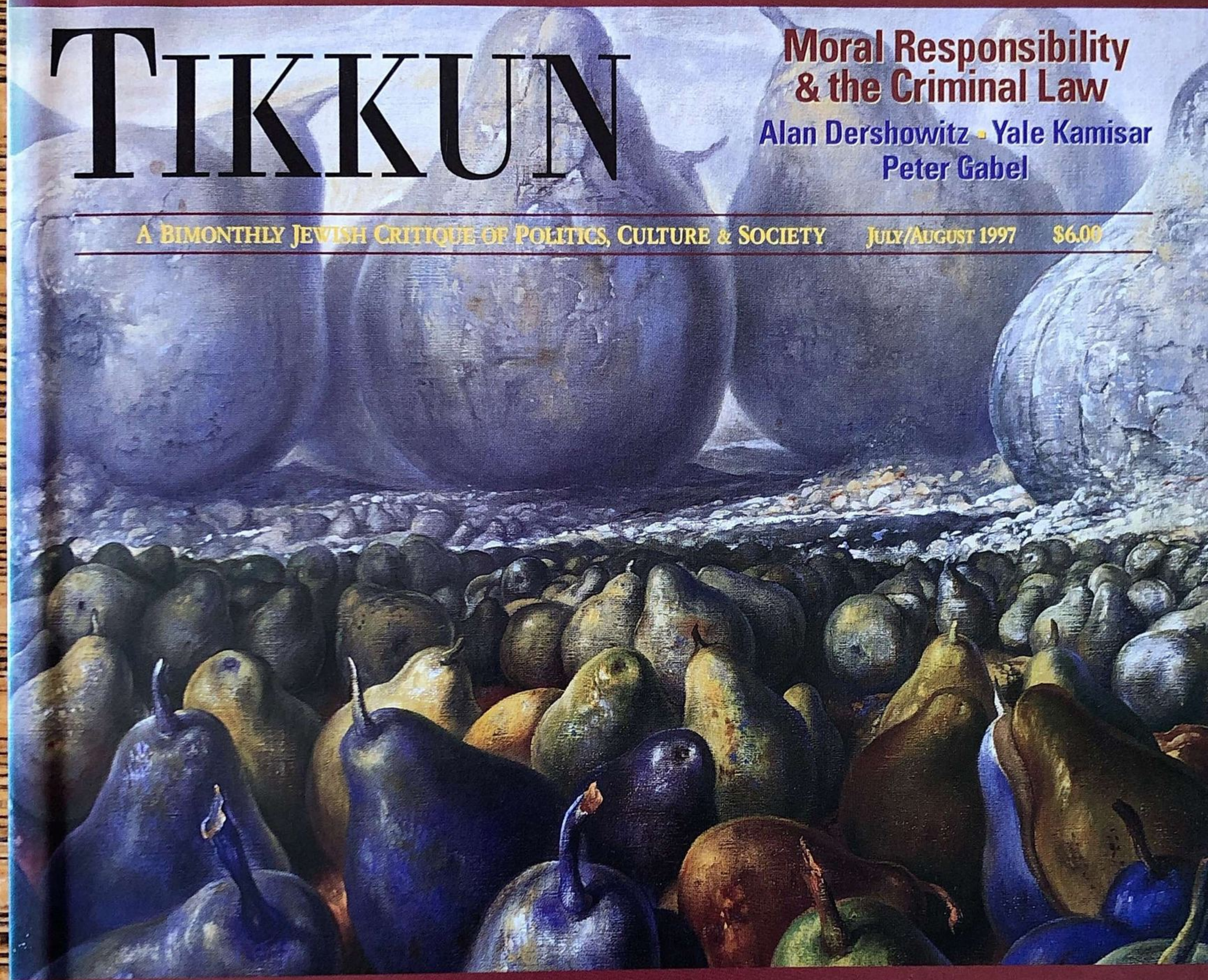
(te•kün) To mend, repair and transform the world.

TIKKUN

Moral Responsibility & the Criminal Law

Alan Dershowitz • Yale Kamisar
Peter Gabel

A BIMONTHLY JEWISH CRITIQUE OF POLITICS, CULTURE & SOCIETY JULY/AUGUST 1997 $6.00



The Social Responsibility Amendment to the U.S. Constitution

Thad Williamson • Hazel Henderson • Richard Grossman & Ward Morehouse • John Vasconcellos

CIA Drugs
Peter Dale Scott

Israel Without Ideology
Noah Efron

African Genocide
Stephen Weissman

Meaning and Economy
Rev. Kevin Phillips

Collapsing Jewish Orthodoxies

Rabbi Danny Goldman • Loolwa Khazzoom • Rabbi Arthur Waskow
David Biale • Gidon D. Remba

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The essence of reality is an all encompassing

U - N - I - T - Y

that embraces and indeed generates relative diversity.

It is not that you and I are creatures fashioned by God. It is rather that you and I are temporary manifestations of God. We are real. We are worthwhile. We are unique.

What we are not is eternal, separate and independent. We are God, though certainly not the totality of God.

The relationship between God and creation is like that between an ocean to its waves. Each wave, while unique and distinct in time and space, is yet a manifestation of the same ocean. Without the ocean there could be no wave. Yet waves are no less real for their having no existence separate from the ocean. Waves are no less distinct one from the other for their each being manifestations of the same ocean.

Similarly, you and I, and the myriad details of creation are no less real for being manifestations of the one God. Our separate reality is dependent upon that larger unity. Our separate reality is momentary, transient, and relative, but that does not make it illusory or unreal.

The aim of Jewish spiritual practice is to become conscious of both the wave and the ocean, the relative and the absolute. The Jewish mystic celebrates the self even as she experiences its transience. She honors the other even as she recognizes it as part of herself and the Greater Unity from which both arise. Jewish spirituality is not an "either/or" proposition; it is profoundly and unrelentingly "and."

Jewish spiritual practice does not supplant the self with the One, but awakens the self to its inseparability from the One. Jewish spiritual practice awakens you to the complementary awareness of the One and the Many as equal manifestations of God, and allows you to function in the relative world of separate selves while at the same time encountering through that relative world the absolute world of inseparable unity. It is not that the relative is more or less real than the absolute, but that both are authentic expressions of God, as we encounter God.

Rabbi Aharon haLevi Horowitz, Schneur Zalman's great disciple, taught this idea centuries ago.

God's only desire is to reveal unity through diversity. That is, to reveal that all of reality is unique in all of its levels and in all of its details, and nevertheless united in a fundamental oneness. The main point of creation... [is] to reveal the wholeness of God from the opposite perspective...For it is the nature of completeness to include all opposites in the One.

Rabbi Aharon's point is crucial to understanding Jewish spiritual practice. The goal is not to exchange one opposite for another, but to see that all opposites are manifestations of God, the one true Reality. Heaven is no more divine than earth. An angel is no more holy than your neighbor. A rock is no less a manifestation of God than a rabbit. There is a profound equivalence among the animate and inanimate, and at the same time there is a profound difference.

You must hold both the relative and the absolute in mind simultaneously, seeing them both as manifestations of the greater nondual reality of God. This is the essence of Jewish spiritual practice. It cannot be done by retreating into one half of the whole or the other. It can only be done by allowing each half to take its place in the whole.

Selected from Minyan: Ten Principles for Living a Life of Integrity *by Rabbi Rami M. Shapiro (forthcoming from Bell Tower, September, 1997). Rami Shapiro is a rabbi and storyteller of Temple Beth Or in Miami, Florida.*

Pears

During the night a storm
The winds blow pears off the trees...
And in the morning a long chain of prisoners...and a soldier
with them...

Secretly, the women crouch and pick up the pears
And the soldier, an old man with a heart, pretends he does not
see
He is only much ashamed that the pears make them so happy.

—Henryka Karmel (translated by Woktek Sawa and Matthew Lippman)
"Pears" was written in 1946 by a teen-age woman interned in a Polish concentration camp.

TIKKUN

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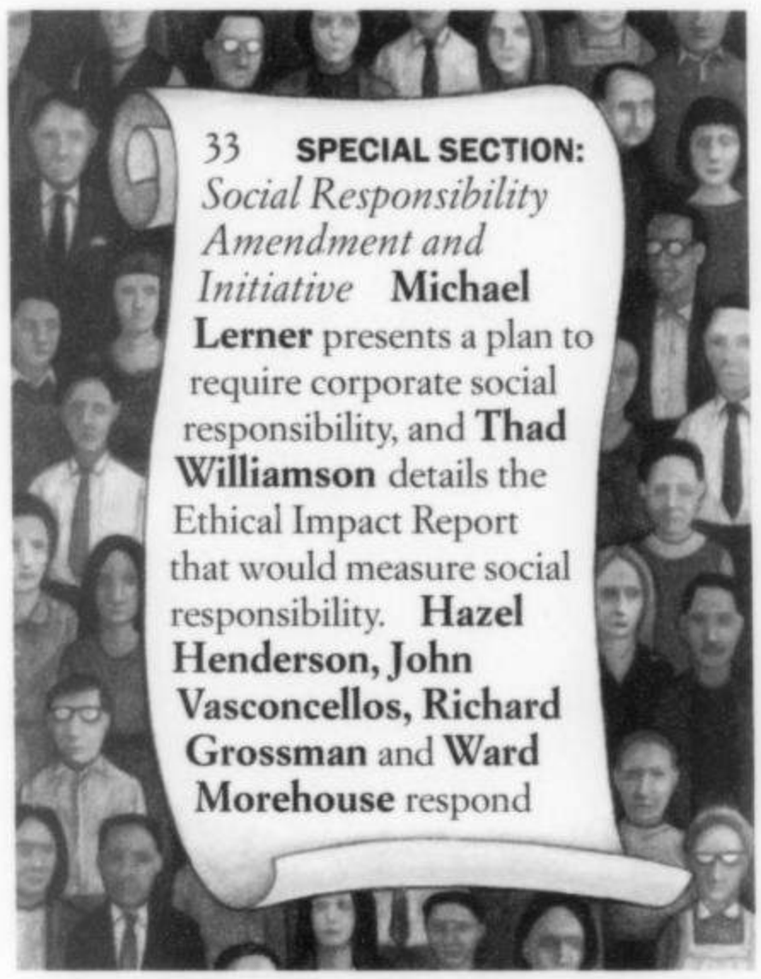
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Letters to the Editor

"Real" Judaism?

To the Editor:

I write concerning the recent passage of the first reading of the "Conversion Law" here in Israel ("Not 'Real' Judaism," May/June, 1997). This Law, if passed, will codify the monopoly that Orthodox Rabbis have in matters concerning conversion to Judaism.

The passage of this law, represents a serious break from those principles which define a western, democratic government. Among those principles is that every individual, regardless of her numerical representation in society, is endowed with the unalienable right to freely choose his religious expression or, for that matter, to be free from state sanctioned religion.

The explanation by the Netanyahu government, that the "Conversion Law" simply codifies what was or is the "status quo," is not acceptable. This law codifies a status quo that demands change. That the Conservative and Reform movements in Israel brought legal action challenging the status quo is, in fact, an acceptable manner in which to challenge an unjust system in any western democracy. The Conversion Law is a cynical reaction to a legitimate effort to effect desperately needed social change.

The Conversion Law not only challenges Israel's standing as a democracy, it also challenges its standing as the physical and spiritual home of the Jewish people. The law, despite the Prime Minister's denials, delegitimizes an entire sector of the Jewish people. Those of us who care about Israel and its standing as the spiritual home of the Jewish people must speak

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out against this law and the religious coercion of the Orthodox establishment by continuing to press for true religious pluralism so that Judaism, in all its expressions, can truly have the opportunity to thrive as it (arguably) does in other democratic nations.

LOU FRANKENTHALER
Jerusalem

Homosexuality

To the Editor:

Harold M. Schulweis's "A Second Look at Homosexuality" (May/June 1997) is a stunning, if inadvertent, reminder that tolerance, whether proffered by a well-intentioned rabbi or a neighbor or a community, is pretty thin gruel. Schulweis seems to believe that gays and lesbians shouldn't be cast out of the fold because homosexuals didn't choose their sexual orientation, and so weren't into "defy[ing] God... or using his or her body to serve a pagan cult." A Talmudic error, he calls it: the old rabbis didn't have Schulweis's access to the latest science. Presumably, if being gay wasn't "constitutional", by which Schulweis appears to mean "biologically determined"; and, besides wasn't a "living hell," the good rabbi would feel differently. Earth to Rabbi Schulweis: as many Jews have recognized, in and out of shul, a God that would turn His (or Her) back on homosexuals—people expressing their sexual selves to the fullest, whether or not their genes made them do it—doesn't deserve to be the moral core of any religion worth the name. And a rabbi who can manage only tolerance for the "stranger," not the public equivalent of love for his congregation, should find a more bookish and less pastoral calling.

DAVID L. KIRP
Professor, Graduate School of Public Policy
University of California
Berkeley, California

Therapy & Society

To the Editor:

A sign of just how narrowly clinical the mental health field has become is the glee progressive therapists feel whenever a colleague so much as mentions the relevance of social analysis. But not all social analysis is progressive. Michael Bader's "The

TIKKUN SUMMER CAMP FOR ADULTS

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Cherie Brown, Peter Gabel and Rabbi Michael Lerner.

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People of all faiths are welcome. Enrollment is limited. **Cost:** If you bring a tent and sleep in it, or commute it's $300; 4 person-occupancy room: $35/per; double room: $400/per; double with private bath: $430 per; single: $475; weekend only (space permitting):$285.

TO REGISTER: Send a letter telling us about you and your interests, and what you like and/or dislike most about TIKKUN or the politics of meaning. Send to TIKKUN Camp, 26 Fell Street, San Francisco, Ca. 94102, along with a $100 non-refundable deposit.

You don't have to be in your twenties... to become an intern at TIKKUN. We have had lawyers, doctors, and other professionals who wanted to take off time for 8 months while they transitioned to other professions or made decisions about significant changes in their professional lives. Still, if you are in your twenties, you may still be very welcome. Interns for Fall 97-Spring 98.

EDITORIAL INTERNS: Interns read and assess incoming manuscripts, do editing and proofreading, contact potential authors, and help run the office and promote the magazine. Also, help organize TIKKUN conferences, salons, and outreach to synagogues and to college students.

POLITICS OF MEANING INTERNS: Interns do networking with community groups, churches and synagogues, labor unions, professional groups, and elected officials to promote the politics of meaning perspective and to recruit people to participate in our activities and conferences. You also do plenty of clerical work and computer work.

BEYT TIKKUN INTERNS: Help build a Jewish Renewal spiritually-oriented synagogue. Organize programs for teenagers and children, assist people in developing personal spiritual work, help with the clerical side of the community, energize prayer and study. Help us organize a Jewish cultural center. Interns are unpaid, and are expected to work minimum of 16 hours per week during the year (25 hours during the summer).

Some of our interns have subsequently been hired by TIKKUN, others have gone on to excellent jobs in publishing, still others have made important contacts that assisted them throughout their subsequent academic careers. To Apply: Send a self-revealing letter about your life, interests, your reactions to TIKKUN and the politics of meaning, plus when you can start and whether you can commit to the entire period from sometime in September to sometime in May.

Cultural Dimension of Psychoanalytic Practice" (May/June 1997) falls into the most regressive trap in the Freudian legacy: The patient's political beliefs are interpreted as signs of neurosis or resistance while the analyst's selective attention, based on self-interest, is deemed an appropriate topic for the analytic dialogue. Yes, Freud "rented" his hours; he also sold exclusive rights to practice analysis in the U.S.A to the highest bidder, the AMA. Are we required to mimic all of his self-serving stances? While it is perfectly reasonable for an analyst to establish the policy that a patient must pay for missed sessions, it is just as reasonable for a patient to complain that he or she should not have to pay if sufficient notice is given. The patient might even be protesting the analyst's selective inattention to a more grievous aspect of the economic arrangement about which the analyst seems unconcerned: the class inequity that makes the talking cure accessible only to those with means. Bader poses the analyst's self-interest in quasi-neutral terms ("the analyst's non-defensive acceptance of his/her own needs"), while stigmatizing the patient's disagreement as "reactive cynicism." Is this a neutral stance? Rather than using the Norwegian experience to justify dismissal of the American patient's concerns, Bader might have put the contrast between mental health services in the two countries to better use arguing for a reduction of class inequity in the U.S.A.

TERRY A. KUPERS, MD
Oakland, California

Michael Bader responds:

My article attempted to describe a moment in which I discovered a hidden social dimension of my psychoanalytic practice. I went out of my way to describe this new awareness as correcting a blind spot in which I had been overly reductionistic and psychologistic. Even at my worst, however, I am always ready to appreciate the patient's point of view, including the rational piece of her/his objections to my billing policies. All of my writing—some of which Kupers is aware of—aims to humanize analysis, increase its clinical scope, improve its efficacy, and put it into a broader intellectual and political context. My particular interest here, however, was in exploring how the paranoid expectations and anxieties that capitalism creates shape transactions about money, time, and other aspects of the so-called "analytic frame", and in pointing out how analysts have a blind spot for the constitutive role of culture in what they observe in their patients.

Therefore, how could Kupers possibly accuse me of patient-blaming and link me with Freud's reactionary politics? Except for quoting one phrase out of context (I was explicitly self-mocking when I advocated the analyst's "non-defensive acceptance of her/his own needs," not trumpeting an ideal technique), Kupers doesn't cite a single instance to support his case. What he does do is wrap himself in a characteristic moral outrage and deliver a rant against Freud, psychoanalysis, the mental health system and me (not necessarily in that order). Now, the system needs to be criticized and Kupers was one of the best and earliest voices of this challenge. Therefore, it's particularly disappointing to me that he can't read my attempt to introduce a social dimension into one, hitherto unexplored, area of psychoanalytic practice as the voice of a fellow traveller but, instead, takes umbrage at something I didn't explore (the analyst's greed) and didn't critique (the overall mental health system).

I'd recommend that Kupers let Freud die the slow death that's already occurring and experiment with an open-minded rereading of an article that attempts to develop the same kind of social critique that Kupers himself pioneered. Unfortunately, he seems bent on a lefter-than-thou attack on some reactionary straw analyst he sensed was lurking in my paper. Did he actually read my article or simply use his P.C. decoder ring? I'd offer speculation as to the possible sources of Kuper's gross misreading, but I don't want to be accused further of blaming the patient.

Abortion

To the Editor:

None of your authors in the article "Abortion: Whose Values? Whose Rights?" (January/February, 1997) discussed the issue of why unplanned pregnancy occurs in

"Jewish feminist cultural studies has come of age."*

Jews and Feminism
The Ambivalent Search for Home
Laura Levitt

"This genuinely experimental work juxtaposes theology, a feminist analysis of liberalism, and Jewish cultural analysis of emancipation to construct an original reading of being a Jew and a Jewish woman in the United States."
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Judaism Since Gender
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the first place, nor did they discuss what was, for me, the deciding factor in choosing an abortion.

Until our young women have a sense of their own value as autonomous individuals, they will continue to be sexually active. The implied or stated threat that a young man will leave her makes it difficult for a young women to refuse. Safe sex? Not if the young man gives her an argument! Young women are terribly insecure. Our culture tells them that they need to be someone's partner in order to be normal or adequate. Until these young women have been able to build support systems of both men and women who value them in their decision to abstain, they remain vulnerable. Until American culture values the contributions of women and the outlook and unique perspective women offer, these contributions and perspectives are lost to all of us.

Once a pregnancy occurs, the choices, in most cases, are abortion, adoption, or to keep the child. For many, this last is no choice—parents, family members, and friends refuse support or are without resources to offer support. So, adoption? Closed records? Never knowing where the child is, or even if the child is alive? Knowing that your child will always be the child that took the place of that wanted child-of-their-own that an infertile couple could not have? Helen Alvaré's comment that "the Catholic Church in the United States is the largest provider of social services for born Americans" is particularly hurtful. Catholic Charities in Delaware destroyed over 20 years worth of adoption records (copies of which were *never forwarded to the Courts*) in order to protect the confidentiality of adoptive parents. I would never want a child of mine to be unable to find me if that were his or her wish; not to feel that there was something shameful about his or her origins and, by inference, about him or herself. Nor would I ever surrender a child to a system which looks more at Church affiliation than at parenting skills.

Until these problems are remedied, abortions—legal or otherwise—are bound to continue.

CAROLINE WRIGHT

Children First?

To the Editor:

Eleanor Reynold's suggestion that "each of us as individuals" should "[j]oin a movement that puts children first" ("Waiting to Grow," January/February 1997) raises a few questions. Where is this movement that "puts children first" going to put the rest of the population? Second, as in second-class citizens? Whatever happened to the idea that we're all equal in this democracy, with no special group being singled out as coming first?

This may sound like empty rhetoric (on both sides), but Reynold's specific proposals are ominous. Where is the money for a "children's subsidy for the first three years of life to enable one parent in each family to stay home with the children," possibly even without means testing, going to come from? Our society is already claiming we "can't afford" life-prolonging medical care for the old and ill. Does "putting children first" mean that 70 year-olds will be denied coronary bypasses so that middle-class parents can be paid to stay home with their children? Don't expect the old and ill (or those who care about them) to regard this as "part of a healing and transforming process."

FELICIA ACKERMAN
Professor of Philosophy
Brown University
Providence, Rhode Island

Meaning & Economies

To the Editor:

Thad Williamson's article, "Strategies for Meaning in the Economy" (March/April 1997), includes some good ideas for encouraging corporate accountability. However, it only addresses a portion of the related issues.

Simply browbeating corporations caught violating social objectives is unlikely to produce anything more than a few token changes. True economic reform also requires changing consumer and worker expectations. An economy of meaning requires not only shifting power into the hands of progressive groups such as labor, consumer organizations, and community activists, as the article recommends, but changes in the values and strategies such groups reflect.

The key to a more meaningful economy is to create incentives that encourage socially beneficial behavior by all participants in the economy, and to avoid the "social traps" that exist in a competitive system. A critical strategy is to shift taxes from labor to goods that are harmful to produce or consume. Our current tax structure discourages desirable economic activities (employment) and encourages those that are undesirable (increased resource consumption, pollution, and risk). Tax reform can incorporate details to help achieve specific social objectives, such as increased tax rates for work weeks over 35 hours to encourage shorter work weeks, and higher taxes on greenfield development to discourage sprawl and encourage reinvestment in cities.

Such a tax structure would increase demand for labor, which empowers employees, and encourage more efficient resource consumption. Many of the specific objectives mentioned in the article, such as workplace childcare centers, local production and higher wages, would become more achievable as a result.

For more information on these ideas I recommend Alan Thein Durring's highly readable book *This Place on Earth; Home and the Practice of Permanence* (Sasquatch Books, 1996), and Herman Daly and John Cobb's more technical book *For the Common Good* (Beacon Press, 1994). The organization, Redefining Progress (1 Kearny Street, San Francisco, CA 94108, Telephone: 415-781-1191) is doing extensive research on practical strategies for implementing these ideas.

TODD LITMAN
Victoria, Canada

Philip Roth

To the Editor:

Michael Lerner's critique of Philip Roth's new novel, *American Pastoral*, makes the classic mistake of trying to judge an impressionistic work of art by linear political standards. It reminds me a little bit of the yippies who picketed Bob Dylan's house complaining he had abandoned "political" songs for merely "personal" songs, like those on "Blond on Blond."

I easily see the temptation for Lerner to view the book sociologically and polit-

ically. After all, the plot involves a Jewish girl who joins the Weatherman and blows up buildings. Jews! Sixties! Roth even comes from the same part of New Jersey as Lerner! Furthermore, Philip Roth offers temptations for political analysis since he flirts, in his fiction, with real life via his alter ego, Nathan Zuckerman. A character who has reappeared in several Roth novels, including *American Pastorol*, and whose "life" has had numerous similarities to the real life of Roth.

Lerner describes the Weatherwoman, Missy, as "a one dimensional stick figure quite unlike anyone known to those of us who were active in the social-change movements of the 1960s." He speculates that Roth is "stabbing back at the left," possibly because he may associate his publicly estranged ex-wife, Claire Bloom, with "the entire liberal consciousness." Lerner gives Roth the ultimate TIKKUN put-down by describing his vision as that of "higher cynicism, the inability to imagine a world in which human needs cannot be reduced, not to id, not to money, not to ego."

But Zuckerman is barely a character in *American Pastoral*, he serves merely to introduce the tragic protagonist of the book, the father of the Weatherwoman, Swede Levov. Roth, in this instance, did not write an autobiographical novel but a work of true fiction. As to the "one dimensional" nature of the daughter, she is a secondary character in the book. *American Pastoral* is clearly the story of the father. It is absurd to suggest that novelists or poets should only depict characters they may have known personally, or who are of the same generation or culture! Putting aside what this theory would do to historical novels or science fiction, this goes against the whole idea of art, much of which is intended to resonate symbolically, emotionally, and yes, spiritually. If *American Pastoral* were an overtly political novel like *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, or *The Turner Diaries*, Lerner's insistence that he can criticize the Weathermen with more depth and sensitivity than Roth might make more sense. The political environment of the Vietnam war provides a backdrop for Roth's characters but I don't think he has an anti-left political point. All of the characters, including Swede, are against the war, but the book is not about the war or the war protest. It is about how a man, to whom everything came effortlessly all his life, deals with tragedy and mistakes.

I don't agree that describing disappointment and disillusiuon is inherently cynical. If this were the case, the entire literary tradition of tragedy would be spiritually suspect, and great art would only depict fully realized characters whose stories have happy endings. To see the humanity amidst repression or coldness, to see light amidst human frailties and failure, this too is spiritual because it recognizes the divinity of all creation. No generation or political philosophy has a monopoly on producing transcendent art. One need notconsider *American Pastoral* a masterpiece to recognize that it is a valid work of art which should be apprehended through the prism of literature, not any version, however benign, of anyone's P.C. rule book.

DANNY GOLDBERG
New York, NY

Editor responds:

My critique is not about Roth's politics, but about his inability to make his characters coherent or realistic. I never expected to agree with Roth's characters—some of them that I found most skillfully delineated were those with whom I shared least political or spiritual sympathy—but what made them so compelling was that they often managed to articulate or to embody in the way they were presented a worldview or a way of life that captured and helped illuminate for us some aspect of contemporary reality. That is what is missing from American Pastoral *that makes it such a failure in literary terms.*

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CURRENT DEBATE

The Moral Obligation of Defense Lawyers

In the last issue of TIKKUN, *I wrote a review of Alan Dershowitz's book "The Vanishing American Jew." That review faulted Dershowitz for a narrow Jewish chauvinism and a failure to understand either the spiritual crisis facing American Jews or the Jewish Renewal movement that has arisen to respond to that crisis. But it also referred to the sections of the book in which Dershowitz talked about his role in defending OJ and sought to justify his role in terms of Jewish tradition. In that context, I argued that the American legal tradition's view that the lawyer has no responsiiblity beyond mounting a powerful defense (in the process putting all moral judgments on permanent hold) was part of a discourse of the separation of morality from technique that stands in sharp contrast to the tikkun-oriented tradition of Judaism.*

However, in the course of writing that critique I unfairly characterized Dershowitz's career and ignored a variety of good deeds that Dershowitz has done. I may have been unconsciously provoked by Dershowitz's reference to TIKKUN *in the* L.A. Times *as "a cult," a way of protecting himself from a critical review that I wrote of his book. But that was no excuse for crossing a line that I normally believe to be important: to critique the ideas, not the person. I do not know enough about the details of Dershowitz's life to have reduced his career to the part of it that is best known: the self-promotion, the pro bono work for rightwing Jewish nationalists, and the representation of men charged with abusing or killing women (Claus Van Bulow, Mike Tyson, O.J. Simpson). I am in no position to say that this is not offset by the other pro bono work he does, nor was it appropriate for me to set myself up as someone who ought to be making sweeping judgments of this kind.*

What is appropriate is to continue to contend that the position of "defense attorney" does not automatically provide someone with a free pass to moral irresponsibility toward the rest of the community. In order to respond to that issue, we are printing below the letters to the editor of both Dershowitz (with its host of other innuendoes and slurs against me) and the letter by the much respected Yale Kamisar, constitutional law professor at the University of Michigan. I asked our associate editor Peter Gabel, president of New College of California and a founder of the Critical Legal Studies movement, to present in response the critique of legal practice he has been developing as part of his work with National Legal Task Force of the Foundation for Ethics and Meaning. —Michael Lerner

ALAN DERSHOWITZ, *professor of law, Harvard University:*

☞ No one should be surprised that an editor whose magazine makes up letters also makes up facts. Lerner describes me as having made "a career of accumulating large sums of money or publicity to defend and usually acquit well-known murderers." The fact is that during my 33 years of law practice I have been retained to participate in the case of only one man charged with murder, and in that case, I received a very small amount of money. When I agreed to join his defense, he was facing the death penalty and I never turn down a capital case. In another case, I helped to save the life of a juvenile facing execution. I have been appointed, without fee, to represent several death-row inmates, and I argued appeals on behalf of two women charged with killing their batterers. Most of my cases are pro bono, most of my clients have been Jews in trouble and many of my clients have been victims of international human rights abuses. These are the actual facts, but Lerner has never been known to let the facts get in the way of his rhetoric. He has disliked me since I refused his plea to become the publisher of TIKKUN magazine. He has absolutely no understanding of the role of the defense lawyer in protecting civil liberties and his claim that "blood" is on my hands because of who I have represented reeks of McCarthyism. I will not respond any further to his *loshen hura* except to say that any reader who actually reads my book *The Vanishing American Jew* will see that he has totally mischaracterized its contents. I urge the readers of TIKKUN to compare my book with Lerner's description of it, and then to write to Lerner about his mischaracterization.

This is a real letter written not by some ghost writer but by the person whose signature appears below. I wonder if he will publish it or if he limits the letters he publishes to those ghost written by his staff.

YALE KAMISAR, *professor of law, University of Michigan:*

☞ I must say that I was taken aback by some of the things said in your editorial on Alan Dershowitz (May/June, 1997). I am perfectly willing to admit you know a great deal about the history and meaning of Judaism, but I venture to say you do not know much about the history and meaning of the right to counsel.

At one point you describe Professor Dershowitz "with his hands still dripping from the blood of the victims whose assassins he protected...." This strikes me as deplorable "guilt by association" or more specifically "guilt by client."

Unfortunately, even before the birth of the American nation, when criminal defendants were accused of heinous crimes, it was not uncommon for their defense lawyers to be identified with their clients. When John Adams and Josiah Quincy, Jr. defended the British soldiers charged with killing five colonists in the so-called Boston massacre, the patriotism of these fine lawyers was sharply challenged and their reputations badly sullied.

When, two centuries later, Edward Bennett Williams, probably the greatest criminal defense lawyer of his time, represented Senator Joseph McCarthy in his censure case, Williams was called a "McCarthyite" and a "fascist." When, a short time later, he represented several motion-picture writers who faced contempt charges for refusing to answer questions about their alleged Communist activities, Williams was labeled a "red." Nor is that all. Although reputed gang leader Frank Costello eventually retained Williams to represent him in his denaturalization case (a proceeding that raised important constitutional questions), at first Costello was reluctant to accept Williams as his lawyer because, as he is said to have put it, "Didn't he (Williams) represent Senator McCarthy?"

At the end of your editorial, you talk of the "OJ Judaism" that "makes it seem perfectly fine to make one's fortune by freeing the murderers and ignoring the pain of the victims and their families." But it is not the defense lawyer's job to pass judgment on his or her client. Nor is it to alleviate the pain of the victims and their families. The essence of the defense lawyer's job is to challenge the persuasiveness of the prosecution's evidence—and to challenge the conduct of the government officials involved in the case at every step of the way. (As a result of the OJ case, hopefully Los Angeles police officers and crime lab personnel have learned that there is much room for improvement.)

As a distinguished committee, appointed by Attorney General Robert Kennedy, observed more than 30 years ago: The survival of our system of criminal justice and the values which it advances depend upon a constant, searching, and creative questioning of official decisions and assertions of authority at all stages of the process. The proper performance of the defense function is thus as vital to the health of the system as the performance of the prosecuting and adjudicatory functions.

PETER GABEL, *professor of law, New College of California School of Law:*

☞ Although I think both Michael Lerner and Alan Dershowitz should cool their rhetorical jets, at the level of substance Dershowitz and Yale Kamisar are mistaken when they say Lerner doesn't understand the civil liberties position on the right to counsel. As our Politics of Meaning platform plank on law makes clear (TIKKUN, Sept./Oct. 1996), we do understand the traditional civil liberties position—and we think it must be rethought as part of a fundamental rethinking of the entire legal system.

Our existing legal system—with its emphasis on protecting the individual against oppression by the government—emerged as an heroic response of the human spirit to centuries of class and religious domination that were justified by feudal law. The adversary system, with its emphasis on the confrontation of opposing positions as the route to discovering truth, the guarantee of freedom of contract with its emphasis on liberating the individual from any pre-existing status constraints on freedom of action, the emergence of evidentiary rules that rejected the word of twenty bishops in favor of empirically verifiable facts, and the protections of the Bill of Rights which sought to protect the innocent individual citizen against all forms of officially sanctioned group power—all of these liberal inventions represented an important advance for humanity when understood in the context of the injustices of the feudal aristocracy, the Divine Right of Kings, or the Salem witch trials. And they gave rise to the (partly justified) romantic view of the criminal defense lawyer described by Kamisar and perhaps to some extent identified with by Dershowitz.

But that was over two hundred years ago, and the advances of that earlier time must be re-examined in light of the problems of our present era, problems that the liberal legal system has itself helped to produce. Today we live in a world of radically isolated individuals creating a public culture without ethical or communal meaning. Our problem is not liberating ourselves as individuals from State oppression, but rather finding a way to heal the cultural alienation that has disabled us from creating a loving and caring society. And in this present context, we need to envision a new kind of legal culture that preserves individual liberty against group-sanctioned injustice but that also understands the legal arena as a moral environment within which to build greater empathy, trust and solidarity. Or to put this in the converse and

adopt some of Michael Lerner's language in his editorial criticizing Mr. Dershowitz, we must stop seeing the legal system as an amoral, hyperindividualistic environment in which protecting civil liberties becomes a justification for criminal defense lawyers doing anything they can to get their clients off even when they know or strongly suspect or even believe that their clients are lying or have been guilty of acts of cruelty or brutality.

It is difficult for me to imagine that anyone could wholeheartedly endorse Mr. Kamisar's defense of the existing system after enduring the drawn-out painful spectacle of the O.J. Simpson trial. Here we have an extraordinary situation in which the general public has substantial direct evidence that the defendant has brutally murdered his ex-wife, the mother of his own two children, and her friend, a random victim who could have been any one of us. The immense human suffering engendered by this terrible crime obviously calls upon us to recognize the death-experience of the victims and the horror and trauma of the families as well as to expect whomever is responsible for it to be compelled to acknowledge that responsibility. Yet we were daily forced to watch a team of criminal defense lawyers including Mr. Dershowitz act as though they had no responsibility for assuring that this recognition of suffering and acknowledgment of responsibility would occur, and indeed that they were the ones pursuing justice by, to use Mr. Kamisar's words, "challeng(ing) the conduct of the government officials involved in the case every step of the way" irrespective of the probability that Mr. Simpson had actually committed the murders. At least as morally offensive to the conscience of the country were the "legal experts" who covered the trial on television. Steeped in the same legal tradition as the defense team, they speculated excitedly hour by hour on what "move" Johnny Cochran et al. would make next, about whether Marcia Clark and Christopher Darden were up to the challenge and what "moves" they would make in return, suppressing people's experience of the pain at the murders and their longing for justice beneath an obscene fascination with the lawyers as celebrities, and gossip about who was more skilled at the legal-manipulative chess-game.

Nicole Simpson: Polaroid taken by Nicole Simpson's older sister, Denise, a few days after a 1989 beating. This Polaroid photo was shown to jurors during testimony in the O.J. Simpson double murder trial.

It is not surprising that applications to law school have dropped since the Simpson trial. People know instinctively that it is wrong and unjust to use every tactic to challenge the prosecution's case when you know your client is guilty of brutal and violent acts. The moral situation is not changed significantly when you strongly suspect or even merely believe

that your client is guilty of such conduct. Why should people want to join a profession that exalts cleverness and adversarial challenge as its highest virtue and calls it the pursuit of justice, and that shows little or no concern for the seriousness and openness to suffering that the actual pursuit of justice calls for in any human situation where injustice exists?

The reason that Mr. Dershowitz and his colleagues were able to convince themselves that what they were doing was not only permissible but right is the belief that the presumption of innocence, combined with the right to counsel, justifies and even requires the criminal defense lawyer to do whatever is legally allowable to secure his or her client's acquittal. I submit that this position is only valid when the defense lawyer actually believes the client is innocent and has been unjustly accused (or in some situations where the lawyer believes the law itself is unjust or its application will lead to an unjust result). In cases where the client is charged with committing acts of brutality or cruelty, neither the presumption of innocence nor the right to counsel justifies an effort to obtain a verdict of not guilty if the lawyer does not believe his or her client is in fact innocent.

The basis for the current ethical rules that allow and even require the criminal defense lawyer to zealously pursue the acquittal of all of his or her clients so long as he or she does not know them to be guilty as a matter of fact is found in the hyperindividualism of the pure civil liberties model that I referred to earlier. As I have said, the principal concern of the architects of our existing legal system was the protection of the individual against all forms of group tyranny or coercion. In the area of potential incarceration or even execution during an historical period that had recently witnessed the abuses of the Star Chamber, this version of the presumption of innocence was thought to require the absolute protection of the individual, whether in fact guilty or innocent, unless the prosecution could prove its case by empirically verifiable evidence beyond a reasonable doubt. The guilty client was not expected to take responsiblity for his or her own conduct and was even protected from having to do so by the Fifth Amendment, which guarantees a defendant's right not to have to testify against him or herself. The guilty client's lawyer was also insulated from responsibility for knowledge of his or her client's probable guilt because the lawyer's sole legitimate and even socially exalted role, within the civil liberties framework, was to defend the legal "presumption" of each individual's innocence, irrespective of that individual's actual responsibility for suffering inflicted on other human beings, until and unless the State proves its case.

As Mr. Kamisar says in words that I personally consider to be morally shocking, "it is not the defense lawyer's job to pass judgment on his or her client." It is this same consciousness, when applied in the "non-criminal" context, that allows lawyers representing large corporations to use every legal means to destroy the rainforest—it is "not their job" to pass judgment on their clients' ends.

Enough already! The vast majority of Americans find this amoral conception of the lawyer repugnant and are pained by the injustice—the lack of real caring about consequences—that this conception of law routinely sanctions. And because liberals and the Left regard the pure civil liberties position as some immutable idea that cannot even be questioned for fear that the group (liberals) or the System (the Left) will reduce them to slavery, more and more people quietly come to identify with a Right-wing which shows itself to care about the suffering of victims and expresses its rage at the protection of the violent and cruel people for whom liberal lawyers disavow any responsibility. To put it simply, the pure civil liberties position inevitably drives people to the Right and turns what would have been an appropriate concern for recognition of suffering and the need for responsibility into a potentially fascist rage.

The solution to this that the politics of meaning lawyers group will soon propose in its call to the American Bar Association for what we term Legal Renewal is a new conception of the lawyer and of legal culture itself. We believe that lawyers must reject their current public identity as technical rule-manipulators indifferent to their clients' ends and free of moral responsibility for their clients' conduct, whether that conduct is labeled criminal or civil in nature. Instead, we will put forward a conception of the legal profession as a "calling," a spiritual and activist pursuit aimed at healing the social alienation and ingrained distortions in human interaction that disable us from repairing our communal fabric. Among the changes we will argue for will be abolition of the adversary system as it exists today, revamping of the evidentiary rules to include the incorporation of meaning into the public resolution of conflict rather than just rules and facts, and the rejection of the belief that money is the primary proper remedy for civil wrongs in favor of recognizing the importance of apology and forgiveness.

With respect to ethical rules governing the legal profession, we will call for the affirmation of a lawyer's duty to take every step to reconcile the client's goals and needs with the well-being of the wider community and the creation of a more humane and just society. In the case of the criminal defense lawyer, this will mean no longer permitting attorneys to ethically participate in justifying false denials by their clients of responsiblity for violent and cruel acts. If we are to bring about a *tikkun olam*—if we are to heal, repair, and transform the world—the only possible path is to expect our practitioners of justice to make the truth visible and to respond to it as a community in a compassionate and caring manner reflecting our individual and collective responsibility for it. ✡

Sunrise, Sunset



Michael Lerner

"Sunrise, Sunset... Swiftly Flow the Years."

Shmaltzy self-indulgence, perhaps? But perhaps also something more.

My son Akiba, returned from Israel and now about to start graduate school in religious studies at Stanford, was married to Sunny Rosenfeld on June 22.

I can barely grasp how the time has flowed in the eleven years since Nan Fink and I started TIKKUN magazine.

And the drama of life moves so quickly. Four billion people on the planet, separated by ideologies, language, and political systems, and each one is barely grasping her own situation. At first, we come to see ourselves in relationship to our parents, later to our tribe or community, perhaps later to our nation. Eventually, we come to understand ourselves and our parents and our tribe or community or nation as having a history. We can see that we are the current embodiments of the ongoing flow of the history of the human race. If we mature beyond this point, we also develop a spiritual awareness of the way that we are embedded in a spiritual unity of all being. We see how our own preoccupations and passions blend with those of the rest of the human race, and eventually with those of the entirety of being.

It takes decades for most of us to get to this point in which we can see ourselves as part of that totality of the human race, and to begin to develop some sense of where we are in that ongoing drama. We recognize ourselves as living at the moment in which human beings have achieved the level of mastery of technology sufficient to actually threaten the ongoing life-support system of the planet, drenched with a materialist ideology that tells us to focus on how wealthy "we" have become (but to ignore how poorly "we" have distributed this wealth or at what cost to the environment), blinded by an empiricist epistemology that tells us that what is "real" is what can be verified through sense-observation (and hence that all reference to that which cannot be subjected to such verification, including the entire realm of the spirit, is either illusory or "merely" poetic and that those who allow spiritual insights to shape their lives have lost all contact with reality, unless they keep their spirituality neatly contained and split off from how they make their daily decisions about how to live). We live at a moment of "triumph of the market," with all its glorification of money and power, and all its ignorance of love and caring and solidarity and community. We live in a moment when people no longer have time to respond to the world with awe and wonder and radical amazement, and when those who talk the language of healing and transformation are marginalized and ridiculed.

This too will pass.

We can see how the human race cannot sustain itself with these attitudes, and so they will pass or human life on the planet may pass.

And if, after all this, we can move slightly beyond the human predicament, we begin to see ourselves as part of the totality of all being, a moment in the development of the self-consciousness of the universe. Each of us constitutes one of the billions of brain cells of an evolving consciousness, and momentarily and in a distorted, perspectival way we can get a grasp of our fleeting role in the totality of all being.

By the time we "get" this, we are a few decades or a few moments from death. If we are very lucky, we pass on some of this awareness to the next generation, so that they might be able to stand on our shoulders and see a bit more clearly and a bit earlier in their lives what we have seen.

And then join with us and all of creation as it rises in song and praise and celebration of the wonder of it all. We can join in the universal choir of being that is singing praises of thanksgiving as we stand in awe, wonder and radical amazement at the miracles of the flow of creation, adding our little voice to that of billions of other creatures—as the Bible puts it, "All that have breath will praise Yah." And then we pass on.

I can't always stay at this moment of awareness. I'm still beguiled by my desire to find a partner for the decades ahead, perhaps even to have more children, and to build a relationship with someone who could share this sense of the totality with me. I'm still engaged in the daily struggles to keep TIKKUN alive, to build a politics of meaning movement, to contribute to the development of Jewish renewal. Yet a wedding can suddenly call one's attention to the larger picture, to one's place in the cosmos, to one's relationship to the God of all Being.

As a father, I asked God to give me the strength to bring my son to Torah (bar mitzvah), to chuppah (to the wedding canopy) and to *ma'asim tovim* (deeds of goodness).

I know some of the ways that I was inadequate as a father, some of the ways I let my son down, some of the ways my own inner distortions kept me from being as present and attentive to Akiba's needs and realities as I should have been.

Yet I'm also aware of the ways that the universe compensated for my personal limitations, how lucky I have been that Akiba's mother was herself such a good person, and how marvelous it was to see Akiba often transcending our limitations and turning out far better than "the objective situation" might have generated. To see this son of mine, in many ways light years ahead of me in his consciousness, his smarts and his capacity to love, and to be able to see the ways that I might have contributed to his being, is to experience one of the great joys in life. No wonder, then, that I can praise God who preserved me in life *(she'he-cheeyanu, vekee-a-manu, ve he-gee-anu lazman hazeh)* and made it possible for me to celebrate this wonderful moment.

Meaningful Changes in Europe?

The electorates in both countries knew that the existing conservative governments were not serving their interests. In the United Kingdom, Tony Blair promised a new style leadership that spoke to the hunger for meaning and purpose, much like Bill Clinton in his 1992 election. Unfortunately, like Clinton, the use of a "politics of meaning" was more rhetorical than substantive. What it avoided was the commitment to challenge the market economy and its ethos of selfishness and materialism, and to demand a "new bottom line" that would judge institutions "efficient" or "productive" to the extent that they fostered ethical, spiritual, and ecological sensitivity and produced people capable of sustaining loving relationships, solidarity, and caring for others.

As the Clinton presidency has demonstrated, without the demand that the market economy build a society that treats human beings as created in the image of God (or, in secular terms, "as ends and not as means"), and without the demand for corporate social responsibility, a politics of meaning can be appropriated by cynical politicians as their symbolic verbal gesture of regret while they dismantle social programs and cheer on the globalization of capital. One need only look at the empty gesture of Clinton's much touted Volunteerism Summit. Had that Summit taken the politics of meaning seriously, it would have combined the appeal for volunteerism with an attempt to politically mobilize the American people to challenge the selfishness of corporate power and to demand an end to corporate domination of the American political agenda. Volunteerism as part of a growing movement for social transformation would have excited the American people and offered an alternative to the growing cynicism that paralyzes virtually everyone. But volunteerism as a figleaf to assuage the guilt of a society that is increasingly willing to turn its back on the poor and the vulnerable—that's not a ticket likely to appeal to the remaining sparks of idealism in most of us. Unfortunately, Tony Blair's new government may be following the Clintonesque distortions of a politics of meaning.

But the French socialists who won the elections this Spring are not likely to provide much of an alternative either. Traditional social democrats, they imagine they can provide more jobs and social benefits by placing traditional restrictions on capital. American editorialists have been warning them that they will soon have to become "more realistic" as the power of capital will discipline them and force them to choose between creating a good business climate and losing jobs through disinvestment and the movement of capital to other more

Some Great Reading

First, two books that I resisted reading, and then found myself delightfully surprised at how good they were:

▪ Meredith Maran's *Notes from an Incomplete Revolution: Real Life Since Feminism.* I thought I'd encounter more "politically correct" moralizing. Instead, I found a deep and thoughtful grappling with the continuing difficulties of staying honest with oneself and one's own experiences while trying to live a life consistent with feminist and revolutionary ideals. But this isn't the "Failed Revolution" genre of disillusionment. What I liked best was that Maran does not give up on her feminist ideals, and neither does she lie to herself about how discouraging it sometimes feels to have people who share your ideals be unable to embody them in their actual behavior. Rather than the sensationalist self-disclosure of contemporary autobiography, Maran exposes herself only to grapple with fundamental ethical and spiritual issues.

▪ Neale Donald Walsh's *Conversations with God: An Uncommon Dialogue* (volumes I & II). When an author has two books on God and both are on the national bestseller list, how good can they be? Very, it turns out. These are books of spiritual renewal that are deep and important. Though struggling against a fundamentalist understanding of Christianity, and hence renewing specifically Christian categories (like the trinity), Walsh frequently addresses issues that beguile Jewish theology and secular agnostics as well. Though he sometimes hears God's voice in a very different way than many of us in the Jewish world do, there are also many startling moments of similarity with some of the best insights of the Jewish renewal movement. Most important: Walsh's God insists that S/He is always talking to every one of us, and that our task is to open our ears to listen.

Two other important books will be published by the end of the summer: Rami Shapiro's *Minyan* and David Cooper's *God is a Verb.* Both these books are "state of the art" Jewish renewal classics, combining spiritual depth and practical wisdom. Read them and you get an idea of why so many people are getting excited about our Jewish renewal movement.

favorable places to make a profit.

I'm afraid that the warnings are partly correct. The growing arrogance of many multinationals derives from their ability to move their resources and to penalize any country that wants to put restraints on their profiteering. The resulting unemployment "teaches a lesson" and makes the domestic population come to believe that it's only "common sense" to accommodate the needs of big capital.

The only alternative to this is to be willing to stand up to capital in a more thorough way, even to the extent of not allowing corporations to do business in your society unless they are willing to embody principles of social responsibility in a serious way. Similarly, such a movement would have to stand up to the impersonal governmental bureaucracies that social democrats historically fostered, and to demand of them as well that they be restructured in ways that acknowledge they are dealing not with impersonal "citizens," but with feeling and sensitive human beings who need to be treated with caring and respect.

We know that such a movement would engender ferocious opposition from the overwhelming power of capital today, as well as from government bureaucrats who run the public sphere as their private fiefdoms, and from labor unions representing government workers that are sometimes more concerned to defend their workers' material interests than to restructure government in ways that make it sensitive to the common good. We recognize that those forces of capital would have the power to punish any society that seriously committed itself to challenging the power of capital (with the inevitable consequence that such a society would probably experience a decline in its ability to deliver material goods—particularly if it decided, as it must, to share equally the burdens of unemployment that would for a while increase as the world capitalist market attempted to impose its discipline by refusing to continue trade and commerce).

Once the wrath of the major corporate forces is provoked, a social-democratic movement that builds its popular support on the promise of more material benefits for the working poor and the middle classes would be quickly defeated, because its fundamental claim to legitimacy was based on providing more material goods, which it would be unable to do. The only way it could have succeeded would be if it had mobilized political support on a politics of meaning basis: namely, by helping people come to understand how living in a society based on selfishness, materialism and cynicism was undermining the things that they wanted most, namely, loving relationships, an ability to trust and count on people around them, a sense of security that others would be there for them when they were needed, a sustainable environment, work that had some higher purpose than maximizing wealth for the powerful, and lives that had some connection to spiritual and ethical values.

If people were to mobilize politically to fight for these goals as "the new bottom line," they might be able to sustain the losses of some material benefits that would be the inevitable short-term consequences of a struggle with big capital. The Social Responsibility Amendment and Initiative (see p. 33 of this issue of TIKKUN) might play an important role in developing a new set of priorities, precisely because their call for an Ethical Impact Report gives specific direction to our demand for a society that treats human beings as created in the image of God. Though "realists" may dismiss a spiritually-oriented strategy, the most unrealistic utopians are those who imagine that they can fight the power of capital without first popularizing a new spiritual consciousness that rejects the materialism and selfishness of the competitive market.

And there's another side to a meaning-oriented approach. There are many people inside the corporations who themselves are decent people who would wish to live in a different kind of world. Whereas a traditional leftie strategy assumes that these people are irredeemably stuck in their social and economic roles, a meaning-oriented strategy recognizes their humanity and appeals to them to side with the part of themselves that they felt they had to suppress in the name of being realistic. Our refusal to write anyone off, while simultaneously providing them with mechanisms to make their going with their highest ideals more safe (because if the SRA were to pass they could argue that following their highest moral instincts is in the best long-term economic interests of the corporation), is another reason why a meaning-oriented approach is ultimately far more realistic than the current strategies on the left. ✡

Throwing Shit Near the Western Wall

On the Jewish holiday of Shavout (June 11, 1997) a small group of Conservative Jews attempted to hold a prayer service at the holiest spot in Jerusalem: the Wall that remains from the Temple in the Old City. They were physically assaulted by ultra-orthodox Jews who believe that Conservative Judaism (and of course, Reform, Conservative and Renewal Judaism as well) is not "real Judaism" but rather, as some put it, a Nazi plot to destroy the soul of the Jewish people. The Conservative Jews were forced to run for cover, and were showered with excrement from a nearby yeshiva. Read Danny Goldman (p. 14) and Arthur Waskow (p. 16) to get a perspective on the behavior. From TIKKUN's perspective, it is a disgrace that the Jewish people should allow the national shrine of the Wall to be turned into the private property of the ultra-orthodox.

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SPECIAL SECTION: COLLAPSING JEWISH ORTHODOXIES

The attempt by a section of the Orthodox Jewish world in Israel to use government power and laws to limit the ability of Conservative and Reform rabbis to perform various religious functions, and the effort by a sector of the Orthodox community in the U.S. to declare that all other branches of Judaism are not really practicing Judaism at all, has provoked an intense counter-reaction in many sections of the Jewish world. In this section we print a few of the responses that have emerged.

Who Is A Jew?

Rabbi Danny Goldman

Newspapers around the world have focused on a growing crisis in the Jewish world: the attempt by the Orthodox to define who can convert to Judaism, and by implication, who is a Jew? To the Argentinian public, this appears quite strange. But for us, this conflict is serious and has significant consequences for the Jewish future.

Ultra-orthodox Jews do not want to accept conversions from Reform and Conservative rabbis, or to allow these movements to function in the State of Israel. Many of them are willing to say explicitly that what Reform and Conservative Jews practice is not Judaism. From their perspective, those who do not follow traditional Jewish Halacha may be ethnically Jewish, but are not practicing the religion of Judaism. This may have been their attitude for many decades, but something has changed in recent years. As the Reform movement begins to accept people as Jewish whose father, but not mother, was Jewish and as the Reform, Conservative and Reconstructionist movements begin to convert more and more people to Judaism, Orthodox Jews fear that their own children may be tempted to marry or treat as fully Jewish, people who from the Halachic standpoint have no Jewish legitimacy. So they are attempting to use their power in the Israeli Knesset and in the Jewish community to require that anyone who wishes to be considered a Jew go through the processes of conversion, marriage, and divorce that are governed by the Orthodox world.

From their standpoint, the Orthodox are trying to "save" the Jewish world from the anarchy of many different religious approaches and traditions. They believe that one universal voice and one specific approach, namely their definition of Halacha, can maintain order and impose unity. But from my standpoint, their approach is creating something like a class war between different sectors of he Jewish world. A small number of people are attempting to put themselves in the position of judges and rulers of the Jewish people.

The Orthodox see themselves as the sole possessors of the truth. But throughout history, we see that those who believe that they have the only truth usually do not promote unity and connection, but rather the destruction of ties between people.

The murder of Prime Minister Rabin was a concrete manifestation of this kind of thinking. The same certainty and hatred that led some Orthodox Jews (not all) to believe that it would be appropriate to kill the Israeli prime minister in order to "save" the Jewish people and its claim to the West Bank is now being manifested in a certainty that no one is really Jewish and no one deserves the benefits of the community except those who are willing to submit to Orthodox procedures.

ILLUSTRATION BY RUSS ANDO

The Orthodox warn us that unless we follow their procedures, they will be unable to marry or engage in religious connection with the majority of Jews from around the world. They see this as a tragedy that will lead to the creation of two peoples, one the "real" Jewish people composed of those who have followed Orthodox religious traditions, and the rest composed of people who may be religiously impure because their parents or grandparents didn't follow the appropriate path in conversion, marriage or divorce.

But this threat—that we may face a division of the Jewish people if we don't follow their path—is ridiculous because we are already divided, and already two peoples. What the Orthodox refuse to recognize is that in the past century a growing number of Jews have begun to create a different religious identity that is based both on a commitment to Torah and Jewish tradition and on a commitment to recognizing that every human being is created in the image of God. We have different priorities than the Orthodox, and we have a fundamentally different worldview. They claim that their worldview is the authentic one based on Torah, but they are unwilling to hear that our worldview is just as legitimate, just as much based on a reading of the holy texts as theirs, just as much a serious manifestation of Jewish commitment as theirs.

They hope to blackmail the Jewish people into accepting their path on the assumption that for the rest of us, our Jewish path isn't very serious and doesn't really matter to us very much. But that is a deeply mistaken view. There are, of course, some non-orthodox Jews who are not very serious about their Jewishness, but this is also true of some orthodox Jews. But there are many of us who are not willing to accept a view that claims that because we follow fewer of the traditional hallachic laws than do the Orthodox, we are less committed or less serious. Quite the contrary: We have been creating a Judaism that is authentic and is this generation's response to God's call to the Jewish people.

In this circumstance, the Orthodox may be right that two peoples will emerge in the coming decades. But we should not see this as a tragedy. We will have a relationship with the Orthodox like cousins. Just as we are today trying to create a new relationship with the Palestinians, our old cousins from the past, so there may be tensions and problems in shaping a relationship with these new cousins. But since we are committed to seeing them as valuable human beings also created in the image of God, we will work hard to build caring and supportive relationships. We respect the differences in these two emerging nations, and we ask for the same respect in return. ✡

Rabbi Danny Goldman is the spiritual leader of Congregation Beth El in Buenos Aires and the editor of a new Spanish language Jewish magazine called NEFESH.

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The Politics of Philanthropy



David Biale

The United Jewish Appeal (UJA) is running scared. A full-page advertisement in the west coast edition of the *New York Times* shows a picture of an endearing young child with the heading, "He's Not Reform, Conservative or Orthodox. He's Poor and Hungry." The text warns: "Wherever you stand on the debate about religion in Israel, he's not the enemy. Don't make your Federation and the UJA the battlefield." As ultra-Orthodox groups, led by the Shas party of Morocco and Jews from other Arab lands, demand changes in the law to effectively freeze out the Reform and Conservative Movements from Israel, Jewish institutions in this country fear that, for the first time, American Jews may vote with their checkbooks.

Belying the ad's call for unity is the subtext of the photograph: the little boy is clearly Ashkenazi and not orthodox. The photograph thus contributes to the stereotyping the ad seeks to counter, and concedes that the battle has already been won by the forces of division: American Jews might give money for a poor Russian Jewish child, but cannot be expected to muster up the same sympathy for an orthodox child of Moroccan origin.

The UJA ad is a desperate response to a recent action by The Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma Counties' which cut its UJA contribution from $6 million to $5 million. The $1 million difference is to be divided into two halves by the Federation: one half to local needs and the other half to special projects in Israel that promote Arab-Jewish relations and religious pluralism.

Although the action attracted widespread attention in the local press, it was not entirely unprecedented. Over a decade ago, the San Francisco Jewish Federation already drew opprobrium from the UJA by setting up its own philanthropic foundation in Israel, called *Amuta*, which was to make direct grants to worthy projects outside of the UJA-Jewish Agency bureaucracy. Moreover, other Federations have also cut their contributions to the UJA over the last few years as local needs become more pressing. It was the timing of the San Francisco action that drew the media's attention. The local newspapers speculated that the San Francisco Jews were trying to send a double message to the Netanyahu government: get serious about the peace process and keep your hands off the Reform and Conservative movements in Israel.

If only it were true. In a full page ad that appeared in the *Northern California Jewish Bulletin* the same day as the UJA ad in the *Times*, the Federation took pains to distance itself from the media's interpretation. Entitled "A Message of Support for the People of Israel," the ad argues that the Federation's move was "not so much a result of dissatisfaction with the policies of the Israeli government or the influence of certain religious groups in Israel" as it was "a reflection of a desire to more efficiently fund programs in Israel. It was not designed to send a message."

Why this fear to "send a message" when a message is obviously being sent? Is there no policy of the Israeli government that would force this establishment to say loudly and publicly what it clearly says to itself privately? There is a dirty secret here: the Jewish Federations have painted themselves into a corner by predicating all their fundraising on foreign appeals, especially to assist Israel. They fear that if American Jews are dissuaded from giving money to Israel—whether for political or religious reasons—they will not give money to strengthen Jewish life in this country or support the bureaucrats' own well-padded jobs. All the recent talk of "Jewish Continuity" cannot conceal the bankruptcy of basing fundraising on an illusory unity around Israel.

It is doubly disturbing that the greatest fear of disaffection with Israel is aroused by the intra-religious dispute rather than by relations with the Palestinians. No one who favors religious pluralism can applaud the machinations of the ultra-Orthodox, but whether or not Conservative and Reform conversions are recognized in Israel does not affect most American Jews. Only a fundamental insecurity in their own identity would prompt these Jews to seek legitimation from the religious establishment in Israel.

But core issues of relations between Jews and Palestinians raise much more important moral questions, don't they? The recent reports, by the U.N. Human Rights Commission and the *New York Times*, of Israel's use of systematic torture on Palestinian prisoners ought to have sparked some measure of outrage from American Jews rather than silence. Israel's explanations, themselves tortured, that "moderate physical pressure" is not torture and that it is only used in cases of a "ticking bomb," would be laughable if they didn't conceal the broken lives of literally thousands of Palestinian detainees who had no connection to "ticking bombs."

These practices are not new, but have instead been part

ILLUSTRATIONS BY RUSS ANDO

and parcel of the Occupation since 1967. And American Jewish apologies go back as far. In the early 1970s, Alan Dershowitz, that great civil libertarian, defended Israel against similar charges in the pages of *Commentary*. Why are we willing to tolerate practices in Israel that we would never tolerate in America? If American Jews really want to send a message to Israel, shouldn't this be one very important issue on which to do so?

The issue of American Jewish philanthropy to Israel needs rethinking as a necessary part of the rethinking of the whole relationship between Diaspora Jews and the New Israel. Several years ago, Yossi Beilin, then Deputy Foreign Minister, proposed that American Jews stop giving money to Israel since Israel is no longer a charity case. He was met by howls of outrage by Federation and UJA functionaries who smelled the end of their own *raison d'etre*. Yet, Beilin was right: Israel now has one of the highest per capita incomes in the world and it no longer needs either American Jewish philanthropy or U.S. foreign aid on the same scale to which it has become accustomed.

American Jews need to refashion their relationship with Israel to move away from charity and towards specific projects that promote values such as religious pluralism, democracy and Jewish-Arab relations—exactly those values that the San Francisco Federation has supported for over a dozen years. All American Jewish giving to Israel should be on the model of the New Israel Fund in the form of foundations that award grants competitively to worthy projects. But these foundations should not be based on an illusory sense of Jewish unity. Instead, they should reflect the diversity of American Jewish opinion and the equal diversity of Israeli society. Only by accepting and affirming these diversities publicly can a true pluralism be allowed to flourish and only by affirming a true pluralism can a much more realistic sense of Jewish unity emerge.

David Biale is a contributing editor of TIKKUN *Magazine.*

Religious Restoration or Religious Renewal

Rabbi Arthur Waskow

Jews are used to finding themselves on the front pages of major newspapers—almost always in regard to peace and war in Israel. But as the spring-fever festival of hilarious Purim came this past March, suddenly there was a different kind of front-page story: a band of Orthodox rabbis had proclaimed that what Reform and Conservative Jews do is not Judaism at all.

Unfortunately, this was not a Purim joke. The institutions of non-Orthodox Judaism did not just laugh and walk away; they issued statements bespeaking deep alarm, even though they far outnumber those who are trying to delegitimize them. They realize that a profound and historic struggle for the future of the Jewish people has begun. Behind the Orthodox rabbis' proclamation they smell the threat of a new attitude from the Israeli government—not merely ignoring liberal Judaism but actively denying their legitimacy and bonding together State power, "modern Orthodox" expansionist nationalism, and ultra-Orthodox control over Jewish identity (through control of conversions and marriages) into the emergence of a new State Orthodoxy.

Why is this struggle underway? At the level of secular historical analysis, it began when Modernity shattered most traditional religious communities, including traditional Judaism. Even before the Holocaust, the economics, science, and politics of Modernity was dissolving traditional Judaism. The Holocaust—Modernity run amok—finished the job. But in the very process of shattering the traditional communities, the Holocaust (and other products of Modernity like the H-bomb and global warming) undermined respect and honor for Modernity itself; thus the birth of a new kind of untraditional fundamentalism.

Those liberal Jews who bothered to ask a religious question about this history—to ask what God had to do with it—mostly concluded that God had nothing to do with it. That accorded with their absorption into secular Modernity. But as we all face the fundamentalist resurgence, and more importantly as we face the partial failures of secular Modernity, we might ask again. Perhaps a serious God-centered answer will illuminate our path.

From a seriously religious perspective, this seemingly secular historical transformation is an aspect of the evolution of the God Whose Name is Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh, I Will Be Who I Will Be. "Modernity" is our description of an event in the Divine life-cycle that, as some Kabbalists taught, is carried forward by the flow of God into a world through a growing self-awareness that is ultimately intended to provide God with a Divine Mirror—the Conscious Universe.

This process proceeds not smoothly, but in jumps. The



emergence of life on earth was one such jump. Another was the emergence of the human race and its ability to be self-reflective, to conceptualize, control, and relate to the wholeness of the universe—to learn from the past and reinvent the future. Within human history, such events as the agricultural revolution and the emergence of Biblical/Prophetic Israel, Buddhism, and other ancient faiths was another such leap into greater control over and relationship with the wider universe. So were the emergence of Hellenism and the responsive emergence of Rabbinic Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

Now, one aspect of God—the I-It/Doing/Making aspect—has come surging far more fully into the human species than ever before, without, as yet, a commensurate surge into human action of the I-Thou/Loving/Being aspect of God. That I-It influx is what we call Modernity.

The first response: Modernity works, join it. Set up a state that is Modern though Jewish. Create a form of Judaism that cedes at least six-sevenths of life to Modernity, and preserves but shreds of traditional Judaism for at most the "religious" ghetto of Shabbat. Celebrate our entry into the larger world.

The second response: Modernity—or at least its hypertrophy—endangers the world. Fear it. Flee it. Vomit it out, and restore pre-modern religion. Recognize the chief dangers of Hyper-Modernity: it shatters the family, the neighborhood, the life-cycle, the culture, the community. The response of religious restoration is to restore these values by restoring women and men to their separate (and dominant/subordinate) roles, and by tightening the boundaries and barricades against other communities, cultures, and traditions.

In its fullest Jewish expression, in Israel, this restorationist response seeks to use state power to define who is a Jew by traditional tests, to enforce traditional religious law among Jews, and to enforce military control by Jewish settlers and the Israeli state over non-Jews—Palestinians—in the whole Land of Israel as anciently imagined. Note that this is not an organic continuation of traditional communities but a kind of "intentional restorationism." By some it has been called "settler Judaism," but it is broader than that. It bespeaks State Orthodoxy, a new form of Judaism in that it seeks to use State power, official violence, and sometimes private violence in a way that was unavailable to traditional rabbinic Judaism.

In America, the analogous phenomenon has been the emergence of a Christian Right (with some allies among Orthodox Jews) ready to restore obedience to old doctrines by imposing governmental power over the family (ruled by a father), education (replicating old certainties), poverty (a punishment for indolence), nature (a mere tool for human benefit), and so on. These versions of religious restoration have created strong political bases and have been well-publicized.

Third response: Digest Modernity, rather than vomit it out or be swallowed up by it. Absorb those aspects of modernity that are sacred, and eliminate those that are destructive. This response—religious renewal—is less widely known than religious restoration, and so far has much less political power. The renewal response recognizes Modernity as an expression of God-powers newly entering human capability as God continues to flow into the world—and sees both the holiness and the dangers in this flow. It sees as dangers not only the death of spirituality, community, culture, and the family that the new overweening power of Modernity brings about, but three other dangers:

1. Hyper-Modernity poisons the earth, air, and water, thereby multiplying old diseases, meanwhile extinguishing thousands of species of life and threatening the web of life on earth through the H-bomb, ozone depletion, and global warming.
2. It threatens local and regional economies, even the very economies of industrial strength that Modernity created, in order to serve the "global economy"; for many, it expropriates jobs as well as income—the very sense of worthy work done for worthwhile recompense—while forcing others into exhausting overwork.
3. Hyper-Modernity destroys community, family, and culture, as well as the earth and the economy, depriving us of our sense that the world makes sense, that there is meaning and Wholeness in the world.

Yet the response of religious renewal springs from recognizing that there are also some sacred results of this great flow of Godly power into human hands: democracy, the equality of women, the new close contacts with other traditions, the emergence of strong Diaspora communities with real power in the societies where they live, and responsibility for the web of life throughout the planet.

Among Jews, religious renewal means the absorption of these new sacred values into Torah, and thereby the creation of a new form of Judaism, as different from Rabbinic Judaism, and as deeply rooted in it, as Rabbinic Judaism was different from, and rooted in, Biblical Judaism.

Religious restoration, or religious renewal? Vomit Modernity out, or digest it? That is the crucial question that all the ancient traditions now face. For Jews, the choice is between State Orthodoxy and a new Holistic Judaism.

Why are these the necessary choices? Because the dan-

gers of Hyper-Modernity are real, and more and more human beings, Jews among them, are feeling the great tug. Hyper-Modernity is making the ground beneath our own feet increasingly slippery. The old forms of family are vanishing: Do we restore them by brute force, or transform them? The old ways of controlling and distancing foreign peoples and cultures are vanishing: Do we restore them by brute force, or transform our relationships with them? Should we move backward or forward? It is Elijah's old challenge: We have been walking like a bird on a branching twig, one foot on each branch. But the branch is diverging; soon we must choose one branch, or fly upward to some newer place.

For the vision of Jewish renewal is indeed new—not the same as that of the nineteenth-century Jewish Reformers and secular Zionists who compromised with Modernity by embracing it for most of life and restricting Judaism to the privatized ghetto of "religion." The vision of Jewish renewal is a Holistic Judaism in three senses: It engages the whole person; it is shaped by the whole people (not by just a small elite of verbally adept Torah scholars, still an elite even with women among them); and it is concerned for the whole planet.

This Holistic Judaism aims toward a maximalist Judaism, infused with some elements of Modernity and, in this new synthesis, shaping all of Jewish life: new paths of work, rest, sex, food, money, health, family, and political action, as well as new forms of prayer, Torah-study, dance, art, music.

Both State Orthodoxy and Holistic Judaism are new. What is new in the amalgam of "settler Judaism/State Orthodoxy" is the possibility of using the power of the state in support of Orthodox goals, and the readiness to turn the long history of Jewish subjugation, fear, and semi-repressed rage to the service of "You shall control and dominate the stranger, because you were strangers and were dominated in all the lands of your dispersal."

In Holistic Judaism, what will be new? There will be full equality of women and men in shaping what Judaism is; willingness to learn from some of the teachings of other spiritual paths; a conviction that God intends for both families of Abraham, not just one, to live freely and in peace in what we call the Land of Israel. There will be a conviction that Judaism is internally pluralist; recognition of intermarriage as more opportunity than disaster; and a conviction that Judaism must draw on its own deepest wisdom to reach beyond itself, to contribute to the healing of the earth and of the non-Jewish societies in which we live. Holistic Judaism has more open boundaries in both directions: more open to receiving and sharing both from other peoples and from the previously excluded sectors of Jewish life, and more open to carrying the teachings of Judaism outward into "non-Jewish" territory—teaching by example and persuasion, not by domination.

Holistic Judaism may include a new willingness to extend the principles of Shabbat and the sabbatical year to protect and heal non-Jewish societies and the earth outside of the Land of Israel from uncontrolled technology; to develop a Jewish sexual ethic and ritual that defines how to make holy not only gay and lesbian sexuality but also the sexual relationships of unmarried people and the emergence of new kibbutz-like groupings to raise children in a society where one parent, or even two, cannot do the job alone; a new eco-kashrut not for food alone but also for the "eating" of coal, oil, wood, paper, and plastics, and for the investment as well as spending of money; a new ethic about how much time to spend at work and how much in rest and true re-creation, about how to share jobs in an economy that now disemploys some and overworks others; a new readiness to use dance, body gesture, drushodrama, dialogical davening, chant, and meditation as ways of getting directly in touch with God.

It is not surprising that such a Judaism has sprouted first and grows strongest in America, where the boundaries between religious communities are very fuzzy, where the State has least control over religion and therefore encourages religious pluralism, and where the equality of women and men in every sphere grows stronger and stronger. Instead of viewing these American origins as a weakness or a sign of our own inauthenticity compared to Israel or Eastern Europe, we should view it as an asset—a way into the future. Renewal is not a version of assimilation, but at least as Jewishly authentic as is the new State Orthodoxy. Indeed, it much more honors the great strand of Torah that calls on us to love the stranger and to hear that God is One.

The choice between restoration and renewal is not merely a question of politics as we usually understand it. The web of community, of worthy work and rest, and of life on this planet is at stake. If the danger as well as the majesty of Modernity is that it has brought into human hands new powers from the inward flow of the Powerful God, the Infinite I-It, its majesty must be turned to love by bringing into human hands an inward flow of the Loving God, the Eternal I-Thou. The new God-powers are too strong to be contained by the old versions of God-loving. Only new forms of I-Thouing can unify the currents. We can affirm the Unity of the One God Who is both power and love, both doing and being, both I-It and I-Thou, only by ourselves acting in that Unity.

So the task of Judaism, and Christianity, and Islam, and Buddhism, and Hinduism, and all the other spiritual traditions, is now to move forward to bring the next great wave of I-Thouing, of love and restful be-ing, of deeper, broader, and more meaning-full community, into the world. ✡

Rabbi Arthur Waskow is a Pathfinder of ALEPH: Alliance for Jewish Renewal, author of Godwrestling—Round 2 *(Jewish Lights Publishing, Woodstock, VT) and* Down-to-Earth Judaism: Food, Money, Sex, and the Rest of Life *(Morrow), and co-author of* Tales of Tikkun *(Jason Aronson).*

Jewish Multiculturalism:

Enhancing Our Awareness, Embracing Our Diversity

Loolwa Khazzoom

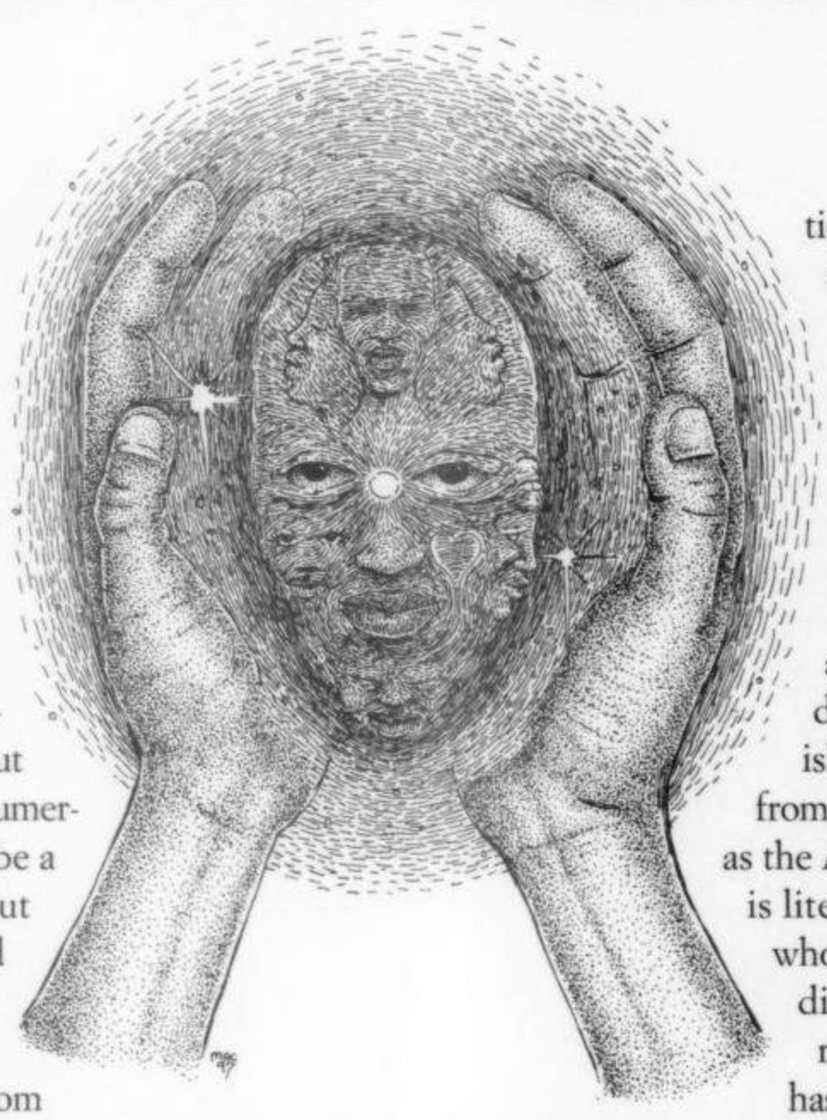


ILLUSTRATION BY MAC MCGILL

When most of us think of multiculturalism, we think of it *outside* the Jewish community. The closest it may touch us is through issues like Black-Jewish relations or Arab-Jewish dialogue. But how often do we think of Black Jews or Arab Jews?

Jewish organizations have sponsored numerous conferences and workshops on diversity without talking about *Jewish* diversity, and have sponsored numerous discussions on what it means to be a Jew in a multicultural world without ever addressing the multicultural world within Judaism. As Jews, we do not have integrity in addressing multiculturalism if we continue to work from the assumption that all Jews are white and come from a European background.

As we go story by story through the history and heritage of the Jewish people, we find that Judaism is rooted deeply in the Middle East and North Africa: Abraham and Sarah, Moses and Miriam, the Talmud, the first yeshivas and the Hebrew language all come from the Middle East. Purim tells the story about Iranian Jews, Passover tells the story about Egyptian Jews, and so on. So whether your family is from Poland, Syria, Germany, Spain, Russia or Ethiopia, the Middle Eastern and North African Jewish heritage is a part of *your* Jewish heritage. But how much do you know about this part of your Jewish identity?

In the overwhelming majority of American Jewish schools, camps, synagogues and community organizations, Judaism has been presented to us almost exclusively in its European form, with little or no mention of other ways of Jewish life. Our lack of education about non-European Jewish traditions has created the perception that what is European *is* Jewish and what is Middle Eastern or North African is merely "other"—a less valid, less important part of the Jewish experience. At best, Jewish traditions from the Middle East and North Africa have been presented to us as a curiosity, as something "exotic," but not as a fundamental, authentic part of the Jewish experience. As a result, most of us today have little or no knowledge about our Jewish heritage from the Middle East and North Africa.

As a result of our lack of education, our community is in serious danger of losing 3,000 years of Jewish heritage. Between 1948 and 1950, entire indigenous Middle Eastern and North African Jewish communities were forced to flee from their homes in what today is known as the Arab world. As a result, there now is literally *nobody* under the age of 65 who reached adulthood in the full, traditional Jewish communities of the region, *and* the Jewish community has not been giving us education about this part of our Jewish history and heritage. This is a lethal combination, and time is running out.

If we do not begin learning these traditions immediately, there may be nobody left to teach them to our children. For this reason, it is imperative that as a Jewish community, we begin recording the languages, songs, prayers, personal stories, and every other aspect of Jewish life in the Middle East and North Africa, and that we integrate this knowledge into our community—before it is too late.

Of course, by learning about the Jewish communities and traditions from the Middle East and North Africa, we will learn about the Jewish community from Spain, as well. What is colloquially known as "Sephardi" Jews in fact encompasses two distinct Jewish communities: Mizrahi ("Eastern") Jews, are indigenous to the Middle East and North Africa. They literally never left the region in the entire history of the Jewish people.

Sephardi ("Spanish") Jews are descendants of the Jewish community that lived in Spain until the Inquisition and Spanish expulsion of 1492. After that time, the Sephardi community resettled throughout the Ottoman Empire, which included many countries in the Middle East and North Africa.

So the Jewish communities from Egypt, Morocco, Iraq,

Iran and other North African and Middle Eastern countries encompass both the Mizrahi and Sephardi communities. Of course, the traditions of *both* these communities must be preserved and passed on. And in learning about these communities, we will also educate ourselves about Sephardim who settled in Mexico, South America, and Mediterranean countries such as Greece and Turkey.

We also need to begin recording and integrating the Ethiopian Jewish traditions before they are lost. With this community, we have the advantage that it has left Africa only during the past decade, so the customs, culture, and mannerisms are still very much a part of even the young generation. We must not let this heritage approach the danger of extinction; we need to begin recording information about it right away.

On the immediate level, what can we as individuals do about the issue of Jewish multiculturalism, especially if we do not have the first idea about non-European Jewish history and heritage? The first and simplest step is to bring a level of consciousness to our own personal Jewish lives: Become aware of what comes to our minds when we think about Jewish prayer, Jewish food, music, or dance, and Jewish history. It is fairly safe to assume that what we will think about will be Ashkenazi (Eastern European, German, and Austrian) liturgy, customs, and history.

Let us nurture our curiosity about what else is out there: What traditional Jewish food can we eat for Purim, for example, in addition to Hamantashin? What traditional songs can we sing on Shabbat and the holidays, in addition to the ones we already know? For holidays such as Chanukah, we constantly make up new English songs to sing, because we do not know enough of the traditional Hebrew ones. Unfortunately, most of us do not even realize that there *are* more traditional Hebrew ones to be learned.

Because Ashkenazi heritage has been presented to us as *the universal Jewish heritage*, most of us have not even been aware that anything traditional exists outside the confines of what we have learned. Every school we have gone to, every camp we have attended, every book we have picked up has taught us the *same* traditional songs, but has not even mentioned that there *are* more traditional songs to be learned.

Because of how Judaism has been presented to us, we have not even known to *ask the question*, "What else is there that you have not told me?" Begin to ask. This is step one.

Let us ask the questions out loud to bring consciousness to other people, especially to our Jewish leaders. We can do our part in raising consciousness about Jewish multiculturalism in our community by identifying that there is a problem, that there are many things outside our own experience we need to know. When we go to a Jewish event, we can ask these thought-provoking questions: What part of the world is this Kiddush from? Does anyone here know the traditional Kiddush from India?... *Why not?* Does anyone here know the Shabbat services from Ethiopia? The Jewish dances from Yemen?... *Why not?*...

The second step is to familiarize ourselves with the histories, social justice issues, and cultural and religious traditions of Jews from the Middle East, Africa, Mexico/Latin America, and East and South Asia. Following are a few organizations that can help us in this endeavor:

Kulanu is a national organization that does research on and provides assistance for Jews around the world. Members sponsor open trips to visit and support Jewish communities in countries such as Brazil, China, Cuba, Ethiopia, and Uganda. Their quarterly newsletter keeps Jewish multicultural activists in touch with each other and provides the latest news on international Jewish communities. (Contact them by phone: 301/681-5679; at their LISTSERV address: kulanu@ubmail.ubalt.edu; or on the World Wide Web at: http://www.ubalt.edu/www/kulanu.)

The American Sephardic Federation provides a listing of synagogues throughout the United States that follow the Sephardi and Mizrahi traditions. With this information, individuals can attend Mizrahi/Sephardi services, talk to the rabbis there, and meet people who can teach about various aspects of the Mizrahi/Sephardi history and heritage. (Contact them at 212/366-7223.)

The New Israel Fund is an American organization that sponsors progressive projects in Israel, including several Israeli organizations that work for the rights of African and Middle Eastern Israelis. Two such organizations are HILA and Kedma. HILA does advocacy work on behalf of families in "development towns." Last summer, HILA sponsored the first feminist conference for African and Middle Eastern Jewish women. Kedma is a cutting-edge school that incorporates Mizrahi, Sephardi and Ethiopian Jewish identity into the school curricula. Kedma has chapters in two "development towns," one in Jerusalem, and one in Tel Aviv. (Contact The New Israel Fund at 202/223-3333.)

Those of us who are involved in any level of Jewish leadership can contact individuals from these organizations to help arrange programs. For example, if we arrange a Black/Jewish dialogue, we can contact Kulanu to invite Jewish speakers from Ethiopia or Uganda. If we organize a *Shabbaton*, we can invite a rabbi from one of the Mizrahi/Sephardi synagogues to lead the Saturday morning prayers in the Persian tradition. If we organize a discussion on current events in Israel, we can invite a representative from the New Israel Fund to speak about challenges facing Mizrahi, Sephardi, and Ethiopian Israelis.

Even if we ourselves know only about European Jewish heritage and traditions, even if we can only work as individuals, we nonetheless can help make our community more reflective of Jewish diversity.

What do we as a community need to do? First, Jewish schools, synagogues and community organizations need to raise consciousness by providing the forum and financial support for individuals to discuss the subject of Jewish multiculturalism and to create programs that encompass non-European Jewish heritage.

Second, our community needs to sponsor individuals and groups who will seek out and record all the information about Mizrahi, Sephardi, and Ethiopian Jewish heritage before it is lost. For example, our community should sponsor a video project where individuals take hundreds of hours of videotape footage of the old Mizrahi and Sephardi Israelis—the ones who reached adulthood before leaving their countries of origin; the ones who witnessed what their communities used to be like before they were forced to flee from their homes.

For this project, we should follow these people around in their everyday settings with the video cameras on: Follow the women around the kitchens while they cook traditional Jewish cuisine from Morocco and Lebanon. Hang out at the Yemenite and Iranian synagogues during the week, and get the prayers recorded on video and audiotape; record all their stories.

Once we have everything recorded and preserved, we can start relaxing. We will have the information we need to transmit this important heritage to our future generations.

The third step our community needs to take is to make information about Jewish multiculturalism easily accessible. Our community needs to create a resource and curriculum guide that will provide a quick, easy and inexpensive way for Jewish leaders, teachers and others to incorporate Jewish diversity into their programs. Creation of this guide is actually the most crucial step in enhancing our awareness and embracing our diversity because it will enable our community leaders and lay people to directly learn and teach about Jewish diversity.

The resource section of the guide should list Mizrahi, Sephardi, and Ethiopian Jewish historians, rabbis, writers, activists, cooks, musicians, dancers, and artists living in the U.S. and abroad. It should include an annotated bibliography referring readers to books, periodicals, cassettes and videos on Jewish multiculturalism; samples of Mizrahi, Sephardi, and Ethiopian Jewish folk tales, recipes, prayers and songs with accompanying cassettes, holiday games, arts and crafts projects that replicate Jewish ceremonial objects, and famous rabbinical teachings. The curriculum section of the guide should include step-by-step descriptions of how to utilize all this information and how to create successful programs and curricula.

But there is more: We need to create Jewish multicultural centers, places people can go to learn about Jewish diversity. And these places should be accessible to everyone—Jews from every ethnic background, religious denomination, political persuasion, and sexual orientation, as well as non-Jews from all walks of life. These multicultural centers should:

- Provide the Jewish community with educational resources and programs about Jewish life and traditions in non-European countries by housing books, videos, and music recordings on the history, religious and cultural traditions, and human rights struggles of Jews from non-European countries.

- Offer Mizrahi, Sephardi, and Ethiopian Jews a non-denominational, all-inclusive place to go to connect with their heritage through religious and cultural events.

- Provide sensitivity training seminars for Jewish community leaders that increase awareness of and value for Jewish diversity, and promote understanding and alliance between Jews of all backgrounds.

- Publish a local resource guide, offer a speakers bureau, and host ongoing classes and monthly events on Jewish multiculturalism.

- Serve as a bridge between the Jewish community and non-Jewish communities of color, connecting us through our common African, Chicano/Latino, Asian, and Middle Eastern heritages.

By taking these steps and all of those discussed above, our community can retrieve and preserve 3,000 years of Jewish heritage from around the world before it is lost forever. And through raising our own consciousness and the consciousness of those around us, we can do our part in ensuring that we and our leaders take these steps.

Our great sage Hillel once made a poignant three-part statement, which is especially fitting for the issue of Jewish multiculturalism: "If I am not for myself, who is for me?" That is, if we do not embrace diversity in our own Jewish family, how can we address it in the world beyond? "If I am only for myself, what am I?" If we connect to our Jewish sisters and brothers from around the world, we will open a bridge to all people from which we can approach different ethnicities with a deeper sense of connection, understanding, and support. "If not now, when?" If we do not act now, there will be no other chance. ✡

Loolwa Khazzoom is a writer, a Mizrahi music specialist and performer, and Jewish multicultural consultant. She is recording a CD of Mizrahi songs and prayers and planning a multicultural resource and curriculum guide.

The End of Ideology in the Promised Land



Noah J. Efron

▪ *Rubber Bullets: Power and Conscience in Modern Israel*, by Yaron Ezrahi. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1997.

"We shall know how to keep the rabbis in their synagogues, and our generals in their barracks," Theodor Herzl wrote of his Judenstaat. Add to that keeping the socialists on their kibbutzim, and you've got the desideratum of *Rubber Bullets*, Yaron Ezrahi's memoir-cum-political criticism about growing up Israeli and, ultimately, about Israelis growing up. Ezrahi believes that Herzl's brash confidence that ideologues of different stripes could easily be kept in check was misplaced, or at least well ahead of its time. Most of the hundred years since Herzl first proposed a Jewish state have seen various collectivist ideologies claiming, with great success, the hearts and minds of *eretz yisraelim*, Jews born in "the land of Israel."

These ideologies were until recently so pervasive and so adept at creating collective allegiance, Ezrahi argues, that they prevented individual Israelis from developing sturdy private identities. Israel's history, refracted by these ideologies, was epic—in different versions messianic, eschatological, or utopian—and it transcended and overshadowed the petty private histories of mere individuals. To be Israeli was to participate in something larger than life and more important than any particular life, including one's own. To be an Israeli was to sway, Ezrahi writes, to "the epic chorus that silenced the lyrical voice of the self." Only after the Six-Day War did the hold of totalizing ideologies (and the epic history they engendered) slacken somewhat, and only with the start of the *intifada* a decade ago, was their psychological hegemony seriously challenged. As the image of Israel as an embattled David became harder and harder to sustain (given Israel's patently Goliathine might), many Israelis' confidence in the heroism of their unfolding history was shaken.

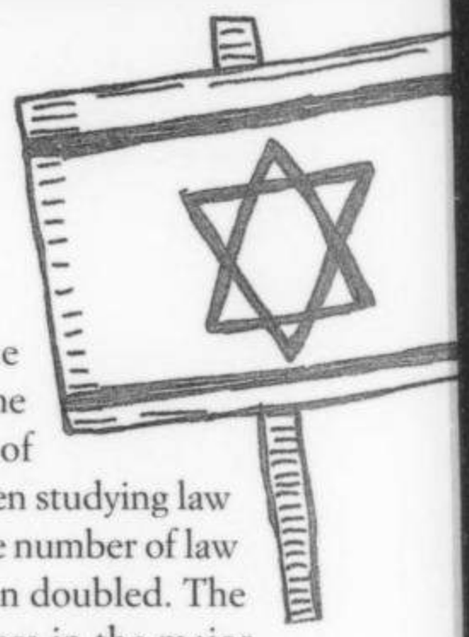
Ezrahi nicely observes that nothing marks the end of Israel's epic history better than the introduction of rubber bullets to fight Palestinian protesters in the *intifada*. Rubber bullets, though they can be lethal, are meant to control and subdue, not to kill. Rubber bullets are used against civilians, not enemy soldiers. They *limit* force, implying that in the battle between Jewish soldiers and Palestinians, the danger is not of Jews having too little power, but rather of indiscriminately using too much, discrediting the heroic view of beleaguered Jews struggling against implacable enemies. Once this axiom of Israel's epic history is given the lie, other revisions follow in tow. For the first time, many Israelis have now begun to see their foundational ideologies and their foundational mythologies as a sham. They have turned away from collectivist vision, and increasingly sought to cultivate the self, enlisting in what Ezrahi calls "the counterrevolution of the Israeli individual." It is only now that we Israelis are, as Marlo Thomas sang, "free to be you and me." After one hundred years of Zionism and fifty years of statehood, Israelis are finally able to effect the frame of mind necessary for liberal democratic values to thrive.

Though the influence of the old era can still be felt, particularly in the rhetoric and rejectionism of the religious right, Ezrahi is persuaded that better, less ideologically fraught times are upon us.

Ezrahi, who teaches political science at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, is a famously affable mensch and a widely-respected public intellectual and peace activist. *Rubber Bullets* combines these different aspects of his persona, intertwining personal memoirs, social criticism and political analysis. This combination is appropriate, because one of Ezrahi's most potent points, and one of his most vigorous complaints, is that for Israelis the personal is *always* fused with the social and political, producing—like Brundel-fly in the sci-fi classic—monstrously amalgamated identities. In Israel, it *is* hard to tell where you end and the country begins. In its form and content, Ezrahi's book captures this fact well. Indeed, the stories of Ezrahi's own childhood in Palestine and Israel—he was eight when Ben-Gurion declared the establishment of the state—are the most arresting part of the book. Growing up epic, it turns out, can be cruel.

Ezrahi's most wistful anecdotes concern his family. His grandfather, an early Hebrew scholar named Mordechai Krichevsky, paid close attention to the four-year-old Ezrahi, but had little interest in what the boy thought or who he was. Ezrahi's relationship with his father, Yariv, was close, but here too,

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communal ideologies got in the way. Yariv was a musician and music teacher, a vocation of which Ezrahi was proud but ambivalent. He imagined his father as a sort of warrior, yet the eight-year-old Ezrahi could not help but notice that his father fell short of the Israeli soldierly ideal.

Many years later, this ideal would come between Ezrahi and his own son, Ariel. As Ariel neared induction, Ezrahi found himself hoping that his son would fail his physical, that they find "some defect, not serious but sufficient to disqualify" Ariel from serving in crack combat units. In the weeks before Ariel was to go to basic training, Ezrahi toured the United States with his son, choosing the Grand Canyon as a backdrop to warn Ariel about the ideological indoctrination he was about to receive in the Army. When Ariel rejected his arguments against the occupation, Ezrahi realized with a start, perhaps a touch condescendingly, that Ariel and his friends would be sent off to the army "before they had been able to distinguish themselves as individuals from the larger society and even from their own high school group."

The collectivist ideology would have its day, distancing father from son, just has it had distanced Ezrahi from his own father.

Ezrahi also shows how collective commitments infiltrate not just one's family but also one's very self. When he was ten, visiting family friends on kibbutz Gvat, he set out with a group of kibbutz children to a nearby reservoir. When they arrived, the other boys and girls stripped naked, Ezrahi alone wearing a bathing suit: "I was left with a sense of irrecoverable loss, painfully accepting my stigma as an outsider. I was clearly and irremediably a city boy, a native of that inferior place where money is paramount and fallen people live." This is a poignant realization, and it took its toll on young Ezrahi. Two years later, he woke up from a nap frightened and disoriented: "I did not recognize anything around me or remember who I was and why I was there. I'll never forget the terror as I felt I was moving in the void." What is striking about this is that it was "a liberating moment, a fleeting escape from my dense collectivized and historicized consciousness, a seductive invitation to a trip outside the Jewish-Zionist epic." When a total, terrifying loss of self is a relief, something is clearly wrong. As Ezrahi puts it:

"To be born in Tel Aviv in 1940 and turn eight about four weeks before the Declaration of Israel's Independence was...to be dwarfed by a narrative stretching between catastrophe and redemption. It could dry up an early appreciation for anything personal, for private language, private space, private time, even private life."

Ezrahi observes with understandable relief that this stultifying communalism is quickly fading now. Many Israelis are increasingly repelled from ideology-driven politics toward more pragmatic approaches.

One must agree with Ezrahi that Israelis are at the same time gravitating toward bourgeoisie pleasures with greater gusto than ever before—annual junkets abroad, for instance, are now almost *de rigueur*—and the pursuit of these pleasures is less at odds with the prevailing ethos than it used to be. The new cultural heroes are not generals, farmers, or scholars; they are investment bankers and stock and securities traders. The arts can no longer be relied upon for hortatory representations of Zionist ideology. Acclaimed movies like *Life According to Agfa* or *The Revenge of Itzik Finkelstein* portray seamy institutions that leave Israelis emotionally and morally vacant. Aviv Geffen, a teen rock idol, threatens to kill himself if drafted, and advises his groupies to leave the country after the assassination of Rabin and election of Netanyahu. Each year for over a decade, it has become more difficult for the army to persuade soldiers to agree to become officers; even as standards have been lowered, too few have come forward. Over the same period, the number of young men and women studying law has exploded, and the number of law schools has more than doubled. The army of young lawyers in the major cities of Israel is not, as a group, seeking to advance the public interest. The kibbutz movement has settled into a state of perpetual crisis, with several kibbutzim closing their doors or privatizing, and others doing away with rules limiting private property and ensuring equality of means and opportunity. And Israeli academia, where Ezrahi spends most of his time, is experiencing a frenzy of "demythologizing" of Israeli and Jewish history.

Like the story of growing up when communalism was at its most vigorous, the story of the decline of communalism is one that Ezrahi tells with elan. But just what were these ideologies, what accounts for their hold on *eretz yisraelim* for most of the past hundred years, and what accounts for the weakening of that hold? Here Ezrahi's account is less convincing. Liberal individualism did not develop in Jewish Palestine and Israel, Ezrahi finds, because it was suffocated from the start by zealots and zealotry. He writes that "an Israeli society shaped and led by Eastern European nationalists, socialists, and religious Zionists (all representing highly collectivist variants of the cultures of Judaism) was thoroughly inhospitable to the values of self-cultivation and unfamiliar with the resources of advanced Western individualism. Jewish immigrants from the Arab countries, while marginalized in other respects, only reinforced these trends in Israeli society."

This statement is the core of Ezrahi's *j'accuse*. It is telling and worth parsing. One of Ezrahi's points is that the communalist ideologies from which Israel derived its political culture were nationalism (by which he seems to mean the revisionist nationalism, or corporatism,

(continued on page 72)

CREATIVE MIDRASH

I and My Companions:

Two Months in the Short Life of a Desert Daughter, Bat Yiftah

Zoë Grashow

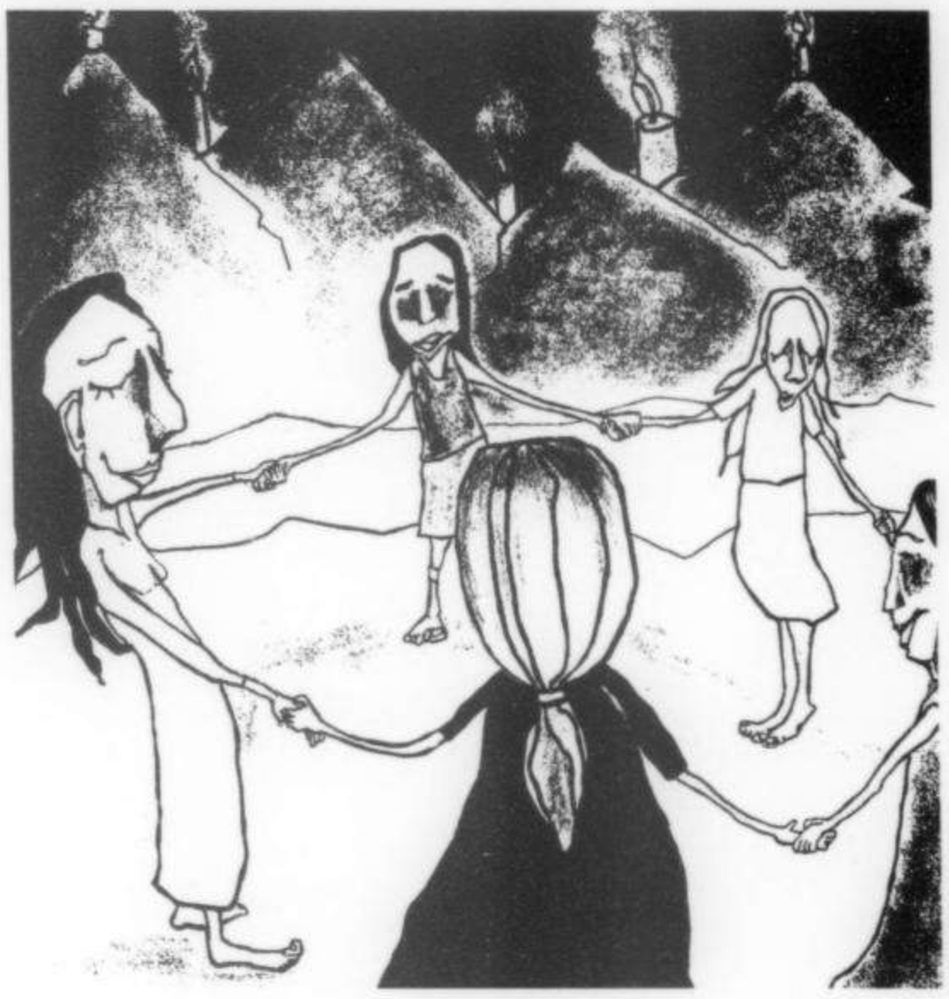


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VOW

Yiftah vowed a vow to God saying, "If you deliver the children of Ammon to me, whatever comes from my door shall be yours in a burnt offering."—Judges 11:30-31

Yiftah, whose namesake is 'he will open,' lets his mouth swing open like a door on broken hinges, letting escape his terrible vow. It slips straight up to heaven, detained for some time while its message is stored and recorded. In time, the vow will return to him, bursting through the door and dancing toward him in a flurry of skirts and the laughter of timbrels. It will rush into his mouth and clog his throat with choking despair.

How it must be for the daughter of such a man! Bat Yiftah does not have her own name, but basks in the reflected glory of her father's military career. And her mother? Oh, her mother is surely a wisp of a woman, breezing about the house like a shadow. Bat Yiftah helps her in the kitchen. Sometimes she goes to the market with a servant to buy grain and spice. The townsfolk see her and say, "Ah! *Hineh* Bat Yiftah!" Indeed, she forgot her real name long ago. Even her mother has forgotten.

There are many things Bat Yiftah would like to remember. She hates to admit that when her father is at war, she forgets the details of his face. She loves him very much and strives to be worthy of his piety. She even adores his impulsiveness, and supposes that this is why he is such a great warrior.

In the long stretches that Yiftah is gone, the house is relatively quiet and still. Bat Yiftah used to get lonely, but eventually she learned to love the solitude, staring at the dusty shafts of sunlight, meditating to the "woosh, woosh" sound of her mother rolling spices. Often she lost herself in the utter serenity of the home, and days slipped by where she did nothing but dream. All at once she would feel a stab of emptiness, of desolation. It was then that she would call on her companions to make her laugh.

Often Bat Yiftah cannot help but feel guilty that she was born a girl. She knows her father would have liked to have had a son to share his enthusiasm for battle and sport. She catches her reflection in a vessel of water and tucks her hair under her thin hood. She thinks, "But I am quite beautiful, and soon I will be wed to a man as strong as he, and I will have sons of my own."

Next time she goes to the market, she is very happy. She has heard that Yiftah was victorious again in battle. Soon he will be home and the house will be a tumult of chatter and activity. A merchant calls out, "Shalom, Bat Yiftah!" and Bat Yiftah blushes.

VICTORY

Yiftah came to his house and behold, his daughter came to meet him with timbrels and dances, and she was his only child. Beside her he had neither son nor daughter.—Judges 11:34

Bat Yiftah heard the chariots approaching, rattling with gifts. She brushed off her skirts and pushed her way through the servants and hardly noticing her mother, she kicked the chickens that blocked her way, nudged away the sheep and the goats, and raced through the outer gate toward her father. All of the energy that had been incubating within her over the quiet of the years, all of the relief that her father was

alive, all of the excitement exploded and she burst through the gate in a frenzy of dance, shaking her timbrels and tossing her hair.

"Soon I will be in his arms and they will crush me like iron, and lift me up!"

But when she reached Yiftah, he did not reach out to touch her, only looked down at her with pain. She thought, "He hates me because I am not a son. He is thinking, *beside her I have no son, nor daughter.*" She dropped her timbrels.

DEFEAT

When he saw her he rent his clothes and said, "Alas, my daughter! You have brought me very low. I have opened my mouth to God and I cannot go back."—Judges 11:35

All of her exhilaration was extinguished. In a single moment, Bat Yiftah felt her emotions turn from the hottest of hot to the coldest of cold. One moment her lifeblood was pounding in her ears, and in the blink of an eye, it all drained from her face. She was sentenced to die, consumed in fire, offered up whole.

And Bat Yiftah was wise enough to recognize the moment for what it was. She said to herself, "My father's battle was my battle. He won on account of me. Were I a boy I might have gone with him to battle and lost my life defending him. This is no different. I will be a good warrior. I will be a graceful warrior. I must be as brave as he! I must be as pious, as loyal to heaven!"

All of the servants stood listening. There was a heavy silence. Bat Yiftah said to herself, "Now I will live up to my namesake. I will show them by my courage and grace that I am truly Daughter of Yiftah."

ACCEPTANCE

She said to him, "My Father, you have opened your mouth to God. Do to me that which came from your mouth, forasmuch has God taken vengeance for you of your enemies, even of the children of Ammon."—Judges 11:36

Bat Yiftah spoke. In the corner of her eye she thought she saw her mother faint. She recalled the legend of the Ammonites, how they were a people born of a father and his own daughter. Wasn't it ironic that the man who would kill his own daughter should be victorious over these offspring of incest, even of the children of Ammon? A tiny voice in her heart told Bat Yiftah, "You have said the right thing. You have passed the test. You have shown the willingness of Isaac. Now, like Isaac, you will be redeemed. Father will not really go through with it now, now that he has seen your sincerity, your piety and love. He cannot go through with it."

She paused and she waited for him to respond. The silence grew longer, and she reassured herself, "My father is a man of many words. Surely he has many to speak now, to me, his only child."

REQUEST

And she said to her father, "Let this be done for me, let me alone two months that I may depart and go down the mountains and bewail my virginity, I and my companions."—Judges 11:37

But the silence grew longer and he said nothing. In fact, he lowered his eyes. Then Bat Yiftah knew that he was really going to do this thing, and although she blanched with fear, she would not cry before this warrior, her father, in his battle gear stained with Ammonite blood. Suddenly she thought to herself, "I will never have children! I will never give him a grandson!"

And then a thousand thoughts crowded into her head. She managed to filter them carefully and said, "*Let me alone two months that I may depart.*" There are three reasons Bat Yiftah said this. The first was that perhaps in time Yiftah will change his mind. The second was that she was angry at him for leaving her all of the time for battles, angry for all of the time she spent waiting for his return, and now at the finale of her life, she would leave him. She would make him wait. The third and most important reason was that she must be let alone, to roam on the mountains, to find herself and her freedom even in the midst of her terrible obligation. She felt she must run away, for the first time in her life, for perhaps two months roaming the mountains, which is something a young woman would never be allowed to do under normal circumstances, would be filled with all of the beauty, wonder, adventure, and discovery that would make a long and healthy life seem pale and boring. Bat Yiftah swore that she will not be like her mother, a phantom half-absent. She will live, and pull fresh berries from the bushes, and let the pulp ruin her skirts. She will chase rabbits and let her hair become tangled and wild. And she will run barefoot without fear of poisonous snakes. Free.

"*And bewail my virginity*," she reminded her father that now he will never have grandsons. In sacrificing her, he would sacrifice all of his future generations. The Daughters of Lot gave their viriginity to their father for life, for their children Moab and Ammon. She would give her virginity for death.

"*I and my companions.*" She invited the ones who were her solace in times of loneliness to come along, not only to comfort her, but more importantly that they be her witnesses. That they share her freedom, her joy and pain, that they lose

(continuted on page 71)

The CIA, Drugs, the Ghetto— and the Media Whitewash

Peter Dale Scott

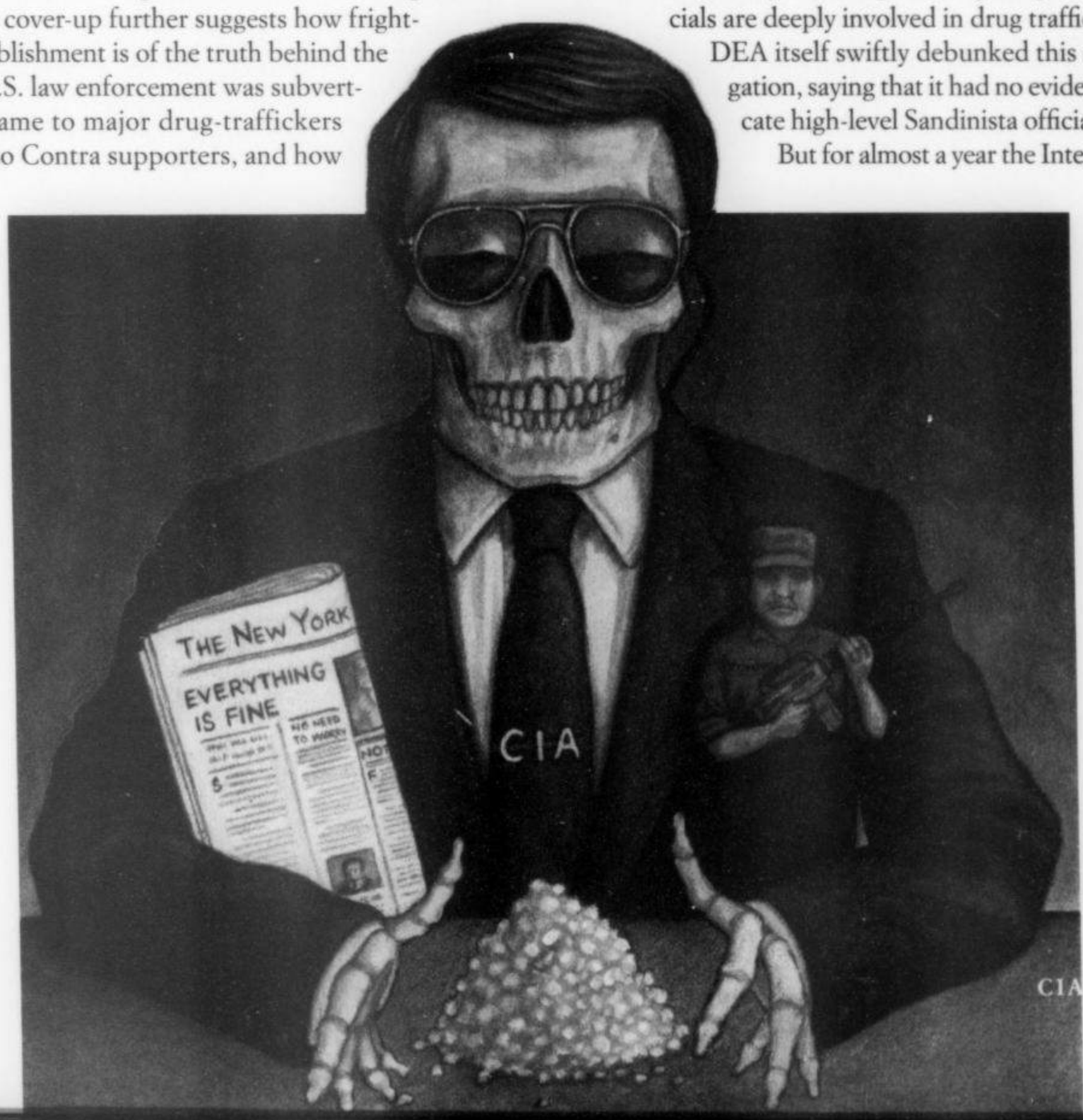
If you read the May 13 *New York Times,* it appeared that nine months of controversy over a major Contra-drug story, published last August by Gary Webb in the *San Jose Mercury News,* had finally been laid to rest. "Exposé on Crack Was Flawed, Paper Says," read the dismissive headline. A *Times* editorial the next day claimed that Webb's editor, Jerry Ceppos, had admitted in a column that Webb's articles "had been poorly written." Three weeks later, the *Times* shifted its focus from the story to Webb himself, claiming that his "bare-knuckles" style and "penchant for self-promotion" had split the *Mercury* newsroom.

For a confused public, that may have seemed like the last word. For those who had been following closely, Jerry Ceppos' column of apology, and the *Times'* one-sided oversimplification of it, were only further evidence of a dramatic cover-up, a whitewashing that does not stand up under scrutiny. The cover-up further suggests how frightened the establishment is of the truth behind the story: how U.S. law enforcement was subverted when it came to major drug-traffickers who were also Contra supporters, and how the CIA, by recurrently allying itself with the world's biggest traffickers, has contributed to the increased flow of drugs into this country.

This fear has been enhanced by the rise of the Internet as a public grapevine, a cottage-industry alternative press. Amid all the wild stories one can pick up out there in cyberspace, there is also abundant documentation of the big media's own role in a CIA-drug cover-up that has been going on for several decades.

In 1986, for example, *San Francisco Examiner* reporter Seth Rosenfeld broke the story that Contra leaders and supporters had been behind the "Frogman" cocaine shipment seized in San Francisco. The big media ignored this story until after Webb repeated it last August. Instead they reported Reagan's charge on television, made only a few hours after the *Examiner* story, "that top Nicaraguan government officials are deeply involved in drug trafficking." (The DEA itself swiftly debunked this suspect allegation, saying that it had no evidence to implicate high-level Sandinista officials.)

But for almost a year the Internet has kept



ILLUSTRATIONS BY RUSS ANDO

alive the series of stories by Gary Webb in the *San Jose Mercury News,* alleging that a California drug ring supplied the cocaine for crack in Los Angeles' black neighborhoods, and simultaneously channeled drug profits to the CIA-managed Contra Army in Central America.

The Webb Story and the Efforts to Rebut It

Webb focused on three figures. One was "Freeway Ricky" Ross, a dealer who introduced L.A. and other cities to crack. A second was Daniel Blandón, a Nicaraguan who not only supplied Ross (and others) with his cocaine, but developed the concept of creating a mass market for crack. The third was Norwin Meneses, the head of the "Frogman" connection importing cocaine for Blandón. Webb charged that both Meneses and Blandón met regularly with Contra leaders, and by supplying them with drug earnings gained protection from law enforcement. (Blandón, by turning in Ross, ended up on the DEA payroll; Ross, an African American, ended up with a life sentence. Meneses was eventually convicted for trafficking, but in Nicaragua, never in the United States.)

These allegations have been challenged vigorously by the "responsible" U.S. press: those papers, above all the *New York Times,* the *Los Angeles Times* and the *Washington Post,* which respond most swiftly to the needs and requests of their CIA sources.

For those who follow such matters, the special connection between these papers and the CIA is no secret. Watergate reporter Carl Bernstein once wrote in *Rolling Stone* that the CIA's "relationship with the [*New York*] *Times* was by far its most valuable among newspapers, according to CIA officials. From 1950 to 1966, about 10 CIA officials were provided *Times* cover…[as] part of a general *Times* policy… to provide assistance to the CIA whenever possible."

The situation at the *Washington Post* was hardly different. In 1988, the paper's owner, Katharine Graham, said in a speech at the CIA's headquarters: "There are some things the general public does not need to know and shouldn't. I believe democracy flourishes when the government can take legitimate steps to keep its secrets and when the press can decide whether to print what it knows."

Graham's words came amid six years of extraordinary efforts by the *Post* to first suppress, and then contain, the explosive Contra-drug story. I was myself a witness in a secret Congressional hearing, of which the *Post* falsely reported the Chair as saying "none of the witnesses gave any evidence that would show the Contra leadership was involved in drug smuggling." When the Chair, Congressman Rangel, wrote to complain that this was quite different from what he had said, the *Post* declined to print his letter. Thus it became possible for the words Rangel never uttered to become embalmed as "fact" in the official *Iran-Contra Report* from two other Congressional committees.

In 1989, a subcommittee chaired by Senator John Kerry published a report documenting that the U.S. Government had contracted with known drug traffickers to supply the Contras. This important finding was minimized in the dismissive news stories published by the *Post* and the *Times,* while *Newsweek,* owned by the *Post,* wrote off Kerry as a "randy conspiracy buff."

The *Post's* treatment of the Gary Webb story was in this tradition. The rebuttal of Webb was assigned first to Walter Pincus, a man who admits that he was once sent at CIA expense to two overseas conferences. (The *Washington Times* [July 31, 1996] once described Pincus as a journalist "who some in the agency refer to as 'the CIA's house reporter.'")

Pincus elaborately rebutted a number of allegations that Webb never made, such as "that the CIA helped start and played a major role in promoting the crack plague," or "that the CIA was behind Blandon" (Daniel Blandón, the Nicaraguan drug dealer in LA who gave drug profits to the Contras). (The issues raised by Webb had been of CIA's knowledge and protection of the traffickers, not initiation of the project.)

More deviously, Pincus wrote that "Although Nicaraguans took part in the drug trade of that era, most of the cocaine trade then can be attributed to Colombian and Mexican smugglers…the Nicaraguans accounted for only a small portion of the nation's cocaine trade….Blandon's own accounts and law enforcement estimates say Blandon only handled a total of about five tons of cocaine during a decade-long career. That…is a fraction of the nationwide trade of the 1980s, when more than 250 tons of the drug were distributed every year."

Both in detail and overall, these words were skillfully misleading. Although Blandón's various accounts are confused, it takes a very biased reading of them to come up with an estimate of "a total of five tons" over a decade. Blandón testified that he supplied just one of his many customers, the L.A. crack king Ricky Ross, with an average of 50 to 100 kilos a week. That alone works out to a total of 2.8 to 5.7 tons a year, not a decade.

The larger deception here is through the implicit assumption (which Webb did not make) that all of the Contra drug supporters were Nicaraguan. As we shall see, some of the biggest were



the top Colombian and Mexican smugglers whom Pincus tried to imply were irrelevant.

The debate still rages over the actual importance of Ricky Ross (and hence of Blandón) in the rise of the crack market. Jesse Katz of the *L.A. Times* weighed in with a front-page article saying that Ross was only one of many "interchangeable characters," who was dwarfed by other dealers: "How the crack epidemic reached that extreme, on some level, had nothing to do with Ross."

It is clear that something, or someone, had intervened to help produce this verbal performance. Two years earlier, on December 20, 1994, the same Jesse Katz had written a 2400 word article on "Freeway Ricky" Ross as "King of Crack... Key to the Drug's Spread in L.A." His opening words then were: "If there was an eye to the storm, if there was a criminal mastermind behind crack's decade-long reign, if there was one outlaw capitalist most responsible for flooding Los Angeles' streets with mass-marketed cocaine, his name was Freeway Rick." As for crack, "Ross did more than anyone else to democratize it, boosting volume, slashing prices and spreading disease on a scale never before conceived." Katz estimated that Ross's "coast-to-coast conglomerate was selling more than 500,000 rocks a day." Other journalists, now forgotten in today's furor over the Webb stories, have written how Ross personally created the crack scene in other cities such as Cincinnati.

The unseen force that induced Katz to make this remarkable recantation has now reached Jerry Ceppos, Webb's editor at the *San Jose Mercury News.* Last October, in response to the Pincus article in the *Post,* Ceppos wrote a letter which the *Post,* once again, did not publish. In it, after making some of the points in my preceding paragraphs, Ceppos went on to point out that: "While there is considerable circumstantial evidence of CIA involvement with the leaders of this drug ring, we never reached or reported any definitive conclusion on CIA involvement....We reported that the men selling cocaine in Los Angeles met with men on the CIA payroll. We reported that they received fund-raising orders from people on the CIA payroll. We reported that the money raised was sent to a CIA-run operation. But we did not go further—and took pains to say that clearly."

Ceppos concluded by repeating the words of a *Post* editorial on October 9, 1996: "For even just a couple of CIA-connected characters to have played even a trivial role in introducing Americans to crack would indicate an unconscionable breach by the CIA. It is essential to know whether the agency contributed to this result or failed to exercise diligence to stop it."

That was Ceppos in 1996. In May 1997, sounding like one of Stalin's victims in the show trials of the 1930s, Ceppos revised his tune even more dramatically than Jesse Katz. "We fell short of my standards," he wrote in the *San Jose Mercury.* Reversing himself, he now wrote that the original Webb story on crack and the Contras "strongly suggested high-level C.I.A. knowledge of that connection." "I feel that we did not have proof that top C.I.A. officials knew of the relationship," he added, converting his original defense of the article into an attack on it.

Interestingly, however, Ceppos did *not,* as the *Times* claimed, admit that the series was "poorly written." He still claimed that it was "important work" that "solidly documented disturbing information... worthy of further investigation;" and had been "right on many important points." The shortcomings he now admitted referred less to content than to the manner of presentation. "If we were to publish today," he said, the series "would state fewer conclusions as certainties."

Even some who endorse the importance of the series have agreed that the ambiguities in the evidence were greater than Webb admitted. Particularly controversial was his estimate that Meneses and Blandón supplied millions in drug profits to the Contras, a claim which remains debatable even though Webb supported it with Blandón's court testimony and sheriffs' affidavits. Ceppos now points to the figure of millions as no more than "our best estimates."

Webb strongly disagrees. Since the series appeared, both he and the British network ITV have interviewed Carlos Cabezas, a convicted member of Meneses' network, who now talks of having delivered Meneses' drug profits to a CIA agent in the Contra logistics network by the name of Ivan Gómez. (Others have confirmed Gómez' CIA status.) Cabezas told Webb that in 1982 these profits had amounted to between $4 and $5 million, confirming Blandón's own figures. Webb wrote up the story, but so far Ceppos has declined to publish or even edit it.

At this point we do not know what induced Jerry Ceppos to reverse himself. (He declined to be interviewed for TIKKUN, saying through a representative that he preferred to let his column "speak for itself.") It is, however, easy to identify one powerful and interested force in the propaganda battle of the last year: the CIA operatives responsible for the Contras.

One technique used by the *L.A. Times* to rebut the Webb story was simple and straightforward. Citing a "former CIA official" named Vince Cannistraro, the *L.A. Times* reported that "CIA officials insist they knew nothing about Meneses' and Blandón's tainted contributions to [Adolfo] Calero or other contra leaders." In another news story, Cannistraro was even more categorical: "I have personal knowledge that the CIA knew nothing about these guys [Blandón and Meneses]. These charges are completely illogical."

One might have thought that, in a lengthy three-day series, the *L.A. Times* could have mentioned that Cannistraro had actually been in charge of the CIA Contra operation in the early 1980s (the Meneses-Blandón period), before moving

on to supervise the covert program of CIA aid to heroin-trafficking guerrillas in Afghanistan. (TIKKUN readers may recall Cannistraro as the former CIA "expert" who, within hours of the Oklahoma City bombing, told a TV audience that the act was obviously the work of Arab terrorists.)

If a journal presents a suspect as a credible source, it is clear that it is looking for the opinion, "not guilty." (The *L.A. Times* did not cite Noriega, or for that matter O.J. Simpson, as sources to establish their innocence.) And it would not have taken much research for the *L.A. Times* to show that, on this point, Cannistraro may have been lying.

One need only go to the lengthy attacks on Webb by Tim Golden in the *New York Times.* Though in sum Golden was also hostile to Webb's allegations, his articles specified that the DEA had notified the CIA about Meneses' drug-trafficking activities. Golden referred also to "intelligence reports on Norwin Meneses," his Contra contacts, and his involvement in arms and drug smuggling. "'We knew about him, and he obviously knew some people who were Contras,' one official said." Golden does not identify the agency of this official, but it would have been unusual for intelligence of this nature not to have reached the CIA.

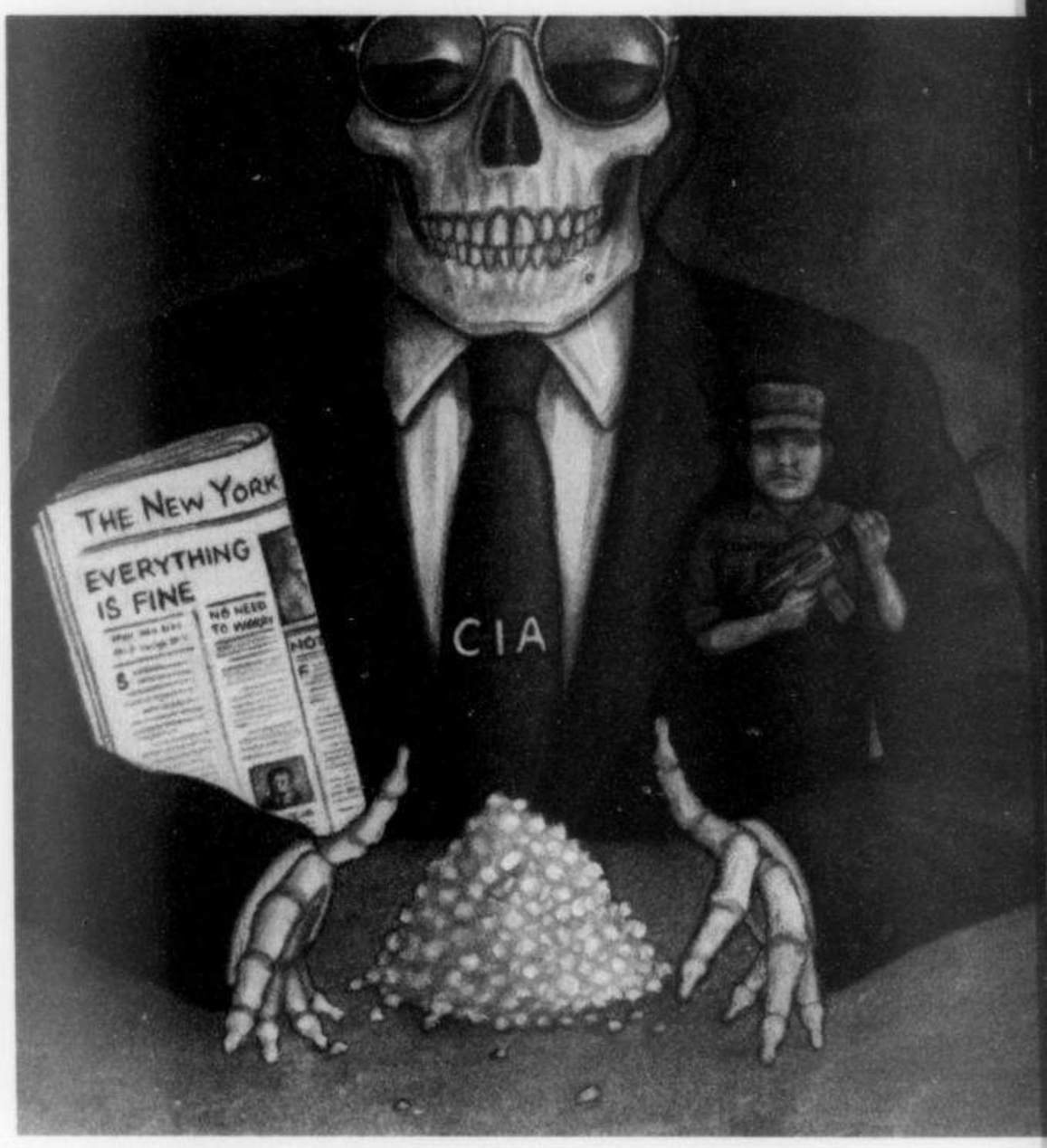
Overall, Golden's reports in the *New York Times* are as biased as those of Pincus and Katz. He wrote that "Reports of Mr. Meneses' links to the Nicaraguan rebels are not new," even though his own article belittling them was the first mention of them ever in the *New York Times.* He wrote of the 1986 account of Meneses by Seth Rosenfeld in the *San Francisco Examiner* that "the most significant contribution by Mr. Meneses that the newspaper could find was a $5,735 tab he was said to have helped pay at a 1984 dinner" in honor of Adolfo Calero. In fact the core of Rosenfeld's story concerned $36,020 of drug profits seized from Meneses' organization, which the U.S. Attorney, in an unusual corroboration of a Contra-drug connection, ordered returned as belonging to the Contras. (Recently the *New York Times* has conceded that, as Rosenfeld also reported, the organization also sent the Contras a truck and other supplies.)

Finally, with twisted logic, Golden derided Webb's claim that Blandón and Meneses "met with CIA agents" at the same time they were selling drugs. Golden conceded that Contra leader Adolfo Calero had met "on as many as four visits" with Meneses, and also that Contra military commander Enrique Bermúdez had met with Meneses and Blandón. Ignoring Calero, Golden then wrote that "Although Mr. Bermúdez, like other contra leaders, was often paid by the the C.I.A., he was not a C.I.A. agent." This is technically correct. However Calero, about whom Tim Golden is so eloquently silent, *was* a CIA agent, according to more candid histories of the Contras. (Webb also alleged that Meneses met with other CIA agents as well, such as the drug pilot Marcos Aguado.)

The Bigger Story: Subversion of Law Enforcement to Protect Traffickers

These quibbles should not obscure the most important points made by the Webb stories, which cannot be refuted. Two of these, admitted now for the first time by the "responsible" press, are that earlier press dismissals of the Contra-drug connection had been wrong, and that the CIA had knowledge of this connection. As Walter Pincus conceded in his attack on Webb, "Even CIA personnel testified to Congress they knew that these covert operations involved drug traffickers." (Journalist Robert Parry has pointed out that the use by one Contra faction of cocaine profits to buy a helicopter was noted in a 1985 CIA National Intelligence Estimate.)

An equally important point, ignored in all the attacks on Webb, is that Meneses and Blandón, while they were supporting the Contras, were immune from government prosecution. Jack Blum, former counsel to the Kerry Subcommittee investigating the matter, has focused on this point: "If the question is 'Did the CIA sell crack...?' the answer is a categorical no. If you ask whether the United States government ignored the drug problem and subverted law enforcement to prevent embarrassment and reward our allies in the Contra war, the answer is yes." Referring to his own experience, he recalled how the Justice Department "fought giving us access to essential records and to witnesses in government custody."



Even the *Washington Post's* own ombudsman was able to see the issue avoided by Walter Pincus. In an assessment published by the *Post,* she asked: "Did the U.S. Government play any role in supporting or condoning drug smuggling into the United States?" And she concluded with a rebuke that is hard to disagree with: "A principal responsibility of the press is to protect the people from government excesses. The *Post* (among others) showed more energy for protecting the CIA from someone else's journalistic excesses."

And in thus protecting the CIA over the years, one might add, the press helped strengthen the immunity enjoyed by the traffickers themselves. Time after time, it proved impossible for government prosecutors to go after important traffickers, protected by the CIA, of whom the public knew nothing at all.

One can think of many reasons why the "responsible" press should have so risked their credibility in their zeal to rebut Gary Webb. One is to protect their own past record of complicity in covering up the bigger Contra-drug story. Another is a real establishment concern at the anger of black communities and leaders, when they learned that drugs reaching their communities were imported by traffickers who enjoyed protection against arrest. Both the *New York Times* and the *Post* tried to discount this as black paranoia, or what the *Post* called "an inclination, born of bitter history… to accept as fact unsubstantiated reports or rumors about conspiracies targeting blacks."

But in truth the facts should make any citizen angry, angry not only at the Contras and the CIA, but at the "responsible" press for their complicity in covering up an intolerable situation. For Gary Webb, however fallibly, has focused the nation's attention on a CIA-Contra-drug connection that is bigger, by far, than he and the *Mercury* ever implied.

DEA reports from the 1980s give us a glimpse of this bigger story: those drug traffickers supporting the Contras to gain CIA protection included not just Norwin Meneses and Daniel Blandón but some of the DEA's top targets at the time.

The Real Contra-Drug Connection

In 1982 the DEA prepared a top-level secret intelligence memo, listing twenty "Major Cocaine Violators" in Colombia and the United States. The memo focused attention on a single four-man consortium which, the DEA believed, accounted for a major share (perhaps a third, perhaps more than half) of all the cocaine moving between the two countries.

By 1985 the DEA had come to believe that the most important smuggler of the four was a Honduran by the name of Juan Ramón Matta Ballesteros, the link between the Colombians and the dominant Guadalajara drug cartel in Mexico. In that year *Newsweek* published official estimates that Matta alone was responsible for one-third of the cocaine reaching the U.S.

By this time the DEA had another reason to want Matta: it believed that Matta, along with other Guadalajara cartel members, was responsible for the murder in Mexico of its own agent, Enrique Camarena. After 1986, it also knew exactly where Matta was, living comfortably in Honduras, a country almost completely dominated by the United States.

Yet until 1988 Matta remained untouchable. Indeed, as the Kerry Committee documented, when the DEA Office in Honduras began to identify Matta as its principal target, the response of the U.S. Government was to close down that office. Then, in April 1988, Matta was picked up while jogging and quickly flown (some said "kidnapped") to the United States.

There was no mystery as to what had changed. One month earlier, on March 7, the *Christian Science Monitor* had noted that the U.S. faced a dilemma, whether to go after Matta (who had many friends in the Honduran military) or to placate Honduran displeasure at the on-going Contra presence in that country. And in that same month U.S. support for the Contra war ended, Congress voted (twice) to suspend military aid, North was indicted, and a truce was declared in Nicaragua.

The two questions, Matta and the Contras, were indeed closely related. Matta was not only one of the world's leading cocaine traffickers, he was also one of the leading Contra supporters. His airline, SETCO, was used by the CIA and State Department to ship aid to the Contra camps, at the same time that it was listed in Customs and DEA computers for suspected drug-smuggling.

Matta was not alone in buying himself immunity by the simple device of supporting the Contras. So did his Guadalajara associate, Angel Félix Gallardo, who moved to the top of the DEA's Wanted list after Matta's arrest. Félix, who was wanted both for Class I trafficking and for Camarena's murder, escaped arrest for another year, until after the election of a new Mexican President. Witnesses and documents in Félix's trial alleged that the Guadalajara cartel had supplied the Contras with arms, cash, and even a training camp on a drug ranch near Veracruz.

The Honduran military which protected Matta also included some who supported the Contras, and who became involved in drug-trafficking. Two of their drug shipments in late 1987 totaled over 6.7 tons, the largest drug shipments seized up to that time. One Contra-supporting general, José Bueso Rosa, plotted to use cocaine proceeds to finance the assassination of the Honduran President. Although the State Department called this the most significant case of narco-terrorism to date, Bueso Rosa was given lenient treatment because of his Contra support. Oliver North then intervened energetically to reduce his sentence even further.

CIA aid for the Contras in Costa Rica was channeled chiefly through the tightly-controlled Ilopango Air Base in

El Salvador, a base where the real power was exercised by a U.S. colonel responsible for Contra support. The local DEA agent at the time, Celerino Castillo, has since charged that two hangars there under CIA and Oliver North's control doubled as depots for major cocaine shipments. Castillo claims that his documented reports on Ilopango to DEA in Washington were never acted on. Certainly a number of known drug traffickers flew regularly in and out of Ilopango; a drug plane given over to the Contras and CIA was stationed there, and Ilopango allegedly served as a base for American drug networks, such as the notorious Company, which served the entire United States.

Manuel Noriega was at one time also a Contra supporter, and his initial drug indictment was for shipments with pilots who were at the same time flying aid for Contra camps in Costa Rica. Some of these were Cuban American drug traffickers from Miami, whose airline, listed in DEA computers, also received State Department contracts for flying Contra support. Significantly, the U.S. Government only turned against Noriega in 1987, after he in turn had shifted his attention from the Contras to the incipient Contadora peace process in Central America, named after a Panama island under Noriega's control.

Finally, to quote from a 1991 *Washington Post* editorial, "What is one to make of the riveting assertion, made by a convicted Colombian drug kingpin at Manuel Noriega's Florida drug trial, that the Medellín cartel gave $10 million to the Nicaraguan contras? Carlos Lehder is a key prosecution witness; the U.S. government cannot lightly assail his credibility." Another cartel figure, Ramón Milián Rodríguez, also testified under oath that the Medellín cartel had given millions to the Contras.

The overall picture is clear, and devastating. It would appear that, from Colombia through Mexico, all of the major known traffickers at this time doubled as Contra supporters. Indeed, because this drug milieu was still relatively integrated, one could say that the basic Central American drug network simply became a major part of the Contra support network.

The Contra-Drug Story and the Hopes for U.S. Democracy

One can agree with Ceppos' admission that the Gary Webb articles are not immune to criticism. Nevertheless, as Peter Kornbluh pointed out in the *Columbia Journalism Review,* the *Mercury News* managed to "revisit a significant story that had been inexplicably abandoned by the mainstream press, report a new dimension to it, and thus put it back on the national agenda where it belongs." He added that the mainstream press "faces a challenge in the contra-cocaine matter not unlike the government's: restoring its credibility in the face of public distrust over its perceived role in the handling of these events."

The problem of the "credibility gap" has been an increasing concern of serious politicians since the Kennedy assassination and the Vietnam War. Much of the concern about the Webb series has focused less on the much-battered image of the CIA than on the increasing alienation of black civic leaders. Many of these have for some time been convinced that government covert operations have continued since the days of Hoover's COINTELPRO to target ethnic neighborhoods.

Some of the media rebukes to Webb and the *Mercury* have implied that the story would have died, had it not been for what the *Post* dismissed as black paranoia. Others have pointed to the role of the *San Jose Mercury's* website, which because of the story has been "hit" by up to one million viewers a day. More than one critic has contrasted the rationality of the traditional media with the ability of Web surfers to believe anything: even that the CIA has been involved with drug traffickers.

The efforts of the mainstream media to defend the credibility of the CIA may well be successful in the short run. The Webb story, which has now outlasted any previous CIA drug story, is still one which nearly all members of Congress are reluctant to embrace too closely.

In the long run, the press overkill applied to the Webb story may do more to increase alienation than to reduce it. The chief victim may turn out to be the public's faith, revived by Watergate, frustrated by Iran-Contra, in the ability of the mainstream media to criticize our aging institutions at all.

In psychological warfare, a form of warfare which the CIA takes pride in practicing, the aim is not to persuade one's opponents. (That is traditional politics.) The aim is to neutralize them. TV images of a CIA director being shouted down in South Los Angeles do more to sustain than threaten the CIA in an increasingly polarized but white-dominated society. Those who wish to delegitimize the concerns of the Webb story find it convenient to list it among the exotica of the Internet—along with tales of space aliens, fluoridation horrors and conspiracies to spread the AIDS virus.

What we see threatened here is politics itself. If there ever was an issue worthy of serious political consideration, it is the larger story of tolerated drug-trafficking which Gary Webb began to expose. But Congress is clearly scared of this issue, and scared of the CIA. One can hardly blame them, as long as the responsible media continue to treat the Contra-drug story as a "conspiracy theory" born out of ghetto paranoia.

The result is a national dementia. We continue to marginalize rational discussion of our collective drug crisis, even as drugs, licit and illicit, play a larger and larger role in dividing the different levels of our more and more stratified society. ✡

Peter Dale Scott is the author and co-author of various books on drug trafficking, most recently Cocaine Politics *and* Deep Politics and the Death of J.F.K. *from Univ. of Ca. Press, Berkeley.*

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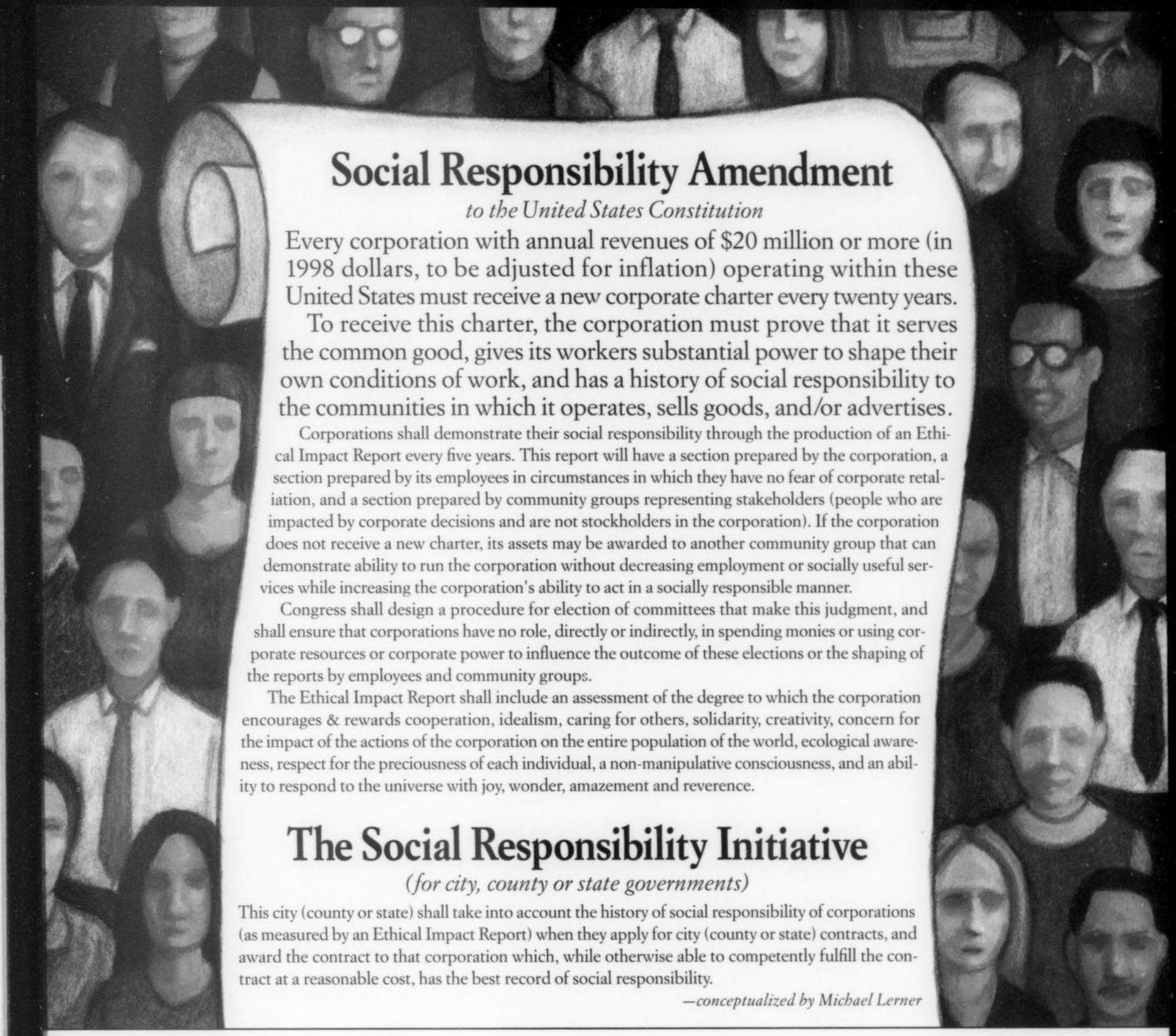
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Social Responsibility Amendment

to the United States Constitution

Every corporation with annual revenues of $20 million or more (in 1998 dollars, to be adjusted for inflation) operating within these United States must receive a new corporate charter every twenty years.

To receive this charter, the corporation must prove that it serves the common good, gives its workers substantial power to shape their own conditions of work, and has a history of social responsibility to the communities in which it operates, sells goods, and/or advertises.

Corporations shall demonstrate their social responsibility through the production of an Ethical Impact Report every five years. This report will have a section prepared by the corporation, a section prepared by its employees in circumstances in which they have no fear of corporate retaliation, and a section prepared by community groups representing stakeholders (people who are impacted by corporate decisions and are not stockholders in the corporation). If the corporation does not receive a new charter, its assets may be awarded to another community group that can demonstrate ability to run the corporation without decreasing employment or socially useful services while increasing the corporation's ability to act in a socially responsible manner.

Congress shall design a procedure for election of committees that make this judgment, and shall ensure that corporations have no role, directly or indirectly, in spending monies or using corporate resources or corporate power to influence the outcome of these elections or the shaping of the reports by employees and community groups.

The Ethical Impact Report shall include an assessment of the degree to which the corporation encourages & rewards cooperation, idealism, caring for others, solidarity, creativity, concern for the impact of the actions of the corporation on the entire population of the world, ecological awareness, respect for the preciousness of each individual, a non-manipulative consciousness, and an ability to respond to the universe with joy, wonder, amazement and reverence.

The Social Responsibility Initiative

(for city, county or state governments)

This city (county or state) shall take into account the history of social responsibility of corporations (as measured by an Ethical Impact Report) when they apply for city (county or state) contracts, and award the contract to that corporation which, while otherwise able to competently fulfill the contract at a reasonable cost, has the best record of social responsibility.

—conceptualized by Michael Lerner

Michael Lerner

Don't quibble over the details! There will be plenty of time for us to refine the wording of the SRA (Social Responsibility Amendment) and SRI (Social Responsibility Initiative) in the coming years. But get the concept—corporations are created by us, they receive all kinds of special benefits by virtue of the state's conception of them as "individuals," and we have every right to set the conditions under which they should operate, or whether they should operate at all.

Every day most of us go to workplaces in which the "common sense" assumption imposed on us by those who decide to hire, promote or fire us is that our goal is to maximize the wealth, power or ego-needs of some corporate boss or institution, or maximize our own "success." No matter how spiritually or ethically sensitive each of us might be, there is no denying the subversive and debilitating impact of being immersed in a world that insists that we be "realistic" by orienting ourselves toward maximizing wealth and power.

Yet there is an equally important truth: most people don't really like living in a world that so forcefully detaches them from their own highest values and beliefs. Most people know that it isn't healthy and doesn't feel right to live in a world in

ILLUSTRATION BY RUSS ANDO

which loving and caring and solidarity are so marginalized, and in which the ethical and spiritual truths that they affirm in their personal lives, families, and religious institutions are dismissed as "idealistic," "utopian," "unrealistic," or simply "inappropriate for our economic life." Yet when people have this feeling that something is wrong, they simultaneously feel that they are alone. They imagine that no one but them (or a small number of synagogues, churches, mosques, ashrams, or political groups) would ever care about the spiritual and ethical vacuum that permeates daily life.

SRA: The Social Responsibility Amendment

One reason we need a powerful politics of meaning movement is to give people the sense of confidence that if they want to live by some other values besides those rewarded in the marketplace—that is, if they want to live a spiritually, ethically and ecologically sensitive life—they are not alone, because this desire is very widely shared.

The women's movement faced a similar task when it came forward with what, from the standpoint of the late 1960s and early 1970s, seemed an equally utopian goal: to challenge patriarchy. The women's movement first sought to do this but it soon found the need to work on another level as well: to develop specific legislative programs that would help embody feminist consciousness in a way that would make its message more accessible to a large number of people. Hence, the Equal Rights Amendment. The ERA never passed, but it played an important role in legitimating parts of the feminist agenda, and in popularizing its discourse.

The Social Responsibility Amendment to the Federal Constitution would have the same impact. Though unlikely to pass, it provides a focus for organizing and a clarity of the bottom line. I believe that the SRA, in the form proposed here or in a form that is very similar in fundamental concept, will become as central to American political discourse by the middle of the 21st century as the ERA was in the 1970s and early 1980s, with similarly salutary impact. In the next few years, as the idea becomes better known, it will immediately have a positive result: a switch in the political dialogue from "which of the two parties can best make corporate interest feel comfortable" to a serious debate about what kind of social responsibility is appropriate.

Needless to say, corporations and their allies in the media will first ignore, then ridicule, then denounce these ideas—and will use their considerable economic power to marginalize those who identify with this approach. Nevertheless, within a decade these ideas will be seen as not only legitimate, but as the vanguard of a whole new social movement.

Building support for the SRA requires generating a public debate about the social responsibility of corporations. Here is where to start: get your church, synagogue, labor union, professional organization, civic group, city council, and people running for office in your locality to endorse the SRA. The process of getting those endorsements will generate the kind of public discourse that the SRA is designed to elicit.

You don't have to wait. Take this section of Tikkun, make copies of it, and start distributing it in your community, and ask community groups to endorse. Remember that the process itself is important, even if you can't get a majority vote at this point within your local community institution.

SRI: The Social Responsibility Initiative

The SRI is a more immediate step.

Unlike the SRA, which puts a requirement on all corporations of a certain size, the SRI is much more modest. It has no coercive aspect, because corporations that do business with city, county or state governments do that business voluntarily. So if the SRI were to pass, no corporation would be required to do business with the government entity that had passed it, so they could not reasonably claim to have been forced into policies that they oppose. The SRI hooks into an already existing governmental process—the awarding of competitive contracts—and puts forward a new dimension that must be assessed when awarding the contract: namely, the history of social responsibility of the firms competing for our taxpayers' money. We have an absolute right to set conditions for how our money should be spent, and to tell anyone who wants to get their snout in the public trough that they are going to have to fulfill certain conditions (namely, the filing of the ethical impact report) and will be judged, in part, by how socially responsible their corporation has been. Of course, this is not the only criterion for a contract with the city, county or state. It is not meant to replace the other considerations that go into making such a decision (such as competence and cost of the service). But it is meant to be decisive when more than one corporation has shown evidence that they can meet the requirements of the contract with regard to competency and costs.

In some cities, counties or states, it is possible to draw up the SRI and put it on the ballot by citizen's initiative. Call the secretary of state or city or county clerk and ask them for information on the procedure. In other areas, you are going to have to ask a locally elected official to introduce it, or you are going to have to get a coalition of forces together to back it. Remember if you do that, that the key is to ensure that what you are fighting for it's not just a particular piece of social policy but for a politics of meaning that challenges the bottom line of American society—so don't become so focused on getting a coalition together that you compromise on the basic thrust of the message behind the initiative.

Within the next five years several communities will pass an SRI, and that will give credibility to the SRA. Of course, many corporate interests understand this potential progression, and so they are likely to spend lots of money trying to



defeat any efforts to pass an SRI for fear that once the whole notion of "ethical impact reports" is legitimated there will be no stopping the move for corporate social responsibility.

Of course, corporate social responsibility is only one of the dimensions of social responsibility. We are all too aware of the way that progressives in the past have failed to take personal responsibility for their own lives and the impact of their actions on others. The politics of meaning movement is as concerned about transformations in our own personal lives as in any attempt to encourage the growth of ethical and spiritual sensibility in the larger society. In the Politics of Meaning, I suggest some steps to insure that this focus on our own individual spiritual, psychological and ethical development doesn't get lost in the process of building larger social change, as it so often has in the past.

The Ethical Impact Report

This is the heart of the enterprise. The Ethical Impact Report gives teeth to the process of assessing corporate social responsibility.

In my view, the Ethical Impact Report must have three different sections: one filled out by the corporation as a form of self-study (and might, in current conditions represent their public relations rather than self-disclosing attitudes). A second section would be filled in by all employees, meeting to do so one day a year in a gathering with no management personnel in attendance and with adequate protections for confidentiality. A third section would be filled in by relevant community groups, what some have called the corporation's stakeholders (which goes far beyond their stockholders who are represented by the corporate management).

In the essay below, Thad Williamson has presented some of his thinking about what the elements of an Ethical Impact Report should be. I believe that the debate about what can be in and what can't be is itself an important process that will build a deeper readiness to challenge corporate selfishness. People will discuss how to do this report in a way that does not turn into a cold and spiritually empty document that focuses solely on aspects of reality that can be "objectively measured." We'll explore how to use this report in a way that validates our understanding of the way that corporate life undermines our spiritual needs and makes it difficult for us to treat each other as created in the image of God—and makes it difficult for us to treat the larger world as deserving of wonder and celebration rather than seeing it just as some material to be used.

I imagine that in the next ten years, as this idea begins to get greater public visibility, people in the Politics of Meaning movement will be sponsoring local seminars, fora, salons, and discussions in unions and synagogues and churches, to involve people in the process of defining the criteria for the Ethical Impact Report. By focusing public attention on what the dimensions of corporate responsibility ought to be, we move far away from the current assumption that it is impossible to even imagine putting significant constraints on corporate power.

The Danger

One possible problem with the SRA-SRI strategy is that it enters into a public discourse that rarely takes the spiritual dimension of life seriously. The possibility exists that the idea will be grabbed by liberals and lefties who don't share a politics of meaning, but who simply want to use this concept as another way to spit in the face of the corporate elite. I would insist, for example, that an Ethical Impact Report would ask about the degree to which a given corporation encourages people to recognize each other as miracles who deserve love and respect, rather than only as objects to be manipulated and controlled; or whether corporate advertising encouraged people to see the world merely as something to be used for our own ego purposes; or if it gave equal attention to validating a spiritual orientation that encouraged us to respond to the world with awe and wonder.

Yet, I could easily imagine my liberal and leftie friends discussing these concerns and insisting on a narrower, more technocratic Ethical Impact Report that merely assessed worker wages and rights.This whole notion of "social responsibility" could be taken in a very narrow way, dismissing all the spiritual elements as merely "psychobabble." Many groups may join a coalition on social responsibility precisely because they feel "safe" with the narrower, technocratic interpretation of this language, insisting on a narrowly economistic or rights-oriented definition of social responsibility.

On the other hand, if we in the Politics of Meaning movement become the major proponents in this campaign, we will at least be in a position to put forward our understanding of social responsibility as encompassing issues like the degree to which the corporation makes it possible or impossible for people to respond to the world with awe and wonder.

After all it's only in situations where you might lose that there is ever something serious to win—and what we want to win at this point is the creation of a spiritually-sensitive, transformative, social movement.

Another danger: that in focussing on "winning" we start to ignore another central task of a politics of meaning—to encourage us to develop our own inner life, our own spiritual development, and our own capacity to act in loving and caring ways toward others. We must work both on the inner and on the socially transformative level at the same time.

You are invited to share with us your own stories of what happens when you propose the SRA or SRI in your community, church or synagogue, or workplace. Join us in testifying to the possibility of transformation. And come to our national conference in 1998 where we will further refine these ideas.

The Content of Ethical Impact Reports:

A Two-Tiered Proposal

Thad Williamson

What measuring sticks would a healthy, meaning-oriented society use to gauge the performance of its mid-sized and larger-scaled economic entities? Just what information should an "Ethical Impact Report" for corporations contain? Before offering my own thoughts as to specifics on this important question, some general observations about the idea are in order:

First, although the TIKKUN-sponsored Social Responsibility Amendment rightly takes aim at developing criteria for evaluating current corporate practices, it ought to be recognized at the outset that the idea of an "Ethical Impact Report" need not be limited to corporations only: We should also seek to apply these criteria to government entities, as well as non-traditional corporations, such as majority worker-owned firms. An ethical impact report might help spur not only better behavior within some existing corporations, but also provide a means to critically evaluate—and improve—the praxis of the most widely discussed alternatives to the private corporation.

Second, it is clear that a meaningful ethical impact report must simultaneously avoid either *(a)* replicating the assumptions of standard business practice about what is necessary for corporations to do in order to compete in a market or *(b)* proposing wildly unrealistic standards of ethical conduct. Even if everyone in society today agreed it was important to start moving towards a meaning-oriented economy, important vestiges of present practice—such as hierarchy, excessive work stress, competing for prestigious positions—would remain for some time to come. An ethical impact report should aim to set a higher standard than present practice, while also recognizing that an evolutionary process for change will be needed—and that in many circumstances the market itself does place severe limitations on what corporations can do in the area of social responsibility.

Ethical impact reports might help move corporations to the best possible conduct given competitive pressures, but it still will be necessary to engage in a larger critique of those market pressures if the next stage of evolution towards a meaning-oriented economy is to be reached. Ethical impact reports are not the end-all of a long-term strategic vision: Failing to recognize this at the outset could lead to either creating criteria which are simply too "far out" for any present economic entity to relate to; or, alternatively, disillusionment when establishing ethical impact reports results in only partial improvement in corporate behavior.

Third, it should be recognized straightaway that while some corporations may respond favorably to ethical impact reports, especially if backed by the force of law as the Social Responsibility Amendment proposes, others will vociferously resist the reports and make vigorous use of the legal system to fight any punitive measures (such as losing a corporate charter) imposed by the state as a result of what an ethical impact report finds. More insidiously, still other corporations will respond to such reports by making cosmetic changes, or even manipulating their own data, so as to meet the minimum requirements for a decent "grade."

Fourth, it must also be recognized that while legally enforceable requirements regarding corporate behavior will necessarily tend towards quantitative assessments of a firm's impact, the most important criteria from a politics of meaning point of view will often be qualitative assessments—which will be necessarily subjective in some measure. Obtaining the relevant facts and figures about various aspects of corporate policies, both internal and external, is a clearly achievable task, and indeed the New York-based Council on Economic Priorities (CEP) does a fine job of doing just this in compiling its annual assessments for the ongoing *Shop For A Better World* series. But an ethical impact report that aimed to apply PoM-oriented criteria would need to delve deeper, beyond what quantitative data alone can show, in order to evaluate a firm's overall positive or negative impact.

Finally, it is necessary to specify just whom or what a firm is said to be "impacting." In my view, the ethical impact of corporations—including the intrinsic impact of the products it produces—must be approached from at least five distinct angles: Its impact on its own workers, on the immediate geographic community or communities in which it operates, on consumers of its products, on the environment, and on society as a whole. All five angles are important, and we risk missing something crucial by neglecting any of these points. For instance, Anheuser-Busch merits a top rating as a corporate citizen in the most recent CEP evaluation, but the question of whether beer consumption and related advertisements have a positive or negative impact on society as a whole is never raised in the CEP methodology.

The Content of Ethical Impact Reports: Qualitative and Quantitative

Given these initial reflections, my proposed yardsticks for measuring how well economic entities promote human meaning and well-being fall into two categories: "Qualitative criteria", and empirically measurable "quantitative" standards to which firms should be held strictly accountable.

As noted above, it is assumed that the measurement of this qualitative criteria will be necessarily subjective, or intersubjective; it hence will be helpful to lay out the methodology I have in mind for making qualitative assessments:

Managers, rank-and-file workers, consumer representatives, local community representatives, and finally, an outside, wholly independent team of "auditors" should each write separate "sub-reports" regarding a company's ethical impact. Each of these sub-reports would address "qualitative criteria" pertaining to a firm's behavior such as those listed just below. The idea here is that the best overall insight into what is going on can be unearthed by looking at the firm from multiple angles of vision—rather than trying to come up with a single statement that will inevitably be strongly influenced in its findings by the wishes of top management. By preventing management from exercising control over all of the report's contents, a move towards compiling sub-reports from different perspectives would ensure that ethical impact reports become more than simply corporate publicity or feel-good statements.

What follows immediately below, then, is a check-list of the qualitative criteria which each stakeholding group should address in compiling their respective sub-reports.

Qualitative Measures of a Firm's Ethical Impact:

Honesty/Integrity

How well does the firm promote the values of truth-telling and personal integrity in its day-to-day operations? Are employees encouraged, directly or indirectly, to deceive or conceal the truth from consumers, clients, co-workers, government regulators, etc.? The large number of corporations that now regularly break the law is a testament to the fact that some employees are asked to violate standards of integrity and honesty as a matter of course in everyday economic life. Such violation is anathema to a meaning-centered economic life, whether the breach comes in pursuit of an employee's individual aspirations or the larger objectives of the firm. An ethical impact report then, should ask whether a culture of honesty is present in a given firm.

Participation/Accountability Running in Both Directions

How much say do employees have in shaping what happens at work? Is everyone's brain and intellectual capacity, if not valued equally, at least acknowledged and drawn upon in working life? Are there mechanisms for promoting accountability not only of workers to managers, but also for making the decisions of those at the top of the hierarchy accountable to lower-level employees—or does a middle manager's word carry the day, no matter how wrong-headed, off-base or seemingly arbitrary? Do executives and strategic planners face consequences for bad decisions? Certainly it is not to be expected that total worker control—while still a worthy objective that ought to be pursued in alternative forms of economic organization—is likely to be found within the everyday operations of present-day corporations; but those firms which do allow for genuine participation and send the message that everyone's input is valued and worth hearing ought to receive appropriate credit in the ethical impact report.

The Impact of Work on Health, Stress, and Self-Worth

Does the experience of work contribute to each employee's sense of self-worth, growth, and personal development? Do the employees care about the work? Are there unhealthy levels of stress generated by the job? Does the work of the corporation damage the physical or mental health of its employees? Are workers forced or encouraged to adopt an unhealthy lifestyle—insufficient sleep, poor eating habits, caffeine addiction—to maximize productivity at work, or to stay "competitive" with fellow workers? An ethical impact report should critically probe each of these questions.

Critical questioning, however, must be accompanied by some view as to just what a healthy workplace looks like. Sociologist Robert Karasek suggests in his important book *Healthy Work* that the two prime characteristics of a healthy work experience are *(1)* work that is intrinsically interesting and that engages the mind in some matter (as with a skilled craftsman); and *(2)* autonomy given to the employee(s) in the carrying out of that work. Obviously it is not possible that all jobs in the foreseeable future could fulfill both or even one of Karasek's conditions—but his research does suggest a useful normative standard for the redesign of work experience to promote a meaning-oriented economic life.

A related issue is the question of how much time work takes up. Recent books by Juliet Schor and Arlie Hochschild have vividly portrayed the problem of work life gradually consuming more and more time in many Americans' lives at the expense of family and civic life. One useful suggestion for addressing this problem comes from none other than Scott Adams, author of the popular "Dilbert" comic strip, in his book *The Dilbert Principle.* Adams suggests a return to an "Out at Five" standard of the workday for most offices, not only to promote the mental health of employees and their families but also to put an end to insidious forms of competition between employees within a firm to see who can be

seen to work the hardest or rise the quickest. A return to the standard of the 40-hour week would necessarily put an end to wasteful, nonproductive activities which sap energy and morale in current white-collar workplaces. Again, while the 9-to-5 principle is clearly not appropriate for every office and should not be used to thwart the growing trend towards giving employees flexible schedule options, the "Out at Five" principle is not a bad normative standard to have in mind when assessing the ethical impact of work schedules within present-day corporations.

Cooperation vs. Backstabbing

How much is cooperation between workers valued? Are employees who "backstab" or try to undercut other employees to advance themselves penalized or rewarded for such behavior? How much unproductive, derogatory comment about fellow employees goes on behind closed doors? Is capacity to cooperate and work well with others a criteria for promotion? Is taking personal responsibility for failures acceptable (or even honored)? Is caring behavior encouraged and honored?

Respect For Others

Are employees expected to show respect for *all* co-workers? Do managers and executives demonstrate respect for employees in making decisions? Are employees regularly or even occasionally humiliated by higher-level figures?

Sense of Purpose in Work

How well does the work fulfill deep human yearnings to do work that is socially meaningful, which makes a contribution to society? Does the work inspire passion and commitment in employees? To be sure, many corporations will fail badly on these counts today, but the experience is obviously not unknown even in present economic practice. Indeed, one of the chief possible benefits of worker-owned and worker-controlled firms is that previously mundane or alienated work might gain a new sense of purpose and meaning when the workers feel they are doing it for themselves; yet the air of purpose and excitement is also on occasion present within more traditional corporate arrangements, such as, notably, the flourishing computer software industry today. Ethical impact reports, as further emphasized below, should not blink in noting that some work really is not and cannot be made intrinsically meaningful. But it is also surely the case that much work today that is experienced as alienating and unpleasant could be done with a different sense of meaning and purpose given different work arrangements and policies.

Effect of Advertising Policies

What sorts of images are utilized by firms in promoting products? What is the image of "the good life" promoted by such advertising? Are appeals to consumers' guilt, insecurity about personal appearance or desires to be wealthy at the heart of advertising appeals? Is deception or manipulation involved in any way? How do the advertisements portray women? How do such advertisements impact children exposed to them?

Impact Of the Firm on Politics and Policies

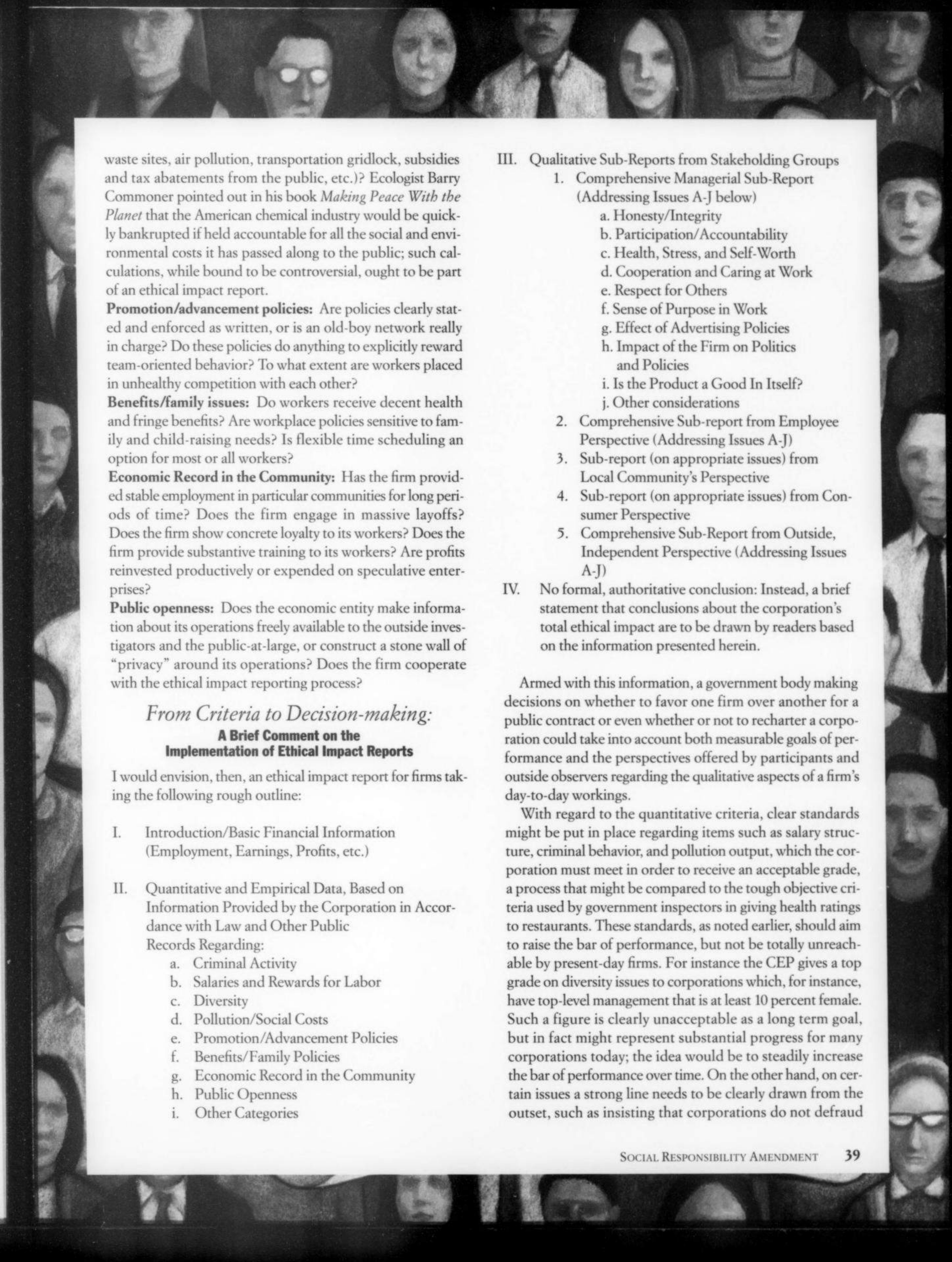
How does the corporation participate in political life? Does it give money to particular candidates or parties, and if so, whom? Does it seek subsidies for itself from local, state or national governments, or threaten to move operations if its wishes are not adhered to? What lobbying activities does the firm (or its industry representatives) engage in? Does the firm adapt a see-no-evil approach to operations in repressive countries abroad?

Is the Product a Good In Itself?

In some ways, this is the most radical—and important—question an ethical impact report might ask: Taking a step back and looking at the activities of the firm as a whole. Is it a good thing that this production process, this particular economic activity, is taking place? In many cases, such as housing construction or educational entities, the answer is clearly yes; in other cases, such as chemical or automobile production, the answer is a more tentative "yes, but, not when excessive in scope or to the exclusion of more-beneficial substitutes"; in a few cases (such as cigarettes, the massive bureaucratic duplication characteristic of private insurance firms, or most weapons production), the answer is simply "no." As noted earlier, an ethical impact report which fails to ask this question risks missing a large chunk of the real impact of a given corporate entity or production process; on the other hand, asking the question forthrightly can clarify the ethical consequences of particular economic activities and help create a badly needed public conversation as to just what kinds of economic activity are desirable in a healthy, human-sustaining society.

Quantitative and Empirical Measures to Be Included in an EthIR

Crime: Does the corporation break the law, either at home or abroad? Have lawsuits been raised against the firm?
Labor/rewards for work: How well are workers paid? Does the entity's profit rate depend on super-exploited Third World workers? What is the salary ratio between top management and low-level pay? Can all workers afford a decent living? What stance has management taken regarding unionization?
Diversity: What is the firm's affirmative action record? Are racism and other forms of discrimination aggressively opposed in the workplace? Are persons paid equally for work of comparable worth? Is a glass ceiling in place?
Pollution output/social costs: What social and environmental costs do the operations of the firm create (i.e., hazardous



waste sites, air pollution, transportation gridlock, subsidies and tax abatements from the public, etc.)? Ecologist Barry Commoner pointed out in his book *Making Peace With the Planet* that the American chemical industry would be quickly bankrupted if held accountable for all the social and environmental costs it has passed along to the public; such calculations, while bound to be controversial, ought to be part of an ethical impact report.

Promotion/advancement policies: Are policies clearly stated and enforced as written, or is an old-boy network really in charge? Do these policies do anything to explicitly reward team-oriented behavior? To what extent are workers placed in unhealthy competition with each other?

Benefits/family issues: Do workers receive decent health and fringe benefits? Are workplace policies sensitive to family and child-raising needs? Is flexible time scheduling an option for most or all workers?

Economic Record in the Community: Has the firm provided stable employment in particular communities for long periods of time? Does the firm engage in massive layoffs? Does the firm show concrete loyalty to its workers? Does the firm provide substantive training to its workers? Are profits reinvested productively or expended on speculative enterprises?

Public openness: Does the economic entity make information about its operations freely available to the outside investigators and the public-at-large, or construct a stone wall of "privacy" around its operations? Does the firm cooperate with the ethical impact reporting process?

From Criteria to Decision-making:

A Brief Comment on the Implementation of Ethical Impact Reports

I would envision, then, an ethical impact report for firms taking the following rough outline:

I. Introduction/Basic Financial Information (Employment, Earnings, Profits, etc.)

II. Quantitative and Empirical Data, Based on Information Provided by the Corporation in Accordance with Law and Other Public Records Regarding:
   a. Criminal Activity
   b. Salaries and Rewards for Labor
   c. Diversity
   d. Pollution/Social Costs
   e. Promotion/Advancement Policies
   f. Benefits/Family Policies
   g. Economic Record in the Community
   h. Public Openness
   i. Other Categories

III. Qualitative Sub-Reports from Stakeholding Groups
   1. Comprehensive Managerial Sub-Report (Addressing Issues A-J below)
      a. Honesty/Integrity
      b. Participation/Accountability
      c. Health, Stress, and Self-Worth
      d. Cooperation and Caring at Work
      e. Respect for Others
      f. Sense of Purpose in Work
      g. Effect of Advertising Policies
      h. Impact of the Firm on Politics and Policies
      i. Is the Product a Good In Itself?
      j. Other considerations
   2. Comprehensive Sub-report from Employee Perspective (Addressing Issues A-J)
   3. Sub-report (on appropriate issues) from Local Community's Perspective
   4. Sub-report (on appropriate issues) from Consumer Perspective
   5. Comprehensive Sub-Report from Outside, Independent Perspective (Addressing Issues A-J)

IV. No formal, authoritative conclusion: Instead, a brief statement that conclusions about the corporation's total ethical impact are to be drawn by readers based on the information presented herein.

Armed with this information, a government body making decisions on whether to favor one firm over another for a public contract or even whether or not to recharter a corporation could take into account both measurable goals of performance and the perspectives offered by participants and outside observers regarding the qualitative aspects of a firm's day-to-day workings.

With regard to the quantitative criteria, clear standards might be put in place regarding items such as salary structure, criminal behavior, and pollution output, which the corporation must meet in order to receive an acceptable grade, a process that might be compared to the tough objective criteria used by government inspectors in giving health ratings to restaurants. These standards, as noted earlier, should aim to raise the bar of performance, but not be totally unreachable by present-day firms. For instance the CEP gives a top grade on diversity issues to corporations which, for instance, have top-level management that is at least 10 percent female. Such a figure is clearly unacceptable as a long term goal, but in fact might represent substantial progress for many corporations today; the idea would be to steadily increase the bar of performance over time. On the other hand, on certain issues a strong line needs to be clearly drawn from the outset, such as insisting that corporations do not defraud

consumers or ask their employees to lie.

Regarding the qualitative criteria, the best that can be done in my view is to ask all decision-makers to carefully read through the evidence given from the sub-reports compiled by different voices inside and outside the firm, and then come to their own overall assessment—a process that, for purposes of illustration, might be compared to how parole review board officers compile different kinds of information from different sources before coming to their own conclusion. This judgment about the qualitative aspects of a firm's ethical impact ought to carry at least equal weight with the quantitative criteria in coming to an overall decision as to whether to extend or deny a corporate charter.

Any decision—thumbs up or down—regarding a given corporation will be bound to inspire conflict and controversy, and the actual shape of decision-making will largely be determined by what political forces are in power at a particular moment—that is, what persons are appointed to or elected to the decision-making entity. Such controversy is inevitable, and should not be feared, but rather embraced: A heated public discussion over whether a particular corporation merits rechartering would be the sign of a badly needed extension of deliberative, democratic processes to economic affairs in the United States—and a clear sign that the notion of taking ethical concerns seriously in conducting economic life has arrived. ✡

Thad Williamson is a graduate student at Union Theological Seminary in New York and a consultant to the National Center for Economic and Security Alternatives in Washington, D.C.

SRA Responses

Hazel Henderson

I support both your proposals. As one who has been organizing and writing on the Love Economy, the social and environmental costs of GNP-measured economic growth and the need for new scorecards (such as my Country Futures Indicators [CFI], soon to be released for the U.S.A. as the Calvert-Henderson Quality-of-Life Indicators), I applaud your efforts.

The Social Responsibility Amendment to the Constitution can help create a much needed debate on corporate charters and why they need updating from their historic focus on maximizing investors' and stockholders' returns. Today, most corporate managers acknowledge that, in reality, they must attempt to optimize the corporation's performance to include other stakeholders: customers, employees, suppliers and other business partners, neighboring communities and the general public, as well as the environment. This is the result of today's communications and the rise of civic society activism worldwide and the movements for corporate accountability, as well as the "creative ten percent" of socially-concerned investors and entrepreneurs—many of them women whose enterprises now employ more American workers than all the Fortune 500 companies together.

Such updating of corporate charters can also be achieved at the state level—as Kansas pioneered in 1910, when it passed the "Blue Sky Laws" which finally curbed abuses by companies and Wall Street's freewheeling frauds on small investors. Two years later, 23 other states had passed similar laws. Such a phenomenon is discounted in market economics, which focuses on competitive behavior, and therefore, would expect a "virtuous cycle," where instead states would "race to the bottom." Only when we take off these spectacles of market economics and examine human behaviors from the broader perspectives of game theory (which embraces cooperative, creative and contrarian games) can we predict outcomes such as the "vicious cycle" created by the State of Kansas, as I have described elsewhere (see "Transnational Corporations and Global Citizenship" forthcoming, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, Geneva, 1997).

The Social Responsibility Amendment you propose will help raise awareness of the options we humans have when we broaden our views and policy tools beyond economism and the failing approaches of outdated macroeconomic textbooks. Furthermore, the debate over the SRA would help highlight the Supreme Court's error in ruling that corporations, as legal entities, were granted all the rights of real "natural persons." ✡

Hazel Henderson is an independent global futurist, author of Building a Win-Win World *(1996) and five other books on sustainable development. She held the Horace Albright Chair at the University of California, Berkeley, and shared the 1996 Global Citizen Award with Nobelist Perez Esquivel of Argentina.*

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John Vasconcellos

America needs a new explicit commitment to responsibility (as well as to freedom), both personal and social, and it must be incorporated into every aspect of our lives, individual and social, including economic.

Our operational question: *'How do we awaken in America, in every American, that sense of responsibility, that commitment to responsibility, that practice of responsible living?'*

Michael Lerner's two proposals (for the United States *Social Responsibility Amendment* and for the state and local government's *Social Responsibility Initiatives*) are valuable, even if they manage only to call our public's attention to the missing crucial dimension of corporate social responsibility.

At best, however, such would constitute external stimuli toward responsibility—granted, better than none at all.

Even then, however, somebody at the Federal (or other government level) will have to determine whether a corporation has performed responsibly. And performance of each corporation will be the function of the responsibility of its leaders. And action by each citizen (whether in his/her own work or personal life) will necessarily be determined by his/her own level of development of responsibility.

The bottom line, therefore, must come down again to *'How?'* How do we engender development of responsibility in our people, how do we reorient our entire society, culture, institutions, to facilitate growth of responsible beings?

Every *'How?'* regarding human behavior always depends on, is informed by, the assumptions we hold regarding our human nature, our natural inclinations, our capacities. Our foundational vision *always* determines our choice of means.

During my 30 years in the California Legislature, I've recognized that this is the missing link, almost always missing in American political, social dialogue, missing in Lerner's proposals as well. Its centrality was brought home to me by the juxtaposition of three poignant conversations.

The first conversation was during a 200-person community meeting in Sacramento in 1973, regarding educational goals. After 2 hours of discussion, an older woman rose, challenged us, *'This goal talk is fine, but it isn't the real problem, we all have pretty much the same goals: traditional 3 R's, self-esteem, responsible citizenship, good work, safe communities, peaceful world.*

'Where we really differ is in the means we choose to enable our children to attain these goals; and when you realize little children arrive in this world as monsters needing to be tamed, you know what means you have to use!'

The second conversation was in an 80-person dinner in Irvine in 1986 when, at the conclusion of his 30-minute presentation, pioneering humanistic psychologist Carl Rogers said, *'You know, I've been doing psychology for 60 years. I have come to believe we human beings are innately inclined toward becoming life-affirming, constructive, responsible and trustworthy.'*

The third conversation came early last year after the Fundamentalists seized control of our State Assembly. During a telephone radio debate featuring myself and Republican Assemblyman Keith Olberg, at one point he stopped the issue conversation to say, *'You know, John believes that people are basically inclined to be good.'*

I responded, *'You've got it correct, Keith, and you believe that people are basically inclined to be evil.'*

The most basic issue in our lives can not be more clearly framed than by these three conversations. Therein lies the single most important issue facing every one of us humans, with respect to our beliefs, our expectations, how each of us will proceed to envision ourselves and every other human, how each of us proceeds to engage ourselves, all humans.

For, while sincerely seeking to attain the same goal—here, the development of responsible human beings, who will live out that responsibility in the corporate economic milieu—each of us is going to choose based on our foundational vision of ourselves, our human nature, potential, inclination.

Depending on whether I hold a faithful or a cynical view of our human nature, I'll select opposite means toward that end: threatening, punitive, repressive, shaming versus nurturing, encouraging, liberating, self-esteeming. And I will live my way (and yours) into a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Therein we'll find the most important issue which lies at the root of our social controversies, our values, and in particular, our current bent toward greed and materialism.

Therein lies our beginning point for a revolution toward a more loving collaborative generous lifestyle and society: the necessary revolution—from negative to positive—in our belief regarding our own human nature.

That revolution found its roots in the 1960s, on the campuses and in the streets, in the various liberation movements, and in the therapeutic movement as well. All these years it's been fermenting, within and between so many of us humans—searching for self, searching for meaning, searching for relationship, searching for love.

The time has come for us to (per Horace) *'Seize the day!—Lest the years imprison us.'* With this new vision, our new faith, we find the key to a new politics—of meaning, of responsibility, of a twenty-first century politics of healing and hope.

Finally, each of us is that key: each is responsible for self-consciously committing ourselves to a daily regimen of personal openness and trust, discovery and growth, realizing our innate potential to become responsible human beings!

Let us today, individually and altogether, commit

ourselves to living this new vision into reality, realizing our own promise, practicing this new politics of healing and hope, generating a new society of generosity and collaboration, solving the problems which have so long plagued us.

John Vasconcellos is a first term California State Senator from the Thirteenth District in Silicon Valley. As a politician and author, he is committed to the development of a new, positive human politics.

Richard L. Grossman and Ward Morehouse

This country desperately needs lively debate about corporations and democracy. This is not properly a debate between people and corporations, or between people and our governments. The U.S. and state constitutions, after all, are not agreements between people and corporations. They are not agreements between people and governments. These constitutions are agreements among the people—social contracts with one another—about the terms of our self-governance.

In this nation, defining business corporations is the responsibility of self-governing people. Sustained debate about corporations and democracy would lead to long overdue public reflection on history, values, sovereignty, property, personhood, liberty, money, production, work and nature which is essential if we are to live up to this responsibility.

Corporations have no standing to participate in such reflections. Debating with corporate officials concedes that artificial entities possess the inherent rights of natural persons. And devoting such attention to corporate "social responsibility" violates people's humanity.

During the past century, many people—from U.S. presidents to business executives—have called upon corporations to be socially responsible. Many civic organizations have launched corporate responsibility campaigns. Have these efforts led to greater civic authority over corporations? Have they led to the rethinking of citizen goals, strategies and arenas of struggle?

The concept and language of social responsibility, by not offering even a nod to the reality that giant corporations illegitimately exercise governing power, have channeled civic aspirations to voluntary codes of corporate behavior, encouraged the celebration of inherently limited regulatory laws and agencies and inhibited the fulfillment of democratic ideals in every generation.

They have also helped concoct a popular wisdom that there is no realistic alternative to today's ruling corporations.

You want responsible? Responsibility is for people. We the people act responsibly when we exercise our sovereign authority—gained by a Revolutionary War—over all institutions we create.

You want debate? Let's promote debate that explores how this nation came under corporate control, examines the nature of large corporations, and grapples with the proper relationship between a self-governing people and our institutional creations.

We can start with the reality that giant corporations always aspire to govern. This was true of the East India Company and the Virginia Company of the 17th Century. It is true of the Time Warner, Waste Management and Shell corporations today. If permitted by their creators, giant corporations define who is a person and what's public or private, shape ideas and public policy, write laws, elect and instruct government officials, control dispute resolution, destroy local culture and historical memory, vacuum the Earth, commit legalized violence, destroy or limit competition....

The American Revolution wrested sovereignty from the English monarchy and governing authority from Parliament, vesting both in a new idea called we the people. For a few generations, people defined corporate bodies with precision.

To directly-elected state legislators, it was unthinkable that information and decision making indispensable for promoting the general welfare could ever be off-limits, beyond their sovereign authority. They quickly seized authority to charter corporations—towns, burial societies, firehouses, schools, business entities—and define them as public trusts.

These corporations, according to law and culture, were subordinate entities with no inherent rights of their own. As the Pennsylvania legislature declared in 1834,

> *A corporation in law is just what the incorporation act makes it. It is the creature of the law and may be moulded to any shape or for any purpose that the Legislature may deem most conducive for the common good.*

But the United States was diseased at its founding by violences against human personhood and the natural world, violences perpetuated to this day. Property owners immediately sought to limit we the people. A minority in the 13 colonies was powerful enough to define the majority—Africans, Native people, women, men without property, debtors—as property, or as non-persons, without legal standing. They also defined the Earth as an arena for exploitation and conquest, and its creatures as having no legal rights.

During the Civil War, corporations began to amass wealth. But wealth was not enough: corporate leaders wanted to govern. So they sought legal sanction for their exercise of political powers. Because the majority of human beings were still excluded from the self-governing people, it was relatively easy for corporate leaders—masking their demands for political, property and civil rights in the language of liberty for natural persons—to revise the Constitution.

By World War I, federal courts had granted corporations key

(continued on page 79)

New Ways of Living in the World of Work

Kevin A. Phillips

Reverend Phillips shows how a politics of meaning perspective can be embodied in the work of a local church. Though some of the approach may be specific to a Christian community, much of what is done in the groups being described could work in synagogues, mosques or even secular meaning-oriented communities. This article is part of our ongoing effort to encourage readers to write about the ways that they have adopted a meaning-oriented perspective in their own community work.

In Mountain View, California, the unemployment rate is 3 percent, the lowest unemployment rate in the country. Outside every grocery store, fast food restaurant, day care center and high tech company hang signs that read, "Now Hiring Friendly People." Behind every sign stands a white-knuckled, red-eyed manager desperate for help.

Mountain View is the center of Silicon Valley where high tech industry spurs job growth. Speed defines corporate culture here. This industry reinvents itself every six months. How fast a company gets product to market determines its bottom line.

Consider the major computer networking companies that make the Internet possible. Last year 80 percent of the product they sold consisted of technology less than a year old. Already they are developing technology that will make last year's revolution obsolete. Employees must learn quickly if they are not to become obsolete. This injects anxiety into a culture already demanding 10 and 12-hour days and an hour-long commute. When time is a limited resource, we make tough choices. Urgency holds the knife that pierces the heart of the truly important.

I moved here four years ago to become the Rector of an Episcopal Church. My line of work is not based on speed. Spiritual formation. Contemplative prayer. Silent retreat. Communion. These words form the vital center of my corporate culture. They find their inspiration in a very different set of values than those driving Silicon Valley.

As I settled into my new position I met people who, like me, also valued supportive relationships in community and the opportunity to explore the mystery of God in an unhurried atmosphere. I met people who value living in conversation with an ancient tradition. Yet many of these people told me how they lived with a sense of permanent regret. They shared how they must sacrifice what they most deeply value to keep pace with the world of work.

It's not that they would rather not work. Many people here enjoy their work. They find energy and opportunity for self-expression in what they do. They do not regret work; they regret what work costs them.

In the time that I have known her, Pat has changed jobs twice. "Companies do not hire people, they hire skills," she says. "Your manager is not looking out for your best interest but for the company's. Anyone who hasn't figured that out is way behind on the learning curve."

She once told me about a friend she sees at her son's soccer games. "It's sad," she says, "his kids are playing soccer and he is sitting on the side lines with his laptop computer.



PHOTOGRAPH BY CAROLINA KROON/IMPACT VISUALS

And it's not because he loves his work. He has to do it."

Another parishioner is a product manager. John says, "My world is driven by revenue growth. The value of our company is a direct function of our earnings growth rate. There is tremendous pressure to deliver results at the price of whatever has to be sacrificed." From before the sun rises to after it sets, John schedules every minute of the day. "We announced over 200 products last year. We are supposed to announce 300 this year. The group that is going to do that has not grown at all. We just can't hire people fast enough to keep up with the expectations of Wall Street. It's a machine that's never satisfied."

Is the experience of Pat and John unusual? "No way," says Marty, another parishioner and an executive recruiter.

"We never have to market our services. We get more calls than we can handle." Marty listens to people as they transition from one harried workplace to another. "A manager once telephoned me and asked me in no uncertain terms to stop recruiting out of his department. I listened politely," Marty says, "But I didn't tell him I had his boss's resume sitting on my desk."

Pat and Marty and John work hard. They also value community. They want to find meaning in their lives that transcends their material value to the company they work for. Do they really have to sacrifice spiritual values to maintain their competitive edge in the workplace? Do they have to turn their backs on supportive community to support themselves? Must they lose connection with God and neighbor to stay connected to technological innovation?

These questions are not unique to the Silicon Valley. The community growing up around the Politics of Meaning expresses the same kind of yearning. We are looking for new ways of living in the world of work.

In response to these concerns, my community has developed a small-group format to help us listen to one another and support one another as we work to build a new world. We explore how values and habits inherited from the market economy divide us and keep us from working together to build a common life that makes sense. It's not easy. Not only does it require a commitment of time in an already crowded calendar, it also challenges the economic culture in which we live. It calls us to question the basic orientation of our lives.

Recently I asked Pat what she values about her group. What keeps her coming back? "Well, it's one more thing that takes me away from my family. But when I get there I like it. It's human interaction that is not performance-based."

I asked John the same question. "I value the relationships I've developed there. People get to a point where they share freely and openly about things people don't normally talk about. The discussions are more profound and meaningful than in other relationships. We generally talk about the things in life that really matter, but are too often ignored. Without the group, spirituality comes last in life. If you think of priorities as a pyramid, the group provides a place where we meet once a week to keep our spiritual foundation where it belongs, first not last."

John's "spiritual foundation" is the prophetic voice we encounter in our small groups. The ancient prophets of Israel and the memories of the first century Church found in the Bible hold up a standard of behavior, a hierarchy of value and a vision of reality that confronts and critiques today's market culture.

Hard-nosed thinkers sometimes deride contemporary spirituality as self-indulgent emotion. This is not simple cynicism. Much of contemporary spirituality *is* self-indulgent emotion. The yearning for meaning in people's lives is so strong that some retreat to a kind of primal scream as a substitute for authentic spirituality.

The Bible portrays God as the personal intention that drives creation. The world is not random material without meaning or purpose waiting to be exploited by individuals. It is an ordered reality. Reason recognizes God's intention in creation even as God's purposeful act serves as the ground out of which meaningful thought grows. Authentic spirituality is not a self-indulgent, emotive justification for that which could not otherwise be justified. It is the basis of rationality.

When we live in a right relationship with God and with one another we participate in reason's highest expression. 'Goodness, Truth and Beauty' is always a social function. Spirituality is the participation of a community in the rational expression of God, 'the Word of God,' which brings creation to blessed fulfillment.

In our small groups we engage one another in constructive dialogue with the ancient prophets. Their vision of reality provides the rod by which we measure contemporary life. Without a contrasting vision of what God intended life to be, we risk falling victim to what Michael Lerner describes as the idolatry of "what is." John's authentic "spiritual foundation allows him to explore with others—in dialogue with the Word of God—God's intention for creation. It allows him to be open to the blessed possibility of what could be.

Does John ever experience dissonance between what his group explores and what he lives with at work? "Oh yeah! The two worlds are very different," he explains. "The group is about community. Work is about power struggle. Whether we are competing with our competitors, or our group is competing with another group for resources, or we are negotiating directly with a customer, the issue always seems to be who can maintain a position of strength in the situation. Also there are enough external demands to make cooperation a low priority. It takes a back seat to the pressure of getting some result."

What difference does participating in a group make for John? "I have a heightened awareness of what's going on at work. I've developed a sense of humor about it. I mean, it's funny the kind of world this environment creates. For example, we had a meeting the other day with our CEO. All around the table are people working 10 and 12 hour days for this guy, I mean really knocking themselves out. The CEO comes in and opens the meeting with, "I don't know what the fuck I pay you people for! My grandmother could do a better job than you people—and she's dead!" I had to hide behind the person sitting next me. I couldn't stop laughing. It's absurd.

Participating in one of our groups develops new perspectives. Scripture challenges us to envision alternative futures. We cannot build a better work and social environment if we fail to explore new possibilities outside the limitations of current perceptions of reality.

People experience our groups as a safe place to explore difficult issues. Discussion flows about how one experiences God's presence in the world and how that experience can influence life in concrete ways. One woman recently resigned her position in response to abuse she was able to perceive in her office as a result of hearing other people's stories in dialogue with a prophetic witness. No one in her group encouraged her to take this action. She found sufficient support to make what she believed to be a responsible stance against injustice.

Our groups follow a very simple format. A little bit of training in small group process and almost anyone can be an effective leader. A lab manager at a high tech firm, Iver, has been leading a group for almost a year. It meets at his house on Thursday evenings. He has a core of five or six people committed to make it work. He has had as many as fourteen in attendance. Small talk allows newcomers to meet old timers and to get comfortable in the new environment.

I asked Iver what he enjoys most about leading a group. "I enjoy the relationships I build with people, but I also enjoy the discipline of having to get myself ready to lead the group. Sometimes I come home from work angry or stressed about this or that. I've learned how to let that go so I could be present to other people."

Is the time he invests in the group worth it? "Of course. It's a window into other people's lives. How often do you get the chance to hear what's in the heart of the chair of a music department of a university and how he thinks about God? Our relationships have grown significantly."

How has the group helped Iver connect with people more deeply? "Well, we've talked about some amazing things, things that are formative experiences in our lives. We've even discussed suicidal depressions. We've discussed a lot of triumphs too. The group is a discipline of intimacy. If you're just shooting the breeze or talking about things on a technical level, it's not the same. The group has actually helped me to be a better manager. Relationships at work have a new dimension. There's the possibility of being real with people, with raising the subject that is sitting quietly in a corner of the room. Just by being real, people want to be real with you. With my co-manager it's creating an atmosphere of honesty and empathy that was very scarce in my life before I began participating in the group. Now I see that opportunity popping up all over the place."

I have experienced the same kind of growth in my relationships. Some members of my staff have found the time invested in nurturing empathy and caring in groups they attend so valuable, they have asked that I incorporate this group format into our weekly meetings. When we began, I felt some resistance. A month into the new routine my Finance Administor confessed, "After the first week, I went home and told my husband how we wasted the first hour-and-a-half of staff meeting just talking to each other. Now I have come to see this as the most valuable part of our meeting. I have really grown to appreciate the people I work with."

What happens in our meetings? We begin with gathering and the leader establishes the meeting as a safe place. This may be as simple as providing a warm smile and a friendly greeting. People who lack a basic sense of trust appreciate clear rules of engagement. This enables people to take risks that lead to healing and growth. The gathering process establishes an atmosphere that allows them the freedom to change.

Once my staff has gathered, I invite the group to share a period of silence. Three to five minutes seems sufficient. This helps participants transition from the world of work or family obligations to the world of the group. It creates a buffer zone that invites a deepening of the mind and heart. Many voices speak within; anxiety and hope exist side by side. The voice of healing gets shouted down by the voice of past hurts and disappointments. Silence gives people the opportunity to untangle what's happening inside. Silence itself is healing.

I experience the silence as a bonding time. I gain confidence to speak and patience to hear perspectives that may differ from my own. I sometimes come out of silence hoping for a creative antagonist who will help me to push up against the limitations of my own perspectives.

Following the silence comes our check-in time. I break the silence by inviting the group to share their highs and lows of the week. We share good experiences as well as a bad. Sometimes the stories relate to issues at work. Sometimes they have to do with our children, spouses or other relationships.

Once a member of my staff shared that her sister had just been diagnosed with breast cancer. She shared her fear. Her eyes filled with tears and she was able to let go of some of the tension filling her body. Not only did it help her to share this "low," it helped us understand how to engage her in the days ahead. It facilitated our work; it did not hinder it. Because we meet regularly to share our "highs and lows" sufficient trust has developed among us. She felt able to share. It was not a burden to bring this to her work. It is a natural part of what we do at work.

When we share our "highs and lows," passing is always an option. Once a member of my staff was in a tail spin. Her

struggle was too present to share. Her need to pass was a signal to the rest of us. We gave her the space she needed. The next week she shared the crisis had passed. The low that was too deep to share had this week become a high.

Sometimes things come up in our groups suggesting a need for support. We don't respond during the check-in time. No one comments on one another's story. No one gives advice or tries to fix it. We simply listen and in listening we acknowledge our shared humanity.

Serendipitous opportunities sometimes arise during this check-in time. A man who had recently been laid-off from his job came to visit me one day. He held his face in his hands as he said, "I have never been fired from a job before. I went through one case of beer in two days. I'm shattered. I can't face going into the job market like this. Who will hire me?"

One of our groups happened to be meeting that night. I gave Ed the address. The next day, one of the participants in the group called me on the phone. Clark said, "Kevin, last night I was at my group meeting and I was sharing my low of the week. I have to lay off one of my employees tomorrow. I shared how I didn't want to do it. That I didn't know how to do it. That I was afraid to do it. Right after I spoke, this new guy spoke up and said he had just been laid off."

It blew my mind. It gave me a great opportunity to hear what it is like on the other side of the fence.

Ed also called me that day. "Thanks for sending me to that group. I feel like I was really able to help someone last night. I feel like I've turned a corner. I'm going to make it."

The next step in our group process is the dialogue. The check-in time has created a safe atmosphere and a sense of our shared humanity. We now turn to Scripture. We hope through dialogue to open our lives to a transcendent dimension. We hope to hear the voice of God in some small way.

In ancient Israel respect for the Holy governed relationships and defined acceptable use of power. When abuse of power became manifest, social forces brought about a balance of justice. When the power elite attempted to co-opt religious forms to justify their positions, strong relational bonds held the power elite accountable. The prophetic voice appealed to a common memory of God's mighty acts in history. When the power elite refused to yield, the prophetic voice anticipated the judgment of God experienced as social disintegration, foreign domination and exile.

Today the prophetic voice is silenced. Respect for the Holy has bowed to respect for the successful. It no longer provides a compelling check against the abuse of power. There seems to be little regulation between neighbors other than lawsuits among the rich and blood-letting among the poor. A society of disconnected individuals no longer has the relational skills to sustain life in community and to bring about justice.

Our dialogue helps us respect the Holy. It helps us reconnect with one another and rebuild substantive community on an authentic spiritual foundation. Participants write what we call Look/Book/Tooks which we distribute to all the groups. A Look/Book/Took is one sheet of paper divided into three sections. The first part "looks at the world as we experience it." The Look section opens with a simple paragraph which is read to the group. Two or three questions follow to initiate conversation. A facilitator monitors the group to make sure it stays on track and to help participants respect the boundaries of good dialogue.

Following the Look section we read a text relating to the topic. This is the Book. A simple paragraph puts the reading in context and orients the group to its relevance to the Look discussion. Following the Book we move into the Took section. Here we summarize what we have valued in our discussion. Each of us identifies something we can take away to incorporate in our lives.

The topics for our Dialogue can be anything: gender issues at work, the need to create more empathetic supervisory relationships, the challenge of respecting individuality while working for community solidarity.

One dialogue we recently shared among my staff concerned leadership. We explored what constituted effective leadership and what discouraged able lieutenants. We enjoyed a frank and open discussion that helped me discern what I could do to be a more effective leader by being more sensitive to the needs and perspectives of my staff.

Our meeting ends in prayer. Some readers may object to this part of the format. Some workplaces may not allow prayer. I find it vital. I recommend it for groups meeting in homes. Even if everyone in the group may not share the same understanding of prayer, it is an important binder. It puts empathy and caring on center stage.

During our prayer time we may revisit issues raised during the "high and lows." Someone may summarize an important lesson from our dialogue. Some simply enjoy the silence and appreciate the community.

The other day I asked Marty what he valued about his group. "Look, everybody has pain. For some people it's money. Some people it's security. Some people it's the work environment. These people are being held hostage by Wall Street. If they have a bad quarter there's going to be lay-offs. All these people have any more is their work." Then he mentioned someone who joined one of our groups. "Two years ago, all this guy ever talked about was his job. Let's face it, now he's got more than a job. He's got a life." ✡

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Living Wage Ordinance:

A Victory for the Working Poor

Richard W. Gillett

A stunning vote by the Los Angeles City Council this past April has given a major boost to cities around the country which may be contemplating living wage legislation as a way to boost the wages of the working poor. The passage of a Living Wage Ordinance, which easily overrode a mayoral veto, was the culmination of a year-long campaign by the Los Angeles Living Wage Coalition. The ordinance mandates a wage of $7.25/hr. with health insurance, or $8.50/hr. without it, plus 12 paid vacation days. It affects companies with City contracts of $25,000 or more, and companies which receive substantial subsidies from the City such as tax breaks, loans or leases on land. Among the approximately 5,000 affected workers are food service workers, security guards, janitorial service workers, and some factory workers.

In passing the ordinance, Los Angeles joins cities such as Baltimore, New York, St. Paul and San Jose, California. But because it contains health care provisions and covers subsidies to companies (the other cities do not), and because a decisive victory for the ordinance occurred despite ferocious business opposition, the Los Angeles ordinance is being seen as a bellwether for other cities.

The months-long debate here, widely covered in the press, helped focus attention on an under-appreciated reality: the massive extent of poverty among the working poor, and on the other hand the lucrative deals and tax breaks that many already overly-wealthy companies enjoy at the expense of the City and its taxpayers. For example, to understand the severity that even the federal poverty line represents, consider that in Los Angeles an average two-bedroom house rents for $855 a month. After the rent is paid, a family of four *at* the poverty level has only about $450 a month left for all other expenses: food, transportation, clothes, health care and other basics. Fully 35 percent of all workers in the City have incomes below the poverty line. And the working poor in L.A. are getting poorer: from 1979-89 low wage industries here grew by a whopping 40 percent.

In contrast, a survey of City service contracts by the Living Wage Coalition found that profit margins in some contracts are in excess of 35 percent. Furthermore, last year L.A. gave out more that $250 million to companies in the form of subsidies and incentives. For example "Dreamworks," the new Hollywood movie consortium formed by Steven Spielberg and others recently received an incentive package of $84 million to build a new studio complex.

The coalition widely publicized these disparities in its campaign for the ordinance, reminding the public that taxpayers are getting hit twice: footing the bill for the subsidies paid to such companies, and also paying the cost of social services such as health care and welfare benefits for poor families. And it made a point of bringing affected workers to City Council committee hearings and to meet with council members, a strategy which proved to be very effective.

How did the campaign develop? In late 1995, a small group of activists from the community, organized labor, academia and a group of lawyers, all of whom had political and community experience, began to assemble information from the City of Baltimore's successful passage of a living wage ordinance, and from other cities. Headed by Madeline Janis-Aparicio, a young attorney with political experience and boundless energy, enthusiasm and imagination, they approached an able and progressive ally on the L.A. City Council, Jackie Goldberg. The coalition received grants from foundations, labor unions and Roman Catholic, Protestant and Jewish groups and hired staff. It began to develop solid and well-researched data on the potential impact of the proposed ordinance on workers, the business community and the city, and began involving key religious leaders early on. Working with the coalition, they founded an interfaith group, Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice (CLUE). Early in 1996 CLUE drew up a theological statement and set about involving the larger religious community.

An early example of the involvement of top leadership was an OpEd piece in the *Los Angeles Times* in support of the ordinance, co-authored by the Episcopal Bishop of Los Angeles, a prominent rabbi, and a Methodist area bishop. Other support followed, by the American Jewish Congress, by Catholic Cardinal Roger Mahoney, by the Muslim Public Affairs Council and other religious bodies. But the chief religious efforts were grassroots, taking place in concert with the overall lobbying strategies of the coalition.

And to keep the living wage issue growing in the eyes of

the public and the press, the coalition used innovative additional strategies such as a winter holiday emphasis to promote the ordinance. Thus at Thanksgiving time over 1,000 paper plates were mailed to the mayor and council, depicting drawings such as a child's Thanksgiving turkey with an inscription such as "Please fill this plate with a living wage." In December a group of coalition members visited each City Council person's office to sing "Living Wage Carols"—holiday carols adapted to lyrics promoting the living wage (the lyrics got quoted in the press, plus a photo). For the New Year, cards saying "Ring in the New Year with a Living Wage" were sent in from around the City. But the most dramatic holiday event was a solemn visit to the mayor's office by actor David Clennon (from TV's "thirtysomething") in the guise of the ghost of Jacob Marley, to warn the mayor against trampling down the poor as Marley and his partner Ebenezer Scrooge had done in life. The mayor was "not in" for "Marley's" visit, despite the presence of a silent procession of 200 people accompanying Clennon as his clanking chains echoed through the corridors of City Hall. It was great theater; a dramatic photo caught the ghost with the mayor (who did turn up shortly in council chambers) and was prominently displayed in the *L.A. Times*.

Meanwhile the business community was by no means idle. Last fall it formed a "Coalition to Keep L.A. Working," which began to lobby council members intensively, using the press, talk shows and community forums to predict dire consequences should the ordinance pass. It would, they solemnly intoned, result in widespread layoffs of lower paid workers (in order to pay the higher wage mandate), spoil the "business climate" in L.A., and cause businesses to flee to Burbank, Glendale and other cities. With the mayor as their active ally, their group raised over $150,000 and employed a consultant to study the ordinance, to demonstrate the adverse effects it would have if passed. But their reliance on out-of-date and grossly over-inflated figures, and even a bit of Red-baiting from the mayor (the ordinance was a socialist scheme, he warned) did not help their cause. Nonetheless most newspapers bought their argument, and the *L.A. Times* editorialized strongly against it two weeks prior to the Council vote.

It was a surprise to everyone that the vote, when it came, was unanimous. Coalition supporters were packed to the walls of the Council Chambers the day of the vote. "Do the right thing" said the bright green stick-on tags worn by the hundreds of supporters. Indeed, the speeches of many of the Council members prior to the vote appealed to the simple morality of the issue: it simply is not right, if we have the ability, not to provide the workers with whom the City has a contractual relationship, with a living wage.

Ironically, the *L.A. Times* (despite its own editorial against) published the results of a comprehensive poll two days before the mayor vetoed the ordinance, showing that 70 percent of the voters favored it. His veto was overridden by a vote of 11-1.

What to make of this victory?

First, the solid and sustained participation in this campaign of the mainstream religious community—Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, Muslim—is concrete witness that the Christian right cannot presume to speak either for the whole Christian community or for other faiths. It indicates that the enduring religious traditions that sustain our major faiths can, if evoked, speak effectively on behalf of those who have been marginalized and dehumanized by the economic machine of modern—day capitalism. The excesses of business profits, corporate downsizing, an endlessly rising stock market, and the skyrocketing salaries of corporate CEOs are becoming widely perceived by the public as out of control and—to use a word seldom applied to economic policy—immoral. (It's noteworthy in this regard that California last fall passed a proposition raising the state's minimum wage to slightly above the level of the just-passed federal minimum wage.) These basic perceptions seemed to be the backdrop for the religious community's willing entry into the living wage campaign. Moreover, it was rubbing shoulders (many clergy for the first time) with labor unions, workers, community activists, and politicians with a conscience—in itself a very promising development.

Furthermore, there might be an opening here for religious groups to use future living wage campaigns as vehicles to broaden discussion of the responsibility of business to the community beyond that of providing a livable wage.

The living wage victory in L.A. raised the possibility that a real awakening and a willingness to rekindle the fires for a new agenda for justice might be at hand in the form of a promising new partnership of religious faiths with the diverse and progressive sectors of the community, and even with some politicians with a conscience. ✡

Richard W. Gillett is an Episcopal priest in Los Angeles and is a member of the steering committee of Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice. He has been involved in labor issues for many years.

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PERSONAL ESSAY

Damaged Hearts

Debora Freund



Two summers ago a relieved airline stewardess handed over a wheelchair containing my mother-in-law salvaged from life in a nursing home. Her nightgown peeped from under her skirt. Her wig sat too far back on her bald head. Below her bare knees, two identical onion shaped knots kept her mended nylon stockings from sliding down her useless legs. Her eyes lit up when she saw me.

"My sister," she exclaimed and covered my face with wet kisses.

Hugging her, I gave in to unfamiliar emotions, feelings for which I had obviously found no use in my daily life.

Behind her, my father-in-law looked dignified in his ancient striped suit, one of the three found miraculously in his closet upon his return from Auschwitz. He advanced carefully, leaning on a polished dark brown walking stick, cautious not to antagonize his damaged heart. In his free hand he carried his wife's black leather purse. The one with the silver handle. The purse was empty—his wife had no use for it. But in his code of behavior, no woman should travel without one. He held me tight, his eyes were shut while he uttered a silent prayer. Then he opened them, puckered his dry lips, and aimed them straight at mine.

We were driving them to their new home, we explained, a cozy place close to ours, just redecorated. But my father-in-law wouldn't hear of it. Thank you, he said politely, but the extra expense was not necessary at all. And he really wanted to spend his time with us. What were families for? I waited for my husband to argue, but he simply spread his arms in eloquent helplessness. I did a rapid, mental shifting of the children's sleeping arrangements. Andrew, my son, into my daughter's room. My older son, Henry, was abroad in school for another four months.

It was possible. For a while, anyway. I nodded and said of course, stay with us. And the pleasure was ours.

As the days go by, I watch with amusement tingled with wonder the little rituals that make up their lives. His hat always perched on the left handle of the stationary bicycle in my son's room. Her chamber pot installed under the illuminated world globe. The old prayer book set on her lap every morning. Her finger follows the lines—an image of concentration—even though it's years since her eyes could actually read.

The paper thin peelings of tomatoes from breakfast, rolled into tight little roses. "You can use these for dinner," he will then say.

Endearing, harmless little gestures? Yes. But oh, the repetitiveness of it all. Daily, without the slightest deviation.

Those two pairs of false teeth placed every evening on the same spot of the kitchen table. Only to find them the next morning hidden under loose, greenish strands of food, floating on the surface. Or the rancid odor that trails in my father-in-law's wake on Thursdays because "a bath is something to honor the Sabbath with." The nail clippings on Tuesdays: Her hard, deformed brownish toe nail laying on a tissue next to his fragile, calcium-lacking one. He collects them on a tissue paper which he carefully pleats into eight equal folds, and then burns them in a deep ashtray to which she may, sometimes, hold the candle.

Her devotion to her husband is total. Even at those times when there seems to be a woolen sock pulled over her brain. She has called him 'Tatika' since she had given him a one and only son.

"Tatika," she whimpers if he stays a bit later at the synagogue. Her bulky figure cowers on her stool like an inanimate lump. Until he returns and warms his hands in hers.

They sit together, there hand in hand, his rain-drenched hat still on his head. A tiny puddle beneath her stool divulges the loss of muscle control. It's from fear, he apologizes. Huddled there and dripping, in the midst of my gleaming modern-furnished living room, they look like survivors of some awful shipwreck from another time.

"Please God," I find myself praying. "Please, do not take him away even a half an hour before you take her."

This is how I see my father-in-law day after day. Sitting in a corner of our kitchen—in front of an open, densely lettered book containing his congealed past. For long hours

ILLUSTRATIONS BY KEVIN HARRIS

he frowns, tugs at his beard and sways. Sometimes, he remains motionless on the chair, his eyes rolled upwards toward the ceiling, his thin beard thrust forward resembling an ancient monument. I stay silent. Often I catch myself tiptoeing around in my own kitchen, afraid of intruding into a private audience with God.

There is no aura about my mother-in-law. Yet it is she who carries a special mark—a memorial—on top of her head. It is a dome-like lump, the size of a man's large thumb. A two-inch text written by an S.S. guard in Auschwitz—for stealing potato peels—who smashed at her skull with the heavy lid of a pot she was scrubbing.



"I didn't mind the scrubbing," she once told me, long ago. "I was used to hard work from home and I could easily make the pots shine into the 'mirror' they wanted to see. Besides it felt good to be nearby potatoes again.

"But the worst was having to climb into some of those huge pots. Each day, I had to confront my face reflected in the shiny surface: The shorn hair growing back in patches. The cracked lips and the empty eyes with the missing lashes. Unlike the other women in camp, I was robbed of the image of myself that I carried, of the time I had seen myself in an ordinary mirror. With full hair and young eyes and a smile that men would notice.

"But I don't regret it. I kept my younger sisters alive with those peels. Nor did I ever complain. Not like the Stein sisters." A special scorn would come into her voice whenever she mentioned these childhood acquaintances. "Instead of trying to figure out how to survive, they constantly whined."

"If only I had now my green cashmere shawl." She imitated one of the Stein girls, sniveling in camp during a harsh, cold winter night. "How warm I would be."

"They were weak, up there." My mother-in-law pointed a flour-covered finger to her brain. "And none of them survived."

This conversation took place in her kitchen, I remember. And I can still see her pounding at the bread dough with her rolling pin, like a judge lowering his gavel at the pronounced sentence: for the Stein sisters it could not be otherwise.

A half year has passed since they moved in. More or less, I am used to them by now, including my father-in-law's constant presence in my kitchen—at the same edge of the table near the wall—a clean kitchen towel spread under his long dark book. A destitute patriarch recreating his old world in a corner.

Still, I'm constantly reaching or walking around him to get the things I need.

"I am disturbing you." He says one day, breaking his usual silence.

His eyes bore into mine, keenly scrutinizing the expression on my face as I struggle with an answer.

"No," I deny. "You are no trouble at all."

On the contrary, I tell him, he is the reason my business is thriving these days. "You pray for me. That is the reason things are going so well."

He laps this up avidly, like a stray cat who has been given a saucer of fresh milk.

In truth my business is not thriving at all. Neither is my husband's. With the new doctors' bills accumulating and the full-time help we had to bring in, we find it hard to make ends meet.

But I have given my father-in-law a big idea. And from then on, he has shifted his location. Now he sits right across from me at the living room table—where I have installed my business headquarters. He sways back and forth in a frenzy, reciting the Psalms over and over again. He has a new mission in life. And I, a new personal cheerleader.

But my mother-in-law is less happy. When I entered their room, the next morning, she was sitting upright in her bed.

"She stole my teeth," she said pointing at me. Her mouth was dribbling, her voice was shrill. She was not the sweet docile woman I knew. There was hatred in her eyes.

I knocked several times on my teeth to prove they were my own. That I didn't need hers. I brought in her own teeth from the kitchen. She pushed them away. "Not mine," she said. During the whole day she followed me with a glare of distrust. With my husband, she was her own pliant self.

"My teeth," she said vehemently whenever I passed her vision. "Give me back my teeth."

I covered her hand with mine so we could knock together on my teeth. She hit my cheek with a strong swift blow. I was hurt.

"A daughter-in-law remains a daughter-in-law," I commented to my husband with an edge of bitterness. "How come she doesn't accuse you?"

"Her brain is like Swiss cheese," the doctor informed us. "The older she gets, the more holes and the less cheese."

"However," and he cast a meaningful sideways glance in my direction,"She can continue to live like this for a long time."

That night, I couldn't fall asleep. Was she feeling through

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the veils of her senility that I didn't love her as much as her son did? Of course I didn't. I felt I had tapped the limits of my potential. I had no more left in me to give.

I turn and toss in my bed. The kitchen clock strikes one. From the room on my left—my boy's room—I hear my father-in-law stir. In my mind I follow his hands as they palpate the wrinkled apples displayed in a circle around my son's computer, realigning them in order of their ripeness. My ear follows the slow shuffle of his leather slippers in the hallway: one hand holding a heavy leatherbound, yellowing paged Psalm book, the other gripping the fly of his too-short pajama trousers that he never bothers to close.

I hear the water trickle as he purifies his hands in the ritual way: three long streams of water on each hand. And then the dragging of the chair on the tiled floor. The incantation of the ancient midnight prayer filters through the open window accompanied with the sucking sound of his tongue landing on his bare gum.

His sobs grow louder and louder. A recurrent anxiety scrapes again at the back of my mind with a familiar niggling question: "Am I doing this right?"

A story I had once learned in school resurfaces in my mind. The Talmud brings an example of two sons, one rich, one poor. Both deferred to the Bible's fifth commandment: "Honor your father and mother." The rich son took his old parents into his luxurious habitation and gave them the best money could buy. Daily, he served them freshly slaughtered chicken, and ordered his servants to indulge each of their slightest whims. This son went to Hell.

The other son—the poor one—squeezed his parents into his crowded dwellings and begged his father to shoulder part of his labor. Each day he took him along to the fields and let him do some work alongside him. This son went to Paradise.

Why?

Because he made his father feel needed.

I toss and turn in my bed. Was my care for them limited to their bodily needs? Those, I dispensed proficiently. But the warmth and attention they craved for—that I gave out in meager doses—often forcing it grudgingly from myself with guilt.

"Guilt about what?" I ask myself.

Deep down I know the answer. I had supplanted them with the parents I didn't have. It is my chance to be a daughter. A chance I cannot turn down.

But how to dissociate myself from the decay of age? From the scents that have assailed the flat. A stale, musty sour smell, like the interior of a dingy old closet, blended with the odor of mothballs and accidental beads of desiccated urine.

And how do I confront the inescapable comparison of the deterioration of my own middle-aged body with the finished product taunting me, daily.

And their offspring snoring beside me: how to stop regarding him as their extension? And sometimes, when my eyes are closed, confusing him with the original mold: his father.

A thud makes me jump out of bed. I throw on a robe and rush into their room. My mother-in-law is sitting up in her bed, her useless legs dangle down the edge of the bed.

"What is it?" I ask.

My mother-in-law fixes her film-covered blue eyes onto mine, willing me not to look down on to the sodden bed. I pull a clean nightgown over her head—in a tent shape—while lowering the soiled one, so as not to expose the shame of the heavy empty breasts nodding on the round belly. I clean the wrinkled hide, uttering soothing noises. I cannot recall feeling such tenderness for my babies when they woke me in the midst of the night.

She takes my hand and places it on her cheek. I let it rest there and shed a tear for my own mother, who had died young and beautiful, without ever having a choice to become this used up.



Summer drifts by and the High Holidays approach. A particularly heart-wrenching period for my father-in-law, who knows that on this holiest of days, Yom Kippur, the Almighty fetches only the holiest of men. That leaves him with very few days on earth.

A week before the High Holidays he deposits a crumpled hundred-dollar bill on the kitchen counter. His voice is tearful.

"My dearest," he says. "You have been a devoted daughter-in-law. God will repay you for your deeds. But I want to leave you a token of gratitude of my own. Go out and purchase yourself the most exquisite pair of silver candlesticks you can find."

From last year's scene with the silver tray, I have learned it was a waste of time to protest. So, I thank him, and say I am touched. But the familiar flutter in my stomach begins: a sinking feeling that I have before the burden of a new expense.

"Now what?" I ask my husband.

"Nothing," he says. "Just go out and buy them."

I buy them. They cost nine hundred and fifty dollars. My

father-in-law's eyes light up when he sees them.

With a straight face I give him the change of one dollar.

"Ninety-nine dollars," he purses his lips. "Expensive, but well spent. Never scrimp on quality, I always say."

Rosh Hashana, the Jewish New Year arrives. I haul my mother-in-law to the synagogue of the local old age home, the only one in town with an elevator. Once, she had loved the service of the High Holidays and used to croon along with the cantor. Now, she sits there as a spectator, in her new black dress with the satin white collar and new black suede shoes. Her eyes shine with excitement. Her cheeks are rosy. She looks like a child at a birthday party.

As Yom Kippur draws near, my father-in-law sighs louder during his meditations and sobs longer into the night.

On Yom Kippur Eve, he sits at the head of the dining room table. His skull—freshly shaven in honor of the holiday—gleams like a smooth billiard ball. He is garbed in his ritual white cotton *kittel,* the one he will be buried in.

"Approach, my children," he says in a trembling voice.

We approach. He puts his hands on the crown of my head. His lips move to say a blessing, but he bursts out crying.

"Dear children," he hiccups. "Pardon me if I ever offended you. I will always be there to solicit God's protection over you. Even from heaven."

My husband joins the crying. I tiptoe out of the room. I have been to this movie last year.

The holiday of Sukkot arrives. Again we are united around the table, set with porcelain and crystal dishes. The discourse soon turns around food. The main orator is my father-in-law. How his mother would never serve to the table a bird without stuffing. The *poulet au naturel* I had served, his tone implies, is nothing but a naked chicken. How the taste of *tschoulent*—the traditional bean casserole—could be improved had I used chicken fat instead of bottled oil. And how could I possibly rob these mushrooms of the exquisite taste of an egg stirred into them?

He doesn't mean to criticize me, I know. It is his aspiration for perfection that prods him to be fastidious.

The day after, my father-in-law is weak. We try to rest his heart as much as possible. My husband, at the end of the meal, extends his arm to him to help him out of his chair. My father-in-law leans heavily on him. His eyes are shut in weariness.

The doorbell rings. My friend Blanca, a truly beautiful woman, breezes in. Within seconds—as if injected with a magical drug—my father-in-law sheds ten years. He slips out of my husband's arm and straightens his body. His eyes are wide open. He takes Blanca's hand in his own, bows low over it and in the clearest, most melodious voice I ever heard coming out of his throat, he says: "Welcome. Welcome," as if she were the Messiah.

I do not find the generosity in my heart to be relieved at his miraculous recovery. Nor am I amused, this time. I am just plain irritated.

"It is time they should move into their own apartment," I insist to my husband that night.

"It will upset my father. You know how bad his heart is."

I snort. "I'll take the responsibility for his health," I say,"He'll be just fine."

In the daytime I had no change of heart. I was out of the door hunting for an apartment right after breakfast. Luckily, something came up almost right away. There was one located just across the boulevard from our building. It was beautifully outfitted with crystal chandeliers and old Hungarian rosewood furniture. It had high ceilings, tall windows, lots of light.

A week later, after lunch, I ceremoniously put into the hands of my father-in-law a key.

"From now on you shall be able to welcome us in your own home," I said.

I expected him to object. But he said nothing. For several days he followed me around with dejected eyes. On the appointed morning, he put on his best navy suit, and selected the walking stick with the silver carved lion on the handle—the one he used only on the Sabbath. He then took his wife's hand in his own and stood patiently waiting next to her wheelchair in front of the door. Her fingers immediately clasped around his, her blue eyes trusting. He looked like an aged man burdened with an old baby ordered into exile for some ill-defined crime.

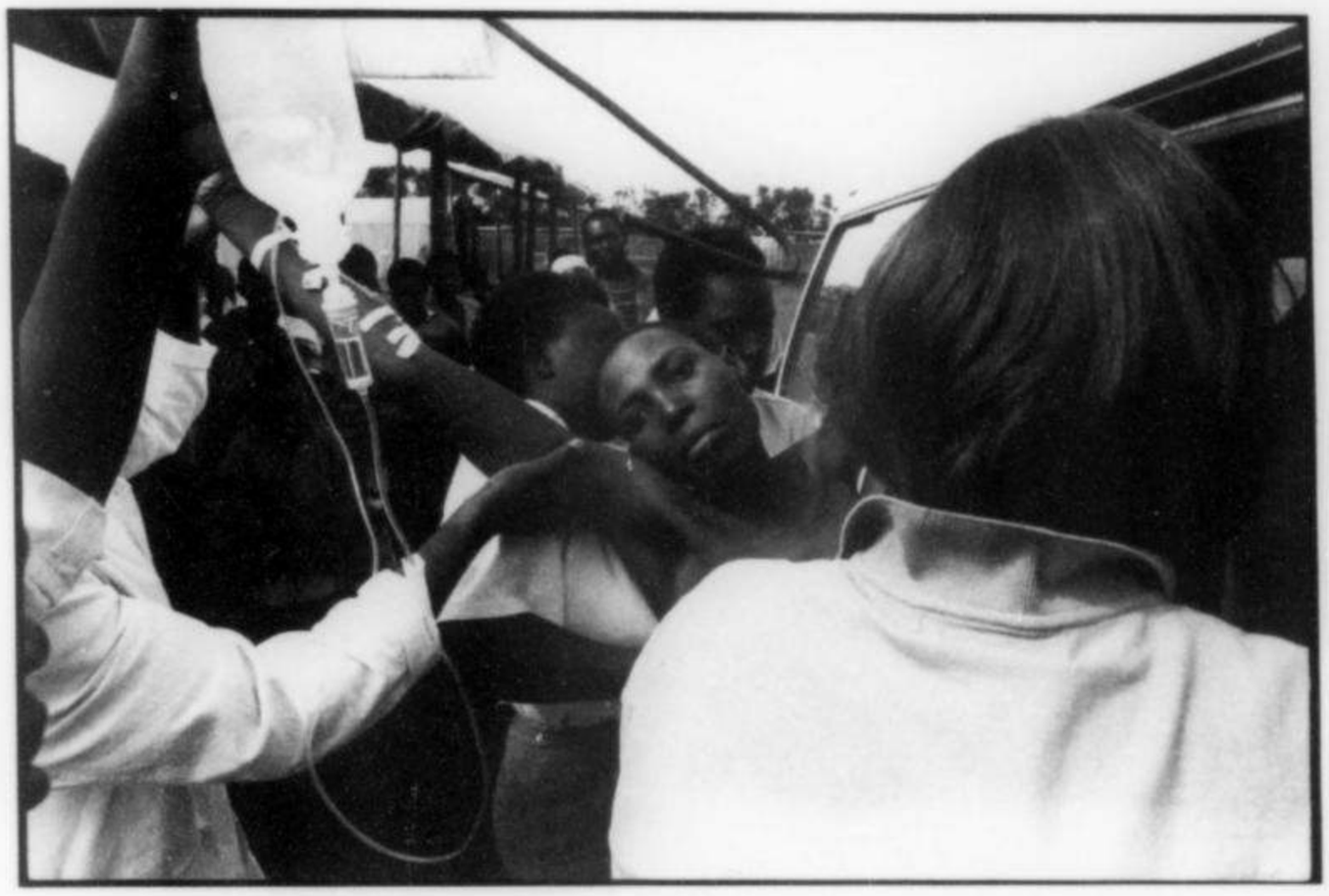
I do not see him shed one tear. Rather, I was the one who cried. Standing at my high window, I watched my husband lead them away and I cried. I knew my children were standing somewhere behind my back, looking at me with an expression I did not care to see. I felt my parents looking too.

I cried while they crossed the street, while the wheelchair was hoisted up and down the curb. I cried when I caught a last glimpse of the billowing green silk and cashmere scarf I had purchased and tied around my mother-in-law's neck for the trip. It waved at me in the wind before falling on her shoulder, and vanished into the house. ✡

Debora Freund, who grew up in Israel, lives in Antwerp, Belgium. She is finishing a master's degree in creative writing at Bennington College. "Damaged Hearts" is an excerpt from a larger essay.

Living with Genocide

Stephen R. Weissman



PHOTOGRAPH BY TELLOV VOETEN/IMPACT VISUALS

The first and most fundamental human right is the right to life. Without it such other rights as freedom of speech and protection against arbitrary arrest are simply irrelevant. In this sense, genocide—the intentional destruction of substantial portions of the racial, national, ethnic and religious components of humanity—is the most heinous of all human rights abuses. In the wake of the Nazi Holocaust, the United Nations established the Convention on Genocide which has been ratified by 106 countries. It confirms that the "odious scourge" of genocide is a crime under international law, one that the signatories "undertake to prevent and punish." Concern about the spread of genocide has also been behind the recent creation of the International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda.

Yet there remains an enormous gap between the expressed commitment of the international community and its actual behavior. In the last five years alone, the world has failed to take timely action to prevent or stop genocide or genocidal acts in Bosnia, Chechnya, Rwanda, Burundi, and now Zaire.

America has contributed to this failure of international law enforcement. As the most powerful and influential country in the world, and the one most open to popular participation in foreign policymaking, the United States could play a critical role in mobilizing cooperative international action. However, despite the post-Cold War dividend of reduced security threats, neither Republican nor Democratic administrations have given priority to protecting the most basic of all human rights. Yet a constructive, multilateral approach to genocide would require neither the wholesale dispatch of American troops nor unending drains on limited foreign affairs budgets. It would not lead to "more Somalias."

In pursuit of a grand but vaguely defined "new world order," President George Bush was unwilling to contemplate even minimal use of NATO airpower against Serbian aggression in Croatia and Bosnia, a step former policymakers now say might have prevented much of the subsequent carnage in Bosnia. And after propounding an impossibly ambitious list of foreign policy objectives (ranging from the promotion of democracy and market economics worldwide to preventing regional conflict and stamping out international terrorism, pollution and drug dealings), President Bill Clinton hesitated for almost three years before initiating the coalition diplomacy and NATO air strikes that helped lead to the Dayton peace agreement. Moreover, an authoritative international study concludes, while up to 800,000 people were being slaughtered in Rwanda in April-June 1994, "By its acts of omission, the United States ensured that neither an effective national response nor a collective UN effort to mitigate the genocide materialized. Citing financial constraints, the United States wanted a bare-bones UNAMIR [U.N. peacekeeping mission] before April 6th, argued for withdrawal soon afterwards, and delayed the authorization as well as deployment of an expanded [non-American] UN force in May and June."

The Canadian Commander of UNAMIR, Major-General Romeo Dallaire, has observed that, "In Rwanda, the international community's inaction contributed to the Hutu extremists' belief that they could carry out their genocide…UNAMIR could have saved the lives of hundreds of thousands of people. As evidence, with the 450 men under my command during this interim, we saved and directly protected over 25,000 people and moved tens of thousands...A force of 5,000

persons rapidly deployed could have prevented the massacres in the south and west of the country...."

I

Probably the clearest illustration today of the tragic spread of genocide and the real potential of the international community to stop it is provided by Rwanda's neighbor, the small Central African state of Burundi. This was by no means apparent as I awoke at dawn in my hotel room in the ramshackle capital of Bujumbura last December. The lakeside city lay tranquil as soft streaks of light uncovered the dramatic hills looming in the distance. White birds drifted lazily over small wooden buildings as the first pedestrians set off on the main road for work. Beyond the city however, in this "Land of a Thousand Hills," the "Switzerland of Africa," a generation-long cycle of genocide was continuing.

A U.N. human rights monitor described to me a rather typical occurrence which she had just personally investigated on a hill called "Murambi" in a northern province. Fleeing from fighting in Eastern Zaire, refugees from the majority Hutu ethnic group returned to Burundi on October 20-21. The minority Tutsi army separated out the men and gathered them in and around a pentecostal church, urging them to "sleep and be calm" as they would be "registered" the following day. "At around 7:30 P.M.," she recounted, "it began to be dark and people started to go to sleep. The soldiers arrived and began to shoot and throw grenades at the refugees. After about an hour they left. About 400 persons were dead [and 200 others wounded]. One of the survivors said he counted 435 bodies. The local administration claimed that the Hutu armed bands did it. They acknowledged 285 bodies in a common grave."

Since 1993, an estimated 150,000 Burundians—2.5% of the population—have been murdered in ethnic-based massacres of civilians. An additional 825,000 Burundians are currently refugees or displaced persons. The Tutsi army has been the main perpetrator, but insurgent Hutu militias and civilians of both ethnic groups have also participated in the killings. As in Bosnia, genocide is by no means the result of ancient tribal hatreds. In fact, there were few violent confrontations between Tutsi and Hutu until about a generation ago. When European colonists arrived in the late 19th century, Burundi was a long-established, decentralized kingdom in which the principal political rivals were branches of a separate group, the *ganwa* or royal "princes of the blood." While the predominantly pastoral Tutsi benefited more from the extensive patron-client system than the mainly agricultural Hutu, and outranked them socially, both groups spoke the same language and shared a common culture. Their economic circumstances were often similar, and intermarriage was common. Even their overall distinction in status was subject to qualification. Some Hutu clans, like the Abahanza which guarded the royal tombs, were quite prestigious while certain Tutsi "bad clans" were forbidden to enter the King's court. Generally speaking, regional and family identities appear to have been more central to Burundian politics than ethnic ones.

Under the influence of colonialism, ethnic differences became more salient. Centralization and economic modernization eroded old ties based on locality and kinship. Most important, Belgian policies in Burundi and Rwanda promoted the political and social domination of the "noble" Tutsi whose "fine bearing alone guarantee them considerable prestige over...the worthy Hutu, less clever, more simple, more spontaneous and more trusting." As elsewhere in Africa, the transition to independence spawned a struggle between politico-ethnic elites that gravitated towards ethnic polarization and authoritarianism. But nowhere was the conflict as stark as in Burundi and Rwanda where only two groups with radically different populations and social statuses—the dominant Tutsi minority comprised 15 percent of each country—faced each other. And no ruling clique was more insecure than the military-based southern Tutsi faction that came to power in Burundi just as its Tutsi brothers in Rwanda were being driven not only out of office but to a large extent out of the country itself.

Since the 1960s, the political process in Burundi has unfolded with the fatalism of a Greek tragedy. After the assassination of Prime Minister-designate Louis Rwagasore, a *ganwa* who had brought Hutu and Tutsi together in the dominant UPRONA party, politico-ethnic conflict contributed to the assassination and severe wounding of two more prime ministers. When it became apparent in 1965 that the Tutsi had prevailed, Hutu leaders attempted an armed coup. This led to the first genocidal acts (3,000–5,000 killed) including the liquidation of most of the Hutu political elite. After another, more substantial Hutu armed challenge in 1972, the regime murdered 100,000 to 200,000 people in three months, a "selective genocide" that targeted educated Hutu.

Following a well-publicized local genocide (up to 20,000 victims) in 1988, international pressures produced a transition to multiparty democracy. However the experiment was short-lived. The Tutsi President, Major Pierre Buyoya hoped that a controlled liberalization would enable him to co-opt enough Hutu support to maintain him and the UPRONA party in power. But the Hutu-led FRODEBU party, and its relatively moderate Presidential candidate Melchior Ndadaye, swept the June 1993 elections. In October, Ndadaye and his constitutionally designated



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PHOTOGRAPH BY WIM VAN CAPPELLEN/IMPACT VISUALS

successors were assassinated by Tutsi soldiers with the complicity of top military officers. This triggered ethnic massacres on both sides (Ndadaye's murder also contributed to the decision by extremists in Rwanda's ruling Hutu clique to eliminate the Tutsi threat once and for all). In a prolonged "creeping coup," Tutsi leaders used force and intimidation to drive FRODEBU Presidents into a series of increasingly disadvantageous "power sharing" agreements. A former FRODEBU Cabinet Minister, Leonard Nyangoma, organized the CNDD, which created the most threatening Hutu insurgency yet using bases in Eastern Zaire. Last July, the military stepped in and formally reinstalled Buyoya as President.

Thus what began as a conflict for power among political elites has gradually become a recurrent life-and-death struggle among ethnic groups. Periods of violence, political scientist Rene Lemarchand writes, are driven by "the conviction held by both Tutsi and Hutu that unless the other's crimes are retaliated against by retribution, planned annihilation will inevitably follow." Both groups have created impressive "mythico-histories" to justify their political positions. These incredibly detailed and divergent explanations of ethnic group origins, body-types and social and political behavior go far beyond even the serious differences between blacks' and whites' perceptions of reality in the United States. And now these deadly "mythico-histories" have been transplanted to Zaire, recently renamed the Congo. There victorious Zairian Tutsi rebels, supported by the Tutsi regimes in Rwanda and Burundi, fought and massacred a mixture of Rwandan and Burundian insurgents, genocidaires and civilian refugees.

II

For more than 30 years, the international community has been unwilling to take strong and sustained action against the cycle of genocide and support moderate forces in Burundi. Nothing illustrates this more clearly than the response to the 1972 bloodbath, the first clear genocide since the Holocaust. A small number of African leaders, notably President Julius Nyerere of neighboring Tanzania and Organization of African Unity (OAU) Secretary-General Diallo Telli privately remonstrated with Burundi President Michael Micombero. But the OAU's Council of Ministers, reflecting the continent's dictators' anxiety about creating a precedent for foreign intervention against a sitting government, told Micombero it was "convinced that, thanks to your saving action, peace will be rapidly re-established, national unity will be consolidated, and territorial integrity will be preserved." This message, a West African delegate confided, "could be interpreted more or less to suit the desires of the recipient."

The U.N. belatedly dispatched a mission to Burundi which at least produced a public and authoritative confirmation of the massive death and suffering. But U.N. officials did not follow up with specific requests for international action to stop genocide; instead, they focused on appeals for humanitarian assistance to the survivors.

The overall response of Burundi's Western donors is best summarized by the title of a contemporary Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Report: "Passing By." Here, for example, are the soft expressions in a letter which was delivered to Micombero at the very height of the massacres by the U.S., Belgian, French and German Ambassadors:

"As true friends of Burundi we have followed closely with anxiety and uneasiness the events of these last few weeks. Thus we are comforted by your having constituted groups of wise men (elders) to pacify the country, and by the commands which you have given, to repress the arbitrary actions of individuals and groups, the private vengeances and excess of authority."

After the 1988 events, the American Congress, Belgium, the European Union and even the World Bank threatened to withold further aid unless the Government moved towards reconciliation with its Hutu citizens. Dependent upon foreign assistance for a quarter of its GNP, the regime undertook a top-down program of liberalization. But when Burundi's fledgling democracy collapsed in 1993, the West once again stood by. France carried on with its military aid program—part of its effort to project "grandeur" in world politics even at the price of alliances with the least savory regimes in Africa—and other donors kept their economic spigots open. It was not until the Spring of 1996, as the Hutu-led CNDD insurgency grew, that the West signaled its dissatisfaction by suspending aid. By then however, both sides had become more strongly committed to military actions. (While the conflict in Zaire eliminated most CNDD bases in late 1996, the insurgency is now well-established in Burundi and able to maintain some access to the outside through porous borders.) As in Bosnia and Rwanda, the only promise of progress now lay in a determined diplomatic initiative backed up by strong economic, military and political sanctions.

III

Two such initiatives have been launched over the last 18 months. Interestingly, both have been African-led but received only half-hearted support from the Europeans and, most critically, the Americans.

In February 1996, U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali suggested that a group of member countries should consult together and provide military forces for possible rapid deployment to deter wider massacres and protect

vulnerable groups and installations in Burundi. This "contingency planning" was designed to reinforce ongoing African and other diplomatic efforts to foster dialogue between the contending forces, and to ensure that the U.N. would not again stand by, as it had in Rwanda, if violence worsened. In U.N. parlance, Boutros-Ghali was threatening Burundi with "peace enforcement," an international military intervention even without the consent of the warring parties. With the end of the Cold War the U.N. has authorized or undertaken peace enforcement operations in the Persian Gulf, Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia and Rwanda. But in each case, the critical determinant of success or failure has been the political will of the five permanent members of the Security Council—especially the U.S.—to use their diplomatic clout and resources to organize, rapidly deploy, and maintain an adequate multinational force.

Concerning Burundi, France declined to put up any ground troops and promised only to "consider" other financial and logistical assistance. Paris's ties to the Burundi Government and continuing embarassment over its controversial military role during the genocide in Rwanda controlled its decision. The only other member of the "Perm 5" with a strong interest in Africa was the U.S. Still smarting from its military debacle in Somalia, the Americans also refused ground forces, but offered the U.N. other military support including "urgent and tanker airlift". Thus the fate of Boutros-Ghali's proposal depended upon the willingness of the U.S. to use its influence with other countries to assemble a multinational force. While several African states (including Boutros-Ghali's Egypt) offered or were likely to provide ground troops, the key was to obtain specialized contributions (particularly in such areas as command and control and mobile deployment) from such experienced Third World countries as South Africa, Zimbabwe, India and Pakistan and perhaps smaller European nations and Canada.



Within the U.S. Government a stalemate quickly developed over this issue. One side, led by National Security Adviser Anthony Lake, argued that it would be imprudent not to do "contingency planning" in light of the situation in Burundi and possible political pressure to "do something" if violence worsened during the upcoming U.S. presidential campaign. The opposition was spearheaded by the Joint Chiefs of Staff who were anxious to deflect any new demands on forces they already viewed as stretched by commitments in Bosnia, worried about the messy political tensions that could tie down even a non-U.S. force, and fearful that the United States could somehow get increasingly drawn into the conflict. The eventual compromise can best be described as pseudo-contingency planning. Without identifying any real military units from specific countries, the United States handed U.N. peacekeeping officials a set of "planning assumptions" including a mystery force of 20,000 troops that would enter Burundi within six months and establish three "safe havens." According to U.S. officials, the "plan" largely ignored such key issues as command and control, potential Burundian hostility, and alternative strategies to protect civilians. In short, the U.S. had produced "contingency planning" that was devoid of any practical military significance. As time went on, other countries noticed the corruption of language involved. "Let me be frank for once," a leading European Ambassador to the U.N. confided last fall. "The contingency has superseded the contingency planning. Contingency planning is something that is being done because we are not really ready to intervene yet."

The other major initiative marked a notable reversal of African states' past reluctance to intervene against the continent's human rights abusers along with the recognition that the rest of the international community was paralyzed. Since late 1995, a half dozen or so East and Central African "Great Lakes states," supported by the OAU, the Carter Center, and the Belgian Government, have launched a determined campaign to force a negotiated political settlement in Burundi. Despite sometimes differing economic interests and political tendencies, they have persistently negotiated out a common Burundi policy:

- They drafted former Tanzanian President "Mwalimu" (Swahili for teacher) Nyerere to facilitate negotiations among all parties to the confict. Although Nyerere, who has long experience with Burundi issues, admits he has little concrete to show for his efforts, he has been able to hold ever more inclusive meetings with the key actors, civilian as well as military, and to establish what one participant describes as "a better psychological atmosphere." Meanwhile, the Community of Sant' Egidio, a lay Catholic group in Rome, began mediating between the military regime and the guerillas to achieve an agreement on "principles" and a cessation of hostilities that would usher in broader-based political negotiations under Nyerere. Nyerere's prestigious involvement ensures that Burundi continues to receive high-level attention from the regional states.

- They responded to Burundi's surprise June 1996 request for regional military assistance with plans to send (with anticipated Western financial support) at least 10,000 troops to guarantee security and facilitate political negotiations. In contrast with Boutros-Ghali's proposal, this was to be an invited intervention and one that also had the explicit

PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIC MILLER/IMPACT VISUALS

purpose of bolstering Nyerere's political mediation. Of course, fear of an uninvited U.N. force—as well as rising insurgency and persistent lobbying by Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni for regionally-assisted military reform—helped generate the Burundi appeal. Although the request was politically ill-prepared, and the July 1996 Tutsi-led military coup led to its withdrawal, the region's willingness to provide substantial military forces to enforce a political solution is critically important for future peacemaking efforts.

- They reacted to the Buyoya coup with comprehensive economic sanctions, later modified to exempt "humanitarian" goods like seed, fertilizer, food, medicine, and educational and construction materials. Sanctions would be lifted only after the government restored a measure of constitutional legality and entered into meaningful political negotiations with armed as well as unarmed parties. Despite leakages (particularly from Tutsi-led Rwanda), the embargo has tripled the price of gasoline, hamstrung Burundi's tiny industrial sector—the Bujumbura beer company that accounts for 40 percent of Burundi's tax base has often worked at less than 50 percent of capacity—and lowered revenues from covert exports of coffee and tea. It has undoubtedly contributed to the government's willingness to begin talking with the CNDD.

Behind this new dynamic lies a new generation of African politicians led by recently elected Presidents Benjamin Mkapa of Tanzania and Museveni of Uganda. While their regimes vary in their commitment to multiparty democracy, these leaders' experiences have convinced them that systematic violence and coups produce massive refugee flows and political instability in neighboring countries, that basic moral values have a prominent place in foreign policy, and that they need to act jointly to resolve many of their problems.

The new regional diplomacy should make it easier for key Western countries to support action against genocide in Burundi since it promises to minimize their military and political burden. Nevertheless the French have remained aloof. America has been more helpful. Yet its responses have been constrained by the foreign affairs bureaucracy's general tendency toward incremental negotiation ahead of pressure, and by the Pentagon's continuing reluctance under the "Powell Doctrine" to support even other countries' intervention in politically sticky, non-strategic countries.

"Tony Lake said yes, if there's a coup, we'll isolate them," related one frustrated, high State Department official. "But we did nothing. We said these are good guys. We didn't adopt sanctions. Our credibility is not so hot." After initially opposing sanctions as an inappropriate and ineffective form of pressure against the "not-so-extreme" Buyoya regime, the U.S.—influenced by the new Presidential Special Envoy to Burundi, former Congressman Howard Wolpe—finally came down behind the regional sanctions. But it soon began to lobby each of the regional states to relax the embargo to "reward" Buyoya for superficially meeting some of the requisite conditions. Had the Africans not maintained their remarkable unity behind sanctions last fall, they would have condoned the Buyoya Government's evident drift towards a military solution. High Burundi military and civilian officials assured me in December that they would not countenance real negotiations with the insurgents until they had turned the military balance strongly in their favor. And the U.S. has thus far failed to offer the regional states needed help in monitoring and obtaining international enforcement of sanctions, including the critical oil embargo against the government and a recent ban on arms supplies to both sides.



Washington did set forth its own plan for a Burundi-oriented, Western-financed Africa Crisis Response Force (ACRF). Designed without adequate consultation with African or key European states, the ACRF failed to address the key regional concerns of reducing the carnage and facilitating peace negotiations. Its mission was to be confined to assuring the delivery of humanitarian aid in a few "safe areas" to people fleeing genocide elsewhere. "It would be a shame if our soldiers sat around and watched," complained a disappointed East African military leader. Lacking support from its prospective partners, the ACRF was subsequently demoted from a force to a training initiative. Thus the U.S. is currently doing no contingency planning for supporting the largely African military force that will be a *sine qua non* for an eventual political settlement in genocide-torn Burundi.

IV

If the U.S. wished to become an active partner with others in fighting the spread of genocide in the world, it would first have to re-examine reigning definitions of "national interest" in foreign policy. Like many fashionable methods of political analysis today, these are posited on an overly selfish model of human behavior. The "realist" school of international relations, which rose to prominence in the worst years of the Cold War, defines the national interest as a state's accumulation of power to assure its survival and way of life in an anarchic world. As Cold War tensions faded, "globalists" preached that states

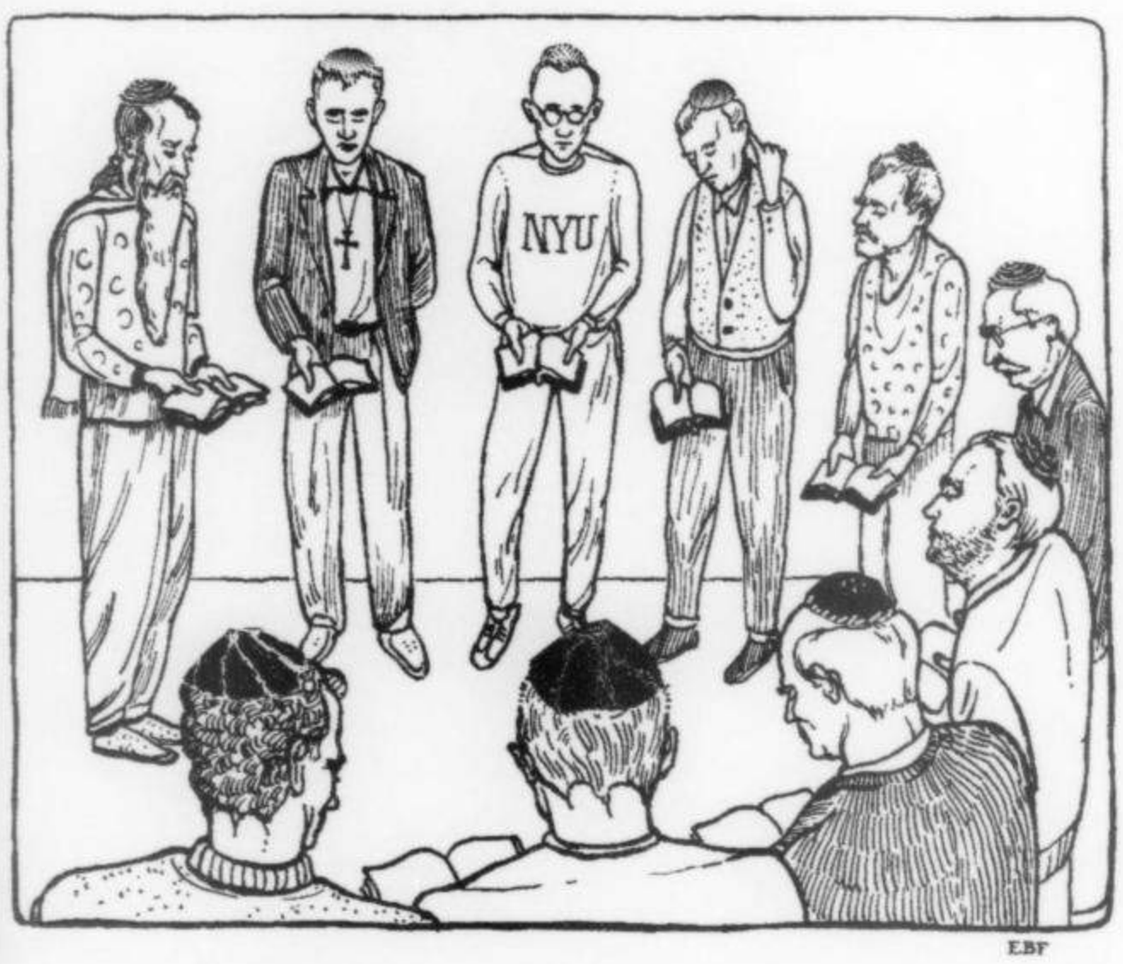
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FICTION

Minyan

Eliezer Sobel



ILLUSTRATIONS BY ERIC FIELD

One by one we file into Finkelstein's living room (Finkelstein, the big shot): Goldberg comes with me, Greenblatt and Weissbaum show up together, everyone glum. Abramowitz and Breshman arrive smelling of bagel, then Bernstein in his Hindu get-up with the orange shawl; Berlinsky in his sport coat like he's selling office supplies; finally Moscowitz, looking pathetic. And that's it: ten men, we have a minyan. The herring and the sponge cake can wait; we have to say Kaddish for Lipschitz.

Freddy Lipschitz, dead at thirty-five, found in a bathroom with a needle dangling from his arm. Who knew he was still shooting? Not me or Goldberg, certainly. Not Abramowitz. No one knew. Okay, Bernstein knew, because Bernstein had his Turkish connections and his hashish friends with their Tibetan Book of the Dead routine. Bernstein supplied him with the stuff. But none of the rest of us knew.

Poor Freddy, miserable his whole life anyway—everyone secretly felt he was better off. A guy with his talents, his gifts, still living with his parents. Broke, out of work, no direction, hadn't touched a woman since the Beatles broke up. Plus ugly, pock-marked, big nose, a guy you'd be uncomfortable seeing in a public restroom. Death couldn't be all bad for Freddy Lipschitz.

Now, to the point: assembled in Finkelstein's (the big shot's) living room are ten Jewish men. And kibitzers every one of them. Listen to me, already mouthing off:

"Jesus said, 'Wherever two or more are gathered in my name, there will I be also.' The Jews never had it so easy. They had to gather ten or more before God would show up. Nine other shleppers in the room and what you say counts. Otherwise your deepest soul cry is considered idle chatter upstairs. You want to talk to Jesus that's a different story. You could be in the back room of the Ramrod Club shtupping a stranger in the behind and it counts as two or more. But you want the king of Abraham and Strauss to listen, you need a minyan… is this right?"

Nobody is listening. They are all preoccupied with Freddy, and with the spread Finkelstein's wife has laid out on the dining room table, a little snack for the boys after Kaddish. Delicious-looking platters from Petaks. Kosher dills like they are going out of style. A feast for Freddy; heartburn for the dead.

But the point—what I'm driving at—is this ten men business. Because we were all, each and every one of us, once little Jewish boys. Bingo! That's it. That's the whole story. Because first things first, what do we know about all little Jewish boys? They all had Jewish mothers. Bingo! On the nose! That's *really* it. Now that covers the whole story: the chicken soup, the ear muffs so you don't catch cold, the be carefuls and the watch outs, the fear of Gentiles and Germans. Plus the unmentionable factor of a built-in wild sex drive for Christian women, the girls who never drank Manishevitz, who can't pronounce the 'ch' in challah or chanukah, blonde girls that make your mouth water. But how to explain this to Mama who wants you should marry someone like your fat cousin Sylvia and be a *shlump* in a chair the rest of your life stuffing your face on potato latkes? You can't, and you don't. So as close to their mothers as Jewish boys usually are, is also how distant they can be when they become men. And this—this distance from their mothers—can cause lots of problems. Emotional problems, I don't have to tell you. *Tsores* in relationships—don't even ask. Ten Jewish men with

emotional problems like nobody's business.

Take Goldberg, a case in point—a composer, a doctorate from NYU no less—thirty-eight, still no wife, no kids, running after a shiksa who tells him she'll only marry him if he can promise to come up with $80,000 per annum. Why? Because "she likes clothes," she says. This is Goldberg the composer we're talking about, not some putz from Long Island who sells shoes. Goldberg, the man who read all seven volumes of Proust and will liberally quote from them to complete strangers—"Ah, there is no such thing as a bad choice in love, because if there is any choice at all, it can only be bad." (Goldberg made a bad choice.) Goldberg, the man of culture, vitality, generosity and principles, who waited on tables for a living until he was thirty-six, who is reduced to tears by Olivier's King Lear. What does he know from money? Or clothes? He wears an NYU sweatshirt night and day. Even on first dates, he never thinks about how he looks, greeting a new woman with a dirty wrinkled handkerchief dangling from one hand, not afraid to perspire in mixed company. Not like me with my deodorants and scents, my musk oils and breath mints. Goldberg could stink to high heaven and still charm young music students with his sheer enthusiasm.

But this is the woman he wants to marry, come hell or high water. Why? We don't know. All we know is that at the beginning they were spending entire weekends in bed and Goldberg confessed in a moment of sexual candor, that he was "learning to receive." What does this mean? Phil Goldberg finally learns to enjoy oral stimulation? Anal? Is this a reason to marry a wardrobe nut? I don't think so. A little poke in the tush is not a life commitment. You don't propose over a blow-job.

Goldberg had a paper route, for crying out loud. To this day, you drive with him through the old neighborhood in Jersey and he'll still show you each house on his route: "There, the Vilinsky's," he'll say, "the house on the corner, the Alexander's; across the street, the Miletti's—lousy tippers" and so forth. Anywhere in East Lake, New Jersey that he ever tossed a *Daily Record* from the basket on his Schwinn, he remembers today like there was going to be a test.

Why am I telling you all this? Because Goldberg was a boy who counted his pennies—Jewish boys didn't have paper routes, ordinarily. That was for the Velano boy, the Dominguez kid—Phil was the exception. So this is not a person you demand an $80,000 income from, somebody who ran his *kishkes* off, sweating profusely, serving fifteen tables at a time to pay his way through a doctoral program. Plus all the student loans, the work exchanges, the graduate assistantships, the stipends—what he didn't do to make ends meet. Not your typical, well-to-do East Lake Wilner–type Jew (me) who to this day has no resume and never had to work. (Only to say now that even when the bucks finally stopped coming from Dad and it looked like I would have to get a job, what happens? Uncle Moishe eats a little too much sour cream and has a heart attack and leaves me twenty grand to keep puttering away at finding a life. But I am taking steps: I received an invoice in the mail recently which stated, "This copy is for your personal files," and I panicked. I had no personal files. I ran out that very day and came home with a huge filing cabinet, which remains empty except for that one invoice. At least I know where it is now.)

No, Goldberg doesn't know from money. He's in student loan payments over his head, and you think a Ph.D. in composing music is a gold mine? Forget about it—there are no "composers needed" in the want ads. This is not a marketable skill by a long shot.



In short, Goldberg has to scrape together $80,000 a year or kiss his *shiksa* good-bye. We all say kiss her good-bye and relax: "The way you live," we tell him, "you can get by on fifteen grand a year, twenty tops if you leave the house once in awhile."

But what do we know? Do we know what goes on in the bedroom? We don't. Do we know what shapes and drives a Jewish man's appetite for women? That we all know something about. Even Bernstein, with his long beard and the statues of Shiva all over, knows something about it. Even Berlinsky with his paper clips and catalogues, Moscowitz and his chiropractors. Even, God help us all, Weissbaum, the idiot with his baseball cards, knows about this. But we can't help Phil Goldberg. It would be the blind leading the blind.

Maybe his mother could have helped. All of our mothers could have helped, if they let us once go to school with a runny nose, once let us keep our shoes on in the house, once let us go out with wet hair. (Where is it written that you *must*, you *have* to, catch a cold if you go out with wet hair? The perversions these ideas lead to in adult Jewish men: walk by my house in the dead of winter, sub-zero temperatures, see me dangling my head full of wet hair out the bathroom window, laughing maniacally.) Maybe if our mothers, God love them all, didn't spray the whole house with Lysol every day, if they hadn't started in with the lectures about intermarriage in the seventh grade—

"But Mom, I'm only taking Mary-Anne to the Thanksgiving Dance, we're not getting married."

"Never mind Thanksgiving, this is where the trouble starts, don't tell me."

Who knew, at age twelve, that there could be a direct link between little Mary-Anne Hamilton and Adolf Hitler? But there was. The innocent Sunday school cross around her neck

may as well have been a swastika—to anyone who survived the war, as my mother did, the two symbols ran together as one, both representing a single, fearful "other" in whose presence we needed to be cautious, alert, and forever on guard. I wouldn't really understand this until about thirty years later.

Ah, who knows? What's done is done, and our friend Phil Goldberg has himself an expensive girlfriend and there's no talking him out of it. But I've known Goldberg for thirty years and it's very disheartening to see him so anxious all the time. Goldberg never knew from anxiety. That's my domain, and Greenblatt's, the anxiety experts. Like Eskimos with their seventeen words for snow, Greenblatt and I know the subtle gradations and textures of anxiety, from mild paranoia upon meeting someone new, to the unbearable sense of dread in the pit of your stomach upon awakening each morning (for no particular reason, it could be a Saturday, doesn't matter). Greenblatt and me, we know anxiety. That's our department; we're skilled in that area, we have a sense of mastery in our field—we can even diagnose and prescribe: "What's the problem? Sweating buckets at job interviews? No problem, you wear sweats and make like you've been jogging, they think you're a fitness buff, you can sweat all you want… you don't like that, take half a Xanax twenty minutes before the interview with just a drop of Peppermint Schnapps."



Jerry Greenblatt, with his nervous habit of picking at his ear with his pinkie all day and then smelling his finger—he has anxiety. Me, thirty-seven, who nearly blacks out when anyone asks, "So what do you do?"—I have anxiety. Not Phil Goldberg. Over a television show maybe, but never anything for real. A sit-com, yes: will Ricky find Lucy hiding in the closet? Watch Phil bite his nails. (For a serious hoighty-toighty academic composer Ph.D. *macher*, he was a TV nut.) Will Oscar notice that Felix cleaned up his sock drawer? See Phil stop breathing. But life? For Phil Goldberg? No problem. Nothing he can't handle with a good-natured remark and a friendly gesture. Getting out of bed in the morning? Nothing to it, for Phil: "That's what you're *supposed* to do in the morning." He doesn't understand me, or Greenblatt. Job interviews? They have him managing the place before he finishes filling out an application. Charming, affable, generous. So maybe now you understand why I'm just a little disturbed to see him not only anxious, but bordering on tormented!

Yes, tormented. Torment is Moscowitz's department. Okay, sure, Greenblatt and I are no strangers to torment, but we generally stay on the periphery, hovering anxiously, fearing the descent into all-out torment. But Moscowitz is Mr. Torment, his soul tangled and anguished and desperate, all the lost opportunities, the too-lates and I'll-nevers, his dead child and estranged wife, the genital herpes and the back that twenty chiropractors couldn't help, spends half his life lying down, feeling lousy and thinking horrible thoughts. And worst of all—it'd be better if he was an atheist—he believes in God but thinks God hates him. Not a happy man, Moscowitz. And eating nothing but cakes and rich foods and sour creams like my Uncle Moishe, God rest his soul. He's trying to kill himself with Jewish food.

So enough already. Phil Goldberg is in rough shape because his girlfriend likes clothes. That says it all. In a few weeks, God willing, after this Lipschitz tragedy blows over, I'm going to see him, take him out for a nice lasagna—the way he likes to munch down the *goyisha* food—and I'm going to knock some sense into him. What have I got to lose? I've known him for thirty years, what, he's going to be mad at me? So let him be mad… after thirty years, let him be a little mad.

So "*Yisgadal v'yisgadash sh'mei rabbaw*: May His great Name grow exalted and sanctified… " And so forth—we intone the traditional mourner's Kaddish for Lipschitz and move over to the dining room where Finkelstein's wife Lilah has laid out a spread. But delicious stuff: cold cuts, pickles, fresh rye bread, cream sodas, you thought you were in a deli—at Petaks, maybe. Typical of Finkelstein, the big shot. Any of the rest of us would have picked up a dozen bagels, a container cream cheese and thrown it on the table. Not Finkelstein with his wife from Great Neck and her lazy susan filled with Nova Scotia lox, schmaltz herring and sardines, like one kind of fish isn't enough for ten Jewish guys? Who even needs fish when you have the corned beef and tongue, the cole slaw and baked beans? Not me. Moscowitz, that's who—lying on the floor in the corner with two plates of food like he's expecting company.

Does anybody notice, besides me, that the cream in the herring is dairy, on a *fleishic* table? Nobody. Or maybe nobody *wants* to see it, or they don't think it's important. If anyone should be aware, it's Finkelstein himself—his mother kept kosher just like mine—but the big-shot makes his own rules, looks the other way, the *gantse knaker* with his split-level house and the swimming pool, the rest of us in apartments, rentals, shares, walk-ups, adjacents. Only Finkelstein went suburban, out of everyone. And how could he not with a girl like Lilah and her Great Neck-orthodontic background? He had no choice. The only joy I get out of it is noticing—you can't help noticing—Lilah is getting fat. Absolutely no question, Finkelstein's Long Island princess, slowly but surely, is blowing up like a balloon in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade—serves the big *macher* right.

But I see the creamed herring standing out on the meat table like a Negro at Packanack Lake Country Club. Why am I so acutely aware of these things? Because I never had a cheeseburger until a gorgeous Gentile woman dared me in college, the mixing of milk and meat like a wicked sex game I couldn't resist. I never had bacon, pork chops, baked ham, lobster, shrimp, no veal parmigiana, not a glass of milk at the dinner table unless it was fish or Saturday night dairy—the hard-boiled eggs, halved or quartered, cottage cheese, plates of radishes—but no milk with meat in my house, ever. So there's no way you're going to sneak a creamed herring platter onto a table of cold cuts and have me look the other way.

But you gotta leave well enough alone… what kind of crime could a cheeseburger be, God, when you put it next to child molesting, or gas chambers? Can you really compare? I don't think so…a slab of red meat with a nice slice American cheese—not so terrible, in the big picture. But those little pink squiggly-looking shrimps people eat, that I'm not crazy about. I don't think I'm missing anything so fantastic or wonderful there… those I won't even taste (too pink, too squiggly).

I approach Mindy Lipschitz, Freddy's overweight sister, to express my condolences.

"How're you doing?"

"How should I be doing? Not so good. I was just thinking about how Freddy so loved a good deli sandwich, and now we have all these beautiful platters from Petaks and he's not even here to enjoy it. It's just so sad."

I'm staggered by the mourner's psychology. The man's whole life, in the end, comes down to a hot pastrami on rye with a little mustard. On his tombstone they will write: "Beloved son and loving brother; enjoyed smoked whitefish." Just hearing Mindy Lipschitz mention the word "deli" in connection to Freddy's death throws me, and I start "going off" as Greenblatt calls it, but at least I have the good sense to wait until Mindy's out of earshot.

But I go off nonetheless: "My friends," I say to Bernstein and Weissbaum, "we are all but individual *noshers* in the collective Jewish unconscious… the Platter is bigger than any one of us; it was served before we were born, and Petaks will deliver after we're gone… do you follow? This is not merely about food; this is sponge cake as Holy Sacrament, Manishewitz the Jewish communion: I am the body of Abraham, I drink the blood of Isaac, I go into business with Jacob—catering the Jew's Divine calling, hundreds of rock cornish hens on the sacrificial altar, the ritual slaughter of prime ribs, the 12 caterers of Israel… before I studied Zen, a *knish* was just a *knish,* and so on. Freddy is dead, Mindy Lipschitz is fat and insane, and the cold cuts lie there, broken-hearted, but *constant*. Am I making sense?"

"Mindy's insane?" Bernstein says.

"Try the salami and eggs," Weissbaum says.

"I *nosh*, therefore I am," I conclude.

And now eavesdrop on Greenblatt's conversation:

"So the old guy turns to me—I don't know him from Adam—we're at Petaks, waiting by the counter with our numbers, and he says, 'My wife and my doctor tell me not to eat this food, but the bagels with the *shmear,* the brisket, the kasha, it's so delicious, I *have* to eat it.'"

Always the comedian, telling his stories, even at a friend's Kaddish. Better to laugh than tear your hair out when you can't do anything about it. Will being somber bring Freddy back? Do any of us really want him back? I mean truly? If it meant putting him up in any of our apartments, would any of us agree to take him? I don't even want to think about it. Maybe Finkelstein and Lilah would take him in their fancy schmancy guest room. It's not even right to discuss such a thing—Freddy was a good boy, just a little *meshuga*, confused. What are you going to do? For a lot of us a lot of the time, the world is a horrible place. I'm no exception, believe me. I think about Freddy and say to myself, "There but for the Grace of God go I." It's not easy, this living business, this human being stuff. It's no picnic, believe me.



Finkelstein holds up a shot glass:

"L'chaim, everyone, in memory of Freddy."

He sees me not drinking.

"Go ahead Wilner, it's on me."

What kind of thing is that to say in your own house? Of course it's on you, Finkelstein—what, you usually charge your friends for a glass of schnapps? You just want to remind us who's paying for Freddy's shiva spread? With your salary you can afford some cold cuts for old friends, without rubbing it in our faces. But no? I say nothing. Better.

"*Namaste*," Bernstein says. It's a Hindu greeting, like *shalom,* but where does this guy come off, with a name like Bernstein, pulling this wandering *sadhu* routine? Claims he walked around India for three years in a loin cloth, no money or shoes, hanging out with beggars in Benares, the guys with no arms and legs, the lepers. He told me they were some of the happiest people he'd ever met.

"Why happy?" I asked him.

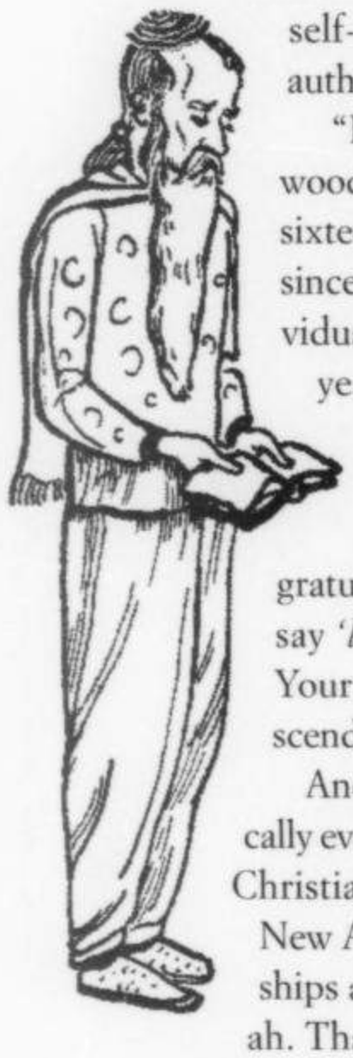
"Because they were God-ecstatics and when you're intoxicated with the Divine it transcends all conditions."

We all know how Bernstein transcends his conditions—he must spend upwards of a hundred bucks a week on pot, mushrooms, you name it. He comes back from India three years later with a beard down to his *pupik* and it's no more

Alan Bernstein, it's "Arjuna," he tells us. How they got Arjuna from Bernstein I can't figure out. So Arjuna, the Jewish Shiva-*bucher* greets everyone with *namaste* and stands there with a roast beef sandwich dripping with mustard in one hand, his mala beads in the other—little prayer beads like a rosary. He moves the beads with his thumb and repeats a word to himself for each one, a *mantra,* a name of God: "Ram," the Hindu Big Cheese. Alan Bernstein, Arjuna, the *sadhu* drug dealer; he didn't enlighten our Freddy any by selling him smack, that much I know.

But he's not the only one to renounce his heritage. Finkelstein himself, as Jewish as homemade gefilte fish in a thick jelly sauce, with a few pieces raw carrot, his parents Aushwitz survivors no less—but does Finkelstein think of himself as Jewish? Not on your life:

"I'm a Transcendentalist, in the tradition of Thoreau and Emerson. I believe in a Supreme Cause but self-reliance and personal integrity are the only authorities I answer to."



"Finkelstein, you spent three days alone in the woods on an Outward Bound trip when you were sixteen, and you've been hocking us about it ever since, trying to pass yourself off as a 'rugged individualist.' Thoreau lived at Walden Pond for two years, and they didn't give him an emergency whistle and Tiger Milk bars. He didn't read philosophy books, he chopped wood and fished… ah, why am I wasting my time? Congratulations, you're a Transcendentalist, only don't say *'l'chaim'* to me, say 'To the Supreme Cause.' Your parents should have only known from Transcendentalism at Auschwitz."

And it's not only him and Bernstein—it's practically every one of these guys: Berlinsky, the born-again Christian; Greenblatt, the Sufi; Moscowitz with his New Age clap-trap; and Weissbaum, poor guy, worships a Taiwanese minister who says he's the Messiah. That leaves Abramowitz, Goldberg and Breshman. Abramowitz watches television; I'll tell you about him later. Goldberg's an atheist. Breshman? That's another story.

For years I tried to talk God to Breshman. I thought he might be the one friend I could bring back to Judaism. In fact, every one of us with our religious causes tried to win Breshman's vote, and to every one of us he gave the same answer:

"Oh, I did that already."

"You did what, Breshman?"

"Judaism…I did it. The whole bit, the *tefillin* in the morning, *davening* three times a day, two sets of dishes, timers on all the lights for Sabbath, *b'ruchas* like they were going out of style, plus, all the guilt for the 613 things you're supposed to be doing that you're not doing or *not* supposed to be doing that you *are* doing…yeah, I did all that already. It wasn't fun."

"Breshman, Judaism isn't something you do, and you're done with it, like two years in the service. It's who you are, Breshman, your *kishkes* are Jewish. That's like saying you already did 'being a man.'"

"Yeah, I did that."

"What?"

"I did being a man already—you know, having a wife and two kids and a house in the suburbs where things break and you're worried all the time about everything and you hate your job and you go to conventions and flirt with other men's wives or maybe see a hooker once in awhile because you're totally bored in bed with your wife and the kids play in the sprinkler and you take out health insurance and fire insurance and theft insurance and life insurance…I did all that already. It was no fun—too much insurance. So I quit."

He gave the same story to all the rest. To Greenblatt, who tried to make him a Sufi:

"I did that—the whirling dervish bit, the *la illaha il allah* for hours, tossing your head around in *zhikrs*, drinking tea with sheiks, telling Nasrudin stories…I did all that already. Too many head movements…made me dizzy."

To Berlinsky, the Jesus freak with the crew-cut:

"I did Christianity—the whole nine yards: I let Jesus into my heart, I loved my neighbor as myself, I took on the cross, I was saved, I was born again, I said Kyrie Eleison and Hallelujah, I lost my life so I could have it, I confessed, I repented, you name it, I did it. I turned the other cheek…I couldn't handle being a sinner. Punishment's too severe. Not for me."

And so forth. You couldn't find the thing Breshman hadn't done. Of course the truth was he hadn't done any of these things. He just knew enough about each one to imagine it all and then dismiss it, and in his mind, it was as good as if he had actually experienced it all. Probably was, too.

I remember the end of one of these conversations, when I finally got who Breshman really is:

"So, Breshman, you did it all already…tell me, what's your story? What do you do now?"

"I like to ski and play tennis."

And that's it. You got seven religious nuts, counting me, Abramowitz who watches TV, Goldberg the atheist and Breshman the ski and tennis bum. It's a minyan: ten Jewish men, saying Kaddish for Freddy Lipschitz.

Freddy, a member of the Baha'i faith. ✡

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Jewish Ethics and the Palestinian-Israeli Problem

Gidon D. Remba

"God told Moses to make war on Sihon (Deut. 2:24), but Israel did not make war; they sent messengers of peace (Deut 2:26). God said,'I ordered you to make war, but you made overtures of peace.' 'There is no peace,' says the Lord, 'for the wicked.' (Isa. 48:22). How great, then, must be the words of peace, if Israel disobeyed God for peace's sake, and yet God was not wrath with them." (*Tanhuma B., Debarim,* 3b)

"Great is peace, as the whole Torah was given in order to promote peace in the world, as is written: 'Her ways are the ways of pleasantness and all her paths are peace.'" Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah.*

Under the leadership of Likud Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the Government of Israel relinquished most of Hebron to Yassir Arafat's Palestinian Authority, agreeing to withdraw from other portions of the West Bank in stages by mid-1998, and to embark on the Oslo Accord's plan for negotiations over a final resolution to borders, Jewish settlements, Palestinian refugees and the status of Jerusalem. No sooner had Netanyahu taken a first step towards pragmatism—dealing a death blow to messianic Greater Israel ideology—than did he paint the dismal tableau of a final settlement: pre-empting, prior to negotiating, all Palestinian claims to East Jerusalem with the Har Homa *fait accompli,* serving up so meager a West Bank withdrawal that Palestinian aspirations for statehood seemed all but emasculated. Re-opening in Pandora's Box a reprise of the *intifada*, thus did the apostle of "peace with security" bring Israel neither peace nor security. Yet the Netanyahu Government's reluctant embrace of the Oslo process has evoked vociferous criticism from the Israeli and American Jewish Right. Is the political Right *morally right?* What does an ethically defensible Jewish position require of us?

The Palestinian-Israeli problem poses a profound challenge to our moral sensibilities as Jews, Zionists and human beings. Should Israel retain military control over most or all of the West Bank and Gaza Strip with its two million Palestinian Arabs, in the name of security or theology, as the Right insists? Or should Israel promote Palestinian autonomy, even statehood in some form, as the Israeli and American Jewish "peace camp"—and a clear majority of the Knesset and Israeli public—maintains? Ought the Jewish marriage to Jerusalem—historical, religious, emotional, political—accommodate Palestinian human realities, symbols and hopes? Are we, as Jews, obliged to pursue reconciliation and peaceful co-existence based on mutual recognition of rights to national self-determination? Must we betray our Judaism—as some conservative critics contend—in order to embrace Western Enlightenment values of liberal democracy and respect for human rights? Jewish ethics must guide us in deciding among these competing claims and commitments.



PHOTOGRAPH BY BILL BIGGART/IMPACT VISUALS

Outline for a Jewish Ethics

The concept of equality owes its origin, in large measure, to the very genesis of Western moral thinking in the Hebrew Bible, in the doctrine known in Hebrew as *"b'tselem elokim"*: Human beings are created in the image or likeness of God (Genesis 5:1). Coupled with this is another principle, which the rabbis of the Talmud held could be derived from that of humanity's Divine creation: You shall love your neighbor as yourself (Leviticus 19:18). For if all human beings are created by God, then we are commanded to love all men and

women no differently than ourselves. The idea of the kinship of humanity expresses this dual truth. Rabbi Hillel summed up the Torah in this supreme commandment: "What is hateful to you do not do to your neighbor: that is the entire Torah; the rest is commentary; go and learn it." (Tractate *Shabbat* 31a) The Love of Neighbor Principle has become known as "the Golden Rule." Some critics allege that this principle in the Torah strictly refers only to one's own countrymen, so that a Jew's neighbors in a Jewish state would be his fellow Jews. The text itself gives the lie to this thesis, a scant fifteen verses later: (Lev. 9: 30–34): "When a stranger resides with you in your land, you shall not wrong him. The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as one of your citizens; *you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt."* The Love of Neighbor Principle in the Torah has universal form, encompassing Jew and non-Jew alike. To those who would cite a contrary anti-humanitarian reading of Jewish ethics from biblical or rabbinic sources, we must recall the interpretive principle urged by the medieval Jewish philosophers Maimonides and Saadia Gaon: there can be only one truth. If a given reading of Scripture conflicts with the results of rational reflection, it must be understood in such way as to harmonize with reason. We know, through human reason, that all human beings have—or deserve to be treated in accordance with—equal rights to life and liberty. By this logic we can conclude that any scriptural reference which appears to conflict with what we know to be a moral truth must be read so as to accord with it. We must give primacy in our hierarchy of Jewish values to traditions which reflect the moral truths of equality and human rights.

The Love of Neighbor Principle, in its original universality, is pregnant with implications for an ethical system, based on human reason, the principles of which every person—atheist or theist, Jew, Moslem or Christian—must follow. Why must one follow the rules of such an ethics? Because every moral judgment or claim I make for myself or my own group, every right I arrogate to myself, implicitly contains a rule which forces me to apply my values in a universal way. If I have rights to life and liberty in virtue of my worth as a being created by God—or because I am capable of rational reflection and free autonomous action—so then does any being who has this quality, on the very same grounds. While every rule has exceptions, these must be *general,* applicable indiscriminately to anyone who fits the bill. Unless the scope of my claims for myself and my own group can be consistently generalized to all similarly situated persons, I cannot successfully justify any benefit I hope to appropriate for myself and my own circle. The moral point of view is defined by this root idea, originating in the Hebrew Bible, of the equal worth of all persons. In enjoining me to love my neighbor as myself, the Torah is propounding the radical view that any "other" is worthy of equal love and respect as "I". I can no longer give preference to myself (or my own nation or group) in virtue of the immediate and profound experience I have of my own (or my people's) needs and desires, in contrast to the more remote inferential knowledge I have of others' "foreign" feelings and needs. To adopt this impartial view about my own needs—or those of my people—is to take a moral stance toward them. The failure to do so represents what Amos Oz has called "moral autism."

Jewish Ethics and the Palestinian-Israeli Problem

Since the Six Day War of 1967, many religious nationalists in Israel and America have placed the sanctity of the Land of Israel above the moral imperative to seek and make peace with our Arab neighbors. The belief has taken root that the capture of Judea and Samaria (the West Bank) by the Israel Defense Forces was a divinely sanctioned act which must not be reversed for practical reasons (e.g., security, non-belligerence treaties) or for any other religious value (e.g., peace, moral relations between Israel and other nations) as it is a fulfillment of the divine will and a harbinger of the messianic era. In this messianic idea, the world is redeemed not through acts of loving-kindness or righteousness, nor through lives immersed in the totality of the commandments, as the Torah and prophets urged on the people of Israel, but through the apocalyptic exercise of Jewish national military power and dominion over the land. By contrast, many traditional Jews hold that *righteousness—tsedek*—is the primary value in Judaism. It behooves the religious zealots to recall another, more fundamental, biblical requirement: "Justice, justice shall you pursue, *that you may live and occupy the land..."* (Deut. 16:20). Justice, in man's relation to man—Jew or non-Jew, individual or nation—is viewed in traditional Judaism as the *condition* of the Jewish people's living in the land of Israel: "You shall faithfully observe all My laws and all My regulations, lest the land to which I bring you to settle in spew you out." (Lev. 20:22) We make the land holy only by living a holy life, guided by a recognition that all people are "carriers of divinity." At the heart of the Jewish messianic idea is a belief in the renewability of the human spirit, in the possibility of a world governed by the spirit of God where, in the words of Rabbi David Hartman, "violence and bloodshed... dehumanization and humiliation no longer deface the divine image in human beings." The Talmud teaches: "the whole of the Torah... is for the purpose of promoting peace" *(Gittin,* 59b).

It is ironic that such American Jewish critics of the peace process as Norman Podhoretz of *Commentary* magazine

characterizes efforts at reconciliation with the Palestinians as "so premature that they could be thought of as a secular version of the sin known to Judaism as 'forcing the end.'" "Forcing the end" refers to the following of "false messiahs," attempts by Jews to bring about the messianic redemption of the world through improper means: what could be a better description of the settlers in their messianic zeal to reinvent the Jewish state in the graven image of Greater Land of Israel geo-theology? And who in our time are better deemed "false messiahs" than the rabbinic leaders of the settler movement, in their abandonment of Judaism's moral core and prophetic vision of peace and justice?

The commandments "You shall love the stranger as yourself" and "You shall not wrong or oppress a stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Exod. 22:20) illuminate our moral responsibilities towards the Palestinians who live under Jewish rule. To rule, however benevolently, over nearly two million Palestinian Arabs who wish their own civil and political autonomy is to commit an oppressive act. For to deny the right to freedom and self-determination of another individual or people is surely to wrong and oppress them.

- The Jewish people claim a right to political self-determination in our own territory.
- This claim is based on our sharing a culture, history, language, geographic proximity (in Israel), and on our religious and cultural sense of peoplehood, heightened by our experience of persecution as a people.
- The Palestinian Arabs share a common culture, history, language and geographic proximity, and maintain a cultural sense of peoplehood. That sense is also magnified by their tragic experience as refugees.
- We saw that a rational Jewish ethics, based on the Love of Neighbor Principle, implies that for an action or belief to be genuinely moral, we must be able to generalize its underlying principles to all other relevantly similar people: if I have a right to *x* because of quality *y,* so does anyone else have a right to *x* if they too possess quality *y.*
- The Palestinian Arabs therefore too have a right to political self-determination in their own geography.
- Both peoples, Palestinian Arab and Jewish, have this right to national autonomy and statehood. One cannot be a consistent Zionist without also being committed to Palestinian Arab political rights.

Now the Right may protest: "We do not justify our national rights to sovereignty over the Land of Israel on the basis of common culture or language or a sense of peoplehood. Our claim rests on God's gift of the Land to the Jewish people. Hence we do not have to generalize from your assumptions." As we have seen, this maneuver has already been blocked: the biblical justification for Zionist national claims in Eretz Yisrael must be tempered by the countervailing Jewish values of peace, justice and love of neighbor. The Jewish state may exercise its historical connection to the Land only to the extent that it does not conflict with these higher Jewish moral values. This may mean relinquishing sovereignty over *some* areas of biblical significance—including Arab neighborhoods in East Jerusalem (a position the Labor party is now considering, according to the May 1 edition of the *Jerusalem Report*). Whether it chooses the religious or secular universe of discourse, the pretension—whether Palestinian or Jewish—to absolute hegemony over the land is checked.

- For historical reasons, both peoples inhabit the same parcel of land: Palestine-Israel.
- This creates two limitations on each people's right to political autonomy and statehood:

  The rights of each to autonomy are limited by the basic rights of the other. Israel, for its part, cannot exercise its political autonomy by annexing the West Bank and Gaza, and its Palestinian inhabitants.

  Palestinian political autonomy, in turn, is limited by Israel's right to self-defense and security, which preclude certain activities from a Palestinian polity: raising a large army, producing or importing heavy weapons, controlling Israel's water resources or the airspace west of the Jordan River, importing millions of refugees. "But everything else," in the words of Netanyahu advisor David Bar-Ilan, "Israel neither wants to, nor can, interfere with… There's very little doubt that the Palestinian entity will call itself a state, and that the world will recognize it as such." (*New York Times,* January 19, 1997)

Labor leader-in-waiting Ehud Barak has now lent his support to a new plank in the Labor Party's platform which, for the first time, does not rule out the possibility of a demilitarized, limited-sovereignty Palestinian state. Netanyahu may have unofficially acquiesced in such a state, but has sabotaged its viability by insisting that the Palestinians abandon their hope for the majority of the West Bank (*Jerusalem Post* interview, May 3, 1997). This is an invitation to dead-end negotiations, dealing the *coup de grace* to the peace process. Nor does it square with the original Oslo bargain, which stipulated Israeli transfer of the West Bank and Gaza to the Palestinian Authority, with the exception of Jerusalem, settlements and "specified military locations." Having been led to the well of Oslo by Labor expecting to drink of a more sumptuous solution, the Palestinians may well forestall agreement, destabilizing the situation until the Israeli electorate—disillusioned with Netanyahu's lack of success, nauseous from another heaping helping of political and military instability, and the economic downturn it fuels via foreign

investor skittishness and depressed tourism—turns Netanyahu out, to give Labor an opportunity to offer up a more thirst-quenching brew. As Israel's Chief of Military Intelligence has recently warned (*Ha'aretz,* May 11, 1997), Netanyahu's choice is clear: revive the *intifada,* or realize a final settlement with a Palestinian state in most of the West Bank and at least a symbolic foothold in Jerusalem, the original promise of Oslo.

Labor and Likud Knesset leaders have already agreed to a joint document calling for "an independent Palestinian entity," forming the basis for a national consensus. Few in Israel harbor the illusion that one can permit Palestinian political autonomy without an inevitable evolution into some form of Palestinian statehood. During Labor's reign, while in the Opposition, Benjamin Netanyahu himself predicated his rejection of the Oslo Accord and Palestinian autonomy on this very argument. (See Benjamin Netanyahu, "Fighting Terrorism," 1995, p. 104.) Comments Mark Heller of the Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies at Tel Aviv University: Support in Israel for a Palestinian state "is now so conventional that any government that endorses it—especially a Likud-led government—will enjoy the support of a working majority in public opinion." (*JP,* February 1, 1997) The latest polls show 51 percent of the Israeli public accepts it. Judah the Pious, a medieval Jewish mystic, cautioned: "On the Judgment Day, the Holy One, blessed be He, will call the nations to account for every violation of the command 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself' of which they have been guilty in their dealings with one another." This vision of justice and equality, of universal human rights, compels us, Israelis and Jews, to promote co-existence and mutual respect for political autonomy and self-determination for both the Jewish and Palestinian peoples.

Rejoinder to An American Jewish Conservative

Norman Podhoretz's latest salvo in a long rhetorical battle against conciliation with the Arabs appears in his recent contribution to *Commentary,* (December 1996) "The Tragic Predicament of Benjamin Netanyahu." Podhoretz believes that Netanyahu's "tragic predicament" lies in inheriting a peace process which is no longer reversible. He is convinced this places Israel in "mortal danger," for "this process [will] bring not peace but another major war." Why? Because Podhoretz holds that Palestinians and Arabs alike still regard Israel as illegitimate, and remain "determined to rectify the injustice… by wiping the Jewish state off the map… Guided by this perspective," Podhoretz interprets "what looked like moves toward peace by the PLO not as a change of heart or mind but rather as a change of strategy. Instead of relying on the old hope of destroying Israel in one fell military swoop, the Palestinians were now putting their faith in the 'strategy of stages' (also known as the 'phased plan'). It was a strategy that called for them to establish first a foothold, and then a state, on as much territory as they could get the Israelis to surrender, and finally to use it as a base for future terrorist or other military operations which, on one pretext or another, the whole Arab world would join in a mighty effort to achieve a final solution of its Israel problem."

What is Podhoretz's evidence for this spin on Palestinian intentions? He finds it in the speeches of Arafat to his people. But if we are to trust the rhetoric of leaders as a guide to their actions, Netanyahu would still be building new settlements in the West Bank, and holding steadfastly on to the Greater Land of Israel. Both Arafat and Netanyahu engage in hardline rhetoric as a fig-leaf for their actual practices, which zigzag from immoderate to moderate, but in any event never rise to the extravagance of their slogans. Podhoretz reads political speeches much as fundamentalists read the Bible—with an overweening literalism. He is insensible to the role of internal political rhetoric in neutralizing the opposition of those segments of Palestinian society which have not yet signed on to the peace process. Seeing the world through ideological blinders, rather than through the lens of pragmatism, the Palestinian-Israeli problem seems intractable.

In the "ideological" perspective, a perfectionist standard is applied to judging the emerging relations between Israel and the Arabs. Perfectionism expects absolute change on command, historical brakes that can stop on a dime; any flaws are considered sufficient for abandoning the project. Podhoretz is quick to remind us of the cases in which Palestinian police killed Israelis during the protests over the opening of the Jerusalem tunnel entrance, construing this as evidence of pure Palestinian perfidy: pack up the peace tent, the experiment has failed. That in the majority of instances these very police protected the Israelis from harm goes unmentioned. Nor do critics of Oslo trouble to acknowledge that cooperation between Palestinian and Israeli security services has—according to Israel's own testimony—prevented numerous acts of terrorism. Their analysis of the problem is flawed, for several reasons. First, it fails to grasp that peace is a gradual, long-term process, to be built over one or more generations; it is not an instantaneous change. Devoid of historical sense, Oslo's critics discount the role of evolutionary progress in Arab-Israeli relations. Genuine peace evolves through growing trust between peoples and governments. Such growth may not be entirely linear, but its unmistakable forward thrust must never be overlooked. Because we cannot create the full "warm peace" suddenly, in one giant step—eradicating with a stroke of the pen entrenched cultural antagonisms and prejudices—we should not in desperation

declare the process a sham, disguising the *true* hostile intent of the other side. The reality is more complex than either/or. Hostile rhetoric, even sporadic extremist violence, will continue as we move along the path to peace. That violent resistance to change cannot be magically excised from Arab or Israeli society overnight should come as no surprise. Peace is not about falling in love at first handshake; only the naïve reproach the peace process for failing to convert the Arab masses into philo-Semites (or insist on such conversion as a precondition.) There will always be a reason for Podhoretz and the Right not to compromise, not to reconcile with the other side. Until the last radical Islamic state, the last extremist Muslim Palestinian faction, vanishes from the earth, Podhoretz is apt to fear peaceful co-existence as the portal to catastrophe. Critics of the "cold" peace with Egypt (who generalize to Oslo) forget that, for all its shortcomings, it has inaugurated the longest period of non-belligerence in history—a quarter century—between Israel and the largest Arab state, saving countless Jewish lives. It has freed the Jewish state from suffering a single major war of survival like those of 1948, 1967 and 1973. Israel, I believe, stands at this same threshold today with the Palestinians.

Second, we must look more closely at the PLO's failure to fully amend its Charter to remove the ultimate goal of a state in all of Palestine. Having recognized "Israel's right to exist in peace and security," Arafat may be holding the amending of the Charter as a final bargaining chip in exchange for Israel's acceptance of a limited-sovereignty Palestinian state. At the same time, he may well not have sufficient support as yet in the Palestine National Council to amend the Charter. When the Israeli Labor Party under Rabin and Peres, which devised the Oslo Accords, was voted out of office by the Israeli electorate in 1996, and replaced with a Likud Party which avowedly opposed Oslo, can we, in fairness, begrudge Arafat if he too still lacks sufficient support for this step? Third, Podhoretz's view of war suffers from a gratuitous, if dangerous, fatalism. There is no outcome which would serve either to confirm or disconfirm his world-view. If war is the inevitable result of an unabated Arab rejection of Israel, then war will ensue whether Israel pursues peace or continues subjugating the Palestinians under military occupation—so everything is permitted, as Dostoevsky lamented. And so long as there is no war, Podhoretz can always insist that the appearance of peace is nothing but a masquerade, an artifice disguising the Procrustean bedrock of conflict which is about to bubble up. In this way, the pursuit of peace becomes a Zen paradox, a Chinese finger puzzle—the first step can never be taken. And the Sisyphean cycle of hate becomes a self-perpetuating prophecy, a whirlwind from which there is no escape.

If war or terrorism should occur during or after the peace process is consummated, Podhoretz will countenance no other explanation than that the Arabs intended it all along. In fact, the true causal workings which foment violence are ignored—provocations by religious settlers, Hamas suicide bombers, a confidence-sabotaging Netanyahu government, a radical Arab state intent on stirring up the poisonous pot of pan-Islamic or pan-Arab unity. Can extremists like Islamic Jihad, Syria, Iran or Iraq attack Israel after a peace agreement is implemented with the Palestinians or even with the Arabs as a whole? Of course. Will this prove that the peace process was a chimera and that "the Arabs" never sought peace? Of course not. The outcome of such a war is bound to be favorably influenced for Israel by peaceful relations with Egypt, Jordan and the Palestinians. We already have seen indications of this in the first years after the Egyptian-Israeli peace accord when Israel fought Syria and the PLO in Lebanon—in an act dubbed by Begin as "a war of choice," not necessary for self-defense—and Egypt refrained from attack. Israel's muscular economy, invigorated foreign investments and new trade and diplomatic relations with Arab, African and European nations have been widely attributed, in no small measure, to the Oslo process. The exponential growth in Israel's markets which Palestinian-Israeli rapprochement augurs can only strengthen the Jewish state as an economic and military power. At the same time, the Bank of Israel governor has already warned that the deterioration of the peace process is responsible for a decline in foreign investment.

What, then, of the argument that territorial compromise and the emergence of a demilitarized Palestinian state threaten Israel's security? We must consider two radically different concepts of security: The Right supports a narrow vision of Israel's security under which the Jewish state is most secure if it has potent armed forces, and maximum territory, irrespective of the strategic political, economic and moral implications of this tack. Supporters of the peace process embrace the broader, more justifiable concept under which Israel's security is maximized not only by military strength but by developing more stable political relations with the Palestinians, which, in turn, attracts high levels of foreign investment and trade, at the same time transforming Israeli society from an ethically precarious position to one which is in harmony with its Jewish moral values.

What effect did the lethal cycle of *intifada* have on the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), the vaunted protector of Israel's security? Would the morale and cohesiveness of its citizens' army have been enhanced had it not lost the moral high ground during this uprising? Indeed, Israel's State Comptroller has now released a report calling attention to an alarming lack of combat readiness in the IDF's reserves, a decline

which began in 1989, at the *intifada's* zenith, when reserve units were involved in "security work" which distracted them from their primary mission of defending the state from major military attack. Would so many Israelis have died, and even more been wounded, had Israel rescinded military administration of Arab towns in the West Bank and Gaza earlier, moving its forces to strategic defensive positions, as it is now doing? Let us recall that the *intifada* did not end with a military solution, despite the extraordinary efforts of the IDF from 1987 to 1993. It was ended by political solution: the Oslo Accord. Former IDF Chief of Staff Dan Shomron told the Knesset: "there is no such thing as [militarily] eradicating the *intifada* because in its essence it expresses the struggle of nationalism." With the uprising and its attempted suppression a continuing source of vicious Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the potential for wider strife with other Arab states increased. This led Tel Aviv University's Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies to conclude that a demilitarized Palestinian state would provide Israel with greater overall security than the "unstable status quo." Along with other critics from the Right in Israel, Podhoretz urges the Jewish state to return to this very status quo—which he dubs "tolerable" and livable—or to stop the peace process in its tracks. Likud Knesset Member Meir Sheetrit responds: "The result of freezing the process would be a descent back to the conditions that existed at the beginning of 1992, when Israel was for all practical purposes at war with the Palestinians." Rabbi Moshe Bleicher of Hebron warns: "I don't see the process as irreversible. The battle we face has not ended... We'll do our part, and the Almighty will do his." (*NYT,* January 29, 1997) Might the Jews of Hebron try to sabotage relations between Israel and the Palestinians there, provoking violence in the hope of drawing Israeli forces into re-occupying the city? And if such an eventuality comes to pass, will Podhoretz cynically claim that this too proves the Arabs' unremitting hostility toward Israel, and that peace, in his Orwellian doublespeak, equals war?

During the late 1970s, when I translated his Knesset speeches for the foreign press, no less a security hawk than then-Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan advocated that Israel unilaterally withdraw from Palestinian Arab population centers in the West Bank and Gaza, and institute civil and political autonomy. Dayan did not seek Palestinian recognition of Israel's right to exist, or proof of benign Arab intentions, as a pre-condition for his plan. Imagine, if you will, what an alternate history of Israel in the 1980s and 1990s would have looked like had Dayan's advice been followed: with no Israeli troops or military administration in Arab cities, the *intifada* might never have come to pass. What impact might this have had on the level of rancor between Palestinians and Israelis? Where might we be today in the process of reconciliation? In just-published conversations from 1976, Dayan reveals that "the conquest of the Golan was a historical error, a result of lust for conquest and greediness for land by the farmers in the north; that most of the border clashes with Syria ("more than 80 percent") were caused by Israeli provocations; and that [Rabbi] Levinger's piratical settlement in Hebron was a 'disaster.'" (as summarized in *Ha'aretz,* May 4, 1997) This re-evaluation of one of Israel's secular orthodoxies and founding myths—that Israel must not withdraw from the Golan for the sake of peace lest innocent farmers be fired on again by the Syrians—does not transform the Arab-Israel conflict into one between righteous Arabs and evil Israelis; the Arabs, including the Syrians, retain a wholesome share of responsibility for their own bellicose refusal to compromise with the Jewish state, and the blood and fire it has wrought. It does *demythologize* the conflict from a metaphysically irreconcilable struggle between perennial, blameless Jewish victims and anti-Jewish genocidal Arabs, into a more prosaic battle over political power and land which may be amenable to resolution in the real world.

If we wait for Arab attitudes to change on their own, while permitting ourselves to act toward the Palestinians in whatever manner we choose—as Podhoretz would when he urges Israel to preserve the status quo of the occupation—we perpetuate the illusion that Israeli conduct towards the Palestinians has no effect on Arab behavior. *And we thereby risk prolonging the conflict, holding back the very change in attitude that Podhoretz claims to be awaiting.* The question responsible Jews should be asking is: What policies will foster growth of the pragmatic Palestinian moderates over the radical Islamic rejectionists? If Podhoretz or Netanyahu worry that after withdrawing from the West Bank, civil war will ensue and Hamas prevail, I would urge them to consider whether martial control and the *intifada* contributed to the growth—or decline—of Hamas and radical Islamic politics among Palestinians. What is more likely to enhance the appeal of the radical Islamic message to Palestinians? An ongoing Israeli military occupation in most or all of the West Bank, the continued shackling of Palestinian national dignity, with all that entails in violent protest, brutality and death on both sides? Or viable Palestinian political independence, an end to Israeli military dominion, and the first fruits of coexistence and prosperity for both Palestinians and Israel? Which vision will, in the end, corrode and which ennoble the soul of Israel, its true source of strength? ✡

Gidon D. Remba served as Foreign Press Translator in the Israel Prime Minister's Office during the Begin-Sadat era. He is presently writing A Guide To the Morally Perplexed: Universal Ethics in a Jewish Key, *from which this essay was condensed.*

JUDAISM

Names For Rabbi Aaron, z'l

Reuven Goldfarb

When I was twelve, thirteen, and fourteen years old, I became increasingly obsessed with painting my name on the walls of the bunks where I lived for eight weeks every summer. I was not the only camper at Delwood to enjoy this pastime, of course. As we grew older and moved from bunk to bunk each year, we were surrounded by more and more names, some of ancient vintage and some more recent. Starting out a new camp season, it was only a matter of time—and the availability of contraband art supplies—before my friends and I would catch the immortality bug and place our names alongside the more venerable entries. The appearance of a can of paint and a few brushes, purloined from the arts and crafts shop, gave us the opportunity to perpetuate our names and the years we spent in those dingy wooden cabins by inscribing the information on the unfinished interior walls.

I must admit that I probably outdid everyone else in my zeal. With neatly printed, high-contrast letters, I covered every available blank space with "Robert Goldfarb, 1954 (the year I first arrived at Camp Delwood) –1959" (probably the peak of my self-memorializing activity, at age fourteen).

So it was when the rabbi got wind of our decorating schemes and paid us a call, I was the person he first addressed. "Robert," he intoned, "Do you write your name on the walls at home?"

"No," I answered.

"Then why do you do it here?"

No answer.

"Do you want me to ask your parents to pay for painting it over?"

"No."

A short lecture followed on respecting other people's property; then the rabbi left. We hadn't really had a discussion, and perhaps he didn't really want one. I sensed no curiosity on his part about my motivation.

But I think I know now why he was so uptight. I was carrying out, for free, what his grown-up congregants were paying for.

It first hit me, big-time, when I visited my late parents' synagogue, Congregation B'nai Chaim, during a trip to their last neighborhood, Murrieta Hot Springs, California. You want to know who writes on walls, rabbi, in shul? Adults. And not with paint. Engraved in brass and in stone, on walls and over doorways, on office and classroom doors, on the very chairs in the sanctuary, on the covering for the bima, and on the curtain in front of the ark!

Everywhere that there is room to write, rabbi, some Jewish adult pays to have a loved one's name inscribed, carved, or embroidered. Yes, rabbi, I know, many of these are memorial plaques, reminders of sainted or ordinary people gone except in memory; held onto, through gesture, by a survivor. That's the Jewish way.

But I, rabbi, not only hadn't paid a single penny—I had attempted to glorify myself, to perpetuate my name. No wonder you were so indignant. What had I done to earn the right? ✡

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for laughs in almost exactly the same way the old *Mary Tyler Moore Show* used to. If you had just tuned in, you might have thought that Ellen was trying to find a way to tell everybody that she had lied about Joe Namath coming to visit, or some comparable device.

Ellen should not be faulted for this. Television shows, especially comedy shows, are built on the ability of their creators to read broad consensus among the vast viewing audience. Ellen's coming out represents a slight movement of homosexuality toward the cultural center, but it doesn't break any new ground. Social ethics in practice are a day-to-day business which is better expressed in ritual forgiveness of series characters at the end of sitcom episodes than in the labored moralism of the Christian Coalition and ACT UP. Decency in America remains the path of least resistance. Americans aren't inclined to seek beyond simply treating each other well. Ellen bet on that; to her credit, and to ours, it appears she bet right. ✡

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could now pursue an even wider range of domestic benefits (from trade and non-proliferation of weaponry to pollution and drug controls) through cooperative international agreements. Neither conception recognized that a state and its citizens could have an "interest" in the welfare of the broader human community. Where altruistic impulses burst through, as in the areas of human rights and democracy, they were usually labeled "values" which might be pursued until they conflicted with real "interests."

In practice, American foreign policy frequently ignores this artificial distinction between "interests" and "values." How else can one explain why half of our foreign aid budget has been going to assure the survival of Israel while more influential Arab states sit on top of much of the world's oil, or why we reversed our policies towards the tyrannies in South Africa, the Philippines and El Salvador? And why after all should such controversial policies as expanding NATO to meet vaguely defined and remote security threats in Eastern Europe or increasing exports to China to benefit a small minority of Americans be considered inherently more important to our "interests" than working with others to save hundreds of thousands of men, women and children we see being murdered in Bosnia or Central Africa? Furthermore, in an age of global communications, an altruistic policy today can become a utilitarian one tomorrow. Timely intervention against genocide in Bosnia or Rwanda—if accompanied by well-conceived long-run policies—would have saved the international community billions of dollars it poured out in heartfelt humanitarian aid. More important, an erosion of the international standard against genocide in Burundi, Rwanda and Zaire could well have a negative impact on future violent conflicts in more "strategic" areas like South Asia, Eastern Europe, and North Africa.

Despite their negative reaction to our politically ill-conceived and poorly explained unilateral intervention in Somalia, Americans do not reject multilateral diplomatic and military action against genocide. For example, they favored NATO air strikes against the Bosnian Serbs years before President Clinton took decisive action in 1995. Moreover, each time the administration took a public stand against aggression the polls showed greater public support for military action, including the provision of U.S. troops to extract U.N. peacekeepers and the use of air power to protect "safe areas." Recently, 70 percent of Americans favored arresting Bosnian Serb indicted war criminals even if there are some American casualties. Several months ago, administration officials quietly went to Capitol Hill and discovered that conservative Republicans were disposed to support U.S. aid for African peacekeeping in Burundi.

Nevertheless an organized, political constituency for cooperative international action against genocide has not developed. One reason certainly is that many liberals and progressives are rightly skeptical about American intervention abroad. During the Cold War, U.S. policymakers freely invoked moral and liberal imperatives for intervention but often ended up bolstering tyrannies and privileged elites. Also the post-Cold War world has featured violent ethnic and religious conflicts, usually in regions with which Americans have little affinity. Addressing these strange and daunting conflicts can seem like a truly Sisyphean task.

Still, citizen mobilizations against unconditional military assistance to Central American governments and "constructive engagement" with the apartheid regime in South Africa, along with public support for military peace enforcement in Bosnia, suggest that liberals and progressives will back economic, political and, if necessary, military pressures where there is hope of fostering reasonable political solutions. And while resolving genocidal conflicts requires greater emphasis upon military means, the end of the Cold War permits broader regional and multinational participation in, and supervision of, such operations. As for the supposed intractability of these conflicts, there is no reason to believe that the comparatively recent advent of a form of black apartheid in Burundi is inherently harder to understand and address than the centuries-old system of white domination in South Africa. Why should we throw up our hands before the prospect of genocidal massacres in a Bosnia or Kashmir when we can conceive of peaceful solutions to the Arab-Israeli conflict?

A foreign policy that gave higher priority to genocide and other serious human rights abuses could be founded not only on our memory of the Holocaust ("Never Again") but also on our own history of struggle for civil and human rights. Something similar seemed to be on the mind of Uganda's Minister of State for Defense, Amama Mbabasi when we met late last year. "Basic to the national interest of Uganda," he explained, "is regional stability. Burundi affects our immediate neighbors and us too. But even more basic to our interest is our own experience with human rights. We subscribe to the view that the concept of territorial sovereignty does not apply where human rights are concerned. We have never forgiven the world for Idi Amin." ✡

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PHOTOGRAPH BY CRISPEN HUGHES/IMPACT VISUALS

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themselves with her in both misery and ecstasy. She invited them to come on a two-month voyage into the self, into their hearts, unearthing dormant emotions, stirring the imagination. She invited her companions to accompany her because she knows that after this voyage their lives will be rich and unfathomably deep, and that through them she will live.

She invited her companions into Eternity.

GRANT

He said, "Go." He sent her away two months and she departed, she and her companions, and bewailed her virginity on the mountains.—Judges 11:38

Yiftah opened his mouth for the last time with one word, "Go."

Bat Yiftah and her companions roamed the mountains, and their emotions soared high and dropped low, as did the land they passed over. They tasted and saw colors and had visions that made them weep and laugh and sing. Their skin became rough and caked with earth, and then they would find a glistening spring, shed their clothes and be reborn over and over again. Many days they wandered in silence, communicating with touch, with glances, with vibrations of their souls. They tumbled down hills, bruising knees and breaking fingernails. They hunted and sunk their teeth into roasted game caught with their own hands, savoring the natural spice.

Bat Yiftah wandered away from her companions sometimes and lay out on a dune, staring at the magnificent dome of night with its splay of stars, and she would cry until she felt dried up. She would curse at her fate, her father, and at heaven until she passed out with her face in the sand. Then she would wake and curse some more, and wander until she felt the sun would kill her. She watched in wonder a father bird filling his feathers with water to bring to his chicks. Bat Yiftah returned to her companions, dry tracks of tears on her dark face, dirt in her stringy hair, and a gentle radiance in her eyes. And they welcomed her back with embracing and dancing and sobbing.

She whispered, "It's not fair." They answered, "We love you."

FULFILLMENT OF VOW

At the end of two months she returned to her father who did with her according to his vow which he had vowed and she had known no man.—Judges 11:39

Yiftah had sent her away two months (*sh'nei hodashim*)... and at the end of two months (*shnayim hodashim*) she returned. For her father, this time had no end. His vow swung upon his heart like a door with broken hinges. Yet when he saw his daughter returning, it was as if eternity had been cut short. He saw his lineage snap in two. For Bat Yiftah, the two months had finality and closure, like a final *mem*. Indeed, her two months in the wilderness contained within them the forty years the Israelites had wandered. A journey from slavery to revelation to freedom. She felt a profound peace as she returned, listening to the desert's constant soft hum.

When Bat Yiftah returned, her spirit did not. It remained wandering the dunes, where nothing could claim it. Her father spoke no word to her, and she did not speak to him. Indeed, he hardly recognized her as his daughter, with her blackened face and tangled, sun-streaked hair. She had a startling beauty, both wild and celestial. She lay herself down and closed her eyes, and saw all the while, behind her lids, the beauty of the mountains, the grandeur of the desert, open, cleansing, free. She had known no man as she had known this wilderness. No man knew her, for her name and her spirit were hidden in the heart of this desert.

MEMORIAL

It was a custom in Israel that the daughters of Israel went yearly to lament the daughter of Yiftah the Gileadite four days in a year.—Judges 11:40

Her companions returned full of fire and life. It was a long while before they remembered how to talk and be understood in the workaday world. Their faces were so illumined that people shuddered when they saw them. Some of the companions were able to talk of their experience eventually. They observed the routines and rituals of women in their towns, and they wished to offer them a small taste of the frightening and miraculous freedom they had experienced on their journey with Bat Yiftah. So they set aside four days in the year where the daughters of Israel would go to the mountains in a group, and share legends of Bat Yiftah, lighting candles in the sand in her honor, lamenting their own namelessness, laughing a little and crying a little, returning refreshed and perhaps enlightened a little, until after some years the custom faded.

But to her companions, Bat Yiftah remained a heroine, for she had broken through their shells and saved their inner lives, and never would they see the mountains of the desert without seeing upon them her face, tear-streaked and radiant. ✡

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of Jabotinsky and his followers), socialism, and orthodox Judaism. Though quite different from each other, these ideologies had much in common. They were planted in the Holy Land by Ostjuden, and, except perhaps for socialism, later fortified by Sefaradim—together an unholy alliance of déclassé Jews who never had a chance to absorb Western civility. The three great Israeli ideologies all funded "epic histories," and though the themes of these histories differed for each ideology, all three "converged in diminishing the individual".

But if these ideologies are the *cause* of diminished individualism, they are at the same time also its *effect*. Because, and this is another of Ezrahi's important points, each of these ideologies traces its roots back to "the cultures of Judaism," in which the individual is all but invisible. Ezrahi observes that Israelis lack the sense of self to produce true autobiographies (finding that the autobiographies of Moshe Dayan, Abba Eban, Shimon Peres, Golda Meir, and Yitzhak Shamir do not address the inner life of their authors nor do they provide honest, reflective narrative of the writing, or speaking, self). This, he explains, reflects the fact that "Hebrew culture from its classical period to the present…has a distinct poverty of autobiography as a viable literary genre". Ezrahi attributes this fact to the "secondary status of the individual in Judaism….The meaning of [the Jew's] life is absorbed in collective structures and collective myths." The durability of these collective myths owes to another feature of the "cultures of Judaism": their "collectivist counter-liberal orientation" toward what Ezrahi revealingly calls "the burden of the past."

It was traditional Judaism, then, that prevented Jews from becoming individuals, forcing them instead into the juggernaut of the Jewish epic. None of this is surprising in light of what Ezrahi calls, "the long Judaic tradition of viewing the individual as a member of a community of faith designated by God to carry out a divine mission. In this narrative, the lives of the multitude are cemented by a single superhuman author who inscribes both nature and history: one God, one King, one Kingdom. As a direct challenge to paganism, with its idea of a multiplicity of gods, and kingdoms, Judaism has been a paradigmatic expression of the attempt to privilege a single all-encompassing master narrative."

This Jewish habit-of-mind, to lose oneself in a single "master narrative," persisted even for those early Zionists who rejected God and Halacha. Micah Josef Berdichevski, a radical Marxist Zionist, adopted Nietzche's notion of "transvaluation" to describe how traditional habits-of-mind might be revived, with new content, in the Jewish homeland. As Ezrahi sees it, the "transvaluation" was all too successful; even for Jews who rejected traditional Judaism, the traditional Jewish affinity for "master narratives" survived, be they Marxist or revisionist or whatever else.

What thrived in this ideologically-charged atmosphere was militarism. Though each ideology pointed toward its own utopia, they all agreed that a powerful army was needed to achieve their visions. This elemental agreement did not prevent different armies from arising out of different ideological milieus. In the decades before the state, socialists and revisionists each built their own militaries, which differed in philosophy and organization. It was only after the revisionists were successfully stronghanded—Ben Gurion's decision to bomb the Altalana being the most shocking example of the long struggle between Jewish armies—that everyone reluctantly fell in behind a single banner. Still, the belief that a powerful military was at once a necessity and a virtue was deeply felt by almost all, regardless of their ideological affiliations. The military was the hub of a rare, profound consensus, and, perhaps owing to this fact, its significance—both practical and spiritual—became an article of faith. It did not take long for the army to become the focus of its own "master narrative" and its own epic history, with mass sacrifice increasing the investment that all Israelis had in the image of their heroic army forging an epic history.

The military "master narrative" soon became the most potent, and universally accepted, of Israel's grand narratives, outstripping the others in influence and allure. This comes as no surprise. What has sometimes been called the "cult of the military" transcended ethnicity, class, and ideology, making possible a heady sort of *concordia discordantium* among Israel's diverse Jewish population. It also played well to international audiences, cheered to have the image of ruddy Jews in Jeeps replacing the image of emaciated Jews at the fences of Dachau. Its appeal grew further because, for a time, it seemed to have succeeded brilliantly. By the time Israel was established, it was hard to believe that a socialist utopia, or a revisionist one, or a halachic one would win the day. It was far easier to believe that the heroic vision of Jews transformed from victims to victors would be fulfilled. It had been fulfilled. Add to that the fact that the army's achievements had exacted commitment by exacting a price; it had produced thousands of martyrs, so many that almost every Israeli family has paid homage to Israel's military with the blood of loved ones. This mass sacrifice increased the investment that all Israelis had in the image of a heroic army forging an epic history.

The epic history it forged was an epic history for the masses. Its appeal was equally great for the petite bourgeoisie in Tel Aviv like Ezrahi's own family, for hard-core ideologues, for Jews from North Africa and the Arabian Peninsula, for the DPs and refugees from western Europe, and for the scattered Jews from the Americas, and other far-flung places from where Jews might choose to emigrate to Israel. For these reasons militarism became a most stable and unquestioned feature of Israeli culture

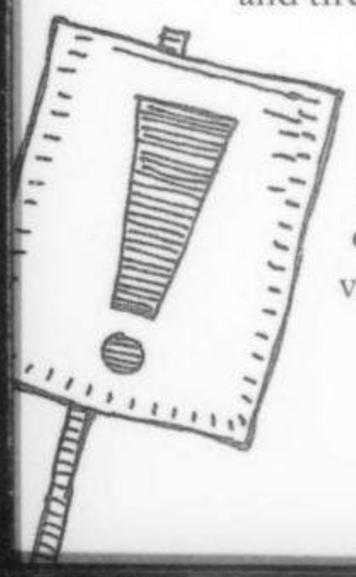
and identity—that is, until recently.

Ezrahi traces the weakening of communalism in all its varieties to the unraveling of the military narrative: "Since 1967, if not earlier, the romantic idea of the Israeli army—of armed Jews fighting to secure historic, religious, or metaphysical justice for the Jewish people—has become demystified by individual Jews' experiences of killing and being killed in wars, as well as by the moral ambiguities and ideological contradictions inherent in the encounter between a vision of liberation and the realities of conquest."

Once Israel became, as the pundits like to call it, a "regional superpower", the story-line of vulnerable Jews winning wars against insuperable odds quickly wore thin. As Ezrahi sees it, the net effect of the past thirty years of Israeli military predominance and serial political and military misadventures has been to expose Israel's collectivist "master narratives" for the myths they are. With these given the lie, liberal individualism finally had an opportunity to grow.

Ezrahi's accounts are right in many ways, but he oversimplifies. Ezrahi exaggerates the moral dimension of the ennui felt by most Israelis suppressing the Palestinian uprising, or watching its suppression on television. Israelis were morally outraged, say, when a foreign cameraman captured a soldier beating bound Palestinian children. But for most Israelis, the *intifada* did not so much change their moral analysis of the occupation, as it did their cost-benefit analysis. The *intifada* enervated all but led only a very few to alter their philosophical or ideological commitments.

Reading *Rubber Bullets*, one gets the feeling that the Israeli communalist ethos collapsed because Israelis, sick and tired of policing and occupying, finally found the gumption to do as the bumper sticker advises: question authority. But other factors deserve more of his attention. The Camp David Accords, which Ezrahi barely mentions, shattered many Israelis' belief that Arab rejectionism was inevitable. The vigorous opposition of most of the West to the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, and to Israel's settlement policy throughout the '80s, and to Israel's reaction to the *intifada* all dampened enthusiasm within the country towards these policies. So did Israel's growing affluence. The collapse of communism also dramatically changed the balance of powers in the Middle East. Many more factors could be mentioned that, looked at together, would weaken the morality play at the heart of *Rubber Bullets*.



Ezrahi also exaggerates the role the nationalist, religious, and socialist "master narratives" played in Israeli culture. All the ideologues of all colors, taken together, long ago became a minority. In the cafes of Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and Haifa, the commitments to revisionism, Judaism, and socialism —though they may have produced strongly felt affinities—were hardly demanding and hardly prevented the development of robust selves. The majority of workaday *eretz yisraelim* were people who did not entirely buy into one or another of the utopian narratives that dominated much of *eretz yisraeli* literature and political rhetoric.

Ezrahi vastly overstates the extent to which Israelis were zombified by "master narratives" of any and all ideologies. Although self-sacrifice was a highly-valued ethos, and although Israelis to this day can exhibit unparalleled empathy (witness the national mourning that followed last month's helicopter crashes), Israelis can also be an eccentric bunch. If a me-first sort of individualism has been frowned upon, a certain devil-may-care individuality has long been admired. Ezrahi may find Israelis flat and superficial, their conversation "innocent of probing reflection," but others would argue that Israelis are just as often ebullient, profound, and insightful.

Ironically, Ezrahi overstates his case in order to craft a single, coherent, and rather heroic story. *Rubber Bullets* is a saga of Israelis finally rising from their "self-imposed nonage"—as Kant famously put it in *Was ist Aufklarung?* This is a saga of daring free thinkers ignoring the crushing pressure to conform. It is Exodus meets the Fountainhead, and it's so epic that it ought have been filmed by Cecil B. De Mille.

Ezrahi's story has everything that one could ask for of epic history. It has heroes: "There is no more daring or difficult act," he writes, "for an individual to undertake than to step outside the bounds of the prevailing universe of meaning, the institutionalized modes of ordering and interpreting experience." It has moral growth: "When more enlightened Israelis started slowly to draw a line separating liberation from conquest, our country from theirs…self-delusion began to give way to collective self-(re)formation." It has the battle between good and evil: It is the battle "between individualism and collectivism, liberalism and nationalism, democratic and messianic politics, between minimalistic and maximalistic conceptions of military force." And it is a battle of historic importance, "a profound struggle over the soul of Israel, over the very conceptions of politics and power in contemporary Israel."

Like most epic stories, Ezrahi's has a moral: strong commitment to shared ideals is stifling and infantalizing. This moral encapsulates a theory about human nature, that humans thrive when unencumbered by communal obligations, when freed to be "ironists," the term, Ezrahi borrows from Richard Rorty (from his essay, "Private Irony and Liberal Hope," in *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*) to describe people who have become "skeptical of the very attempt to regard any idea, narrative, or claim as unambiguously or decidedly superior to all others." Ezrahi's moral also embodies the theory that what constitutes a "good society" is one that ensures for its members what Isaiah Berlin called "negative liberty,"

liberty," the right of individuals to pursue their own appetites, whatever they may be, so long as they do not infringe upon anyone else's rights. These theories are the foundational dogmas of Ezrahi's book.

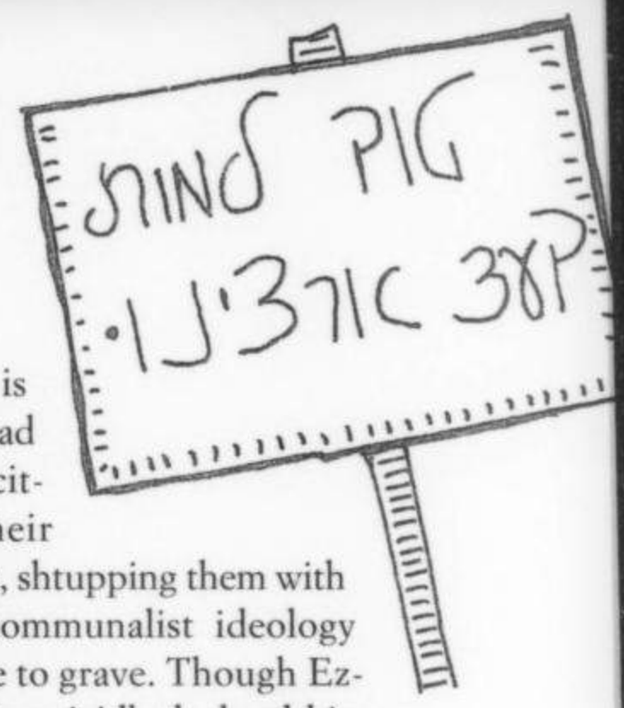
Such dogmas account in part for Ezrahi's antipathy for the "ideologies" and ideologues that held such sway for the first generations of Zionism and for the epic histories they produced; for their achievements, failings, strengths and frailties. Though Zionists proved themselves capable of great cruelties—to other Jews and especially to Palestinians—they also produced astonishing achievements. Zionists like Ezrahi's grandfather *did revive* Hebrew as a throbbing language, and as the foundation of a new literature, and a new culture. They did absorb hordes of Jews from everywhere and nowhere, many Emma-Lazarus forlorn, and provided them relative safety and prosperity in a Jewish state. This Jewish state *is* a democracy. And they *did* create an astonishing army that forever changed the way Jews view their own strength.

One doesn't have to buy the picture-postcard account of any of these achievements. Israeli revisionist historians—we call them the "new historians"—are feverishly rewriting the hagiographic accounts of all these achievements that were for generations the standard accounts of Zionist history. Hebrew literature and language were laden with ideology and propaganda. The ingathering of Jews was a highly selective affair, and immigration and absorption policies and priorities reflected Eurocentrism, at best, and often downright racism. Israel is prosperous because of the systemic exploitations of occupied Palestinians, and it is a democracy only if one ignores the millions of disenfranchised Palestinians whose fate it controls. The army has been an instrument of murder, vicious repression, and massive confiscation of lands—much of it calmly premeditated—since before the state was declared.

All of this is sobering, and depressing but not enough to dismiss, to ignore, or to forget that there was something splendid—yes, even heroic—about the old ideologues and their old ideologies. Yet Ezrahi has nothing but scorn, for example, for kibbutzim: they foster conformity, discourage creativity, engender flatness of emotion, the ability to mourn not individuals or instances but only cohorts killed in this or that given war. Although there is much to criticize and find disenchanting about kibbutzim, it takes a steely resolve not to see something sumptuous about the effort to create a better society, more equal, more free, more productive than any that had come before. One can easily criticize the naiveté or the failed execution, or even the vision itself, but only a willful contrarian can fail to appreciate—to be moved by—the passion and earnest self-sacrifice of the early kibbutznikim.

Ezrahi's antipathy for the "ideologies" of Zionism goes well with his affection for America and American individualism. Ezrahi admires American political culture because its politics are dehistoricized and deideologized, and because its unit of analysis is always and only the individual. Surely the state of American civic and political society is tenuous enough that Ezrahi should be more circumspect in his enthusiasm. Ezrahi approvingly quotes Tocqueville time and again, seemingly unaware of Tocqueville's own ambivalence about the American culture he observed so well. (One need not be Robert Bellah or Robert Putnam to suspect that American individualism has its downside.) Ezrahi's exuberance, deaf to the constant oy-oy-oying about the decline of American values and collapse of civil society, seems positively Panglossian.

An admirable society, John Stuart Mill suggested in *On Liberty*, would be convivial to "a person whose desires and impulses are…the expression of his own nature, as it has been developed and modified by his own culture." Ezrahi's



complaint is that Israel had denied its citizens of their own nature, shtupping them with so much communalist ideology from cradle to grave. Though Ezrahi describes vividly the hardships of growing up in a demanding society, his complaint still rankles because he assumes that ideological and religious commitments are always at odds with one's own "true" nature. Ezrahi is, as a result, deeply suspicious of the strongly held beliefs of most Israelis, beliefs founded in Zionism, Judaism, socialism, or whatever. He wrongly assumes that those who have rejected such beliefs are more evolved, less oppressive and more mature than the rest. He is condescending, seeing those who cling to ideological commitments and to strong civic identities as brainwashed, or as primitives, or as having tragically gone "local" by accepting Middle Eastern mores instead of superior western European ones.

The history of Israel need not be written as a history of dupes and somnabulist ideologues. It can just as easily be written as the history of a society that engendered among people of countless backgrounds and countless points of view a remarkable commitment to common goals and pride in common achievements. Circumstances have changed greatly in the past generation, and this commitment and pride are fading. The fact that communalism in Israel is deteriorating may have good effects, as Ezrahi has argued. Still, Ezrahi's alchemy—distilling this ambivalent fact into unalloyed virtue—reflects a stunning lack of sympathy for the dreams of Israel's founders and the hopes of most Jewish Israelis today. ✡

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The Last Democrat

David Biale



▪ *Locked in the Cabinet,* by Robert B. Reich. Alfred Knopf, 1997.

According to a certain Jewish joke, a prominent English Jew, about to be knighted by the Queen, is informed by the protocol officials that he is to recite a few words in Latin just before the Queen lays on her sword. On the day of the ceremony, he nervously approaches Her Majesty and, as luck would have it, forgets the Latin words. Improvising quickly, he substitutes another non-English phrase: "*Ma nishtana ha-laila ha-zeh mi-kol ha-leilot?*" The Queen turns baffled to her protocol officer and asks: "Why is this knight different from all other knights?"

Robert Reich presents himself in this often hilarious memoir of four years as Bill Clinton's Secretary of Labor as just such a knight of a different color. The charm of his book lies, consciously or not, in a classic Jewish stance toward the pomp and pomposity of goyish power. In this scenario, the Jew who finds himself by happenstance in the corridors of power cannot long maintain the inflated facade required by protocol and eventually lets his folksy origins slip out. In so doing, he deflates the pretensions of non-Jewish culture by turning it into a domestic Jewish joke.

This is more or less Reich's strategy as he describes the unlikely rise of a short, socially inept Jewish academic to the pinnacles of American political power. From this vantage point, he proceeds to cut down everything in official Washington to its proper size, frequently by gestures of self-deprecation. When the cabinet officials suggest ways of saving money, Reich offers the novel idea that they should fly coach:

Silence. It's as if I had suggested that we wear sackcloth and sleep on nails.

"Coach?" *sniffs (Treasury Secretary Lloyd) Bentsen, finally breaking the silence. "I don't believe* that *would be appropriate."*

I grope for a way to rescue myself. "It's not a problem for me," I explain with a lame smile. "I don't need the legroom."

When Reich meets Alan Greenspan, whom he describes as "a shy little Jewish guy" who is also the most powerful man in America, he thinks to himself:

We have never met before, but I instantly know him....He is New York. He is Jewish. He looks like my uncle Louis, his voice is my uncle Sam. I feel we've been together at countless weddings, bar mitzvahs, and funerals. I know his genetic structure. I'm certain that within the last five hundred years...we shared the same ancestor.

This classically Jewish deflation of the august authority of the U.S. government has a serious political purpose in Reich's account. Far more devastatingly than any other recent insider memoir of the Clinton administration, Reich reveals the utter bankruptcy of ideas and principled direction in the regime that he served for four years. His own agenda of narrowing the wage gap by programs of worker retraining was constantly shunted to the back burner as Clinton tilted further to the right in search of re-election. Reich returns again and again, like a broken record, to his ideas for how to create a more egalitarian America, but, to his credit, he makes fun of his own obsessive clichés as much as he does everyone else's. In the end, there is no serious discussion of ideas in his portrait of official Washington, only endless posturing in which ideas (even his own) become empty vehicles for riding to greater power.

But does Reich's pose as the Abbie Hoffman of the Clinton administration match historical reality? Or is it a literary conceit? The issue is not so much whether the stories he tells are true (Lane Kirkland, the former president of the AFL-CIO, has written a long letter to Reich complaining that several stories Reich tells about Kirkland are largely fabrications), but what they reveal about how he perceives his own role. Reich portrays himself as the conscience of the administration in which he emerges as perhaps the last Democrat. What Reich fails to fully recognize, though, is the extent to which he was being used to create the impression that the administration had a genuine left wing. His denunciation of "corporate welfare" was a convenient way for Clinton to gesture toward the left wing of the Democratic party after the health care debacle while remaining squarely

on the side of Big Business. Reich's antics, whether real or literary, were useful presidential politics, but of little real consequence otherwise.

Reich defends his continued loyalty to Clinton by the usual clichés of politics as the art-of-the-possible. But he himself admits several times that Clinton's utter lack of principle goes far beyond the dictates of politics. The endless debates over policy he describes were themselves based on the principle of avoiding principle. In Reich's account, Clinton emerges as a leader without the slightest gifts of leadership.

As is well known, Reich resigned after the 1996 election in order to spend more time with his family, one of the continuing themes in his book. Indeed, the subtext of the book is that while Republicans righteously preach family values, he is one of the few Washington insiders who actually practiced them by getting out.

Yet, as much as we sympathize with Reich's dilemma of trying to remain human in an inhuman job, we somehow wish that he would have resigned over principle and not over family. He protests, rather too much in passing, Clinton's signing of the Welfare Bill. But why didn't he follow the lead of Health and Human Services Undersecretary Peter Edelman and resign instead of weakly carping from within? Wouldn't such a resignation have made much more of an impact than his occasional anarchistic gestures as Clintonite court jester?

And, in the final analysis, doesn't this book, for all its amusing qualities as a kind of political anti-memoir, perpetuate the role that Reich played in the administration? While America laughs over Reich's account of the foibles of an all-too-human set of Washington actors, the whittling down of democracy to an alliance of big corporations and government behind a facade of two parties continues unchecked. Like the classic Jewish jokes that compensate for lack of real power, this testimony of the "Last Democrat" is more an extended send-up by a now-marginal intellectual than it is a program for the revitalized Left that late-twentieth-century capitalism so desperately needs.

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Can American Jewry Handle Good News?

Michael Berenbaum

▪ *Antisemitism in America Today: Outspoken Experts Explode the Myths*, Jerome Chanes, Ed. Birch Lane Press, 1995.

If we are to believe these essays then the Jewish community in the United States has solved what had been the dominant issue on its agenda for more than a century. All statistical information and all longitudinal studies of anti-Semitism over the past several decades indicate that anti-Semitism is on the decline. Fewer Americans hold anti-Semitic views, and few American Jews feel anti-Semitism is an obstacle to their advancement.

Why then do we feel so badly; how then can the perceptions of American Jews be so at odds with the empirical reality? Can we trust that reality?

In twenty well-written and well-edited essays, the ablest students of anti-Semitism in the world today try to make sense of these divergent realities.

The contributors are historians and sociologists, demographers and pollsters, psychologists and agency professionals.

James Rudin charts the progress that has been made in the interreligious sphere. The changes of teaching initiated by Vatican II regarding the Jews has eliminated the notion of Jews as Christ-killer among Roman Catholics. The transformation of Israel's policy under Yitzhak Rabin z'l and Shimon Peres has diminished the tensions between Jews and the mainstream Protestant Churches. Even the Lutherans have renounced the teaching of Martin Luther on the Jews. The tensions are re-emerging with the policies of the Netanyahu government. They will escalate as Jerusalem becomes the central issue of the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations.

True to its title, myths are exploded. Anti-Semitism is on the decline. It does not pose an obstacle to career advancement for the younger generation. Jews are free to be Jews as never before in America. They are also free to assimilate without penalty or to express their Jewish identity in the halls of the academy or Congress, within corporate America, as well as among the intellectual and financial elite of this country.

When taken individually, the essays are excellent, informative and fascinating. But the whole is even better than the sum of its parts.

When several authors writing on different topics return to three or four of the very same anti-Semitic incidents,

we gain a recognition of the narrow universe of contemporary American anti-Semitism—Crown Heights, David Duke, Leonard Jeffries, Holocaust Denial, some elements of the Christian right. Last year, we could have added the Harlem fire and Al Sharpton. Still, it is quite limited. Today, some might consider the politics of the "theo-cons" and their advocacy of a Christian nation as a threat. Tomorrow?

How then to account for the perception that anti-Semitism is on the rise. At an earlier time two decades ago, anti-Semitic views even if held strongly could not be expressed publicly without scorn and derision. In contemporary America, we are free to express hatred more; the norms of self-censorship have weakened.

The source of our discomfort with the conclusions of these essays is that they represent a paradigm shift in the reality of contemporary Jewry—both in the United States and abroad, and the mainstream Jewish community is unprepared for it. In fact, we have entered the post-Holocaust era. The physical survival of the Jewish people is not endangered, at least not from external enemies. For more than six score years, the defining question of Jewish existence has been whether the Jewish people could survive enemies capable of and bent on our destruction. Physical survival of a people became the dominant issue.

American Jews represent one such solution to the question of physical survival. Our ancestors fled lands where they faced no future to settle in our country where they could build a future. My grandparents—and I suspect it's true for most readers of TIKKUN—came here because they could not endure the fear of pogroms in Eastern Europe, they had little economic opportunity and were willing to abandon their families and communities in order to live in freedom. Zionism represented another solution to the Jewish problem. An elite sought to end the exile and to establish a Jewish state.

In the nightmare of the Holocaust we almost lost the struggle for survival and during the past 50 years, physical survival was central to the Jewish agenda. The cause of Israel could compel unity and engagement, commitment and action. Long after Israel became a regional military superpower, the threat of genocide was perceived as real even as it became less and less actual. Vulnerability became essential to Jewish consciousness.

Soviet Jewry and later Ethiopian Jewry became rallying cries. And now, there is virtually no Jewish community that faces the possibility of annihilation by enemies bent on and capable of our destruction. This is the success story of contemporary Jewish life. Still, because our communal life has been centered on physical survival, our shared fate imposed unity. So we don't know if, in the absence of anti-Semitism, we can remain one people or, if freed from external enemies, we can finally do battle with one another; religious versus secular Jews, right versus left, Orthodox versus liberal, Israel-centered versus diaspora-centered Jewish life. Freed from external pressures, we can turn against each other and fight through the unsettled issues of modernity, the divisions papered over by the need for cooperation. And for many Jews, there is a void, the absence of a cause as compelling as physical survival to invite participation in Jewish life. Thus, the good news that Chanes and his colleagues bring us is unsettling.

It should be a cause for celebration and an invitation for creativity.

Michael Berenbaum is President of the Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation. He is the author of The World Must Know: The History of the Holocaust as Told in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

The Jewish/Eastern Nexus:

An Overview of Resources

David Jonathan Cooper

Once upon a time common people needed a god they could picture in their minds' eyes or ears. The Bible speaks of God's hands, nostrils, voice, anger and love. In the 13th century Maimonides wrote *The Guide Of the Perplexed* for the elite Jewish postgraduates who found all this childish. Maimonides wanted them to stay within the fold, so he explained how the Bible was written in the language of children and everyday people. The nameless indefinable Oneness was the god the masses could not comprehend. The Kabbalists also confined their concept of God to an elite corps. The masses, they thought, couldn't possibly avoid the pitfalls of idolatry if they were invited to see God simultaneously as a multiplicity of manifestations and as the

Eyn Sof—the unlimited singularity of existence. The Baal Shem Tov first ventured to spill the mystical beans to the masses: God is an experience and God is All. But the beans did not spill very far.

Today, most of us everyday Jews without post-graduate degrees in theology or Judaics face the same philosophical problems of Maimonides' elite circle of students. Now it is the masses who cannot literally believe in the God of Deuteronomy who sits in judgment and daily directs reality according to His divine machinations. But this is the God we are fed in Hebrew school, and even many school children cannot swallow it. Then we get older and, seeking a spiritual path, we often look back at our Judaism and decide that we have "been there and done that."

For more than a generation Jewish seekers have hit the enlightenment road and have traveled every path. Now we are hitting middle age and are producing a literature, a Jewish literature, describing our peregrinations, many of which have led us back into Judaism by doors other than those through which we left. Of particular interest is the eruption of new material dealing with Judaism and Eastern religions. Eastern approaches have been particularly attractive to Jews because they provide a deep spirituality of transformation and development without the theurgic baggage of normative Judaism that we were taught in our synagogues and Hebrew schools. (Significantly, the reaction to Jews who are combining Judaism and Buddhism has met with an entirely different reaction than to those who have combined Judaism and Christianity. But that is a different article.)

The following annotated reading list is intended to give you an idea about the variety of books on the subject and what resources they provide to enhance your spiritual journey. Some of these have been reviewed in TIKKUN before. The point here is not to review them, but to see them as the phenomenon they represent.

▪ *The Jew in the Lotus* (Harper San Francisco, 1995) by Rodger Kamenetz, is the most popular and perhaps most readable book in the crowd, and the one which has changed the major question in federation circles from "How do we ensure Jewish continuity?" to "How do we create Jewish formative experience that enables our youth and young adults to recognize the spiritual gems of Jewish experience?" Kamenetz traveled with several Jewish teachers who were invited to engage with the Dalai Lama in India so that he could learn from the Jewish experience of long exile. The group encountered a disproportionate number of Jewish-born Americans living and teaching Buddhism in the entourage of the Lama. Kamenetz used the rest of the book to describe his meetings with a variety of American "Bujus" including the late Allen Ginsberg. He records their unique ways of combining (and not combining) their Buddhism and Judaism. Not incidentally, the book's recording of the delegates' dialogues with the Dalai Lama are wonderful as introductions to Judaism.

▪ *Torah and Dharma: Jewish Seekers in Eastern Religions* (Jason Aronson, 1996) by Judith Linzer is a very dense book filled with gems. Once you feel drawn to this subject and have already read Kamenetz, this book is a great place to go next. Ostensibly, it is a study of how two different types of Jews interact with their Buddhism (or Hinduism) and with their Judaism. These two groups are those originally Orthodox and those originally assimilated. The book is framed as a sociological study, but that is not the reason to read it. It is a mass of anecdotes and teachings from the many fascinating teachers Linzer has interacted with over the years. You will meet pretty much everybody who has ever published or taught about this subject, including many Renewalist leaders. You will read about theologian Arthur Green's acid trips as a rabbinical student two decades before serving as the head of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College. You'll read about Baba Ram Dass's appreciation for the PaRDeS method of uncovering multiple levels of meaning in the Torah text. In one chapter, Linzer considers the light which Buddhists can shed on issues of the holocaust and its suffering. Very rich material. Well worth the $30 tab.

▪ *Jerusalem Moonlight* (Clear Glass Press, 1995) is written by Norman Fischer, the abbot of San Francisco's Zen Center. His book is not about Buddhist Jewishness, it is about the world as seen through the eyes of one Jewish-Zen master. He uses "beginner's eyes" to see his Jewishness. That which is so familiar to him he views as if for the first time. The occasion for his musings is a trip he took to Israel where he came to better confront and embrace the totality of his identity. The writing is without pretense and includes unexpected turns. A two-page chapter on why the Torah begins with the second letter of the Aleph-Bet is interrupted by a discussion on life-insurance with an airline seat-mate. From passing thoughts on Shabbat to deep musings about Isaac Luria's mysticism, this book is not about searching, it *is* searching.

Sylvia Boorstein, a meditation teacher and co-founder of Spirit Rock Center in Marin County, California, recently published *That's Funny, You Don't Look Buddhist: On Being a Faithful Jew and a Passionate Buddhist*, (Harper San Francisco, 1997). Where one senses in Fischer that his Judaism and Buddhism are different parts of himself that he seeks to bring into harmony, Boorstein's spirituality is simultaneously Buddhist and Jewish. When she davens the *V'ahavta* it informs her *Metta* meditation. When she touches the loving

kindness of *Metta* it gives meaning to her *V'ahavta*. This light, easy, thought-provoking and joyful book goes far beyond "either/ or" thinking. With Boorstein we experience the answer to the koan how "two" can be "both," and "both" can be "one."

▪ *Zen & Hasidism: The Similarities Between Two Spiritual Disciplines* (Quest Books, 1978 & Ktav, 1996), edited by Harold Heifetz, is a misnamed book first published twenty-one years ago. For a long time it was the only collection of material on Buddhism and Judaism, their similarities and differences. For more than six years the book was out of print. Ktav Publishers resurrected it last year, as well they should. It is a wonderful consideration of the spiritual paths offered by the two traditions. I especially appreciate Heifetz's introduction comparing the two paths. A section of eleven essays on meditation, including a 1918 essay called "Kawwana: The Struggle for Inwardness in Judaism" by Hyman Enelow, is a treasure. Heifetz does not shy away from the difficult issue of whether there are unbreachable differences between the traditions. He provides views pro and con including a 1974 argument (in *Sh'ma* magazine) between orthodox Rabbi Chaim Tz'vi Hollander and Jewish Renewalism founder Rabbi Zalman Schachter (now Schachter-Shalomi).

▪ *Stalking Elijah*, by Rodger Kamenetz (Harper San Francisco, due in October, 1997) is the not yet published sequel to *The Jew in the Lotus*. Kamenetz opens with the story retold by Rabbi Nachman of Bratzlav of a Rabbi Yehiel who dreamed of a treasure at a distant spot, and who upon journeying to the spot is told by a stranger of a dream that the treasure is buried under Yehiel's own home. Upon returning he finds his treasure. Kamenetz's sequel is his return from India to find the gems hidden in his own American Jewish community, much of it in the Jewish Renewal movement. ✡

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rights of natural persons, paving the way for their dominance over elections, lawmaking and the discussion of ideas. They had declared decision making about investment, production and work to be corporations' private property. Congress and state legislatures had replaced the defining of corporations via chartering and *by what authority* mechanisms with laws and administrative agencies which sought only to regulate corporate behaviors at the margins.

Corporations then crafted their story, and made it the nation's. They introduced ever-expanding production and consumption as the nation's primary goal, and promoted human competition over cooperation. They substituted a single corporate culture for the cultures of diverse peoples and places, and perfected selling our resources back to us while hiring us to do their work.

For over one hundred years, we the people have been conceding governing powers to the artificial business entities we created, and allowing corporations to define not only production and our work but also our constitutional democracy. We have allowed our creations to become our masters, trained ourselves to be grateful, and fallen into conspiracies of silence.

Today, corporations act the sovereign citizens; we the people play the consumers.

Citizen groups everywhere valiantly resist harmful corporate behaviors—one at a time, after the fact, and over and over again. But few reflect on American history or the nature of corporations, contest constitutional protections bestowed on corporations, or counter corporate distortion of reality, value, history and language.

Giant corporations are resurrecting the global governance they achieved in the 17th and 18th centuries. They are doing so in country after country by writing new laws which legalize their governing powers, which grant them civil, property and political rights of human beings.

It's an old paralyzing story.

Encouraging people to focus on corporate responsibility perpetuates this corporate story. It continues avoiding the question: "Who is in charge—we the people or our creations?"

People already know how to *do* corporate responsibility. Our task in the coming years is to act like self-governing people, to refashion our goals, to retool for the sustained struggles over the power to govern.

You want debate? You want new energizing stories that will lead to political mobilization? Then focus on corporate nature, not corporate behavior.

Counter the corporate story with people's stories. Contest the civil, property and political rights which corporations claim under the U.S. Constitution.

Embolden civic organizations to challenge—by word and deed—the power and authority of giant corporations to dictate our work, define our culture, govern our nation and rule the world.

Out of such discourse and action, people across the nation will create cultures that nurture diverse, sustained strategies for governing ourselves. ✡

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MEDIA

"Coming Out" in the Middle of the Road

Josh Ozersky



The power of hype is never to be underestimated: that is one moral of the worst-kept secret in America, comedian Ellen DeGeneres' recent coming out as a lesbian. Her TV persona, the protagonist of ABC's *Ellen,* announced her long-suspected orientation in one of the most publicized pseudo-events in TV history. (It also happened to be pretty funny.) More viewers watched "the episode," as it came to be known in the media, than had watched any other single series episode in history, with the exception of the *M*A*S*H* farewell and the "Who Shot J.R?" episode of *Dallas.* Celebrities like Demi Moore and Billy Bob Thornton appeared in conspicuous cameos; TV oracle Oprah Winfrey guest-starred as Ellen's analyst. B-list movie star Laura Dern was Ellen's breakthrough love interest.

There is a good chance that even if you didn't see the show, you know this much already. "The episode" was the subject of such intense promotion, and afterward, such gratuitous commentary, that actually viewing it seemed even at the time like something of a formality. After all, hadn't the likable, tomboyish star appeared on the cover of *Time* two weeks earlier, under the ambiguous headline, "Yep, I'm Gay"? And had not the protest machinery of the religious right dependably geared itself up right on schedule? Affiliated network stations in the deep South pondered whether to show "the episode." A group of media watchdogs affiliated with various religious lobbies and right-wing think tanks took out an ad in *Variety* pronouncing it a "slap in the face to American families." ABC/Capital Cities agreed that Ellen's coming out was a bold statement, all right, but they were proud to stand behind her—"not that there's anything wrong with it," as they say on *Seinfeld.*

Actually, "the episode" was neither a ringing endorsement of gay rights nor a prurient exercise in liberal decadence. Both charges ring hollow. Ellen's admission sets her foursquare in the dead middle of modern sitcom history, a channel of working consensus existing for at least twenty-five years. According to this consensus, in place at least since the debut of *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* in 1971, a sitcom hero or heroine is a decent person trying to make her or his way—"keeping your head above water," as *Good Times* had it. Although quirky or flawed, the sitcom hero is an audience representative who almost never takes strong religious or ethical stands which might alienate him or her from the vast audience. "Love is all around," this being America, and with a wisecrack and a little ingenuity, harmony can usually be restored despite episodic setbacks.

This was in keeping with the age: the '60s had not been a good time for high principles, which now suffered from a terminal credibility gap. So the goofy goodwill of Mary Tyler Moore, Rhoda, Chico, Alice, Ann Romano of "One Day at a Time," et al., came to personify the working assumptions of society. In the new sitcom consensus, those who preach the hard line come off as hypocrites or bullies. The title character usually represents the sane center: she or he can usually be counted upon to steer a reasonable middle course, veering away from the Scylla or Chyribdis of swingers and puritans, dropouts and martinets.

Ellen fits right in. Throughout the episode, the point is made over and over: why should anyone care about Ellen's sexual orientation? Why should she have to be ashamed to be herself? The only thing that robbed these questions of the dramatic effect they seemed to warrant was the fact that everybody seemed to agree with her. Oprah seemed to serve as some kind of paid superego—not a far throw from her real job, if you think about it—and was only too happy to give her normative blessing. (Oprah even made the analogy between what Ellen would face and segregation. Ellen: "You mean I have to drink from a separate fountain?") Ellen's friends all expressed their unconditional support. And Ellen herself was the least troubled of all. Once she got the words out, "coming out" was largely a comedy of embarrassment, which played awkward pauses

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JEWISH MUSIC

Sounds of Renewal

Ya'acov Gabriel

Brilliance comes in many forms. Linda Hirschhorn is a truly gifted composer, arranger and conductor of Jewish vocal music who defies my attempt to categorize her style. It's hard to say whether her music is folk, classical or liturgical but its not hard to hear that it's brilliant. On her three recent recordings, *Gather Round, Roots & Wings* and *Behold!* (Oyster Albums, PO Box 3929, Berkeley, CA 94703) Linda sculpts rounds, fugues, niggunim (wordless melodies), folk blues, and political/feminist anthems with great precision and sweetness. Mostly using only the five or six voices of her group *Vocolot,* her sound is complex but it's very accessible and easy to fall in love with.

I have favorites on each recording. "Miriam's Slow Snake Dance" on *Gather Round* is sensuous and strong, as the story of the crossing of the Red Sea in Exodus is transformed into a dance of freedom by Miriam and the Hebrew women. "Homeless Blues" on *Roots & Wings* challenges us to see the Homeless not as "other", but as every day people dislocated by American bottom-line-and-heartless industrial policy. The song preceeding it, Linda's version of the prophet Zachariah's teaching of "Not by might, not by power, but with love" is sung as a slow round in Hebrew, Arabic and English. This conveys her belief in the power of cultural sharing to help promote peace in the Middle East.

The latest, *Behold!,* is her strongest yet. There is a wonderful confidence in the Fran Avni production. There is a patience in its songs, a sense of worldliness and understanding, which, as Roberta Flack once put it, kills you softly. "Camarada", based on Walt Whitman's "Song of the Open Road," is gorgeous, with voices weaving in and out as the lyrics talk of love being a giving of the self without preaching. The up songs, including the passionate, anti-war "Lo Yisa Goy", the playful "If You Can Walk", and the carnival-ish "Eretz Shiv'at Haminim (The Land of Seven Species)" are also very fun, but it's the ballads and their nifty arrangements that stay with me most. Their combination of melody, political and social consciousness, and sheer vocal fireworks is very special. This is an artist who heals and elevates her listeners.

Another kind of brilliance comes through Andy Statman. He is a master instrumentalist on clarinet and mandolin, and the music he creates is alive, elegant and improvized. His latest release, *Between Heaven and Earth: Music of the Jewish Mystics* (Shanachie Entertainment #64079), is an overt departure from earlier projects, which were more easily definable as bluegrass or klezmer. This record, with his own Quartet and help from the imcomparable Bela Fleck on banjo and David Grisman on mandolin, is chassidic jazz.

He says, in his press release, that he felt an affinity with the later music of John Coltrane, and the implicit spirituality John found in the Black American heritage. In presenting his own roots, Andy takes a similar route. He recorded *Dveykus* (attachment to the Holy One) and *Tisch* (table sitting with the Rebbe) melodies from Reb Nachman of Breslov (1772-1810), and other kabbalistic masters. This grand, deep music is very personal and introspective, and probably was written to induce spiritual experiences in disciples long ago.

What's extraordinary is how Andy arranges the songs and chooses a drummer, bassist and pianist with jazz sensibilities to make the songs after Midnight-ish contemporary as well.

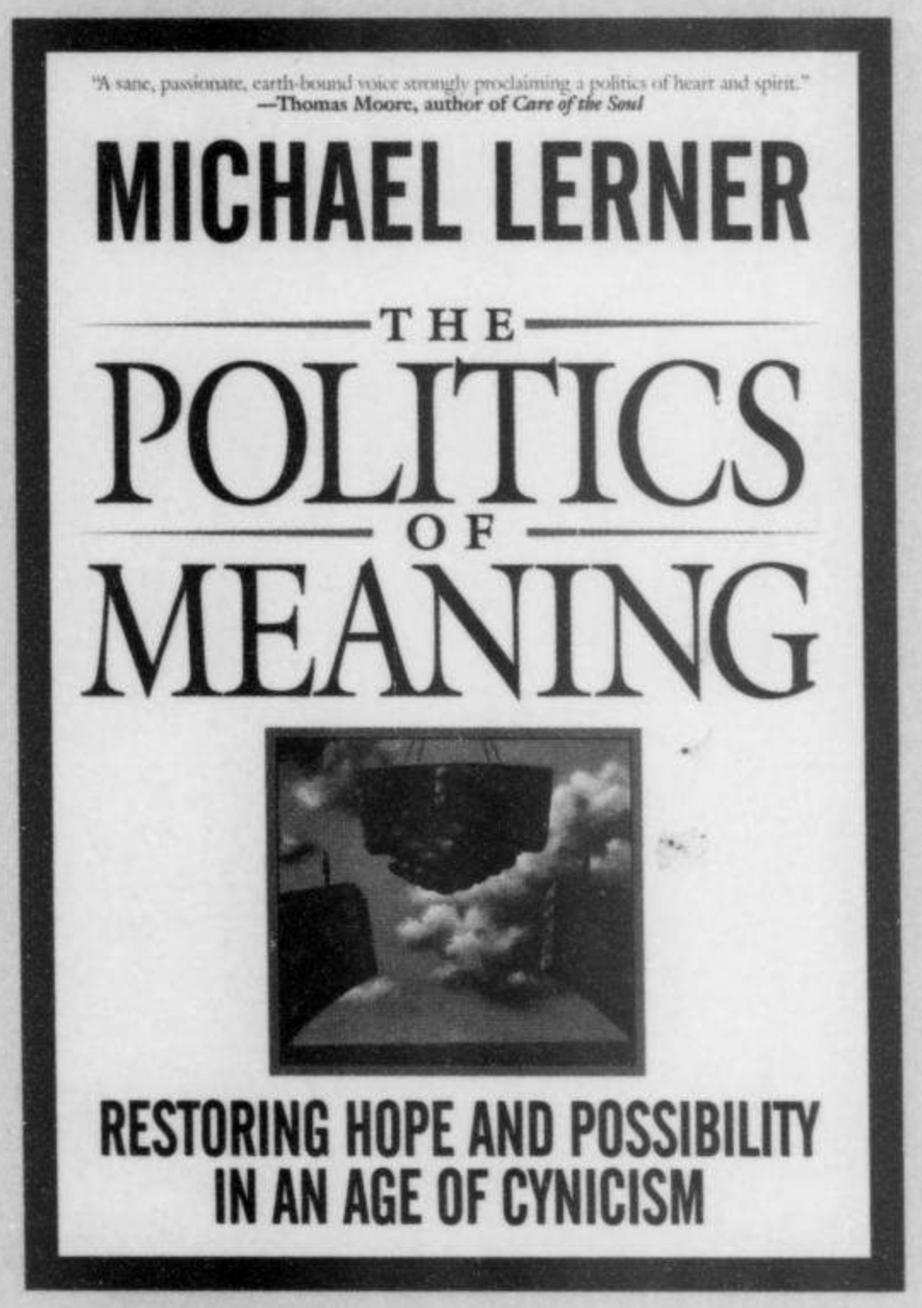
This kind of break-the-expectation fusion is a key element in Jewish renewal music, and separates this project from the klezmer recordings Andy did before. Philosophically, I think it's very true to the original intention of the Chassidic Masters he's quoting and updating. They themselves were models for being rebels and traditionalists simultaneously. They surely would approve of Andy's artfulness and sincerity. He imagines their mind spaces, makes his clarinet a holy voice, and wails.

If you like music with heart and mystery, that breaks cliches and nakedly yearns for Divine Connection, this is a disc for you. For that matter, if mediocrity ain't your cup of tea, check out the brilliance of both these artists. ✡

תיקון

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