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Israel at Fifty

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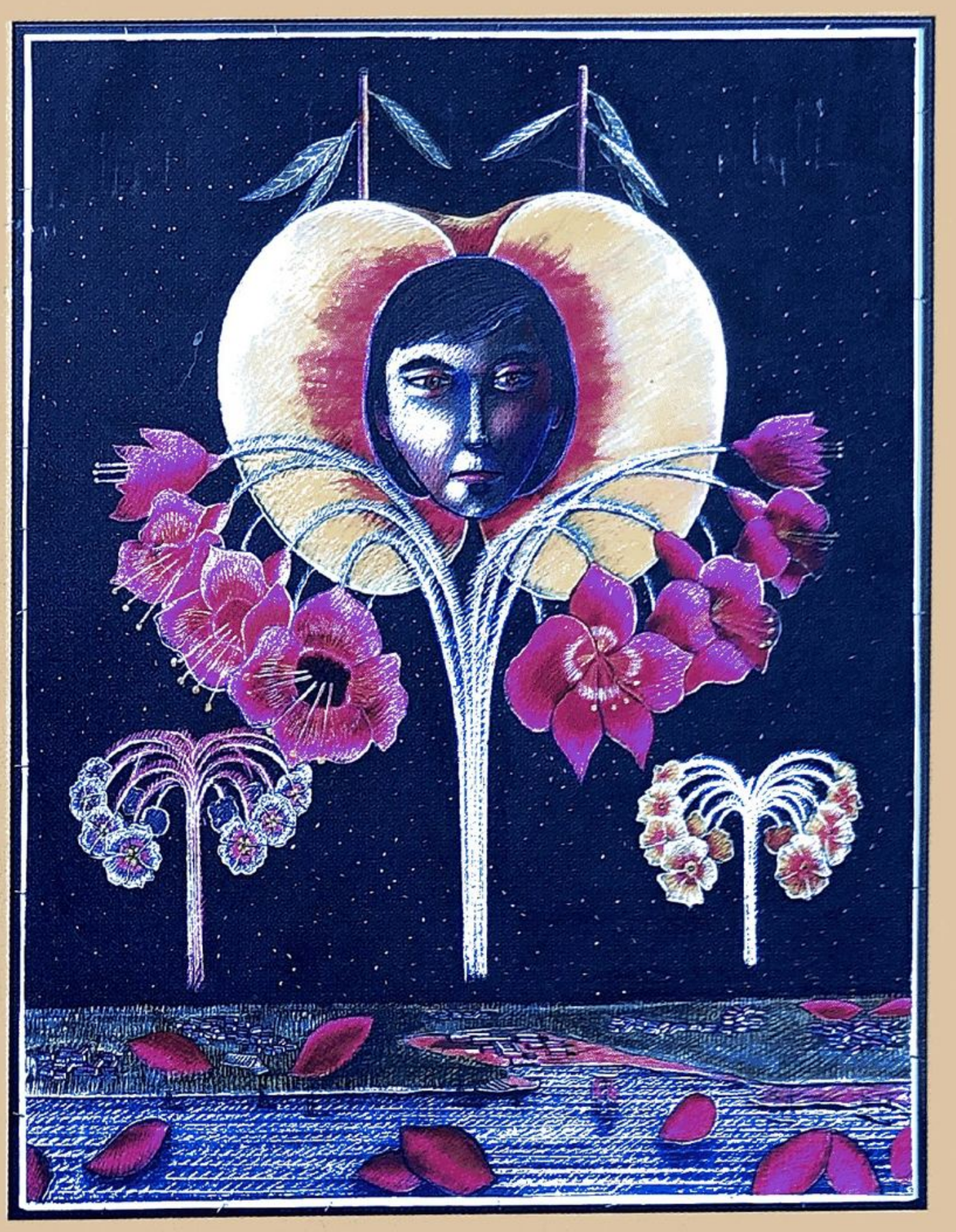
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At the Capital

Here everything is cheaper.

Here, everything is, in fact, being given away
for free.

Still, store windows get smashed.
But what's looted are nuts and bolts, planks
and posts, not the dusty appliances
or the polyester outfits.

The plan, according to the alternative press,
is to build an ark or some other form
of escape vehicle.

Meanwhile, at the Cafe Cherche Midi
the drunks watch TV: a rerun
of last week's terrorist shooting.

They cheer for the victim
who, as he dies, fights back
at the small crowd
trying to hold him up.

Meanwhile, unemployed teachers stand in
the rain
at the harbor, waiting for drugs to arrive.

Meanwhile, the town philosopher rides by
on his unicycle crying: *Go home, all of you.*
Go home.

But the sidewalks are empty.
No tourists come here anymore.

The few that wander in by accident
clutching some outdated guidebook
search for the statue of the king,
the one with the bulge under his cape,
a monument to excessive virility.

But the stony king was struck down
years ago and broken into pebbles
by the city's girls, no longer allowed
to be virgins past the age of ten.

So the occasional tourist ends up
wandering the cemetery
looking for historic graves.

Instead they find gangs of boys
stomping plastic bouquets, kicking
down headstones, writing the names
of the dead on each other's skin
with tacks and sticks, with broken
glass and bricks.

Knives and razor blades, once the obvious
choice
of children, have been sold out
for an entire generation.

The mothers and grandmothers try to keep
up appearances.
They scrub the mural depicting smiling,
well-scrubbed workers.
They water the small grove of petrified trees.
They sweep the dirt streets.

The plane passing overhead, of course,
does not land.
The runway is now a flaming landfill.
The pilot is saying to the passengers:

Below you, please note a diorama
of the former capital. It has been reconstructed
as it appeared after the fatal bombing.
We shall be landing at the newly revised
and carefully selected capital
in just a few moments.

—*Suzanne Wise*

TIKKUN

A BIMONTHLY JEWISH CRITIQUE OF POLITICS, CULTURE & SOCIETY VOLUME 13 NUMBER 3



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Letters to the Editor

Politics of Cancer

To the Editor:

Henry Dreher's essay, "The Politics of Cancer," (Jan/Feb 1998) is well written and interesting. I have two comments. One, since Henry is not a physician he has not experienced medical training. It is disease and event oriented and very involved with technology. Doctors are not taught to deal with feelings, either their own or their patients and they are not taught to be concerned with meaning and stories. Their poor education, leaving out the patient's experience and communication skills, is the villain. It adversely affects the outcome of treatment.

Second, medical literature is so specialized that doctors don't read about what Henry writes. I know from personal experience. When I would cite a study at a medical meeting, physicians I would be talking to would ask, "Where did you read that?" If I said in TIKKUN, what do you think the response would be? "That's not a medical journal."



There are more studies that are not listed in the article which show that the outcome of cancer therapies relate to the psychological stability of the patient. I also know this from my vast personal experience. Physicians do not learn about survival behavior and therefore do not teach it to their patients.

Bella Abzug

We mourn the loss of this tireless fighter for social justice, feminism, and human rights. Unintimidated by those who tried to ridicule her for being outspoken and "uncool," Bella could always be counted on to be in the front lines of the latest cutting-edge struggles. No wonder that she was a loyal supporter of TIKKUN and an advocate of this magazine's perspective.

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The problem is that we are taught to prescribe, but illness requires not just a physician but a priest and philosopher to help people heal by treating the disease and the experience of the individual whose mortality is threatened.

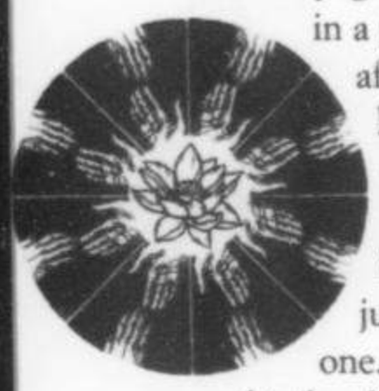
BERNIE S. SIEGEL, MD
Woodbridge, CT

Engaged Buddhism?

To the Editor:

The articles about "engaged Buddhism" which appeared in the January-February issue of TIKKUN made it appear that Buddhism is all set to join and become a partner in the Jewish imperative to repair the world. It looks convincing on paper only to those who don't know much about Buddhist teachings.

One of the main tenets of Buddhism is that the poor and other unfortunates create their own fate through evil behavior caused by ignorance. This fate or karma may come to fruition in a person's life many years and even many lifetimes after the actual evil was committed. Poverty, hunger, disease, and despair are all earned attributes of those people oppressed by them. This is the famous and oft misunderstood notion of karma. Since karma is a manifestation of ultimate justice, nothing can be accomplished to help anyone. It is the task of the stricken individual to just live out his/her karma as best as he/she can without creating any further damage. Only after the bad karma is worked off can the sufferer be reborn to a better existence in a future life.



These teachings even include the notion that karma determines our parentage. ("We choose our parents," as the Tibetan Buddhists put it). This occurs when we turn away from the clear light of Ultimate Truth which is presented to us after death. Instead, we choose a duller, but less challenging, engaging light while in the *bardo*, the journey after death between one life and the next. Turning away from the bright light of Perfect Wisdom, we find ourselves taking shelter from its painful luminosity in the womb of an animal possibly, or a ghost, or a poor untouchable in India. Thus we are born with little chance to improve our lots, but it's all our own fault. As the beautiful Japanese warrior woman, Mariko, puts it in the book *Shogun*, "Karma is karma."

I was a very committed, practicing Buddhist for about eight years in the 1970s and never during that time did I see a penny of *tzedakah* go out to anyone. But I do remember that one time on the street, a crippled panhandler approached me and my Buddhist boyfriend, and my boyfriend started to scream at him to get the hell away from us and find a job.

Engaged Buddhism? I don't think so. In any event, a newfangled Judaism it's not.

SANDRA GELMAN
New York, NY

Spirituality Needs Community

To the Editor:

It was a pleasure reading Rami Shapiro's article "Simply Jewish" in the Jan./Feb. issue—he lays out, in a wonderfully

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accessible and articulate way, a meaningful path for Jewish living. But there was one central component/category of Jewish life that startled me in its absence: community. Rabbi Shapiro's Judaism, as articulated here, could conceivably be embraced and practiced by individuals in no particular social context whatsoever. Even those things he mentions as connecting all Jews—Hebrew, prayer, Torah, the land of Israel, and shared mission and culture—seem to float here in some abstract form, "connecting" us without requiring us to really engage with one another.

One important thing that we non-halachic Jews can learn from our traditional counterparts is the way in which religious obligations necessitate community. If everyone has to be able to walk to shul on Shabbat, if kosher food and holy books need to be readily accessible, then Jews will create Jewish neighborhoods centered around Jewish institutions. If a minyan, ten adult Jews, are required for prayer, then communal structures will arise out of religious needs. On the ethical level, a commitment to caring for Jews in need—in times of economic difficulty, sickness, death—similarly necessitates communal structures, from groups that visit the sick and prepare the dead for burial to free loan societies.

I would suggest that the tension between the Mall and Main Street in our national economy is similar to the tension facing those of us committed to rebuilding meaningful Jewish life in America. Do we want Judaism as Mall, where people stride down a crowded corridor, in no meaningful relationship to one another, picking and choosing the Jewish practice which best suits them just as they would shop for a set of clothes? Or do we want a Main Street Judaism, where we know the proprietors of the stores and share some history with them, where we feel committed to one another's well-being, spiritual and economic? Just as we need revitalized urban centers and towns, we need local Jewish communities—whether centered around religious congregations or based on other models—in which Jews are actively engaged with and committed to one another. We also need to realize that our lives as Jews are intrinsically linked to the health of local urban and town centers—Wal-mart might not be so good for the Jews. I would love to see us being "Simply Jewish" in real relation to one another.

RABBI TOBA SPITZER
Congregation Dorshei Tzedek
West Newton, MA

Criminal Injustice

To the Editor:

I agree with Danny Goldberg's insistence that an analysis of criminal "justice" policies and the impact of incarceration should be central to a politics of meaning (TIKKUN, March/April). Fleet Maull's article in the same issue offered an outstanding antidote to the media stereotype of prisoners as the sub-human "Other." Personally, I feel haunted by the numbers of people whose lives are being destroyed by the inhumanity of our criminal justice system and the invisibility of these daily horrors.



As Jews, I am afraid that we seldom recognize that there are also Jewish prisoners in the United States who have been incarcerated for committing the gamut of crimes. Last December I became aware of the difficult struggles of Jewish prisoners to practice Judaism when they are locked up. When my congregation, Eitz Or, threw a Chanukah celebration for Jewish prisoners at the Monroe State Reformatory, I was struck that the Torah portion for the previous Shabbat had portrayed Joseph's emergence from his darkest hours in prison. I became keenly aware that we were sharing the miracle of light in the darkest time of the year as well as in the depths of this concrete cage. As one prisoner shared the incredible barriers he had faced getting access to a Torah to guide him through the process of *t'shuvah* and to celebrating the Jewish holidays, we were disturbed that these men had been so abandoned by the Jewish community. But penetrating the Walls to build spiritual community, a collective sense of hope, and a common vision of justice is not a simple process.

As people dedicated to the healing of individuals and society, I believe that we should be deeply disturbed that prisons have become the primary public institution devoted to housing people with mental illnesses, especially those who are poor and homeless. According to a *New York Times* article (March 5, 1998), last year prisoners in the Los Angeles County jail who were identified as having mental health problems were issued yellow jumpsuits to distinguish them from the other prisoners. Doesn't the "yellow badge" sound familiar? What a nightmare!

On a personal level, I feel my heart breaking as I witness one young friend graduate from the juvenile justice system to the adult corrections system. He is facing the minimum of a year in prison for stealing a Nintendo from his parents' house two months after his eighteenth birthday, which he had spent in a juvenile prison. Homeless, hungry, and unbearably depressed, he had not been able to find refuge in his parents' house. His situation is an example of the connection between child welfare and juveniles who become entangled with the law. Little response to abuse and neglect in the home contributes to untenable situations where the only way children can get help is through breaking the law. Soon they unconsciously look to being locked up as a sort of familiar, though restrictive, safe haven. But there are terrible side effects to this form of self-help—they learn the skills of being institutionalized rather than community living. A good introductory article of the consequences of this process is "Scars" by Jarvis Masters in *Brotherman*. Masters wrote the article while living on San Quentin's Death Row.

BETH HARRIS
Seattle, WA

Correction

The telephone number for Sounds Write productions was incorrect in TIKKUN's January/February music review. The number is 800-9SOUND9.



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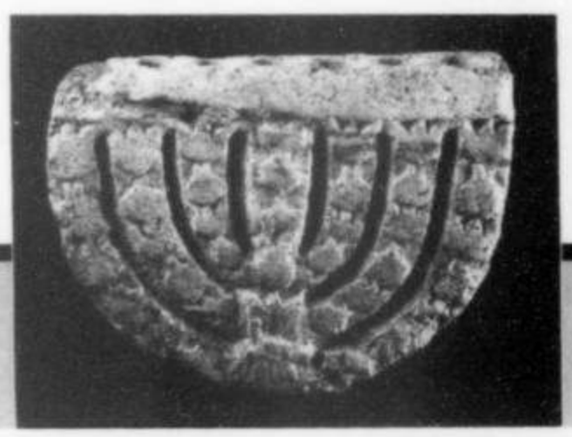
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Publisher's Notes

Danny Goldberg

The essay on Claude Thomas in this issue is the latest in a series of pieces that TIKKUN has been running related to the Peacemaker Community, an interfaith network of activists and a Zen order founded by Roshi Bernie Glassman and his late wife and fellow Zen teacher Jishu Holmes.

Glassman defines himself as a Jew even though for many years he has followed the path of Zen Buddhism. He is best known for founding Greyston, a network of organizations based in Yonkers, NY that has created low-cost housing, jobs for dozens of people previously on welfare, and support services for homeless families and people living with HIV or AIDS.

Glassman is a friend and colleague of Jewish Renewal visionary Rabbi Zalman Schachter, as well as Ram Dass, Timothy Leary's one-time LSD collaborator at Harvard who later introduced Hinduism to millions of Sixties hippies, myself included.

TIKKUN has done an excellent job of speaking to Renewal Jews and Michael Lerner has always made a home in TIKKUN for non-Jewish spiritual voices such as Jim Wallis and Cornell West, who appears in this issue. Another example of such a voice is Phillip Berrigan, whose radical Catholicism is also expressed in this issue.

However, a great many baby-boom Jews, for one reason or another, have found themselves attracted to Eastern spiritual paths, and many, like Glassman, balance these paths with respect and honor for their Jewish roots. Given the tradition of "four Jews creating five shuls," it seems appropriate for TIKKUN to give a voice to the embryonic vision of the Peacemakers.

Like "the politics of meaning," the Peacemaker concept is not always clear, even to those of us who see it as a beacon of light. However, two clear tenets stand out: a commitment to linking social action to the spiritual quest, and a framework which honors and embraces other spiritual traditions.

It is the latter philosophy, a mission that would create a "House of One People," that creates controversy in some Jewish circles. To some people, the idea of the "unity" of various spiritual paths feels like "religion lite," a collection of superficial feel-good connections without the deep spiritual connection, commitment, and discipline associated with traditional religious practice.

However, for many of us who came of age in the Sixties and later, the idea of both the diversity and connectedness of various spiritual traditions is the only intellectually honest place from which to approach God and spiritual action. Maybe some intermarriages represent people running away from religious tradition—but most of them represent people marrying those they love. Just as there are shallow Christians and Jews, there are plenty of shallow meditators and people who profess an interfaith philosophy. But likewise, there are those who are as deeply committed to an inter-faith, mystical path as the most orthodox members of traditional religious communities.

Ram Dass has been consistent in embodying spiritual beliefs and service for almost thirty years. Likewise, the Peacemakers are filled with activists whose commitments are scarcely the hallmarks of dilettantes, whether they be Claude Thomas' walk across the United States, Glassman's annual week of living with New York's homeless, Jesuits working with landmine victims in Cambodia, or others who have connected with the Peacemaker vision.

At Roshi Glassman's 1996 retreat at Aushwitz, a religious Jew berated him for the kind of "feel-good" unity rhetoric of some of his followers. "You have to respect the differences," she said, "there really are cultural, spiritual, and historical differences between Judaism, Buddhism, Catholicism, Islam, etc." Glassman nodded. "I agree that we have to respect the differences—but you have to acknowledge that unity is one of the differences." ❑

Danny Goldberg is Chairman and CEO of the Mercury Records Group. Since 1997 he and his father, Victor Goldberg, have been publishers of TIKKUN.

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EDITORIAL

Market-Logic and...

Tobacco – The Sixties – Israel at Fifty – Prostitution

Michael Lerner

Jail the Tobacco Executives!

The tobacco companies are now threatening to defeat any legislation that would seriously cut their profits. The only reason they had previously agreed to a raise in cigarette taxes and to restraints on advertising to teens was to get a national agreement to limit their liability in suits from families of people who were killed by their product. Now, using the huge financial resources they have amassed by selling these murderous products, they are threatening to unseat legislators with pro-tobacco candidates in the fall elections. Their aim is to use their clout to defeat the McCain bill, which imposes more severe restraints on the marketing of tobacco.

What is likely to emerge will be a compromise, based on the assumption that the poisoners of our youth have "a right" to make a living.

The more appropriate response would be to indict these people for conspiracy to commit murder, and to do so by using the extensive evidence now becoming available that these companies knew that their product caused cancer and nevertheless introduced elements to insure addiction. America's jails are filled with hundreds of thousands of people of color whose sole crime is that they used or sold marijuana or other mind-altering drugs, yet tobacco is demonstrably at least as dangerous as pot. Our health care system is in crisis in part because of the many people dying from tobacco-induced illnesses. We need some courageous district attorneys or state attorney generals to actually put these people on trial. Short of that, these companies will continue to market their murder, both to the U.S. and around the world. While it makes sense to provide federal aid to small tobacco growers to assist them in shifting their crops to something that is not poisonous, the government should stop compromising with the large cigarette companies and focus instead on providing jail cells for their top company executives.

1968: Thirty Years Later

Nothing has happened in thirty years to compare to the sudden explosion of moral and erotic energy in 1968. Yet for thirty years the political elites of our society have been trying to convince the very people who lived through this time that their experiences were nothing more than expressions of youthful exuberance, typified by drug and sex excesses—combined with the "tragic loss" of some exceptional political figures who were mysteriously gunned down by "lone assassins."

But 1968, and the spirit of the Sixties, refuses to go away. It hovers in the background of contemporary politics and culture. Something happened—something transformative.

One way to miss that story is to allow the media to focus your attention on Martin Luther King Jr., President (and Robert) Kennedy, Abbie Hoffman, Jerry Rubin, Tom Hayden, Bob Dylan, etc. These leaders were important primarily because they were good at articulating back to the growing social movement its own ideals and visions. Yet the real heroes of the 1960s were the millions of ordinary people who realized that it was legitimate and important to fight for their own highest ethical ideals, and decided that they should stand up for each other and defend each other from



ILLUSTRATION BY RUSS ANDO

attacks by those who wished to preserve the status quo. For the first time in many decades, millions of Americans got the idea that they themselves could make history rather than be passive spectators as famous people did it for them. And because they felt they could count on others to stick up for them and defend them—a feeling we call the ethos of solidarity—they felt they could take the risk of fighting for what they really believed in rather than compromising their values and visions in the name of being "realistic."

As I argue in *Jewish Renewal: A Path to Healing and Transformation*, this kind of connection with the possibility

of possibility is a central part of what it means to believe in God. In this sense, though most activists in the Sixties would have denied the existence of God (at least as construed by the spiritually-deadened synagogues and churches in which they had grown up), their activity itself was an act of faith and an affirmation of God-energy in the universe.

When God-energy is released in this way, it floods the universe. In 1968, people in every corner of the globe suddenly began to feel themselves empowered in ways that seemed beyond their own self-conception. Consider France. In March of 1968 a small group of students in Paris began to fight for student rights, resisting the repression attempted by the police of Charles de Gaulle. Inspired by student rebellions on U.S. campuses, these students fought back when the police attacked. Within weeks, a significant section of French workers had joined them, and soon a "general strike" ensued that closed down most of the French economy.

How could this have happened? Just a few months before, a famous French sociologist had published a study of the French working class, demonstrating that they had been bought off by a consumerist society and were satisfied with their lives. Were they liars when they talked to the sociologist? No! What happened was this: when French workers saw no possibility of changing the way things were, they reduced their expectations to their existing reality. But once they saw tens of thousands of students fighting for something radically different, standing up to the police and successfully resisting their assaults, these "happy workers" allowed themselves to think about the world they really wanted, and began to fight for it.

And that began to happen throughout the world in 1968, and the ramifications are still with us. It was this spirit that made it possible, for example, for women to ask themselves whether they too ought not to question their position in a patriarchal world, gays and lesbians to challenge homophobia, the handicapped to challenge the discrimination they faced, and so on throughout the world. Suddenly, nothing was to be taken for granted.

Nor was this just a political movement. The students who began to shut down universities in the U.S. in protest of their affiliation with the Vietnam war machine adopted a slogan from Parisian revolutionaries: "All power to the imagination." In art, music, dance, and in almost every other arena of human endeavor there was an explosion of creativity.

With this creative, political energy came an erotic energy. Though sexual passion too often was tainted by male chauvinist behavior, the liberation of libidinal energies gave the Sixties a special enchantment that went far beyond politics as it had been previously conceived, giving credibility to the notion that the personal and political were deeply intertwined.

Don't expect to hear any of this honestly discussed in the media commemorations of 1968. What we will hear is a paltry substitute whose subtext is to convince us to forget the revolutionary aspect of that moment, to tame it down into the politics of personality and pathology, and hence to lose the confidence once felt by millions that we could shape a beautiful and humanly nourishing world.

Israel's 50th Anniversary: How It Is Being Abused

Eighty U.S. Senators recently signed a letter to President Clinton asking him to not to put forward an explicit plan for moving the peace process forward. The letter was pushed by AIPAC (American-Israel Political Action Committee) and supported by many other establishment Jewish organizations. Congressional support for this letter was based in part on the perception that American Jews remain a powerful political force, and that the best way to appeal to them is to support the Israeli government no matter what Israel is doing. That perception is being strengthened as American Jews join in an uncritical celebration of Israel at Fifty.

We rejoice in Israel and believe its existence to be a modern-day miracle. We are proud of its many accomplishments in providing a refuge for Jews, and we believe in its future potential as a creative center for moral and spiritual wisdom.

Yet we are also saddened by Israel's continued denial of rights to its own Arab citizens, by the growing income gap between its older Ashkenazi citizens and its Sephardi and newer Russian citizens, by its denial of equal religious rights to non-Orthodox strands of Judaism, and by its immoral and self-destructive occupation of the West Bank. We are critical of Arafat's regime as well—see the article by Bassem Eid in this issue of TIKKUN—and we are outraged at Palestinian terrorism, but we believe that none of this violence will ever cease until the Palestinian people are granted a state of their own.

Unfortunately, the celebration of Israel at Fifty has become a weapon in the hands of those supporting the Occupation and the perpetuation of the status quo. Not taking a stand of unequivocal support for the peace process and in opposition to the Occupation becomes a stand—in support of the Netanyahu government. Some people will say, "Isn't it unnecessary to 'politicize' these events?" After all, the polls continue to indicate the overwhelming American Jewish support for the peace process. Surely, they say, the politicians and policy makers know that? But what many people willfully ignore is that these events celebrating Israel's anniversary are already highly political—and are being used by the Jewish Right to convince many in Congress that they must toe the AIPAC line.

In recent discussions I've had with policymakers in Washington, I've heard the following assessment of the sit-

uation: "Sure," I've been told, "we know what the polls say; and the President is well aware of them. But advisers like Al Gore warn him that those who oppose peace are willing to threaten the political futures of lawmakers who publicly challenge Netanyahu, labeling them as 'anti-Israel,' whereas the progressive pro-peace people offer no comparable electoral threat to legislators who advocate the agenda of the Israeli right."

The current celebration of Israel at Fifty only intensifies this dynamic.

What the politicians in Washington see is massive numbers of Jews rallying around Israel and a deafening silence from those who might support the peace process. No wonder that they feel safer aligning with AIPAC than with TIKKUN and Peace Now.

This is an important moment to speak out. That's why TIKKUN is urging American Jews to frame their public celebrations in the form of "Honoring the Peace Makers and the Forces of Reconciliation and Religious Pluralism." Do this in your own community—and let your local media and elected representatives know that this is how many Jews are celebrating Israel's fiftieth anniversary: we reject the Israel that cynically tries to retain as much territory and power over others as possible; instead, we honor the prophetic vision of an Israel that embodies the Jewish commitment to social justice and peace.

Prostitution in Israel and the Triumph of the "Market" Mentality



Thousands of women have been brought to Israel as prostitutes in the last few years. Some are women who have been drugged and kidnapped from their country of origin. Others have accompanied the over fifty thousand immigrant workers from Thailand and other third world countries who have been brought to Israel to ensure that Israeli employers need not rely on Palestinian labor. Still others are teenage sabras or daughters and wives of Russian immigrants being actively recruited as a way to make "fast money" in an expanding Israeli economy. Two major Israeli daily newspapers run hundreds of ads for these prostitutes, and the weekend supplement *Ha'ir* that is placed automatically into everyone's copy of *Ha'aretz* supplements these ads with nude photographs of the available women.

Orthodox religious forces protest, but because their concerns are so closely linked to traditions that subordinate women in other ways, their protests get dismissed by the "hip" cultural elites of Tel Aviv as yet another religious constraint on "freedom." Meanwhile, since the Israeli Left is alienated from spiritual values, it can only focus on the denial of specific rights—for example, the denial of Palestinian and other human rights—instead of on the bigger picture. That means the Left ignores the conflict between Jewish values and the demeaning of human life by the market. Without real support from the Left, many Jewish women, both in the U.S. and in Israel, end up attracted to Jewish fundamentalist communities because they offer protection from the sexual pressures of the market mentality.

Until Israel, and for that matter, the entire world is ready to adopt a new "bottom line" of love and caring to replace the ethos of market selfishness and materialism, every sphere of our lives will be increasingly dominated by the logic of the market. In this issue of TIKKUN, Jeremy Rifkin shows us another aspect of that market logic, as he describes what is likely to happen as biotechnology is taken over by large corporations and we get sold various genes to "perfect" our future offspring. On a global scale, Lori Wallach details the latest maneuvers of multinationals to outsmart any attempts to constrain corporate social irresponsibility. Most of us imagine that these "big" issues are remote and impossible for us to address: yet the rapid advance of market values threatens to distort every area of daily life beyond our wildest nightmares.

No wonder, then, that spiritual and religious movements are growing rapidly, offering an alternative consciousness. Yet their offers ring hollow if they do not themselves engage in active confrontation with the political and economic institutions that are prostituting our souls. ❑

ILLUSTRATION BY RUSS ANDO

Shmooze and Study with Our Editor

Spend a week at Elat Chayyim, the Jewish Renewal Retreat Center near Woodstock, New York. Rabbi Michael Lerner will be teaching a course on "The Globalization of Spirit" July 27–August 2, 1998. A beautiful setting with delicious vegetarian food—and a great way to discuss ideas and share thoughts with our editor. (To register, contact Elat Chayyim, 99 Mill Hook Rd., Accord, NY 12404; 1-800-398-2630.)

If you can't make it to Elat Chayyim, consider coming to the Bay Area to spend High Holy Days with Rabbi Lerner at Beyt Tikkun (for information: Beyt Tikkun, 26 Fell Street, S.F., CA 94102).

ON THE COUCH

Selfishness *and the* Politics of Meaning

by Michael Bader



Does the politics of meaning imply that we can't enjoy getting ahead, having fun, showing off, competing with others, and indulging our need for privacy and escape? Do we have to go around caring for and recognizing each other all of the time? What if we don't feel like it? Does that mean we're not in touch with our higher selves? Does that have to make us "wounded healers"? Can we fight for a meaning-based society and still want to "get away from it all," still be selfish?

Because its political objective is to change our society's bottom line from selfishness to caring, the politics of meaning naturally tends to de-emphasize the healthy and positive dimension of human selfishness. And while it acknowledges the uniqueness of the individual, the politics of meaning seeks to counteract the pathological individualism of our culture with a new emphasis on the centrality of mutuality, connectedness, and our relationship to a higher purpose. Unfortunately, such an emphasis can be mis-read as discouraging the healthy pursuit of self-interest. I would like to explore the differences between good and bad selfishness in order to suggest how we can have a new bottom line while still fulfilling our private aims and indulging in personal gratifications.

Narcissism is not necessarily bad. Healthy self-love is the mainstay of a healthy personality. It derives from the child's experience of the parent's empathy and admiration. As Jessica Benjamin, Peter Gabel, and others have argued, children need various kinds of recognition from their parents. One important kind of recognition is for being special, unique, separate from and different than the parents. We think of this as a need to be accepted and loved for who we "really" are—a special someone *other* than the parent. Confusion can arise because sometimes we use the concept of "otherness" in negative terms. For instance, we talk about the process of making an ethnic or racial group into an "Other," someone *not* like us, and, therefore, someone who can be degraded. In my usage, however, a sense of someone's "otherness" is healthy. In this sense of the term, we appreciate that a child or partner or stranger, for that matter, is *not* like us, that he or she has his or her own interests, talents, and sensibilities. The other, in turn, feels "known." In the case of the child he or she does not feel like an extension of the parent, but instead, learns to trust and cherish his or her own instincts and feelings because the parent recognizes these feelings clearly. The child, and then the adult, feels lovable not for what he or she can do for the other person, or for how he or she is *like* the other person, but for him or herself intrinsically, for who he or she is. As the politics of meaning argues, the person is recognized, interacted with, and related to as an end and not a means to an end.

Narcissism is not necessarily bad. Healthy self-love is the mainstay of a healthy personality.

This need to feel special and admired is frequently expressed in everyday life. It often underlies wishes to distinguish oneself from others, to compete with others and win, to feel important and powerful, and to want to be given to by other people who happily subordinate their own needs in the act of giving. It comes out when we preen for each other or want to be adored by our partners. Showing off and experiencing a sense of pride are both derivative of healthy narcissism. They involve an image of the self as the object of desire and admiration and are constituents of healthy self-love.

ILLUSTRATION BY ERIC FIELD

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It is certainly true that healthy narcissism also involves the ability to *give* recognition to and appreciate the specialness of the other. This dimension of our capacity to love is highlighted by the politics of meaning when it refers to our "higher selves" and our "ethical sensitivity." However, what I am emphasizing here is a more selfish aspect of our selves, but no less high or healthy; namely, the need and capacity to *not* worry about the needs of others. This is the sense in which it is a selfish need. In its purest form, it is a narcissism that is based on the unquestioned assumption that other people should want nothing more than to make you a priority. It assumes, in a sense, that the other person's interests will necessarily involve satisfying *your* interests, without the expectation of a *quid pro quo*.

When this healthy selfish need is thwarted, the self reacts defensively. We've all experienced versions of this process. We begin to feel that we *aren't* special and that the very wish to be special to others is bad or burdensome. We might develop pathological beliefs that these perfectly normal needs actually hurt others or make them envious, and thus have to be censored. We might defensively become modest, inhibit our wishes to "strut our stuff," or even become exaggeratedly altruistic and selfless. This kind of solution is often encouraged in women who are supposed to be primarily of service to others and not to expect service *from* others.

Sometimes a person reacts against the prohibition of his or her narcissistic needs by exaggerating them. In other words, if you won't acknowledge how special I am, I'll rub your face in it. I'll *force* you to acknowledge something that experience tells me won't be given readily. I probably won't enjoy it because it's extorted and not freely given—besides, it's forbidden to begin with—and so I'll have to redouble my efforts to get more. This defensive solution is more available to men in our society because men hold positions of social power more frequently. Men can forcibly extract narcissistic supplies from others—or believe that they can—more readily than women. Their socialization and role-based learning interacts with their internal psychological conflicts over selfishness in ways that can often lead to this kind of coercive solution. On a psychological level, then, the man becomes a pathological narcissist not *because* of selfishness but because of a prohibition *against* a certain kind of selfishness.

Other times, the expectation that the world will feel hurt or resentful when presented with the demands of one's healthy narcissism leads to a chronic guilt. Someone who's guilty in this way is inclined to "give 'till it hurts." Then, when it hurts, he or she gets burned out and resentful. This can often be seen more in women, although it definitely crosses genders. Women are expected to be the "helpers" in our society, and this kind of role-based socialization interacts with their guilt over selfishness to produce burn-out. But the psychological problem was the compulsive need to give to begin with. And that compulsion to give comes from a conflict over healthy selfishness. If we can't be selfish, we can't be generous without feeling secretly extorted. This conflict can result from the sense we get growing up that we shouldn't *take* too much or that we shouldn't be too greedy because we might hurt someone with our selfish narcissism.

If we can't be selfish, we can't be generous without feeling secretly extorted.

This kind of selfishness—to be admired, cared-for, and understood without any expectation of mutuality—is paradoxically a crucial part of mutuality. It exists in a dialectical relationship with our pre-wired and healthy wish to give to and care for the needs of others. The repression and distortions of this altruistic wish in our greedy bottom-line society is one of the primary discoveries of the politics of meaning. But without selfishness, the wish to give to others, to care for others, to recognize and cherish them, can collapse into a type of enslavement. By this I mean that an individual, conflicted over his or her healthy selfishness, experiences relationships as one-way streets—with gratifications going the wrong way. His or her healthy wish to take care of others then feels like a net loss. In other words, if you can't put yourself first, you're likely to feel you come in second in most human encounters.

The same goes for feeling private and separate. Identifying and empathizing with the needs of the other is an intrinsic human ability and strength. However, feeling special and important in one's difference and separateness is equally crucial in healthy development. One has to be able to say "no" to a relationship in order to feel safe saying "yes" to it. Unable to be separate, a person cannot be intimate. Unable to freely turn *away* from others, one cannot safely connect with them without feeling captured in the process. If one can't feel entitled, at times, to feel like the center of the universe, one can't afford another person the same privilege without resentment. If one feels guilty about one's own sense of entitlement, one can't as easily fight for the entitlement of others.

A politics of meaning perspective correctly locates the social origins of this problem in the various ways that contemporary life strips people of narcissistic gratifications and makes them feel guilty in the process. The workplace, for instance, often frustrates healthy selfish needs—e.g., it doesn't provide the kind of mirroring admiration and "no-strings-attached" caretaking that we all need—and, thus, is likely to make our normal altruism and sense of collective responsibility feel self-defeating. The stresses of modern family life often contribute to a situation in which two spouses' selfish needs to be at the center of each other's

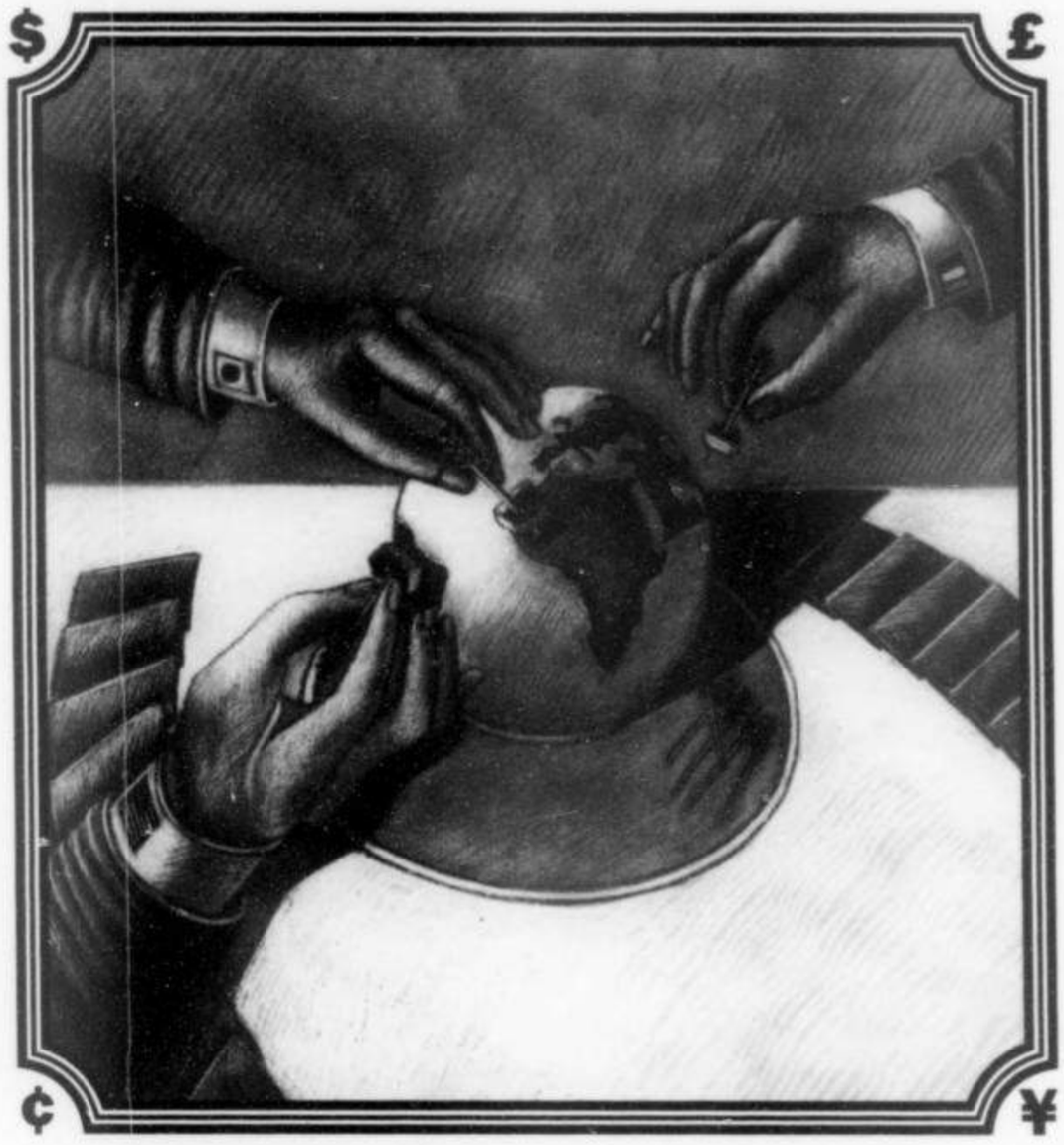
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GLOBAL ECONOMICS

Multinational Madness

The Multilateral Agreement on Investment

Lori Wallach



Imagine an international commercial treaty empowering corporations and investors to sue governments directly for cash compensation in retaliation for almost any government policy or action that could undermine corporate profits.

This is not the plot of a science fiction novel of future corporate totalitarian rule. Rather, it is just one provision of a profound but largely unknown international commercial treaty called the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI).

The MAI, which has been under negotiation since 1995 in Paris, was to be the final pillar in the architecture of corporate economic globalization. It contains numerous audacious provisions that would require major changes in existing federal, state, and local laws and policies, and would limit future action by our elected governments, including measures to counter the growing instability and repeated crisis caused by the daily $2 trillion in world currency trades.

The MAI was supposed to be signed last year. Happily, an unexpected tidal wave of public and legislator attention worldwide has temporarily beached the treaty. But ambitious plans to refloat it at the World Trade Organization, through changes at the International Monetary Fund (IMF) or through a proposed expansion of NAFTA to Europe called the New TransAtlantic Marketplace (NTM), are already underway. Think of it as a globalization shell game; the agenda of removing government power in favor of extending corporate rule is the rotten pea which is moved from shell to shell.

For a decade, we have been continually subjected to pro-globalization public relations campaigns ("ADM—supermarket to the World"), "news" reports (lauding every new international free trade agreement as progress) and political rhetoric, all of which suggest that the current form of globalization is at least inevitable and often positive.

Yet, unlike the moon's pull on the tide, there is nothing inevitable about this reorganization of our world. Rather, this monumental shift in economic, political, and social design was carefully planned and has been systematically implemented—at least until the recent and temporary MAI freeze.

This globalization model is characterized by the establishment of supranational limitations on the legal and practical ability of any nation to subordinate commercial activity to other important goals. Its objective and inevitable result is to desecrate democratic decision-making and to eliminate accountability over matters as immediate as the safety of one's food or the way in which a country may use or conserve its land, water, and other resources.

In the mid-1980s, the small minority of multinational corporations, currency speculators, and mega-banks benefiting from what was an ad hoc rearrangement of power became sufficiently greedy to actually write it all down as formal, global law. It has taken a decade for the public to become aware of and to take action on this new design. The November 1997 congressional refusal to grant the U.S. president "fast track" trade authority, and the recent MAI slowdown, are the fruits of a decade of public education and organizing worldwide.

There is nothing conspiratorial about this push for globalization. Rather, it is a case of common worldview and interests: the globe is understood as a market, people are seen as either consumers or labor, and nature is seen as a resource to be exploited. The globalization philosophy is that maximizing economic liberalization will in itself result in broadly-based economic and social benefits.

From this perspective, a good new system is one that eliminates barriers to commerce on a global scale and thus eliminates economic inefficiency. From any *other* perspective, such "barriers" are seen as valued safeguards on unfet-

ILLUSTRATIONS BY RICHARD ROSS

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tered, harmful business activity—laws that foster safety and health or the sustainable use of resources. Thus the diversity that is a blessing of democracy is itself the major barrier.



Over the past several decades, the power of democratic institutions has been undermined, deepening multinational corporate power. The establishment of the World Trade Organization, the passage of NAFTA, and the expansion of the International Monetary Fund marked a landmark formalization, strengthening and political approval of this ad hoc system. The MAI was to be the crown jewel in this design.

Before MAI

The World Trade Organization transformed the fifty-year-old trade rules of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) into a powerful, free-standing international commerce agency. The WTO's binding rules are enforced through international dispute resolution tribunals with sanction powers (ie. it can order trade sanctions or financial payments for non-compliant countries.). In the WTO's first three years, one of the United States' most successful environmental laws, the Marine Mammal Protection Act safeguarding dolphins from tuna fishing techniques that killed millions, was successfully challenged and was last year eliminated as WTO ordered. Last month, the WTO ruled against a portion of the U.S. Endangered Species Act. The banana trade policy that has developed the Caribbean Island nations as stable democracies with middle classes was recently struck down by the WTO, as was a vital European food safety law.

The WTO's smaller siblings, such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), went further, establishing new rights and protections for investors. The U.S.-based Ethyl Corp. is using NAFTA provisions to directly sue the Canadian government for $251 million in damages. The company claims that a planned ban of MMT—a gasoline additive forbidden in California and other U.S. states because it destroys catalytic converters and is suspected as a threat to children's mental development—was an expropriation of its expected future profits protected under NAFTA.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF), established in 1940 to assist countries with short-term currency crunches related to trade flows, expanded in the mid-1980s to be an agency empowered to entirely reorganize the economies and laws of nations to which it extended loans. The IMF pushed private lenders out of Third World markets by making long-term loans, but only under Faustian conditions about which private banks could only fantasize. The IMF required transformation of small farms that produced staple crops for local consumption into export-oriented plantations specializing in aquaculture shrimp and exotic fruits for hard currency sales to developed countries. The economic stagnation, poverty, and hunger in Latin American and southeast Asia caused by the IMF's structural adjustment programs is now even criticized by conservative economists and the IMF's sister organization, the World Bank.

The Multilateral Agreement on Investment

The MAI was intended to complete the leftover business of the WTO, IMF, and regional rules such as NAFTA—ensuring the right for investors to enter any commercial sector in any country absent conditions and with provisions to socialize investment risk and guarantee future profitability.

The director general of the World Trade Organization, Renato Ruggerio, has described the goal of global investment deregulation rather honestly: "We are writing the constitution for a single global economy."

The MAI's terms would constrain government action concerning:

- where and under what terms investment in manufacturing and services could be done
- financial instruments such as stocks and bonds
- trade in currency
- ownership of land and natural resources, concessions and licenses.

Around the world, legislators, scholars, citizens, activists—and indeed almost everyone outside the narrow cadre of the representatives of government commerce agencies and industry negotiating the treaty—have been unaware of the very negotiations, much less the 170-page text the OECD reports is 90 percent complete.

It was only recently that some in Congress became aware of the MAI negotiations. The U.S. congressional committees with direct jurisdiction over international commerce or investment had not been briefed, even though the State and Treasury departments have spearheaded the MAI talks for three years.

This wall of silence is not unique to the United States. In France, the chair of the committee responsible for investment policy only recently learned of his government's MAI actions.

U.S. government officials denied the existence of an MAI text until an embarrassing day in late January 1997, when a coalition of international citizen groups managed to liberate a copy of the text. A year after our posting of the full, heisted text on our website (www.citizen.org), the OCED finally also made public a sanitized version.

A Treaty of Corporate Rights and Government Obligations

A review of the text shows that, like most international treaties, the MAI establishes a series of rights and responsibilities. Unlike other treaties, the rights granted in the



treaty go only to foreign investors and corporations, while the responsibilities go only to governments. As well, while some of the MAI rules are based on treating foreign and domestic investors the same, there are also powerful new "absolute" rights established for corporations. In contrast to all existing treaties, once governments enter into the MAI, they are irrevocably bound to its terms for twenty years.

The MAI's terms are designed to provide investors with the absolute right to establish an investment (this includes purchase of land, natural resources, telecommunications and other services, and currency) under deregulated terms set forth in the treaty. Governments are given the obligation to ensure "effective enjoyment" of such investments.

First, to guarantee this, the MAI contains broad expropriation and compensation provisions providing that foreign investors and corporations will be compensated for actions a government takes that undermine their ability to profit from their investment. These provisions are nothing like the common law notion found in many nations' constitutions of compensation through due process when the government, for instance, takes your property to build road.

Instead, the MAI language obligates governments to compensate for actions having the "equivalent effect" of even an "indirect expropriation." What does that mean? "[A] lost opportunity to profit from a planned investment would be a type of loss sufficient to give an investor standing," according to the text.

The "expropriation and compensation" rules are among the MAI's most dangerous provisions. They arm every foreign investor or corporation with the power to challenge nearly any government action or policy—from taxes to environmental or labor rules to consumer protections—as a potential threat to their profits. In the United States, radical anti-environmentalists tried to ram similar language through Congress defining an array of government actions as "takings" that had to be compensated. Congress perceived that such a policy would create poisonous anti-regulatory attacks that would eviscerate government. Some conservatives rejected the idea as exposing the government to dangerous financial liabilities. Imagine how lawmakers are reacting to the news that the MAI would give every foreign investor and corporation even greater such rights.

If the MAI's expropriation notion seems too extreme to believe, consider the case of Ethyl Corp. noted above. The U.S. Trade Representative's office refused to pursue the case using the governmental dispute resolution system of NAFTA, fearing the boomerang effect on similar U.S. laws other countries could challenge. So Ethyl Corp. used NAFTA provisos to file its own direct expropriation action against the Canadian government, which is proceeding towards a ruling. The lawyer who initiated the Ethyl case calls the much broader, more vague expropriation terms in the MAI the "paying the polluter" provision, a cruel twist on the "polluter pays" principle. The ability of such a mechanism to chill government action to protect the environment, ensure fair treatment and safe conditions for workers, or shape investment to suit community interests is overwhelming.

Meanwhile, the MAI does not include an attendant set of obligations for investor conduct or even for the prohibition of anti-competitive business practices under which citizens could sue for compensation from corporations. Instead, there is non-binding preambular language noting support for environmental and labor policies, even as the core binding terms of the treaty constrain them severely.

Another specific MAI investor right is the strict application of "national treatment," meaning governments must treat foreign investors the same as domestic investors. Under the MAI, it is the *impact* of a policy—not its intent or a law's textual meaning—that is considered. Thus, facially neutral laws that can be shown to have an unintended discriminatory *impact* on foreign capital would be forbidden. This means laws placing limits on the expansion of extractive industries such as mining or forestry would be vulnerable on the grounds that they discriminate in effect against foreign investors trying to gain new access to resources relative to domestic investors who already have access. Similarly, policies worldwide benefiting small business or preferential treatment aimed at fostering development of certain categories of investors or investments, such as the U.S. inner city "enterprise zones" for development in economically stressed regions, could be attacked.

The MAI also could provide the U.S. tobacco giants a new way to get rid of public health laws. In response to a Thai law aimed at limiting smoking, the U.S. Trade Representative took Thailand to GATT in the early 1980s. GATT opposed a ban on cigarette imports but allowed a ban on advertising. GATT noted that advertising bans would have a stronger impact on foreign brands trying to establish a market share against established local brands. However, GATT allowed this disparate impact because the narrow public health exception in GATT provided limited flexibility for a law whose intention was not discrimination, even if that was its effect. The MAI does not have even such narrow public health exceptions and specifically targets unintended secondary effects.

The national treatment and related "general treatment" rules also would require U.S. states and localities to eliminate many policies based on state residency that have been upheld under U.S. constitutional challenge as essential elements of our federal system of governance. The threat to these laws—such as requirements of residency in many western states to obtain water rights or concessions for timber or mining on state lands or many communities' rules

on residency to obtain a commercial license (i.e. a liquor license)—has caused the Western Governor's Association to issue a report of laws at risk.



National treatment would also apply to privatization. Thus, if your community decides to sell a public water utility, bidders worldwide must be given the same access as local investors, including, for instance, a local democratically-controlled coop. Ready to call Brussels when your water is shut off?

The MAI also includes a broad ban on performance requirements, measures that countries use to shape investment to benefit broad public interests. It is these MAI provisions that would limit countries' actions to avoid future economic meltdowns like that roiling Asia and slowing U.S. domestic growth now. For instance, successful mechanisms, such as Chile's "speed bumps" that require investors to hold onto financial instruments for a set amount of time, would be banned. Many environmental laws and standards also could be challenged under the MAI as forbidden conditions to investment. For example, state laws that require that glass or plastic containers are manufactured from a minimum percentage of recycled content, or that a particular production process designed to minimize environmental damage is used, would be banned under MAI. The MAI has generated unified outrage among environmental organizations worldwide.

The MAI ban on performance requirements could especially threaten laws designed to strengthen domestic economic growth. For example, laws requiring foreign investors to form partnerships with local firms or to remain in a community for a set amount of time would run afoul of MAI rules.

Perhaps this threat doesn't bother most Americans, because we largely have been stripped of such mechanisms to shape investment for the public interest. However, rather than demanding the rest of the world join us shivering naked, we should safeguard the future ability of the United States to "reclothe" itself.

The MAI also would apply the principle of "Most Favored Nation" (MFN) treatment to investment rules, requiring equal treatment among all foreign investor and target countries. This would prevent governments from distinguishing between foreign investors or foreign investment targets based on countries' human rights, labor, or other records.

It has been said that if the MAI had been law in the 1980s, Nelson Mandela would still be in jail. This is the case because the MAI would require revocation of investment boycotts or restrictions, such as restrictions on Swiss banks involved in the Nazi gold scandal or businesses cooperating with Burma or Nigeria's murderous regimes—except those defensible under a narrow "essential security" exception.

As if these extreme provisions were not enough, the MAI would literally replace the government role of enforcing this international treaty with private corporate enforcement rights. Called "investor-to-state" dispute resolution, the MAI allows investors to sue governments at the tribunals of their choice for cash damages. Among the fora MAI lists for such suits is the International Chamber of Commerce!

The Political Situation

For years, the government and industry proponents of the MAI denied its existence. Now that MAI has been dragged out of its crypt, they have resorted to broad generalities. "Don't worry," they argue, "there's nothing new in this treaty. It is just about 'rationalizing' existing investment practices and making a 'level playing field' for U.S. investors."

Strikingly, however, government MAI boosters have no answers when challenged with the MAI's specific terms. Thus, their latest tactic is to promise to take numerous exceptions to the treaty. Of course, by demanding numerous exceptions to safeguard their laws, the governments have provided the latest evidence of precisely how much MAI puts at risk.

Yet, years of experience with the GATT and now WTO, as well as other international commercial agreements has shown that even the so-called full "carve out" exceptions often prove meaningless. Like the WTO, at the MAI there would be no outside appeals when the tribunals simply disregarded countries' exceptions. Additionally, the MAI contains provisions called "standstill" and "rollback" that bind governments to take no further actions in areas covered by the treaty and to systematically eliminate exceptions taken and non-conforming laws.

Already today, any nation wanting to respond to public demands to address widespread economic, environmental, and social problems must do so in the context of massive international investment flows, increasingly uprooted capital and corporations and attendant economic instability worldwide. This is a situation that needs to be remedied, not escalated with the MAI.

The globalization agenda is like a political Dracula. The work of activists worldwide has damaged its viability by exposing it and its instruments to the sunlight of public awareness. We need capital rooted with more democratic accountability, limits on destabilizing speculative currency trading and survivable global social and environmental policy. It is only through our continued vigilance—and the space achieved by victories such as the stall of MAI's proposed constraints on our democracy—that creates our ability to build the vital new global rules to constrain corporate excesses against our communities. ❑

INTERVIEW

AN INTERVIEW WITH Jean-Bertrand Aristide



Catherine Orenstein

In 1990 Jean-Bertrand Aristide, a parish priest working in the slums, received over two-thirds of the vote in Haiti's first free and fair presidential elections monitored by the UN. His election was unprecedented in a land that most recently had been ruled by a series of military regimes and the thirty-year Duvalier dictatorship. During Aristide's presidency the national coffers registered a positive balance for the first time, and the number of documented human rights abuses plummeted. But the traditional powers that control Haiti—the elite, the military, the United States—were wary of his radical politics, and only seven months into his term a military coup sent Aristide into exile. By the time he was returned to Haiti three years later in October 1994, on the heels of the U.S.-led UN invasion, he had been pressured to substitute many of his political and economic policies for the neo-liberal recommendations of international lenders and the IMF. Since Aristide stepped down as president in February 1996, he has continued to work with the poor at his newly created Aristide Foundation for Democracy. Despite the chronic political controversy that surrounds him, he is widely expected to become president again in the year 2001. He was interviewed in March 1998 in New York City by Catherine Orenstein.

ORENSTEIN: I know that you went to school in Israel for a time, and that you speak Hebrew. This interview is for TIKKUN, so I thought I'd start by asking you how the Haitian experience and the Jewish experience can inform each other. For example, I was thinking of the parallel between the Jewish refugees whom the United States turned away in 1939, and the boats of Haitian refugees who were also turned away from our shores during Haiti's coup years.

ARISTIDE: First of all, I'd like to say thank you to those of Jewish faith for this opportunity to express solidarity with you on behalf of the Haitian people. There is a connection between the Jewish past and our present, in the sense that Jews have suffered in the same way that Haitians today suffer, under the same forces of racism and colonialism. When Jewish people go to the roots of their faith, they say that their God is the God of justice, and that their God is against slavery. We Haitians share that same belief. We stand on common ground: Haitians and Jews, acting from the foundations of our faith, have both fought for freedom from slavery. Jews and Haitians, no matter the country, no matter the color of the skin, no matter the religion, are in solidarity with one another for we know that our God is against slavery; and we fight together against it.

ORENSTEIN: When did you live in Israel, and what did you do there?

ARISTIDE: From 1979 to 1983, I lived in Israel as a student of theology. I was sent there to study, on a scholarship. As a student in Haiti, I had written a poem, inspired by the Bible. My professor thought it should be published. That was what began my biblical studies.

ORENSTEIN: What was the poem?

ARISTIDE: The poem was called *Pou ki*, which means "why?" in Haitian Kreyol. I asked why? Why do we have suffering? Why do we have people suffering from need? In light of the luxury that some people live in, I attribute this to a kind of system of economic slavery.

ORENSTEIN: In many of your speeches you've talked about the maldistribution of wealth, not only in Haiti but globally. How do you see Haiti today, particularly in light of the new neo-liberal economic policies that the Haitian Government has been pressured to implement by the U.S. and the IMF?

ARISTIDE: The huge majority of Haitian people say that the biggest problem in Haiti is the cost of living. If you open your eyes, you'll see that they are right: the cost of living has indeed become very high. People are angry and frustrated when they think about how, on December 16, 1990 [Haiti's first free elections, in which Aristide was elected], they voted for their rights, only to see that reversed. They are frustrated when they remember how, during the three years following the coup of 1991, they had to suffer and fight to have democracy back. We must try to figure out what we can do to move forward [politically] without ignoring the immediate economic problems. The mind is not able to work when there is hunger in the belly. In Kreyol, I say *pa gen lapè nan tet si pa gen lapè nan vant*: there can be no peace of mind without bread-peace in the stomach. Poverty can be a cause of violence. So, if we want peace, we must also work to alleviate poverty.

Catherine Orenstein is an independent journalist living in New York City. She has lived in and reported on Haiti off and on since 1990. In 1995 and 1996 she investigated crimes against human rights for the United Nations and the Haitian Government.

PHOTOGRAPH BY CAROL HALEBIAN · GAMMA

The neo-liberal economic program will not solve our economic reality. Globalization and neo-liberalization promise solutions for the poor, but I don't see this happening anywhere in the world. In 1960, the richest fifth of the world's population claimed 70 percent of global wealth; today they claim 85 percent. In 1960, the poorest fifth of the world's population claimed 2.3 percent of the world's wealth; today they have only 1.1 percent. The poor are becoming poorer, and Haiti is the poorest country of the Western world. Economically speaking, neo-liberalization is a kind of colonialism.



PHOTOGRAPH BY CAROL HALEBIAN / GAMMA

ORENSTEIN: When I first went to Haiti in 1990, it was right before you were elected. At that time, Marc Bazin, a former World Bank official who was proposing these same neo-liberal policies, was running against you for president. He was defeated, and you won by a landslide. But now it seems those policies are rising from the ashes. Has the grass roots struggle been for nothing, if everything has come full circle—or has it all come full circle?

ARISTIDE: Let me compare [1990 to] the economic and political fate of our struggle for independence. When our forefathers decided to reject slavery and rise up politically, we became, in 1804, the first black independent republic in the world. But unfortunately, those who colonized the country after independence conspired to use new strategies to oppress us. Not until December 16, 1990 did Haiti have its first fair and free elections. And still the struggle continues, one hundred and eighty-six years after independence. Economically speaking, I would say that from 1960 to today nothing has changed much in the Haitian economic reality. Yes, it's true we won when we rejected those economic plans that Bazin put forth in the 1990 elections. But, unfortunately, those who wanted to impose those plans and to keep Haiti more economically dependent looked for new ways: they attempted a coup in 1990 to try to keep me from coming to office, and staged another seven months later with General Cedras and Police Chief Michel Francois; and during the three years following the coup, they worked to prevent the restoration of democracy.

Comparing the political and economic aspects of the same struggle, I think that the political progress we have made is irreversible in the collective mind of the Haitian people. I cannot imagine for one second that the Haitian people would choose to go back to slavery! They have their land, they have their rights, they want to talk freely, to be free. So politically, this projects an irreversible dimension.

On the other hand, economically it has become clear that we have not moved forward, or have even moved backwards. We have become economically more dependent. But people need to understand that it's not a matter of charity when the IMF, the World Bank, or the IDB [Inter-American Development Bank] enters into financial relations with the Haitian government. Banks do not make gifts. It is an investment. They need us as we need them. When the Haitian people better understand this, we will better understand how to keep fighting for our economic independence. We don't pretend that we can avoid having economic relationships with other countries or financial institutions—of course not. But we must better understand the nature of these relationships.

ORENSTEIN: The other evening you told a parable about the economic catch-22 Haitians face, either accept these reforms or else no aid.

ARISTIDE: Yes, the choices a poor country so often faces remind me of a story. Anatol was one of the kids who lived with us at *Lafanmi Selavi*, the center for street children in Port-au-Prince that I founded in 1986. He later got a job working at the national seaport. One day, a powerful businessman offered Anatol money to sabotage the main forklift at the port. Anatol said to the man, "Well then, I'm already dead." The man asked why. Anatol answered, "Because if I sneak in here at night to do what you ask, they'll shoot me. If I don't, you will kill me." The dilemma is the classic dilemma of the poor: between death and death.

ORENSTEIN: Last time we talked, you spoke about finding a third path, or an alternative to lose-lose situations like that. What kind of alternatives do you propose for Haiti?

ARISTIDE: At the Aristide Foundation we have worked to create another path. First, we have established a cooperative bank where we have welcomed 12,000 people. We offer loans at one percent interest a month, instead of the 10 or 20 percent or more that loan sharks charge. In a country where poor people cannot save, it is essential to have a source of credit. Members of the cooperative can also buy food at the Foundation for about two thirds of the market price, and we now have public transport at reduced fares. We work with the poorest of the poor: shoe-shiners, toilet cleaners, vendors, and people who carry heavy loads on carts that they must rent. We have a program where we loan them the twenty dollars they need to rent the cart in advance, and they can earn money and then pay back the loan. We are not waiting for foreign aid to save us. We must work from our own resources, and show people what they can reap from their own hands.

There is also *Radyo Timoun*—a national radio station that is run by street kids. Boys and girls, twelve, thirteen, sixteen years old, talk with other kids who call in on the air. They are not only talking behind the microphone, but running the show. They are even the technicians; we only assist them. When they broadcast from Port-au-Prince, kids from the far corners of Haiti can hear them. When you have kids talking to kids about their land and the work they are doing, it creates a new dynamic, and can give them a sense of empowerment for the future. This is part of our search for independence.

At the Foundation, we are also training young people to be teachers of English, Spanish, and Kreyol. For a few

months of lessons at the Haitian American Institute one would pay 140 Haitian dollars; we offer the same for 55 Haitian dollars, and we generally pay our teachers more. When young people realize that they can be part of the decision-making, they will feel stronger. In a couple of years, who knows if some of these young people learning English and Spanish and Kreyol won't be employees of their own cooperatives?

ORENSTEIN: But about 60 percent of Haiti's budget depends on foreign aid. Are these alternatives realistic?

ARISTIDE: I cannot answer how many years it will take to gain our economic independence, but I know for sure it will happen. It's a matter of people participating in the decisions that are made, and not just observing. We must invest in the human being, in building schools, in healthcare to protect our lives. With that, the Haitian people clearly would reduce our economic dependence in a very short period of time. Do you remember before the 1990 elections? We saw how people cleaned the capital and even painted the telephone poles and curbs! This was because they involved themselves in those elections, and because they had hope. It's a matter of people expressing themselves politically in economic matters, and not just the government deciding.



ORENSTEIN: When you were elected in 1990, you were a priest working for the poor; when you were finally returned in 1994, you came back under heavy pressure to implement these policies that you have been criticizing. Can you talk about these pressures, and how you will resist them in the future, especially if you become president again in the year 2001?

ARISTIDE: I always feel that I am connected to the Haitian people and also in deep communion with them as well; by this I mean that I always strive to know what they want me to do and to do that. [During the coup years, when we were negotiating my return to Haiti] at Governor's Island, New York, I knew that the people wanted me back in Haiti. So I made compromises, but with limits. I knew they didn't want me back sharing power with the coup leaders. On the putchists' side, they put pressure on me to bargain by increasing the number of killings. But on my side, I was in communion with my people. When I finally went back to Haiti, the first priority, according to my communion with my people, was for the stomach. So first, I had to disband the army; we would never be able to feed the stomach with that kind of army, [which was] used for a hundred years to repress us.

ORENSTEIN: Were you under pressure not to disband the army?

ARISTIDE: I don't know that I was under pressure, but there were those putting pressure on me!

ORENSTEIN: Some pressures you were able to resist but others, like the economic policies, are more difficult.

ARISTIDE: We will always have to negotiate. We will always have to evaluate what we can do and what we cannot do, what we can accept and what we cannot. Increasing national production will help us negotiate from a better position. Any president united with his people will be in a better position [to negotiate]. And compromise will be part [of the negotiations]. Economically, the international community also needs Haiti. If the banks give us credit, it's not because they are nice. There is something to gain.

ORENSTEIN: Even though the UN mission ended in December of last year, there are still 500 U.S. support troops in Haiti. Why are they still there?

ARISTIDE: Let me say this. If a dog has a choice of sitting before the house of the butcher or the house of the tailor, you know that it will never choose to sit in front of the tailor's house. That's Haiti. If you look at the game on an international level, when people want to be somewhere, it's because they stand to gain. They say, oh, Haiti, it's so poor, we have to save Haiti, we must protect Haiti! But exactly what for? Haiti is not really that poor. Haiti's gold and iron alone are valued at $US 740.4 million. Not to mention marble, or the fact that Haiti is the fifth in the world in mango production. Haiti is a great country with a great people and a good number of products foreign companies want. Haitians need to realize all that we have, instead of simply letting people tell us what we're worth.

The banks in Haiti are moving toward the countryside, why? Is it just because they are charitable organizations, who want to distribute bread or healthcare? Of course not! It's because there is money to be had there. And the more we know what we have, the more we can protect it, and develop a normal relationship with those who have more wealth. The international community is still present in Haiti, still has troops in Haiti. We still see economic problems and people still fighting for justice. But at the same time we see hope.

ORENSTEIN: No significant coup criminals have been tried and jailed. How can you move forward when you haven't cleaned up the mess that was left behind?

ARISTIDE: We are in a process of rebuilding. We are rebuilding a country, in the big sense of the word—not just an image. When they started creating the judicial system one hundred years ago, it wasn't to provide justice for everyone. They didn't even recognize everyone as a citizen. Even on birth certificates, anyone who was not from Port-au-Prince was *moun andeyo*, "outsider." [Aristide ended the practice through issuing an executive order shortly after taking office in 1991.]

ORENSTEIN: It's ironic because peasants make up the vast majority of the Haitian population!

ARISTIDE: Yes, it's true: 78 percent of the Haitian population lives in the countryside. It's a kind of social apartheid,

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PHOTOGRAPH BY CAROL HALEBIAN / GAMMA

INTERVIEW

AN INTERVIEW WITH Mario Cuomo

Jack Newfield



PHOTOGRAPH BY TED COWELL / NEW YORK POST

Mario Cuomo was governor of New York from 1983 to 1994. His speech articulating the progressive ideal electrified the 1984 Democratic convention. He wrote that speech himself, without the aid of ghostwriters. Cuomo, 65, remains an active political force, speaking frequently around the country. He has authored two books, "The Diaries of Mario Cuomo," and "Forest Hills Diary." Cuomo's liberalism has always had a theological and spiritual root. In this interview, he talks about his experiences as both a shabbos goy *and a Catholic altar boy, as he grew up in Queens, New York, the son of a ditch digger who spoke little English.*

NEWFIELD: Governor, you have often invoked the phrase *tikkun olam* in your writings and in your speeches. What does it mean to you and what is its relevance to both politics and government?

CUOMO: *Tikkun olam,* translated roughly, means to repair or cure the universe. What it means to me as a Christian—because it was a truth adopted by Christianity as a cardinal principle—is that God made the world but did not finish it, and our mission as individuals is to use all of our strength to finish the world, to complete it, making it as good a place as we can. That is the mission that gives our life significance. We are perceived, as Christians, as an army trying to win the battle against imperfection. We know it's not going to be won during our term of service. But we hope to make some progress. That is the essential principle.

NEWFIELD: When did you first adopt it as part of your philosophy?

CUOMO: That's difficult to say. I got involved in Judaism and Catholicism very early in my life, by accident, in the neighborhood. I became an altar boy, although I was in public school, because the nun in Sunday school thought I should be an altar boy. Because I was an altar boy serving mass every weekend, I read Latin prose, I became fascinated by it, and I started reading about religion. At about the same time, when I was thirteen or fourteen years old, Mr. Kessler, who put my mother and father into business in a grocery store in the Depression and who lived upstairs in a building that he owned, a tenement, encouraged me to become a *shabbas goy* [a non-Jew who works for Jews on the Sabbath], which Pete Hamill was, and a lot of people have been….

NEWFIELD: Colin Powell …

CUOMO: And Colin Powell. And being a *shabbos goy* was particularly convenient for me because the synagogue was on the corner. The grocery store was on one corner and the synagogue on the other. And I was struck by the similarity of the rituals. A language I didn't understand on Sundays and a language I didn't understand on the Sabbath: the Hebrew and the Latin. The mystique: incense, brocaded vestments, an aura of mystery. I eventually became a member of the Second Vatican Council's Catholic-Jewish relations committee that came out of the Catholic church's apology to the Jewish people for 1900 years of insensitivity. I traveled to synagogues, then to Israel, got involved with Israel politically … and so these two things have blended.

Now, very early in my life, I concluded, in a very rough way and without knowing much about philosophy or God, that there must be some justification for this curious existence we lead. And the justification given by the Hebrew *tikkun olam* and the Catholic *collaborators in creation* made all the sense in the world to me. At least it gave me something to do. It means: I don't understand this life. I don't understand why good people get hurt, even after reading the

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rabbi's [Harold Kushner's] book. I just don't understand it: why children should have the eyes blown out of their heads by bombs in Vietnam or anywhere else when they're two years old and they never did anything wrong. This notion that, well, it's an imperfect place and you're supposed to make it as good as possible, that appealed to me. It still does. It also is the only thing that makes sense to me politically. If government, if politics, is the science of a people trying to



figure out how to rule their environment and their own conduct, you should start with the same principle: that we are here to make our society better. Whether it is Athens, Greece, the United States of America, the European Union, or the planet, we're all here trying to make the place better.

That idea leads naturally to the national government encouraging the idea of community, which started with Roosevelt in a real way in the Depression. It's an idea that makes more sense as the world becomes more complicated, tighter knit because of technology, etc.

Now that's it. It's as basic as that. It means people who are well taking care of people who are sick and who cannot take care of themselves. It means people who are strong and well-educated helping to provide an education for people who are not as strong and not as well-educated and who cannot do it for themselves.

It also means having responsibility, personal responsibility, or nothing works. Because if you abandon personal responsibility, you get chaos. Do everything you can to be productive, and then, in a case where you've done everything you can and you need a little help to be productive, we'll help you to be productive.

NEWFIELD: Does this *tikkun olam* philosophy have a practical application to campaigning and governing?

CUOMO: I think in the year 2000, the race for president should be won by the man or woman who stands up and says "Look, the United States of America is the strongest nation the world has ever seen. It's doing very, very well. For the last eight years, nine years, ten years by then, this economy has been booming. The stock market is now 10,004—which I believe it will be, over 10,000 by 2000. There are more rich people than ever before. Owners, investors, and high school workers are doing great, *but* we still have 40 to 45 million poor people—which we will. We still have 16 million children who are absolutely desperate. We still have more than 50 percent of the 137 million workers—or 139 or 140 that we'll have by that time—who are stagnated and going nowhere, and that's not good enough.

And if we want to repair this place called America, if we want to collaborate in creating the strongest possible America, then we must, and I know we can, find a way to incorporate more of those people into the circle of opportunity. Without raising taxes, without destabilizing the budget, keeping the budget balanced. We *still* can find money to invest in education, to invest in health care. Just take it from the 300 billion dollars we're giving to corporations, much of which is wasted. Just take it by doing what you have to do to protect the Social Security fund, but [find] ways to save money in Medicare and Social Security. People like me shouldn't get a cost of living increase in Social Security—I'm making too much money. And people like me should pay a full bill in Medicare—I'm making too much money.

NEWFIELD: That is *tikkun* …

CUOMO: That's *tikkun olam*, that's *collaboration in creation*….

NEWFIELD: Is *tikkun olam* a charter for an argument for affirmative action?

CUOMO: Affirmative action is a very nuanced and sophisticated application of the principle that we should help one another. The question is, does affirmative action really help or does it hurt? Is it counter productive or is it efficient? That's the only real question.

NEWFIELD: What's your answer?

CUOMO: Well, it depends on what you mean by affirmative action. I used affirmative action in putting women on the Court of Appeals, in putting blacks on the Court of Appeals, in putting Hispanics on the Court of Appeals, our highest court in New York State. For the first time in *history* I did it. And the principle was: I will give special assistance to these groups that have been left out because I think it is good for our society to have them reflected in our highest court. I will insist on merit; they must have at least as much merit as the alternate possibilities available to me. I will select them unabashedly, saying "I wanted a woman and so I am selecting Judith Kaye. She's at least as good as the men." That was confirmed by a Republican Senate and a conservative Senate in my state, every time I did it.

Affirmative action in terms of quotas, in which you say, "We must have 8 percent even if that requires that some of them be not nearly as adequate as the comparable." No. Quotas are probably unconstitutional. But there's a great deal of room between quotas which are unconstitutional

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARY McLOUGHLIN / NEW YORK POST

and rhetoric about affirmative action. You can work very, very hard to set goals and to meet goals without doing quotas. You can give special instruction to people who are taking LSAT exams. You can go out of your way to introduce minority candidates to opportunities in various colleges. We do it all the time. We do it for football players. We do it for the sons of the alumni. We do it over and over, affirmative action, and we don't think of it twice.

NEWFIELD: Let me ask you now about the issue of the role of spirituality and religion in political leadership, in civic leadership, in national leadership. Is there a place for spirituality? Is this something America is missing and yearning for, or not? Or should it be left to places of worship, to our religious leaders?

CUOMO: No, no, no. Spirituality and religion are two different things. Religion is an expression of spirituality. All the religions I'm aware of are spiritual in the sense that they are not purely material, they are not limited to the material. They start with an assumption that there is a truth beyond just materiality. I think that is essential, belief in a truth that goes beyond your material existence. If all you are is this strange combination of DNA and flesh and bones and evolution and a monkey in the process of becoming a giant brain a million years from now, if that's all we are and there is nothing more, then life is empty. I believe, with Vaclav Havel and a lot of other people, that you can't run a fully effective society without adverting to a huge justification for the people of the planet. And the justification goes beyond your individual existence. And the justification is *tikkun olam*. Our mission is to pursue a greater good than the satisfaction of our own wants in our own miserably short lifetime. We have to do things that will have meaning long after we're gone.

You know what is a very good example of this, practically, that everybody takes for granted? The environment is a spiritual process, mostly. The way I put it as governor was "I will not be able to catch a single fish in a single lake that I am working so hard to keep clean in my lifetime." You try to clean the air, or clean the water, yet you don't know the pleasure of that cleaner environment in your lifetime. Especially if you're sixty-five, which I am now, still working on the environment: Why? I work for all those generations to follow me, who are not my blood, not my children. I won't be here for them. What is that but spirituality? What is that but something beyond pure materiality, limited by your existence and your own mean intellect? So, yeah, you must have spirituality. You must believe in something larger-than-yourself, or you believe only in yourself. If there's one problem with today's America, it's not Bill Bennet's—who's a good friend of mine—idea of morality: don't sin, and don't have sex. But that's not really the problem. The real problem in this society is that more and more we are encouraged to believe that the only thing that counts is us individually. That's all. That I'm the only important thing. Not my block, not my neighborhood, not my country, and certainly not this planet. That my interest stops at the fence in my backyard. And I think that is shriveling, desiccating, short-sighted, inefficient.

You cannot build a society if you are going to limit it to your own horizons, because then when you get to be sixty-five, what are you going to care about? You know you got so little time left.



PHOTOGRAPH BY CHARLES WENZELBERG / NEW YORK POST

NEWFIELD: In your travels around America, do you sense that this yearning for something spiritual beyond the material has a place in our national political conversation?

CUOMO: Absolutely. Absolutely. All the time, in the most intellectual conversations and in the simplest ways. Garth Brooks, is that his name?

NEWFIELD: The country singer …

CUOMO: Did you ever see one of his concerts? He sings the sweetest, plainest lyrics. I mean, I guess the Beach Boys did that kind of thing, too. And he has hundreds of thousands of Irish kids, a sea of white blond faces, singing with him. These beautiful, sweet, purely sentimental songs about loving and goodness and what is that? What is it that's exciting them? What is it that's rousing their emotions except for a belief in something better, higher. What was it that gave Ghandi his strength? He wasn't promising people bread. What is it that made Jesus a story for 2000 years? What is it that keeps the Jew going after thousands of years of persecution and oppression and all kinds of horrible things being done to the Jewish people?

After the Holocaust they come back and say in Israel "I'm ending the death penalty, except for certain limited crimes." "Why?" "We're against brutality." What is that other than spirituality, other than the belief that there's something more there? The most generous people in the world that I've seen are the Jewish people in America, who give tremendous amounts of money. Not just to Jewish causes—to hospitals of all kinds, to education of all kinds.



They marched in the civil rights campaign. You know, Mississippi, the labor battles, the human rights battles. What is that? That is spirituality.

NEWFIELD: You often quote Paul Simon's line from the song *Mrs. Robinson*: "Where have you gone Joe Dimaggio?"

CUOMO: Absolutely.

NEWFIELD: What does the line mean, and why do you keep quoting it? Is that reference to Dimaggio about this yearning, is it about these lost heroes?

CUOMO: I believe that the United States of America is now generally, not every individual, but generally, one big vacuum. People don't have any single uplifting purpose, any great idol, any great truth that they can put their arms around as a people, as a culture, and say, "This we believe in, and this makes us special. This is something larger than ourselves." No hero. No heroine. No John Kennedy, he's dead. No Bobby Kennedy, he's dead. No Martin Luther King, Jr., we killed him too. No Joan of Arc. No great president. I mean, think about the presidents we've had. There's none of them we would lionize as a hero, somebody to follow. No great truth. No, since the Second World War, we haven't had any single uplifting purpose to believe in. And I think that purpose could be *tikkun olam*. That idea could be, "Hey look, I'll give you something to believe in. Let's all get together, help one another, and build a better universe for as many people as possible." That's something beautiful to believe in. Better than a person, because people die. Better than a hero, because they get shown to have feet of clay.

NEWFIELD: Although that saying reminds me, I think the closest we have to that hero now is Muhammad Ali, Cassius Clay.

CUOMO: Well, that's very interesting.

NEWFIELD: People view him the way they viewed Joe Dimaggio.

CUOMO: I think he has a mystique about him, and I saw it in evidence the other day. He was here in my law firm, WILKE, FARR & GALLAGHER, midwestern, mostly Republican—that's a *real* law firm. White shoes, big fees, baby, mergers and acquisitions. And he walked out of this room, trembling as he does with his Parkinson's, his hands, and crowds of lawyers and clerks came around him, some too young ever to have seen him fight or to know the anguish he must have gone through when he faced the whole nation and made his courageous decision, I think—controversial but courageous—not to serve, not to go to war. And they grabbed him, they hugged him, they kissed him.

NEWFIELD: Why, what does that mean?

CUOMO: I'm not sure. I think in part it is that of course they know he was the great heavy weight champion—they know that from all they've read, and that's part of our culture to know. Also they see this still very big man trembling a little bit with the Parkinson's, and I think that makes them feel a little sympathetic. But more important than that, they see this man handling it all with tremendous grace. They see him on television at the Olympics. They see him from time to time on television being cheered by crowds.

NEWFIELD: Is that spiritual?

CUOMO: I think it is, what else is it? If it were material, they'd want someone young and lithe and still throwing punches, you know. Materially he's old, he's debilitated, he's palsied. There's nothing beautiful about that....

NEWFIELD: But doesn't he stand for generosity, for love, for courage, for sacrifice?

CUOMO: To some people like you and me and others who know about him, he stood up for a principle. He sacrificed his championship by resisting the draft during the Vietnam war because his faith led him to oppose taking a life, to killing. You and I came into this room just a little bit ago and were met by Neil Novakov. Neil Novakov is one of the best lawyers in this place. He works on the most complicated international mergers. He came up to say he was sorry he missed the show with Muhammad Ali, what a shame he wasn't here, the guy is terrific. He was a great fighter. He's a pacifist. He advocates non-violence, advocates people coming together, has been all over the world preaching peace. He preaches what Ghandi preached, what a lot of the greatest people who ever lived preached, and now he wants to do it in a memorial and museum about peace, about fighting racism, healing, and having a vision when you're twelve years old. He said, "Every child must have a vision. I had a vision. I wanted to be the very best at boxing." And then, as Loni, his wife, put it to me, to use the power that that gave him not just to get wealthy, which I guess he did at some point although he doesn't seem to be wealthy now, but to use that power to reach people and influence them to do good things. I mean that's magnificent. And what is that but spiritual? You know the material part of it is winning the fight and having the ego satisfaction of knowing you're the best fighter in the world, and having the crown and having the money that comes with it, but that's not what he wanted. He had not completed his universe when he got that. He was just beginning.

NEWFIELD: Why is it that so many of the people who have this spiritual quality—Ali, Martin Luther King Jr.,

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PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF NEW YORK POST

SPIRITUAL POLITICS

Fighting for Disarmament

Phillip Berrigan

If I sought a conviction for the last thirty years, it would be this—every one has a right to life. Equally, no one has the right to kill—no individual at home or on the street, no doctors in abortion clinics nor any Dr. Jack Kevorkian, no government through war or death row.

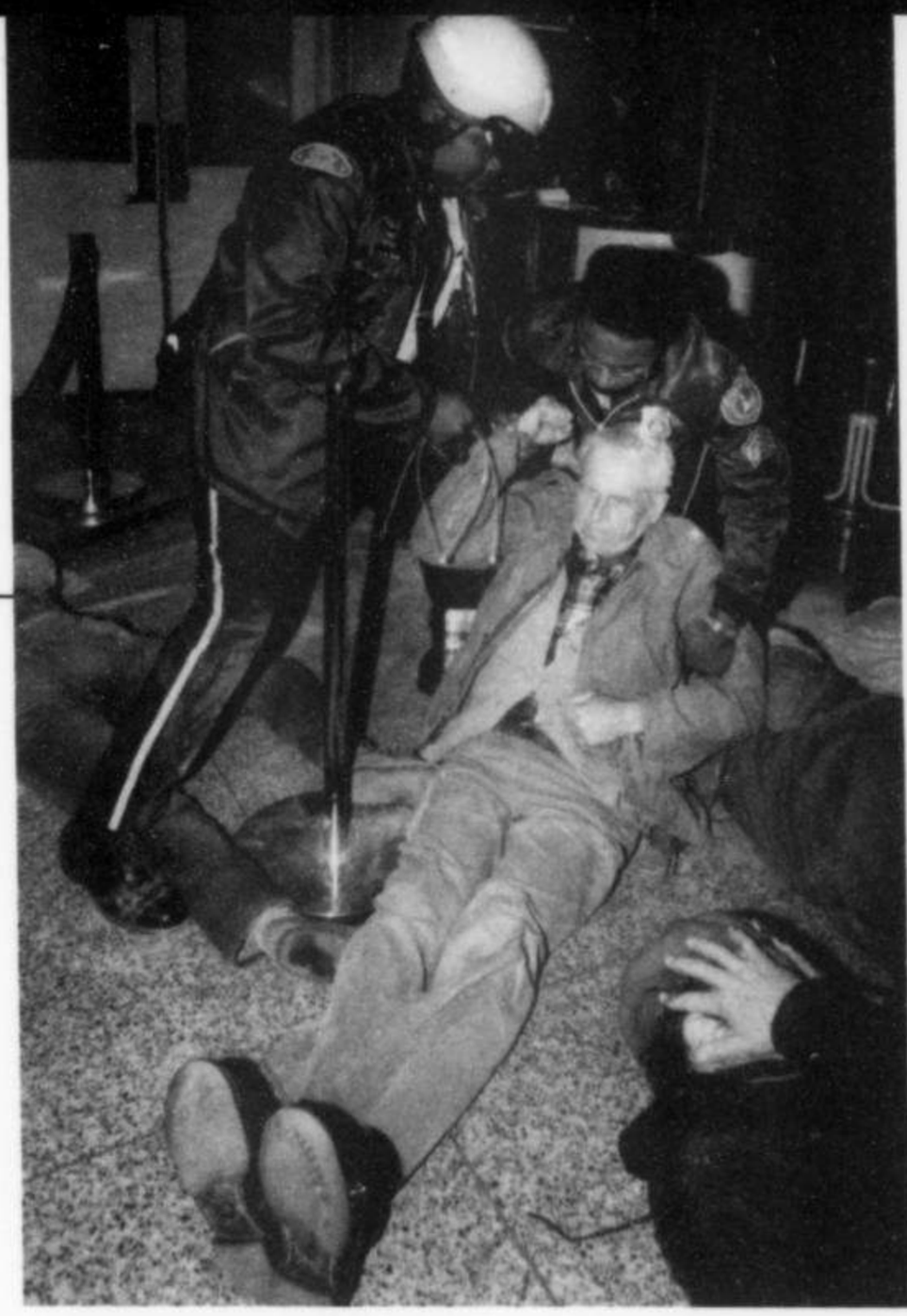
God alone reserves the right to kill. And then, never does.

Everything connected with human meaning and integrity begins with the commandment: "You shall not kill!" Interhuman relationships, social justice and cohesion, geo-politics, the health of the planet—everything. There is even a cosmic dimension to the command, as the universe draws its unity from our love and justice towards one another.

I'm a World War II veteran. When I was in northern Europe for the fifteen months following the invasion of Normandy, I had no grasp of what I was doing. Later on, I learned of my complicity in the death of seventy million people and the devastation of two continents. What a savage irony that seventy million people had to die in order to "stop" Hitler! What a confession of subhumanity! That war, and its closure with atomic weapons, was the greatest argument for nonviolence in history.

The subject of government-sanctioned violence has been ostracized from national discourse. Politicians, preachers, educators, newscasters—all have been drawn into a vast, irrational conspiracy of silence. Why? As the prophet Jeremiah explains, because we do not know God (Jer. 22:15–16). How can we know God when we exclude the image of God in a needlessly suffering person? Why give a damn about justice in today's social muck if we know nothing of the source of love and justice in God? Why be accountable for the shocking state of the world?

In 1956, a year after I was ordained to the Catholic priesthood, I was sent to New Orleans to teach at a Catholic high school for African American youngsters. There began my education in nonviolence, a basic training in the civil rights movement which served me well when first the Cold War, and then the Vietnam War, heated up under President Kennedy.



PHOTOGRAPH BY IRA SCHWARTZ / AP WIDE WORLD PHOTOS

Phillip Berrigan, 76, is currently serving a two-year sentence for defacing a Navy guided-missle destroyer. Berrigan was one of the Catonsville Nine, protesters who took draft records from a Maryland Selective Service Board and set them on fire with napalm.

During the terrible days of the Cuban Missile crisis in the fall of 1962, when the United States, the USSR, and the world came within a whisker of nuclear war, I pondered the incongruity and lunacy of the situation. Major cities of the deep south became paralyzed, thousands evacuated Florida, and everyone within range of the Soviet's intermediate ballistic missiles looked into a nuclear gun barrel. I felt betrayed—the three and a half years I had devoted to my country was for the war to end war, but our leaders had made a monstrous idol of the war in the form of the BOMB and were holding the world hostage. With the Soviet Union, we were signifying to the world a superpower axiom, that war is a necessary option.

That reality appalled and outraged me. Kennedy and Kruschev called no town hall meeting, consulted none of the people, yet they ruthlessly and insanely turned their nuclear guns on us. Who were they to play God with the lives of millions of innocents? (Even this question underscores their insanity—God would never commit such a colossal crime.)

An either/or faced me and millions of Americans and Soviets. Either I had to pretend anonymity and indifference toward October 1962, or I had to judge it as intolerable to faith and humanity and had to resolve to resist it. I chose the latter, since anything less was, in my view, moral slavery.

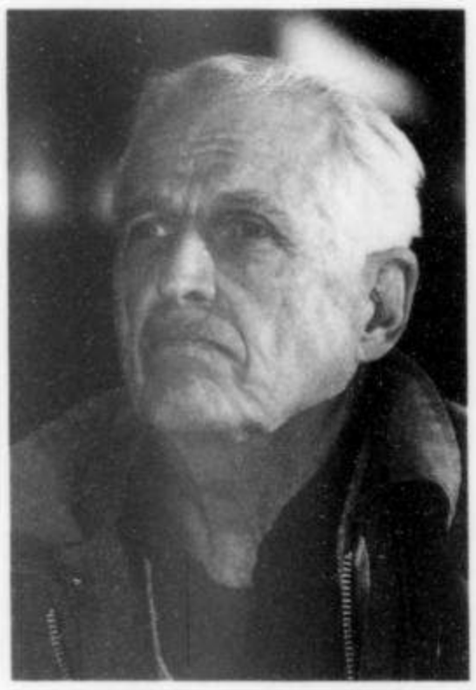
When I made this choice in1962, I was thirty-nine years old, held two Masters degrees, was intensely trained in theology and scripture, a veteran of World War II, and had seven years civil rights experience. Yet, in an overall political sense, I was an infant, a cog in the imperial machinery, manipulatable and naive. October 1962 was a wake-up

call. I began to read revisionist historians feverishly—Fleming, Williams, Kalko and others; and Thomas Merton for theology. And I learned from veterans of the Fellowship of Reconciliation and the American Friends Service Committee who had resisted nuclear testing and the first nuclear submarine at Groton, Connecticut.

My brother Dan once remarked that we learned the politics of resisting the government by first resisting the institutional church. In 1964 and 1965, my Superior repeatedly silenced me for speaking against the Vietnam war. Bowing to hierarchical pressure, he transferred me from teaching in our Seminary to an African American parish in Baltimore. Ever the obedient subject in those days, I ceased speaking against the war for nearly a year. Meanwhile, Dan was punished even more grievously, being exiled to South America. Only popular pressure returned him after four months.

This ecclesiastical boot camp had a political counterpart. I knew several "doves" in Congress, including Senator Fulbright. Working with them slowly educated me to the futility of legal means.

In 1966 and 1967, I was arrested several times at Fort Meyers, Virginia, for trying to discuss the war with the Joint Chiefs of Staff, most of whom lived there. Then, at a Chicago meeting of the leadership of the Students for a Democratic Society, I learned about their concentration on the Selective Service. I returned to Baltimore and, with others, began planning the Baltimore Four raid against the Selective Service. We resolved to pour our blood onto 1A draft files, those hunting licenses which so often get the hunters killed.



Disarm our violent thought; disarm our indifference; disarm our consumerism.

While awaiting sentencing for the Baltimore Four witness, nine of us went to Catonsville on a similar task. A bloody society, perhaps, as Dr. King had said, the most violent in history, could not grasp blood as a symbol. So at Catonsville we switched to a Special Forces formula for homemade napalm and burned 1A files in a parking lot. We reasoned that it was better to burn the documents of war than children. The government rewarded my aspirations for peace with a six-year sentence, of which I served forty months.

In the 1970s, Washington rebounded from its defeat in Indochina with first strike technology—another leap forward in the doomsday race. By 1980, a wider community of resistance suggested we rediscover the prophecy of Isaiah (2:4), repeated by Micah—"and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and neither shall they learn war anymore." This prophecy, complemented by the injunction to "love thy enemies" in Matthew and Luke—offered us inspiration and authority for resisting first strike nuclear terror. In biblical texts like these, it becomes clear that a people faithful to God is a disarmed people. You can't love your enemies at the point of a gun. Just as clearly, we cannot be disarmed as long as such weapons exist.

In the last seventeen years, some fifty-seven Plowshares witnesses have underscored the necessity of disarmament—in Australia, Britain, Sweden, the Netherlands, Germany, and the U.S. (mostly in the U.S.). Invariably, the mass media ignores these events or under reports them. Plowshares people carry two main symbols: hammers (a universal tool symbolizing universal responsibility) and blood (the blood of the covenant of nonviolence and peace).

Disarmament is roughly synonymous with nonviolence—in fact, it adds a new dimension to nonviolence. God's people are a weaponless people, because the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Jesus Christ is weaponless, loving us with a passion and tenacity beyond imagining.

The scripture calls Jesus the "image of the invisible God" (Col. 1:15), and the "word of God made flesh" (John 1:14). Christians desire the unarmed nature of God represented by the unarmed conduct of Jesus as he freely went to the cross. God is unarmed; we must disarm. Disarm our violent patterns of thought, our petulance and rancor; disarm our indifference, covetousness, and exploitation of our neighbor; disarm our consumerism, indulgence, and addictions; disarm our violence toward creation—the water we waste, the air we pollute, the garbage we generate. And so, by disarming and re-creating our relationships, we disarm ourselves before our God. "Be perfect as your heavenly parent is perfect" (Matt 5:48).

If and when I finish this prison sentence, I will have served nearly nine years in American dumpsters for my nonviolent resistance to nuclearism and war, about one-eighth of my life. Those nine years and the resistance behind them are purely a gratuity from God, for which I can claim no credit. My sustained resistance draws its sustenance from my key relationships—to God, to neighbor (enemy), to self, to creation. I have found, in unexamined fashion, that resistance to evil and injustice seems to define, condense, and illuminate the human. That certainly is true in the passion for justice and resistance to injustice we see dominant in the lives of the Hebrew prophets, Jesus, Gandhi, Day, and King.

We must learn, or re-learn, by a simultaneous rhythm, the Yes! to life and the No! to death: "Behold I set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. Choose life, therefore, that you and your children might live" (Deut. 30:19). ❑

PHOTOGRAPH BY JIM LEAVITT / IMAPCT VISUALS

BUILDING A JUST AND CARING WORLD:

Four Cornerstones



Riane Eisler

When I was a child and my parents and I had to flee Nazi Europe, I wanted to know why there was so much brutality and cruelty. Later, in my research, I asked deeper questions. Why don't we have a more equitable and peaceful world when we humans have such a profound yearning for love, beauty, and justice? What are the obstacles? What are the most effective interventions?

My work deconstructs much about our past and present that has been considered "just the way things are." It moves beyond conventional categories such as capitalism versus communism or religious versus secular to a new understanding of beliefs and institutions—from families, workplaces, and schools to political, religious, and economic systems—that support or impede caring and equitable relations. But my emphasis is not on deconstruction. It is primarily on reconstruction: on the shift from what I have called a dominator to a partnership society.

This new approach connects politics in the sense it is generally used with what I call the politics of the body. It pays particular attention to our intimate parent-child and gender relations because it is in these relations that we learn to accept either chronic violations of human rights or respect for human rights as normal. It is action oriented. It shows that fundamental change is possible if the entire spectrum of relations in both the so-called private and public spheres is understood and addressed.

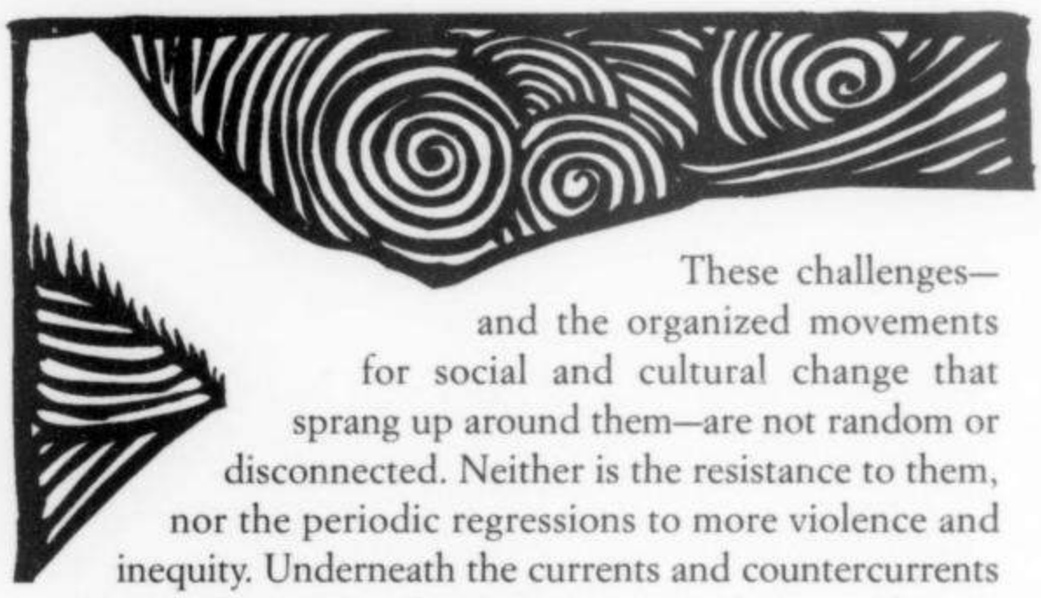
Organized Challenges to Traditions of Domination

If we look at the last 300 years of history from this larger perspective, we see that the upheavals brought first by the industrial revolution and now by the rapid introduction of postindustrial electronic, nuclear, and biochemical technologies have provided the opportunity for challenges to entrenched traditions of domination. These challenges were initiated by small, unpopular, often persecuted minorities conscious that we humans have alternatives: that man's domination of nature, women, and "lesser" men is neither divinely nor biologically ordained.

As this consciousness spread, there sprang up mass movements challenging the supposedly divinely ordained right of kings to rule their "subjects," of men to rule women and children in the "castles" of their homes, of "superior" races to rule "inferior" ones, and of warlike tribes and nations to "heroically" conquer more peaceful ones. More recently, we have seen challenges to long-standing traditions of intimate violence, to adages such as spare the rod and spoil the child that were once likewise considered divinely ordained, along with male violence against women. We have also seen challenges to our species' supposedly divinely ordained "dominion over every living thing that moveth upon the earth," and with this, to our species' right to overpopulate and despoil and pollute our planetary habitat through ever more powerful technologies.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY OENONE TERRILL

Riane Eisler is the author of The Chalice and the Blade, Sacred Pleasure, *and over 100 other books and articles. She is co-director of the Center for Partnership Studies, keynotes conferences worldwide, and consults for business and government.*



These challenges—and the organized movements for social and cultural change that sprang up around them—are not random or disconnected. Neither is the resistance to them, nor the periodic regressions to more violence and inequity. Underneath the currents and countercurrents of human history lies the dynamic tension between the two basic possibilities for human culture represented by the partnership and dominator models. This tension has been constant throughout human history, but it is during periods of great disequilibrium such as ours that a shift from one of these models to the other is possible. However, we can only succeed in this transformation if we pay attention to the foundations that support either partnership or dominator oriented societies.

Looking at the Larger Picture

If we look at only part of a picture, we cannot see patterns. In my work I draw from a larger database than most studies of human society. This database includes the whole of society (both its so-called private and public spheres), the whole of humanity (both its female and male halves), and the whole of history (including prehistory). Looking at this larger picture made it possible to see patterns or connections that were not visible before. It shows that underlying the many differences in societies, both cross-culturally and through human history, are two basic social configurations. Since there were not names for them, I called these configurations the dominator model and the partnership model.

In societies adhering closely to the dominator model, we find the following configuration: top-down authoritarianism (strong-man rule), the subordination of one half of humanity to the other, and a high degree of institutionalized or built-in violence, whether in the form of wife and child beating or in the form of warfare. Moving toward the partnership side of the spectrum—and it is always a matter of degree—we see a different configuration. First, we see a more democratic organization, economically as well as politically. Second, both halves of humanity are equally valued, and stereotypically feminine values such as caring and nonviolence (which are considered "unmanly" in the dominator model) are highly regarded, whether they are embodied in women or men. Third, we see a less violent way of living. (We see this most highly developed today in the Scandinavian world, but there are trends in this direction worldwide.)

Looking at societies from this perspective clears up many things; for example, that it does not help to talk about cooperation versus competition. Dominators often cooperate with each other to achieve their goals, whether it is to launch a war of conquest, clear-cut a rainforest, or maintain economic domination and exploitation. Partnership-oriented societies—or business organizations, or families—can also have a place for competition. But here competition is configured differently. It is not the "dog-eat-dog" competition of the dominator model; it is achievement-oriented, competing against standards of excellence, and more empathic.

Caring is the key to partnership. So my work is very closely aligned to the politics of meaning. It is also, like the politics of meaning, focused on action. It identifies four cornerstones that we need to put in place to support partnership rather than dominator relations.

THE FIRST CORNERSTONE: *Childhood Relations*

The first cornerstone for whether a society adheres primarily to a dominator or partnership model is early childhood relations. We are learning that the physical structure of the brain—including the neural pathways that will determine not only intelligence but creativity, predisposition to violent or nonviolent behaviors, empathy or insensitivity, venturesomeness or overconformity, as well as other critical behavioral developments—are not set at birth. They are largely determined during the early childhood years, particularly the first three years. We are also learning that coercive, inequitable, and violent childrearing—what I call dominator childrearing—is foundational to the imposition and maintenance of a coercive, inequitable, and chronically violent social and cultural organization—the kind of social organization that closely conforms to the dominator rather than partnership configuration.

This knowledge has enormous implications for social policy. It is through our intimate relations that we learn habits of feeling, thinking, and behavior in all human relations, be they personal or political. If these relations are violent, children learn early on that violence from those who are more powerful toward those who are less powerful is acceptable as a means of dealing with conflicts and/or problems. Moreover, if relations based on chronic violations of human rights are culturally considered normal and desirable in these formative intimate relations, they provide mental models for condoning such violations in other relations.

A global campaign against violence and abuse in childhood relations is needed. This has a number of core elements. The first is education: raising awareness of the consequences—personal and global—of either dominator or partnership childhood relations, as well as education providing both women and men the knowledge and skills necessary for empathic, sensitive, nonviolent, and equitable childrearing. The second component is legal: the enactment and enforcement of laws criminalizing child abuse as well as legislation funding education for nonviolent,

empathic, and equitable childrearing. The third component is to change the mass media: raising consciousness of the constant representation of violence as a means of resolving conflicts and of the presentation in so-called comedies of situations in which family members abuse and humiliate each other.

THE SECOND CORNERSTONE: *Gender Relations*

How a society constructs the roles and relations of the two halves of humanity—women and men—is central to the construction of every social institution, from the family and religion to politics and economics as well as to the society's guiding systems of values.

Despite myriads of philosophical and religious pronouncements that values such as caring, compassion, and nonviolence should govern human relations, in practice these values will remain subordinate and excluded from social governance as long as the half of humanity with which they are primarily associated—the female half—remains subordinate and excluded from social governance.

This is not a matter of women against men or of something inherent in women rather than men. Stereotypically feminine traits, such as caring and nonviolence, and stereotypical women's work, such as caring for a family's health and maintaining a clean and healthy environment, can be found in both women and men. However, in societies adhering closely to the dominator model these activities are considered appropriate only for women and inappropriate for "real men." By contrast, in societies that adhere more to the partnership model, masculinity does not have to be equated with domination and conquest—be it of people or of nature—and both women and men can identify with the values and activities needed for a more peaceful, equitable, and sustainable future.

A sign of hope is that there is today strong movement toward real partnership in all spheres of life between women and men, along with a blurring of rigid gender stereotypes. Men are nurturing babies and women are entering positions of leadership. But this movement is still slow and localized, and is in some cultures and subcultures fiercely, even violently, opposed: for example, by so-called religious fundamentalist leaders. (Opposition to women's education and property rights as well as advocating violence against women is not a matter of religious but of dominator fundamentalism and contradicts the teachings of peace and love at the core of all the world's humanistic religious traditions.)



What's needed is for the world's progressive leaders to give policy and fiscal priority to a global campaign for equitable and nonviolent gender relations as a cornerstone for a more equitable and nonviolent society.

The giving of priority to such so-called "women's issues" has enormous implications for the environment, peace, population, economic equity, and political democracy. For example, as long as housekeeping (and by extension cleaning up the environment) is still considered only "women's work," and hence devalued, how can we expect adequate funding for the environmental housekeeping necessary to deal with our mounting ecological crisis? As long as boys and men continue to be socialized to equate "real masculinity" with violence and control—be it through "heroic" epics or war toys such as toy swords, guns, or violent and brutal television shows, films, and computer games—how can we realistically expect to end the arms build-ups that are today bankrupting our world as well as the terrorism and aggressive warfare that in our age of nuclear and chemical weapons threaten our species' survival?

THE THIRD CORNERSTONE: *Economic Relations*

Present economic systems—both capitalist and communist—have proven incapable of successfully addressing our escalating global crises, from environmental pollution and exponential population growth to hunger, poverty, and growing social dislocation. In fact, many of these problems are exacerbated by contemporary economic models.

Under present economic systems, both free market and centrally planned, the problems of underemployment, polarization of wealth, hardship and suffering (particularly for women and children), and violence stemming from "structural adjustments" and other globalization economic policies, are escalating. Neither centrally planned nor free market economic models take into account the life-giving and sustaining processes of nature. Nor do they give value to the life-giving and sustaining activities that in dominator-oriented societies are expected to be performed for free by women in male-controlled households.

It makes no sense to talk of hunger and poverty in generalities when the mass of the world's poor and the poorest of the poor are women and children. Development policies need

to shift their focus to women. Many studies show that in most regions of the developing world women allocate far more of their resources to their families than do men. We must include the work of caring and caretaking (still performed primarily by women worldwide in the "informal" economy) into national and international systems of economic measurement and accounting.

We should encourage and reward economic and social inventions that give value to caring and caretaking work in both the market and non-market economic sectors. For example, we have national programs to train soldiers to effectively take life—and we have pensions for them. By contrast, we have no national programs for training women and men to effectively care for children, even though we have solid scientific knowledge about what is and is not effective and humane childcare. Similarly, we have no pensions (an economic invention that recognizes socially valued work) for these activities.

People need meaningful work. The negative income tax or guaranteed income for doing nothing is no solution. Clearly the most important and meaningful work is that of caring for other humans, particularly our children, and our natural environment.

Redefining productive work also imbues work with what it lacks in a dominator system—where it is primarily motivated by fear and the artificial creation of scarcities through wars and misallocations and misdistributions of resources. It gives work what we may call a spiritual dimension.

To accelerate the development of these economic inventions, the Center for Partnership Studies and the Global Futures Foundation, in partnership with TIKKUN, the Social Venture Network, the Rainforest Action Network, and other organizations are forming a Clearinghouse for Economic Inventions that Give Value to Caring Work. This Clearinghouse will collect information on what is already happening and provide a forum for new ideas and initiatives. It will offer education, organize focus groups and conferences, and provide a framework for testing and disseminating new programs and policies.

THE FOURTH CORNERSTONE: *Spiritual Relations*

We are not used to thinking of spirituality and biology together. However, despite myths that we humans are base, flawed by either original sin or selfish genes, the most profound human yearning rooted in our biological evolution is for caring connection. Despite our conditioning (which has now to varying degrees been going on for thousands of years) for dominator rather than partnership relations with one another and nature, we humans have an inherent capacity—indeed, an inherent drive—toward relations based on partnership rather than domination. Despite cultural beliefs and social institutions that have for millennia rewarded, and even (as in our "heroic" epics) idealized cruelty and violence, we humans have an enormous capacity for altruistic behaviors (for example, the women and men who during the Nazi era risked their lives and those of their families to save Jews). And despite myths that men naturally want to dominate women and women naturally want to be dominated, women and men worldwide have been moving to relations based on partnership. The consciousness of our interconnection with all forms of life on our planet is also beginning to reemerge.

These are signs of a major revolution in consciousness as well as of a major revolution in both spirituality and morality. The emergence in bits and pieces of the consciousness that a partnership way of structuring human society is a viable possibility has enormous implications for the reconstruction of spirituality. Spirituality becomes not only transcendent but immanent, not so much an escape to otherworldly realms, as an active engagement in creating a better world right here on Earth.

But to spread this consciousness will require what I have called spiritual courage: the courage of political, religious, educational, and business leaders to actively oppose injustice and cruelty in all spheres of life. It will take great courage to challenge domination and violence not only in international relations but in intimate relations, not only in the so-called public sphere of politics and business but in the so-called private sphere of parent-child, gender, and sexual relations. It may not be popular, and may even be dangerous to do so, since domination and violence in intimate and intergroup relations are encoded in some religious and ethnic traditions that are our heritage from a more rigid dominator past.

But if we do not address these cornerstones, we will not have the foundations for a more equitable, peaceful, and sustainable future and we will continue to see more and more violent dominator regressions. Only if we consciously and concertedly build these foundations can we construct a better world for ourselves, our children, and generations still to come. ❑



FAMILY MATTERS

A Parenting Movement



by Sylvia Ann Hewlett and Cornel West

We have uncovered an undeclared war against parents that has been going on for at least thirty years. Parents have been undermined and demoralized on a variety of fronts.

Governmental policy has actually undermined families, both by making it more difficult for them to obtain family-oriented housing, and by encouraging a market-oriented approach to health care embodied in the "managed care" system. Further, because of the growing power of capital, people are now required to spend a much larger part of their day in work than in family life, decreasing the amount of time that parents have to spend with their children. The average worker spends 163 hours more per year than he or she used to a few decades ago, while earning power has gone down. The average income for parents has gone down 3 percent since 1989. Wages of (non-supervisory) male production workers alone have gone down 25 percent since 1973. Thirty-two percent of men working full time cannot keep a family of four above the poverty line. This decrease in earning power has played a role in pushing more women into the work force, not for fulfillment, but to meet basic family material needs. There are very few households in which one income can keep the family afloat.

It's hard to find a historical period in which both parents were working these kinds of hours—because even when one parent used to work twelve hours a day, the other parent was at home to provide some parenting. There are seven million home-alone kids between the ages of seven and ten, many of them learning to become predators or becoming victims on the streets. Many children aren't being looked after in the most simple way. But even parents who earn enough money to provide childcare often don't have the time or energy to give children the personal contact that they need. This is a tragedy for the child and also for the nation, because children in this circumstance often doesn't develop a sense of being cared for and hence don't develop a sense of how to care for others.

This analysis doesn't mean that we want to return to family patterns that are oppressive to women. The Ozzie and Harriet family was undergirded by governmental policies (like the G.I. Bill) that restricted women's role in the market. Instead, we want egalitarian forms of parenting that recapture the solidity of the past without the ugliness of the past—without its authoritarianism and patriarchal practices. We want to acknowledge the great hunger that growing numbers of men are feeling for expanded opportunities for parenting.

This hunger is given expression in movements like the Promise Keepers and the Nation of Islam, whose success may have more to do with their ability to articulate these kinds of longings than with the xenophobic elements that they also articulate. Our research on these movements corresponds with themes that have been raised in Michael Lerner's book, *The Politics of Meaning,* and that were recently rearticulated in TIKKUN's March/April issue in R. Marie Griffith's article on evangelical women. Many men in these movements are trying very hard to connect in a deeper way with their families, often accepting feminist ideas about the importance of men taking responsibility for family chores and caring. We heard some of these men evincing a real need to be better husbands and better fathers. We need to affirm these desires even as we hold at arm's length the xenophobic dimension of these organizations; we need to recognize that these are real human beings. Too often, some of us on the Left are simply not open to the lived experience of people and to the tensions they are wrestling with in their everyday lives. In fact, these people are dealing with problems that may be pushing them in ways that raise progressive possibilities, even though today they find expression for their concerns in movements that are associated with more reactionary ideas.

We are aware that the Right often uses "family" to mean deference to patriarchal authority, and this has given many people on the Left a certain wariness about the notion of being "pro-family." However if the Left's only response to this distorted vision of family is to champion individual autonomy and self-realization, that will lead to another kind of powerful distortion: a growing difficulty in caring for people outside your own small circle, your own ethnicity or religion, or even your own particular form of oppression. In this case, we know that there are people on the Left who, the moment you raise the need to support parents, will immediately go on the attack, certain that by caring about

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Sylvia Ann Hewlett is the author of When the Bough Breaks *and, with Cornel West,* The War Against Parents. *She is founder and president of the National Parenting Association. Cornel West, author of* Race Matters *and co-author with Michael Lerner of* Jews and Blacks, *is a member of the board of the National Parenting Association and teaches at Harvard.*

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF HOUGHTON MIFFLIN CO.

parents you are necessarily going to undermine their struggle for liberation from oppressive family forms. But freedom must be about balancing self-realization with a willingness to care for and even to sacrifice for others who are not part of your own group.

In fact, we argue that at the root of the assault on families is the triumph of a market culture which promotes hedonistic, narcissistic, and individualistic ways of being in the world. These ways of being make it harder for anyone to support or to honor non-market activity, of which parenting is a primary example since parenting is about altruism, nurturing others, and putting the needs of others alongside or even higher than one's own. Our point here is a corollary of the politics of meaning critique of selfishness and materialism, a critique which has been central to TIKKUN magazine's intellectual/cultural project. In our new book, *The War Against Parents*, we focus on family in part because families are one of the most important ways through which non-market sensibilities and values are communicated in this culture. Compassion and conscience are constructed through the child-parent relationship.

Parenting is not just about nourishing a small child's body, but about fostering the development of the child's soul.

Parents are tremendously demoralized in modern America. Our failure to respect what they do is firmly ingrained in our culture. Look at new sitcoms and what do you see? If parents aren't dead or done away with, they are portrayed either as fools or as oppressive and abusive. Parents are made to seem at best, irrelevant, and at worst, as obstacles to childrens' self-realization. Ours is a parent-hurting culture, so it's very hard for a modern parent to feel that they have any authority or any right to set rules for doing homework or other necessary boundary-setting tasks (e.g. giving guidance about how to watch television). We undercut them in cruel ways, and this makes it difficult for them to feel comfortable as moral authorities with the right to teach their children to distinguish between right and wrong. Parenting at its best should be concerned with fostering the integrity and sense of moral agency of young people so that they learn to treat others with caring and to sacrifice for something bigger than themselves. Without these non-market ways of being in the world, the future of our society looks bleak.

Our parenting movement can present a very important new direction for progressive thought and action. We've developed a Parents' Bill of Rights, which we think will help to focus some of this discussion:

A Parents' Bill of Rights

In the interest of restoring the dignity and economic well-being of parents and ensuring the health of our democracy, we offer the following Parents' Bill of Rights. —Sylvia Ann Hewlett and Cornel West

MOTHERS AND FATHERS ARE ENTITLED TO:

I. TIME FOR THEIR CHILDREN

Grant parents the "gift" of time by providing twenty-four weeks of paid parenting leave at the time of birth. Develop flexible workplaces that give working parents discretion over when and where work is done; create part-time career ladders; and devise special tax breaks for at-home parents.

II. ECONOMIC SECURITY

Underpin the lives of parents by guaranteeing a living wage for full-time workers. Support school-to-work initiatives; offer help with housing; and provide a family allowance for families with children under six. Eliminate payroll taxes for families with small children and get rid of sales taxes on children's necessities such as diapers and car seats.

III. A PRO-FAMILY ELECTORAL SYSTEM

Encourage mothers and fathers to participate in our democracy by creating incentives to vote and easing registration procedures. Make election days national holidays, and attach voter registration forms to the papers parents fill out when they obtain a birth certificate for a child.

IV. A PRO-FAMILY LEGAL STRUCTURE

Strengthen the institution of marriage by promoting premarital counseling and making it harder to split. Guarantee generous visitation rights for non-custodial parents; restructure welfare benefits to favor two-parent families; and replace the current emphasis on foster care with an emphasis on adoption.

V. A SUPPORTIVE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

Extend the school day and year; encourage the formation of parent patrols to create safe zones around schools; and outlaw the sale of handguns to young people. Increase spending on early childhood education and fund higher salaries for childcare workers. Ban alcohol and cigarette advertising on billboards; underwrite drug prevention programs in every school; mandate a Children's Hour on network television; and make it much harder for kids to rent an R-rated movie or buy a CD with a parent advisory label. Create an AARP for parents.

VI. HONOR AND DIGNITY

Establish an Index of Parent Well-Being to provide a counterpoint to the Dow Jones Index and promote National Parents Day. Introduce an education credit for at-home parents and offer specially-designed parent privileges. Priority seating on buses and priority parking in shopping malls for pregnant women and parents with small children would make our public places much more welcoming to families with children. ❑

TORAT CHESED

You Are Someone's Rebbe

Bradley Shavit Artson

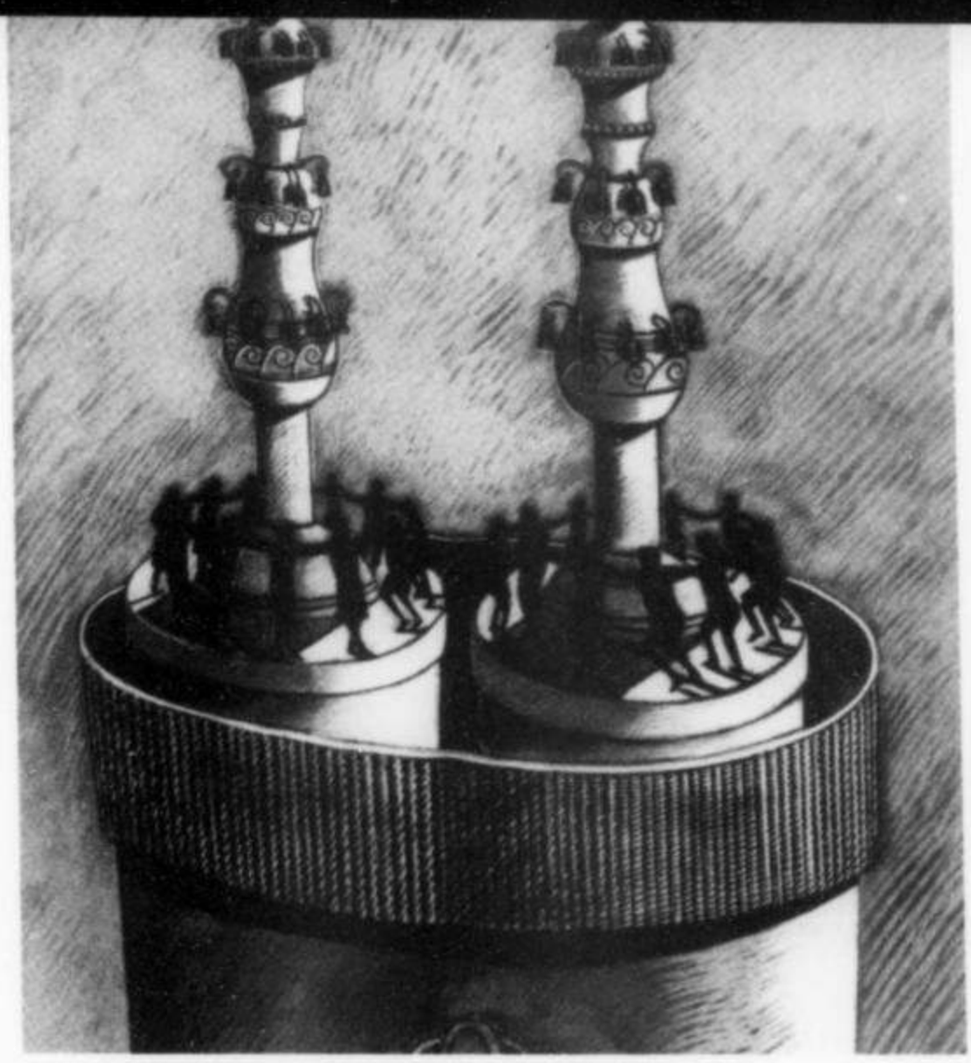


ILLUSTRATION BY RICHARD ROSS

To become a rebbe means to cultivate and to serve God's creatures through wisdom, understanding, and knowledge—*b'chochmah bitvunah u-veda'at* (Exodus 35:31). As rebbes, we serve by embodying the values and practices that Judaism holds dear and by sharing our own journey through life with other people, our *talmidim*. Only by opening ourselves—flawed and striving—to another person's gaze do we express Judaism's conviction that people can change (and improve) and that imperfect people are worthy of love, both our own and God's. Judaism does not demand perfection but it does reject falsehood. Living between the unattainable and the unacceptable, we turn to Judaism as a tool for our own refinement and redemption. In the words of the Rambam, "What is essential is striving to elevate one's soul toward God through the Torah."

The basic structure of Judaism—forging a relationship with God through the mitzvot—links God's love to our practice, assuring us that Jewish observance provides a sacred path for personal growth. Given the premise that God is loving and that the Torah reflects the mutual love between God and the Jewish people, one can only deduce that the mitzvot are offered for our benefit and our refinement. In the act of doing, the Jew learns to become greater than before. We act like holy beings, and, in the process, remake ourselves in God's image.

It turns out, then, that Jewish theology anticipates modern theories of teaching and mentoring in its assumption that practice does make perfect. In the words of the medieval rabbi Aaron Ha-Levi:

> Know that a person is influenced in accordance with his actions. One's heart and all one's thoughts are always [drawn] after the deeds in which one is occupied, whether good or bad.... For after one's acts is the heart drawn. (*Sefer Ha Chinuch*)

Character is not engraved in stone. Working with the more malleable stuff of humanity, a life of Jewish learning and observance offers a ladder of perfectibility. After evaluating our own foibles and shortcomings, we may choose to focus on precisely those mitzvot that will best remedy our own flaws. More generally, by immersing ourselves in a literature of righteousness and compassion, by training ourselves to place God at the center and to respond to God's mitzvot, we may hope to make such responsiveness second nature. When we repeat, over and over, the deeds of loving-kindness that form the backbone of Jewish behavior, we gradually wean ourselves from our selfish sinfulness and begin to approach a more wholesome holiness. In the words of the Rambam, "From one's youth, one becomes accustomed to acting in accordance with the accepted behavior of family and locale" (*Shemonah Perakim*). If our family is *Am Yisrael*, the Jewish people, and our locale is the Torah, then we can hope to accustom ourselves to very high standards indeed.

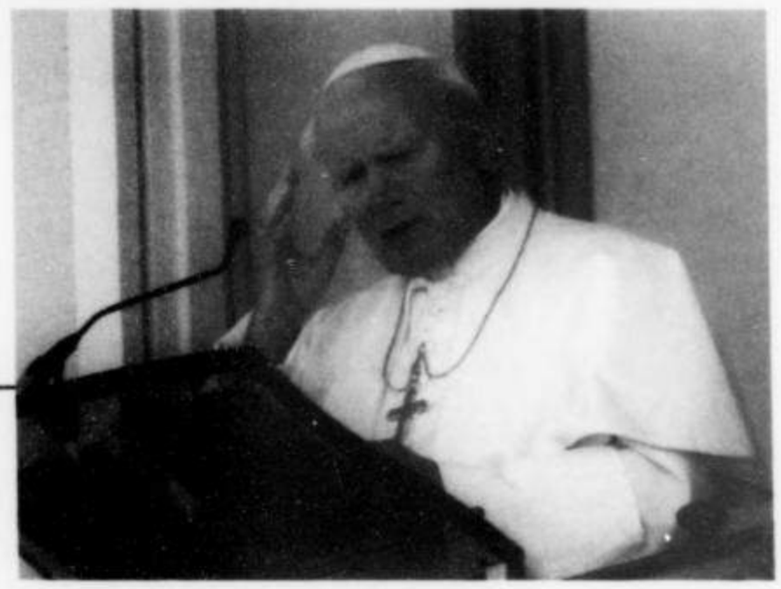
This recognition that we do have the power to mold our character expresses Judaism's fundamentally hopeful and positive assessment of human potential. Humans are not born evil, nor are they tainted by sinfulness as a pervasive condition. Instead, Judaism holds each of us responsible for our deeds precisely because it insists on our ability to be the captains of our souls. Far from reflecting a simple naïveté, Jewish tradition fully recognizes that people have the capacity for good and for evil, that we oscillate between our *yetzer ha-Tov* (good inclination) and our *yetzer ha-Ra* (evil inclination). The goodness within is only a potential, one that requires diligent effort to become manifest: "Although saintliness is latent in the character of every normal person, yet without cultivation it is sure to remain dormant ... [it is] not so innate as to enable people to dispense with the effort needed to develop it" (Luzzatto, in *Mesillat Yesharim*).

It turns out, then, that molding character is not only a possibility, it is a mitzvah. Fashioning ourselves into truer reflections of the divine image is itself a service to the Divine. And because it is possible to train ourselves toward goodness, sensitivity, and godliness, it is also possible to open ourselves to becoming rebbes—through the guidance and examples of rebbes of our own, and through the written legacy they leave for us. ❑

Bradley Shavit Artson, a contributing editor of TIKKUN, *is the rabbi of Congregation Eilat, Mission Viejo, California, and the author of* It's A Mitzvah! Step-By-Step to Jewish Living.

SOUL AND SOCIETY

Castro Meets the Pope



Matthew Fox

The otherwise liberal columnist, Christopher Matthews, wrote gushingly of the pope's visit to Cuba. He called Pope John Paul II "the holy man" and Fidel Castro the "dictator" in his column.

Actually, I see this pope meeting Castro as two dictators meeting each other. The very day the pope landed in Cuba there also landed at our University in Oakland two justice-oriented Catholic sisters who had just returned from Brazil where they had studied with the eco-feminist Catholic theologian Ivone Gebara. What is her story? She has been silenced by the Vatican. That means that in Brazil alone one bishop (the poet Pedro Casigaliga who works with the Amazon Indians and who was imprisoned and tortured along with his sisters, lay workers, and priests), one Franciscan liberation theologian, Leonardo Boff, and now a lay woman theologian have been silenced by the pope. Gebara, who holds two doctorates, is forbidden to teach in Catholic universities. Because she lives in a "third world" country, this silencing effectively denies her of her livelihood.

This pope, who preached "Freedom, Freedom, Liberation" at Castro, has closed down progressive theology schools like the one where Gebara taught in Recife, Brazil, and silenced many thinkers in the church, including the most read Catholic theologian in Germany, Eugene Drewermann, a psychologist priest. Indeed, I am honored that Leonardo Boff in Brazil, Drewermann in Germany, and myself in North America were each expelled from this pope's priesthood all in the same year. (Not a good one for theologians!)

What happens when a dictator smothers thought? It sends fear through a system. The search for truth is replaced by heresy hunting. Silencing gives the toadies the keys to the ecclesial system. (Check out how this papacy has elevated the fascist movement called "Opus Dei" to the highest positions in the Vatican—the pope's media spokesperson is Opus Dei and the banking system of Europe headquartered in Frankfort is swarming with these members of a secret and cult society sanctioned by this pope.) Obedience becomes *the* all-important virtue.

Worst of all, silencing cheats the young of their right to exciting ideas and movements. It is, I believe, especially this latter reality for which John Paul II will most be remembered. Consider these facts: A seventy-five year old Chicago priest, a good man whom I've known for years, tells me that there is no Catholic church left in all of Chicago where you will see anyone under forty-five years of age.

The San Francisco archdiocese closed thirteen churches, many of them historical and beautiful ones, two years ago because the young aren't attending this pope's church anymore. When this man became pope, 164,000 Catholics attended Mass on Sundays in San Francisco; now, nineteen years later, 41,000 do. And most are very old. (Would he last long with a record like that if he had to answer to a board of directors?) A letter in response to the church closings in the local paper exclaimed, "This is a mismanaged corporation! Instead of asking 'why doesn't anyone want what we have to give?' they're selling their assets."

And the pope still has a lot of assets. Though he criticized Nike (and rightly so) in Cuba, he himself has just made a pact with none other than Rupert Murdoch, that king of yellow journalism sleaze, the owner of Fox Network and of the TV satellites that are busy pumping "Dallas" and "Dynasty" into southeastern Asian villages, thus destroying their ancient cultures practically overnight. This pope gave Murdoch a "Knights of Malta" award the week before he landed in Cuba where he lectured the young on commercialism!

At least Fidel did not forbid birth control when the planet is reeling from an excess of human population. Neither did he depose liberation bishops, silence liberation theologians, close liberation schools, deny women their role in church leadership or try to canonize the likes of Queen Isabella (who among other things stole money from Jews in the Spanish Inquisition to finance Columbus' rapacious trips to the Americas), the founder of Opus Dei (a card-carrying fascist priest) or Juniperro Serra, the Franciscan missionary who rounded up the Indians in California and, in his colonialist zeal, beat Indians himself—fifty years *after* the governor of California had forbidden it. Imagine that—canonizing someone who was, morally-speaking, fifty years behind a governor of any state! Nor did Fidel scold other institutions while refusing to critique his own, as this pope did in defending Piux XII's silence during the Holocaust.

Yes, Mr. Matthews.... Don't be a cheerleader for a reality you haven't bothered to investigate, and don't confuse stardom with holiness. If you are going to use the word "holy," do your homework first. The fact is that the credibility of the papacy is at an all-time low while sentimentality for the papacy is at an all-time high. ❑

PHOTOGRAPH BY BRUNO MOSCONI / AP PHOTO

Matthew Fox is author of twenty-three books including Original Blessing, The Coming of the Cosmic Christ *and* The Reinvention of Work. *He is the founder of the new University of Creation Spirituality in downtown Oakland (www.netser.com/ucs).*

BIO ETHICS

THE ULTIMATE THERAPY

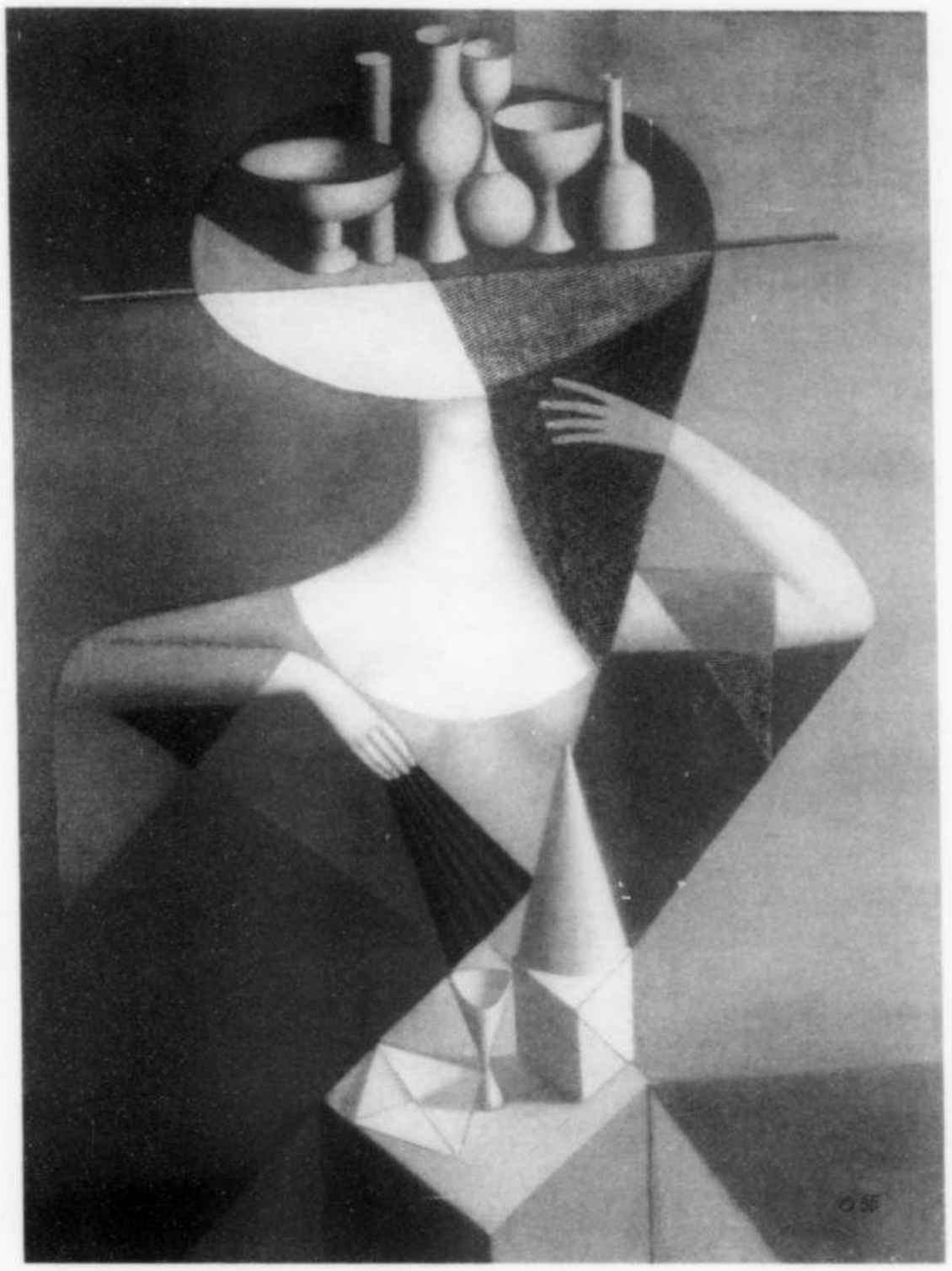
COMMERCIAL EUGENICS ON THE EVE OF THE BIOTECH CENTURY

Jeremy Rifkin

While the twentieth century was shaped largely by the spectacular breakthroughs in the fields of physics and chemistry, the twenty-first century will belong to the biological sciences. Scientists around the world are quickly deciphering the genetic code of life, unlocking the mystery of millions of years of biological evolution on Earth. Global life science companies, in turn, are beginning to exploit the new advances in biology in a myriad of ways, laying the economic framework for the coming Biotech Century.

Genes are the raw resource of the new economic epoch and are already being used in a variety of business fields—including agriculture, animal husbandry, energy, bioremediation, building and packaging materials, pharmaceuticals, and food and drink—to fashion a bio-industrial world. Nowhere is the new genetic commerce likely to have a bigger impact, however, than in human medicine. For the first time in history, scientific tools are becoming available to manipulate the genetic instructions in human cells. Human gene screening and therapy raise the very real possibility that we might be able to engineer the genetic blueprints of our own species and begin to redirect the future course of our biological evolution on Earth. The new gene splicing techniques will make it potentially possible to transform individuals and future generations into "works of art," continually updating and editing their DNA codes to enhance physical and mental health. Breakthroughs in genetic technology are bringing us to the edge of a new eugenics era with untold consequences for present and future generations and for civilization itself.

This article is adapted from Jeremy Rifkin's new book, The Biotech Century: Harnessing the Gene and Remaking the World *(Tarcher/Putnam, March 1998). Mr. Rifkin is president of the Foundation on Economic Trends in Washington D.C.*



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In less than seven years, the global life science companies will hold patents on most of the 100,000 genes that make up the human race as well as patents on the cell lines, tissues, and organs of our species, giving them unprecedented power to dictate the terms by which we and future generations will live our lives. The concentration of power in the global pharmaceutical industry has already reached staggering proportions. The world's ten major pharmaceutical companies currently control 47 percent of the $197 billion pharmaceutical market. The implications of a new market-driven eugenics are enormous and far reaching. Indeed, commercial eugenics could become the defining social dynamic of the new century.

FRIENDLY EUGENICS

Over the next ten years, molecular biologists say they will locate specific genes associated with several thousand genetic diseases. In the past, a parent's genetic history provided some clues to genetic inheritance, but there was still no way to know for sure whether specific genetic traits would be passed on. In the future, the guesswork will be increasingly eliminated, posing a moral dilemma for prospective parents. Parents will have at their disposal an increasingly accurate readout of their individual genetic make-ups, and will be able to predict the statistical probability of a specific genetic disorder being passed on to

their children as a result of their biological union.

To avoid the emotional anguish of such decisions, some young people are likely to opt for prevention and avoid marrying someone of the wrong "genotype" for fear of passing along serious genetic diseases to their offspring. Already, part of the Orthodox Jewish community in the United States has established a nationwide program to screen all young Jewish men and women for Tay-Sachs disease. Every young Jew is encouraged to take the test. The results are made available in an easily accessible database to allow young eligible men and women to choose their dating partners with genotype in mind.



Some ethicists argue that such programs will become far more commonplace, placing a "genetic stigma" on young people. There's ample precedent for concern. Researchers report that when sickle cell anemia was screened for in Greece, nearly 23 percent of the population was found to have the trait. Fearing stigmatization, many of the carriers concealed their test results, believing that public exposure would seriously jeopardize their marriage prospects.

When researchers at the Johns Hopkins Medical Center recently discovered a genetic alteration in one out of every six Jews of Eastern European ancestry that doubles their risk of getting colon cancer, many in the Jewish community began to express their concern that the Jewish population might be singled out and made the object of discrimination. The news of the "Jewish" cancer gene came on top of other discoveries linking breast and ovarian cancer, cystic fibrosis, Tay-Sachs, Gauchers, and Canavan's disease to Jewish blood lines. Of course, scientists point out that other groups are likely to have just as many genetic links to specific diseases, but that the Jewish population has received the most attention to date because "they constitute a well defined, easily identifiable and closely related community—exactly the kind that allows geneticists to start identifying disease-causing genes." Still, the explanations of the researchers were not enough to calm an anxious Jewish community who began to vent their feelings publicly. Amy Rutkin, the director of American affairs for Hadassah, the nation's largest Jewish membership organization, reported that in the aftermath of the colon cancer discovery, the organization has been "receiving phone calls indicating a certain amount of fear and confusion." Rutkin said that "people are asking, is too much research focused on the Jewish community and are we at risk of stigmatization?"

Health professionals worry about genetic stigmatization and especially the prospect of selecting potential mates based on genotyping, but argue that it is still less onerous than selective abortion or sentencing a newborn to premature death or a life of chronic or debilitating illness. Not surprising, there is increasing talk of government mandated genetic testing of couples seeking marriage licenses. Even without a government requirement, it's likely that a growing number of potential marriage partners will want their future partner screened before committing themselves to a life-long relationship.

While genetic screening is already here, human genetic engineering—gene therapy—is just around the corner. Genetic manipulation is of two kinds. In somatic therapy, intervention takes place only within non-sex (somatic) cells and the genetic changes do not transfer into the offspring. In germ line therapy, genetic changes are made in the sperm, egg or embryonic cells, and are passed along to future generations. Somatic gene surgery has been carried out in limited human clinical trials for more than seven years. Germ line experiments have been successfully carried out on mammals for more than a decade and researchers expect the first human trials to be conducted within the next several years.

Despite years of favorable media reports on various somatic gene therapy experiments and the high expectations voiced by the medical establishment and the biotech industry, the results have, thus far, been so disappointing that the NIH itself was recently forced to acknowledge the fact and issue a sober warning to scientists conducting the experiments to stop making promises that cannot be kept. In an extensive survey of all 106 clinical trials of experimental gene therapies conducted over the past five years involving more than 597 patients, a panel of experts convened by the NIH reported that "clinical efficacy has not been definitively demonstrated at this time in any gene therapy protocol, despite anecdotal claims of successful therapy." Even Dr. Leroy B. Walters, a philosophy professor at Georgetown University and the chairperson of the NIH oversight committee that reviewed and approved all of the clinical trials, remarked in a moment of candor that he and the committee had not seen "any solid results yet" after years of experiments. Still, many of the staunchest supporters of the new gene therapies remain convinced that the techniques will bear fruit as methodologies and procedures are honed and new knowledge of the workings of the genes become more available to researchers and clinicians.

Far more controversial is the prospect of conducting human germ line therapy. Debate over genetic manipulation of human eggs, sperm, and embryonic cells has raged for more than fifteen years. In 1983, a cross-section of the nation's religious leaders and prominent scientists announced their opposition to such experiments, on eugenics grounds, and urged a worldwide ban. (The coalition was put together by The Foundation on Economic Trends.)

Programming genetic changes into the human germ line to direct the evolutionary development of future generations is the most radical human experiment ever con-

templated and raises unprecedented moral, social, and environmental risks for the whole of humanity. Even so, a growing number of molecular biologists, medical practitioners, and pharmaceutical companies are anxious to take the gamble, convinced that controlling our evolutionary destiny is humankind's next great social frontier. Their arguments are couched in terms of personal health, individual choice, and collective responsibility for future generations.

Writing in *The Journal of Medicine and Philosophy*, Dr. Burke Zimmerman makes several points in defense of germ line cell therapy over somatic cell therapy. To begin with, he argues that the increasing use of somatic therapy is only likely to increase the number of survivors with defective genes in their germ lines—genes that will continue to accumulate and further "pollute" the genetic pool of the species, passing an increasing number of genetic problems onto succeeding generations. Secondly, although somatic therapy may be able to treat many disorders in which treatment lies in replacing populations of cells, it might never prove effective in addressing diseases involving solid tissues, organs, and functions dependent on structure—for example the brain—and therefore, germ line therapy is likely the only remedy, short of abortion, against such disorders.



Zimmerman and other proponents of germ line therapy argue for a broadening of the ethical mandate of the healing professions to include responsibility for the health of those not yet conceived. The interests of the patient, they say, should be extended to include the interests of "the entire genetic legacy that may result from intervention in the germ line." Moreover, parents ought not to be denied their right as parents to make choices on how best to protect the health of their unborn children during pregnancy. To deny them the opportunity to take corrective action in the sex cells or at the early embryonic stage would be a serious breach of medical responsibility. Proponents of germ line therapy ask why millions of individuals need to be subjected to painful, intrusive, and potentially risky somatic therapy when the gene or genes responsible for their diseases could be more easily eliminated from the germ line, at less expense, and with less discomfort.

Finally, the health costs to society need to be factored into the equation, say the advocates of germ line therapy. Although the costs of genetic intervention into the germ line to cure diseases are likely to remain high in the early years, the cost is likely to drop dramatically in the future as the methods and techniques become more refined. The lifetime cost of caring for generations of patients suffering from Parkinson's disease or severe Down's syndrome is likely to be far greater than simple prevention in the form of genetic intervention at the germ line level.

Genetic Responsibility

In the coming decades, scientists will learn more about how genes function. They will become increasingly adept at turning genes "on" and "off." They will become more sophisticated in the techniques of recombining genes and altering genetic codes. At every step of the way, conscious decisions will have to be made as to which kinds of permanent changes in the biological codes of life are worth pursuing and which are not. A society and civilization steeped in "engineering" the gene pool of the planet cannot possibly hope to escape the kind of ongoing eugenics decisions that go hand and hand with each new advance in biotechnology. There will be enormous social pressure to conform with the underlying logic of genetic engineering, especially when it comes to its human applications.

Parents in the biotech century will be increasingly forced to decide whether to take their chances with the traditional genetic lottery and use their own unaltered egg and sperm, knowing their children may inherit some "undesirable" traits, or undergo corrective gene changes on their sperm, egg, embryo, or fetus, or substitute egg or sperm from a donor through *in vitro* fertilization and surrogacy arrangements. If they choose to go with the traditional approach and let genetic fate determine their child's biological destiny, they could find themselves culpable if something goes dreadfully wrong in the developing fetus, something they could have avoided had they availed themselves of corrective genetic intervention at the sex cell or embryo stage.

In the Biotech Century, a parent's failure to correct genetic defects *in utero* might well be regarded as a heinous crime. Society may conclude that every parent has a responsibility to provide as safe and secure an environment as humanly possible for their unborn child. Not to do so might be considered a breech of parental duty for which the parents could be held morally, if not legally, liable. Mothers have already been held liable for having given birth to crack cocaine addicted babies and babies with fetal alcohol syndrome. Prosecutors have argued that mothers passing on these painful addictions to their unborn children are culpable under existing child abuse statutes, and ought to be held liable for the effect of their lifestyle on their babies.

Proponents of human genetic engineering argue that it would be cruel and irresponsible not to use this powerful new technology to eliminate serious "genetic disorders." The problem with this argument, says *The New York Times* in an editorial entitled, "Whether to Make Perfect Humans," is that "there is no discernible line to be drawn between making inheritable repair of genetic defects and improving the species." The *Times* rightly points out that once scientists are able to repair genetic defects, "it will become much harder to argue against additional genes that

confer desired qualities, like better health, looks or brains."

If diabetes, sickle cell anemia, and cancer are to be prevented by altering the genetic makeup of individuals, why not proceed to other less serious "defects": myopia, color blindness, dyslexia, obesity, short stature? Indeed, what is to preclude a society from deciding that a certain skin color is a disorder? In the end, why would we ever say no to any alteration of the genetic code that might enhance the well-being of our offspring? It would be difficult to imagine parents rejecting genetic modifications that promised to improve, in some way, the opportunities for their progeny.

It is likely that as new screening technologies become more universally available, and genetic surgery at the embryonic and fetal stage becomes more widely acceptable, the issue of parental responsibility will be hotly debated, both in the courts and in the legislatures. The very fact that parents will increasingly be able to intervene to ensure the health of their child before birth, is likely to raise the concomitant issue of the responsibilities and obligations to their unborn children. Why shouldn't parents be held responsible for taking proper care of their unborn child? For that matter, why shouldn't parents be held liable for neglecting their child's welfare in the womb in cases where they failed to or refused to screen for and correct genetic defects that could prove harmful to their offspring?



With Americans already spending billions of dollars on cosmetic surgery to improve their looks and psychotropic drugs to alter their mood and behavior, the use of genetic therapies to enhance their unborn children also seems a likely prospect. According to a 1992 Harris poll, 43 percent of Americans "would approve using gene therapy to improve babies' physical characteristics." Many advocates of germ line intervention are already arguing for enhancement therapy. They contend that the current debate over corrective measures to address serious illnesses is too limited and urge a more expansive discussion to include the advantage of enhancement therapy as well. As to the oft heard criticism that genetic enhancement will favor children of the rich at the expense of children of the poor—as the rich will be the only ones capable of paying for genetic enhancement of their offspring—proponents argue that the children of well-off parents have always enjoyed the advantages that wealth and inheritance can confer. Is it such a leap, they ask rhetorically, to want to pass along genetic gifts to their children along with material riches? Advocates ask us to consider the positive side of germ line enhancement, even if it gives an advantage to the children of those who can afford the technology. "What about … increasing the number of talented people. Wouldn't society be better off in the long run?" asks Dr. Burke Zimmerman.

Perhaps not. Despite the growing enthusiasm among molecular biologists for engineering fundamental changes in the genetic code of human sex cells, it should be emphasized that treating genetic disorders by eliminating recessive traits at the germ line level is far different from treating genetic disorders by way of somatic gene surgery after birth. In the former instance, the genetic deletions can result, in the long run, in a dangerous narrowing of the human gene pool upon which future generations rely for making evolutionary adaptations to changing environments.

We learned, long ago, that recessive traits and mutations are essential players in the evolutionary schema. They are not mistakes, but rather variations, some of which become opportunities. Eliminating so-called "bad" genes risks depleting the genetic pool and limiting future evolutionary options. Recessive gene traits are far too complex and mercurial to condemn as simple errors in the code. We are, in fact, just beginning to learn of the many subtle and varied roles recessive gene traits play, some of which have been critically important in ensuring the survival of different ethnic and racial groups. For example, the sickle cell recessive trait protects against malaria. The cystic fibrosis recessive gene may play a role in protecting against cholera. To think of recessive traits and single gene disorders, then, as merely errors in the code, in need of reprogramming, is to lose sight of how things really work in the biological kingdom.

Somatic gene surgery, on the other hand, if it proves to be a safe, therapeutic way to treat serious diseases that can not be effectively treated by more conventional approaches, including preventive measures, would appear to have potential value.

Many biotech libertarians, however, disdain such distinctions. *The Economist* suggested, in a recent editorial, that society should move beyond old fashioned hand-wringing moralism on the subject and openly embrace the new commercial eugenics opportunities that will soon become available in the marketplace. The editors asked,

> What of genes that might make a good body better, rather than make a bad one good? Should people be able to retro-fit themselves with extra neuro-transmitters, to enhance various mental powers? Or to change the color of their skin? Or to help them run faster, or lift heavier weights?

The Economist editorial board made clear that its own biases lay firmly with the marketplace. To them, the new commercial eugenics is about ensuring greater consumer freedom so that individuals can make of themselves and their heirs whatever they choose. The editorial concluded with a ringing endorsement of the new eugenics:

> The proper goal is to allow people as much choice as possible about what they do. To this end, making genes instruments of such freedom, rather than limits upon it, is a great step forward.

Dr. Robert Sinsheimer, a long standing leader and driving force in the field of molecular biology, laid out his eugenics vision of the new man and woman of the biotech century:

> The old dreams of the cultural perfection of man were always sharply constrained by his inherited imperfections and limitations.... To foster his better traits and to curb his worse by cultural means alone has always been, while clearly not impossible, in many instances most difficult.... We now glimpse another route—the chance to ease the internal strains and heal the internal flaws directly, to carry on and consciously perfect far beyond our present vision this remarkable product of two billion years of evolution.... The old eugenics would have required a continual selection for breeding of the fit, and a culling of the unfit.... The horizons of the new eugenics are in principle boundless—for we should have the potential to create new genes and new qualities yet undreamed.... Indeed, this concept marks a turning point in the whole evolution of life. For the first time in all time, a living creature understands its origin and can undertake to design its future. Even in the ancient myths man was constrained by essence. He could not rise above his nature to chart his destiny. Today we can envision that chance—and its dark companion of awesome choice and responsibility.



Perfecting the Code

While the notion of consumer choice would appear benign, the very idea of eliminating so-called genetic defects raises the troubling question of what is meant by the term "defective." Ethicist Daniel Callahan of the Hastings Center penetrates to the core of the problem when he observes that "behind the human horror at genetic defectiveness lurks ... an image of the perfect human being. The very language of 'defect,' 'abnormality,' 'disease,' and 'risk' presupposes such an image, a kind of prototype of perfection."

The all consuming preoccupation with "defects" or "errors" among medical researchers and molecular biologists puts them very much at odds with most evolutionary biologists. When evolutionary biologists talk of "mutations," they have in mind the idea of "different 'readings' or 'versions'" of a relatively stable archetype. James Watson and Francis Crick's discovery of the DNA double helix in the 1950s, however, brought with it a new set of metaphors and a new language for describing biological processes which changed the way molecular biologists perceive genetic mutations. The primary building block of life was described as a code, a set of instructions, a program, to be unraveled and read. The early molecular biologists, many of whom had been trained first as physicists, were enamored with what they regarded as the universal explanatory power of the information sciences. Norbert Weiner's cybernetic model and modern communications and information theory provided a compelling new linguistic paradigm for redefining how we talk about both physical and biological phenomena. It is within the context of this new language that molecular biologists first began to talk of genetic variation as "errors" in the code rather than "mutations." The shift from the notion of genetic mutations in nature to genetic errors in codes represents a sea change in the way biologists approach their discipline, with profound repercussions for how we structure both our relationship to the natural world and our own human nature in the coming Biotech Century.

The very idea of engineering the human species—by making changes at the germ line level—is not too dissimilar from the idea of engineering a piece of machinery. An engineer is constantly in search of new ways to improve the performance of a machine. As soon as one set of defects is eliminated, the engineer immediately turns his attention to the next set of defects, always with the idea in mind of creating a more efficient machine. The notion of setting arbitrary limits to how much "improvement" is acceptable is alien to the entire engineering conception.

The new language of the information sciences has transformed many molecular biologists from scientists to engineers, although they are, no doubt, little aware of the metamorphosis. When molecular biologists speak of mutations and genetic diseases as errors in the code, the implicit, if not explicit, assumption is that they should never have existed in the first place, that they are "bugs," or mistakes that need to be deprogrammed or corrected. The molecular biologist, in turn, becomes the computing engineer, the writer of codes, continually eliminating errors and reprogramming instructions to upgrade both the program and the performance. This is a dubious and dangerous role when we stop to consider than every human being brings with him or her a number of lethal recessive genes. Do we then come to see ourselves as miswired from the get-go, riddled with errors in our code? If that be the case, against what ideal norm of perfection are we to be measured? If every human being is made up of varying degrees of error, then we search in vain for the norm, the ideal. What makes the new language of molecular biology so subtly chilling is that it risks creating a new archetype, a flawless, errorless, perfect being to which to aspire—a new man and woman, like us, but without the warts and wrinkles, vulnerabilities and frailties, that have defined our essence from the very beginning of our existence.

No wonder so many in the disability rights community are becoming increasingly frightened of the new biology. They wonder, if in the new world coming, people like themselves will be seen as errors in the code, mistakes to be eliminated, lives to be prevented from coming into being. Then again, how tolerant are the rest of us likely to be when we come to see everyone around us as defective, as mistakes and errors in the code.

Already, genetic information is being used by schools, employers, insurance companies and governments to determine educational tracks, employment prospects, insurance premiums, and security clearances, giving rise to a new and virulent form of discrimination based on one's genetic profile. Even more chilling, some genetic engineers envision a future with a small segment of the human population engineered to "perfection" while others remain as flawed reminders of an outmoded evolutionary design. Molecular biologist Lee Silver of Princeton University writes about a not-too-distant future made up of two distinct biological classes which he refers to as the Gen Rich and Naturals. The Gen Rich, which account for 10 percent of the population, have been enhanced with synthetic genes and have become the rulers of society. They include Gen Rich businessmen, musicians, artists, intellectuals, and athletes, each enhanced with specific synthetic genes to allow them to succeed in their respective fields in ways not even conceivable among those born of nature's lottery.

At the center of this new genetic aristocracy are the Gen Rich scientists who are enhanced with special genetic traits that greatly increase their mental abilities, giving them the power to dictate the terms of future evolutionary advances on Earth. Silver says that:

> With the passage of time, the genetic distance between Naturals and the Gen Rich has become greater and greater, and now there is little movement up from the Natural to the Gen Rich class.... All aspects of the economy, the media, the entertainment industry and the knowledge industry are controlled by members of the Gen Rich class.... In contrast, Naturals work as low-paid service providers or as laborers.... Gen Rich and Natural children grow up and live in segregated social worlds where there is little chance for contact between them ... [eventually] the Gen Rich class and the Natural class will become the Gen Rich humans and the Natural humans—entirely separate species with no ability to cross breed and with as much romantic interest in each other as a current human would have for a chimpanzee.



Silver acknowledges that the increasing polarization of society into a Gen Rich and Natural class might be unfair, but he is quick to add that wealthy parents have always been able to provide all sorts of advantages for their children. "Anyone who accepts the right of affluent parents to provide their children with an expensive private school education cannot use unfairness as a reason for rejecting the use of reprogenetic technologies," argues Silver. Like many of his colleagues, Silver is a strong advocate of the new genetic technologies. "In a society that values human freedom above all else," writes Silver, "it is hard to find any legitimate basis for restricting the use of reprogenetics."

If Silver's predictions about where the new technologies are heading are correct, we face the very real possibility of journeying into a Huxlian world populated by Alphas, Betas, Gammas, and Deltas. In the new scenario, however, it's the global marketplace and consumer desire, not an oppressive government, that will likely be the ultimate arbiter of the new biology. In the final analysis, commercial eugenics, controlled by global life science companies and mediated by consumer sovereignty, might prove every bit as dangerous to the future prospects of our species as the shrill cries on behalf of purifying the best blood of the Aryan race more than half a century ago in Hitler's infamous Third Reich.

The question, then, is whether or not humanity should begin the process of engineering future generations of human beings by technological design in the laboratory. What are the potential consequences of embarking on a course whose final goal is the "perfection" of the human species?

Today, the ultimate exercise of power is within grasp: the ability to control, at the most fundamental level, the future lives of unborn generations by engineering their biological life process in advance, making them a partial hostage of their own architecturally designed blueprints. I use the word "partial" because, like many others, I believe that environment is a major contributing factor in determining one's life course. It is also true, however, that one's genetic makeup plays a role in helping to shape one's destiny. Genetic engineering, then, represents the power of authorship, albeit limited authorship. Being able to engineer even minor changes in the physical and behavioral characteristics of future generations represents a new era in human history. Never before has such power over human life even been a possibility.

Human genetic engineering raises the very real spectre of a distopian future where the haves and have-nots are increasingly divided and separated by genetic endowment, genetic discrimination is widely practiced, and traditional notions of democracy and equality give way to the creation of a genetocracy based on one's "genetic qualifications." The driving force of this new bioindustrial world are giant life science companies whose control over genetic resources and the new transformative biotechnologies give them the clout to act as commercial agents for a new eugenics era.

Competing Biotech Visions

Many in the life sciences field would have us believe that the new gene splicing technologies are irrepressible and irreversible and that any attempt to oppose their introduction is both futile and retrogressive. They never stop to even consider the possibility that the new genetic science might be used in a wholly different manner than is currently being proposed. The fact is, the corporate agenda is only one of two potential paths into the Biotech Century. It is possible that the growing number of anti-eugenic activists around the world might be able to ignite a global debate

around alternative uses of the new science—approaches that are less invasive, more sustainable and humane and that conserve and protect the genetic rights of future generations.

While the global life science companies favor the introduction and wide spread use of gene therapy—genetic engineering—to cure diseases, and enhance the physical, emotional and mental well-being of individuals, a growing number of holistically minded geneticists and health practitioners are beginning to use the new data being generated by the human genome project in a very different way. They are exploring the relationship between genetic mutations and environmental triggers with the hope of fashioning a more sophisticated, scientifically-based understanding and approach to preventive health. More than 70 percent of all deaths in the United States and other industrialized countries are attributable to what physicians refer to as "diseases of affluence." Heart attacks, strokes, breast, colon and prostate cancer, and diabetes are among the most common diseases of affluence. While each individual has varying genetic susceptibilities to these diseases, environmental factors, including diet and lifestyle, are major contributing elements that can trigger genetic mutations. Heavy cigarette smoking, high levels of alcohol consumption, diets rich in animal fats, the use of pesticides and other poisonous chemicals, contaminated water and food, polluted air and sedentary living habits with little or no exercise, have been shown, in study after study, to cause genetic mutations and lead to the onset of many of these high profile diseases.



The mapping and sequencing of the human genome is providing researchers with vital new information on recessive gene traits and genetic predispositions for a range of illnesses. Still, little research has been done, to date, on how genetic predispositions interact with toxic materials in the environment, the metabolizing of different foods, and lifestyle to affect genetic mutations and phenotypical expression. The new holistic approach to human medicine views the individual genome as part of an embedded organismic structure, continually interacting with and being affected by the environment in which it unfolds. The effort is geared toward using increasingly sophisticated genetic and environmental information to prevent genetic mutations from occurring. (It needs to be emphasized, however, that a number of genetic diseases appear to be unpreventable and immune to environmental mediation.)

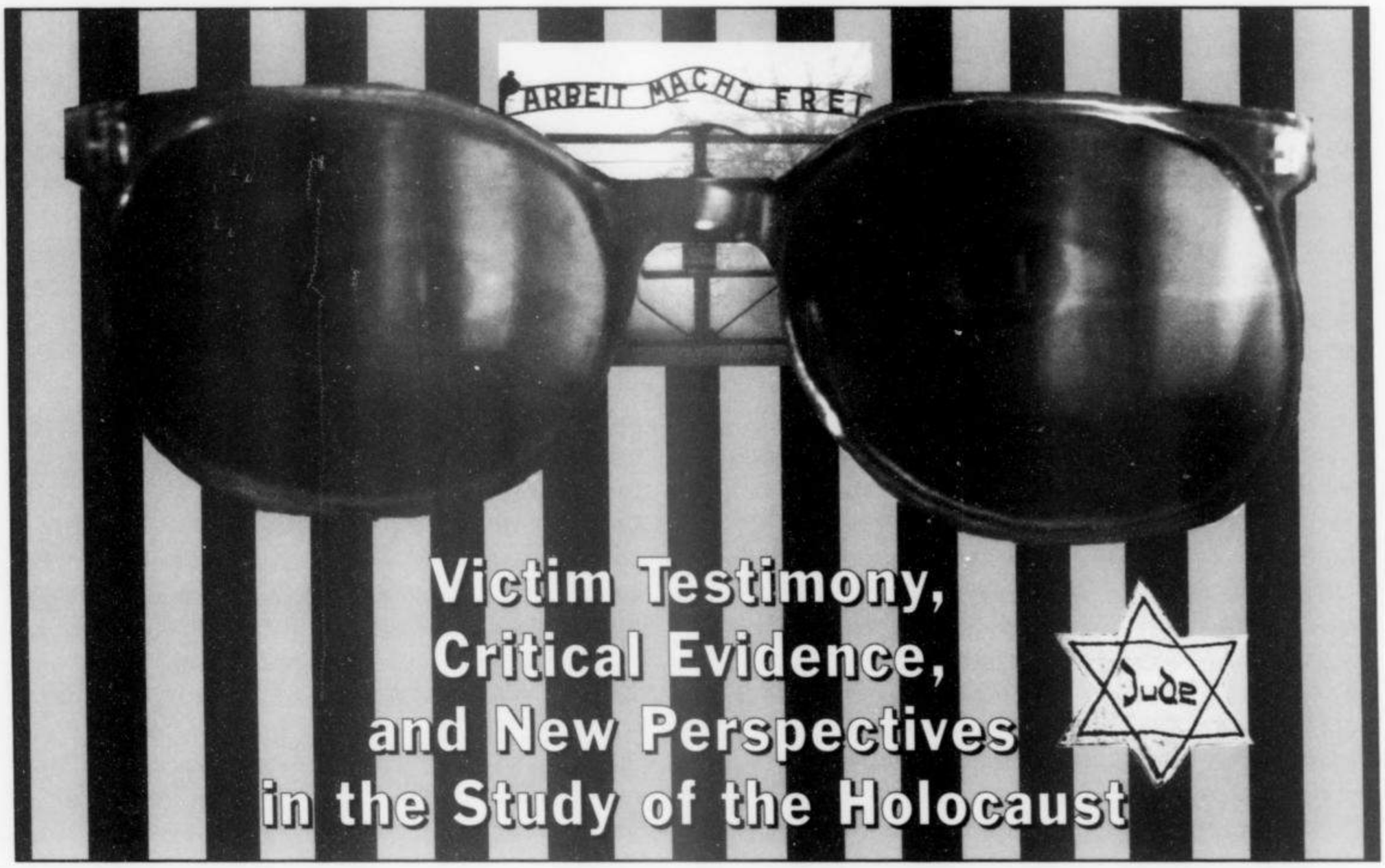
Some would argue that, in the case of medicine and any number of other fields, there is no reason why both approaches to applied science can't live side by side, each complementing and augmenting the other. In reality, the commercial market favors the more reductionist approach for the obvious reason that for now, at least, that's where the money is to be made. While there is certainly a growing market for preventive health practices, programs, and products, far more money is invested in "illness" based medicine. That could change, but it would require a paradigm shift in the way we think about science and its applications, with awareness of and support for a science founded in systems thinking and sensitive to the twin notions of diversity and interdependence.

While it might seem highly improbable, even inconceivable, to most of the principle players in this new technology revolution that genetic engineering, with all of its potential promise, might ultimately be rejected, we need remind ourselves that just a generation ago, it would have been just as inconceivable to imagine the partial abandonment of nuclear energy which had for years been so enthusiastically embraced as the ultimate salvation for a society whose appetite for energy appeared nearly insatiable. It is also possible that society will accept some and reject other uses of genetic engineering in the coming biotech century. For example, one could make a solid case for genetic screening—with the appropriate safeguards in place—to better predict the onslaught of disabling diseases, especially those that can be prevented with early treatment. The new gene-splicing technologies also open the door to a new generation of lifesaving pharmaceutical products. On the other hand, the use of gene therapy to make corrective changes in the human germ line, affecting the options of future generations, is far more problematic. Society may well say yes to some of the genetic engineering options and no to others. After all, nuclear technology has been harnessed effectively for uses other than creating energy and making bombs.

Even a rejection of some genetic engineering technologies then, does not mean that the wealth of genomic and environmental information being collected couldn't be used in other ways. While the twenty-first century will be the Age of Biology, the technological application of the knowledge we gain can take a variety of forms. To believe that genetic engineering is the only way to apply our new knowledge of biology and the life sciences is limiting and keeps us from entertaining other options which might prove even more effective in addressing the needs and fulfilling the dreams of current and future generations.

The biotech revolution will affect every aspect of our lives. The way we eat; the way we date and marry; the way we have our babies; the way our children are raised and educated; the way we work; the way we engage in politics; the way we express our faith; the way we perceive the world around us and our place in it—all of our individual and shared realities will be deeply touched by the new technologies of the Biotech Century. Surely, these very "personal" technologies deserve to be widely discussed and debated by the public at large before they become a ubiquitous part of our daily lives. ❑

The Paradigm Challenged



Daniel Jonah Goldhagen

Imagine a history of American slavery whose authors assert that the testimony of slaves should not be used and where the practice is not to use it, where there is no extensive investigation of whites' conceptions of the enslaved Africans, where it is said that the whites were unwilling slave holders and that few non-slave owning southern whites supported the institutions of slavery, where it is said that those enslaving and routinely brutalizing the slaves were not at all influenced by their conceptions of the victims, where the precept and practice is not to describe the full extent and character of the slave holders' brutality, where it is said furthermore that African American scholars today are suspect because they are African American and the motivation is imputed to them of writing about slavery solely for monetary or political gain or psychological gratification. Imagine what our understanding of American slavery would look like, how skewed it would be, if even only some of these positions prevailed. We would wonder how slavery ever could have existed.

When writing about the Holocaust, many scholars and commentators routinely adopt positions analogous to one or several of these examples. Indeed, some of these positions are a never justified, seemingly unquestioned norm among those who write about the Holocaust. These positions would seem curious—methodologically, substantively, and interpretively—even absurd, if put forward about slavery or about other genocides or mass slaughters such as those in Rwanda or Bosnia. Yet when asserted about the Holocaust, barely an eyebrow is raised. The question naturally arises as to why such manifestly false positions have been frequently adopted? Why until recently were almost no studies, especially no systematic studies, of the perpetrators—namely of those who killed Jews, guarded the camps and ghettos, and deported them to their deaths—to be found among the tens of thousands of books written about the Holocaust, despite the wealth of evidence that had long been available?

The heretofore hegemonic paradigm about the Holocaust has rendered them puppet-like actors, mere pawns

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ILLUSTRATIONS BY LAWRENCE BUSH

whose inner world need not be investigated. It denies the moral agency and assent of the perpetrators and holds that they were compelled to act by forces external to them, such as terror, bureaucratic strictures and modes of behaving, the logic of the system, or social psychological pressure. For a long time, this paradigm diverted attention away from the perpetrators because its logic of external compulsion meant that the perpetrators' internal lives (their beliefs and values) and anything that was socio-historically particular to them (that they were members of a deeply anti-Semitic political culture) did not influence their actions and that, therefore, the study of them would not contribute much to explaining the Holocaust. The problems with this view and its construction can be indicated by comparing it to the hypothetical, fanciful rendering of slavery above.

Many of the German perpetrators knew explicitly that they had a choice not to kill. Not a single one was ever seriously punished for refusing to kill Jews. Yet scholars are wedded to the paradigm that perpetrators were compelled to act against their will.

The perpetrators are finally being discussed extensively, even if the number of empirical studies remains small. Yet in the last couple of years, a phalanx of scholars and commentators have adopted positions which would make the perpetrators of the Holocaust the *only* perpetrators of genocide who believed that their victims did not deserve to die, indeed that their victims were innocent. This strange view seems still stranger given that many of the German perpetrators knew explicitly that they had a choice not to kill, and that no German perpetrator was ever killed, sent to a concentration camp, jailed, or punished in any serious way for refusing to kill Jews. That it was possible for many perpetrators to avoid killing Jews, and that some of them availed themselves of this possibility, became known already at the Nuremberg Trials. The related, stunning fact that not a single German perpetrator was ever seriously punished for refusing to kill Jews has been known since 1967 when the jurist Herbert Jäger published his pioneering study, *Crime Under Totalitarian Domination*. (I treated both the general issue and presented the case of one man who refused to kill in "The 'Cowardly' Executioner: On Disobedience in the SS" in 1985). Yet this latter fact has remained unmentioned in virtually every work written on the perpetration of the Holocaust since Jäger first established it.

Why would Martin Broszat, Raul Hilberg, Eberhard Jäckel, Hans Mommsen and other scholars who wish to explain the Holocaust not discuss these fundamental facts extensively or incorporate their significance into the explanations and interpretations which they put forward? Is it of so little import—that men and women who knew that they could avoid killing children would choose to destroy them anyway—that it is *not even worth mentioning* this information? Acknowledging these facts would have shaken the foundations of the paradigm to which many scholars are wedded, namely that the perpetrators were compelled by external forces to act against their will. This crucial omission of evidence, for which no justification has been offered, has for decades skewed non-experts' and the public's understanding of the Holocaust.

Similarly, when these writers depict and analyze the events of the Holocaust and particularly when they analyze the motives of the perpetrators, they rarely, if ever, use the testimony of the victims, neither their letters, diaries, memoirs, nor oral testimonies. That is not to say this testimony is never used; certainly, it is used by those writing about the lives and plight of the victims, and by scholars like Yehuda Bauer, Saul Friedlander, and Israel Gutman. But when constructing interpretations of the perpetrators of the Holocaust, it has been the unspoken practice of so many scholars to all but ignore, and certainly not to use systematically, victims' accounts of the perpetrators' actions and the victims' understanding of perpetrators' attitudes towards them. With the sometime exception of a quotation or two from Primo Levi (or some other particularly distinguished memoirist), one searches such authors' works in vain for the instances where they use such evidence seriously or even at all.

Some authors explicitly declare that victim testimony is of little value and an impediment to understanding. Raul Hilberg, who is one of the principal exponents of the conventional paradigm and practice and who often speaks authoritatively for those who are in his school, has written roughly seven pages on survivor testimony in his recent memoir, *The Politics of Memory*, which are highly distorting and almost thoroughly disparaging. He makes not a single positive statement about the victims' testimony as a historical source, except when it shows Jews in a bad light. Even though Hilberg acknowledges in passing, in a strikingly critical vein, that the survivors' "principal subjects are deportations, concentration camps, death camps, escapes, hiding, and partisan fighting"—precisely those themes relevant to learning about and analyzing the perpetrators—his practice and that of those who follow him suggests that they believe that there is little evidentiary or interpretive value in all this testimony.

This widespread devaluation of the testimony of the Jewish victims is peculiar. I know of no other historical or contemporary instance about which it is said that the victims

of genocidal onslaughts, sustained violence, or brutality have little of value to tell us about those who victimized and brutalized them. I know of no other crime (e.g., assault, kidnapping), no instance of large scale brutal domination (e.g., slavery, serfdom), no genocide (e.g., Rwanda, Cambodia), nor any other historical instance in which the victims—in the case of the Holocaust a group of eyewitnesses numbering in the millions—are said, as a class, to have little or nothing to tell us about the deeds and attitudes of the men and women who victimized them and whose murderousness and brutalities against others they witnessed. And not only is their testimony silently ignored by many and explicitly devalued by some but it is also sometimes deprecated by writers like Istvan Deak, who began a review of several books on the Holocaust in *The New York Review of Books* (June 26, 1997) by presenting a caricature of and an attack on survivors' memoirs. He goes so far as to say that "an accurate record of the Holocaust has been endangered, in my opinion, by the uncritical endorsement, often by well-known Jewish writers or public figures, of virtually any survivor's account or related writings." How have the survivors' writings "endangered" "an accurate record of the Holocaust"? Except to say (correctly) that personal details may be inaccurate or embellished, Deak does not justify his sweeping condemnation.



The invaluable importance of survivor testimony is attested by the crucial, indeed, indispensable part that the survivors have played in the trials of thousands of perpetrators in the Federal Republic of Germany. Many of these trials could not have been held without survivor testimony. The judgment in the most famous of these trials, that of a contingent of guards and administrators of Auschwitz held in 1963, states: "Apart from scattered and not very informative documents, the court had to *rely exclusively* on witness testimony to help it reconstruct the acts of the defendants" (my emphasis). One thousand three hundred witnesses (among them former guards) gave testimony for that trial.

The Germans' documentation of the killing institutions and operations never record the details of the hundreds or thousands of perpetrators' many actions. Typically, the documents contain, at most, the bare logistics and results of killing operations. So an entire killing operation that might have lasted a full day will appear in a document with nothing more than one line stating that on a given date, the German unit "resettled" (a euphemism) or "shot" some number of Jews.

The accounts of survivors afford a more transparent, more spacious window to the Nazi inferno than the often beclouded and distorting postwar testimonies of the perpetrators who, in order to escape punishment, frequently lie. (Still, some of the perpetrators are surprisingly forthcoming, especially about other perpetrators, and many unwittingly reveal a great deal. Such testimony is invaluable and should be used.) Who would expect to learn from the perpetrators or from contemporaneous German documents a full and accurate account of the texture and details of the Holocaust, of the daily living and dying, of the treatment of the prisoners by the German overlords, including their frequent gratuitous brutality, of the social life of the inmates, their thoughts and feelings, their suffering and their agony? Where can we more fully learn about the character of the perpetrators' actions—the degree to which the perpetrators tortured, brutalized, beat, degraded, and mocked the victims—about the perpetrators' demeanor and attitudes, about whether they acted zealously or reluctantly, about whether they expressed hatred for the victims, and gain insight into the perpetrators' willingness and motivation?

The answer is obvious: from the victims.

Could accurate histories of the Jewish ghettos and of the concentration camps be written without the accounts of the survivors contained in their depositions and memoirs? A perusal of three great books, H. G. Adler's *Theresienstadt, 1941-1945*, Israel Gutman's *The Jews of Warsaw 1939-1943*, and Hermann Langbein's panoramic analysis of Auschwitz, *People in Auschwitz*, shows that the authors have drawn heavily on the accounts of survivors. Are these historical works thereby vitiated? Do they imperil the accuracy of the historical record?

A comparison with the historiography of the Soviet Gulag is instructive. Its scholars do not cast aspersion on the memoirs and accounts of former inmates, whose narratives are indispensable. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn writes in his Preface to *The Gulag Archipelago*: "This book could never have been created by one person alone. In addition to what I myself was able to take away from the Archipelago—on the skin of my back, and with my eyes and ears—material for this book was given me in reports, memoirs, and letters by 227 witnesses … this is our common, collective monument to all those who were tortured and murdered." Evidence of the kind that Hilberg, Deak, Christopher, Browning, and others dismiss, explicitly or tacitly, as unreliable and inessential forms the foundation of Solzhenitsyn's magisterial work. Would Deak argue that Solzhenitsyn has "endangered" "an accurate record" of the Gulag? Or are only survivors of the Holocaust and those who find great value in their testimony prone to such "endangerment"?

It is not because this witness testimony is meager, imprecise, or devoid of insight that it has been ignored. It includes hundreds of memorial volumes, each one containing compilations from survivors of one destroyed Jewish community after another detailing their fates; depositions of many thousands of survivors in the trials of the perpetrators from one camp, killing unit, and ghetto after another; vast amounts of oral testimony; and thousands of memoirs. It would be hard to imagine an instance of mass slaughter, violence, or brutality that would be documented by a greater abundance of rich, detailed, often highly literate testimony that contains penetrating analyses of the events and of the

people who perpetrated them. This makes the disparagement of the victims' testimony and its paltry use that much more surprising and indefensible.

Victims' accounts belie the conventional paradigm and the attendant scholarly theories about the perpetrators that have held sway, namely that the perpetrators either explicitly disapproved or at least did not approve of the mass slaughter of Jews and of other victims. The victims know differently. They have testified so again and again. If the proponents of these explanations had incorporated the voices of the victims into their own writings, then they would have undercut immediately and devastatingly their own theories, and the conventional paradigm.

The omission of the survivors' accounts has obscured, among many other aspects of the Holocaust, one of its constituent features. Scholars' failure to use victim accounts has thus, to use Deak's phraseology, "endangered" "an accurate record": the perpetrators' virtually boundless cruelty towards the Jews has been all but ignored by those who purport to explain the perpetrators' actions. If, as many authors do, one relies principally on highly partial and often unrevealing contemporaneous German documents, then, of course, one will not find frequent and detailed recitations of Germans' routine torturing of Jews. These authors construct a distorted portrait of the Holocaust in which the perpetrators' brutality—so frequent, inventive, and willful—is minimized, blurred, or absent. Consequently, it is not surprising that those few authors adhering to the conventional paradigm who do at least say something in passing about the sources of the German perpetrators' brutality to the Jews do not deem the perpetrators to have been moved by hatred of their victims.

Hilberg, for instance, in *Perpetrators, Vicitims, Bystanders*, puts forward the notion that the German perpetrators' brutality was "most often" an "expression of impatience" with the pace of killing operations. Browning's related view, in *Ordinary Men*, is that the perpetrators' brutality was utilitarian, the consequence of a pragmatic *need* to be brutal when they were under "pressure" "in terms of manpower … to get the job done," like rounding up Jews for deportation. When not under such pressure, in Browning's view, they were cruel when under the sway of cruel officers but seemingly not at other times. Hilberg and Browning have failed to present evidence which supports what are ultimately little more than speculations. (How does Hilberg know that they were impatient? He never says. And is the torture of defenseless people, including children, the invariable result of impatience, as Hilberg's quick and casual manner of presenting his speculation suggests?) But that is the least of their problems. Hilberg and Browning's empirical claims are falsified by evidence of the perpetrators' widespread, non-utilitarian cruelty in all manner of circumstances, even when they were not undermanned, even when they were not impatient, even when they were not undertaking killing operations at all.

For example: although the Germans of Police Battalion 101, during one of the ghetto roundups and deportations in Miedzyrzec, Poland, degraded and tortured Jews in the most gratuitous, willful manner, their deeds are entirely absent from their testimony and, therefore, also from Browning's analysis of the killing operation. The accounts of survivors tell a different, more accurate, and more revealing story. Survivors are adamant that the Germans' cruelty that day was anything but instrumental. It was wanton, at times turning into sadistic sport. At the marketplace the Jews, who had been forced to squat for hours, were "mocked" (*khoyzek gemacht*) and "kicked," and some of the Germans organized "a game" (*shpil*) of "tossing apples and whoever was struck by the apple was then killed." This sport was continued at the railway station, with empty liquor bottles. "Bottles were tossed over Jewish heads and whoever was struck by a bottle was dragged out of the crowd and beaten murderously amid roaring laughter. Then some of those who were thus mangled (*tseharget*) were shot." Afterwards, the Germans loaded the dead together with the living onto freight cars bound for Treblinka. One photograph documenting the final stage of what may be this deportation has survived.



PHOTOGRAPH: MAIN COMMISSION FOR THE INVESTIGATION OF NAZI CRIMES, WARSAW, POLAND / COURTESY OF USHMM

Deportation of Jews onto freight cars bound for Treblinka.

Small wonder that in the eyes of the victims—but not in the self-serving testimony of the perpetrators, in contemporaneous German documents, or in Browning's book—these ordinary Germans appeared not as mere murderers, certainly not as reluctant killers dragged to their task against their inner opposition to genocide, but as "two-legged beasts" filled with "bloodthirstiness." (Browning claims that from survivors "we learn nothing about" Police Battalion 101 or, for that matter, about itinerant units in general.) Germans' cruelty towards Jews, as the victims (and also some of the perpetrators after the war) reveal, was voluntary, widespread, sustained, inventive, and gleeful. Such gratuitous cruelty could have been produced only by people who approved of what they were doing.

The vast corpus of the victims' testimony substantiates the conclusion that ordinary Germans degraded, brutalized, and killed Jews willingly because of their hatred of Jews. So profound and near universal was the anti-Semitism during the Nazi period that to the Jewish victims it appeared as if its

hold on Germans could be captured and conveyed only in organic terms. As Chaim Kaplan, the trenchant observer and diarist of the Warsaw ghetto, concluded: "A poison of diseased hatred permeates the blood of the Nazis." Once activated, the Germans' profound hatred of Jews, which had in the 1930s by necessity lain relatively dormant, so possessed them, that it appeared to have exuded from their every pore. Kaplan observed many Germans from September 1939 until March 1940 when he penned his evaluation derived from their actions and words:



> The gigantic catastrophe which has descended on Polish Jewry has no parallel, even in the darkest periods of Jewish history. First, in the depth of hatred. This is not just hatred whose source is in a party platform, and which was invented for political purposes. It is a hatred of emotion, whose source is some psychopathic malady. In its outward manifestations it functions as physiological hatred, which imagines the object of hatred to be unclean in body, a leper who has no place within the camp.
>
> The [German] masses have absorbed this sort of qualitative hatred.... They have absorbed their masters' teachings in a concrete, corporeal form. The Jew is filthy; the Jew is a swindler and an evildoer; the Jew is the enemy of Germany, who undermines its existence; the Jew was the prime mover in the Versailles Treaty, which reduced Germany to nothing; the Jew is Satan, who sows dissension between one nation and another, arousing them to bloodshed in order to profit from their destruction. These are easily understood concepts whose effect in day-to-day life can be felt immediately.

Significantly, this characterization is based on the words and acts of Germans—of SS men, policemen, soldiers, administrators, and those working in the economy—*before* the formal genocidal program of systematic killing had begun. It is the masses, the ordinary Germans, not the Nazi ideologues and theoreticians, whom Kaplan exposes. The causal link between the Germans' beliefs and actions is palpable, so that the Jews feel the effect of their "concepts" "in day-to-day life." In the more than two-and-a-half years of subsequent concentrated observation of the Germans in Warsaw, Kaplan saw no reason to alter this evaluation, an evaluation confirmed by a German police official, who states plainly that those serving alongside him in the Cracow region of Poland "were, with a few exceptions, quite happy to take part in shootings of Jews. They had a ball!" Their killing was motivated by "great hatred against the Jews; it was revenge...." The revenge was not for any real harm that the Jews had visited upon Germans, but for the figmental harms for which the perpetrators believed, in their anti-Semitically-inflamed minds, the Jews were responsible.

Effectively extinguishing the voices of the victims, and sometimes suggesting that they do little more than glorify themselves, is not only indefensible methodologically but also a deep affront to survivors. Most victims want to do nothing more than convey what the perpetrators did to them, their families, and to others. Victims of such crimes can never gain full restitution for their losses and suffering. What they generally seem to want is to have the truth be told, particularly so that the perpetrators will acknowledge their crimes. Survivors often express bewilderment that their experience has been generally ignored by the scholarship that treats the perpetration of the Holocaust. Many survivors have told me that they are thankful for my book, *Hitler's Willing Executioners* and for its detailed analysis of the German perpetrators, including their gleeful cruelty and brutality, which the survivors attest was almost always voluntary. They say my interpretation of the Holocaust accords with what they and so many others witnessed and experienced.

A new way of approaching the study of the Holocaust is implicit in much of the unparalleled, widespread public discussion about various aspects of the Holocaust that has been taking place for the last two years. The old paradigm consists of abstract, faceless structures and institutions (bureaucracy, the greatly exaggerated "terror apparatus" that was supposedly directed at ordinary Germans, the SS, the Nazi Party, the gas chambers) and allegedly irresistible external forces (totalitarian terror, the exigencies of war, social psychological pressure). This paradigm effaces the human actors and their capacity to judge what they were doing and to make moral choices. It is ahistorical. All of this implies that any people from any era with any set of beliefs about Jews (even non-anti-Semites) would have acted in exactly the same manner as the perpetrators, with the same brutality, zeal, and Mephistophelean laughter. This is being challenged by a view that recognizes that the Holocaust was brought about by human beings who had beliefs about what they were doing, beliefs which they developed within a highly specific historical context, and who made many choices about how to act within the institutions in which they worked and which brought them to their tasks in the first place. The human beings are finally at the center of the discussion. The heretofore dominant question of "What compelled them to act against their will?" is being replaced by the question of "Why did these people choose to act in the ways that they did?"

As a result, powerful myths are crumbling: the myth that the Swiss or the Swedes acted as they did only because of the German threat; the myth that the peoples in different occupied countries did not do more to thwart the Germans or less to help in the killing of the Jews merely because of their fear of the occupying Germans; the official Allied governmental myths that they could not reasonably have attempted to do much more to save the victims; the myth that those who procured Jewish property, including art, generally did so innocently; the myth that the perpetrators, by and large, disapproved of what they were doing but were coerced, were being blindly obedient, or were pressured to act as they did;

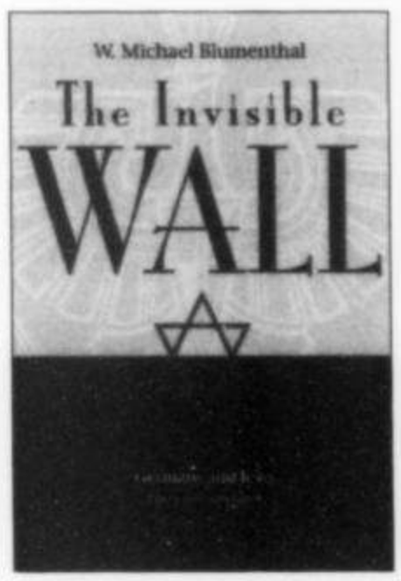
and the three related myths that the German people more broadly (all the exceptions notwithstanding) did not know that their countrymen were killing Jews *en masse,* did not support the Nazi regime even though its many brutal policies (forced sterilization, so-called "euthanasia," the violent persecution of the Jews and others, the reintroduction of slavery into the European continent) were widely known, and did not approve of the general eliminationist persecution of the Jews.

Not surprisingly, many people who have either been comforted by such views or whose careers have been made by adopting positions that buttress them, and who find the new, powerful challenges to these views to be politically undesirable or personally threatening, are extremely unhappy and have let that be known. The frequent response is to attack, often in the most vitriolic and unprincipled ways, the messengers—whether they be scholars, institutions like the Hamburg Institute for Social Research which produced the exhibit, "War of Extermination: The Crime of the Wehrmacht, 1941–1944" that has been traveling around Germany, the World Jewish Congress for forcing the issue of Swiss gold onto the agenda, or the witnesses, namely Jewish survivors, whose testimony has always been a devastating threat to many of the myths.

It would be beneficial if certain basics could become widely accepted which the crumbling paradigm has obscured. They include:

1. The discarding of the caricature of individual Germans as having had no views of their own about the rightness of what they or their countrymen were doing, which included slaughtering children. We need to know how these views were distributed among Germans, and how they, singly or in interaction with other factors, influenced Germans' actions during these years. The same applies to the peoples of other countries, those where the Germans found many willing helpers and those where the populace worked to thwart (sometimes successfully) the program of extermination.
2. The rejection of the myth that the large scale, mass killing of Jews remained unknown to the broader German public. Germans themselves are becoming more candid: twenty-seven percent of those who were at least fourteen years old at the end of the war now admit that they knew of the extermination of the Jews *when it was taking place.* (The survey which determined this stunning new finding, which the chief pollster of the German wire service, dpa, says is still clearly a substantial underreporting of the real figure, was conducted for the German television network ZdF in September 1996. Yet in the flood of articles written about the Holocaust since then, I have seen no mention of this finding, perhaps because it explodes a central element of the conventional paradigm—even though the survey's results were announced and discussed on German national television during a panel discussion on the Holocaust and reported by the dpa.)
3. The acknowledgment that Germans who were not members of specifically targeted groups (Jews; Gays; the Sinti and Roma peoples, who are commonly known as gypsies; the mentally infirm; the Communist and Social Democratic leadership) were not so terrorized as the totalitarian terror model posits. The enormous amount of dissent and opposition that Germans expressed against so many policies of the regime and the regime's responsiveness to public sentiment and action makes this clear. So a new understanding of the relationship between state power, regime policy, and popular consent needs to be worked out. The comparative question of why Germans expressed different degrees of dissent and opposition to different policies, yet virtually no principled dissent against the eliminationist persecution of the Jews, becomes central. More generally, all models that posit that irresistible external forces compelled people—Germans, French, Poles, Swiss, or the Allies—to act as they did need to be replaced by views that acknowledge the existence of human agency. If the vast majority of the German people had genuinely been opposed to the radical eliminationist persecution of the Jews, then Hitler would have never been able to pursue it as he did.
4. The adoption of a comparative perspective on genocide, so that those who study the Holocaust do not adopt methodological practices or causal claims that are at odds

ONE MAN'S QUEST TO UNDERSTAND THE FAILURE OF THE GERMAN-JEWISH RELATIONSHIP



W. Michael Blumenthal, President and Chief Executive of the Berlin Jewish Museum and former U.S. Secretary of the Treasury, seeks to understand how "the unrequited love affair of Germany's Jews with their native country" led to the unspeakable horrors of the Holocaust. Through the rich and remarkable stories of six Blumenthal ancestors who were also major figures in German-Jewish history, *The Invisible Wall* identifies critical connections between loss and regeneration, ultimately finding in centuries of suffering the wellsprings of survival, rich heritage, and personal triumph.

COUNTERPOINT
WASHINGTON, D.C.

with how we study and what we know of other analogous phenomena. *All* available evidence (contemporaneous documents and the testimony of perpetrators, victims, and bystanders) that is not rendered suspect according to clearly articulated, standard social scientific principles is to be used. Regarding the use of the testimony of Jewish survivors, for example, the reasons given for excluding it must be defensible if one changed the word "Jews" to Tutsis, Bosnians, Cambodians, Armenians, the victims of the Gulag, or enslaved Blacks in the American South. The methods of the social sciences present rules regarding research design and the structure of inference, including when generalization is allowed and even required. A major research project might be undertaken using all available evidence to catalogue what is known of the backgrounds, actions, and attitudes of every perpetrator in every ghetto, camp, and other institution of killing—those who victimized Jews and non-Jews—so that a general portrait and systematic analysis of them can be composed.

5. The recognition that the Holocaust had *both* universal and particular elements. Its universal aspect is that all people have the capacity to dehumanize groups of others so intensely that their hatred can impel them to commit genocide. Its particular aspect is that such views do not come to exist in equal measure in every society about every group, and when they do, it is not every society that has a state which mobilizes those who hold such views in a program of mass annihilation. The universal capacity to hate does not mean that all people actually do hate and hate all others in the same way, or that all hatreds will motivate people to treat the object of their aggression similarly. Real existing hatreds, as opposed to the capacity to hate, are primarily socially constructed and historically particular.

The Holocaust is not "beyond human comprehension." In principle, it is as explicable as every other genocide. No one says that the Rwandan or Cambodian genocide cannot be explained. What so many people simply do not want to accept is that the victims of the Holocaust have a great deal to tell us about their victimizers (no less than do the victims in Rwanda and Bosnia); and that the German perpetrators were like the perpetrators of other mass slaughters: the vast majority of these Germans were also willing executioners. That people automatically accept these facts about non-Jewish victims of genocide and about African or Asian perpetrators but not about Jews and "civilized" white Christian Europeans respectively is disturbing. Does anyone think for a moment that the Turkish, Hutu, or Serbian perpetrators did not believe that slaughtering Armenians, Tutsis, or Muslims was right? Does anyone for a moment believe that the testimony of these genocides' victims should not be used extensively in order to learn about the texture of the genocides, including the attitudes of the perpetrators? Indeed, in the Armenian genocide, in Bosnia, Cambodia, Rwanda, and other instances of mass slaughter, such testimony is eagerly used by scholars and has provided the principal knowledge of the perpetrators' deeds and attitudes.

As ever more Germans themselves have come to realize, one can acknowledge that many Germans were virulent anti-Semites during and before the Nazi period, that many supported the brutal persecution of the Jews, and that the murderers of European Jewry came from the ranks of ordinary Germans, without it leading either to the indictment of those Germans who resisted the prevailing norms and practices of the time, or to a condemnation of today's Germany. This seems so obvious that it bears mentioning only because some commentators continue to put forward two fallacies: they pretend that demonstrating that *individual* culpability for crimes was far more widespread in Nazi Germany than had previously been presumed is the same as maintaining that Germans are guilty as a *collectivity*. They also react as if plain talk about the Germany of the past defames the Germany of the present. Such notions can be maintained only by people who themselves deny individual responsibility, are beholden to the insupportable notion of a timeless "national character" (Hilberg has declared in his recent memoir that a German "national character" exists and is critical of others for not accepting this), or believe in some kind of collective, inheritable guilt. Individual Germans during the Nazi period should be judged according to the same legal and moral principles that we use for people in our own societies. The Federal Republic of Germany, like all other countries, should be assessed in the light of its own character and practices, achievements and shortcomings, and not according to a period of Germany's history that is now over fifty years in the past.

Much of what I write here finds an echo in a private letter written in 1946 by a German to a priest, in which the author was plainly speaking his mind:

> In my opinion the German people as well as the bishops and clergy bear a great guilt for the events in the concentration camps. It is perhaps true that afterwards not a lot could be done. The guilt lies earlier. The German people, including a great part of the bishops and clergy, accepted the National Socialist agitation. It allowed itself to be brought into line (*gleichgeschaltet*) [with Nazism] almost without resistance, indeed in part with enthusiasm. Therein lies its guilt. Moreover, even if one did not know the full extent of the events in the camps, one knew that personal freedom and all the principles of justice were being trampled underfoot, that in the concentration camps great atrocities were being perpetrated, and that the Gestapo and our SS and in part also our troops in Poland and Russia treated the civilian population with unexampled cruelty. The pogroms against the Jews in 1933 and in 1938 took place in full public view. The mur-

ders of the hostages in France were officially announced by us. One cannot therefore truly assert that the public did not know that the National Socialist government and army command constantly and as a matter of principle violated natural law, the Hague Convention, and the most simple laws of humanity. I believe that much could have been prevented if all the bishops together on a certain day from their pulpits had publicly protested against all this. This did not occur and for this there is no excuse. If for this the bishops had been sent to prison or concentration camp, then this would not have been a loss, on the contrary. All this did not occur, therefore it is best to be silent.

The author of this letter was no less a personage than Konrad Adenauer, the long time and, by many, revered post-War Christian Democratic Chancellor of Germany who, more than anyone else helped to reintegrate Germany into the community of nations. No one would accuse Adenauer of condemning every last German (even though he wrote of "the German people"), of being anti-German, of maintaining that Germans could never change and would therefore eternally share the views which led them to support Nazism, so why do some deem the speaking today of Adenauer's plain truths to be indications of such attitudes and to be impermissible?



Anyone who knows today's Germany, the Germany which Adenauer worked so steadfastly to forge, knows that it is remarkably different from Nazi Germany. Indeed, it is only by acknowledging the depths to which Germany had sunk, and not just that it somehow had the misfortune to have been captured by a brutal, murderous dictatorship, that one can appreciate the enormous accomplishments of Germans after the war. By denying how Germany really was, we will never fully understand the great effort Germans have made and the good that has occurred after the war. By being false to the past, the conventional, scholarly paradigm which denies the agency of the actors is also false to the present. When one acknowledges that it was culturally-constructed racist beliefs and values which led many Germans to take part in, and so many more—though decidedly not all Germans—to support, the annihilation of the Jews and the killing and brutalizing of many other Europeans deemed racially inferior, it becomes more comprehensible why Germany has been able to change so much. Political culture can be transformed.

Just as the beliefs which led American whites to enslave Blacks and then to impose legal segregation have changed profoundly, so too—as the survey data demonstrate unequivocally—have the dominant beliefs in Germany *gradually* changed about Jews, humanity, and democracy. (In 1933, most Germans voted for parties openly dedicated to destroying the country's democratic institutions. Today, virtually everyone in what was West Germany sincerely supports democracy.) Such profound, positive changes in beliefs and values are hopeful—though, of course, both in the United States and in Germany prejudice and ethnic hatred have by no means been completely eradicated. Over the period of a generation or two, a society can greatly remake its prevailing views, making its people less bigoted and less prone to engaging in discrimination and violence. But this is not accomplished easily. How such changes occur are little studied and little understood. Perhaps people should devote more attention to examining such transformations, instead of working so hard to deny that in Germany any transformation was necessary.

My view of the mentality of the vast majority of Germans during the Nazi period is similar to that of one of the most esteemed of German historians of this century, Friedrich Meinecke (though our understandings of what produced this mentality differ). Meinecke remained in Germany but he kept his distance from the Nazi regime, retreating into "internal emigration" from which he observed the regime's policies and the people's attitudes, sentiments, and conduct. Soon after the war, he wrote a book, *The German Catastrophe*, seeking to explain the origins and character of Nazism. He was severely critical of Germans' conduct during the Nazi era and held that certain traits and traditions common in Germany had contributed to the emergence and success of the Nazi movement. His was a rare candor.

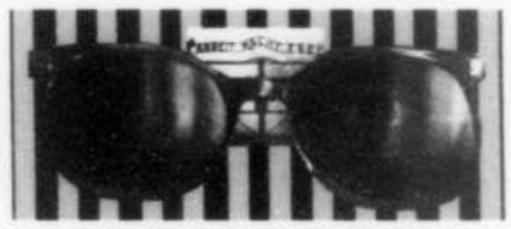
Meinecke acknowledged that it is a "shocking" and "shameful" fact that a "criminal gang succeeded for twelve years in compelling the allegiance of the German people and in imparting to a great part of this people the belief that it was following a great 'Idea'." Germany had fallen, but it was not beyond redemption. Its moral corruption was curable. For "the German people had not become diseased to the core with a criminal mentality but suffered only a unique grave infection caused by a poison that had been administered to it. The case could have become hopeless if the poison would have wrought its effect in the body for long." The young generation would have then become incurably afflicted with moral degeneration. "That was the gloomiest thought that tormented me during the twelve years, that the party could remain in power in perpetuity and instill in the entire younger generation its own degenerate character."

His gloomy moments notwithstanding, Meinecke knew that Germany would be defeated. The prospect of that defeat filled him with mingled trepidation and hope. Germany would suffer grievous external, material destruction but it would be liberated spiritually and mentally. The poisons which he and the Warsaw ghetto's diarist, Kaplan, each identified as having infected so many Germans—so that each one chose to write in collective, corporeal terms—would, in Meinecke's view dissipate and Germany's "soul" and "conscience" would "breathe again." A new day could and would dawn.

Meinecke's depiction of the mentality of most Germans during the Nazi period could hardly be bettered. His prophecy could hardly have been more true. ❑

WILLING EXECUTIONERS

The Goldhagen Controversy



Jeremiah M. Riemer and Andrei S. Markovits

It has been two years since the publication of Daniel Goldhagen's *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust,* and the controversy seems as fierce today as when his book first engendered passionate debate in Germany, the United States, Britain, and Israel. Readers unfamiliar with these controversies might wonder what is so radical about a scholar claiming to show, as Goldhagen does, that anti-Semitism was the driving force behind the Holocaust? Does Goldhagen really need to emphasize the originality of what many observers (and certainly most victims of the Holocaust) would regard as obvious?

Second, those new to the controversy may be surprised to discover that, apart from the predictable reactions by conservative German papers, the Goldhagen controversy has mostly been a fight among the "good guys" of German historical studies. Goldhagen's typical detractor has not been a Holocaust denier or someone incapable of acknowledging Germany's anti-Semitic tradition, though such deniers have eagerly joined the argument against him. Some of his most vociferous opponents in Germany have been leading left-liberal protagonists on the winning side of Germany's last major controversy about the Holocaust, the "historians' dispute" (*Historikerstreit*) of the Eighties. One of the sources of this animosity derives from the fact that these "good guys" wrote nothing about the actual perpetrators in their analysis of the Holocaust. They did not deny the Holocaust, like neo-Nazis; they did not relativize it, like the Right; but they were masters of "structuralizing" the Shoah, talking about the social, economic, and/or social psychological conditions that would produce a Shoah rather than focusing on the actual motives of the participants.



Where liberal historians of Germany's past and Goldhagen part company is over how to interpret the essentially voluntary character of the killings. Both Goldhagen and his chief interpretive rival, Christopher Browning, agree that no German was ever seriously punished for refusing to participate in the genocide. Browning insists on locating the men's motives within a social psychology that is simultaneously situational and universal. The environment of the Nazi dictatorship and killing fields turned these men into killers, Browning argues, but the factors pushing them to genocide (peer pressure, authoritarian upbringing, fatigue, alcoholism, stress) belong to the emotional repertoire of many cultures. Browning concludes his book with the rhetorical question: "If the men of Reserve Police Battalion 101 could become killers under such circumstances, what group of men cannot?"

Against Browning and most other students of the Holocaust, Goldhagen argues correctly that the perpetrators did not have to overcome "our" kind of moral scruples in order to kill; they had to act upon *their* beliefs that this was the right thing to do. The Nazi regime's role was to mobilize this preexisting sentiment, not to force the members of its national community to overcome some more charitable moral code. Goldhagen also insists that the usual appeal to Nazi "authoritarianism" will not do as an explanation. The history of Weimar Germany provides too many examples of Germans who were willing to resist what they regarded as unjust authority. Even the Nazi dictatorship was vulnerable to public pressure and protest (it curtailed its euthanasia program, and it preferred to arrive at a *modus vivendi* with the two Christian churches rather than paganize German society immediately); the point is, there was precious little such protest when it came to measures against the Jews. Since Goldhagen argues that a virtually unchallenged image of Jews as "metaphysical" enemies of Germany could be readily mobilized against unarmed men, women, and children, group psychology has no place in his explanation.

There is one respect, however, in which Goldhagen, like Browning *et al.,* does suggest Germans acted in a conformist manner. Goldhagen often writes as though the Germans who voluntarily killed Jews had little choice about the *views* they entertained regarding their victims. There is a significant difference, however, between Goldhagen's view of what compelled the perpetrators and the Browning version. For Browning, conformity sets in at the very brink of the killing trenches. It is conformity at the point of murder, in the forests, fields, and camps of Poland and Ukraine. To Goldhagen, the onset of conformity is prior to the killing, because it occurs at the level of political socialization. More than anything else, *Hitler's Willing Executioners* is a book about political culture, about what members of communities are educated to believe.

This interpretive difference over the meaning of conformity has resonance for the way Germans view themselves

Jeremiah M. Riemer has recently translated Unwilling Germans? The Goldhagen Controversy *(University of Minnesota Press, 1998) edited by Robert Shandley. Andrei S. Markovits is co-author of* The German Predicament: Memory and Power in the New Europe *(Cornell University Press, 1997).*

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today. During the Bitburg controversy (1985), the liberal historians were keen on resisting a conservative backlash symbolized by Chancellor Kohl's remark that his generation of Germans were blessed by "the grace of late birth." In objecting to this statement, the "good guys" of the *Historikerstreit* were refuting the notion that post-War Germans no longer had any past to confront—or that, if Germany did have a shameful past, it could be "relativized" by comparing it with those "Asian" totalitarian states where it was said, incorrectly, that genocide "originated." It was important for the liberal historians to beat back this apologist conservative offensive. But in defeating "the grace of a late birth" theory, the liberal historians may have overlooked an opposing and equally disturbing view implicit in their own comparative perspective on the Holocaust. This view, congruent with Browning's interpretation, might be labeled: "There but for the grace of God go I, the genocidal killer."

Oddly, Goldhagen has received a lot of criticism in Germany (mostly from the left) for shifting the focus of political psychology in modern Germany from coercion to education, from the intractable "authoritarian personality" to the willing exemplar of the regnant political culture. Many German leftists have mocked his contention that post-War Western Germany became a different country because of "re-education" and "generational replacement." Parodying this truth has typically taken the form of two false accusations against Goldhagen: one, for buying into the myth of 1945 as Germany's "zero hour," when Germany supposedly shed its entire political heritage overnight for Western values, and two, for overstating the influence of the Western occupying powers on political re-education in the Federal Republic. Goldhagen has never subscribed to either one of these legends. But—most notably in his acceptance speech for the Democracy Prize—he *has* paid tribute to postwar Germany's effort at democratic self-re-education. Whatever one may think of Goldhagen's characterization of the Federal Republic as a model of democratic transition worth emulating, there can be little doubt that no country has done more to transform itself via political education.

If Goldhagen has faced vehement opposition from Germans, he has also faced just as much antipathy from Jewish intellectuals (Raul Hilberg, Fritz Stern, Peter Gay, Alfred Grosser) who have devoted their scholarly careers to the German past. To them, Goldhagen's book is—at best—far too Judeocentric; at worst, simplistic in its emphasis on the Jews as victims and in its putative demonization of the Germans as a people. To this group of often distinguished intellectuals, Goldhagen's focusing on Jews is somehow a crude reminder of an explanatory mode of the Shoah and of National Socialism that they always found somehow embarrassing. To these people, National Socialism—though a terrible tragedy, to be sure—involved much more than just the Jews. To them, Goldhagen seems to be arguing that to be a Jew in Germany prior to Hitler's rise to power was tantamount to being politically naive, socially blind—almost foolish (because if the anti-Semitism was as pervasive as Goldhagen argued, why didn't they notice it and leave, as the Zionists were urging them to do?) But this is a misreading of Goldhagen's intentions and a mischaracterization of his book. He argues instead that Germany could and did accommodate both an "eliminationist anti-Semitism" that was growing exponentially with the Nazis' assumption of state power and a culture that offered Jews as individuals (though hardly as a collective) opportunities to attain amazing heights in the arts, journalism, medicine, commerce, and the law. Goldhagen's thesis need not be read as an assault on the intelligence or common sense of pre-1938 Germany Jewry.

Finally, what of the charge that Goldhagen is using or abusing the memory and reality of the Holocaust for a political agenda? If anything, this accusation is better redirected at many of the critics who hurl it. Norman Finkelstein, the co-author of *A Nation on Trial,* sees Goldhagen's insistence on the very specific German context of the Shoah as the latest example of liberal American Jewry's abandonment of universalist commitments, which started during the Six Day War when progressive intellectuals like Michael Walzer became preoccupied with Israel's survival. Finkelstein accuses Goldhagen—and Holocaust studies in general—of being little more than apologies for Israel's existence and its repressive policies towards the Palestinians. While it is undoubtedly true that a number of Jewish right-wingers have used the tragedy of the Shoah to justify Israel's reckless behavior towards the Palestinians, Goldhagen most certainly does not. Indeed, by precisely focusing on the Nazi period and by submitting a cultural argument that highlights the Shoah's uniqueness in the context of Germany's history at that particular time, Goldhagen makes certain that his book never generalizes about any people ("Germans" or others) at all times. Goldhagen's book in no way renounces universalism in favor of a Manichean "us-versus-them" outlook on the world. If this is what Goldhagen were up to, why has his only intervention in the Berlin Holocaust memorial debate been in favor of commemorating the persecution of homosexuals and Roma and Sinti gypsies alongside Jews?

With *Hitler's Willing Executioners,* Goldhagen has redefined an entire field of study in one fell swoop. No matter how his work is criticized, even vilified—it cannot be ignored: anybody working on the Holocaust from now on simply *has* to deal with Goldhagen's thesis and work. Some young scholars are damned with faint praise; in Goldhagen's case, the honor of loud condemnation and admiration has been showered on a thought-provoking work. ❑



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Israel at 50



A Compassionately Critical Assessment

PART TWO IN A SERIES

We are passionate supporters of the State of Israel. We are certain that, by the middle of the twenty-first century, an Israeli civil rights movement will rectify the racism and oppression of Palestinians documented in our pages. Yet this movement's eventual triumph will be possible only because of the heroism of those who are willing to "break ranks" with the silent majority of Jews who know that what is happening in Israel is wrong, yet are unwilling to do much about it. The courageous few who do speak up have often lost jobs, careers, important political or business or academic connections—and sometimes they've found themselves cut off from the Jewish community entirely. This kind of isolation continues, despite the "accepted wisdom" that the Jewish world has changed, that there's no longer any risk connected with speaking out forcefully. In fact, it is often the very people who claim to support the peace process who move to silence those to their left, those whose prophetic critique uncomfortably reminds them of the huge distance between the Israel of their dreams and contemporary Israeli reality.

We are proud to publish these authors who champion peace and reconciliation in our recent March/April issue, in this issue, and in the coming July/August issue. They, and tens of thousands of others in Israel and the U.S. (including many of you who are members of the TIKKUN community), are the true heroes of the Jewish people, the true lovers of Zion. We honor also the prophetic voices in the Palestinian world—people like M.K. Azmi Bishara and Bassam Eid—who are outspoken critics of Arafat's authoritarianism. We urge you to celebrate Israel's fiftieth anniversary by holding public gatherings to honor the people in your community who have taken personal risks to stand up for peace, pluralism, and reconciliation in the Middle East. That is the most fitting way to celebrate the great potential of the still emerging State of Israel.

—Rabbi Michael Lerner

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Ze'ev Sternhell

A New Zionism
for an Open Society

Most people, in Israel as well as in America, have traditionally accepted a deeply distorted vision of Zionism. This misconception, soothing for Jewish susceptibilities, is rooted in the refusal to see Zionism as just another nationalism, not worse but in some respects not much better than most other nationalisms. Zionism was a path of rescue for an endangered people that Europe was casting out; however, contrary to the mythological vision of our history, promoted by decades of sentimental explanations if not successful propaganda, Zionism has not been an innocent enterprise embodying the highest moral values, bringing peace, development, and high culture to a backward country. "We are conquerors of the land facing an iron wall, and we have to break through it" said Ben-Gurion in 1922. All the rest—equality, justice, the creation of an alternative society—are "mere words and phraseology." As a defensive reflex, Zionism resulted in the adoption of an organic nationalism strongly tinged with religious elements and little drawn to individualistic and universalistic values.



Israeli demonstration in support of continued occupation and military presence in Jerusalem and the West Bank. March, 1994.

It was our nationalism, and not our intoxication with the military victory of the Six Day War or a temporary deficiency in some humanistic values in Zionist thinking, which drew the country into an occupation and settlement of the West Bank. It is Labor's "moderate" nationalism, its appeal to history as proof of the legitimacy, morality, and exclusivity of the Jewish people's right to the country, to the entire country, that is historically responsible for creating the semi-colonial situation which endangers our future as a free and democratic society. After all, if the territories were simply supposed to be exchanged for peace, why was it necessary to start Jewish settlements on the West Bank and the Golan Heights? Why wasn't it enough to keep them under military occupation and strictly apply international law? Fifty years after independence, broad segments of the Israeli—and very often the Jewish American—political and cultural establishments still believe questions like these undermine the basis of Zionism. In the same vein they refuse to face the fundamental issue of Israeli identity—a natural product of the very existence of a normal political collectivity—and the character of future Israeli society.

A good example of such blindness comes in Arthur Hertzberg's review (*New York Times Book Review*, 15 Feb. 1998) of my last book, *The Founding Myths of Israel: Nationalism, Socialism and the Making of the Jewish State.* Hertzberg not only regards all attempts to make Israeli society open, liberal, and secular as an attack on Zionist objectives, but he looks at the very questioning of the founders' heritage as a cardinal sin. No price is too high to preserve a "Jewish State"; Hertzberg is ready to fight the battle of the "Jewish State" to the last of our fundamental rights. Israelis need no Constitution, no Bill of Rights, no secular legislation, no equality for non-Jews, a principle which is inherent in the demand for a special status for Jews. In other words: he wants me to live in a tribal ghetto. Conditions that would be unthinkable for Hertzberg as an American citizen are perfectly natural for Hertzberg as a Jewish activist.

Moreover, Hertzberg does not hesitate to distort, pervert, and misrepresent my argument and evidence in order to keep in place the old comfortable mythology of the purity of intentions and "innocent bystander" quality of the Zionist enterprise of conquest of the land. His ridiculously reverential attitude towards a past that is the real origin of all our present weaknesses is truly amazing but can be easily explained. For him, as for other authors of naive hagiographies (see the case of historian Anita Shapira), it is always vital that we see ourselves on a higher moral ground than any other historical nationalist movement. Like many other people, not only in Israel but also among liberal and peace-oriented American Jews, Hertzberg cannot accept the idea

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that our nationalism, like other contemporary nationalisms, rejected from the beginning the universalistic aspects of liberalism and socialism, and from its very inception comprised many weaknesses and deficiencies that could be found in other nationalist movements.

Indeed, the State of Israel is a classical product of modern nationalism as it materialized in Eastern Europe and the Third World. After a long and difficult struggle, the nation was able to acquire itself a state. But during all the years of the struggle to set up the State and defend it—a struggle which had not yet ended—Israeli cultural and political elites



May 14, 1948. Children purchasing flags to celebrate the formation of the Jewish state.

refused to consider the significance of the necessary changes which would take place after independence. Only a few people understood that the normalization consequent to the founding of the State of Israel would constitute a revolution whose true results would be felt only after a long period. Only in our time has the realization begun to penetrate the Israeli consciousness that a liberal and free state worthy of the name is not only a military, economic, and technological power-structure providing the nation, as a cultural, historical, and religious entity, with the means to ensure its security and achieve its objectives. It is also a framework in which one can decide which way of life is most suitable, what political and social system is most desirable: a framework in which one can decide whether the state is nothing more than the operative arm of a cultural-religious community, or whether it will be based on the concept of citizenship and the idea that all people living within the boundaries of the State are free individuals and citizens with equal rights.

Those who wish Israel to be a truly liberal state or who want Israeli society to be an open one must recognize the fact that liberalism derives from the initial attempt, in the seventeenth century, to separate religion and politics. A liberal state can only be a secular state, a state in which the concept of citizenship lies at the center of its collective existence. Only a society which recognizes the independence of reason and the autonomy of the individual, only a society which respects free thought, can be a free and open society. A state cannot be liberal as long as religion plays a major role in governing society and politics, or as long as the state is defined as the operative arm of the nation conceived as a living organism.

Israeli cultural elites have often preferred to shut their eyes to the problematics involved in the very nature of Jewish national identity. Nationalism, when it is used for state-building, is generally incompatible with universal values; Zionism was no exception. Zionism, like all the national movements in Central and Eastern Europe, reflects the concept of the nation originating with Johann Gottfried Herder at the end of the eighteenth century. In the areas where Zionism was born and from which came its founders, the basis of collective identity was the sharing of a common culture—history, religion, language—and not membership in a political community. Culture came to be considered as the expression of an inner consciousness, and it is this consciousness that makes one feel oneself to be an inseparable part of the social body. People united by a common culture form an organic unit resembling an extended family.

This was the concept of the nation of Israel's founders. As it began to be implanted in Eretz Yisrael, Zionism developed the classic features of organic nationalism. The experience of contact with the soil, the desire to strike roots in it, and the need to lay a foundation for the legitimation of a return to the country led to a blossoming of the romantic, historical, and irrational aspects of nationalism. The cult of ancient history, from the conquest of Canaan to the rebellion against Rome and the "sanctification" of places where Joshua Bin-Nun or the kings of Israel had fought, were not very different from similar phenomena in the Czech, Polish, or German national movements of the nineteenth or twentieth centuries. The founders' love of the country and its landscapes, their enthusiasm for its vegetation, and their sense of the holiness of its soil had a truly mystical quality. Aaron David Gordon's "holistic [*shalem*] nationalism" corresponded to the teachings of tribal nationalism in Europe, rooted in history and religion. The Bible, said Gordon, was our "charter which has been valid until now, and which will always be valid...." The Gospels, the New Testament, he claimed, were also the product of the Jewish people: "It all came from us; it was created amongst us...." And now came the decisive argument: "And what did the Arabs produce in all the years they lived in the country? Such creations, or even the creation of the Bible alone, give us a perpetual right over the land in which we were so creative, especially since the people that came after us did not create such works in

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this country, or did not create anything at all." For the founders this was the ultimate Zionist argument.

The dependence of the Jewish national movement on this sort of organic nationalistic argument necessarily gave it, from the start, a radical character which now constitutes a very heavy burden for Israeli society. Indeed, it was arguments such as Gordon's that explain why the Labor movement, until it relinquished office in 1977, was unable to cope with the consequences of the Six Day War. The position of occupier which Israel began to take up only a few months after the lightning victory of June 1967 was not the result of some miscalculation on the part of the ruling elites of that period or mainly the product of the Arab refusal to consider the possibility of peace negotiations, but a further step in the realization of the major ambitions of Zionism.

Members of the ruling elite at this time were not pragmatists or "men of peace" unable to resist pressures of the extremists, as this is often presented. Their behavior was not due to personal weakness, but to an open or latent ideological identification with the settlers' value-system. When the Golan Heights, Judea, and Samaria were conquered, Ben-Gurion had been out of office for no more than four years, and the head of Government still was a man of the Second Aliya. In 1967, as in 1948, and as in any moment of the 1920s and 1930s, the ruling elites were still convinced that frontiers were created by facts on the ground based on the eternal right of Jews to their whole ancestral country. After the victory of the Six Day War, the debate which took place in Mapai was not about whether the doctrine of conquering territory whenever the opportunity arose was still valid or justified, but rather about how, and to what degree, the situation created by the Arab defeat could be exploited. This time, the disciples of Ben-Gurion and those of Tabenkin and Katznelson, both those who had accepted the first partition-plan of 1937 and those who had rejected it, were in the same camp. It is incorrect to suppose that the Occupation came about because the prime minister at that period, Levi Eshkol, was unable to resist the combined pressures of Moshe Dayan and Shimon Peres, Ben-Gurion's protegés, and of Yigal Allon and Israel Galili, the followers of Tabenkin. The Premier allowed himself to be won over to the point of view of these activists of the younger generation, and in fact of his whole national unity cabinet, which included Menahem Begin, because both the founding-fathers and their successors were agreed in pursuing a policy of *fait accompli* in the occupied territories. For Levi Eshkol, as for the others, the war of 1948 had only just ended.

Yigal Allon also invoked history and historical rights when, as Minister of Labor in the Eshkol government, he spearheaded the policy of expansion and was the chief protagonist of Jewish settlement in Hebron. He skillfully exploited the fact that the Israeli government was unable to initiate a new national policy that differed from the traditional Zionist approach, and for that reason had failed to



PHOTOGRAPH BY LEO SIONE / IMPACT VISUALS

Arab West Bank village near Jerusalem. 1984

make any clear decisions with regard to Jewish settlement beyond the 1949 cease-fire lines. On the 27th of July 1967, Allon presented his plan to the government. The plan proposed annexing the town of Hebron and the Mount Hebron area with its population of eighty thousand Arabs to the State of Israel. After presenting his strategic and security considerations, Allon pointed out that in this way "the Cave of Machpela and Rachel's Tomb, precious to us from the national and traditional point of view, would remain within the boundaries of the State of Israel." His celebrated "Allon Plan," which included the annexation of the Jordan Valley and the Golan Heights, soon became the official political and settlement plan of the State of Israel, in accordance with the traditional goals of Zionism.

Dayan's basic position was similar to that of Allon. On the 3rd of August 1967, when he lamented those who fell in the battle for the Jewish Quarter in the Old City of Jerusalem in 1948, Dayan expressed himself very clearly:

> Our brothers who fell in the War of Independence—we have not abandoned your dream, nor have we forgotten your lesson. We have returned to the Temple Mount, to the cradle of our people's history, to the heritage of the Patriarchs, the land of the judges and the fortress of the kingdom of the House of David. We have returned to Hebron, to Shechem [Nablus], Bethlehem and Anatoth, Jericho and the crossings of the Jordan.... Brothers, we carry your lesson with us.... We know that in order to give life to Jerusalem, we have to station the soldiers of the Israel Defence Forces and its armor in the mountains of Samaria and at the entrance to the Jordan bridges.

In the same vein, did not the people of the northern kibbutzim act in the spirit of their predecessors, the pioneers of Tel Hai, Kfar Giladi, and Hanita, when in June 1967 they started settling on land which had just been liberated from the Syrians?

All these developments took place *before* the Arab League announced that there would be no peace negotia-

tions with Israel. In the summer of 1967, the political fruits of the Labor movement's cultural-religious nationalism had ripened. That is why, after the victory of June 1967, none of the leaders of the Labor movement thought that Zionism drew its moral authority from its character as a movement of rescue which also exemplified the universal rights of men to define their own identity and to govern themselves. None of the leaders of the Labor movement believed that the Palestinians deserved the same rights, because none of them believed in universal rights. Pretending, like Hertzberg and others do, that the Occupation and the colonial situation created in the last thirty years was merely the product of the Arab refusal to recognize Israel, is no more than looking for an alibi and falsifying history. Our nationalism also played its part in this situation.



Jamaliya Refugee Camp in Gaza. December, 1993

The nature of our organic nationalism is also the true source of our past and present social weakness. The founders knew very well that a contradiction existed between nationalism and socialism. They knew that the universal values of socialism cannot really coexist with the particularistic values of nationalism. They knew that democratic socialism, in all its versions, denied the primacy of the nation, loathed nationalism in its organic and cultural form, and saw a change in the system of the ownership of wealth as the precondition to a change in life. It focused on the need for social action and regarded all attempts to "reform man" as naïveté and bourgeois hypocrisy, if not sheer deceit. But in the founders' view, the good of the nation required a solidarity transcending social divisions. Therefore, said Chaim Arlosoroff, "Jewish socialism has to be clearly and unequivocally national." In Palestine this variety of socialism took the name of "constructive socialism," or, in other words, nationalist socialism.

The essence of nationalist socialism, in Palestine as in Europe, was its acceptence of the principle of the nation's primacy and its subjection of the values of socialism to the service of the nation. In this way, socialism lost its universal and moral significance and became no more than a tool in the process of nation-building. The aim of nationalist socialism, including constructive socialism, was to make the worker the agent of national redemption, not of social change. Therefore, constructive socialism never promised to liberate the worker from all the forms of dependence inherent in the capitalist order, it never objected to private capital as such, and was never interested in the welfare of the individual: it was interested in the welfare of the nation, of producers, of builders of the national economy.

Moreover, in mandatory Palestine, a free market economy flourished which was a paradise for capitalists, businessmen, and members of the liberal professions. This policy included the absence of any direct taxation of income and the large-scale importation of private capital (75 percent of the capital that entered Jewish Palestine between the two World Wars was private). Mapai was probably the only socialist party in the world that, in the 1930s, opposed the imposition of an income tax, strongly supporting a system based on rules that served the interest of the middle classes. The founders sought economic development at any price and no social consideration was allowed to stand in the way of national interest. It was no accident that secondary and higher education were expensive and inaccessible to large numbers of laborers, salaried employees, artisans or shopkeepers, and new immigrants. The Jewish economy was absorbing a sufficient number of superbly trained professionals from Europe and was not interested in more of them. Due to this policy, promoted by Mapai, the yishuv became a typical bourgeois society, with significant social and economic discrepancies.

If nation-building was regarded as the final goal of all political, economic and social action, there was no reason for the founders, after the establishment of the State, to have abandoned the methods, principles, and modes of conduct which had contributed to that goal. Before the State existed, the *histadrut* was the State-in-the-making: that was why it could not be the model of a future society. The same could be said of collective agriculture: the kibbutzim and *moshavim* (this is an embarrassing truth for all those for whom the kibbutz was an alibi for an entire existence) were not means to a social revolution, but tools in conquering the land and forging national sovereignty. Collective settlement arouse out of the need to find an unconventional solution to the problem of unemployment in agriculture. But, most of all, the idea of settlement as the ultimate socialist enterprise led to a renunciation of concern with society as a whole. The concentration of its energies on the kibbutzim, this wonderful vanguard which realized in itself the dream of an egalitarian society but concerned only a few (never more than 5 to 7 percent of the population), absolved the Labor movement from the need

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to devote itself to the problem of inequality in the cities. Unfortunately, collective settlement never endowed the society as a whole with special norms of conduct and never contributed to the lessening of social differences.

After the War of Independence, the task of consolidating the nation quite naturally fell to the State, and in much the same way as the *histadrut*, the State used its powers of coercion and prerogatives chiefly to reinforce the strength of the nation, not to establish a better society. Like the *histadrut* in the days when it was the main instrument for regulating economic activities, the newly-constituted State did not believe that the welfare of the individual could be a value in itself. That was why, contrary to another myth that gained wide credence, Israel, until the revolt of the Black Panthers in the early 1970s, did not have any real social policies. It enabled the poor, the unproductive, all those who had trouble in finding their place in the economy, to barely keep their head above water, but a genuine policy of assistance that could have assured the underprivileged a decent standard of living was never worked out. As in the time of the *histadrut*, Israeli society paid very little attention to those who could not contribute to the accumulation of national wealth. Centralism and state planning, very common at that time in Europe, were not instruments of justice but of economic recovery. This was not due to a lack of sensitivity, but derived from ideology.

As long as the Arabs refused to recognize the legitimacy of the Jewish national movement and its emanation, the State of Israel, or to recognize the Jews as a social entity, Israeli society had no difficulty in supporting a nationalism which implied, among other things, the "recuperation" of the whole land of Israel. At the same time, the one-dimensionality of Zionism was one of the reasons for its success. Without giving that single-mindedness entire credit for the creation of the State, it is undeniable that the society it created could never have become the united society it soon became, despite the social and economic inequalities which characterized it from the beginning, if Zionism had been pluralistic. It is precisely because it represented a single vision that the movement also permitted the cohabitation and collaboration of religious and secular Zionists.

From the very beginning, during the long and difficult years of struggle, the Arab refusal to recognize the necessity and legitimacy of Zionism was matched by an Israeli refusal to recognize the legitimacy of the Palestinian national movement. The founders and their direct successors were unable to cope with the consequences of the 1967 victory for a very simple reason: the only *modus operandi* they knew was creating facts on the ground. Moreover, they had no doubt that the acknowledgment of a Palestinian nationality was tantamount to undermining the foundations of Zionism. This view has been as destructive for Israel's policies since the Six Day War as for the spiritual and moral climate in which Israeli society has developed in the last



PHOTOGRAPH BY RUBEN BITTERMANN / IMPACT VISUALS

Fundamentalist Jews try to march on the Haram al Sharif. May, 1995.

generation. The origins of this view go back to the days of the Second Aliya, and form an inseparable part of the founders' heritage. That is the reason why, in the history of Zionism, the Oslo Agreements signed by Rabin and Peres constitute a turning point, a true revolution. From then on, the Jews, for the first time since they had begun to settle, no longer officially regarded themselves as the sole legitimate owners of the Promised Land.

In this respect the settlers of Judea and Samaria and their allies, the very people who rule Israel on the day of its fiftieth anniversary, are absolutely right when they maintain that recognizing the legitimacy of Palestinians' national claims marks the end of an epoch. The time indeed has come for a second Zionist revolution, one that is rationalist, humanist, genuinely secular, and deeply committed to social justice. The time has come to say that if the settlements in Judea and Samaria or in the very heart of Hebron are the natural, logical, and legitimate continuation of the original intention of Zionism, then we need another Zionism. If a "Jewish State" that does not recognize the absolute equality of all human beings is considered to be closer to the spirit of the founding fathers than a new liberal Zionism, then it is time to say good-bye to the ghosts of the founders, and to start forging for ourselves an identity detached from the mystical ramifications of our religion and the irrational side of our history. ❑



Jeff Halper

Israel's War on Palestinians

The Campaign of House Demolitions

"I don't sign orders to destroy the houses of Jews, only of Arabs."

—Haim Miller, Deputy Mayor of Jerusalem and Acting Mayor in Olmert's absence (*Yediot Ha'akhronot*, February 7, 1998)

Perhaps the most fundamental—and bitter—struggle waged between the Israelis and Palestinians since 1967 has been over land. Here, where national conflict intersects with personal lives and Palestinian families try to carve out a semi-normal existence under occupation, human suffering is the greatest. For people impoverished, humiliated, and living under conditions of extreme instability, owning a parcel of land and a family home assumes an importance far beyond mere shelter; it represents the one place in the world where security and dignity are assured.

The establishment over the past thirty years of 136 Jewish settlements on the West Bank numbering some 150,000 people has been accompanied by severe measures to confine Palestinian growth and development, both through a politicized planning process and the wholesale destruction of "illegal" homes. In the past ten years more than 1,800 Palestinian residences have been destroyed, leaving more than 10,000 Palestinians homeless. Even Oslo did not end this policy: during the Rabin/Peres administrations 93 Palestinian homes were destroyed.

Since the election of Netanyahu's government, however, the policy of controlling Palestinian building has become a full-fledged campaign. According to two recent reports on the subject (*Demolishing Peace: Israeli's Policy of Mass Demolitions of Palestinian Houses in the West Bank*, issued by B'tselem in September 1997, and *Bulldozed into Cantons: Israel's House Demolition Policy in the West Bank since the Signing of the Oslo Agreements, September 1993– November 1997*, issued in December, 1997, by LAWE, The Palestinian Society for the Protection of Human Rights and the Environment), since Netanyahu's election in May of 1996 more than 500 Palestinian homes have been destroyed as "illegal structures." Between 1000-1500 others homes, most of them on the West Bank are today targeted for demolition.

A second "front" in this struggle to contain Palestinian housing is East Jerusalem, where the vast majority of the city's Palestinian residents live, but whose presence Israel is trying to reduce. Under the administration of Likud mayor Ehud Olmert, Arab neighborhoods, are being steadily strangled as thousands of acres of their land are expropriated for massive new Jewish satellite cities and the roads needed to serve them, as well as to provide the city with "open spaces." The new and expanding ultra-Orthodox neighborhood "Rekhes Shu'afat," built on hundreds of acres confiscated from the Arab neighborhood of Shu'afat, for example, links the Jewish suburb of French Hill to that of Pisgat Ze'ev, thus creating a contiguous area of Jewish building that effectively halts any development of the Arab north-eastern part of the city.

Denial of residency to Arab Jerusalemites (known as "The Quiet Transfer") and stepped-up house demolitions—some 2500 Palestinian homes and other buildings have been labeled by the municipality as "illegal"—are part of this campaign to squeeze the Palestinians out of the city, or at least to confine them to isolated pockets. In early February of 1998, the Minister of Internal Security, Avigdor Kahalani (who forthrightly admitted that the peace process had "delayed" the process of demolition), announced the establishment of a special police "Unit for the Demolition of Houses" whose job it is to locate "illegally" built Palestinian houses and to protect demolition crews who come to destroy them. This has created fears that Israel plans to step up its campaign of house demolitions, both in Jerusalem and on the West Bank. Indeed, twenty-five houses were quietly demolished in the month of February alone.

Pressure to keep vast tracts of West Bank land "vacant" has increased as Israel inches towards a final settlement with the Palestinians. "Area C," the 73 percent of the West Bank still under Israel's exclusive control, is the focal point of Israel's efforts. It contains the vast majority of Israeli settlements which Israel aims to unite—with each other and with Israel proper—through an expansive system of highways, by-pass roads, and industrial areas. Control of "Area C" will also allow Israel to isolate the Palestinian population in three or four disconnected enclaves (a plan known in Israel as "Allon Plus"), thus foreclosing any possibility of a continuous Palestinian state.

The Israeli government has consistently refused demands to halt settlement activities on the grounds that "it is unrea-

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PHOTOGRAPH BY MAHFOUZ ABU TURK

sonable to expect us to freeze Jewish life in Judea and Samaria," casting new construction as simply a "natural expansion" of settlements. But the freezing of normal Palestinian life on the West Bank is exactly what Israeli planning policy entails. Overall, Israel aims to control the whole area and to restrict the Palestinian population to bantustans. On the practical, everyday level of a Palestinian family that simply wants to build a house, however, the situation is even more complex. Hundreds of houses are slated for demolition because they stand in the way of future by-pass roads (and Israel insists on a "sterile" strip of 200 meters—two football fields—on either side of the road) or of settlement expansion—although these are never given as official reasons for denying building permits. Since Palestinians are not privy to Israeli construction plans (many of which have not been finalized), they have no way of knowing where they might legally locate their houses so as not to constitute an obstacle to Israeli expansion. The LAWE report does not miss the bitter irony of this situation: "Jewish settlements which have long been regarded as illegal by the international community (including the United States) are permitted to expand in order to accommodate 'natural growth,' while Palestinians who build homes to accommodate their natural growth live in fear of the bulldozer." It might be added that the first twenty-one Jewish settlements established on the West Bank were built without plans or permits and, indeed, against the stated policies and wishes of the Israeli government. Erecting structures in order to "create facts" on the ground is still a favorite tactic of the settlers, yet over thirty years, as thousands of Jewish housing units have been built without permits, only three have ever been destroyed.

In order to lend a legal pretext to its actions, Israel created, in 1971, a Kafkaesque system in which all decisions regarding municipal boundaries, zoning laws, development plans, and the granting of building permits to individuals and businesses were removed from Palestinian control through their municipal and village councils and placed under the exclusive jurisdiction of the West Bank military commander, working through a Supreme Planning Council (subsequently placed under a "Civil Administration," though still with close links to the military commanders). The Palestinian populace has virtually no say in planning decisions, and since the planning bodies of the Civil Administration are located in the Israeli military base of Beit El, access to Palestinians in general is severely limited.

Next, Israel froze Palestinian development by adopting and strictly enforcing until today British regional plans (RJ/5 and S/15) drawn up for the West Bank by the Mandate authorities in 1942, when the Palestinian population of the area was a fraction of what is it today. (The British planned for a future population in the northern West Bank of 33,000, for example, but massive influxes of refugees from the 1948 and 1967 wars, coupled with natural increase, has created a population that today numbers some 156,000.) In the British plans the vast majority of West Bank land was classified as agricultural, as indeed it was then. Since 1967 tens of thousands of acres have been expropriated from Palestinian farmers, while the local workforce has been transformed into one working in Israeli industries, further weakening the population's link to agriculture. Thus "villages" that once contained several hundred or several thousand people now are towns with populations in the tens of thousands, though Israeli planners till treat them as small agricultural communities.

All this has create a legal framework for what is essentially political planning. While Netanyahu is fond of pointing out that 80 percent of the Palestinian population now lives under the Palestinian Authority, he does not mention

that on the West Bank the vast majority of the 1,700,000 residents are confined to "Area A" enclaves of cities and towns tightly bounded and encircled by Israeli settlements, military bases, and roads, comprising just 3 percent of the West Bank; a much smaller minority inhabiting "Area B" 24 percent of the West Bank under joint Israeli-Palestinian control. Since the Israeli planning authorities have defined the municipal areas of Area A according to their limited jurisdiction rather than actual urban realities that permit growth, any natural expansion of these towns and cities is liable to extend into Israeli-controlled Area C, for which building permits are routinely denied. The Israeli settlement Ma'ale Adumim, for example, with 25,000 residents, spreads over 14,000 acres, while Palestinian jurisdiction over the city of Nablus, with 145,000 residents, covers only 6,500 acres.

A similar situation applies to the rural areas of "Area C." The Israeli Civil Administration of the West Bank has prepared "Local Planning Schemes" for more than 300 of the 400 Palestinian "villages" under its control. Ignoring population growth, housing needs, and the necessity of upgrading urban services, these plans draw tight boundaries around the villages, boundaries intended to contain instead of develop them.

The inevitable outcome of this "planning process," then, is to create a situation where Palestinians in both urban areas and villages are forced to apply to the Israeli authorities for building permits that are virtually impossible to obtain (in addition the process itself is prohibitively costly, both in money and time, for many families—it can take up to $2400 and three to four years). The number of building permits issued to Palestinians today is only a small fraction (estimated at about 10 percent) of what is required for their housing needs, not to mention the other normal needs of business, industrial, and urban development. Nevertheless, desperation caused by extremely overcrowded conditions, as well as the normal aspiration to provide for one's family a house of its own, forces many Palestinians to invest their life savings in houses they know might well be destroyed. Sometimes demolition occurs before the house is completed; sometimes upon its completion; and at other times months or years after the family has moved in. Virtually all demolition orders issued to Palestinians are "administrative orders," meaning that they are issued by the Civil Administration of the West Bank, providing a thirty day period for appeal (in Jerusalem Palestinians have 48 hours to appeal to a local court). No appeal that has reached the Israeli High Court has ever been accepted. Indeed, Palestinians do not even argue the legal merits of the demolition orders, since the Civil Administration carefully sets them within the "proper" legal framework, but rather base their arguments on the violation of human rights, basic human needs, and human respect that the laws effectively denying housing to thousands of people entail.

The human suffering entailed in the process of destroying a family's home is incalculable. Palestinian families never know just when the demolition crews, accompanied by tens of soldiers and police, will arrive. They can come at any time of the day or night, though normally demolition does not occur on Fridays or Saturdays due to the Jewish Sabbath. Those are the only times when the threatened families are free of constant fear and anxiety. When the dreaded time comes, the families are often given but an hour's warning to remove their belongings before the bulldozers move in. Sometimes demolition is resisted; at other times the family and their neighbors watch sullenly as their home is reduced to rubble.

Isma'il al-Shawamreh, his wife N'tisar and their nine children are a case in point. They live in the village of Anata, near Jerusalem. Before 1967 Anata was connected to neighboring villages—Hizma to the north, Shu'fat to the west, and al Issawiya to the south—all of which bounded the northern peripheries of Jerusalem. Its residents made their living from its 8,000 acres of agricultural land and from stonecutting.

Following the 1967 war, half of Anata was incorporated into the expanded municipal boundaries of Jerusalem and half was left as a part of the West Bank. About a third of its population of some 12,000 hold Jerusalem identity cards, while the other two-thirds are classified as West Bank residents, with no access to Jerusalem—including "Jerusalem" parts of Anata—in times of closure. In order to contain any possible expansion of the village, the Israeli authorities expropriated some 5,000 acres from Anata in order to build the West Bank settlements of Alon, Kfar Adumim, Almon, and Ma'aleh Adumim. The settlements, the nearby Anatot military base, and the roads serving them completely circumscribe the village, which is isolated from its own remaining agricultural lands. Most of Anata's work force has been forced to find employment in Israeli factories, although the effective blockade of the village from Jerusalem has made employment difficult.

Confined to a small part of their traditional lands, crowding in Anata has become chronic. Some twenty-three demolitions orders have been served on Anata residents who have been unable to secure building permits yet have been forced by their intolerable conditions to build "illegally." Some of these orders have been issued by the Jerusalem municipality; others, where Anata expands into the Israeli controlled "Area C" of the West Bank, by the Civil Administration.

Isma'il al-Shawamreh has worked in a potato factory in the West Bank Jewish settlement of Mishor Adumim for the past ten years. Wishing to move from the one-room 4 x 4 meter shack where they and their nine children lived, the al-Shawamrehs bought, in 1993, an eighth of an acre of land on the southern periphery of the village—which subsequently became "Area C"—and applied to the Israeli Civil Administration for a permit to build a house. After a long period of waiting the permit was refused on the grounds

that the land—a rocky, steep area that has never been farmed—is zoned as "agricultural land."

Unable to remain in their cramped quarters, Isma'il raised loans from friends and family, dipped deeply into his $800 a month salary and managed to raise $40,000 to build a four-room house. In February, 1997, soon after the al-Shawamreh family moved into their still-to-be completed home, they received an administrative order informing them that their house would be destroyed in 96 hours. Although he has retained a lawyer, Isma'il is afraid to go to court to appeal the order. "I know I will lose the appeal," he says, "and then what? I'm afraid that by calling attention to my case the authorities will come immediately to knock down my house." He shrugs his shoulders, smiles sheepishly and admits: "I just don't know what to do." His only visible defense is a letter to the Israeli Civil Administration from the Palestinian Authority pointing out that the final disposition of "Area C" has still to be decided in negotiations, and Israel is constrained from "creating facts" on the ground.

"What will I do if they destroy my house?" Isma'il asks. "Winter is coming, what can I do with the kids?" The tension is almost unbearable. "We live in fear and uncertainty. It's as if every man waits his turn [to have his house destroyed]." Isma'il then reflects and adds bitterly, almost in resignation: "It's no use. There's no life here. No matter what we do we can't win. They tell us to get building permits and we try. They tell us to pay taxes to Israel and we do. We work in their settlements and their factories. We are not active in politics and do not demonstrate or make trouble. Still they make life impossible for us, as if they simply want us to disappear."

Unfortunately, the government's campaign of house demolitions is a "non-issue" in Israel. Public debate takes place on a much higher and more abstract level (Oslo: Yes or No?), and the furor over building in Har Homa or Ras el Amud has the effect of diverting attention from the many less-dramatic but cumulatively more significant actions on the ground, such as demolishing a thousand Palestinian houses. Over the past year the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions, a coalition of peace groups working closely with the Palestinian Land Defense General Committee, has initiated actions designed to fight against house demolitions and to support Palestinian families whose houses are threatened with destruction.

The Committee has also embarked on a campaign to match Palestinian families who have been served with demolition orders with Israeli and foreign ones willing to support them. Each matching family is provided with a packet of information containing details of a Palestinian family and their situation. Taking a page from Amnesty International's book, the Committee asks the matching families to write to Israeli officials from Prime Minister Netanyahu down to Yossi Hasson, the Coordinator of the Planning Committee in the Civil Administration, concerning the case of "their" particular family. The hope is that hundreds of letters written in support of individual families will lessen their isolation and constrain the behavior of the Israeli officials.



PHOTOGRAPH BY MAHFOUZ ABU TURK

Americans—and American Jews in particular—can play a crucial role in slowing down, if not stopping altogether, Israel's destruction of Palestinian homes, certainly a moral issue whatever one's political views. Netanyahu's government banks on three sources of uncritical and absolute support for his policies: the organized Jewish community, whose official policy of "neutrality" and "non-interference" belies massive funding of West Bank settlement activities through its contributions to the Jewish Agency; the fundamentalist Christian right-wing, led by Jerry Falwell, who make no pretension of being "neutral" and vigorously lobby Congress and public opinion on behalf of Netanyahu's policies; and the American Congress, in which "friends of Israel" (an important political designation) are defined as those who support the Likud government's policies. But even those who support the concept of a Judea and Samaria fully integrated into Israel with maximum Jewish settlement must address the unspoken issue: what of the welfare and human rights of the non-Jews—Palestinians and Bedouins—living in those areas?

There are few wounds deeper and more traumatic than watching your home being bulldozed, often with many personal possessions still inside. The physical suffering involved in finding cramped living quarters for a family of ten or more is considerable, but it is less painful than the anguish, helplessness, and despair registered on the faces of Palestinian families who endure such an experience. The very fact that Israelis care enough to support these families and to protest the destruction of their houses keeps the personal connection, the possibility of future reconciliation, alive. "We know you can't prevent the demolition of my house," one man said, "but the very fact that you're here, that someone knows what is happening and cares, is as important to me as my house was." ❑



Marlene E. Post

The Big Picture

A Hadassah Perspective on Israel

Many people dread the big five-0 birthday, reflecting on their regrets, missed opportunities, and unfulfilled hopes. Israel seems to be facing the same crisis.

"How can we celebrate when there is so much to mourn?" critics cry as they reflect on Israel at fifty. Disaster—Rabin assassinated, the peace process stalled, Jews hating Jews, Arabs and Jews hating each other—they claim, is no cause for celebration. They hang their heads low and moan.

Looking at the political arena it is easy to understand the pessimism. But surely the fifty-year history of a new nation in the Middle East is more complex than a list of its could-have-beens.

When Hadassah founder Henrietta Szold traveled to pre-State Palestine in 1912, she too found the Holy Land desolate. In her journals, she described acute poverty, filth, and rampant disease. The maternal and infant mortality rates were nearly one in two, easily treatable eye diseases were blinding children by the hundreds, and everywhere people were suffering.

She did not go home in despair. She returned to the U.S., gathered volunteers, and raised money to send nurses back to Palestine to set up community health and maternity care stations for all the people of the land. One woman's determination blossomed into a small Zionist organization. Born from her drive, millions of Zionists since have contributed to her practical vision of healing a people.

Today, thanks to the hard work of such dedicated activists around the world, Israel, despite her suffering, is far from desolate. Networks of hospitals, schools, libraries, roads, irrigation systems, and a world of innovations have changed a once barren, impoverished land into one of the most developed nations in the world, leading in technology, medical care and research, and teen literacy. And only one in 4,000 women die in childbirth—a better ratio than even in the U.S. These are today's miracles.

The needs of the people of Israel are complex and Zionism continues to seek ways to meet them. In Israel, our organization alone, just one of scores, has housed, supported, and educated 300,000 children from around the world and from disadvantaged Israeli homes; treated millions of Jews, Muslims, and Christians at two hospitals and ninety outpatient clinics; planted millions of trees; and provided thousands of Israelis with vocational training and career counseling.

Though Israeli Jews and Arabs on the street are cynical about the political situation, the view from inside Israel's institutions is dramatically different.

When I walk through the Pediatric Oncology Unit at Hadassah Hospital, I see children and families and doctors from every race, religion, and ideology side by side. Arab and Jewish children laugh together. Their parents laugh together. And sometimes they also cry together. But no one is thinking about Arafat or borders or conversion laws. They are thinking about living. Surviving. Family. Together they are fighting cancer. Across the hospital, Jewish doctors—secular and religious—together with Arab doctors consult and treat patients; organs from Jews and Arabs are transplanted into each other; families from diverse religious and political ideology talk in waiting rooms about each others' children.

Israel continues to discover new treatments for disease, teach children to read, train the poor with job skills, give children love and hope.

Fifty years ago they might not have survived their diseases; the cures and treatments might not have been discovered; some roads to the hospital not yet built. Their families might have been living in poor conditions in Russia or Iraq or Ethiopia.

Today in hospitals, classrooms, and other institutions across Israel, the world is changing. And in its course, politics and ideology are sometimes forgotten. For moments, getting along is natural.

If Henrietta Szold and the other founding Zionist leaders came to Israel on its fiftieth birthday, I am quite confident they would see a miraculous but imperfect new world past the horizon of political and religious squabbling.

That coexistence is possible in one ward, or one classroom, means that it is possible. Sometimes the most practical solutions are found outside the political arena.

Throughout history, leaders have been assassinated, Jews

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Marlene E. Post is national president of Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America, the largest women's, largest Jewish, and largest Zionist organization in the United States.



Bassem Eid

Must Palestinians Choose?

Between Human Rights and Nation Building

As a Palestinian, I have a certain sadness on the occasion of this fiftieth anniversary. I have to remember that the Israeli people denied my existence and my identity. Every time we Palestinians face Yom Ha'Atzma'ut, Israeli Independence Day, we have to ask ourselves, "Why did the Israelis deny our liberty?" At the same time, however, Israel has become a symbol of democracy in the Middle East. Nobody can deny that there is, for Jews, a democratic civil society. As Palestinians, even though we are occupied by this democratic civil society, we have to learn how to create such a democratic civil society in Palestine. We may have to struggle against Israel, and that struggle must continue, but we also have things to learn from Israeli society.

It's hard for us in Palestine to fully credit all that can be learned from Israel when Israeli human rights violations continue even as we speak and even as your readers read this article. The confiscation of land and the extension of settlements is well known. After the Oslo agreement, many American Jews may have the impression that human rights violations ceased, but that is not true. Right now, there are 350 Palestinians under administrative detention in Israeli jails (they are held without charge and without possibility of trial). Thirteen hundred Palestinian students from Gaza are not allowed to cross the borders of Gaza to attend the West Bank universities where they previously studied. Thousands of workers have been kept from their jobs in Israel. So Oslo has led many Palestinians to feel that they are not much better off.

Today, Palestinians are stuck between the Israeli hammer and the Palestinian Authority rock. We are being denied our human rights by the Palestinian Authority just as they had been previously denied by Israel. The attitude of the Palestinian Authority today runs counter to the expectations and dreams of the Palestinian people—particularly to the dream of a democratic and free Palestinian state. The Palestinian Authority has not fulfilled its commitment to respect the standards and principles of human rights. Indeed, those rights were never on its agenda. The Palestinian Authority thinks that it is more important to focus on the struggle with Israel for fuller Palestinian self-determination and for Israeli withdrawal from the territories. Its position is that human rights cannot be achieved while this struggle is going on, but only after the successful creation of the Palestinian State—and that, in the meantime, there will necessarily be violations that happen along the way.

We in the human rights community in Palestine are not demanding that the Palestinian Authority implement the European Convention for Human Rights or America's Bill of Rights. We understand that there may be some necessary limitation of rights in the course of the struggle. But what we do demand is that the Palestinian Authority minimally respect the rights of its own people, and this it does not do. Instead of internalizing Israeli norms of a democratic civil society, the Palestinian Authority has begun to assimilate the norms of other Arab states and their dismissal of human rights concerns, and this is a tragedy for the Palestinian people.

Just as the forces of the Israeli Occupation used and continue to use torture against Palestinians, today we find that the Palestinian Authority's various police forces regularly use torture against their own people. People are beaten, deprived of sleep, kept in painful physical conditions (e.g. have very hot or cold water thrown at them, are forced to stand for hours in distorted body positions, etc.). The Palestinian Authority has learned from Israel the notion of administrative detention, and similarly keeps people in prison without charge and without the possibility of trial.

There are three categories of people being subjected to this assault on human rights: political prisoners who belong to political opposition parties and have done nothing but hold views opposed to those of the government; criminals who have committed civilian offenses (drug dealers, car thieves, prostitutes); people who are suspected of being collaborators with the Israel Occupation forces. All in all there are about 1500 people in prison, most of them coming from this last category of suspected collaborators. People who work with the security services may lodge complaints against specific people whom they suspect of being collaborators. Sometimes these complaints come from personal conflicts and, instead of being resolved on the personal level, one party denounces the other as a collaborator. And the person denounced may find himself in prison without any possibility of defending himself.

We have no free press. Our press acts as a political press: violations committed by Israel will appear on the front page of our newspapers, while violations committed by the Palestinian Authority are kept out of the newspapers totally. We have a radio station, the Voice of Palestine, and Pales-

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Bassem Eid is the director of the Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group (PHRMG) and previously worked as a field researcher for B'Tselem in Jerusalem.



Marc Gopin

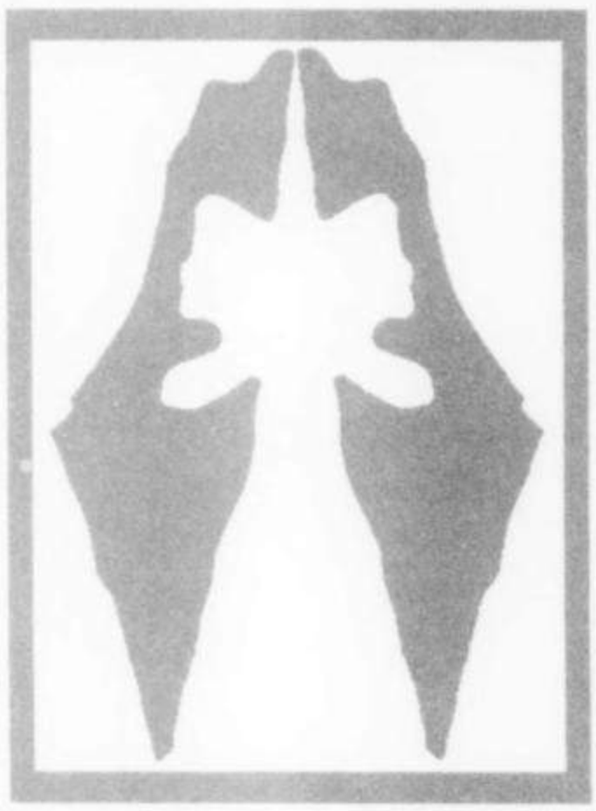
Carnal Israel

The Future of Jewish Spirituality in the Age of Zionism

Judaism today is undergoing an existential crisis. Almost every form of Jewish spirituality, from Jewish scholarship to Jewish Renewal to Jewish organizations large and small, is intoxicated with the physical existence of the Jewish people, with the Jewish body, carnal Israel, and particularly with the body in its relationship to the earth.

After two thousand years, Jews are discovering what it is to exult in religious experience through land, through the senses and the body. What this has led to, what it historically has always led to in other religions, is the distortion of a rich religious tradition that has a deep set of ethical commitments to the stranger, in biblical language the *gerim*, those non-members of one's culture who happen to reside on the land as well.

The biblical prophets were aware that this level of intoxication with the land is poisonous. It's for that reason that their litmus test of spirituality was whether a Jewish population could balance a love of land with love of the inhabitants in the land—all of them—the poor, the non-Jew, those who had lost their land, among others. They required a balance between love of land and moral restraint, a stepping back from land intoxication, which is the essential message of the Sabbatical laws, the tithing laws, the laws of the Jubilee, and other forms of resource distribution.



At the beginning of our own century, Hermann Cohen, one of the greatest Jewish philosophers of modern times, understood the danger that Zionism would re-ignite an intoxication with the land that would strangle Jewish morality. But Cohen had a hard time presenting his case in the light of the unrelenting persecution Jews faced from the 1880s onwards. Zionists made a strong case for criticizing a disembodied Judaism with only a moral/spiritual face. They didn't want Jews consigned to the fate that old Church doctrine had marked out for us, namely, to be a wandering, landless people, with only a spiritual message and with suffering our perpetual fate.

Today, the good news is that more and more religious Jews in Israel know that something has gone wrong with religious Zionism. To recapture our sense of religious morality, we must undertake a fundamental re-evaluation of our relationship to the land. From a strategic point of view, for example, land is increasingly useless. It is now clear that missile technology and the increasing possibility of non-conventional (chemical, germ) warfare has wiped away the security that used to come with land. In today's wars, there is no more battlefield. We must face the fact that this ancient use of land has become obsolete and that only a reliable relationship with good neighbors is the key to security.

The love of land is an essential human response to the world, a basic resource of life and spirituality. But it does not require ownership or sovereignty to function in that way. We became obsessed with land ownership in order to try to undo the persecution of previous centuries, to undo the pain of the past with one land grab. But land ownership cannot undo that damage. The past must be mourned, but should not infect the moral decisions of the present.

In the early part of this century, *halutz* (pioneer) Israeli identity was an empowering myth for most Jews. It was a new Jewish identity rooted in conquering the soil, in creating the kibbutz. In many ways, the Russian, American, and other Diaspora Jews settling on the West Bank have only wanted their turn at the halutz mythology, their turn at being the conquering pioneer. It has been for us the same sort of classic colonial identity that Americans found in settling the United States' western frontier. It is an intoxicating mythology, one that suggests that we can build an identity by settling and "taming" a wild place, that by owning land we can leave in the shadows the violent reality that gaining the land in the first place requires.

But that very violence is the blind spot in the old halutz myth. According to the myth, the land was empty, "A land in need of a people for a people in need of a land." The fact that the land was not empty, that moving back to the land involved terrible suffering and humiliation for the Palestinians and its other inhabitants, is a deep and abiding wound in Jewish consciousness. It offends our basic sense of who we are. The easiest way to cope with that wound has

ILLUSTRATION BY LARRY BUSH

Dr. Marc Gopin has Orthodox ordination, is a Senior Associate at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, and teaches at George Mason University's Religion Department and the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution.

been by denying the existence of the Palestinians and their pain at the deepest level.

The Left in Israel, the children of the kibbutz, must take responsibility for this mythology as much as West Bank settlers. Both groups must start to evolve a new vision in Israel, a love of land wedded to a love of Jewish humanitarian values, and not to ownership or conquest. We have no choice but to revisit the halutz myth, to sympathize with the old intoxication with the land but to move beyond it.

The key to a sensible and decent future, and to the heart of Jewish spiritual values, is to build relationships with ourselves and with the strangers among us. Religious Zionism, in particular, needs to confront a new concept of the non-Jew. Traditional Judaism has been trapped by its conception of the non-Jew as either the righteous *Hasidei umot ha'olam* or as the hated descendant of Esau and Amalek who can only hate and kill Jews. This is an exilic, highly disempowered conception of "the Other." The real world is a world of people who are neither perfectly good nor perfectly evil, people who may have killed me yesterday but who are ready to talk to me today. In particular, we must come to see the Palestinians, our closest neighbors, as our partners in a quest for true, mutual security. No matter how violent, angry, or resentful they may be, we have no choice but to do what it takes to cultivate and negotiate a new relationship.

The rediscovery of the Jewish love of carnal Israel has been an understandable healing stage for the Jewish people as it copes with the wounds of the past. But the confusion of a re-embrace of the land with the mythological drive for ownership and conquest of an "empty" land has created new wounds for us and has wounded the Palestinians as well. To heal these wounds, the Jewish people as a whole must learn to balance a love of land with a valuation of all human beings, an embrace of the Jewish soul as well as the Jewish body, and, in so doing, become aware of the souls of the non-Jews, particularly our Palestinian neighbors, who also love the land, and who also have sacrificed too much of their culture and values in a struggle for that land.

As a next step, we should take the lead in a joint effort with the Palestinians and Israel's other neighbors to take care of the land—its water supply, its resources, its natural beauty—without an obsession with who owns what. Above all, preventing war through the creation of a broad-based set of trusted relationships would be the best way to secure the land for everyone. This joint effort to love and protect the land could, if done well, lay the psychological and spiritual groundwork necessary for the hard negotiations ahead.

I often think of the famous biblical story in which Solomon discovered the true mother by seeing which woman was ready to let the child go in order that it might live and thrive. The Jewish people, without doubt, have ancient roots in the West Bank. But a true mother of this land would be willing to give up her exclusive share in it, in order to see it survive and flourish. ❑

An Open Letter to the Jewish People re: Israel

The 50th anniversary of the founding of the state of Israel is a good time to go back and see if the standard myths concerning the Arab-Jewish conflict are historically accurate.

• Our **free booklet, "The Origin of the Palestine-Israel Conflict"**, documents the little-known history of the dispossession of the Palestinian people. A wide range of sources are used, including Israeli historians, American academics, Jewish intellectuals of that era, and Zionist leaders themselves. Among the sobering conclusion are:

• For more than 1200 years before the Zionists arrived, Palestine was overwhelmingly populated by Arabs—direct descendants of people who had lived there for thousands of years before the Jewish people even existed!

• The Zionist movement, from the beginning, looked forward to a practically complete dispossession of the Palestinians, so that they could establish a Jewish state. They had no intention of sharing Palestine with its indigenous Arabs.

• The Zionists legally bought less than 7% of the land of Israel before 1948. Most of the rest of the land was taken from the Palestinians by force of arms.

• Prior to the Zionist movement, Jews and Arabs had lived peacefully together in Palestine for many centuries.

• Israel was admitted to the UN under the condition that they repatriate the Palestinian refugees expelled during the 1948 war, but later the Israelis categorically refused to do so.

• Israel's conflict with the Arab world is due to its "original sin" of colonialism in Palestine, not because of the Arabs' inherent anti-semitism.

You might ask, "Why should I care?". The answer is because you are Jewish and the best part of our Jewish heritage is its insistence on ethical and moral behavior. This booklet shows the extent to which we are responsible for the Palestine-Israel conflict and consequently what our moral obligations are. This is the *only* route to real peace and security for the people of Israel and the rest of the Middle East.

Write for a copy of our **free booklet**, to **Jews For Justice in the Middle East**, P.O. Box 14561, Berkeley, CA 94712.



Rabbi Daniel Siegel

Israel and Diaspora:
Limbs of a Single Body

I have never been in the "Israel loop." Despite the fact that I have been a rabbi for twenty-five years, doing what we now call outreach and Jewish continuity work, I have never gone on a mission to Israel or met an Israeli prime minister. I have never gone to Poland before visiting Israel or been taken to Yad Vashem. My Israeli friends have not yet become influential; they tend to be as marginal to their world as I have been to mine, students of Torah and practicing Jews who also support the peace movement yet can't seem to muster enough political muscle to elect even one Knesset member.

I also freely confess to being a Diaspora Jew, at home in North America not because I live more comfortably than I would in Israel, but because I find it exciting to live in a society that is a great social experiment. Israel is the place where national identity is the guiding principle of Jewish identity. It is our contribution to the movement which resolves minority status in host countries through the creation of new and usually smaller independent states. North America is the place where the same issue is dealt with by creating a society based on individual citizenship, one in which all group identities are freely chosen. I believe that both these social experiments are equally exciting, equally meaningful, and equally necessary in the long process toward the redemption to which we all aspire.

> Rabbi Akiva said: "Everything is foreseen, yet freedom of choice is granted. The world is judged favorably, yet all depends on the preponderance of good deeds" (Mishnah Avot 3:19).

Judaism is a dynamic, constantly changing effort to balance different sets of polarities. On the one hand, Jews are just ordinary people and, on the other, we Jews see ourselves as somehow special. On the one hand, we have been chosen by God for a great mission and, on the other, we need to make a living like everyone else. On the one hand, we are a collection of individuals and, on the other, we are a people with a shared destiny.

> Rabbi Abba said in the name of Samuel: "For three years the schools of Hillel and Shammai were divided. These said the law is according to our opinion and these said the law is according to our opinion. A voice emanated and declared: The words of these and the words of these are the words of the living God, and the law is according to the school of Hillel" (Babylonian Talmud Eruvin 13b).

The answer is a paradox. If the words of both sides are equally true, equally the words of the living God, then why should the law be decided in favor of one over the other? And, if the law favors Hillel over Shammai or the other way around, then how can they be equally the words of the living God?

In the best of times, living within this paradox is intellectually exciting and spiritually creative. The possibilities in such conversations are endless and stimulating. However, there are also times when it is not possible to live in the paradox. Decisions need to be made in order to save lives, to escape from dangerous situations, and to transform realities. When the need to decide is a matter of life and death, as it certainly was in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Europe, it is an unaffordable luxury to grant equal legitimacy to two sets of possibilities. The result is a paralysis which in turn allows people to become trapped.

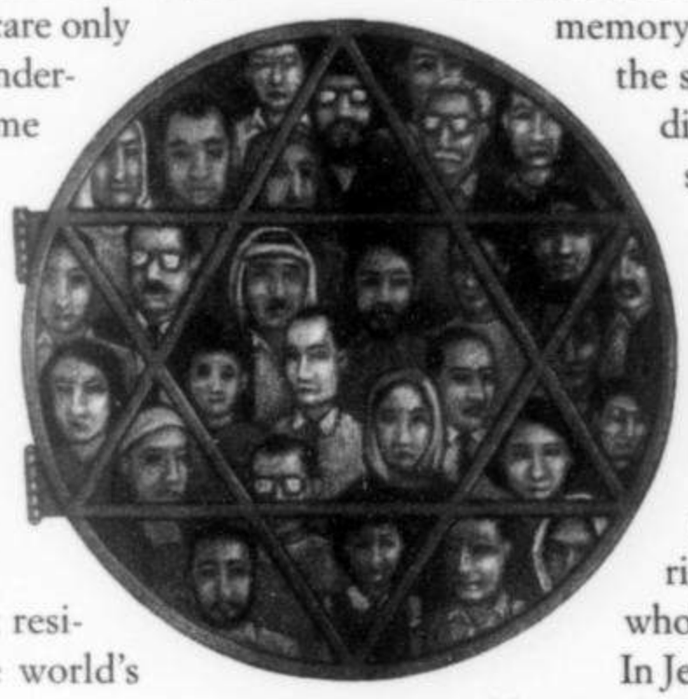
At the risk of oversimplifying, European Jews were forced to radically re-evaluate their situation and the philosophical underpinnings of their lives from the late nineteenth century through the years of the Nazi rise to power. Essentially, there were three schools of thought: the first was to remain where they were, using both old and new skills to at least ride out the storm (as they had done so many times before) by continuing to serve God and/or by working to transform the political systems of the host countries. The second possibility was to move to the West, where the social experiment based on individual identity and rights promised a freedom from the worst aspects of anti-Semitism and the opportunity to escape from poverty. The third was to accept the European concept of national identity and territory as the answer to the minority status brought on by statelessness, and to move to Palestine to work for the establishment of a Jewish state. Unfortunately for us all, those Jews who chose to remain had underestimated Hitler's seriousness of purpose. Neither of the other two solutions to the problem of Jewish existence in the modern world was able to save the European communities. As a result, all of us live with the pain over the loss of part of our collective body. At the same time, the struggle to become established in new homes produced its own contradictions.

Now, it seems, just as both the Western Diaspora and the Israeli Jewish communities are emerging from this struggle

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Rabbi Daniel Siegel is the first person to receive ordination from Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, cofounded a synagogue with his partner, Hanna Tiferet, and served as Jewish chaplain at Dartmouth and rabbi for the Upper Valley Jewish Community.

for legitimacy, we are engaged more than ever in a mutually destructive and increasingly angry debate. As religious pluralism, revival, and renewal grow in the Diaspora, Israel seems more deeply caught in a sharp dichotomy between the religious and the secular. To North American Jews, Israel seems to be stronger than ever and so we are puzzled and angry over its apparent unwillingness to be gracious to the Palestinians. Israelis themselves seem split between universal and national moralities, resulting in a long series of governments without clear mandates and an inconsistent peace process. And each of us denigrates the choices of the other. We North Americans supposedly care only for our material comforts, while Israelis understand the meaning of sacrifice in the name of the collective good. We think Israelis are hypocrites, pretending that they live a Jewish life while demonstrating in their life choices that they would rather live here. We can hardly speak to each other anymore, as Israeli Hebrew becomes unintelligible to someone who hasn't served in the Israeli army and our Diaspora values of individualism and tolerance seem naive to the permanent residents of the Middle East, one of the world's tougher "neighborhoods."



> Blessed is God in all worlds, Amen and Amen.
> Blessed is God from Zion, the One who dwells in Jerusalem.
> Halleluyah. (from the morning liturgy)

My grandfather, I.N. Steinberg, was a deep believer in the first line of this prayer. He was a social revolutionary in Czarist Russia, a member of Lenin's only coalition cabinet, and the leader of the Territorialist Movement until his death in 1957. He was a practicing Jew all his life and he wanted Jews to live everywhere, serving God, building just societies, and modeling the ethical in a way which was visible to the surrounding society.

My grandmother, Ida Siegel, was a deep believer in the second line of this prayer. She was a Conservative Jew and a Zionist at the beginning of this century, when both were still seen as new and unconventional.

I went to Israel on sabbatical in 1984 convinced that I was more a Steinberg than a Siegel. Though I had been a staff member for the United Synagogue Youth pilgrimage in 1967, I had also nearly been expelled from my elementary school yeshiva for suggesting that Israeli reprisals against Arabs were as repulsive as Arab attacks on Jews. I believed, and still believe, that we are essentially a spiritual people, called by God into existence to witness and to work toward a world based on mutual respect and the awareness of our interconnectedness. After having the privilege of studying at the Shalom Hartman Institute and in *hevruta* (learning partnership) with Debbie Weissman, I emerged not only with my universalism intact but also with a kind of Zionism now implanted within me. I love being in Israel, and not just the Israel of Torah study and the Bible. I admit that all of Israel, including cell phones, malls, kosher Burger Kings, too many cars, and too much pollution, also has its place in my soul.

Last year, I had the chance to spend the month of December visiting my wife, Hanna Tiferet, and our son Elisha in Jerusalem. Hanna was a Melton Senior Educator and I was preparing to leave my job at Dartmouth College to become the Executive Director of ALEPH: Alliance for Jewish Renewal. On this visit, I found what others in Jewish Renewal are also discovering. For the first time in my memory, Israeli and Diaspora Jews are seeking the same things at the same time, even if in different ways. We went to the desert outside Mizpeh Ramon and spent two nights in tents at Sukkah Ba-midbar. Each tent is named for one of our patriarchs or matriarchs, including Hagar (Abraham's Egyptian "other" wife) and her son Ishmael. There was a place to do Tai Chi, hilltops on which to pray the morning service and welcome the sunrise, and beautiful, gentle people seeking a wholeness and spiritual depth for their lives.

In Jerusalem I met and learned with friends my older sons had made when they had spent time in Israel, people who know Jewish sources deeply, who come from observant and even Chasidic families, and who are seeking connections with others who will learn these sources with them without having to first commit to the conclusions on which Orthodox learning insists. I was able to move from one alternative synagogue to another and wasn't there long enough to visit them all. I prayed in an egalitarian Conservative environment as well as with a group which, while still Orthodox, had only a transparent curtain between men and women. Everyone freely moved through that nearly non-existent barrier as people danced to the melodies which went on and on, and then shared an egalitarian Torah reading.

Jewish Renewal teachers, including Phyllis Berman and Rabbis Shefa Gold and Arthur Waskow, have been invited to participate in new kinds of Jewish spiritual gatherings. At these gatherings, North American and Israeli Jews have shared efforts at harmonizing their hunger for spirituality, which seems more easily available from Eastern sources than from within their own Judaism. Most surprising of all, ALEPH programs such as the Jewish Renewal Life Center in Philadelphia and our program leading to rabbinical ordination have been receiving inquiries and applications from Israelis.

Like everything in (Jewish) life, things seem terrible and wonderful all at once. Like many others, I am appalled by the current Israeli government's unwillingness to pursue the peace process vigorously. I am fearful of the damage Israelis are causing to the very land which they so love. I worry

(continued on page 78)

FILM REVIEW

Titanic Love

Rebecca Adams



PHOTOGRAPH BY MERIE W. WALLACE / PARAMOUNT PICTURES

It was a dark night when I saw *Titanic* recently in Yonkers, escaping briefly through the rain to a local theater with my friends from the hospital where we are training in child psychiatry. Depleted by the endless procession of damaged inner-city children who have nothing to cling to but a few impoverished cultural activities—Nintendo games, drugs, bad movies hypnotic in their violence—and to whom we can give little, I came with criticisms prepared before the opening credits. Suspicious of a Hollywood romance that had bewitched so many of our adolescent patients and resentful of the vast cost of the film—dreaming bitterly of what *Titanic's* $250 million cost could have done in the struggling communities that surrounded us—I was unprepared to be deeply shaken, unready to be haunted by ghosts of sadness and hope, despair and love.

Yet, from the moment of the film's opening with its sepia-colored shots of travelers and immigrants waving their good-byes from the ship's deck, sailing to their deaths in freezing and lonely water, I too was transported. And this despite registering the heavy-handed dialogue and the characterizations that verged on caricature, the very modern sensibilities of the supposedly Edwardian lovers, despite my awareness of the box-office consciousness that fills each frame. In the weeks since, my haunting by *Titanic* goes on. I still find myself completely occupied at odd times by feelings stirred by it, almost bewildered by its power to conjure ghosts in me. Somehow *Titanic* transcends itself. How is it that it has taken me and countless others into such deep waters?

For its breathtaking financial success, predictable Oscars sweep, and the emerging stories of people seeing it for the dozenth time, suggest that *Titanic* has haunted and inspired us as a nation. Teenagers mouth the dialogue by heart. In coffee time work conversations we marvel at its three hours that pass in a moment, celebrate the romance, regret the terrible loss of life. The film has created a cultural space in which a powerful experience is shared, as we shake off both the freedom and tyranny of our currently exploding technologies—cable, video, the internet—that foster an ever greater specialization of interests and an ever-greater fracturing of communal consciousness. "Wasn't it incredible?" people breathe, and for a moment we unite in a common memory. There is something liberating and utterly necessary for our souls' nourishment here, something akin to falling in love.

Fundamentally, of course, *Titanic* is a love story: or, rather a story of numerous loves, some doomed, others potentially freeing and transformative. History has given director and writer James Cameron a rich, multi-layered text of romances to envision and intertwine with that of the fictional Jack and Rose: man and the conquest of the sea, man and technology, immigrant and New World. As tarnished as the romances culturally available to us may be, we still fall in love—as the *Titanic's* passengers must variously have been—with the dream that our technologies will protect and fulfill us, with the hope that we will finally master nature, with the delights made possible by wealth, with America as the location of freedom.

Most powerful of the love stories that shadow that of the young couples is our desire for technology. A magnificent and invulnerable ship, beautiful and fast, is the object of desire, a *ship of dreams:* technology making new dreams possible. We know this love story well; in different forms it continues its hold on us. And yet just beyond the usual articulation, there lies a collective fear that this romance—dazzling as it is—may be doomed, and that our scientific venture could founder. The narratives of our relationships with technology and with wealth are usually triumphant, their anxieties rarely made explicit; but under the surface, submerged and silenced in darker waters of our consciousness, are stories of destruction and loss. With the knowledge that the contemporaries of the *Titanic's* passengers saw their confidence in scientific and material progress decay on the battlefields of W.W.I, and located as we are in history after another World War and a Cold War in which technology

Rebecca Adams, M.D., is a Fellow in Child Adolescent Psychiatry at New York Hospital–Cornell Medical Center and is a candidate in NYU's postgraduate program in psychoanalysis and psychotherapy.

assisted in vast destruction and created the possibility of human annihilation, there is reason to fear that the current technological revolution has disguised dangers.

So it is fitting and ironic that *Titanic*—the most expensive movie of all time, and one so heavily reliant on sophisticated computer-generated images—speaks on one level to the fear that ill-used science, engaged to capitalist greed, may sink us all. Just as the newspapers did in the historical wake of the sinking, the movie chides the *Titanic's* creators for technological hubris and greed. It makes explicit the unholy alliance between the idolatry of the works of our own hands, capitalism's fostering of greed, and patriarchy. Rose herself points out (in an unlikely historical anachronism) the phallic arrogance of the ship's dimensions, as

Feminism needs to reclaim romance, this route to knowing one's self and another most deeply.

she asks archly of Ismay, the director of the White Lines Shipping company that built *Titanic,* if he has heard "Dr. Freud's" comments on men's concern with size. Ismay, unenlightened by this interpretation, later urges the captain to make headlines by sailing as fast as possible, the ship's speed then preventing its turning in time from the iceberg. *Titanic* as morality tale: are we going too fast? Do obstacles lurk beneath the surface? (Rorshach-like, we read our own meanings into the causality of death. A fourteen-year-old patient, struggling with the effects of sexual abuse, told me he thought the sinking was the lovers' fault—if the men in the crow's nest hadn't been watching Jack and Rose embrace, they would have seen the iceberg in time.)

But there are loves pointed to in this film that have the potential to provide narratives of true transcendence: the longing for social equality, the dream of America as a destination of possibility and change, and the transformative power of falling in love itself. For Cameron, assisted by history, has placed the distortions in our vision due to class and patriarchal consciousness at the center of the film. An aching folk-song of the time laments the third class passengers locked beneath decks as the ship sank:

Oh, they loaded up the boats so very far from shore
but the rich refused to associate with the poor
So they put the poor below
Where they were the first to go
Oh it was sad when the great ship went down.

Rebellion is unleashed in many of the poor immigrants by the terror of coming death: Jack and his friends fight this ultimate injustice, battering down the locked doors, while a patient Irishwoman comforts her children with the falsity—does she believe it?—that "when the first class people are in the boats, they'll come for us." And so it goes on in our own time, the humanity of so many unrecognized millions trapped beneath the decks while unfathomable luxury is enjoyed above, both rich and poor condemned to meaninglessness.

I wonder what parts of us have hit icebergs and foundered to allow such vast social pain to continue. Yet it is worse than this: the ice has entered our hearts, become incorporated, and these frozen internal places make calculations of radical transformation of our lives seem unthinkable. Instead, pushed faster and faster towards some or another meaningless goal, fatal in its emptiness, we distract ourselves from the pain of alienation from our unfulfilled potentials and from each other with the pornography of luxury, with the accumulation of wealth and power. Movies help us forget, even as they

(continued on page 79)



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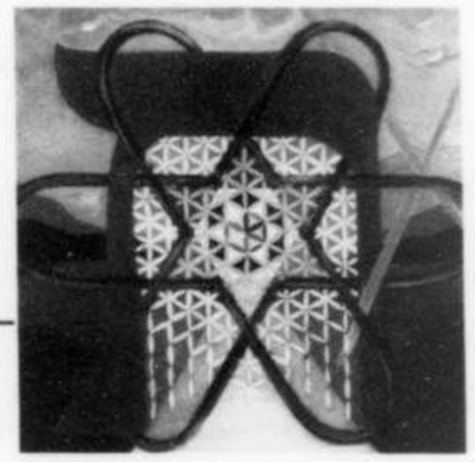
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REVIEW

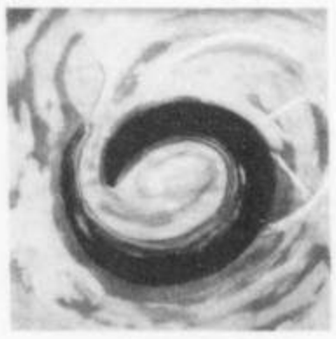
Sexual Politics of Language



Paula E. Hyman

- Naomi Seidman. *A Marriage Made in Heaven: The Sexual Politics of Hebrew and Yiddish.* Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997.

The culture war between Yiddish and Hebrew is long ended. The Nazi mass murder of the Yiddish-speaking masses of Poland, Romania, and Hungary, the forced (and voluntary) assimilation of Yiddish-speaking Jews in the new Soviet Union, and the abandonment of Yiddish by immigrants eager to make their way in their countries of resettlement combined to eliminate the social milieu in which Yiddish had flourished as a vehicle of literary creativity as well as the language of daily life. With the exception of the ultra-Orthodox, most Jews today regard Yiddish not as a living language but as a source of ethnic humor or a stimulus of nostalgic sentiment. Yet, exploring the changing relations of Yiddish and Hebrew in Eastern Europe and the Zionist *yishuv* in the last decades of the nineteenth century and the first third of this one is no mere exercise in delving into an esoteric aspect of the Jewish past. As Naomi Seidman demonstrates in her splendid book, the subject of Hebrew and Yiddish naturally speaks not only to those interested in the development of modern Jewish consciousness but also to a larger audience concerned with gender relations and with the impact of gendered bilingualism on cultural creativity.



In traditional Ashkenazi Jewish society, texts written in Hebrew were directed exclusively at a male readership; those produced in Yiddish were aimed at a female audience. Hebrew was a language worthy of respect and honor; Yiddish, a disparaged jargon. Yiddish was gendered female even though—since Yiddish was the vernacular of all Jews—men might (and did) read Yiddish books. As a woman's language, and the language of the lower classes, Yiddish played a subordinate cultural role. Seidman points out that "the relations of Hebrew and Yiddish ... often reflect and reinforce other ... polarities in what can be called the 'symbolic system' of Ashkenazic Judaism. Thus correspondence can be drawn between Hebrew-Yiddish relations and such important oppositions as sacred/profane, educated/uneducated and ... writing/speech."



Despite these tensions, the two languages existed in symbiosis until the rise of Zionism and Yiddish socialism. Some Hebrew writers of the 1880s and 1890s sought to attract female readers to expand their audience, to infuse Hebrew literature with a stronger aesthetic sensibility, and to implant a love of the language and of Jewish culture that women would transmit to their children; but most educated women continued their practice of reading Yiddish and European vernaculars, the languages to which they most frequently had access. Similarly, Yiddish writers struggled to establish the legitimacy of Yiddish as a literary language, a true language, by freeing it from its association with women. Because a mass Yiddish-reading public existed, they were more successful than their colleagues who sought to create a secular modern Hebrew literature. Mendele Mokher Sforim (Sh. Y. Abramovitsh), one of the founding fathers of modern Yiddish literature, provides a good example of the rise in status of Yiddish writers. When he began his career, he published his Yiddish works under a pseudonym in order to protect his reputation as a Hebrew writer, but it was through Yiddish that he ultimately achieved a popular audience and a prominent place in Jewish literary history.

The Hebrew-Yiddish culture wars that erupted at the end of the nineteenth century as East European Jewry became secularized reflected a struggle over issues of masculinity and femininity as Jews engaged in the sexual politics of Jewish identity. With the rise of Zionism and Bundism, the languages of Hebrew and Yiddish acquired a strong political valence. Bundists sought recognition of Yiddish as the degendered cultural instrument of the Jewish masses and Zionists promoted modern Hebrew as the appropriate language for the pioneer New Jew. As the language of the Jews of the Zionist *yishuv*, Hebrew soon acquired a mythic father, Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, the self-proclaimed creator of the first Hebrew-speaking family in Palestine. Hebrew

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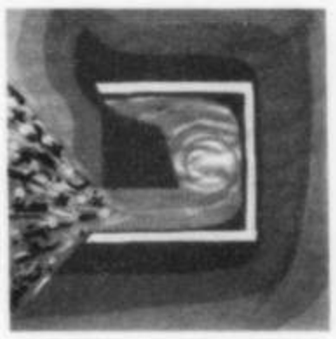
had no mother, however, and female pioneers struggled with the language more than did their male colleagues. As for the popularity of the Ben-Yehuda story, Seidman asserts that "for both Ben-Yehuda and the language pioneers that came later, Hebrew was not just a language, it was also a reorganization of traditional family structures and a recovery program for wounded Jewish masculinity" (114).



Zionist pioneers and intellectuals thus saw Hebrew as essential to their task of creating a new nation that would repudiate the Jew of the Diaspora, the *galut* (exile). Indeed, *galut,* and particularly the East European version in which the pioneers and intellectuals had grown up, was itself gendered female, for its Jews were feminized by virtue of the language they spoke, their "*mame-loshn,*" by the powerlessness they endured, and by the passivity they manifested. Because Hebrew carried such symbolic freight in nation-building, Zionists could not accommodate the bilingualism, not to mention multilingualism, that had characterized East European Jewish life.

Seidman's "marriage made in heaven," however unequal its partners, thus ends in a bitter divorce that leaves modern Jewish culture without the richness of bilingualism. In Palestine and Israel, writers in Hebrew consciously eliminated Yiddish from their linguistic repertoire in order to liberate the new society from the legacy of subordination associated with Yiddish. In the Soviet Union and in communist circles abroad, Yiddish was cut off from its Hebraic roots; a new Yiddish orthography even made it difficult to detect the Hebrew origins of Yiddish words. As Seidman notes, ironically today the two languages have reversed their traditional roles: Hebrew is the language of everyday life in Israel while "Yiddish increasingly is a language of books, a new kind of 'holy tongue' accessible only to the old, the most religious segments of the Jewish population, and to a small group of 'classicists'" (135). The bifurcation of Yiddish and Hebrew literatures deprived each of a layer of the past, of a historical mooring.

Because she is interested in the changing fortunes of Hebrew and Yiddish and what they reveal of the sexual politics of Jewish identity, Seidman looks closely at two writers whose bilingualism informed all their work: Mendele Mokher Sforim, whose fiction is known to anyone with even a mild interest in modern Yiddish literature; and the far less well known Devorah Baron, who was the first woman to stake a claim among Hebrew prose writers in Eastern Europe and who later spent much of her adult life as a recluse in Tel-Aviv. Although each worked primarily in one language—Abramovitsh in Yiddish and Baron in Hebrew—both used their bilingualism to construct a complex cultural world in which language-choice reflected psychosexual tensions.



Seidman is particularly acute in noting how Mendele, in an 1890s autobiographical novel published in both Hebrew and Yiddish, juxtaposed his two literary languages and their gendered messages of masculine learning of Talmud and feminine immersion in folklore and gender-specific liturgy. Seidman points out how Abramovitsh's initial shame at opting to write in Yiddish—the mistress or serving girl rather than the wife or lady—gave way to a full affirmation of a self-conscious and stylized Yiddish writing as he moved from Hebrew to Yiddish, back to Hebrew and again to Yiddish. In the process he made Hebrew a more supple, modern literary language that took cognizance of its "female" partner and also infused Yiddish with the literary allusions of Hebrew. His ultimate choice of Yiddish as the preeminent language for his fiction signified, at least in part, his embrace of the feminized elements of East European Jewish culture. In his final return to Yiddish Abramovitsh acknowledged two contradictory defects in the secular Hebrew literary world: that it excluded women as surely as did traditional religious writing in Hebrew, and that it was the site of sexual wantonness.

Devorah Baron was one of the excluded, despite her decision to write in Hebrew, and her efforts to be recognized as a Hebrew writer who wrote also in Yiddish. Although her early stories in both languages express feminist themes, Seidman demonstrates how Baron felt freer in Yiddish to write politically and sexually radical stories that explored the tensions between the sexes and the generations while her Hebrew fiction of the same period was intellectualized and emotionally distant. Even after she settled in Palestine and continued to write in Hebrew, she remained marginalized, by her choice of subject matter—the traditional world of the East European shtetl—and by her position as a female commentator on Jewish culture and experience.

Through her analysis of Mendele and Baron, Seidman subverts the notion that Hebrew was simply the language of men and Yiddish the language of women. She illustrates the intertextuality of Hebrew and Yiddish for the bilingual writer, who wrote for a bilingual and multilingual audience. And she makes clear that the "divorce" of Hebrew and Yiddish, though perhaps necessary for political reasons on both sides, left Jews in Europe and in the *yishuv* as culturally deprived children. The current generation of Jewish writers are still more culturally bereft. Not only is there no Jewish cultural bilingualism today, but most Jewish writers in the Diaspora are cut off from any Jewish language whatsoever. Seidman's stimulating book implicitly raises the question of whether a Jewish culture can survive in the absence of a Jewish language. ❑

REVIEW

Can Prayer Be Revolutionary?

Rebecca Alpert



- *The Book of Blessings: A New Prayer Book for the Week Days, the Sabbath, and the New Moon Festival,* by Marcia Falk. Harper San Francisco, 1996.

As a rabbi who works at the margins of Jewish life, I often find myself being asked to perform lifecycle ceremonies for a population the mainstream Jewish community refers to as "the unaffiliated." These are the (majority of) Jews in America who are alienated from or skeptical of synagogue life. They do not see themselves as religious Jews, yet the forms of Jewish religion are in fact important to them when they face critical moments in their lives. I enjoy working with this population; neither they nor I feel comfortable within mainstream Jewish life for a variety of reasons. They are often looking for a rabbi who is more like them, and I'm happy to perform the role.

This work poses some unique challenges. One that has been particularly vexing is working with people who, though looking for a spiritual framework, have trouble with God. They want a meaningful bar mitzvah, wedding, bris, or funeral, but they would prefer if we could dispense with references to the ruler of the universe (never mind the King). They have no objection to Hebrew, in fact, they understand it to be the language of their people and prefer it, as long as it's translated, and as long as the translation omits the ubiquitous "Blessed are You, Lord our God."

This situation often used to leave me in a quandary. I long ago resigned myself personally to prayer as poetic form, to saying words I did not believe, or to making minor changes to alleviate my dislike of much of the lexicon of prayer (from changing male references to omitting mentions of messiahs and chosen people). But none of this shifting gets to the core of what to do about addressing an anthropomorphic deity in archaic forms.

This problem and many others were solved when Marcia Falk's *The Book of Blessings* appeared in print. Falk is a scholar and poet, whose other works include *The Song of Songs: A New Translation and Interpretation* and *With Teeth in the Earth: Selected Poems of Malka Heifetz Tussman*. *The Book of Blessings* is only a part of a major project Falk has undertaken to create blessings for other holy days and lifecycle events, a project which has consumed her for the past decade.

In this volume, Falk has produced a masterpiece and the most profound challenge to the Jewish liturgical canon in recent memory. Through her efforts to solve the problem of praying to a patriarchal God, Falk has opened up many avenues for Jews who may never have found their way to prayer before or for those who, though they do pray, had simply resigned themselves to segregating prayer and politics.

People who have theological problems with prayer will find Falk's solutions eminently satisfactory. Falk has revolutionized Jewish prayer by removing the prayer formula, substituting instead very beautiful and poetic renderings which suggest that rather than being blessed by a deity, we offer blessing for what is good in life. What is astounding is that it all sounds so Jewish, so right, so easy to pray. That is her poetic gift.

Those who are not accustomed to the daily recitation of Hebrew prayer or who are alienated from Jewish religious life will find great beauty and philosophical resonance here, as in this version of "Mah-Tovu" ("How Good the Dwellings"), the biblical excerpts with which the prayer service opens: "How good the dwellings

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ANDI ZEISLER

Rabbi Rebecca T. Alpert is the Co-Director of the Women's Studies Program and Assistant Professor of Religion and Women's Studies at Temple University. She is the co-author (with Jacob Staub) of Exploring Judaism *(1986) and author of* Like Bread on the Seder Plate: Jewish Lesbians and the Transformation of Tradition *(1997).*

where we gather—serene and vibrant as the gardens, the rivers, the aloes and the cedar trees. How good to sit together in peace."

They will be delighted by the exquisite poetry newly created by Falk, or translated by her from forgotten Yiddish poets of past generations. This translation (the text also includes the Yiddish original) of a poem by Rachel Korn is part of Falk's Kabbalat Shabbat, the prayers to greet the Sabbath:

ALL THE WINDS

All the winds have grown still
as though someone rocked them softly
to sleep
between naked branches of the trees
on a rainy autumn night.

All the sorrows have made their home
at my doorstep, as though—in all the
world—
they had no other harbor
but my eyes, my hands, my smile,
my word.

As a prayerbook that speaks to those who don't pray regularly, Falk's book opens up the religious world to those to whom it may have been closed, and provides a bridge between the religious and the secular Jew.

Those who have political problems with prayer will also find responses in this book. Most frequently, prayer is experienced outside the realm of politics. But *The Book of Blessings* raises keen political issues that must be faced by the Jewish community. Falk's poetry challenges the Jewish community to look at new social realities. Her work is, for example, deeply committed to reflecting the realities of gay and lesbian Jews. When she writes a "Blessing for the Beloved," it is with these simple directions: "Couples may choose from the three Hebrew versions of this dialogue (for a woman and a man, for two women and for two men)." It is the simplicity of this statement that makes its politics both subtle and refreshing, and I hope Falk is at work on some such material for Jews who are not in couples as well.

Falk's havdallah blessing also makes an important political statement: "Let us distinguish parts within the whole and bless their differences." Rather than privileging one group over another, this prayer provides a metaphor for our struggles as Jews not to separate ourselves from others. In blessing difference rather than elevating Sabbath over the rest of the week or the Jews over the other peoples of the world as does the traditional havdallah prayer, Falk calls us to be engaged in a political process that draws us toward others in dialogue and coalition.

Of course, the most obvious political statement made by *The Book of Blessings* is the complete absence of gendered language to refer to God. Because Falk never refers to God as "he" or "she" or "you," she avoids the problem of assigning God the most human of attributes, gender. By doing this, she creates the only real possibility for equality for women in Jewish life. Never saying either "Blessed are You, Lord our God" or referring to God as King or Queen of the Universe avoids picturing God in human form, and ironically reinforces traditional Jewish theology which continually reminds us that God is beyond human images. In this way, Falk is truer to traditional Jewish thought than is the liturgy, which constantly undermines its theology by using words to create human images of God. By removing this problem, Falk gets us out of the tired conversations about God's gender and moves us beyond them to a new spiritual realm (a realm that was anticipated by Mordecai Kaplan's theology many years ago). So rather than praying to someone, Falk suggests in her introduction that her blessings create "opportunities to appreciate life more deeply and more purely and to gather inner strength—or, as a friend of mine put it, to find our place in the lap of the world."

Falk's poetry challenges the Jewish community to look at new social realities.

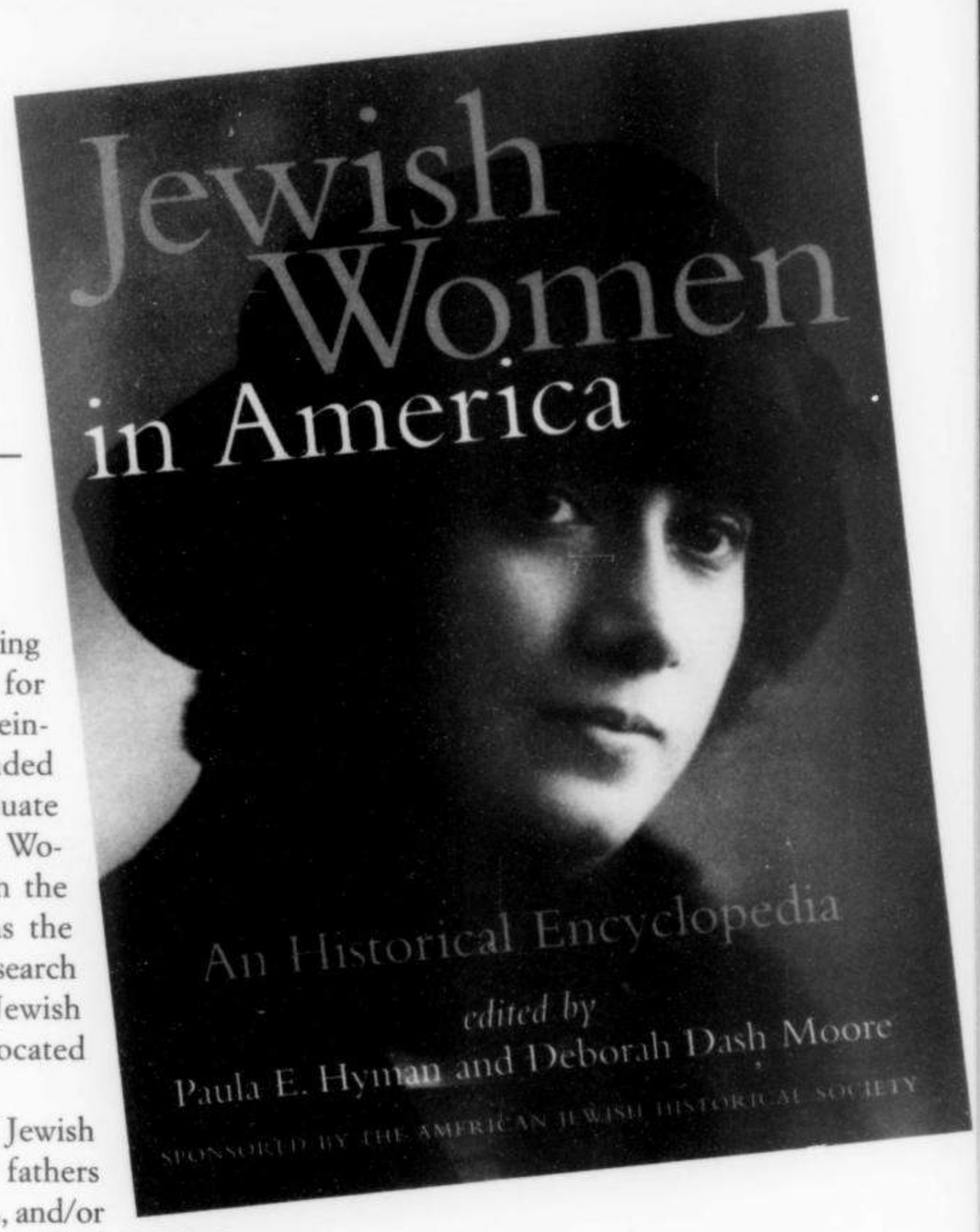
Can prayer be revolutionary? I think it can. Falk has managed to create a series of prayers that both link us to the Jewish past and disrupt many of our assumptions about what prayer should be, as in the "Mah-Tovu" and havdallah blessing cited above. These prayers are brief, and that is also revolutionary. As we fill up with more and more words, the words themselves begin to have less and less meaning. Falk's succinct prayers give us the opportunity to linger over them, to contemplate the depth of their meaning and poetry, to engage in the Hebrew in new ways. This is an opportunity not to pray by rote, not to be self-impressed with how fast or how much we can pray. Instead, we can with these new words fix on their meanings, hear their resonance with ancient words of prayer, and at the same time explore new worlds, new ideas, new ways of relating to our Jewishness.

Of course, much of what regular "prayers" like about prayer is the opposite: its fixed and timeless quality, its familiar tunes, its predictability—the opportunity to commune with God using the words as meditation and not spending too much time on what they might mean. This is the way in which Falk's work is most challenging. She does not mean this to be a new prayer book, to be turned into formulas that can then be recited. She does mean this as an educational tool, as a new compass that will allow for the possibility that prayer for this generation could be a completely different kind of experience—one of thoughtful reflection and a different kind of communication with the world outside.

Falk's book is a significant accomplishment, a work that needs to be read and debated and prayed with. It affords us the opportunity for a new kind of spiritual encounter: one that takes the politics of prayer seriously in a very crucial way. ❑

REVIEW

World of Our Mothers



Phyllis Chesler

- *Jewish Women in America: An Historical Encyclopedia,* edited by Paula E. Hyman and Deborah Dash Moore. Sponsored by the American Jewish Historical Society. Routledge, 1997.

This is a magnificently massive treasure, a 1,770 page large-size encyclopedia filled with photographs—a priceless family album of ladies in large hats, radicals-in-spectacles, suffragists holding up signs in Yiddish, Barbra Streisand as the unforgettable Yentl. Gathered together, they comprise the missing, invisible World of Our Mothers and Grandmothers. The quantity and quality of information is, seemingly, comprehensive. Drs. Paula E. Hyman's and Deborah Dash Moore's undertaking is large; they wish to include women in Jewish history. Between the misogyny of the Jewish world and the anti-Semitism of the non-Jewish world, this is no small task. Theirs is a formidable accomplishment.

However, in any project of this nature, omissions (some mistakes, too) are inevitable. Photographer Lisette Model was Catholic, not Jewish. While women of wealth are well represented here, missing is Muriel Siebert, a Jew, and the first woman to buy a seat on the New York Stock Exchange; Barbara Dobkin, whose financial contribution made this *Encyclopedia* possible and who, in 1994, founded Ma'ayan; and philanthropist Judith Stern Peck. Missing also is an entry for Dr. Shulamit Reinharz, who founded the first graduate degree in Jewish Women's Studies in the world as well as the International Research Institute on Jewish Women, both located at Brandeis.

A number of Jewish women whose fathers only were Jewish, and/or have not necessarily defined themselves or their work as "Jewish," are included—which is fair enough, given their secular prominence. However, there are too few entries for those women who have, for the last twenty to thirty years, been transforming Judaism at the root: Torah scholars, *agunah* activists, grassroots diplomats, ritualists, intellectuals, women whose place in Jewish history is already assured—but only if they are not prematurely forgotten.

Shockingly omitted, in terms of not having their own biographical entries, are: Aviva Cantor—who organized the first-ever Jewish Feminist Conference in the early to mid-1970s, co-founded and co-edited *Lilith* magazine (1976-1987) and wrote, in my view, *the* most important secular Jewish feminist work of our era: *Jewish Men/Jewish Women: The Legacy of Patriarchy in Jewish Life*; and the American-born Marcia Freedman, the first openly Second Wave feminist (and, eventually, lesbian), to be elected to a patriarchal Parliament anywhere in the world—she was elected to the Knesset and formed Israel's first Woman's party in the mid-1970s.

Who is remembered, who is forgotten, is an awesome responsibility.

Also omitted as individuals: Joan Roth, whose sublime and unrivaled photographs make her *the* pre-eminent living photographer of Jewish women world-wide (ironically, at least ten of her photos are used throughout the *Encyclopedia*); Lilly Rivlin, who was one of the earliest to work, tirelessly, as a feminist on behalf of the Israeli peace process; who wrote the first piece ever on *Lilith* in *Ms.* Magazine (1972); and who, together with artists Bea Kreloff

(continued on page 79)

Phyllis Chesler, Ph.D, is the author of nine books including Women and Madness *and the recently published* Letters to a Young Feminist *(Four Walls Eight Windows Press). She is a visiting professor of Psychology and Women's Studies at Brandeis University.*

Walking with Claude AnShin Thomas

Peter Trachtenberg



Claude AnShin Thomas on New York's George Washington Bridge.

Early on the morning of March first, following a traditional Zen service and twenty minutes of meditation, about a dozen men and women filed out of the Yonkers headquarters of the Zen Peacemaker Order and began to walk. They were dressed against the chill, carried heavy packs, and wore sturdy walking shoes, as if setting off on a nature hike. The procession passed down Broadway, crossed the George Washington Bridge, and, now in New Jersey, picked up Route 46, heading west.

Walking at the head of the column and setting its pace was a small, limber man with the shaven head, sober black robes and *rakusu*, or ceremonial bib, of a Zen Peacemaker priest. The *rakusu* was made of waterproof GoreTex; with it the priest wore a pair of black Lowas Tibetan GTXs, the Porsche of hiking boots, which had been donated by their German manufacturer. They are a forgivable luxury since Claude AnShin Thomas will be walking across the United States at a rate of twenty miles a day until he reaches the Community of Mindful Living in Albany, California, some 3,000 miles and seven months away.

He is making the journey without money, food, or support vehicles. Like centuries of Buddhist monks, he will beg for food and shelter, a practice that encourages compassion in the giver and humility in the mendicant. Although Thomas has plotted the route with a meticulousness he learned as a combat soldier during the Vietnam war, he has only a general notion of where he and his fellow pilgrims will spend each night or on whose generosity they will depend along the way.

When asked what led him to this vocation, Claude answers: "I've always been a monk." His calling constitutes a refuge from a world that he watches with the skeptical remove of someone who has been injured once too often. For almost thirty years Claude numbed himself with drugs and alcohol, or lashed out in anger, burrowing inward or exploding outward. Today, he is something of a controversial figure in the American Buddhist world. He can be hypersensitive to criticism and attack those who seem to question his motives. But as Eve Marko, the Director of Communication for the Zen Peacemaker Order, told me: "Zen practice doesn't make you perfect, it makes you more of who you are. There is nothing smooth about Claude. All his issues are apparent." While Claude's anger and tendency to withdraw can be unnerving to those who expect Buddhists to glide about in a state of unflickering serenity, his vocation as a Zen Peacemaker priest has provided him with a way of making peace with a society from which he feels essentially estranged.

Claude Thomas grew up in small mining towns in Pennsylvania. His father was a school teacher, his mother sometimes worked as a waitress and domestic. They were alcoholics. His father was the smell of cigarettes and stale beer passing through a child's room late at night. Claude's mother had bursts of rage that ended with the boy lying bloody on the floor while she stammered apologies and begged him not to tell his father.

Claude's parents separated when he was eleven. He learned to hang out in bars and pool halls. He became a skilled athlete, a kid who compensated for his small size by being absolutely fearless on the ball field. At the age of fourteen he began studying martial arts, a practice he gave up only in his forties, after earning black belts in Hop Ki Do and Shaolin Kung Fu. He learned to drink. More than anything, he perfected the aloneness that is the common inheritance of the children of alcoholics: the ability to shut out pain, to deny grief, to keep secrets, to rely on substances instead of on people, and to treat other people as substances.

Claude graduated from high school with no idea of what he wanted to do. When his father suggested that the army would make a man out of him, he enlisted. A writer in the

PHOTOGRAPH BY PETER CUNNINGHAM

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local newspaper said that if he had to charge a hill with anyone, it would be with Claude "Tommy" Thomas. It was 1965.

In Vietnam Claude became a helicopter door gunner and crew chief. As routinely as other seventeen-year-olds headed off to factories or classrooms, he would strap himself into the open bay of a Huey gunship and scud at treetop level over a countryside that might erupt in lethal fire at any moment and in which everything that moved was a potential enemy. He remembers being on ground patrol and passing a group of Vietnamese monks who, moments later, whipped out automatic weapons from beneath their saffron robes and fired, killing dozens of American soldiers.

He became just as distrustful of his own countrymen. Helicopters like his were sometimes pressed into service for interrogations. Suspected Viet Cong would be herded in with slaps and kicks, then hog-tied and made to squat blindfolded beside the open door. Once airborne, the interrogators would cajole and bully and threaten the prisoners, then push them out the door, one at a time, until somebody broke. The terrified suspects had no way of knowing that the chopper was only five feet off the ground.

He offers neither solutions nor interpretations but simply a profound attention.

Once, however, a Special Forces interrogator ordered the Huey up to 1,500 feet and, as Claude watched in horror, pitched a Vietnamese into the air as one might pitch a sack of garbage. Then he pushed out two more. "I jumped on my radio and started screaming, 'They're throwing 'em out the door! Stop them, stop them, you gotta stop them!' The response that came back was 'You didn't see nothin', Thomas. Nothin'.'"

The seventeen-year-old boy went from witnessing daily killing to becoming a killer. On some level, he even came to enjoy it. "You've got a weapon on your person at all times and you can use it whenever you want. You can fire off five hundred, a thousand, *twenty thousand* rounds of ammo at people you can't even see. Suddenly you're in a position that all your life you imagined only God has. Life or death? You decide. You have the juice."

But something inside him was recoiling. In 1967, Claude was shot down for the fifth time. He lay pinned in a capsized helicopter, his shoulder shattered. Two of his crew were dead, a third man critically wounded. He remembers: "I could smell the fuel leaking, and I could hear the gunfire hitting the helicopter. I was convinced that I would die, and I believed that I *should* die. I didn't want to survive because I hated myself and what I'd done."

He survived. He was pried out of the wreckage and taken to a military hospital, where he spent the next nine months; at the age of twenty he was discharged from the army, with a rebuilt shoulder and six citations for bravery.

But he was still at war. Back in the States, Claude drifted from job to job and through two doomed marriages, one of which produced a son named Zachary. He went to college. He wrote poetry and played in rock bands. He wanted someone to notice him, and no one did. Everywhere he went he saw Vietnam treated as a blackout in America's past and vets like himself as its humiliating reminders. Almost thirty years later he is still angry about that. In time he grew so disaffected that he left his country to travel through Europe and the Middle East, where for a while he made a living as a smuggler. His drinking and drug use accelerated, but no matter where he traveled or how he anesthetized himself, the war remained with him.

"In 1990 I found myself shut up in my house, afraid to leave," he writes. "I would walk outside and see a plane fly by; I would cringe because I would see the tree line going up in napalm, and Vietnamese running from their villages, their flesh on fire. I would walk into the grocery store and I couldn't take a can of vegetables off the shelf because I was afraid it was booby-trapped." By now he had returned to America and had been clean and sober for nine years. But he was on the verge of killing himself.

A social worker suggested that Claude attend a retreat for Vietnam veterans given by Thich Nhat Hanh, a Vietnamese monk and peace activist who had been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize by Martin Luther King, Jr. Claude came by motorcycle, dressed in black, with black, mirror-lensed sunglasses. When he arrived he reconned the grounds the way he had learned to recon perimeters in Vietnam. Later that evening Claude found himself sitting in a room full of men like him, listening to Thich Nhat Hanh tell them that they were "the light at the tip of the candle," whose experiences could help bring about the transformation of the world. He had not been face to face with any Vietnamese in twenty-three years. "I started to cry. I realized that I didn't know the Vietnamese people any other way than as the enemy. And if they were the enemy, then I didn't know how to relate to anyone else in the world other than as the enemy."

A month later he boarded a plane for Thich Nhat Hanh's Plum Village in France; other veterans had donated his air fare. He was too anxious to sleep in the dormitories and instead put up a tent in the woods nearby, which he surrounded with primitive booby-traps so that he would be alerted if anyone tried to sneak up on him. Weeks went by and he was not disturbed. His hosts were nothing but welcoming. At last he approached a nun called Sister True Emptiness and in great shame told her about the traps. He tried to reassure her, telling her that he had taken them down. The nun smiled and told him, "If you need to put them back up, put them back up."

During this stay, Claude became friendly with a Vietnamese woman with a small baby. In the intervals between

chores, talks, and meditation they would sit together on the grass. Once the baby started crying, and Claude's friend invited him to pick it up. He couldn't. Instead he began to sweat and tremble. "The same thing had happened when my son, Zack, was little. It was my job to feed him at night and I could do that. But I could never pick him up when he cried. I'd start to sweat, the room would get very small, and I'd end up pouring myself a drink and driving out into the night, just getting the hell out of there. Now it was almost twenty years later, and the same thing was happening, but I couldn't drink it away, and I couldn't leave. I had to sit there with it.

"And I remembered something that had happened to me in Vietnam. My unit had landed outside a village. And of course the moment this happened kids would come and flock around the helicopter. They'd beg for food or try to sell us bananas or pineapples or Cokes. On this particular day there were maybe twenty-five kids swarming around us. There was always the possibility that one of those kids was V.C. That kind of stuff happened all the time. So we chased them away, fired a warning burst over their heads. But when the kids had gone, we saw that they'd left a baby lying on the ground, and it was crying. Some guys went over to it. I was going to join them, and I suddenly had this thought, this voice inside me, saying *Uh oh, man. Whatever you do, don't pick up that baby.* I yelled at the others to stop, but it was too late. Someone picked up the baby, and it exploded. It had been booby-trapped. It killed three soldiers. I stood there, numb. I was covered with blood. I felt something inside my shirt, and when I reached inside my collar, what I pulled out was the baby's foot. This tiny foot."

Claude did further retreats and continued to study. In 1995 he was ordained by Roshi Bernie Glassman as a Zen Peacemaker priest, with the name of AnShin, meaning Heart of Peace. Since then he has traveled incessantly, lecturing, leading retreats, and taking part in pilgrimages (like one from Auschwitz to Vietnam). He is an electrifying speaker, witty, surprising, touchingly vulnerable. He has learned how to listen. When Claude listens to people talk about their problems, he offers neither solutions nor interpretations but simply a profound attention. "My practice is to open a space in which suffering can be touched, in which I can attend to my own suffering and the suffering of others and not turn away. And when that happens, healing is possible."

In most things, Claude challenges those he meets. While his choice partly reflects his belief that Zen practice is meant to stir things up, to bring practitioners face to face with their unexamined selves, it also suggests a man who is himself still subject to frustration, indignation, hurt feelings and even shame: in other words, to suffering.

But, of course, Buddhism teaches that everyone suffers. It would be simplifying grossly to say that Claude is healed. It would be better to say that he is recovering. He remains painfully sensitive to sudden movements or loud noises; crowds make him anxious. He still sleeps in the short bursts of someone who has learned that anything longer could be suicidally negligent. What Claude learned at Plum Village was not how to banish suffering, but how to lend suffering the attention necessary for it to be transformed into something else.

Thich Nhat Hanh has said that to practice mindfulness is to become fully alive, to experience the miraculous quality of everything one does and touches. By touching his unhappiness—by disregarding the impulse to turn away from it, deny it, or short-circuit it with a spasm of compulsive activity—Claude came fully alive for the first time since his childhood. The Buddhism he embodies may be too public, too emotional, too *messy* for some people's comfort, but it is as authentically American as Claude himself. ❑

The American Zen Pilgrimage set out of Yonkers, New York, on March first and will arrive in Albany, California in September. Individuals interested in walking with Claude AnShin Thomas, or in making contributions of money, food, or lodging, may contact the Zaltho Foundation at (978) 369-4342. They may also monitor the pilgrimage's progress on the Web at www.zpo.org/walk.

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JEAN-BERTRAND ARISTIDE *(continued from page 18)*
an invisible apartheid. This huge majority was nothing in the mind of the elite. In order to ensure that [system], they created their army to kill anyone who dared try to change it. That's why before I disbanded the army in 1994, Haiti had 7,000 soldiers controlling 40 percent of the national budget. We had 1.5 doctors for every 10,000 Haitians. But we had one soldier for every 1,000 Haitians!

ORENSTEIN: Now you no longer have an army; why is the justice system still lagging?

ARISTIDE: Allow me to give a metaphor. When you have a house which is almost ready to fall down upon your head, and you don't have another house to go to, you must move carefully to rebuild that house. If you move too suddenly, you may find that you don't have a roof any longer. This is Haiti. We have had that kind of society, and we want to change it. Before, one percent of our population controlled 45 percent of the wealth of my country. Now that they don't have the military to back them, the elites are waiting and watching the new police force to see which officers might replace their old army men. We may feel tempted to seek justice in faster ways, using violence or illegal ways, but then our house would fall upon us! Our opponents would say, "Look, they criticized us, and now they are doing the same!" So, here is a philosophical reality which includes time. What we cannot do in one day, we may do in two days, rather than risk moving backwards. That doesn't mean we will let things drag on forever. The judicial system is on track; it's very slow. But if we continue to educate people, to give the people a larger margin of participation in the decision-making, then we will create an environment where the mobilization of the collective mind, the collective expression of that thirst for justice, will put the judicial system in a social environment where what they were allowed to do will no longer be possible.



ORENSTEIN: The Haitian government recently requested the extradition of ten top coup leaders, including General Cedras, who is in Panama, and former Police Chief Michel Francois, who got asylum in Honduras. Haiti had already requested, to no avail, the extradition of Emmanuel Constant, leader of the FRAPH death squads and a CIA agent, who currently lives here in New York, and where he has said he is applying for political asylum.

ARISTIDE: On the one hand this is sad and shameful and serious, what you have just described. These are men who are accused of killing thousands and thousands of Haitians. On the other hand, this speaks to hundreds of years of our history. Haiti is the way it is not because all Haitians and foreigners are evil, but because of just some Haitians and the foreigners who help them. It is not so obvious when we talk about economic issues as when we see that Emmanuel Constant is given refuge in the U.S. But basically the dynamic is the same. What we have as a reality today is not so different from what we had before 1804; slavery, which is the dynamic of profit. Today, they don't do it the same way. There is a new etiquette: globalization, privatization, modernization, etc. But as I said, it's sad when we see that men who were involved in so much bloodshed are now protected by those who have the power to behave differently.

ORENSTEIN: The U.S. is Haiti's biggest trade partner, biggest diplomatic partner too, so to speak. But in some respects, the U.S. also seems to be Haiti's biggest adversary. The United States is harboring Emmanuel Constant. The U.S. also refuses to return thousands and thousands of coup regime documents which the U.S. soldiers confiscated from military and paramilitary headquarters when they invaded in 1994. Haitian prosecutors have requested the documents, but the U.S. refuses to return them to Haiti without first blacking out the names of U.S. citizens, who, this suggests, might have had a hand in the coup. How does this effect Haiti's relationship with the United States? Everyone expects that you will be president again in a few years. If you become president in the year 2001, how will these American betrayals affect your ability to work with your biggest partner?

ARISTIDE: I'd like to go back to psychology and philosophy to answer that question. If I choose to mistake the American government for those few Americans who harbor and assist criminals such as Emmanuel Constant, then philosophically my approach is wrong. In doing that, I will confuse the part with the totality. Not all the members of the American government are involved in these scandals. There are different branches of the American system and different people amongst them—and even within the same branches, there are Americans of very different character. There are those who welcomed me to Washington during my years in exile from Haiti, where I was among friends, who sincerely supported the institution of democracy. During the coup, many Americans went to Haiti and some even demonstrated in front of the U.S. embassy there to protect the lives of Haitian people and denounce the killing that was going on. This shows how different they are from those people who enable Emmanuel Constant to live here. So we cannot confuse part of the reality with the whole reality.

Let me use life itself as a metaphor. We have 18 billion cells in our bodies. Some are helpers: they clean, and protect, and feed. But others, in the very same system, are destructive, just as in society we have people doing harmful things. Considering that dynamic of life, we must not open our arms to what is bad and say welcome, but at the same time, neither can we get so angry that we confuse what is protecting us with what is harming. Then we would play into the hands of our enemies. Theologically, I find this expressed in the Bible as the message of God, the power of love. Love can be stronger than weapons. ❑

PHOTOGRAPH BY CAROL HALEBIAN / GAMMA

MARIO CUOMO *(continued from page 22)*



PHOTOGRAPH BY FRANCIS SPECKLER / NEW YORK POST

Nelson Mandela—are black? Is it that suffering and persecution are connected to this spirituality?

CUOMO: That's a really good question. Probably, the fact that they continue to suffer. But also, they have been deeply religious for a long time in this country, maybe because they needed religion more than some of the rest of us.

NEWFIELD: I'm trying to get to the relationship, is there a relationship between suffering and the impulse to heal?

CUOMO: Well, a lot of people have suffered. The really good people, the inspired people, take that and use it as an inspiration to understand better the suffering around them and to empathize and sympathize with it more. Some of them get bitter as a result of it. Some of them become hateful as a result of it. The good people, the inspired people, like Ali and like Bobby Kennedy, they use it to do good things. I saw that. I've seen that in *every* community. I've seen it in the Jewish community when they came back and struck down the death penalty. I saw it in the black community, the African American community. One woman who had lost three kids to crime and violence in one neighborhood in Brooklyn—Florence Davis, her name was—came and started a group of victims fighting to put down that kind of violence in her own community. To get rid of guns, to fight drugs, because three children had been lost. Instead of going crazy and spending her life in bitterness and wailing and tears and rending garments, she decided to put her life to work. No more children. She said, "I'll never have another child. I couldn't bear to have another child." After losing three. She lost three sons! Murdered! Three of them! And still heading up that organization.

NEWFIELD: That's *tikkun* squared.

CUOMO: Absolutely. That's spirituality. What else is it? Something bigger than yourself. It's a whisper that everyone gets at one point in your life. Some people listen to it, some people don't. But what it says is, hey look, your life doesn't mean a *darn thing* unless you believe in something more than your own life.

NEWFIELD: Thank you. ❑

SELFISHNESS *(continued from page 11)*

attention clash, leading both to feel cheated. In response to this perceived deprivation, each partner can become either pathologically giving or demanding (or both). The liberal appeal to help others who are less fortunate worsens the guilt that one already feels about one's healthy selfishness, while the conservative pitch to put yourself first can seem to validate the narcissistic longing that guilt and self-denial has suppressed for so long.

In contrast, the selfishness that the politics of meaning critiques is the ideal of short-term self-interest that dominates the marketplace. This is a selfishness that is intrinsically mean-spirited because it says that you can *only* be happy if you have more than others, and that the solution to feeling cheated is to cheat others first. It is a selfishness that says that the only safe place to be is in a kind of paranoid isolation tank because only then can you be safe from the demands of others. I think that it's possible to see that this experience of selfishness not only negates the central and primary place of altruism, caring, and empathy in the human psyche, but also is a perversion of healthy selfishness. It's perilously close to what happens in families when a child's *legitimate* narcissism is discouraged, prohibited, or experienced as dangerous by others. The child—and, later, the adult—experiences the world as a zero-sum-game, i.e. my gain is your loss, and vice-versa. The parents model this world-view through their failure to endorse the child's narcissism. If one's psychological world is based on a theory of scarce resources, and one's selfish wish to be cared for and loved without reciprocity threatens to deplete everybody else's "tank," then pathological selfishness will result. Either one will give up a claim to the good things in life and feel chronically cheated or else will pre-emptively "take" those things in a deliberately aggressive and insensitive way. This psychological dynamic mirrors the logic of the capitalist marketplace. When the pathologies of the social and private world reinforce each other, the bottom lines in both arenas suffer.

In this sense, the politics of meaning's critique of selfishness is actually a ringing endorsement of the healthy kind of selfishness in which people want to be valued for who they are. At times, the rhetoric of a meaning-based political movement in which people are called to their "higher selves," to a transcendent purpose, and in which images of community and ethical needs are invoked, can suggest an ideal of people who are connected but not also separate, loving of others but not necessarily of themselves, and committed to the welfare of others but not also to their own pleasures and gratifications. This interpretation would be false, but we need to be sure that our rhetoric doesn't make it even superficially plausible. We have to make sure that our theory allows for the possibility that our selves can be aggrandized without hurting our neighbor in the process. ❑

THE BIG PICTURE *(continued from page 60)*

and non-Jews have had conflicts, and, even in the pages of the Talmud, rabbis engage in permanent debate.

Despite tragedies and shortcomings, Israel continues to discover new treatments for disease, teach children to read, train the poor with job skills, give children love and hope, give homes to those who have none. These are common missions which all the people of Israel share—regardless of background or belief.

We must not hang our heads when there is still so much more we can accomplish.

Through all the debate about Israel's fiftieth anniversary, I am frequently asked difficult questions: Are peace and unity truly possible in Israel? Is Zionism to blame? Is Zionism moot?

But inside the walls of Israel's institutions, the answers to these questions exist—even if only—in shadows and fragments. As Zionists and Jews, with a common commitment to *tzedakah*—justice—it is our responsibility to bring this trend into wholeness and light and everyday life. ❑

ISRAEL AND DIASPORA *(continued from page 65)*

about the growing divisions within Israeli society and between Diaspora and Israeli Jews. At the same time, I am so excited to be sharing my spiritual thirst with so many Israelis and anxious to work at developing a common vocabulary so we can talk together. I want there to be more spiritual centers in Israel where young (and not so young) Diaspora Jews can study Judaism in its original language and in an open environment which welcomes questions and change. Equally, I want to welcome Israelis to a Diaspora Judaism which is open to the world. Living as we do in a pluralistic society encourages us to learn and share our accumulated wisdom and experience with seekers of all faiths. Here, in the Diaspora, we are able to connect with the many others with whom we share the hope of transforming this reality into the one envisioned by the prophets.

> Blessed is Yah (transcendent) who is God (immanent Creator), God of Israel, who alone works wonders.
> And blessed be God's glory forever; let the whole world be full of God's glory. Amen. Amen. (conclusion of the morning prayer)

We are indeed limbs of a single body, from our Holy Land, our origin point and the place to which we have returned to experiment with, to develop, and to deepen our national identity; to our dispersion and the experiment in voluntary spiritual community in a pluralistic society in which we Western Jews participate. Each part of the body fulfills its function and it is hubris for one part of the body to declare itself better or more right than another. The moment for living joyously in the paradox is returning. I hope we will be able to recognize this as the wonderful opportunity it truly is. ❑

MUST PALESTINIANS CHOOSE? *(continued from page 61)*

tinian Television, both of which are "official media" representing the perspectives of the Palestinian Authority and are not in any sense "public media." Permission to create a newspaper is not granted to anyone who does not accept this kind of discipline. As an example, the media is prohibited from reporting about our human rights research.

Although there are opposition parties, including Hamas, these parties are silent about the human rights situation in particular, and the political situation in general. There are two reasons: the Palestinian Authority oppresses the political opposition, arresting those who are too forceful in expressing opposition views; and, second, the Palestinian political opposition has no platform of principles, no political plans for the future, no political activities on the local level, and when they speak against the Oslo accord they never give an alternative vision. So they cannot be considered a serious political opposition. They are living in fear of the Palestinian Authority, and that leads them to keep silent about their own positions.

I know that this kind of information is sometimes used by Israeli right-wingers and by some elements in the American Zionist world to prove that Palestinians are better off under Israeli occupation than they would be under their own self-rule. But human rights is a universal necessity which should not be used for these kinds of narrow political aims. So, I refuse to be silent about these human rights violations in order to protect us from having this information misused by right-wingers. There is no legitimacy in using one set of human rights violations as an excuse to legitimate another form of human rights violations. Besides, many of the right-wingers calling for sanctions on the Palestinian Authority because of its violation of human rights are deeply hypocritical—they have no credibility because they never call for sanctions when Israel violates human rights. These people suddenly become human rights sympathizers only when these concerns can be used against the Palestinian Authority to deny the Palestinian people their fundamental right of national self-determination.

So we in the Palestinian human rights community have a difficult task. We intend to continue challenging our own government, but we refuse to be used as pawns for the delegitimation of the Palestinian struggle for freedom. We realize that there is no guarantee that once Palestine is free it will be adequately sensitive to human rights issues. This will depend on the determination of Palestinians to struggle for these rights with the same energy that they previously struggled against the Israeli occupation.

The international community should support the Palestinian struggle and simultaneously find ways to insist on the necessity that the new Palestinian state embody a democratic civil society. But please do not give credibility or support to those right-wing Zionists who are using human rights as a vehicle to deny Palestinians the right to their own national freedom. ❑

TITANIC LOVE *(from page 67)*
allow a little fantasized fulfillment of those very longings. And so we repress or cynically dismiss the love stories that constitute us and that could teach us to survive.

As a feminist, understanding the many ways romance has been used to distract women from and compensate us for our oppression, I was initially perplexed by my heartfelt and aching response to *Titanic's* central love story. But the aching was so haunting and authentic that I had to acknowledge its legitimate claim. Feminism needs to reclaim romance, this route to knowing one's self and another most deeply. In a brilliant recent essay in *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, psychoanalyst Steve Mitchell writes of the "degradation of romance." In psychoanalysis as in our culture, we are taught to distrust romance's dizziness and danger, jettisoning it quickly for something 'deeper' and safer, the less intense lovingness and companionship of marriage. And yet it is perhaps only in the state of being in love—or of religious ecstasy—that state in which we have a heightened, inspired vision of ourselves and another, that we meet what we have submerged below the surface of ourselves. Jack and Rose's love, crossing barriers of class and loosening the corset of traditional feminine inhibitions, reminds us that the tendencies to dominate or to submit and to misrecognize the other are overcome in moments of deep mutual recognition made possible by romantic states. Falling in love, an experience of perceiving what the beloved is and what is as yet only potential, is not the danger: this lurks later, in the fear and difficulty of maintaining this vision. Mitchell argues that while complaining of the lack of romance in our marriages, often seeking it elsewhere, we may unconsciously seek to avoid continuing the excitement and transcendence experienced with our original partners—and actively (though unconsciously) tend to limit those experiences with our spouses. The transcendence available to us when we love romantically is too evocative of the free moments in childhood when we hoped and felt that our aliveness was seen, only to have it suppressed or ignored, and loving passionately re-evokes this pain and makes us fear its repetition even as it delights. And so we avoid intimacy, deeper knowledge of ourselves, deeper knowing by the other.

Rose, as an old woman, tells us that Jack "saved me in every way a person can be saved." Old photos on her desk when a dying, elderly woman show her riding a horse astride (as Jack promised to teach her), standing in pilot's goggles by a plane, sensuously posing in an actress' publicity shot. Rose's capacity for adventure and sensuality were hers, not given to her by Jack, but Jack recognized them in her, and reflected them to her in his love so that she could see them and claim them as her own. The movie's transcendent loves—that for another, and for freedom from the oppressions of a class-ridden past—coalesce as she shivers on the Carpathia, rescued from the freezing water by Jack's sacrifice, and declares her independence from her family by giving her name as his, with the Statue of Liberty framed behind her. (Here, too, I resonated personally, and cried: like millions of others, I came to New York in love with this dream of the freedom to remake myself. The darkness and difficulty we encounter here, we immigrants, as we discover that we bring the past with us and inside us and that the new place opens reluctantly to us, disillusions; but the power of the dream invigorates me still.)

It is our recognition of each other as fully alive—as longing for more life, as longing for our potential to be rescued from the deep—that can save us, perhaps collectively as much as individually. If *Titanic's* romance has stirred those longings in us, enough to see it twice, three times, ten times, and then perhaps to love a person or a cause, I am grateful for its success. ❑

OUR MOTHERS *(from page 72)*
and Edith Isaac-Rose, were key New York feminist Seder mothers; and artist Helene Aylon, whose "Liberation of God" piece alone deserves a biographical entry.

There are no biographical entries for some major Jewish feminist Torah scholars and activists, some of whom are mentioned in passing, but whose importance is understated or unknown: for example, Arlene Agus, who re-introduced Rosh Hodesh to the modern Jewish feminist world; Judith Antonelli, who has published an important feminist reinterpretation of Torah; Marcia Falk, liturgical poet par excellence; and scholars Rachel Adler, Tikva Frymer-Kensky, Judith Hauptman, Rivka Haut, Vanessa Ochs, Ilana Pardes, and Judith Plaskow.

Missing are the American-born members of Women of the Wall—arguably the most important halachic, legal, civil, feminist, multi-denominational, "pluralist," Israeli and American challenge to a patriarchal, divided, Judaism. Women's struggles to pray at the *kotel* (1988-still ongoing) is only mentioned in passing. Why is there no collective entry for the American-born Women of the Wall (WOW), or for the American leaders of the International Committee for WOW?

It is important for us to remember the prophet—and the people, the inspired, grassroots energy as well as the prominent organization, one's friends and supporters as well as one's opponents or rivals. Who is remembered, who is forgotten, is an awesome responsibility. While women often err on the side of extra-inclusiveness, in this case, since the *Encyclopedia* is a first of its kind, a scrupulous inclusiveness might better have served the editors' purpose.

Thus, I urge—no, I beg—the editors to restore these inadvertently "disappeared" Jewish women in a future, paperback edition—and I thank and congratulate both Paula Hyman and Deborah Dash Moore for an otherwise splendid, stunning, accomplishment. ❑

Sikkum: TIKKUN RECOMMENDS ...

Pillar of Fire
America in the King Years 1963–65
by Taylor Branch (Simon & Schuster,1998)

The second of Branch's three volumes on America's epic hero is a monumental historical resource. It's also an important corrective for idealistic young people in their twenties and thirties who imagine that they themselves can do little to shape history but must instead wait for a new messianic figure who has the charisma and wisdom of a King. It was the other way round: the action of hundreds of thousands of us "little shots" created the climate within which King could receive national credibility, which he used in turn to articulate the highest aspirations of these "little activists" in ways that gave us greater confidence in our own ideals. Many historians can quote King telling students that "the highest good is love, and he who loves has somehow discovered the meaning of life," yet they never fully understand how the social movements of the 1960s were based on the willingness of millions of people to take that view seriously. Without understanding the centrality of these activists, the cult of King becomes a passivizing force.

The Unknown City
Lives of Poor and Working Class Young Adults
by Michelle Fine and Lois Weis (Beacon Press, 1998)



Talk about generational politics usually focuses on the needs and interests of the upper middle class, ignoring those without adequate money or power to make their presence felt except as an amorphous part of mass culture. So it's a welcome change to find a social psychologist and sociologist who address the problems of poor and working-class youth, highlighting their powerlessness and despair, but also their creativity in finding new routes to survival.

Shadow of the Other
Intersubjectivity and Gender in Psychoanalysis
by Jessica Benjamin (Routledge, 1998)

Mutual recognition requires the assertion of separate subjectivity—in order to build relationships one must have and assert a separate self, and doing so is a benefit to the other as well. Feminist theorist and psychoanalyst Jessica Benjamin champions a sophisticated view of the way we internalize the other, while seeking to avoid the danger of allowing talk about mutual recognition and caring to become a way to trap women back into their traditional role as the sole caring ones. This is an important book, worth the struggle to enter its arcane language.

A Blessing on the Moon
by Joseph Skibell (Algonquin Books, 1998)



Why can't Chaim Skibelski, murdered by Nazi troops along with the rest of his village, find peace in some future world? Why must he drag his torn and bleeding body through Europe, witnessing what has happened in the aftermath of the Holocaust? In this Kafkaesque novel where Chassidim have stolen and buried the moon in protest of a world gone mad, Chaim seems strangely reconciled to absurdity in ways that Skibell's readers will never be.

When Life Hurts
A Book of Hope
by Wayne Dosick (HarperSanFrancisco, 1998)

After tragedy, your life will never be the same. But it sure helps to have the kind of supportive community that Jewish Renewal Rabbi Wayne Dosick managed to build around himself. Yet, after coping with the destruction of all his worldly possessions two years ago, he finds that even community is not sufficient to replace the need for some deeper spiritual meaning, drawn in part from Torah and other spiritual traditions.

The Book of Job
translated and with introduction and notes by Raymond P. Scheindlin (W.W.Norton & Co, 1998)

Top of the line translation by an accomplished expositor of Hebrew poetry, complete with very useful notes. But the theological problems, not surprisingly, remain unresolved.

Conscious Evolution
Awakening the Power of our Social Potential
by Barbara Marx Hubbard (New World Library, 1998)

Advice and strategy for a world that is out of alignment, Hubbard's book is a useful introduction to some contemporary New Age thinking about the way in which individual human potential might grow into a social potential movement that will trigger a new "Great Awakening" of planetary consciousness. Her compendium of ideas on how to cooperate with the tendency in evolution for higher consciousness and greater freedom could be a useful jumping off point for the next stage in politics of meaning strategizing.

Sikkum: TIKKUN RECOMMENDS ...

Rethinking Modern Judaism

by Arnold M. Eisen (U of Chicago Press, 1998)

Eisen's fascinating account of the interaction between Jewish religious practice and the concerns of modernity provides an insightful entrance point to understanding the evolution of the theologies of America's largest Jewish denominations. Eisen argues that it is not beliefs but the variety of Jewish ritual practices that keep the vast majority of Jews Jewish. The future of the Jewish community, then, lies not in convincing Jews to share a single belief system, but in its ability to offer "experiences of meaning and community in practices satisfying both intellectually and emotionally."

Heading South, Looking North

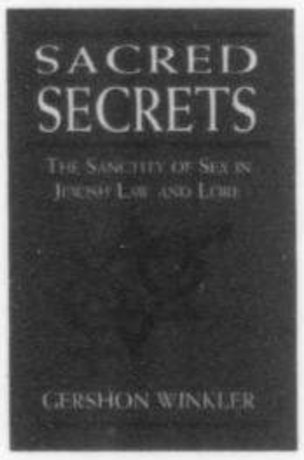
by Ariel Dorfman (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998)

A powerfully moving autobiography by one of Latin America's most significant novelists and thinkers. Dorfman takes us through the "movement consciousness" of a Latin American writer and activist supporter of Allende in Chile whose famous *How to Read Donald Duck* made him a culture hero in the U.S. as well as in Latin America.

The Courage To Teach

by Parker J. Palmer (Jossey-Bass, 1998)

A powerful rethinking of what teaching can be about from an inspired spiritual educator. Filled with practical examples from the classroom, this is an invaluable resource for how to overcome our fears of being our realest and deepest selves, and to teach from that inner space of wholeness that transcends ego.



Sacred Secrets

The Sanctity of Sex in Jewish Law and Lore

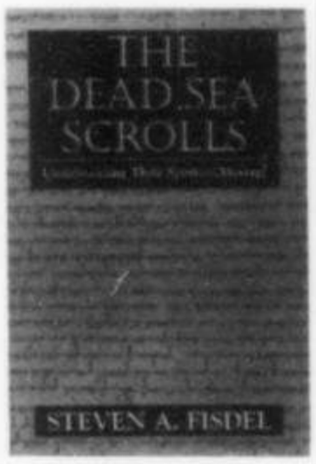
by Gershon Winkler (Jason Aronson, 1998)

Jewish Renewal Rebbe Winkler does an admirable job of showing that much of the Jewish religious tradition is powerfully committed to a healthy sexuality with responsibility, particularly those parts that originated in Judaism before our tradition became responsive to the puritanism introduced by Greco-Roman Hellenism and later by Christianity. Let the uptight beware—through a careful exposition of relevant religious texts and responsa, Winkler shows that the sexual panic in some Orthodox circles is based more on fear than on Halacha.

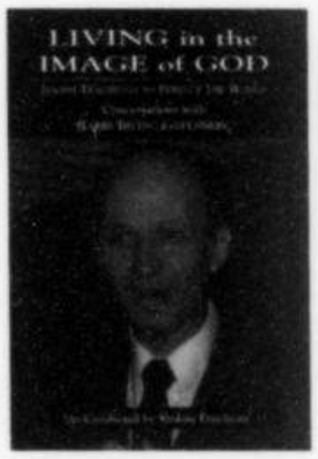
The Dead Sea Scrolls

Understanding Their Spiritual Message

by Steven A. Fisdel (Jason Aronson, 1997)



The spiritual community that lived in the desert in the first century of the common era sought to fulfill the biblical command to become a nation of priests and a holy people. Service to God had to be internalized as people returned to the way of the desert: dependence on God, social leveling, justice and humility, atonement and rectification. Moral development and spiritual evolution, rather than physical survival and material attachments, became the central focus of existence. Fisdel gives us a unique encounter with this Jewish spiritual path.



Living in the Image of God

Jewish Teachings to Perfect the World

Conversations with Rabbi Irving Greenberg (Jason Aronson, 1998)

"Yitz," as he is known affectionately to thousands of his students, is the most sane and creative voice for tolerance and tikkun in the modern Orthodox world. Though his views on Israel sometimes yield a version of "Settler Judaism," Greenberg's perspective on most issues is usually thoughtful and deserves careful consideration and respect.

The Future of a Negation

Reflections on the Question of Genocide

by Alain Finkielkraut (U of Nebraska, 1998)

This translation of one of France's preeminent Jewish intellectuals, writing in 1982 about an earlier phase of Holocaust revisionism, is still relevant. Finkielkraut demonstrates one of the many negative consequences of deconstructionist thinking, its surprising embrace of the ethos of cynicism that typically accompanies laissez-faire ideology and the moral relativism of the marketplace. Its supposedly "democratic" freedom to deny the constraints of truth, the individualism that allows "my truth" to reject as "oppressive" any "hegemonic" truth form, leads some to claim the freedom to deny that the Holocaust ever took place. This powerful reading is accompanied by an introduction by Richard J. Golsan on the more recent French receptivity to late 1990s Holocaust deniers.

תיקון

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



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