic ideas have decisively shaped twentieth-century culture.

CRUELTY IS NOT DESTINY

To the Editor:

In second grade at Hebrew School I learned the story of Abraham and Isaac. I wondered why God would be so mean; I was scared and I wondered when He was going to test *my* parents. The story was handed to us as a solid, rigid lesson on faith and obedience. I raised my hand once, was ignored, and put it back down. There is a time for questions and a time for no questions allowed.

At times during my adolescence I did not identify myself as a Jew. My friends and I got high in the synagogue playground and looked at the moon and philosophized on the hoods of our parents' cars. From up there, we realized, countries and boundaries, currency and religion were all irrelevant. "god is sharing/share god," I wrote in my journal. "one religion/simply/human." I boycotted the fur coats and dozing old men of High Holiday Services for several years. I thought about the Holocaust and Israel, but not in a "religious" way, I told myself. I saw "The Last Temptation of Christ" and thought that the character of Jesus, as portrayed in the film, was one of the most profoundly human individuals I had ever encountered. I was confused by the feeling that he had been kept from me like a secret, and saddened by the stern-looking protesters marching in a quiet circle outside the theater. I perceived a fracturing in the world that was somehow speaking to, or mirroring, a fracture in my self. I considered my spirituality and my ethnicity/affiliation to be entirely separate compartments of my life.

During high school, I left my family's conservative synagogue altogether. I got involved in NEFTY, a reform youth group whose local chapter was at a different, slightly more progressive temple. Singing "Shalom Rav" and "Father and Son" by a campfire at a retreat in the Berkshires, meeting people who thought smart was cool, and being encouraged for the first time to voice my questions, discovering that there is a space and a need for questions in Judaism—these experiences shaped the bridge on which my Jewishness survived and traveled with me through fear and anger, the bridge which over time grows stronger and more supple. I wonder about the path to humanness and about the path to God. I wonder about the path as God.

Last year I taught seventh grade at a progressive Jewish Renewal Temple's Hebrew School. On the first day of class I told my kids about me in second grade. I told them the story I was told those years ago, the story of the Akedah. I told about how scared I was and about my raised hand going unrecognized. I felt a freeing, a circle coming home, as I told my students that their questions were welcome in our class. The first question was, "So, what's the deal with that story?"

And that's where TIKKUN comes in. At the library I found a back issue with a cover story about Abraham and Isaac: "Cruelty Is Not Destiny." And inside that article I discovered a radical and powerful truth: The lesson I was handed in second grade was, unbeknownst to me, simply one reading of the story. There is space and need for other readings. The interpretation offered in the article suggests that the moment of transcendence, the ultimate reckoning which transformed Abraham into the first Jew, was not when Abraham, fueled by faith in God's will, said, "Okay, God. I'll slaughter my child for you." Rather, this moment was achieved when Abraham became able to hear the one true voice of God, the voice that spoke to love, the voice that said, "Don't do it." "...Abraham must confront the central problem facing every religious person ..." writes Michael Lerner, "...the difficulty in separating the voice of God from the voice of the legacy of pain and cruelty that dominated the world and is embedded in our psyches. The greatness of Abraham is *not* that he took his son to Mt. Moriah ... so that he could sacrifice his son. No. The greatness of Abraham is that he didn't go through with it."

Sharing this reading with my class the following week was perhaps my proudest moment as a teacher: I was thrilled that my choice to do a little research on a very big, disturbing, seemingly entrenched lesson had led me to this reading which resonates with healing truth. My understanding of the notion of truth in learning, of truth as process and transcendence as opposed to the binding of children in too-tight hand-me-downs, will never be the same. For this genesis I am grateful to the work and words of TIKKUN, and I want to become part of what you are forging.

What draws me to TIKKUN? The holistic integration of personal narrative and collective purpose. The radical paradigm shift put forth in the politics of meaning, which embodies so much of what I think and feel. The validation that my support of a Palestinian state is not anti-Israel. The realization that defending a Planned Parenthood Clinic and marching with Act Up are not, for me, secular endeavors. The writing. The hopefulness. TIKKUN calls me out of the woods and into my community, my world, and still respects the sacredness of the woods, of solitude, of self. TIKKUN and the politics of meaning exemplify for me the interconnectedness of self-realization and the work of transforming the world, of creating peace.

David Israel
Berkeley, California

JOURNALISTS VS. MEDIA

To the Editor:

I would certainly agree with Jay Rosen that contemporary journalism is flawed. I didn't like the O.J. overload any more than he did.

But Rosen doesn't help his case by writing stupid half-truths that undercut his own thesis about the need for greater journalistic responsibility.

As evidence of how depraved and cynical we journalists can be, he takes The *Philadelphia Inquirer* to task for reporting that Colin Powell's wife is being treated for depression. The nation, he writes, was enchanted by the bright possibilities of a Powell candidacy, but the "*Philadelphia Inquirer* was having none of it," preferring instead to show "toughness."

As the national political writer who spent time on the Powell story last autumn, I can't let this one pass.

What Rosen failed to point out was that the information about Alma Powell was confined to three paragraphs that appeared in the middle of a thirty-seven-paragraph article. The article itself focused on whether Powell would run for president, and explored all possible factors that might influence his decision. The Alma Powell material was presented in that context; indeed, we cited a close family friend, who told us that all personal facts would play a role in Powell's decision.

Rosen, by contrast, leaves the impression that we "exposed" (his word) the

Alma Powell illness in a story devoted to that subject alone. Nor does he mention the fact that Colin Powell himself later said publicly that he had no problem with our handling of the subject.

And as to Rosen's crack that the *Inquirer* didn't care about "the sense of possibility" inherent in a Powell candidacy, facts say otherwise. On August 7, September 24, and October 13, I reported on that very phenomenon ("What America desperately wants is a better version of itself," a Powell biographer told me). But I'd bet my salary that Rosen never saw those pieces, or even checked our coverage at all.

I respect that Rosen, as a media critic and booster of the "public journalism" movement, has a vested interest in monitoring our misbehavior. Fine. There is much to monitor.

But in this case, he is guilty of the same acts that he condemns in others. That does not inspire confidence.

Dick Polman
Philadelphia Inquirer
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

PRAGER

To the Editor:

As a long-time subscriber who generally appreciates the tone and quality of your contributors, I am disappointed and offended by the inaccuracy and meanspiritedness of Stew Albert's review of Dennis Prager's book, *Think a Second Time*. Albert is the kind of rigid, arrogant liberal who has given liberalism a bad name, the kind Roger Rosenblatt alluded to in his recent article in The *New York Times Magazine* (1/14/96) titled "Triumph of Liberalism." Mr. Albert is among those who condemn middle-class morality, who would likely refer to teenage motherhood as "another manifestation of family life," who pay more attention to the rights of criminals than victims, those for whom truth is an abstract notion. Mr. Albert has so grievously misrepresented Dennis Prager and his book, I am newly inclined to be suspect of TIKKUN's agenda, taste, and judgment.

He writes that Mr. Prager is in demand as a speaker among those required to "tell us to look for moral corruption mostly among the poor, the Blacks, the gays, and pathetically sentimental middle-class liberals." Anyone who has read or heard Mr. Prager even minimally knows he believes and states quite the opposite—that there is no economic or racial relevance to an individual's morality. He writes that moral and ethical behavior must be taught and that the wealthy hardly have a corner on the commitment or ability to do so. If Mr. Albert disagrees with this premise, then it is he who is the pathetically sentimental, middle-class liberal.

The review is punctuated by numerous and unimaginative code words calculated to brand Mr. Prager as an evil right-winger: "surprisingly humane theories" of child rearing; "celebration of capital punishment," "all-consuming hatred of liberal and feminist ideas," "there really are bad children," "horrible Rodney King," etc. Each of these characterizations and descriptive adjectives is wholly disingenuous and specious. They are in fact out-and-out lies. Mr. Prager is a scholar, among the most humane and thoughtful I have ever heard or read. And he is a centrist; not a racist, not a homophobe, not an anti-feminist.

Patricia McCarthy
Burbank, California

To the Editor:

It has amazed me in recent years to see Dennis Prager described as a moderate centrist, when I have heard him speak in a fashion that replicates the style of the worst fascistic demagogues. One such incident particularly sticks in my mind: when Prager debated someone (was it your editor?) from TIKKUN in a synagogue in Oakland. The topic was supposed to be contemporary liberalism, but Prager thought he would get advantage by switching the focus to Israel. Rather than talk about Lerner's position (one that was closely aligned with the doves of the Israeli Labor Party), Prager focused instead on an article that Lerner had written some twenty years earlier as a (rather intemperate) student activist, an article which Lerner had subsequently repudiated in print. Refusing to deal with the substance of the issues about Israel, Prager spent much of his time trying to personally discredit Lerner himself. The approach played well with the crowd of older Zionists in this audience, so that Lerner's current political views were never given a serious hearing. Instead, people who normally voted Democratic found themselves shaking their heads in assent to a long list of right-wing slogans that were being slipped in to the discourse without critical scrutiny before a crowd of people who seemed to have lost their own capacities for judgment the moment that they were exposed to Lerner's youthful irreverence. But for the few dozen of us younger Jews who were in the audience, witnessing this kind of demagogic behavior replace what we had hoped would be a serious exchange of views sickened us and reminded many of us of why we felt so uncomfortable in many American synagogues.

So imagine my surprise to discover that in the 1990s Prager had decided to market himself as a centrist in order to get a role as a television talk-show host. I'm delighted that TIKKUN printed Albert's analysis of his work. When I called to ask why you had never done anything on Prager before, I was told by someone in your office that it would appear too competitive for TIKKUN to be criticizing the editor of another Jewish publication. I responded immediately that that was baloney, because TIKKUN always critiques *Commentary*. I was told in response that although TIKKUN sometimes critiques specific articles in the magazine, it had never written a personal critique of Norman Podhoretz, and in general stays away from personal critiques. I'm glad that in this case you've overcome that kind of restraint—because people like Prager are remarkably seductive, since they seem to have no internal constraint on changing the way they present themselves depending on the audience.

Rosalie Graham
Oakland, California

New email address!

Letters to the editor
letters@tikkun.org

All other magazine inquiries to
staff@tikkun.org

Contact the Foundation for Ethics and Meaning at
foundation@tikkun.org

THE POLITICS OF MEANING

(Continued from p. 42)

consciousness-raising groups to focus on Michael Lerner's *The Politics of Meaning: Restoring Hope and Possibility in an Age of Cynicism*. But after fully absorbing Lerner's perspective, we hope that those groups will move on to develop their own ideas, write papers in which these ideas are explored, and then circulate these papers to other small groups around the country (or publish them in TIKKUN). We expect that there will be an explosion of meaning-related thinking in the next two decades, and that people will develop the meaning-perspective in ways that we can only dimly imagine today.

We also hope that local chapters will organize the following campaigns:

a. To demand corporate social responsibility and to insist upon an Ethical Impact Report from corporations, governmental bodies, and multi-million-dollar non-profits;

b. To challenge media cynicism;

c. To demand that schools teach empathy;

d. To challenge the profit-making bottom line of hospitals and doctors;

e. To challenge the selfishness of lawyers and the failure of the legal system to address the common good; and much more that will come out of future politics of meaning gatherings.

We are urging professional groups to set up meaning-oriented consciousness-raising groups to discuss the prospects of their profession operating by a politics of meaning "bottom line" instead of the current bottom line. For example, groups of lawyers are meeting to discuss what changes would have to occur in courtroom procedure if the fundamental supposition was one of trying to promote mutual caring, and community. Groups of doctors are meeting to discuss what a hospital could look like if the goal were to treat human beings as though they were made in the image of God and deserved to be treated with gentleness, caring and respect. We encourage you to create such a group in your own area of work.

We will convene a yearly national Summit so that people who are doing this kind of work can share their stories and learn from each other.

But ultimately, our goal is not to build any one organization as *the vehicle*, but to encourage people to make every institution, organization, and social movement of which they are part a meaning-oriented reality.

On the other hand, initially it is particularly important to have a mechanism for the sharing and promoting of the ideas, and that is the task of the Foundation for Ethics and Meaning and of TIKKUN magazine. A more detailed strategy and tactics for building the campaign for a politics of meaning are presented in Michael Lerner's book, *The Politics of Meaning*.

One first step you can take: Whenever you hear someone say that it's "natural" for people to be selfish or narrowly self-interested or worrying only about themselves, reply, "That's not true. It's not true about me. And I doubt if it's really true about you as well."

And then tell them about the politics of meaning.

Is the politics of meaning a front for Democrats, or is it an attempt to create a third party? And why isn't it part of the Greens or the New Party?

We are not attempting to reform the Democratic Party, though we would encourage people to take the ideas put forward here and use them in whatever party you work with. There is no hidden political agenda here. Those who think that these ideas can gain a significant foothold in the Democratic Party or other political parties should feel free to try to take the ideas into those realities. But that is not our goal as an educational movement.

We are not associated with the Greens, the New Party, or any other party. We are happy to see new parties sprout up. But most new progressive parties seem to attempt to change things simply by restating the traditional goals of liberals or of the Left. We think that in so doing, they will improve and clarify the political discourse in the country. But that is not enough. We are not a Left grouping—we are a grouping that transcends the old categories. We would be interested in working with any party or organization that explicitly and wholeheartedly adopts the politics of meaning as its central guiding philosophy. But we won't be much impressed with parties that add a few meaning-oriented planks to an agenda that is basically based on the traditional Left and Left-liberal assumptions and formulations that have guaranteed the isolation of Left forces in the past. We need a whole new direction, not a few slogans pasted on to a lefty way of thinking.

How do we learn more about the politics of meaning?

First, read Michael Lerner's *The Politics of Meaning: Restoring Hope and Possibility in an Age of Cynicism*. Use the book as the basis for a study group. You'll find that it answers many of the questions that arise.

Second, subscribe to TIKKUN magazine where the discussion takes place. In each issue of TIKKUN, you'll find writers who apply a meaning-oriented approach to contemporary issues and problems.

Third, there are many books worthy of your consideration that partially or wholly embody the politics of meaning perspective. Among them are:

- Robert Bellah et.al., *The Good Society*
- A. Lawrence Chickering, *Beyond Left and Right: Breaking the Political Stalemate*
- Thomas R. Cole, *The Journey of Life: A Cultural History of Aging in America*
- Harvey Cox, *Fire From Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the 21st Century*

•Herman E. Daly & John R. Cobb, Jr., *For the Common Good*
•Ram Dass and Mirabai Bush, *Compassion in Action: Setting Out on the Path of Service*
•Elizabeth Debold, Marie Wilson, Idelisse Malave, *Mother Daughter Revolution*
•Charles Derber, *The Wilding of America: How Greed and Violence are Eroding Our Nation's Character*
•E.J. Dionne, *Why Americans Hate Politics; They Only Look Dead*
•Larry Dossey, *Meaning and Medicine*
•Michael Eric Dyson, *Making Malcolm*
•Tom and Mary Edsall, *Chain Reaction*
•James Fallows, *Breaking the News: How the Media Undermine American Democracy*
•Matthew Fox, *Confessions*
•Peter Gabel, *collected TIKKUN articles (available through TIKKUN)*
•Lynn Gottlieb, *She Who Dwells Within*
•Colin Greer and Herbert Kohl, *A Call to Character: A Family Treasury*
•Thich Nhat Hanh, *For a Future to Be Possible*
•F. Alan Hanson, *Testing Testing: Social Consequences of the Examined Life*
•Abraham Joshua Heschel, *Who is Man?*
•David Korten, *When Corporations Rule the World*
•Jonathan Kozol, *Amazing Grace: the Lives of Children and the Conscience of a Nation*
•Frances Moore Lappé, *The Quickening of America*
•Michael Lerner, *Surplus Powerlessness*
Jewish Renewal, A Path to Healing and Transformation
•Rosemary Reuther, *Gaia and God*
•Jeremy Rifkin, *The End of Work: The Decline of the Global Labor Force and the Dawn of the Post-Market Era*
•Jeffrey Salkin, *Being God's Partner*
•Michael Sandel, *Democracy's Discontent: America in Search of a Public Philosophy*
•Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, *From Age-ing to Sage-ing: A Profound New Vision of Growing Older*
•Barry Schwartz , *The Costs of Living: How Market Freedom Erodes the Best Things in Life*
•Jerome Segal, *Agency and Alienation: A Theory of Human Presence*
•Donald W. Shriver, Jr., *An Ethic for Enemies: Forgiveness in Politics*
•William M. Sullivan, *Work and Integrity: The Crisis and Promise of Professionalism in American Life*
•Jim Wallis, *The Soul of Politics*
•Arthur Waskow, *Godwrestling; Godwrestling—Round II*
•Richard Weissbourd, *The Vulnerable Child: What Really Hurts America's Children and What We Can Do About It*
•Cornel West, *Race Matters; Jews and Blacks: Let the Healing Begin: The Future of the Race: Caring for Others and Healing Ourselves,* with Henry Louis Gates, Jr.
•Ken Wilber, *A Brief History of Everything; Sex, Ecology, Spirituality*
•Robert Wuthnow, *Acts of Compassion*

We welcome suggestions to expand this list and apologize to those authors whose books we inadvertently omitted. This list is only a small sampling of the relevant books.

THE BALANCED BUDGET MYTH

(Continued from p.55)

consequences are stagnant wages, increased poverty, and worsened distribution of wealth.

In countering this position, I propose a consumer-driven economic growth, with more tolerance of higher inflation. The full-employment model would use fiscal policy to stimulate employment and consumption. In this view, an unbalanced budget is totally acceptable, perhaps even necessary.

Bill Vickrey, former president of the American Economic Association notes (through a personal communication with me) that going from zero to 10 percent inflation reduces the GNP by 1.8 percent. On the other hand, each 1 percent reduction in official unemployment accounts for a 2.5 percent increase in national income:

> Reducing unemployment from 6 to 2 percent thus increases real income by about 10 percent, for which even an increase in inflation to 10 percent per year, is unlikely to cost more than 2 percent of national income at most. This would leave a net gain of at least 8 percent of national income, in addition to the salutary effect of low unemployment on poverty, homelessness, family breakup, and crime.

The choice of economic strategies before our policymakers boils down to emphasis on growth versus control of inflation. The latter sacrifices jobs, increasing poverty and all its attendant ills. Wall Street is made happy while the rest of us suffer. The counter-strategy calls not only for accepting a higher inflation rate in service of greater growth and employment; it also raises the additional argument regarding the need for stimulation via balanced budgets. We must challenge the legitimacy of the great god of NAIRU (Non-Accelerating Inflation Rate of Unemployment), which currently reigns and determines economic policy. In essence, in this choice between trade-offs, I advocate a consumer-driven job strategy that aims to reduce unemployment while accepting some degree of inflation. □

THE PSYCHODYNAMICS OF CYNICISM

(Continued from p. 34)

within a family by lowering one's expectations and by complying with one's mistreatment. I come unconsciously to *agree* with the way I'm treated by my parents because they have an awesome authority to define reality and morality for me. Love and caring, awe and admiration, idealism and dependence—all can come to feel potentially embarrassing if displayed too directly or publicly, in a family or in our lives as citizens.

So we can see that idealism and ethics can seem embarrassing in public life. And there is nothing more embarrassing than the politics of meaning. Nothing. You can hear the sneers of the cynical and hard-bitten insiders when Michael Lerner talks about spiritual sensitivity or Peter Gabel talks about connection. Their contempt—I should say, *our* contempt, because I believe that this is an incipient reaction in most of us—is a powerful reflex, a reflex triggered, I believe, by an unconscious process.

Here's how I think it works: Words like caring, kindness, meaning, community, sensitivity, connection, love, and even God—when introduced into a political discourse—threaten to remind us of what we long for but have had to give up or suppress. They stir up an appetite, you might say, for these kinds of relationships and experiences. But along with the appetites goes the danger of being foolish and humiliated if we acknowledge and insist on our right to have them. This danger has roots in our childhoods and in our everyday social experience. So we do what psychoanalysis has described so well—we identify with the aggressor and treat our own appetites as they were once treated by others, and still are treated by others—namely, we reject and devalue them. We attack our own longings as forbidden and dangerous. First we do it to ourselves and then to others. We adopt the voice of the cynical Other: the parent, the media image, the corporation, the politician. Then we're safe; we don't have to be vulnerable to humiliation. We're on the inside, now, adult insiders and not pathetic and naive children. Then we do it to others. We treat the idealist as a fool, dismiss the language of love as naive, and mock the politics of meaning as a kind of touchy-feely navel-gazing. We feel safer, restored. Everything is really pretty corrupt. Goodness is a pipe dream. What a relief! What a lonely and depressing relief.

For the politics of meaning to get across and be heard, we have to talk about and challenge cynicism all of the time. We have to appreciate how shameful it is to let oneself express hope and compassion and to expect it from others. We have to defend our right to insist on these values in the face of the inevitable resistance and embarrassment that this evokes in ourselves and others. For, as Marianne Williamson put it, "It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us." □

ECOLOGICAL POLITICS

(Continued from p. 24)

nature, and maximization of efficiency.

A genuinely ecological politics does not refute the liberal aim so much as embed it within a larger context. Protecting the earth is not simply about sustaining the material mechanisms that ensure human life; it also entails honoring and working to preserve the integrity of nature's networks of support, of which we are a part. As E.M. Forster said in a very different context, "Only connect!" This injunction needs to be at the heart of our environmental efforts. We must insert ourselves, practically as well as emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually into the ecological fabric of the planet and play our role as biotic citizens. In this way we can exercise a more purposeful orientation in our politics and, consequently, more successfully safeguard the natural world. □

OBSERVING THE SABBATH

(Continued from p. 44)

then another. Employers and employees would find reasons to keep working. The Sabbath is a categorical imperative. Chip away at that precise starting time, and *Shabbos* won't start at all.

For me to reclaim Shabbat requires no classes, no conversion. It is my birthright, my legacy. I know the script, the lines, the text, the tunes (I often hum my favorites on the way to the gym). Any time I'm ready to "keep" it, rather than "remember" it, it's mine. But I'm afraid to commit to the Sabbath Bride, who could seem so stern, so demanding in my youth. Most weekends, I resist her advances. But there are other Saturdays, increasing in number, when, moving from observation to observance, I postpone my errands, forget about my workout, put on a skirt, and go to shul. On such Saturdays, my heart is light, my spirits soar. □

JERUSALEM JOURNAL

(Continued from p. 51)

with warmth. Clinton is behind Israel (and obviously Peres and the peace process) 100 percent. A dim thought about the consequences of not being even-handed occurs to me, then flits away.

After the press conference, we've come to Rabin's grave-site on Mount Herzl. The press waits for hours for Clinton to show up. Today was supposed to be a hot day, but it's cold, gray, raining on and off. There are only about twenty of us here, mostly photographers along with the White House press corps. It's taken an hour to disassemble and check every camera, every microphone, each portable telephone, even though we've all passed through intensive security twice this morning.

Ehud Barak, the Israeli Foreign Minister, Secretary of State Warren Christopher, and other dignitaries—all the men in *kippot*—chat with Yitzhak Rabin's daughter, son, and grandchildren under pine trees a few feet away from us, next to Rabin's grave. A headstone has just weeks ago been placed over Rabin's tomb: half black, half white, a curving design. Uri Droumi, head of the Israeli press office, admonishes us to keep quiet when Clinton arrives. "He wants this solemn. He doesn't want noise: no beepers, no cellular phones. Please, no Israeli shouting." We wait and wait. I think of the wounded in Hadassah I could be talking to, the trip to Nablus I'm missing. Finally, Clinton arrives with Leah Rabin.

In front of the grave, she points at the new stone, talking to Clinton, describing with words and gestures the monument's meaning. Then she places a bouquet of roses on top of her husband's final resting place, while Clinton takes some stones from his pocket that he's brought from the White House lawn. Following Jewish tradition, he places them on the tombstone. Then he does his meditation routine again: a true feeling of sadness rises into his reddened face, his eyes are closed, his mouth draws far down into a single sad line almost reaching his chin, as he takes Leah Rabin's hand. Now, he's tearing up. Seeing this, I also start to cry, a burst of feeling so in contrast to the edgy boredom of the last few hours, in contrast to everyone else around me—the professionals shooting pictures, for whom this grave-site is overly familiar turf. Even Rabin's kids and grandchildren seem blasé; they too come here for official occasions all the time.

Just as Clinton bows his head, the sky lightens. The rain had stopped, and now there's a slight glitter reflected on Rabin's tombstone. I'm not crying over Rabin's death, I realize; I'm crying over what may be the grave-site of this attempt at peace. The way the light is so weakly trying to emerge from the darkened sky mirrors our collective future. For we don't, any of us, know who will win the next election and—deeper than that—don't know what's to come of the current process, whoever wins. All around Israel, that play of dark and dimming light fills the minds of everyone traveling buses, in the malls, at cafes, at the airport: not knowing where the next bomb will go off, or if Hamas will stop bombing for a time, or how we're to go forward.

After the five-minute silent ceremony, we depart as Clinton heads for Tel Aviv. The press bus drops us off on a Jerusalem street corner at rush hour. It's raining again, and in the crowds I can't remember where I parked my car. I run toward a parking lot that, as luck would have it, is the Egged bus depot. Red and white buses are everywhere. Everyone has said: "Keep away from buses." And here they are taking off, pulling in, fifty or sixty coming and going, another hundred parked. I run between them, lost, no one around. At first I feel a mild frenzy and then I realize how ludicrous the notion of complete security is, that we have no idea where it's safe, where it's not.

I run up a hill, try to enter the back of an official building, only to find it chained shut. It's raining hard. I look down at the central bus station, at the main post office, at the rushing crowds. Anyone with an evil intent can still find a way, trick the authorities, circumvent checkpoints. Those of us who've driven so easily around checkpoints for years know this. Suddenly all the tens of millions of dollars in security devices sent by the United States strike me as absurd. The only security is psychological trust, and we've never been further from that.

Yet fears for my own safety virtually disappear, replaced by ordinary concerns, what's true for most Israelis. For now I'm busy thinking, "Where's my car?", and then, finding it, getting to the next appointment on time. I watch as my mind drops dreadful thoughts and scary scenarios in favor of the so human need to get to the next meeting, then dinner, then get home on time. This is the way we live with terror; *we don't think of it* because the mind can't hold both the immediate/mundane while feeding abstract terrors—not at the same time.

Buses are everywhere. It's still rush hour, and stuck in traffic, I'm listening to Clinton on the radio from Tel Aviv. As if completely safe, I get absorbed as he talks of the need to conquer fear and pursue peace, and then praises Jews and Israelis: "Overcoming persecution is the genius of the Jewish people." Then he waxes eloquent about how Israelis conquered the desert, made it bloom, and in Tel Aviv, where so recently there was only sand, how Israelis created a bustling cultural center. I hear his authentic love for Israel. And yet I notice vividly what I'd only vaguely sensed earlier: that he's dangerously close to Golda Meir's myopic "A land without a people for a people without a land." Clinton's love for Israel must unhinge the Palestinians; any of them listening to his talk would be irate. (In

fact, Hanan Ashrawi *is* publicly furious within the hour; Nabil Sha'ath talks of violence by the next morning). If I were Palestinian, I would be angry too: We Jews are not the only victims here, even though we're the most recent, obvious, and—this time—innocent ones. I'm glad Clinton came and is consoling us, but we need Palestinians to have realistic hope too, if *we're* ever to be truly safe.

Friday, March 15

I arrive at the Greens' house for Shabbat dinner. Judith Green, along with only a handful of Israelis, has kept dialogue with Palestinians going for years. She's quiet, just back from Nablus, after several meetings in the West Bank town of Beit Sahur this week. Usually we are full of ideas, great conversation; tonight, Judith's silence says: Dialogue is not going well. Very solemn, she says she even missed synagogue tonight, needing to be alone. Then she mentions: "It's illegal now for Israelis to visit the West Bank."

"But personal relations are fine with your Palestinian friends?" I ask.

At first she nods. "Yes, they all called after the bombings. We continue dialogue with videotapes back and forth from Tel Aviv to Nablus," she answers. Then she reflects, "But what's purely personal here?" As she speaks, I realize I haven't talked to a single Palestinian in weeks, and in a strange way, I'm back to where I began in September 1991 when I first moved to Jerusalem, and knew only Jews. "Maybe we should write the Clintons about dialogue, not munitions," I suggest tepidly. Judith shoots me a look that says, "Wake up. You're in the wrong dream now."

I step out into the Greens' backyard in Abu Tor, a "mixed" section of Jerusalem, one of my favorite spots. I savor its wide view of the Judean hills in the distance, the sounds of Arabic prayers mingling with Hebrew ones. The birds of Jerusalem sound, as they always do, happier and sweeter than birds anywhere. I love the air here, the vistas opening beyond the pomegranate and fig trees in the yard, the way the daylight so gradually turns to twilight over the desert. But tonight I feel as if I've fallen through a time warp, as if I've just arrived and don't know the reality of this place at all. The beauty combines with images of death and a lurking sense of enmity that mocks our efforts at co-existence—invisible forces circling the city, seductive as the beauty, and these days, equally fierce.

Shabbat, March 16

All day I enjoy the sun and sleepiness, an interiority and rest that, Chagall-like, floats from house to house every Shabbat. Even though Hamas is threatening new attacks, Shabbat feels safe. Jerusalem's streets are full of people walking leisurely in the heat. Everyone seems normal after thirteen days, no new bombs. I chat with Jon and Anna Emmanuel. Anna, a fiction writer, says: "This all reminds me of the Warsaw Ghetto. My mother was a teenager in Poland then. She thought it was ridiculous to obey orders, to let fear infect her. She loved music, would slip out of the ghetto at night to hear violin concertos. And now *my* teen-ager refuses all injunctions, slips onto Bus 18, drives me crazy."

Jon, a journalist who covers Palestinians for The *Jerusalem Post*, sounds more sanguine, less afraid. "I'm in the West Bank a lot, the majority are not for terror," he says.

The house where I'm living has had a death in the family. At five this morning, cancer claimed a much beloved friend, Marlene, at forty-five. Mourners arrive, or call from Tel Aviv. The loss of this mother of young children combines with the other deaths. Women are crying, talking of Marlene, her children, and in the next breath of the children who've died the past two weeks. The newspaper *Ha'aretz* tells of a foiled Hamas plan to bomb the airport, where I'll soon be heading. "El Al is safe," I say to Beatrice, a friend so vulnerable that to her nothing feels safe. "Who knows?" she says. "The Scuds were easier; at least that was a war with borders. Now it's war, but no borders. I cry and plan, make private rituals about what's dangerous and what's safe, but what I really want is to leave, go to an island somewhere. My husband and kids won't hear of it, call me hysterical. So I'm here, crying for Marlene, crying for this world we live in. Anywhere else is easier than Israel," she says.

I pack, as sad leaving for the States as I was scared, less than a week ago, coming here. What felt so dangerous from afar and during the first days, what still terrifies Beatrice and others, now for me seems almost negligible. For the tightest closure of the Israeli-Palestinian borders in Israel's history, despite all the hardship it brings to Palestinians, creates a temporary feeling of greater safety. This is what Hamas has accomplished: a heightened sense of community, a stronger shared story, on each side of the Green Line, with a huge chasm separating the two sides. Camaraderie with one's own kind cuts through Israeli fear; it's this strong communal spirit that's so hard for me to leave.

Yet driving to the airport, I know that the peace of neighborly co-existence has suffered a huge setback, as the "peace" of fences, borders, and separation grows daily in popularity. This is not at all what we moderates on both sides have been striving for. I wonder how and if we'll again create a narrative flow across the explosive space now standing between us. □

Community Meaning

(Continued from p. 16)

economic institutions are commonly buffeted back and forth in declining local economies. Also, most worker-owned firms are neither democratically controlled nor participatory (and this defines a critical area of internal "reconstructive" challenge for the future.) Nonetheless—and above all because traditional economics and traditional reform are failing—the process of reconstructive development is almost certain to continue to gain momentum over time.

The late British cultural historian Raymond Williams held that the "making of a community is always an exploration, for consciousness cannot precede creation, and there is no formula for unknown experience. It is, in practice … a long conversion of the habitual elements of denial; a slow and deep personal acceptance of extending community. The institutions of cynicism, of denial and of division will perhaps only be thrown down when they are recognized for what they are: the deposits of practical failures to live."

In a similar vein, Martin Buber emphasized that real change requires a conscious existential choice—a decision to move in a new direction. The reconstruction of community is important not simply because it might ultimately be the precondition of slowly—even agonizingly—resolving our growing economic and social difficulties. It is important because at its core is the question of how human culture and human meaning might ultimately be transformed. What is at stake is the political-economic precondition of community—and a process of re-knitting the vital relationships between individuals and between groups without which a different consciousness, a different vision, a different philosophy, and a different meaning are all but impossible to imagine.

Philosopher Hannah Arendt once urged that we pay close attention to the "odd in-between period which sometimes inserts itself into historical time when not only the later historians but the actors and witnesses, the living themselves, become aware of an interval in time which is altogether determined by things that are no longer and by things that are not yet."

"In history," Arendt urged, "these intervals have shown more than once that they may contain the moment of truth." In such contexts, new possibilities can occur—"erupt"—even amidst widespread cynicism (even, in part, because of it). Despite all the obstacles, it is clearly important to press forward with traditional progressive reforms to the extent this is feasible. Yet we also know that in the past quite new social movements have developed "out of nowhere"—movements sufficiently powerful to challenge extraordinarily imposing institutional structures: the modern civil rights movement, the feminist movement, the environmental movement, the anti-war movement—all seemed to be facing overwhelming odds at the outset. So, too, few predicted the collapse of communism or the enormously rapid demise of apartheid once the walls began to crumble.

Just possibly what is happening at the deep grass roots of America's communities might one day become the basis of something quite extraordinary—something which might conceivably even take us, as Buber urged, past the limits of our own present-hobbled ideas of what is possible. □

And Adam Knew Eve

(Continued from p. 53)

our souls, to point us in the direction of the other—whether this is our neighbor, our spouse, our God. This is the challenge of our sensual lives: to make contact where before there was only chaos and division, in the darkness of the soul to create light and to share it.

In Jewish liturgy, there are blessings for almost everything we do or consume. But for the sex act no such blessing exists. In all other acts, we thank God. In the act of sex, for one split second, we become God. □

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Observance in Manhattan

Now,
with the only cars around
at rest
along both sides of our street
downtown,
something like silence has come
hovering
for more than a moment here
among us
walking under these leafy trees

In This Room

on Friday night I praised you;
glowing, you
rose
quietly, like a firefly

—Stephen Levy

Metamorphosis: 1993

Kafka
Is not surprised to find
He is alive and living in Praha.

He wakes one morning
After an uneasy sleep
To find himself transformed into a T-shirt

Hanging in a stall
Outside the courtyard of the Castle.

Within the boundless Castle corridors
Der Prozess is not yet over,

Kafka
Stretches the innermost fibers
Of his cotton soul

And measures the length of his arms.
Just as he had thought:
One size fits all.

—Annette Henkin Landau

We're Looking for Creative Non-fiction

TIKKUN invites submissions of creative non-fiction up to 2,000 words. We are interested in the memoir, personal essay, epistolary exchanges, and other epiphanies. We are looking for work that illuminates the world through the particular and specific experiences of the author rather than vice versa. Focus need not be Jewish. Send manuscripts with SASE to Enid Shomer, Creative Non-fiction, TIKKUN, P.O. Box 1778, Cathedral Station, New York, NY 10025.

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What Is the Politics of Meaning?

The politics of meaning is both a new theoretical orientation and a strategy to change American society.

Theoretical Orientation

Liberals and progressives have focused on economic needs and individual rights—and have fought against corporate or governmental forces that deny each. A progressive politics of meaning supports the liberal agenda on these issues (including civil liberties, women's liberation, economic justice, choice, ecological sanity, etc.). Yet liberals have too narrow an understanding of human needs, often seeing us as creatures whose primary interest is in economic survival or individual freedom. But they've been unable to recognize the ethical, spiritual, and psychological needs that are equally central.

We see human beings as fundamentally in relationship to each other and needing each other's recognition and love. The healthy human being is not the one who can stand alone, but the one who can acknowledge his/her need for others and can recognize in every other the sanctity that makes them worthy of respect and caring.

Human beings have a need to transcend the materialism and selfishness and the manipulative consciousness that teaches them to see others primarily in terms of what they can get out of others. Most people have a hunger to move beyond the "looking out for number one" common sense of this society and to see their lives as connected to some higher ethical and spiritual meaning. Yet most people believe that this is unrealistic, that ethical and spiritual life can only be ideals for some future eras, and that in the meantime they must be "realistic" and live according to the dominant ethos of selfishness and cynicism.

But a world based on selfishness and cynicism produces a huge amount of psychic pain. The ethos of selfishness and cynicism plays itself out in a weakening of families, loving relationships, and friendships—because the more people internalize the cynical view that everyone is only out for themselves, the harder it becomes to trust anyone or to believe that they will really be there for you when you most need them, when you don't have so much to give back and can't make the relationship an "equal exchange" (in market terms). Nor can you trust corporations not to pollute the environment or others not to rob you on the streets or at home. As trust dissolves, fear increases.

Because liberals and the Left never really address this crisis of meaning, the Right has been able to position itself as the primary meaning-oriented political force in the society, bemoaning the ethical and spiritual decline and the crisis in families. Yet they are simultaneously the force that champions the very ethos of selfishness and materialism in the world of work, whose consequences lead to all this pain in personal life.

That's why we need a progressive politics of meaning.

Sound-Bite Version

The goal of a politics of meaning is to change the bottom line in American society, so that productivity or efficiency of corporations, legislation, or social practices is no longer measured solely by the degree to which they maximize wealth and power—but rather also by the degree to which they tend to maximize our capacities to sustain loving and caring relationships and to be ethically, spiritually, and ecologically sensitive.

Strategy

Some people think that all of these meaning issues only have an impact on middle-income people, and that liberals and progressives should *first* solve the economic problems of the society and stop the cutbacks of the conservatives. We wish them luck. But we believe that they will be unable to do that until they've addressed the meaning crisis. The alliance needed between poor people and middle-income people can only be built if the pain of middle-income people is given equal attention to the pain faced by poor people. Up till now, the Left has tended to give the message to the American majority that they are being selfish and bad to worry about the collapse of their families, crime, etc., when the poor are suffering so much more. This has not been an effective strategy. We think the best way to serve the interests of the most oppressed is to take seriously the meaning crisis, and build a cross-class alliance on that basis.

Some New Age people talk about meaning issues too—but they tend to focus on changing their own heads. That's an important element—but it is unlikely to work for most people unless we build economic and political institutions that foster caring rather than selfishness and cynicism. In TIKKUN magazine we put forward specific programmatic ideas to show what this might look like concretely.

The Plan

In TIKKUN magazine we put forward specific programmatic ideas to show what this might look like concretely. The Foundation for Ethics and Meaning is both a meaning-oriented policy institute (a progressive alternative to the Heritage Foundation) and an organization with local chapters around the country. We held the national Summit in Washington, D.C. April 14-16, and regional summits are planned for Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle, Portland, Minneapolis, and Ann Arbor. We welcome your effort in creating a summit in your area. To subscribe to TIKKUN, send $31; to join the Foundation, send $50—to the Foundation for Ethics and Meaning, 251 W. 100 Street, New York, N.Y. 10025 (212-665-1597). Building this movement is a task that will take decades—join us on the ground floor as we begin the process. If you missed the '60s, don't miss the most important movement of the '90s.

Tikkun (tē-kün) ...to heal, repair and transform the world. All the rest is commentary

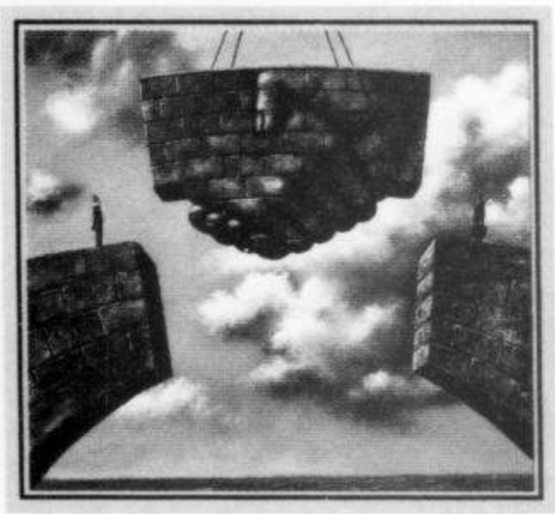
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