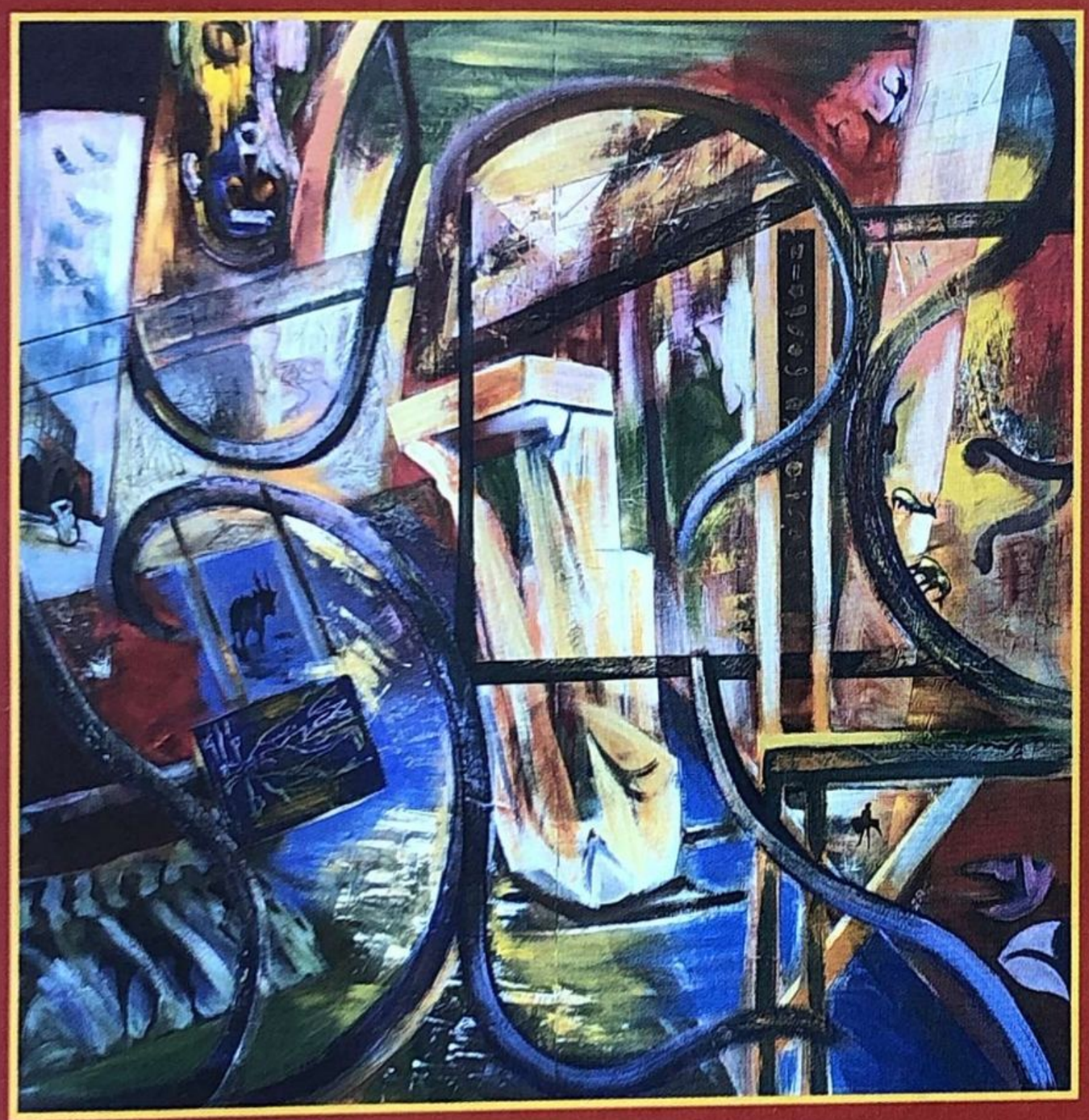
(te•kün) To mend, repair and transform the world.

TIKKUN

BIOTECHNOLOGY

A ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION WITH
JEREMY RIFKIN, LEE SILVER &
BARBARA KATZ ROTHMAN

A BIMONTHLY JEWISH CRITIQUE OF POLITICS, CULTURE & SOCIETY JULY/AUGUST 1998 $5.95



HOLOCAUST GHOSTS AND HEREDITARY VICTIMHOOD

ZYGMUNT BAUMAN

FOREIGN POLICY FAILURES: IN AFRICA

Kenneth Roth

IN HAITI

Catherine Orenstein

YOUTH ACTIVISM

Ivan Frishberg &
Mark Strama

BETRAYING KIDS

Michael Males
Svi Shapiro

Israel AT *Fifty*

PART THREE IN A SERIES

FATE OF PALESTINIANS

Azmi Bishara, M.K.,
Manal Diab, Barry Trachtenberg

JUST SAY "NO" TO UJA?

David Arnow, Benjamin Ben-Baruch, Gordon Fellman,
Irwin Kula, Mark LeVine, Michael Paley, Barry Shrage

08>
64858
0 306776 6

PLUS: Jack Newfield interviews Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.
Peter Gabel on Generating Meaning in a Workplace
Christine Benvenuto on My Conversion & Zipporah's
Arnold Eisen on Abraham Joshua Heschel

The Rope Was Innocent

and the ass, the two man-servants
below on the plain, the ram
the wood, the knife,
the fire. The pit, the rack,
the bullwhip—all the instruments

were innocent: iron slept
cold in the ground. But love
was not innocent. It was love
who gave the order and love
who obeyed, who carried and stacked

the wood, offered wrists and
ankles for the binding. Love
prepared the fire and raised
the knife, and it was love
who lowered it. Bless the animals,

who live without mercy; the ape
with her beautiful breasts,
nursing her young, the tethered
ram, and the ass grazing there
in the lowlands—little wooly ass

who cannot pray, who hears only
the braying of wind in the grass
and when death comes with its smell
of lion, answers: *Here am I*,
and falls to its knees without wonder.

—Jean Nordhaus

TIKKUN

A BIMONTHLY JEWISH CRITIQUE OF POLITICS, CULTURE & SOCIETY VOLUME 13 NUMBER 4

2 **LETTERS**

7 **FREE ASSOCIATIONS**

8 **EDITORIAL:** *Israel at Fifty—The Strategy of the Israeli Right*



"LET 'EM ISRAELIS AND PALESTINIANS WORK THIS OUT THEMSELVES"

FEATURES:

11 **ISRAEL AT FIFTY**
We conclude our three-part series by first focusing on the fate of the Palestinians with **Manal Diab**'s account of the bombing of her home (updated by **Barry Trachtenberg**) and Member of Knesset **Azmi Bishara**'s in-depth analysis of the political situation. Meanwhile—are U.S. Jews inadvertently supporting Israeli policies they abhor by giving money to UJA/Federation? We ask **David Arnow**, **Benjamin Ben-Baruch**, **Gordon Fellman**, **Irwin Kula**, **Mark LeVine**, **Michael Paley**, and **Barry Shrage** if Americans should "Just Say 'No' to the UJA?"

25 **TIKKUN OLAM**
How do we put our principles into practice? **Peter Gabel** shows how we can *Generate Meaning in Workplace Culture*. **Danny Siegel** gives pointers for *Fixing the World* in his new column, *Tikkun Olam*. And new columnists **Lawrence Bush** and **Jeffrey Dekro** apply Jewish principles to the world of finance in *The Torah of Money*.

33 **COVER STORY: HOLOCAUST GHOSTS**
Zygmunt Bauman warns against the Holocaust legacy that paints all Jews as victims, suggesting that even correct memories of the Shoah may be functioning in ways that are destructive rather than liberating.

41 **FOREIGN POLICY FAILURES**
How has U.S. foreign policy impacted other countries? Not well, according to our authors. First, **Kenneth Roth** addresses *American Failures in Africa*, then **Catherine Orenstein** describes the *Second-Hand Democracy* established under the aegis of UN human rights monitors in Haiti.

ARTICLES:

22 *Betraying Kids*
Mike Males argues that boomers are *Disowning the Future* while **Svi Shapiro** describes what is happening to a generation in which kids are *Killing Kids*.

40 *My Conversion and Zipporah's*
Christine Benvenuto finds words for her own conversion to Judaism by *Envisioning Zipporah*.

47 *Biotechnology II*
Jeremy Rifkin, **Lee Silver**, and **Barbara Katz Rothman** battle over where to draw the bioethical line.



56 *Interview*
America's preeminent American historian **Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.** speaks to **Jack Newfield** about politics, prosecutors, and the press.

59 *The Web*
Jesse Eisinger makes the Internet his business.

FICTION AND POETRY:

46 *"Politics"*—a poem by **Joshua Weiner**

51 *Bless Minsky*—a story by **Jonathan Treitel**

79 *"if the living die"*—a poem by **Elliot Wolfson**

COLUMNS:

20 *New Voices*
Ivan Frishberg and **Mark Strama** take a look at *Youth Activism*.

32 *Simply Jewish*
Rami Shapiro tackles *Death and What's Next*.

39 *Torat Chesed*
Bradley Shavit Artson's thoughts *On Suffering*.



REVIEWS:

70 **Arnold M. Eisen** on *Abraham J. Heschel*.

73 **Roger S. Gottlieb** on *Spirituality and Death*.

75 **Meg Daly** on *Letters to a Young Feminist*.

77 **Ya'acov Gabriel** on *Cantors and Klezmer*.

78 **Thane Rosenbaum** gives us *Short Takes* on the competition.

80 *Sikkum:* Books TIKKUN recommends.

Front cover: *Hall of Wonders (Agassiz Upended)*
1997, oil on wood by Ellen Levy, photographed by Oren Slor
courtesy of Associated American Artists, NYC.
Back cover: *Phoenix I: Out of the Past*
1988 serigraph by Shraga Weil, courtesy of Safrai Gallery, Jerusalem.

TIKKUN

Editor
Michael Lerner
Associate Editor
Peter Gabel
Managing Editor
Jo Ellen Green Kaiser
Literary Editor
Thane Rosenbaum
Poetry Editor
Carolyn Forché
Assistant Poetry Editor
Joshua Weiner
Jewish Book Editor
David Biale
Associate Literary Editors
Phillip Lopate, Leonard Michaels, Francine Prose, Mordechai Richler, Linda Zisquit
Contributing Editors
Stew Albert, Bradley Shavit Artson, Larry Amsel, Charles Derber, Arnold Eisen, Andrew Furman, Ya'acov Gabriel, Meredith Maran, Ruth Messinger, Naomi Wolf
Editorial Assistant
Julia Bloch
Redactor
Stanley Karter

Production and Design
David Van Ness
Art Editor
Jodi Perelman
Contributing Artists
Russ Ando, David Ball, Susan Bein, Lawrence Bush, Kevin Harris, Grady McFerrin, Mac McGill, David Regan, Richard Ross, Jen Seron, Jon Straus, Oenone Terrill

Proofreaders
Denise Fletcher, Phillip Deitch
Assistant to Literary Editor
Richard Horowitz, Moshe Zeilingold
Interns
Kim Romano, Tzaporah Ryter, Sam Steinberg
Office Manager
Megan McCarthy
Controller
Valerie Bach

Co-Publishers
Victor S. Goldberg
Danny Goldberg
Associate Publisher
Robin Aronson

Editorial Office:
26 Fell St.
San Francisco, CA 94102
415-575-1200
fax: 415-575-1434

Publisher's Office:
120 W. 44th St., Suite 704
New York, NY 10036
212-840-6843
fax: 212-840-6745

Editorial Board
Martha Ackelsberg, Rachel Adler, Gar Alperovitz, Michael Bader, Michael Berenbaum, Heather Booth, Jay Cantor, David Cohen, Dan Cohn-Sherbok, Elliot Dorff, Leslie Epstein, Sidra Ezrahi, Gordon Fellman, John Felstiner, Nan Fink, Saul Friedlander, Tikva Frymer-Kensky, Laura Geller, David Gordis, Arthur Green, Colin Greer, Robert Heilbroner, Burt Jacobson, Reuven Kimelman, Daniel Landes, Hillel Levine, Tzvi Marx, Daniel Matt, Marshall Meyer (z"l), Jo Milgrom, Elliot Neaman, David Newman, Ilana Pardes, Robert Pinsky, Judith Plaskow, Letty Cottin Pogrebin, James Ponet, Arnold Rachlis, Aviezer Ravitsky, Lillian Rubin, John Ruskay, Michael Sandel, David Saperstein, Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, Barry Schwartz, Howard Schwartz, Chaim Seidler-Feller, Gerald Serotta, Dvorah O'Donnell Setel, Stanley Sheinbaum, Uri Simon, Michael Steinlauf, Daniel Thursz, Arthur Waskow, Steve Wasserman, A. B. Yehoshua, Idith Zertal

Letters to the Editor

Politics of Cancer

To the Editor:

Henry Dreher (in TIKKUN, Jan/Feb 1998) writes that there is strong evidence for increased life expectancy in cancer from attendance at psychosocial support groups. Mr. Dreher states that profit motive, obstinacy, and "biomedical myopia" of the medical system prevent widespread and rapid implementation of social support networks. None of these can be supported rationally.

First, social support is available to most people with cancer. Structured groups are available, yet are not the only form of support—families, religious networks, and the support of medical professionals are ubiquitous. Our private oncology practice offered group support for twenty years until our retirement. The groups averaged about five to ten people out of a practice of several hundred patients—limited only by patient interest. And, ours was not the only available group. Despite availability, groups are not all that popular—probably because most people find illness a highly personal and private experience and get their support in other, less intrusive ways.

Second, I know of no systematic inertia in acceptance of support for cancer patients. Many hospitals and both small and large physician groups offer a variety of support methods.

Most important, the quoted studies have been misinterpreted and claims of effectiveness have been excessive. The Stanford (Spiegel) report was retrospective—retrospective looks at data are not as reliable as limited, prospective measurements, because of the advantage of selection. The report stated that breast cancer group attendees lived longer—on average (mean) eighteen months longer than controls. But the median difference (a customary way to express survival) was only about one month. More pertinent, however, is that therapy group patients lived no longer than national or regional averages and medians. For reasons unexplained, the comparison control group was short-lived; all having died by just over four years. Either the patient group

TIKKUN (Vol. 13, No. 4, ISSN 0887-9982) is published bimonthly for $29 per year by the Institute for Labor and Mental Health, a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization, 3137 Telegraph Ave., Oakland, CA 94609. Periodical-rate postage paid at Oakland, CA and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to TIKKUN, POB 460926, Escondido, CA. 92046. TIKKUN subscribers are members of the Institute for Labor and Mental Health. **Visit the Tikkun website at: http://www.tikkun.org.**

SUBSCRIPTION ORDERS, CHANGES, AND PROBLEMS:
Call 1-800-395-7753 or write TIKKUN Subscription Service, PO Box 460926, Escondido, CA 92046. $29 for 6 issues, $56 for 12 issues, $83.50 for 18 issues. Add $10 per year per sub for Canada and Mexico, $14 for all other countries. Institutional subscriptions: $50 for 6 issues.

Please pay for all orders in U.S. funds (including postal money orders) or with checks drawn from a U.S. bank only—Visa/Mastercard/AMEX also accepted. For back issues call 1-800-395-7753. Please allow 6–8 weeks for any subscription transaction, including receiving your first issue, solving subscription problems, or changing your address. (Bills and payments may cross in the mail.)

16 mm and 35 mm microfilm, 105 microfiche, and article copies are available from UMI, 300 North Zeeb Rd., Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Audiotaped back issues are available free of charge for blind or visually impaired people at the Jewish Braille Institute of America, Inc., (212) 889-2525.

Manuscript submission: Do not send letters of inquiry. **Non-fiction:** Send to 26 Fell St., San Francisco, CA 94102. **Fiction:** Thane Rosenbaum, 60 W. 87th, New York, NY 10024. **Poetry:** Joshua Weiner, 3 Carver St., Provincetown, MA 02657. **Letters to the Editor:** E-mail to magazine@tikkun.org. Our evaluation process may take up to four months. Submissions without a self-addressed stamped envelope will not be returned.

Copyright ©1998 by the Institute for Labor and Mental Health. All rights reserved.

Advertising queries should be addressed to Robin Aronson, 120 W. 44th Street, Suite 704, New York, New York 10036; (212) 840-6843.

Distribution: U.S. bookstores and newsstands by Eastern News Distributors, Inc., One Media Way, 12406 Route 250, Milan, OH 44846-9705; (800) 221-3148.

was aberrant, or the assignment to the two groups was skewed by chance or some other undetermined factor. In either case, the results should not be generalized to the population as a whole. There were other odd features of the study, described elsewhere, casting doubt on its published conclusions.

The UCLA (Fawzy) study of early stage melanoma patients showed similar odd results. The controls lived shorter than normally (less than 80 percent alive at five to six years), while the group therapy patients lived no longer than normally expected based on national data (91 percent at five to six years). Thus, both studies showed group support therapy not to increase survival over national data.

The USC (Richardson) study on leukemia and lymphoma patients was misquoted as having shown that longer survival was not related to compliance with the chemotherapy regimens, with implications that other, social, factors were involved. First, the study was not intended to test effectiveness of psychological factors. The study measured the effect of a few nurse education visits on longevity and patient compliance with medication-taking and office visits. The study showed longevity to be affected by severity of disease, percentage of clinic appointments kept, and compliance with medication-taking. There was no additional psychosocial support group, or psychosocial measurement.

In addition, several other studies show no difference between psychosocial group support patients and standard treatment alone. A study of Dr. Bernie Siegel's "exceptional cancer patients" (eCAPs), reported in the *Journal of Clinical Oncology* in 1993, was one of those. Thus claims for effectiveness of psychosocial support as an independent factor in survival are either dubious or untrue.

Although our search for meaning in the infinite and ineffable demand attention, science and common sense have separated religion and "spirituality" from medical practice. Modern bio-molecular medicine now shows results in both survival and cures. As we enter a new golden age of rationality and scientific medicine, we see an unfortunate

Internships at TIKKUN

in our San Francisco editorial office
or in our New York publisher's office

For intellectuals, literary types &/or political activists. Enter the world of publishing while engaging the cutting edge of intellectual, cultural, political, and spiritual life in the U.S.

- **TIKKUN Magazine** Read and assess incoming manuscripts, proofread, assist office staff, conduct outreach to authors and subscribers, organize support for peace in the Middle East and for a politics of meaning in the U.S.
- **Beyt Tikkun Synagogue** Build a Jewish Renewal community in the SF Bay Area
- **International Rabbinical Committee** Create an interdenominational *tikkun olam*-oriented organization of progressive rabbis
- **Jewish History, Philosophy & Theology Tapes** Create a set of tapes to introduce an intellectually sophisticated but Jewishly undereducated constituency to the wisdom of Judaism
- **Research Assistant to the Editor** as he works on books in Jewish history and Torah
- **Publishing Intern** in our NY office working on circulation, advertising, direct mail, fundraising

TO APPLY, write a self-revealing personal letter telling us why you'd be good at TIKKUN, what excites you about the magazine, and which internship area appeals to you. Internships are unpaid, but are invaluable experience for your future in the literary world, publishing, politics, or academia. Minimum commitment of 12 hours per week. Write to TIKKUN INTERNS 26 Fell Street SF CA 94102 or e-mail magazine@tikkun.org

---

High Holidays with Beyt TIKKUN

COME VISIT THE SF BAY AREA FOR THE HOLIDAYS
—AND DAVEN WITH **RABBI MICHAEL LERNER**
AT TIKKUN'S JEWISH RENEWAL SYNAGOGUE.

REGISTRATION INFO: CALL 415-575-1432

OR WRITE **BEYT TIKKUN COMMUNITY SYNAGOGUE 26 FELL ST SF CA 94102**

retreat toward unproved methods and mystical thinking that colors even the simplest interpretation of scientific data.

WALLACE SAMPSON, MD
Former Chief, Medical Oncology, Santa Clara Valley Medical Center
Editor, The Scientific Review of Alternative Medicine

Henry Dreher replies:

Support groups are available in many if not most cancer hospitals, but they rarely conform to the structured therapeutic and mind-body approaches used in the Spiegel and Fawzy studies. Dr. Sampson's comment that sources of support are ubiquitous badly misses the point: the medical community has made an insufficient commitment to caring for the interpersonal and psychospiritual dimensions of cancer. Ideally, patients would be informed about meaning-based therapies as soon as they are diagnosed, and they'd be encouraged to participate in these group or individual treatments. Moreover, health professionals would make sure that patients had strong support systems and knew how to use them. How important is social support? One prospective study, published recently in the journal Cancer, *showed that breast cancer patients with many people in whom they could confide were 20 percent more likely to be alive after seven years than patients with no confidants.*



Sampson dismisses David Spiegel's study of metastatic breast cancer patients who lived twice as long by participating in his psychosocial treatment group. First, he wrongly criticizes the study as "retrospective." Spiegel began *by randomly assigning eighty-six patients into a treatment or a control group, followed their progress, and obtained data on survival after ten years. This is a randomized, controlled,* prospective *study—the gold standard of clinical research. Using mean survival as a measure is valid; so is the use of median. The fact that median may be "customary" should not infer that the use of mean is bogus.*

Dr. Sampson is correct when he says the therapy participants did not live longer than national or regional averages. As it happened, the entire sample did worse than national norms. But mainstream science—which Sampson claims to champion—usually poob-poohs clinical research that compares a treated group to national norms or historical controls. The reason, put simply, is that a given sample of individuals may not reflect national norms. That is why mainstream science demands that researchers take largely homogeneous patient populations and randomly assign them to treatment and control groups—the randomized trial. Indeed, when mind-body therapists have published research using national norms, their findings have been summarily dismissed. But now, in a twisty sort of logic, Sampson rejects a well-designed trial and asks for comparisons with national norms. It's a sophisticated version of changing the rules once the game is over.

The fact that Spiegel's sample as a whole did worse than expected is not irrelevant. Spiegel himself has acknowledged this as one more reason to replicate his study, and he is currently doing so. But Spiegel had searched for any possible explanation for his findings other *than that his treatment was responsible for the survival difference. He controlled for every key measure of disease severity to see whether the treatment effect could be explained by some biological factor, but he found none. (An editorial in the journal* Lancet *accompanying Spiegel's study said his methods were "beyond criticism.") Given this fact, it is all the more astonishing that all of the patients in the control group died after four years, while fully one-third of the treatment group survived. After ten years, there were three survivors from the entire sample, all from the treated group.*

With regard to Dr. Fawzy's study at UCLA, Sampson says that the melanoma patients in the control group lived shorter than normal based on national data. In fact, Fawzy proved that his control patients did not *die sooner than expected, using a far more compelling basis of comparison. He matched every control patient to another melanoma patient at the same clinic in Los Angeles with the same group of surgeons and doctors. Each matched patient had precisely the same extent of disease. Fawzy found that the survival of the control subjects was virtually identical to this matched group of patients. Thus, when Fawzy discovered after six years that 29 percent of the control patients had died, as compared with only 9 percent of the treated patients, it was not because the control patients died at a higher rate than expected. Further, Dr. Fawzy controlled for every key biological factor that could have explained the survival difference between treated patients and controls, and none of them did. Sampson either did not read the study carefully or he ignored Fawzy's methodologic rigor.*

Sampson makes conspicuous errors in his critique of the Jean Richardson study at USC. After noting that cancer patients in the brief supportive educational program lived longer than control subjects, I added that their improved survival had nothing to do with medical compliance. I can see how my wording here could be misconstrued in one narrow respect. In fact, in the researchers' final analysis, long survival was linked to three specific factors: medical compliance (consistently taking a prescribed drug), less severe disease at the study's outset, and participation in the program. (Sampson conveniently leaves out the latter.) What I meant was that participating in the program brought a survival benefit that had nothing to do with medical compliance. *Sampson disregards the researchers' own conclusion that "special educational and supportive programs ... are associated with significant prolongation of patient survival due to,* as well as independent of *their effects on compliance" (emphasis mine). These investigators, who were not mind-body therapists or advocates, were nonplused by their own finding, speculating that the additional support from health care providers could have made the difference.*

Sampson mentions Dr. Bernie Siegel's clinical trial published in 1993, which showed no significant difference between cancer patients in the mind-body treatment and control groups. But that was truly a retrospective study—exactly the kind of research design that stringent scientists like Sampson normally find utterly unconvincing.

I, too, am concerned about cancer patients who pursue unproved methods while eschewing potentially effective ther-

apies. Yet I know of no serious mind-body scientists or clinicians who promote their treatments as alternatives to cancer therapy—only as adjuncts.

Finally, Sampson's wish to sever spirituality from medical practice is unfounded, particularly in light of the remarkable finding by epidemiologist Jeffrey Levin that "over 250 empirical studies have appeared in the epidemiological literature in which one or more indicators of spirituality or religiousness, variously defined, have been statistically associated in some way with particular health outcomes." Rather than retreat from spirituality in medicine, we should find rational and *compassionate ways to study the psychological and medical correlates and consequences of a spiritual life. Overall, Dr. Sampson reveals an* a priori *bias against mind/body medicine, which would explain his strenuous and often faulty arguments against research that heralds a new paradigm.*

Mandatory Minimums

To the Editor:

Danny Goldberg's criticism of contemporary drug laws in his "Publisher's Notes" (March/ April 1998) seems a bit off the mark, and fails to note the history of the modern "draconian" punishments he decries.

Mandatory minimum sentences for drug possession were instituted in the late 1980s because judges in some communities were excessively lenient in their sentencing of drug users and dealers. This leniency meant that drug traffickers could operate almost at will in many inner cities. As long as they were not apprehended with a large quantity of drugs (say, a quarter-pound of cocaine), they could usually avoid serious prison time.

Thus, veteran drug dealers were able to remain on the streets for year after year, accumulating wealth and prestige. Especially in poverty-stricken neighborhoods, drug dealers became role models for many young people who saw no other avenue to success. And the dealer's ease in avoiding prosecution enhanced this image of the dealer as a rebel against the "System," a system which many urban youth already believed to be stacked against them.

With the arrival of crack cocaine on the scene in the early 1980s, an already woeful situation in inner cities spiraled out of control. Here was a drug which was both cheap and addictive. A crack user could get started for $5 or $10, and within weeks would be spending hundreds of dollars a week for "rock." As might be expected, many crackheads resorted to robbery, burglary, or prostitution to feed their habits. The dealers, seeking to protect their shares of the market, armed themselves and added bloody "turf wars" to the escalating climate of criminality.



While many politicians, activists and writers have, like Danny Goldberg, remarked upon the fact that mandatory minimum sentences have increased the proportion of young African American men behind bars, the fact is that these sentences resulted from the outcry against the drug-fueled criminal culture of the inner cities—an outcry which came from the law-abiding black families who live there. The fact is, these drug dealers were preying upon their own communities.

The obvious problem with mandatory minimum sentencing is that it does not allow the judge to make distinctions between degrees of criminality. Yet, had it not been for judges who thought it merciful to turn drug dealers loose on the street with minimal punishments, government would never have resorted to such drastic measures.

For two years now, violent crime in America's major cities has been declining—a trend applauded across the political spectrum. Is it not possible that mandatory minimum sentencing has played some role in this welcome trend? After all, the fellow who's caught with a dozen rocks of crack might be the same fellow who has been involved in robbery, burglary, or assault. Crack dealers are not noted for their civic involvement, and a crack habit is not generally conducive to productive social behavior. By sweeping drug dealers and users off the street, the justice system has removed much of the fuel that was feeding the conflagration of criminal violence in our inner cities. Meting out harsh sentences for drug possession sends a definite message to young people: Stay off drugs or be ready to go to prison.

One suspects that Mr. Goldberg, a white guy from a middle-class background who came of age in the Sixties, has misunderstood all this. For such a person, the use of drugs is associated with rebellion against the Establishment, with liberation from confining social norms, indeed with "expanding consciousness." Unfortunately, in urban communities, the hopelessness of addiction is an Establishment all its own, dictating perverse social norms of crime and despair, and threatening to extinguish rather than expand "consciousness." Likewise, the romantic Sixties ideal of the criminal as revolutionary—an ideal embodied by the Black Panthers and the Weather Underground—has given way to the ugly reality of criminals as heartless, selfish thugs.

If the Left wishes to be taken seriously, it must cease its puerile infatuation with death-dealing criminals as the "vanguard of the revolution." Criminals are criminals, and they belong in prison. There is nothing progressive, enlightened or merciful about allowing drug dealers, robbers, rapists, and murderers to roam urban neighborhoods at will. If the Left will not fight to ensure that poor and working-class families enjoy safety in their homes and on their streets, what good are all the good intentions in the world?

ROBERT STACY MCCAIN
Gaithersburg, MD

Co-Publisher Danny Goldberg Replies:

I am sorry to disappoint Mr. McCain, who seems to want to argue with a straw man's clichés from the Sixties. I have been publicly and privately anti-drug for twenty-five years, having produced anti-drug TV. spots, raised money for several rehab centers, etc. I identify with none of the silly, Sixties catch phrases about drugs that Mr. McCain decries.

In a perfect world in which nobody did anything wrong, we would need no cops, no prisons, and no TIKKUN. *In the real world, how to punish or forgive transgressions is one of the central moral issues of a society. One can morally oppose robbery,*

for example, and also morally oppose cutting off the hand of a chicken thief.

Contrary to McCain's implication, the primary voices against mandatory minimums and other excesses of the "drug war" have been African American leaders such as the chair of the Black Congressional Caucus, Maxine Waters, who articulated the unfairness of the sentencing disparity between crack and powdered cocaine in TIKKUN *(Sept/Oct 1997). Black members of Congress are elected by "law-abiding families" in the inner city, not convicted felons who can't even vote.*

The fact is that a white cocaine abuser will receive a much lighter sentence than a black crack user of the same amount of the same pharmacological substance. This is racist and immoral.

The fact is that marijuana and LSD are not associated with "robbery, burglary, or prostitution." Yet tens of thousands of people who have committed no other crime than using and disseminating them are in jail for years or decades while violent criminals can be released early or given shorter sentences because of the irrational mandatory minimums Mr. McCain is attempting to defend.

The fact is that regardless of the original intent, mandatory minimum laws are structured so that the bigger dealers Mr. McCain is concerned with often get reduced sentences because they can turn in other dealers, whereas relatively innocent bystanders such as girlfriends or drivers who get caught playing a minor role in a drug transaction have no ability to get such reductions because they don't know any drug dealers. Of course, the big drug dealers can afford expensive lawyers and thus have another huge advantage over the working class and low-income victims of the "drug war."

If drug users or dealers also are "robbers, rapists, and murderers," they obviously can and should be prosecuted and punished for those crimes. However, to take people who have committed no other crime except drug consumption and low-level dealing and subject them to a decade or more of brutality when half of the leaders of modern society committed similar crimes when they were younger is immoral.

In a perfect world, no one would want drugs because their inner sense of spiritual connection and self-esteem would preclude the desire for them. In the real world, most teenagers and some adults from all families—poor, working-class, or wealthy—go through a period in which they want to get high, some from alcohol, some from prescription drugs, some from illegal drugs. However, those who are not wealthy and cannot afford expensive lawyers are vulnerable to paying devastating consequences while the rich are sent to the Betty Ford clinic. A Left that doesn't "take seriously" such unfairness in the name of a puerile infatuation with being "taken seriously" by the conventional wisdom's flavor of the month is morally bankrupt.

Israel at Fifty

To the Editor:

There may be two wronged peoples in what is now Israel/Palestine, but they are not equally wronged qua the history of Palestine.

Before 1948, the Arabs of the British colony of Palestine had no control over their borders or anything else in public policy. For every Zionist in the period 1890–1948 who wanted coexistence with the Arabs in Palestine, there was one (I'm being charitable here) or more who didn't. As there were Arab atrocities against Jews, such as in Hebron in 1929, there were also Jewish atrocities; more significantly, thousands of Palestinian Arabs were killed by the English during the massive uprising in the late Thirties.

From the Palestinian perspective, there was a two-front war, one against the English army and one against the incoming European Jews whom they saw as a dispossessing force. If you think that you are going to ever get the Palestinians who were thrown out or who fled from the horrors of war to recognize your "equal right" to live there, you are not living on planet Earth. The best thing is to acknowledge the injustice of the past and present and to realize that, *in this case*, the Jewish people are more victimizer than victim.

I would never expect Native Americans or Mexican Americans to recognize the "legitimacy" of the U.S. imperial conquest. They will only recognize the *fact* of it, exactly as the Palestinians recognize the fact of Israel's conquest. By insisting on the *equal* legitimacy of the State of Israel in the eyes of the Palestinians, you are only playing into the hands of the Right and setting up a precondition which is as impossible to satisfy as it is morally repugnant.

MICHAEL P. HARDESTY
Oakland, CA

To the Editor:

Rashid Khalidi's article in the March/April issue of TIKKUN was thought-provoking and quite sad.

It is important to note that, in the 1800s and early 1900s, Arab inhabitants of Palestine frequently attacked and rioted against Jews. In Safed, Jews were attacked in 1834, 1838, and 1929. There were major riots in Hebron, Safed, and Jerusalem from 1936 to 1939. The riots in Hebron caused many Jews to leave for safer locales. During World War II, the Mufti of Jerusalem and many other Arab inhabitants of Palestine actively supported the Nazis and the "final solution" for the Jews.

If the Arabs had accepted the UN partition, the Palestinians would be celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of their state too. When the British mandate ended, the Arabs in Palestine joined with the armies of six neighboring Arab countries to attack the fledgling new state. The majority of the land which would have been given to the Palestinian Arabs was conquered by Egypt and some by Jordan. Contrary to what Khalidi asserts, the birth of Israel did not necessitate the "bloody infanticide" of Palestine. Israel did not take their country away from them!

I am truly saddened that the Palestinians have suffered so much. The mistakes made had tragic consequences for them (and also for Israel). But blaming Israel for these mistakes and asking us to atone for them is not fair!

If Khalidi insists on Israel revising historical facts as a condition for reconciliation, he makes reconciliation impossible. There has been enough suffering on both sides. Perhaps the best approach is to look forward, as neighbors who want to live in peace with each other.

RABBI JOSHUA L. SEGAL
KAREN R. SATZ
Nashua, NH

Free Associations

The Last Kabbalist of Lisbon

That's the title of an extraordinary first novel by Richard Zimler which sets a murder mystery in the midst of a pogrom raging in Portugal in 1506 against "New Christians" (Jews who had been forced to convert by King Manuel). Berekiah Zarco, a young manuscript illuminator, sets out to discover the murderer of his kabbalist uncle; in the process, he comes to grips with the mystifying complexities of living in a city where Jews are the constant target of mobs incited to pillage and murder by Dominican priests, a city where Moslems are the Jews' most plausible allies.

This book should be required reading for every Christian who wonders why Jews blame the Church for the popular anti-Semitism that was later appropriated by secular nationalists and fascists. Zimler's picture of Jewish oppression in Portugal also reminds us that God's absence, used as a post-Holocaust reason for despair and atheism, was every bit as problematic in past generations when we faced Inquisition, pogrom, and expulsion at the hands of Christians, or before that, the destruction of Jewish society by Greek and Roman imperialism.

In this novel, Kabbalah emerges as a response to God's absence, but ultimately it can never totally fill that ontological nullity. Indeed, at moments one feels as if Zimler's kabbalistic wisdom is meant to replace the hopeful embrace of the God of transformation and healing.



Student protesters celebrate President Suharto's resignation.

Indonesian Democracy?

Well, not quite. The international bankers who want their loans repaid are not about to let Indonesians determine their own future. They will continue to use the IMF and the World Bank to squeeze the Indonesian economy—and low income people will suffer most.

Still, the power of the students to overthrow a dictatorship that had seemed impregnable only weeks before should remind the most cynical among us of the central contention of TIKKUN: the healing of the world is possible, structures of domination in the world can be overturned, and the way it will happen is not through some charismatic political leader but through the action of ordinary and sometimes seemingly powerless people like the students who took to the streets against overwhelming odds in Indonesia a few weeks ago.

"The Globalization of Spirit"

That's the name of the course our editor Rabbi Michael Lerner will be teaching at Elat Chayyim July 27–August 2. It's not too late to sign up. 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 at 1-800-398-2630.

Indian & Pakistani Nuclear Madness—And Ours

We join in the world's dismay over recent testing of atomic weapons by India and Pakistan.

But we don't share the hypocritically self-righteous tone in which this criticism is articulated.

Five major powers control nuclear weapons, the United States the biggest and most powerful among them. In our arrogance of power, we think it's fine to stockpile these weapons and to spend billions on delivery systems that make them a credible threat to any potential enemy, and yet at the same time we feel free to give lectures to other countries who wish to join this club.

Well, as India and Pakistan show, this double standard won't work. It's not hard to imagine third worlders reasoning thus: "Sure, the big powers want to keep their hegemony. They want to prevent the rest of us from acquiring the weapons that would make us their equals. Those who first held gunpowder and guns would have preferred if the rest of us didn't have them. Yet guns were a great equalizer, making it possible for those of us who were physically weaker and outnumbered to fight back against our oppressors. Nuclear weapons are similar equalizers."

Faced with that kind of argument, the only really compelling reply is that these kinds of weapons are so wildly destructive to all life on the planet that no one ought ever to use them under any circumstances. But that argument would work only under one circumstance: if the United States took the lead in unilateral nuclear disarmament, or in creating a multilateral process of nuclear disarmament. If the world were going in that direction, India and Pakistan would have more trouble explaining to their own people why they were willing to undermine this trek to disarmament. But under the present circumstances, the outrage of the nuclear-armed states isn't really very persuasive. ❑

PHOTOGRAPH BY BULLIT MARQUEZ / AP PHOTO

Israel at 50

PART THREE IN A SERIES



EDITORIAL

Strategy of the Israeli Right:

Keep the U.S. Out

The main locus of political struggle for Middle East peace is shifting to focus on the role of the United States; the peace movement will plead with the United States to take decisive steps to pressure Israel toward accepting a Palestinian state willing to live in peace with Israel, while the supporters of Occupation will push for the United States to stay outside the conflict and to let the parties involved decide for themselves.

Netanyahu and Arafat have argued so intensely over how much land should be returned to the Palestinians in Stage II of the process because both sides know that it is extremely unlikely that there will ever be any further Israeli withdrawals as long as the Israeli government is dominated by right-wing forces. If Netanyahu's claim that a withdrawal from 13 percent of the land would constitute a security threat to Israel is true, then that claim will be equally true and hence unacceptable whether or not we call the negotiations "Stage II" or "Final Settlement." Nor is Bibi lying—further withdrawals would be a security threat if you think "Israeli security" includes security for settlements set up in the West Bank for the sole purpose of blocking significant concessions of land for peace, filled with provocateurs who would be happy to die for the sake of maintaining their supposedly God-given right to possess the entire biblical Land of Israel. Such settlements are, of course, extremely vulnerable to Palestinian rage, precisely because of their goals and their flagrant land grabs. If we allow right-wing cabinet minister Ariel Sharon to define Israel's borders, as he explicitly said he was doing in the 1980s when he helped create these West Bank settlements, then we simultaneously give credibility to Israeli security worries.

Those Israelis who designed the Oslo accords are now saying publicly what they promised Arafat privately: that by this stage Palestinians were supposed to have had more than 50 percent of the disputed land under their control, and that the final settlement was to have given them almost all of the West Bank except for some small revision of boundaries to satisfy security concerns and to incorporate some of the settlements closest to the pre-1967 "Green line" (the rest would have either been dismantled or agreed to live in peace as a Jewish minority within a Palestinian state).

Arafat has shown considerable flexibility in accommodating U.S. demands that he shrink his request for Stage Two withdrawals from 30 percent to 13 percent, and he has complied with Israeli and U.S. demands for crackdowns on suspected terrorists (nothing amazing about the latter, since in doing so he also cracks down on domestic dissent, as Bassem Eid explained in TIKKUN May/June 1998).We have little sympathy for the authoritarian regime of Yassir Arafat, and even less for the terrorists of Hamas. We support instead the democratic forces among the Palestinians, forces most effectively represented by Azmi Bishara (whose words in this issue of TIKKUN and in our Nov./Dec. 1997 issue provide a very different kind of direction for the Palestinian people both inside and outside the Green line). But we also recognize that Arafat is in power, that his proposed Palestinian state will at least give the Palestinians the bare minimum of self-respect that they need, and hence will provide them with a genuine incentive to abandon terrorism. And Arafat's pragmatism is in sharp contrast to the arrogant rejectionism that motivates Netanyahu even as the latter goes through the motions of participating in a peace process.

Given Netanyahu's determination to prevent a Palestinian state from arising on the West Bank, his desire to enter final settlement talks without significant prior concessions is shrewd. Netanyahu knows he has a public relations "trump" card to offset any pressure on him to make significant concessions in those final talks: Jerusalem. Netanyahu will effectively use his refusal to negotiate even a symbolic presence for a Palestinian state in Jerusalem as his excuse for why a final settlement agreement can never be reached with the Palestinians.

Faced with this reality, Arafat has only one card he can play: to proclaim a Palestinian state on whatever territory Palestinians control when the five years allocated by the Oslo accords are finished (September 1999). Whether this proclamation means anything *de facto* depends on two factors: U.S. recognition and UN membership (which the United States might prevent through its UN Security Council veto).

Indeed, the only thing that might turn final settlement talks into something real would be the fear that the United

States might in fact recognize a Palestinian state and allow it to join the UN. Without that fear, Netanyahu has a clear path to continue the Occupation and to repress Palestinian demonstrators (thus making terrorism seem to some Palestinians to be the only path through which their legitimate anger can be expressed).

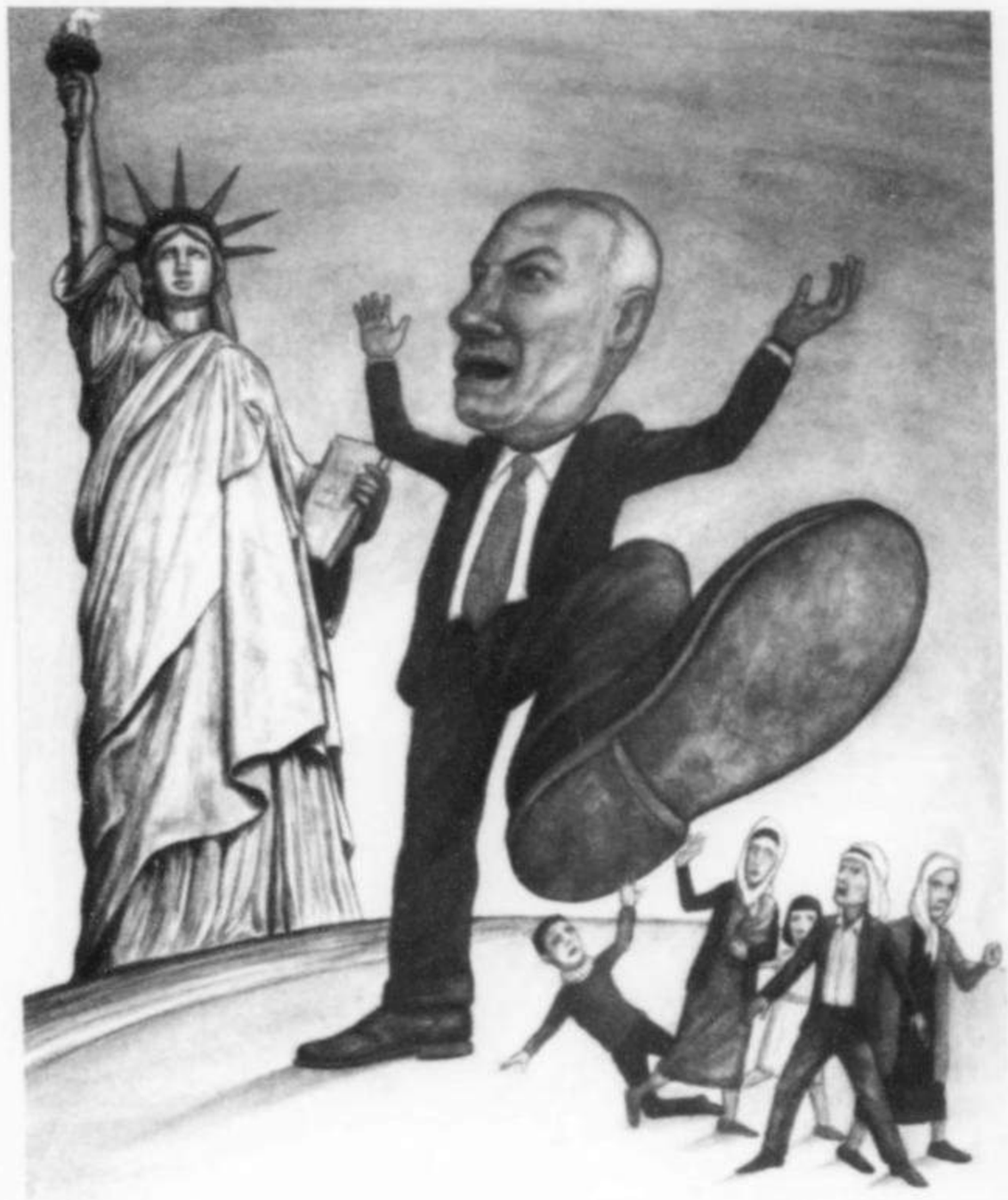
No surprise then that the major thrust of pro-Occupation propaganda is shifting from an attempt to justify Netanyahu's refusal to cede territory to a much more limited claim: "Let the parties decide for themselves, free from U.S. pressure." Of course, one of the parties in this conflict has been massively armed by the United States, has been given powerful economic assistance, and has become one of the most powerful military/economic forces in the world (something that Jews who lived through the Holocaust still cannot seem to compute in their own self-assessment), whereas the other side has no army, has lived under occupation for thirty-one years (longer than the entire time between the start of World War I and the end of World War II), and is daily faced with new land grabs by Israeli settlers protected by the Israel Defense Forces.

U.S. neutrality equals Israeli dominance and rejectionism, given the present configuration of forces. The status quo will continue, Palestinian rage will find expression in terrorism, that terrorism will, in turn, strengthen the hold of Israeli right-wingers, and peace will seem like an "idealistic fantasy."

So the major locus of political struggle in the coming year will be in the United States and about the role of the United States.

Right-wing Jews have already launched preemptive attacks against anyone who wishes to see the United States play a role in negotiating peace by defining even the articulation of a U.S. vision for a final settlement as "dictating the terms of settlement." Moreover, these same right-wingers who shamelessly criticized Rabin's efforts to build peace and who lobbied Congress to take positions on Jerusalem and on Arafat in opposition to Rabin's policies are now rolling out their pre-Rabin slogans that "American Jews have no right to organize for a particular vision of what Israel should do or be unless they are willing to move to the Middle East and share the risks." Of course, none of these Jews would have accepted the proposition that Americans ought not to have criticized Soviet treatment of Soviet Jews unless they were prepared to live in Russia.

Then there's the tired old "You shouldn't criticize Israel without giving equal attention to criticizing Arafat" kind of argument. What makes this particularly inappropriate is that Arafat has already conceded to U.S. pressure on the issue of Stage II land demands, and he is likely to make many other concessions in the future (not because he is a "good guy," which he decidedly is not, but because he believes that a peace accord that would yield a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza is in the best interests of his people, while the forces that support Netanyahu do not believe that such an accord would be anything but a sellout of the historic claims of the Jewish people to the biblical Land of Israel).



"LET US ISRAELIS AND PALESTINIANS WORK THIS OUT OURSELVES"

So here is what we need: a group of Jews who are willing to unequivocally give the following message to Clinton, Gore, and to all of our elected representatives: "We define as pro-Israel not those individuals who support the morally and politically destructive policies of the Netanyahu government, but rather those who are willing to pressure Israel to follow a path that will be, in the not-too-long-run, of far greater value than Netanyahu's policy of perpetuating occupation. We intend to use our political, economic, and intellectual clout to show that those who go along with Netanyahu are actually destructive to the best interests of the Jewish people and to the best interests of the United States as a country seeking to make more real its best democratic aspirations."

Most immediately, all of us who support peace must make it safe for President Clinton to give out the following message to the American people: "Because I want Israel to remain strong and secure, I will do everything possible to push Israel toward accepting a Palestinian state that is willing to recognize and live in peace with Israel as a Jewish state. I believe that Israel can best achieve that goal by negotiating in good faith to create such a Palestinian state, because such good-faith negotiations will produce a

ILLUSTRATIONS BY RUSS ANDO

Palestinian state more likely to live in peace with Israel. But if Israel is not willing to help create such a state, and allows the five years of Oslo to lapse without an agreement with the Palestinians that gives Palestinians the same right to national self-determination that Jews rightfully claim for themselves, then I will make sure that the United States does what it can to help in the creation of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza that is willing to live in peace with Israel and willing to do its part, consistent with respect for human rights, to combat terrorism. One way or the other, a Palestinian state willing to live in peace with Israel will emerge, and I hope that Israel will play a role in helping that process rather than opting out by refusing to negotiate in a serious way within the five-year limit of Oslo."

Making Clinton feel that he can make this kind of statement without facing an overwhelming barrage of charges that he is anti-Semitic or anti-Israel is what we can do to help bring peace to Israel. And we have the right to do this, because peace in the Middle East is in the best interest of the United States, a country of which we are citizens and whose policies we have a perfect right to shape (leaving aside all the powerful arguments of Torah that tell us that we must surely reprove our fellow Jews if we see them doing something that is manifestly wrong or self-destructive).

A first step on this path has been taken by Cherie Brown, who has initiated a public call to stand up for peace. Brown is the director of the National Coalition-Building Institute (headquartered in Washington, DC) and has been involved for many years in working to strengthen Jewish identity and in building Israeli-Arab dialogue.

Joining her in putting her statement forward are Rabbi Mordechai Liebling, director of the Jewish Reconstructionist Federation, signing as an individual; Reena Bernards, who has been active for a decade in bringing together groups of Jewish, Arab, Palestinian, and Israeli women; Rabbi Michael Lerner, editor of Tikkun; and Rabbi Arthur Waskow, director of The Shalom Center. Dozens of others, including Letty Cottin Pogrebin, have already signed on, and hundreds more will have done so by the time you read this.

Below is the statement that Cherie Brown is circulating, and which you may wish to sign and circulate among your friends and community.

U.S. Jews, Break the Silence

Yitzhak Rabin courageously pursued a course of peace through the Oslo peace accords. The current policy of the Netanyahu government is wrong. It reverses years of progress between the people of Israel, her Arab neighbors, and the Palestinian people. WE CANNOT REMAIN SILENT.

We, the undersigned individuals represent U.S. Jews who want to return to the courageous policies of Yitzhak Rabin. We do not back the policies of the Netanyahu government. The time is now to organize Jews of every background to speak out against the current Israeli government's return to a policy of fear and non-cooperation with her Arab and Palestinian neighbors.

We call on all like-minded Jews to join us. Help us to launch a national signature campaign and collect as many names as possible of Jews who will say publicly that they do not support Netanyahu's policies.

Help us show that the vast majority of U.S. Jews endorse a return to Rabin's policy, as expressed in the Oslo accords, to exchange land for peace. Let it be known that we welcome the efforts of the Clinton administration to encourage the Netanyahu government to return to the Oslo commitments.

We look forward to fulfillment of the Israeli national anthem, "Hatikva," the hope. We maintain that just as the Jewish people need to live "*Am Chofshi B'artzeinu*," a free people in our own land, so the Palestinian people need the option to live a free people with their own state alongside us, in peace with us.

We agree with Shimon Peres when he said: "Let me say it clear: 'In order for there to be a Jewish state, there must be a Palestinian state.'"

We join with Jews everywhere when we say we are Jews who yearn for peace and a secure Israel. And this is the best way to bring about a secure Israel.

Do Not Let Your Silence Speak for You

Join the Break the Silence Signature Campaign. Gather as many signatures of U.S. Jews as you can who endorse this statement. *Please let us know right away:* E-mail NCBIinc@aol.com with a copy to shul@tikkun.org or send names and contributions to:

Break the Silence Campaign
P.O.Box 65780, Washington, D.C. 20035

☐ Please add my name to signers of the BREAK THE SILENCE statement.

☐ I enclose a contribution of $____ to help publicize it.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS

CITY/STATE/ZIP

ORGANIZATION/TITLE (OPTIONAL)

PHONE/S

E-MAIL

Source: I read about this in Tikkun Magazine!



Manal Diab

Facing Israeli Violence

A Palestinian Woman's Personal Account

Twice in the last six months, my roommates and I, Palestinian women living in our native land, were attacked by our Jewish neighbors in what is a continuation of the oppression of Palestinians by Israelis that began in 1948. As all of the world knows, Palestinians continue to be treated as unwanted foreigners in their own land.

In July of last year, the three of us, all Palestinian Israeli citizens, moved into an apartment in the West Jerusalem neighborhood of Musrara. Musrara was divided into two sections by the border between Jordan and Israel from 1948 until 1967. The eastern portion is mostly Arab, the western portion mostly Jewish. The western half is undergoing a process of gentrification and many new apartment buildings are under construction. The vast majority of residents in these new apartments are secular Jews. We moved into the top floor of one of these new buildings because of its convenient location—close to downtown and to our jobs—and the fact that the rent was within our budgets. We did not deliberately choose a Jewish neighborhood, but moved here because we felt that everyone should be able to live wherever they want.

If we were Jewish women under attack by Arabs, the police response would be dramatically different.

Musrara borders on Me'a She'arim, the home of ultra-Orthodox Jewry. Over the past ten years, the population of this neighborhood has been expanding beyond its borders. As part of this expansion, my roommates and I have been undergoing a vicious campaign of intimidation designed to expel us from our home. As we walk through the streets of our neighborhood, we constantly hear whispers and comments pointing us out as Arab; all of the neighborhood knows that Arab women live on the street. People look at us with a mixture of fear and wonder, not understanding how Arabs, especially Arab women, can live in what they consider to be "their" neighborhood.

We are not the only Arabs in the neighborhood; below our building is an Arab home. They too are subject to harassment, as are the residents of a convent at the top of our street. For us, the violence began with verbal attacks (with cries of "Go to Jordan! Go to Gaza! To Ras El Amoud! This is not your country!"), then graffiti on our door (including swastikas), and stones thrown at us by children of the Talmud Torah. Now, the violence has reached a point where we have been attacked on two occasions; on October 13, 1997 our door was set on fire, and on December 1, 1997 a lethal bomb exploded on our doorstep.

After the first attack, I was in shock. I could not believe that the violence that we are faced with everyday, in the streets, in the stores, at work, followed us to our home. The response of the police was appalling. They did not follow through with an investigation; they did not do anything either to give us more protection or to try and find our attackers. For example, after the bombing, I spotted a Hasidic man on a bicycle riding out of the neighborhood—a very odd occurrence at such an hour. I begged the police to stop and question the man, but they ignored me. This was the beginning of a pattern of indifference that has continued to this day.

Because we are Arab women, the police refuse to do anything to protect us. They will not post an officer on the street. They will not even step up patrols in the neighborhood. Even after the second attack, when a lethal bomb was placed at our door, the police have still refused to assist us or to make our building more safe. Even when Mayor Ehud Olmert came to our apartment following the firebombing, he was not so much concerned with our right to live anywhere in the city as much as he wanted to know why we were living in a Jewish neighborhood, as if we were somehow to blame for the attempt on our life. This is in stark contrast with the support of the Arab family next door, who has visited to encourage us to stay in our apartment, to assert our right to live here. The police have tried to convince us that other Arabs are most likely to blame for the attacks, ignoring the overwhelming evidence to the contrary: the swastika on our door, the stones thrown at us by Hasidic children, the Hebrew word "nevella" [a biblical term for a female rotting carcass] written on the wall in our stairwell, as well as the Hebrew words "Manyakim Hakhutsa" [Fuckers Get Out] written by our mailbox.

If we were Jewish women under attack by Arabs, the police response would be dramatically different. Every Arab in the neighborhood would be arrested, every family

ILLUSTRATIONS BY RUSS ANDO

Manal Diab is a Palestinian woman born in Tamra, in the north of Palestine. She has been active in women's organizations and is currently teaching at Al-Melawiye school in the Old City of Jerusalem. She is studying for her B.A. at Hebrew University.

would have been woken up from their beds. Dozens of police would stay in the streets. Identity cards would be confiscated. But because we are Arab victims of Jewish violence, living in a Jewish state, we are not considered worthy of even the most basic protection.

Many people have asked me if this has changed my sense of identity, if these events have forced me to reconsider how I look at myself as a modern Arab woman living in a Jewish state. Rather than a reconsideration, the attacks on my life have only strengthened my sense of alienation and seclusion. To be a modern Arab woman subjects me to two levels of oppression. Growing up as an Arab woman in Israel, I was always taught, in school, by the government, that I was an Israeli, but I always have felt myself to be a second-class citizen because I am not Jewish. In a Zionist context, to be Jewish means that you have all of the power and all of the rights—to be Palestinian means that you are not an equal member of this society. No matter what the official propaganda states—that all citizens in Israel are in fact Israeli—I have never in my life considered myself an Israeli, I have never felt that I have a place in a Jewish state, yet I still consider this to be my land.

I live between worlds. I am not at home while under Israeli rule, and also, as an independent Arab woman, I am subjected to oppression from traditional Arab society as well. It does not matter whether I am Muslim or Christian; the patriarchal mentality of traditional Arab society requires me, because I am a woman, to live according to a strict moral code which forces me to be a second-class person. To assert my right of self-determination, to live as a free woman, is something for which I must struggle every day.

In order for everyone living in this land to feel at home, the Jewish State must be replaced with a secular state, one that recognizes the validity of all of its peoples. I believe in one secular state that encompasses all of the pre-1948 borders. The answer is not Oslo. The choice is not between Likud and Labor (as both support a Jewish country), nor between Israel and the PLO (who want to divide the land). Those leaders who state that the answer is to divide Palestine do not represent me. How can my people, our land, be split in two? How can the village of my ancestors not be a part of Palestine? I believe deeply in Palestine, that this land is Palestinian land. But I also recognize the reality, that there are many Jews here also. So I believe in one state for everyone. I know it is a dream, but it is a good dream. ❑



Barry Trachtenberg

May 1998 Update on the Bombing of Palestinian Women

May 1, 1998
Dear Friends,

On April 30th at 12:40 A.M., the apartment of the Palestinian women in the Musrara district of Jerusalem, Manal and Rim Diab and Sonya and Wafa Khoury, was once again the target of a bombing attack. This was the third such attack on their lives. No one was hurt, thank goodness. Two of the women were alone in the apartment at the time.

This time, the attack was vastly overshadowed by the events of Israel's fiftieth year. The only reporters who came were ones who were familiar with the story, and who knew the women in the flat. In none of the stories regarding the events of Israel's fiftieth anniversary in the U.S. print media has this terrorist attack as yet been mentioned. In Israel itself, there is a lack of strong emotional feelings around this third attack. What strikes me as peculiar is that there seems to be an absence of outrage this time. Not an absence of care, mind you, but in some ways people here may have gotten "used" to such a horrible and extreme occurrence. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that there is a greater recognition that this is one more terrible event in a string of terrible events.

What makes the low-key attitude towards this bombing odd is that this attack, the third since October 16th of last year, happened on the evening of Israel's fiftieth anniversary. The most powerful thus far, the blast was strong enough to blow some of the stone tiles off of the wall in the stairwell, and it seriously damaged the door, making the apartment considerably more vulnerable to attack. A symbol of how Zionism and the State of Israel have been, in large part, predicated on the displacement, exile, repression, and murder of the Palestinian people, the fact that the bombing took place on this evening in particular is important in a way very specific to this case. After the second bombing, it became clear that in spite of the evidence to the contrary the police were convinced that these crimes were

Barry Trachtenberg is a graduate student of Modern Jewish History at UCLA. He is spending the 1997-98 academic year in Jerusalem. From October 1997 until May 1998, he was part of a volunteer civil guard assisting the Diab and Khoury sisters.

personal, not political. Mayor Ohlmert actually said such a thing in their apartment the morning after the second attack. The police were convinced that the attacks were from other Arabs, who were trying to keep these women "in line." But the evidence to the contrary was strong—the swastika on their door, the stones thrown at them by Hasidic children, the Hebrew word *"nevella"* (a biblical term for a female rotting carcass) written on the wall in their stairwell, as well as the words "*Manyakim Hakhutsa*" [Fuckers Get Out] written by their mailbox—and yet ignored by the police. It was easier for them to write this off as Arab-on-Arab violence and thus refuse, as they have done up until now, to provide even the most basic protection for these women: increased patrols on their street, replacing the door to the building with one that swings shut and locks automatically, fixing the lights in the stairwell. The police have not even provided the apartment with a replacement fire extinguisher since the last blast. Quite simply, they have done nothing to make the women's lives any safer, adopting the attitude that it is better to focus on catching the criminal(s) than to spend energy on making the apartment safer in the meantime.

The linking of Independence Day and the bombing of April 30th refutes all such arguments of Arab-on-Arab violence, and the police must now be pressured to step up their investigation of the ultra-Orthodox Jews who have been harassing these women since they moved into the apartment last July. They must investigate the Yeshiva boys at the top of the street who throw stones (one was arrested briefly last week for such an act), and who have learned how to shout in Arabic, "Arabs get out!" No longer can the police dupe themselves into believing that these are personal crimes, directed against these women for personal motives, instead of crimes motivated by the fact that these women are Arab, that they are women, and that they are independent, strong, and refuse to allow their will and determination to be free to be crushed.

What is happening to the Diab and Khoury sisters is a reflection of the terrible plight that Arabs experience when trying to live as independent, free people in Jerusalem. Under the present city administration, Jerusalem is undergoing a process of "relentless Judaization," to use Edward Said's apt term. As the entire city comes more and more under Jewish control, its administrators are doing all they can to displace and interrupt Arab life in the city. This includes a continuous attempt to end the private shared taxi service that transports thousands of Arabs to and from work every day (I myself have been in such taxis that are stopped by policemen who search everyone and arrest those without proper papers); it includes the constant harassment of merchants outside of Damascus Gate (just two weeks ago, I watched while two Israeli soldiers, each perhaps twenty years old, continuously kicked over the food baskets of elderly Arab women selling produce at the Gate); it includes checkpoints around the city where only Palestinians are stopped to have their papers examined. This is apartheid. What is happening to the women of Ido Ha'Navi Street in Musrara is another step in this process of apartheid.

Some people have said to me, "The police are conducting an investigation, so the city therefore is not complicit in the acts of terror against these Palestinian women." I respond: this is the way the terror of apartheid here in Israel works. Extremists take action which is clearly illegal; the settlers who occupy the center of Hebron provide the most striking example of such behavior, but one could easily list dozens of such blatant criminal acts. These extremists push the boundaries further and further, and then the government, often wishing to appear as moderate (when in fact they are often supporting the extremists), shifts farther and farther to occupy what they consider to be a neutral, middle ground. To continue the example of the Jews who are illegally occupying Hebron, the State, as part of its fiftieth year celebration, gave tens of thousands of dollars to the settlers to throw a party, which thousands of people, including Israel's two Chief Rabbis, attended. What began as an act of extremist violence (those first Jews who came and occupied a building in Hebron) has now become formally recognized as a part of Israel and is celebrated as such by the State.

What is happening to the Diab and Khoury sisters is a reflection of the terrible plight that Arabs experience when trying to live as independent, free people in Jerusalem.

The events are linked: the bombing of my friends' apartment, the soldiers who kick over the food baskets of elderly Arab women in the marketplace, the disruption of transportation services in East Jerusalem, the building of Jewish homes on what Israelis call Har Homa in the eastern portion of the city, the knocking down of the homes of Palestinians which were built without the permits that are required but impossible to obtain, the Israeli identity cards which mark one's nationality as Jewish or Arab and are thus used as a basis to discriminate … all of this is linked.

We all hope that the police will finally catch the terrorists who placed the bombs at the home of the Diabs and the Khourys. We hope that the police will actually do all that they can to arrest the perpetrators. All of us hope that the campaign of terror against them will finally be ended. What really must be ended, however, is the ideological commitment of Israel to eradicating the presence of the Palestinian people who, in spite of fifty years of oppression, displacement, torture, and murder, refuse to disappear. ❑



Azmi Bishara, Member of Knesset

Arab Citizens of Palestine

Little to Celebrate

There's not much for Israeli Arabs to celebrate as they face the fiftieth anniversary of 1948. What happened in 1948 was the establishment of a Jewish State and the disintegration of a Palestinian reality in this land. Palestinian society was dispersed and destroyed, so you can't really expect us to look back on that moment with nostalgia or fondness or a celebratory mode—regardless of how one feels about the Israel that subsequently developed.

Arabs in Israel are part of the Palestinian people and the Arab nation, sharing Arab culture, religion, and language; they had this Arabic identity long before the State of Israel. Israel was not founded at Israeli Arabs' choice or in coexistence with them, though they remained in Israel and eventually were allowed to become citizens unlike their brothers, sisters, cousins, and friends on the West Bank, in Gaza, and in the refugee camps of the Palestinian Diaspora. They remained, but what did not remain was any independent Palestinian economy or any Palestinian city. Except for education, no realm of Israeli Arabs' lives remained autonomous. They had a right to speak and write in Arabic, but in every other respect they were marginalized onto the sidelines of dominant Israeli society. In the early years they lived under Israeli military rule, and were only allowed to vote in Israeli elections beginning in 1967. In this same year, 1967, the rest of the Palestinian people came under military rule without becoming citizens, living under military rule just as had Israeli Arabs until that year.

But even when these Israeli Arabs were allowed to vote, it was as part of a Jewish communitarian democracy, a democracy unified not by its Israeliness but by its Jewishness. The Israeli Supreme Court ruled that Israel was a State that was Jewish in its essence and democratic in its character. Israeli Arabs then, even today, are part of the form but not part of the essence of the State in which they are citizens. It is not citizenship, but Jewishness, which regulates the relationship between individual and state.

Everything changed for Israel in 1967. Suddenly, worldwide Jewish investment in the State dramatically mushroomed. So did military aid: in one year, 1968, Israel received as much aid from the United States as it had in the entire nineteen previous years of its existence. The implications of 1967 became clear in the 1970s: a rise in investments, a rise in living standards which led to an expanded middle class, the privatization of social services, competition between political parties, the rise of the right wing political bloc, and a loosening of the hold of the Labor party and agricultural militarism in politics (a phenomenon manifested by the decline of the kibbutzim).

In response to these changes, Israeli Arabs went through two phases: from 1967 to the mid-1970s, they rediscovered their Palestinian identity through their encounter with the West Bank and Gaza, an identity which previously had been repressed through military-occupation-generated fear. This phase also marked the development of a new Arab middle class and intelligentsia that would become the repository of Palestinian nationalist consciousness in the face of the defeat of Arab nationalism as represented by Nasser. After Land Day, March 30, 1976 (the first one-day general strike by the Palestinian people protesting the Israeli confiscation of their land—the first time that Arabs in Israel used civil disobedience), Palestinians began to realize that they were torn between demanding equality in Israeli civil society and demanding an independent national identity. So the second phase, a phase of compromise, began: we began to demand equality in Israel and to demand a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza (a state which we will not become part of).

In the 1980s, as Israel's economy really jumped, and there was a corresponding increase in individual rights, so too the economic status and individual rights of Israeli Arabs also increased. So a process of Israelization began among Palestinians, and a section of the Palestinian intelligentsia began to realize that the national identity of Palestinians was becoming even more confused; Palestinians now wanted to emphasize their Israeliness, yet they still were not really being let into the dominant Israeli society. In fact, Israel was becoming even more exclusively Jewish, more right-wing politically, more hostile to the Palestinians. The growing Palestinian middle class intelligentsia started wanting something more than an economic trickle-down; it wanted to share in the shaping of their own lives, not simply to respond to what others had planned for them. They were told, in response, that they had been given economic opportunities in return for political quiet. And they realized: we are not really citizens, we are tolerated guests. That truth became apparent in the mid-1990s when some Israelis started saying that Yitzhak Rabin's decision to make peace was not legitimate since he relied on Arab votes to constitute his electoral

---

Azmi Bishara is a Member of Knesset from the party of the National Democratic Assembly-Brit Le'umit Demokratit (BaLaD).



majority—the message was that Arabs are not really part of the society, that relying on their votes made Rabin's government illegitimate, and hence that it would be appropriate, from the standpoint of right-wingers, to kill him. The guy who assassinated Rabin said that he killed him because Rabin was giving away parts of Israel and relying on Arab votes to support this policy. So suddenly in the mid-1990s, the marginalization of Palestinian identity became clearer.

Today, as settlements expand, a genuine Palestinian state in the West Bank seems less possible than it did in the mid-1970s. And equality within Israel seems even more unlikely as Israel becomes more self-consciously not just a Jewish State (that is, a state with a majority of Jews and a Jewish character) but a State of the Jews. Israel is not willing to create an Israeli nation, because it already has another nation, a Jewish nation. So where does this leave Israeli Arabs? How can we get a sense of national identity, a sense of belonging that will give meaning to life?

I came back into politics and was elected to the Knesset to address this issue: the cultural marginalization of Israeli Arabs from their own identity and their civil marginalization from full citizenship. I want Israel to become a society which officially recognizes itself as a state which contains two cultures, one a Jewish majority culture, the other, a Palestinian national minority living inside a Jewish majority, sharing citizenship. Israeli society must recognize Palestinian national identity as a legitimate nationality to be respected—this is my project, and the compass for my political activity. The state itself may have the cultural character of the majority, but its relationship to citizens should be regulated by citizenship and not by their religious identity—in short, I want Israel to become a state of its citizens. By the way, I want this for all the states of this region—that all these states become states of their citizens. So we don't say to the state, "Give me this or give me that" but instead we say that it is our right to be part of the decision-making about our society. I don't want a generous state to make good decisions about budgets for my community—I want to be part of the decision-making process that determines my budget.

If a Palestinian state emerges, I believe it is very important that it be democratic. That's why I'm critical of Arafat's Palestinian Authority—because the rule of law is better than despotism. But Israel does not seek a democratic society in Palestine, but rather the despotic rule of someone who will respond to Israel's demands without having to deal with the messiness that democracy would entail. So I do not see the emergence of a democratic Palestinian state on the West Bank or Gaza. Rather, what I see is the expansion of Israeli settlements and the development of bantustan regions which approximate the development of a system of apartheid for West Bank Palestinians. This will be apartheid in the sense that one land area is occupied by two groups, one of which has sovereignty, political rights, and the freedom of movement, while the other group does not. As this apartheid system develops, the conflict for Israeli Arabs will become even more complex, because it will mean that we will be asking for political equality in Israel while Israel is oppressing our people in the West Bank; in effect we will be asking for equality with the oppressors of our own people.

(continued on page 65)

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF RNS / REUTERS



David Arnow, Benjamin Ben-Baruch, Gordon Fellman,
Irwin Kula, Mark LeVine, Michael Paley, Barry Shrage

Just Say "No" to UJA?

A Roundtable

Background Note:

In recent years, a growing number of American Jews have been disturbed by two Israeli policies: those aimed at thwarting the Oslo Peace Accords with the Palestinians, and those that seem to give state authority to the Orthodox establishment in Israel while denying Reform, Conservative, Reconstructionist, and Renewal Jews equal religious rights. These issues are behind a growing questioning of the validity of giving money to the United Jewish Appeal (UJA)/Federation, the most successful and powerful arm of Jewish fundraising for Israel in the United States. Monies raised for Israel by UJA/Federation are channeled through the United Israel Appeal to the Jewish Agency. Critics contend that those monies eventually end up directly or indirectly supporting West Bank settlements and religious institutions that teach their students that the donors of these funds may not really be Jewish at all. These concerns have been present since the founding of the State of Israel, when the religious status quo was established which gave the Orthodox Chief Rabbinate power over marriage, divorce, and conversion. Recently, however, these issues have been inflamed by Orthodox Jews' physical assault on Conservative Jews seeking to pray at the Western Wall, and by the attempts of some sectors of the Orthodox establishment to prohibit recognition of conversions performed by Reform and Conservative Jews in Israel.

The controversy has been further intensified by the statements of some Israeli leaders, most notably Member of Knesset Yossi Beilin (former Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs under Shimon Peres and now a Member of Knesset for the Labor Party), that call for Americans to stop sending money to Israel and to spend their monies instead on educating their own communities to offset the growing crisis of Jewish continuity (a crisis which we at TIKKUN *have maintained is rooted in part in the materialism and ethical bankruptcy that manifests itself in uncritical political support—and monetary donations—to Israeli Occupation policies).*

For years, many American Jews have sent money to alternative funds, like the New Israel Fund, to bankroll specific projects in Israel they wished to support. Today, the question being asked is not whether these other routes are appropriate, but whether it is time to take a further step and stop giving to UJA/Federation until it stops giving monies to Israel's Jewish Agency. So we asked a range of Jewish leaders and thinkers to comment on the proposition, "Should we 'Just Say No' When UJA/Federation Calls?"

David Arnow is past president of the New Israel Fund and vice president of UJA/ Federation of NY. Benjamin Ben-Baruch is an applied sociologist and is on the board of the Jewish Reconstructionist Federation. Gordon Fellman is professor of Sociology at Brandeis University and chair of its Peace and Conflict Studies Program. Irwin Kula is president of CLAL-The National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership. Mark LeVine is a fellow at the International Center for Advanced Studies at NYU. Michael Paley is executive director of synagogue and community affairs at UJA/Federation of NY. Barry Shrage is president of Combined Jewish Philanthropies of Boston.

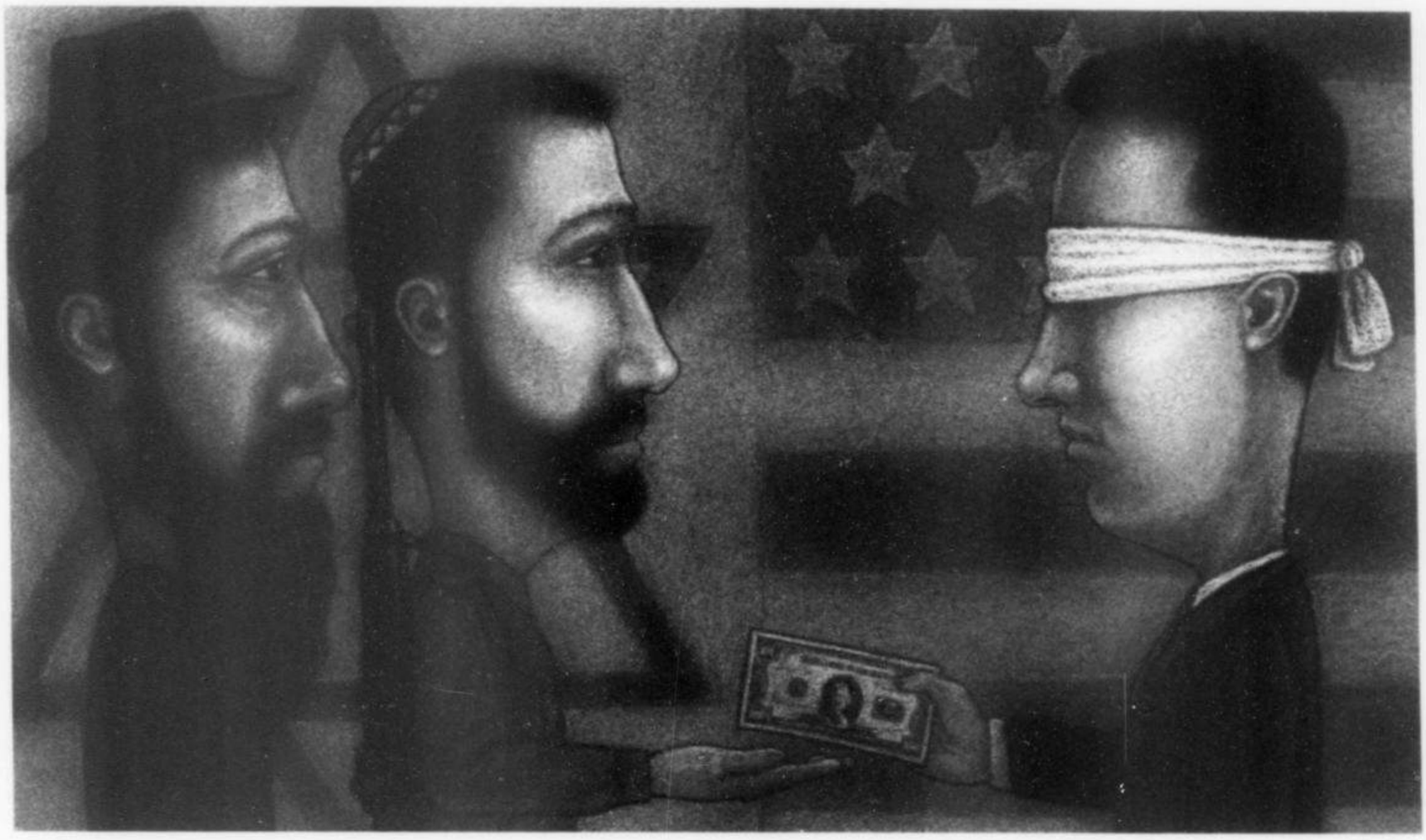
Roundtable

BENJAMIN BEN-BARUCH: I believe it is unethical to give to the United Jewish Appeal, for several reasons:

First, the UJA is the fundraising arm of the Zionist Organization/Jewish Agency. These are political institutions, not philanthropic institutions, and giving money to them is putting money directly into the hands of Israeli politicians who advocate the very policies that many American Jews oppose. As one text on the Israeli economy puts it clearly, the Jewish Agency is one of the "national institutions" that performs governmental functions and frees government funds to pursue its other tasks (including the building of the infrastructure of West Bank settlement activity). We should be giving money to Israel, but not through quasi-governmental bodies—we should give directly to those institutions that share the democratic and human rights values of the American Jews who are donating this money.

Second, giving to the Jewish Agency through the UJA supports a discriminatory, two-tiered system of social services: the Jewish Agency provides social services almost exclusively to Jews. Since it administers and provides some funding for important social service functions that would otherwise be provided by the government, basic social services are denied to Israeli Arab citizens. American Jews ought not to be involved in a process of discriminatory allocations of social services.

MICHAEL PALEY: The Jewish Agency may once have been a quasi-governmental agency, but it is not that today. And UJA contributes no money to the government or to the military, but directs its money to supporting social services in Israel, in particular supporting immigrants from Ethiopia and the Soviet Union. The UJA/Federation is a philan-



thropy in the best sense of the word, showing that American Jews have a stake in the well-being of Jews around the world as they become refugees, become resettled, and try to become successful members of a new society.

Whether we give a lot of money or a little money, the Chief Rabbinate of Israel will not mold its policies on tolerance should less money come from UJA/Federation, so cutting monies to UJA/Federation would not have any impact.

I care about poor people. UJA/Federation is an organization concerned about *chesed*, about kindness and about good deeds. It is an extremely life-saving service.

The Jewish Agency was built to serve the needs of Jews, so I have no doubt that most of the people receiving its funds are Jews.

Gordon Fellman: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has been brilliant in escalating the hatred of Jews and Palestinians toward each other, and now at escalating the hatred of Jews for each other. The settlers and their supporters could be playing the role of the zealots of 2000 years ago. These are people who believe that they know God's will, who seem to be committed to ignoring larger regional, global, and historical circumstances, and anything that we do that does not actively discourage them is really immoral. If we do give money to UJA that is used for social services in Israel, I suspect that that frees up other monies that Israel uses for support of these settler groups and their supporters.

And while we have been thinking of Israel as a poor country needing our support, Israel, in fact, has become a country very much like the United States—a very wealthy country with a developed class structure and significantly unequal distribution of wealth and income. But its own wealthy people and middle class are not that philanthropic, and so don't spend very much of their money taking care of their own poor. Ironically, Israel is the one Jewish community in the world that is not very philanthropic. I accept M.K. Yossi Beilin's notion that Israel doesn't really need our money, that the *schnorring* relationship that they have with us is inappropriate. I give money to parts of the Israeli system that I think need it, and I give it directly. But it would be misleading to think that Israel would be hurt in any serious way should American Jews stop giving money.

What we ought to be doing, however, is lobbying in our own country and presenting a different kind of Jewish voice. We just witnessed how the Smithsonian yielded to pressure from the Jewish Right and cancelled a lecture series that had been planned that was being co-sponsored by the New Israel Fund. There are pressures from the Right that are very effective, and it would be very important if we could direct American Jewish energies to making clear that a large majority of us do not support the Zionist Organization of America and Americans for a Safe Israel when they try to undermine the peace process and isolate the pro-peace voices in this country. That is far more urgent than cutting funds for UJA/Federation, far more likely to be politically effective, though I do agree that there is a moral question about giving funds to UJA.

I think it particularly unfortunate in this regard that many American Jews outside of the extreme Right accepted

ILLUSTRATIONS BY RUSS ANDO

many years ago the notion that they had no right to take positions on what was happening in Israel, and should keep silent in the public arena. The reasoning was: "You don't live in Israel, don't share the risks, so you have no right to take a stance." I've always found this reasoning extremely unpersuasive. I didn't live in Vietnam or South Africa or Tibet, but I had no qualms about opposing the Vietnam war or opposing apartheid or opposing the Chinese domination of Tibet. Ironically, the American Jewish right-wing promoted this notion, then shattered it when they ferociously criticized Rabin's government.

When the UJA/Federation today fails to criticize the Israeli government's derailing of the peace process in the General Assembly, or when their subsidiary agencies that otherwise take political positions fail to take a critical stance on Israel's current policies, they are actually taking a political position, because *not taking a position is a position*. By not objecting to what is going on in Israel, we implicitly sanction it (even if in private we don't really approve of it). By treading lightly and failing to take a loudly critical stance, one creates the space for organizations like Americans for a Safe Israel to appear to be speaking for the American Jewish majority and to represent us as being overwhelmingly supportive of Netanyahu. I admire the Right for saying what they mean, but I think the rest of the Jewish world has to be equally clear and equally vocal in saying what it really feels.



DAVID ARNOW: This conversation is focused on the Israel part of the UJA/Federation, but "just saying no" would not be just saying no to the Israel part, but to the Federation portion as well. In most communities outside of New York, the majority of the funds being solicited stay locally. In New York, where the greatest amount of funds do go to Israel, 56 percent goes overseas, but a great deal of that goes to the Joint Distribution Committee or to the activity of resettling of immigrants from the former Soviet Union. Just saying no would be saying no to Jewish people all over the world, starting in your own community, who have serious need. I don't think you can justify saying no to people who are in serious need around the corner from you just because you have a disagreement with the policies of the Israeli government.

The problems of Israel's relationship with Palestinians or pluralism within Israel were not caused by UJA/Federation and they will not be solved by UJA/Federation. I think the way to deal with pluralism in Israel is to support institutions that are involved in fighting that struggle—but not to take food out of the mouth of some aged Jew in the Soviet Union who is dependent on this charitable aid. You can't expect all organizations in the Jewish world to have the same message or role: the Federation system is quite constrained, because what it is trying to do is something that all the different strands in the Jewish community can agree on: let's put some food on the table of a hungry Jew, let's take care of Jews in nursing homes, etc. You want to deal with pluralism—do that through the New Israel Fund.

The amount of money that UJA/Federation is sending to Israel is in the low hundreds of millions. People who have a moral problem with aiding and abetting Israeli policies might wonder whether they should pay their U.S. taxes, since there are $3 billion going to Israel from the U.S. budget. If you have a problem with the Israeli government, fight that out through organizations with policies on peace or pluralism, but don't expect UJA/Federation to do that.

MARK LEVINE: It makes no sense to me to be supporting patently immoral policies implemented or financed (directly or indirectly) by the Jewish Agency, and then to say that it really doesn't matter because we aren't giving that much money. In the struggle against apartheid in South Africa, the decision by various communities to stop investing in corporations that carried on activities in South Africa was made not because of the actual material hurt that such a decision was likely to have, but because of the cumulative political impact it would have. And that impact would be comparable if American Jews were to refuse to give money to UJA/Federation until such time as it stopped giving money to the Jewish Agency and concentrated its giving only on the poor people and the nursing homes that everyone agrees deserve support.

In this conversation, those supporting UJA/Federation are claiming that giving to UJA is essentially apolitical. But a very different story is told by the UJA itself when it talks to its potential donors. Look, for example, at the UJA website, which I consulted in January, 1998.

First, there is a project advertised called Partnership 2000, aimed at "attracting new populations to develop areas in strategically pivotal regions of the Negev, Galilee and Jerusalem." Needless to say, they are strategic because they have large Arab populations. Settlement for the Jewish Agency has, from the beginning of the Jewish Agency and continuing through this very moment, meant often displacing the Arabs who live on the land and replacing them with Jews. It is an incontrovertible historical fact that this has been the goal and consequence of Jewish Agency and JNF settlement policies, and this is part of how monies sent to UJA/Federation will be used. Inside Israel, the intention of "settlement" supported by UJA/Federation monies is not even hidden; it is explicitly talked about as a plan to "further Judaize the Galilee" to offset what people suspect might be a potential problem of having a sector of the country populated by so many Arabs. I've talked to Israeli Arab leaders in the Galilee and they understand that the plan is simply an extension of past activities which involve wiping Arab villages off the face of the earth. For sixty years, the Jewish Agency has been intimately involved in the process of dispossessing Palestinians, a process which is at the root of the

Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Thus, giving to UJA/Federation is a powerful political act with measurable consequences for sustaining and worsening the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

The attempt by people in this roundtable to de-link UJA giving and support of Israel is belied by the national UJA website, which states the following: "The highest form of Jewish unity … and the best connection to Jewish life is Israel." It is the UJA discourse that makes Israel central to the definition of American Jewish identity.

The claim that UJA/Federation is somehow politically neutral is further belied by the way that UJA missions operate when they go to Israel. These missions serve to convey the official State of Israel line on its political situation, giving little attention to the Palestinian perspective, and instead encouraging participants to develop the emotional and ideological framework of the government. So, for example, missions being advertised on the UJA website talk about meeting with Israeli military brass but rarely about meeting with Israeli Arab activists who could tell a different story. These missions are not politically neutral—they are part of the propaganda machine of the Israeli government.

Again, on the day after excrement was thrown on Conservative Jews attempting to hold a religious service at the Western Wall in Jerusalem, the UJA website tried to divert attention from the pluralism issue by cautioning its readers in the following way: "On the same night that this incident happened in Jerusalem, another victim of the bombing in Mahane Yehuda dies, and we should focus our attention on Arab terrorism." This is from a Religious Diversity Update #4, August 11, 1997—an official update.

So participants in this roundtable are not correct when they portray the UJA/Federation as merely philanthropic. The reality is that in the public discourse that the UJA/Federation supports, the Arab-Israeli conflict is front and center, and the impact of UJA rhetoric on public life is to strengthen the worldview of the more conservative and least accommodationist elements in the Jewish world.

It would make more sense, then, to separate UJA giving from Federation giving, and allow those who wish to support the UJA's ideological goals in Israel to give to UJA, while allowing the rest of us who wish to support the philanthropic goals of the Federation's local activities to support that. But as long as giving to one automatically allows more funds for the other, as long as they are linked, giving to UJA/Federation necessarily is a political act that weighs in on the least accommodationist and least reconciliation-oriented side of the Israel-Palestinian conflict.

BARRY SHRAGE: If a person has an ideological problem with bringing 700,000 Russian immigrants to Israel or bringing 25,000 Ethiopian Jews to Israel, or if your heart doesn't break at the Mahane Yehuda bombing, maybe you shouldn't make a donation to the UJA/Federation campaign. Although I personally oppose expansion of West Bank settlements and am very supportive of the peace process, I also have no problem with bringing immigrants to Israel and settling them on the land. I would hope and pray that none of that would ever involve displacing Arab citizens of Israel.…

MARK LEVINE: But it does.

BARRY SHRAGE: There are forces within the Israeli political world that are deeply opposed to that kind of displacement of Arabs. But that doesn't take away from the important historic mission of the Jewish people to bring immigrants to Israel. The overwhelming majority of American Jews support that mission and are proud of it.

It's important to understand that the UJA/Federation is not one unified system working the same way in each community. In Boston, 70 percent of our funds are used locally, 30 percent are sent overseas. We have our own vision of what the overseas agenda ought to look like, and our missions are much more likely to look at the Arab-Israeli conflict from a different perspective than the one you outlined. Our last mission included an interfaith component and was focused on Torah study, though we were briefed on the military situation. In Boston, we take a very strong stand in favor of religious freedom and diversity. We fund projects in Israel aimed at strengthening religious freedom and diversity, and this has become the core of the The Partnership 2000 effort we are funding in Haifa.

(continued on page 67)

Perspectives on Judaism

Rethinking Modern Judaism
Ritual, Commandment, Community
Arnold M. Eisen
"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."—*Tikkun*
Cloth $35.00

Abraham Geiger and the Jewish Jesus
Susannah Heschel
"A mesmerizing account of a little-told chapter in the history of Judaic scholarship."
—*Publishers Weekly*
Paper $19.00

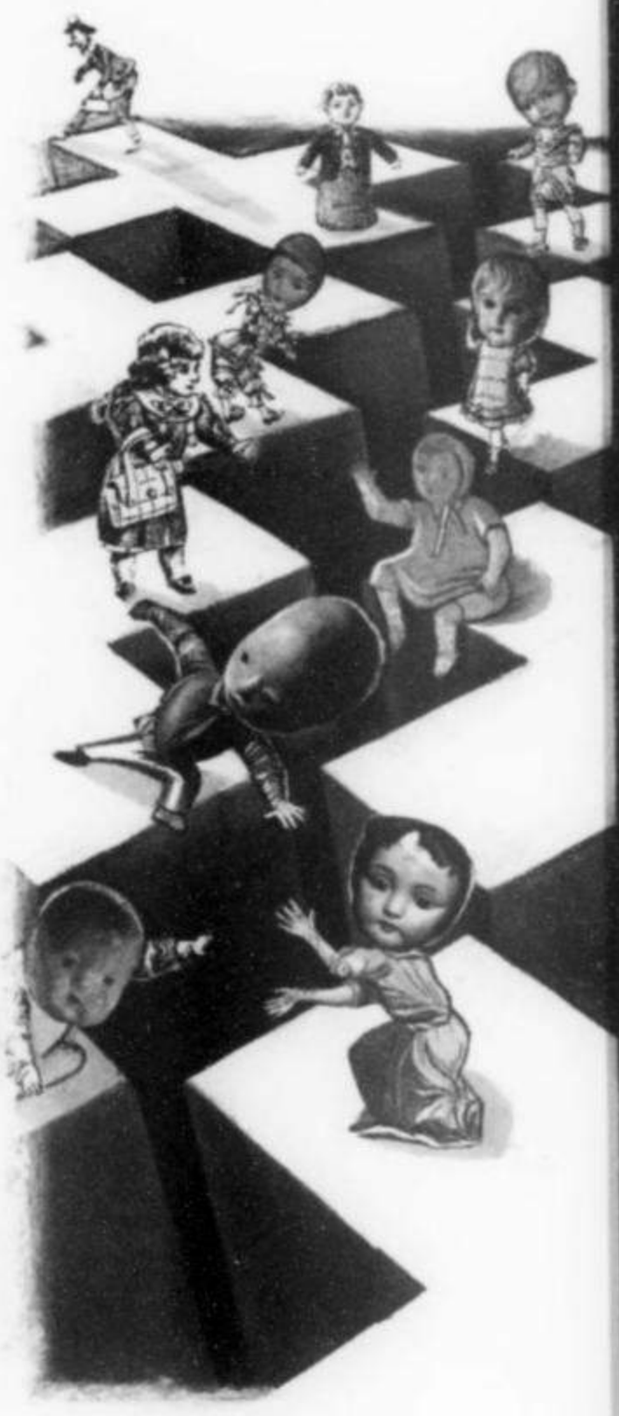
Available at bookstores

The University of Chicago Press
Visit us at www.press.uchicago.edu

Canary in a Coal Mine

Youth Activism and American Democracy

Ivan Frishberg and Mark Strama



We know what we're supposed to say in this article. Young people are not slackers. Their abstention from the political process is the fault of politicians ignoring their unique concerns. They are very engaged in civic activism through community service. Just look at all these examples of young people who are making a difference in their communities. That is what we are supposed to say.

And why not? There is a good measure of truth in all of that. But it misses a larger point. The truth is that most young people are profoundly and fundamentally disengaged from the political system. And, unfortunately, they are not very different in this respect from the rest of the American public.

There are distinguishing characteristics that identify our generation. We are incredibly diverse—we were the first generation in American history to grow up in a society in which prejudice, while nearly universal, was socially unacceptable. We embrace technology, and because of it we live in a world that is smaller and more interconnected than ever before. We come of age later, we go to school longer, we change jobs and careers more frequently than generations before us.

Ironically, however, one of the most distinct characteristics of our generation is a lack of a generational identity. Young people are more likely to identify themselves—and identify with others—on the basis of their occupation, education, recreational interests, musical taste, race or ethnicity, or other qualities, than on the basis of "youth." This explains why the "Generation X" label was never accepted by those whom it was meant to describe. To the extent that it described a generation without a distinct identity or sense of self, it also explains why the label fit.

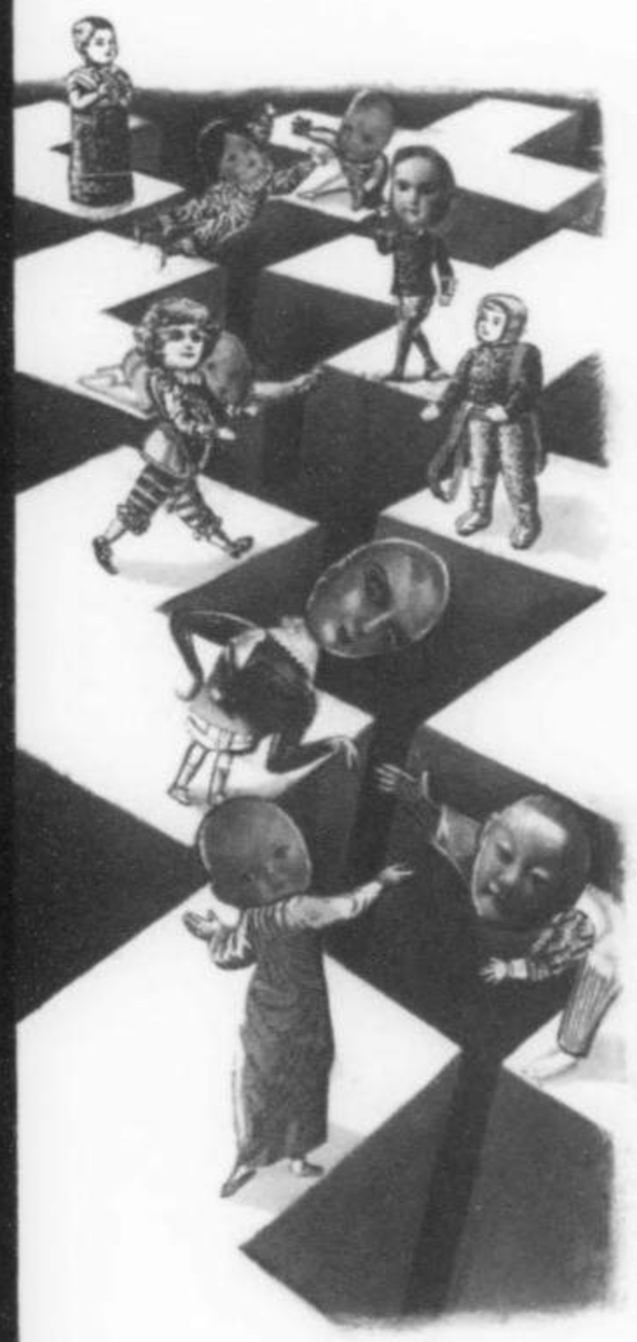
We have grown up in an era in which government is increasingly technocratic, not ideological. Government has become complex beyond understanding, while at the same time the practice of politics has relied more and more heavily on sound bites, distractions, and superficial appearances. We are the first generation to grow up after the Vietnam war and Watergate permanently shattered America's faith in its government. This, combined with the fact that we are the most marketing-savvy generation in history, has created a level of skepticism among today's young people that makes it much more difficult for any political candidate or political cause to mobilize us. An astute, world-weary pragmatism tempers the natural idealism of youth.

All this said, young Americans' disengagement from the political system is merely a pronounced reflection of the participation levels of the rest of the American public, and the underlying reasons for it are the same. Power in America has become so concentrated at levels that are increasingly inaccessible that the ordinary person cannot help feeling irrelevant and insignificant. The corrupting influence of money in politics, the exclusivity of the two-party system, and the complicity of the media in allowing our national dialogue to be manipulated by spin doctors and sex scandals have conspired to deprive us of our sense of ownership of and responsibility for our democracy. Americans—young and old—dismiss politics for two essential reasons: we have lost faith in the political system's ability to change our lives; and we have lost faith in our own ability to change the political system. Young people's cynicism about politics is merely a reflection of the attenuated state of our democracy—we are canaries in the coal mine.

To reverse this trend, recruitment and mobilization efforts need a nationally coordinated strategy to bolster locally-driven organizing. Such efforts can address issues of immediate relevance to people's lives in a forum where citizen activism can make an immediate difference. By engaging citizens in locally-focused activism and demonstrating their power to make the system respond on issues

Ivan Frishberg (ivan@pirg.org) is the director of the PIRG Higher Education Project and co-founder of Youth Vote. Mark Strama (markstrama@aol.com), former program director of Rock the Vote, is a consultant for socially responsible businesses and non-profits.

ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID BALL



that are important to them, we can begin to overcome the cynicism that discourages so many people from participating.

Young people belong at the forefront of these efforts. If you look at some of what young people are up to these days, you will certainly see the evidence of their inclination toward participation. Over 1,500 graduating seniors applied for 75 full-time job openings with Public Interest Research Groups (PIRGs) as campus organizers and as Public Interest Fellows. Over 2,700 young people applied for 500 positions as teachers serving low-income school districts with the Teach For America program. During the first weekend of April, students from Galluadet University crawled around in the rain and mud building a community garden at a homeless shelter in Washington, D.C. Those Gallaudet students were joined on that day by nearly 15,000 students across the country who were participating in a national day of service organized by the National Student Campaign Against Hunger and Homelessness. Clearly, there is a desire and demand that exists for productive participation among a huge number of young people.

The frustrating reality is that these efforts increasingly struggle against the flow of society. On college campuses, activism is being squeezed out by economic and corporate pressure on students and universities. Where activist posters once hung, credit card and soft drink companies now reach out to the student body on billboards that replaced traditional postering locations. The average full-time student is now working over twenty-five hours per week to pay for the increasing costs of getting an education. Even with students working more hours than ever before, this year's freshmen will graduate with an average debt of $20,000. It is getting harder and harder just to be a student, let alone a student activist.

Against this societal trend, the successful and spontaneous examples of civic activism among young people in recent years become even more impressive. Some of the most inspiring examples of youth-initiated campaigns to better their communities include youth who lobbied a local government to build a safe place for them to skateboard, college students who pressured their universities for more responsible labor policies, and high school students in Massachusetts organizing against efforts to ban any music that carries an explicit lyric label.

These local initiatives have succeeded largely without national support, training, or coordination. Consequently, despite their organic success, they have been isolated, disconnected, and difficult to sustain. The challenge is to develop a national strategy that draws on these success stories and applies their lessons to local organizing efforts across the country that are coordinated and sustained as part of a national effort for civic renewal.

For example, Rock the Vote is seeking to create a Fellowship program that would place young activists in the offices of its partner radio stations across the country. These Fellows would be trained to identify and organize around local issues that affect young people. In the absence of a "silver bullet" national issue that mobilizes young people everywhere (such silver bullets don't exist), this strategy of going local is essential to engaging young people in a way that is empowering and relevant. Most importantly, it enables Rock the Vote to use local activism as a means of developing the tools for sustained political engagement among young people.

Another example of civic participation that is nationally coordinated but locally organized is a collaborative project of the student environmental movement. The PIRGs are part of a collaboration with four other student environmental groups to recruit and train the next generation of environmental leaders. This collaboration will organize students to take their environmental concerns into the work world after graduation, pressuring some of the worst polluters to change their polluting ways or turn their back on the next generation of employees. The combination of expressing personal power as a prospective employee and spotlighting the local polluter while addressing the global environmental crises is an example of how to offer youth a sustainable and empowering act of civic engagement.

Young people are socially conscious, and possess the energy and idealism necessary to change the world. Unfortunately, most of us, however, see politics not as a vehicle through which to exercise social responsibility, but rather as a forum that both excludes and ignores us. Like many Americans, the extent of our distaste for the political system results in more derision of it than ownership over it. Changing this will not be accomplished through a casual effort.

These efforts to provide opportunities to engage young people will reap dividends beyond energizing this generation. If youth's problems are the problems of America, then the techniques we use to address their tendency towards the apolitical will also apply to their elders. Simply put, the challenge of organizing youth is a vital part of the larger project of saving our democracy. ❑

Disowning the Future

Mike Males



Flanked by three past presidents and assorted luminaries in a North Philadelphia slum on a fine April Sunday, President Clinton keynoted the official abandonment of America's impoverished youth. Volunteers, not "more government," will be enlisted to mentor the ghetto young to become "good citizens," said Clinton at the 1997 President's Summit for America's Future. Moderate Republican Colin Powell and liberal Democrat Bill Bradley, White House prospects both, echoed his proposal that private initiatives must help kids, not more taxes and Big Government.

"You've got to go to work or be in school, you've got to pay your taxes and—oh, yes—you have to serve your community to make it a better place," chastised Clinton. But North Philadelphia was an odd place to extol communities blessed by private initiative and jobs. The summit's imperious moral tone blared over burnt-out neighborhoods, boarded storefronts, vacant factories, and crumbling schools, offering no remedy to inner Philadelphia's distress—the result of the loss of 160,000 industrial jobs, or two-thirds of its manufacturing base since 1960. Instead, "The president, First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, Vice President Al Gore and his wife Tipper, helped paint over black, green and red graffiti—including the names of local gangs—with tan paint" (*Los Angeles Times*, April 23, 1997), thus demonstrating to the press who the dignitaries blamed for the condition of America's young.

The assembled dignitaries did not inspect the presidentially-recommended local schools, but Jonathan Kozol did, in nearby Camden, New Jersey. Abandoned industrial hulks loom over the desolate ruins of what one journalist has called "a city of children." Camden teachers, Kozol writes in *Savage Inequalities,* say they do "not have books for half the students in their classes." Tiles fall from splotched ceilings. The high school has no lunchroom. The lab has no equipment. The typing room has no computers. In the nation's third richest state, spending on Camden students, 98 percent black and Latino, averages half that of nearby suburban schools.

Downstate, Atlantic City middle-schoolers might find Camden facilities posh. The resort city of glittering Boardwalk casinos crams 2,200 kids, nearly all black and Latino, into a condemned building with no yard, collapsing ceilings, and a stench of garbage. Thirteen-year-old Steven Yarleque gets the point: "We are prisoners … locked up like we are some kind of criminals." The press sniffs about the school's "violence problem."

The real message of the president's Summit is that of larger society: these kids are no longer seen as valued citizens, but as management problems. The Big Government deplored by Clinton and Republicans cheerfully funnels vital sustenance to Americans who count: half a trillion dollars in annual public aid to the elderly, a quarter-billion for defense, two hundred billion in subsidies to corporations.

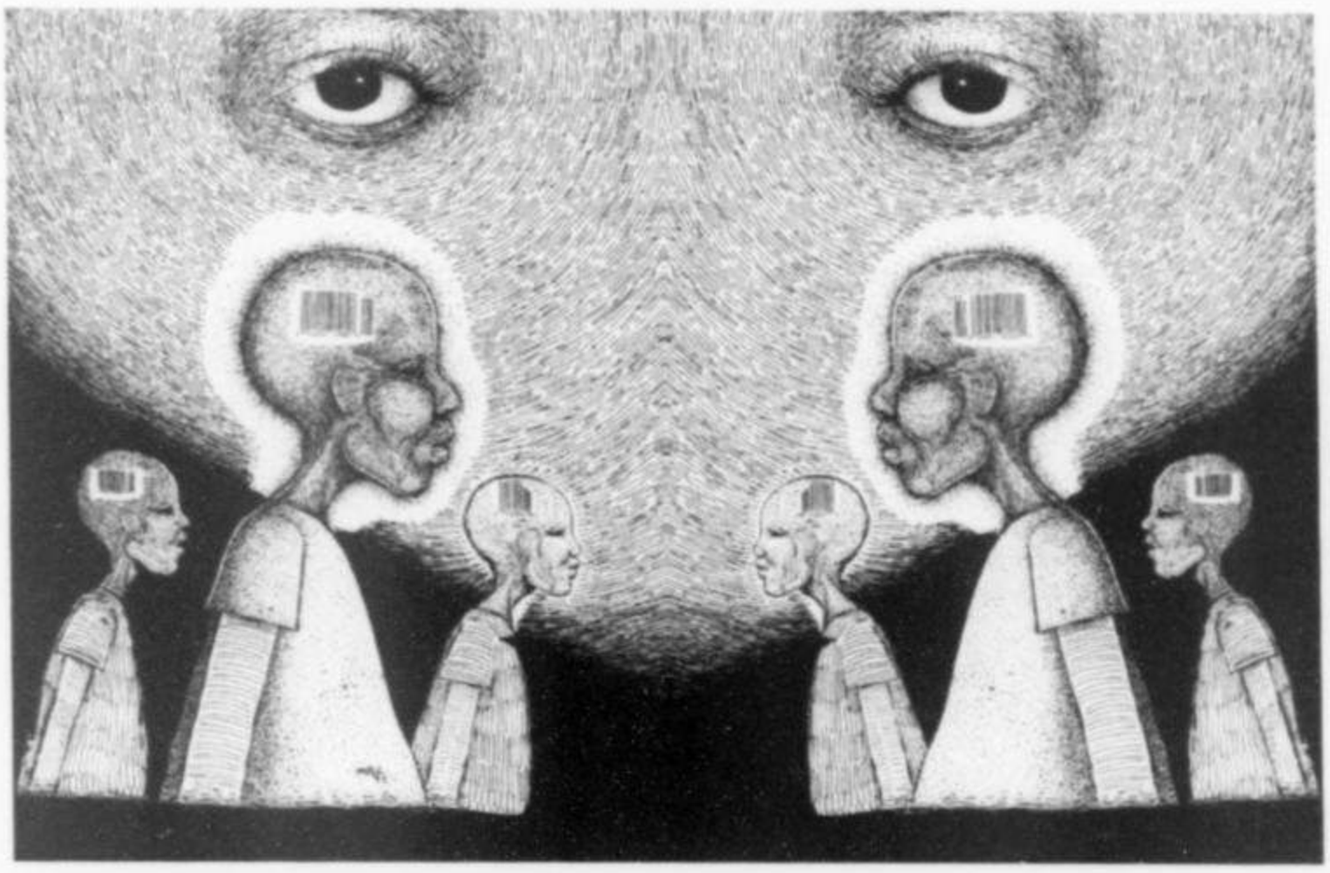
Meanwhile, as a generation, teenagers today are poorer, raised in more chaotic families by more disordered and drug-addicted parents. They suffer more crowded schools, costlier universities, and poorer job prospects. They receive less public aid than their parents and grandparents collected from multi-hundred-billion dollar Big Government programs such as the New Deal, GI Bill, and Great Society. While older groups became richer in the last two decades,

(continued on page 60)

Mike Males, author of The Scapegoat Generation *(Common Courage Press), is a social ecology doctoral student at the University of California, Irvine. His new book,* Framing Youth, *is due out in October from Common Courage.*

ILLUSTRATIONS BY DAVID BALL

KILLING KIDS



THE NEW CULTURE OF DESTRUCTION

Svi Shapiro

In a society with as much violence as our own, it is still hard not to be shocked by the recent killings in our public schools. These senseless murders of children by their peers have unnerved us; the scenes of weeping school friends, distraught teachers and parents, and bloody mayhem among the young cannot fail to move us. Pundits and psychological experts have worked overtime to explain these massacres in Mississippi, Kentucky, Arkansas, but each time we still find ourselves without answers, confronting the horrific.

Indeed, in the shock and seeming inexplicableness of these events it is not hard to understand why so many of us, both in the stricken communities and outside of them, reach for evil as an explanation. Evil offers us the mystery of the human heart with its unfathomable but omnipresent potential for hate-filled destructiveness. Of course, the notion of evil also offers us the reassurance that these killings are the result of a malevolence outside of society, a force beyond our control.

When we do turn to our social world for an explanation, the media present us with a surfeit of professional ruminations on the developmental trials of adolescence. We are told that students erupt in violent behavior when they are treated as social outcasts, ridiculed or rejected by their peers. Such explanations do not account for the fact that many students are teased and yet are not driven to such an angry and destructive response; they do, however, point to a deeper problem teens face.

Adolescents have a powerful emotional need to find a sense of belonging among their peers, and that already competitive and judgmental ethos of youth is complicated by a marketplace that manipulates the wants of young people and sets the standards for appearance and success by linking products and peer acceptability. Failure to meet these standards can lead to a damaging sense of alienation from one's peers and a hostility that, turned inward, produces depression or suicide; turned outward, it produces anger and resentment towards classmates. The power of the marketplace to seduce youth into self-destructive behavior is all too nauseatingly evident in the campaigns run by the tobacco industry and in the epidemic cases of anorexia and bulimia among young women trying to achieve the standards sold to them by the fashion industry. For evidence of what happens when this hostility is directed at others, we need only remember all the kids killed on the street by other kids desperate to get their hands on a pair of Nike sneakers. Quite simply, we have created a culture which terrorizes the young.

Svi Shapiro is professor in the Social Foundations of Education program at the University of North Carolina, Greensboro. His most recent book, with David E. Purpel, is Beyond Liberation and Excellence *(Greenwood 1995).*

ILLUSTRATION BY MAC McGILL

This corporate exploitation of adolescent conformity, however, is only a symptom, and not the source, of the recent spasms of youth violence. Something more dangerous is occurring when homicide has become the third leading cause of death among children five to fourteen years old, and the second leading cause of death among youths and young adults; when twenty-five children (the size of a classroom) are killed by guns every two days in our nation. Zygmunt Bauman, perhaps our most acute observer of postmodern ethics, has put his finger on the problem by describing a phenomenon he terms "adiaphorization"—the erosion of a sense of moral sensitivity towards others. We are increasingly unlikely to see the Other as our flesh and blood neighbor, one for whom we are morally responsible. Instead, as the philosopher Emanuel Levinas suggests, we see the Other as an abstraction rather than as the "face" of one who is unique and irreplaceable and demanding of our care and responsiveness.

The manipulative commercialism that causes teens to kill each other over shoes is just one representative element of a universe in which the "ethic" of the marketplace becomes the only guide to moral concerns. We live in times in which selling and consuming are very nearly the sole regulators of our moral world. In such a world, citizens become little more than potential shoppers, and sensitivity to other human beings is much less valued than whether they are part of an economy of consumption. Inculcating in the young a sense of the sacredness of life is increasingly undermined by a culture where little seems to have any real value unless it produces a profit.

The pervasive influence of the marketplace in organizing our world fragments and privatizes our lives. The market's emphasis on competitive individualism ensures a culture in which self-interest and personal reward are far more significant than the sense of interdependence and connection between human beings. And nowhere is this ethos more pervasive than in the schoolroom, which acts as the hothouse in which the culture of competition and self-interest is nurtured. Elizabeth Dodson Grey has described what she calls the "culture of separated desks"—the classroom environment which is constructed as the place in which children learn the norms of patriarchy and capitalism—individualism, self-sufficiency, separation from one's peers, individualism. School is the principal social institution that seeks to differentiate human beings—one that decides the status, opportunities and future possibilities of each new generation of citizens. Teachers, who typically enter education out of the desire to help all youngsters grow and develop, find themselves instead, to an unprecedented degree, testing and sorting kids into winners and losers. This attention to grades, test scores, honor rolls, and "advanced" classes mocks our intention to create the affirming, loving environments all youngsters crave. Of course, in an environment which places so much stress on winning and losing, those who are the losers can only experience shame and embarrassment. And if the losers are disproportionately poor, that shame can easily be transformed into anger and resentment.

In 1993 a panel convened by the national Research Council published a detailed analysis of the factors of youth violence. It confirmed that the most powerful and consistent predictor of this violence was economic hardship and deprivation. Such hardship shows up both in the lack of resources that make healthy physical and social development possible, and in the diminished hope these children have of living decent and secure lives in their adult years. It is well to remember that while there has been an escalation in the rates of violence among all adolescents, the rate among Black youth is still about eleven times higher than among white teens according to a recent report of the Children's Defense Fund. Whatever the present celebration over the high rates of employment in this country and increasing income, the national economic surge has little affected life in our cities where the only available work is minimum wage and youth are left without any real sense of hope for their futures. Continuing rage towards "official" institutions such as schools which are experienced as part of this oppressive reality finds its outlet in the physical violence of the streets, as well as in the symbolic violence of music, language, and other forms of popular expression. No meaningful discussion of youth violence can ignore its powerful connection to issues of poverty, racism, joblessness, to a culture that places so much emphasis on success and materialism while simultaneously excluding so many youths from access to this culture of consumption.

It is clear that there are no easy or simple cures for violence among the young. One sign that violence is deeply rooted in our social life is the fact that our culture refuses any truly significant limitation on the sale and availability of weapons (compare us to Britain, where the Dunblane massacre of schoolchildren led to the nearly complete ban on handguns). Violence has become an aesthetic and a pastime. Made more vivid with special effects wizardry, electronic technology has turned violence into video games, and gives it an increasingly vivid presence in movies and TV. My point here is not just that such violence has become dramatically more present in popular culture, but that it is represented as a source of entertainment and pleasure. Hugely successful films like *Pulp Fiction*, *Fargo*, or *Scream* portray human brutality for our amusement; the hyper reality of the images of the Gulf War on CNN erodes the clear distinction between death and spectacle, amusement and pain. Our endless appetite for graphic violence contributes to our lack of moral sensitivity towards each other. In a culture awash with graphically-constructed images of torture and killing that seem to last only as long as the picture on the screen, we can only expect a continuing

(continued on page 64)

Generating Meaning and Connection in Workplace Culture

THE NEW COLLEGE MANIFESTO

Peter Gabel



PHOTO COURTESY OF NEW COLLEGE OF CALIFORNIA

Reform synagogue leader David Saperstein recently suggested to us that TIKKUN should place greater emphasis on helping our readers take action in their workplaces, professions, and personal lives in a way that would reflect the ideals of *tikkun olam*—that our articles be prescriptive as well as descriptive. One way of doing this is for us to publish actual artifacts representing interventions in the world, interventions demonstrating attempts to shift the culture of particular social settings in a politics of meaning direction, in a direction that seeks to heal, repair, and transform a workplace, a professional organization or setting, a friendship group, or a family. One such example was our publication of the Social Responsibility Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and the Social Responsibility Initiative one year ago in the July/August 1997 issue. That proposed amendment and initiative are examples of legal interventions that would require corporations to demonstrate a record of social responsibility—as measured by an Ethical Impact Report—as part of their effort to obtain government contracts. They are not just discussions of the need for corporations to change their bottom line from simply maximizing wealth and power to one that helps to create a more loving and caring society—they are examples of how to do it. And in fact preliminary efforts have been made to get the proposed Social Responsibility Initiative onto the ballot in San Francisco, Eugene, Oregon, and a few other cities.

What follows is an excerpt from another such effort—an effort to change the culture of New College of California, which has been my workplace for the last twenty-four years. Founded in 1971 in Father Jack Leary's living room, with twelve students and no money or property, New College was one of the thousands of experiments that emerged from the heightened political culture of the 1960s—its origins reflected a time when large numbers of people, especially young people, were willing to reject the seeming imperatives of the mainstream culture and commit themselves to creating an alternative reality, no matter how "unaccredited" this reality was by the dominant society.

Unfortunately, New College is one of the few experiments that survived the collapse of the social movements of that time. Today, it is accredited, has an annual budget of over six million dollars, and a thousand students attending one of its socially progressive programs at the undergraduate or graduate levels. But while New College has survived, it has had to weather the effects of the last twenty-five years, which have included the collapse of the Sixties, the conservatizing pressures of accreditation, twelve years of Reagan and Bush, the craziness of the Left as those dynamics were lived out within New College, the complex impact on the Left of the collapse of the Soviet Union (including the apparent inevitability of the globalization of capitalist values), and most recently the "maturing" of the Sixties generation itself as reflected in the liberal-corporatism of the Clinton years as well as the influx of a generation-X student body many of whose members were born after the spirit of the Sixties had begun to wane.

Add to this the fact that those of us who emerged as leaders of New College have changed also. We have remained radicals in the sense that we have retained our commitment to a fundamental transformation of the existing society in a more egalitarian and communal direction, but we have come to understand that the nature of this transformation involves a strong spiritual component, a "healing" rather than just a change in power relations. Imagine what it's like to have simultaneously internalized the effects of all of the historical forces that I've summarized in the preceding paragraph and have changed your own understanding of how to achieve the very same idealistic goals that you began with more than two decades ago! It's like starting out in one horse race and finding yourself, after so many times around the track that you

Peter Gabel is associate editor of TIKKUN *and president of New College of California.*

can't remember when the race started much less when it is supposed to end, having switched horses and running against different horses than when the race began.

It is against this background that I recently wrote and distributed the "Manifesto for a New New College," excerpts of which follow. The specific tendency that I was seeking to combat in writing this was the forgetfulness and loss of faith in our original communitarian vision that was quietly overtaking our workplace culture. The "liberal corporatism" that I spoke of earlier was seeping into every aspect of the college's life—I was increasingly being called "management"; a significant group within the College were calling for "progressive discipline of workers" to protect the College from lawsuits; the lack of a movement-consciousness in the larger culture was leading people to increasingly define themselves in terms of their narrow roles as faculty, staff, and administrators, without a holistic communal consciousness; and the pressures of accreditation and other outside definers of our reality were intensifying that process. It was clear to me and those who agreed with me that if some action were not taken, the progressive experiment that many of us had devoted our lives to would probably vanish—or as I said in my recent TIKKUN article on "How the Left Was Lost," we would "lose each other without ever leaving each other's presence."

So in that context I wrote and handed out—to one person at a time to keep the dynamic at a human scale—a manifesto that was meant to finally state the full communitarian vision and call on the community to embrace it. Although this document has a "radical" tone that would not be appropriate to more conservative workplaces, the content—as evidenced by the "Seventh Article of Faith" that we have included in this excerpt—could certainly be adapted to other workplaces of a more traditional character. For example, I recently asked a friend on the Harvard Law School faculty to try to implement the annual day of remembrance for those in the community who have died, including all members of the community from deans and faculty and their families to secretarial staff and janitors and their families. My view is that introducing such a day into the culture of Harvard Law School would have a powerful politics of meaning effect on that very traditional institution. It would begin a process there that also needs to occur here at New College, where our utopian vision of "radical community" needs to undergo a rethinking and a deepening that reflects a level of empathy, compassion, and trust—a new level of spiritual wisdom—that we did not understand well twenty-five years ago and that needs to be fostered in workplaces throughout the country with histories and identities very different from our own.

So I urge you not to read what follows as relevant only to workplaces with a history in the Sixties New Left, or, for that matter, as relevant only to colleges and universities. My call in Article Seven for an idealistic annual retelling of the College's history for all community members has direct relevance, for example, to government agencies founded on social service ideals like caring for the poor. Often the public employees who staff these workplaces (welfare workers, for example) began their careers with idealistic, caring motives, only to become beaten down and even bitter by being chronically stereotyped as faceless bureaucrats underserving of public support and by other social dynamics reflective of the cynicism and individualism of the larger society (including the manipulativeness and hostility of many of their own clients). Either in their agencies or in the public employee unions which represent them, these workers would greatly benefit from renewing the idealism and sense of meaning and purpose that an annual retelling of their common history, including an analysis of the difficulties they have faced, could provide. And it could strengthen their collective memory of and belief in those ideals while providing them with a context for developing strategies to counter the forces that tend to undermine them.

Similar points can be made about the other cultural-life proposals in Article Seven. All workplaces would benefit, from the standpoint of the politics of meaning, from weekly community gatherings that are not just escapist TGIF parties but that have a substantive, intellectual component that allows people to connect with one another beyond the superficiality of their narrow, functional workroles. Deep and thoughtful evaluations which contemplate spiritually serious encounters among co-workers would deepen the individual and collective meaning of work in workplaces of all kinds—much more than the standard annual efficiency evaluations common in most capitalist workplaces today.

So as you read this, think about whether some similar intervention, appropriate to your workplace culture, might be attempted where you are. Perhaps this manifesto could serve as the basis for a discussion group among a small group of friends at your workplace (or in your union) where comparable meaning-creating and connection-creating steps could be initiated.

What follows are only the "Preamble to the Manifesto" and one of its nine "Articles of Faith." The other eight articles put forward proposals such as meaning-centered approaches to finances (emphasizing mutual support and collective responsibility rather than the separation and selfishness fostered by individual contracts); to governance (linking democratic ideals with the fostering of mutual recognition and community rather than with the interest-group consciousness fostered by purely role-based decision-making structures); and to the nature of work itself (rejecting the idea of work as the time-bound performance of discrete functional tasks in exchange for a wage favoring a more holistic conception of community participation, which accompanies, but is not given in exchange for, a share of the community's resources). In future columns, I will spell out some of these proposals in more detail.

Manifesto for a *New* New College

Preamble

For many years, perhaps since the very beginning, New College has been trapped between two paradigms. One is the paradigm of a community based on direct personal comradeship among particular people who relate to each other out of affection and informal solidarity. That is the revolutionary New College, the one that sprung up out of the idealism and hope of the Sixties and that sought to repudiate the artificiality and robot-like character of the larger market-based society in which people treat each other in a functional, role-based fashion. The other paradigm is that of an organization or "institution," which purports to be on the Left and to be for social change but that is still organized like most other organizations, with a board and a president and people dividing themselves into managers and employees and one or another narrow functional role. This second paradigm should rightly be called the education-and-social-change machine, because it involves conceiving of ourselves as people-machines organized into roles and functions to turn out a product (the graduate of New College who will supposedly work for social change) while not actually engaging in the social change ourselves. Of course, we have done our best to reconcile these two paradigms, so that even when we are in the second paradigm we try to treat each other as humanely as possible … but the fact is that the two paradigms contradict each other and the contradiction prevents us from really making our social point. It leads to people saying things like, "well, the inner circle talks about community but it's just a cover for wanting power in the organization," or, "why won't faculty member "x" take on more advisees … doesn't he/she realize we're a community?"

No area of our life in the College is unaffected by this contradiction. Should someone in the role of "law professor" be expected to answer the phones if necessary? It depends on your paradigm. Should you want to answer the phones if necessary? It depends on your paradigm. Should salaries be allocated according to marketplace criteria? It depends on your paradigm. Should some people be "accruing vacation days" while others never even think about taking vacations except when the time's freed up and don't want to stop others from taking whatever time off they actually need just because they've "used up" their vacation days? Should we follow procedures designed to protect us at all costs from legal liability, or should we reject the paranoid precautions generated by concern about legal liability on the grounds that that whole way of relating to each other is a paranoia-inducing, self-fulfilling prophecy? The answers to all such questions depend on which paradigm one is relating to the world through. For perhaps the whole of its his/herstory, but certainly in the last five years or so, New College has been relating to the world through both paradigms at once.

So we the undersigned say—New College should be a radical community. What we mean by this is we want to stand against the alienation and isolation that characterizes human relationships in the larger society. We believe that all people are motivated fundamentally by the longing for mutual recognition and affirmation—by the need for social connection—and that this need is as central as the need for food or shelter. We believe that the larger society is characterized by a hyper-individualism that is actually a denial of this need and that people guard themselves against the vulnerability associated with this need by hiding behind artificial hierarchical roles through which they can keep each other at "arm's length," at an infinite and anonymous distance. All longings for physical and emotional intimacy are channeled into the nuclear, biological family, with all of the distortions that inevitably result from impaction, from trying to channel all of our needs for love and connection into an underground bunker located underneath the anonymity of the work-world and the larger culture. We believe that many of the problems in the larger society—problems of domination, discrimination, and abuse—result from the denial of this basic need for loving community and the twisting of this need into pathological, fantasy-based forms of group identity (excessive patriotism, for example) and corresponding fantasy-based phobic stereotyping (xenophobia, for example). We do not say this with a holier-than-thou attitude … as if we know how to create good community and everybody else is hopelessly screwed up. On the contrary, we have compassion for all of us suffering from the alienation of the larger society, and we feel we ought to try to do something about it in our lifetimes by showing that people can live in a different way, that they (we) can be friends, work cooperatively, and trust each other not to hurt or abuse each other.

Those of us who have been here long enough to remember our origins know, that New College arose precisely as an antidote to the alienation, isolation, and individualism that we are criticizing. But twenty years ago, it was much easier to share this perspective because it was shared instinctively by the entire counter-culture of which New College was a part. Now, the former members of this counter-culture, millions strong and scattered all over the world, are largely invisible to each other, carrying around in secret the memory of what was once collectively, intuitively clear and obvious. The counter-culture largely abandoned itself because the Left found itself to be as crazy as the Right, bashing each other in public spaces and reinforcing our doubts that we could live in community beyond the family rather than strengthening our confidence that we could do so. The unsafety of the Left destroyed the Left, leaving New College as one of the last few survivors. This manifesto is based in part on the fact that we see New College

as in danger of going the way of the rest of the counter-culture—in much the same way that Bill Clinton unconsciously decided he would rather be on Mt. Rushmore than admit that he smoked marijuana. The communitarian ideals that gave birth to New College were not abolished by corporations or the State; they ebbed away as people lost confidence in their original intuition that human relationships could be radically more affirming, trusting, and caring than appears to be the case in the larger culture. This manifesto is a call to prevent these ideals from continuing to ebb away at New College, so that we don't one day find that the New College we have devoted much of our lives to has suddenly vanished.

ONE REASON THAT THERE HAS BEEN A DISTINCT TURN IN progressive politics and even in the larger society toward spirituality is precisely because of this destructive his/herstory of the twentieth-century Left. People have rightly lost the ability to believe in any form of political change that does not pay real attention to the rhythms of socially expressed emotion that bind people together. The idea that we could overcome centuries of alienation and paranoia without very delicately and carefully stitching ourselves back together through spirit-enhancing processes was … well, the his/herstory on the Left of crazy public meetings, accusations, gossip, denunciations and even physical violence demonstrates the impossibility of that idea. These very same dynamics have all but torn New College apart during its whole his/herstory, but especially during the last five years. But to say that spirituality is important does not necessarily have anything to do with organized religion or even explicitly spiritual rituals. The Sixties was libidinally constituted by music, drugs, dancing, and other forms of hanging out together that enabled people to feel their instinctive connection to each other through embodied community—as opposed to ideologically rancorous public meetings or bureaucratic forms of representative democracy. This isn't to say we need only spirit-enlivening experiences with music, dancing, etc.; nor does it mean we shouldn't have ideological debates or representative forms of governance. But it does mean that we should think about New College in spiritual/emotional terms—in terms of what our being-together feels like rather than some model of how we are organized. The last thing we are calling for is some new "model of organization" based on community instead of something else. We are calling for the creation of the experience of community and of paying attention to how to sustain it as our way of life.

ARTICLE SEVEN:

THE CULTURAL LIFE OF OUR WORKPLACE SHOULD BE consciously shaped to strengthen our spiritual/emotional/intellectual mission of embodying a communal vision that stands against the alienated and bureaucratic character of work-life in the larger culture. Among the experiences that should be an essential part of our workplace life should be:

—An annual retelling of the story of this workplace, of the his/herstory of where we came from and why we exist.

—Community gatherings should be a regular occurrence, not just for governance purposes, but for culture creation. One possibility is to have get-togethers every Friday afternoon that combine a brief "program" (which might have an interesting and educational public statement about, say, the historical importance of Halloween as a community-constituting pagan ritual as well as minor announcements) with food, drink, and music for us and our families.

—At least one day should be set aside each year, preferably in the fall, for evaluations. But our evaluations should not be based on the capitalist model of measuring how "well" each of us has done according to some market-based model of efficient functioning. Instead, they should be drawn from traditions like the Jewish High Holidays that call for a serious reflection on what we have accomplished in the preceding year in relation to our highest values and the mission of our workplace. Conducted with one other community member, these evaluations should also encourage the development of aspirations for the coming year and some serious thought about what will be needed, psychologically and from the rest of the community, for these aspirations to be realized.

—There should be an annual event for those who have left this workplace which affirms that their leaving does not mean their excommunication and that we see them as continuing members of the community. We should honor those who have done work that exemplifies our ideal of challenging and seeking to overcome the alienation, isolation, and injustice characteristic of the larger culture.

—On one occasion each year, we should publicly gather to remember community members who have died.

In the original manifesto this "Preamble" is followed by nine "Articles of Faith." We have reprinted an edited version of "Article Seven" here. The "Articles" address how the Preamble's philosophical vision should be embodied in all aspects of College life, subject to revision based on community-wide debate. The final section of the manifesto then calls for a vote on adoption of the manifesto's vision and principles following such debate. The distribution of the document has already provoked much constructive discussion and has significantly sharpened our community's understanding of the difference between a politics of meaning workplace and a more traditional workplace. Public conversations are the next step and are planned for the summer and fall. Anyone wanting a full copy of the manifesto can get one for free by writing Peter Gabel at TIKKUN. ❑

TIKKUN OLAM

Fixing the World

Danny Siegel



Plain and simple: the purpose of this column is to continue the Jewish age-old quest to do *tikkun olam*, to fix the world. It will be a practical column: there will be names of people to contact—experts in their field—addresses, phone numbers, fax numbers, e-mail addresses, and, whenever they exist, a website. A High Philosophy of *Tzedakah* is nice, and useful, but, in my opinion, not as important as the doing itself. The actual fixing of the world helps us form the philosophy behind the fixing. If we just do it, rather than work it out in our heads beforehand, I believe it will make sense as we go along.

• • •

Since 1975 I have met more than one hundred people I call Mitzvah Heroes, great people who are doing caring, insightful, small-to-large scale *tikkun olam.* My search for ways to do *tzedakah* began in January of that year, when I decided to go back to Israel for a visit. I had actually just returned from a year in Jerusalem, a year stretching from August 1973 to August 1974, which included, of course, the Yom Kippur War. I had not planned on a war, on spending part of Sukkot in a bomb shelter, Simchat Torah down by the Wall (inside the enclosure since the lights had been blacked out). Back in the States for a few months, I felt the urge to get back, for a few weeks, and that's when my *tzedakah* venture really began.

I had remembered the ancient custom of gathering a dollar here and a dollar there from people before journeying to Israel. The purpose was to have *tzedakah* money ready to give out, so a trip to Israel wouldn't be the same as a vacation to the Riviera or a time-out in Orlando. It makes a "trip" into a "pilgrimage" or "mission." I must have done a good job of it, since I found myself with $955 in my pocket for *tzedakah.* Now the supposedly hard part began: where to give the money.

I began with a place my late mother had recommended, Myriam Mendilow's Life Line for the Old. This program provided workshops for our elders, wonderful workshops, rooms filled with activity, life, productivity, meaning, caring ... and gorgeous products of their handiwork. Mrs. Mendilow changed my life by teaching me that vision and dreams can become reality, that we can bring heaven and earth closer together, that we can make people happy, give them hope.

From there, it was relatively easy. I just kept asking my friends, "Who is doing great work, real *tikkun olam?*" By the time that first trip was finished, I had enough to issue a report to my contributors.

This cycle continued over the years. I continued to seek out Mitzvah Heroes, traveling as far as Fredensborg, Denmark to meet them. I incorporated the fund as a nonprofit tax-exempt corporation called Ziv Tzedakah Fund, Inc., and began to distribute money both in Israel and in the United States. This past year we gave away $340,000 to more than 115 projects. (You may receive a copy of our report from Naomi Eisenberger, c/o Ziv, 384 Wyoming Ave., Millburn, NJ 07041, 973-763-9396, fax: 973-275-0346, e-mail: naomike@aol.com, website: www.ziv.org. Please note that Ziv is unable to take requests for funding of new projects at this time. We, ourselves, seek out any new programs to fund.)

The following are some practical, let's-just-do-it projects that may interest the readers of TIKKUN. It's your choice: pick the ones that appeal to you personally for one-time or regular involvement with your time and/or your money.

ILLUSTRATION BY SUSAN BEIN

Danny Siegel is the author of twenty books including Good People, *a collection of essays about everyday people who are Mitzvah heroes and* Tell Me a Mitzvah, Tzedakah *stories for children.*

I personally believe that there is no such thing as a small mitzvah.... Whatever you do will make a difference.

Things to Do

Five quick reminders:

1. Pick something you like, or that you are good at, and ask yourself, "Why not?"—then contact whichever project most appeals to you.

2. The contact people for the projects I list all know me. They are reliable, trustworthy, and know how to do their kind of *tikkun olam* with great sensitivity. You are welcome to mention my name.

3. There are always two kinds of projects: off-the-beaten track types, and more common ones. How to be a mitzvah clown, for example, is in the former category; in the latter category, an activity like gathering baseball equipment for kids in need is nothing unusual, but no less critical in the world of *tikkun olam*.

4. For a lengthier list of project ideas (in no particular order of importance), you may want to get a copy of my article, *116 Practical Mitzvah Suggestions*. Contact Marcia Goldwasser, 155 5th Ave., NY, NY 10010, 212-533-7800 ext. 2319, e-mail: goldwasser@uscj.org.

5. Remember: we all have more *tikkun olam* power than we think. The Hebrew word tikkun in *tikkun olam* is the same word used for fixing a chair, unplugging a clogged drain, applying glue to a broken plate. Just as we fix chairs, drains, and plates, so, too, we can fix people's lives and make the world more *Menschlich*.

The Projects

1. The *Tzedakah* habit: Every time you grocery shop, buy one extra item for *tzedakah*. Donate it to a local food pantry. I once asked Alice Mosiniak if donating a can of tuna fish made a difference. Without hesitation, she said, "Yes." At the time, Alice was director of a food bank that distributed hundreds of thousands of pounds of food a month to hungry people.

2. Kids: For a contribution of $30, the North American Conference for Ethiopian Jewry (NACOEJ) can procure school supplies for Ethiopian immigrants in Israel. You can also fund an array of after-school activities for these children. (NACOEJ, 165 E. 56th St., NY, NY 10022, Attn: Barbara Ribakove Gordon, 212-752-6340, fax: 980-5294, e-mail: NACOEJ@aol.com, website: www.cais.com/nacoej/).

3. Domestic Violence: We needs signs posted in bathroom stalls with the phone number of the local domestic violence hotline, and small cards in a tray nearby, so a woman can put the number in her pocket or purse. We need them in synagogues, JCCs, Federation buildings, all Jewish communal locations. Contact: Rabbi Gordon Tucker at Temple Israel Center of White Plains, NY, 914-948-2000, fax: 948-4755, e-mail: gotucker@delphi.com. To establish a Jewish shelter for victims of domestic violence, contact: Jewish Family and Child Service, Gordon Wolfe, Executive Director, 4600 Bathurst St., Willowdale, Ontario M2R 3V3, 416-638-7800, fax: 638-7943. There are fewer than a dozen Jewish shelters in North America.

4. Cleaning House, Part I: Donate all those little soaps, shampoos, conditioners, sewing kits, shower caps from hotels you have sitting in the closet. Shelters for homeless people and for victims of domestic violence need them more than you do. This is ever-so-simple, and taking a shower with high-quality, fancy toiletries sometimes means the difference between feeling like a nobody and feeling like a real person.

5. Cleaning House, Part II: If you have an infant car seat in the house that you are no longer using, donate it to an agency that will get it to a family that cannot afford to buy one. It saves lives. Do it even if your local police, rescue squad, or hospital already does it. They know how to get it to someone who falls through the safety net. And finally, for this issue:

6. Horses: There are more than 500 therapeutic horseback riding organizations in North America. This method of physical therapy has been used in Europe for more than 200 years and is gaining prominence in the United States and Canada. It is effective—even miraculous—for a wide range of people with disabilities. Learn about how it works and then publicize it so people who have never heard of it can spread the word and bring benefit to people who need it. Contact the North American Riding for the Handicapped Association (NARHA), POB 33150, Denver, CO 80233, Attn: William Scebbi, phone: 800-369-RIDE (voice/message) or 303-452-1212, fax: 303-252-4610, e-mail: narha@frii.com, website: www.narha.org. I have seen a number of these programs in the United States, and they are wonderful. I have also been involved with the most well-known group in Israel, the Therapeutic Riding Club of Israel. (Ziv has even bought them eight horses! Who would have suspected that I would be in the horse business?) Contact: The Therapeutic Riding Club of Israel, POB 3168, Bet Yehoshua, Israel, Attn: Anita Shkedi, phone: 09-899-7776, 796-7705 (h), fax: 899-6103, e-mail: trci@internet-zahav.net.

• • •

There you have a few for now: big *tikkun olam* and supposedly "small" *tikkun olam*. There will be more of the same in future issues.

Yasher Koach—all the more strength to all of you. ❑

American Jews *and the* "Torah of Money"

Lawrence Bush and Jeffrey Dekro

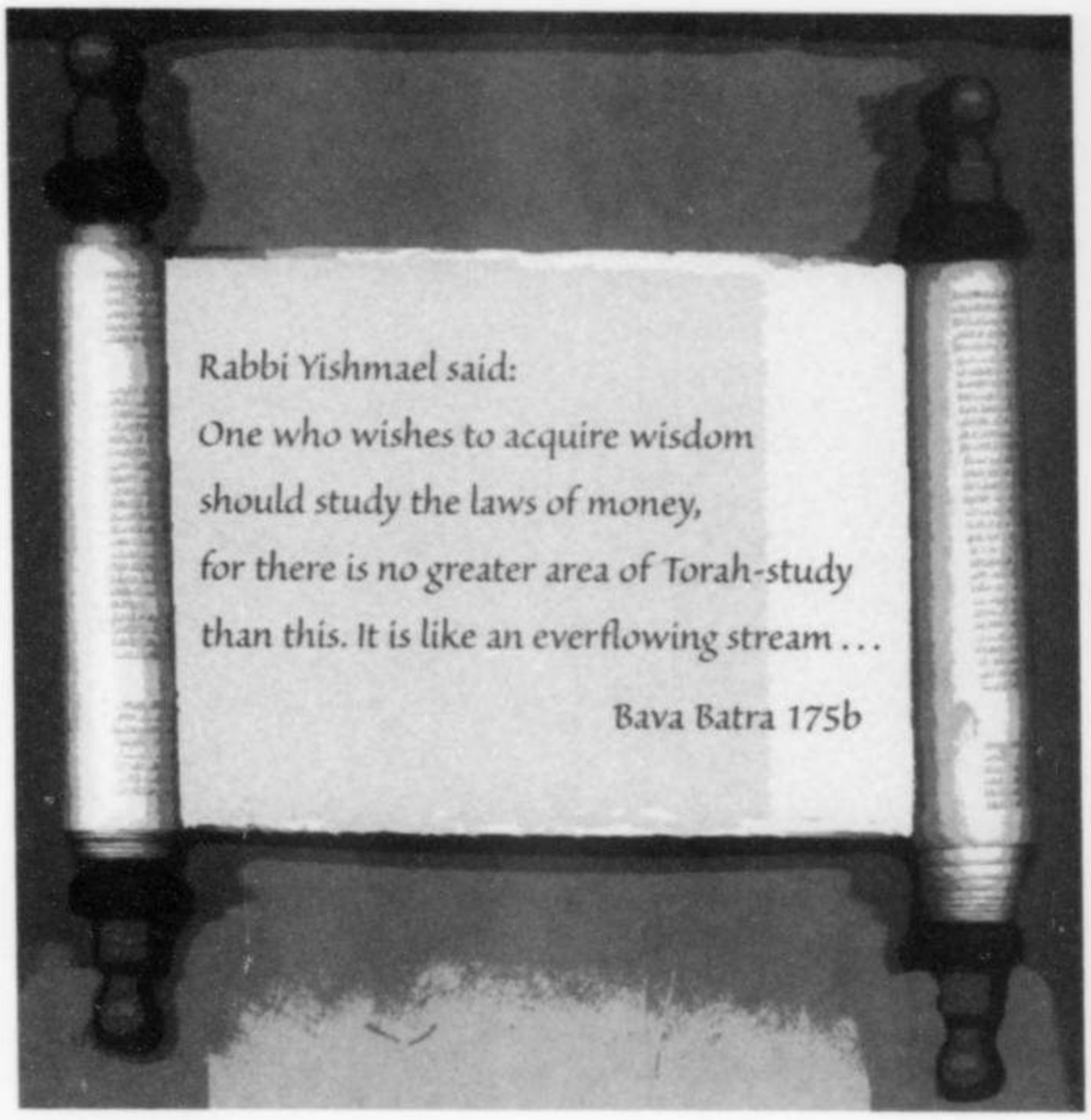


ILLUSTRATION BY LAWRENCE BUSH

Let's begin this new column with a fact that is increasingly acknowledged but only warily asserted: the American Jewish community is rich.

We are rich in assets. Constituting less than 2.5 percent of the U.S. population, Jews are reliably estimated to own or control between 8 and 10 percent of the U.S. Gross Domestic Product. Even with half a million Jews living at or below the poverty line, Jewish median family income is nearly 70 percent higher than the national median—one third of American multi-millionaires are tallied as Jewish. More than 4,000 Jewish family foundations control approximately $5 billion in assets; federation endowments account for an additional $4 billion.

We are rich in generosity. Major cultural organizations, universities, medical centers, political parties, and activist groups in the United States and Israel are beholden to the money-organizing networks of American Jews. *Tzedakah* is truly as binding a force in contemporary Jewish life as the Holocaust, Zionism, or religious observance—and, through the UJA/Federation, is the only real common denominator holding together our fractious community.

We are rich in economic philosophy. Our religion has a wealth of teachings about *dinei mamanot*, the laws of money, which offer a meaning-based approach to issues of wealth, poverty, and community. This "Torah of Money" goes well beyond the teachings about *tzedakah* that many Jews absorbed in Hebrew school. Nevertheless, an "everything-I-need-to-know-I-learned-in-*cheder*" approach to its principles might read as follows:

1. *Tzedakah* does not mean "charity" but "righteous empowerment"—the individual and communal obligation to achieve justice through the giving and investing of money, wealth, and resources. In particular, Judaism ranks partnership and investment as the most righteous strategies for alleviating poverty.
2. Judaism links blessing and prosperity to mitzvot (righteous deeds); ethical business means profitable business.
3. Judaism has a "stakeholder" philosophy of management/ownership that views private property rights as being freighted with communal obligations.
4. Judaism's teachings about Shabbat emphasize that sheer productivity and rampant consumerism are not the ultimate aims of life. While we are instructed to taste the many fruits of life and to honor the Sabbath with our finest table setting, the worship of wealth is a form of idolatry and its decadent use is a life-destroying sin.

As ever with Judaism, these fundamentals of the Torah of Money are more usefully seen as a holy dialogue than a holy writ. Judaism's economic philosophy, after all, was developed in an agricultural, theocratic, patriarchal, and ethnically insular community of very limited wealth. By contrast, we live in a high-tech, secular, globalized, multi-ethnic society of vast wealth and capacity. Interpretative license aside, however, the fact remains that the dynamic "money culture" of American Jewish individuals and institutions is little informed by the Torah of Money. *Tzedakah,* one of our key "Jewish survival" activities, has generally been uncoupled from the very values that make Jewish survival a profoundly worthwhile goal.

The reasons for this discontinuity between our Jewish communal culture and the Torah of Money are complex.

(continued on page 63)

Lawrence Bush is communications director for The Shefa Fund and author of American Torah Toons. *Jeffrey Dekro is president and founder of The Shefa Fund. To communicate with them, phone (215) 247-9704 or e-mail Shefafnd@libertynet.org.*

SIMPLY JEWISH

Death & What's Next



Rami Shapiro

"Rabbi, do Jews believe in reincarnation?" I am asked this all the time. Americans seem to be obsessed with the idea. They want to come back.

Most Americans get their idea of reincarnation from Hinduism. But the Hindus seem to believe that life basically sucks, and that if we are good enough we will escape the karmic wheel of birth and death. Hindus don't want to come back.



Most Americans, on the other hand, don't want to escape life; they want to consume more of it. In the American version of reincarnation, life is a perpetual Home Shopping Network. We come back to buy more stuff. Of course the assumption most Americans make is that they will return as Americans, or, at worst, as Canadians. No American ever imagines that he or she will take rebirth as a leper in Calcutta.

Does Judaism subscribe to any of these views? Actually, yes. Some kabbalists are close to Hindus in this: you have a separate soul that comes back to learn its lessons, and, if it learns them well, it graduates to heaven where it will study Torah with God. Ever notice how everything good in Judaism ends up being school? You get three chances at graduation. If you fail you come back as a rock. At this point your only hope is that a sage sits on you.

I don't find any of this convincing. I don't believe in separateness, and I already own more stuff than I can use. To me, the self is a temporary manifestation of God, the Source and Substance of all reality. Our relation to God is analogous to that of a wave to the ocean. The wave is an extension of the ocean. We are extensions of God.

If waves were self-conscious, they, like we, would focus on the surface view of things, and insist upon their separateness from each other and from the ocean as a whole. As they watch their fellows crashing upon the shore, they, like we, would worry: "Is there life after beach?"

From an outside observer's point of view the question is ludicrous: the wave is the ocean and the ocean is forever. If the wave would only realize its oceanic essence, the whole furor about birth and death would dissolve of its own accord.

Yet, like these hypothetically self-conscious waves, we, too, look about us and insist upon separateness. We see others die, panic about the end, and invent alternatives to it. But the fact is, we are God, and God is forever. If we would only realize this, all our worry about birth and death would just drop away.

"But what about past lives, Rabbi?" someone always objects. "What about people who remember prior reincarnations?"

Past life memories are real. What is false is the notion that they belong to the person doing the remembering.

Since we are one with all in God, we have the potential for encountering other elements of God's peopling. There are some among us who tap more clearly into this shared wisdom and experience than others. Not knowing what to make of it, however, they fold it into the delusion of separateness and claim it as their personal experience from a past life. It isn't. It is part of the collective experience of Life of which they are a temporary manifestation. If you experience a past life, honor it, but do not lay claim to it.

The problem with my belief is that few people find it comforting. No heaven for me? No hell for you? No second chance at leasing that new Jaguar? What fun is that?

None, I suppose. Yet to the extent that I am open to the oceanic; to the extent that I recognize my interdependence with all things and my unity with God; to that extent life deepens in meaning, fills with compassion, commands justice, and ultimately loosens my grip on self and stuff. And what could be more comforting than that? ❑

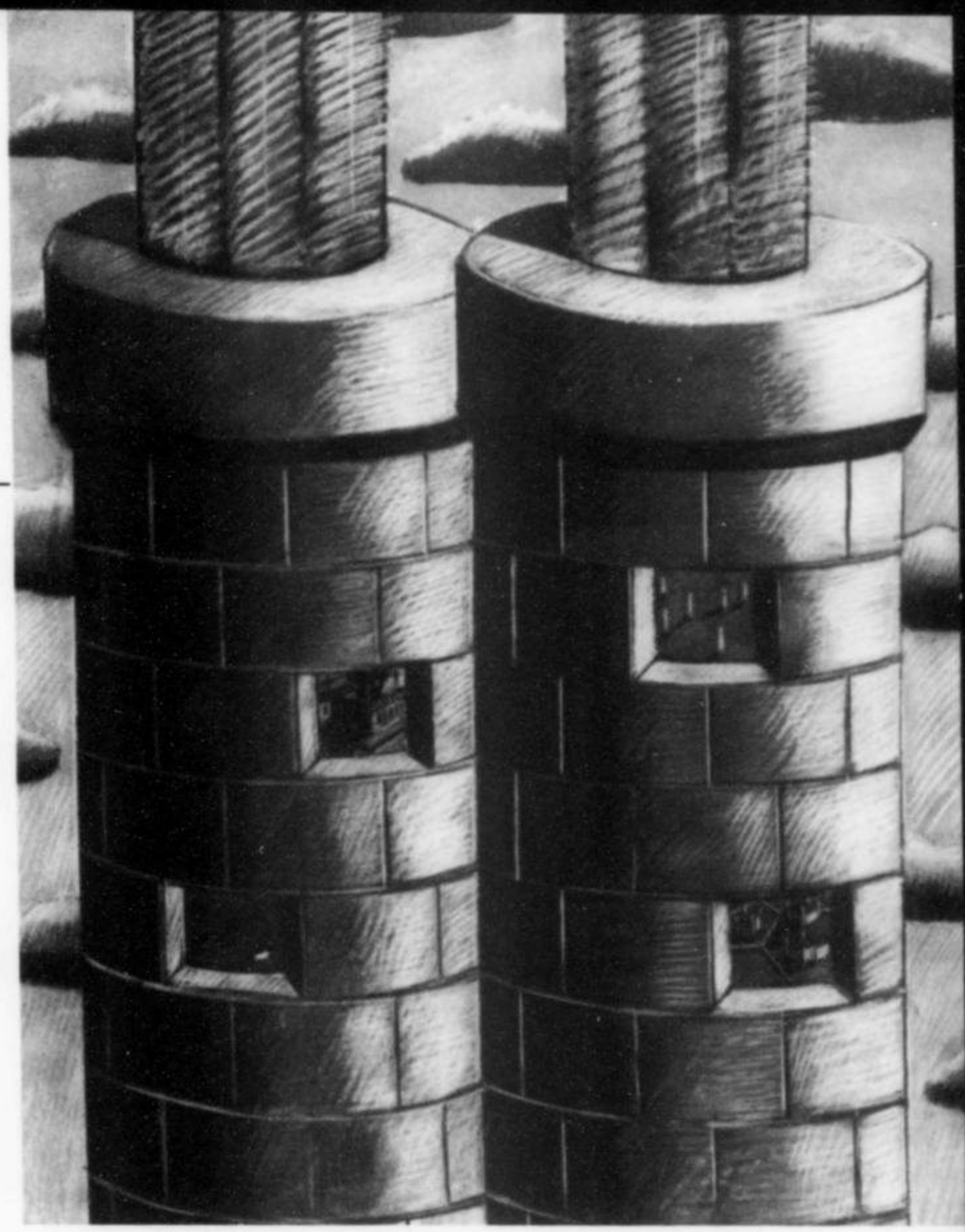
Rami Shapiro is rabbi of Beth Or in Miami, Florida; founder of the Virtual Yeshiva; and president of Simply Jewish, a consulting firm for Jewish leaders. His most recent books are Minyan *and* Wisdom of the Jewish Sages.

ILLUSTRATION BY RANDY MACK BISHOP / PEN TIP

HEREDITARY VICTIMHOOD

The Holocaust's Life as a Ghost

Zygmunt Bauman



Half a century has passed since the victory of the Allied troops put an abrupt end to Hitler's "final solution of the Jewish question"—but the memory of the Holocaust goes on polluting the world of the living, and the inventory of its insidious poisons seems anything but complete. We are all to some degree possessed by that memory, though the Jews among us, the prime targets of the Holocaust, are perhaps more than most. For Jews especially, living in a world contaminated with the possibility of a holocaust rebounds time and again in fear and horror. To many, the world appears suspect at the core; no worldly event is truly neutral—each event is burdened with sinister undertones, each contains an ominous message for the Jews, a message that can be overlooked or played down only to the Jews' own peril. As E.M. Cioran, the incisive and bitter French philosopher, put it,

> to be afraid is to think of yourself continually, to be unable to imagine an objective course of events. The sensation of the terrible, the sensation that it is all happening *against* you, supposes a world conceived without *indifferent* dangers. The frightened man—victim of an exaggerated subjectivity—believes himself to be, much more than the rest of his kind, the target of hostile events.... [He has attained] the extremity of a self-infatuated consciousness; everything conspires against [him]."

Self-defense calls the victim to learn the lesson of history, though in order to learn it, the victim needs to decide first what the lesson is. The precept of staying alive as the sole thing that counts, as the supreme value that dwarfs all other values, is among the most tempting, and the most common, interpretations of the lesson. As the direct experience of the victims recedes and fades, the memory of the Holocaust tapers and congeals into a precept of survival: life is about surviving, to succeed in life is to outlive the others.... Whoever survives—wins.

This reading of the Holocaust's lesson has been recently displayed—to worldwide acclaim and huge box-office success—in Spielberg's now well-nigh canonical image of the Holocaust. According to the *Schindler's List* version of the Holocaust experience, the sole goal of that most inhuman among human tragedies was to remain alive—while the humanity of life, and particularly its *dignity and ethical value,* was at best of secondary importance and was never allowed to interfere with the principal goal. The goal of staying alive took care of moral concerns. What counted in the last resort was to outlive the others—even if the escape from death required being put on a separate, unique, and exclusive list of the privileged. When offered by the commandant of Birkenau a replacement for "his Jewesses," Schindler refuses; it was not the saving of lives that counted, but the saving of specific, chosen lives. By definition, survival is selective; it is coveted *because of its* selectiveness.

In Spielberg's film, the value of staying alive is not diminished, but made more salient yet by the fact that others, less fortunate, traveled to the extermination camp; viewers of *Schindler's List* are invited to rejoice in the sight of Schindler's master of works pulled out in the nick of time—he alone—from the train destined for Treblinka. Through a willful travestying of the Talmud's precepts, Spielberg's film translates the issue of humanity's salvation into the decision of who is to live and who to die. As the late Gillian Rose, a sublime philosopher and Judaic scholar, pointed out in her last public lecture, "The Talmud is ironic—the most ironic holy commentary in world literature: for no human being

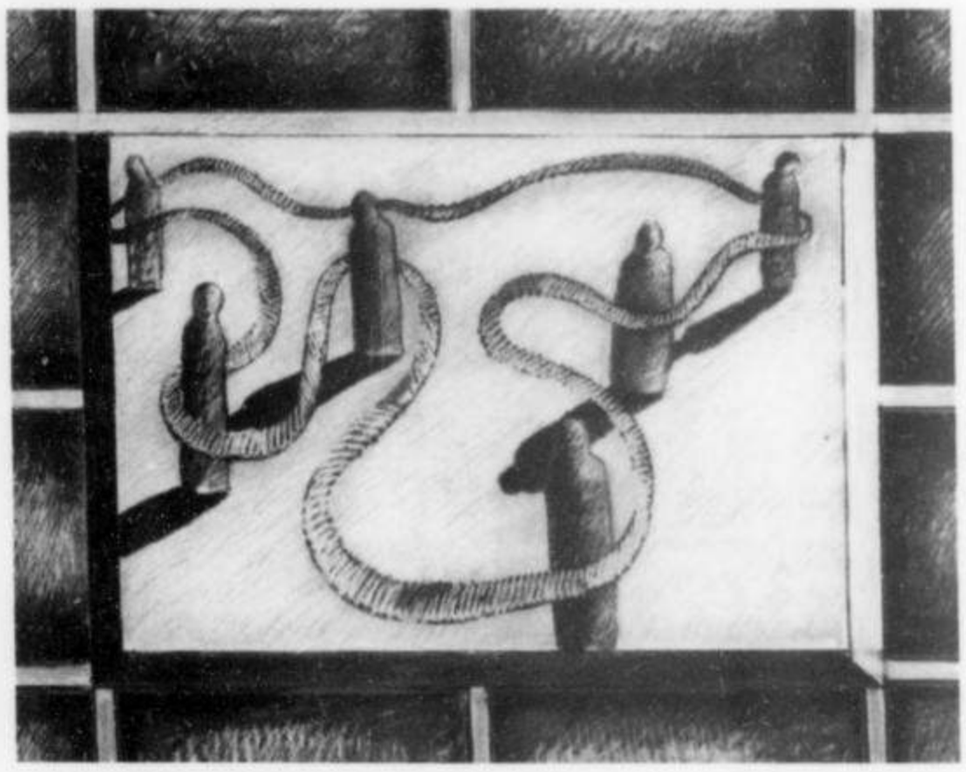
ILLUSTRATIONS BY RICHARD ROSS

Zygmunt Bauman is emeritus professor of sociology at the University of Leeds. He is the author of Modernity and the Holocaust *(1989),* Modernity and Ambivalence *(1991),* Postmodern Ethics *(1993), and* Postmodernity and its Discontents *(1997).*

can save the world." Rose spoke of the "ruthlessness of saving one or one thousand" and comments that while Keneally's original book, *Schindler's Arc,* "makes clear the pitiless immorality of this in the context," Spielberg's film *Schindler's List* "depends on it as congratulation."

That elevation of survival to the rank of the supreme, perhaps the only value, is not Spielberg's invention and not at all a phenomenon confined to artistic representations of the Holocaust's experience.

Soon after the end of the war psychiatrists coined the term "survivor's guilt"—a complex psychical ailment which they ascribed to the habitual way survivors ask themselves why they stayed alive when so many of their near and dear perished. According to these psychiatrists, the joy of escaping death was permanently poisoned for the survivors by their acute moral uncertainty about the propriety of sailing safely out of the sea of perdition; that uncertainty, in turn, had disastrous consequences for the survivors' will to live and to succeed in life after their rescue. Many practicing psychiatrists acquired fame and fortune treating so-construed "survivor's syndrome." Whether the syndrome was rightly spotted and the psychiatric treatment well aimed was and remains a moot question; what is rather obvious, though, is that in the course of time the "guilt" aspect, looming prominently in the beginning, has been progressively exorcised from the model of the "survival complex," leaving the pure



and unalloyed, unambiguous and uncontested approval of self-preservation for the sake of self-preservation.

Such a shift brings us dangerously close to the spine-chilling image of the survivor as painted by Elias Canetti—as the man for whom "the most elementary and obvious form of success is to remain alive." For Canetti's survivor, survival—unlike mere self-preservation—is framed in relation to the other, not the self: "They want to survive their contemporaries. They know that many die early and they want a different fate for themselves." At the far end of the survivalist obsession, Canetti's survivor "wants to kill so that he can survive others; he wants to stay alive so as not to have others surviving him." For Canetti, "The survivor's most fantastic triumphs have taken place in our own time, among people who set a great store about the idea of humanity.... The survivor is mankind's worst evil, its curse and perhaps its doom."

The wider repercussions of that cult of survival contain dangers of potentially formidable proportions. Time and again the lessons of the Holocaust are reduced for popular consumption to a simple formula: "who strikes first, survives"; or to an even simpler one: "the stronger lives." The awesome two-pronged legacy of the Holocaust is the tendency, on the one hand, to treat survival as the sole, or at any rate the topmost value and purpose of life, and, on the other hand, to posit the issue of survival as that of a competition for a scarce resource, and survival itself as a site of conflict between incompatible interests in which the success of some depends on the non-survival of others.

Sinister, pernicious, and morally destructive as it is in its own right, this is not the only avatar of the Holocaust's ghost and not its only misdeed. Another is the phenomenon dubbed by Alain Finkielkraut *le juif imaginaire*—a Jew manifesting his Jewishness, so to speak, by living on the account and at the expense of a "categorical martyrdom," basking in the fame of his ancestral martyrs without paying the price of the glory. Such "imaginary Jews," in Finkielkraut's caustic description, are the "habitués of unreality," who "have taken up residence in fiction ... live in borrowed identities ... have chosen to pass their time in a novelistic space full of sound and fury"—and have become, as a result, "armchair Jews, since, after the Catastrophe, Judaism cannot offer them any content but suffering, and they themselves do not suffer." For this generation, Alain Finkielkraut, the prolific and refined French writer born in 1949 and one of that generation's most illustrious and famous members, is full of contempt: they are, he says, "cowards in life, martyred in dream"—"they mask their inborn softness with the outcast's courage."

There is admittedly a specifically French flavor to Finkielkraut's analysis. When he writes of this group's "desperate striving ... to plug into the great revolt of the day," his words may sound outlandish and exotic to the members of that generation scattered in other, particularly English-speaking, parts of the Jewish diaspora. And yet—the acid remarks about the "pastiche" that "was the governing principle of deeds," about the "frantic masquerade [that] sought to appease bad conscience," about "exorcising the vapidity of lives ... through acts of fictive intensity," and altogether looking "at current events the way Emma Bovary read popular fiction: enraptured by escapism"—may find an echo in many memories and cause the beating of many breasts. Living on a borrowed identity—as martyrs by appointment, *martyrs who never suffered*—"we could only bear to face ourselves unrecognizably disguised"; this spiritual predicament was the fate which the whole generation

shared, even if the disguises were locally diversified dresses.

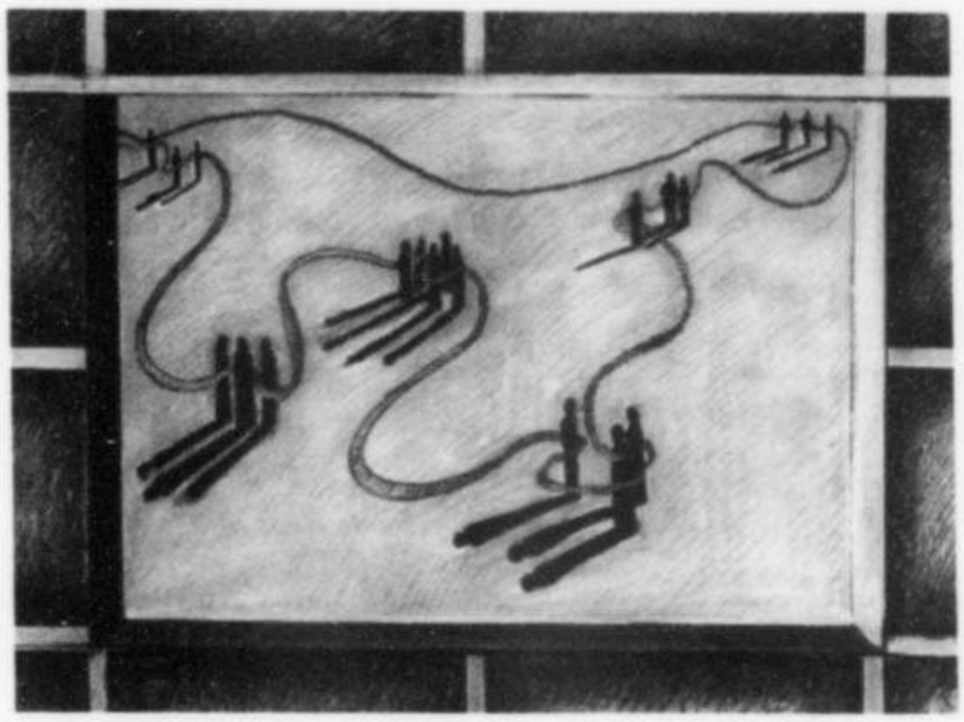
Anne Karpf has recently reported, in a penetrating and sharply ironic survey of the thriving "Holocaust syndrome" literature, her own feelings of relief and spiritual comfort when first hearing of the inherited trauma of the survivors' children. Finding out that she "belonged to a group which might warrant being helped, rather than being purely privileged and morally obliged to help others," she "was relieved and even elated that [her] years of problems weren't necessarily the result of personal pathology but might have a shared and external source."

Karpf put her finger on an open wound, gaping in many a soul. In this hectic, chameleon-like, deregulated, and unpredictable world of privatized loners, one has a lot of problems finding and guarding one's place in life; one is indeed greatly relieved if at least the blame for one's troubles can be shifted onto something other than one's own shoulders.

Exactly seventy years ago Sigmund Freud, in his seminal study *Civilization and Its Discontents*, suggested that "civilization" is a trade-off: one cherished value is sacrificed for another, equally close to the heart. He proposed that in the civilized society of his time a lot of personal freedom of expression had been sacrificed in exchange for a good deal of collectively guaranteed security. In my *Postmodernity and its Discontents* (Polity Press 1997), I have suggested that were Freud writing his book seventy years later, he would probably need to reverse his diagnosis: our present-day troubles and discontents are, like their predecessors, products of a trade-off, but this time it is security which is daily sacrificed on the altar of an ever-expanding individual freedom. On the way to whatever passes for greater individual liberty of choice and self-expression, we have lost a good deal of that security which modern civilization supplied, and even more of the security it promised to supply. Worse still, we have stopped hearing promises that this supply of security will be resumed, and instead hear more and more often that security is contrary to human dignity, much too treacherous to be sought and much too dependency-breeding, addictive, and altogether quagmire-ish to be desired.

And so there are good enough reasons to be nervous, anxious, and angry. It is not clear, though, where the ambient fear derives, what one is truly afraid of, where the danger lies, and what one can do to mitigate it. Anxiety seeks a peg and while searching for it may easily hang itself on a wrong one, prompting actions glaringly irrelevant to the genuine cause of trouble. When genuine reasons for agitation are difficult to locate and even less easy to control if discovered, we are powerfully tempted to construe and name putative, yet credible, culprits against whom we can wage a sensible defensive (or better still, offensive) action. We may bark up a wrong tree, but at least we are barking and cannot deprecate ourselves nor be reproached by others for taking the blows against us hands down.

Throughout the United States, "self-help" groups were formed by the "children of the Holocaust"; these self-invigorating group discussions added an extra dimension of collectively sustained interpretation (and thus the authority of numbers) to the zealous search for a collective Holocaust trauma, which would put the missing sense back into these individuals' present personal troubles. This search was also given the authority of the psychiatric profession; all over the country, psychoanalysts told their patients in no uncertain terms that the roots of their "maladjustments" were buried



in the Holocaust. Some therapeutic experts, like Harvey and Carol Barocas (quoted by Karpf and prestigious enough to contribute to the *International Review of Psychoanalysis*), went so far as to suggest that "the children of survivors show symptoms that would be expected if they actually lived through the Holocaust." And so the ghost has been issued an official permission of domicile, recognized as the lawful plenipotentiary of the "real thing," and so (in tune with the spirit of our time) the troublesome and worrying distinction between the "real" and "virtual" reality has been declared null and void.

For those involved, the message hammered home by the psychiatrists, and sunk ever deeper in the course of the self-help sessions, could not but be richly rewarding. In Anne Karpf's words, "there's undoubtedly something satisfying in joining the ranks of unequivocally wronged, those with an irrefutably legitimate claim on our sympathy." To acquire the right to sympathy and benevolence before one earns it through personal exertions, is an opportunity few people would willingly forfeit. The side effect of all this is, however, a sort of "competition for victimhood," a "pecking order of pain" reminiscent—we may recall—of the rivalry among the tuberculous residents of Thomas Mann's *The Magic Mountain* who quickly established their own eerie hierarchy of prestige and influence measured by the size of their pulmonary caverns.

There is something else, though, to the status of a "victim by proxy"—one of belonging to a *sui generis* "aristocracy of victimhood" (that is, having a *hereditary* claim to

sympathy and to the ethical indulgence owed to those who suffer). That status can be, and often is, brandished as a signed-in-advance and *in blanco* certificate of moral righteousness; whatever the offspring of the victims do must be morally proper (or at least *ethically correct*) as long as it can be shown that it was done in order to stave off the repetition of the lot visited on their ancestors; or as long as it can be shown to be psychologically understandable, nay "normal," in view of the super-susceptibility of the hereditary bearers of victimhood to the threat of a new victimization.

The ancestors are pitied, but also blamed for letting themselves be led, like sheep, to slaughter; how can one blame their descendants for sniffing out a future slaughterhouse in every suspicious looking street or building and—more importantly still—for taking preventive measures to disempower the potential slaughterers? Those who are to be disempowered may not be kith and kin of the perpetrators of the Holocaust, neither bodily nor spiritually, nor in any juridical or ethically sensible way charged with responsibility for their ancestors' perdition; it is, after all, the heredity of the "hereditary victims," and *not* the continuity of their assumed victimizers, which makes the "connection." And yet in a world haunted by the ghost of the Holocaust, such assumed would-be persecutors are guilty in advance, guilty of *being seen* as inclined or able to engage in another genocide. They need commit no crime; standing accused or just *being suspect*, true to the message of Kafka's *The Trial*, is already their crime, the only crime needed to cast them as criminals and to justify harsh preventive/punitive measures. The ethics of hereditary victimhood reverses the logic of the Law; the accused remain criminals until they have proven their innocence—and since it is their prosecutors who conduct the hearings and decide the validity of the argument, they have slim chance of their arguments being accepted in court and every chance of staying guilty for a long time to come—whatever they do.

Thus the status of hereditary victim may take the moral reprobation off such new victimization—this time perpetrated in the name of erasing the hereditary stigma. We often say that violence breeds more violence; we remind ourselves much too rarely, though, that victimization breeds more victimization. Victims are not guaranteed to be morally superior to their victimizers, and seldom emerge from the victimization morally ennobled. Martyrdom—whether lived in a real or a virtual reality—is not a warrant for saintliness.

Memory of suffering does not assure life-long dedication to the fight against inhumanity, cruelty, and the infliction of pain as such, wherever they happen and whoever are the sufferers. At least an equally probable outcome of martyrdom is the tendency to draw an opposite lesson: that humankind is divided into the victims and the victimizers, and so if you are (or expect to be) a victim, your task is to reverse the tables ("the stronger lives"). It is this lesson that the specter of the Holocaust whispers into many ears. And for this reason we cannot be sure whether the lasting legacy of the Holocaust was not the very opposite of what many had hoped and some anticipated: the moral reawakening or ethical purification of the world as a whole or any of its sections.

The pernicious legacy of the Holocaust is that today's persecutors may inflict new pains and create new generations of victims eagerly awaiting their chance to do the same, while acting under the conviction that they avenge yesterday's pain and ward off the pains of tomorrow—while being convinced, in other words, that ethics is on their side. This is perhaps the most awesome among the Holocaust's curses and the greatest of Hitler's posthumous victories. The crowds which applauded Goldstein's massacre of the Muslim worshippers in Hebron, which flocked to his funeral and go on writing his name on their political and religious banners, are the most terminally afflicted, but not the only bearers of that curse.

The phenomenon of hereditary victimhood ought not to be confused with genetic kinship, or with family tradition preserved through parental influence over the educational setting. Heredity in this case is mainly imagined, acting through the collective production of memory and through individual acts of self-enlisting and self-identification. Thus the status of the "Holocaust children," that is of hereditary victim, is open to every Jew, whatever his or her parents might have been "doing in the war" (in fact, embracing this status has turned for many into their main vehicle of Jewish self-definition). Psychiatrists conducted ample studies of the biological descendants (and/or educational objects) of the inmates of concentration camps and the dwellers of ghettos; but the swelling numbers of the "sons and daughters of the Holocaust" who *are not children of either,* still await a comprehensive study. There are many clues, though, of what such a study may reveal. It may well transpire that the complexes of such "imagined children," the "children-pretenders," the "self-appointed children" (and for the same reason "children *manqués*"—flawed, if not fraudulent, children) are more severe and vicious, and burdened with more sinister consequences, than those which the psychiatrists have described thus far.

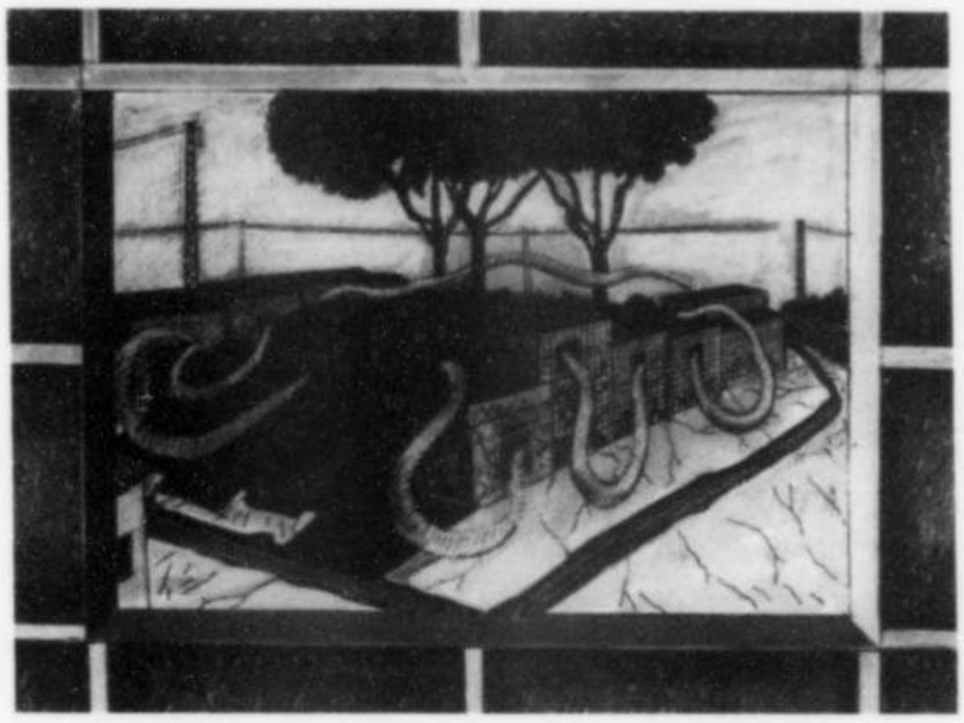
One may say: this stands to reason (whatever "reason" may mean in the world of the possessed). For the "children *manqués*," the site which they occupy in the world, from which they view the world and in which they want to be viewed by the world, is that of martyrdom; but it so happens that they are not, nor have been, personally, the butt of anybody's wrath and wrongdoing. They do not suffer, or they suffer not enough for the victims-by-birth that they are. The world seems reluctant to harm them and make them suffer, and under the circumstances such a world is too good to be acceptable—since the reality of a harmless world means the irreality of a life which derives its sense from the harm done to it and the harm yet to be done.

Living in a not-hostile and harmless world means the betrayal of that sense-giving parentage. To reach completeness, to fulfill their destiny, to get rid of their present deficiency and to efface their vexing (and in the end humiliating) impairment, to turn from children *manqués* into children pure and simple, they would need to re-forge their own imagined continuity of victimhood into the world's real continuity of victimization. That can be done only by acting *as if* their present site in the world was really and truly a site of the victims; through abiding by a strategy which may gain rationality only in a victimizing world. Children *manqués* cannot be fulfilled unless the world they live in reveals its hostility, conspires against them—and, indeed, contains the possibility of another holocaust.

The awesome truth is that, contrary to what they say and think they wish, children *manqués*—the "flawed children"—are unfit to live, and feel out of place in a world free of that possibility. They would feel more comfortable living in a world more like that other world, populated by the Jew-hating murderers who would not stop short of including them among its victims if given a chance and not having their blood-soaked hands tied. They draw a sense-giving reassurance from every sign of hostility toward them; and they are eager to interpret every move of those around them as overt or latent expression of such hostility. In their lives the ghost of the Holocaust may feel safe; in their deeds it has found a magic counter-spell against other people's exorcisms.

The flawed children of the martyrs do not live in homes; they live in fortresses. And to make their homes into fortresses, they need them besieged and under fire. Where else can one come closer to their dreams than among the famished and destitute, despaired and desperate, cursing and stone-throwing Palestinians.... Here, the comfortable and commodious, all-mod-con houses are unlike the houses the children *manqués* have abandoned—those comfortable and commodious, all-mod-houses over there in the stale and dull, too-safe-for-comfort American suburbs, where children would be bound to stay as they are, *manqués*. Here, in Israel, one can tightly wrap the houses with barbed wire, one can build watchtowers in every corner and one can walk from one house to another proudly caressing the gun hanging from one's shoulder. The hostile, Jew-baiting world once forced Jews into ghettos. By making a home in the likeness of the ghetto one can make the world once more hostile and Jew-baiting. In that fully and truly flawed world, the children, at long last, would be no more flawed. The chance of martyrdom missed by the generation would have been repossessed by its chosen representatives, who want to be seen as its spokesmen as well.

Whichever way you look at it, the ghost of the Holocaust appears self-perpetuating and self-reproducing. It made itself indispensable to too many to be easily exorcised. Haunted houses have an added value, and being possessed has turned for many into a valued, meaning-bestowing life formula. In this effect one can spy out the greatest posthumous triumph of the *Endlösung* designers. What the latter failed to accomplish when alive they may yet hope to achieve in death. They did not manage to turn the world against the Jews, but in their graves they can still dream of turning the Jews against the world, and thus—one way or another—to make the Jewish reconciliation with the world, their peaceful cohabitation with the world, all that more difficult, if not downright impossible. The prophecies of the Holocaust are not quite self-fulfilling, but they do fulfill—render plausible—



the prospect of a world in which the Holocaust may never stop being prophesied, with all the deleterious and disastrous psychical, cultural and political consequences which such prophesying is bound to bring forth and propagate.

Can one exorcise the ghost of the Holocaust? A big question and a daunting task, no doubt. *And a different one from making the world Holocaust-proof*, although the state of being possessed makes that other task yet more daunting. It is not easy to write out a foolproof recipe for exorcism, and even if a medicine were available, there would be no guarantee that the patient would swallow the prescribed pills.

Being possessed means seeing the world as one dimensional while being blinkered to all other dimensions, not to mention their interplay. The sole dimension which the ghost of the Holocaust renders visible to the eyes of the possessed (while effacing or removing from sight all other dimensions) is that measured by the degree of Jew-resentment. The world, though, is multi-dimensional.

Jean-Paul Sartre proposed that the Jew is a person whom others define as a Jew. What Sartre must have meant was that the act of such defining is also the act of *reductive selectiveness*; one of the manifold traits of an irretrievably multifaceted person is hereby given prominence, rendering all other traits secondary, derivative, or irrelevant. In the practice of the possessed, the Sartrean procedure is conducted once more, though in the opposite direction. To the possessed, the others, the non-Jews, emerge as one-dimensional as the Jews appear in the vision of their haters. For the possessed, the others are not benign or cruel *patri familiae*,

caring or selfish husbands, benevolent or malicious bosses, good or bad citizens, peaceful or pugnacious neighbors, oppressors or oppressed, pained or pain-inflicting, privileged or dispossessed, threatening or threatened; more precisely, they may be any or all of that, but the fact that they are all that and more is but of secondary and minor importance and does not count for much. What truly counts—perhaps the only thing that counts—is their attitude toward the Jews (and let us recall that the possessed take every stance directed toward a person who happens to *also* be a Jew as



a manifestation and derivative of the attitude taken toward *the Jews as such*).

That is why it is so tremendously important to accept and remember that many declared anti-Semites stoutly refused to cooperate with the perpetrators of the Holocaust, while the ranks of the executors were full of law-abiding citizens and disciplined functionaries who happened to be free of any peculiar grudge against the Jews. To accept and remember that "deportation of the Jews" (as the annihilation of European Jewry was officially defined) derived its meaning in Nazi thinking from their overall, audacious plan of wholesale *Übersiedlung*, their vision of a European continent in which well-nigh everyone would be transported from their present, contingent site to the place where reason ordered them to be (and that could entail nothingness; as the Holocaust progressed, even Jewish graveyards were proclaimed out of order and replaced with chimney smoke). To accept and remember that extermination of the Jews was conceived in the framework of a total "cleansing of the world" operation (which included also the mentally deficient, physically handicapped, ideologically deviant, and sexually unorthodox) by a state powerful enough and sufficiently immune to all opposition to afford such total plans and to execute them without fear of effective dissent. And to accept and to remember, last but not least, that the Nazis behind the Holocaust were *also* "*Bürgers*," who like all *Bürgers* now as much as then, here as much as there, had their "problems" which they dearly wished to "resolve."

The acclaim accorded to Daniel Goldhagen's version of the Holocaust as primarily the story of the voluntary and Jew-hating helpers of Hitler adds to such risks, being itself a fruit gestated in the haunted house. That some of the participants of mass murder did enjoy their part in crime either because of their sadistic inclinations or because of their hatred of the Jews or for both reasons simultaneously is not, of course, Goldhagen's fantasy (though it is not his discovery either). Taking that fact, however, as the explanation of the Holocaust, as its central point or deepest meaning, says a lot about the ghosts haunting the house, while turning our attention away from what is the most sinister truth of that genocide and what is still the most salutary lesson which our haunted world could learn from the recent history which contains the Holocaust as its major event.

The point is that for every villain of Goldhagen's book, for every German who killed his victims with pleasure and enthusiasm, there were dozens and hundreds of Germans and non-Germans who contributed to the mass murder no less effectively without feeling anything about their victims and about the nature of the actions involved.

And the point is that while we know quite well that prejudice threatens humanity, and we know even how to fight and constrain the ill intentions of people poisoned with prejudice, we know little how to stave off the threat of a murder which masquerades as the routine and unemotional function of an orderly society. As Enzo Traverso put it recently in reference to France, the causes of the Holocaust in general, and that "wall of indifference" which surrounded the mass slaughter of the French Jews, need to be sought not in the "Jewish question," as Jean-Paul Sartre saw fit, nor even in the circumstances of the genocide itself, but in the French pre-Vichy society. A genocide of unwanted strangers cannot take place in just any society, and the presence of a quantity of Jew-haters is not the only, not even the necessary, condition which needs to be met to make that genocide a possibility.

Hannah Arendt pointed out a long time ago that the phenomenon of Holocaust anti-Semitism may explain at most the choice of the victims, but not the nature of the crime. Nothing happened since then to invalidate Arendt's verdict, while the monumental memoirs of Primo Levi, the monumental historical research of Raoul Hilberg, and the monumental documentary of Claude Lanzman, to mention but a few landmarks, did a lot to confirm and reinforce it.

This is not to say that the world we live in differs from the world of the Holocaust to an extent which makes it holocaust-proof and that holocaust fears are therefore illusory. But it does mean that the threat of such holocausts as may yet come is all too often sniffed out today and searched in the wrong places and our sight is diverted from the grounds in which genuine threats are rooted. These are the grave risks of living in a haunted house. ❑

On Suffering



SERIGRAPH BY SHRAGA WEIL / COURTESY OF SAFRAI GALLERY

Bradley Shavit Artson

The topic of theodicy (literally, "God's justice") is probably the most severe challenge to religious faith in general and to liberal religion in particular. Theodicy challenges religious faith because it is an attempt to explain the presence, indeed the pervasiveness, of evil in a world created by a God we suppose to be loving and powerful. Liberal faith is particularly challenged because it does not have the comfort, however illusory, of a literally-revealed Truth to rely upon. We are forced to stumble in the haze, using a combination of reason, intuition, tradition, and emotion to establish a path through the pain. We know that we must move forward, but we aren't sure where forward really is.

Our challenge: evil does exist in the world, and it exists in abundance. It strikes at the great and the obscure, the moral and the vile, the young and the old, with arbitrary indifference. The existence of goodness and morality may pose a problem for the atheist's philosophy; the existence of this immoral/amoral evil is certainly a problem for a believer's understanding. How could a God worth worshiping possibly abide by, let alone create, so much suffering?

For traditional monotheists (those who construe God as having no less personality than God's creation), the issue is painful and clear: how could a good God allow all this suffering? But the issue is no less intense for those who construe God using metaphors of an impersonal force: how does that force lead to a triumph of well-being over suffering? How does it provide comfort (physical or spiritual) during times of tribulation? Are the outbursts of suffering the consequence of other, more malignant, forces (a.k.a. gods)?

Let us, for the sake of clarity, sharpen our distinction. There exist two broad categories of evil—social evil and natural evil. Social evil (including the severe disparities of wealth and opportunities between different individuals or between different societies; events like the Holocaust; food shortages; and attitudes towards others such as sexism, racism, homophobia) can be attributed to the essential nature of human freedom and free will. Unless people are to be moral automatons, some will clearly exercise the option to make the wrong choices—some people will seek their own interests at the expense of other people, some will lust for power, for vengeance, for violence. For God to prevent, *a priori*, those choices is to reduce human beings to moral robots. Social evil is the price we pay for autonomy. (One can still ask why, in an infinite range of possible universes, God had to make one in which those extremes are the only two choices.)

So, relatively speaking, social evil need not pose a severe challenge to religious faith. Not so, however, with natural evil. There is no moral reason why viruses like AIDS should inflict such drawn-out, lethal suffering on people, why instant crib death should exist, why some people are unable to walk, or see, or hear. Here there is no issue of moral autonomy at stake—we see only meaninglessness and undeserved suffering. I have no answer to instant crib death. There is a hole in my faith.

The range of attempted responses to this problem are as wide as they are ineffective. "We are punished for our sins" does not help at the funeral of a child. Being "purged now so we can be rewarded later" doesn't address the question of why a loving God would require suffering at all. That "the universe is structured to permit moral growth" dodges the issue of why that structure isn't more constantly clear and why it should require innocent agony.

(continued on page 64)

Bradley Shavit Artson, a contributing editor of TIKKUN, *is the author of* It's A Mitzvah! Step By Step to Jewish Living *(Behrman House and the Rabbinical Assembly).*

Envisioning Zipporah

Christine Benvenuto

What action directives will derive from my statement of commitment to this ancient story and from my particular rereading of it? How is my life changed by the fact that I see myself descended from those who came forth from Egypt?

—Rabbi Arthur Green
Seek My Face, Speak My Name

We are poised at a moment when it is easy to feel that Judaism is deeply threatened, that Jews are dying for lack of connection to God and Israel, squandering their own vitality by their failure to transmit Judaism to the next generation. At the same time, many see the unfolding of a Jewish spiritual and cultural renaissance, an era of rebirth and renewal.

In either event, it might be supposed that everyone who cares about Judaism would be anxious to attract and encourage all committed Jews. Ironically, however, there are Jews who seem to fear that their identities hinge precariously on who they keep out of the fold. Here in the United States, rabbis are criticized for welcoming families that include non-Jewish members. In Israel, the full inclusion of women into religious life terrifies many Orthodox Jews, while some have claimed that those affiliated with the Reform or Conservative movements aren't Jews at all, and that conversions performed by their rabbis are invalid.

As a convert, this last controversy naturally captures my attention. Regardless of who Israel decides is a "real" convert, the issue evokes for me the more elemental question of what, precisely, a convert really is.

My husband jokes that converts are like other Jews, only happier. Quite seriously, a convert, by virtue of having freely pursued a conscious and sometimes arduous path, is unlikely to be conflicted about his or her Jewish identity or to be burdened with the alienating experiences of Judaism that some Jews by birth carry with them. It is a painful paradox that seekers who approach Judaism from the outside may encounter fewer emotional obstacles than some Jews for whom the whole of Jewish tradition is—or should be—a birthright.

Judaism is not my birthright. I feel deeply privileged to call myself, and be called, a Jew. But Judaism has a word besides "Jew" to identify a convert: *ger,* "resident alien." Is a convert a resident alien, passive and marginal as that term implies, or a Jew?



In the months leading up to my conversion to Judaism, I began following the cycle of Torah readings. I read very personally, as someone who was about to become a Jew and who had recently become a mother and was preparing for Jewish parenthood. Though only half conscious of it, I was searching for clues about how and where a convert might enter the Jewish story.

In this state of mind, I glimpsed a remarkable dynamic at work in the family of Moses and Zipporah.

(continued on page 62)

ILLUSTRATIONS BY OENONE TERRILL

Christine Benvenuto's short stories and articles have appeared in many publications. She is completing a novel for which she has been awarded a grant from the Vogelstein Foundation.

FOREIGN POLICY

American Failures in Africa

Kenneth Roth



PHOTOGRAPH BY GREG GIBSON / AP PHOTO

When does an apology make a difference? It was a question one could not help asking after President Clinton's recent contrition-filled trip to Africa. Much attention focused on whether Clinton should express regret for America's role in slavery. But the declarations Clinton made that were of greatest significance to Africans addressed more recent crimes—the U.S. government's support for African dictatorships and its refusal to stop genocide in Rwanda. It remains to be seen whether Clinton's apology for these offenses will be accompanied by steps to prevent their repetition.

Clinton's trip to Africa, the longest by far of any sitting U.S. president, was meant to demonstrate American commitment to a continent that U.S. policy makers long valued only as a Cold War battlefield. With the demise of the Soviet Union, Africa seemed to fall off Washington's map. Aid plummeted. Attention waned. Apart from Nelson Mandela's dramatic ascendancy over apartheid in South Africa, most of the news reaching American soil was bad—Somali famine, Rwandan genocide, Liberian slaughter, Zairean corruption, a steady diet of disaster.

Clinton sought to change the message by recognizing the often unheralded success of such countries as Botswana, Ghana, and Senegal in strengthening their economies and opening up their political systems. He went to Africa to applaud these successes, to improve Americans' image of the continent, and to promise help.

To Clinton's credit, he was willing to interrupt this good-news message by devoting some time to Africa's lingering problems and America's contribution to them. During a three-hour visit to the airport in Kigali, Rwanda's capital, he acknowledged that the United States and the international community had abandoned the country as genocide unfolded, at a time when intervention could have saved hundreds of thousands of lives. In a speech before a collection of east and central African heads of state in Entebbe, Uganda, he expressed remorse for past U.S. support of African dictators and pledged to promote democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

Welcome as this soul-searching was, it should have gone further. Take, for example, the apology for complacency in the face of the Rwandan genocide. "We did not act quickly enough after the killing began," Clinton conceded. But his mea culpa glossed over the Administration's insistence at the time of the genocide on withdrawing rather than strengthening a U.N. military force in the country. With the U.S. in the lead, the U.N. Security Council voted to reduce the force from 2,500 to a mere 270 troops. Traumatized by the killing of eighteen American peacekeepers in Somalia in 1993, Clinton had just adopted Presidential Decision Directive 25, which, in Colin Powell-style, set forth myriad conditions that would have to be met before the U.S. government would contemplate the further deployment of peacekeepers. Unfortunately for Rwandans, their genocide was to prove the test case for this new policy.

As Rwandan Tutsi and moderate Hutu fell to a well organized campaign of slaughter, the Clinton Administration also resorted to obfuscation. Warren Christopher, then Secretary of State, referred to "acts of genocide," in a twisted effort to distinguish the killing from full-fledged "genocide," which, under international law, the United States would have been compelled to "prevent." An official at the National Security Council spoke of "age-old animosities" between Hutu and Tutsi, as if the killing was a natural phenomenon best left to run its course, rather than a calculated campaign with a leadership that could be targeted and stopped. Madeleine Albright, then U.S. ambassador to the U.N., drew up questions from the new peacekeeping policy for the thinly staffed U.N. to answer, rather than pledging American support to find the solutions that were so urgently needed as genocide raged.

Clinton during his recent visit did try to set the record straight. He acknowledged that "we did not immediately call these crimes by their rightful name: genocide." He recognized that the killings "were not spontaneous or accidental" and "most certainly not the result of ancient tribal struggles" but the fruit of a deliberate, well planned "policy aimed at the systematic destruction of a people." He correctly explained: "The ground for violence was carefully prepared, the airwaves poisoned with hate, casting the Tutsi as scape-

---

Kenneth Roth is executive director of Human Rights Watch, the largest U.S.-based international human rights organization, which monitors and promotes human rights in some seventy countries worldwide.

goats for the problems of Rwanda, denying their humanity. All of this was done, clearly, to make it easy for otherwise reluctant people to participate in wholesale slaughter."

Despite these welcome truths, Clinton still tried to minimize his responsibility by attributing his inaction in the face of genocide to ignorance. "All over the world," he acknowledged to a group of Rwandan survivors, "there were people like me sitting in offices, day after day after day, who did not fully appreciate the depth and the speed with which you were being engulfed by this unimaginable terror." In fact, there was ample information reaching the White House, from Human Rights Watch and other groups. The press also published numerous compelling if inexact accounts. Administration officials knew full well what was happening in Rwanda. Despite the loss of hundreds of thousands of lives, they simply did not want to take the political risks of getting involved.

The Administration did no better in dealing with the aftermath of the genocide. The slaughter ended only when the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), composed largely of Rwandan refugees who had lived in exile since the 1960s, won a military victory over the genocidal government. As the RPF, which had first invaded in 1990, advanced through the country, some two million Rwandans fled abroad, the vast majority of them to eastern Zaire. There, Hutu militia and the deposed Rwandan army took advantage of massive international assistance for the refugees to regroup, rearm, and plot to "finish off" the genocide. Despite repeated requests from U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees Sadako Ogata for international military assistance to separate killers from refugees, the Administration again refused to get involved. As Clinton acknowledged in his airport speech, "We should not have allowed the refugee camps to become safe havens for the killers." The ensuing civil war in eastern Zaire and northwestern Rwanda owes much to this policy of inaction.

At the Kigali airport, in an echo of the "never again" vows that followed the Holocaust, Clinton pledged: "We owe to all the people in the world our best efforts to organize ourselves so that we can maximize the chances of preventing these events." But in Africa, that pledge seems to have been reduced to U.S. support for a new African Crisis Response Initiative, a collection of African troops specially trained and equipped to respond to future outbreaks of slaughter. Given the Clinton Administration's extreme reluctance to risk the lives of American soldiers in the name of halting genocide, or even to authorize U.N. peacekeeping by others, this all-African force may for now be the best that can be hoped for. But the experience of African peacekeeping in Liberia and Sierra Leone has been mixed, and it remains unclear how such a force would fare in the face of renewed genocide. Next time, as well, the fate of the victims is likely to depend on political will in Washington.

Despite—or, perhaps, because of—this failure to stop genocide, the Clinton Administration has been supportive of after-the-fact efforts to bring the killers to justice. President Clinton in Kigali correctly noted the importance of such accountability for nation-building in post-genocide Rwanda. Parallel with U.S. support for international justice, from Nuremberg to the International Criminal Tribunals for Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia, Clinton pledged $30 million to build "impartial, credible, and effective" national justice systems in Rwanda, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo. In Rwanda, as some 130,000 Hutus are imprisoned in unimaginable, sardine-like conditions awaiting trials by a judicial system that was left devastated by the genocide, international assistance is essential to speed trials that respect due process.

To his credit, Clinton mentioned the importance of accountability not only for *genocidaires* but also for members of the current Rwandan army who commit abuses. As Hutu rebels resume their genocidal project in northwestern Rwanda, the Tutsi-led Rwandan army has often responded by killing Hutu indiscriminately. While occasionally Rwandan troops have been disciplined for these atrocities, more often Rwandan officials offer flimsy excuses, such as claims that execution victims were caught in "cross-fire." The U.S. Embassy in Kigali has too often repeated these evasions, and Clinton in his speech did not refute them. However, Clinton's insistence that justice apply not only to "insurgents" but also to "soldiers" was a welcome reminder that atrocities, regardless of the source, will breed only further atrocities.

But again, Clinton's rhetoric fell short of his administration's actions. In late 1996 and early 1997, after the international community refused to separate *genocidaires* from refugees in camps in eastern Zaire, Rwandan government troops took action. Operating in alliance with the Zairean rebel force of Laurent Kabila, the Rwandan army closed down the refugee camps. Some 600,000 refugees returned to Rwanda, but thousands of other refugees, often in the company of armed elements, fled west through the forbidding jungle terrain of northern Zaire. Rwandan troops and their Zairean rebel allies tracked them relentlessly across half a continent. The U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees estimates that some 200,000 refugees are missing. Thousands are presumed dead, many murdered, others left to perish in the jungle.

To establish justice in the region and to break the cycle of violence and revenge, investigators must determine how many died and who was responsible for the slaughter. Then the killers and their commanders must be brought to justice. But Kabila, who went on to topple Zairean leader Mobutu Sese Seko and rename the country the Democratic Republic of Congo, has erected substantial obstacles to U.N. investigators. The Clinton Administration, eager to promote "stability" in the Congo and to exploit its vast natural resources, has been disturbingly acquiescent. When a

respected U.N. investigator, Roberto Garréton, angered Kabila by calling attention to the atrocities against refugees, Kabila insisted that he be replaced, and U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Bill Richardson brokered the deal. That violated the principle that an abusive government should never pick its investigators—a breach that Saddam Hussein was soon to exploit in objecting to tough weapons inspectors in Iraq.

The replacement team in Congo fared no better, as Kabila tried to extort payments from it, then sought to dictate the sites it could visit. The Clinton Administration issued occasional protests, while pressing the U.N. behind the scenes to accept Kabila's conditions. Congolese authorities went on to harass witnesses, detain one of the investigators, and allow a mob to descend on the team as it began exhuming a mass grave of refugee victims. Unable to work, the team was finally withdrawn.

When Human Rights Watch, after its own, separate investigation, revealed the direct role of Rwandan troops in the slaughter of refugees, and named the commanding officers involved, the U.S. ambassador to Rwanda, William Gribbin, attacked the findings in a cable back to Washington. Despite the close relationship between the U.S. government and the Rwandan army, and admissions by Rwanda's defense minister, Paul Kagame, that Rwandan troops were actively involved in the military campaign across northern Congo, Washington says it has no information about which Rwandan troops were deployed and what role they played during the slaughter. Given this series of events, one is left with the impression that Clinton's devotion to accountability in Central Africa is addressed more to losers than to victors.

Clinton's tour leaves one with a sense of opportunity lost.

The Clinton Administration's continued embrace of Kabila, even as he erects substantial obstacles to the U.N. investigation, underscores the weakness of Clinton's apology for past U.S. support of abusive African governments. With a history of massive financial aid to the likes of Liberia's Samuel Doe, Somalia's Mohamed Siad Barre, and Zaire's Mobutu Sese Seko, the U.S. government has much to apologize for. But it is only by comparison with such past tyrants that today's much-touted "new generation" of African leaders looks good. The Clinton Administration's open embrace of these leaders raises disturbing questions about whether in fact it is changing its ways.

The centerpiece of Clinton's efforts to highlight this new leadership was a summit of six east and central African heads of state at Entebbe, Uganda. Their final communiqué was supposed to be a ringing endorsement of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. Yet a closer look raises disturbing questions about the depth of this commitment.

One of the region's most important ideological challenges to human rights is the non-party "movement" form of "democracy" championed by Yoweri Museveni, Uganda's president. Taking a page from the argument of Kenya's President Daniel Arap Moi, Museveni contends that Africa cannot afford to permit multiple political parties because they would degenerate into tribalism. Rather, he contends, it is best for his "movement" to represent popular concerns, without resorting to competitive political parties. This new version of the one-party state has found much admiration among other regional leaders. Because Museveni has presided over a relatively stable nation experiencing strong economic growth, the Clinton Administration has tended to accept his autocratic governance style.



PHOTOGRAPH BY TUEN VOETEN / IMPACT VISUALS

In fact, most of the African leaders who signed the Entebbe document hardly embrace democracy. Kenya's Moi appears to have allowed his supporters to whip up violence against ethnic groups that have sided with his political opponents. Ethiopia's Prime Minister Meles Zenawi refuses to tolerate pluralist party politics and has cracked down on critical media reporting. Rwanda, still immersed in war, has not even begun to democratize, and is governed by an increasingly exclusive clique of Tutsi nationalists. Congo's Kabila, in addition to obstructing investigations into the massacre of refugees, has prohibited public demonstrations, barred opposition political activity, harassed the independent press, and banned the country's leading human rights group, while his troops have beaten and forcibly "disappeared" human rights and opposition activists.

With "democrats" like these, it was hardly surprising that the Entebbe communiqué resorted to generalities. Rather than pledging to embrace democracy, the African leaders vowed only "to pursue a dialogue on democratization." They did endorse the rule of law and respect for human rights, and even upheld "the right of citizens to regularly elect their leaders freely and to participate fully in the decision-making which affects them." Notably, however, these carefully chosen words offered no guarantee of

(continued on page 65)

FOREIGN POLICY

Second-Hand Democracy

Human Rights Workers in Haiti

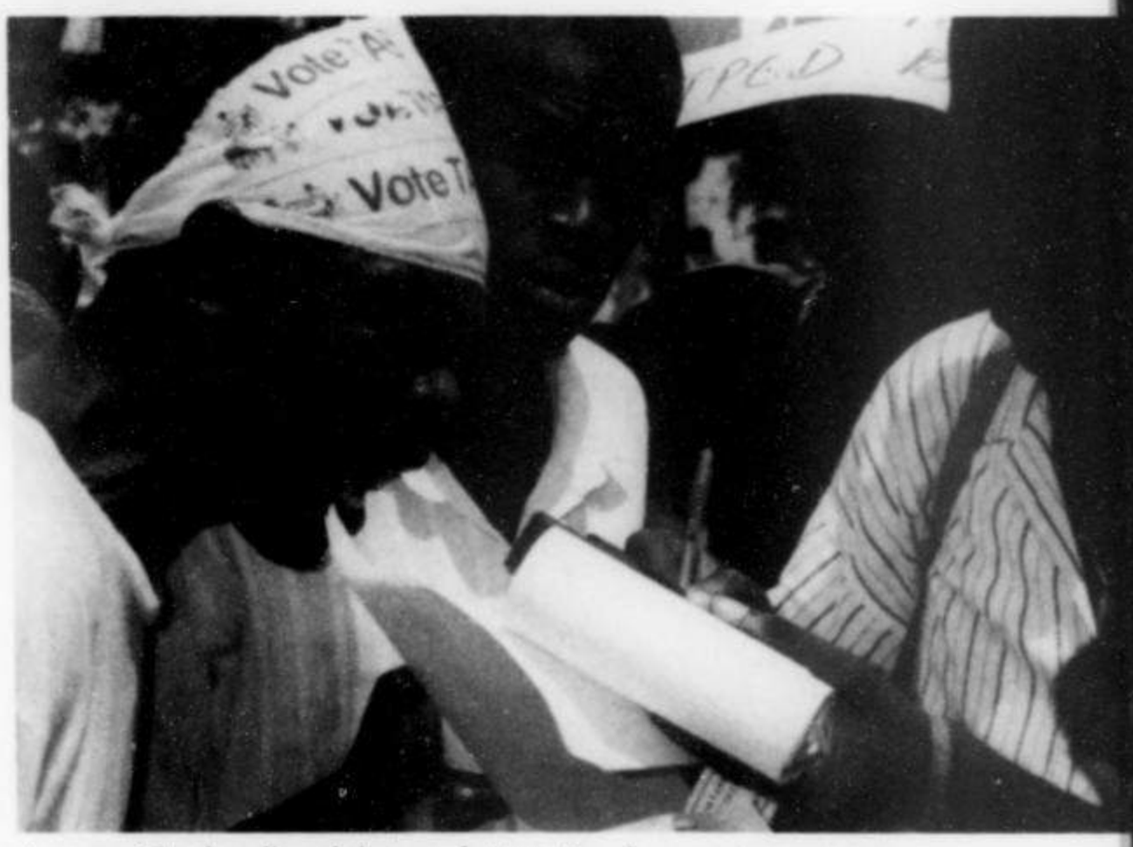
Catherine Orenstein

In Haiti they say only when you're done being sick do you know the cure. Since Haiti's military regime ended in 1994, the international community has sent in thousands of soldiers and spent billions of dollars to secure what the world initially hailed as a great success story. But today, less than four years later, violence, poverty, hunger, and death still plague the island. Since June of 1997, there has been no working government or prime minister. If foreigners think about Haiti at all these days, I imagine it is with bewilderment; what else could the international community have done? As the world turns its attention—and its remedies—to new hot spots, it's a good question to ask.

In 1995 I went to Haiti to work as a Human Rights Observer for the joint United Nations/Organization of American States International Civilian Mission, which was the eyes and ears of the UN military peacekeeping mission, one of the first efforts of its kind. The idea of conducting formal UN human rights monitoring in the context of peacekeeping operations was introduced as a spur to peace talks in El Salvador, where a pioneer mission was sent in mid-1991. Based on that precedent, in 1993 the UN and the OAS sent a civilian mission to Haiti which would, at its peak, reach over 200 observers (a small group remains there still).

Since then, international human rights monitoring has taken off. There are now civilian human rights operations in over a dozen countries. Some of my former colleagues from Haiti have moved on to missions in Rwanda, Bosnia, and Guatemala. With the establishment of the office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in 1994 and the spread of civilian observers around the globe, human rights are an increasing factor in evaluating international solutions to global crises, ultimately influencing diplomatic and business decisions as well as world public opinion. But defining human rights can be elusive, and our global vision can sometimes warp local truths.

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.



A man with a headband that reads "vote" makes a statement to a reporter on election day.

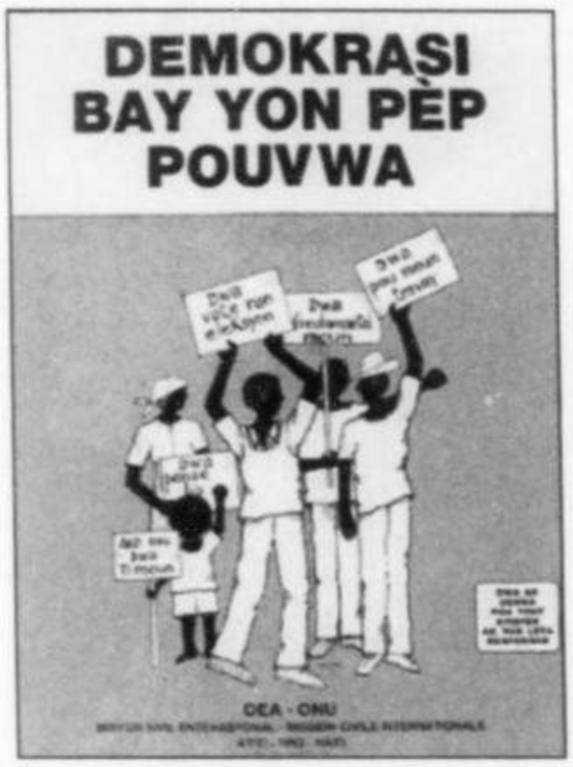
We came to Haiti as the nation's supposed saviors. But in my experience working during the post-coup regime era, we also came with many presumptions and misunderstandings as well as with mandates and orders that sometimes contradicted our stated humanitarian objectives. Even as the U.S.-led international community ousted Haiti's top generals, it ushered in policies that perpetuated many of the coup regime's injustices—policies that I believe we peacekeepers and human rights observers ultimately, if unwittingly, sanctioned.

The foreign military presence in Haiti began in September, 1994, when 20,000 American soldiers invaded to kick out General Raoul Cedras and his military junta. United Nations troops took over later and stayed until the mission finally ended this past December. About 500 U.S. "support troops" remain. But what most people don't know is that we—that is, our soldiers and diplomats—never actually dismantled or disarmed the coup regime. General Cedras was flown to exile in Panama. Death squad leader Emmanuel Constant now lives in New York City. Almost all of the other thugs were allowed to go free, and for the most part are still at large. Back in 1994, in the immediate aftermath of the U.S. invasion, Haitians were told not to take justice into their own hands, but to bring those accused of crimes to the American GIs who would escort them to Haitian jails. But the ex-soldiers and their Haitian jailers were old friends from the coup days, and those who entered through the front gates left through the back. In October of 1994, for example, one hundred inmates "escaped" the national penitentiary when their jail cells were left open. When I visited that prison a year later, the inmate roster showed that less than a handful of prisoners were being held for coup-regime related crimes.

As civilian observers, my colleagues and I learned the consequences of this impunity second-hand. With their American-made M16s and their elite backers, Haiti's thugs and ex-soldiers had little to fear from the struggling judicial

PHOTOGRAPH BY CATHERINE ORENSTEIN

system or the shaky new police force. Only a handful of trials took place. For this reason Haitian victims routinely came to our International Civilian Mission office seeking help. Sometimes they reported past crimes; other times they reported hunger or homelessness. We gathered their stories and noted their accusations with stomach-aching impotence. Sometimes our office helped them get medical assistance. But we did not help them plead their cases in court, or turn the information they gave us over to Haitian judicial officials. According to our deputy director, Ian Martin, the mission had originally agreed to provide information to Haiti's Ministers of Defense, Interior, and Justice (before the Minister of Justice was assassinated), but did not for fear that they would be unable to protect the confidentiality of information sources. As a result, our reports floated harmlessly up into the ether of the international human rights community. Despite our good intentions and as Amnesty International later reported, victims and witnesses whom we interviewed often left our offices frustrated or even misled.



The elite financiers of the coup leaders—the tiny cabal of families who have held Haiti in misery for decades—also got off scot-free. They remained in positions of economic power, reassured by an elite prime minister (businessman Smark Michel, replaced by businessman Rosny Smarth, who resigned in June, 1997) and an economic program that the World Bank and the United States required first as a condition for President Aristide's return, and later as a condition for foreign aid (upon which the bulk of the Haitian budget relies). The economic program, which includes freezing minimum wage hikes, dropping tariffs, eliminating government service jobs, and privatizing Haiti's state-run industries, is a boon to Haiti's tiny business class who make their riches importing and exporting, mostly with the United States. But the majority of Haitians oppose them: in 1990 when former World Bank official and presidential candidate Marc Bazin proposed these same neo-liberal policies he received only 14 percent of the vote. Which is not surprising, given that five million Haitians live off of less than seventy cents a day. The cost of living is soaring, and last year reports of famine in the northwest told of people eating dirt to quell hunger. For this reason placards at demonstrations in the capital called the World Bank economic reforms *plan lamo*, a death plan. Camille Chalmers, head of the grassroots Platform for Alternative Economic Development, once compared the World Bank's structural adjustment program (SAP) with the 1991 coup: "One was to eliminate the involvement of the popular social classes in politics, the other is to shut them out with economic exclusion mechanisms. We call the SAP an economic coup d'etat."

POSTERS COURTESTY OF M.I.C.I.V.I.H

Foreign human rights workers often sympathized with this viewpoint. Nonetheless these debates fell out of our professional hearing range because our mission mandate focused on political and civil rights and distanced us from economic issues. Thus, despite evidence that poverty had grown worse, even during coup times, despite constant protests and demonstrations against the economic regime, and regardless of the impunity wealthy coup backers universally enjoyed, our reports on Haiti in the year after the invasion were unequivocally positive. In June of 1995, for example, UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros Ghali reported to the Security Council that human rights abuses had fallen substantially. In August, our Mission newsletter gushed about improvements. "The human rights situation is plainly improved," the Mission's director, Colin Granderson, wrote in October, 1995, one year after the restoration of civilian rule. "In effect, violations of fundamental human rights … are the exception, not the rule." Meanwhile, the anniversary was marked in Cite Soleil by the stoning of U.S. Vice President Gore's wife's motorcade; Tipper Gore was touring the capital's main slum with a wealthy Haitian health clinic director accused of collaborating with the putschists.

The significance of our mission's selective human rights focus was highlighted by our public education campaign on human rights, *Dwa Ak Devwa Pou Tout Moun Ak Yon Leta Responsab* (Duties and Rights of Haitians in a Responsible State). As part of the campaign, my colleagues and I visited Haitian groups to speak about the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights and the Haitian Constitution, passing out flyers and posters that urged Haitians to seek justice in the courts and not the streets. Our superiors advised us to focus our discussions on the rights to life and safety and the freedoms of speech and assembly, and to avoid getting drawn into fruitless debates on hunger, shelter, unemployment, or other economic issues that Haitians inevitably and loudly voiced. This was a subject of angst amongst observers: it was awful to hear Haitians accuse us of ignoring their real problems. I once tried to defend myself at a meeting, explaining (as I had heard someone else do) that issues of poverty fell to the development community, not to human rights workers. But the words sounded hollow and I stood there feeling silly in a muddy, tin-roofed school barely larger than my vehicle. More than a few Haitians saw the irony in a wealthy UN consultant coming to an island where per capita income is less than $250 only to say that economic problems are not human rights problems. *Kote ou chita se la ou kanpe*, they said; where you sit determines where you stand.

This goes to the root of why we human rights observers



were able to see and present post-coup Haiti as a success story. For me and many other foreigners, it was inevitably easier to sit with the wealthy. Haiti's small ruling clan, most of whom spoke English, or French, crossed paths with peacekeepers and human rights monitors like myself in the fancy restaurants of Petionville, a wealthy suburb above the capital. We had a lot to talk about: they read books; they traveled to New York and Miami; maybe they had gone to the same college as we had. We rented their elegant gated apartments up there in the hills, understandably, since most Haitian dwellings are without electricity or plumbing. During my tenure, even the UN/OAS human rights mission situated its Port-au-Prince headquarters on the pristine mountaintop property of the wealthy Brandt clan, a family which was widely known to have financed the military regime.

Not all human rights observers lived in luxurious circumstances, but to varying degrees we all lived privileged lifestyles—a fact that permeated our work. On the job, observers carried walkie-talkies to communicate with each other. In the capital, our radio codes for locations began with a list of Petionville hotels and restaurants, assigned the names of tropical drinks or flowers. "Echo 14 at tequila sunrise," I'd say. "I'll meet you at rum punch." ("Captain Steubing," we'd privately joke, "meet me on the aloha deck.")

There's a popular Kreyol proverb that says rocks in the stream can't understand the suffering of rocks in the sun. My colleagues and I were like rocks in cool water, sipping rum punches on the patios of Petionville hotels. From where we sat, and with our limited Kreyol, how could we fully understand the words coming from the hot, dusty slums of *La Saline* and *Cite Soleil* far below us—sites renown, not incidentally, for both their flourishing popular movements and human rights abuse cases? From up above not only were old coup crimes a remote concern, but the economy seemed to be recovering just fine, as we watched new mansions go up in the hills and new restaurants and businesses open. But down below, Haitians spoke of *insekirité*, the fear of neighborhood tormenters still at large, and battled *lavichè*—the fact that life itself in post-coup Haiti was getting too expensive.

In December of 1995, the international community formalized Haiti's return to normalcy. The United States and the UN provided cash, observers (including myself), and even ballots to ensure that Haiti held elections to replace Aristide, who had won the presidency by a landslide in 1990 but had spent the majority of his term in exile. American officials (who distrusted the left-leaning Aristide and feared he would try to extend his term) opined that the true test of democracy is not the first, but the second free election. But Haitians dubbed the process *demokrasi pepe*, or "second-hand democracy," from the Kreyol word for the tons of used clothes dumped into the country from the United States each year.

A few months after the elections the UN/OAS civilian mission was dramatically scaled back, and the UN military mission was scheduled to leave within the year (in fact, it lingered until last December). For us, the job was mostly done. But with our perspective and our mandate, we foreigners plainly had different standards for a successful solution to Haiti's crisis than most Haitians did. While we may have restored normalcy, we ignored the fact that "normal" is what most Haitians had been struggling to change when the coup came along and stopped them in their tracks.

International efforts in Haiti may have been successful in the sense that Haiti's military façade is now gone, and civilian rule restored. But in many ways, the international community made short shrift of its own peacekeeping goals. By tolerating criminals, buffering the elite, imposing economic policies that sow inequality, and lending the United Nations' moral legitimacy for such flawed solutions, we foreigners helped ensure the continuity of Haiti's real nightmare: the banal and often deadly realities of normal daily life. This is not to say that foreigners are responsible for Haiti's problems—or for solving them. But until the power relations behind our peacekeeping and human-rights efforts are challenged, and until our perspective is reexamined, the benefits of the international community's work in places like Haiti will be moot. ❑

Politics

Dad said *Nixon*; he came on TV.
We watched with ice cream floats,
Big Macs and fries. We watched the sky

On TV fill with planes. We waved good-bye
And sucked air through straws.
It was dinner-time but where was Mom?

Dad sat and watched: I watched his beard grow.
I found a jar and left the house
And bottled fireflies. The real night came.

Then smeared them with my thumb
On the hot blacktop
And spelled my name. And watched it glow.

—Joshua Weiner

BIOTECHNOLOGY

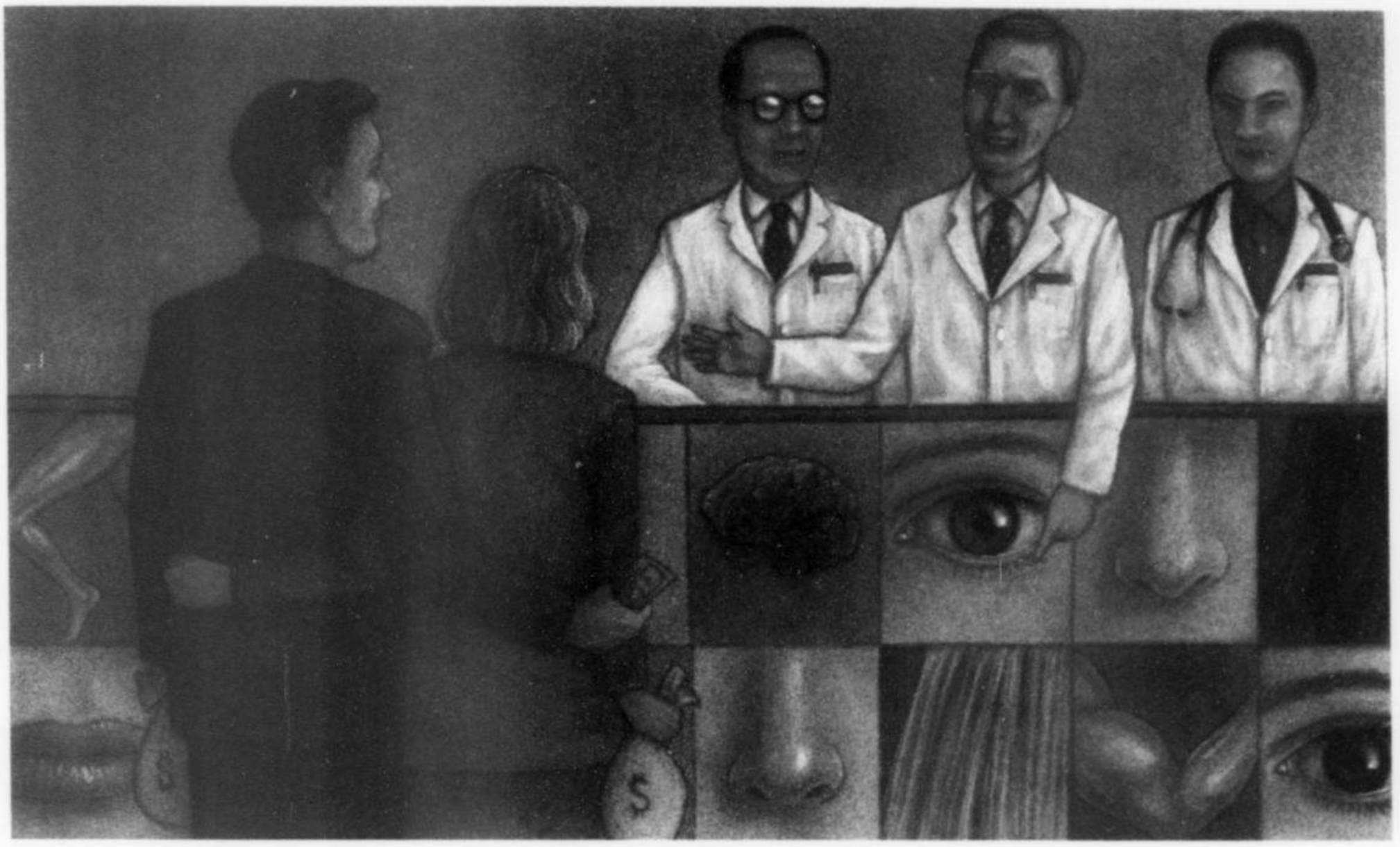


ILLUSTRATION BY RUSS ANDO

A NEW FRONTIER OF CORPORATE CONTROL

A Roundtable with Dr. Lee Silver, Jeremy Rifkin, Barbara Katz Rothman

In the May/June 1998 edition of TIKKUN, *Jeremy Rifkin reviewed the new possibilities unleashed by genetic technology, including germ-line therapies in which genetic changes are made in the sperm, egg, or embryonic cells, and are passed along to future generations. In the coming biotech century, a parent's failure to correct undesirable genetic features may be regarded as a heinous crime, a breach of parental duty for which the parents could be held morally, possibly legally, liable. Commercial eugenics, controlled by global life science corporations responding to market forces, may shape a world where the haves and have-nots are separated by genetic endowment, and in which notions of equality give way to the creation of a genetocracy based on one's genetic qualifications.*

In the following roundtable we continue the discussion of the meaning of these developments, and what, if anything, can be done.

Dr. Lee Silver is professor of genetics at Princeton and author of Remaking Eden: Cloning and Beyond in a Brave New World. *Jeremy Rifkin is author of* The Biotech Century: Harnessing the Gene and Remaking the World *and president of the Foundation on Economic Trends in Washington, D.C. Barbara Katz Rothman is professor of sociology at City University of New York and author of* Genetic Maps and Human Imaginations.

SILVER: Jeremy Rifkin is 100 percent right to say that the next century is going to be the biotech century. Biotechnology will have an even greater impact on humanity than computer technology had. Rifkin is right in thinking that biotechnology will expand the gap between those who have money and those who don't, but I don't see a way to avoid it. At the same time, this technology will increase the possibilities that some children will be happy and healthy. It's hard to fault parents who will want to buy this

technology to improve the chances that their children will lead happy, healthy, and successful lives. But I agree with Jeremy that it is not a good thing that some people will have access to this technology and others will not. Unfortunately, I don't see how an alternative can be devised in the current world that we live in.

ROTHMAN: That's the problem. You seem to be saying, "There's nothing wrong with the technology, there are only these flaws in society that make it likely that the technology will be used in bad ways—but since we can't change society, we must go with the technology anyway." To highlight what's wrong with this form of argument, consider the following scenario: Imagine that Hitler had won the war, and fifty years later we have biotechnology to shape the human future. In that circumstance, you'd probably agree that it would be a far better thing if they didn't develop another step of that technology, and if people working on it were to stop doing so. So the question is not how good is the technology, but how good is the society that is likely to use it? Moreover, the people who say, "This will be fine for some people in their private lives, even though it won't be good for us on the public communal level" seem to ignore the position held by many that this kind of public/private split really doesn't make sense, because our private lives are so deeply shaped by what is happening in the public sphere.

Part of the problem here in using biotechnology to shape what kind of children will be born, and with what characteristics, is that we are led to the question, "Who defines what is normal and what traits are desirable?"

SILVER: Well, who do you think should define them? Who could make these rules and on what basis?

RIFKIN: There are tremendous benefits to this technology. But we need to weigh the benefits against the potential downsides. Do we want to, in the words of Frances Galton, "use genetic manipulation to weed-out inferior biological stock and to breed in superior biological stock"—in short, eugenics? Now, if you are a parent who could get a genetic screen that would remove the possibility of passing along a harmful or crippling disease to your future child, it seems obvious that you'd choose to exercise this option. Parents will want the best possible advantage for their child, so if they could genetically remove the possibility of obesity, or myopia, or short stature they would want to be able to choose this route. A recent Harris poll said that 43 percent of the American public would use this technology to alter their sperm or egg before conception to modify the physical characteristics of their child. The problem is that there is no way to draw the line; once we accept the idea that we are responsible for genetically programming our children to provide them with the best possible life circumstances, we then have parents deciding what is the best possible combination of qualities for our children.

ROTHMAN: And parents don't make that kind of decision in a social vacuum. If I say to the parent: "Your perspective child has a condition which might impair its earning power by 30-40 percent, do you want to change that condition?" the parent might say "I don't want to impose that on the child, so let's change that." So then we say, "Ok, then you'd better not have a girl child—let's change your sperm so it creates boys." The earning power between men and women isn't a genetic issue, anymore than the fact that tall men do better in the world or that lighter skin people do better in the world is a genetic issue—these are social issues. But when parents make individual decisions they make them in a context that is shaped by the larger social reality or by market forces.

RIFKIN: That's why we don't need the Hitler analogy to understand how troubling this technology can be. There's no evil cabal here, no government forcing us into brave new worlds. Instead, we have the banality of a market-oriented, commercial eugenics in which consumers may wish to take advantage of these technologies.

ROTHMAN: And feel that, given the social realities of their world, they have no real alternative.

SILVER: But who is going to draw the line? Will some governmental committee decide that it's legal for parents to fix a gene that predisposes people to being fifty pounds overweight, but not legal to tamper with the gene if the child would likely be only forty pounds overweight? How can any bureaucrat know what's important to an individual family? And do you really think Americans will accept a governmental edict telling them that they can't do what they think is best for their child?

RIFKIN: We have other examples where government restricts options in the market. When it came down to the question of whether we should allow people to sell their organs in the marketplace for those who needed organ replacements, we decided against allowing that. Similarly, in the case of marketplace surrogacy for gestating fetuses, a number of states said "no." Many European states have made it illegal for women to rent their wombs because they consider doing so to be inhumane and barbaric, and yet, no black market for the practice has emerged. There are many issues on which we do not and should not let the marketplace be the final arbiter.

SILVER: The problem with surrogacy or organ selling is that society doesn't want to have an individual facing the question of having to choose between not having enough money or getting the money by selling an organ or a womb. But the case of parents putting genes into their children that will give their children certain advantages is different because there is no apparent downside to the individual.

ROTHMAN: But this gives us a false illusion of control—that parents are led to believe that they can shape their children to be what they want. As this model takes hold, children will increasingly be understood to be the product of parental desires. But children will not be this, and so the marketing of the technology will raise false expectations

and lead to greater disappointments in parent/child relationships.

Rifkin: The technology will fundamentally alter parent/child relationships. The child becomes the "product" of a design program. This is a fundamental break in human history.

Rothman: Take the characteristics that you like most or least about yourself—imagine how different you would feel about yourself and your parents if you imagined those characteristics as something that your parents checked off on a genetic order form.

Rifkin: Within the next eight to ten years, we will be able to identify most of the hundred thousand genes that make up the human genome. Most will be claimed as "intellectual property" by some corporation. What does it say about our civilization if we allow the evolutionary blueprint of the human race to be claimed as private intellectual property by giant life-science companies as though this were a human invention? Should we put the genetic blueprints of the human race under the control of private companies whose primary objective is profit?

Silver: The Jewish community has used genetics to try to eliminate the Tay-Sachs mutation.

Rifkin: But in many cases we don't know the subtle roles that recessive gene traits may play in the future survival of the human race. Isn't there a certain scientific arrogance in suggesting, as some advocates of eugenics do, that we eliminate some genes entirely from the genetic pool of the future?

The first rule of medicine should be: Do no harm.

Silver: The Tay-Sachs disease is very difficult to cure once the child is born. The only thing you can do is abort or do embryo selection.

Rifkin: We may find out that a large number of harmful genes may be affected in terms of their mutation by the larger embryonic environment in which the woman is gestating the fetus, so that by making subtle changes in that environment we might be able to modify the expression of the gene without eliminating it from the gene pool.

There are alternatives. Seventy percent of the diseases that we are trying to cure in this country are diseases of affluence: heart attack, stroke, diabetes, breast, colon, and prostate cancer. We know that there are different levels of genetic susceptibility to those diseases, but we also know that the environment that we surround ourselves with can trigger those predispositions (if you smoke, if your diet is heavy with fatty meats, if you lead a sedentary lifestyle and live in a polluted environment). Where, then, do you put your scientific research and tax dollars—toward which path in dealing with health problems? We could be using the new genetic science to better understand how genetic mutations are triggered by environmental forces, and use that knowledge to remediate the environment rather than re-engineer the gene.

Silver: That kind of education is a good way for government to spend money. But when it comes to things like heart disease and cancer, in cases where people are going to be willing to spend lots of money to not have their children have genetic proclivities toward these kinds of diseases, market forces are going to be in play. I'm against patenting genes, but the use of genetic information in terms of treatments and diagnostics is going to be developed by the market, and they are going to make money selling those treatments. I'm cynical of the marketplace, but I don't see any alternative. People are going to want to give to their own children certain advantages that other children already have (like genes that provide resistance to diabetes and heart disease).

Rothman: People are going to look back at this moment and be amazed that instead of making serious decisions about what would serve the best interests of society, we were overwhelmed with the sense of our own powerlessness and so let the whole issue be decided by the market.

Rifkin: What are the consequences for society of starting on a eugenics path? By introducing genetic changes into embryonic cells, you are starting on a new line of development for the entire human enterprise. It's not just about what people want today—we may be foreclosing possibilities for future generations that we do not yet understand, yet many molecular biologists feel we have the right to tinker with the gene pool.

It's not a question of cutting off the science, but of what rules we apply to science so that we can control its impact on future generations of humans and the other creatures we travel with on this planet. Rule One: Do not harm. We have to determine what kind of technologies we might allow to develop that would be less risky, more prudent, and would maintain options for future generations. For example, genetic science is now being used in agriculture in ways that are of great concern to environmentalists, yet we could be using the same genetic science to advance twenty-first century organic agriculture that is nutritious, safe, and conserving of the earth. What we need, in agriculture, pharmaceuticals, and medicine, is to explore "soft-path" ways of using the new genetic science in the marketplace. When we don't have that public discussion about alternatives, people then feel that their only choices are to accept the corporate agenda or to say "no" to the future, and those are not the only alternatives.

We need to ask what are the values that underlie these new technologies, and which of those values are consonant with our values as a society and which are not. I don't oppose gene screening or the use of genes in somatic therapy, but I'd be opposed to releasing genetically engineered life forms into the environment in agriculture when we don't have information on the ecological consequences, or making changes in the human germ line when we don't have a clue as to how such changes could affect future generations.

In Denmark, when they wanted to find out what the

public wanted to do about biotechnology, they created a "grand jury" made up of a representative cross-section of society. The people's representatives met and listened to scientists, technologists, proponents, and critics of all sides of the debate. For months this "grand jury" listened to the testimony, and then were asked to set guidelines about how the new biotechnologies should be used. Their recommendations were not binding, but the process brought a broad part of their society into the debate.

SILVER: There is a sense of radical individualism in our society; people think they ought to be able to do what they want as long as they don't hurt anyone else. This is the political reality that you are up against when trying to shape public policy on this question. So I don't think the Danish model will work in this country unless you change the American mentality, which I don't think will happen.

ROTHMAN: When you actually ask people about these questions, many people respond in quite sensible and ethically serious ways about them. But the market doesn't respond to what people are saying, only to the issue of whether it can find sufficient numbers of people to buy their product to make it worth their while. When people say, "The market is the market and there's no hope to change it," that cannot be accurately described as the market yielding to popular will.

RIFKIN: Let's assume that, for the sake of argument, everyone could afford it. Is there still a reason to be concerned about proceeding? I think there is. Let me give an example to show what I mean. Imagine that we had a generation of people who decided that we all want to consume as much of the earth's resources as we possibly can. We all agree to distribute the goods equally, so that no one can cry "injustice" at the distribution. The marketplace would be happy to provide a mechanism to do this. But it would not have any mechanism to take into account the interests of future generations, or of the other creatures with whom we travel on this planet, or of the biosphere—so just because it can be done in an equitable way doesn't make it a legitimate choice. The issue of future generations or fellow travellers in the environment is never raised.

Do you really think that there is enough wisdom and clairvoyance to take all this into account—among the scientists, technicians, and the corporations involved in the new genetic commerce? After all, we're talking about decisions that affect the genetic future of the human race. Thinking that the scientists, companies, and an unfettered marketplace ought to be the final arbiters of the future evolution of our species, is either the ultimate hubris or naïvité.

SILVER: I'm not claiming that anyone in my field currently has that kind of wisdom. But we've embarked on many new medical technologies in the twentieth century and as a whole the human race has benefitted. Mistakes may have been made along the way, but people will try to do their best and if mistakes are made they will be corrected. If Jeremy Rifkin seems to assert that there is too much hubris in science, I want to say that we have no alternative but to rely on human rationality within a context in which we can experiment, try out different and new directions, and then make corrections in instances where we decide we have made mistakes.

ROTHMAN: I don't see how your methodology would produce a just world, because part of my conception of a just world is one in which there is greater acceptance of individual difference, variation, and deviance—and this is what would be eliminated with greater genetic engineering. One thing, for example, that would happen today if parents had this choice is that they would eliminate the genes that might allow for their children to become gay or lesbian. In the current social reality, most parents would rather choose some physical handicap than to have their children become homosexual, and if they had the technology to make this result happen, they would. So there would be a narrowing of the range of human behaviors that parents would deem acceptable.

RIFKIN: So part of the key to this is: do we honor the diversity of human experience? When we try to engineer our offspring and make reproduction a shopping experience, we may end up programming for "acceptable" cultural norms that will shift with the marketplace and with media-induced fads. We may risk producing much more uniform children and narrow the range of human possibilities. We may also be undermining the sanctity of life when we treat our potential children as a utility that can be shaped like a piece of art.

SILVER: The notion that everyone wants the same thing for their children is false. Mostly, what parents want their children to look like is themselves. That's the way we are wired.

I also believe that nature is very cruel. Most animals die violent deaths. What we humans have tried to do is to make life better for us and for our children. So, unlike those who feel that the kind of engineering we are talking about will be bad because it "goes against nature," I don't think it's such a bad thing to go against nature when it comes to reducing unnecessary pain. Polio is a natural phenomenon, and the polio vaccine is an attempt to go against nature. Every time we try to find a new cure to some disease we are going against nature. I don't think nature is always so great.

RIFKIN: I agree. I support science and agree that we have to take risks. But the first rule of applied science must be: Do no harm. Which translates here into: Operationalize only those technologies which are least likely to do harm to future generations and the most likely to maintain our options. There are ways to use this new science. The corporate life science agenda is only one path into the biotech century.

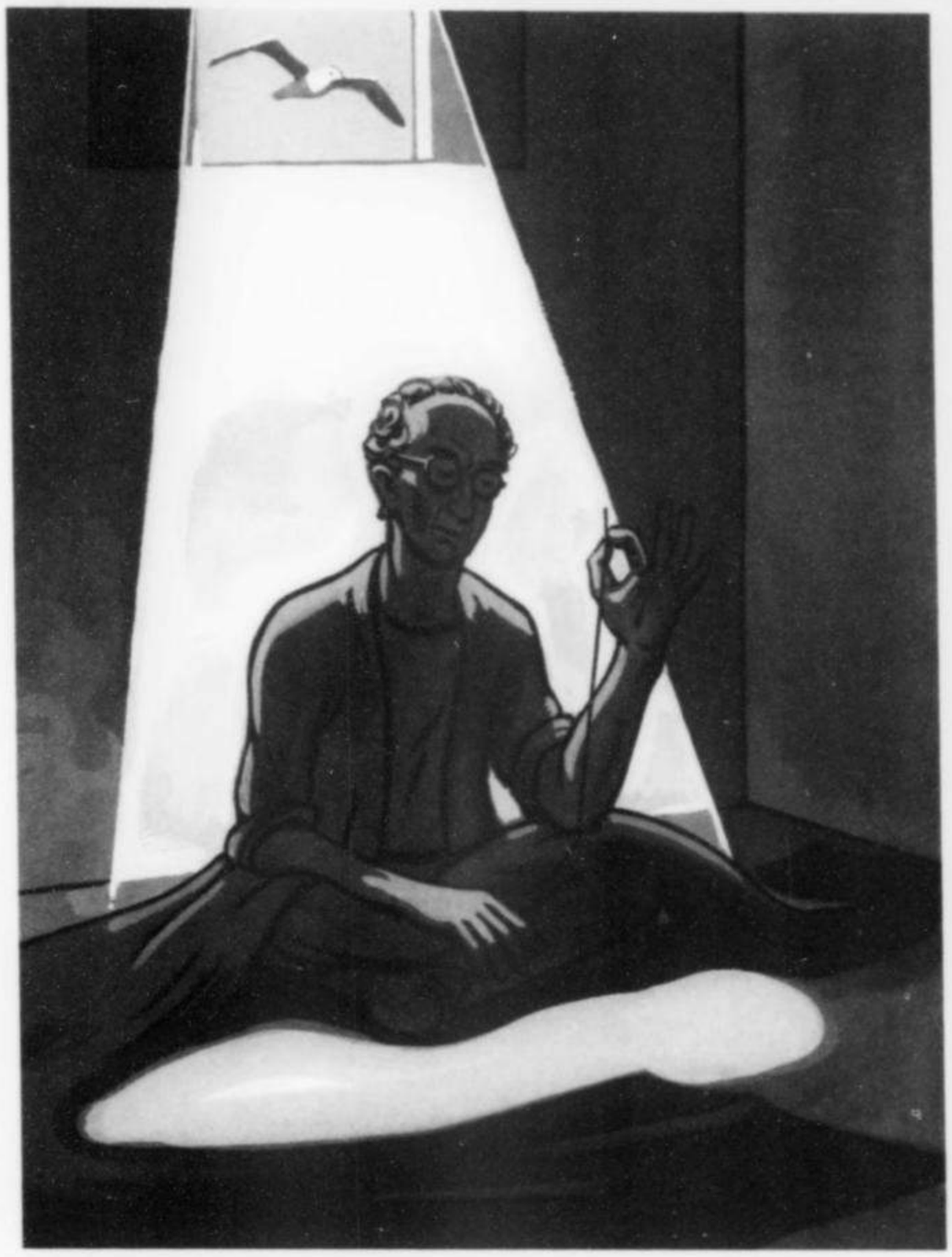
SILVER: So exercise, keep your weight down, eat less fatty foods. But nobody is going to make much money in that way, and this is a society where people, including scientists, are motivated to make money as one of their goals.

(continued on page 63)

FICTION

Bless Minsky

Jonathan Treitel



ILLUSTRATIONS BY JON STRAUS

Various dust motes—some cubical, some diamond shaped, some crescent like an oriental sword, some corkscrewed like the side curls in the coiffure favored by fashionable women back in, oh, one of the decades of the mid- to late twentieth century—enter through the high square window of the main room in a studio apartment on the seventh floor of the Atlantic Panorama residence (which actually has no sea view, but probably it once did, before all the hotels and restaurants and condominiums along Ocean Drive were established) and spiral downward and drift into the nostrils of Minsky, crosslegged on the floor with a long needle in his right hand and a quantity of black nylon fabric spread over his lap, causing him to sneeze and his false teeth to rattle inside his head. Minsky blesses himself. He pushes his bifocals up into place. He goes on sewing. The room is spare, since he had to relocate all the furniture into the bathroom in order to have space to work on his current project; do not expect to find anything within this room apart from dust, black material, needle, thread, the moving hand of Minsky, the static remainder of Minsky, and the cold strong light coming through the window. Here usually there is sunshine; today the sky is clouded and the light is wintry—bright however. A gull stands outside the window with its wings wide. Actually it must be flying, kind of; it must be gliding into a steady breeze—but, until such time as it is wafted out of view, it seems to be resting on empty air.

Minsky is hemming it. Nylon fabric doesn't really need to be hemmed, but Minsky hems it anyway. He bought it at the Colombian place on 27th and Collins. Boy did he have a negotiation—an unarmed combat practically—with the manager before he agreed to sell it to him at the wholesale discount. "Now listen here, Raoul," Minsky had said, "I was in the tailoring business when you needed your tochus wiped." In the end Raoul not only didn't quibble about the price, but he threw in a free two hundred yards of thread and a guava pastry his wife had made. So Minsky is not so old, not so out of it. He still has a sewing hand and a business head.

Sometimes, still, Minsky amazes himself.

He doesn't need to concentrate on his work while he's doing it, even when a finicky task like this has to be done; his hand is perfectly capable of thinking for itself. So he lets his mind float free. He is back in the old neighborhood, back in the old premises off of King's Highway, with the neon OPEN in the window which he is seeing in mirror image and and a wedding photograph of him and Kitty up beside the bobbins, also of Robert on his bar mitzvah and of Joan wearing her orthodontic attachment and the big stenciled sign along the back wall MINSKY'S YOUR MAN. And always there is work to be done: that hostess gown in amber taffeta for Amelia Bernstein on her and Sammy's golden wedding may they live to a hundred and twenty ach he died of liver failure nine years ago and Amelia had a stroke a week later, or widening Barry Glick's dress pants to take account of his paunch who had a heart attack during his once in a lifetime visit to Jerusalem, or narrowing Boris Shulman's (brain tumor) tuxedo lapels—always something—that's the tailoring business for you in a nutshell: you never know what job you'll be doing next week but you know you'll never be standing on the Coney Island boardwalk holding your battered Homburg out toward fun loving strangers with nervy looks in their eyes, saying, "Sixty-five cents for an honest mensch down on his luck?" Ah, he misses the old neighborhood. Of course it's not the same any more—all his friends have left Brooklyn, they've gone to a better place or, like himself, a sunnier one. He remembers the long walks he used to take with Robert and Joan when

---

Jonathan Treitel was born and lives in the Diaspora. His stories have appeared in The New Yorker. *He is writing a novel about Einstein. His permanent address is jtreitel@yahoo.com.*

they were little, on weekends and holidays. Maybe they should come and visit him here and then they'll all shmooze and go for an endless stroll just like in the old times but no you can't any more expect your children to look after you in your golden years this is not the modern way. They used to go down the fire escape, because they lived over the store and that was the quick way out without setting off the burglar alarm, then they'd run (hurry! Robert, Joan, let's see who can get there first?) like this along the Highway as far as McDonald Avenue, and like this down to Avenue X, and this to Ocean Parkway, and this to Z, and this to Neptune, and this, and this, and ha! that's the stitching completed.

Minsky stands up with difficulty, for he has a lower back problem. It's not fair. It's unconstitutional. What does his lower back have against him? What did he ever do to his lower back? When he was young he used to hear his baffled, slightly comic elders—his parents, his uncles and aunts and honorary uncles and aunts—use the word "grief" a lot. "Such grief I get from my children!" "Don't give me grief!" "Who needs this grief?" And they used to make gestures involving stiffening the rib cage and pressing the hands against the torso, or making the shoulders writhe, or simply grinding the teeth and sucking in, and he used to think "grief" meant literally the physical pain that accompanies sorrow, and now he knows he was right: he has grief between his vertebrae. The fabric he has been working on, he is gripping it in his right hand. A long, artfully twisted strip of black nylon. A physical representation of anything under the sun: he made it: he is free to interpret it as he wills. He is old enough and self-aware enough to look after his own symbolism. He can make the bit of cloth stand for a bit of cloth, if he wants. He holds one end of it as high up as he can at a corner of the room, near the window, and it stretches to the opposite corner and curls up on the floor. Good. Maybe it's perverse, but he always begins with the tail first. He sings quietly in a fine baritone, "Little Bo Peep/ Has lost her sheep/ And doesn't know where to find them./ Leave them alone/ And they'll come home/ Dragging their tail behind them." He sniggers. He's ashamed to be singing such childishness. He and Kitty never used to sing Mother Goose-y rhymes to their children, just regular adult songs: "Don't sit under the apple tree with anyone else but me." "I'm biding my time because that's the kind of guy I'm." On the other hand, he used to sing much worse things in the army, at Fort Bragg and in the MLR looking out at the Chinese positions in Changdan Valley. Besides, he's graduated to being an old man now, and if an old man isn't entitled to be childish, who is? However he wishes the song made more sense. When he was middle aged he used to wonder what kind of old man he was going to turn into. He was never picky. He wouldn't have minded being the genial grandfatherly kind bestowing wisdom on the young, or the bald lean muscular bozo who does a thousand pushups before breakfast and cracks the ice to do the Australian crawl in midwinter, or the virile smoothie with an artfully knotted cravat taking full advantage of the male-female ratio, anything but not the drooling geezer babbling about his love life sixty years earlier and the end of the world.

He wheels the sewing machine in from the bathroom, and sets about hemming the full width of the big roll of black nylon. In due course he states out loud (addressing any God or ghost who might happen to exist and be listening), enunciating, chewing each syllable: "Minsky is making the biggest kite in Florida."

This is how Minsky got the commission to make the kite. About a week ago he was sauntering along the beach, as he does every morning, along the stretch between Fifth and Fifteenth street, parallel to the palm trees, when who should he meet by the HURRICANE EVACUATION PICKUP SITE sign but Milly Ossoff who is holding the hand of a boy about seven years old who turns out to be her visiting grandson Jeff. So he and Milly have a little conversation about their mutual slipped disk ("My specialist thinks my nerve is pinched," Milly confides), and then they talk about the weather, how fantastically hot and sunny it is, which in fact it was back then and it stayed that way until only a few days ago, and then Minsky is introduced to Jeff. Jeff is a well-behaved, friendly boy; he puts his Walkman headphones on Minsky's head so he too can listen to the rap music. Minsky doesn't understand a single word of it. "Thank you very much," he tells Jeff, and returns the headphones. And naturally, seeing Jeff skip in circles, he's reminded of Robert at that age. And he remembers: one summer he made a kite for Robert out of black rayon with a skull-and-crossbones on it. (In fact he made several extra piratical kites, and sold them as a sideline.) Minsky remembers standing behind his son, their parallel bodies leaning from the wind, their four hands simultaneously gripping the reel, while he taught him how to handle it (the big secret, Minsky always says, is to use the kite's own strength against it) then he let the boy take the strain. Such fun Robert had for approximately three weeks, running about Brighton Beach with the kite; Joan also, stumbling after her big brother. In the end Robert became bored and he let it go: the skull-and-crossbones blew out to sea in the direction (Robert said) of the Spanish Main; Joan wept. So Minsky tells Jeff because he's a very good boy he deserves a very good present. And he goes home and he has some fabric left over from the Fourth of July party, and he makes a kite, a box kite (which is the best kind, in Minsky's opinion, because it fights you the hardest), with a red body and a blue tail and JEFF sewn on the side in white.

So now let's visualize Minsky on the beach two days later, wearing a pale blue floppy sun hat with a JNF logo, also a pale blue short-sleeved shirt, cream pants, handmade moccasins which are comfortable but expensive however quality is worth paying for, crouched (and damn his lower

back pain) under a beach umbrella, engaged in explaining to Jeff how to master the kite when Minsky becomes aware of somebody standing close behind him, looking at him. And he glances around. And it is obviously one of the winter people. A man in his forties, in a silk-mixture lightweight three-piece suit which is a strange shiny bruise color, hippopotamus color, and his face kind of matches the suit. The man snuffles through parted lips. His hair is metallic gray and fluffy. He is a broad man; he has the build of one of those retired athletes who commentate on TV and you know he's gone to seed a little but he could still pack a punch if he had to. Silk shirt, open necked; gold medallion not properly visible through the translucent material of the shirt. Shoes made of the pelt of some endangered species. And the stranger is looking at Jeff who is running between the supine bodies of dozing beautiful sun-worshiping women and some men too while trying to get his kite to catch a little breeze and lift up, and then at Minksy, and then back at Jeff who is shouting, "Prepare for take off, kite! This is your captain speaking! Three two one blast off! We are now flying at an altitude of wheeeee!" and at Minsky, and at Jeff, and he says (to the boy, who certainly isn't listening), "Hey it's cute," and, "Aren't you lucky to have such a sweet old man to give you pretty things?"

Inspiration struck Minsky. How come he was so bold, so pushy, how did he find such inner resources, an old man many years out of the rat race, living off a modest income from his Individual Retirement Account but still eager and willing to seize a business opportunity?

Minsky rises to his feet, and makes an authoritative gesture with his bifocals.

"Excuse me." He is actually addressing the stranger, the hippopotamus man, this alien creature who has so conveniently dropped in from his otherworld to stand on Miami Beach in the vicinity of Minsky. His accent is higher than usual, servile, Yiddishy. "Excuse me, sir. Do you want one?"

"Me?" the man says, tapping his own breastbone, a little below the medallion.

"Do you want a kite? I am a professional kite manufacturer. You have a little boy of your own maybe?"

The man laughs, a kind of deep slow grinding laugh, dilating his nostrils. His bad teeth are revealed. "Uh, sure I have a boy, sure. Yeah."

"You want what kind of kite?"

"I accept nothing but the best."

"What color?"

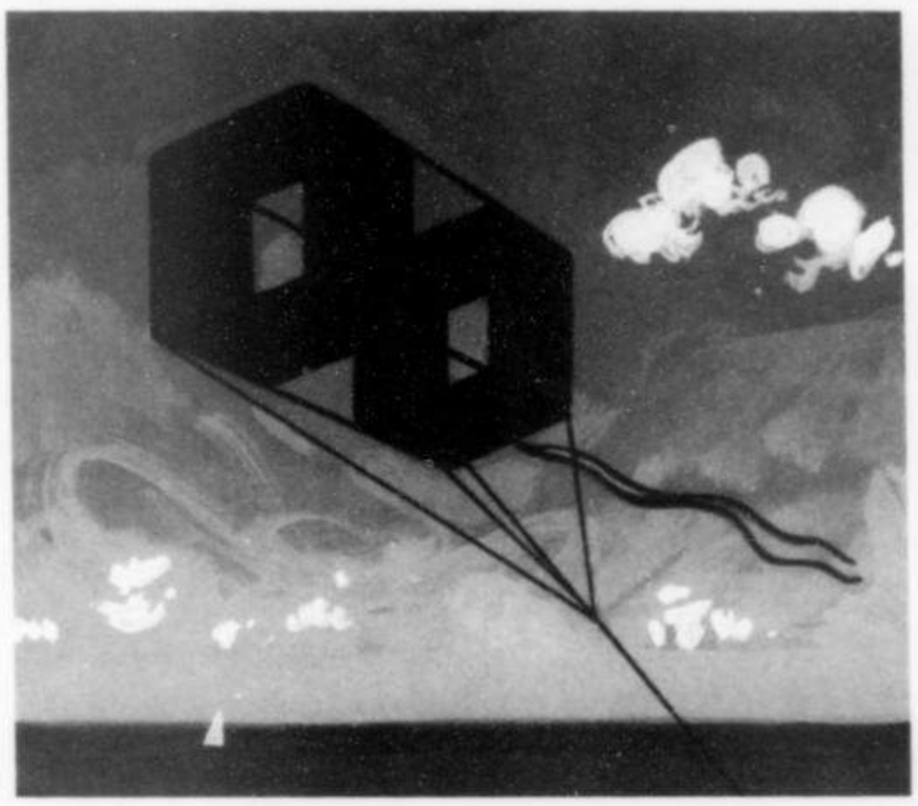
"No color. Zilch. My favorite color is black."

"What kind of price range are you—"

The man thrusts both his hands simultaneously into his inner coat pockets, and struggles, and comes up with an embossed business card. He punches it down on Minsky's palm. The card, creased and thumb-marked, rocks for some seconds. "This is my address. I want it by Friday. Money's no object."

And that was about all there was to the business relationship. The hippopotamus grunted and stuck his hands inside his pants pockets, and stomped down to the surf, and blew his nose at the horizon, and turned and went south along the shore in the direction of the tip of the island, glancing alternately at the ocean and the sunbathers.

And now Minsky is in his his apartment thinking about money, while a gull—possibly the same gull as earlier but probably not—balances on the air outside the window. Back in Brooklyn he used to see gulls all the time, because though he didn't live beside the ocean—couldn't see it, couldn't honestly smell it—it was only a couple of miles away, and anyhow you knew it was always there, the openness of it, the possibilites, waiting.



His hands are engaged in passing the material through his faithful sewing machine. Just another three pairs of edges to be stitched.

Which by association of ideas reminds him of a story Irene Miller, an acquaintance of his from the social club, told him last week. She used to be on the committee for Hadassah on the Upper West Side, and once many years ago she managed to persuade the writer I. B. Singer to give their group a little talk. And afterwards a woman named Jenny Greenbaum? Greenstein? Green-something, anyway Jenny, she went up to the writer and said, "Are you the Great Singer?" He was a little taken aback, being a modest man, but of course in the end he nodded and said he was. And then Jenny said, "Thank you, thank you for your marvellous invention. I have used it for all my sewing for many years." In fact Irene had known Singer quite well, before his death; she said he went on long walks through the neighborhood "stealing" things: for instance if he saw a broken mattress on the sidewalk, and a bum lounging on it performing a conjuring trick, he would "steal" this incident for one of his stories. Minsky had tried many times to read Singer, in Yiddish and English both. He had wanted to like him so much, and he had begun each novel, each short story, with confidence and

determination, but each time the fiction had taken off into some realm of imagination which Minsky couldn't enter: he simply had been unable to believe in that world.

He moves the cloth to and fro under the needle of the Singer, sewing up the end of the hem.

He realizes he didn't fix on an exact price with the winter person, and this is probably a mistake. He didn't, as they say, "close." Nevertheless maybe this is for the best: maybe the man is an eccentric millionaire and he will gladly sign a check with many zeros at the end. And then he will persuade all his rich friends to buy kites also, and Minsky will be rich.



He shivers. He is cold.

Minsky has a nightmare he often entertains. Call it a daydream. Call it a fantasy. The Atlantic Panorama goes co-op and they demand more money from Minsky than he can possibly afford, and his modest portfolio of investments sinks without trace, and the Savings and Loan he keeps his IRA in goes kaput, and there he is out on the streets, just one of those whiskery bums moaning and turning under the palm trees when they wake up in the morning and realize they're still alive. And then of course he'd have to find the *mazuma* somehow, and he would, and he would be saved. All Minsky wants is to suffer a little in his old age: he doesn't want his epitaph to be: "The thing that hurt him most was his back."

In fact he used to play the horses when he was younger, when he had two growing children to support, precisely when he couldn't afford to take any risks. How Kitty yelled at him for his foolishness! The ingenious insults she invented! In fact he never lost much, never made much. It wasn't his fault: he gambled quite wildly—but losses and gains pretty much evened out. And now, in retrospect, he feels glad, on the whole, in most moods, that he's had a comfortable enough life. Often he thinks all he wants is to stay in this little studio apartment in the sunshine, or, on rare days like this, in the cold white light, and live out his days—and he hates himself for having this thought. His electric Singer hums. "You're sewing it back to front." "No, I'm not." "Yes, you are, Minsky. Look at the grain of it, look at the texture." "So? What does it matter? It's not a ra-ra skirt, it's a kite!" "Don't say I didn't warn you, Minsky!" "So who's the tailor, me or you? You think I slaved in the shmatter business forty years and I don't know how to make a simple seam?" "You're wrong, Minsky." "I'm right, I tell you! I'm right!" And in his anger Minsky shakes his head back and forward and makes a kind of deep roar and the top part of his teeth falls out and lies on the folded length of material on the floor, wobbling and pointing up at him.

"Now see what you've made me do!" Minsky says. He tries to bend down to pick the teeth up. Painful. "Hey. Please. Help me." He tries again. "C'mon. Not too much to ask."

A cackle. A high, sexy cackle. "Argue with you I can. Talk dirty to you I can. Kvetch at you I can. But I can't pick up your false teeth for you, my fine figure of a Minsky. I'm dead, remember. I've been dead twelve years, nine months, three weeks and five days."

"I hate you, Kitty." He means it and does not mean it—and, for the minute it takes him to find his special hand-operated hinged-tip apparatus expressly designed for picking up things without his having to stoop, and operate it, he succeeds in imagining he and his wife are having a ferocious quarrel and for hours they'll refuse to speak to one another but at last of course, lovingly, they will.

Kitty's passing hurt him terribly; at the time he believed, he hoped, it was the greatest agony in the world and he would never get over it. But of course it wasn't and of course, in a way, he has. Sometimes a whole ten minutes goes past without him thinking of her once.

He slides the Singer back into the bathroom, making space.

Minsky pushes the stiff supporting wires inside the hems. One trembly sheet of nylon becomes stretched out the full length of the room; then another at right angles to it; and so on, and so on. He tugs at the string; the fabric shakes, the tensile forces readjust themselves; the entity sets about assuming its proper shape. Solid geometry. Its twisty tail stretches over his shoes.

And at last the completed kite, the biggest kite in Florida, the whole great black perfect actual kite, occupies an entire room on the seventh floor of the Atlantic Panorama residence on Washington and Tenth, pressing against the fluorescent ceiling fixture and the blue carpet and the window and the doors—while Minsky himself, his arms up, his body squashed against the wall, not absolutely trapped, is struggling and reaching out with one hand and grabbing the sill and arching his head backward through the window and eyeballing a gliding gull; he takes a deep gulp of winter air.

The neatly folded kite is under Minsky's arm. It is tucked inside a crisp cellophane bag from the dry cleaners. He is going round to make a delivery—just as he did as a fourteen-year-old apprentice! Back then, he always used to take a long route whenever possible, so as to pass the Italian fruit maestros and as many newspaper sellers as possible yelling headlines and the respectable hotel on was it Sixty-Third street which all the kids said was a whorehouse, to see life,

in short—and now in his retirement he is doing the same! Deliberately, instead of just heading due south, he is going by way of Ocean Drive, so as to overlook the beach. The sky is erased with luminous cloud; the air is chill. Today—and it is one of Minsky's daily responsibilities to check out the almost naked young women who elongate their admirable oiled bodies on beach towels, there is usually a certain mountainous pale Latina who waves to him and blows him a kiss as he goes past, as she does to every man—today, nobody is sunbathing. A distant powerboat whines like a mosquito. The coldness seems to make the daylight more intense; outlines are supersharp. The wind is diagonal. The sand is matt white. The whiteness is not absolute: several lone brave figures are etched on the whiteness. A canonically tall thin model, in stiletto heels on the sand, unable to walk, on her own having somehow lost her photographer and assistants, clutching her flying saucer hat, is seen in silhouette. A grizzled fellow about Minsky's age is lifting weights without end. A brace of Amazons are playing industrial strength beachball, relentlessly, wordlessly, accompanied by hard grunts, as if to the death.

He heads inland along Fifth.

He passes Pussy Motel—despite its name a decent institution where cats are boarded (according to the card in the window) in "unique suites with windows overlooking a tropical garden for lizard and bird watching opportunities."

He passes the sheer black front of Bang Your Keyboard Club—for "adult computer users."

He passes a hardware store. A neon sign: WE MIX PAIN S.

He passes offices for tax accountants and money launderers and ophthalmologists.

He passes a body piercing store. A man by the entrance thrusts a printed sheet of paper into Minsky's hand. It seems the author, "a health care professional," is eager, for a fee, to slip sharp splinters of sterilized metal into Minsky's body. The advertisement has been produced according to the dictates of one of those books that encourage you to aspire to devising a resume so perfect the composition of it will become your goal and your job search merely secondary, a means toward that end. "Positive" verbs in the first person active mode are used throughout: "I organized. I employed. I was responsible for …"

He keeps on walking.

He checks the address on the business card. He looks up. He stops. He pushes open the glass door with his shoulder and, turning sideways so the folded kite will fit through, shuffles into the building.

He is in an office. Not small, not very large. A high raftered ceiling; a sense of spotlights. Several desks with in-trays and computer terminals. Some big cardboard boxes at the rear, waiting to be unpacked. He can see $ on the computer screens, also £ and ´ and DM, and many numbers; some screens are blank. No workers at their desks. A few stray persons floating about, combinations of darkness and of lightness, out of focus, either too near or too far, confounding his bifocals.

And then he see the hippopotamus, quite close but he is not looking in Minsky's direction, he is frowning at something altogether different. He is wearing a suit in a greenish cashmere and an unmatching blue knotted woolen necktie.

The effect of the bifocals is to render the man clear below the necktie and a blur above. Minsky takes a deep breath. He sings out, "Congratulations!"

The man turns; registers Minsky's existence. "Who? Why? What do you want?"

"Thank you, sir! Thank you. I am pleased to bring you your kite, just as you ordered. I think you'll find it conforms to your specifications though I am willing of course to make any necessary alterations absolutely included in the price."

"What?"

"Your kite. Your—"

"Go away. We don't want any."

Minsky fumbles desperately, opening his dry cleaning bag, and pulling up a stretch of black fabric. It comes out as a shiny, multiply folded muddle—like that mess you remove when you clean a fish. "Feel the quality …"

The man bends closer to Minsky. All of his face becomes sharply focused. "Don't annoy me. Don't aggravate me. Don't give me …" (searching for a word; while Minsky is confronted by the pores in the tip of the stranger's nose) "… grief."

Minsky howls in physical pain. "But you promised!… The quality is.… I used best extra-strong nylon, and triple-stitched for strength. And if it's a discount you're looking for. Just pull here, pull …"

Minsky begins to assemble the kite, eagerly stretching out the fabric and snapping the joints into place.

The man pays no attention. "… Nobody aggravates me. And I'll tell you for why. I'll tell you. For. Why. Because when I get aggravated, I get irritated. I get upset. I get in a lousy mood. I get distressed. I get …" (the man's big paws flap; his nostrils widen; he hisses) "… antsy."

"But your boy," he wails—and Minsky thinks of his Robert, wherever he is now in the world, and of his Joan also, and of the two of them as children playing Now You've Got Cooties along the boardwalk at Brighton Beach—"But your boy will be so unhappy!"

The man looks puzzled. He smiles. He move back one pace. He actually grins. There are gold fillings at the back of his terribly pitted canines.

He says, "No. Yeah. My boy is not going to want …" He stands up straight. "Explain to this, to this gentleman, Joel, exactly why you are going to get no present of no kite."

The "boy" steps forward. He is about nineteen, with curt bleached blonde hair, and an earring in one ear. The emerald in his earring matches the hippopotamus' suit. He

(continued on page 66)

INTERVIEW

Schlesinger Speaks

Jack Newfield

Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. has been perhaps the most consistent spokesman for American liberalism since the 1940s. His book, The Vital Center *(1949), was the manifesto for liberal anti-Communism. During the 1950s, Schlesinger said, "I oppose the two Joes with equal vigor," referring to Stalin and McCarthy.*

Schlesinger, now eighty, has won Pulitzer Prizes in both history and biography. He is currently writing his memoirs, and is professor emeritus at the City University of New York.

NEWFIELD: Let's begin with the recent alleged sex scandal involving President Clinton in the White House. What does it say to you about this society: the rise of the Internet? the lowering of media standards? the role of privacy in politics? From the point of view of an historian, does this scandal reflect a lot of these things coming together, or was it just an aberration?

SCHLESINGER: Well, I think it is a lot of things coming together. One of them clearly is the lower standards of the respectable press, and their competition for an audience which they regard as increasingly prurient, obsessed with gossip about people's private lives. So many stories that have been circulated, even in our top newspapers, have turned out to be exaggerations or falsehoods or based on rumor of one sort or another. And yet they were printed because of this competition for news.

I think that that may have had a salutary effect, because there are already signs that we're entering the second phase of the cycle. Having gone too far, there's now a lot of self-examination in the media, and it may have some effect, though I don't suppose it'll have much lasting effect. I do think the media coverage shows an agreeable, perhaps surprising, amount of maturity on the part of the electorate, if you can judge by the polls which show that they are quite unimpressed by the nature of Clinton's sex life. They're perfectly willing to assume that the stories are true, or substantially true, or partly true, but that's not interfering with their regard for him as president.

NEWFIELD: What's changed since sexual allegations that seemed to be true ended Gary Hart's candidacy, and caused Senator Packwood to be forced out of the Senate?

SCHLESINGER: If Gary Hart hadn't issued a challenge to the press, and if he'd been supported by his wife, he could have brazened that out in 1988. But Lee [his wife], you will remember, was quite understandably furious at him.

NEWFIELD: And Hillary's support is the big difference for Clinton?

SCHLESINGER: Hillary's support makes a great difference. Being a president makes a difference. In 1992, Hillary's support was more important. People quite rightly do not make a connection between marital fidelity and other qualities of life. We're a nation of hypocrites—if anyone, any candidate, could ever command the adultery vote, he'd win in a landslide. People forgive lies about adultery.

It seems to me, it's no business of the press to ask about people's private lives and who they have affairs with. If you're asked illegitimate questions, I think you're entitled to give illegitimate answers.

NEWFIELD: What is your view of the special prosecutor as an institution?

SCHLESINGER: Well, I think the special prosecutor certainly has gotten out of control.

NEWFIELD: Meaning Ken Starr?

SCHLESINGER: Yes. And, with the precedent that this one sets, as an institution. There should be some limits



PHOTOGRAPH BY WILLIAM JACOBELLIS / NEW YORK POST

Jack Newfield is the author of six books and a columnist for the New York Post. *He is currently completing a three-hour documentary film on Robert Kennedy that will be aired on the Discovery Network in June of 1998.*

on the duration of the term, and on the amount of money to be spent.

NEWFIELD: You are well-known for popularizing the theory of recurring historical cycles of reform and conservatism. I was wondering whether you viewed President Clinton as the end of a conservative era, or the beginning of a liberal era?

SCHLESINGER: According to the rhythm of our politics, he represented the beginning of a liberal era. And I think that's what Clinton would have liked, but it's been derailed.

Young people who grew up in the 1930s—John Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, Bobby Kennedy, Hubert Humphrey—thirty years afterwards carried the New Deal forward into the New Frontier and the Great Society. Just as the Kennedys were Roosevelt's children, so Clinton and Gore are Kennedy's children.

NEWFIELD: Don't you think a case can be made that Clinton, given his stating that the era of big government is over, his signing of the welfare reform bill which hurt poor people, his emphasis on balancing the budget, can be viewed by historians as a conservative president, not that different from George Bush?

SCHLESINGER: Yes, I agree. I think that the liberal cycle has been derailed—though not, I think, by Clinton. I may be wrong, but I think other things being equal, Clinton believes in government and believes in using government to expand opportunity, justice, and so on. But he's a prisoner of a Republican Congress and the prisoner of a national mood, which is a consequence of a deeper cyclical rhythm. We're now going through a shift from a factory-based to a computer-based economy. I think this is more traumatic than the Industrial Revolution, which was spread out over several generations, allowing time for human and institutional adjustment. The computer era is far more dynamic: every six months, new generations of these high-tech instruments emerge. It's thrown people off-base, and they're very concerned because they're being carried forward by new technologies into a kind of uncharted future.

NEWFIELD: Do you view somebody like Congressman Richard Gephardt, given his views on trade, activist government, and populist economic issues, as someone who's a throwback, or as someone who is to the left of Clinton, and might, if he were to run for president, represent the cycle of liberal upsurge?

SCHLESINGER: Well, I thought his Harvard speech a few months ago was very good. I think that we're entering a stage where the nature of the problems is going to require a return to affirmative government.

In January I published a *Wall Street Journal* piece that said that even some conservatives like Bill Bennett, Bill Kristol, and Irving Kristol are acknowledging that the attack on government has gone too far. For example, the government's role in protecting consumers and investors has been so retracted that now there's increasing pressure for more government intervention. *The Economist* had an article recently along similar lines. I think we're not going to be able to deal with the problems raised by the transition from the industrial age to the computer age without a much larger measure of government intervention.

NEWFIELD: Let me ask you a more philosophical question about the role of free will and heroic leadership in the context of your theories of history's tides. How much room is there for a heroic leader like Martin Luther King, Jr. to change the clock on these thirty year cycles?

SCHLESINGER: I think individuals can make a great difference. Ronald Reagan, for example, made the conservative swing of the cycle a kind of dogmatic, ideological thing. Dwight Eisenhower, in a similar phase of the cycle, was much more accommodationist, and did not try to pursue it along ideological lines. But you have to have some support in the national mood, the national temper, to do it.

NEWFIELD: Do you think Martin Luther King, Jr. had more of an influence on the early 1960s than even President Kennedy, in terms of the direction of the country?

SCHLESINGER: I think he was a great symbol. His emphasis on non-violence was terrifically important. But, I think events made [the civil rights changes] possible.

I remember Kennedy once saying to a small meeting of civil rights leaders around the table, at a Cabinet meeting, "We owe a hell of a lot to Bull Connor" (the racist police chief of Birmingham, Alabama). And people were kind of hushed, shocked. Roy Wikins was there, Martin Luther King, Jr. was there. And Kennedy said, "You know, if it hadn't been for Bull Connor, and those dogs barking on the television, we wouldn't have a mood which would make it possible to move ahead in civil rights." So I think events were the great educators. And I think television gives events vividness and intensity which newspaper headlines can't.

NEWFIELD: Let's talk a little bit about your book, *The Disuniting of America*, which I loved, and I understand has just come out in an enlarged and revised version. Talk to me a little bit about the distinctions between identity politics, political correctness, multiculturalism, and diversity.

SCHLESINGER: Well, obviously, we're a very diverse country. We're a multicultural country. We've been so from the start. And I think up to a point multiculturalism had a very healthy impact on American education, on America's perception of itself. When multiculturalism means giving recognition to the achievements of minorities in American history and American literature, I'm all for it. When it means seeing things from a variety of perspectives, I mean, the arrival of Columbus from the viewpoint of those who met him as well as from the viewpoint of those who sent him, I'm all for that. When it means teaching people about other cultures, other continents, other colors, other creeds, fine. It's only when it reaches the point of identity politics that it becomes a problem. When it tries to establish separate and permanent ethnic, racial communities, that seems to me untrue—

particularly at a time when ethnic antagonisms are bursting out, tearing nations apart all over the world.

NEWFIELD: Domestically, who do you see as the main spokespeople for identity politics now?

SCHLESINGER: The inventor is Michael Novak. Michael Novak wrote a book called *Unmeltable Ethnics* in which he denounced assimilation as a British plot to put everyone in the same bowl. Novak has now gone very far to the right and would repudiate a lot of this stuff. But the ideology of multiculturalism we owe to Novak, and it's been taken out and mobilized in other directions. What has taken place, I think, is the awakening of debate among minorities, so that the voices that one hears now are people like Henry Louis Gates, Jr., William Julius Wilson, Cornel West.

The most important domestic issue we face of course is race. We are, we were, historically we've been a racist country, and we're still today a racist country. Multiculturalism seems to be an ill-judged response to this serious problem.

NEWFIELD: My sense is that both FDR and JFK dealt with racism by turning to economic remedies; Medicaid, Medicare, the minimum wage, Social Security, labor rights, and Headstart, rather than to purely racial remedies in order to avoid a backlash.

SCHLESINGER: I think there are limits to some race-specific remedies. After a time such remedies irritate people who feel that one race is getting advantages that were denied them. I think the more that can be done through universal remedies, economically-based remedies—raising the minimum wage, improving the school system—the better.

Affirmative action seems to me to play an absolutely indispensable part in breaking well-entrenched habits in employment, discrimination. In the end, though, what I believe is that improved education will be the key to reducing the inequalities of both class and race.

NEWFIELD: I consider identity politics to be almost the enemy of coalition politics. Do you?

SCHLESINGER: Yes. I mean, in New York and Boston we ran conventions, and we'd have balanced tickets. A Wasp for one thing and a Jew for another and an Irishman.

NEWFIELD: Those balanced tickets excluded blacks and Latinos.

SCHLESINGER: Yes. But there's no reason why you can't include them, too. Identity politics, on the other hand, means a pursuit of a single interest at the expense of a larger program. The old ethnic politics was coalition politics. The new ethnic politics is separatism.

NEWFIELD: I would describe your politics as universal humanism, and a belief in certain universal values.

SCHLESINGER: Yes.

NEWFIELD: I think your book, probably originating from a different starting point, is very similar to the *tikkun olam* philosophy of this magazine, which I think is based on Rabbi Hillel's notion that you can't just be for your own group. You have to care equally about the Irish famine and slavery and the Holocaust, or any other injustice in the world.

SCHLESINGER: It seems to me that the real answer to the disuniting of America is intermarriage—assimilation—which is taking place all the time. More Japanese Americans marry Caucasians than marry other Japanese. I understand more Jewish Americans marry non-Jews than marry Jews. The increase in black-white marriages has been tremendous. So I think you can count on sex or love to defeat the disuniting of America.

NEWFIELD: How much of a threat is monoculturalism, which is the right-wing's philosophy, the point of view of Pat Buchanan and Reverend Falwell?

SCHLESINGER: I think the political correctness of the Right is far more powerful: the way in which evangelicals try to control teachers, school boards, library boards and so on in small towns around the country; the way they try to establish creationism as equally valid scientifically as evolution; and so on. The amount of censorship that takes place is well-organized, it's well-funded, and it affects children at a formative age, when they're much more easily intimidated, much more malleable, and they're much more likely to be influenced. Multiculturalism is mostly, I think, at the colleges now. And by the time people get to college, either they're capable of taking care of themselves or, in any case, it's impossible to teach them anything anyway.

NEWFIELD: What about the monoculturalism in politics, which I think Buchanan represents, in terms of white, European superiority?

SCHLESINGER: I think it's very funny. Pat Buchanan comes from people who 100 years ago faced "No Irish Need Apply." But I don't find it in politics particularly.

NEWFIELD: What about the anti-immigrant point of view that I think Governor Wilson in California seems to represent?

SCHLESINGER: It doesn't seem to strike great chords. I mean, Pete Wilson thought he could get the Republican [presidential] nomination by attacking affirmative action. He got nowhere. I don't think anti-immigration is going to be a big issue. I think there are limits to which nativism can go, short of some dramatic catastrophe or something like that.

I think of monoculturalism more in the way of trying to control school curricula—the movement to have English as the official language, that kind of thing.

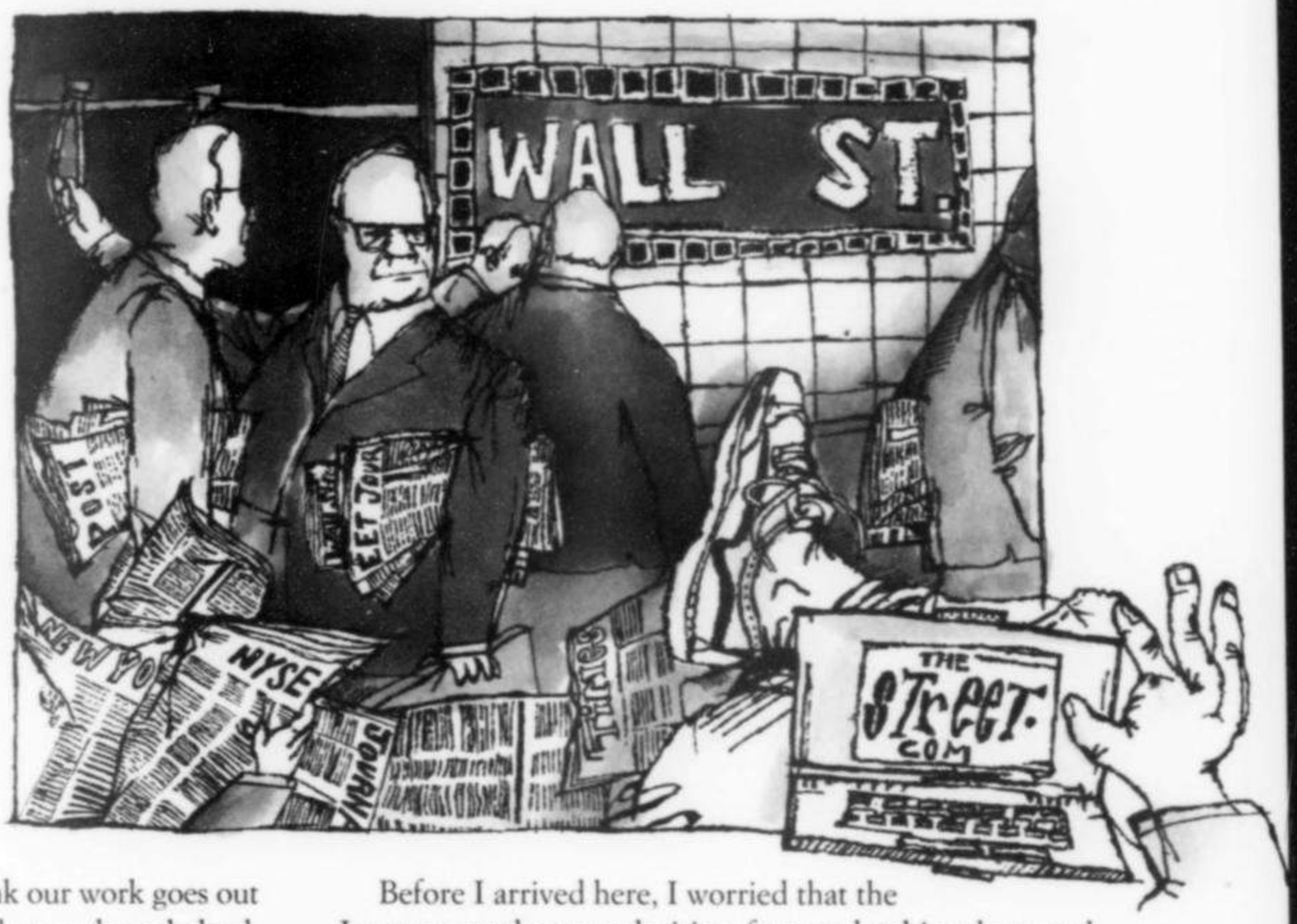
NEWFIELD: We agree that the goal is universal humanism and common values. But what do you think the values of American liberalism should be? Democracy? Economic equality? Racial justice? Tolerance?

SCHLESINGER: What holds these things together is the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. It's a civic creed: the First Amendment calls for individual freedoms; the Fourteenth Amendment calls for equality. They are both basic parts of that creed. And I think that is what defines us more than anything else, defines what it means to be an American. ❑

ONLINE

The Web

Jesse Eisinger



On Monday, we turn away venture capitalists who want to throw money at us and on Tuesday, I have to explain to a fund manager—who should know better—who we are. This is what it's like toiling in heady semi-obscurity at TheStreet.com, a subscriber-based, financial Internet publication. On good days, we think that the Internet will change the news business because it is cheaper to produce and superior. (On bad days, I think our work goes out into the void only to see my points made, unacknowledged, in other publications.)

These are triumphalist days of the adolescent Internet, especially for Wall Street-types. To call what's happening to the stocks of, say, Yahoo! Inc. (valued in late April at about six billion dollars on virtually no earnings) and Amazon.com Inc. (valued at two billion dollars on no earnings) a speculative bubble severely understates the euphoria and absurdity of their market valuations; it makes Albanian Ponzi schemes seem the essence of conservative investing. It's the second stock-market rage for the Internet in the Nineties, and investors seem not to recall that these things can end; the talisman of the last bull market, Netscape Communications Corp., has seen its shares go from a high of eighty-seven dollars in late 1995 to the low twenties in late April. This time, the bubble is even more effervescent. Even the forgotten dregs of publicly traded companies are having their day: K-Tel, the staple of late-night ads, says it will go from being a purveyor of schlock music on television to a purveyor of schlock music on the Internet and the stock vaults eight-fold in a week. This second frenzy is greedier, a relief from all the blather one used to hear about how important the Internet as a medium is and how it will change human relations as we know it. Now the Internet is less about "content" and more about commerce. This time, the content providers drawing attention, like us, the Wall Street Journal Interactive, CBS MarketWatch, are commercial ventures.

It's a bubble culture, not just a bubble economy.

Before I arrived here, I worried that the Internet was the new television, forever dumbing down and abbreviating, speeding things up to the point that they are blurred and meaningless. The Internet was and still is badly disorganized, haphazard, and lacking in authority. While much has changed even in the ten months that I've worked on the 'Net, expectations of journalistic quality haven't. No one really anticipates respectable journalism to come from the medium that spawned Matt Drudge and puffed up Pamela Anderson. The media establishment doesn't see 'Net publications as a threat while the public tends to believe whatever it reads, wherever it reads it. Newspapers (like the *Wall Street Journal*) broke news on Monica Lewinsky on their websites, but in retrospect, that seems like a reaction to a media fever and a rush to be first, which really meant sacrificing accuracy. It simply proves that the stock market hasn't monopolized frenzy: it's a bubble culture, not just a bubble economy.

Whatever the *Journal*'s decision to break news on the Internet was, it wasn't the print establishment embracing the new medium. The print establishment will only fight the Internet, as its development will mean the marginalization of print. I love newspapers, but I don't love newsprint on my hands or struggling with a broadsheet on the subway during rush hour. And when I read a paper in the morning, it already seems to me to be ancient news. More importantly, I know something about economics. The New York Times Co. spent $117.3 million in capital expenditures on its newspapers and their distribution—i.e., printing plants, trucks—in 1997. While *The Times* is continuing to spend to maintain and expand their distribution and production,

ILLUSTRATION BY GRADY McFERRIN

Jesse Eisinger is a senior news writer for TheStreet.com, an online financial publication.

pure Internet publications aren't spending one-hundreth of that on such costs. Instead, they can pour money into reporters, editors, and designers. Every major print publication has some presence on the Web and is waiting for it to "take off." This waiting game may save the brand names, but it doesn't bode well for new print enterprises or the print versions of well-known publications. Perhaps newspapers won't go away entirely; perhaps people will want "longer" articles, which they believe they won't be able to read on a screen. I'm only halfway convinced. They might remain but they will be for people who don't mind yesterday's news, and they will be poor relations.

Meanwhile, since expectations for Internet publications are so low, we're allowed a certain stylistic freedom. For example, TheStreet.com is the first publication to speak to investors in the raw, neglected vernacular of the trader. Inspired by the bullishness of the times, TheStreet.com aspires to be no less than the most important new business news organization since Bloomberg burst into the news world about ten years ago. Bloomberg lets everyone think that it invented real-time business news, but Bloomberg has nothing to say about news; its high-quality news service conforms to AP style. The genius was in delivery, not in content or language. The essential failure of most business journalism—that it rarely gives investment perspectives worth paying for—stems from its stultified language and a lack of connection to the culture of Wall Street. The Trojan Horse of TheStreet.com is that it's not the medium, it's the message. Anyone could have written about stocks the way we do, but no one did. Now, people expect us to say the things hedge fund managers think. That might mean a glib move like putting a hypertext-link into a story about Vans Inc. to the site for *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*. But it also means crystallizing the often convoluted thinking of investors without patronizing them. Readers of TheStreet.com recognize that its writers understand the fleeting nature of market movements, the anthropomorphisizing of share prices, the dramas and risk-taking and fears of the marketplace. When we use the language of Wall Street, we don't write about our subjects as if they were disembodied mutual funds or retail investors. We embrace the culture of Wall Street as if we were all A.J. Leiblings hanging with Telephone Booth Indians.

We at TheStreet.com are grateful, then, that something about the Internet allows an out-of-the-mouths-of-teenagers phenomenon. Of course TheStreet.com is far from the only publication on the World Wide Web with a colloquial, snarky tone. While that style might allow some Internet publications to be influential (see under: Suck.com), it's not, alas, a requirement for commercial success on the 'Net. In the end, it's still about economics. The Web's "attitude" might invite the attention of the chattering classes, and that's what's important to my side of the Chinese Wall. Stateside, however, where the real answers always lie, they know that it always comes down to where the money is. ❑

DISOWNING THE FUTURE *(continued from page 22)*

real wages among workers under age twenty-five fell by 19 percent (32 percent among blacks), college tuitions rose four-fold in real dollars, and the percentage of children in poverty jumped 60 percent.

Today, 25 million children and youths grow up in low-income families with annual incomes of less than $25,000, and 6 million in destitute households with annual incomes of less than $8,000. When the world's wealthiest economy subjects its young to horrendous conditions, it would hardly be shocking if teenage murder, drug abuse, and suicide increased. What is surprising is that kids today aren't so bad. Virtually every bad thing "everyone knows" about teenagers turns out, upon analysis, to be untrue.

It is aging America's need to justify its broken covenant with the young, not worsening teenage behavior, that created today's anti-youth climate. The agendas of politicians, politically attuned institutions, and a multitude of correctional industries that have cropped up in the last two decades demand an incessant drumbeat of bad news about adolescents. Added to the injury of generational abandonment is the insult of the authorities' relentless lying about young people.

Some youth "crises" popularized by politicians and the press—mass drug abuse, a heroin scourge, epidemic suicide, crime everywhere—are concocted to profit powerful interests such as the Partnership for a Drug-Free America, overbuilt psychiatric hospitals, and the mushrooming prison-industrial complex. Others, such as teenage homicide, violent crime, motherhood, drinking, and smoking, are so grossly distorted and stripped of context as to amount to fabrications.

The most frightening myth: "Everyone knows" that kids today are more murderous and that the nation faces rising hordes of "adolescent super-predators." Predictions by much-quoted experts such as Princeton's John DiIulio, UCLA's James Q. Wilson, and former Education Secretary William Bennett forecast 30,000 more "juvenile super-predators" marauding America's streets by 2005. Yet the experts who wax horrific over hypothetical youth crime overlook a dozen-fold greater leap in real violence perpetrated by offenders over age thirty. FBI figures show that the per-capita rate of violent crime among adults in their thirties and forties has doubled over the last twenty years, adding half a million violent crimes to the nation's annual volume—200,000 more in the last decade alone.

Domestic violence, which victimizes children and youths, accounts for much of this "age thirty-plus predator" surge. Youth-on-youth tragedies are exploited to demonize an entire younger generation, while adult acts of violence victimizing kids are ignored. Murders of children by parents (a half-dozen per day) are far more common than school murders (two to three per month). The day before the Jonesboro, Arkansas school shooting, a suburban California

housewife suffocated her three children with duct tape. A few days after the Paducah, Kentucky school shootings in December, West Virginia parents were arrested for torching their house and immolating their five children to collect insurance money. The indifference of Clinton and crime officials to the household violence that federal agencies estimate kills 2,000 to 3,000 children and injures 500,000 every year evidences a politically-selective attitude toward child safety.

Magazine covers and "experts" trumpet that teenagers everywhere are slaughtering in record bloodlust. Not true. The sharp increase in teenage murder and violent crime from 1984 to 1992 occurred only among inner-city populations stressed by poverty, job loss, isolation, and growth in warring gangs. States which separate statistics by ethnicity, such as California, show that violence and homicide among white (non-Latino) teenagers actually declined over the last two decades. A white California teenager is only one-fifth as likely to be murdered as a black fifty-year-old. So concentrated is youth homicide that two or three Los Angeles zip codes account for more than the entire state of Minnesota.

The growth in teenage violence is closely tied to sinking employment and wages among urban non-whites. But what accounts for the much larger, multi-racial surge in violence and serious property crime among thirty to forty-year-olds—populations whose prospects are far sunnier? Skyrocketing drug abuse is the likeliest culprit. In a December 30, 1997, press conference, White House drug policy chief Barry McCaffrey finally admitted drug abuse is rising. Federal surveys show mushrooming rates of drug-related deaths, hospital emergencies, and treatments among thirty to forty-year-old grownups have tripled in the last two decades. The average age of abusers of cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine, and drugs mixed with alcohol today is forty.

In contrast, drug fatality and injury fell rapidly among teenagers in the 1970s and has remained low since. The much-publicized "doubling in teenage suicide" since 1970 results from better identification, not more fatality. In 1970, 5,700 teens died from self-inflicted causes such as drug overdose, other poisoning, gunshot, hanging, drowning, and falls. Coroners ruled 80 percent of those deaths "accidents." In 1995, fewer teens died from self-destructive causes (3,800), but 70 percent were ruled "suicides." Congressional hearings in 1985 revealed that the psychiatric industry profited from hyping an "epidemic of teen suicide" and recruiting patients to fill beds in hospitals overbuilt during the 1970s and early 1980s.



ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID REGAN

In truth, the rate of youths dying from violence (accidents, suicides, murders) is considerably lower today than among their parents twenty-five years ago. Students lose fewer school days to disease, injury, and disability today than in the 1960s, 1970s or 1980s, despite record-high enrollments of students whose pregnancies or ill health used to bar them from school.

Even teenage pregnancies, which are declining, are miscast by authorities looking to label teens today as reckless miscreants. The best long-term study (by University of Chicago psychologist Joseph Hotz) found teenage mothers may be more farsighted than their privileged liberal and conservative maligners. By getting the mothering of small children out of the way during teen years, when only low-wage jobs beckon, poorer women can earn substantially more by their thirties than those who wait to become mothers and are saddled raising babies during adulthood, Hotz found. Having a baby does not prevent teenage girls from graduating from high school, and most of those who do drop out later obtain a GED. But a modern America invented "teenage mothers" as a handy symbol to censure the survival strategies of young women raised amid poverty, violence, sexual abuse, and sexual pressures from adult men, and that America remains bent on punishing them more.

Given rampant adult indifference and poor moral examples, today's kids could be excused for being hopeless. Yet teenagers are doing far better than we have a right to expect. As a generation, youths today act better than more economically privileged adults and better than kids of the past. Teens also display more tolerant attitudes. The 1997 Public Agenda survey found that adults indulged in hostile, finger-pointing stereotyping against young people, while teenagers were much more positive and individual in their judgments about adults. Public Agenda's 1997 survey found that while two-thirds of adults described teenagers with blanket, negative terms such as "rude," "irresponsible," and "wild," and only one-third of adults thought today's youth would make the world a better place, two-thirds to four-fifths of the teens polled described adults around them in positive terms which emphasized individual qualities. These mature attitudes among the young provide more hopeful harbingers for our increasingly diverse society than Clinton's, the Republicans', and teens' elders' moralistic rhetoric of abandonment and drift toward a gated-prison/gated-enclave future. ❑

ZIPPORAH *(continued from page 40)*

In Moses the Torah presents the quintessential slave-prince of assimilation, a man who knows himself to be a Jew but was not raised among his people and doesn't live among them, a man in whom strangers see an Egyptian, not a Jew. As commentators have noted, Moses possesses a keen and indiscriminate sense of justice that brings him to the defense of Jews and gentiles alike. But when God calls upon him to assume the leadership of his people, Moses demurs, and God is angered.



What follows is an obscure, almost dream-like scene in which we have our sole image of Moses' Midianite wife, Zipporah, who appears as briefly as if in the flare of a match flame. With his family, Moses leaves Midian to return to Egypt and....

> At a night encampment on the way, the Lord encountered him and sought to kill him. So Zipporah took a flint and cut off her son's foreskin, and touched his legs with it, saying, "You are truly a bridegroom of blood to me!" And when He let him alone, she added, "A bridegroom of blood because of the circumcision."
>
> (Exodus 4: 24–26)

In this highly enigmatic confrontation, Moses is revealed as having so tenuous an ethnic identity that he has not even fulfilled a Jewish father's responsibility to perform *brit milah* on his son. Though commentators have noted that it may have been customary for circumcision to coincide with a boy's adolescence or marriage, that doesn't explain why Zipporah's act instantly appeases God's anger.

Seeing her husband under attack by his God, Zipporah reaches an immediate (and evidently correct) conclusion about its cause, and acts upon that conclusion without hesitation. By her dramatic gesture, she brings her son into God's covenant with Israel and saves her husband's life as well, with a blood pact that narrows the gap between him and the Jewish people. Most unusual among biblical women, Zipporah even gets the last word here. Having given her husband back to his God and his people, she seamlessly asserts his identity in relation to herself, in a kind of symbolic naming of him that concludes the scene: "You are truly a bridegroom of blood to me!"

Through marriage to a Jew struggling with his own identity, Zipporah enters the volatile, evolving community of Exodus and, once there, takes an aggressive stance within a family out of balance with its people and its God. It is one of the mysteries of this evocative passage that we have no way of knowing what has prepared her for this moment.

Ethnic and religious differences have probably not been at issue between Moses and Zipporah. For the whole of their marriage they have lived in her world, Midian, a world Moses has not been eager to leave. Zipporah has had no opportunity to imagine a place for herself in a Jewish milieu. At the same time, no one has told her that her marriage represents the annihilation of the Jewish people. In a very real sense the Jewish people does not yet exist and will not come into being until her husband's return to Egypt. And it is Zipporah who ensures that return.

Perhaps today too, Jews are laboring to emerge into a new stage of peoplehood, awaiting the return of every daughter and son. At a time when concerns over continuity prevail, it is important to recognize that, like Zipporah, one of the things many converts have to offer Judaism is their families. Some converts are the partners of disaffected or minimally-engaged Jews. Many bear the responsibility for raising the next generation of American Jews. A resident alien is unlikely to engender the kind of rock-solid Jewish identity a twenty-first century Judaism needs.

Embedded in the story of Moses' return to Egypt is the story of a woman leaving her family, her childhood home, to join a new people. Perhaps it is Zipporah's outsider status, her perspective as an absolute beginner, that accounts for her acute discernment. Perhaps it is the innocence she brings to what may well be her first Jewish act that allows for her amazing courage. But by the certainty with which she takes the covenant into her own hands, she places herself at its very center.

How would an act like Zipporah's play today—within a relationship, a family, or the Jewish people? Does a resident alien have the responsibility—and the right—to enter into a partner's spiritual grapplings, to impart a child's Jewish identity, to engage in the leadership of a community?

Like so much in Judaism, these questions call up contradictions. The convert who is called a *ger* is also said to be a person who has come under the wings of the Shekhinah. The Skekhinah doesn't rent out rooms for the night. For one who is granted a home beneath those wings, there is a tremendous obligation to serve Judaism, to give something back. For one who has known that shelter, the idea of qualified belonging can have no meaning at all.

In practice, complex, painful repercussions might result from a stance like Zipporah's; we are real people, not archetypes. But if the terms of our personal relationships, our membership in *am Yisrael,* don't support such activism as Zipporah's, then we must renegotiate them. It is time to stop selling each other and Judaism short.

By itself, ritual immersion doesn't create a Jew. It's only a watery passage to the Jewish path on the other side. As I walk that path now, this fleeting vision of Zipporah appears before me at every turn, beckoning, making me uncomfortable. Imagining Zipporah as a convert's model, her singular act becomes an intimidating challenge. ❑

Torah of Money *(continued from page 31)*

We can point to the obvious fact that American Jewish wealth has been created in an atmosphere of assimilation and unrestrained capitalism, in which values of individualism, materialism, the absolute sanctity of private property, and the linkage between personal wealth and personal worth weigh in far more heavily than Jewish values.

We can also point to the many pressing responsibilities that face Jewish *tzedakah* networks—immigration and social welfare needs in Israel and the United States; protecting Jews worldwide from anti-Semitism; promoting Jewish education and culture; etc. These pressures, exacerbated for Jews by deep-seated security fears, have produced very conservative Jewish financial management strategies that segregate financial means from financial ends, how we invest from how we give.

The alliance between the State of Israel and the U.S. military-industrial complex has also fostered over the years a nasty, *realpolitik* attitude among Jewish decision makers, who have too many times ignored Jewish values of compassion, justice, and communal participation in the name of Israeli security and "Jewish unity," i.e., political influence. The oligarchic nature of Jewish communal leadership also makes unlikely the implementation of the mechanisms of accountability which have progressive social and spiritual resonance and are endemic to the Torah of Money.

Drained of its deeper Judaic meaning, the existing money culture of American Jewish life may "get the job done," raising funds for Israel, for social welfare, for Jewish education and continuity projects, etc.—but it also tends to alienate many sectors of the Jewish population, including many women, young adults, non-wealthy Jews, and a growing segment of wealthy inheritors and entrepreneurs. For them, the negative, sometimes even comical, image of the Jewish community as materialistic, "unspiritual," and preoccupied with fundraising has hardly been transformed by the welcome growth of literacy, spirituality, and inclusiveness in liberal Jewish life during the past twenty years.

The intent of this column is to draw attention to those activists in Jewish life who are challenging these stereotypes by infusing their fundraising, money-management, and *tzedakah* with Jewish values rooted in text, tradition, and historical understanding. They work in synagogues and Jewish Federations, in women's and "alternative" philanthropies, and in many other settings. There are also numerous "social responsibility" organizations involved in low-income community and economic development, corporate reform, environmental protection, and consumer and shareholder activism, whose organizational operations embody the values of the Torah of Money. In future columns we'll be introducing many of these individuals and groups to you, as we showcase ways of earning, spending, investing, and organizing resources that harmonize the dictates of the "bottom line" and the teachings of the "Most High." ❑

Biotech Roundtable *(continued from page 50)*

Meanwhile, there are some people who are born with a gene that makes them much more likely to die of a heart attack in their twenties than most people. Do you really think it would be wrong for parents who have such a gene to try to change that gene in their children to the one that other people have naturally?

Rifkin: I'm not against this kind of somatic therapy as a reasonable therapy of last resort if you've tried everything possible in the way of sophisticated preventive health. But I would oppose making the change in the egg and the sperm cells because those changes are passed along to future generations. So it's a matter of balance.

Silver: This is a case where what the parent is trying to do is to give the child a gene that everyone else already has.

Rothman: Of course, parents will always try to get the best for their children, but what notion they have of the best will be shaped by the larger society.

Rifkin: As people grow up in a society in which the notion of perfection by gene therapy gains greater credence, there will likely be less tolerance for any form of deviance. One of the bases of all human relationships is empathy—the notion of our shared vulnerability and the sense that we are not perfect. The more that our "imperfections" are seen by others as a matter of choice ("Their parents didn't make smart choices for how to engineer them") the more difficult to sustain empathy.

If we can get genetic information to a point where parents can know enough about their future offspring to know for sure that they will have what they consider unacceptable genetic deformities, they do have another option: don't have children, but adopt some of the millions of children in this world who need families and don't have them.

I'd like to see the U.S. government ban human cloning and germ-line therapy, as well as prohibit the release of gene-splice organisms into the environment, and forbid the patenting of human genes and the genes of other creatures. Don't leave to consumers in the marketplace those decisions that will have consequences for future generations who cannot participate in the decision process. I don't think any of us are wise enough to dictate the evolutionary future of our species. We are tool-makers and risk-takers, so I am for transforming the world, but only in ways that sustain rather than drain relationships, that steward rather than destroy nature, and that keep options open.

Silver: Jeremy Rifkin puts evolution on a pedestal, but evolution is random, there is nothing godly about it. We've already taken control of evolution by the way we have cured diseases and prolonged life, so I don't really agree with Rifkin's worries that we will be taking on too much responsibility if we shape the evolutionary future of the human race with regard to some of the specific problems that engineered genes might solve. ❑

Killing Kids *(continued from page 24)*

desensitization to the real consequences of guns and other weapons of destruction.

Education is often oversold in this society as the vehicle for solving our most vexing problems. But, as I have tried to make clear, violence among young people cannot be seriously addressed apart from a politics that seeks a transformation in our economic priorities and cultural values. In the specific area of education, we should remember Hannah Arendt's chilling description in *Eichmann in Jerusalem* of the evil that arises as a result of people's thoughtless conformity to authority and the norms of others. Given so many human beings' unthinking readiness to kill and brutalize others, can there be any question as to the importance of educating children so that they have the capacity to deeply question the world that confronts them? As the educational philosopher Paulo Freire has asserted, young people have to be able to "problematize" their world—to be able to see how the world around them is the product of human actions, moral preferences, and political decisions that are often taken as an exercise of power in the service of limited interests. Children must learn that there is nothing inevitable about a world that commodifies so much of our precious resources, sees other human beings as little but exploitable labor, and makes happiness synonymous with materialism and consumption.

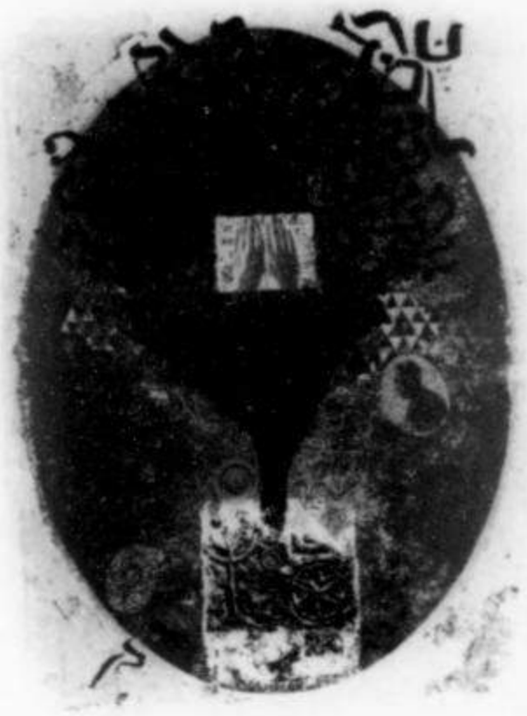
This critical reflection upon our world must also ask students to imaginatively and creatively reconstruct how we might live. In this we need to develop among young people not only a language of critique but also one of possibility—one that can nourish their sense of hope about the making of a world that is more just and caring. For this, we need an education based not just on rationality and intellect, but on body and spirit. Such an education must help us to see the Other as, in Levinas' words, the "face" of God—a being of infinite and sacred worth.

The education I describe here is not something that can be achieved by adding (as we so often do) a course here or there. It demands instead a thoroughgoing transformation in the vision and practices of education, away from our current emphasis on individual success, competitive achievement, and social sorting, and towards an education that is truly for the heart and mind. Such an education would serve the moral and spiritual purpose of healing a world disfigured by human degradation, injustice, and exploitation, and by the violence which inevitably accompanies them. This is not to suggest that education alone can radically change our social condition—a frequent error we make in the United States, where it often seems easier to change schools than other institutions. The phenomenon of violence is deeply embedded in our culture and will take a much broader transformative politics to uproot. Yet we act where and how we can, in spite of the limitedness of our efforts. For, as the Jewish sages remind us, each life that is spared means a whole world that is saved. ❑

On Suffering *(continued from page 39)*

I admit from the outset that I do not have an adequate theological response to natural evil. But I do have a strong sense of what such a response must entail.

The first guideline must be the recognition that evil is real. There are outlooks and faiths which deny or disparage the fact of evil. This is, I believe, callous and self-centered. People perceive pain. Watching a man who is in his last stages of terminal illness and telling him that pain is merely a figment of his sinful imagination, simply the absence or distance of God, is cruel and abusive. Such a theology is unworthy of moral people or of a loving God. So Rule Number One is that evil is real and must be dealt with as a reality.



Rule Number Two is that the theology must be one which would be helpful to a person in pain. Far too often, we develop complex theologies which would either reveal their inadequacy or compound the sufferer's pain were we to dare to use them in front of people who are suffering. Were we to tell a mourner "*mipnei hata'enu galinu*" ("we were exiled because of our sins"), we would be ashamed. Our theology must not be shameful, must not hide itself in rabbinical schools and theology seminars. It must bring comfort when comfort is needed and where pain is felt.

Rule Number Three is that our theology must build upon elements found within the Jewish heritage. Accepting the postulate that religion is not merely an intellectual exercise, particularly at moments of anguish, it is crucial that Jewish symbols, stories, and rituals be re-integrated so as to lend their strength and subconscious resonance to the person in pain.

The path which I believe would integrate these three points most productively would be a modern reintegration of Kabbalah. The notion that somehow God suffers when we do, that God is in need of human mending and able to contribute to human emotional and spiritual empowerment, that Shekhinah is always accessible to human relation—these are the elements from which a new Jewish response to pain might emerge. Such a notion would recognize that pain is an ever-present reality in our world—but a reality which God and humanity can oppose together. It would mobilize the power of sacred story and of community in the battle against meaninglessness and isolation. And it would teach that ultimately we will repair the breach—God, the world, and humanity will one day be whole. ❑

Arab Citizens of Palestine *(continued from page 15)*

So Palestinian Arabs will be torn once again, because their demand for equality will require that they distance themselves from their own people in order to keep their eyes on the living standards and political rights that the oppressor can give you.

Meanwhile, Israeli Arabs do not yet have equal rights: the State invests twice as much money in the education of Jewish students than in the education for Arab students; the development of Israel is based on expropriating Arab land to allow for expansion of Jewish settlements, while not one new Arab village has been built since 1948; there are forty Arab villages that are "unrecognized" and hence do not get any services. Yet if our project eventually succeeds, and we do get equal participation in the Israeli system, and if Israel stays with its current direction of trying to keep Palestine as a bantustan state without enough economic base for independent survival, then there may come a time when the binational state option will reemerge as a real solution, and we Israeli Arabs will be in a unique position to provide leadership for such a reality. If the separate state that Israel is willing to grant is really just a few separate and detached areas, then the binational demand may become the real demand. If the state that Israel allows is one in which people cannot leave to study or to work without Israeli permission, people will feel in their daily experience that this is not really an independent state even if Arafat proclaims that it is. And in that circumstance, the Palestinian state option may be exhausted and people will be looking for something else—instead of sovereignty, citizenship.

One thing that may make this kind of development more plausible: the fact that within Israel there is emerging from below a new kind of identity, an identity based on Hebrew language and culture, an identity emerging from Tzahal [the Israel Defense Forces] and from a thousand other institutions of life in Israel, and this Hebrew identity is the identity of the majority of Israelis. But people still confuse this emerging identity with a Jewish universal identity, with the universal, ahistorical *Am Yisrael,* the unterritorial people of Israel that claims a right to citizenship in this land despite the fact that most of its people live elsewhere. Zionism does not recognize this emerging Hebrew nation, but only the nation of the Jewish people all around the world, which is why we in the Knesset end up discussing and deciding laws of conversion to the Jewish religion, laws which actually ought not be decided by national parliament. Imagine: Christian and Moslem members of Knesset discuss and vote on a theological dispute about how to become a Jew! This same abnormality is what prevents the emerging Hebrew nation from recognizing itself and normalizing the State of Israel. Yet I believe that this newly emerging Hebrew nation can form the foundation for the kind of transformation of Israel that may emerge in Israel's second fifty years: a truly binational democratic society. ❑

American Failures in Africa *(continued from page 43)*

independent political parties or competitive elections. Instead, the communiqué asserted that "there is no fixed model for democratic institutions." In the context of Entebbe, this truism implied that Museveni's "non-party democracy" was just one variant of legitimate democracy, like the difference between Britain's Westminster system and the U.S. presidential model, rather than a perversion of the term.

Clinton might have signaled higher expectations in his speech before the African leaders. Instead, he danced around the issue. Repeating the obvious, he proclaimed that "America knows from our own experience that there is no single blueprint for a successful democracy." But that sent the clearly understood message that "non-party democracy" was within the realm of acceptability. Worse, he devoted not a word to the considerable democratic shortcomings of the African leaders assembled before him. Without pressure from Washington to uphold the communiqué's high-sounding principles, it risks becoming an exercise in hypocrisy.

Clinton only compounded the problem when, later in his trip, he seemed to lower the bar for assessing Nigeria's endless "transition" to democracy. Nigerian Gen. Sani Abacha, who took power in 1993 by annulling an election and imprisoning its presumed winner, has promised new elections and civilian rule by this fall. Meanwhile, through coercion and severe political restrictions, he has arranged for endorsements by each of the five political parties he has allowed. The only remaining step is for him to remove his uniform and announce his election by proclamation as a "civilian." Shortly before Clinton's trip, Susan Rice, Clinton's young and dynamic assistant secretary of state for African affairs, had announced that under no circumstances would the United States recognize an electoral victory by the military—a clear allusion to Abacha. But Clinton, while visiting South Africa's Nelson Mandela, offered that an Abacha victory might be acceptable after all. Clinton aides scrambled to offer "clarifications" of what the president supposedly meant, but the damage had been done—American expectations for African democracy were shown to be so low that even a world-class pariah could be seen to pass muster.

Despite the much-needed attention to Africa's problems and progress, Clinton's tour leaves one with a sense of opportunity lost. Any reflection on Washington's misguided and often destructive relationship with Africa can only be welcomed. But the apologies for the past and pledges for the future will ring hollow until the Clinton Administration addresses the inadequacies of its policies in the present. While Clinton was preoccupied with painting a positive picture of Africa for Americans, an audience of Africans was closely following his pronouncements as well. They will be disappointed if, under the guise of "mutual respect" for Africa's new leaders, Clinton betrays a lack of respect for the rights and democratic aspirations of the African people. ❑

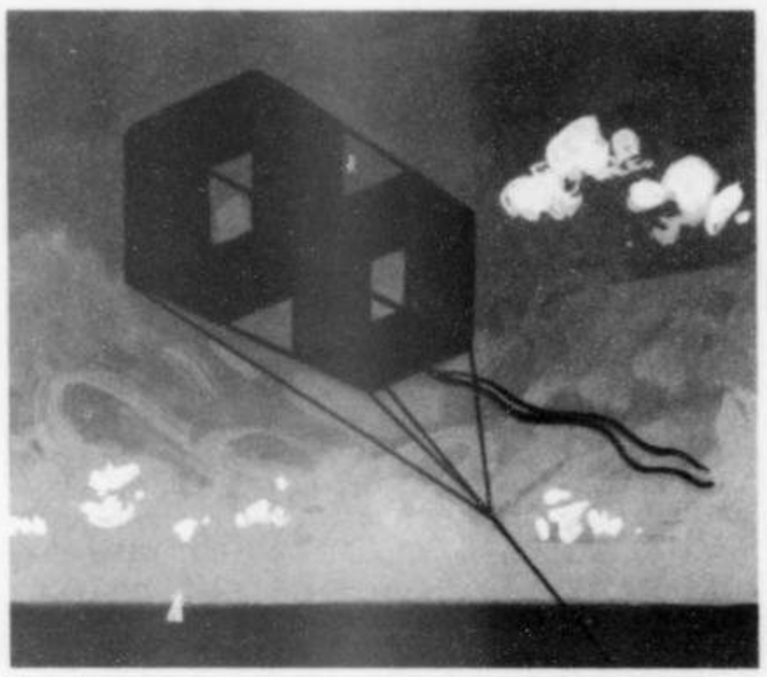
BLESS MINSKY *(continued from page 55)*

says in a nervous singsong, like a child with one line to recite in a school play, "I have been a naughty boy and I deserve my punishment."

And at last the pair of winter people, the older one and the younger one, stand side by side like a long married couple, touching hands, contented, smirking at Minsky.

Minksy makes a run for it. Actually he lopes. Then, as he feels the pain in his lungs, he walks in slow motion like the Six Million Dollar Man moving at fantastic speed on TV. His half-opened kite has escaped from its bag; he is dragging it by its string. Sometimes he succeeds in semi-grasping it and pushing it in front of him. Then the wind catches it and it trails him.

He is not sure where he is. He knows where he is: he is on Miami Beach. He is not sure exactly where on Miami Beach he is. He knows he is at the intersection of Collins and Fourth, waiting for the lights to change. He is not bothering for the lights to change: he sways toward the red—a scarlet convertible Buick screams. He is on Eleventh, treading on a dropped pistachio ice cream. He is on Seventh; an orange sunhat says Excuse me. He is on Ocean and Eighteenth—the same or a different scarlet automobile screams. He shuts his eyes. He opens them. A polka dot bikini top bobs into his vision. A shoulder in turquoise cotton. A one hundred percent raw silk hip. The kite is tugging at his arms, making them hurt. On Lincoln Mall he passes three ethnically various five-year-olds in the process of being shot for a clothing catalog; one of the youngsters, a curly headed boy, is skipping from leg to leg and a maternal voice is going, "If you want to suck your lollipop, Ariel, no jumpy-jumpy." He tries to thrust the kite string into this Ariel's hand, but the boy doesn't understand—it seems Minsky is stuck with it. On Collins, between Twelfth and Thirteenth, he stumbles up to an old man in a wheelchair and an old man in a Zimmer frame who are discoursing on socialism; both are acquaintances of his; he tries to greet them but has no breath for it. On Sixth he has to wade through a shoal of middle-aged English tourists, a female voice is twittering, "So I says to him, I'm not letting you go swimming in the nuddy, you'll get sunburned on your youknowwhat." He intersects with dogs. A sociable labrador. A feisty chihuahua snapping and barking at the kite tail. A lanky pale greyhound being walked by a matching female model; the dog lead and the kite string almost tangle: almost the retired tailor ends up with the greyhound and the model with the kite. He notices he is descending to the beach—he never intended it like that; the wind's pressure and the force of gravity are urging him. The entire sky is overcast now: a brilliant uniform expanse of cloud. The air is dense. The white sand looks like snow, it really does; snow. Over the snowy steppes of Miami Beach goes Minsky. The kite has somehow expanded: it is genuinely its proper box shape: has attained full size. It has risen a little over him; its tail is lashing him. Somehow, by sheer willpower, he has found the strength to head into the wind, inland, as far as Lincoln and Tenth. Here he almost loses the kite. The string tugs sharply—his fist opens—the string jerks free. But, amazingly, the kite simply hovers, not moving off in any direction. After a few seconds he realizes this; the faithful string nuzzles his palm; he grabs it again: ready for his journey to continue. But just then a gust of wind bowls down Lincoln, past Woolworth, past Danny's Genuine New York Deli, past a gang of root-beer-drinking teenagers with back-to-front fluorescent green baseball caps, past Payless Shoes, past a pregnant women carrying much shopping, past La Independencia Diner, past a woman whose smile looks something like Kitty's when he first met her, past Shalom Butchers and enters the big body of the kite. The kite jerks horizontally. The string tugs at Minsky's shoulders; there is grief in the small of his back. The kite heaves upward. Minsky is drawn. He is on tiptoe. His moccasins scrape the pale paving. He is swung. He is lifted.



He is lifted and for a time it seems there is nothing to stop Minsky rising off the sidewalk at Tenth Street, and heading over the white plain of the beach, over the hissing surf, over the blank sea, under the white plain of the sky, and becoming free from Florida.

Meanwhile, a block away, at Lincoln and Ninth, a Cuban has been having his hair cut. He is sitting on a clean plastic chair out on the street. He is a bull of a man. His swarthy wool lies around him on the sidewalk. Right now the bull has his head tilted back, and is smiling, while his nose hairs are being attended to. The barber, a fellow Cuban, is a narrow dark man. He is standing up tall. He is thrusting a large pair of glittering scissors inside his customer's nostrils. The barber is darting around and making ingenious circular motions with his implement so as to perform angled snips, something like a picador in the arena. And a third Cuban, possibly a mutual friend or a business colleague of the other two, a long-haired dapper fellow with a café au lait complexion, is leaning against a convenient wall, admiring the barber's artistry. So intent are the three Cubans on their roles—the customer, the barber, the onlooker—they do not notice the big black box kite hovering above them; it wafts away, dragging its tail behind it. ❑

ISRAEL ROUNDTABLE *(continued from page 19)*

In Boston, we believe that our Federation is a force for Jewish renewal and Jewish renaissance. We focus on Torah, Jewish learning, *chesed* (kindness and strengthening local communities) and social justice (including bringing Jews into support of inner-city-oriented programs like the literacy program recently created by Leibel Fein).

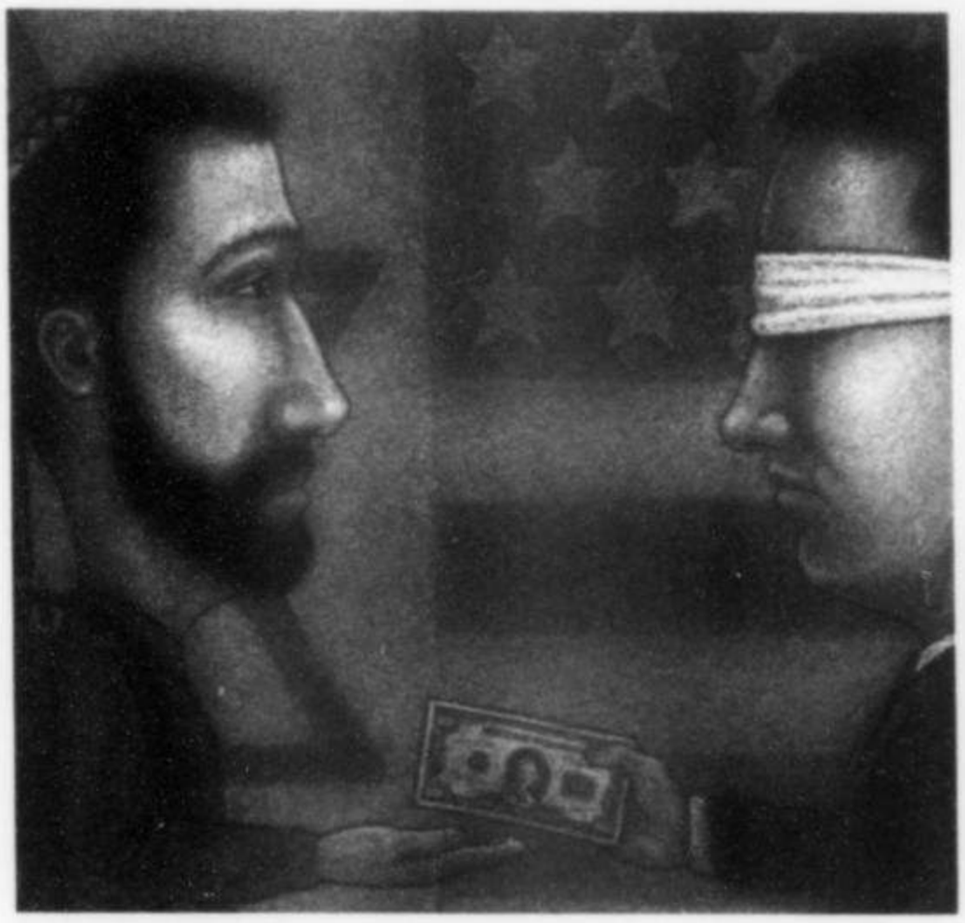
Every Jewish citizen has a right to participate in the life of the Federation and to have their perspective heard. But I think that there is broad support in the Jewish community for the notion of our communal responsibility for the State of Israel.

It may be true that the State of Israel can afford to spend a lot more money to ensure that Ethiopian Jews get a fair shake once they get to Israel, but if the government fails to take care of its responsibility and if we can leverage our philanthropic dollars to really make a difference, then I think we can and must do the right thing and try to make social change happen—with or without the Israeli government.

FELLMAN: We do care about immigrants. But Israel is a very rich society. Why shouldn't their resources be directed toward absorbing immigrants? Of course, if I were the Israeli government, I'd welcome this American money, because it would free up other monies to then be used to support projects that the American funders find distasteful (like building the West Bank settlements or giving money to yeshivot committed to undermining the peace process). The fungibility is a major issue.

SHRAGE: We are involved in bringing Ethiopian and Russian Jews to Israel not because the Israeli government wants us to do that, but because we can't imagine a world in which we American Jews wouldn't want to be supporting that kind of mitzvah. The government is shirking its responsibility toward Ethiopians, and I want American Jews to be doing much more for the Ethiopians.

KULA: The $150–$220 million from the UJA coming to Israel is insignificant in its impact on the $55 billion budget of the State of Israel. What is significant is the impact of the giving of this money on the construction of American Jewish identity. We claim to be a "world people," but what happens when we—who are one part of that people—fail to fulfill our responsibility toward other parts of our people? What happens is a destructive narrowing of the definition of what it means to be part of the Jewish people. On the other hand, involvement on a large scale in the fate of Jews in Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union, or Israel has a positive impact on broadening our own sense of identity, as we move beyond our own narrow self-interest and give expression to that part of our Jewish identity that expresses concern for world Jewry. Right now, we don't provide donors with a wide enough range of projects that would encourage this widening of identity, and that is an important direction that Barry Shrage and others are pioneering for the Jewish community.



FELLMAN: There is plenty of money in Israel to settle Ethiopian Jewry; but why isn't Israel doing that? If we want to support Jews who need money, why not give that money to Jews who remain in the former Soviet Union who are desperately poor, while politically supporting those Israelis who are trying to get their own government to take care of Ethiopian immigrants (something that it could easily afford to do, particularly if it weren't spending its money on supporting the settlements and the Occupation)? I don't want to give any money to the UJA/Federation, given the issue of fungibility of funds, because I don't want to be indirectly helping the Israeli government in its mistaken priorities. I give money to specific grass roots projects in Israel that are sharing humane priorities.

PALEY: That's fine. But there needs to be some fund to support the people who don't know how to get the publicity and who might otherwise fall through the cracks and who have needs that wouldn't get attended to by anybody. Even some of the elderly Jews who live in the Bronx don't know how to do good p.r. for themselves, and so the rest of the Jewish people would never hear about them. Those least able to fight for funds but most in need of those funds need an organization like the UJA/Federation. It's a holy act to build an international network of Jews to help those people. It's a sign of enormous largesse that Jews do that.

ARNOW: I'd like to add that whatever leverage the American Jewish community has is already being used—there are countless groups meeting with Netanyahu and with members of the Knesset. If you want to change the situation, you have to be constructively engaged with it. Saying that we are not giving any money would have zero influence. We have to be engaged and educate Israelis to a different way of thinking. If money is cut off, Israel's policy toward Palestinians and toward religious pluralism won't change one inch.

BEN-BARUCH: But community giving to Israel exclusively through state and quasi-state institutions has a negative impact. We have constructed an American Jewish identity focused upon supporting the State and its policies. If we are interested in philanthropy, helping the poor, and reflecting our values in Israel, why would we give through institutions controlled by Israeli politicians and political parties?

KULA: Our national institutions are now in transition. The UJA, in partnership with the Federations, is developing increasing opportunities to give to projects or institutions independent of the state apparatus.

SHRAGE: The piece of the Jewish Agency that is likely to stay intact is that part which moves immigrants from the former Soviet Union to Israel. In my view, the rest of the Jewish Agency is likely to see a serious decline of UJA dollars in the next few years. Cleveland, Boston, Los Angeles, and other Federations are already moving in this direction.

BEN-BARUCH: But even settlement activity, always done in coordination with the government, is much more problematic than you seem willing to acknowledge. The settlement is done by the government in ways that advance its major political goals, such as strengthening its hold on the Occupied Territories, or strengthening the infrastructure within the Green Line that provides necessary support for settlement and holding onto the West Bank.

SHRAGE: Our funding for the rescue of Jews is not used for the kinds of projects your mention, but mostly to fly the immigrants from their country of origin to Israel itself—just to bring them to the airport. Very little is being used for resettlement, and insofar as it is, the pattern of that resettlement has been unchanged from the Shamir government to the Rabin government to the Peres government and now to the current government.

LEVINE: Whatever the amount, it's a powerful legitimation of the Occupation. And it's interesting to watch the Federation world suddenly getting actively involved in the diversity issue (the role of Reform and Conservative Judaism in Israel), even pressuring and lobbying Israel on this issue, though they have refused to do the same with regard to the issue of peace and settlements. It shows that Federation could play this kind of advocacy role should it decide to do so. Yet the advocacy is deeply flawed, because the separation of these two issues is impossible. Once you have a society that regularly learns to demean the Other, that discourse has a corrosive effect on the moral life of a society. Orthodox Jews today are only applying this habit of demeaning the Other that they learned from the Zionist treatment of Arabs and Mizrachim and applying it to their "Other," namely those people who claim to be Jewish but are, in their view, subverting Judaism by refusing to have any standards for what it is to be Jewish beyond what feels good at the moment. It's a fantasy to believe that you can have a society that demeans Arabs in general and Palestinians in particular and then have that dynamic neatly contained—it will inevitably spill over to fellow Jews. The two issues are really one. If you speak to the settlers in Hebron or to some of the Orthodox leadership, you will hear the same hatred that is felt by Israeli society toward Palestinians.

SHRAGE: Statements from local Federations strongly condemned attacks on fellow Jews and strongly advocate for pluralism.

PALEY: And the UJA/Federation gives more money to tolerance-oriented projects like Gesher, Oranim, Ellul, and Midrasha than any other single organization of Diaspora Jewry. But UJA gives money across all boundaries to people in need regardless of their ideological or religious affiliations, and this is a good model.

TIKKUN: The argument that not giving to UJA/Federation would have no political impact needs further investigation. The same kind of arguments were made against the movement that developed in the mid-1980s calling for disinvestment in South Africa: that student efforts to push their universities to disinvest in corporations that invested in South Africa could not possibly have a political impact in changing the hardline apartheid government; or, that disinvestment, if it had any real impact, would only hurt the Black population of South Africa who would be most likely to suffer the consequences should American firms pull out. Yet, both of these arguments, while plausible, wildly underestimated the political impact of disinvestment on the self-confidence of the ruling elites and the white population of South Africa, which became far more willing to engage in negotiations with the African population once the disinvestment movement began to gain steam in the United States. Of course, the issues are not the same, and we would never claim that the Israeli Occupation is as heinous as apartheid, but the argument about the political impact of small local actions may be relevant.

ARNOW: But the punishment must fit the crime. If there were a massive, worldwide boycott against Israel, that might change some policy. But that kind of thing is not justified, given the differences which you yourself acknowledge.

KULA: One reason the liberal-progressive message is not heard is because it is articulated in such sweeping, monolithic ways. Listen to how the entire UJA/Federation establishment is being portrayed, here in this roundtable, as an unethical, immoral system. The UJA/Federation establishment has many different constituencies, and we have to recognize that plurality and not stereotype the entire system.

Moreover, our relationship to the Jewish Agency is changing, and the amount of money being funneled through the Agency is likely to decrease in the coming years.

SHRAGE: But the Jewish Agency did many wonderful things through the years, and it implemented many policies that we in the American Jewish world wished it to implement. Now we are entering a different era, and the way American Jewish money will be directed will be different as the needs of Israel and of the American Jewish community

change. But I'm proud of what the Jewish Agency has done with most of the money we've sent.

Arnow: Things change, and the massive structures of the UJA/Federation world are in the process of change. Not as quickly as some of us might hope, but things are changing.

Kula: But it does not help that process of change if we talk about the UJA/Federation as though the entire structure was serving evil political ends. All that kind of language does is cause good people who might be open to rethinking things to actually close down. This is an example of surplus powerlessness. Instead of lamenting the big bad UJA, those of us who support an accelerated peace process and pluralism need to be much more nuanced in our statements, acknowledging the activities of the UJA/Federation of which we can be proud, and then pointing to areas that are more problematic. We need to move in a strategic way, step by step, retaining the things that are good, allowing the problematic areas to die off and putting whole new programs in their place. Destroying the institution entirely will only hurt thousands of people. We need to be aggressive evolutionaries.



Paley: Part of the good news that people need to recognize is that the UJA/Federation world is really changing. The New Israel Fund was on the agenda of the Federation's General Assembly for the first time this year. People who don't have a lot of money are getting on the agenda and are having an impact on the inner workings of the institution. Immigrants, Hillel students, and others who perceived themselves as having no impact are now getting listened to in the UJA/Federation world. So we need to get the message out that this is our organization and we can shape it. You can get yourself heard in these contexts.

Shrage: The leadership of the American Jewish community and the masses of American Jews are pretty much in the same place. About 15 percent of the American Jewish community would probably take the most left-wing position on the return of the entire West Bank and a tiny minority of those might even agree with Mr. LeVine who apparently believes that Israel is little more than an imperialist oppressor. Probably 15–20 percent of American Jews would support a right-wing position, with many fundamentally opposing any return of land for peace. But the vast majority of American Jews just want to support Israel and their dream for a Jewish homeland for all Jews. They believe in Israel's democratic institutions and will support any democratically elected government on issues of security and foreign policy because Israeli lives are at stake with regard to those decisions and only Israelis can make those kinds of decisions. They love Israel. They believe it needs to fight to exist in a hostile environment and they will support it in this struggle. That may be naive, but it *is* how most American Jews feel. The reason that the Federation system doesn't generally get involved in Israeli foreign policy is because this split exists in the community that it represents. The majority of the leadership and the majority of the people do support trading land for peace to the extent that they think it could work without risking Israeli security, and they were supportive of Prime Minister Rabin when he was in power. Those of you who believe that the so-called "Federation elite" are way to the right of the "Jew on the street" are as wrong as Meir Kahane used to be when he said that the "elite" were way to the left of the American Jewish community. In my view and in the view of most demographic studies, the American Jewish community *and* its leadership are firmly committed to the center.

Kula: Besides, there are other institutions whose role is to take stands on these issues. A mature leadership knows how and where to articulate its anger. If we allow our legitimate concerns to spill over into every institution, we will simply blow apart the few places where we presently sit together and we will destroy the only large scale instrument that presently exists to help thousands of people.

LeVine: The UJA/Federation supporters in this roundtable are unwilling to see the actual role that their organization plays in sustaining a particular version of the Zionist discourse, a discourse that is increasingly being shown to be a myth (see, for example, the work of the New Historians in Israel, some of which is summarized in the March/April 1998 issue of Tikkun by Israeli historian Benny Morris). In my own work in Israel, I've witnessed so many debates distorted by an ideological misunderstanding of Israeli history (just as, for many decades, America's own mythology kept it from confronting its legacy of genocide against Native Americans and African Americans). That naive and one-sided view of Israeli history, the myth of the imperiled David fighting the overwhelming Goliath, the discourse of a peace-seeking and compromise-oriented Zionist movement versus a ruthless and genocidally-intent Palestinian opposition, is fostered by the education done by the Jewish Agency and by many of the institutions supported by UJA/Federation in the United States. People in this forum talking about the slow evolution of the UJA/Federation are unwilling to even begin to acknowledge the destructive impact of this kind of education, done in the Jewish community and fostered by UJA/Federation funded institutions. No wonder, then, that they have a more optimistic picture of this evolution, since they still don't even understand the problem itself, and the way that their institution helps foster a consciousness that makes true healing and reconciliation possible.

Arnow: The recent newspaper ads signed by many leaders of UJA/Federation giving Clinton the message that it's appropriate to put pressure on Israel—and the Palestinians—to move in a peace-oriented direction represents a significant change. Change is happening, and you need to give it more credit. ❑

Seeing the World from God's Perspective

A.J. Heschel's Prophetic Witness

Arnold M. Eisen

- *Holiness in Words: Abraham Joshua Heschel's Poetics of Piety*, by Edward K. Kaplan. State University of New York Press, 1996.
- *Abraham Joshua Heschel: Prophetic Witness*, by Edward K. Kaplan and Samuel H. Dresner. Yale University Press, 1998.

My first encounter with Abraham Heschel came as a teenager. Bored with synagogue services, disenchanted with the vacuities of American Jewish communal life, but excited by the riches of the Jewish tradition that I encountered three times a week at a city-wide Hebrew high school program, I happily joined in a discussion group for teens that met during services on Saturday mornings and exposed us to some of the great minds of modern Jewish thought. One day we turned to Heschel's *God in Search of Man*, and came upon the opening lines that excited me so much I can still recite them from memory.

> It is customary to blame secular science and anti-religious philosophy for the eclipse of religion in modern society. It would be more honest to blame religion for its own defeats. Religion declined not because it was refuted, but because it became irrelevant, dull, oppressive, insipid.

"My God!" I exclaimed (aloud, according to memory). "He's been to my shul!" Heschel understood. I noted excitedly that he had not excluded Judaism from the category of religion gone stale. Anger at Judaism's current estate was not illegitimate. I was not supposed to be tolerant of all I saw around me. There was a great deal that needed changing, and Heschel—in that book, and the others I read eagerly in the next few years—had pointed the way. My admiration for him grew when I learned that he had marched beside Martin Luther King, Jr., and heard of his service as co-chair of Clergymen and Laymen Concerned about Vietnam. Heschel's critique of American Judaism in the name of the tradition was joined to a critique of America in the name of that same tradition. The combination sent a powerful and stirring message to a young Jew in search of the meaning of who he was.

I next encountered Heschel in person. He came to speak at Penn while I was a student there, and in the course of covering the talk for the campus paper I asked Heschel if I could come to interview him in his office at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York. He agreed, and so I found myself there one day, face to face with the man who was by then my hero, surrounded by books that not only overflowed from every shelf but were piled on chairs, on the desk, on the floor. It was a moment too important to waste on mere journalism. I asked the questions most important to my life at that moment, and Heschel, understanding within minutes, was entirely there, engaged, responding. First question: what gave him the right to denounce much of contemporary religious life as irrelevant, oppressive, insipid, and dull? Second question: what gave him the right to attack the Vietnam war in the name of Torah, when many good and learned Jews supported government policy? Third, and probably the most pressing of all to me that day: what good did all his words about Judaism or about the war do for the world? The bombs were still falling, people were dying, and he was adding to the piles of books. What was the point? I of course wanted reassurance on all three counts, and left having had it provided.

The final encounter I will describe here took place some months later in the corridors of a congressional office building in Washington. I had spent the day lobbying the aides of aides to congressmen about the war—and so, apparently, had Heschel. He looked bedraggled, was obviously exhausted. I did not go up to him to say hello, and not just out of shyness. I was mad at him, you see: the greatest Jewish thinker of the day was wasting his time knocking on the doors of politicians. He should have been doing things worthy of his learning, like writing books! Heschel apparently had other ideas, then as always—about the role of ideas, the power of words, the

Arnold Eisen is professor of Religious Studies at Stanford University and the author, most recently, of Taking Hold of Torah: Jewish Commitment and Community in America *and of* Rehinking Modern Judaism: Ritual, Commandment, Community.

demands of Torah. He was living these commitments, and modeling them for all who cared, or needed, to see.

Stories such as these abound when Heschel is recalled, even among scholars otherwise inclined instinctively to criticism. It isn't that Heschel was a saint, certainly, or that his many words and ideas of and about Torah were without flaw. I myself have dealt elsewhere with the problems evident in Heschel's attempt to argue rationally for what he believed was a commitment beyond reason. More than one of the students who sat in Heschel's classes at JTS week by week has told me that he was not always as focused or attentive as he was the day I met with him in his office. The point of the stories is not hagiography but the lasting effect he has had upon a striking number of American Jews of this generation. Heschel took his position as role-model and guide extremely seriously. Descended from a long line of Hasidic rebbes, he had chosen to leave Warsaw for the West, and—a greater break from his past—to leave Hasidism, at first for a circle of Yiddish poets and then for Jewish scholarship. A new sort of prophet, he would join religious belief and practice to the scholarly study of that belief and practice, attempting to be pious even as he expounded piety.

Heschel sought to stimulate and then sustain a journey beyond the conceptual givens of contemporary existence.

We get a fine sense of the life Heschel left behind in Poland, and can infer more than ever before about his intentions as he left it, in the new biography by Edward Kaplan and Samuel Dresner. Hasidic roots are traced in engaging detail, as are the steps Heschel took, at first tentative, to find a different path for himself than the one laid out at birth. Early Yiddish poems suggest a possible career as a mystic poet, writing lyrically for a largely secular audience about the soul's quest for God. Then came a dissertation which launched a scholarly career devoted to a not dissimilar end. The biography also shows Heschel testing the limits of his move from his past via intense encounters with Martin Buber—and struggling to fulfill the visa requirements for the physical move, to America, which saved Heschel's life from the gas chambers that claimed much of his family and destroyed his world. Imbued with a vocation that could only have been strengthened by his narrow escape, Heschel sought to be the rebbe that his new community, American Jewry, required.

Kaplan's *Holiness in Words*, a readable introduction to Heschel's thought in all its variety, makes the outline of that strategy fairly clear. Heschel wanted, first and foremost, to reinfuse the observance of those Jews who still were observant with *kavanah* (spiritual intention), and to bring others to God and observance by awakening their wonder at being and the world. To that end, he wrote books studded with both argument and poetry, in an effort to move his readers to leave the *terra firma* of rational thinking, calculation, and pursuit for the "immense expanse" beyond reason where "only the sense of the ineffable can glide." In *The Earth is The Lord's* and *The Sabbath*, Heschel's first major works in English, he tried to paint a picture of what authentic Jewish piety had been for East European Jews, and what it could be still for Jews in America. In *Man is Not Alone*, *God in Search of Man*, and other works in a more or less philosophical genre, Heschel sought to stimulate and then sustain a journey beyond the conceptual givens of contemporary existence. "We sail because our mind is like a fantastic sea shell, and when applying our ear to its lips we hear a perpetual murmur from the waves beyond the shore." Once embarked, we would recognize that "the reality of ineffable meaning is ... beyond dispute," the problem becoming how to "tell it to our minds."



But, for reasons Kaplan's guide makes clear, Heschel wanted more than this: a "pattern for living," mitzvot in the Jewish case, that enacted faith even as it led repeatedly back to God, and in particular the social activism which to Heschel's mind stemmed from seeing the world from God's perspective. This was his message in *The Prophets*, based upon the doctoral dissertation he had written in Berlin. The critique of business as usual by Israel's prophets, their relentless call for social justice, was the inevitable outcome of "sympathy" with "divine pathos," feeling God's pain at the horrors visited on and by God's creatures. "Prophetic radicalism" was what God demanded of Jews, indeed of all who heard God's word. Heschel sought to be a "prophetic witness" devoted to enlisting others in the cause. Kaplan's book will help new Heschel readers find their way through the large corpus of his works. For critique,

one has to turn elsewhere; the point of Kaplan's book is rather to appreciate, and assist in, Heschel's attempt to evoke both *kavanah* and social reform, pointing his readers alternately in God's direction and the world's, teaching them to see the two as one.

This is and remains a powerful message, despite failings in argumentation which on occasion undermine Heschel's ability to persuade us, his readers, even when we perhaps most want to be persuaded. The appeal of the man and his words seems intact for all that, twenty-five years after his death, indeed perhaps is greater now than ever. Reflecting upon that appeal, with the help of two new books likely to contribute to it, one suspects that one source of Heschel's hold may be that he modeled a *wholeness* that is both precious and rare in American Jewish life. More than any other Jewish thinker in this country, Heschel took into himself and studied virtually every facet of the history of Judaism—Biblical and rabbinic, halakhic and aggadic, philosophical and mystical. He also read and was influenced by significant figures in modern Christian thought such as Søren Kierkegaard and Reinhold Niebuhr, had enduring close friendships with Niebuhr and other Christian leaders, carried on an effective dialogue with the Vatican during the period of its own reforms. A complementary wholeness was evident in Heschel's moves back and forth from the synagogue and study hall to public forums and picket line. All of this, the sum of this, conveyed the message that full and authentic Jewish observance need not mean retreat from American culture or social concerns.

Finally, I think, there is the importance of Heschel's critique of Judaism as we know it: his perception of a "more" in this realm too that was not yet visible—and the assurance that we can attain it, even short of perfect faith: that this tradition, with all its failings, and we, with all of ours, could nonetheless reach to God. The climactic ninth chapter of *Man is Not Alone*, which concludes with what can only be an account of Heschel's personal religious experience, is followed immediately by a chapter titled, simply, "Doubts." A student of mine has gathered evidence from Heschel's writings of a personal battle to stave off the meaninglessness that must have haunted him from the Holocaust. It seems likely that my own youthful challenge to the meaning of his words echoed doubts that resounded far more loudly and persistently within Heschel himself. And yet.... That was Heschel's enduring gift, perhaps: the "and yet." Heschel helps us mightily in maintaining commitments of which we cannot make sufficient rational sense, and generates conviction far greater than his arguments alone (or ours) allow.

Consider these words on prayer, a difficult matter for many contemporary Jews, from the recent collection, *Moral Grandeur and Spiritual Audacity* (pp. 259–60), edited by Heschel's daughter Susannah:

> A dreadful oblivion prevails in the world. The world has forgotten what it means to be human. The gap is widening, the abyss is within the self. Though often I do not know how to pray, I can still say: Redeem me from the agony of not knowing what to strive for, from the agony of not knowing how my inner life is falling apart ... I *pray because I am unable to pray*. And suddenly I am forced to do what I seem unable to do. Even callousness to the mystery is not immortal. There are moments when the clamor of all sirens dies, presumption is depleted, and even the bricks in the walls are waiting for a song. The door is closed, the key is lost. Yet the new sadness of my soul is about to open the door.

One is grateful for words like these, for the life of the person who wrote them, and for books that serve to bring him close. ❑

ARE YOU A FUTURE SHOLOM ALEICHEM?

FIND OUT BY ENTERING

THE SECOND ANNUAL

DORA TEITELBOIM FOUNDATION

JEWISH CULTURAL WRITING CONTEST



In order to promote the growth of fiction and non-fictional writings on Jewish cultural issues, the Dora Teitelboim Foundation is searching for writers (amateur or professional) to showcase their original *previously unpublished* short stories in the Jewish media.

The theme of this year's contest is:

"CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN JEWISH LIFE"

Contest Prizes: 1st Prize $750.00 plus publication
2nd Prize $500.00 plus publication
3rd Prize $250.00

To receive contest rules and an application, eligible entrants should send a **stamped, self-addressed envelope** to: The Dora Teitelboim Foundation Writing Contest, P.O. Box 14-0820, Coral Gables, FL 33114

Submissions will be judged by members of leading Jewish publications and the Dora Teitelboim Foundation, and may be written in English or Yiddish.

READING SPIRIT

Spirituality and Death



Roger S. Gottlieb

- *Living Downstream: An Ecologist Looks at Cancer and the Environment,* by Sandra Steingraber. Addison Wesley, 1997.

Some years ago, Elisabeth Kubler-Ross introduced the simple but—sadly—at the time quite unheard-of practice of counseling terminal cancer patients in hospitals by talking directly to them about the fact that they were facing death. Remembering Tolstoy's character Ivan Ilych, who reflected that in some ways the most painful part of his ever-worsening illness was the fact that everyone around him kept up a facade that he was not dying, we can appreciate the enormity of Kubler-Ross' contribution. Her gift was to encourage people to face the imminent end of their lives, to directly experience the fear and anger it was provoking, to finish whatever they could in the time remaining, and, thus, to be able to achieve some clarity, and even peace, as the end approached.

Stephen Levine creatively adapted Kubler-Ross' work to a Buddhist framework, counseling the dying and those around them to seek openness to the present, acceptance of what is, and detachment from any sense of separate, ego-bound identity: "You relate to one who is ill the same way you relate to any being. With openness. See the conditioned illusion of separateness.... Allow both of you to die.... Not trying to change things. Not trying to make something or someone other than it is."

The lessons offered by Kubler-Ross and Levine are very important. I can still remember the grief and fear I felt when, eight years old, I fully realized that someday I too would die. My mother's attempt to soothe me—"Don't worry, that won't happen for a long time"—communicated her caring but missed the point of what I needed to learn. Now, well past the mathematical middle of my life, having been present at the deaths of both my son and my father, the prospect of that final change is no longer so overwhelming. However, at times I can still feel a shiver of fear which comes with the knowledge of how temporary everything is.

But while I do not wish to deny the value of the perspective which sees the prospect of death as an opportunity for individual spiritual growth, I believe that this approach neglects something of critical significance. In this light we may recall one of Elie Wiesel's early essays, in which he describes how hard it is to say Kaddish for his father's yahrzeit. The usual rituals of mourning just did not seem appropriate to his father's death in Buchenwald: "stretched out on a plank of wood amid a multitude of blood-covered corpses, fear frozen in his eyes, a mask of suffering on the bearded stricken mask that was his face." Wiesel believes that his father's death

> did not even belong to him. I do not know to what cause to attribute it, in what book to inscribe it. His death, lost among all the rest, had nothing to do with the person he had been. It could just as easily have brushed him in passing and spared him. It took him inadvertently, absent-mindedly, by mistake. Without knowing that it was he; he was robbed of his death.

In other words, there is the natural fact of our limited presence on earth, our mortality, the growth and flourishing and eventual withering of our flesh. And then there is the unnatural, the deeply wrong way in which some of us die.

These ideas pose, I believe, a central problem for any attempt to make spiritual sense of death. They are poignantly raised for us by Sandra Steingraber's riveting book on the relation between the multitude of ways in which we've polluted the earth and the multitude of ways in which we die of cancer.

Like Rachel Carson of *Silent Spring*, who serves as a kind of background inspirational voice for *Living Downstream*, Steingraber is at home in the

ILLUSTRATION BY OENONE TERRILL

Roger S. Gottlieb teaches philosophy at Worcester Polytechnic Institute. He is currently writing a book which will focus on the relation between spirituality and resistance.

desperate poetics of dying as well as in the technical details of cell reproduction, injuries to DNA, and toxic industrial processes. She has watched several family members struggle with cancer, and is herself a survivor of a youthful attack of bladder cancer almost unquestionably brought on by toxins in her Ohio neighborhood. She is also a published poet and holds a PhD in biology.

Steingraber's book is not explicitly spiritual. Its major focus is a chapter-by-chapter analysis of how and what kind of pollutants enter our air, land, and water; and includes technical (but highly readable) accounts of such topics as how cancer data are created and interpreted, and precisely how particular chemicals disrupt cells. What Steingraber is telling us, and what makes her book *spiritually,* and not just socially and medically, important, is that a very large percentage of cancer victims are not enduring "their own" deaths. They are, in some ways like Wiesel's father, having something wrong imposed on them. The frightening truth, which any purely personal approach to cancer deaths obscures, is that our bodies are assaulted by literally thousands of artificial chemicals, many of which are *known* carcinogens, and the vast majority of which have never been subject to close examination either individually or in terms of what their combined effects might mean to our health.

Our chance of getting cancer is between one in two for men and two in five for women, a nearly 50 percent increase since 1950. This frightening commonplace is an occasion not only for the spiritual virtues of acceptance, openness, and letting go of attachment, but for an extended meditation on such other issues as denial, complicity, and the proper spiritual form for rage at the way industrial civilization poisons itself. For instance, one of Steingraber's chapters is in fact titled "Silence." It explores how cancer silences its victims and often leads others around them to be silent; how the presence of carcinogens "silences" other species, from songbirds to fish to whales, all of which have human-made chemicals in their bodies; and how scientists are often reticent to move beyond limited technical studies to vocal public acknowledgments of "the hazards created by chemical assaults on the natural world."

Furthermore, a conventional spiritual approach will often miss the distinctly political questions raised by cancer death—as Steingraber reveals in her searching and compassionate account of one Ohio community's struggles over whether to accept a toxic waste incinerator. In fact, we face situations in which the dumping of poisons into the environment enables some people to make a good deal of money, while putting others at risk for lethal diseases. Her book can lead us to ask: what is the "proper" spiritual response to that which is not simply death, but also a kind of murder? When should death call forth acceptance—and when a passionate resistance to evil?

What is the "proper" spiritual response to that which is not simply death, but also a kind of murder?

Living Downstream is not an easy read. Unlike many self-consciously spiritual books, it neither comforts nor soothes. Sadly, it has been greeted with near silence by this country's media—probably because it is so eloquent, so painful, and so real. But for just these reasons it is an absolutely essential book for anyone who believes spiritual life requires us to face all of the truth, including the grief, fear, and rage that may result when we realize that our death—or that of someone we love—is not fully our own. ❑



THE HOLOCAUST AND HISTORY
The Known, the Unknown, the Disputed, and the Reexamined
Edited by Michael Berenbaum and Abraham J. Peck
★ A Selection of the Jewish Book Club
"Destined to become an essential resource." —Booklist
This monumental volume of extraordinary scope, depth, and power presents the results of nearly 50 years of Holocaust scholarship by the world's most eminent researchers.
Published in association with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, D.C.
1024 pages cloth $65.00

NOW IN PAPERBACK!
ANATOMY OF THE AUSCHWITZ DEATH CAMP
Edited by Yisrael Gutman and Michael Berenbaum
Yehuda Bauer, Raul Hilberg, and Franciszek Piper, Editorial Board
★ A Selection of the Jewish Book Club
". . . a one-volume study of Auschwitz without peer in Holocaust literature." —Kirkus Reviews
Published in association with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington D.C.
660 pages, 25 b&w photos, 52 figs., 7 tables, 4 maps
paper $24.95 cloth $49.95

NOW BACK IN PRINT!
AT THE MIND'S LIMITS
Contemplations by a Survivor on Auschwitz and Its Realities
Jean Améry
Translated by Sidney Rosenfeld and Stella P. Rosenfeld
"In its every turn and crease, it bears the marks of the true." —Irving Howe, The New Republic
Published in association with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.
128 pages paper $10.95 cloth $24.95

NEW EDITION!
FROM A RUINED GARDEN
The Memorial Books of Polish Jewry
Second, Expanded Edition
Edited and translated by Jack Kugelmass and Jonathan Boyarin with Geographical Index and Bibliography by Zachary M. Baker
"This newly revised version of the classic study . . . is a pleasure for the eye and the soul!" —Sander L. Gilman
Published in association with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.
368 pages, 26 b&w photos paper $17.95 cloth $39.95



IRVING HOWE—SOCIALIST, CRITIC, JEW
Edward Alexander
★ A Selection of the Jewish Book Club
"This bracing, perceptive study honors Howe's admirable career by treating it with the same high degree of moral seriousness that characterized Howe's own work at its best." —Alvin H. Rosenfeld
Jewish Literature and Culture
272 pages cloth $35.00

at bookstores
INDIANA UNIVERSITY PRESS
Orders: 1-800-842-6796 www.indiana.edu/~iupress

REVIEW

Letters to a Young Feminist

Meg Daly

- *Letters to a Young Feminist*, by Phyllis Chesler. Four Walls Eight Windows, 1997.



Recently, I ran into a friend from high school who I hadn't seen since graduation. We compared notes on our unmarried lives, complete with careers, travel, our own apartments, book groups, walks in the woods. The only difference: I call myself a feminist and she does not. She, like many women of my generation, enjoys the relative freedoms and independent lifestyle more readily available to women now, without connecting that independence to a legacy of political, psychological, and physical struggle undertaken by our foremothers. My friend said that feminists were "too angry" for her to identify with.

Phyllis Chesler would certainly be one of the angry women my school acquaintance would shun. Chesler—author of numerous feminist classics including *Women and Madness* and *Mothers on Trial*—came of age at a time when sex education was taboo; girls wore poodle skirts not jeans; abortion was illegal; and women were expected to be wives, period. Her generation didn't discover its feminist foremothers until far into adulthood. In her new book, *Letters to a Young Feminist*, Chesler recounts tales from her life before and after discovering feminism. Each of the book's twenty-two letters is only a few pages long, written with an intimacy that only the letter form allows. Though some of the letters may seem old hat to feminist readers, they will challenge and inspire my generation, whose relative freedoms feel like a second skin.

How quickly some of us forget (or are never taught). Twenty-five short years have passed since the historic Roe v. Wade trial which legalized abortion in America. Thirty-five years since the publication of *The Feminine Mystique*. Thirty years since the founding of NOW. Just long enough for the babies of feminists to grow up and pursue their own careers. Careers! Isn't that also a relatively new phenomenon for women? Aren't there women alive today who were born before women won the right to vote? In the rush to throw off the chains of our enslavement—the controls on our wombs, our minds, our bodies, our incomes—some young women are tossing away the very tools by which our foremothers gained us this brief space to become our full selves. We latchkey, TV-hound kids who bow down to movies, TV, and magazines as if such media showed us "real" life mirrors of ourselves—we need to lose our myopia.

One of our most pervasive and most misguided ways of combating sexism is to tell ourselves that we're not *that* oppressed. We tell ourselves our lives are bearable just to stay sane, to survive. Phyllis Chesler powerfully addresses those lies we tell ourselves in a letter she writes about "female fugue states" in which we "forget" what we think we cannot change: "Verbal taunts on the street. Incest at home. We pretend it's not happening. I'm not here, it doesn't matter. This helps us survive, but it prevents us from living in our bodies, or breaking with patriarchy." Such fugue states seem prevalent in today's world of apparently successful women.

Perhaps women of my generation resort to fugue states so often because even the feminists among us balk at identifying ourselves as an oppressed group. How liberatory is that, they say, to see oneself as oppressed? To speak out about injustice, we're told now, is to make oneself a victim. Especially in the sex-positive Nineties, if a girl cries "rape," she's branded a "Victorian" or "hysterical." Worse, as Chesler notes,

ILLUSTRATION BY JENNIFER SERON

Meg Daly is co-editing with Anna Bondoc an anthology of letters between young women and their feminist mentors, forthcoming in 1999.

"the fear of being verbally shamed, then shunned by men, is why so many young women have learned to say 'I'm not a feminist, but....'"

It's true that feminism, like any movement of activists and intellectuals, is certainly in need of critique, on sex as well as on other issues. But we women need to remember that we haven't ended sexual violence simply because we've become more sexually free and powerful. Chesler is right when she argues that "confusing one's own sexual orgasms with radical actions is silly, pretentious. Feeling good physically is important, but it is not political in the same way as freeing prisoners from concentration camps or feeding the poor." In our desire to take charge of our own lives, we must not starkly ignore the facts of many other women's lives.

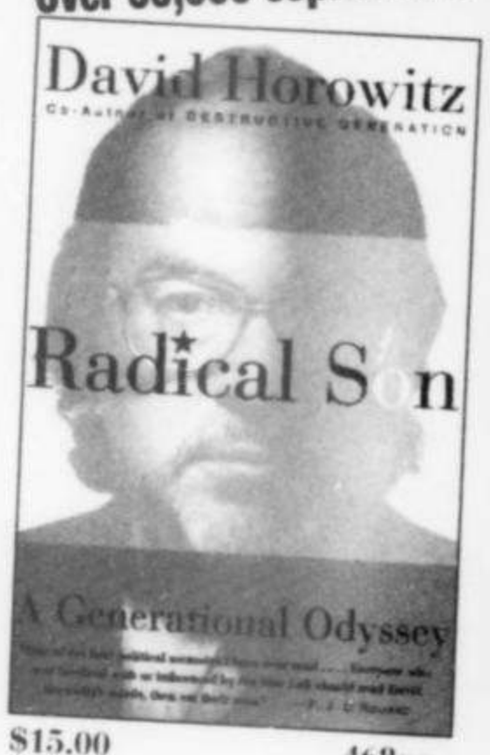
Those of us who have resolved to be politically engaged face a different conundrum: where's my movement? The feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s was, as Chesler observes, "an opening in history, a miracle." Women today do not live in such a time of opening. We need to stop looking for the limelight and return to the important tasks still at hand: the continued fight for safe, legal abortions; ending violence against women and children; equal pay for women; better, affordable childcare; ending and de-institutionalizing homophobia; and the list goes on.

At a time when *Vogue* magazine will publish an article suggesting that a sixteen-year-old girl can be empowered by an affair with a male teacher twenty years her senior, Phyllis Chesler's heartfelt and unflinching letters come as a welcome antidote for young women. In the course of giving an anecdotal history of the past thirty years of feminism, Chesler addresses real empowerment and tells the truth about the continued injustices rampant in women's lives. She provides a needed stepping stone for young women, challenging us to continue her generation's world-changing legacy. ❑

"DAVID HOROWITZ'S MEMOIR OF THE '60S, *RADICAL SON*, TELLS MANY TRUTHS WE DO NOT WISH TO BELIEVE. IT IS A SEARING BOOK, AN UNFLINCHING BOOK AND DEEPLY HONEST.
A reader may not come to Horowitz's conclusions about politics present. But about politics past he is undeniable."

—MARTIN PERETZ
Editor-in-Chief
The New Republic

Over 55,000 copies sold



$15.00 468pp

"Horowitz is a superb writer. James Atlas was not wrong when he characterized *Radical Son* as a work of literature, for that is precisely what one feels in the shape and ring of its paragraphs. Horowitz's painful narrative is more honest and to my mind, more important than other memoirs of those times. Ultimately, *Radical Son* is about uneasy reconciliations with a radical father as well as with oneself. We expect our best novelists to do such work. In this case, however, it comes wrapped in the folds of an extraordinary memoir."

—SANFORD PINSKER
Partisan Review

Now in paperback
Available in bookstores.
To order call (800) 752-6562 or go to
www.frontpagemag.com

A magazine of the net
FRONTPAGE
Edited by Peter Collier & David Horowitz

www.frontpagemag.com

MUSIC REVIEW

Sounds of Renewal



ILLUSTRATION COURTESY OF SIX DEGREES / ISLAND RECORDS

Ya'acov Gabriel

I sat weeping in my in-law's living room this morning, listening to an extraordinary CD. It's true that I'm leaving for a sabbatical in Israel, that I haven't slept much this week, and that I just schlepped my wife, my one-year-old son, and nine bags to Philadelphia last night. I have enough accumulated pain at the moment to make anyone cry.

Still, the hot tears were specifically released by a beautiful, poignant recording called "Prayers for a Broken World" by the Wholesale Klezmer Band (Oyfgekumener Productions, 751 Washington St., Brookline, MA 02146; 413-624-3204). This is a recording with very high *kavannah* (intentionality). It reproduces a set of songs, original and traditional, that were done as a concert and fundraiser for relief work in Bosnia and Rwanda. In the liner notes, the group links the Yiddish and instrumental tunes with efforts in late 1994 to stop genocide in both of those calamitous places. Aside from good intentions, the music is right where it should be. It's a little bit worn, a little bit naked, and elegantly streetwise, the way Bob Dylan and the Grateful Dead are at their best.

"*Avrom tate*" is a beautiful interpretation of the story of Isaac and Ishmael. To hear the song and its yearning for an end to the Israeli-Arab conflict is to know the deep power of the Yiddish language to be emotional and intuitive in expressive ways. The fact that lead singer Joe Kurland wrote it in 1991 makes it even more amazing. Obviously, Yiddish is alive and well and living in Massachusetts.

The title song, another Kurland original, is poetically subtle. It first accuses God of being a Father too busy playing at His next creation to keep genocides from happening among His children. Then it shifts its focus and says people need to participate in repairing this world. It's not God's responsibility to heal this world, but ours. There are also Hasidic prayers and happy dance tunes, a brilliant anti- weapon poem, a story teaching tolerance between Islam, Christianity, and Judaism, and some great instrumental jams.

The group has other releases, "*Yidn Fun Amol*" and "*Shmir Me,*" that also balance their sense of social justice with a sense of fun. This is Soul Music with a *heimish* (down home) intelligence that really delivers.

Another kind of soul explorer is Wally Brill. A producer and aural soundsmith of great facility and depth, he interrupted work on a planned opera to pursue a very startling project: what kind of musical collages could you come up with if you combined seventy-year-old Cantorial 78's, great rhythm tracks, expansive arrangements and a high-tech/mystical sensibility?

His answer is a CD called "The Covenant" (Six degrees/Island Records; P.O. Box 411347, San Francisco, CA 94141-1347; to hear it, call 1-800-303-0047, artist code 0111).

The opening track, "Kiddush Le-Shabbat," features Ben Zion Kapov-Kagan powerfully and operatically performing a blessing over the Sabbath wine, as hand drums, keyboards, finger cymbals, a didgeridoo, electric violins, and then a trap set kick in and make it throb and cook under his soaring voice. It's done reverentially, but with a hip rock producer's sense of style and climax. What you get is excitement as well as spirit.

The second track, "A Typical Day," is a huge emotional shift. With a heavy rap/sample kind of underpinning, Auschwitz survivor Helen Lazar describes what it was like to be twelve, naive, and living in Hell on Earth. As counterpoint, Cantor Samuel Malavsky is cycled-in singing the phrase *Ribon Ha-Olamim* (Master of the Universes) as if pleading for understanding. It's hard for me to verbally explain it to you, but in the hands of a techno-wizard like Brill, it works.

The other tracks are not as assaulting as this one. Each has its own logic and integrity. Some are dream-like, some groove along in a dance-friendly way, and all of them have a sweet mystical sense of the human musician reaching up and out for the Infiniteness of the Divine.

If you think all a record producer does is turn on the machines and let the musicians play away, this project could be a mind-expanding experience for you. Along with very trippy kabbalistic and outer space cover art, this is a recording that melts categories, opens windows and invites you to sample sacred music of the 58th Century.

What both these projects have in common is a respect for the musical past without it limiting one's creative horizons. That's what makes them Renewal, and that's what makes them enjoyable. ❑

Ya'acov Gabriel is rabbi of the Jewish Renewal Congregation Har Shalom in Fort Collins, Colorado. He was a music producer and reviewer for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation for fifteen years. His sixth recording is Eagle Wings.

Short Takes

Thane Rosenbaum

With this issue, TIKKUN introduces "Short Takes," a conversation within the family of American intellectual, political, and cultural magazines. The purpose of this section is to give TIKKUN readers a sense of what other magazines are covering and the ways in which TIKKUN can add to the dialogue.

Lingua Franca

In the April issue of *Lingua Franca*, Scott Sherman profiles Jay Rosen, a former media editor of TIKKUN, a professor of journalism at New York University, and a pioneer in the movement of public journalism. This movement advocates that the press has a public function and that the cherished principles of objectivity and adversarialism have led, in Rosen's mind, to "a snarling and relentless cynicism—a categorical mistrust of all public figures." The essence of Rosen's argument, much of which was shaped in earlier issues of TIKKUN and in his books, is, as Sherman writes, "that American public life is in lousy shape and the press have a responsibility to help." And how is that accomplished? Well, it can take the form of town meetings, focus groups, polling—anything that furthers direct or deliberative democracy and creates a public dialogue. Rosen is not without his critics, as Sherman points out, but the main point is that the media has historically shaped public perception—not the other way around—and what Rosen is advocating is an approach that puts some of the responsibility on the media to determine what it is that the public wants and to find ways to help the public achieve its goals.

The Atlantic Monthly

Edward O. Wilson explores "The Biological Basis for Morality" in April's issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*. Where do morality and ethics come from? Are they endemic to our species, as though operating naturally and independently of how or what we do, or is it that humans in fact create the ethical principles by which we live? For Wilson, the discussion is framed in terms of a split between the transcendentalists, "who think that moral guidelines exist outside the human mind, and empiricists, who think of them as contrivances of the mind." The one is rooted in natural law, or the expression of God's will, while the empiricists focus on the interpretation of objective knowledge. As Wilson writes, "the choice between transcendentalism and empiricism will be the coming century's version of the struggle for men's souls. Moral reasoning will either remain centered in idioms of theology and philosophy, where it is now, or shift toward science-based material analysis." Wilson argues that there is no way to resolve the contradictions between the two, which itself is an expression of humanity's spiritual dilemma.

The American Prospect

In the May/June issue of *The American Prospect*, law professor Bruce Ackerman observes that the engine that has historically created change in American politics has three essential parts: political movements, political parties, and a presidency guided by the will of the people. By the end of the nineteenth century, progressive politics worked most successfully when there was an interaction among, and unity of, movements, parties, and presidency. But Ackerman argues that in the twentieth century, this engine blew a gasket when both presidents and movements detached themselves from strong party affiliations. The result has been that progressives no longer know how to reassemble this engine, leaving conservatives as the only political philosophy capable of "recreating the classic movement-party-presidency" formula. According to Ackerman, modern-day progressives have failed because they have ignored the historical power and effectiveness of party politics as a way of achieving long-term goals. Instead, liberals and progressives have focused on short-term election victories and the building of internal organization. Conservatives, on the other hand, are far more in tune with the concept of nurturing a strong Republican Party and integrating it into the movement-presidency formula. Ackerman is largely right: conservatives have indeed shown themselves to be more organized and aware of how things get changed in America, while modern liberals have for years proven to be without vision and organizational depth, despite the fact that the great successes of American politics in this century have been fought and won by liberals.

Mother Jones

Writing in the April *Mother Jones*, Walter Russell Mead explores the ways in which the twenty-first century will be marked by a workplace environment favorable to liberals and

---

Thane Rosenbaum is TIKKUN*'s literary editor and author of* Elijah Visible.

progressives. Mead writes that "the world economy is changing. Over the next few decades, we could have a left-leaning economy that works best when policies espoused by the traditional left, including higher levels of government spending, are applied to it." According to Mead, the new labor market has improved for blue-collar workers. Manufacturing jobs are no longer in as steep a decline, and the supply of blue-collar workers is less now that woman have fully integrated themselves into the workforce. Organized labor inevitably stands to gain more power in this new market. Additionally, the economy is now based more in the service sector than in manufacturing and agriculture. All of this spells trouble for white-collar workers, since "automation will devastate the earnings of many white-collar workers and consign whole professions to the dustbin of history.... The service revolution will make expertise as cheap and available in the future as Styrofoam is today. The falling—even the collapsing—price of intelligent services is going to open the door to enormous and important new industries." Woe to the lawyers, doctors, accountants, and professors. In the new world, the software programmer is king, followed by nurses and burger flippers. But perhaps the biggest winners of all, according to Mead, will be liberals and progressives who will now have an opportunity to unite the key players in this new workforce—laborers who have historically been sympathetic to liberal policies.

Civilization

Filmmaker Martin Scorsese and historian Simon Schama are in conversation in the March issue of *Civilization*. The focus of their discussion is their common fidelity to narrative detail and innovative storytelling. Schama says that "I think there are two kinds of tempers in history. There are those for whom history is simply the political science of the past ... like "Crossfire" with dates. And then there are people who are kind of wanderers." Scorsese says that "in film the big problem is the frame. It's what you leave in and what you leave out. Where you stop. The size of the person in the frame. Who's in the frame with him or her.... That implies something psychologically."

Utne Reader

In April's *Utne Reader*, Jim Hightower explores the all-consuming role of corporate power in America. "Corporations have become the governing force in our society, reshaping American life to fit nothing more enlightened than the short-term profit sheets of greedy CEO's. Everything from our amusements to our government, from our public schools to our popular culture—has become thoroughly corporatized." Hightower, who participated in TIKKUN's 1996 Symposium on Ethics and Meaning, doesn't speak of remedies, although a sidebar written by Craig Cox discusses how corporate charters and social audits can enter the equation, both of which should sound familiar to TIKKUN readers who have read the corporate impact statement drafted by Michael Lerner.

Harper's

Orville Schell writes about Hollywood's fascination with Tibet in the April issue of *Harper's*. "'I see and feel, therefore history is' will perhaps become the maxim of the day. This new kind of entertainment formula is a phenomenon that Oliver Stone has helped to create with his own historical docudramas. It is a measure of the power of Hollywood and the dangers of feature-films-as-history that as more and more films take up historical stories, many millions of viewers soon will share 'movie versions' of history."

Smithsonian

In the April issue of *Smithsonian*, Joyce and Richard Wolkomir, in "The Quality of Mercy," look at a day-in-the-life of two nurses at Central Vermont Medical Center, observing with tenderness and admiration the role these women play in giving care and compassion to their often terminal patients. In connection with one of these nurses, the authors write that "she doesn't mind that her work—despite the high-tech gear and the life-and-death responsibility—requires services as humble as Jesus' washing of his disciple's feet." The result is an affecting portrait of the people who tread in the medical trenches and shows another side of a profession presumably in the business of healing, but too often mired in arrogance and cynicism. ❑

if the living die
the dead shall live
in catacombs of prayer
spread like darkness
onto field of sunlight
where roses bleed
from incision of reason
piercing petals of passion
that lay motionless
in spin of space
and twist of time
bereft of scent and rhyme
yearning to be touched
by the pulp of her heart
scattered like ashes
in the crevice of hope
abandoned
if the dead live
the living shall die

—Elliot Wolfson

Sikkum: TIKKUN RECOMMENDS ...

Just As I Thought

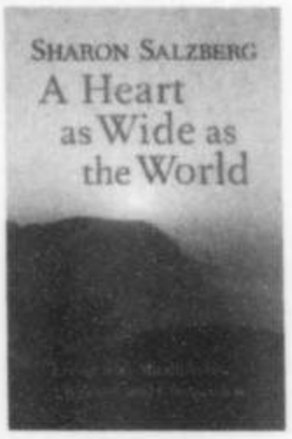
by Grace Paley
(Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1998)



Grace Paley is a national treasure—a writer who is unafraid to use her amazing talents as a short story writer and essayist to unequivocally support our most hopeful aspirations. Winner of the TIKKUN MAGAZINE AWARD for her contribution to feminism and to the development of progressive Jewish social change movements, Grace Paley has always been there when those struggling for justice and peace have needed her. In this collection of articles she mixes autobiographical reflections with clever analyses of the past thirty years of her life, and models a life for a writer at sharp variance with the self-satisfied and smug who run much of America's literary and publishing establishments.

A Heart As Wide as the World

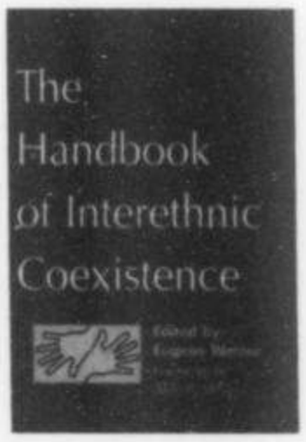
by Sharon Salzberg (Shambhala, 1997)



A master teacher of meditation shares her own inner process as she learns the secrets of how to become a meditator. Salzberg is remarkably honest and engaging as she opens for us her path inside the Buddhist world. Like many "engaged Buddhists," Salzberg brings her Jewish consciousness into the Buddhist framework, reminding us that the Buddhist notion of universal interconnectedness can lead to the recognition that if we take care of others, others will take care of us and "otherness" itself will drop away. This book and her earlier *Lovingkindness: The Revolutionary Art of Happiness* are valuable tools on the path of developing our inner lives.

The Handbook of Interethnic Coexistence

edited by Eugene Weiner
(Continuum Publishing, 1998)

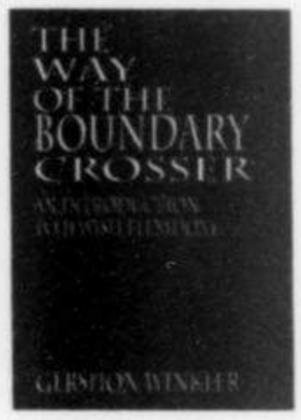


A remarkable compendium of articles on many aspects of healing the conflicts between communities, this book is a testimony to the outstanding work being done by the Abraham Fund in Israel on healing the conflicts between Israeli Jews and Israeli Arabs. Alan B. Slifka, who founded the Abraham Fund, is a powerful example of a Jewish businessman who takes Jewish ethics seriously, and has used his financial power to promote peace. This 650-page reference book will be a valuable contribution to the newly emerging "peace studies" curriculum in academia—and might even stimulate the creation of a new profession of coexistence work.

The Way of the Boundary Crosser

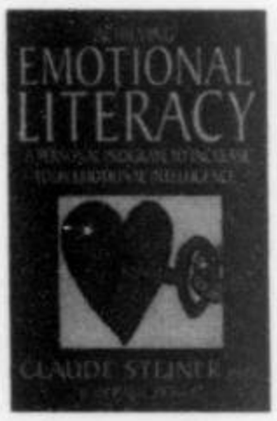
by Gershon Winkler (Jason Aronson, 1998)

Gershon Winkler presents us with a serious reinterpretation of the halachic tradition, showing how it has embodied a "flexidoxy" in contrast to stultifying orthodoxies. Torah, for Winkler, means showing or teaching—it is the knowing that extends beyond all givens, the expansive consciousness. The Torah of Judaism is just one take on the universal Torah, and what we Jews have is not the only manifested form of that greater consciousness that is Torah. Winkler presents a unque blend of spiritual insight and solid knowledge of Jewish rabbinic texts. His book is at once engaging, provocative, and important for Jewish renewal.



Achieving Emotional Literacy

by Claude Steiner (Avon Books, 1997)



Claude Steiner was the founder of Radical Psychiatry and shaped one of the significant strands of the movement to integrate social and psychological insights in the 1960s and 1970s. Steiner worked from the categories of Eric Berne's *The Games People Play* and added an understanding of social realities to the work of transactional analysis. This book is a restatement for a new generation of the insights of this tradition, written in a pop-market style (its subtitle is "A personal program to increase your emotional intelligence"), yet it conveys important information still to be absorbed by the contemporary world. If only people were more willing to share the "warm fuzzies" and "positive strokes" that could add a gentleness to the ways we talk to each other.

Jewish Icons

Art and Society in Modern Europe

by Richard I. Cohen (U of California Press, 1998)

Jews have had a conflicted relationship to the visual arts. As much as the Torah forbids "graven images," it simultaneously instructs us on the details of building religious artifices for the Temple and its sacrifices. Richard Cohen studies the artistic expression in modern European Jewish life, showing us how art mirrors a Jewish world which, despite the rhetoric of the ideologues, did not always swing on a pendulum between tragedy and heroism. Jewish artists chose topics and modes of representation that reflected their own take on society and on the possibilities faced by the Jewish people. This is a masterly study of the way that art can both shape and be shaped by larger social realities.

Sikkum: TIKKUN RECOMMENDS ...

Daniel
Under the Siege of the Divine
by Daniel Berrigan
(The Plough Publishing House, Farmington, Pa., 1998)

The Biblical Book of Daniel is here retold in a way that highlights its contemporary significance. Daniel faces the overwhelming power and seductiveness of the imperial regime that conquered Judea in 586 BCE. Daniel Berrigan, one of the great prophetic figures of the contemporary Catholic world, has been through his own confrontations with the idols of the powerful, has faced their lions' dens, and has exposed their absurd self-serving images and rhetoric. As Berrigan puts it, "In every age, we must walk a thin line, a line drawn through a world quite as mad as that of Daniel and his all but unpronounceable adversaries." This is a story, Berrigan tells us, that "concerns the wiles of worldly power, striking hard against the discipline of the believing community. In struggle, the faith of Daniel and his friends is revealed ironically as a new form of power." Berrigan does a remarkable job of opening up for us a Biblical text only rarely studied in the synagogues of contemporary America.

On Faith
Essays by Nathan Rotenstreich
edited by Paul Mendes-Flohr
(U of Chicago Press, 1998)



Nathan Rotenstreich was one of the most creative philosophers at the Hebrew University until his death in 1993, and this volume is his systematic analysis of the cognitive horizons of faith. Unlike those who have attempted to reduce faith to a merely psychological or sociological epiphenomenon, Rotenstreich argues that faith is a unique aspect of human experience, a universal attitude that cannot be subsumed by other categories and phenomena.

Globalization and Its Discontents
by Saskia Sassen (The New Press, 1998)

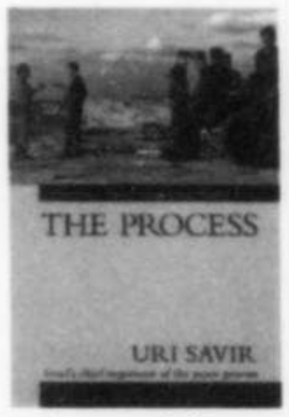
Perhaps the most important story of the 1990s is the rapid acceleration of economic globalization, bringing in its wake monumental transformations of the way we do business. Saskia Sassen's essays challenge too easy understandings of globalization—that it is merely the acceleration of multinational corporate power without the possibility of nation-state control. The concentration of power in global cities, and the ways these cities exploit vast numbers of poorly paid immigrants, creates new terrains for democratic struggle. This book is tough reading, but it has the kind of economic details that provide a serious look at precisely how globalization has been unfolding.

Women in the Holocaust
edited by Dalia Ofer and
Lenore J. Weitzman (Yale, 1998)



Men and women responded differently to the horrors of the Holocaust, and this book shows how gender differences played out during the genocide. While recognizing that Nazi policy targeted Jews as Jews, and that gender is only one component of the survivors' total experience, the authors, in bringing together the experience of all Jews with the experience that was particular to women, help to provide a more complete and complex account of what happened. Authors included in this collection are: Paula Hyman, Ida Fink, Marion Kaplan, Nechama Tec, Yehuda Bauer, Lawrence Langer, and Joan Ringelheim. It's a sophisticated and powerful deepening of our understanding of one of the twentieth century's greatest horrors.

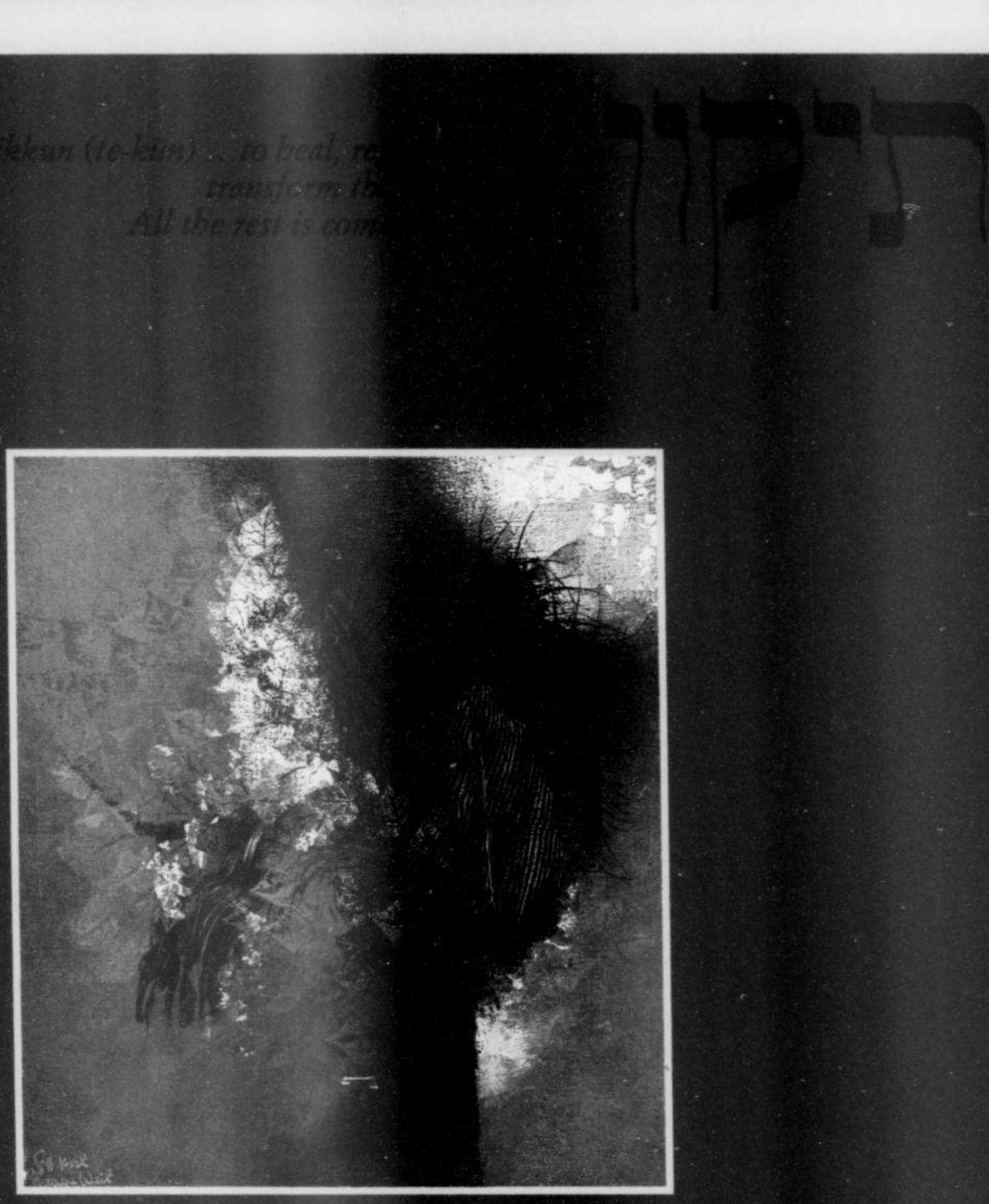
The Process
by Uri Savir (Random House, 1998)



Savir recognizes that the Oslo Accord and its legacy presents a sharp problem for Prime Minister Netanyahu's ideological commitment to the Land of Israel, to the belief that Israel will always face hostility, and to the conviction that peace can only be achieved through deterrence. Yet, as one of the primary negotiators of the Oslo Accord, Savir cannot believe that the peace process will be destroyed. And in this fascinating and engaging book he gives us details of the 1100 days from the beginning of the Oslo process to the date that his boss, Shimon Peres, was voted out of office. Assuming that skillful negotiators and political elites can manipulate a society into peace, seemingly unable to recognize the spiritual bankruptcy of Shimon Peres' vision of the future, totally lacking any understanding of what makes the majority of Sephardic Jews feel so alienated from the Labor party and whatever it would have engineered, Uri Savir is nevertheless a brilliant representative of the well-intentioned "best and brightest" of Israel's policy technologists.

Champions of the Poor
The Economic Consequences of Judeo-Christian Values
by Barend A. de Vries (Georgetown U Press, 1998)

Anyone who believes that Christian religiosity is necessarily politically conservative should read this account of how Christian liberals derive their economic approach from their Biblical faith.



It's time to say "No" to Netanyahu.
And "Yes" to peace and reconciliation.

TIKKUN:

a progressive voice ...
on Israel, American politics & culture,
religion, spirituality, and psychology

It's not enough to support our principles ...
Please subscribe to TIKKUN.