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TIKKUN

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FALUDI'S MEN

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MEANING AND MEDICINE

A BIMONTHLY JEWISH CRITIQUE OF POLITICS, CULTURE & SOCIETY

MARCH/APRIL 2000

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PASSOVER SEDER SUPPLEMENT

Cool Jews

BY

Jonathan Schorsch

AGAINST SPANKING

BY

Alice Miller



UNION CORRUPTION

Robert Fitch

GEOFFREY HARTMAN

Morris Dickstein

PURE POETRY

Binnie Kirshenbaum

THE INSIDER

Thane Rosenbaum

Fighting Corporate Globalization: After Seattle

Peter Bleyer • John Cavanagh • Paul Hawken • Randy Hayes • Hazel Henderson

Marjorie Kelly • David Korten • Fran Korten • Thea Lea • Lori Wallach

Plus: Ed Koch...a Jack Newfield interview

Mexican Elections by Scott Sherman

And Reviews and Essays by Rami Shapiro, Ellen Herman,
David Biale, Jeremy Brecher & Tim Costello, Art Kleiner



Leah's Dream

*"... for she said, Surely the Lord
bath looked upon my affliction;
now therefore my husband will love me."*

—Genesis 29:32

"Then finally I asked you to marry me,
my husband, and we embraced
as we never have, neither of us

breaking away from the other,
our bodies clinging,
breast to breast, sex to sex;

my arms around you, your hard hands
on my back, my face at your neck.
And you didn't break away.

When I said to you, 'I don't want
to be alone anymore,' I spoke
with the passion of an abstinent,

an ascetic hungry at last
for the world's meat and drink.
You didn't reply, you didn't pull away.

... Then I woke, it was still dark,
you were sleeping beside me,
snoring lightly, a small tentative sound,

like the teakettle's gentle whistle
when water begins to boil..."

—Gail Mazur

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Peace & Love, by Sam Witt. Courtesy of the artist.

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Solar Mermaid, by Elly Simmons. Courtesy of the artist.

Sikkum: TIKKUN RECOMMENDS ...

Sacred Landscape

Meron Benvenisti

University of California Press, 2000

Meron Benvenisti was deputy mayor of Jerusalem from 1971 to 1978 and has since become a crusader for the social justice for Palestinians that his boss, Mayor Teddy Kolleck, so effectively managed to deny. The struggle has always been about land; Benvenisti powerfully describes how Israelis have sought to obliterate all signs of the Palestinian past while Palestinians continue in their unrealistic fantasy of a return to a world that is no more.



No Room of Their Own

Yael S. Feldman

Columbia University Press, 1999

Yael Feldman has produced a provocative look at the tension between Israeli nationalism and an emerging feminist consciousness in Israeli women's fiction. While this carefully documented study lays out the major issues facing Israeli women writers, Feldman is not only a superb academic but also an impassioned observer. The categories she brings to bear on Israeli fiction are likely to stimulate deeper thinking, both about Israeli women and about the post-Zionist challenges faced by all Israelis.

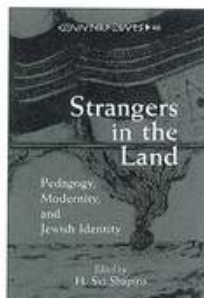


Strangers in the Land Pedagogy, Modernity, and Jewish Identity

Edited by H. Svi Shapiro

Peter Lang, 1999

This collection of articles by respected scholars on their Jewish identity is for many of them the kind of personal, self-revealing exploration that one rarely hears in the academy. The range of issues they address, including "Literary Pedagogy and Jewish Identity," "Election, Ambivalence and the Pedagogy of Jewish Particularity," "Mathematics and the Jewish Question," and "A Jewish Woman Makes Her Way Through Academia," resonates with critical pedagogy theorist Svi Shapiro's own self-reflections. This work presents a cornucopia of intellectual delights.

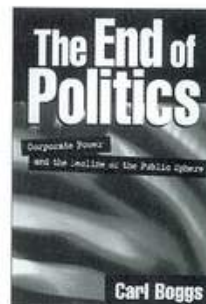


The End of Politics Corporate Power and the Decline of the Public Sphere

Carl Boggs

The Guilford Press, 2000

A central achievement of corporate power has been its ability to convince people that they have little chance of achieving anything important to them in the sphere of politics. Boggs shows how liberal theory has combined with corporate power to produce this deep distrust of the public sphere. However, his frequently insightful analysis is marred by a tone-deafness to psychological and spiritual issues. Like so much of the Left, he manages to trivialize the entirety of spiritual consciousness by simply ignoring spiritual theorists like Ken Wilber, Martin Luther King, Jr., the Berrigans, and magazines like TIKKUN and *Sojourners* (the journal for progressive Christians)—in short, the entire religious and spiritual left. Yet, what he does attend to—the emergence of an anti-politics at the heart of mainstream culture—is done with an authentic 1960s consciousness that remains instructive even though one-dimensional.



The Reason for Wings

A Novel

Joyce Reiser Kornblatt

Syracuse University Press, 1999

A fine and original contribution to the canon of Holocaust literature. Kornblatt introduces us to Rachel Silver, a Holocaust survivor living in fascist Argentina. When her pregnant daughter disappears into the black hole of Argentina's military torture camps, Rachel decides to memorialize for herself, and for the granddaughter she has never met but believes is still alive, the family's aching testimony of endurance and survival. Rachel's narrative is a primal act of healing and family preservation.

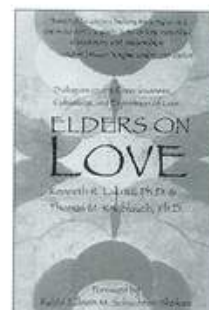
Elders on Love

Kenneth R. Lakritz and

Thomas M. Knoblauch

Parabola Books, 2000

Dialogues on the consciousness, cultivation, and expression of love among eight elders. An encouraging signal that, as our spiritual master Zalman Schachter-Shalomi teaches, aging may soon be associated with saging.



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Letters to the Editor

Jews and Jesus

To the Editor:

I would like to respond to Rami Shapiro's "Jewish Agenda for the New Millennium" (November/December 1999). Shapiro tells us that we should "reclaim" Jesus, and refers to him as the most influential Jew of all time. I think it is more accurate to say that Jesus has been the most influential Christian icon of all time, and he happened to be Jewish.

Most of what Jesus apparently taught was also taught by Hillel, and there are concepts, such as not resisting evil and knowing the Father only through the Son, which Jesus apparently taught, that are completely antithetical to Judaism. Although I am in favor of educating ourselves and others about the Jewish view(s) of Jesus, I am not in favor of elevating or changing his status within Judaism.

The constant bombardment of pressure from living in a Christian society may make us Jews vulnerable to wanting to "make

friends" with Jesus in some way. What we really need to do is reclaim our own spirituality within a Jewish context.

CYNTHIA GLICKSMAN

Fullerton, CA

Leary's Love Song

To the Editor:

In response to Paul Krassner's article, "The Love Song of Timothy Leary" (November/December 1999), I offer a first-hand account of the actual events that transpired during Timothy Leary's cooperation with federal agencies while he was imprisoned in the mid-1970s.

1. When Leary first met with federal agents to make a deal, he volunteered the information that his attorney, Georges Chula, had smuggled hashish to him during a prison visit. He later testified to this under oath to an Orange County grand jury. Confirming court transcripts are available.

2. The feds requested Leary's cooperation in setting up Georges Chula for a



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cocaine bust. Leary himself called Chula from prison and asked him to meet with me. Timothy then instructed me to solicit cocaine from Chula at the meeting.

3. Timothy himself masterminded the raid on Michael Horowitz' office, though I regretfully admit I was a willing accomplice.

4. I would like to point out, with humor, that the account of Tony Russo and Ken Kesey jumping out of my back window is total fiction. As is the story of Timothy giving me a list of people to seduce.

I met Timothy Leary when I was twenty-six years old; he was fifty-three. I was fascinated and infatuated with him to the point of indeed committing many dishonorable acts. I have been clean and sober for fifteen years and deeply regret the harm I have done to others, in particular to Mr. Georges Chula.

I understand that TIKKUN means to heal, repair, and transform. I wish Paul Krassner in his wisdom had written an article that aimed to heal and comfort rather than reopen the old wounds and wars.

JOANNA HARCOURT-SMITH
Santa Fe, NM

Modern Maccabees

To the Editor:

Here in Israel, we are suffering even more than in the United States from rampant globalization and neoliberalism. The social gap in Israel is among the widest in the world. Our fragile environment, with such scarce reserves, is being torn up by commercial and development interests. Our economy is increasingly based on the exploitation of foreign labor, the economic oppression of the Palestinians, and rising levels of unemployment. Partly as a result of the widening social gap, and partly as a result of the alienation of consumer culture, levels of violence, including domestic violence, are on a fearful rise. There is a masculinization of wealth and political power and a feminization of poverty.

The Maccabees were a small group, a single family, but, with the call, "Let every one who is for God come to me," they were able to form a coalition strong enough to beat the forces of global empire. In today's Israel, criticism of government policy on all these issues is not lacking, but few have grappled with the links between them. The activists tend to be divided into the small groups of intellectuals who come out on issues like the environment or home demolition and the large "prosocial" groups—

many of them religious, such as the Shas party—seeking bigger budgets for fighting poverty and unemployment and improving health care and education. These various groups come out on single issues, distrust each other (or worse), and do not work together. We need a Maccabean effort at mutual understanding, coalition-building, and activism in order to shake the neoliberalism of Israel's successive governments and the economic (and ideological) bear-hug of Uncle Sam.

DEBORAH GRENIMAN
Managing Editor, Nashim

Prophetic Visions

To the Editor:

I want to thank you for the wonderful January/February issue of TIKKUN! There was so much to feel positive about, even though the battle for "a new bottom line" has just been joined. The editorial was right to call the Seattle protesters "the modern Maccabees." Thanks go to Barbra Streisand too, who summed up how many of us feel in her "Stewards of the Earth." Most of all, thanks to David Kortzen for his vision in "For the Love of Life."

For all this to happen we not only must read, write, and discuss—we must get out in the streets and keep the spirit of

Seattle alive. Plans are being made for spring protests in mid-April in Washington, D.C., and on May Day at financial centers in New York, San Francisco, and Chicago. For information on the Chicago action, call Dennis Dixon at (773) 384-8544.

BILL STEYERT
Chicago, IL

Austria's New Fascist

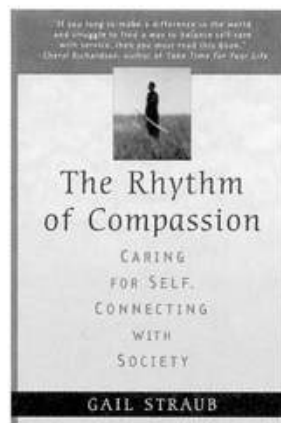
To the Editor:

In Austria a coalition government between the conservative People's Party and Jörg Haider's far-right, anti-Semitic "Freedom Party" will likely come into existence in the next few weeks. The U.S. State Department normally does not take positions on foreign elections, but in this case massive pressure from Israel and the European Union has led the United States to threaten Austria with diplomatic consequences should Haider join the government.

The protests on the streets against Haider, which have erupted all over Europe, are to be welcomed, but the diplomatic strategy to isolate Austria is short



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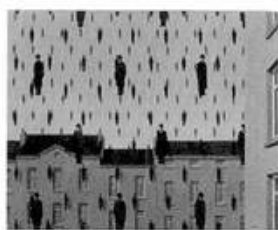
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LETTERS

sighted and will likely backfire. His supporters will regard him as a hero whose opinions have been stifled by hypocritical foreigners. A boycott of Austria by tourists, as has been suggested, will hurt the small-business people and probably cause great resentment. Austrians will point to the fact that in 1994 a right-wing party also ruled as part of a coalition in Italy without protest from Western governments. In short, it does not seem wise to me to short-circuit the democratic process because we don't like its results.

Of course Austria is a different case, for symbolic and historical reasons. In 1933 Hitler came to power also by joining a coalition government as vice chancellor under Franz von Papen, a conservative aristocrat who thought he could tame Hitler. As everyone knows, Hitler used the opening to destroy what little was left of German democracy. Today's Austria, however, faces much different conditions. Haider has neither a social movement to mobilize nor a paramilitary army to command, as did Hitler. Haider's Freedom party is represented in the European Parliament and it governs at the state level in several of Austria's provinces. It is true that Haider has pandered shamelessly to the lowest common denominator in Austrian politics, railing against immigrants and making disturbing public comments, praising some of Hitler's economic policies and lauding the integrity of S.S. soldiers. But there is no evidence that his aim is to overthrow the Austrian government or to change the rules of democracy. Haider's appeal seems to be based on a widespread feeling that Austrian politics has been run too long by the encrusted establishment of the Social Democrats and the Christian Democrats. If Haider and his satraps become part of the establishment, he will have to prove his mettle, say what he really thinks, and act responsibly, or get thrown out by the voters.

Some would argue that as a matter of principle alone, we should never allow any extreme right-wing party to govern in a land that once positively embraced National Socialism. The problem is, who is the "we"? Democracies become stronger by integrating radicals into the deliberative process of politics rather than by giving in to the moral temptation to censure them. The president of Austria has apparently drawn up a pledge that Haider must sign,

a pledge to obey the democratic process, as a condition for entering the coalition. That pledge gives world opinion the right to carefully scrutinize the actions of a very dubious politician. It is the best one can ask for in this difficult situation.

ELLIOT NEAMAN
San Francisco, CA

Trees Please

To the Editor:

I am always delighted to come across the literary criticism of Dr. Andrew Furman, but I felt especially rewarded by his provocative essay, "No Trees Please, We're Jewish" (November/December 1999). Realizing that Jewish writers long ago won their place in American culture, Furman now believes that contemporary Jewish writers should aspire to do more than merely shuttle between the Old World shtetl and the New World city: "A new creative outpost, one actively engaged with the natural realm, awaits the imagination of the Jewish American writer ... it is a territory, a Jewish territory, of untapped potential and unforeseeable rewards."

At this critical moment in environmental affairs, it would be wonderful if we too were able to witness a new generation of Jewish writers attempt to bring the environmental wisdom of Judaism's ancient texts into dialogue with the present. There is little doubt that the same Jewish vision that illuminated the immigrant and post-immigrant urban reality of the past is capable of doing the same for other realms. If we are still a people as fired by the imagination as we are by memory, than it is the least we can expect. Kudos to TIKKUN for publishing an essay that is as concerned with the ethical potential of the Jewish American literary future as it is with its past traditions.

RANEN OMER-SHERMAN
Notre Dame, IN

CORRECTION

On page 16 of our January/February 2000 issue, the last line of Tirzah Firestone's response to Max Frankel's "Why Am I Here?" was dropped due to a printer's error. The end of the article should have read: "Together we proclaim our connection and responsibility to the earth which we inhabit, to the other members of the human race, and to the task of fostering a sane, meaningful and, yes, joyous existence which sanctifies and celebrates the wonders of this universe."

Et Tu, Ralph Nader?

More Elitist Culture-Bashing From the Left

Danny Goldberg

In one of their first think pieces of the year, the *New York Times* bemoaned the threat to American democracy posed by low voter turnout—49 percent in the last presidential year of 1996, and 34 percent in the off year of 1998. For those interested in progressive politics and in having a government that empowers the poor and the working class, these figures are even more ominous. A disproportionate number of nonvoters are poor or minority—the very people who could contribute to a progressive coalition.

TIKKUN has long decried the lack of a spiritual dimension in progressive politics, but there is also a more prosaic quality of the Left that adds to voter apathy. The entire political elite (including the political media) continually tells those members of the public who enjoy certain types of popular entertainment that they are immoral. Republicans can get away with this type of criticism because it reinforces their Christian conservative base, outweighing any alienation among the small P. J. O'Rourke-libertarian faction. But those Democrats and left-of-center activists who indulge in cultural snobbery are thumbing their noses at millions of their natural supporters.

As 1999 ground to a close, *Time* magazine mentioned a "toxic popular culture" as part of the context of the Columbine murders. Democratic presidential candidates Al Gore and Bill Bradley sullenly agreed in their debates that popular culture was a negative influence on society. And a *Nation* cover story by Micah Sifry (which also ran in the online magazine *Salon*) on Ralph Nader's intended re-run for president on the Green Party ticket contained the following extraordinary passage:

"More and more, corporations are raising our kids," [Nader] declares. Companies now start marketing directly at children as early as age 2. The average youngster, he points out, watches thirty hours of television a week, with three pernicious effects: They learn violence is the preferred solution to life's problems, they are taught to value cheap sensuality in everything from sex to self-image to food, and they become addicted to entertainment that shortens their attention span.

One paragraph later, Sifry writes that "Nader is the ultimate anticynic," and quotes Nader again: "If you were in a

big lifeboat and the ship had just sunk ... and you had to ... save everybody on the lifeboat, and here you are rowing away and you look back and there's some guys who aren't rowing, they're listening to some music on their radio.... You'd say—pick up those oars!"

Of course, Nader is using music as a metaphor, but it is stunningly tone-deaf (pun intended) to use music as a symbol of lazy, uninvolved citizens. That notion would undoubtedly come as a surprise to socially active singers from Woody Guthrie to Lauryn Hill, as well as to the millions of involved, compassionate, and caring people who—as Emma Goldman famously did—like to dance. Putting aside the unfortunate metaphor, what about the substance? To hear Nader or William Bennett talk, you would think that those of us who enjoy or defend popular culture care nothing about crime, addiction, or families. As it happens, millions of people disagree with the fundamentalist-style condemnation of popular culture yet still share the moral goals of the culture-bashers.

I am not in favor of kids watching thirty hours of TV a week, but the solution is not to demonize TV. We need to invest more in education, sports, and after-school programs that offer kids and parents alternatives. A progressive program that did not demean millions of TV watchers might also include more government support for public television.

However as the parent of a nine-year-old girl and a six-year-old boy, I disagree with Nader and Sifry on the evils of popular children's television. For example, the biggest craze among kids this year has been Pokémon. The cartoon show spawned trading cards, movies, toys, and clothes. Although the television show and the movies have sports-like fights among the mythical Pokémon creatures, none of them ever dies, and the human protagonist, Ash Ketchum, is a model of traditional morality. Likewise, the most popular cable kids' channel, Nickelodeon, is politically correct to a fault, with virtually no violence or "cheap sensuality." The most popular movie with kids and adults last year, *The Phantom Menace*, is typical of the *Star Wars* movies. It's not Shakespeare but neither does it glorify violence any more than hundreds of years of pop culture from the *Iliad* to *Robin Hood* to every Western ever made. The next most popular movie, which many kids undoubtedly snuck into

Danny Goldberg is copublisher of TIKKUN.

PUBLISHER'S NOTES

despite its R rating, was *The Sixth Sense*, a truly brilliant and spiritually alive film.

Other youth-oriented entertainment criticized as harmful turns out on closer inspection to be, at worst, innocuous. In popular music, for example, the most popular albums last year were by Britney Spears and the Backstreet Boys, not great art in my opinion, but harmless evocations of preteen and early teen puppy love. The most popular children's books in decades chronicle young Harry Potter's adventures as a wizard. Although some Christian conservatives have foolishly accused the books of being anti-Christian, even such a conservative Christian stalwart as Charles Colson has supported the books, as have librarians and lovers of literature around the world.

Teen culture is, of course, another matter. Adolescents have always been interested in sex and violence. People who think that interest is created by popular culture are out of touch with their own youth. It's a volatile time that can be a breeding ground for bad decisions about sex, relationships, parenthood, drugs, and violence. As has always been the case, teenagers, especially teenage males with identity crises, tend to gravitate toward culture that is offensive to adults. I share with most other adults a revulsion to crass and graphic violence and sexism in entertainment, but I don't think this personal aesthetic makes me more moral than teens.

Many on the Left distrust the idea of the unregulated market. Markets, after all, can produce pollution, racism, and poverty. Enlightened capitalism requires a mediating force. Progressives support investment in programs such as public education, care for the poor, and public parks precisely to balance the inequities of the market. I, like most progressives, would like to see more such balance. But liberal culture-bashers see certain types of entertainment as analogous to environmental pollution. They believe that government should, at a minimum, use its bully pulpit to balance this cultural pollution in a market that, in addition to Nickelodeon, produces gangster rap and sitcoms brimming with sexual innuendo.

The difference is that no one likes pollution or chooses it; its existence is the result of greed winning out over responsibility. Even the most venal polluter doesn't like the pollution; he simply, immorally, ignores it. Entertainment, on the other hand, even pornography, is deliberately chosen. Attack toxic waste and you are attacking a well-funded company who may hire lobbyists against you. Attack a popular hardcore rapper like DMX or a television show like *Friends*, and you are attacking its fans, saying your cultural taste is morally superior to theirs. This is stunningly ineffective politics. It is also morally ambiguous. History is littered

with members of the elite who condemned the work of artists such as James Joyce as obscene.

There is no doubt that enlightened government is needed to counteract racism and sexism in the free market economy. Government regulation of discrimination is morally grounded. But elite pressure on the entertainment industry, while not automatically a violation of the First Amendment, is misguided for the same reason that the First Amendment was created; aesthetics are not morals. People of good will disagree on what constitutes excessive violence and sex in entertainment. Besides, attempts to influence

artists and media, whether via production codes, blacklisting, or censorship, have never produced more moral work.

Another concern that the Left is missing is that elite-driven "standards," even if cloaked in the "voluntary" structure of the corporate policies of media giants such as AOL-Time Warner, will discriminate against the culture created by the poor and by minorities. This is happening now. For example, films by Scorsese or Coppola about Italian gangsters receive awards while rap songs about black gang-

sters are condemned.

In the wake of tragedies like the murders at Columbine High School, politicians and some in the media often suggest that the creators of entertainment should take into account the mentality of potential murderers. I have a problem with such a proposition. Oliver Stone's *Natural Born Killers* has been accused of encouraging murder. Many, myself included, consider that film a masterpiece of commentary on the most shallow and venal aspects of the news media. No work of entertainment has been more beloved by killers than J. D. Salinger's novel *Catcher in the Rye*. On the other hand, how can we quantify the healing power of the novel for generations of alienated teens? Killers are created by far deeper psychological forces than entertainment. It is insane to advocate a culture that revolves around its potential impact on the craziest and most violent people.

Regardless of how progressive politicians feel about any particular aspect of popular culture, they are damaging their agenda and alienating potential supporters by making acceptance of their personal aesthetic a litmus test for moral inclusion in progressive politics.

There is one national political leader who instinctively and in every public utterance embraces the masses who enjoy popular culture. His name is Jesse Ventura. It is commonplace among progressives to lament that Ventura, with all of his populist appeal, does not support progressive government policies. How poignant it is that a generation of snobbish political progressives has produced "leaders" who love America but despise Americans and so are doomed to never lead them. □

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Why Spirituality?

We at TIKKUN have noted the growing interest in Spirit as an alternative to the “bottom line” consciousness of the competitive market.

Some TIKKUN readers have an instant negative association with anything to do with Spirit, either because they remember the conformist and deadly religious communities of their childhoods; because they associate the notion of Spirit with reactionary religious communities which enshrine patriarchy and homophobia; or because they have heard spiritual language used in flaky ways disconnected from the grounded realities of historical community and from rigorous intellectual thinking. These associations are reasonable, and the negative feelings legitimate.

However, there is a growing renewal movement in many religious communities which seeks to reclaim the underlying spirituality that was their original foundation. And there are many people seeking to connect to that spirituality independent of traditional religious communities as well.

So, it might make sense to think about the difference between religions, which are a set of fixed practices and beliefs, and spirituality.

What, then, is spirituality?

Spirituality is a lived experience which usually involves:

a. a feeling of awe, wonder, and radical amazement in response to the universe—a feeling that leads us to be unwilling to view the world merely in instrumental terms, and instead gives rise to a joyous experience of love and connection to the world and to others;

b. a recognition of the ultimate Unity of All Being, and through that of the preciousness of the earth and the sanctity of every human being on the planet;

c. a deep trust that there is enough for all and that every human being deserves to share equally in the planet’s abundance and is equally responsible for shaping our future;

d. a sense that the world is filled with a conscious spiritual energy which transcends the categories and concepts that govern material reality and inclines the world toward freedom, creativity, goodness, connectedness, generosity, and love.

That is what spirituality is about.

Religions, on the other hand, are the various historical attempts to organize a set of doctrines, rituals, and specific

practices which are supposed to be “the right way to live.”

Some religions may embody spirituality. Many have encompassed spiritual moments or spiritual practices at one time or another. Today, however, many religions have little to offer in the way of spirituality except in isolated corners of their traditions. That’s why renewal movements have sprung up in most of the established religious traditions, seeking to reclaim their spiritual foundations; TIKKUN tries to support them all, while encouraging them to link that spirituality with activity aimed at global healing and transformation (*tikkun*).

TIKKUN particularly supports that kind of renewal in the Jewish world. But we don’t conceptualize Jewish renewal as a separate denomination. There is renewal energy in Reform, Reconstructionist, Conservative, and Orthodox Judaism, as well as among Jews who don’t feel comfortable in any denomination. We welcome them all in our pages, as we do many Jews who are secular. At TIKKUN events we’ve had Orthodox figures like Shlomo Carlebach and secular figures like

Allen Ginsberg, may their memories be a blessing. We are not part of some particular religious denomination, but support the spiritual awakening taking place in many corners of the Jewish world, and in many corners of other religious traditions as well. What we don’t support is any use of religion to demean a specific group of people because of who they are.

In San Francisco, we’ve set up a synagogue called Beyt Tikkun to try to build this kind of spirituality within the framework of traditional Jewish religious practice. It’s an exciting community. Yet, we have a long way to go before we can claim to be a fully alive spiritual community.

We’ve discovered that many people come to services with a consumer mentality: they expect *us* to create a spiritual experience for them. The difficult truth is this: spiritual experience requires work on oneself. We can create a context in which it’s safe to be spiritually alive, but we each need to open our own inner selves, to quiet all the inner distractions, and to focus our attention on connecting to our own deepest spiritual truths. It’s so easy to get distracted—we have so much on our minds when we approach prayer, meditation, or other spiritual opportunities. It’s hard to stay focused on spiritual life.



One major obstacle is our own egos. We are so worried about “how we are doing” that we often find it hard to relax into a deeper spiritual framework through which we can experience ourselves as one part of the Unity of all Being.

Jewish rituals preparing for Passover can be an opportunity to address this issue. The Hasidic rebbes taught us that the *chametz* (leavened bread) that we need to clear out of our houses is really a symbolic reference to our own expanding egos which distract us from connection to God. Cleaning out our inner *chametz* in preparation for the Pesach seder is really a cleaning up of all these parts of us. It focuses our attention on overcoming the distractions in our lives, so that we can really be present to the possibility of

liberation that Passover both records and invites us to re-experience. This is also the spiritual intention of Lent for Christians and of Ramadan for Moslems.

Most Jews in the United States, whether they are secular or religious, attend a seder on Passover (April 19–April 27). Yet many of these seders turn out to be empty rituals. We’ve prepared a seder supplement (you can tear it out and make copies—it’s between pages 64–65 of this issue) to help you deepen the discussion. But even the supplement won’t get you very deep into spirituality unless you’ve taken some preparatory time to work on cleaning out excess ego. This year, let’s make sure that our seder is really focused on this deepest level. □

Pathologies of Globalization

People around the world have been resisting the process of corporate globalization for a century, yet the form that resistance has taken has often been irrational and self-destructive.

It’s not hard to understand why many people resist. While there are tens of millions of people around the globe whose economic conditions are improving as a result of globalization, there are hundreds of millions who are actually worse off. Moreover, the globalization of capital brings with it a massive dose of Western consumer culture, with its glorification of the individual over the community and its worship of material success over all other values. The disintegration of family and community loyalties, the manipulation of sexual imagery to sell consumer products, the development of lonely and alienated individuals, the sense of being unseen by others except in terms of how we can be of use for their own self-advancement or pleasure—all of these contribute to a massive social dislocation which shapes the contemporary world.

While some people have managed to turn the collapse of communities and the creation of a global market society into an opportunity for self-enrichment, there are millions of others who have not been so fortunate and who experience the “progress” we hail in the West as an assault likely to destroy the communities and solidarity that are their only protection from the ravages of a heartless world.

When they turn to religious fundamentalism or ultranationalism they hear a very comforting message: you are valuable not because you are a success in the competitive marketplace, but simply and solely because you are one of us. Unfortunately, that comfort is often linked with the demeaning of some Other—the people who are not part of this group.

The corporate media portray these people as just crazy and suggest that the only way to counter their irrationality is to accelerate the globalization of capital and its consumer

culture. Once that happens, we are assured, everyone will forget their particularities and become part of the one universal culture of the consumer marketplace. Of course, what this picture leaves out is that it is precisely the dynamics of the marketplace which have caused people to seek ultranationalist and religious fundamentalist solutions in the first place. So the struggle gets defined in terms that lead us to say “no” to both sides: “no” to the globalization of selfishness, and “no” to the reactionary nationalist and fundamentalist responses.

For these reasons, we need a different kind of political movement, one that can respond compassionately to people who are driven to seek irrational responses to real and pressing pain, but one that simultaneously rejects nationalism and fundamentalism with their accompanying racism, sexism, and homophobia. That’s what we mean when we talk about the need for a Politics of Meaning—and for a new bottom line to replace the bottom line of money and power.

To begin, we need to learn to say “no”:

No to Russia’s Murderous Policy in Chechnya

For an example of how resentment against capitalist globalization gets displaced onto others, look at the ultra-nationalist unity emerging in Russia as its economically-challenged citizens sweep Vladimir Putin into the presidency as the reward for his near-genocidal policies against Chechnya.

No one can blame the Russian people for being angry at the Chechen Islamic thugs (“field commanders” who operated outside the control of the elected government and without its sanction) who invaded neighboring Dagestan and saw themselves as warriors for Allah.

But to use the tragedy of terrorist bombings of apartment houses in Moscow and Volgogradsk—bombings which have never been proven to be linked to the Chechens—to legitimate a full-scale war against the largely unarmed

Chechen people could only have been engineered by the cynical Putin, whose background as director of the Russian FSB (the successor to the KGB) gave him plenty of experience in conspiracy.

Skillfully twisting resentment of Western liberalization into rejection of human rights and a hunger for the “good old days” of strong leadership and law and order, Putin’s regime is likely to bring increasing repression coupled with an intensification of free-market economics: in short, a contemporary slightly-less-murderous version of fascism.

No to Haider and Austrian Neo-Nazis

And speaking of fascism, congratulations to the European countries who have downgraded their diplomatic relations with Austria now that it has installed a new coalition government that includes nationalist Freedom Party neo-Nazi Jörg Haider. Much of my family was murdered by Nazis who were intent on wiping out every last Jew on the planet, and who faced very little opposition, and sometimes, as in the case of Austria, enthusiastic cooperation, from most of the people in Europe.

So it’s wonderful to see a new generation of Europeans who are genuinely motivated by a desire to rectify the past and who are willing to stand up to neo-Nazis. It’s especially important to note that Haider did not win electoral support from a majority of Austrians, and that a significant minority of them have demonstrated against his anti-immigrant xenophobia and his explicit praise of the Nazi past.

But as long as he remains in power, Austrian society is responsible for his views. That’s why the peoples of the world should boycott tourism to Austria and take other steps to say, “We don’t want to have economic dealings with a society led by a neo-Nazi.”

But that won’t happen here. The bottom line of American policy-makers, whichever branch (Democratic or Republican) of the pro-business, pro-wealth, single party



that happens to be in power, is to maximize the freedom of the international market and allow corporations to do whatever they want.

No to Restrictions on Gay Marriages

The “defense of marriage” act currently being voted on in California and proposed elsewhere is irrational and homophobic. Gays and lesbians should be honored in the same way we honor straights when they decide to make a loving commitment to build a family together and to consecrate their love through sacred ceremony.

It’s nonsense to believe that straight families will be stronger if gays and lesbians are prohibited from marrying or denied the legal benefits that accrue to married couples. I’ve been a therapist for twenty-three years, and now for many years a rabbi, and I’ve talked these issues over with many colleagues. Never have I or any other rabbi or therapist found, when counseling a couple, that the “real problem” underlying their family discord was that there were gays and lesbians in the society around them! The idea that gays and lesbians are destroying families is ludicrous.

Social forces are making loving commitments harder today. Families are wrestling with the ethos of materialism and selfishness, not with the existence of gays and lesbians. Here is a classic case of demeaning an Other instead of recognizing the real problem. □

Conference on Ethics and Meaning

In the four years since we held the Summit on Ethics and Meaning in Washington, D.C., attended by some 1,800 people, the issues we raised have become much more widely understood. The surge of interest in spiritual issues has become unavoidable, even for the mainstream media (which still manages to distort the message).

In my forthcoming book, *Spirit Matters*, I describe how the contemporary deprivation of Spirit is hurtful and crazy-making, and what a new spiritually oriented society might be like. But building a movement aimed at “changing the bottom line” in America has proved very difficult. The labor movement remains locked in a largely economic framework (despite John Sweeney’s enthusiastic participa-

tion at the 1996 conference), the liberal churches continue to see their role primarily as cheerleaders for the liberal agenda rather than as messengers of the deeper spiritual understanding liberals and progressives so badly need, and the Left continues to believe that progressive spiritual forces are opening the gates for right-wing fundamentalists.

Though we are no longer involved in the leadership of the Foundation for Ethics and Meaning, Peter Gabel and I will be speaking at its conference in New York City on May 18–20 (for details, see page 31). We hope to see you there so that we can have some serious discussion of the strategy for the period ahead. These kinds of gatherings are very valuable! □

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AN INTERVIEW WITH Larry Dossey

Larry Dossey, M.D., is an internal medicine physician, executive editor of the peer-reviewed journal *Alternative Therapies in Health and Medicine*, and the author of *Reinventing Medicine* and seven other books that explore the role of consciousness, spirituality, and prayer in health.

TIKKUN: You've become famous, through your books *Reinventing Medicine* and *Meaning and Medicine*, as the doctor who has focused national attention on a set of research experiments which demonstrate that prayer has a real effect. In these studies, a group of patients with the same illness is randomly divided into two groups. Then, a group of religious believers hundreds of miles away is asked to pray for the people in one group. Research findings indicate that the group prayed for does better, even though neither group is told which group is being prayed for, and even though the people doing the praying have no idea who specifically they are praying for. This kind of double-blind experiment, validated time after time, is a powerful indication of the efficacy of prayer. How did you get into this kind of thinking?

DOSSEY: Very cautiously. I was one of those "wounded healers" you've written about in your books, Michael. I was "blessed" with a horrible affliction from grade school—classical migraine headache, with pain, nausea, vomiting, and incapacitation. The worst thing was temporary blindness. I almost dropped out of medical school because I was convinced I'd have an attack of blindness during surgery and might harm somebody.

None of the conventional medical approaches worked for this problem. In the early Seventies, after I had completed my medical training, I tried biofeedback, which employs imagery, visualization, and relaxation. This had a remarkably positive effect. This experience made me deeply aware that I possessed a mind-body connection and that my mind could dramatically affect my health. It's a pretty basic realization, I realize, but as an obsessive-compulsive, hard-charging medical student I was totally oblivious to it. Following biofeedback I took up meditation, which was a natural transition, invoking my own eclectic methods.

By this time I had begun to immerse myself in Eastern spiritual literature, which I found extremely fulfilling. Reading about the mystical traditions throughout the world, Western as well as Eastern, became a serious pursuit. I had been raised as a Christian fundamentalist, and in



college had become an agnostic in recovery from that earlier fundamentalist experience. I felt really short-changed by fundamentalism, which has little focus on inner life. Meditation and the mystical spiritual literature helped me gradually regrow my spiritual roots.

As a physician it became increasingly obvious to me that spiritual meaning was vital to health. I began to focus on the impact of spiritual practice on health. One thing led to another, and eventually I stumbled onto the database regarding the role of intercessory distant prayer, which I was totally unaware of in my medical training. I bumped into other scholars exploring this field, such as Dan Benor, Jeff Levin, David Larson, and Harold Koenig. I spent several years assessing these studies, which resulted in my 1993 book, *Healing Words: The Power of Prayer and the Practice of Medicine*.

I wondered if anyone would read it. Lots of health-care professionals did so, and the book set off a kind of tsunami in clinical medicine. Back then, there were three U.S. medical schools out of 125 that had formal courses looking at the role of religious devotion, spirituality, and prayer in health. Now 60 of the 125 have developed such courses, and around 100 have declared their intentions to do so. I'm fairly flabbergasted by all this. By any measure, this is a landmark transition in the history of medicine.

TIKKUN: What, in your view, is the mechanism through which the interaction takes place between prayer at a distance (in cases where people didn't know they were being prayed for) and healing?

DOSSEY: Nobody knows. We're not entirely at sea though. We can identify factors that must be present for the distant connections between people to take place: compassion, love, empathy, concern. To me this is funnily ironic: our fancy medical research is pointing the way back to old-fashioned love.

I've referred to these distant happenings as non-local events, because in essence they resemble the eerie, non-local events which physicists have demonstrated at the subatomic level between separated particles. These distant particles seem to behave as if they are united; if you change one, you change the other instantly and to the same degree. This is strongly analogous to distant, prayer-based healing, in which the separated individuals behave as if they are united. No one knows, however, if there is any real connection between the non-local behavior of subatomic particles and the non-local manifestations of intention and prayer. Perhaps this is only an analogy or an accidental correlation of language and nothing more.

There is burning interest in these happenings in many areas of science. Currently there are easily a dozen contending hypotheses about how these non-local events may work at the human level that are being advanced by world-class scholars, such as Nobel physicist Brian Josephson at the Cavendish Laboratory, University of Cambridge. The most celebrated hypothesis has been advanced by David Chalmers, a cognitive scientist and mathematician at the University of Arizona. His seminal paper was in *Scientific American* in December 1995, "The Puzzle of Conscious Experience." Chalmers says that, based on current evidence, it is time for serious scientists to bite the bullet and simply declare consciousness fundamental to the universe, perhaps on a par with matter and energy. This declaration is a way of delocalizing consciousness in space and time. It frees consciousness from its confinement to the individual brain and body and even from the present moment. This permits, although it does not prove, the distant effects of prayer.

As a scientist, I wonder about the best explanatory theory, but as a physician I think: let explanation be damned. We are stuck with some stubborn facts that have been demonstrated in double-blind studies. Often in medicine we have known that something works before we know how it works. The history of medicine is peppered with examples—penicillin, aspirin, quinine, the use of citrus fruits to cure scurvy. Sometimes we have to go with the data and set aside our demand for an explanation. That's where we currently are with distant healing. Sooner or later somebody will probably agonize their way to some scientific understanding of these events, but we aren't there yet.

TIKKUN: The reason I ask you about the mechanism is that in the Jewish spiritual world we tend to think of the world being permeated by Spirit in the place of what older theories call the ether. Sometimes we call that God's love, which permeates every aspect of being, and which has consciousness as one of its dimensions.

DOSSEY: My favorite term to express the power that permeates everything is the Absolute. The Absolute is that outside of which nothing else exists.

As a result of my first eighteen years of life in fundamental Protestantism, I am sick of the anthropomorphic ways of describing this power. I shudder with embarrassment about the images I once applied to the Absolute. I used to imagine God as a white, short-tempered, bearded, male cosmic parent figure who preferred English. I was totally unconscious of how we smuggle assumptions into our image of God based on gender, race, and culture. So, although "the Absolute" sounds utterly impersonal to many people, to me it is highly personal.

TIKKUN: Is the Absolute some-

thing you can have a relationship to?

DOSSEY: I have a very strong, intimate relationship with the Absolute.

TIKKUN: Can it have a relationship to you?

DOSSEY: Yes, it's a mutual process. I sense that.

TIKKUN: Raphael Kellman, in an article accompanying this interview, argues that meaning is the fundamental need for human beings and that deprivation of meaning is central to what causes various health problems.

DOSSEY: If you deprive human beings of positive meaning, it can be toxic, lethal, fatal. So we are beyond philosophy and psychology here. We are talking about life and death. One of the most dramatic examples of the power of meaning in health is Black Monday Syndrome, in which more Americans have heart attacks between eight and nine on Monday morning than at any other time. Studies have shown that job dissatisfaction is one of the major predictors of sudden death from heart disease. So, what does your job and Monday morning mean to you? If you hate them, if they contain negative meaning, you have a major risk factor for heart disease. In some studies, "job meaning" is a better predictor of heart disease than blood pressure, cholesterol, smoking, and so on. I've suggested a new area of medicine I call Meaning Therapy—attending to our meanings as seriously as we'd attend to our blood pressure, diet, or any other physical factor.

When I began to contemplate spiritual meaning and the healing effects of distant prayer, I bumped into a personal, ethical, and moral dilemma. At that time I would not have prayed for one of my patients on a bet, because I didn't

If you deprive human beings of positive meaning, it can be toxic we are beyond philosophy and psychology here. We are talking about life and death.

believe prayer was in the same league as drugs and surgery. But as I went deeper into the data supporting prayer, I began to ask myself: Are you going to pray for your patients or not? Are you going to honor the power of this spiritually meaningful ritual to improve the health of your patients? You call yourself a scientist; are you willing to follow the data or not? I realized that if prayer worked, withholding it might be the equivalent of denying my patients a valuable medication or surgical procedure. I found I could not weasel out of confronting prayer as a doctor; there was simply no place to hide. So I began to go to my office earlier each morning and have my prayer ritual. For me, prayer was the outward result of the intersection of spirit, meaning, and science in my life as a physician. I know first-hand that confronting spiritual meaning is not a head trip or academic exercise; there are powerful personal, professional, and ethical repercussions for any physician who takes seriously the evidence supporting the effects of spiritual meaning in health.

The facts show, in hundreds of studies, that people who follow a spiritual path live longer, on average, than people who do not, and they are healthier in the process. So these are medical issues by definition. As a doctor, you need to know something about your patient's spiritual path, just as you need to know whether they smoke and what their blood pressure is. I hypothesize that as this data continues to accumulate, we may get to the point that if doctors don't at least inform patients of the importance of spiritual meaning in their lives, they may be guilty of medical malpractice. To fail to call this to the attention of patients is, I think, bad science and bad ethics. I agree with Dr. Kellman's suggestion that doctors, as part of the medical intake, should obtain a spiritual history. It's indefensible not to do so.

Not surprisingly, all doctors don't agree. There are a couple of physicians at Columbia Medical School who just trash this whole idea. They say that doctors should stay out of the God business. They maintain we aren't trained to delve into the spiritual lives of our patients. This is private, sensitive territory. These are the same reasons put forward a couple of decades ago against doctors' exploring the sexual practices of their patients. But when the epidemic of AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases surfaced, these objections became irrelevant overnight, and doctors began to acquire the skills and sensitivity needed to explore sexual issues. Basically, the main problem is that the naysayers haven't yet come to terms with the evidence that spiritual meaning exerts life-and-death effects on health. When they do, their objections will evaporate.

TIKKUN: One could imagine, however, that somebody could say, if you are Jewish you should go to a Jewish doctor, who will reinforce your spirituality. Or if you are a Baptist, a Baptist doctor, since this doctor now has as his or her task to help develop your spiritual life. After all, a Jewish doctor might refer you to a Jewish source.

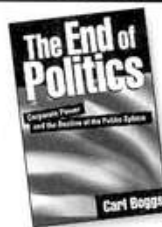
DOSSEY: That's right; the critics have indeed said that

religious interactions should be limited to situations in which the physician and patient share the same tradition. It's quite wonderful if the physician and patient share a common religious background. But my hope is that physicians become so tolerant, so ecumenical, in their approach to spiritual meaning that they can connect with and serve their patients regardless of religious affiliation. This is not farfetched. Hospital chaplains and pastoral counselors already receive training that enables them to cross religious boundaries and minister to patients of all faiths. Why can't doctors do the same? We're not that hopeless!

TIKKUN: I imagine that expecting doctors to bring their own tradition's spirituality to their patients might worry Jewish doctors who could fear a new form of "quotas" like those which restricted the number of Jews in medicine in the first fifty years of the twentieth century. Patients might want doctors who reflect their own spiritual tradition—and that might make it harder for the disproportionate number of Jewish doctors. One of the things that science provided for Jews and other religious minorities was an area in which their success would not be dependent upon their spiritual foundation. Science said, we don't care where you are coming from, the question is, can you do this medicine. Now, if we bring meaning in, there is the fear that we will bring particularistic meanings that will re-exclude people.

(continued on page 16)

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Spirituality and Medicine

Raphael Kellman

A spiritual approach to health care must both ensure that everyone who needs medical care can have access to it and reflect a holistic, ecological, humanistic perspective based on meaning and spirit.

Spiritual medicine is based on a different perception of ourselves and our world than we currently have. It is based on the belief that the world can also be perceived from the perspective of the heart. Just as interconnectiveness and interdependence is vital to the natural world, it plays a vital, not merely an ancillary role, in spiritual medicine. Indeed, spiritually based medicine can be better termed a medicine of meaning, rooted in an ecological orientation with a simultaneously transcendent and imminent relationship to the world. From the standpoint of a medicine of meaning, nutritional imbalances, environmental toxins, and an unnatural relationship to food and the food chain are secondary to the loss of compassion and meaning. Our culture's escalating medical costs, rise in chronic disease, and financial inability to provide some level of health care to all are precisely due to the fact that we have not taken a spiritual or meaningful approach to medicine.

In short, a medicine without meaning will always be bankrupt—figuratively and literally. We cannot resolve problems of accessibility without at the same time addressing problems of content.

Recent advances in various disciplines of science are more consistent with a medicine of meaning approach than with the framework on which modern medicine rests. In modern physics, for example, the boundary between subject and object is nebulous at best, shattering our belief in a mechanistic understanding of life and of the human body. In the study of life systems as well, scientists now employ a non-linear model in which the parts of a living system contribute to, but do not define, a living system, and the whole is more than the sum of its parts.

In medicine itself, we are beginning to realize that the mind is not localized in the brain. We know that the heart can send messages to the brain and might have its own

mode of perception. Indeed recent studies are beginning to make us wonder if the connection between love and the heart isn't more than metaphor but represents something physiological. Even the gastrointestinal system has more neurons and neuropeptides than the spinal column; perhaps the medical community has not digested the fact that the gut has its own mode of perception as well.

Spiritual medicine is, in fact, more consistent with science and is rooted in the belief that we live in a vast, interconnected, interdependent world.

In order to achieve such a medicine of meaning, however, we must first understand the philosophical orientation of the modern medicine most of us experience. Modern medicine is still deeply rooted in a mechanistic model. In medical school, aspiring doctors learn to think of human beings as machines. Medical science itself was developed through the study of the anatomy of a corpse. But a human being is not a corpse—we are something else that needs to be understood in a different way.

Take, for example, the mechanical model of a pump used to explain the heart, first proposed by the scientist William Harvey in 1628. This model has helped doctors understand heart disease, but does not and cannot explain the true nature of the heart or give us a deep understanding of the causes of heart disease. Recent studies in fact have shown that meaning, job dissatisfaction, compassion, and interconnectiveness are more important variables than all the known risk factors for coronary heart disease. For example, a behavioral medicine specialist, Mark Goodman, evaluated forty-one patients who had angioplasty and showed that patients with a high potential for hostility tended to block off again. Another study showed that the chance that one would survive their first heart attack was not dependent on cholesterol, diabetes, or high blood pressure but rather job dissatisfaction. A third study, published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* in 1993 showed that those heart attack survivors who suffered from depression characterized by feelings of decreased self-esteem had a three to four times greater risk of dying within six months than those who were not depressed.

On the other hand, emotions like compassion and interconnectiveness improve cardiac function in patients with heart disease. This "interconnectiveness variable" was demonstrated to make a difference in a study of 2,700 residents in Tecumseh, Michigan. The study showed that men

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who volunteered for community organizations were two and a half times less likely to die from all causes of diseases than their non-involved peers. A national survey conducted by Allan Luks involving 3,300 volunteers showed that volunteers get an immediate “helper’s high” which consists of a surge in energy, a feeling of optimism, and a feeling of empowerment; such helpers also reported better perceived health. Many also reported fewer infections, improved eating and sleeping habits, and even the relief of pain. Other studies have shown that this state is associated with improved immunological function and even improved cardiac health.

Spiritual medicine would argue that the heart is more than a mechanical pump, but a particular kind of mind interwoven with this thing we call the heart. There is nothing in the world that we can compare to this organ that can perceive in a particular way the interconnectiveness between all, and the deep need for the experience of meaning, not only for its own function, but to sustain the world itself. This perception motivates our biochemistry, so that we see the world as a grand experience of sharing. Receiving for the self alone not only impedes our own physical health, but short circuits the flow of the world. Spiritually based medicine can maintain the flow of the world because it empowers us to mold our destinies. The more we can embrace this belief, the more we can not only prevent but literally reverse disease.

For example, in the *Study for the Advancement of Medicine* in 1995, researchers showed that when patients experience caring and compassion, salivary SIGA, the body’s first line of defense against viruses and other pathogens, increased significantly. A study by A. Thomas McLellan at Harvard University showed that an experience of compassion raises SIGA, even in people who claimed that they had no subjective feeling of compassion.

Meaning-based practice, then, should be a high priority for medical practice as a whole. Unfortunately, we are taught in medical school to leave our souls behind, and this really undermines our work as physicians. I’ve worked in hospitals where you can feel the lifelessness in the caregivers and everyone else. In these cases, the institution has already removed the soul from its interactions with the patients, and I’m not surprised when healing in such a setting doesn’t work so well.

Of course, I don’t deny the physical dimension to healing. Spiritual healing doesn’t have to be counterposed to chemotherapy. We need to approach people on all levels because interventions on many different levels all have a synergistic effect. But neither is approaching someone purely on a physical level alone adequate. And I say this not only about traditional forms of medicine, but also about “alternative” medical techniques. If, for example, you give people a regimen of vitamins without any other meaningful level of intervention, your work will be less effective.

To stay with the example of vitamins, a far better way to approach nutrition is to show people that in order to restore their body’s capacity to heal they need to work on their entire



way of relating to food and to the body. Eating for ourselves alone, without thinking about how we will experience sharing, is antithetical to the theme of life and will have negative physiological consequences. Changing this consciousness can have penetrating effects on our physiology. When people can see that food is an act of giving by the earth and that we have a corresponding need to give back, they gain a sense of meaning. They learn that the earth gives to us so that we can give in turn to others—because we are all fundamentally interconnected and interdependent. Our atoms are constantly being shuffled from the earth and the air through us and back to a tree or to another human being or to the earth in a constant dance of sharing. When we block this cascade through fear or greed, we interfere with the life-giving and nurturing qualities that are available and were meant to sustain us.

That’s why part of a meaning-oriented medicine is that a doctor must try to instill an understanding of the systems-nature of our health—that on the one hand the health of one part of our body is linked to the health of all other parts, and on the other hand that the health of the body is linked to the health of the economic, political, and ecological systems outside the body. So, for example, caring about the environment is good for our health, even when we are not yet successful in stopping the polluters or restraining those who are misusing the earth’s resources. When someone activates the concern in themselves for ecological improvement, they are simultaneously activating a transpersonal aspect of their being that aspires to meaning and that, in turn, has significant physiological effects.

Modern medicine has not yet moved toward a spiritual practice in part because it is very much influenced by money—the money made by large pharmaceutical companies

SPIRIT AND HEALTH

and by the insurance companies. It is to their advantage, they believe, to keep medicine based on mechanistic models of the body. The current system has proven valuable and profitable for them, and though there might be a way to make money even with a revised conception, they don't want to risk it. And they've been amazingly successful in shaping the dominant consciousness, not just among medical practitioners but also among ordinary people.

What's more, these new ways of healing will be cost-effective. When we live in a society in which health care is available to some but not to others, we are living in a society with a meaning-deficit—and that will have immediate health consequences. Conversely, if we live in a society in which the bottom line is radically different from what it is today, we will experience benefits not only from the increased availability of health care, but also from the type of health care we all will receive.

Such meaning-based medicine is not new. Ancient traditions have long encouraged us to acknowledge our physical connection to the universe. Look at how Judaism, for

example, requires us to do a blessing at the beginning of the meal, before eating, and then to spend a good period of time in a long prayer after the meal, so that attention gets directed to the spiritual reality of eating. We have always known that to strengthen our bodies we need to get nutrients from food. What a meaning-based practice teaches us is that how well we absorb such nutrients depends on our state of mind when we eat. If we can get ourselves to slow down and really respond to the world with awe, wonder, and radical amazement, we will certainly create a healthier attitude and, eventually, a healthier world.

Ultimately, spiritual medicine is based on a radical change in our perceptions of who we are and our relationship to the world. Ironically it is more consistent than modern medicine with recent advances in so many disciplines of thought. Why modern medicine is not up to date has more to do with sociological, political, and economic reasons than with scientific ones. A medicine of meaning, if understood properly, not only has the potential of healing the human being but of healing the world as well. □

INTERVIEW WITH LARRY DOSSEY (continued from page 13)

DOSSEY: Here's where science, paradoxically, comes to the rescue. Nearly 2,000 studies show, as I've said, that people who follow a religious path live longer on average and are healthier in the process. The surprise—to some—is that it apparently doesn't matter which path it is. Moreover, the studies in intercessory, distant prayer show that the prayers of any tradition appear equally effective. I adore these findings because they validate the importance of religious tolerance, which has been sadly deficient in our culture of late. Moreover, these findings provide a doctor with immense latitude. As a physician, if I bring up spiritual meaning with a patient, I can say, "I'm not selling; you go find a spiritual meaning that is most fulfilling to you."

I'm not advocating that physicians usurp the role of skilled spiritual professionals. I just want to emphasize that spiritual meaning is vital to health, and that somebody needs to help make this real to patients. I'd be delighted if rabbis, ministers, priests, hospital chaplains, and pastoral counselors filled this need. The fact is, they haven't. And here's a grudge I have with spiritual professionals. The average priest or minister has a horribly anemic view of the role of spirituality in health. Spiritual counselors of all types seriously need to do some homework on this score. Most of them continue to see physical and spiritual needs as comprising two different worlds. But of course everyone has dirty hands on this point; we physicians are the worst of all.

My wife and I were consulting with a major hospital in lower Manhattan three or four years ago and I gave a talk about the evidence we've been discussing. Later that day I was talking to the hospice folk, and the rabbi whose job it is to pray with and counsel people came up to me and said, "I

need to get one thing straight. You are actually claiming that prayer really does work?" Here is a man who is counseling and praying with patients who assume that he thinks that prayer is effective, yet in his inner life he has grave doubts that it really can improve health care.

TIKKUN: But sometimes it doesn't work.

DOSSEY: Nothing works all the time in medicine. When we use penicillin for strep throat, it fails 40 percent of the time. When it doesn't work we don't blame penicillin. Why blame prayer because it isn't 100 percent effective? Why erect a double standard in which we demand more of prayer than we do of drugs and surgery? The miracle is that prayer works at all. Even the slimmest effect of prayer shows that love, compassion, and intention matter—in which case the universe is utterly different from the blind, mechanistic machine of classical science.

It's hard for me to imagine any solid reason for not putting spiritual meaning and prayer back on the table in medicine. Indeed, this is happening. Ten years ago prayer wasn't even ridiculed, it wasn't even discussed. We're making immense progress.

Still, I get concerned about the popularization of spiritual meaning and prayer in healing. Too often this results in trivialization. People begin to see prayer not as a bridge to the Absolute, but as just another tool in our black bag of medical tricks. Pretty soon prayer degenerates into formulas, three easy steps, and how-to books. We Americans are so pragmatic!

TIKKUN: In many religious cultures, people will hire people to pray for them.

DOSSEY: You could get board certified in prayer! □

Against Spanking

Alice Miller

How did Evil come into the world and what can we do to combat it? While people have always had a diffuse, intuitive conviction that the seeds of Evil are to be sought in childhood, the ruling tendency has been to imagine Evil as the manifestation of innate destructive instincts, a congenital defect best transformed into goodness, decency, and nobility of character by corporal punishment.

This position is still frequently championed. Today, nobody seriously believes that the Devil has a hand in things, smuggling some changeling into the cradle and forcing us to employ strict upbringing methods to batter our diabolical offspring into submission. But from some quarters we do hear the serious contention that certain genes predispose some individuals to delinquency. The quest for these rogue genes has inspired many a respectable research project, even though the hypotheses behind it fly in the face of a number of proven facts.

For example, we know today that the brain we are born with is not the finished product it was once thought to be. The structuring of the brain depends very much on experiences undergone in the first hours, days, and weeks of a person's life. The stimulus indispensable for developing the capacity for empathy, say, is the experience of loving care. In the absence of such care, when a child is forced to grow up neglected, emotionally starved, and subjected to physical cruelty, he or she will forget this innate capacity.

In the last few years, neurobiologists have established that traumatized and neglected children display severe lesions affecting up to 30 percent of those areas of the brain that control our emotions. Severe traumas inflicted on infants lead to an increase in the release of stress hormones that destroy the existing, newly formed neurons and their interconnections. It's not just a coincidence that the number of children committing murders is on the increase, and that very many of them were born to adolescent, drug-dependent mothers. Extreme neglect, lack of attachment, and traumatization are the rule in such cases.

Alice Miller is the internationally acclaimed author of Prisoners of Childhood (reissued in paperback as The Drama of the Gifted Child), For Your Own Good: Hidden Cruelty in Child-Rearing, and Thou Shalt Not Be Aware: Society's Betrayal of the Child.



Of course we do not arrive in this world as a clean slate. Every new baby comes with a history of its own, the history of the nine months between conception and birth. In addition, children have the genetic blueprint they inherit from their parents. These factors may determine what kind of temperament a child will have, what inclinations, gifts, predispositions. But character depends crucially upon whether a person is given love, protection, tenderness, and understanding in the early formative years or exposed to rejection, coldness, indifference, and cruelty. Otherwise, how can advocates of the "congenital evil" theory explain why, thirty to forty years before the Third Reich, a sudden spate of children with "bad genes" was born ready at a later date to do Hitler's bidding?

The people who turned into Hitler's willing executioners had accounts to settle that dated back to their earliest days. In Germany in the 1860s, monstrous advice about "good" parenting was disseminated by self-styled educationalists; their advice manuals went into as many as forty editions, which has led me to conclude that most parents read them and did indeed act—in good faith—on the recommendations set out there. Parents beat their children from the outset because they had been told this was the way to make decent members of society out of them. Forty years later,



the children thus treated did the same with their children. They didn't know any better. Born thirty to forty years before the Holocaust, those traumatized children later became Hitler's adherents, adulators, and henchmen. In my view, it was the direct result of their early drilling. The cruelty they experi-

enced turned them into emotional cripples incapable of developing any kind of empathy for the suffering of others. At the same time it made them into people living with a time bomb, unconsciously waiting for an opportunity to vent on others the rage pent up inside them. Hitler gave them the legal scapegoat they needed to express their early feelings and their thirst for vengeance.

The latest discoveries about the human brain might have been expected to bring about a radical change in our thinking about children and the way we treat them. But as we know only too well, old habits die hard. It takes at least two generations for young parents to free themselves of the burden of inherited "wisdom" and stop beating their own children, two generations until it has become sheerly impossible to give one's child a slap "inadvertently," two generations before the weight of newly acquired knowledge gets in the way of the hand raised to deal the "unthinking" blow. Part of the reason change comes so slowly, however, is that, alongside the habits

Statistics tell us that 90 percent of the prisoners in American jails were abused in childhood.

stored in our bodies favoring such misguided behavior, we also still listen to a host of "experts" who continue in the demonstrably false belief that the effects of corporal punishment are salutary. Because, in most cases, the experts in question inherited this opinion from their own parents when they were children themselves, their belief in it prevails over all the weight of scientific evidence pointing to the contrary.

We cannot reach adults who were subjected to abuse as children unless we return to the scenes of their childhood experience. As I argue in my latest book, *Paths of Life*, the experiences undergone by infants in the first days, weeks, and months of their lives are of immense significance in explaining their subsequent behavior. In no way do I wish to assert that later influences are completely ineffectual. On the contrary. For a traumatized or neglected child, it is of crucial importance to encounter what I call a "helping" or a "knowing witness" in its immediate circle. But such

witnesses can only really help if they are aware of the consequences of early deprivations and do not play them down. It is in disseminating the information required by such potential knowing witnesses that I see my task.

For a long time, the significance of the first few months of life for the later adult was a neglected subject even among psychologists. In several of my books, I have tried to cast some light on this area by discussing the biographies of dictators like Hitler, Stalin, Ceaucescu, and Mao and demonstrating how they unconsciously reenacted their childhood situation on the political stage. Here, however, I want to turn my attention away from history and the past and train my gaze on our present practice. My conviction is that in numerous areas of practical life we could be more productive if we paid the childhood factor greater heed than is customarily the case. Consider the example of our current penal system, the area in which the willful neglect of the childhood factor is most apparent.

Statistics tell us that 90 percent of the prisoners in American jails were abused in childhood. This figure is astonishingly high if we bear in mind how often individuals deny and repress childhood abuse. Probably the real figure is closer to a full 100 percent. A sheltered and respected child does not turn criminal.

Unfortunately little has been done to integrate this knowledge into the way prisons are organized and run. Outwardly, of course, today's prisons and penitentiaries have little in common with the grim fortresses of the nineteenth century. But one thing has stayed much the same: questions like what made an individual prisoner a criminal in the first place, what features of his early life set him off in that direction, and what could he do to avoid falling into the same trap over and over again are very rarely posed. In order to answer these questions himself, the prisoner would have to be encouraged to talk, write, and think about his life as a child and share these facts with others in a structured group setting.

In my latest book, I report on a program of this nature in Canada. Thanks to group work, a number of fathers who had sexually abused their daughters understood for the first time that their actions were criminal. Of crucial importance for them was that they were able to talk about their childhood to other people they trusted. That way they learned to grasp how they had automatically passed on something they had experienced themselves without realizing it.

We are accustomed not to say anything about the things we have suffered in childhood and frequently, instead of saying anything, we act blindly. But it was precisely the opportunity to talk about those things that released these prisoners from their blindness, gave them access to heightened awareness, and protected them from acting out. Programs like these are unfortunately still very much the exception. The only other one I know of is at a prison in

Arizona where violent criminals can talk about their childhood and, with the help of the group, learn to decipher the covert meaning of their life histories. I have seen video recordings of these group sessions and I was impressed by the change in the facial expressions of these men after therapy. Proceeding in this way regularly would probably save a great deal of the taxpayer's money; programs like these are not expensive to organize and the danger of relapse is significantly diminished. It is thus doubly surprising that they have not found their way into most prisons.

The situation in prisons reflects a similar problem in the rest of society. On the political stage, the more nationalism threatens our world, the more frequently we must reckon with the emergence of unpredictable dictators. Dictators are simply a subgroup of people exposed to serious physical and mental jeopardy during childhood. To counteract their mania it is not enough to know that we are dealing with dangerous individuals who must be "taken out of circulation." We must instead understand the motives behind their actions on the basis of their life histories and not play their game, not be maneuvered into the role of their persecutor. We must trust to the productive fruits of direct communication instead of the destructive measures of direct confrontation.

As long as we are unaware of the degree to which the right to human dignity has been denied us in our own childhood, it is anything but easy to truly concede that right to our children, no matter how sincerely we may wish to do so. Legislators in Germany only a short while ago, in 1997, expressly conceded to parents the right to physical correction. In America, parents in poll after poll say they reserve the right to "spank" their children, and too many teachers still cannot imagine a school system without punishment and penalization. But we know beyond doubt that punishment has at best a short-term "positive" effect. In the long run, the exertion of force merely serves to reinforce aggressive behavior on the part of children and adolescents.

In schools, for example, if children from a background of domestic violence have to devote all their attention to averting danger, they will hardly be able to concentrate on the subject matter they are being taught. They may well expend a great deal of effort on observing the teacher so as to be prepared for the physical "correction" that they feel, fatalistically, to be inevitable. In reality as they see it, they can hardly afford to develop an interest in what their teachers are trying to tell them. Yet more blows, yet more punishments are hardly likely to allay this effect; on the other hand, understanding these children's fears could quite literally move mountains. But teachers who have themselves grown up with punishment favor punishment in the face of all the logic that militates against it because they learned at a very early stage to

believe in its efficacy. Neither in their own childhood nor during their training as teachers have they had the opportunity to develop a sensibility for the sufferings of children.

Helping instead of punishing would be to the advantage of the teacher and his role as an instructor. We know that children who have faced physical punishment will be unable to defend their right to human dignity, unable to recognize physical pain as a danger signal and to act accordingly. Even their immune system may be affected. In the absence of other persons to model their behavior on, with-

Children who have faced physical punishment will be unable to defend their right to human dignity.

out knowing or at least helping witnesses, these children will lack the language to express themselves when they grow up because adults will normally elect to keep suppressed feelings of powerlessness in a state of suppression.

Protection and respect for the needs of a child—that is surely something we ought to be able to take for granted. But we live in a world peopled by individuals who have grown up deprived of their own rights. As adults they then attempt to regain those rights by force (through blackmail, threats, "physical correction," and the use of weapons). Thousands of professors at hundreds of universities teach all manner of subjects, but there is not one single university chair for research into child abuse and cruelty to children.

How strange, when we recall that the majority of the people living on this earth are victims of precisely that kind of treatment!

As a priority commitment for the next decade, the United Nations has declared its allegiance to the implementation of "Education for Peace." This cannot be achieved by fine words alone. We need to set an example for our children as the people who will decide what the next generation will look like, and to show them that coexistence and communica-

tion without violence is possible. An ever greater number of parents are capable of setting this example and are aware of the far-reaching implications of their own behavior. Many of them agree that physical force against children should be banned by law. If this group succeeds in outlawing physical correction—as has already happened in nine European countries—then the next generation will grow up without spanking and beating, and that means growing up free of a legacy that can only set them off on a course that is fateful indeed. It is realistic to hope that this fact will lead to an increase in the number of knowing witnesses and a better world for us all. □



Union Reformation

Robert Fitch

Let me start out with an admission. If there ever was anyone who was oblivious—even hostile—to the issue of union corruption, it was me. Ten years ago, I was working as a consultant for the Communications Workers of America Local 1180, which represents many telephone company employees and municipal workers, on city economic development issues. We were promoting the idea of reviving the port of New York; I suggested one way to build a coalition was to support the candidacy of Lou Valentino, the head of the Brooklyn Longshoremen. Lou was running for an open seat on the city council. I got a big check to put in his hand that I walked over to him. As I crossed the threshold of the Longshoremen's Hall on Court Street, I noticed, carved in stone above the door, the words "The Anthony Anastasia Memorial Hall." Anthony was "Tough Tony." His brother, Albert Anastasia, was the head of Murder, Inc., "The Lord High Executioner." Together, they helped found the Gambino crime family. I remember thinking, "Well, that was a long time ago." But when I entered the hall, it was like a scene from a television show about the mob—women in big hair filing their nails. I went up the stairs; it was just a couple of days before the election. Lou was sitting there alone yelling into a phone, "Get me a dozen Puerto Ricans. And put them on a flatbed truck." He was busy but glad to see me. I gave him the check. We shook hands. I thought I'd won an ally. The next week, Wayne Barrett, an investigative reporter at the *Village Voice*, an alternative paper in New York City, exposed Lou's ties to organized crime. I was angry at Wayne. By writing about corruption, he was missing the big picture.

Now I'm seen as someone who is focusing on labor's little foibles instead of on its grand design. In 1998, when I began working on a story about sweatshops, I had no idea that UNITE (the Union of Needle Trades, Industrial and Textile Employees)—a merger of the old garment and textile workers union—was involved. A source told me that Kathy Lee clothes were being made in a particularly revolting garment factory, not in Central America or Saipan, but at 446 Broadway. That address is just doors from where UNITE was holding its Christmas of Conscience demonstration

Robert Fitch has been a union organizer, a union consultant, and a labor journalist for fifteen years.



against Guess?. It was the workers—who hadn't been paid in nearly twelve weeks—who told me that the sweatshop had a contract with UNITE.

Then I learned of Department of Labor documents which showed that while two-thirds of the garment shops in the city are sweatshops, three-quarters of UNITE's factories are in violation of wage, hour, and safety regulations; in other words, they are sweatshops according to the union's own standards. Further research showed that the business manager of Local 23-25, UNITE's largest local, was under investigation for shaking down garment bosses; and the two top leaders of Local 10, their flagship garment-cutters local, had been caught in a government sting taking bribes from factory owners to ignore the contract. Since then, a top UNITE official and a UNITE lawyer, as well as the former chief of organizing, have been caught on tape strategizing with Luchese crime family operatives about which garment shops to shake down.

Is this subject best left unwritten? Obviously, from the standpoint of Jo Ann Mort, UNITE's director of communications, who told a meeting of *Nation* staffers that none of what I'd written was true; yet in 1998, when UNITE's executive vice president Edgar Romney—who's on the FBI tape—wrote to the *Village Voice*, he didn't challenge any of my facts.

In the book she edited, *Not Your Father's Union Movement*, Mort herself writes about the need for "core positioning and message discipline." But this is not a strategy for journalists trying to find the truth or for reformers trying

to right what's wrong; it's the method of public relations consultants trying to create an image. "Message discipline" underpins UNITE's own strategy for presenting itself as a fighter against sweatshops with its highly successful campus campaigns against overseas garment makers. The fact is that the best move UNITE could make in the battle against sweatshops—if it wanted to protect its members, instead of just its image—would be simply to enforce its own contracts here in New York. UNITE has presided over the greatest collapse of labor standards in this century, while piling up more financial assets per member than any other union in the country. These assets allow six-figure socialists to maintain newly redecorated offices just off fashionable Fifty-seventh Street in Manhattan while union members work in deteriorating Chinatown shops.

It is hardly a coincidence that America has the weakest unions in the advanced capitalist world and the greatest income inequality. It goes without saying that a corrupt union is a bad union, one that will never be a school for solidarity. But a corrupt union will always be a weak union, too. And weak unions explain a great deal of what's wrong with this country's economy and its political system. A weak union means a weak welfare state. That's why Americans work longer hours, retire later, and take shorter vacations than the rest of the industrialized world. Child poverty here is ten times what it is in Finland. We are alone among advanced industrialized countries in failing to provide universal health care coverage.

If we could change America's unions, we could change America. Trade unionism is potentially the most important force in the world for justice, equality, and the dignity of ordinary people—as historian David Montgomery says, "for straightening people's backs." Through concerted action, individual sacrifice, and common courage, working people can challenge the injustice and inequality that comes with the capitalist territory. But today that challenge is weak because the brand of unionism that has triumphed is not the kind that's celebrated in the Wobbly songbooks.

"To talk about reforming the rotten, graft-infested unions which are dominated absolutely by the labor boss is as vain and wasteful of time as to spray a cesspool with attar of roses," Eugene Debs said in 1905. The problems are pretty much the same now as they were then, when Debs helped found the IWW as an alternative to the AFL: the Federation is still made up of a lot of fragmented, patronage-driven political machines, over-staffed and overpaid, tied to Democratic Party machines locally and the Democrats nationally.

In analyzing the reasons why our political system is marked by the world's highest cost and lowest voter turnout, political scientists talk about the decline of the party system, the rise of consultants, the spread of polls and

focus groups, and all that. But part of the reason labor can't hope to play an independent role in the political system, even at the local level, is that with the eclipse of the socialist left and the merger of the CIO into the AFL, unions no longer act as agencies for political participation for working people. They no longer mobilize, educate, activate. A lot of members don't even know they're members.

Supporters of the trade-union status quo will agree with some of this analysis. Some will acknowledge that weak unions and economic inequality go together. Privately, some are dissatisfied with a political role that's shrunk to little more than paying protection money to the Democrats. But nearly all agree that the reason unions are weak can be entirely explained by factors external to unions—the unfavorable regulatory environment, the courts, the National

Labor Relations Board, the culture of individualism, globalization, the strength of employer resistance, and so forth. Some blame labor's lack of aggressive organizing among workers, but all of them are missing the point. The basic structure, the internal organization of unions today, is fundamentally flawed.

A lot of unions could double their membership without increasing their strength. In New York City, for example, the problem isn't a shortage of paid members—almost 50 percent of eligible workers are members of UNITE and the percentages are even higher in municipal unions—it's that membership is mainly nominal. Unions are *designed* to minimize participation of the members and maximize opportunities for corruption of the leaders.

Labor movement officials are unanimous in thinking that the subject of corruption should not even be raised at all. As Rosa Luxemburg once observed, "Unlimited praise and boundless optimism are made the duty of every friend of the trade-union movement." These friends of labor raise three main objections to writing about corruption.

The first is that union leaders are no more corrupt than business leaders, so why pick on them? Here's why: in small business, particularly in the construction, trucking, garment, carting, and restaurant industries, bosses bribe trade-union leaders for many reasons: to protect themselves against the outbreak of strikes; to violate the contract; to hire nonunion workers; to skip pension and benefit contributions; to ignore safety regulations. Labor leaders in turn pay mobsters for protection and for the right to shake down bosses, splitting the proceeds they receive from the contractors.

Then there's big business. The corporate and banking elite are at the top of the capitalist food chain. That's why we call them the ruling class. I've seen figures that show that in a given decade, one-fifth of the Fortune 500 will be convicted of a serious crime. But how meaningful is it to call giant corporations "corrupt"? For something to have become

*If we could change
America's unions, we
could change America.*

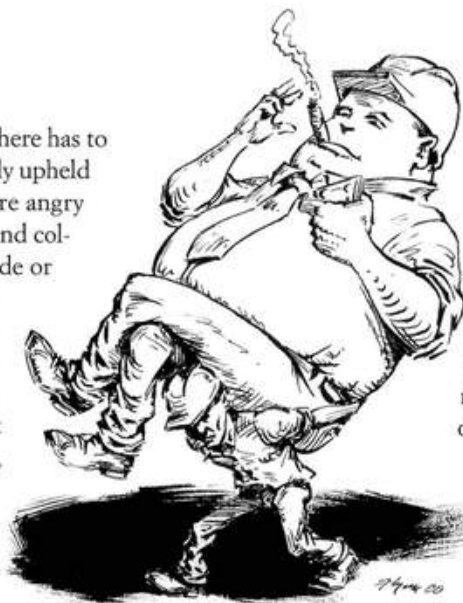
corrupt, it once had to have been good. There has to have been some deviation from a previously upheld standard of morality or justice. People are angry when they hear that Ford knew that rear-end collisions would cause the Mustang to explode or that Johns-Mansville knew how lethal asbestos was even as they pushed its use in schools and hospitals. But how many people felt betrayed? The corporations were simply delivering on their mandate to put the stockholders first. Unlike the unions, the corporations didn't sell out the people whose interests they were supposed to promote.

Corrupt corporate executives can hurt us only once. But because unions have stood for something besides the worship of the golden calf, union leaders can hurt us twice—first with the blow to our wallets and second with the blow to our hearts.

Another frequent objection to revelations of corruption is that indictments of union leaders are really just punishments for their militant actions. In 1996, for example, when a House subcommittee investigated the Clinton administration's extraordinary agreement to put mob associate Arthur A. Coia, Jr., in charge of the cleanup of his own union, the Laborers International Union of North America (LIUNA), AFL-CIO president John Sweeney was on hand to return the fire. Said Sweeney: "Laborers president Arthur Coia has been an acknowledged leader in fighting for change, for a stronger labor movement, and for cleaning up corruption wherever he could find it. That's why he was being attacked."

Actually, there's more to it than that. In 1994, Coia was the subject of a 212-page Justice Department complaint alleging that he and his father were longtime associates of the Patriarca crime family. In the early Eighties, father and son were indicted with the Patriarcas for ripping off a LIUNA dental plan. They escaped conviction only because the statute of limitations had run out. Coia even admitted that he became secretary treasurer of LIUNA only after seeking the approval of the Chicago mob boss Vincent Solano.

Is that all in the past? If you want an example of how far Coia's cleanup has gotten in LIUNA, download the audio tape of vice president Steven Manos being beaten last year at a meeting of Local 230 for protesting a union expenditure. It's at www.laborers.org. You can hear Manos' cries and Charlie LeConche, the head of the Connecticut LIUNA district council, telling him, "We own you," as Manos is thrown down the stairs. Afterwards, the man who beat him, Frank Freeman, was promoted to Manos' spot as vice president of



Union leaders can hurt us twice—first with the blow to our wallets and second with the blow to our hearts.

Local 230. International LIUNA vice president Vere Haynes was in the room, watching the beating. He never said a word. Later, LIUNA's General Executive Board attorney issued only a reprimand for this Hobbs act violation. Death threats, beatings, and even murder remain the ultimate methods of persuasion in the aftermath of the government's failed cleanup of LIUNA. Arthur Coia himself resigned in December 1999 as president of LIUNA to become the emeritus president for life at \$355,000 a year. His personal assistant succeeded him. Coia and the union had contributed \$3.2 million to the Clinton Democrats in the 1995–1996 election cycle.

The most effective charge against those who write about union corruption is that, whatever their truth, the consequences are bad: they help the bosses and demoralize trade unionists fighting the good fight inside the union. This general concern was well stated in

a pamphlet put out by the National Interfaith Committee on Worker Justice: "As wrong as union corruption is, it is unfortunate that union corruption receives so much front page media attention, compared to the important justice work done by unions to raise wages, benefits and working conditions for low-wage workers."

What's "unfortunate" is not what is in the media but what is in the shops; not the exposure of the conditions but the refusal of the union to fight them. The Department of Labor estimates that 75 percent of UNITE shops in New York City are sweatshops by the union's own definition: some members make as little as a dollar an hour, even though the contract calls for over \$9.00 an hour. There's even a system whereby the workers buy their checks to make it appear that they're getting the federal minimum wage. Typically, Chinatown workers put in ten and twelve-hour days, seven days a week. But after exposure by the *Village Voice* and a congressional investigation, UNITE publicly announced it was cracking down on Sunday work. And in the summer of 1999 the Department of Labor began to raid illegal UNITE shops. For the members, at least, media exposure produced better results than clerical sycophancy.

The point is to offer hope: to show that in these unions there really are two sides—the corrupt side and the reformers' side. The labor establishment insists that the voices of the corrupt leaders are the authentic voices of American

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AN INTERVIEW WITH Ed Koch

Jack Newfield

Ed Koch was mayor of New York City from 1978 through 1989. Since 1989 he has published twelve books and remains a high-profile public presence.

NEWFIELD: Mayor Koch, do you feel your views on race have evolved since you and I first met in 1962 or 1963?

KOCH: Absolutely. In 1964 I went to Mississippi and I represented young blacks and whites who were doing voter registration. Marion Wright [later Marion Wright Edelman] was in fact the chief lawyer in Jackson when I was there. I spent eight days there.

NEWFIELD: I think you wrote a piece for the *Village Voice* about it.

KOCH: Yeah. On three occasions I represented young men and women who were arrested for sitting-in and who had been savagely assaulted. They were being charged in criminal court for resisting arrest. It was quite an experience, very moving.

My involvement, as long as I've been in politics, has been in support of integration. I never believed in preferential racial treatment, which separated me from a number of people in the Democratic Party who did believe in it.

NEWFIELD: You mean affirmative action and/or quotas?

KOCH: Well, affirmative action is just a synonym for racial preferential treatment. I don't know of any affirmative action program that would do what I would accept, which is to reach out and encourage people to apply on their merits. Affirmative action is just a way of concealing what it is that you really want to do, which is to provide extra points for being black or Hispanic or a woman so as to give you preference over a white male. I'm against that.

I believe that you can have preferential treatment for poverty, and that would benefit blacks and Hispanics more than whites, but there are poor whites as well. In my book, you can't do it on the basis of race, ethnicity, or gender. Well, that's always provided somewhat of a problem for me

Jack Newfield is the author of six books and a columnist for the New York Post. His three-hour documentary film on Robert Kennedy aired on the Discovery Network.



in Democratic primaries and so forth. It's always been to me a miracle that I ever won a primary in New York City. A miracle! I would always win general elections, except for my first one, when I ran for the Assembly, and when I ran for governor, but primaries were always a real challenge because it brings out the left more than the middle-of-the-road or conservative Democratic voter. And, of course, I also lost the 1989 mayoral primary to David Dinkins.

NEWFIELD: And you felt racial preferences were more controversial than your support for capital punishment?

KOCH: I thought that both issues deserved attention. My opposition to racial preferences was not simply based on a question of fairness—[in that preferences were] excluding whites who were similarly situated (like Appalachian whites, to take a large group who are in poverty and lack education and so forth)—but I believed it was counterproductive. It created animosities that didn't have to exist.

NEWFIELD: Do you regret any decisions dealing with race that you made while mayor?

KOCH: I regret not taking sufficient time to explain it all to everybody—to my critics, who said we were harming minorities in particular when we closed Sydenham Hospital in 1980. I thought about Sydenham quite extensively over the years. My health people and my budget people came in and said, "Mayor, Sydenham is killing people. The hospital itself is antiquated from a building point of view. It has

steps to the emergency room, it has water in the basement. It's a terrible facility. But that's not as important as the fact that people are dying as a result of the care they get in Sydenham." I don't know whether it was apocryphal or not, but they said that no thoracic surgery had ever resulted in a living patient.

It was the most expensive per patient hospital in our whole system, which was in desperate need of money. And they said you have to close it down—for thirty years every mayor has said they're gonna close it, and then they gave in to the pressures of the black community because it was a symbol, it was the first black hospital, the first hospital that allowed black doctors as a matter of right when they were being excluded in the regular hospitals. And so it had enormous psychological, symbolic value.

NEWFIELD: And how do you feel about it now?

KOCH: It was the right thing to do, but I didn't explain it adequately. You know, if I wanted to go back and do things on the basis of, "Gee, more people will like me," then I would say, well, in retrospect, keep it open. It cost a great deal in support because the black community had been basically supportive of me. And that was a very important matter and when I was doing it I knew that I was giving up support that I otherwise had. But I thought I should do the right thing. Again, on reflection, I would say that somehow or other I didn't get the message across, and that's my fault.

NEWFIELD: Did the 1968 school strike have any emotional impact on your evolving views about race?

KOCH: In the case of the school strike I believed that the strike was wrong. I denounced the teachers for an illegal strike. I used the Taylor Law when I was mayor—very few mayors have used it. I don't believe that you can, with impunity, engage in an illegal strike. You can do it, but then you have to suffer the consequences. I'm not against non-violent civil disobedience. That's what the Taylor Law says you gotta pay for. And I required, when I was mayor, that those people who committed a violation of the Taylor Law pay the civil penalty. I don't believe you send people to jail for that. But you do fine them.

On the other hand, even though I said the teachers were absolutely wrong, I said to those people who wanted to break into the schools and open them up (you may recall that was one of the things that people were urging), I said, no, I'm not a lock-picker. I don't break into schools. I was the district leader at the time.

NEWFIELD: I remember talking to you and Dan Wolfe at this point, and my recollection is that you were very upset emotionally about the degree of anti-Semitism by a few black leaders in Oceanhill-Brownsville.

KOCH: There's no question about it. If the implication is that that made me hostile to blacks, not at all. But it cer-

tainly made me hostile to those who were anti-Semitic. I don't believe people should commit suicide. I'm against suicide. I don't believe that in pursuit of some goal of ending discrimination that you say, well, it's not important, you will allow anti-Semitism to take place, that maybe it has a role in rectifying past prejudices against blacks. I don't accept that.

NEWFIELD: I don't know anybody who does.

KOCH: I don't know about that. I wouldn't agree with you. I remember people saying, "Well, you shouldn't get upset about it. I mean, remember they suffered so much" (referring to blacks). I said, "No, I don't accept that." But that didn't make me hostile to blacks.

NEWFIELD: What about your views on civilian review of the police? Because I remember you volunteered at the ACLU for police brutality cases and you supported the civilian review board in the 1966 referendum.

KOCH: It was more than that. That is what I did when nobody was doing it; I was running for office, for the city council, and I made that the issue. I supported a civilian review complaint board. It went down in defeat, but I don't regret that at all. It was the right thing to do.

More recently, I have written many columns on the fact that blacks are injured and discriminated against by the criminal justice system. The jails now are 49 percent black, and there are about 2 million people in the jails and prisons. About half of them are black. The other horrifying statistic is that 29 percent of black males age twenty to twenty-nine are either in jail, on probation, or on parole.

I thought to myself, Ed, do something. What we are seeing is felons coming out of jail for nonviolent crimes—I'm only interested in the nonviolent, not the violent person—and they can't get jobs, they can't get married because they can't support a family, they lose their right to vote. It's just not right. All we are doing is creating this enormous pariah class. And aside from the injustice to them, there is the danger to the rest of us because, like it or not, people who don't have jobs, who don't have family ties, who are perceived as pariahs, they will become pariahs. That's why recidivism is so high.

We have programs that seek to divert people so they don't go to jail if they're first-offenders, and stuff like that, but we don't have any programs that deal with them after they come out and they have served their time. So I thought I'd come up with such a program. And I did. And the program provided basically the following: if, after you came out, you voluntarily entered a job program or you had a job and it was acceptable to the administration of this program; and you got your GED in the course of the year that you would be required to serve; and you went into alcohol or drug treatment programs if that applied to you; and after leaving that program, for another year you'd be monitored; and if

*I don't believe people
should commit suicide.
I'm against suicide.*

INTERVIEW

you never violated the program in terms of drugs, alcohol, or committing another crime, then you could apply for both a pardon and a sealing of your criminal records.

So about five years ago, maybe a little more, I sent this proposal around to a lot of groups, but primarily to the black groups because they would be the greatest beneficiaries of the program. I was shocked that nobody was interested in it. I sent it to the NAACP and the Black Caucus in Congress—you name the group, I sent it to them. They either didn't answer or they answered with a brush-off letter; very nice, you do that, we have other things that we're doing.

So I thought to myself, maybe it's because I'm white. I'll get a black partner. And I met Professor Charles Ogletree, Jr., a professor at Harvard Law School. I explained it all to him. He said, "I think it's good, I'd like to join with you." And now we sent the letters out again. Same answers. So it had nothing to do with my being white. They had their own agenda, which they thought was more important.

Well, I'm getting discouraged. I mean, you have so much energy. And so one day I was called by the Black Entertainment Network and they said, "We'd like you to come onto our program. It's a cooking program and you do the eating." Well, that sounds good. And then they said, "Now, Al Sharpton is gonna be there." I said, "It doesn't make any difference to me. I have no problem with that." My relationship with Al Sharpton goes back a very long time. In 1978 he came down to City Hall and he sat in in my office, wouldn't let people in and out. And I had him arrested. He remembers that—he always brings it up whenever we're together. And if he doesn't, I will.

NEWFIELD: When you were mayor, he was a harsh critic?

KOCH: He was, he was. About a year and a half before this he had called me. We had a rather extended conversation. I said to him, "Listen, Al, you're a black leader. But you'll never be more than a black leader, you'll never be a crossover leader, until you apologize for Tawana Brawley and admit that it was fraud on her part, and until you explain and apologize and ask forgiveness for anti-Semitic statements and anti-white statements you've made over the years."

Now, I haven't seen him until this television show. And I'm so desperate to get this [first-offender] program moving because I feel my energy is leaving me, I said to him, "Al, let



The lesser of two evils is something you often have to make a decision about when voting.

me tell you my problem. Maybe you can help me." I explained it and he said, "I'm seeing Jesse Jackson tonight, and if he says okay, I'll be with you."

Well, the next day he calls and says, "Mayor, I met with Jesse and his wife last night, and I told him what you said. Jesse said to me, 'You do what that man told you to do.'" He's referring to apologizing and so forth. Jesse went on, "I used to hate that man, but now we're friends."

Now we're working together [on the justice program] and we're getting support. The three of us, Sharpton, Ogletree, and myself, went to the Black Caucus in Washington. We're making a lot of progress.

NEWFIELD: I gather from the Peter Noel article in the *Village Voice* you still believe Reverend Sharpton is a demagogue.

KOCH: Yeah, but he's very smart and he's very able. And I believe he has enormous potential. And I believe that he will ultimately take my advice to apologize for the Brawley hoax. He keeps saying he's going to, and I believe he will.

NEWFIELD: Do you feel much guilt for endorsing Rudy Giuliani over David Dinkins for mayor in 1993?

KOCH: No, I have no guilt. The reason is very simple. I said I didn't think the City could survive another four years after Crown Heights with David Dinkins there. Nice man. Terrible mayor. I said that many, many times. Rudy. Good mayor in certain areas. Terrible person. The lesser of two evils is something you often have to make a decision about when voting. So I have no guilt.

NEWFIELD: Is there a unique dynamic, in your experience, between blacks and Jews, compared to blacks and whites?

KOCH: I know that there are people who say that. I don't accept that. I mean, I believe that what Jews have, to a greater extent than others, is a sense that we've been deprived; we've been subject to victimization, so we can understand it better than others who have not. And on that basis there would be an affinity. But I don't believe that Jews should separate themselves from other whites. I think we should work with blacks as equals. Not as, gee, we're gonna atone for somebody else's sin that we didn't commit. I don't accept that, which is what some Jews, consciously or unconsciously, do. They want to self-flagellate. I'm not a self-flagellator.

NEWFIELD: Thank you.

"Democracy" in Mexico

Scott Sherman

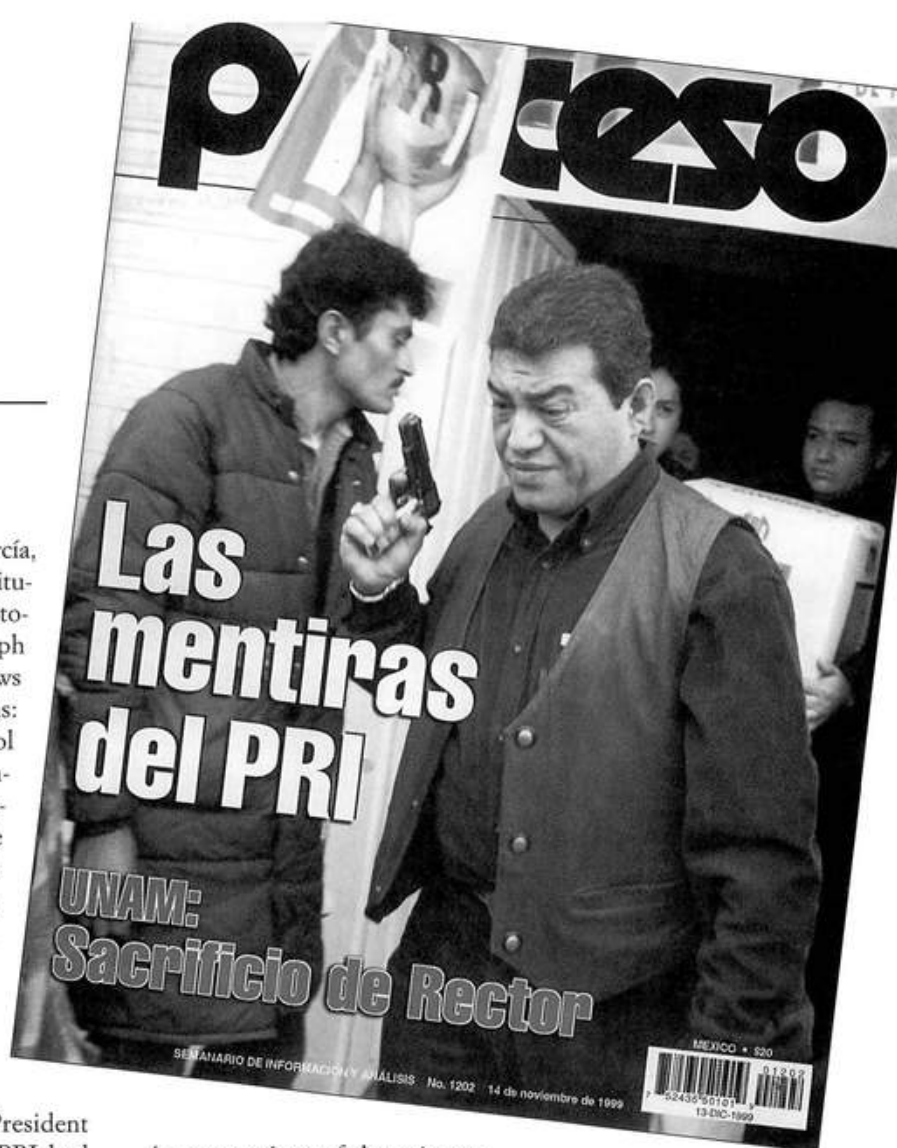
In the middle of November, Héctor Laug García, an obscure mid-level functionary in the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), leapt to notoriety across Mexico when his photograph appeared on the cover of the country's leading news magazine, *Proceso*. And what a photograph it was: Laug García is shown with his silver-plated pistol drawn, leading several lackeys out of a polling station in the city of Puebla, carrying a ballot box containing votes cast for a dissident candidate in the PRI's first-ever presidential primary, held on November 7, 1999. The image, accompanied by a headline entitled "The Lies of the PRI," triggered a political firestorm, and Laug García, a high-ranking PRI official in Puebla state, was forced to resign a few days after *Proceso* hit the streets.

Pistols? Stolen ballot boxes? Electoral fraud? Such things are supposed to be part of the PRI's ignoble and sordid past, not its present. When President Ernesto Zedillo announced in March that the PRI had decided to jettison the *dedazo*, or big finger—the long-standing ritual in which the sitting president appoints his successor—in favor of an unprecedented open primary, the international response was immediate and effusive. "Moving to a broad-based national primary will contribute to a healthy opening of Mexican political life," gushed a *New York Times* editorial, which concluded that "Mr. Zedillo is well on his way to building a legacy as the president who brought real democracy to Mexico after decades of manipulated candidates and fraudulent elections."

A similar perspective shaped the *Times*' news coverage of the primary itself. "The vote," the *Times*' Mexico correspondent, Julia Preston, wrote from Mexico City on election day, "was regarded across the political spectrum as a historic advance toward democracy in Mexico." Her story contained vague references to accusations of fraud, but its general tone was decidedly upbeat. "They are not imposing leaders anymore," Preston quoted one young voter as saying. "They are letting us decide."

Proceso and the *Times* put forth radically different

Scott Sherman has written on Mexico for the Los Angeles Times, Newsday, and The Nation.



interpretations of the primary, and one of these accounts is presumably wrong. What happened in Mexico on November 7? Was the primary a "democratic advance," as the *Times* insisted? Or was it, as *Proceso* argued, just another lamentable footnote to the PRI's history of deceit and chicanery?

It is unwise to discuss the PRI primary without first considering a set of essential questions: What *is* the PRI? How has it sustained itself as the world's oldest ruling party, one that has clung to power since 1929? How is it structured? What is the internal logic by which it operates? In 1969, reflecting on the PRI's fortieth anniversary, Octavio Paz provided succinct answers to these questions, and his views are still relevant. "It is not a political organization in the proper sense of the term," Paz wrote in his book *The Other Mexico*. "It is a bureaucratic organism that performs political-administrative functions. Its principal mission is political domination, not by physical force but by the control and manipulation of the people through the bureaucracies that direct the labor unions and the associations of the peasants and the middle class." But Paz concluded that the party is also "an organ for exploring the conscience of the people and their tendencies and aspirations," and in

the process illuminated both the PRI's flexibility and sophistication, and its parasitic tendency.

By ignoring the historical specificity of the PRI, and by treating it like any other political party competing in elections, the international press missed the real story of the November 7 election. Most foreign correspondents and think-tank denizens were taken in by the trappings of what appeared to be a "free" election: the U.S.-style debates among the four PRI aspirants, whose efforts are aimed at the presidential elections in summer 2000; the sleek voter registration cards; the razor-sharp TV commercials; the snappy campaign jingles; the huge rallies; the avalanche of leaflets and posters. In fact, the entire proceeding was a simulated performance, a grotesque pantomime, intended to convey an atmosphere of democratic change and effervescence. The international community fell into the trap, while the PRI tacticians rejoiced.

In Mexican political circles, however, there were few illusions about the primary—or about the inevitable victory of Zedillo's hand-picked successor, former Interior Minister Francisco Labastida Ochoa, a loyal custodian of the system for three decades. Indeed, in the months leading up to the primary, it was widely understood, on the left and the right, that the *dedazo* had simply assumed a more insidious form, and that the primary was a farce. A few weeks before the vote, in his weekly column in the widely read daily *Reforma*, independent Senator Adolfo Aguilar Zinser, an influential member of the opposition, spoke for many when he noted that "Labastida was chosen by the governing elite and anointed by Ernesto Zedillo. To legitimate him they designed a primary whose inevitable result is his triumph."

Before the vote, Zedillo insisted that all four candidates would compete on a level playing field, but the process was rigged from the start in Labastida's favor: the powerful, semi-official TV networks fawned over him; the PRI elite rushed to embrace him; and the electoral rules were designed to guarantee his election. For instance, victory did not go to the candidate with the greatest number of votes, but rather to the contender who captured a majority of electoral districts—a rule designed to neutralize independent-minded voters in the capital while favoring the PRI machine, whose real strength is in the provinces and rural areas. Indeed, winning elections is what the PRI does best: thirty years after Paz's analysis, the party, despite important gains by the opposition in recent years, still controls nearly every popular organization and trade union, as well as a huge cross section of the poor. By mobilizing and directing these constituencies on election day, the PRI becomes an unstoppable machine whose millions of members march in lockstep.

Victory did not go to the candidate with the greatest number of votes, but rather to the contender who captured a majority of electoral districts

I myself witnessed a blunt demonstration of its strength on November 2, when the PRI bused tens of thousands of militants to downtown Mexico City for Labastida's massive closing rally. Most of the participants, who belong to the PRI's various unions and organizations, had no choice but to attend the extravaganza, where their task was to shout slogans for the official candidate and allow themselves to be photographed by the press. Labastida's advisors knew they had the full weight of the system on their side, which is why they boasted to reporters a few days before the vote: "This election was over a month ago."

The three other candidates, however, complained loudly every step of the way, denouncing the entire process as "a sham." But they were powerless to stop the party apparatus. In the weeks and months leading up to the election, PRI officials at every level bribed voters with cash, chickens, cement, and bicycles. On November 7, the PRI not only mobilized a colossal army of 800,000 volunteers to get out the vote for Labastida, but fell back on all the old tricks: PRI supporters were trucked to the polls; independent-minded voters were hounded and threat-

ened; and poll workers were bribed with cash from mysterious envelopes. Labastida's vanquished rivals documented electoral fraud all over the country, and noted countless irregularities in the voting. For instance, in a large number of polling stations, the number of marked ballots vastly exceeded the number of registered voters—an old gimmick in the PRI's book.

These tactics enabled Labastida to win a crushing victory: he obtained 272 districts, while his nearest rival, Roberto Madrazo, who ran a bare-knuckled insurgent campaign, received only 21. The entire purpose of the primary was to unify the party for next year's elections. The strategy was successful, but the dirty tricks enraged powerful sectors of the PRI rank and file. "This was the biggest fraud in the history of the country," one livid Madrazo supporter told *Proceso* a few days after the vote. (That legitimate anger was nowhere to be found on television, which broadcast propaganda footage of Labastida and his family in the days after the vote.) The opposition took a similar view. In a post-election interview with the press, the leader of the conservative National Action Party (PAN), Luis Felipe Bravo Mena, assailed the primary as a "farce," while Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, the presidential candidate of the center-left Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) remarked: "There was no surprise, because Labastida was the candidate chosen by Zedillo many months ago. The only surprise is that he didn't win 100 percent of the districts." So much for Julia Preston's assertion in the *Times* that the vote was "regarded across

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Fighting Corporate Globalization: After Seattle

A TIKKUN Roundtable

The world is still reverberating from the wonderful moment in December 1999 when demonstrators in Seattle confronted the World Trade Organization and challenged corporate globalization. Though cheerleaders for globalization, like New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman, dismissed the demonstrations as misguided, many political leaders have already acknowledged the movement's demands that globalization include environmental protections and workers' and human rights. The growing movement for worldwide ecological and social justice the Seattle demonstrations represented may well signal the defining politics of this new century. So we asked eight of the people whose thinking, organizing, and writing was foundational for what happened in Seattle to think together about strategies for the future.

TIKKUN: What should be the strategic focus for those who wish to challenge the worst aspects of globalization? TIKKUN has been discussing a Social Responsibility Amendment (SRA) to the U.S. Constitution which would require any corporation operating in the United States, whether located here or abroad, to receive a new corporate charter every twenty years. That charter would only be granted if the corporation could prove an acceptable record of social responsibility (to the environment, to its own workers, and to the larger community of people impacted by its products and advertising) as measured by an Ethical Impact Report. The struggle for such an amendment, even if the SRA never passed, would transform public debate and would give

support to those inside the corporate world who want a greater level of corporate social responsibility. This is part of our larger strategy to change the bottom line in American society by changing the definition of productivity and efficiency so that it would include maximizing not only material well-being and power, but also the degree to which any institution or social practice encourages people's capacities to be loving, caring, ethically/spiritually/ecologically sensitive and to respond to the universe with awe and wonder.

That is our sense of a strategy. What's yours?

HAZEL HENDERSON: There are five interacting levels for our strategic focus:

1. The global level. We should be promoting global



Peter Bleyer is executive director of the Council of Canadians, a national citizens group based in Ottawa which has mobilized Canadians against destructive aspects of globalization (613-722-4824). John Cavanagh is director of the Institute for Policy Studies and coauthor with Thea Lee and Sarah Anderson of the Field Guide to the Global Economy. Paul Hawken is author of Ecology of Commerce and Natural Capitalism. Randy Hayes is president of the Rainforest Action Network (415-398-4404). Hazel Henderson is a futurist economist, author of Building a Win/Win World and Beyond Globalization. Marjorie Kelly is editor of Business Ethics magazine. David Korten is author of When Corporations Rule the World and The Post-Corporate World. Fran Korten is executive director of the Positive Futures Network and publisher of Yes: A Journal of Positive Futures. Thea Lee is assistant director of public policy for the AFL-CIO. Lori Wallach is director of Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch and one coordinator of the group that sponsored the Seattle demonstrations.

ROUNDTABLE

standards, eco-labels, corporate codes of conduct, the global reporting initiative, and an alternative global media. I'm involved in building a global television network called WETV; we are in thirty-one countries now, bartering time from existing stations so as to promote programming that addresses local and global solutions to globalization. We have private investors, and NGOs who promote us get stock options. We need such public/private civic partnerships to build a platform for an alternative media.

2. The national level. Focus on tax-shifting—shifting taxes from payrolls and incomes to pollution and resource depletion. Shifting the formula of gross national product to focus on quality of life. Get the central banks to block speculation in money by creating fully regulated, transparent markets for currency.

3. The corporate level. Encourage socially responsible investing—which has already reached the level of \$2.2 trillion in the United States alone. Also, we need a “truth in advertising” set-aside: reduce the tax deductibility of corporate advertising and set aside funds for an agency that could produce counter-ads to challenge misleading corporate advertising or products that are ecologically or socially irresponsible.

4. Local governments, acting with local groups and businesses, can sometimes prevent large multinationals from coming into a community and putting local companies out of business.

5. Personal action. Lifestyle changes in consumption.

PAUL HAWKEN: I'm concerned about globalization in any form that it occurs, even when seemingly aimed at social responsibility. For example, the Global Reporting Initiative is an effort by NGOs and some 160 corporations to report on environmental issues. A year ago, they decided to call this effort a report on sustainability—so we now have corporations like General Motors and Coca Cola meeting to set sustainability standards for the world. This is a disaster, representing the usurpation of language and the sustainability initiative for an agenda set by multinationals.

On the other hand, I wonder if we can adequately deal with globalization without a global strategy. For years, we've been saying “Think globally, act locally.” Perhaps we made a big mistake with that saying, and we should have been acting globally a long time ago. In the same way, I wonder how to deal with the conflict between trying to slow down the frenetic pace generated by the corporate world on the one hand, and our need to act faster in order to save the environment on the other. If we speed up our own processes, haven't we given in to one of the very things we need to fight? But if we stay slow, won't we be increasingly ineffective?

DAVID KORTEN: The WTO protests highlighted the extent to which the whole range of labor, health, human

rights, and environmental issues that people care about are trade related. In each instance these trade-related issues fall within the existing mandate of the United Nations. It makes no sense to develop the WTO and the United Nations as competing global governments. The logical action is to close the undemocratic, single-issue WTO and bring responsibility for regulating global trade and investment in the human and environmental interest under the relatively more open and democratic United Nations.

We also need to get the question of ownership on the agenda. The present system of global capitalism institutionalizes an extreme form of absentee ownership that concentrates decision-making power and systematically separates it from the people affected. Democracy will remain a sham until we create an equitable system of “stake-holder” ownership that

distributes economic power and links financial interests with the interests of people and communities of place.

THEA LEE: We need to change the rules of the global economy. A lot of the incentive for violating labor standards or undermining environmental regulations comes from the trading rules that currently exist. The ferocity we face just talking about core labor standards at the WTO indicates that the violation of core labor standards and repression of voices of workers around the world is key to what's wrong with the global economy.

We in the American labor movement see the strong connection between the global and the local: the rights American workers exercise to form unions, create decent material well-being for themselves, and have political influence will all be undermined if workers around the globe don't get similar rights. We've put a lot of energy into building alliances and connections with trade unionists around the world and we've been very successful. But after Seattle we now have a clearer sense of the importance of building those ties with progressive forces including religious groups, human rights groups, and anti-poverty groups.

We have a grassroots strategy and an electoral strategy. We hope to elect public officials who are open to these issues. We need to work with grassroots organizations all around the world. Unless we can alter the way that our voices are heard in the international arena, it won't make much difference if the decisions are being made by the WTO or the UN.

LORI WALLACH: We need to educate and organize people to demand changes in the current corporate economic globalization paradigm. The “WTO: No New Round, Turnaround” mobilization that culminated in Seattle in December 1999 aimed to clarify that the specific form of globalization being enacted by the WTO is not an act of God but a carefully planned scenario—a scenario that is not inevitable, is unacceptable, and must be challenged.

*To the WTO we say:
prove you can bend,
or you will be broken.*

There are basically three paradigms for what happens next:

1. If the few interests benefiting from the status quo continue their stubborn inflexibility, poor countries may eventually begin to ignore these rules, perhaps after Chiapas-like uprisings driven by hunger and lethal deprivation. Rich countries will begin to implode the rules when their own publics hit a political boiling point over some particularly outrageous WTO or NAFTA ruling. Even before this we may see a financial meltdown based on the system's deep, structural flaws.

2. Alternatively, the system could be transformed so that corporations must follow environmental, labor, human rights and other public interest rules in order to obtain trade benefits and gain market access. Current patent laws function in this way today—and show why it's just nonsense when corporations say that having these kinds of rules would make it impossible to have an international market. But there are major problems to this paradigm: First, who will make these rules and who will enforce them? Second, inherent in any international rules-making is a democracy deficit and an undermining of local democratic decision-making. Third, how can a system of international laws be fairly applied to countries at different stages of development?

3. Another approach is to drastically prune back the WTO's coverage and power. In this scenario, as long as each country treats its local producers, services, and products the same as imports and foreign investors, each country is free to set its own rules. This paradigm preserves and enhances local democracy, but is inherently unequal in application, since rich countries exert more leverage over corporations than poor countries.

Some argue that the ideal paradigm would be for each country to enforce international standards at their own borders. That would set the conditions for market access while still allowing individual countries to set different local standards. One thing is clear—no matter which policy paradigm is pursued, an enormous amount of continued education and organizing is required. First, we must continue to halt WTO expansion. Second, the country-based coalitions that worked on the "WTO: No New Round, Turnaround" campaign are now planning the next international joint effort, perhaps a "WTO Fix It or Nix It" campaign. Either the WTO makes major substantive and procedural changes before its Ministerial Summit eighteen months from now, or the international NGO networks will launch campaigns in countries around the world to defund the WTO or to withdraw from it. To the WTO we say: prove you can bend, or you will be broken.

FRAN KORTEN: Most Americans don't even know what the WTO is. We were incredibly successful through the Seattle demonstrations in raising awareness, so that now 10–15 percent of the population knows that there are a lot

(continued on page 48)

The Foundation for Ethics and Meaning, the New York Open Center, TIKKUN magazine, and an incredible group of co-sponsoring organizations invite you to the conference to kick off the new millennium:

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In April 1996 TIKKUN magazine and the Foundation for Ethics and Meaning convened the first National Summit on Ethics and Meaning in Washington DC. A truly "historic conference" and "gathering of the tribes," its message of hope and solidarity, political and spiritual renewal still echoes for its 1,800 attendees. In the wake of last November's WTO protests the issues that motivated the Summit have become even more critical; the corrupting influence of big money, pseudo-partisan politics, and the failure to address the globalization juggernaut and the long-term environmental health of the planet, all reveal a continuing emptiness of spirit at the center of political power that cries out for meaningful change and renewal.

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FIGHTING CORPORATE GLOBALIZATION (cont. from page 31)

of people who don't like what it does. But we are in the beginning stages of raising consciousness about globalization and corporate power's implications for daily lives. One of the most important things we can do at this stage is to continue the momentum people felt in Seattle. There is now a hunger among a significant minority to learn more about these issues. For example, faith-based institutions are developing study groups on these issues. These religious institutions have a staying power that makes it possible for them to have a very important impact over some course of time.

One place to raise these issues is by focusing on genetically modified organisms, an issue that helps people understand how the power of corporations can actually affect their own bodies. As people become aware that they can't know what they are eating, they become motivated to question corporate power.

PETER BLEYER: The Seattle demonstrations were a very important step toward building the kind of movement we need to challenge the worst aspects of globalization. We saw an incredible diversity in the participants, not only the oft-quoted example of environmentalists dressed as turtles walking with steelworkers, but a mix of generations and geographies. We also witnessed multiple forms of engagement, ranging from carefully constructed arguments by insiders drawing on their years of expertise to mass non-confrontational marches to disruptive civil disobedience—all of which was critical.

The process of movement building itself is essential—the process of democratic decision making, argumentation about alternative strategy and tactics, exploration of the best way to put forward our perspective—all contribute to the development of a consciousness, which is part of our goal.

MARJORIE KELLY: Globalization is not the source of the problem. The source of the problem is our society's value structure which puts the needs of those who possess capital above all other needs. This value system expresses itself in the structure of the corporation, where stockholders can claim the increasing value of the corporation when they've done little to create it. Half of all stock is owned by one percent of the population, so talk about democratizing ownership is very misleading. Seventy-five percent of people own no stock or less than \$10,000 worth of stock.

Corporations leap national boundaries with the same value system. So, for example, they say "protecting our patents is more important than keeping medicine in the public realm to advance public health." And the WTO endorses that. The needs of capital come first.

In a way this is a form of discrimination comparable to racism or sexism: it says that the interests of one group

(those with capital) take precedence over the interests of any other group. TIKKUN's suggestion of chartering goes right to the heart of this problem. Corporations are not some naturally existing beings, but a human construct that we created but are no longer able to control. I think periodic chartering is vital, though I'm not sure that federal chartering is the best place to start, because all corporations today are chartered at the state level.

I don't, however, think we want to change chartering in ways that merely give instructions like "don't pollute" or "pay fair wages." Rather, we need chartering that implements structural change and gives a democratic voice to employees for internal decision making. Employees should have a vote in the corporation and they shouldn't have to own property in order to vote (since that would just reinforce the message that only property owners should have a vote). Externally, the community should have a voice in the chartering process itself.

We have to remember that globalization is a fever, but the problem is the underlying infection—a system that puts the needs of capital above all other needs.

JOHN CAVANAGH: What was particularly striking about Seattle and made it possible was that different constituencies came together to challenge the WTO, but each organized with a different focus—students protesting against sweatshops, environmentalists concerned with the WTO's anti-environmental moves, the religious community's call for a release of Third World debt (the Jubilee), the labor movement's demand for the right to organize, etc. It was extremely important that people had the experience of actually succeeding in stopping something which they could have only accomplished by being there together—even though they did not necessarily understand each other's issues. We have enormous strength in these movements, particularly when they function across national borders and speak for the two-thirds of the world that has been marginalized and in many cases hurt by the process of globalization. We need to find other opportunities to pull these forces together again.

I think it is realistic, if we hold this array of groups together, that we could achieve a real reduction in the power of the WTO, significant debt-reduction for Third World countries, and changes in the International Monetary Fund. One other encouraging thing about Seattle: the tremendous surge of youth power and the potential of this kind of struggle to pull in young people.

THEA LEE: In polls taken after Seattle, 70 to 90 percent of the American public said that they believe human rights, labor rights, and environmental standards should be part of

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any trade agreements with other countries. But given the power of money to shape the agenda of the major parties, these issues have not gained a foothold in mainstream politics. On the congressional level, where people are closer to their constituencies and where the impact of plant closings is felt more directly, we have had a big impact (and thus been able to defeat "fast-track" twice). The further removed people get from their constituents, the less these issues resonate.

RANDY HAYES: It will be important to see if these constituencies get mobilized around the Republican and Democratic national conventions this summer.

JOHN CAVANAGH: I'm feeling optimistic about the globalization movement. Often, when different sectors get together they are all affected in different ways, speaking different languages, so it's harder to get a unified focus. Yet this movement has a much greater potential than many past movements because corporate-led economic globalization does affect people in so many different ways. There *is* no single leadership. We need to be patient: we are fostering something that will really be new—a mass movement that cuts across sectors and across borders.

MARJORIE KELLY: It is a problem, though, that people in these movements are not yet defining for themselves an overarching vision. We are fighting the same fight that was fought against the robber barons in the late 1800s—only people then knew who their enemy was, they knew it was capital and aristocratic wealth. That system has now learned to hide itself behind names like "free trade" and "free market." We don't actually have a free market—we have a corporate controlled economy. The fraudulent suggestion here is that there are all these equal players freely competing and the best and smartest win.

I don't think corporations are inherently bad, but what is bad about them is that they only give a vote to the needs of capital and not to the needs of others who are affected by economic decisions. Our task is to strip away the disguise.

HAZEL HENDERSON: The economics profession, often well paid by corporate-sponsored foundations, has functioned as a kind of thought police on these issues, making it seem difficult to even use the word "capitalism" or other words which suggest the problem in the notion of a "free market."

FRAN KORTEN: And that's part of what excited people so much in Seattle—the ability to talk about corporate globalization allowed people to give a name to the problem they were protesting. There are two clear themes in this discussion: policy initiatives and movement building.

PETER BLEYER: The WTO has done a tremendous amount of damage to the environmental, social, and economic fabric of our world. But its very existence has helped reveal the need for an equally broad-based global people's movement to set a new course.

DAVID KORTEN: I believe the most central theme bringing people together in Seattle was the sense that we have



lost control, that democracy and human rights have been taken out of our hands. And the demonstration helped ignite a feeling of people around the globe that we may be able to regain control.

PAUL HAWKEN: We are in the most spectacular gilded age of all history—a huge bubble, and historically these bubbles always burst. When that happens people who are numb today will be shocked, and that will create a new openness. We have to be prepared with alternatives for that moment.

JOHN CAVANAGH: I don't think this movement has to wait for any major breakdown. Opinion polls indicate that a majority of people are already with us on many important issues—they are against NAFTA and the WTO, they think corporations are too powerful, they were sympathetic to the protestors in Seattle. The key challenge is to change this support into political power. This year's work around the International Monetary Fund and debt cancellation are important if they can bring people together.

THEA LEE: What's wrong with globalization is that it erodes people's decision-making power. The environmental movement gets at this when it talks about the way globalization undermines the decisions people have made on

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local levels to try to protect the environment. The labor movement talks about this in terms of empowering workers to raise their voice effectively in the workplace—including freedom of association, the right to bargain collectively, and opposition to forced labor, child labor, and discrimination.

MARJORIE KELLY: We've democratized politics but we've not yet democratized economics, which still functions by the same values that the monarchy used to function by. We need to democratize corporations. We should argue that corporations are partially a piece of property which can be owned, but partially also a human community which cannot be owned and which must be democratic. So a merger or downsizing should require democratic participation.

RANDY HAYES: We aren't that close to democracy politically in the United States. We are actually more like a "democracy theme park." Campaign finance reform is critical.

JOHN CAVANAGH: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is the one document people most refer to as their common ground—and democracy is certainly one important part of that. People in our movements are also concerned about ecological sustainability, food safety, a strong favoring of the local, and cultural, biological and economic and social diversity. These are complex, but

*Globalization of spirit
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so too is the world we seek to build.

PAUL HAWKEN: As powerful a motivator as democracy is, it's not a total solution to the problems we face. You can have democratic countries that are greedy, selfish, and materialistic. Democracy needs to be deeply nested in transcendent values.

HAZEL HENDERSON: We need to talk of earth ethics and responsibility.

TIKKUN: This is why we at TIKKUN talk about the need for a new bottom line so that productivity and efficiency are defined not only in terms of maximizing money or power, but also in terms of maximizing people's capacities for ethical, spiritual and ecological sensitivities, their capacity to be loving and caring. No matter how powerful the movements assembled in Seattle may become, they will never succeed in fundamentally challenging the power of capital until they begin to broaden the definition of

what they are for to include this spiritual goal, a change not only in who has power but in our vision of what we value. In our view, globalization of spirit may be the most effective counter to the globalization of capital.

DAVID KORTEN: The deeper issue is transforming a society dedicated to the love of money to a society dedicated to the love of life. □

"DEMOCRACY" IN MEXICO (continued from page 28)

the political spectrum as a historic advance toward democracy in Mexico."

For millions of Mexicans in the opposition, the most important political story of 1999 was not the PRI primary, but the protracted negotiations throughout the late summer and early fall between the PAN and the PRD to create an opposition alliance for the July 2000 elections. The PRI controls approximately 40 percent of the electorate in presidential elections, while the PAN, PRD, and a series of small satellite parties divide the rest. A PAN-PRD coalition, therefore, is the best way to break the PRI's seventy-year stranglehold on power, and polls showed that 60 percent of the population supported the concept of a left-right alliance.

In the end, it was not to be: the immense ideological malice between the PRD and the PAN, who occupy opposite ends of the political spectrum, and the difficulty of choosing a single presidential candidate doomed the negotiations in late September and guaranteed Labastida's election in 2000. Many analysts angrily blamed the PAN, which pulled out of the talks, for the outcome; others affirmed that Cárdenas, who resigned as Mexico City's mayor, is determined to make his third run for the presidency, even though his standing in the polls is no more than 12 percent. Writing in *Reforma*, Adolfo Aguilar Zinser called the oppo-

sition stalemate "the failure of the century," and focused his ire on the intransigence of both the PAN and the PRD: "In spite of its failure, sooner or later an opposition alliance will prove to be a necessity. One hopes that when it does come to pass, the political opposition in this country will be led by those who have the maturity, the generosity, the political skill, and the patriotism to attain it."

And Héctor Laug García? An investigation by *Proceso* unearthed a lengthy history of thuggish behavior. In a municipal election in Puebla in 1998, for instance, journalists found him in the streets buying votes for 300 pesos each, and he responded by threatening the reporters and seizing their camera.

In spite of his activities on November 7—stealing ballot boxes and pointing his pistol at voters—Laug García appears to be in no immediate danger, because federal and state officials told *Proceso* they have no plans to prosecute him. The smug foreign correspondents who produced sonorous accounts of the PRI's "historic advance toward democracy" have thus far evinced little interest in Laug García's case, but the Mexican opposition, with considerable justification, views it as an ominous portent: "If this type of behavior occurred during the PRI's internal elections," a high-ranking member of the PAN nervously remarked to *Proceso*, "what is going to happen in next year's presidential elections?" □

Judaism and Corporations

Lawrence Bush and Jeffrey Dekro

The talmudic sage Rabbi Shimon bar Yohai would have fit right in with the small, window-smashing faction in the Seattle demonstrations against the World Trade Organization last November.

As the Talmud tells it, Shimon despised the material achievements of the Romans, who dominated Israel. The Romans built markets, he complained, simply in order to sell slaves; bath houses simply to commingle with prostitutes; roads and bridges simply to move their armies and facilitate conquest.

Faced with arrest for his words, Shimon ended up hiding in a cave for thirteen years.

When he finally emerged, he saw a farmer plowing a field. The rabbi's rage at the sight of someone participating in "the system" was so hot that the farmer was incinerated! Several more working people were similarly reduced to ash before a heavenly Voice interceded: *has Shimon left his cave only to turn the world to chaos?*

The Voice of Judaism does not favor chaos. The "settling of the world"—economic development—is a fundamental good in Judaism, a sign of our partnership with God in the ongoing creation of the world. It is no coincidence that Judaism assigns the same Hebrew word *avodah* to mean "labor" and "worship."

Yet the alternative to chaos envisioned by our tradition is not the WTO's goal of a smooth-running global economy in which local environmental concerns, labor issues, political and religious preferences, and economic development needs are given short shrift. *Judaism's alternative to chaos is not cogworks but covenant*: the recognition of our awesome responsibility to create justice as well as wealth in this interdependent world.

Jewish law bids us always to mix compassion with our economics, based on our harsh memory of slavery in Egypt. Recognizing that our economic activities are driven not by idealism but by the *yetzer hara*, the *evil* (or lustful) inclination (without the *yetzer hara*, holds the Midrash, no one would build a house or have children or work for a living), Judaism seeks to sanctify and turn this inclination towards socially positive acts. (Hasidism goes even further, contending that God's own Face may be found through the relational encounters the marketplace offers.) In macroeconomic terms, the

Torah of Money combines marketplace principles with elements of distributive economics, embodied in the mitzvah of *tzedakah* and based on the conviction that "the Earth belongs to God" (Psalm 24)—that wealth is the collective product of humanity, not the privileged entitlement of one narrow sector.

Many aspects of contemporary corporate economy and culture violate this and other fundamental Jewish principles:

- The grossly excessive compensation earned by corporate executives trespasses against Judaism's opposition to decadent luxury, which the tradition links to moral degradation: the sins of Sodom, for example, were sins bred from overabundance (its land grew loaves of bread and its dust was gold, says the Talmud, yet the city's laws and customs bled the poor and the stranger).

- The legal and moral separation between corporations and their managers and owners is not acceptable within Judaism. As Rabbi Meir Tamari argues in *The Challenge of Wealth*, Jewish law places restrictions on the limited liability concept and does not morally accept "the separation of ownership from control and management," by which "the corporation enables shareholders and directors alike to evade responsibility for the ethical issues facing its operations."

- Exploitation of workers, heedless polluting, the economic abandonment of communities, manipulative advertising, and other everyday features of the corporate world represent transgressions of Jewish law, which places many controls on economic enterprise in the name of the community's well-being. Management decision-making based not on a "stakeholder" philosophy but on the narrowest definition of "the bottom line" is unacceptable. As the Talmud slyly puts it: "There is the story of a man who was clearing stones out of his domain and throwing them into the public domain. A pious man, seeing him, said to him, 'Wretch, why do you remove stones from a domain that is not yours to a domain that is yours?'"

The great achievement of the Seattle demonstrators was to bring corporations back onto the political radar screen of the American people, who have been led by two decades of conservative bombast to view "big government," rather than unregulated corporate power, as "the problem." To build a movement to regulate that power will require the mobilization of many values-based traditions—populist, socialist, environmental, communitarian, Catholic Worker, and so on. Judaism's Torah of Money should not be least among these sources of humanized alternatives to WTO capitalism. □

Lawrence Bush and Jeffrey Dekro are the authors of Jews, Money and Social Responsibility. They can be reached at info@shefafund.org.

Making Judaism Cool

Jonathan Schorsch

I sit listening to the newest and skankiest dub beat, bass thumping, high reverb shimmering, cool horns sliding around the syncopation, the chorus droning:

Slaughter, slaughter, they want to slaughter 'em
Slaughter, slaughter, watch out murderer.

The "em" is slurred enough to be "us." The singer drawls in deep Jamaican accents, the words strobe-lighted by the heavy reverb:

I want to tell you sometin about my granfader,
my granfader was a concentration camp survivor
taken from his home in the Second World War
separated from his family by the Nazis mister
and herded like an animal into a cattle car.

Is this some Rasta philosemite? No, only a recent CD by a collection of New York's hottest Jewish musicians. Doing the Holocaust as Jamaican dub, it struck me, marked the quintessence of a near decade of making Judaism cool.

Already in the mid-1990s, when living in Jerusalem, I noticed that the ultra-religious radio stations played all sorts of updated songs that were little more than covers of tunes from cool genres—usually from Africa or its diaspora—with words from the Bible or the like. The last decade has also witnessed the rise of the heavy metal Hasidic rock of Yossi Piamenta, the Jewish rap of Blood of Abraham, Rebbe Soul, the New Orleans Klezmer All-Stars, and the whole Lower East Side avant-garde Jewish music scene: the Klezmatics, John Zorn, the Radical Jewish Culture/Tzadik label, etc. A Reggae Passover disk came out a few years back, while an announcement for a Reggae Chanukah disk popped up recently in my email. Even the stodgy Israeli Duo Re'emim did a hip-hop/D.J.-mix cover of the traditional Ashkenazic Rosh Hashanah melodies.

This borrowing approach has a long history in music, Jewish and otherwise, and especially so in Ladino and Hasidic music, many of whose tunes originated in secular, non-Jewish contexts (for instance, as drinking songs). The Hasidim sought to elevate the fallen sparks hidden within the melodies by attaching them to words that called forth the

Jonathan Schorsch has coauthored books and articles on socially responsible investing and Judaism and ecology, plays guitar and percussion professionally, and practices capoeira as a devoted amateur.



holiest qualities. In the twentieth century, popular Jewish music also went in search of the newest fashion, in search of making the old new and the global local, like the tangos played by Polish Jewish orchestras in the 1920s, or the American "klezmer" musicians in the first part of this century who invented "authentic" old-world Jewish music by updating it with thoroughly American instruments and styles.

Today, post-baby boomers, alive to ethnicity and the rise of religiosity since the 1980s, have come to appreciate the arts of their own ethnic culture. The movement of *ba'alei teshuvah* (those who have made *teshuvah*, "returned" to Jewish observance) has shifted the demographics of the institutional Orthodox world such that the yeshivah-bochers can groove quite easily to the secular, cool, ethnic *riddims* of their sinful youths.

Indeed, such grooves typify the general trend of making Judaism cool. Just think of Madonna and Roseanne studying Kabbalah, radical Jewish culture (Tattooed Jew, etc.), Carlebach followers and fans, the hip currency of Sephardi and Mizrahi music, the style of Chabad missionizing (not to mention the popularity of the Chabad telethon), a Jewish lounge club in New York named Makor (Source). It's not just that Judaism and things Jewish are "in," though that is part of it. No, we are being told that things Jewish—traditionally very uncool—are actually cool. Some Jews are

JUDAISM

even acting as if it's cool to be Jewish. An Upper West Side paper reported that Friday nights at shul are as popular now as discos! People are converting to Judaism right and left; in some synagogues on the West Coast, converts to Judaism make up 30 percent or more of the congregation. Indeed, if one looks closely one sees that Jewish cool signifies a kind of amusing and perverse but much needed *tikkun*, or repair, for Judaism and our culture at large.

Still, isn't there something a little wrong here? Cool marks ironic distance, detachment, and anti-establishmentarianism, an overemphasis on style. "Mama, I wanna make rhythm, don't wanna make music," crooned Cab Calloway in 1937 New York, as he slid into a mock ethnic voice and scenario (a boy playing rhapsodies on a violin), before exploding into a crescendo of scat ("noise," according to the contemporary mainstream understanding of music and taste). "Pop" music, television, and Hollywood host, if not breed, irony and sarcasm as a *weltanschauung*. Meanwhile, observant Judaism for the most part entails utter seriousness, without much room for humor, sarcasm, or irony, especially in the ultra-Orthodox world. There would seem to be some tension, to say the least, between hip-hop and *tehillim* (psalms), no? Doesn't some inherent semiotics of heavy metal preclude it from serving the seriously sacred?

According to the Jerusalem-based paper *Kol Ha-Ir* some years ago, many ultra-Orthodox rabbis of Me'ah She'arim thought so and came out against the rock-and-roll religious music that had become popular enough to keep open a large, allegedly disruptive music store on one of their neighborhood's main streets. It makes sense that many of the late-night religious D.J.s in Israel broadcast while obviously stoned. Though supposedly radically different in content, the fit between the pre- and post-teshuvah lifestyles appears stylistically continuous. The newly religious traded in their black leather for the stylistics of black suits and fedoras; mohawks for the myriad of specific pe'ot styles, each representing a different Hasidic group. The ornate, patterned, textured chintz vests of the Hasidic rebbes—the fabric origin of the derogatory adjective "chintzy"—now signified for them the height of cool. (Remember the haute-fashion rip-off of Hasidic garb from a few years back?) No surprise that the rebbes worried that the seepage of the pre-teshuvah life into the ba'al-teshuvah life would threaten to undermine the entire point of the transformation.



Jewish cool signifies a kind of amusing and perverse but much needed tikkun, or repair, for Judaism and our culture at large.

A close look at two recent releases provides a fascinating glimpse into the paradoxes of cool Judaism. Trumpet player Steven Bernstein's disc, *Diaspora Soul* (1999), on John Zorn's Tzadik label features a small postmodern Latin jazz ensemble belting out versions of "Ani Ma'amin," "Manishtanah," "Rock of Ages," "Roumania, Roumania," and others. The playing is both straight and ironic, funky and funny; Bernstein blows a mean trumpet. In a revealing chain of associations, Bernstein describes the sound he sought:

Not just the rhythms, but the phrasing and air flow of the R&B players are a continuation of the [New Orleans] marching style.... This led me to thinking not just about a New Orleans sound, but rather the Gulf Coast sound, encompassing Texas and Cuba—and the last part of the Gulf Coast was Miami. And who retired to Miami? The most popular Cuban export of the '50s was the cha-cha ... who loves a cha-cha more than the Jews? And the final piece of the grail—the hora bass pattern—one, two-and, and-four-and—is the first half of the clave, the heart of Afro-Cuban music.

Bernstein's music is clearly a loving tribute. Note, however, that Jews here are only the recipients, the listeners to the great ethnic musics, not their creators.

The tension between the disparate elements in Bernstein's music parallels the tension in the problematic of ethnic identity itself at play in the production of this music and the manufacture of this disk. The Cuban percussion, languid dance-groove bass, vibe-like electric piano, or swelling organ underpin the Jewish melodies which make up the horn themes. These melodies, however, are more icing than cake; Bernstein's soloing, for instance, only occasionally takes up allusions to Jewish music.

Bernstein has (purposefully? ironically?) recreated the overall feeling of exactly those Fifties and Sixties Jewish groups (Mickey Katz, the Barry Sisters) who incorporated "exotic" elements. He makes fun of (and pays respect to) them just as these groups had fun with (and made fun of) the "exotic" musics they were borrowing and even the Jewish music they were simultaneously transforming, down to the cheapo arrangements, "tacky" production values, often uninspired lounge-music tracks—amusing and almost desperate efforts to make cheesy songs cool. Is this the music that Jews who love cha-cha produced? The playing is great and the concept often works; Bernstein has forged a unified sound and it constitutes convincing Jewish music. But the effect cannot be listened to unironically. Perhaps all

this has to do with Bernstein's comment about being asked to do a "Jewish" album:

How does a Jewish musician who has spent his entire life studying "other" musical cultures make a "Jewish" record? How does one make a "Jewish" record, when by nature, all of one's music is already "Jewish"?

Another new release, on the Knitting Factory label, provides one answer to Bernstein's question. *Keter* (1999), the first disc from Zohar, an ensemble made up of eclectic pianist Uri Caine, singer/hazzan Aaron Bensoussan, and other adept players of cutting-edge music scenes in the States and Israel, presents a seamless D.J. mix of Mizrahi and Sephardi trance music over extended renditions of standards such as Eli Eli, Avraham Avinu, and many more. The Arabic improvisational singing, Ladino ballads, deep syncopated percussion, throbbing bass lines, avant-garde jazz piano, samples, and tape manipulation all come and go in the overarching mix, constituting equal, interchangeable elements from the databank of world music sounds. Yet this music does not sound ironic. The titles, intensity, and ecstasy all aim to produce a Jewish answer to Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, Yoruba street percussion, or techno: Jewish music is the primal thang, the oldest and most up-to-date, connected to the grooves of the universe.

The disc's unintended irony resides in the degree to which the music's features come from "other" musical cultures. This shouldn't surprise: the Zohar and Kabbalah itself represent utterly miscegenated texts, a seamless mix of Hellenistic, Arabic, Christian, and Jewish elements. Another unintended irony is that normalizing Jewish music, making it just one among all other ethnic grooves/styles, is done at the cost of accepting the marketing of multiculturalism, the manufacture of cultures. In some ways the music on *Keter* is what I imagine the just-opened Jewish "club" Makor in New York must be like—I've only heard from a sister-in-law who was there herself—with its three stories of Jewish happenings, a bar and strictly kosher food, hip world music imported via the mavens from the Lower East Side, mosh pit above, *shiurim* below, a mind-body *yosher* (balance) that would do the Maharal proud.

Convivencia, man! Judaism for the new millennium! But what does it really mean when lyrics yearning for the speedy rebuilding of the Temple float over the beautiful explosions of Afro-Cuban drumming, a drumming (with its own lyrics, by the way) whose rhythms, like those of Haiti, Brazil, and elsewhere, derive from worship devoted to deities/heroes of Yoruba or Fon or Nago origin, and energize the Afro-Cuban religion known as Santería? The ironies here abound. Does using this beat imply that the artists condone the Santería practice—so controversial in parts of the United States—of animal sacrifice? They should, since they sing for the revival of the Temple-based cult of animal sacrifice in Judaism. Do they really want the speedy rebuilding of the Temple and return of the sacrificial system? (Do we, when we sing this song at wedding

parties?) One can certainly dance to it, but I wonder

The cool Jewish trip could only be American. On one side, the roots of Jewish cool lie in New-Age terminology and attitude: positivity and openness to the non-modern, to the non-rational. But New Age was never cool. It is a pretend religion for people with pretend traditions. The homogenized, boundaryless music of New Age well reflects its sanitized, denatured, fake solution to personal and world problems. New Age is goofy, yet self-serious, with *no* sense of irony. On the other side, Jewish cool derives from cool aesthetes, from the beat poets to their progeny of the Sixties. These were self-serious, adolescent rebels with a cause, goofy only unintentionally. But their extreme anti-establishment cool left no escape from alienation and anomie.

One brand of Jewish cool that seems to escape this existential angst is the ecstatic neo-Hasidic style developed by the late Shlomo Carlebach. That Carlebach style is a variety of cool can readily be seen from its staunch hippie anti-fashion hierarchy, its rainbow-people politics, and its ease with way-long ecstatic praying and dancing, a product of its followers' affection for way-long guitar and drum solos. Carlebach style owes much to the optimistic, cheerful searching of New-Age religiosity, but it derives as well from working-class rebellion and from a hippie back-to-the-land spirit, with roots in serious personal and political *tikkun*: Bob Dylan, the Grateful Dead, Gil Scott-Heron. It's more a whole-person Jungian-balance, caring-people kind of trip. (This might be particularly true for Jewish boys and men, whose self-involved energies adulating cool can thus be channeled into community-oriented, world-healing activities. A great deal of overlap binds Jewish renewal with the men's movement.) Carlebach followers favor a Sephardi/kabbalistic/neo-Hasidic *nusach* for prayer, a rebellion against the insipid Protestant harmonies of American Conservative and Reform synagogues and homes. Carlebach followers are very sincere. A Carlebach approach maintains interest in the ritual efficacy of particular traditions, all of them, and is never mocking.

Yet even Carlebach style is not free from the ironies of sincerity. The very passion of Carlebach followers can lead to sometimes amusing, sometimes unsettling results. Their search for an "authentic" Judaism has led many to embrace some less-than-savory aspects of Judaism because of their seeming "authenticity." A friend of mine, for example, an inveterate hippie carpenter, pot-smoker and all, is building a piece of the ritual furniture needed for the third Temple planned by some extreme nationalist and ultra-Orthodox groups. Friends of friends apparently hold the "contract" for making the harps to be used therein by the Levitical choirs.

Likewise, I am dismayed to hear that in Israel Rabbi Carlebach's songs and image have now been usurped by right-wing settlers. I have been told that yeshivah-bochers belted out Shlomo *niggunim* (melodies) at a recent rally

against dismantling West Bank settlements. I am not surprised by this: anyone can claim pieces of discourse, and Carlebach himself had a strain of nationalism. But it's one thing to market "authentic" ancient-style weddings or biblical clothing, and quite another to make mysticism into militarism by other means. Jewish passion doesn't always lead to ugly nationalism. Without any irony, however, without some critical, skeptical attitude, Carlebachy cool readily becomes too serious, a tool for the Right, and thus no longer cool at all. Can Jewish cool be ironic and serious all at once? Can it survive if it's not?

A recently released anthology of previously untranslated stories of the Ba'al Shem Tov contains a tale in which the wonder rabbi cures a Jew who was passing as a hedonistic Polish noble of his "negativity and insidious addictions." The tale explains to some degree the relationship between cool and Judaism, at least in ba'al teshuvah circles. In his healing speech, addressed both to and not to the disguised Jew, the Besht says:

Anybody who really wants to progress on the spiritual path must look into his very own soul and see clearly what is stopping him from getting close to God. In my experience there are two traits that obstruct one from truly proceeding on the path. The first one is irrational anger, and the other is sarcasm.

In this Hasidic view, sarcasm, a form of irony, simply must be eliminated. It is easy to understand why. Irony and especially sarcasm imply disdain, haughtiness, mockery, negation, and they act as corrosive agents. Spiritual Judaism, even of the cool variety inspired by pseudo-Kabbalah, entails a voluntary move away from irony. There is to be no more camp for Madonna, who made her name camping and vamping Catholicism. Now, I am told in all seriousness, Roseanne gives *shiurim* at the Kabbalah Learning Center. Even cool Jewish culture that is openly ironic seems to be so these days only affectionately (I'm thinking of the San Francisco Bay area group Charming Hostess' covers of Eastern European and klezmer tunes, or even of Israeli comedian Gil Kopetch).

It all makes sense. People are desperate to escape the postmodern condition, which is fundamentally marked by an ironic stance toward the world. Neo-Hasidism's vision of traditional Judaism's no-nonsense approach to the world offers Jewish kids who grew up in the most assimilated, up-to-date, worldly spheres a means of maintaining the stylistics of cool while escaping cool's alienation and disinterest. A world in which nothing matters or can be done is replaced by one in which every action makes a difference and saves worlds.



*Judaism will survive
cool. Cool might
just survive Judaism.*

Cool Judaism has enabled young Jews to express ethnic pride in themselves and in Judaism, now that they've discovered that the "true" Judaism repressed by their bourgeois parents is ethnic, oppressed and Other. Such "ethnicity" has allowed young Jews to express sincerity in acceptable cool fashion (reggae, hip hop, cutting-edge klezmer) since, unlike whites, oppressed Others are permitted to be sincere, oppositional, searching, and positive while fighting for cultural survival. And it has allowed Jews who have discovered the transcendent in "other" cultures to be open enough to themselves and others about their finding the transcendent "at home."

Through the stylistics of cool Judaism, the rebellion manufactured and harnessed for marketing the rebel youth culture is channeled into a rebellion against the very things producing these styles and attracting young people to them in the first place: the secular culture industry, bourgeois living, individualism, emotional deadness. Hopefully. One cannot forget the extent to which even seemingly authentic efforts of cultural resistance, "the relics of counterculture," as

Thomas Frank writes, "reek of affectation and phoniness, the leisure-dreams of white suburban children." All too often cool Judaism harnesses transgression for the sake of mere posture, even for profits. It remains to be seen whether cool Judaism is just another style to consume or whether it helps leads to an authentic and lasting personal rebellion against materialism, against abused worldly power, against the destructive cult of the individual and the ego, the source of the need to be cool.

Judaism will survive cool. Cool might just survive Judaism. After all else is said, these two new CDs make fantastic music for simchas! The question of whether they can survive together, however, depends in each case on the fundamental formula contained in Pierre Bourdieu's theory of the "habitus," as articulated by Duke Ellington: it ain't what you do but the way that you do it. Passion and the search for "authenticity" cannot become substitutes for thinking, for the eternal effort to juggle the necessary opposites of God and human, devotion and critique, self-confidence and humility. Planning for the third Temple is not merely a larger equivalent of the drumming circles of men's groups. The dangers of soul without mind continue to be very real. This said, however, the potential power of cool Jewish culture remains strong. If cool Judaism helps young people to avoid the Orwellian carelessness, ignorance, and idiocy induced by the culture industry, it makes a damn good noble lie. □

Holy Relationship

Mordechai Gafni

Because we are created in the image of God, when we look for guidance on how to shatter the boundary of self and create relationship we should turn to the creative process of the divine. The mystery of Creation is that God emerges out of divine aloneness to create an other who is not God.

How does God create space for an other? The Jewish mystics' answer is *tzimtzum*—by the act of contraction, withdrawal. In early mystical sources, particularly talmudic mysticism, God is understood to contract all of his light, as it were, to one point—and from that point the world is created. This idea finds expression, for example, in the midrashic passage that describes God as contracting his light to the point of space between the two cherubs in the tabernacle. From that point—which is the point, according to the biblical story, from which the divine voice issues—the world is created.

The early kabbalist Isaac Luria, however, understands withdrawal not as being contraction into an intensified point but rather as meaning God's actual withdrawal from an area to leave behind an empty space—a space apparently devoid of God. It is from that place of emptiness that the world was created.

I would suggest that these competing images of Creation are not exclusive, as is usually assumed in scholarship, but paradoxical and complementary. Moments of fullness, presence, certainty, and selfishness are necessary for the creation of anything, including relationships, and are expressed by the talmudic understanding of creation as the *intensification of presence*—God contracts presence to one point and from that point Creation outflows. At the same time, however, there is a second prerequisite to Creation, and that is emptiness. Just as, in the kabbalists' understanding, God is portrayed as emptying himself of self in an act of radical selflessness, Creation is understood to emerge not from the certainty of presence but from the radical uncertainty of absence.

The creation of a new idea (which is itself a small world) takes place in a similar way, according to R. Nachman. In an elliptical passage, Nachman writes, "And this is the meaning of the Mishnah—all my life I was raised among (*bein*) the sages and I found nothing was better than silence." The literal translation of the Hebrew word "*bein*," however,

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*It is the dialectical balance
between certainty and uncertainty
that is the root of all creation.*

does not mean "among the sages" but, rather, "between the sages." And between the sages there is the empty space, which separates them from each other.

Nachman continues, "Through conflict the empty space is created and in that empty space the creation of worlds takes place." New ideas are created by a unique dialectic of presence and absence, certainty and uncertainty. Conflict emerges from each side's radical certainty as to the correctness of their position. In the empty space created by conflict, however, one must be prepared to move into silence—the place where the sure voices of conflict are quieted and holy listening becomes the order of the day. In that silence uncertainty is allowed to enter.

It is this dialectical balance between certainty and uncertainty that is the root of all creation. Without entering the empty space, no relationship can be created. Without holding firmly to the fullness of my position—which is a reflection of my uniqueness as an individual—no creation can take place.

In the human realm as well, selfishness and uncertainty dance with the fullness of presence, self, and certainty to generate the holiness of new insight and depth. Mordechai Lainer of Ishbitz (an eighteenth-century Hasidic master) moves us a step in this direction by linking intellectual creativity and intimate connections between men and women. He does so esoterically—by solving a textual difficulty.

The textual difficulty occurs in the second chapter of the book of Genesis, where Adam searches for an appropriate existential and sexual partner. Such an appropriate partner, the text says, must be "a helpmate against him." The obvious difficulty in the text is how one can be both a "helpmate" and "against him." Lainer solves the difficulty by referring us to the Talmud's Tractate Baba Metzia 64a, which tells the tragic story of the meeting, relationship, and death of Rabbi Yochanan and Reish Lakish. An exposition of this text is not necessary here; what interests me is the way, with this reference, Lainer ties together two areas—that of intimate relationship between man and woman and the process of intellectual spiritual creativity between teacher and disciple.

Taking as our starting point Lainer's identification of relational intimacy with intellectual creativity, we may now take note of two distinct moments in sexuality: one is the moment of "helpmate" and the second is the moment of "against him." "Helpmate" is a moment of radical giving, of selflessness. I resolve my own uncertainty through the sacrifice of withdrawal, giving myself up to the other and seeking to please my partner, not myself. This is a tzimtzum—contraction—moment.

There is, however, a second moment, completely different from the first but no less central, which is an integral part of every intimate relationship. This is the moment where I do not give up self but instead move to satisfy self. In this moment, when I move towards my own satisfaction I am not absent but radically present. This is a reflection of the second moment in the kabbalistic understanding of tzimtzum: "the intensification of presence."

Sexual intimacy with a partner is always a mixture between holy masturbation and holy love. Clearly, being with a partner who is intent only on themselves makes for an unsatisfactory sexual relationship. At the same time, if one engages in sexuality in which one only receives from the partner—without the partner withdrawing into themselves—then, again, the sexual experience is not honest and therefore not holy, healthy, or satisfying. There must be a moment in sexuality in which we turn into ourselves, not in the usual sense of withdrawal, but in the sense of intensification of presence—and in which we rejoice in being privileged to witness our partner doing the same. A partner who only gives but who is unwilling to reveal their holy selfishness is dishonest and ultimately unsatisfying.

The ultimate paradox is that these selfish and unselfish moments—the understanding of tzimtzum withdrawal either as the radical absence in which we give to the other or as the radical presence in which we contract into self—are each transformed into the other. This is the holy magic of relationship. In the act of full giving—giving to oneself and giving up oneself to the other—the giver ultimately finds himself.

*In the act of full
giving ... the giver
ultimately finds
himself*

The idea of self being an ineradicable moment in sexuality is captured beautifully in a midrashic passage. The Midrash comments on the verse from Psalms, "I was formed in sin, my mother conceived me in sin." The Midrash identifies the sin of conception as being the moment of self-involvement in sexuality. The word "sin" here does not mean sin in the formal legal or even moral sense. Rather, it refers to the masturbatory moment which exists in every sexual partnership. This self-involved moment expresses itself at the end of intimacy when, in the colorful language of the

Midrash, each person turns their face away from their partner. This is the physical expression of the moment of distance, which exists even when the lovers are sexually enmeshed. This separation, in which each side faces a different direction, creates an empty space between them. In this empty space—paradoxically—the relationship is created. It allows each side to retain the

integrity of self that allows for willful union.

The empty space represents both forms of withdrawal, of tzimtzum. Each partner has withdrawn into their own place. And yet each side affirms the other's right to space. It is a time of full affirmation of other.

It therefore comes as no surprise that the divine voice heard by the prophet in the ultimate act of self-creation, the achievement of prophecy, comes from the *bein ha'ruvim*—the space between the cherubs. In Jewish texts cherubs symbolize the sensual relationship between the male and female principles. The space between the cherubs, like the space between the sages, partakes of the void out of which the world was formed. In the void that the mystics called, in Hebrew, *bein*—the void that is completely empty—holy spiritual intuition arises. It arises from the place between (also *bein*) which, as we have seen, is a strange combination of radical absence and radical presence.

The void, with its dialectic of intense presence and absence, is an ineradicable feature of holy reality. Its embrace—be it in the realm of sexuality, creativity, or intellectual or spiritual growth—is a precondition for spiritual health. □

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Science and Religion

A Marriage Made in Heaven?

Rami Shapiro

Physicists Read the Mind of God

SANTA FE, 2007—A spokeswoman for the Physics and Theology Institute said today that recent breakthroughs in superstring theory have resulted in a startling discovery.

"Not only are we reading the mind of God," said Dr. Alice Weinstock, "we have found the essence of the Creator."

"In the past religion and science were often in conflict," said the Reverend Frank Macintosh, cochair of a recent PTI symposium on "The New Science of God," "but we are entering a new age of cooperation in which science as well as religion can reveal the God of Creation."

Farfetched? Or just a matter of time? A growing number of scientists and theologians believe that the marriage of science and religion is inevitable, and that science is revealing the very nature of God. But what kind of God does science reveal? If science is reading the mind of God, just what kind of thoughts is God thinking?

Almost 400 years ago Galileo Galilei invited the Church Fathers to look through his telescope and see for themselves that the earth orbits the sun. They refused, insisting instead that Galileo stop looking through the infernal device as well. Today the Church has its own telescope, and theologians turn to science for the latest revelations of God.

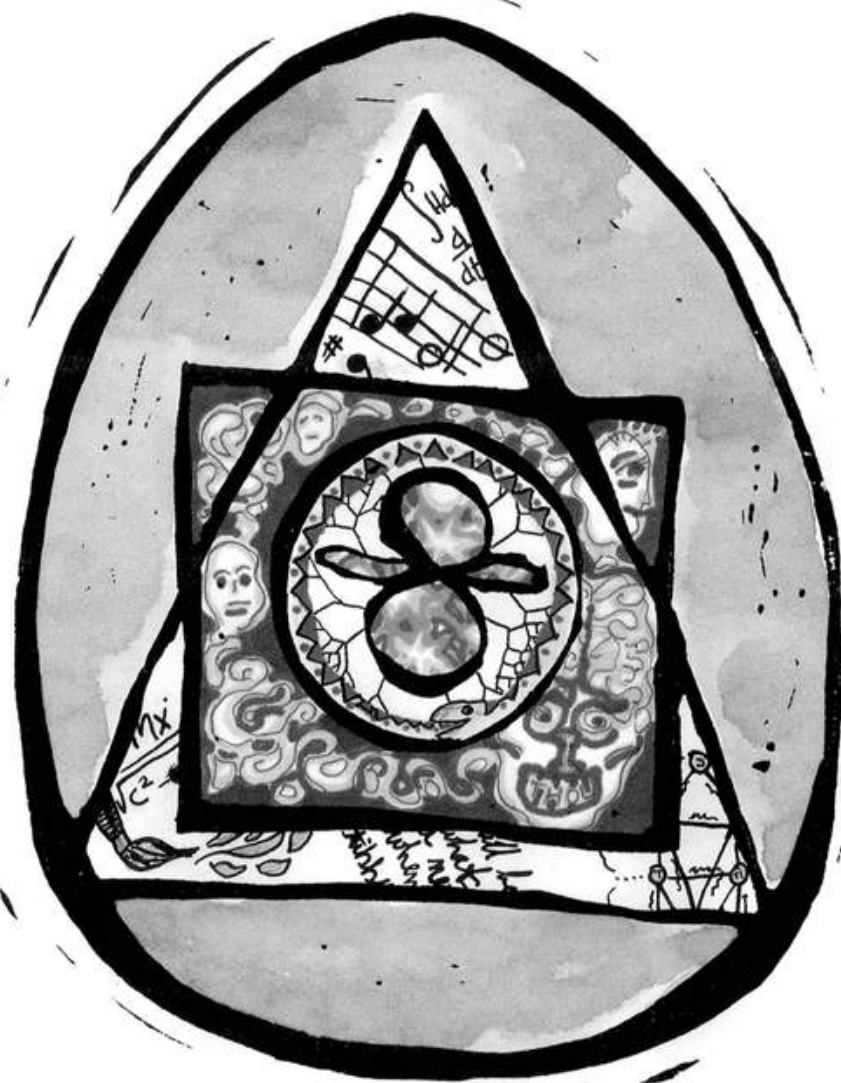
If religion has found a use for science, science has finally discovered that the fundamental unity spoken of by religious mystics permeates every strata of creation. However, the reductionist way scientists tend to view that unity

shrinks God to the amoral building blocks of nature.

Just as religion will never discover superstrings, science will never imagine loving one's neighbor as oneself. Religion and science are different lenses through which we can catch glimpses of God, but to lay one atop the other is to distort them both. And yet we persist in blurring the boundaries between religion and science in hopes of having the latter prove the claims of the former so that faith can be bolstered by fact.

We lack a map of reality that would allow us to accept the truths of both science and religion without reducing either to a subset of the other. Such a map would unify (but not reduce) our sciences, both material and spiritual, and present an idea of God that incorporates and transcends them both. Such a map is not hard to find, and has appeared in every culture throughout recorded history. It is called the Great Chain of Being.

Transpersonal philosopher and theorist Ken Wilber has done the most to bring the Great Chain into the twenty-first century, and I am indebted to him for much of my understanding of it. Wilber's map is far more complex than the one I will use here, and speaks to issues beyond the narrow



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scope of this essay. Here, I draw upon the kabbalistic version of the Great Chain, the Five Worlds, to present a unified but not homogenized vision of science and religion within the greater unity of God.

Like a Russian doll concealing progressively smaller dolls within it, the Jewish mystics see all reality manifested as five distinct and nested dimensions or worlds. Just as the smaller doll is included in and transcended by the next larger doll, so are the less inclusive worlds included in and transcended by the next more inclusive world, and the whole nested reality is included in and transcended by God, the unconditioned and unconditional source and substance of all that was, is, and will be.

The first and least inclusive of the five worlds is called Assiyah. This is the realm of quantum mechanics, superstring theory, chaos, and complexity. The world of Assiyah is primarily the domain of physics. It is a world of constant wonder, and, if Heisenberg is right, impenetrable mystery. It is the world to which both physicist and theologian turn to read the mind of God. Listen to Sheldon Glashow speak of superstring studies in Timothy Ferris' *Coming of Age in the Milky Way*: "[Exploring superstrings may be an enterprise] as remote from conventional particle physics as particle physics is from chemistry, to be conducted in schools of divinity by future equivalents of medieval theologians.... For the first time since the Dark Ages, we can see how our noble search may end, with faith replacing science once again."

Do we really want science to be replaced by faith? What advantage is gained by reducing the dialogue between science and religion to a monologue? And what kind of faith will this be? Glashow's vision is not the wonderful marriage of science and religion that some imagine. Spirit is replaced by superstrings, scientists are replaced by theologians, and faith in a moral universe calling us to justice, compassion, and humility (Micah 6:8) is reduced to faith in amoral multidimensional superstrings that speak to the origins of life, but not to its meaning or purpose.

The energies and forces studied by physicists in the Assiyah dimension of reality are called *nefesh*, which kabbalists take to be the most rudimentary manifestation of soul or consciousness. Without Assiyah and *nefesh* no other worlds can exist, but to imagine that Assiyah reveals the final word (rather than the first) is to reduce the five dimensions to one, and the least inclusive one at that.

The second world or dimension of reality is called Yetzirah. In Yetzirah the quantum world of Assiyah reaches a new level of complexity, that dimension of life

explored by biologists. Biology reveals a level of complexity that the world of quantum mechanics need not and cannot posit. Just as biology incorporates and yet transcends physics in its field of study, so the world of Yetzirah incorporates and goes beyond the world of Assiyah. The consciousness or soul manifest in Yetzirah is called *ruach*. *Ruach*, like *nefesh*, is not self-aware. It is the level of instinct and law, not yet reason and will.

Biology, no less than physics, has much to offer regarding the majesty of creation, and the universe it reveals is of such intricacy and wonder as to be a source of mystic amazement in and of itself. And herein lies the danger. To lose oneself in the wonder of Yetzirah is to fail to move beyond it.

Ursula Goodenough, professor of biology at Washington University, gives a sample of this way of thinking: "Our story [of nature] tells us of the sacredness of life, of the astonishing complexity of cells and organisms.... Reverence is the religious emotion elicited when we perceive the sacred.... And so, I profess my Faith: For me, the existence of all this complexity and awareness and intent and beauty, and my ability to apprehend it, serves as the ultimate meaning and the ultimate value."

I cannot understand how the wondrous complexity of cells is the ultimate meaning and value of life. True, without cells the world I revere could not exist, but to reduce that world to its cellular structure, or to point to cells as the carriers of meaning and value, seems extraordinarily reductionist.

A more reasoned approach comes from biologist Kenneth Miller of Brown University, who writes in *Finding Darwin's God* that "God uses physics, chemistry, biology to fashion and run the physical universe." Elsewhere Miller adds, "To a religious person, science can be a pathway towards God, not away from Him."

Science can move us closer to God manifested as the physical world. It cannot, however, reach those dimensions of God that transcend it. Or, when science does try to explain the spiritual yearnings of humankind with the biologic of Yetzirah, the results are inevitably similar to E. O. Wilson's sociobiology, which reduces the grandest capacities of human life and culture to the amoral transmission of genetic code. It is not that the science of biology is wrong; it is only that the world of Yetzirah is too small.

Beriah, the third dimension of the kabbalistic map, is the world of self-conscious beings: beings, human and otherwise, who are aware of Creation, if not yet their place in it. It is in this world that life achieves the level of consciousness called *neshamah*, ego, the self that imagines itself to be separate from other selves. The dominant science of Beriah is psychology.



Where the sciences of physics and biology reveal an all-inclusive unity underlying their respective dimensions, the unity revealed by psychology is an egoic one, striving for an integration of forces present in the self to create a more harmonious self. *Neshamah* consciousness knows all about "I" but has yet to discover "Thou."

Just as a study of the physics of Assiyah does not require the biological complexity of Yetzirah, and the biological complexity of Yetzirah does not require the conscious ego of Beriah, so the psychology of Beriah does not mandate a more inclusive dimension of reality that incorporates and transcends it. On the contrary, speculation into an egoless spiritual unity and inclusivity is seen as an infantile wish to return to the supposed safety and security of the womb. Early forms of religion that do appear in this world are centered on the ego and its survival after death.

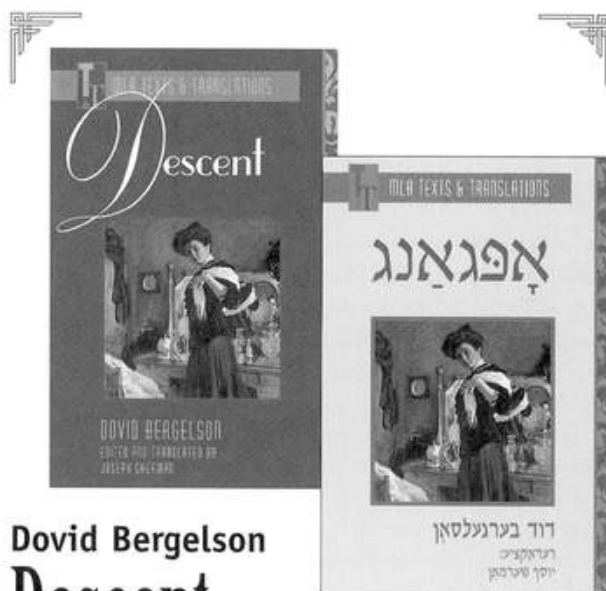
Higher, more inclusive expressions of religious consciousness, for example the belief of ethical monotheism that one God necessitates one world (a united earth), one race (a united humanity), and one moral code (justice and compassion for all), requires a transpersonal perspective that cannot be found in the self-preoccupied dimension of Beriah.

For this perspective we have to move to the fourth world called Atzilut. It is at this level of reality that *neshamah* consciousness evolves into *chayya* consciousness, an appreciation of the transpersonal dimension of being. It is here that we find the creative energies of art, music, mathematics, religion, theology, and literature, and the quality of mind capable of using them.

The language of *chayya* is nuanced: dream, myth, and metaphor. When the nineteenth-century chemist Kekule discovered the atomic structure of the benzene molecule, he saw it first in a dream; that is, he leaped beyond the egoic world of Beriah to tap the transpersonal realm that is Atzilut. The science of Atzilut is transpersonal religion.

It is here that the sacred traditions of the world begin to recognize that the egoic formulations of faith common to Beriah are too narrow, focusing as they do on division, chosenness, the saved, and the damned. They begin to look beyond these differences to discover a common ground from which to build a more compassionate and peaceful world. The "scientists" of Atzilut tend to be the prophets and visionaries who peer over traditional boundaries to embrace the whole of life—cultural, psychological, biological, and physical—as a network of mutually supportive and interactive systems all within the domain of God.

As integrative as Atzilut is, however, it is still not the final level of inclusiveness and transcendence. For this we turn to the fifth world, Adam Kadmon, Primordial Being. It is here that all selves dissolve into a selfless unity characterized best by the Hindu phrase *sat chit ananda*: being, consciousness, bliss. Not surprisingly, the level of consciousness that experiences this dimension of reality is called *yechida*, or unity consciousness. This consciousness



Dovid Bergelson

Descent

Joseph Sherman, trans.

אפגאנג [Opgang]

Joseph Sherman, ed.

Descent, published in 1920, describes the complex Jewish life of Russia and Ukraine through the turbulent period leading up to the October Revolution of 1917: the emptiness of bourgeois values, the rise of secularism, the rejection of old traditions, the alienation of intellectuals, and the attempt of different generations to find a place for themselves inside and out of the shtetl.

The novella centers on the mystery of the suicide of a young pharmacist in Rakitne, a provincial town. The prose is immaculately crafted, the narrative indirect, and the mood poignant, dark, and disquieting.

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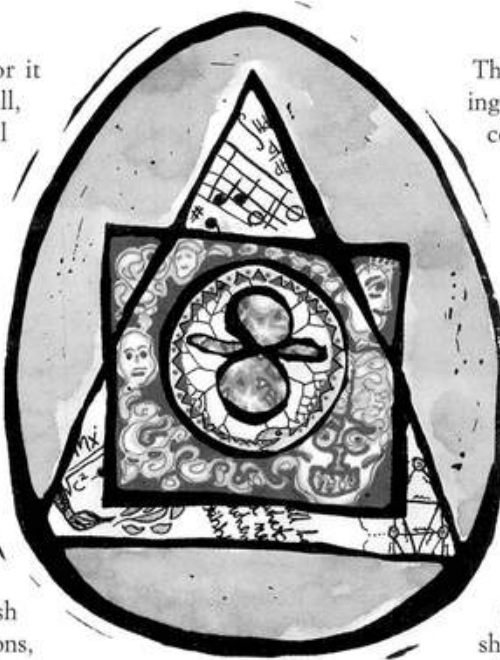
belongs to no one in particular, for it does not see any separate beings at all, but only the One from Whom all diversity flows.

The science of Adam Kadmon is mysticism, and her scientists are those rare beings—Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Mohammed, Lao Tzu, Buddha, Krishna, Eckhart, Hildegard of Bingen, to name a few—who master rigorous spiritual disciplines and momentarily drop body, mind, ego, and soul to experience God as the greater unity that is the singular source and substance of all worlds and levels of consciousness.

It is often difficult to distinguish between the fourth and fifth dimensions, as they seem to encompass similar, if not the same, things. The difference is the presence and absence of self. In the fourth dimension of Atzilut, *chayya* consciousness is still a form of self-consciousness. The person manifesting *chayya* consciousness is aware of both herself and her fundamental interdependence with all other selves. She is not without self, but sees that all selves are part of each other and a greater whole. It is this greater whole that is the realm of Adam Kadmon, the fifth world of the kabbalistic map. The *yechida* consciousness that manifests in this fifth dimension is aware of a seamless unity that leaves no room for variation or selves of any kind. *Yechida* consciousness is not aware of itself, it is awareness itself; consciousness without content.

Does *yechida* reveal the true nature of God? No more so than any of the other worlds. God is not limited to any one dimension. God is the parchment on which the map is drawn. God is present in every space, in every place. God permeates each and every dimension, for God is both the source and the substance of all reality. God is the superstring and the dark infinity of space. God is the cow in the stable and the neighbor next door. God is the immanent and the transcendent. There is nothing that is not God.

When we apply our Five Worlds map to our understanding of science and religion, we honor each discipline and its discoveries for what they are: various facets of an infinitely faceted God. When the physicist exploring Assiyah uncovers the primary forces of existence and thus the mind of God, she reveals the truth, just not the whole truth. It is not that the eye of the physicist sees poorly. It is that the lens of physics sees only what it can.



There should be no conflict between good science and good religion, but neither should there be an equation of the two.

The same is true for the biologist exploring Yetzirah who discovers the vast interconnectedness of all life and thus the unity of God; for the psychologist exploring Beriah who lays bare the secrets of self and then suggests that God is only a projection of this self; for the ardent religious disciple exploring Atzilut who shows us the transpersonal ground from which all religions arise; and even for the mystic exploring Adam Kadmon who points toward the Source from which all form and being arise and to which they return: if the mystic suggests that this realm is the only true realm, and that all other dimensions are illusory, she, like the religious disciple, psychologist, biologist and physicist before her, reveals the truth, just not the whole truth. It is not that the eye of each sees poorly. It is that the lens of each world sees only what it can.

Whatever lens we use to view reality, we are reducing reality to what that lens reveals. All attempts to align God exclusively with any one aspect of reality are flawed. Physics is not theology, and while good theology must incorporate the truths of science and not deny or violate them, it must do so in the process of offering a more inclusive view of reality

than science can reveal. There should be no conflict between good science and good religion, but neither should there be an equation of the two.

The quantum paradoxes of Assiyah, the biological wonder of Yetzirah, and the psychological genius of Beriah are all vital to the whole story of reality, but they do not contain the whole story. Physics may well be "nearing God," as Stephen Hawking said in the *Observer*, and the physicist may well desire with Albert Einstein "to know the thoughts of God," but they will know the thoughts of God only when God is thinking about the laws of physics.

What the kabbalistic map of the Five Worlds offers, indeed what all the expressions of the Great Chain of Being offer, is a means for integrating science and religion in a greater whole. Such a map allows us to honor and pursue the sciences appropriate to each dimension without forcing any one science to work in all dimensions. It provides us with a schema of reality that honors both science and religion, and reveals to us the truth that we are never apart from and always a part of that infinite Reality we call God. □

Sailing in Kansas

A Berlin Memoir

Kathy Green

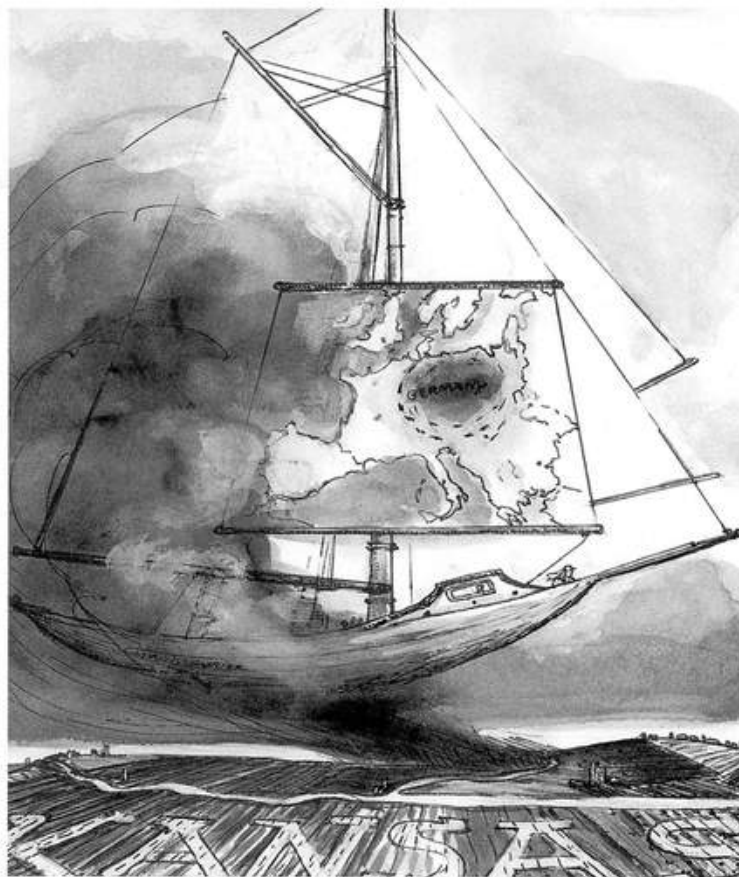
What would you take when leaving a burning house? Grabbing what is precious (or coincidentally at hand) must be among life's most irrational and revealing experiences. Does any value choice you might make in safety bear even the remotest resemblance to your actual behavior in crisis? How would the constraints of time and flight affect your choices? Would you later come to understand the ability to make decisions as a luxury of privileged times?

In 1938 my grandfather, Emil Friedrich Held, a respected, semi-retired elder of the Berlin Stock Exchange, did not take gold, silver, or stock certificates. In any case, the Nazis would not have allowed such valuables to leave the country. Rather, he chose to take family albums and old sailing trophies as he fled the rapidly approaching conflagration.

I was born in Kansas City in 1944. Throughout the early years of my childhood in Leavenworth, Kansas, on Saturday afternoons I would sit with my father, Siegfried Ernest Held, and look at the pictures in the albums. We would carefully turn the pages, and my father would tell stories. I came to distinguish between the album's distinctive bindings: the fat red leather volume contained more pictures of my father's early childhood; the stiff black-covered book had more photographs of racing boats. Garden parties and beach picnics, skiing and horseback riding were more likely to be found in other albums.

The world of the pictures was affluent Berlin, spanning the years from around 1906, when my father was born, until the mid 1930s when his mother died in Berlin and my father fled to the United States. Many of the pictures and accompanying stories were happy. LaFite Rothschild labels are clearly legible on bottles of wine being served at a picnic aboard a sloop. People appear attractive, well dressed, having fun. Intertwined with the happy picnickers and sailors was the stuff of nightmares: a photograph reveals a beautiful young woman swinging her leg provocatively on a beach; her straight blond hair is voguishly cropped, her bathing suit discloses sensuous curves. Although she was not Jewish, she was killed by the Nazis a few years after my

Kathy Green is a Jewish educator living in Newton, Massachusetts. She co-edited The Jewish Family Book and has worked in teacher training and planning for Jewish schools.



father took her picture; she had been working as a journalist and asked too many indiscreet questions. The life depicted in the albums had ended abruptly and violently.

The people depicted in these albums did not live in our dingy surroundings. Leavenworth, Kansas, is a small town twenty-nine miles north of Kansas City, home of federal and state prisons and an army post. While in the early 1950s it was possible to drive past large houses that suggested prosperity in Leavenworth, children who attended North Broadway, my elementary school, were at best the sons and daughters of blue-collar workers. Their fathers were, by and large, prison guards. I remember that a little girl's father was killed in an accident; he had been a truck driver. I remember a child who walked to school through snow with no stockings and cracked, open-toe shoes. Schools were not yet racially integrated. I was the only Jewish child in my school. The small Jewish community produced only a handful of children who attended schools in the newer, somewhat more affluent south part of town.

When I was growing up, Jews were excluded from membership in the Leavenworth country club. An embarrassed friend withdrew an invitation to my mother to join the Leavenworth Historical Society when she learned that Jews were not welcome. I must have been fairly young (but old enough to read) when I saw a sign on the glass door of the large Kansas City drugstore: No dogs or Jews except on leash. I was so young that I thought the sign was funny and had to be told otherwise. Anti-Semitism was part of the milieu of midwestern America, circa 1950. It incited feelings of anger in my family but also was understood, perhaps in the context of their German experience, as fairly

PERSONAL ESSAY

trivial. I remember my father explaining that since all societies need scapegoats, American Jews were lucky that there were black people.

My family's financial circumstance was much better than that of my schoolmates, but we never felt that we were "comfortably well off," and we lived frugally. While the rugs in our small, wood-frame house were authentic Orientals, my mother only bought dresses on sale in Leavenworth or from a wholesale house in Kansas City. My grandmother would make soap in the basement. In the middle of the winter my mother would buy a small wooden keg of herring and proceed to make a variety of herring dishes, all of which were seen as great treats; the price paid was that my mother's hands would smell of herring for days and days. Today, as an adult, I have no idea what our financial situation was or what constituted realistic behavior. Our lifestyle, which seemed to be tied to lack of money, stood in stark contrast to the Helds of Berlin and their companions in the photograph albums.

My father, like those of my schoolmates, was employed by the government. His doctorate in economics from Friedrich Wilhelm University and his years of experience in charge of a foreign department in a Berlin bank joined with a new American's patriotic desire to serve his government and led him into a job as a special agent with the Internal Revenue Service. When he first arrived in the United States in about 1936, in the midst of the American Depression, he earned a weekly salary of \$15, out of which he saved money in his successful attempt to rescue his father. He literally starved himself to save money and thus undermined his future health.

My grandfather Held died in the Kansas City Home for the Jewish Aged in 1952 and was buried in the family plot in Leavenworth. His wife, who had been born in Kansas City, was buried in Berlin. It was no small irony of history that this distinguished Berliner, forced to leave his American wife's grave in the Berlin Jewish cemetery, was buried in Leavenworth. Before Emil Held's condition required him to move into the Home for the Aged, my father spent every Friday night with him in his boarding house apartment. He had one room, with bathroom and refrigerator down the hall. On the wall, alongside his neatly made bed, hung a framed photograph of a racing boat which Emil Held had successfully sailed for the Kaiser in international competitions before World War I. His living quarters surely were more modest than those of his servants back in Germany. When I visited him on Sunday afternoons with my mother, father, and grandmother, he would slice yellow apples and wedges of cheese for me and play Beethoven records on his large, wood-encased Victrola phonograph. He would smoke cigars and hear me say, in carefully rehearsed German, *Ich liebe dich*.

Shortly before his own death when I was thirteen, my father told me that he had learned that seven to ten years

was the most optimistic, life expectancy he could anticipate after a heart attack of the severity of the one he had suffered six years earlier. When announcements were publicized in the 1950s that the West German government would make restitution payments, my father applied. After a day's work he would return to Leavenworth and sit at a large, gray Remington typewriter positioned at the end of the dining room table, lace tablecloth neatly folded back, and detail his claim.

My husband and I found Sieg Held's restitution files, in the neat order that no one other than a German Jew could have achieved. What went through his mind as he sat there night after night and typed? Virtually all the correspondence is in German, including exchanges of letters with a representative of the Jewish communal organization in New York which tried to assist such claims. It was about ten years after the end of the war and about twenty years since my father had last lived in Germany. He catalogued and described. He identified names, addresses and phone numbers of people in Berlin, who—if, as he said, were still alive—could attest to his claims. Were they all non-Jews who he thought had survived the war?

I remember my father expressing the sense that whatever he could get from the Germans, he wanted. But as he wrote, describing the contents of a family apartment in Charlottenburg, what was more real to him? His life in the cosmopolitan Berlin of the 1920s or his life in Leavenworth, Kansas, of the 1950s?

Looking at the letters dated during the winter of 1956 it is apparent that he was working hard on his claims; sometimes letters are dated only a day or two apart. Writing to his Jewish communal restitution counselor in New York, asking for a one-time settlement of his claim, he says quite clearly, "I need the money badly." Admittedly, any petitioner for money will project need. But for what did this proud man need the money so badly as to be driven to declare need? Was the money an escape route out of Leavenworth, perhaps allowing him to actualize his dream of sailing off the western coast of Mexico, a world he saw depicted in sailing magazines? Ill health had forced his early retirement from the Internal Revenue Service, and he was freelancing as a "tax attorney," beginning to represent clients in Kansas City. Did he thus see his income as precarious? Looking at the pictures in the family albums with his daughter was an escape, a window into another world. Could money from that world finance another dream? Or was it another way of exacting retribution, of seeking vengeance?

Eventually it was shown that while Emil Held had sold or otherwise given up property in order to survive, he had done so a few months before the actual laws of confiscation were passed, thus invalidating many of the claims for restitution. There was no acknowledgment of the fear experienced by an elderly Jew living alone in Berlin after Kristallnacht. Sieg died June 7, 1957, a little more than a

year after his most intensive period of restitution correspondence. Reading the files, I find myself flooded with sadness. My father's situation seems so pathetic. No child wants to perceive a parent as pathetic—pained, struggling, battling all odds, perhaps—but not pathetic.

After my father died, I fantasized that he, along with his father and mother and other lost relatives, had returned to the heavenly Berlin of the 1920s, a Berlin that I rationally knew no longer existed. I would sit in his bedroom, in the same room where we had looked at the albums and listened to the *Egmont Overture* or overtures to *Lobengrin* or *Tannhauser* on my grandfather's phonograph, and imagine them reunited in a world that existed only in the pages of the albums. I imagined a Berlin circa 1920. In reality, of course, Berlin was in economic, social, political turmoil, but in the pictures everyone appeared happy. I do not know how my grandfather, as a member of the stock exchange, felt about the situation. Was he optimistic or frightened? That spring my father was sixteen and had broken his foot. He had to stay in bed, and Charlie, an itinerant sailor who worked for my grandfather summers, entertained the boy by helping him build a model of one of their boats. We still have fragments of that boat, stored in our attic along with thin brass bowls, a gift from Charlie's winter sailing adventures in the Far East, brought to Frieda Held. I imagined a Berlin from which my father and grandfather had come and to which in death they had returned. Only random objects that my grandfather had taken for sentimental rather than monetary reasons and a few loving relatives were left behind. Who knows? Perhaps we will eventually join them.

As a child in Leavenworth, when something tangible, perhaps a glass or bit of china, would break, I would hear my grandmother resolutely declare, "I've lost more important things in my lifetime." And I would know that she was thinking of dead relatives or friends. As an adult living in Philadelphia several years ago, I experienced a robbery: a burglar broke into our home and stole some silver cups that my grandfather had won as sailing trophies before the First World War. What the Nazis did not succeed in taking, an American thief got.

Now I know. We live in the crevices between that which is living, human, and those things which are tangible objects, animated only by our projections. We touch, we mourn, we define our pasts and sketch the designs of our futures. I admire the vivid flowers that decorate the Meissen tea cups and saucers that belonged to my great-grandfather Held; his image in a photograph is startlingly similar to that of his grandson, my father. Saved from a world destroyed, I hold these objects in my hands. The Helds are long dead, and yet such fragile objects survive. Their lives, in the end, were more precious and fragile than these delicate little objects they preserved. Now I am the last fragile container of their memories. □

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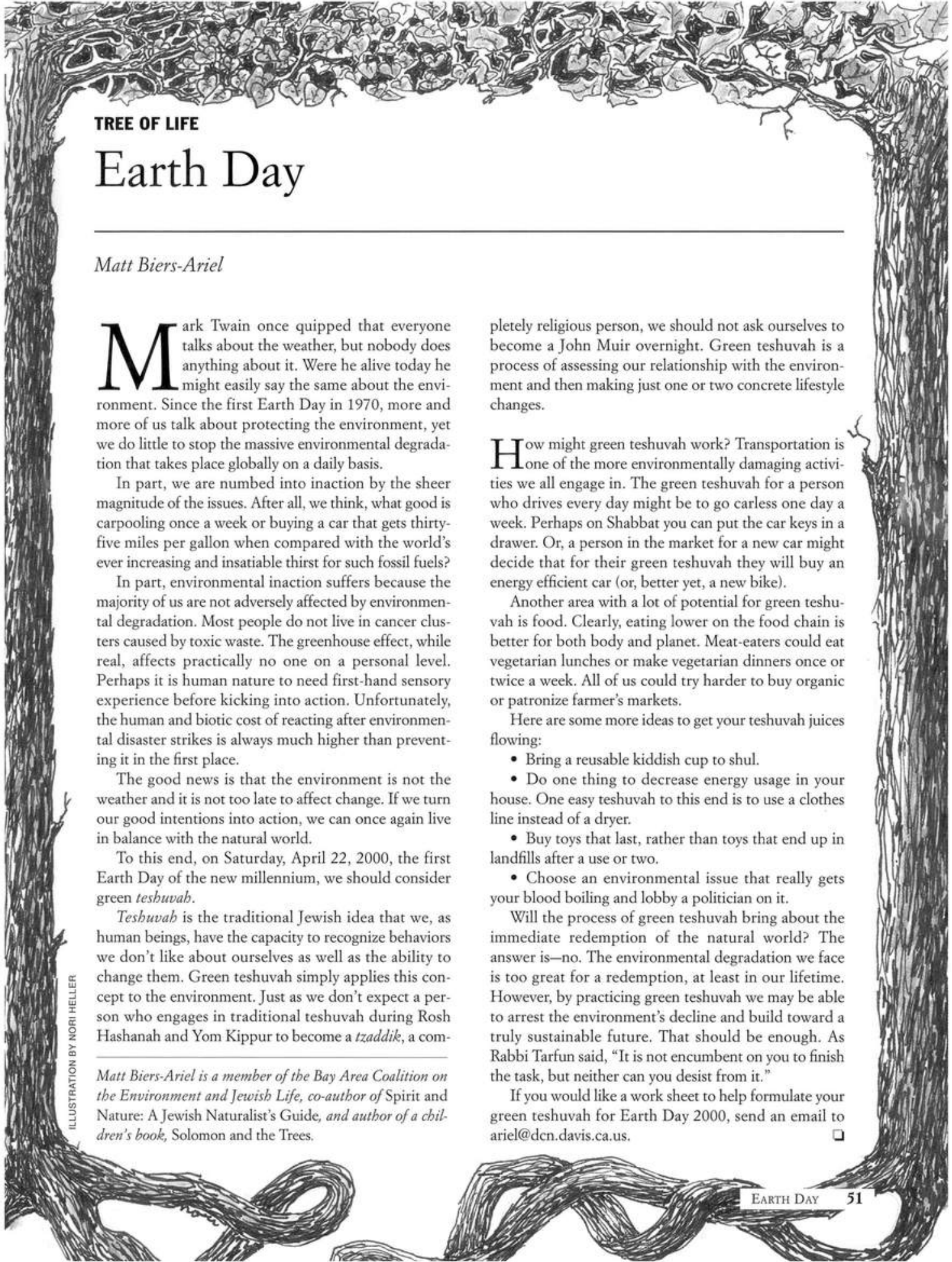
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TREE OF LIFE

Earth Day

Matt Biers-Ariel

Mark Twain once quipped that everyone talks about the weather, but nobody does anything about it. Were he alive today he might easily say the same about the environment. Since the first Earth Day in 1970, more and more of us talk about protecting the environment, yet we do little to stop the massive environmental degradation that takes place globally on a daily basis.

In part, we are numbed into inaction by the sheer magnitude of the issues. After all, we think, what good is carpooling once a week or buying a car that gets thirty-five miles per gallon when compared with the world's ever increasing and insatiable thirst for such fossil fuels?

In part, environmental inaction suffers because the majority of us are not adversely affected by environmental degradation. Most people do not live in cancer clusters caused by toxic waste. The greenhouse effect, while real, affects practically no one on a personal level. Perhaps it is human nature to need first-hand sensory experience before kicking into action. Unfortunately, the human and biotic cost of reacting after environmental disaster strikes is always much higher than preventing it in the first place.

The good news is that the environment is not the weather and it is not too late to affect change. If we turn our good intentions into action, we can once again live in balance with the natural world.

To this end, on Saturday, April 22, 2000, the first Earth Day of the new millennium, we should consider green *teshuvah*.

Teshuvah is the traditional Jewish idea that we, as human beings, have the capacity to recognize behaviors we don't like about ourselves as well as the ability to change them. Green *teshuvah* simply applies this concept to the environment. Just as we don't expect a person who engages in traditional *teshuvah* during Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur to become a *tzaddik*, a com-

pletely religious person, we should not ask ourselves to become a John Muir overnight. Green *teshuvah* is a process of assessing our relationship with the environment and then making just one or two concrete lifestyle changes.

How might green *teshuvah* work? Transportation is one of the more environmentally damaging activities we all engage in. The green *teshuvah* for a person who drives every day might be to go carless one day a week. Perhaps on Shabbat you can put the car keys in a drawer. Or, a person in the market for a new car might decide that for their green *teshuvah* they will buy an energy efficient car (or, better yet, a new bike).

Another area with a lot of potential for green *teshuvah* is food. Clearly, eating lower on the food chain is better for both body and planet. Meat-eaters could eat vegetarian lunches or make vegetarian dinners once or twice a week. All of us could try harder to buy organic or patronize farmer's markets.

Here are some more ideas to get your *teshuvah* juices flowing:

- Bring a reusable kiddish cup to shul.
- Do one thing to decrease energy usage in your house. One easy *teshuvah* to this end is to use a clothes line instead of a dryer.
- Buy toys that last, rather than toys that end up in landfills after a use or two.
- Choose an environmental issue that really gets your blood boiling and lobby a politician on it.

Will the process of green *teshuvah* bring about the immediate redemption of the natural world? The answer is—no. The environmental degradation we face is too great for a redemption, at least in our lifetime. However, by practicing green *teshuvah* we may be able to arrest the environment's decline and build toward a truly sustainable future. That should be enough. As Rabbi Tarfun said, "It is not incumbent on you to finish the task, but neither can you desist from it."

If you would like a work sheet to help formulate your green *teshuvah* for Earth Day 2000, send an email to ariel@dcn.davis.ca.us. □

Matt Biers-Ariel is a member of the Bay Area Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life, co-author of *Spirit and Nature: A Jewish Naturalist's Guide*, and author of a children's book, *Solomon and the Trees*.

Lessons from the Green Revolution

Do We Need New Technology to End Hunger?

Peter Rosset, Joseph Collins, and Frances Moore Lappé

Faced with an estimated 786 million hungry people in the world, cheerleaders for our social order have an easy solution: we will grow more food through the magic of chemicals and genetic engineering.

For those who remember the original “Green Revolution” promise to end hunger through miracle seeds, this call for “Green Revolution II” should ring hollow. Yet Monsanto, Novartis, AgrEvo, DuPont, and other chemical companies who are reinventing themselves as biotechnology companies, together with the World Bank and other international agencies, would have the world’s anti-hunger energies aimed down the path of more agrochemicals and genetically modified crops. This second Green Revolution, they tell us, will save the world from hunger and starvation if we just allow these various companies, spurred by the free market, to do their magic.

The Green Revolution myth goes like this: the miracle seeds of the Green Revolution increase grain yields and therefore are a key to ending world hunger. Higher yields mean more income for poor farmers, helping them to climb out of poverty, and more food means less hunger. Dealing with the root causes of poverty that contribute to hunger takes a very long time and people are starving now. So we must do what we can—increase production. The Green Revolution buys the time Third World countries desperately need to deal with the underlying social causes of poverty and to cut birth rates. In any case, outsiders—like the scientists and policy advisers behind the Green Revolution—can’t tell a poor country to reform its economic and political system, but they can contribute invaluable expertise in food production. While the first Green Revolution may have missed poorer areas with more marginal lands, we can learn valuable lessons from that experience to help launch a second Green Revolution to defeat hunger once and for all.

*Peter Rosset has a Ph.D. in agricultural ecology and is the executive director of Food First/The Institute for Food and Development Policy (www.foodfirst.org), which was founded by Joseph Collins and Frances Moore Lappé in 1975. This article is based on research presented in *World Hunger: 12 Myths*, second edition by Frances Moore Lappé, Joseph Collins, and Peter Rosset, with Luis Esparza (Grove Press and Food First Books, 1998).*

Improving seeds through experimentation is what people have been up to since the beginning of agriculture, but the term “Green Revolution” was coined in the 1960s to highlight a particularly striking breakthrough. In test plots in northwest Mexico, improved varieties of wheat dramatically increased yields. Much of the reason why these “modern varieties” produced more than traditional varieties was that they were more responsive to controlled irrigation and to petrochemical fertilizers, allowing for much more efficient conversion of industrial inputs into food. With a big boost from the International Agricultural Research Centers created by the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations, the “miracle” seeds quickly spread to Asia, and soon new strains of rice and corn were developed as well.

By the 1970s, the term “revolution” was well deserved, for the new seeds—accompanied by chemical fertilizers, pesticides, and, for the most part, irrigation—had replaced the traditional farming practices of millions of Third World farmers. By the 1990s, almost 75 percent of Asian rice areas were sown with these new varieties. The same was true for almost half of the wheat planted in Africa and more than half of that in Latin America and Asia, and about 70 percent of the world’s corn as well. Overall, it was estimated that 40 percent of all farmers in the Third World were using Green Revolution seeds, with the greatest use found in Asia, followed by Latin America.

Clearly, the production advances of the Green Revolution are no myth. Thanks to the new seeds, tens of millions of extra tons of grain a year are being harvested. But has the Green Revolution actually proven itself a successful strategy for ending hunger? Not really.

Narrowly focusing on increasing production—as the Green Revolution does—cannot alleviate hunger because it fails to alter the tightly concentrated distribution of economic power, especially access to land and purchasing power. Even the World Bank concluded in a major 1986 study of world hunger that a rapid increase in food production does not necessarily result in food security—that is, less hunger. Current hunger can only be alleviated by “redistributing purchasing power and resources toward those who are undernourished,” the study said. In a nutshell—if the poor don’t have the money to buy food, increased production is not going to help them.

Introducing any new agricultural technology into a social system stacked in favor of the rich and against the poor—without addressing the social questions of access to the technology's benefits—will over time lead to an even greater concentration of the rewards from agriculture, as is happening in the United States.

Because the Green Revolution approach does nothing to address the insecurity that lies at the root of high birth rates—and can even heighten that insecurity—it cannot buy time until population growth slows. Finally, a narrow focus on production ultimately defeats itself as it destroys the very resource base on which agriculture depends. We've come to see that without a strategy for change that addresses the powerlessness of the poor, the tragic result will be more food and yet more hunger.

More Food and Yet More Hunger?

Despite three decades of rapidly expanding global food supplies, there are still an estimated 786 million hungry people in the world in the 1990s. Where are these 786 million hungry people? Since the early 1980s, media representations of famines in Africa have awakened Westerners to hunger there, but Africa represents less than one-quarter of the hunger in the world today. We are made blind to the day-in-day-out hunger suffered by hundreds of millions more. For example, by the mid-1980s, newspaper headlines were applauding the Asian success stories—India and Indonesia, we were told, had become “self-sufficient in food” or even “food exporters.” But it is in Asia, precisely where Green Revolution seeds have contributed to the greatest production success, that roughly two-thirds of the undernourished in the entire world live.

According to *Business Week* magazine, “even though Indian granaries are overflowing now,” thanks to the success of the Green Revolution in raising wheat and rice yields, “5,000 children die each day of malnutrition. One-third of India's 900 million people are poverty-stricken.” Since the poor can't afford to buy what is produced, “the government is left trying to store millions of tons of foods. Some is rotting, and there is concern that rotten grain will find its way to public markets.” The article concludes that the Green Revolution may have reduced India's grain imports substantially, but did not have a similar impact on hunger.

Such analysis raises serious questions about the number of hungry people in the world in 1970 versus 1990, spanning the two decades of major Green Revolution advances. At first glance, it looks as though great progress was made, with food production up and hunger down. The total food available per person in the world rose by 11 percent over those two decades, while the estimated number of hungry people fell from 942 million to 786 million, a 16 percent drop. This was apparent progress, for which those behind the Green Revolution were understandably happy to take the credit.



*If the poor don't have the money
to buy food, increased production
is not going to help them.*

But these figures merit a closer look. If you eliminate China from the analysis, the number of hungry people in the rest of the world actually increased by more than 11 percent, from 536 to 597 million. In South America, for example, while per capita food supplies rose almost 8 percent, the number of hungry people also went up, by 19 percent. In south Asia, there was 9 percent more food per person by 1990, but there were also 9 percent more hungry people. Nor was it increased population that made for more hungry people. The total food available per person actually increased. What made possible greater hunger was the failure to address unequal access to food and food-producing resources.

The remarkable difference in China, where the number of hungry dropped from 406 million to 189 million, almost begs the question: which has been more effective at reducing hunger—the Green Revolution or the Chinese Revolution, where broad-based changes in access to land paved the way for rising living standards?

Whether the Green Revolution or any other strategy to boost food production will alleviate hunger depends on the economic, political, and cultural rules that people make. These rules determine who benefits as a supplier of the

increased production—whose land and crops prosper and for whose profit—and who benefits as a consumer of the increased production—who gets the food and at what price.

The poor pay more and get less. Poor farmers can't afford to buy fertilizer and other inputs in volume; big growers can get discounts for large purchases. Poor farmers can't hold out for the best price for their crops, as can larger farmers whose circumstances are far less desperate. In much of the world, water is the limiting factor in farming success, and irrigation is often out of the reach of the poor. Canal irrigation favors those near the top of the flow. Tubewells, often promoted by development agencies, favor the bigger operators, who can better afford the initial investment and have lower costs per unit. Credit is also critical. It is common for small farmers to depend on local moneylenders and pay interest rates several times as high as wealthier farmers. Government-subsidized credit overwhelmingly benefits the big farmers. Most of all, the poor lack clout. They can't command the subsidies and other government favors accruing to the rich.

With the Green Revolution, farming becomes petro-dependent. Some of the more recently developed seeds may produce higher yields even without manufactured inputs, but the best results require the right amounts of chemical fertilizer, pesticides, and water. So as the new seeds spread, petrochemicals become part of farming. In India, adoption of the new seeds has been accompanied by a sixfold rise in fertilizer use per acre. Yet the quantity of agricultural production per ton of fertilizer used in India dropped by two-thirds during the Green Revolution years. In fact, over the past thirty years the annual growth of fertilizer use on Asian rice has been from three to forty times faster than the growth of rice yields.

Because farming methods that depend heavily on chemical fertilizers do not maintain the soil's natural fertility and because pesticides generate resistant pests, farmers need ever more fertilizers and pesticides just to achieve the same results. At the same time, those who profit from the increased use of fertilizers and pesticides fear labor organizing and use their new wealth to buy tractors and other machines, even though they are not required by the new seeds. This incremental shift leads to the industrialization of farming.

Once on the path of industrial agriculture, farming costs more. It can be more profitable, of course, but only if the prices farmers get for their crops stay ahead of the costs of petrochemicals and machinery. Green Revolution



proponents claim increases in net incomes from farms of all sizes once farmers adopt the more responsive seeds. But recent studies also show another trend: outlays for fertilizers and pesticides may be going up faster than yields, suggesting that Green Revolution farmers are now facing what U.S. farmers have experienced for decades—a cost-price squeeze.

In Central Luzon, Philippines, rice yield increased 13 percent during the 1980s, but came at the cost of a 21 percent increase in fertilizer use. In the Central Plains, yields went up only 6.5

percent, while fertilizer use rose 24 percent and pesticides jumped by 53 percent. In West Java, a 23 percent yield increase was virtually canceled by 65 and 69 percent increases in fertilizers and pesticides respectively.

To anyone following farm news here at home, these reports have a painfully familiar ring—and why wouldn't they? After all, the United States—not Mexico—is the true birthplace of the Green Revolution. Improved seeds combined with chemical fertilizers and pesticides have pushed corn yields up nearly three-fold since 1950, with smaller but still significant gains for wheat, rice, and soybeans. Since World War II, as larger harvests have pushed down the prices farmers get for their crops while the costs of farming have shot up, farmers' profit margins have been drastically narrowed. By the early 1990s, production costs had risen from about half to over 80 percent of gross farm income. So who survives today? Two very different groups: those few farmers who chose not to buy into industrialized agriculture and those able to keep expanding their acreage to make up for their lower per acre profit. Among this second select group are the top 1.2 percent of farms by income, those with \$500,000 or more in yearly sales, dubbed "super-farms" by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. In 1969, the superfarms earned 16 percent of net farm income; by the late 1980s, they garnered nearly 40 percent.

Superfarms triumph not because they are more efficient food producers or because the Green Revolution technology itself favored them, but because of advantages that accrue to wealth and size. They have the capital to invest and the volume necessary to stay afloat even if profits per unit shrink. They have the political clout to shape tax policies in their favor. Over time, why should we expect the result of the cost-price squeeze to be any different in the Third World? In the United States, we've seen the number of farms drop by two-thirds and average farm size more than double since World War II. The gutting of rural communities, the

creation of inner-city slums, and the exacerbation of unemployment all followed in the wake of this vast migration from the land. Think what the equivalent rural exodus means in the Third World, where the number of jobless people is already double or triple our own.

Not Ecologically Sustainable

There is also growing evidence that Green Revolution-style farming is not ecologically sustainable, even for large farmers. In the 1990s, Green Revolution researchers themselves sounded the alarm about a disturbing trend that had only just come to light. After achieving dramatic increases in the early stages of the technological transformation, yields began falling in a number of Green Revolution areas. In Central Luzon, Philippines, rice yields grew steadily during the 1970s, peaked in the early 1980s, and have been dropping gradually ever since. Long-term experiments conducted by the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) in both Central Luzon and Laguna Province confirm these results. Similar patterns have now been observed for rice-wheat systems in India and Nepal. The causes of this phenomenon have to do with forms of long-term soil degradation that are still poorly understood by scientists. An Indian farmer told *Business Week* his story:

Dyal Singh knows that the soil on his 3.3-hectare [8 acre] farm in Punjab is becoming less fertile. So far, it hasn't hurt his harvest of wheat and corn. "There will be a great problem after 5 or 10 years," says the 63-year-old Sikh farmer. Years of using high-yield seeds that require heavy irrigation and chemical fertilizers have taken their toll on much of India's farmland.... So far, 6 percent of agricultural land has been rendered useless.

Where yields are not actually declining, the rate of growth is slowing rapidly or leveling off, as has now been documented in China, North Korea, Indonesia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.

The Green Revolution: Some Lessons

Having seen food production advance while hunger widens, we are now prepared to ask: under what conditions are greater harvests doomed to failure in eliminating hunger?

First, where farmland is bought and sold like any other commodity and society allows the unlimited accumulation of farmland by a few, superfarms replace family farms and all of society suffers.

Second, where the main producers of food—small farmers and farm workers—lack bargaining power relative to suppliers of farm inputs and food marketers, producers get a shrinking share of the rewards from farming.

Third, where dominant technology destroys the very basis for future production, by degrading the soil and generating pest and weed problems, it becomes increasingly difficult and costly to sustain yields.

Under these three conditions, mountains of additional food could not eliminate hunger, as hunger in America should never let us forget. The alternative is to create a viable and productive small farm agriculture using the principles of agroecology. That is the only model with the potential to end rural poverty, feed everyone, and protect the environment and the productivity of the land for future generations.

Successful Examples

That sounds good, but has it ever worked? From the United States to India, alternative agriculture is proving itself viable. In the United States, a landmark study by the prestigious National Research Council found that "alternative farmers often produce high per acre yields with significant reductions in costs per unit of crop harvested," despite the fact that "many federal policies discourage adoption of alternative practices." The Council concluded that "Federal commodity programs must be restructured to help farmers realize the full benefits of the productivity gains possible through alternative practices."

In South India, a 1993 study was carried out to compare "ecological farms" with matched "conventional" or chemical-intensive farms. The study's author found that the ecological farms were just as productive and profitable as the chemical ones. He concluded that if extrapolated nationally, ecological farming would have "no negative impact on food security," and would reduce soil erosion and the depletion of soil fertility while greatly lessening dependence on external inputs.

But Cuba is where alternative agriculture has been put to its greatest test. Changes underway in that island nation since the collapse of trade with the former socialist bloc provide evidence that the alternative approach can work on a large scale. Before 1989, Cuba was a model Green Revolution-style farm economy, based on enormous production units, using vast quantities of imported chemicals and machinery to produce export crops, while over half of the island's food was imported. Although the government's commitment to equity, as well as favorable terms of trade offered by Eastern Europe, meant that Cubans were not undernourished, the underlying vulnerability of this style of farming was exposed when the collapse of the socialist bloc joined the already existing and soon to be tightened U.S. trade embargo.

Cuba was plunged into the worst food crisis in its history, with consumption of calories and protein dropping by perhaps as much as 30 percent. Nevertheless, by 1997, Cubans were eating almost as well as they did before 1989, yet comparatively little food and agrochemicals were being imported. What happened?

Faced with the impossibility of importing either food or agrochemical inputs, Cuba turned inward to create a more self-reliant agriculture based on higher crop prices to

farmers, agroecological technology, smaller production units, and urban agriculture. The combination of a trade embargo, food shortages, and the opening of farmers' markets meant that farmers began to receive much better prices for their products. Given this incentive to produce, they did so, even in the absence of Green Revolution-style inputs. They were given a huge boost by the reorientation of government education, research, and extension toward alternative methods, as well as the rediscovery of traditional farming techniques.

As small farmers and cooperatives responded by increasing production while large-scale state farms stagnated and faced plunging yields, the government initiated the newest phase of revolutionary land reform, parceling out the state farms to their former employees as smaller-scale production units. Finally, the government mobilized support for a growing urban agriculture movement—small-scale organic farming on vacant lots—which, together with the other changes, transformed Cuban cities and urban diets in just a few years.

The Cuban experience tells us that we can feed a nation's people with a small-farm model based on agroecological technology, and in so doing we can become more self-reliant in food production. A key lesson is that when farmers receive fairer prices, they produce, with or without Green Revolution seed and chemical inputs. If these expensive and noxious inputs are unnecessary, then we can dispense with them.

The Bottom Line

In the final analysis, if the history of the Green Revolution has taught us one thing, it is that increased food production can—and often does—go hand in hand with greater hunger. If the very basis of staying competitive in farming is buying expensive inputs, then wealthier farmers will inexorably win out over the poor, who are unlikely to find adequate employment to compensate for the loss of farming livelihoods. Hunger is not caused by a shortage of food, and cannot be eliminated by producing more.

This is why we must be skeptical when Monsanto, DuPont, Novartis, and other chemical-cum-biotechnology companies tell us that genetic engineering will boost crop yields and feed the hungry. The technologies they push have dubious benefits and well-documented risks, and the second Green Revolution they promise is no more likely to end hunger than the first.

Far too many people do not have access to the food that is already available because of deep and growing inequality. If agriculture can play any role in alleviating hunger, it will only be to the extent that the bias toward wealthier and larger farmers is reversed through pro-poor alternatives like land reform and sustainable agriculture, which reduce inequality and make small farmers the center of an economically vibrant rural economy. □

UNION REFORMATION (continued from page 23)

trade unionists. Who is promoting cynicism? Who is providing hope?

America needs a lot more than a raise: it needs a rank-and-file movement against corruption, one that will reform trade-union organization along participatory lines. The idea of such a movement makes a lot of people on the Left nervous. Orthodox Marxists will argue that workers' protests must take place on the factory floor, not in the union hall; must be a protest against the factory boss, not the union boss; and must be against objective conditions, not workers' own institutions.

But any revolt against "objective conditions" will fail unless new institutions replace the corrupt ones now in place. Labor can learn something from the sixteenth-century reformation of the Catholic Church. The problem then too was defined in terms of corruption. "The canonization of a long line of saints could not detract from the blatant lack of saintliness in the Church as a whole," writes historian Norman Davies. "Europe was full of tales about simoniac bishops, nepotistic popes, promiscuous priests, idle monks and, above all, the sheer worldly wealth of the Church."

Top officials were using the Church's position as a defender of the poor to enrich themselves in just the way crooked officials use the unions' role as defenders of the workers to disguise their own avarice. The medieval popes canonized St. Francis and St. Teresa, just as those in power at the AFL-CIO invoke Eugene Debs, Mike Quill, and Mother Jones.

Historians say Luther set off the Reformation when he nailed his ninety-five theses to the door of Wittenburg castle. But they rarely say what was in the theses. It turns out that many were accusations against a corrupt church official named Johann Tetzel, whom Luther had caught selling indulgences. Medieval kickbacks. Of course, Luther's protest went well beyond corruption. His point was to use the corrupt state of the clergy to argue for new congregations in which people worked out their own salvation without Rome or its official hierarchy. It's a stretch from Luther and the popes to the Wobblies and the executive council of the AFL-CIO, but if there's a common thread it's that we're all leaders. □

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from Pure Poetry

Binnie Kirshenbaum

1

scansion: The system of describing conventional poetic rhythms by visual symbols for metrical analysis and study. Stressed and unstressed syllables are marked according to the degree of sense emphasis transmitted. It does not make rhythm; it reveals it by transferring it from a temporal into a spatial dimension.

With the splendor derived from pointillist detail, I'm getting a picture regarding Henry's ex-wife. Our first date, and already I am privy to the particulars of the marital dirt. Is this a treat for me or what? Ah, those trifling morsels of delectability. Minutiae like candy kisses. Henry tells me how Dawn lets the children go without bathing for days at a clip. How graciously and with a tra-la-la of *oh-it-was-nothing*, she accepts compliments on dinners she did not prepare, but rather bought from the caterer at Dean & DeLuca. How her nipples are cylinder-shaped and long like Olive Oyl's nose, and how her pubic hair grows to extraordinary lengths.

"I swear to you," Henry says, "it grew like you wouldn't believe. Honest, it was like the hair on your head except that it was scraggly. You have beautiful hair. The way the light catches it." Henry takes a sip of his drink, a gin and tonic, and he asks, "What color is it, exactly? Your hair? On your passport, what does it say about hair color?"

"Black Cherry." I tell him my hair color is Black Cherry. That is what it says on the bottle, but I don't tell him that part. That it is Black Cherry by L'Oréal. Instead, I steer the conversation back to where it was before he digressed. The color of my hair is of no compelling interest to me at the moment. I much prefer the dish on his ex-wife. "So what does Dawn look like?" I ask. "Is she very beautiful? Aside from the nipple issue, that is."

Henry shifts forward in his seat to get at his wallet. Our table is window-side, and a glimmer of my reflection stares back at me, sizing me up. I spook myself and turn away from the window, as if you could turn your back on your



double. Henry hands me the photograph of his ex-wife. She is all dolled up. "For a wedding," he tells me. "Mostly she dresses like a slob. Sweatpants and grimy T-shirts. And she doesn't put on fresh underwear daily either. To tell you the truth"—Henry's voice drops a notch as if he is confessing to a crime—"her personal hygiene is not the best. I'll bet you're clean," he says. "You look like you are very clean."

I bring the photograph near to my nose. I'm myopic like nobody's business, an affliction that can also translate into a lack of discernment. Vanity prohibits me from wearing my glasses except when the need to see clearly is a critical one. Twenty-twenty vision is not sufficient motivation to obscure my eyes, which are the size of walnuts and hazel-colored. Not to mention I was blessed with lashes like Liza Minnelli, only mine are real, and don't even talk to me about contact lenses because the eye is not an orifice.

I focus on the subject of the photograph. Seated on a lawn chair, her legs crossed, she is wearing a yellow frock and a straw hat with a wide brim. Her smile is also wide, and if I squint, I can make out that her teeth are crooked. She is a skinny woman, and she is not much to look at. Although she might be pretty enough if not for the lack of a chin, which is the most serious of all the facial flaws.

We did not meet that way, but Henry is the sort of man I could've met through a personal ad in *New York* magazine. *Divorced white male, 40-ish, father of two children plus cat, hamster, and goldfish. Solvent, kind, good-looking, and fun-loving, but is not afraid to cry. Likes music, movies, long walks on the beach, and YOU?*

I return the photograph to Henry, and I ask him, "Do you still love her?"

A flicker of doubt crosses his face, and I catch it there. Still, he says, "Definitely not. No way." Glancing once more at the picture of his ex-wife, Henry is reminded that, except during the summer months, she did not shave her legs or

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underarms, spots where also her hair grew like shrubbery. He next tells me how, in lieu of a proper blow job, she acquiesced only to something like playing the harmonica, her lips pursed along the shaft. Not once in the entirety of the twelve years they were married did she take the whole of Henry's cock into her mouth. "And get this," Henry says. "Every year for my birthday, she gave me a chamois-cloth shirt mail-ordered from L. L. Bean. Except one year I got a book on dolphins. Dolphins are nice," Henry says, "but it's not like I was interested in them." Then he asks, "What about you?"

"Me?" I say. "I take it in my mouth."

Henry laughs, but also he is blushing like a tea rose. "No. I mean, have you ever been married?"

I nod, and I say, "Yes. Once. Briefly."

"So you're divorced too," Henry thinks we have that in common, but I tell him, "No. I'm a widow."

"Oh. I'm sorry," Henry is flustered.

As if he's made a social gaffe, he fumbles with words and gestures. Like a pair of trout on land, his hands flip against the air and slap his face and the tabletop. "Really. Sorry. Oh, I shouldn't have said anything. Would you like more wine? Let me get you another glass of wine."

We, Henry and I, did not meet through a personal ad because—for what it's worth—when it comes to men, I have never experienced deprivation or even slim pickings. It could be that I am heavy with pheromones. That I give off an irresistible stink. Or maybe men go for me because they like a toothache, because in all modesty, I'm not the easiest person to get on with. Whatever. Also, it doesn't hurt any that I have a certain celebrity, albeit minor, but that does come with a kind of cachet.

Bent on getting me another glass of wine, Henry raises his arm to signal the waitress. I reach across the table and take his hand. "Henry," I tell him, "my glass is full."

No matter or not that I am popular with the men, I would never have answered such a personal ad because while I like cats and music well enough, I'm not keen on the movies. Or children, and spare me from long walks on the beach. The beach is an area I actively dislike, and men who cry are not for me. I do not have what it takes to care for the emotionally enfeebled. I've got my own problems.

Leaning in to diminish the distance between us, as if nosing about in my business requires physical intimacy, Henry asks how it happened. "How did he die?" His voice is soft and it comes from the back of his throat. It is not necessary to look or to touch to know that, as we speak, Henry's pecker is growing stiff like rigor mortis has set in. It's this situation about me being a widow that's doing it. As if all women widowed young are like spiders. Black widows. Seductively mysterious and titillating and dangerous. A femme fatale, and perhaps for real. As if maybe I am capable of bringing on killer orgasms. Henry is not the first man of

my acquaintance to burst his fly over the possibilities. "Your husband?" he presses for an answer. "Was it an accident?"

"Complications," I tell him that much. "He died from complications," I say, and then I leave it alone. I do not explain what is meant by "complications." Entanglements. The raveled skein of yarn that is story's tragic element, the labyrinthian free-falls of choice, the momentum of things out of control, of fear and human failings. Better he should think Max died from a bowel nicked during a routine appendectomy. Or from pneumonia. The tragic conclusion of a common cold neglected.

I bill myself as a widow, I refer to Max as my dearly departed, I incant *may-he-rest-in-peace* because this is one of those cases when a falsehood embodies a greater truth. A metaphorical truth because the literal truth would serve only to distort the picture of my marriage to Max. As if our marriage were simply yet one more marriage that didn't

pan out. As if we were but a statistic in the annals of divorce. A marriage gone belly-up due to squabbles over money or that he ran around on her or that she grew fat or that they grew apart. All the usual reasons for a marriage to go kaput. Our marriage was not that way. Not at all.

To do my marriage justice, a death is required. Death is the way it had to end, the only exit available, and Max had to be the one to take it because it wouldn't be logical for me to be the dead one. Despite that there is more than a shred of evidence to justify the statement, "My marriage ended because I died," I could hardly say such a thing now and be believed. Not while I'm sitting here window-side in a trendy downtown tavern with my hand under the table and resting on Henry's leg. My fingertips make small and soft circles around his knee. Circles of intent, and not to mention I prefer the part of the widow to that of the corpse.

In this version of the story, the part of the widow is a small one. There was no scene where I stood graveside weeping while a casket, with Max in it, was lowered into the ground. No mass was said for Max, and I did not write an elegy for his memorial service either. That's because there was no memorial service. I did not sit *shiva* for him, and I have never left a spray of red roses laced with baby's breath at his headstone. Indeed, there is no headstone that sports three lines, like a tercet chiseled into marble, "Max Schirmer / Loving Husband / 1993–1994" because Max is not dead in that way.

In the conventional sense of the word, as far as I know Max is not the least bit dead. Nonetheless, for purposes of my own, Max is as dead as a doornail. A conceit aided along by the fact that he now resides in Los Angeles. The city of angels, which is a place of clear skies, fluffy white clouds, movie stars, palm trees, blue swimming pools, and not at all unlike an afterlife.

*Henry is not the first
man of my acquaintance
to burst his fly over
the possibilities.*

Meanwhile, poor Henry here is having something like an asthma attack. His breath is short and rapid, which is a cryptogram for horny as a toad. Considering as how I am responsible for this condition, what with the way my fingers are figure-skating along his thigh, I invite myself back to his place. It is not in my nature to tease, and also because it is my way to ask for what I want. "Let's go to your place," I say, because generally speaking, my apartment is off-limits to guests. The ghosts who live there with me, Dora and Estella, they don't take to strangers, and the ghosts, they were there first.

3

explication: Also called formal, structural, or textual analysis; examines poetry for a knowledge of each part and for the relation of these parts to the whole.

At home, I take my mail to my desk and here, in print, in my complimentary copy of *Lingua Obscura*, which is a journal of rhetorical grandiloquence for assholes, some other poet has written a diatribe attacking my work. Which was why the editors thought to send me a free copy without my requesting one. So I could read why this poet who goes by the name Ankh has a problem with my poetry. That's it. Ankh. No surname. Ankh, in this day and age, no less. Ankh.

My ghosts are at the kitchen table whispering between themselves. Ghosts, I have learned, do not sleep during daylight as one might suppose, and Dora giggles. Laughter that sounds like wind chimes. I ask them to please lower the volume. "I'm trying to read here," I say.

That Ankh is a poet of questionable abilities, not to mention the critical vision of a mole, does not stop her any. She goes for my throat and my soul because of my use of a word that she can barely bring herself to utter. "The word *cunt*," she claims, "is not in the poet's diction." She does not write *cunt*, but spells it out. "C-*.N-T."

I beg to differ. The word *cunt* is in the poet's diction. It's in my diction, and I think it is a lovely word. The way I happen to be smitten with the related word *gynecologist*. *Gynecologist* is a word that rolls off my tongue as if it were greased with butter. Also, I am very attached to my gynecologist as a person. As I am attached to my therapist, although the word *therapist* I don't care for much. The word *therapist* sticks in my craw and offends my sensibilities. Still, I'm quite fond of both these men, although I prefer it when the gynecologist does the probing.

It is nothing but a coincidence that my therapist's office and my gynecologist's office are located on this same stretch of Waverly Place, although my therapist does not much believe in coincidence.

I see Leon every Tuesday afternoon from 3:00 to 3:50, which is the therapist's idea of an hour. The same way their year is but eleven months long. All therapists do that, truncate time, shave ten minutes from an hour and delete one month from the year. Most often it is August that they

disappear. While they're off splashing in the Hamptons or gourmandizing in Tuscany, you are left alone to flounder.

Leon's office is dark and somber. Diplomas from Harvard and the University of Chicago and the New York Psychoanalytic Institute hang on walls paneled with rich wood. The bookshelves are heavy mostly with tomes on personality quirks, case studies, psychoanalytic theory, the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* volumes I-IV. Also, Leon has the complete works of Oscar Wilde. Sandwiched between *Freud's Brain* and Jung's *Dreams* are my books, which I gave him as gifts on the condition that he not stoop so low as to scour them looking for clues relating to my personal life. Also, I refused to scribble a few words plus my autograph on the title pages. "I don't write cheesy messages on title pages," I told Leon, which is not entirely a rule I live by. For strangers, for my students, for an audience, those who show up to readings clutching books in sweaty hands, for them I am delighted to inscribe slop on the title page.

I take my seat, the bull's-eye, dead center in the middle section of the three-piece couch that is semicircled around Leon's chair. This couch is designed for group therapy. Leon does groups three nights a week. I've not been asked to join one, but even if I were invited, I would refuse. I'm hardly about to share my intimacies with an assortment of victims of life's little disappointments. Still, it would be nice to be asked.

Directly across from me, in an S-shaped Scandinavian chair, Leon sits contorted like a pretzel. I associate those

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chairs with back troubles and with old hippies whose potbellies and sagging breasts obstruct their view of the Birkenstock sandals on their feet. Leon, however, is sprightly, and on his feet are a pair of navy blue leather pumps with one-inch heels. Ferragamo or maybe Gucci would be my guess. Soft leather and classically styled and a tasteful complement to his beige A-line skirt. A gold brooch is pinned to the scalloped collar of his white blouse. My therapist is a drag queen, but understated. I like this about Leon. That he is a librarian of a drag queen. I admire his courage, if not his taste, which is way too dowdy for me. You could say Leon gives drag a bad name, what with his knee-length skirts, tailored jackets, sensible shoes, pageboy hairdo, and pearly pink lipstick. Then again, to be fair, I have never seen him outside his office. Perhaps nights and weekends, he gussies up in sequins and feathers.

Also, Leon is sympathetic. He knows firsthand what it is to put on a face. To try to fool the people and yourself. To have it be that your soul is in constant conflict with your matter. That deep inside you are somebody else altogether. Not to mention how Leon knows what it is like to be an outcast and a black sheep. If anything, next to him, I look normal.

"You have a run in your stocking," I tell him, and Leon folds his hands neatly on his lap and waits for more. It's a technique employed by therapists and the police alike. To sit and wait until you cave in to the pressure of the quiet. You give it up and spill your guts. Leon has a genius for this skill. He can wait with the best of them, and I am weak. I confess. "I have a new boyfriend. One that I like," I add.

Leon is pleased, and try as he might, he can't hide it. Lurking behind that cool and professional demeanor of his is a doting mama type who aches for me to meet a nice guy and settle down, which he believes cannot happen until I recover from Max. As if Max were a sickness that is curable, although Leon does not phrase it that way. He says I need to learn to trust, to trust love.

They never did meet, Leon and Max. I didn't start seeing Leon until after my marriage was done with, but Leon's father was lost to the Nazis and his mother went crazy as a result of too much terror, and despite his training in detachment, I can tell that Leon can't abide a German. He won't admit it in so many words, but he worries that Max has ruined something in me just as the Nazis destroyed his mother's capacity to do much other than shriek into the night. What he says is that Max was merely a symptom of a larger conflict.

"So tell me," Leon asks. "Who's the lucky guy?"

"His name is Henry," I say. "He's divorced with two children and cat and a hamster and a goldfish. He is independently well off. He's very sweet," I say, and Leon shines

like a beacon, guiding me to safety until I add, "Who knows? He might be the one."

Leon does not think that it is healthy to jump the gun. He doesn't so much like looking ahead that way. For Leon, the future is not as illuminating as the past. Between Carmen and Leon, I pretty much have all my verb tenses covered.

"You're practicing safe sex, I trust," he says, and I say, "Leon, he was married for twelve years. I'm his first date in over a decade."

"I don't care," Leon says. "Please, promise me. You'll use condoms."

I look away from Leon and I promise him I'll use condoms, which is a lie, and I check my watch. Sometimes the truncated hour isn't truncated enough. Time remains, and I need a new topic to talk about, so I say, "I've got a birthday coming."

Leon knows something about me and my disastrous birthdays. Not everything there is to know. I have yet to reveal many of the plum details, but I've been with Leon for more than two years now. Consequently, he's all too familiar with the sad tale of my last birthday. How I was going to treat myself nice, how I went to Saks and bought a scarf that was economically way out of my line. A small fortune I spent on that scarf, only to leave it by accident in the taxicab, which soured the remainder of the day for me to the extent that I kicked at the walls of my apartment and howled like a wounded wildebeest until I fell asleep from the exhaustion of it. The year before that I found myself locked into a fetal position from which I was unable to unfurl for eighteen hours, and the year before that one—well, that year I was still married to Max. Which was the most hideous birthday of them all. To date, knock wood.

"Your birthday isn't for a ways off yet," Leon notes. "What makes you think about it now?"

"Carmen." I place the blame squarely on my friend. "Carmen is worried about it."

"And you?" Leon asks. "Are you worried about it?"

"I'm trying not to think about it," I say, "but Carmen is pestering me about a gift. About what I want."

"And do you have any idea what that could be?" Leon asks. "What you want?"

"Nothing," I say. "There's nothing I want," but Leon does not let me off the hook so easily. "If it were all going to work out wonderfully," he says, "if your birthday were going to be the perfect day you've imagined, how would it unfold?"

I tell Leon that I cannot imagine such a thing. It is too farfetched, and Leon gives me an assignment. "Think about it," he says. "Close your eyes and see what you can come up with. Try to picture a happy birthday for yourself." With eyes shut, I first see only the darkness, which is a far better thing than what follows. Which is Max. □

*I look away from
Leon and I promise
him I'll use condoms,
which is a lie.*

Remembering Erikson

Ellen Herman

■ *Identity's Architect: A Biography of Erik H. Erikson*, by Lawrence J. Friedman. Scribner, 1999.

Americans may pride themselves on a history of diligent self-invention, but we no longer seem to know who we are, let alone how to make ourselves up from scratch. Since the 1960s, when the civil rights revolution recast the terms of being and belonging, identity has been an American obsession. Controversies over affirmative action, child adoption, electoral representation, school curricula, and intermarriage absorb our time and attention. We wonder if identity is passed down to us through communities of descent, wired into us by our genes, or brought upon us by acts of free will. What makes an American, for example? Must national identity trump other loyalties that make us who we are: race, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, occupation, family, philosophy of life?

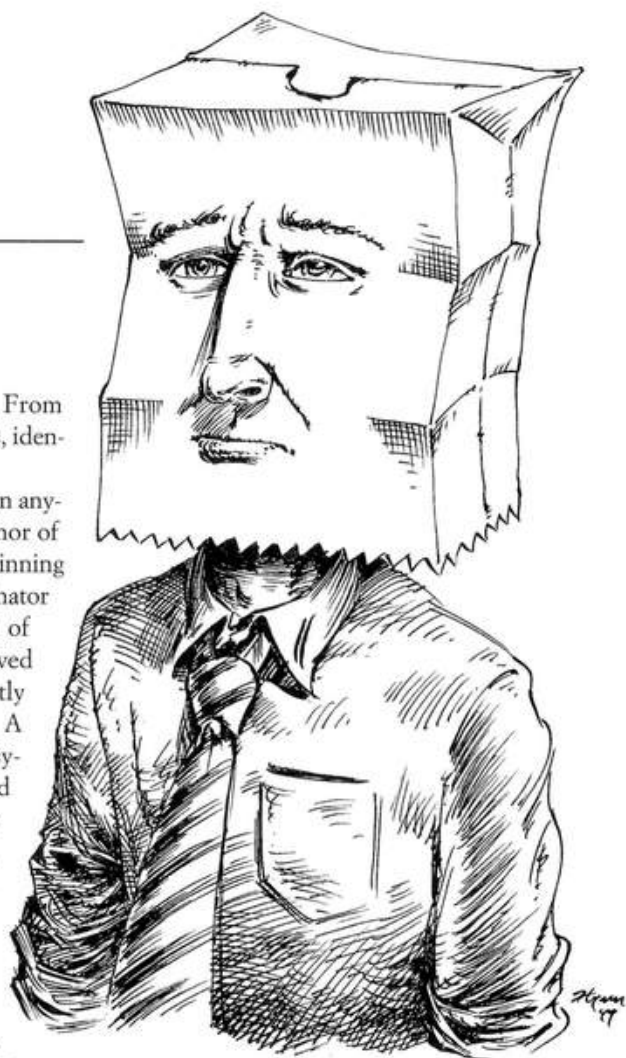
Is identity a style of belonging at once reassuring and rigid, as in having Jewish blood or Indian blood or Black blood? Periodic calls to revise census categories illustrate that Americans think of themselves not (or not only) in terms of tribal ascription but in terms of behavior and experience that are chosen, combined, and recombined. Identity is racial *and* biracial, gendered *and* transgendered, cultural *and* multicultural. As a way to categorize personhood, identity may be fixed or fickle. In either case, a post-identity

moment has not yet arrived. From identity crisis to identity politics, identity matters.

Erik Erikson came closer than anyone to being the individual author of the identity concept. A prize-winning writer, gifted clinician, and originator of a famous eight-stage model of human development, Erikson lived a long, productive, and mostly happy life from 1902 to 1994. A Freudian who transmitted psychoanalytic ideas to popular and academic audiences at the zenith of their American vogue, Erikson anticipated the analytic drift toward ego psychology and its preoccupation with how human organisms become social selves. His reverence for maternalism made him a cultural feminist before that style came back into fashion in the 1970s; his commitment to gender difference was denounced by radicals interested more in obliterating than sacralizing feminine identity.

Erikson's sixty-four-year marriage is an object lesson in the dependence of brilliant men on the voluntary subordination of brilliant women. Joan Erikson closely supervised her husband's career, demonstrating a creative flair that only occasionally gained an independent outlet. She edited everything he wrote, decided what he would wear and eat (even in restaurants), selected his friends. While he was tending to other people's children, she raised his.

Identity's Architect is engrossing, full of telling details about Erikson's



marriage and family, his accomplishments, and the settings that nurtured his ideas. Lawrence Friedman devotes considerable psychobiographical skill to interpreting this fascinating life. Unsurprisingly, he is deeply indebted to his subject's core insight: that psychology and society are inseparable. Erikson's studies of Hitler, Luther, and Ghandi were sacred texts for pioneering psychohistorians, who took seriously Erikson's twin claims that psychoanalysis was a historical method and that history was a gigantic bundle of individual case histories. So it goes in this book. Friedman's treatment of Erikson is so Eriksonian that readers may be as struck by the identification between biographer and subject as they are by the chronicle of Erikson's lifelong search for an identity of his own.

Friedman documents moments of real identity crisis in Erikson's life,

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especially in relation to his biological father, whose identity he never knew, and his son Neil, born with Down's syndrome and institutionalized until his death as a young adult, another ghost in the Erikson family. Outside of such pivotal events, identity came easily to this man located midway between countries and religions. Born to a Danish Jewish mother, adopted by his German Protestant stepfather, and trained by Freud's daughter Anna in Vienna during the 1930s, Erikson became an American citizen in 1939. A combination of talent, luck, and the generosity of influential patrons eased a transition that was considerably harder for other emigré intellectuals. Erikson returned the favor by embracing everything American and rolling up his sleeves as the country went to war.

He coined the terms "ego identity" and "identity crisis" to diagnose World War II soldiers whose loss of self and feelings of historical void caused profound suffering and disorientation. Then he built a renowned private practice accompanied by research and academic positions at Yale, Berkeley, and Harvard. Several of his most celebrated books were published during the 1950s, including *Childhood and Society* and *Young Man Luther*. But it was the ferment of the 1960s, particularly the passions of mobilized youth, that made Erikson's name synonymous with identity. The baby boom generation turned identity into a cause.

Identity formation was a developmental task that Erikson assigned to adolescents. Like each of his other life cycle stages, it required delicate transactions between interior revolutions and the stark external realities of the social order. If these transactions went smoothly, teenagers approached adulthood confident that the inner self and the person visible to others were identical and assumed adult roles and responsibilities without much fuss. If they failed, identity confusion resulted. During the 1960s, masses of white, middle-class young people experienced just such confusion. Their past

came undone from present and future; they could not reconcile their developing personhood with the expectations of parents and other authority figures, who seemed resigned to morally dubious and distinctly boring social arrangements. In the authenticity that identity promised, young people found a powerful slogan legitimizing all manner of political and cultural dissent.

*Erikson was entirely
right about the
inevitable see-saw
between self and
society*

Imperialism, social injustice, bureaucratic depersonalization, and vacuous consumerism were rejected in defense of identity as an ethical ideal. Americans could hardly become their truest selves without reconstructing the balance between personal and social, inner and outer. Erik Erikson told them so.

It is a sobering feature of the past three decades that this hunger for identity, once channeled into the cause of social justice, has been speedily absorbed into the machinery of commerce and government. Being and becoming are now traded and serviced as efficiently as other commodities. A literal growth industry caters to our identity anxieties, promising help, healing, even wholeness itself. Seminars peddle career growth, parenting and partnering skills, emotional intelligence. Corporations sponsor diversity training workshops, aiming to boost productivity by enhancing what we know about ourselves and one another. Organized religion promotes therapeutic, small group experiences, while meditation and other spiritual practices offer solitary means of personal salvation. Trauma has mobilized an army of trained professionals. Everyone is floundering. Everyone is suffering.

Everyone can know more, grow more, be more of who they really want to be.

What does this proliferation of dutiful identity quests tell us about identity and the state of our culture? I think it tells us that Erikson was entirely right about the inevitable see-saw between self and society, although his sunny style sometimes sugar-coated the bitterness of this signature truth. There is no transhistorical "I," no eternal "me" lurking below the veneer of time and culture, just waiting to be recovered or rescued if only we knew how. Persons do not exist abstractly, on their own, but only concretely, together, in particular affiliations.

Although such social identity is as real as real can be, Americans resist it for two reasons. First, the mantra that we have only ourselves to praise or blame for everything is an enduring feature of our unforgiving individualist culture. Second, the implications of socialized identity are frightening. There is nowhere to look but outward, to the social ecology that binds the self and makes it up, if we are serious about understanding and reconstructing our identities and our lives. Yet the decrepit state of so many of our communities, schools, and social networks understandably makes our interior psychological landscape appear a place of relative refuge where identity can be fostered and protected from social harm. Compare, for example, the hazards that many American children and adolescents encounter today to those faced by the baby boomers just a few decades ago. AIDS, more guns, more poverty, and a well-founded belief that adults are more terrified of than interested in them—these are just a few of the obstacles between young people and survival, let alone constructive, adult, Eriksonian identity. To actually do something about what young people face takes a secure tie between "I" and "we" that can impart courage and stamina. That so many of us have neither is as good an explanation as any for why we gaze inward instead, plagued by identity and its troubles. □

Commie Jews

David Biale

■ *Rivonia's Children: Three Families and the Cost of Conscience in White South Africa*, by Glenn Frankel. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1999.

With the fall of Communism a decade ago, that specter which had haunted Europe (and elsewhere) for nearly a century and a half fell into seemingly permanent disrepute. To be sure, the crimes of Stalin, the repressions of basic freedoms, and the failure of the economic systems of most Eastern bloc countries had long discredited the movement. But the collapse of what had seemed a permanent part of the world's political order made it almost impossible to find anything that might be redeemed out of Communism.

Glenn Frankel has now undertaken this very task in his riveting tale of a group of white and (mostly) Jewish Communists from South Africa, who, virtually alone, risked everything to fight apartheid. In 1961 they made an alliance with the African National Congress and began planning for an uprising, including bombings of government institutions, from a rented farm on the outskirts of Johannesburg in a suburb called Rivonia. On July 11, 1963, the South African police raided Rivonia, imprisoning a group of activists, including Nelson Mandela. What followed became known as the Rivonia trial, which resulted in Mandela and his comrades being



Johannesburg, 1954. Nelson Mandela pictured outside court during the Rivonia trial.

These were among the very few white South Africans who were willing to befriend black Africans and treat them as equals.

sentenced to life in prison. As is, of course, now well known, the first president of the new South Africa would languish in prison nearly thirty years before the famous negotiations with President F. W. de Klerk that freed him and set in motion the transformation of South Africa from apartheid to majority rule.

What has largely been forgotten in this heroic story is the key role of Mandela's white Communist allies. These were among the very few white South Africans who were willing to befriend black Africans and treat them as equals, which was also characteristic of the American Communist Party in its heyday in the 1930s and 1940s. Without apologizing for their often slavish and dogmatic adherence to the party line from Moscow, Frankel rescues for history their extraordinary courage and moral choices. Their ideology, however flawed, made it possible for them to risk all the privileges of

whites in South Africa for a vision of racial equality and liberation. Because they had much more to lose than their black comrades and were much more likely to endure total social ostracism, the nature of their choices was different from those of Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, and other ANC activists.

That most of Frankel's main characters are Jewish is an issue he doesn't evade. The Jews came to South Africa primarily from a few towns in Lithuania in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. They formed a relatively homogeneous community that quickly came to identify more with the English-speaking rather than with the Afrikaner South Africans. As in many other places, many of them identified with the Left, but the reasons for this identification remain hotly debated. Certainly, most of the Jewish Communists did not identify as Jews—they were Isaac Deutscher's "non-Jewish Jews." But the fact that they were outsiders to the main elements of white South African society—British and Afrikaner—undoubtedly

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made them more likely to rebel against the existing order. It was the explosive combination of Communist ideology as a kind of substitute for religion and the Jews' marginal status that probably turned these Jews into such a prevalent presence on the South African left. The Communists were not, however, exclusively Jews: one of the heroes of Frankel's account is Bram Fischer, a radical Afrikaner lawyer who was one of the main leaders of the Party and provided his comrades' defense at the Rivonia trial. Later, when the government tried to arrest him, he went underground, was finally caught, and died in prison after endur-

like the others, subjected to a long period of solitary confinement. In the 1980s, the South African Secret Service sent her a letter bomb that killed her in Mozambique. And, finally, we read of AnneMarie Wolpe, wife of Harold Wolpe, who escaped from prison and managed to go into exile. AnneMarie was less involved in the Party than the others, but later wrote a moving memoir of her experience. Her brother, Jimmy Kantor, was a lawyer who was not involved with the Left, even though he was associated with some of the conspirators; he was arrested and subjected to debilitating solitary confinement as well,

limits, even as blacks were subject to the harsh rigors of apartheid. Even for those arrested at Rivonia, racial differences played a role in their treatment: whites were subjected to intimidation and the psychological torture of solitary confinement, but blacks were physically tortured. Following Rivonia, white radicals came to expect treatment similar to that of blacks, and the regime behaved with increasing brutality in order to silence all opposition. To be sure, a few liberals like Helen Suzman continued to voice objections to apartheid and to intervene on behalf of those imprisoned; South Africa never became quite as totalitarian as Nazi Germany or Soviet Russia. But the price of resistance was much higher than almost anywhere else.

The fact that these Communists did resist, even though victory only came a generation later, is a tribute to their extraordinary courage and, yes, their ideology. Indeed, we might well conclude that Communism could often motivate its members to act with high moral purpose when the Party was not in power, even though it showed an entirely different—and far more negative—face when it achieved power. As a movement of resistance, it could create the solidarity necessary for individuals to risk their lives for higher goals; as a governing ideology, it more often quashed the individual and his or her moral conscience.

There is also something almost touching in the naïveté of these revolutionaries who believed that bombing a few government buildings might trigger a revolution in the face of a determined regime. Here, one can almost discern a subterranean Jewish mentality at work: as if a well-placed joke might bring the whole edifice down. But even if Rivonia's children failed at the time, their actions had a long-term impact by inspiring the fight against apartheid. As Frankel puts it, they "helped keep hope alive in South Africa and pave the hard road to freedom. In the end they redeemed themselves and, perhaps, us as well." □

Following Rivonia, white radicals came to expect treatment similar to that of blacks.

ing terrible torment at the hands of his Afrikaner jailers: perceived as a heretic to Afrikanerdom, Fischer suffered even more than his Jewish comrades.

The prevalence of Jews in the Party should not, however, mislead us with respect to most of the South African Jews. With the exception of a few liberals like Helen Suzman, the majority of the Jewish community kept its head down under apartheid, fearful, for good reason, that the National Party—the Afrikaner force behind apartheid—had a history of sympathy for Nazism and that anti-Semitism lay barely under the surface. In fact, in a striking echo of the Rosenberg Trial in this country, the prosecuting attorney, Percy Yutar, was himself Jewish and may have been partly motivated to show that Jews could be loyal to the regime.

Frankel focuses primarily on three families of leftists. The first is Rusty and Hilda Bernstein: he was one of the key Rivonia figures, while she managed to avoid arrest, despite active involvement in the Party. The second is Ruth First and her husband Joe Slovo, who became the primary leader of the Party. Ruth was arrested and,

eventually to be released for lack of evidence against him.

Frankel's attention to these individuals gives his book some entirely different dimensions than one might expect from a political history. He devoted many hours to interviewing not only those participants still alive, but also their children. He has succeeded in chronicling the extraordinary price that families have to pay for acts of political courage. Some of these children were old enough to take on major responsibility when their parents were arrested or fled into exile; others suffered long-term psychological damage. By telling their story as well, Frankel has given a human face to this kind of activism. He also demonstrates with great sensitivity how the Rivonia crisis propelled the women involved into new roles, which the Party—no more egalitarian than South African society generally—had largely denied them. This is, then, also a kind of proto-feminist story.

The Rivonia trial marked a turning point in South Africa from authoritarianism to outright totalitarianism. Previously, whites had been allowed to express their opinions within certain

The Business of Labor

Jeremy Brecher and Tim Costello

■ *Taking Care of Business: Samuel Gompers, George Meany, Lane Kirkland, and the Tragedy of American Labor*, by Paul Buhle. Monthly Review Press, 1999.

Running for president of the AFL-CIO in 1995, John Sweeney characterized the Federation as a "Washington-based institution concerned primarily with refining policy positions" instead of a "worker-based movement against greed, multinational corporations, race-baiting, and labor-baiting politicians." He charged that the American labor movement was "irrelevant to the vast majority of unorganized workers in our country" and added that he had deep suspicions that "we are becoming irrelevant to our own members."

To find out how the "house of labor" became that way—and why it has proved so difficult to change—read Paul Buhle's new book *Taking Care of Business: Samuel Gompers, George Meany, Lane Kirkland, and the Tragedy of American Labor*. *Taking Care of Business* provides portraits of three of the four top AFL and AFL-CIO leaders whose reign spans an incredible 115 years of American labor history. But this book goes far beyond its subtitle to present the intertwined stories of labor's top leaders and those who opposed them from below and from the Left.

The Early American Labor Movement

For a century, labor historians have described the tension between exclusion and inclusion in the structure of American trade unions. A major strength of Buhle's book is to integrate this description with a more contemporary understanding of the politics of race and gender.

The work force of colonial America, Buhle observes, consisted of Melville's "mariners, renegades, and castaways" drawn from every race and corner of the globe—including women, of course, as well as men. In the years following the Civil War, the labor movement had strong roots in both the anti-slavery and the women's rights movements. The *National Anti-Slavery Standard* renamed itself the *National Standard* and advocated the rights of workers, women, freed slaves, Chinese immigrants, and Indians. Wendell Phillips, a leading anti-slavery agitator, ran for governor of Massachusetts on the Labor-Reform ticket. In 1871, feminists Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton addressed the convention of the American Labor Reform League and were thereupon voted vice presidents. The next year, charismatic socialist Victoria Woodhall and the great abolitionist orator Frederick Douglass ran for the nation's highest offices on the same ticket.

Yet from early on there was another side to the American labor movement. The International Typographical Union

refused to apprentice women—whereupon Susan B. Anthony trained women privately and encouraged them to take nonunion jobs. By 1870, the *Workingmen's Advocate* declared of the Chinese, "'Bond' or 'free' they are a curse to our country." Woodhall and her supporters were expelled from the American section of the International—with Karl Marx's personal written consent.

The Gompers Era

In the 1880s, the broad tradition of inclusive labor reform found expression in the Knights of Labor, which by 1886 had more than one million members. The Knights officially welcomed all workers except lawyers and liquor dealers; while to their shame they participated in the anti-Chinese bigotry of the West, they welcomed black workers in a way almost unique in the era and aligned with Mexican-American movements in the Southwest.

But the Knights met opposition from another labor organization, the American Federation of Labor, and its leader Samuel Gompers, formerly a Marxian socialist. Gompers recalled in his autobiography that, in 1886, his forces had "roused the trade unionists of the country to an understanding of the menace which the Knights interposed to trade unions."

Gompers set the skilled white tradesmen against unskilled workers and workers of color, excluding the unskilled from his own cigar makers union and asserting that "We are not going to let [the Caucasian] standard of living be destroyed by negroes,



George Meany,
AFL-CIO President 1952–1979

Chinamen, Japs or any others." (It's little wonder that black trade union leader A. Philip Randolph once called the AFL "the most wicked machine for the propagation of race prejudice in the country.")

Perhaps Gompers' most lasting accomplishment was instituting a highly successful structure for retaining the AFL's control over labor markets, relevant public policies, and their own organizations. Within unions, Gompers and his associates established high dues, relatively high benefits, racial and gender exclusion, strongly centralized leaderships, and highly paid officials. Between 1870 and 1895, national union leaders typically remained in office for a year or two. From 1895 to 1920, half of all national labor leaders held their offices for at least fifteen years.

The Federation itself was shaped into an instrument for protecting this control. Its tools included red-baiting, excoriating attacks on all alternative organizations as "dual unionism," refusal of recognition to city federations that included non-AFL locals, and Gompers' personal machine of 2,000 organizers and 125 paid functionaries. In the early twentieth century, Gompers fought the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW, or Wobblies) as aggressively as he had the Knights of Labor a quarter-century before.

Gompers promoted what he called "pure and simple unionism" and demanded "no politics in the union." But Buhle points out that this actually meant no *socialist* politics in the union—endorsements were regularly given to Democrats and to some Republicans. In the early twentieth century, the AFL developed tight ties with the Democratic Party—known in the South until the New Deal as the "White Man's Party."

Despite its supposedly "voluntarist," anti-statist stance, during World War I the AFL became a virtual agent of the U.S. government. The government's Committee on Public Information secretly funded the American

Alliance for Labor and Democracy—with Gompers insisting to Wilson that the funding be kept secret. Meanwhile, Labor's National Peace Council, initiated by the Chicago Federation of Labor and other local bodies, enrolled more than a million members—and then saw its leaders indicted for their anti-war activities.

The Meany/Kirkland Era

Many of the structures Gompers established persisted through the regime of his less-illustrious successor William Green and found a new champion in the AFL's rising star George Meany, who was president of the AFL from 1952 to 1979. Meany opposed minimum wage legislation until 1937, on the basis that it would usurp the privilege of unions to establish wage rates for their members through collective bargaining. In 1944, Meany, almost alone among union leaders, supported Republican Thomas E. Dewey against FDR. Attacking New York's American Labor Party (which he had briefly supported), Meany stated that "there is no place in America for a party founded on class or caste lines."

AFL collusion with racial exclusionism continued through much of the twentieth century. For example, when the Wagner Act went to Congress in 1935, the NAACP demanded that it contain an anti-discrimination clause. The AFL executive stated that it would not support the law if it included such a clause. The Roosevelt administration acceded to their veto—resulting in legislation that gave unions both legal standing and the right to enforceable discrimination.

Buhle reveals that, as late as 1960, the Virginia AFL-CIO held a strictly segregated state convention; when A. Philip Randolph complained and called for AFL-CIO state and local councils to end all segregation practices, George Meany moved to censure Randolph formally for being "divisive." In 1966, when Hispanic and black workers who had been excluded from Meany's home local were hired

by New York City and white union members walked off the job, Meany defended their action instead of demanding that the local be opened up to blacks and Hispanics. "As far as I'm concerned ... this union won't work with non-union men." If they did, "I'd resign from the union and join some other union." (Meany added a peculiar homophobia to the mix, referring in the later years of his career to "people who looked like Jacks, acted like Jills, and had the odor of johns about them.")

By the 1930s, some of Gompers' key tenets were challenged by the rise of militant industrial unionism—leading to the expulsion of the CIO from the AFL and "labor's civil war." But, writes Buhle, "Too quickly, indeed from the beginning, emerging leaders chose stability and government assistance over inclusion and radical democracy." The new industrial union wine was successfully contained in Gompers' old bottles. Paradoxically, in Buhle's words, industrial unionism

became a new mode of enforcing the contract. Attempts to seize back the initiative from foremen and time-study experts were met, now, with directives from industrial union leaders to stay in line until a grievance could be properly negotiated. Soon, union dues would be deducted automatically from wages, so that officials no longer needed to bother making personal contact and monthly appeals to the loyalty of members.

By the end of the 1930s, "A triangle of government, business, and labor leadership brought about a compact that served mutual interest in stability, though often not the interests of the workers left out of this power arrangement." Ultimately, this laid the groundwork for the 1955 merger of the AFL and the CIO—initiated by George Meany, who became the unchallenged master of the merged organization.

Meanwhile, organized labor became even more enmeshed with the international "security" apparatus of the U.S. government. Irving Brown, according

to *Time*, used CIA funds "to pay off strong arm squads in Mediterranean ports so that American supplies could be unloaded against the opposition of Communist dock workers." After a CIA-financed coup in Guatemala in 1954, Meany exulted, "The downfall of the Communist controlled regime in Guatemala will be hailed by the free world." (As we now know, the actual result was the genocide of Guatemala's native people.) Even Walter Reuther admitted taking \$50,000 in fifty-dollar bills from the CIA for international bribes. He chalked it off to naïveté.

Labor cooperation not only with the U.S. government but with U.S. corporations abroad became institutionalized in a series of international "institutes," such as the American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD), whose board of directors included not only top AFL-CIO leaders, but also such notable friends of labor as David Rockefeller and United Fruit Company chair J. Peter Grace. Edwin Doherty, Jr., named director of AIFLD in 1965, noted, "The cooperation between ourselves and the business community is getting warmer day by day."

In the midst of such international triumphs, the proportion of American workers in unions steadily declined. Asked why in 1972, Meany replied, "I don't know, I don't care." He added, "Why should we worry about organizing groups of people who do not appear to want to be organized?... I used to worry about ... the size of the membership.... I stopped worrying because to me it doesn't make any difference.... The organized fellow is the fellow that counts. This is just human nature."

Meany was followed by the ultimate bureaucrat, who largely kept his policies in place. Lane Kirkland was a graduate of Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service, but he had virtually no labor background except for a brief union membership as a deck officer during World War II. At its peak, Kirkland's "name recognition" among AFL-CIO members never rose above 3 percent. A journalist friendly

to Kirkland wrote that he was not troubled by his limited relationship to actual union members, because "Kirkland does not view the rank and file as his primary constituency, he sees the international union presidents ... as his real constituency. As for them, they say he's doing fine." Kirkland's stewardship saw the proportion of workers represented by unions fall to levels not seen since the 1930s.

The Sweeney Era

In 1995, an insurgent movement headed by SEIU president John Sweeney challenged Lane Kirkland and replaced the leadership of the AFL-CIO. It promised to revitalize the labor movement and thereby provide American workers a "new voice." Yet, despite the new leadership's very vigorous efforts, labor's defeats at the polls and on the picket lines have continued and the proportion of workers represented by unions continues to decline. Its program has been more radical and imaginative than even its supporters could have hoped, and yet after five years its aspirations are largely unfulfilled.

Why? It wasn't just Kirkland's "era of stagnation" that needed to be reversed. The labor movement's problems went far deeper. Some were the result of changes in the external world—from globalization to outsourcing to ethnic succession—with which even a labor movement revived to past levels of energy would still be inadequate to cope. But others were rooted in the labor movement itself—in traditions and structures that went back to the era of Samuel Gompers.

Buhle indicates both how far the Sweeney administration has come from its predecessors—and how far it has to go to successfully revive the labor movement. It has brought some of the smartest and most dedicated people in the labor movement into its inner circles. It has stressed organizing the unorganized, with a strong emphasis on the unskilled and people of color, who have so often been the objects of exclusion rather than outreach by

organized labor. It has broken with the superhawk element of American politics and welcomed radicals and peace advocates as activists and allies. But it still articulates a vision of a common interest of American labor and American capital, and it is not yet clear that it is willing to challenge, rather than cooperate with, U.S. capital abroad. Nor does there seem to be any major change in organized labor's relation to the political system.

But perhaps the greatest continuity of all remains one that goes back to the Gompers era—the relation between labor officials and rank-and-file workers. Buhle points out that "inflated salaries, large expense accounts, nepotism, and ostentatiousness indicated and reinforced, from Gompers's time to the Meany era and beyond, the wall that divides union officialdom from the rank-and-file." Indeed, a series of focus groups in 1993 discovered the hot news that many people, especially low-income people, regard unions as "largely undemocratic bureaucracies that impose decisions on their members from the top down." This perception—affected by anti-union propaganda but often also rooted in direct personal experience—has formed one of the greatest blocks to organizing new workers.

As Buhle concludes, "The reversal of 1995 lacked one decisive element. The new leaders did not stand at the head of—or invite—anything like 1940s style antibureaucratic unrest or Wobbly manners back into their ranks. It remained to be seen, therefore, how leadership could rebuild the labor movement without tapping vast unreleased energies and hidden talents from below." The answer, for Buhle, lies in "leadership defined in the old Wobbly fashion: ordinary working people acting as their own leaders." Buhle's book points the way toward a labor movement that can engage working people's commitment because it challenges authority and injustice and embodies fundamental values of democracy and mutuality. □

Short Takes

A Look at What's in Other Monthlies and Bimonthlies

Here TIKKUN continues our conversation with American intellectual, political, and cultural monthly and bimonthly magazines.

Lingua Franca

A piece in the February *Lingua Franca* by Chris Mooney on the scholarly rumble over the correct interpretation of the Second Amendment—and its implications for gun control—offers the surprising fact that it was, until recently, one of the least studied amendments to the U.S. Constitution. That changed with a 1989 *Yale Law Review* article supporting the interpretation that individuals could own guns, a concept now known as the Standard Model. Other legal scholars joined the fray, contending “gun ownership would be protected only in the context of a state militia, such as the National Guard.” Studying this debate, it becomes clear why pro-gun forces are winning the legal battle: gun control advocates have accepted history as the most appropriate battleground. So, for example, when Standard Modelers argue that the Founders used the Second Amendment to address the fear that “a strong federal government would use its potentially tyrannical powers to tread on local autonomy and individual freedoms,” progressives answer by citing historical studies that only about 14 percent of white male Protestants (just 3 percent of the population) owned firearms at the time of the Revolution. This tactic essentially transfers the debate from legal theory or political reality to historiography. While pro-

gressives flounder in the past, gun rights folk have staked out the progressives’ turf. For example, citing the almost 5,000 lynchings since 1882, pro-gun forces argue that individual gun ownership is important for the safety of black citizens; from their perspective, “A society with a dismal record of protecting a people has a dubious claim on the right to disarm them.” Mooney’s article shows how much work gun control advocates have still to do.

Harper’s

The goodly number of pages the January *Harper’s* devotes to ruminating about the Internet and issues of privacy leads us to the resounding conclusion that nothing Orwell could have dreamed up rivals the Internet’s snooping capacity. This conclusion is especially unsettling since, at its advent, the Internet was seen not only as a grand boon for personal and intellectual freedom, but as a countercultural end-run around the corporate domination of the media. Douglas Rushkoff, electronic-media thinker and author of the recent *Coercion*, makes the failure of this alternative vision distressingly clear in his interview with Jacob Brockman. “I used to think that this acceleration of human action was a great thing,” he tells Brockman. “I thought we’d simply bypass our restricting editorial voices, [and] get our superegos out of the way.” Much to his chagrin, however, Rushkoff found that most of the people listening to his paeans to electronic liberation were in the public relations and advertising industries. Noting

several instances of “neurolinguistic programming” by web tycoons, Rushkoff concludes, “the same techniques that emperors, kings, popes, and priests have used for centuries are now in the service of corporations. What’s different is that we now have technologies in place that make these coercive techniques automatic.”

New Prospect

There’s a great deal going on in America’s religious life that liberals should know more about—and support,” states an encouraging article in the January 17 *New Prospect*. Author Richard Parker examines the discrepancy between liberals’ perception of religion and the reality of religion in America today: “Contrary to what many may think, religion is alive and well in America—and a good deal of what it says and does is strikingly progressive.” As TIKKUN readers already know, faith-based groups and interdenominational coalitions support a range of progressive goals, from organizing low-wage hotel workers in Beverly Hills to urging cancellation of the foreign debt of the poorest countries, yet their efforts often are not noticed by the mainstream media. Parker suggests this invisibility is due to the secularization of the press and the academic establishment and to a diminished emphasis on religion as part of one’s identity since World War II. For the past twenty years, while the press was focused mostly on the Christian right, progressive religion was growing in numbers and strength. Now, says Parker, “in an era when progressive voices seem few in number ...

America's progressive religious world represents a large body of committed and caring human beings—deeply bound, out of their own understanding of the connection between justice and the divine—who seek a world most of us could generously affirm.”

Atlantic Monthly

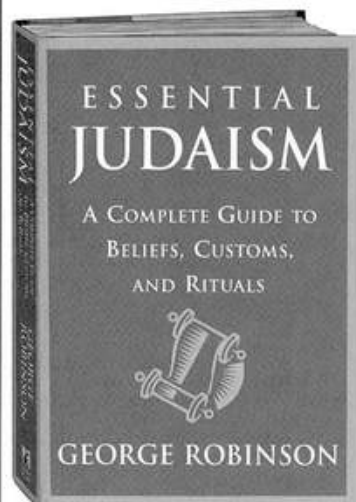
Just how were the Americas populated, and by whom? That's the debate raging among historians according to Marc K. Stengel, the author of the *Atlantic Monthly's* January cover story. On one side, upstart “diffusionists” believe that prior to 1492 there were numerous instances of European and Asian contact with the Americas; on the other, old-guard “independent interventionists” maintain that the western hemisphere was essentially free of cross-cultural pollination during that period. The diffusionists are a particularly entertaining bunch; their paradigm-shifting claims range from *National Enquirer*/Elvis lives-type material (the supposed discovery of King Arthur's sword in Kentucky, for example) to more perplexing finds such as the discovery in Guatemala of stone blades dating from about 1100 BCE that are “distinctly Chinese in pattern [and] bear ideographic writing that has uncanny resemblances to glyphs from the contemporaneous Shang Dynasty in China.” These amusing anecdotes, Stengel reminds us, shouldn't obscure the fact that the two camps are fighting over nothing less than “the right to propose—or, better yet, to define—the prehistory of the Americas.” That debate has real consequences for today's Native Americans, who often side with the old-guard interventionists in order to stake their claims to land and history. Thus, it is surprising and refreshing to hear from Vine Deloria, Jr., Native American activist, author of *Custer Died for Your Sins*, and arch-diffusionist. Deloria paints the interventionists as paternalistic know-nothings who have chosen to ignore tribal oral histories.

“Numerous tribes do say that strange people doing this or that came through our land, visited us, and so on.... There's great reluctance among archaeologists and anthropologists to break centuries-old doctrine and look at something new.” If Native American rights were more fully protected, perhaps they would not need to disown tribal history to keep tribal land.

Mother Jones

The February *Mother Jones* examines the toxic legacy of Agent Orange in Vietnam and the dim chance that any justice will be done there. Older readers will remember television images of barren trees in areas where the defoliant, a product of Dow Chemical and Monsanto, had been sprayed to deny cover to the enemy. It now appears to have been, perhaps inadvertently, the worst kind of chemical warfare as well, affecting generations to come: “Millions, perhaps tens of millions of Vietnamese, combatants and civilians alike, were showered with Agent Orange, and then lived, worked, and breathed amid the residue of an especially virulent form of dioxin, a byproduct of one of the defoliant's chemical components,” writes Robert Dreyfuss. He notes that this carcinogen was “once described as ‘the most toxic molecule ever synthesized by man.’” Testing for the presence of the chemical is enormously expensive—beyond the means of a country still struggling with the effects of decades of war—so facts are in short supply. But the Vietnamese estimate that exposure to Agent Orange has caused birth defects in 500,000 children, some of whom are the grandchildren of those who were initially exposed. Despite efforts by individuals and groups in both countries, recalcitrant governments have been slow to address the problem. Dreyfuss offers possible reasons: Vietnam may be worried about damaging its nascent tourist industry, and the U.S. might be concerned about the potential for devastating liability costs. □

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Web Intrigue

Art Kleiner

- *The New New Thing: A Silicon Valley Story*, by Michael Lewis. W. W. Norton and Company, 1999.
- *High Stakes, No Prisoners: A Winner's Tale of Greed and Glory in the Internet Wars*, by Charles H. Ferguson. Times Books, 1999.

On a December evening, late in the recession of 1991, I saw Michael Lewis face down the kind of question that everyone still wants to ask him. He was on the college lecture circuit, speaking to a packed room of mostly business majors at Miami University of Ohio—a large, prestigious, and very conservative state university in the heart of the Midwest. The students were primed for Lewis; he was only thirty-one, tall, slim, young, and clean-cut enough that he could have passed for one of them. In this pre-Bill Clinton era, it seemed like young conservatives were going to inherit the world, and though Lewis is not particularly conservative (he writes for *The New Republic*), these students were instinctively attuned to his message. They saw through the irreverence of the brilliant book he had recently written, *Liar's Poker*, and its portrayal of Wall Street traders as gluttonous boors. Instead, they noted carefully from his pages the amount of his last bonus as a bond-trader at Salomon Brothers (\$225,000) and the reason he quit (he got bored with the idea of becoming a millionaire).

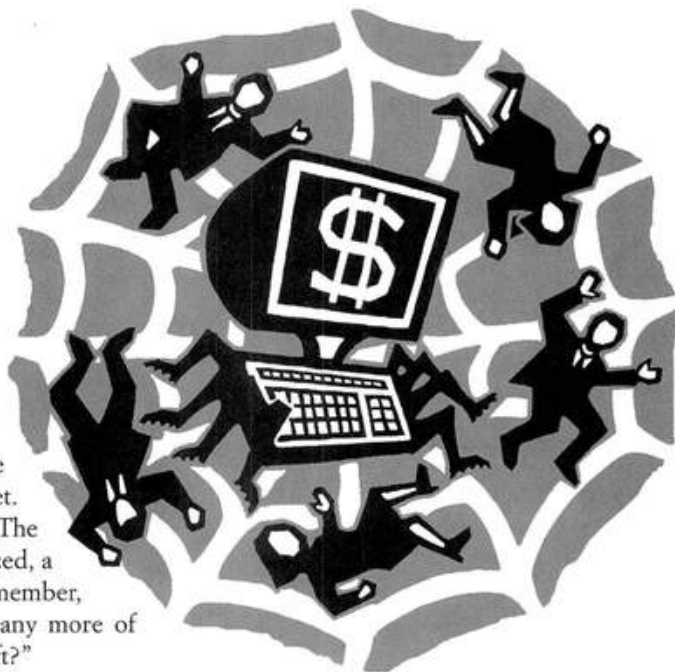
The students waited impatiently for Lewis to finish his anthropological

sketches of the strange inhabitants of Wall Street. Then he took questions. The first student he recognized, a bruising young frat member, called out: "Are there any more of those jobs [like yours] left?"

No one laughed. For a split second, Lewis returned an abashed and rueful glance to the crowd, as if reminded of the unfairness of his luck. Then he said, quickly and softly, "No. They're gone now." After a moment, he added, "The Eighties aren't over in terms of cultural attitude. People still want to make that kind of money. The only difference is, the credit dried up."

At the time, it seemed like it would be dried up forever. But today, when people ask the same question, he has to answer differently. The credit is back, but it isn't going to Wall Street. It's going to Silicon Valley instead, and so are the young business school graduates. The people inheriting the world this time are not conservatives but young internet parvenus—a very different crowd. And as if on cue, here is Michael Lewis again, with another bestseller, once again sketching the curious characters of the people at the center of the burgeoning economy.

This time, however, he has written a much more irritating book. *The New New Thing* is the story of Silicon Valley entrepreneur Jim Clark—a man who grew up in a mud-floored house in rural Texas, accidentally found out he was a math prodigy, became an engineer, and eventually went on to found Silicon Graphics and Netscape, temporarily two of the most successful



companies in the history of the computer industry. Both companies ultimately failed, to be acquired by someone else, but in the meantime they made Clark a billionaire, and made many other people wealthy as well. In Michael Lewis' eyes, Clark is the embodiment of a new theory of capitalism. Money is no longer made by people who make great deals or sell great products, let alone by people who work hard or play by the rules. Nor does money get generated by great ideas. Wealth is attracted to people like Jim Clark simply because they possess a kind of world-class self-indulgence, which gives them a sixth sense about the direction the future will take.

Liar's Poker had been fueled by Lewis' essential boredom with Wall Street—a boredom so deeply full of outrage that it is pungently captivating. But in this new book, set in Silicon Valley, Lewis replaces his own boredom with Jim Clark's. Clark is profoundly, famously, hilariously bored with everything around him, except whatever happens to be his technical obsession of the moment. His boredom does not just lead to near-fatal helicopter crashes and sailing mishaps; it reshapes economic priorities. A pivotal moment of Clark's life, and the seminal moment of the current internet stock bubble, occurs on page eighty-four of *The New New Thing*, when Clark forces the board of his

ILLUSTRATION BY CHRIS PAPA

Art Kleiner is the author of *The Age of Heretics* (Doubleday, 1996) and coauthor of *The Dance of Change* (Doubleday, 1999). His website is <http://www.well.com/user/art>.

company, Netscape, to take the sucker public. Here are some snippets of the language that follows:

No one else inside the company thought it should do anything but keep its head down and try to become a viable enterprise.... Clark wanted a new sailboat. To get it he needed more money.... The Netscape CEO, Jim Barksdale, didn't want to go public.... Clark forced the issue. On the first day of trading the price of a Netscape share rose from \$12 apiece to \$48. Three months later it was at \$140. There was only one explanation. "People started drinking my Kool-Aid," says Clark. "The IPO gave anarchy credibility." In the frenzy that followed, a lot of the old rules of capitalism were suspended.

Kenichi Ohmae, former head of the Japanese office of McKinsey, a management consulting firm, speaks of companies like Netscape as "Godzilla" companies: companies that grow voraciously and play by a completely different set of rules, as if they had acquired a completely different set of chromosomes, perhaps through a kind of nuclear irradiation. Michael Lewis portrays Jim Clark as a "Godzilla" kind of entrepreneur, but he didn't need irradiation to get that way. He just needed the grit and ruthlessness to beat the money men at their own game. In Silicon Graphics, his first company, the money men squeezed Clark out of any decision-making capability. When he left, fuming, to found Netscape, he forbade the venture capitalists, who had stymied him at Silicon Graphics, to invest. The chief of those financiers, Glenn Mueller, was apparently so convinced he'd be ruined as a result that he shot himself the day Netscape was incorporated.

Lewis takes up most of *The New New Thing* profiling Jim Clark as a force of nature, a restraint-free artist of progress. We see him building the world's largest sailboat, controlling it by a computer (because he can't forget that the captain of his previous boat once lied to him), and drawing a motley group of programmers and sailors out

into the fierce, deadly winter North Sea to test it. We see Clark founding a new company that intends to revolutionize health care, barely deigning to learn anything about the health-care industry in the process, directing most of the company's business from his boat, and forcing financiers to practically do his laundry if they want to join in. I don't know Clark personally, so I don't know if the book portrays him accurately, but if it comes anywhere close, then an economy embodied by Jim Clark's personality would be a very unpleasant (albeit exciting) place to live.

And perhaps that's Michael Lewis' point. By portraying the new economy in the most alien way imaginable, he makes it clear that the rules have shifted in ways that will make most people uncomfortable. Lewis seems to believe that the essence of survival in this new world will depend on finding those few mystics who get the drift, and latching on to them. At least a dozen people in *The New New Thing* acquire more than a million dollars each through that strategy. And, from the outside, it seems to be the way that Silicon Valley is operating these days. Money courses through the Valley on waves of hype, settles around those who can hype most effectively, and returns cash powerfully enough to keep the hype flowing freely. The masters of hype are people like Jim Clark, whose greatest talent is the ability to—well, to keep feeding people their Kool-Aid.

It makes a terrific story, but it does no good at all if you want to understand the actual dynamics underlying the dramatic shift to the computer-networked economy. In fact, the bubbling froth of eccentric, charismatic personalities like Jim Clark is significant only on the surface. For a look beneath, the book I keep returning to is *High Stakes, No Prisoners*, by Charles Ferguson. Ferguson cofounded one of the first web-authoring software companies (Vermeer), and sold out (choosing Microsoft over Netscape as the acquirer); his Silicon Valley credentials are impeccable. But he was also a

Washington policy wonk, a management consultant, and a maverick business author before he became an entrepreneur—all of which gives him a little bit more perspective.

If Lewis, from an outsider's vantage, portrays Jim Clark as a self-centered misanthrope, then Ferguson is a compulsively voracious student of people, and his story is all told from the inside. He delayed his book because Microsoft insisted on a two-year gag order as part of the Vermeer deal (Microsoft wanted five years), but he makes up for it with notable candor about everyone he worked with or encountered—including himself. We learn the exact flavor of his volatile temper and hair-trigger paranoia; we follow the sly maneuvering of Vermeer's mendacious president, John Mandile; and we meet, in vivid detail, the same gaggle of venture capitalists who stymied Jim Clark in *The New New Thing* and who come across as almost altruistic at times here, in comparison to everyone else. Finally,

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BOOK REVIEW

we gain an insider's view of the strategic and technical considerations in designing a world-class software package (FrontPage), as well as pricing it, marketing it, and raising money for it. The battling giants of the industry, while always in the background, are a constant presence in *High Stakes, No Prisoners*: Microsoft, the telephone companies, IBM, Sun Microsystems, the venture capitalists (whose role and power have been transformed by the investment boom of the past few years), and so on. Clark is here, too, but dismissed as the putative leader of what Ferguson calls Netscape's "children's crusade."

Most significantly, in *High Stakes, No Prisoners*, Ferguson offers (partly implicitly) a more mature, less star-struck theory about what makes the new economy work. Economic success has little to do with flamboyant individual innovators. Instead, it depends on community—and the legal and social underpinnings of community. As Ferguson puts it, "The Silicon Valley system depends on a rich set of government policies, habits, and private institutions that have evolved over the last half-century. [The discipline of] economics has had remarkably little to say about why this is so, or how the system could be replicated elsewhere." It can't be replicated elsewhere easily, because the pioneers of the Valley have relationships that took thirty-five years or more to develop. Conversations with people there invariably turn not to technology, but to relationships.

This does not mean that the Valley is a *nice* place. The world of high-tech that seems so anarchistic and playful in *The New New Thing* comes across in *High Stakes, No Prisoners* as a ruthless environment rife with highly sophisticated sharks—not just in venture capitalists' clothing, but also garbed as publicists, managers, and even software engineers. Ferguson's plotline is a continual odyssey to discover how much he can (or can't) trust the people around him. Always, there are surprises. But to a surprising extent, deals that are about

to be undermined by greed, backstabbing, and mendacity are rescued, a hair's breadth away from disaster, by someone who acts with integrity. At one point, for instance, Chris Peters, the executive in charge of Microsoft Office, steps in just as the deal between Vermeer and Microsoft is about to explode. Neither side trusts the other—and both sides are right to be suspicious, especially since Ferguson and one of the Microsoft executives, Chris Maffei, despise each other. But the next passage is typical of the book:

It was clear that Peters told Maffei to behave himself and meant it seriously. I remember one moment that came the morning after a particularly brutal exchange ... at our attorney's offices. Maffei pulled out a package and, trying his very best to be civilized, he gave it to me and said, "Merry Christmas, Charles, I'm sorry I've been so difficult." It was a huge Starbucks coffee mug, which became my favorite.

These are the times when genuine innovation takes place, and genuine (sustainable) wealth accrues. When tempers and suspicion rule the day, the wasted effort and misunderstandings mount, and everyone loses—especially us, the customers who depend upon computers and communications innovation for an increasing amount of our infrastructure. That sentiment—when people collaborate, everyone wins—represents the original Silicon Valley spirit, poking its head above the ice of venture capital, non-disclosure lawsuit threats, and cutthroat competition. Silicon Valley was created by idealistic, evangelistic technophiles; they still live there, but the ethic of the Homebrew Computer Club and the West Coast Computer Faire is long departed. Even today, however, enough of the history remains that most people there cannot fully acknowledge the ruthlessness of their industry. That's why Bill Gates (who lurks behind the scenes on every page of *High Stakes, No Prisoners*, though he never appears in person) is hated so much by other computer

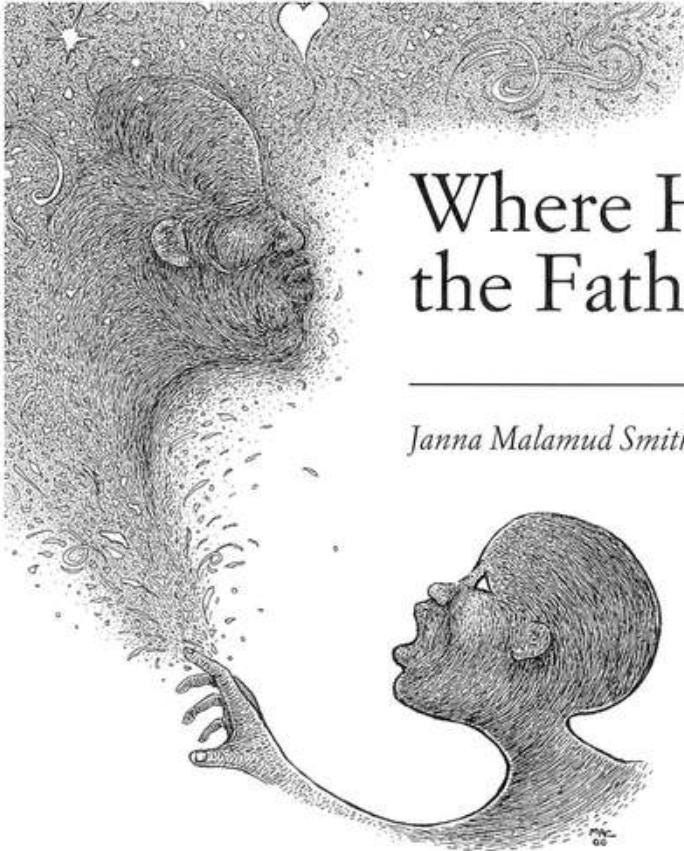
people. They fear that, when they look in a mirror, they will see someone as ruthless as he is.

Jim Clark and Charles Ferguson have both made out well at the end of these two books. Clark's subsequent two companies, based on the unprecedented connectivity of the Internet, have set out to short-circuit the traditional bureaucracies of health care (Healthcon) and financial planning (MyCFO). The latter company, in particular, shows promise of becoming one of the most influential financial players in the world; the former, after a rocky start as an internet-based system for linking doctors, insurance companies, and patients, has been reshaped through a deal with Rupert Murdoch's News, Inc., into a health information network. Meanwhile, Ferguson retired from his Microsoft deal with \$14 million. And the rest of the economy, of course, has come a long way since 1991. Nobody really has to ask Michael Lewis, "Are there any more of those jobs left?" People now know where to find them.

If *The New New Thing* makes you feel that the computer industry is different from other businesses, and will spin our society out into some manic new whirl, Charles Ferguson's story makes you realize how much the conventional dynamics of business still hold sway there, how stark its battles for power are, and how the danger still exists that the promise and benefit of the new technologies will be derailed by the entrenched interests of the industry. And in the end, Ferguson's theory makes more sense. The quality of the community, not of its individual geniuses, will determine how the technology develops. It's also clear, from Ferguson's book, that many denizens of the Valley realize this. What they need is not policies, per se, coming from government. They need the kinds of experiences that build trust, and they can provide these only for themselves. Will they be able to manage it? That's the true test of their innovativeness, and the test is yet to come. □

Where Have All the Fathers Gone?

Janna Malamud Smith



■ *Stiffed: The Betrayal of the American Man*, by Susan Faludi. William Morrow, 1999.

Around the beginning of the nineteenth century in the United States a remarkable shift occurred. Advice guides on parenting, almost always in earlier times addressed to fathers, changed audience and targeted mothers. They did not merely expand the table of contents; they virtually wrote fathers out of the text. Reading through the "parenting advice" literature, I was so struck by this sudden switch that I eventually emailed a historian of my acquaintance and queried him. Was my observation accurate? And, if so, what had happened to fathers? He wrote back a couple of days later confirming the textual phenomenon (real fathers were probably more present in family life of the era than the books manifest, he opined), and suggesting that to understand more I read a spate of recent texts on "American manhood."

Until 1800 or thereabouts, the father was the parent of record and the chosen audience for advice scribes not only because he held all the social and economic power, the legal rights, and the access to education and books, but because he was the link between the family and the public world. Fathers were responsible for educating and preparing sons to take their place in that world. Then something changed ... or at least began to change. In the broadest stroke, starting in late-eighteenth-century New England, white middle-class fathers gradually left home to focus their attention on money-earning labors, and mothers became the primary parent. This arrangement spread gradually throughout the middle-class populations in the nation and apparently seemed serviceable enough for the next century. Starting in the 1970s, the tacit contract broke down. Women entered the workplace, and this change meant that some men would come to feel both vestigial at home and threatened on the job.

Susan Faludi's massive and important new book, *Stiffed: The Betrayal of the American Man*, explores many aspects of this dilemma of contemporary manhood. But when all is said and done, it offers us a vast chorus of men—like so many creatures in a dark wood—unseeing and unseen, singing out their longing for fathers.

Tale after tale is of absent fathers, or, to be more precise, the absence of loving, talking, attentive, useful fathers; ones who might be able help sons grow up in the complex late-twentieth-century world. While expressing this longing is not their intention, they seem unable to avoid it once they start to converse. Some men tell Faludi about fathers who died in the war or left after divorces; others describe those who fell silent at home, ashamed by their inability to earn good wages; still others recount being fathered by martinets who could only repeat empty platitudes of masculinity, or worse still, men who beat their wives and children and terrorized their daily lives. The sum is a series of fearfully impoverished narratives—not the author's, but the nation's. She includes a few who are well fathered, but mostly Faludi's men search the landscape for the memory of a tender gesture, a piece of useful advice. They long for older men to guide them lovingly, show them how to lathe a crucial emotional or political or religious piece that will help them make their way with confidence. Where are the fathers? And what has happened to so vex the sons?

To answer these questions, Faludi, an accomplished Pulitzer prize-winning journalist and established feminist, sets out across America. Faludi is bold, smart, and probably a first-rate map-reader to boot. She travels. No suburban sprawl, no wilderness of identical tract

Janna Malamud Smith is a clinical social worker and author of *Private Matters: In Defense of the Personal Life*. She is currently writing a book about mothers.

BOOK REVIEW

houses keeps her from finding an address. And this is a woman who will take *anyone* to lunch—shipyard worker, astronaut, gang member, drag queen, Citadel plebe, football fan, or porn extra. Part of the pleasure of reading the book is the way her indefatigable energy, her large ambition to paint a mural the height of a skyscraper, summons up other American epics. One thinks of John Dos Passos' *USA*, James T. Farrell's *Studs Lonigan* trilogy, the reportage of Edmund Wilson, Studs Terkel, Anthony Lukas—to name only a few. Like them, she attempts to braid many voices, assemble a rope of stories so long and thick Paul Bunyan could take it and lasso the nation.

A “stiff” is a working guy, a day laborer, a member of the proletariat. But to be “stiffed” is to be cheated of something owed to you. As well as amassing stories, Faludi frames an argument about betrayal. American men have been bilked of their patrimony. Her central thesis—and this brief summary will not do justice to her often subtle discussion—is that the men who fought in World War II returned home imbued with the values that had helped make them victorious: loyalty, teamwork, and the goal of “getting the job done right.” However horrid the war, its participants had imbibed its communal aspects: the close bonds among men, the relative egolessness, the submergence of the one into the many. They hoped when they came home to enter a work world imbued with similar values where once again they could win.

Some achieved that goal. Faludi visits the almost defunct Long Beach Naval Shipyard and describes the workers' lives. At its best, the place fits the old World War II ideal (which, she points out, is from the New Deal). Men come in, find mentors, work, and rise through the ranks, all the while nurturing the younger ones (or at least those they like) below them. In time, workers accrue real knowledge that they can then pass on. “To be a shipyard ‘father’ ... was to have command not over men but over a body of knowledge—and to

be capable of transmitting that knowledge to a younger man who would, through his mastery, become a teacher himself.” Faludi compares these men to a newer type, the middle managers in the aerospace industry, who appear to know little that they can offer up to the young, and who work in a bureaucracy where no such idea of mentoring seems any longer to exist.

The boys of the 1950s who grew up with television and movies about war heroes believed manhood would be a time when they could fight evil, explore new frontiers, provide for families. But as they graduated from high school and college they crashed into the awful confusions of the Vietnam war, and saw their real fathers struggling in a very different society. In spite of economic growth, good jobs had started to flee overseas, and work conditions were deteriorating as the men aged.

The promised manhood was being dismantled before the sons' eyes. They could not approach their fathers' same-age earnings. But worse, they could not grab hold of any clear representation of how they were supposed to behave as men. Manhood was transforming from something active and useful to something more passive and ornamental. Substance was giving way to helpless dreams of celebrity. Faludi writes, “Where we once lived in a society in which men in particular participated by being useful in public life, we now are surrounded by a culture that encourages people to play almost no functional public roles, only decorative or consumer ones.”

In *Stiffed*, Susan Faludi listens carefully to men's stories and tells them back to us with a distinctive combination of empathy and clarity. She shines full light on her subjects, and at the same time she lets them speak and works hard to understand their points of view. As a woman and feminist she may feel alienated from some of their aims or acts—which she describes without flinching—but she never derides the people themselves. Rather the opposite: however awful the behavior she

describes—misogyny, racism, homophobia, rape, sadistic torture, murder—she attempts to locate its human roots, to surprise the reader by revealing the desperation, shame, longing for tenderness, or search for pride that launches it.

You imagine that her subjects looked forward to her calls. She may not have come with a cameraman, that Godot-like apparition for whom all her subjects seem to wait, but she at least kept her appointments. Wherever they settle in to chat, a TV is always on in the background, often the centerpiece of otherwise under-furnished rooms. But unlike their cathode company, the author surprises the men by wanting to hear what *they* have to say. Perhaps one of the more important facts of our era is that the television set itself—the technology the late twentieth century chose to substitute for small-town intimacy and communal life—was designed only to flash and show, narrate and drone, never to listen.

Faludi is, in contrast, a generous listener, and her reportorial kindness is generally a real plus. One danger of her style is that at moments it can make her appear as an apologist. While it's an enormous relief to have her write as a feminist who does not need to make boys and men bad, occasionally her disciplined and mostly admirable neutrality slights history and real sexual politics. She starts the book by describing a domestic violence group for men who batter women, and observes that its members are not men who feel on top of the world or dominant, but rather guys who feel panicked, out of control, and inadequately masculine by some measure they hold up to themselves. Beating women is their effort to shake off the awful anxiety, to reverse the powerlessness.

While this analysis is certainly accurate as far as it goes, Faludi seems to imply that the phenomenon is local, one more response to the vast displacement, alienation, and dislocation of the current work world, rather than one of the most pervasive cross-cultural, cross-class, cross-time universals of human

societies. Ancient Greek and Roman husbands beat their wives regularly. And more to the point, Arthur Kleinman, a professor at Harvard Medical School, has helped document contemporary wife-beating as a critical and pervasive world-wide public health issue. The only historic novelty in what Faludi witnesses is the effort made by the state, albeit fairly paltry (and often unsuccessful), to use group therapy to challenge family violence.

It is very much to Faludi's credit that you want to argue with her. I would have liked her to write more about men who don't fit her schema, who, in spite of disappointments and bad years, have found ways to create rich and satisfying lives. I would have liked her to have engaged in more explicit discussions of social class issues, downward mobility, education, religious differences, economics, and politics, and to have offered a longer historical perspective.

Most of all, I wish she had analyzed the father-longing more. What exactly were these men asking for when they asked for better fathering? Some simply had no fathers. But others had fathers who coached them at sports and stayed involved, yet who seemed also to fail them. How reasonable was the sons' desire? How mythic? Perhaps the world had turned upside down so fast that like the children of immigrants, these sons experienced their progenitors as incompetent in the new land? Or had they simply watched so many heroic battle movies that they felt confused about what a flesh-and-blood man could and couldn't do? Was it the very limitlessness of the proffered commodified world that fooled them? Perhaps because American ideologies shortchange tragedy, the nation's sons have no recourse but to personify it in their individual dads.

But whatever diminished the role of fathers, whenever it started, and for whatever complex and diverse reasons, it's clear from reading *Stiffed* that the situation is long overdue for change. The nation needs to imagine (and political

agitation needs to make space in the demanding work world for) active, loving, involved, three-dimensional fathers so that real men can feel social support as they try to reinvent their purpose and improve on what they experienced.

Ultimately, to tax Faludi with questions that all of us must seek to answer is unfair. She's done her part, and she's done it well. I found myself reading bits of *Stiffed* aloud to my husband and two teenage sons. And I urged the three of them to read it. I especially thought it might be helpful to my sons by giving them a sense of the larger cultural sources of the pressures they feel more personally. (Besides, it's gamey enough to keep them reading.)

It occurred to me a few years back that perhaps Madame Bovary could have saved herself had she only read Flaubert. Our advertising and entertainment media floods us with stories that are often barren. We take them in. Sometimes we separate the real from the fictional. But often, over time, we

get confused. Packaged not so neatly in memory, other people's fictions ooze and mix with our more personal experiences. For better and worse, they become part of what we experience as the "them" that is "us." Faludi makes clear how the awful, frequently dehumanized visions of media masculinity that batter American men (and, of course, the real economics that undergirds them) have appalling consequences. Designed to sell products and exploit, they are devoid of tenderness, modulation, or maturity.

But where in contemporary society is their harsh rant effectively contradicted? Well, one place is in good books. When I finished *Stiffed*, I found myself hoping that the men Faludi wrote about would read *their* book. By listening to the sons and carefully, elaborately retelling their stories, the author offers a large opportunity, a crucial bit of the often missing care and attention; in fact, she embodies the very fathering that can help boys become men. □

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A Surplus of Meaning

Morris Dickstein

■ *A Critic's Journey: Literary Reflections, 1958–1998*, by Geoffrey Hartman. Yale University Press, 1999.

Reading this rich and generous selection from Geoffrey Hartman's work, I found myself caught up in the whole history of literary criticism in the last four decades. Hartman's essays, harvested from seven different collections along with some recent uncollected pieces, touch on virtually every movement in postwar academic criticism: from the New Criticism that instilled habits of close reading in the Fifties to the European phenomenology and hermeneutics that altered the literary landscape in the Sixties through deconstruction and its postmodern successors in the Seventies to later explorations of history, culture, and group identity. But this book also includes an essay on Hitchcock, a study of mystery novels, an idiosyncratic discussion of Freud, and some keenly perceptive work in Holocaust commentary and biblical criticism.

With another critic this assortment might suggest a mixed itinerary with no firm center or clear commitments. But Hartman, far from being seduced by every wisp of academic fashion, brings his distinctive voice to every subject he writes about. In part this arises from his background. It would scarcely be accurate to describe him as an emigré intellectual, since he left Germany on a Kindertransport in 1938 at the age of

nine, spent the war years in England, and went to college and graduate school in the United States. As a graduate student in comparative literature at Yale he studied with emigré scholars like René Wellek, Henri Peyre, and Erich Auerbach, to whom he pays warm tribute in this book. Influenced by their depth of knowledge of European literature, language, and philosophy, and especially by Auerbach's philological approach to literary texts, Hartman became their second generation, an heir to the tradition of cosmopolitan humanistic learning that the Nazis had nearly extinguished.

From the beginning Hartman developed a passion for interpretation that became the driving force in his writing. This bent was soon naturalized by his study of Anglo-American poetry, especially Wordsworth, to whom he devoted the opening chapter of his first book, *The Unmediated Vision* (1954), as well as an influential book-length study ten years later. Not only did Hartman become a superb close reader of poetry, but he did so in a prose that was itself often close to poetry, free of jargon yet densely packed with aphorism, witty word-play, and learned allusion. Instead of arguing, summarizing, taking the reader by the hand, Hartman prefers to burrow into a text, to lose himself in the dense foliage of an idea. His essays leap forward by association, alliteration, and creative digression, taking abrupt turns that may puzzle the unwary. "Interpretation is like a football game," he says. "You spot a hole and you go through. But first you may

have to induce that opening." Hartman praises the German critic Walter Benjamin's "revisionary perspectives and startling trains of thought that make one stop and wonder at the physiological and mental mechanisms he reveals." The same could be said of his other models, including Maurice Blanchot and Theodor Adorno.

This kind of "European" writing, so alien to the familiar style of English and American criticism, can be immensely eloquent yet also self-indulgent. Hartman has often defended it as a form of "creative" criticism, on a par with literature itself. It has an obvious link to the theory wave that swept over academic criticism in the 1970s, which his work anticipated. But he can also write in a more straightforward manner, deploying argument and evidence to influence the direction of literary scholarship or public discussion: witness his classic 1958 essay, "Milton's Counterplot"; his seminal study of Wordsworth; or his recent pieces on education, collective memory, and the Holocaust. The overview we get from *A Critic's Journey*, however, shows that Hartman's more elliptical manner is anything but an accident of style, a deformation of theory, or simply one writer's penchant for pleasing himself. It is deeply ingrained in his whole approach to art and experience.

In a revealing moment in the "polemical memoir" that introduces this volume, Hartman recalls submitting four close readings of poems to his thesis advisor, René Wellek, who returned them with the comment, "Very good—but where is the thesis?" In a sense this became the story of his life. His little memoir is a polemic against polemics. Unlike his old friend

Morris Dickstein directs the Center for the Humanities at the CUNY Graduate School. His most recent books are *The Revival of Pragmatism* (Duke) and a study of postwar fiction for the latest volume of the Cambridge History of American Literature.

and colleague Harold Bloom, whose close readings are always loosely organized around a pointed argument that helps him reach a general audience, none of Hartman's books is thesis-driven. Instead he is an evangelist of interpretation itself. "I am not good at concluding," he writes near the end of one essay. For him the journey not the arrival matters.

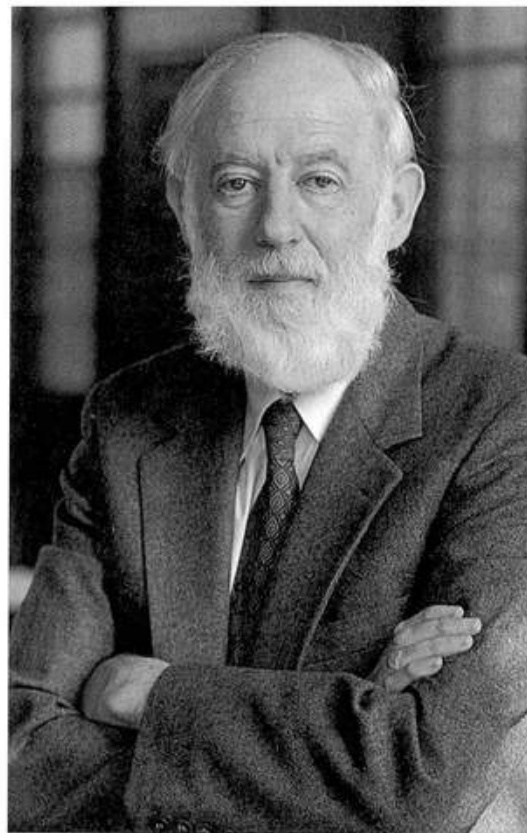
Like the deconstructionists, he sees in literary texts a *surplus* of meanings, and resists the efforts of critics—or even of the authors themselves—to simplify or unify them. In an astonishing passage, he compares writers to the biblical redactors or editors who were working with layers of material they could not seriously alter or fully control. Hartman feels that a film director like Hitchcock flattens his characters by his meticulous planning, his need for control, and he argues that the neat resolution of the detective story betrays the moral complexity and weird atmosphere that made it worth reading in the first place. "A voracious formalism dooms it to seem unreal, however 'real' the world it describes.... We value less the driving plot than the moments of lyricism and grotesquerie that creep into it."

Hartman is so strongly drawn to poetry because of its irreducible complexity, and he recoils from vernacular poetry (as he dislikes plain-speaking criticism) as a misguided push for purity and directness. This separates him from the American tradition which, since Twain, Hemingway, and Frost, has been anchored in the spoken language. When Hartman writes about Wordsworth, he brilliantly complicates a writer long seen as an apostle of simplicity. For Hartman, poetic language is layered with "animistic" residues of religion and myth. Interpretation, to be adequate to the irrational traces that shape this material, must become prismatic, limitlessly resourceful, and open-ended. Hence he sees the critic not as the handmaiden of the text, the faithful servant of its literal meaning, but as its creative interlocutor, on the model of the midrashic interpreters of scripture.

In the preface to his first collection of essays, *Beyond Formalism* (1970), Hartman attacked the "repetitive, compulsive analysis of works of art in terms of theme or formal relations":

Great exegetes ... have always, at some point, swerved from the literal sense of the text. This text, like the world, was a prison for Rabbinic, Patristic, or Neoplatonic interpreters.... I feel the poverty of our textual imagination compared to theirs. The very idea of interpretation seems to have shrunk.

Hartman sees the Rabbinic commentators as freewheeling visionaries, men of imagination who adapted biblical texts to contemporary needs. Their fanciful elaborations, like Kafka's, could become suggestive parables in their own right. For Hartman they



Hartman, far from being seduced by every wisp of academic fashion, brings his distinctive voice to every subject he writes about.

turned what could have become a dead letter into something constantly changing. "For any text to remain alive, it requires the attention and supplementation of commentary." But Hartman takes little account of the homiletic and normative distortions of midrashic interpretation, whose current heir may be the politically motivated criticism, left and right, for which he has little respect. Along with ingenious flights of speculation, the rabbis too often took problematic texts, including whole biblical books, and softened them into a pallid orthodoxy. They served the community better than they served the truth.

Hartman's surprising appeal to Midrash does little to validate criticism as a whirligig of open-ended interpretation. But it helps us see how his own criticism is modeled on scriptural commentary, except that his scripture is not the Bible but the poetry of Wordsworth. I know of no modern

parallel to the way Hartman has used one poet's texts to investigate such a formidable array of theoretical issues. In the Freud essay, for example, Wordsworth's seemingly euphemistic language becomes a vehicle for exploring Freud's strategies of dream interpretation. There's no apparent limit to the ways Hartman can use the eight simple lines of "A Slumber Did My Spirit Seal" without repeating himself. (He does it twice in this volume.) Like the rabbis with scripture, he is so deeply *inside* Wordsworth's words, he's lived with them so long, that even the slightest turn offers a new angle of vision. His own prose is an echo chamber of Wordsworthian intimations.

In the late 1970s Hartman's exegetical bent, his distaste for any closure in interpretation, led him into a wild adventure. He became fascinated not only with deconstruction but with its strangest, most idiosyncratic work, Jacques Derrida's *Glas*, a book made

up of two parallel discussions of Hegel and Genet whose pages, with their layers of text and commentary, look remarkably like leaves of the Talmud. *Glas* was *Finnegans Wake* without genius, perhaps even without talent, a baroque display of Joycean word play that pumped up Hartman's own linguistic brio. From this period Hartman has salvaged only one essay for *A Critic's Journey*, "Words and Wounds." Here is a sample:

Ishmael, the ending of which rhymes (at least approximately) with the first syllable of Melville's name, may evoke the homophonic word *male*. The trouble with this kind of rhyming, this illness of the ear, as W. H. Auden once defined poetry itself, is its infectiousness. What if *Melville*, when heard with *Ishmael*, elicits further echoes? *Male(v)ill*, *Male Will*? Or should the ear pick the assonance of *el* as the descriptive key, in its Hebrew meaning of "God" and its Arabic force as definitive article: *the* *the*?

Literature, of course, *is* partly about sounds and associations, but this infection of the inner ear, as Hartman rightly labels it, induces a vertigo of misplaced ingenuity that has little to do with criticism. Deconstruction played to Hartman's sense that interpretation was like Bottom's dream (in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*)—"it hath no bottom," no ground and no limit. "One tries to find ways, of course, to allay this infinitude," Hartman writes, "and these ways constitute what is called closure. But there is also a foreclosure ... that takes words away before they can be profaned by the language exchange." At this stage Hartman risks becoming like Wordsworth as a boy, who sometimes needed to grasp hold of a tree to prove that there was a world outside his own mind.

Such a tree loomed up for Hartman as a reflux of his own past. In 1981, the same year he collected his Derrida essays in *Saving the Text*, he became project director of the Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies at Yale, which he had cofounded a year or two

earlier. Though individual memory and oral testimony can be as slippery as any literary language, this project of interviewing Holocaust survivors anchored Hartman in a massive historical reality. This was just the moment when other leading academic critics (such as Edward Said) were turning from the skepticism of deconstruction, with its emphasis on man as a language animal,

"It is uncomfortable to recognize the frustrated creativity in hate, the idealism gone bad."

to a new historicism. Hartman's moral values had always kept him at some remove from deconstruction. Gradually the Holocaust, the war, and his own experience of displacement became grounding elements in Hartman's work, giving him greater respect for more civic-minded critics ("public critics," he called them) who mediated between art and its audience and engaged major social issues.

The results can be seen in all of Hartman's books from the last decade including *Minor Prophecies*, a study of the literary essay; *The Longest Shadow*, a collection of essays on the aftermath of the Holocaust; and *The Fateful Question of Culture*, a more elusive (and allusive) work that raises serious questions about multiculturalism and identity politics in the light of the regressive tribalism of the fascists. In two exceptionally fine essays in *A Critic's Journey*, "The Reinvention of Hate" and "Art, Consensus, and Politics," Hartman analyzes group hatred as a perverse mode of linear thinking, a way of simplifying and integrating the world, of expelling ambiguity. Like Hitchcock and the detective novelists (but with far more grievous consequences), the Nazis imposed pattern, order, and uniformity, the very qualities Hartman

avoided in his own criticism. He quotes Adorno to the effect that "genocide is absolute integration," adding that "it is uncomfortable to recognize the frustrated creativity in hate, the idealism gone bad."

In criticism, as in social life, Hartman has now come to recognize the need for consensus, for a genuinely communal speech, as opposed to "the staged unanimity of fascism and the ideology-machine of communism." They represent the kinds of totalizing narratives he never wished to write, for they depend on foreclosure and exclusion. As against this forced consensus, the strategic appeal of the work of art, he says, is through "persuasion without coercion."

According to Hartman, the artist's tactics of persuasion are mirrored in the step-by-step strategies of critical reading, which, instead of being an operative display of learning and insight, becomes "a form of exegetical bonding that does not deprive us of quality of consent." Where Hartman once offered a rationale for close reading as a secular offshoot of religious commentary, a way of gaining access to the elusive traces of myth and magic in art, he now defends it on political grounds as a cure for totalitarian manipulation, a form of liberal conversation. Art criticism can now be seen as "political philosophy by other means," highlighting "different perspectives" and drawing upon "a precarious reserve of empathy that is always in great demand."

Evoking such an incremental approach and a town-meeting image, Hartman sounds more like John Dewey or Richard Rorty than like his earlier French or German models. It seems that the study of the Holocaust and its aftermath has given a communitarian spin to Hartman's instinctive tolerance and pluralism, his interest in hearing a variety of voices. Pulling back from the epistemological vortex of deconstruction, he has become more like the public critics he once scorned, still resisting closure but doing so now in the name of democratic consent. □

FILM REVIEW

Smoked Out

Thane Rosenbaum

■ *The Insider*, directed by Michael Mann. Touchstone Pictures, 1999.

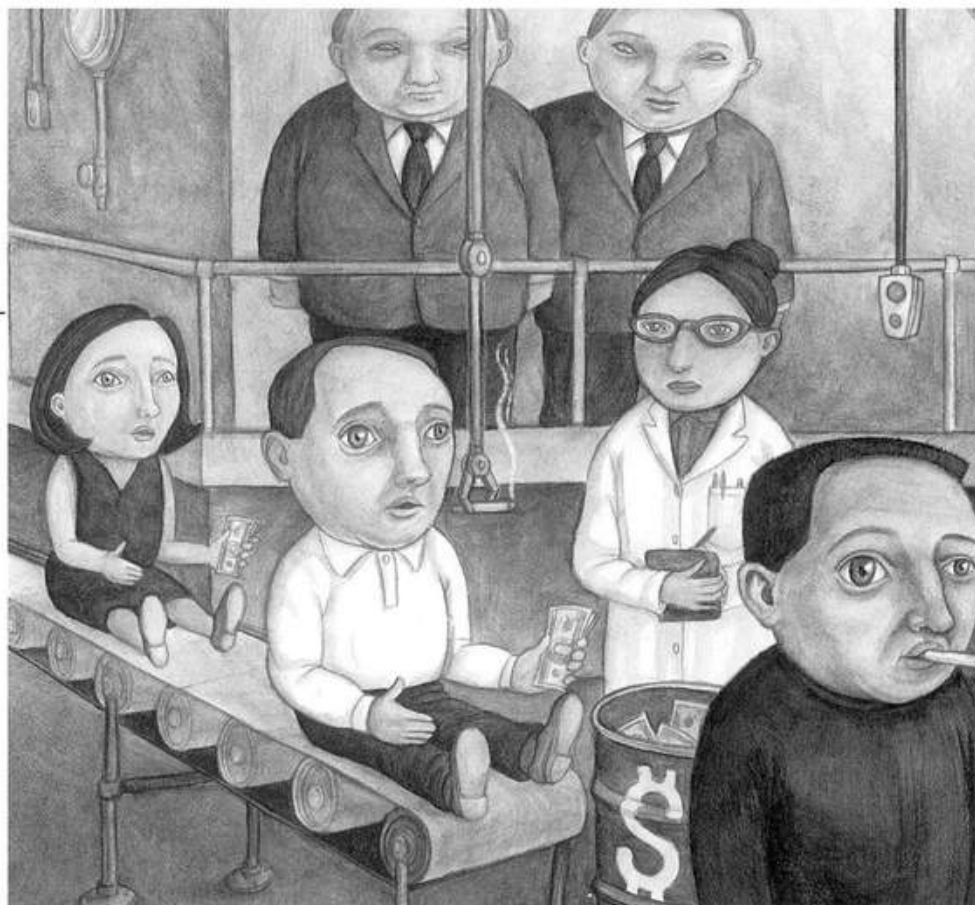
My most recent novel is entitled *Second Hand Smoke*, but don't let the title fool you. I have no particular interest in cigarettes, the tobacco industry, or the cruel ironies of how lingering, ambient fumes that don't quite make it into the lungs of a smoker can be just as damaging, if not even more so, to someone who isn't smoking but just happens to be breathing in the same vicinity of someone who is.

My fictional world is actually the post-Holocaust landscape. The smoke that fires my aesthetic imagination is not nicotine related, but rather comes from the unfiltered flames that roared from the chimneys of Auschwitz. For me, smoke is much more of a metaphor than a health crisis. Hitler routinely rejected the advice of his own generals, so any warning from our surgeon general probably wouldn't have changed his habits much. For Hitler's purposes, the more the chimneys smoked, the more his own murderous addictions were fed.

But I do care about the breakdown of values and the crisis of faith that poisons our peace of mind and our hopes for the future when institutions fail us. In times like these, even an atmosphere unclouded with smoke can still choke us with cynicism and mistrust.

Michael Mann, the cowriter and director of *The Insider*, is someone with a more genuine interest in cigarettes, the tobacco industry, and the

Thane Rosenbaum is the literary editor of *TIKKUN*.



harmful side effects of smoking. But even for him, the ash that he scatters on this subject is intended to ignite a much larger conversation, one that involves the ethical responsibility of corporations and the value placed on truth and loyalty in America.

The story of this film is already well known—corporate greed, conflicting interests, and vanishing journalistic integrity—since it came to us from the failure of journalism to tell this story in the first place. That's what usually happens with cover-ups and conspiracies: once unburied, they often go on to provide irresistible moral lessons and otherwise rich sources of drama.

Jeffrey Wigand (portrayed in the film by Russell Crowe), an executive and scientist with the tobacco company Brown & Williamson, conducted research on ways to enhance the impact of nicotine in cigarettes. During his years in the cigarette business, he learned that tobacco companies were lying to the public; it was no secret among industry insiders that, despite tobacco executives' sworn testimony to the contrary, nicotine was in fact addictive. These companies understood all

along the profit-making potential of manipulating nicotine levels in cigarettes. One satisfied customer would assure them a customer for life—well, more accurately, an addict with a radically reduced life span. The goal was to hook consumers to the sensations of smoking to an even greater extent than they already were.

Wigand's conscience eventually influenced him in ways that his job security and country club memberships no longer could. By the time the television news magazine *60 Minutes*, with its left-leaning, anti-establishment producer Lowell Bergman (Al Pacino) entered the picture, Wigand had evolved into a courageous whistleblower, telling his story to Mike Wallace (Christopher Plummer), and with that, he assumed, to the entire nation.

But *60 Minutes* had its own corporate agenda. CBS, its parent company, was up for sale, and Westinghouse, the future buyer, would have been far less interested in acquiring an asset mired in a tortuous interference-of-contract lawsuit from Brown & Williamson. Wigand had signed a confidentiality agreement before he left the company

REVIEWING THE COVENANT

**Eugene B. Borowitz
and the
Postmodern
Renewal
of Jewish Theology**

**Peter Ochs, editor, with
Eugene B. Borowitz**

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FILM REVIEW

and any disclosure from him on *60 Minutes* would undoubtedly have resulted in a breach of that agreement. For that reason, the segment about Wigand never aired.

In the meantime, Wigand's life contracted an altogether different kind of tobacco-related cancer: the loss of his family, his job, his self-worth, and his pride, all due to the stresses of having come forward. After all this personal sacrifice and pain, his story didn't immediately get told and Brown & Williamson did everything in its power to undermine his integrity and reputation.

Yet, Wigand was only one of the insiders in this film who was exposed to the cruelty, corruptibility, and soullessness of the modern corporation. Mann is seemingly making a larger statement about the diminished value of truth and loyalty in America, and how the presumed guardians of those virtues—in this case, the media—are no better at protecting them than the rest of us are.

In his own way, *60 Minutes* producer Lowell Bergman was a whistle-blower as well. When he realized that his word—his commitment to his sources—was no longer inviolable, that the financial interests of the corporation had become more sacred than journalistic ethics and truth-seeking, he too eventually left his job, although in his case, it was more an act of free will, without the threats and intimidations from his former employer.

The ethical and moral transgressions of the tobacco companies are treated as being beyond redemption in *The Insider*. But as far as *60 Minutes* is concerned, the interests were equally tainted and conflicted: on the one hand, there was the corporate imperative of protecting the stock price and shareholder value, and on the other, the responsibility of a news organization to tell the truth and protect its sources.

Cultures exist and thrive by the telling of stories. And civilizations fall when truths are subverted, crimes go unpunished, and narratives are

suppressed. Such is the case in life, and in art as well, with *Oedipus Rex*, *The Deputy*, *All the King's Men*, *All the President's Men*, and now *The Insider*, serving as representative, but surely not exclusive, examples of this theme. Wigand and Bergman are two Americans set adrift in a world where loyalty and commitment no longer matter, where sacrifices go unrewarded, profits are disgracefully exalted, and truth is forever silenced.

A whistle-blower is a bystander who valiantly decides to give up his or her post of indifference, abandoning the security that comes with anonymity. As Wigand came to learn, resisting the temptation to remain spineless and willfully unaware requires extreme self-sacrifice, a burning sense of morality, and a willingness to face danger. Such charitable acts were rare during the Third Reich, where the presence of smoking chimneys was more lethal and grotesque than a mere cigarette. But even in cases where corporations serve shareholders over citizens and where professional ethics are hostage to a rising stock market, the moral imperative for the Wigands of the world to come forward is equally great, and in many ways, far less threatening. Today, with corporate mergers compressing the scope of collective interests, subverting the free flow of information, and creating such vast spectacles of wealth, how much harder will it be for those willing to blow the whistle to do so while standing inside the otherwise soundproof corridors of corporate greed?

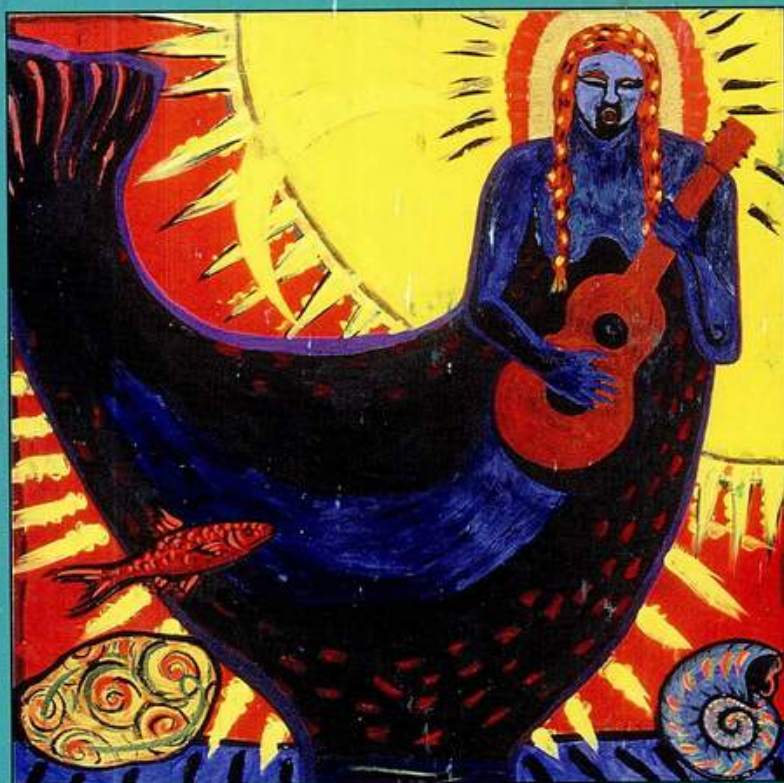
It is ultimately a job for someone with healthy lungs, because it invariably requires the summoning of the troops. The person must be a primal screamer: the rebel yell clears the conscience. Given the extreme demands on the breath, however, such a person probably shouldn't take up smoking. Yet, maybe it would be better if such displays of courage were themselves habit-forming, so the rest of us could get hooked on something that is so generous to the spirit and unharsh to everyone's health. □

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