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CHANUKAH SUPPLEMENT

TIKKUN

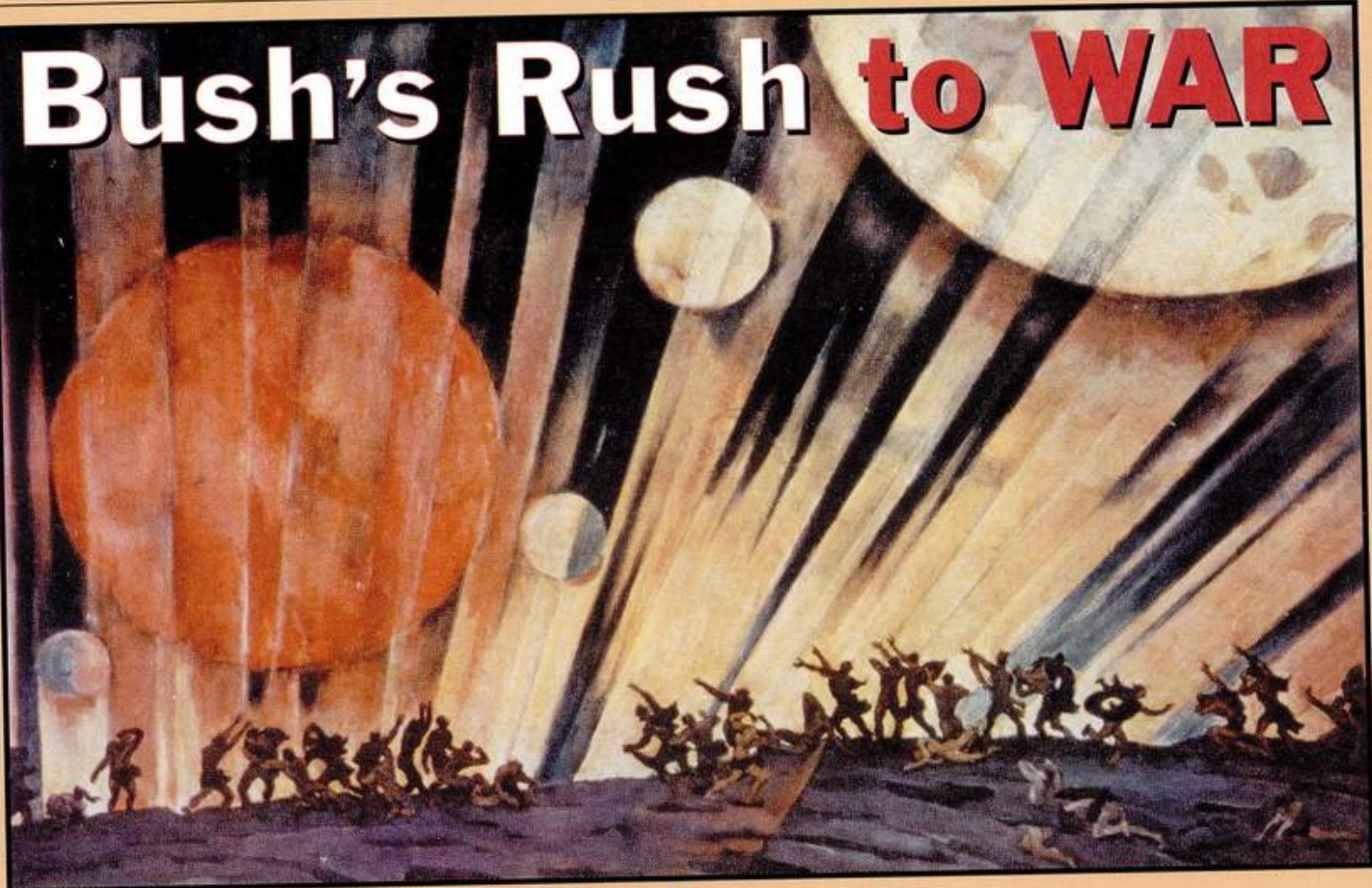
**ARIEL SHARON
CAUSING PAIN**

SAM BAHOUR • NAN GEFEN

A BIMONTHLY JEWISH CRITIQUE OF POLITICS, CULTURE & SOCIETY

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2002

Bush's Rush to WAR



IT'S NOT GOOD FOR **THE WORLD**
IT'S NOT GOOD FOR **THE U.S.**
IT'S NOT GOOD FOR **THE JEWS**

Michael Lerner

Medea Benjamin • Mohamad Bydon

Lev Grinberg • Uri Avnery

**BRUCE
SPRINGSTEEN'S
POLITICS OF MEANING**
Michael Bader

**YOUTH &
DOMESTIC
TERRORISM**
Henry A. Giroux

**ELIE WIESEL'S
MORAL ABDICATION
ON PALESTINE**
Mark Chmiel

**ESSAYS ON
MASCULINITY**
Nancy Ehrenreich
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PLUS:

Mark Shechner on Morris Dickstein's literary criticism
Lev Raphael on Writing a Jewish Life
Antonia Juhasz on the Environment after Johannesburg
and more.

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Little lights

Tonight I light the first candle
on the chanukiya by the window
and then a second in the bathtub,
the yahrzeit candle for your death.

I am always sad the first night
of a holiday when we should rejoice.
This night nineteen years ago
the light of your mind snuffed out.

The chanukah candles burn quickly
two hours and they gutter out
their short time burnt up.
We did not know how old you were—

you'd always fudged your age,
you had no birth certificate—
I don't know if you knew
your birth date and place, for real.

Grandma always gave a different
answer and then shrugged. Your
mother is younger than me and
older than you, what else matters?

Yes, there's Moses and David,
Babylon and the Talmud,
Maimonides, and then we appear
out of a cloud of smoke and haze

of old blood there among the Jew-
haters clutching a few bundles.
My people poor, without names,
histories vanished into the hard soil

but we had stories with pedigrees:
my female ancestors told them,
Lilith, the Golem, Rabbi Nachman,
the Maccabees, all simultaneous

all swarming around my bed
all caught in my hair as you
washed it with tar soap, relating
fables, family gossip, bubele

maisehs, precious handed down
the true family jewels, my dowry.
Those little flames you lit in my
mind burn on paper for you,

your true yahrzeit, all year
every year of my aging life.

—Marge Piercy

CHANUKAH SUPPLEMENT (between pages 48 and 49)

2 LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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5 The Iraq War

In a desperate move to shift public discourse from the moral and economic crisis that emerged after the exposure of corruption and deceit in major American corporations, George Bush discovered a threat to the world in Iraq. Would such a war be good for the world, the United States, or the Jews? Our co-publisher, **George Vradenburg**, argues *The Case for War* (5). Editor **Michael Lerner** argues *The Case Against War—It's Not Good for the World* (7), while **Medea Benjamin** writes from the front lines of the anti-war movement in Washington (16). **Mohamad Bydon** argues it's not good for the United States (17). **Lev Grinberg** warns of the consequences for Israel in *Trapped by the USA* (21), while **Uri Avnery** argues that Iraq is less dangerous to the Jews than Israeli government policies which are *Manufacturing Anti-Semites* (25).



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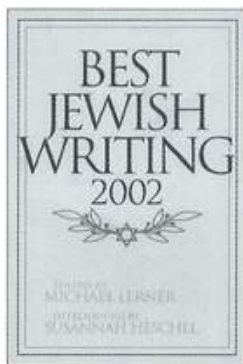
Back Cover: *Who Will Live and Who Will Die?* by Gilah Yelin Hirsch. Courtesy of Gilah Yelin Hirsch.

Sikkum: TIKKUN RECOMMENDS ...

Best Jewish Writing 2002

edited by Michael Lerner
Jossey-Bass, 2002

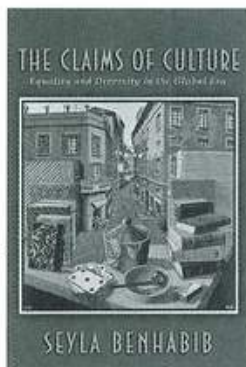
This is the second edition in the series created by our editor, Michael Lerner. Susannah Heschel writes poignantly about the traumas of this past year in her introduction to this collection which features fiction, poetry, essays about the Israel-Palestine conflict, a section "On Being a Mensch and Healing a Troubled World," and a selection of writings about September 11—including Michael Lerner's "Should Scared Jews Become Tough Jews?" Authors featured this year include A.B. Yehoshua, Judith Plaskow, Joshua Weiner, Letty Cottin Pogrebin, Nilton Bonder, Adrienne Rich, Chaim Potok, Amos Oz, Wendy Wasserstein, Allen Appel, Jonathan Tel, Grace Schulman, Robert Pinsky—plus some great articles from TIKKUN. The perfect Chanukah gift!



The Claims of Culture

Seyla Benhabib
Princeton University Press, 2002

Seyla Benhabib teaches philosophy at Yale and is one of our most interesting political theorists. Insisting on the fluidity, porousness, and essential contestability of all cultures, Benhabib wants to show a path for a politics that is respectful of difference and yet affirming of democratic process and liberal values. She provides some foundation for the vision of a globalized world that maintains and respects difference and is built on dialogical principles that have been central to the vision of TIKKUN.



White Boy A Memoir

Mark D. Naison
Temple University Press, 2002

White Boy is a riveting memoir of the author's deeply personal, and at times volatile, connection to the social upheavals of the 1960s. Raised as a Jew in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, Naison became estranged from his family when, deeply involved in the Civil Rights movement, he fell in love with a black woman. After work as a tenants' rights activist and a brief flirtation with the Weathermen, Naison abandoned revolutionary politics to become a professor of African American studies and begin the thirty-year-long study of race in America which adds depth to this powerful and important memoir.



Scars Of The Spirit The Struggle Against Inauthenticity

Geoffrey Hartman
Palgrave MacMillan, 2002

A fascinating and groundbreaking collection of essays from one of America's leading literary critics. Hartman, a distinguished professor at Yale and the co-founder of its Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, has written an important book that gathers his most original ideas on finding ways in which to recognize the real or authentic in today's modern world. Moving from philosophy to the Internet, from talk shows to the Holocaust, these beautifully written essays address the relationship between art and atrocity and present Hartman's defense of aesthetics as a means to speak to suffering.



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Letters to the Editor

War and Peace

To the Editor:

Thomas Moore's statement "A Nation in Need of Renewal" (September/October 2002) echoes the plaintive cry of those who deplore America's recourse to war following September 11. He calls for responses to violence that are deemed more humanistic and "mature." I find in this an absurd calculation that literally extends what is presumed to be ideal for individual human development to an identical model for the actions of a state. States are not individuals, their options and responsibilities are not directly comparable even though, to some degree, each will be reflected in the other. Our founding fathers, who we recall as uncommonly wise and mature men, staked their political hopes and personal lives on waging war, a decision for which we have good reason to be grateful.

This is not to argue that our country has necessarily responded wisely in all

respects to the terrorist threat, but merely to say that the proposed mantra of "peace" seems to me highly simplistic for the role of a nation, much less a world-leading nation.

SID HURWITZ
St. Louis, MO



To the Editor:

As a strong supporter of Israel's right to live in security and prosperity, a strong opponent of terrorism and other acts of senseless violence, and the father of two daughters living in Israel, along with their husbands and my seven grandchildren, I want to commend you for giving space to voices actively seeking a political solution in the Middle East. At a time when so many are trapped by the rhetoric of war and violence, it is important that moderate voices be heard so that others will not feel isolated, marginalized, and voiceless.

At a time of widespread Palestinian terror which has resulted in Israelis being

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very much afraid to live their normal lives, go to public places, attend family gatherings in public spaces, even to ride on buses, and the hatred that is being taught in Palestinian schools, I fully understand the feeling that peace is not possible at this time. I also recognize that previous Israeli efforts toward peace have been rebuffed. However, I believe that we have a choice today between, in the words in the title of a book by Buckminster Fuller, *Utopia or Oblivion*. As difficult as it will be, if the Israelis and Palestinians, with the support of international groups and the nations of the world, can find a way to live cooperatively in peace, using modern technology and the world's resources, there can be far better conditions for all the people in the Middle East and beyond. However, continuation of present animosities and policies threatens oblivion: endless violence, terrorism, war, economic recession, and environmental degradation for not only the Palestinians and Israelis who are already suffering in so many ways, but potentially all the world's people.

I believe, very respectfully, that it is time that we moved beyond finding reasons to demonize our opponents, and started using our wisdom and resources to seek creative ways to end the present horrors and impasse and seek a long-lasting solution that will benefit all of humanity.

RICHARD SCHWARTZ
Staten Island, NY

Nightingale Kaddish

To the Editor:

My family name is Soloveichik, and that may tell you something about lineage in the Orthodox world of Judaism. From that background I grew up believing in empathy, the importance of living in another's shoes, the ability for which comes from the principles of teshuvah, or turning. As Abraham Joshua Heschel put it, "There are three prerequisites for turning. Eyes that see, ears that listen, and an understanding heart." Increasingly, I have felt that Jews (and Israel) lost this spirit, till I found TIKKUN and its voice—a voice which restores my faith in the knowledge that there are maybe many more Jews than I realised who are as disturbed as I am by what Jews are perpetrating in Israel/Palestine. And I couldn't agree with TIKKUN more in so many ways. For several years I have spoken up in whatever ways I can, but I send you this poem in thanks. I am glad that there are more than just a few voices rising up. With your efforts, maybe it can lead to concrete results. You are everything a Rabbi *should* be.

Nightingale Kaddish

*As now as the next breath but one,
as everywhere as air:*

Remember Us, Remember Us.

*The Holocaust and milking it is
hot hot hot.*

*The Mother of all Victims rules aloof
her jewelry of numbers blue*

*not earned by other victims too insignifi-
cantly
nothing
to tattoo.*

*Enough already of Never Again.
If this sounds like a fart in schul
maybe I better bubble out again
until I fill the holy space of ark and torah
scrolls with gas enough
to force a flight outdoors
and down the marble steps
into the arms of ghosts of dead
Armenians Cambodians Tutsis Balkans
mixed*

*Ebos as remembered as a swarm of gnats
long dead.*

*Lebanese abandoned. For their friend-
ship with*

*the Jews they'll disappear
but please don't concern yourself.*

*Of Diasporas, again there's only one.
Not Palestinians as freshly wronged as
your last*

*breath
by the belluva rousing echo of the Song
of Lebensraum.*

Who can talk?

We, who must.

*Those of us who are
the tribe itself.*

*My great-grandfather rabbi stirs.
Sing, he says. For why is our might
different than*

*any other's might when used so wrongly?
For We, he says,*

*are not the only ones pogrommed
against,*

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LETTERS

*the only Unwilling Wanderers
the only holocaust worth a flame.
Holocausts aplenty simmer now.
Swiss banks weep now. Stolen artworks
creak.
But of those who sole possession was:
themselves,
not even individuals but groups of bugs
exterminant
how do lawyers settle the worth of life?
They don't. Never a gain.
My great-grandfather's name was
Soloveichik—
"Nightingale"
In his name I sing today
a short and many-noted Kaddish for
all the
Holocausts that were,
lit by tribal hate or maniacal despotism
towards
a people by their own.
And now, Enough Already for the dead,
all equal
in their tragedy of death.
With all the power of one little throat
I lift my voice for all the Holocausts
to come.*

ANNA TAMBOUR
Nowra, Australia

The Middle Path?

To the Editor:

Though I respect TIKKUN's attempt to find a "middle path" between those who think being "pro-Israel" is being "pro-Sharon" and those whose support of Palestinian liberation has sometimes led to anti-Israel and anti-Semitic perspectives, in so doing you might have ended taking an intellectually indefensible position on the issue of violence. Your editorials continually denounce suicide bombers as intrinsically immoral, thereby reinforcing the opinion that Palestinian suicide bombers are uniquely aberrant—uniquely monstrous? I'm not so sure.

In the past year I have been contemplating this suicide bomber thing and I had to ask myself if I could imagine any circumstance (no matter how far-fetched), in which I would strap a bomb to myself. Interestingly, it did not take me too long to imagine just such a circumstance—and this surprised me. Call it an exercise in understanding the other side.

I'm not Jewish, but I'm sure if the situation were somewhat reversed, militarily speaking, and certainly if there was the threat of another Holocaust, I have

no doubt whatsoever that some Jews would pick up the bomb, so to speak. Perhaps several. Certainly, if one were to roll back to Nazi Germany and assuming Jews then were more aware and had access to explosives, many would be suicide bombers. In fact, Israel is a whole country (unique here), which would choose to self-immolate rather than have another Holocaust. Don't you think?

So, while Israel is insisting on the moral high ground—because they can afford to by military superiority—the fact is, I don't think Israel is facing the truth, or commonality, about this suicide bomber thing. After all, it is quite common in all wars for men and women to sacrifice themselves in a multitude of ways. Further to this point, I'm an American citizen post 9-11, and I had to ask the question: If I'm voting (or not!), and thus putting in power a governmental apparatus which also commits acts of terrorism ... or I simply don't care about the rest of the world ... why shouldn't I be the target of someone's wrath? What gives me the right to excuse myself from targeting just because I'm a "civilian"? What gives me the moral right to excuse myself simply based upon lack of a uniform? I have no such moral right, I concluded, and if my government is committing acts of terrorism (which can be literal or economic, by the way), then I am a legitimate target. And so are my children. It's a question of responsibility to all. Just thought I'd share this rumination with you. I thank you and TIKKUN for your tremendous efforts to bring Light into our lives.

JOHN LAWRENCE
Atlanta, GA

Aiding and Divesting

To the Editor:

I am a doctoral student in psychology at the University of Chicago. I have recently posted a website and petition devoted to stopping U.S. aid to Israel. The website and petition is a collaborative effort between myself (U.S. citizen of Palestinian descent) and Benjamin Balak (Israeli citizen, economics professor in the United States). The petition has been endorsed by several activist groups, including SUSTAIN, Jews Against the Occupation, International Solidarity

Movement, and Gush Shalom.

We would be grateful if you would show your support for the petition by signing it. With your approval, we would like to include your name among a list of eminent intellectuals and activists (to be posted on the website) who have signed the petition.

View the Stop U.S. Aid to Israel website at www.stop-us-aid-to-israel.org.

SAMI ABUHAMDEH
Chicago, IL



Editor responds:

I don't favor a complete cut-off of aid to Israel, though I would favor making some forms of aid directly contingent on ending the Occupation. Israel is still vulnerable to attack from hostile neighbors, and I don't want Israel to be vulnerable. Cutting off aid is too broad an instrument to specifically help pressure Israel to end the Occupation.

And it's a tactic which could easily backfire—like the tactic of disinvestment. In today's political climate, most Americans have not yet accepted our arguments that the Occupation itself is immoral and self-destructive. By putting forward the "Stop U.S. Aid" or the "disinvestment" strategy, you shift the discussion from "What is wrong with what Israel is doing" to "Is this the right tactic?" The former question allows us to educate people, the latter moves attention away from the Occupation and toward the issue of do we want Israel to survive? And on that question, I am very much on the side of those who wish Israel to survive.

Instead of drawing people who might be on the side of ending the Occupation onto your side, this tactic pushes many of them (myself included) onto the other side—not, in my view, a smart move. Tactics (as opposed to fundamental underlying principles) have to be geared to the political realities of the moment. We both share the principle of self-determination and freedom for the Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza, and for reparations for Palestinian refugees, an end to settlements and an end to the Occupation. So find tactics that unite the few people who actually agree with all that, rather than tactics that weaken our base of support. For these reasons, I cannot sign your statement. □

The Case for War

George Vradenburg

I want to articulate what I believe to be the case for military action designed to disarm Iraq of unconventional weapons and to remove Saddam Hussein from office. The position favoring military action is quite different from the editorial position of this magazine. But, then, debate in the pages of *TIKKUN* is healthy.

As I see it, Saddam Hussein is a clear and growing danger to international peace and security. I take as accepted the proposition that he is systematically violating UN resolutions—adopted on an incontrovertible record after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait—requiring that he dispose of weapons of mass destruction and desist from various crimes against his own people. The UN should take unambiguous steps to enforce those resolutions, including insistence that Hussein open the thirty government installations (including his massive "palace" complexes) that he has refused to open to weapons inspectors. Should he fail to do so, the UN should authorize military action to enforce its mandate. Should the UN fail to act to enforce its own mandate, its own relevance on matters of international peace and security will be called into question, putting greater responsibility on the United States for such matters. (I recognize that a more muscular UN may produce a stronger role for the UN in the matter of Israel and Palestine, but so much the better. On that particular proposition, I am in accord with the editorial position of this magazine.)

Military action sanctioned by the United Nations would likely be limited to discovery and destruction of weapons of mass destruction and other enforcement matters related to the crimes committed against the Iraqi people and would not, by its terms, seek "regime change." That was the case in the Gulf War in 1991. And while "regime change" was the hoped-for result in 1991, it did not eventuate. So here, "regime change" might not occur even though it might be the hoped-for result of UN-sanctioned action. We should not shy away from that consequence; indeed, it should be a motive for action.

What if the UN is incapable of acting or, perhaps the more difficult case, what if its inspections are limited in

scope and produce an ambiguous result? Should the United States, with whatever allies join with us, proceed without the sanction of the international community acting through the UN?

I believe that we cannot delegate our destiny, or our own safety and security, totally to the United Nations. Russia or France or China could well veto effective UN enforcement of the UN's own resolutions in order to further their own

political or commercial interests or to weaken this country. In that case, we and others cannot simply ignore a head of state dedicated to affirmative use of force against his neighbors, his people, and his sworn enemies—including the United States. In that context, we, acting alone or with others, must retain a residual right to act.

Initially, it is important to remember that Saddam Hussein is an international thug in possession of biological and chemical weapons and seemingly in

active pursuit of nuclear capability. He has the capability to deliver those unconventional weapons regionally with his existing missile systems and globally through terrorist networks of individual suicide killers. In his offensive attacks against Iran, Kuwait, Israel, and the Kurds, and in his brutal suppression of domestic dissent, Hussein has demonstrated no inhibitions against using all tools at his command against those who oppose his ambitions. This is not a regime that is building nuclear capability for peaceful or defensive purposes. This is a regime building unconventional weapons capability in the face of specific UN injunctions *not* to do so, adopted as a direct consequence of Hussein's invasion of Kuwait and of his use of chemical weapons against his own people. This magazine supported the military action in the Gulf War and should, therefore, support the enforcement of the UN resolutions resulting from that action.

Some continue to argue that "containment and deterrence" is an absolute alternative to war. Certainly that is the traditional and desired manner of controlling potentially aggressive behavior by nation-states. But it is not working here. Saddam is not being prevented from building his weapons capability *today* in the face of specific UN resolutions, and he is not being deterred now (nor was he in the

Should the United States proceed without the sanction of the international community acting through the UN?

George Vradenburg is co-publisher of *TIKKUN*.

past) by our (or Israel's) nuclear capability. And besides, nuclear deterrence feels decidedly irrelevant against today's anonymous suicide killers organized in global terrorist networks. Rather, it appears that Saddam regards his own nuclear capability as a potential deterrent against *our* acting to prevent *his* future offensive adventures.

Some, including this magazine, argue that resort to military force is immoral and will simply reinforce a world system that relies on military power to maintain inequitable economic and political power structures. In the name of "realism," action against Iraq totally obscures, if not ignores, the vital need to create a more loving and caring global culture.

I totally disagree.

In the first place, recent interventions in Bosnia and in the first Gulf War—and the widespread criticism of the *failure* of the United States or the international community to intervene in Rwanda—were based on principles of preventing war crimes or political domination and, in my judgment, on the goal of creating a more loving and caring world culture. So, it seems to me, the use of military force per se cannot be the decisive criterion for whether a particular military action will or will not create a more loving and caring global community. Rather, the issue must turn on whether the purpose and effect of military action will reinforce existing inequitable political and economic power arrangements or create the conditions for a better world.

Is it not reasonable to believe that removal of Saddam Hussein will produce an Iraq more committed to freedom and the welfare of its people and, in the near future, to an Arab region more focused on the economic and social well-being of its people and the equal role of women in their societies? I certainly think so.

The evidence is strong of a growing desire in the entire Arab region (and, I believe, Iraq in particular) for greater freedom and democracy, for jobs and economic growth, and for social advancement for women. The Arab Human Development Report, recently issued by the United Nations Development Program and authored by Arab scholars, has noted, "the wave of democracy that transformed governance in most of Latin America and East Asia in the 1980's and early 1990's has barely reached the Arab states. This freedom deficit undermines human development." "Sadly," notes the report, "the Arab world is largely depriving itself of the creativity and productivity of half its citizens [its women]." The report goes on to state,

The Arab world is at a crossroads. The fundamental choice is whether its trajectory will remain marked by inertia ... and by ineffective policies that have produced the substantial development challenges facing the region;

or whether prospects for an Arab renaissance, anchored in human development, will be actively pursued.

But the political leadership of Iraq has thwarted freedom and democracy, jailed those who have advocated it, and subordinated the role of women in it. Change in political leadership would change the "trajectory" of Iraqi development in a markedly positive direction.

I am not a Pollyanna. We can't simply ignore the potential "backfire" effects of military action among Arab peoples in the region more generally. Even the young people in the region who favor democracy and freedom (and who make up over half the region's population) believe that a war aimed at Saddam will be a "war *against* them, not *for* them."

No doubt that those feelings were prevalent in post-war Germany, Italy, Japan, and Korea. But within a reasonably short time period, those feelings changed and the benefits of intervention were realized. Even today, after fifty years, those nations regard our military presence as positive, indeed necessary,

for the health of their regions. From all appearances, more recent military interventions by the United Nations, NATO, or the United States in Bosnia, East Timor, and other regions have produced outcomes friendlier to freedom and economic well-being (the environment needed to foster a loving and caring culture) than would non-intervention.

Thus, while the immediate purpose of military intervention should be to enforce UN resolutions or protect the safety and security of the American people, the intervention should be undertaken as well with the broader objective of permitting the peoples of Iraq and the region to shape their own destiny, in the context of their history and culture. In that broader context, Iraqi disarmament and "regime change" through military action can result in a freer Iraq, with greater prospects for economic and social growth. And a healthier Iraq can begin to tip the Arab "trajectory" in the region as a whole toward peace, freedom, and economic growth.

At the end of the day, we cannot avoid the fact that we live in an increasingly hostile world, where the instruments of war are being democratized as rapidly as the means of communications and finance. In such a world, we have a stronger interest in assuring that peace, freedom, and economic and social opportunity proliferate more rapidly than weapons of mass destruction. And by extending those values to more people, we will be enabling a more loving and caring world ... a world of *tikkun*. In the world as it exists, we must be prepared—after due consideration, with a clear vision of the better world we are trying to create—to take action. In Iraq, that means the elimination of unconventional weapons and the removal of Saddam Hussein. □

Intervention should be undertaken with the broader objective of permitting the peoples of Iraq and the region to shape their own destiny.

The Case Against War

It's Not Good for the World

Michael Lerner

Don't speak falsely now, the hour is getting late ...

—Bob Dylan

The great challenge facing humanity today is to overcome the ethos of selfishness and “me-firstism” (or in the case of nation states, “we-firstism”). Once we recognize that we are all inter-dependent, we will be able to work as one united human race to undo the 150 years’ worth of damage we and our ancestors have perpetrated on the life-support system of the planet. To many of us, this may sound like some utopian fantasy, but to survive on this planet, we must change the way we think. We need to do everything we can to build a new ethos of love, recognition of our mutual inter-dependence, and a whole new attitude toward the universe based on awe, wonder, and radical amazement at the grandeur of creation to replace our utilitarian materialistic worldview toward nature and each other. Every specific political decision needs to be made within the context of whether it advances or impedes this urgent survival necessity.

At no time in history has the need for a new moral order and new ethos of love and generosity been more practical and more immediately needed for the well-being of everyone. Yet never have these ideals seemed less plausible—in large part because so many of us have given up on our highest ideals and become “realistic,” adjusting to the way things are. And it is that so-called “realism” which will destroy this planet.

Isn't being “realistic” the dynamic that has led so many Democrats to be as chicken-hearted as they have been, unable to stand up to President Bush and publicly proclaim that the emperor has no clothes?

Of course, not all Democrats see a problem with Bush's imperial robes. Some actively support the war. They say, “We have no choice because Saddam Hussein is on the verge of obtaining the capacity to deliver nuclear strikes at neighboring states.” To them we reply: show us the evidence that Saddam will soon obtain nuclear weapons capacities and that he would actually use those weapons, knowing that it would lead to massive retaliation and the destruction of himself and his country. To be sure, Saddam is a vicious and



pathological murderer who ought to be brought to justice and tried for crimes against humanity. That was also true of Stalin, and many of the other leaders of the Soviet Union—yet, though the evidence was incontrovertible that these Soviet leaders had weaponry far in excess of even the wildest claims about what Hussein has, and though they proved in Hungary and Czechoslovakia that they would use their power to suppress their own people and though their crimes against their own populations were genocidal at levels Saddam has never equaled, we smartly held to a doctrine of containment that confined the Soviet Union and kept that country from ever using nuclear weapons.

Containment didn't keep the Soviets from developing instruments of mass destruction, but it did prevent them from using them, and containment of Saddam has kept him from aggressive action outside Iraq since 1991, but will not keep him from trying to balance the weapons of mass destruction already held by Israel, India, and Pakistan with weapons of his own. Saddam is not more ruthless or pathological or driven by suicidal ideology than the Soviet dictators with whom containment worked effectively. Saddam is an expert at self-preservation, and as long as it remains clear to him that use of nuclear weapons would mean not only his death, but the destruction of Iraq, and as long as we do not threaten to kill him personally, there is every reason to believe that the containment policies will continue to work. Just as the Soviets loved to talk of “burying” us, so Saddam

will talk about Israel and the United States. Yet when it comes down to it, Saddam will taunt but he will not strike as long as we in the international community make clear to him the costs of aggressive action.

This magazine supported international action in 1991 to push Saddam out of Kuwait—until it became clear that all the rhetoric about seeking to replace Saddam with a democratic regime was merely window-dressing. In 1991 there was a smoking gun—the invasion of Kuwait. The *New York Times* reported on October 8, 2002, that the United States has been testing chemical and live biological weapons since the 1960s—their current status is still classified. Some people might conclude that if there is a smoking gun in the world today, it is in the hands of the United States. We don't worry about this because we have so much more power than other countries, but our decision to use this power pre-emptively now (either alone or with a coerced and intimidated UN) will set precedents that will haunt the world in the coming decades. What will the moral foundation of our outrage be in the future if this kind of pre-emptive militarism gets turned against us in a circumstance where United States or Israeli military superiority is no longer guaranteed?

So why the rush to war? Some on the Left believe that it can all be explained in terms of the U.S. hunger to dominate the world oil market. Others talk of a U.S. imperial consciousness and the desire for world dominance on the part of old Cold Warriors who now head a country that is the unchallenged superpower. The Cheney wing of the Administration has not hidden its desire that the Iraq war be only the first stage in a larger expansion of American power that may soon involve the overthrow of the Iranian and Syrian governments as well. Still others point to the November election, which seems to explain why all this had to be decided by the U.S. Congress in October.

The rush to war could have been slowed by a principled Democratic Party. Had the Democrats in Congress had a whiff of sense, they would have proclaimed the following: "We see this as an electoral ruse, and we as a group are not falling for it. There is nothing about the current situation which requires that we vote on this issue before the November elections, and so we Democrats in both the House and Senate will, as a group, simply walk out and not be present at any vote called before that. If the Republicans want a war in order to get re-elected, we are not going to participate. However, the day after the midterm elections, we will participate in a quiet and long deliberative process to see what the grounds are for making war, and whether they make sense to us and to the country; we may even call for a national referendum on such a war, because we don't think the president should be taking this action without a much greater consensus than exists at the moment. As Al Gore, the man who won more votes than George Bush and who would have been president if we had a genuine democratic system here,

has made clear: many Americans doubt that we have exhausted nonviolent methods for dealing with this situation. All this will be part of our exploration after the election." Would this be political suicide? Not according to the polls, which as late as early October indicated that a majority of Americans were very suspicious of any unilateral moves toward war on the part of the U.S. government.

So why didn't the Democrats wait?

Because, even if they really don't support the war at all, they are being "realistic," and assuming that some percentage of ordinary people will be tricked into war fever, and that percentage might be the difference between re-election and not. But this is a self-fulfilling prophecy. The American people are more likely to fall prey to war-making demagoguery if their elected and supposedly principled leaders don't act as an opposition but only as the elephant's misshapen tail.

These so-called leaders will tell you that it was more important for them to get re-elected than to take a principled stance on this war, though their vote on this war will be used for years to come as authorization for the murder of others. This is the slippery slope of the liberal realists—they compromise on their compromises to the point where you can see why no one really respects or trusts them. Then they wonder why we stop voting for them. No matter what happens in this election, the media will tell you, "the Democrats did worse than we expected from an off-year opposition party because they weren't strong on patriotism." Yet, the truth is that the Democrats will not have gained as many seats and votes as they could have gained (in a year when the stock market crashed, when many corporate leaders have been exposed as major thieves and liars, and when many ordinary people are worried about their financial futures) because they were not leaders in any sense of the word but "realists" who allowed themselves to be bamboozled by Bush. People want their leaders to be strong and to stand up for their own beliefs, and it was that kind of strength, not militaristic strength, which made people respond so enthusiastically to Martin Luther King, Jr. The Democrats' constant capitulation on matters of principle leads many people to distrust them.

Without serious opposition to the war from the Democratic Party, those of us committed to social justice and peace have to create our own anti-war stance and movement. So even though we believe that Saddam Hussein deserves to be put on trial for war crimes against humanity, and even though we think his treatment of his own people and the Kurds is morally outrageous, and even though we believe that the people of Iraq would be better off if they were no longer under his rule, many of us believe that this war, as proposed by President Bush, is wrong. Unilaterally pursuing a pre-emptive war against Saddam will make it harder for us to achieve the fundamental changes we need to save the planet and achieve the kind of world we believe in. While Saddam has created a role for himself as the symbol of Iraq, the very presence of Saddam in Iraq is part of a

larger historical picture in which third world countries have set themselves up against first world countries and global corporations. To understand Saddam's role in Iraq, and the role of the United States in opposing him, and then to understand why we think the world will be worse off if Bush pursues his crusade against Saddam unilaterally, we must first take a snapshot of the world scene.

For the past one hundred and twenty years the world has been dominated by a global marketplace in which national governments beholden to large corporations have increasingly aided these corporations in expanding their markets and lowering the cost of raw materials and cheap labor. This expansionist dynamic has had mixed consequences for the world. On the one hand, it has greatly expanded the number of working people in advanced industrial societies who benefit materially from the global capitalist system, raising their incomes and life expectancy. On the other hand, it has impoverished many people in "developing" countries, and in both advanced and developing societies it has replaced previously existing communities, religious systems, informal social support networks, and an ethos of communal solidarity with a new ethos of individualism, selfishness, materialism, and "looking out for number one." The new ethos of individualism, in turn, has had its own mixed consequences: on the plus side, a dramatic increase in individual freedom, mobility, privacy, and equality of rights, but on the minus side, a tremendous amount of social dislocation, spiritual alienation, crime, drug abuse, family breakdown, depression, and despair.

On a global scale, the industrialized world's insistence on protecting the interests of their corporations has led to national clashes and to a world-wide system in which the powerful Northern and Western countries managed to dominate the militarily less developed Southern and Eastern countries—at first through direct colonial rule, and then, post-World War II, through a more sophisticated global imperialism (to use a word used by Senator Ted Kennedy in October, 2002 to describe the basis of proposed U.S. action against Iraq). In the imperial stage, Western countries have created a world marketplace governed by rules which favor the interests of large corporations, even at the expense of the well-being of people in their own countries, but usually in ways that guarantee that the interests of advanced industrial societies will maintain their superiority and that "development" will only occur in ways that do not significantly challenge the global reach of the United States' position as superpower.

There are some who continue to imagine that a world governed by the supposedly benign interests of the United

States and its multinational corporations can create a Pax Americana in which everyone will benefit. But the militant U.S. protection of international corporate interests has led to the almost unrestricted destruction of the life support systems of the planet, particularly as the countries most indebted to these interests have blocked any serious attempt to reverse and repair the ecological damage they have done.

In response to these dynamics, social, political, and religious movements have emerged to challenge the causes and to speak to the effects of the increasingly globalized capitalist system.

The use of violence by the great powers convinces others that using violence is the only "realistic way" to achieve political ends, a lesson learned by potential recruits to terrorist organizations.

First-world wealth was built by forcing huge economic dislocations that pushed subsistence-level farmers off their land and into the shantytowns and slums of huge mega-cities where they "gladly" accepted sweatshop conditions as an alternative to starvation. The result has been starvation and homelessness for tens of millions, along with the third-world dumping of environmental pollutants and poisons that had been outlawed in advanced industrial societies. Nationalist sentiments in advanced industrial societies, taught in schools, reinforced by media, and imposed by militarist indoctrina-

tion and periodic wars, undermined the ability of working-class movements to identify with the needs or interests of working people and the poor in developing countries, and made it possible for large corporate interests to rely on their own national populations against third world insurgencies. A "me-firstism" easily slipped into a "we-firstism" so that American, English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, and Russian nationalism could allow huge numbers of people in advanced industrial countries to believe that they were serving the interests of the entire world, by participating in a world system that enriched themselves and impoverished at least one-third of the world's population.

This is not to say that there was no resistance to corporate globalization. The second half of the twentieth century can be written as a history of third world insurgencies. It was during this era that third world countries succeeded in throwing off their colonial masters, replacing them in many instances with governments that were ostensibly socialist/communist. Nor did governments based in communist theory, such as the Soviet Union, ignore corporations' increasingly global reach. Yet the Soviets turned out to be unreliable allies, in large part because the system they had created in Eastern Europe was not based on democratic principles, but instead supported a system of elites who used repression and political demobilization to enforce their dictatorial rule. Rather than champion the interests of working people either domestically or internationally, the Soviets became yet another form of

"self-interest," and their allies were often asked to subordinate the needs of their own people to the needs of Russia's ruling elites. Lacking any larger spiritual or humanistic vision or values, adopting a crude materialism that led them to equate progress with industrialization, the socialists and communists of Europe were unable to sustain any commitment to the interests of the larger world, and their system became yet another instance of the triumph of selfishness, and that triumph in turn demoralized idealists everywhere and led to the internal collapse of their own system.

Because socialism and communism failed them, many people in "developing countries" turned to other forms of opposition to the world capitalist system by the mid-Eighties. The two most prominent replacements were ultra-nationalism and fundamentalism. Both had their attractions and their distortions. Both ultra-nationalism and fundamentalism accepted the basic structure of the capitalist system (private ownership of the means of production, unequal wealth and power, competition for scarce resources, limits on the rights of workers) but attempted to limit the reach of Western countries. They especially have sought to repudiate Western capitalist values and have sought to ensure that the wealth that had been previously extracted on behalf of international corporations would at least in part be shared by the upper classes of their societies, and to a more limited extent by a newly developing (but usually small) middle class.

Though the rhetoric surrounding these ultra-nationalist and fundamentalist movements is often "anti-imperialist," (that is, they reject external domination in favor of using the resources of their own society for their own people), in most cases the countries involved have made many compromises with the interests of international capital, merely seeking a larger proportion for their own upper and upper middle classes of the wealth that was being appropriated by Western corporations.

The strategies for mobilizing people in their own countries behind this "anti-imperialist" program are varied. In the ultra-nationalist variant, there is often a combination of socialist and anti-imperialist rhetoric with nationalist or racist-supremacist themes. The nation is perceived as embattled and threatened by external enemies, so, in the name of national defense, internal dissent is repressed and discussion of economic democracy or ecological sanity is marginalized or demonized. In the fundamentalist variant, the focus is on challenging the cultural and social consequences of the marketplace: the destruction of family values, the undermining of communities, the transformation of women into commodities in the marketplace (through capitalist advertising or prostitution), the undermining of traditional religions, and the prevalence of profiteers (often identified with some minority group that is allegedly only interested in money at the expense of communal values, e.g. Jews in Europe, Chinese or Japanese in Southeast Asia, Turks or Arabs in southern and Eastern Europe, Muslims in

sub-Saharan Africa, etc.). These rallying cries of fundamentalist societies become unifying themes which deflect people from questioning whether the society being created actually does embody genuine community (which it usually does not, because while people are in the mosque or church or synagogue together on the weekend, during the rest of the week they are relegated back to their position in a highly unequal and alienated capitalist marketplace).

The abiding strength of ultra-nationalist and fundamentalist approaches is that they help overcome the self-blaming generated by the meritocratic fantasies of the marketplace ("if you are materially unsuccessful," marketplace ideology proclaims, "you have nobody to blame but yourself and your own inadequacies"). Instead of being valued by how much they can create in the international marketplace, they are valued for who they are as human beings (or, as is often the case, because they are a member of some special nation or some special religious group). The huge distortion in these approaches is that in order to solidify the in-group, some other groups are identified as the source of disruption of the nation and their values as a threat (e.g. for Christian fundamentalism, the threat is gays and lesbians and non-Christians; for United States nationalism, the threat first was represented as Soviet Communism, then, when that dissolved, Islamic fundamentalism; for Arab nations, the State of Israel; for Hindu fundamentalism, Islam; for Islam, American imperialism and its various, more immediate representatives: Christian missionaries, Jews, etc.).

As third world countries turned from socialism/communism to fundamentalism/nationalism, and as their support from Russia waned with the dissolution of the Soviet empire, they had to face a world increasingly dominated by American power and corporations. Those states that have accommodated to this new reality by allowing the United States to define the conditions of world trade and by facilitating American corporate penetration of their societies have been allowed to run their own societies basically any way that they wish. China, for example, with a history of oppression of its own people, occupation of Tibet, denial of human rights, and real threats to neighboring Taiwan, has nevertheless managed to avoid outright conflict with the United States because of its willingness to cooperate with American corporate interests and global trade. Those states that have been more resistant to American corporate penetration have found themselves being demonized by America and made the butt of the new campaign against international terror.

In the twentieth century, and especially in the aftermath of World War II, there were strong progressive political movements in Middle Eastern countries (e.g. Egypt, Algeria, Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Pakistan) and in Islamic strongholds like Afghanistan and Kashmir. Most of these movements rejected essentialist thinking that pitted "Communism" against "Capitalism" and required adherence to one or the other. They didn't want to choose sides in the Cold War. In

the 1950s, the assumption of power by nationalists like Mossadegh in Iran, Nasser in Egypt, and the Ba'ath socialist parties in Syria and Iraq alarmed leaders of the United States. These nation's policies of non-alignment and nationalization of, for example, Iranian oil and the Suez Canal, were viewed as harmful to Western interests. The United States was determined to defeat these nationalist policies, and engineered the overthrow of Mossadegh in 1953, and contributed to the fall of Nasser in 1967. With the defeat of these popular movements, fundamentalist Islam—perceived by many Muslims as their only alternative—began to attract large numbers of adherents.

The struggle with Iraq can be understood in this perspective. Saddam Hussein gained prominence as a member of the Ba'ath party, which is nationalistic, anti-Israel, and secular. Iraq was once a client-state of the United States, receiving a steady flow of U.S. dollars in the Eighties during its war with fundamentalist Iran. After that war, however, Iraq became a less tractable client and the U.S. government began to reverse its course, finding much to criticize in Hussein's already-murderous regime.

When the United States and other Western powers decide to demonize a given society, they often will focus on certain "core democratic values" that are being denied. Though America has the highest rate of incarceration of its own citizens of any country on earth, it is quick to denounce the

human rights violations of countries it seeks to demonize. It manages to ignore the same or even worse human rights violations in countries that have given American capital a green light. When Saddam invaded Kuwait, the United States made him pay; but the United States has managed to ignore similar crimes when committed by its global allies (most recently, it has given the green light to Russia to continue its brutal repression of Chechnya in exchange for its support for a war against Iraq and global terror). The pious cries we now hear about Saddam's earlier war against the Kurds, for example, might be more credible if the United States had not known about it at the time and continued to supply Iraq with weapons which were used to implement this brutal policy.

I do not mean to suggest that the ultra-nationalists or the fundamentalists are "the good guys" in a battle against a vicious United States or international capital. On the contrary, in my view there are some valuable aspects to what the United States and international capital espouse (democracy, human rights, privacy, etc.) and some terrible and vicious aspects to many of the forms of ultra-nationalism and fundamentalism—not least among those being their anti-Semitism—but more generally their willingness to demonize some "out" group in order to strengthen internal cohesion and solidarity.

Rather than pick among these contending forces, I want to suggest that our goal must be to divest our energy from

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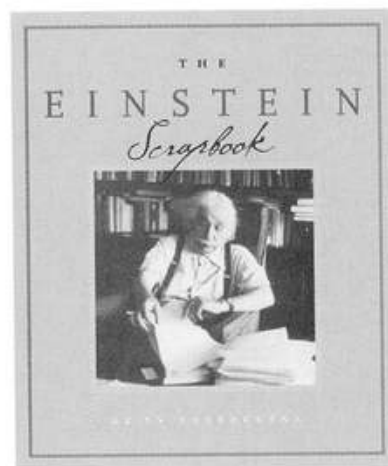
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these kinds of struggles because they reinforce the very worst aspects of everyone's consciousness: the "us" vs. "them" mentality—the sense that we should be focused on the well-being of our own country or state or city or neighborhood or football team or whatever, rather than focused on the well-being of the entire planet; the notion that the most efficient way to achieve our ends is through violence; the certainty that there is not enough and that we have to horde what we have and protect it from others who are trying to take it from us; the notion that we need more and more to satisfy our basic needs and that we can only get that by producing and consuming "more" and "newer."

All of these ways of thinking about the world are part of what people buy into when they start to allow themselves to be taken up by the rhetoric of "We, the interests of American power." Instead, we need to enter this discussion from a totally different place. Although we love this country and are proud to be Americans, we must also identify with the interests of the human race and the preservation of the planet. We do not want the resources of the United States to be used toward destroying other human beings or the environment.

Nor can we put off the work of peace and justice any longer. Too many "realists" say, "First let's deal with today's problems, and tomorrow we'll work toward our ideals." But the "ideals" part never comes, because we are always working on the now. Given the resistance of the American people to increase their own taxes, the monies being spent on preparing for and implementing an ongoing war with Iraq (and then possibly Syria and Iran, if Cheney and his cronies have their way) should be troubling, as they are already depleting funds that might otherwise have been available to alleviate the suffering of the poorest and politically weakest sectors of our own society—including children, those without health insurance, the homeless, the hungry, and the working poor.

If there should be any massive engagement of American resources, instead of war our focus should be to build the economic infrastructure of "developing" countries while rebuilding our own economy in ways that can contribute to a reversal of environmental and societal degradation. We must act to transform our notions of production and consumption so that they become subordinate to the health of the planet; we must find a way to share the world's wealth with everyone else (including future generations).

Imagine a global peace force of tens of millions of people whose energies were dedicated full-time to these tasks, and whose activities were coordinated by an international organization whose goals were planetary ecological security and global social justice!

There are two methods to achieve one's ends in this world: through showing that you care about the Other, or through showing that you can force the Other to follow your program. Every foreign policy action tends to reinforce one or the other of these approaches. For most of history, great

powers have relied on force, and that has had the consequence of creating a world in which everyone comes to think that violence is the only "realistic" approach. And this, in turn, convinces everyone else, including potential recruits for terror and supporters of whatever cause, that they too are being unrealistic to think that they could rely on anything less than massive force.

Remember how all the preparations for war in Afghanistan were accompanied by extravagant talk of a "Marshall plan to rebuild that society once we had won"? Well, it never happened. Remember how we were led to believe that after the Gulf War the United States would defend the oppressed Iraqi minorities and democratize the region? It never happened. And it won't happen as long as we choose violence, because the logic that leads us to war, a logic of self-interest and power, will not lead us to acts of generosity and caring.

A war against Iraq will only further the immiseration of the people of Iraq, a people already suffering from the economic boycott we've used these past ten years. I sincerely doubt that if we go down this path our country will ever provide Iraq with a level of aid sufficient to repair the damage we've done to the Iraqi people for the past eleven years. Instead, what this war will do is give further impetus to the (already well-established) tendency to resolve disputes through force and violence, and that will have the impact of convincing yet more people in the world that the only realistic way they fulfill their needs is through force and violence also. We will see increasing numbers of people who believe that the only difference between them and the U.S. government is a difference of power, which they will seek to reduce by acquiring instruments of power.

It is this same reasoning which leads people in the advanced industrial societies to give up on any hopes of saving the environment and creating a rational global system to plan production and use of resources in an ecologically sane and planet-restoring way. This kind of *tikkun* (healing, transformation) of our environment is seen by most people as utopian, for the simple reason that they look out at the world and see everyone acting from narrow self-interest. "In that case," they reason, "why should I be the one to get rid of my SUV or decrease my consumption. After all, if I start restricting my desires or support social programs that will cut into my income by increasing my taxes, others will simply continue their own selfishness and I won't really have changed the world, but only disadvantaged myself." Ecological movements will never gain the strength they need as long as this argument holds sway—and it will hold sway as long as all of us look at the rest of the world as "they" whose interests can be subordinated to "ours."

That, by the way, is why the U.S. approach to the United Nations is so contemptible. Even those who call for the United States to go through the UN to achieve its ends in Iraq argue that doing so will make it easier for us to build a better alliance to get our way. Very few argue what needs to

be said: that we have no business imposing our views on the rest of the world. If the United States can't convince Iraq's neighbors that it is a threat, then America ought to postpone any violent intervention.

We at TIKKUN believe that the United States should be *part* of the world, not *running* the world, and that we should begin to move toward seeing the interests of the six billion people on this planet as "our" interests. But the Bush administration operates from the opposite assumption—that the rest of the world should be serving U.S. interests. Bush pushed for a vote in Congress for military authorization first, believing that in so doing it would be able to say to the UN: "We are going to do this intervention regardless of what you decide, so if you want your institution to look relevant and get future U.S. economic support, you'd better go along with what we are doing or at the very least not oppose it."

Clever? Not really. It's just part of the bullying principle that convinces everyone that they live in a world of bullies, and in such a world everyone gets more despairing and less able to live by principles of cooperation and caring for others. It infects every aspect of our lives, making it less likely that we personally will be able to build in our own lives the kind of loving and caring relationships we'd really like to have surrounding us.

There is an alternative. But it requires a fundamental shift in the basic paradigm, a new willingness to believe in the real truth behind the deepest religious and spiritual traditions that have developed over the course of the past thousands of years. I refer, of course, to the core notion of most religious and spiritual traditions: that the world could be based on love and respect, joy and celebration of the grandeur of creation, and caring and respect for each other and for the earth itself. Just as selfishness tends to build a world of selfishness and despair, so acts of generosity and caring have a similarly infectious quality. If instead of trying to impose its will on the world, the United States would use its vast resources to model a different kind of world, the ethos behind that political path would spread like wildfire.

Imagine how different the world could be if the United States were currently using its global power to achieve the following: 1. A global redistribution of wealth so as to eliminate hunger, homelessness, and to create a world economy which provided a safety net that guaranteed to everyone on the planet a full program of health care, education, and employment. 2. A global economic system reoriented so that its top goals were to restore the ecological well-being of the planet and to provide maximum social justice and sharing of the world's current wealth and resources in ways that would



Iraqi civilians, not Saddam Hussein, will be the ones to suffer most from this war.

be perceived as fair not only to everyone alive but also to future generations. 3. A global ethos of caring for each other manifested in "A New Bottom Line," in which institutions and social practices were judged efficient, rational, and productive to the extent that they tended to produce or sustain loving and caring behavior, ethically and ecologically sensitive human beings, and social practices based on awe and wonder at the grandeur of creation.

It is my contention that in such a world not only would the Saddams and terrorists be quickly marginalized, but the whole notion of public safety would take on a new meaning, because of the dramatic decrease in anger and jealousy between and inside national entities.

The role of the United States in stimulating such a development would earn for us the kind of international respect and appreciation that would make it easy to command support for our genuine needs—because people would want to express gratitude for this kind of generosity. Just as the world felt little gratitude toward the United States which sought to rebuild countries after World War II only to strengthen the hold of our global corporations, so it would respond generously if the real goal and outcome of such policies was to strengthen the entire world and do so in a way that favored the disadvantaged.

Political energy always flows either toward hope or toward despair. If America modeled generosity, nonviolence, social justice, ecological sanity, and a world based on trust and kindness, those energies would spread and be replenished and duplicated at every level of the world's consciousness. Instead, the more we model a world based on power and domination, materialism and the quest for more, "me-firstism" and self-indulgence, the quicker those values spread and infect everyone on the planet.

"But," you might still ask, "why can't stopping Saddam be part of this effort to build a new consciousness. After all, the man has in fact been a ruthless dictator who has oppressed his own people, and has possibly accumulated weapons of mass destruction that might be used against us at some point. Wouldn't a world that was based on the kinds of principles you articulate try to interfere in this process?"

The answer here is that in such a world, the United States and other countries would not be articulating the morally questionable position that we, the United States, has the right to huge stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons, and to a huge nuclear arsenal, but that another country's development of those same materials is a legitimate cause for war.

"OK, we are being inconsistent," you might counter, "but really, don't you realize that Iraq might use these weapons whereas we never would." Oh really? The only country in history that has ever used nuclear weapons is the United States, and the political pressure to use them again in Vietnam was only narrowly averted. The use of Agent Orange and napalm—these are chemical weapons and the United States has many others which are used when we deem them effective. Why, exactly, is it more morally outrageous to imagine Iraq using chemical weapons than it is for the United States to bomb the population of Vietnam, causing the deaths of over three million people?

"But the United States has responsibility as the most powerful country in the world to help create a minimum degree of safety against a bully like Saddam." So, this war is about making the world safe? Then how come the people in his neighborhood are not calling for this intervention? Why don't all the surrounding countries ask for help? They did in 1991, when Saddam invaded Kuwait. But today, when he is far weaker militarily, they are openly opposed to such an intervention.

"Still, if you want to build a different kind of world, you need to establish a principle of international law, and Saddam has ignored or tried to subvert the various UN resolutions passed since 1991. The world you want may be based on love, but it needs some kind of restraints on those who for whatever reasons of individual or collective pathology refuse to live by the shared principles of humanity and are willing to violate fundamental human rights."

This is an important point. There should be an international police force and an international court to enforce law and order on a global level. Although in a world in which we were actually focused on planetary ecological survival and social justice, the need for such would be far less than today. But as we move in that direction, there needs to be some transitional enforcement of basic human rights and dignity around the world, and some protection for individuals and nations from aberrations like Saddam Hussein.

The United States has been the primary opposition to such an order, and it consistently opposes granting power to

a world court to enforce the rule of law. It has consistently backed violators of law and order in the world.

So if anyone wants to believe that the world has now turned over new leaf, it could only happen if the United States was *not* setting the agenda for where that new leaf begins to turn. If we want enforcement of UN Security Council resolutions (and why just that, and not resolutions of the General Assembly representing all nations, not just the most powerful?), we might expect at least equal attention to enforcing the far larger number of violations of resolutions by the State of Israel, including those that call for Israel to end the Occupation and to work out a just solution for Palestinian refugees. In fact, if we think of Israel's incursion into Lebanon and its continued presence there for some eighteen years, in total violation of international law, and Israel's development of nuclear weapons, we can see why other nations would be more than a little skeptical about the prospect of a U.S.-engineered intervention into Iraq on the grounds of enforcing UN resolutions or creating a world based on law.

Similarly, we can easily imagine why the world would have good grounds to doubt America's sudden enthusiasm for the rights of minorities (the Kurds) or for domestic human rights being violated by Saddam when the U.S. has refused to use its power to force Israel to stop the Occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, or to restrain Israel's systematic violation of human rights of Palestinians documented in this magazine.

In fact, the role of the United States in the world in the past thirty years, not to mention its current role as chief military supplier and political supporter to many dictatorships and authoritarian rulers (e.g. in Saudi Arabia), and its destructive role in the global economy give it "dirty hands," which makes it impossible to take seriously any sudden claim that it is motivated by higher ethical or human rights goals.

"But even if we have dirty hands, shouldn't we acknowledge that there are some instances where the peoples of the world need to rely on the United States to play a moral role, given that it has the unique monopoly on world power?"

Yes, there could be such instances in which even now, before the United States has changed its direction, it could be asked to play such a role. We could imagine a situation in which the peoples of the world, acting through some democratic mechanism, appealed to the United States to stand up to a given regional bully. If, for example, the UN General Assembly were to call upon the United States to do so, and plead with it to get involved in a particular issue following the strict dictates of the UN, and as part of a UN force whose direction was guided by the principle of the minimum use of force necessary to achieve a moral objective, then there would be a *prima facie* case for U.S. involvement. But if that involvement meant using the military force of the United States in a violent way, then, given the track record of the U.S. in the past, there should still be a

presumption against U.S. military involvement unless there was a democratic referendum put to the people of the United States. To be substantively democratic, there would have to be guarantees that every media presented, during prime time and in place of normal shows, a significant airing of major alternative perspectives, including those normally kept out of the American media (e.g. those of people on the Left and the religious left, the Right and the religious right, as well as libertarians and pacifists). The technology is available to make such public referenda substantively democratic and possible within a few days.

We in the *TIKKUN* world tilt against any use of violence ever. Violence is a slippery slope, and it almost always produces unexpected and terrible consequences. But the framework we've just articulated would allow for emergency situations and special cases (if the world thinks it is facing a Hitler, or, as in Kosovo, an immediate humanitarian disaster, or, as in Rwanda, a genocide) it should have the mechanisms to involve U.S. power. Even in the case of Saddam, if the majority of people in the world want to appeal to the United States to join an international force, contributed to equally by a majority of countries in terms of human power and financing (proportionally to their wealth), then the United States should use the democratic mechanism described above to consider such involvement. But the United States cannot be the initiator of acts of violence—no matter what its claim of higher motivations—until it has cleaned up its act by adopting the three policy goals articulated above, and making credible steps to have these goals be at the center of all policy decisions both domestically and globally. We advocate this not as punishment for past crimes, but as the path that is most likely to actually, in the real world in which we live, produce the safety, isolation of terrorists, and undermining of dictators that would make many such acts of violence unnecessary.

Although we suspect that U.S. interest in Iraq is motivated by the global strategic designs of U.S. hawks and by oil companies and their advocates who wish to have unimpeded access to the resources of the Middle East, our argument is not based on that point at all, but on the strong belief that the kind of world likely to emerge from U.S. intervention will be worse than the kind of world that would emerge if the United States were restrained. And in this respect, it would not matter if the United States were to quickly and easily replace Saddam with a different leader. The legitimization of U.S. power and reliance on violence, the strengthening of the tendency to use violence to achieve one's ends, the demeaning of the Other, the killing of innocent civilians in order to achieve a political goal, the whipping up of "us-vs.-them" psychology that always accompanies war, the undermining of idealism and the disempowering of social change movements, the re-allocation of resources from caring to vengeful purposes, and the inevitable widespread ecological damage—all of these are

disastrous consequences no matter how quickly a Saddam regime would be overthrown.

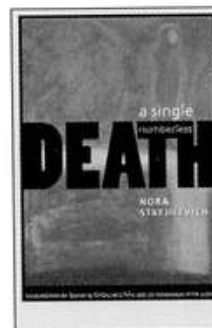
It is in these terms that we wish to build an anti-war movement. We do not want to be associated with an anti-war movement that is spouting out anti-American rhetoric or rhetoric that demeans Israel. We don't want to be part of an anti-war movement that is focused on the evil motives of Bush and Cheney or the conspiracies of oil companies, however valid the points may be. We want to be part of an anti-war movement that puts forward a positive vision of a world that we believe in, and that subordinates all its activities to that goal, rather than solely and simply to a utilitarian focus on stopping this particular war. Our path in opposing the war must embody the values that we seek.

Our message goes out equally to those who support the war and to those who oppose it: The world we want to see in the future must be built now. It will never happen if the values that guide our lives are ones that we don't really believe in, although we have become resigned to them as presumably the only "realistic" choice. This distorted realism recreates every day a world that does not satisfy and does not correspond to our highest values. Please, don't perpetuate that conformity by letting yourself be convinced to think within the box of "realistic" alternatives none of which are truly worthy or humane. *Tikkun* must begin now, with you and me. □

A Single, Numberless Death

Nora Strejilevich

Translated by Cristina de la Torre
with the collaboration of the author



In the first English translation of her elegant fictional memoir *Una sola muerte numerosa*, Strejilevich combines autobiography, documentary journalism, fiction, and poetry to express the "choir of voices" of the more than 30,000 souls who were imprisoned and abused under Argentina's brutal military regime. She engages the reader in the history of a bloody military coup and state-sanctioned anti-Semitism, exploring themes of exile, identity, and violence.

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Anti-War Activism

Medea Benjamin

On September 28, the day we were planning an anti-war rally in Washington D.C., I was awakened at 5AM by a call from the BBC in London. "Over 150,000 turned out to protest Tony Blair's support for a military invasion of Iraq today," the interviewer said. "How many do you expect at your D.C. protest today?" I cringed and with great embarrassment told her that we hoped to get a few thousand people. Incredulous, she wanted to know why so few. In my early morning stupor, I rattled off a series of explanations: After September 11, people are scared and more likely to believe the argument that Saddam is an imminent threat; the Democratic Party, for the sake of electoral politics, has refused to challenge George W. Bush; organized bodies like the unions and churches that could help mobilize large numbers of people have been divided on the issue; and finally, the media blackout of the anti-war movement has made it difficult to gain momentum.

But I forgot to mention perhaps the most critical factor, and one that Michael Lerner so often talks about: the sense of powerlessness among the U.S. public. From the very moment Bush started talking about invading Iraq, we at Global Exchange began organizing anti-war teach-ins and rallies. I would often begin my talks by asking two very simple questions: "How many of you feel that war with Iraq is inevitable?" Virtually all hands would go up. Then I'd ask, "How many think we can stop this war?" Invariably, people would laugh and raise their hands again. But for many, the second round of hand-raising seemed more of a hollow, perfunctory response—like shouting "The people, united, will never be defeated," while a little voice is telling you that the people are never united and are usually defeated.

I don't think our European colleagues suffer from that sense of powerlessness. Massive anti-war protests in countries such as Germany and Italy have forced their governments to distance themselves from George Bush. And the strong movement in England is starting to have a moderating effect on Tony Blair. In fact, it is the popular anti-war sentiment from the streets of England to Egypt that is slowing down the rush to war—putting government after government in the bind of having to choose whether to please the all-mighty U.S. government or appease their own people.

Medea Benjamin is the founder of the human right organization, Global Exchange (www.globalexchange.org), and a new coalition, United for Peace (www.unitedforpeace.org).

The only force actually capable of *stopping* this war from happening, however, is us, the U.S. people. And fortunately, the anti-war movement here at home is quickly building. Congressional offices have been flooded with so many calls that they're comparing it to the Vietnam War days. Rallies now attract tens of thousands from Portland to Boston. As the sense of urgency grows, more and more people are engaging in principled acts of nonviolent civil disobedience, sitting in at congressional and federal offices throughout the land.

My most prominent act of civil disobedience against this war was interrupting Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld as he was testifying before the House Armed Services Committee. The picture of me and my colleague, Diane Wilson, standing right behind a row of generals with signs calling for "inspections, not war" was on the front pages of not only U.S. papers like the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times*, but all over the world. We got hundreds of emails from places like Hong Kong, Senegal, Brazil, and Lebanon telling us how inspiring it was to see Americans speaking out against war.

When I was sitting in a cold D.C. jail after being charged with "disrupting Congress," I thought about the moral fortitude and determination of people like Rigoberta Menchu and the indigenous people in Guatemala who would consider American jails luxurious compared to Guatemalan torture chambers; I thought about the East Timorese eating grass in the jungle while fighting the brutal Indonesian military; I thought about Nelson Mandela and his colleagues cast away for decades on Robbin Island—all of these courageous people prevailed despite overwhelming odds. Rigoberta Menchu is a Nobel Peace Prize winner and travels the world inspiring others. East Timor is now a free and independent nation. And Nelson Mandela, who recently called the United States a threat to world peace, is the most respected political figure in the world today.

Now is the time to take inspiration from those we most admire, to recognize the tremendous power we have in our moral convictions, and to find any and every way we can to build a nonviolent movement in this country to move us from a nation whose arrogance will provoke more terrorist acts against us, to a nation that is a proud member of the family of nations; a nation that respects and nurtures international law; a nation that uses our great wealth and resources to help improve the lives of the disenfranchised at home and abroad. □

Of Drunken Cowboys and Arabian Knights

Weighing the Morality Of a War Against Iraq

Mohamad Bydon

*On the last day,
I kissed my sheik's tomb
And said so-long,
And went.
Baghdad is no longer
But a graveyard for the beloved and a
love poem that I lost.*

—Abdel Wahab al-Bayati,
Iraqi poet in exile

On Detroit's Warren Avenue, a mosque welcomed passersby and worshippers with a large banner: "No to Saddam Hussein; No to UN Sanctions; Yes to Iraq." Founded by Iraqi Shi'ites seeking refuge in the United States after the Gulf War, the mosque is home to some of the most fervent anti-Saddam sentiments anywhere outside of Donald Rumsfeld's Pentagon. The worshippers tell horrifying tales of persecution and torture at the hands of Saddam's secular, and formerly pro-Western, regime. Although they make up 55–60 percent of Iraq's population, the Shi'ites have no representation in the central government that rules Iraq. They are forbidden from participating in their religious rituals, for which the punishment can include amputation, branding, or even execution. (In the past, physicians who refused to administer such punishments or who performed reconstructive surgery on the victims were themselves executed.) The Shi'ites have also seen their holy mosques and shrines—most notably the tombs of Imam Ali and Imam Husayn—desecrated at the hands of Iraqi security forces. Those who organized to fight Saddam's rule were quashed through a major military offensive in which Iraqi troops massacred innocent villagers, bulldozed civilian homes, and even drained the Amara and Hammar marshes used by the guerrilla fighters for cover. Shi'ite clergymen (including some of



my own family members) were imprisoned or "disappeared."

Like Saddam's oppression of the Kurds and his use of biological weapons against the Islamic government in Iran, his brutalization of the Shi'ites was conducted with American knowledge at a time when his regime was receiving generous supplies of weapons and aid from Washington. The end of the Iran-Iraq war coincided with a major rift in American-Iraqi relations that culminated in the Persian Gulf War. Largely due to conversations with U.S. Ambassador April Glaspie just days before his invasion of Kuwait, Saddam Hussein mistakenly believed that the United States would not interfere in the conflict. When President George Bush began forming an international coalition to fight for the "liberation"—though not the democratization—of Kuwait, the nations of the world jumped aboard. The war to restore Kuwait's conservative but oil-friendly monarchy devastated the Iraqi army. While American losses numbered in the low hundreds, estimates of Iraqi deaths range from twenty thousand to one hundred

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thousand. The numbers include a vicious American massacre of thousands of retreating Iraqi troops on the now infamous "Highway to Hell," as well as the U.S. Air Force's obliteration of the Amiriya bomb shelter in Baghdad, killing six hundred to one thousand civilians.

As the war proceeded, the Shi'ites of Iraq saw an opportunity to overthrow Saddam. Most of the men in the Detroit-area mosque joined the Shi'ite resistance at the time of the Gulf War. Their stories of repression at the hands of Saddam are quickly followed by shocking episodes of the American role in the annihilation of their movement for the liberation of Iraq. This was not merely a matter of American indifference to their fate, evidenced by scenes of U.S. troops watching as Iraqi soldiers crushed entire Shi'ite communities. Rather, the American army played an active role in suppressing Shi'ite resistance to Saddam—first by moving U.S. army divisions to block Shi'ite fighters from accessing deserted Iraqi armories, and then by allowing Saddam's forces to fly armed helicopters into revolting Shi'ite villages. Although these American policies were driven by a fear of the unknown and an overarching desire to retain the territorial integrity of Iraq, there can be little doubt that America's refusal to aid the Shi'ites and Kurds after encouraging them to rebel has hurt our image among the people of the Middle East.

The Iraqi Shi'ites in Detroit differ on this current administration's hawkish plans towards Iraq. As first-hand victims of Saddam's repression, they speak with a moral authority lacking in the empty rhetoric of the Pentagon's militaristic neo-conservatives. Yet they do not see this as a clear-cut issue. Whereas some of them support any military campaign that would oust Saddam, others are more cautious, fearing for their own family members in Iraq and wanting to avoid a bloody civil strife similar to the one that broke out between Kurdish factions in northern Iraq between 1994 and 1997. As Iraqi expatriate Ala Fa'ik told the *Detroit News*, "Saddam Hussein is a thug who has abused people for more than twenty years while the whole world was watching.... His regime has hurt all Iraqis—the Chaldeans, the Muslims; he even imprisoned his own brother. But an American invasion would be very hurtful. My preference is to have change happen by the Iraqi people themselves." Recently, the Iraqi-American Conference for a Free and Democratic Iraq met in the Detroit-area where nearly 170,000 Iraqi Chaldeans, Shi'ites, and Kurds reside. The delegates voted against an invasion of Iraq, insisting that change must come from within rather than by decree of a superpower that has always placed its own interests ahead of those of the Iraqi people.

Similar sentiments can be found among Kurds in the Middle East. In Beirut, Lebanon, a Kurdish rights activist who helped defend PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan and who has been to Iraq at least five times in the past few years, tells me that the Kurdish people are not in agreement about the attack on Iraq. Many fear that a post-Saddam central government will strip them of their current autonomy, placing them

once again under Baghdad's thumb. Kurdistan is today relishing in what many have called a "Golden Age"; the prospect of exchanging its new-found freedoms for Richard Perle's vision of a new Middle East is rather unappealing. Additionally, the Kurds remember the last time they challenged Saddam. On March 15, 1988, Iranian forces occupied the town of Halabja in northern Iraq. Kurdish leader Jalal Talabani, who is being courted by the current Bush administration, allied his faction with the fiercely anti-American Islamic Republic of Iran and provided armed Kurds to fight alongside the Iranian army. Saddam's government used the Iranian-Kurdish alliance to label the Kurds a fifth column fighting alongside Iraq's enemy during a time of war. The next morning, Iraqi Migs and Mirages dropped chemical weapons on Halabja, killing five thousand innocent Kurds. The bombing marked the beginning of the Anfal campaign, during which one hundred thousand Kurds were "disappeared" as four thousand Kurdish villages were razed to the ground.

Members of the current American administration cite the Halabja bombing as evidence that Saddam Hussein's Iraq belongs on the exclusive list of "evil" nations. Yet they conveniently ignore the American position at the time of the bombing. Saddam in 1988 was considered a pro-Western ruler who had brought modernity to his country while fighting the backward Islamic regime in Tehran. The progress of Saddam's chemical and biological programs was well known to his American supporters, as was his use of such weapons against Iran. After Saddam's air force used chemical weapons against the Kurds of Halabja, the United States worked hard to prevent the United Nations Sub-Committee on Human Rights from condemning Iraq (in a vote of eleven to eight, the sub-committee decided not to issue any condemnation). The U.S. administration at the time went on to veto a Congressional resolution urging sanctions against Iraq and even approved \$1 billion worth of U.S. foreign aid to Iraq a mere six months after Halabja. On the long list of Middle Eastern dictators and human-rights violators, Saddam was "our S.O.B." It was only when he challenged American oil interests that he fell from grace and earned himself a spot within the so-called Axis of Evil.

Since last November, the Bush administration has been leveling charges against Iraq, preparing the American people for war against a third-world nation handcuffed by sanctions and regularly bombed by U.S. and British warplanes patrolling the no-fly-zones. The national discourse in this country over policy towards Iraq has been led by the right wing of American politics. Republican pundits from administrations past and present have debated the merits of an invasion to the backdrop of the Democratic Party's deafening silence. While the hawks dream of an oil-rich Jeffersonian democracy in Baghdad (and on the board of OPEC), the peaceniks have clamored to find their voice. Thus far, the anti-war position is revolving around questions of possible American casualties, an unwanted occupation of Baghdad,

and the lack of allied support. While these are legitimate considerations, few among the cautious have attempted to make the case that we do not have a moral justification for launching an attack upon Iraq. Interestingly, the moral case was made most succinctly by House majority leader Dick Armey in an interview with journalist Jake Tapper: "I was trying to talk about who we are as a nation. I think we're somebody special. And we're not an aggressor. When somebody is compromising the freedom of somebody else on the globe—as was the case when Saddam Hussein had Iraq invade Kuwait—we ought to be there. But to attack just when we've got a fruitcake running around some country using it as a venue, I don't see a need."

Our European allies have been crying foul as the Bush administration has changed—unilaterally, of course—the definition of our "enemies" from those who kill Americans to those who use terrorism as a tactic to those who harbor terrorists

and most recently to those who pursue weapons of mass destruction. With Osama bin Laden (remember him?) reportedly still alive and at the helm of Al Qaeda, President Bush is pursuing Iraq with an obsession so fervent that it must be called to question.

Republicans from past administrations have challenged George Bush on his unlikely claim that Iraq is an imminent threat that must be pre-empted. Few in number are the experts who believe that Iraq will launch a war against America in the near or distant future. Arguments that Iraq is a threat to regional stability have been lost on Middle Eastern leaders, the likely victims of any Iraqi chemical or biological aggression. From Jordan to Egypt to Saudi Arabia, our friends and allies in the Arab world see our own sprawling and indefinite war as a greater threat to their nations than the tattered Iraqi army. Even the Israeli army's Chief of Staff, General Moshe Yaalon dismissed the possibility of an Iraqi attack on Israel when, responding to a question about Iraq's chemical, biological, or nuclear capabilities, he said, "The Iraqi threat does not keep me awake at night. We are fully capable of defending ourselves ... [Iraq] does not constitute an existential threat to Israel."

Meanwhile, George Bush insists—in between golf strokes—that Saddam is "thumbing his nose" at the world, though nobody else in the world seems to see it that way. The international community is nervously watching as the major hegemonic power of the world cocks its fist and waits for the right moment to launch an unprovoked war against an impoverished third-world country. As our ally Israel continues its decades-old defiance of UN Resolution 487 calling for UN inspections of Israeli nuclear facilities, Republicans

speak with authority about Iraq's outrageous refusal to abide by UN resolutions. Never mind that the resolution ending the Gulf War calls for regional, and not simply Iraqi, disarmament. Never mind that no nation would allow inspectors into its military facilities when it is on the verge of war with a Goliath state, especially when these inspectors have been used as spies in the past. In 1998, UN inspectors defied their mandate and handed over information on Iraq's conventional weapons facilities and presidential palaces to American officials, who proceeded to launch a military offensive against

the Iraqi government using the information. As Operation Desert Fox began, the UN inspectors were evacuated voluntarily from the country in order to guarantee their safety during the bombing campaign. The Iraqi people, predictably, were not so fortunate. The American and British assault of 1998 killed hundreds of Iraqi civilians, although an early Pentagon estimate set the figure at ten thousand. In the

aftermath of the devastating bombings, Iraqi protests that the UN inspectors had acted as spies fell on deaf ears, despite corroborating statements from several inspectors. Iraq retaliated by refusing to readmit the UN inspectors.

For his part, President Bush openly talks about the inherent evil of any nation possessing weapons of mass destruction, despite the fact that we and many of our allies possess large stockpiles of such weapons. Hawkish experts counter that if Saddam had biological or chemical weapons, he would definitely use them against our friends or allies. But in making such statements, they conveniently ignore history. It is important to remember that Saddam has never used weapons of mass destruction without tacit American approval, nor has the United States ever been the target of his aggression. While military experts disagree on his current capabilities, we know that at the start of the Gulf War he did in fact have extensive biological and chemical weapons programs. As the war proceeded, Saddam bombed Tel Aviv and Riyadh, occupied Kuwait City, torched miles of oil fields, and fought off allied forces, all with conventional weapons. He refrained from using his considerable stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons for one simple reason: American leaders made it clear to him that if he did use them, his entire regime would be removed from power. Saddam has never been deeply ideological. Like all dictators, he understands above all else how to stay in power. If it means the continuation of his regime, Saddam Hussein will avoid picking fights with trigger-happy cowboys. After all, does anyone truly believe that Iraq will attack us if we do not first attack Iraq? Even Madeleine Albright, hardly a pacifist, recently noted that the decade-long containment of

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Iraq and Saddam Hussein's ambitions has been successful. "Today, American and British planes enforce no-flight zones over 40 percent of [Saddam Hussein's] country and a maritime force prevents weapons from reaching Iraq by sea. Saddam Hussein's military is far weaker than it was a decade ago. And he must surely be aware that if he ever again tries to attack another country he will be obliterated." Indeed, the Iraqi army today is a shell of what it once was, unable to enter large parts of Iraq proper much less launch a world war. But even during the Gulf War, when Saddam's army was as strong as it had ever been, Iraqi soldiers regularly surrendered to European journalists and TV crews, mistaking them for the American army.

Nevertheless, bomb-dropping hawks continue to insist that Iraq is an imminent threat to America as flag-waving patriots have used Saddam's past brutality to claim our own moral superiority in this upcoming battle. Yet the post-war sanctions sustained with American pressure have resulted in death tolls so vast that they far outnumber any massacres committed by Saddam's forces. According to the United Nations, the sanctions have been responsible for the death of 1.5 million Iraqis. Conservative pundits argue that the deaths have been caused by the Iraqi government which has hoarded oil revenues. But it should be noted that the majority of these deaths came before the oil-for-food program allowed Iraq to sell oil on the worldwide market. Additionally, before the sanctions came into effect, the Iraqi people had one of the highest living standards in the third world and a medical infrastructure that was the envy of many developing nations. The post-war thwarting of Iraq has impacted children most severely: UNICEF estimates that 500,000 Iraqi children below the age of five have died as a result of restrictions placed by the sanctions.

In a 1996 interview with Madeleine Albright, *60 Minutes* reporter Lesley Stahl questioned the Secretary of State on sanctions against Iraq: "We have heard that a half million children have died. I mean, that's more children than died in Hiroshima. Is the price worth it?" Albright's response, in which she did not deny that these deaths were indeed caused by the sanctions, is still quoted in the Arab world as evidence of the true face of America: "I think this is a very hard choice, but the price—we think the price is worth it."

Today, American officials openly talk about a "war of liberation" for Iraq while defending Vladimir Putin's genocidal campaign in Chechnya and Ariel Sharon's brutal offensive in the West Bank. Although the fear of creating a double standard or the weight of our own history is not reason enough to oppose a war on Iraq, the precedent of unprovoked war is. While the Bush administration has pressured the United Nations and various allies into submission on the question of a stiffer policy towards Iraq, the Pentagon's war designs remain troubling. The *Christian Science Monitor* recently remarked that in "pressing his case against Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein, [George Bush] is asking the world to alter

the founding principles of the post-World War II international order.... Mr. Bush is challenging United Nations rules on sovereignty and the acceptable use of force that have underpinned global relations for three generations." Echoing these concerns, a University of Virginia professor wrote for the *Washington Post*: "One common philosophical argument for democracy is that democratic regimes are particularly unlikely to start wars. Our nation now finds itself on the verge of initiating war against another sovereign nation. We have not been attacked by Iraq, and we have thus far failed to produce convincing evidence that Iraq has aided, or plans to aid, those who have attacked us. If we go to war, we will be the initiators of aggression." Dr. Talbot Brewer went on to warn that on the question of waging war, America may no longer function as a genuine democracy.

There is much more at stake in a U.S.-launched war against Iraq than the administration hawks would lead us to believe. Our moral compass as a nation must guide us through these difficult times to ensure that we remain true to our ideals, which have never been represented by the worldview of neo-conservatism. If we allow this President to challenge sovereign nations and foreign governments at will, we will have made him the moral arbiter of the world. Given such a mandate, George Bush—with sword, pistol, and Franklin Graham at his side—would launch America into a war the consequences of which may not be felt for decades. □

NONKILLING GLOBAL POLITICAL SCIENCE



IS A NONKILLING SOCIETY POSSIBLE?

Philosophy begins when someone asks a general question and so does science.

— Bertrand Russell

An astonishing achievement.

— John D. Montgomery
Professor Emeritus,
Harvard University

NONKILLING GLOBAL POLITICAL SCIENCE

by Glenn D. Paige

Introduction by James A. Robinson

I hope this book receives wide distribution.

— James MacGregor Burns
Past President, APSA

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Trapped by the USA

Lev Grinberg

When the United States attacks Iraq, Israel will be the country most immediately placed under direct threat, not the USA. Already, the Israeli minister of security has informed Israeli citizens that, in case of war, "we are expected to be the victims." Israeli newspapers report plans to evacuate the metropolitan area of Tel Aviv, and to transform parks and stadiums into temporary mass graves.

Yet, Israelis seem unable to express their vital interest against a war with Iraq. Why have Israelis adopted a passive mood of "expected catastrophe"? Why do many Israelis believe that the violent policies the United States is practicing in the Middle East will actually reduce the dangers to Israel in the future, instead of increase them? The answer lies in an examination of Israel's thirty-five year long "special relationship" with the United States.

1967

Following the end of the 1967 War (commonly known as the Six Day War), the Israeli government decided to knock down the barriers separating Eastern Jerusalem from the rest of Jerusalem and to annex the eastern Palestinian neighborhoods. Expecting immediate American pressure to withdraw from the conquered territories, the government rushed in and took control. However, the pressure never came. The expectation for U.S. pressure was based on past experience: In 1956 the United States had forced Israel to withdraw from the Sinai Desert back to the international border after only three months. In 1967, though, surprisingly, no such demand was made. On the contrary—the Americans allowed Israel to start a construction thrust, building neighborhoods in Eastern Jerusalem, settlements

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An Israeli girl holding her baby doll waits to get a gas mask at the gas mask distribution center in Jerusalem.

Why do many Israelis believe that the violent policies the United States is practicing in the Middle East will actually reduce the dangers to Israel in the future, instead of increase them?

in the West Bank, in Sinai, and in the Golan Heights. Not only was there no pressure to withdraw, but Israel began receiving a generous three billion dollars yearly from the U.S. government.

The difference between 1956 and 1967 was the political context. In 1956 Israel attacked Egypt in cooperation with the UK and France, who were trying to get the Suez Canal back under their control. The United States and the USSR, World War II victors, were interested in further blocking the declining empires of Great Britain and France, while encouraging the independence of the colonial world, so they forced Israel to withdraw. However the situation in 1967 was completely different: the old colonial powers had already vanished, and now the United States and USSR were deeply invested in a struggle over imperial domination of the world, commonly known as the Cold War. New independent governments in Egypt and Syria were aided and

supported by the USSR, encouraging the United States to support and boost the military power of Israel as its Middle Eastern wedge against the growing Russian influence.

Until 1967 the Israeli public felt dangerously unprotected, its very existence threatened: The deep conflict over confiscated lands with the Palestinian people—who were living in misery in refugee camps surrounding Israel's borders—kept the whole region unstable. A fear of total destruction was easily transferred from the Nazi's attempt to slaughter all Jews in Europe to the new threat posed to Israel by the Arab nations. This pathological transfer prevented Israel from seeing the real threats and reasons for the Arab-Israeli conflict and led Israel to develop atomic capacities at the beginning of the 1960s.

Israel's quick success in the 1967 war (also called for that reason the "Six Day War") and the unexpected development of a "special relationship" with the United States combined dangerously with Israel's ingrained pathological fears to produce a new and dangerous approach to the ongoing conflict. Religious Israelis interpreted the apparently miraculous feat of winning a war in six days and simultaneously gaining a superpower as a close ally in messianic terms, seeing the victory as divine interference in history. These messianic beliefs in turn led them to start a religion-driven settlement of the whole Promised Land in the Occupied Territories. Meanwhile, secular Israelis interpreted the unexpected success in terms of pure military force and developed a shallow, pervasively militaristic outlook that legitimated military rule over the Palestinians, and illegal settlement on their lands. For both religious and secular Israelis, the enemy was reinvented as a total evil with no legitimate demands, striving for nothing short of the complete destruction of Israel—an enemy who could only be stopped by full use of military power. With the backing of the United States, Israel now felt it had that power. In effect, Israel's strategic weakness in the Middle East, as one small nation facing the whole Arab world, had been transformed by the events of 1967 into an aggressive stance favoring the uncontrolled use of power backed by the United States.

This special relationship with the United States, with its resulting policy of military aggression, would become a historical disaster for the State of Israel. It created in the minds of Israeli leaders an illusion of superpower strength, which to this day prevents it from making genuine offers of peace to its Arab neighbors. "If we are so powerful," goes the thinking, "why should we compromise?" This aggressive and horribly damaging stance was best expressed by former Minister of Security Moshe Dayan, when he argued that it is

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"better to have [control of] Sharm-el-Sheikh [Sinai Peninsula] without peace, than having peace without Sharm-el-Sheikh."

The first disastrous consequence of the "pure military force" policy came in the 1970s, in the events leading up to and following the Yom Kippur War. In 1971, when Egyptian President Anwar Sadat proposed a "Peace for Land" agreement with Israel (via Gunar Jarring, the UN mediator), the Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir arrogantly rejected him. Meir was following Moshe Dayan's strategy,

risking peace to hold out for more; she felt confident in that position because of the special relationship. When war came, in the Yom Kippur attack of 1973, the United States did send an "aerial arms train" to Israel, but that did not prevent the war, nor did it save the lives of the 2,700 Israeli soldiers who died fighting it. And just six years later, Menachem Begin signed the exact same agreement with Sadat that Meir had rejected in 1971. The policy of pure

military force, built on the special relationship, gained nothing but Israeli suffering.

American Interest

Under the aegis of the special relationship, Israel has become the spearhead of the American presence in the Middle East, which has carried with it the dear price of continuing conflict. As usual in dependency situations, the benefits have all gone to the most powerful—in this case, the United States—while the dependent—Israel—has paid the blood price. The United States is interested in a strong Israel ready to suffer casualties in constant wars, and apparently Israel is constantly volunteering to do so, convinced it is in its own best interest. The Israeli militaristic and messianic outlooks rationalize this abnormal dependency; joined with the Holocaust's trauma, the special relationship is sustained by parliament after parliament.

The United States sways Israeli politics according to its interests in the region. At times the United States encourages the messianic and militaristic forces by increasing military support, thus advancing aggressive policies, while at other times it encourages the more moderate, peaceful parties in Israel, promoting compromise. The latter was the case in 1977 when—despite the election of a Likud government—a peace movement appeared for the first time. The United States encouraged peace with Egypt because it was reeling from an oil crisis, and so jumped when Sadat cleverly decided to trade USSR sponsorship for U.S. sponsorship. With an Arab nation now within its political reach, the United States wanted to encourage its other client nation in the area, Israel, to make peace. Peace Now's

success in mobilizing tens of thousands onto the Israeli street worked only after the belief became widespread that President Carter would hinge continued U.S. support of Israel on a compromise with Sadat, and the Israeli Prime Minister hesitated.

The influence of U.S. policies on Israeli internal politics was also felt when President Reagan pressured Israel to use restraint in the invasion of Lebanon, when masses went to the streets against that war. However, the clearest effect of U.S. policies took place after the Gulf War, when the United States was interested in a "new order" in the Middle East. President George Bush Sr. pressured the obstinate Israeli PM Yitzhak Shamir by canceling a \$10 billion loan as "punishment" for Shamir's refusal to halt settlement-building in the Occupied Territories. 1992 was an Israeli elections year. The peace camp won the elections and gathered unprecedented power after promising a compromise with the Palestinians and withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza.

The present developments in internal Israeli politics, namely the decline of the Israeli peace camp, should also be viewed in the context of the Israel-U.S. special relations. The greatest blow to the peace camp's legitimacy was struck by President Clinton, when, after years of dedicated support for peace efforts, at the end of his tenure, he lost his patience and blamed Arafat for the failure of the Camp

David negotiations. Clinton convened the Camp David Summit despite the warnings of all experts that the summit was doomed to fail. Since the president of the United States took such an explicit stand against the Palestinian leadership, the peace camp started to crumble, and Barak went on to one of the most humiliating electoral defeats in Israeli history.

Israel's continued dependency on U.S. support has, on the one hand, exaggerated Israel's belief that it can achieve all its interests through military action, and, on the other hand, prevented it from seeing what its interests really are, mainly that of living in peace with its neighbors. The point is not that Israel is not threatened by its Arab neighbors, nor that the United States has not helped Israel economically and militarily, but that the very nature of the "special relationship" with the United States constantly creates additional and unnecessary dangers for Israel. In particular, Israel's power against the Palestinians and its Arab neighbors is so disproportional, because it is backed by the United States, that it has no need to compromise or restrain its power.

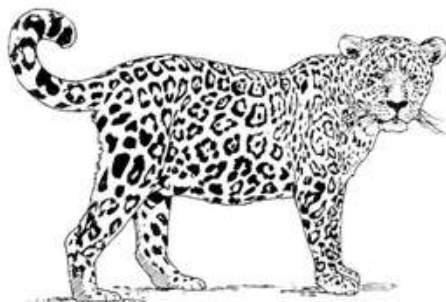
War with Iraq

On the eve of the U.S. attack on Iraq, Israel has adopted an attitude of fatalistic paralysis; the feeling is that we are unable to stop the train that will hit us. The leaking of plans for mass evacuation and provisional cemeteries is

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obviously an over-reaction, most likely a part of this country's ongoing Holocaust trauma and resulting existential paranoia, trickling down the generations. President Bush's current policy does, however, bring Israel closer to real dangers than ever before, and in double pace. Yet, it is currently impossible to have any form of meaningful public debate on the Iraq war in Israel, since the Israeli government depends on the United States and cannot object, and the majority of its citizens are swept up in the power-craze of having unconditional U.S. support.

I have previously argued ("the BuSharon Global War") that Bush decided to support Sharon's goal of destroying the Palestinian Authority and neutralizing Arafat only at the beginning of December 2001, when he had already finished the war in Afghanistan and was starting to plan the war against Iraq. Why then? It was only at that moment that it became clear that the Arab countries would not support a U.S. attack on Iraq and that Bush would need Sharon. In order to get Israel's full cooperation, he backed Sharon's aggressive policies and discourse, comparing Arafat to Bin Laden, the Fatah to the Taliban, and Hamas to al-Qaeda.

After Sharon received full backing from Bush for canceling the Oslo agreements, disbanding the Palestinian Authority, re-conquering the Gaza strip, de-legitimizing Arafat, and turning the Palestinian cities to no more than large prisons, how could he now reject cooperating with U.S. policies toward Iraq? The Israeli government is the only government in the world that unconditionally stands by the Bush administration in attacking Iraq, though her civilians are the only ones outside of Iraq expected to be hurt by this war. Ariel Sharon proudly declared that "Israel is the best prepared nation in the world for a chemical or biological attack" (*Yediot Aharonot*, September 6, 2002). What he does not add is that its civilians are the only ones in the world under real threat of being *hit* by chemical and biological weapons.

There is no doubt that if the Iraqi people suffer serious damage from the United States, the majority of Arab nations will largely view using unconventional weapons on Israel as legitimate. There is also no doubt that if Israel were to be attacked with chemical or biological missiles, the majority of the Israeli public would support a nuclear strike on Iraq (current polls already show this tendency). Sharon will certainly take the chance to mass-deport rebellious Palestinians (who he will claim are supporting Iraq), a move that the current IDF chief of staff recently hinted at when he defined the Palestinians as a "cancer," offering "amputation" as a possible solution (*Haaretz*, August 31,

2002). The consequences of an American strike on Iraq would undoubtedly be a disaster to the entire Middle East, at the very least.

Even the best scenario for the war is not optimal from the Israeli point of view. According to Professor Moshe Maoz (writing in *Haaretz*, September 23, 2002), if the United States succeeds in effectively occupying Iraq and installing a puppet government (given the fact that there is no serious opposition party as there was in Afghanistan), U.S. military forces will need to stay to protect the new pro-American government, and a guerilla war will start, resembling Vietnam. Attacks against Israel, the easily-targeted U.S. ally, will surely be part of that war, and the expected erosion of the United States' image in the Middle East will damage Israel's position and its chances to negotiate a peaceful retreat from the occupied lands. The Lebanon precedent of unilateral withdrawal will remain the only option, with all its dangers of continued conflict.

There is no doubt that the threat of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East must be dismantled. A war, however, would have the opposite effect, because it would be the most direct incentive and motivator for Iraq and Israel to use their non-conventional capacities. If the United States wins such a war, from a military point of view, it will motivate Arab states to develop atomic weapons in order to balance the American-Israeli threat, or it could push terrorist groups to buy them from corrupt regimes for striking at that threat. The dynamics of violence always lead to more violence. The solution must be a comprehensive peace initiative, such as the very positive one drafted by the Arab League on March 2002 that got buried under the Israeli "Defensive Wall" Operation in April. Such a comprehensive agreement must include a mutual agreement to dismantle non-conventional weapons, lowering the regional balance of power. All else is bound to speed up the war drums.

Any reasonable Israeli must object to a war that will endanger him and his family and spell disaster for the future of his country. But we are stuck in the same thirty-five-year-old problem: Messianic-nationalists and a war-craving military elite run our government, and they are currently supported and encouraged by the extremist conservatives of the Bush administration. A lethal coalition. We are captives of the United States, unable to say No. The United States has invested large funds and prestige in Israel, and now it wants to get some profit back. We must not go along, we must stand against this war, as independent Israeli citizens. We have to say: No thank you, Mr. President! □

Messianic-nationalists and a war-craving military elite run our government, and they are currently supported and encouraged by the extremist conservatives of the Bush administration.

Manufacturing Anti-Semites

Uri Avnery

The first Israeli victim of Saddam Hussein is a Zionist myth on which we were brought up. The myth tells us that Israel is a haven for all the Jews in the world. In all the other countries, we are told, Jews live in perpetual fear that a cruel persecutor will arise, as happened in Germany. Israel is the safe haven, to which Jews can escape in times of danger. Indeed, this was the purpose of Israel's founding fathers when they established the state.

Now Saddam comes along and proves the opposite. All over the world, Jews live in safety; they are threatened by annihilation in only one place on the planet: Israel. Here national parks are being prepared for use as mass graves, here (pathetic) measures against biological and chemical weapons are being prepared. Many people are already planning to escape to the communities in the Diaspora. End of a myth.

Another Zionist myth died even before that: The Diaspora, so we learned in our youth, creates anti-Semitism. Everywhere the Jews are a minority, and a minority inevitably attracts the hatred of the majority. Only when the Jews gather in the land of their forefathers and constitute the majority there, we learned, will anti-Semitism disappear throughout the world. Thus spoke Herzl, the founder of modern Zionism.

Nowadays this myth, too, is giving up its blessed soul. Whatever good the existence of the State of Israel may or may not have done, the current government of Israel is quickly undoing. The Sharon government is a giant laboratory for the growing of the anti-Semitism virus. It exports it to the whole world. Anti-Semitic organizations, which for many years vegetated on the margins of society, rejected and despised, are suddenly growing and flowering. Anti-Semitism, which had hidden itself in shame since World

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Many good people, who feel no hatred at all towards the Jews but who detest the persecution of Palestinians, are now called anti-Semites.

War II, is now riding on a great wave of opposition to Sharon's policy of oppression.

Sharon's propaganda agents are pouring oil on the flames by accusing all critics of his policy of being anti-Semites. Many good people, who feel no hatred at all towards the Jews but who detest the persecution of Palestinians, are now called anti-Semites. Thus the sting is taken out of this word, giving it something approaching respectability.

The practical upshot: not only is the State of Israel not protecting Jews from anti-Semitism, but—on the contrary—its government is manufacturing and exporting the anti-Semitism

that threatens Jews around the world.

For many years, Israel enjoyed the sympathy of most people. It was seen as the state of Holocaust survivors, a small and courageous country defending itself against the repeated assaults of murderous Arabs. Slowly, this image has been replaced by another: a cruel, brutal, and colonizing state, oppressing a small and helpless people. The persecuted has become the persecutor; David has turned into Goliath.

We Israelis, living in a bubble of self-delusion, find it hard to imagine how the world sees us. In many countries, television and newspapers publish daily pictures of Palestinian children throwing stones at monstrous tanks, soldiers harassing women at checkpoints, despairing old men sitting on the ruins of their demolished homes, soldiers taking aim and shooting children. These soldiers do not look like human beings in uniform—the world does not see “the neighbor's son” most Israelis see. These soldiers look like robots without faces, armed to the teeth, heads hidden by helmets, bullet-proof vests changing their proportions. People who have seen these photos dozens and hundreds of times start to see the whole State of Israel in this image.

For Jews, this creates a dangerous, vicious circle. Sharon's actions create repulsion and opposition throughout the world. These actions reinforce anti-Semitism. Faced with this danger, Jewish organizations are pushed into defending Israel and giving it unqualified support. This support enables the anti-Semites to attack not only the government of Israel, or the State of Israel as a whole, but local Jews, too. And so on.

Anti-Semites of all stripes and hues are, of course, repulsive. They will vilify Jews whatever we do. Anti-Semitism, like other forms of racism, is never justified. But that is not the point. The point is that the actions of the Sharon government, and the unqualified support given to this government by the Jewish establishment, has enabled these hard-core anti-Semites to win over well-meaning people who are repelled by Sharon's actions.

The Israeli government pretends to speak for all Jews around the world, yet no attempt has been made by mainstream Jewish organizations to reject this claim. This may turn out to be a terrible mistake.

In Europe, Jews already feel the pressure to reject Sharon. But in the United States, Jews still feel supremely self-confident. In Europe, Jews have learned over the centuries that it is not wise to be too conspicuous and to display their wealth and influence. But in America, the very opposite is happening: the Jewish establishment is practically straining to prove that it controls the country.

Every few years, the Jewish lobby "eliminates" an American politician who does not support the Israeli government unconditionally. This is not done secretly, behind the scenes, but as a public "execution." Just now the Jewish establishment rallied against the black congresswoman Cynthia McKinney, a young, active, intelligent, and very sympathetic woman. She had dared to criticize the Sharon government, to support the Palestinian cause, and (worst of all from the Jewish establishment's standpoint) she had gained the support of Israeli and Jewish peace groups. The Jewish establishment found a counter-candidate, a practically unknown black woman, injected huge sums into the campaign, and defeated Cynthia.

All this happened in the open, with fanfare, to make a public example of McKinney—so that every senator and congressperson would know that criticizing Sharon is tantamount to political suicide. Not content with this flexing of power, the pro-Israel lobby—which consists of Jews and extreme right-wing Christian fundamentalists—is now pushing the Bush administration to start a war in Iraq. This, too, openly and in full view of the American public. Dozens of articles in the important newspapers point out the Jewish pro-war influence as a plain political fact.

Of course, Jews have a right, just like every other citizen in the United States, to raise their voice in the political arena. But, as the ancients remind us, "pride comes before the fall." The shameless flaunting of Jewish power, the buying of

representatives and senators, the immense pressure put on the media, is counterproductive in the long run. It is the ghetto mentality turned upside down; instead of timidity, arrogance.

What will happen if the war the pro-Israel lobby is advocating ends in failure? If it has unexpected negative results and many young Americans die? If the American public turns against it, as happened during the Vietnam War?

What will happen when Sharon's policies bring about revolution in the Arab world, as they will if he is allowed to continue on his current path? As long as the Jewish establishment can convince the American public that the interests of Israel and the United States are identical (an idiotic notion) this will not arouse anger, but when the day comes—and it will come—when the two countries' interests are seen as diverging, what will be the reaction then?

One can easily imagine a whispering campaign starting: "The Jews have pushed us into this," "The Jews support Israel more than they support America," and, finally, "The Jews control our country."

Of course, the special political culture of the United States encourages the rise of special interest groups—but that was also true in Spain of the Golden Age and in the Weimar Republic in Germany. History does not have to repeat itself, but neither should one disregard its lessons. Just because Jews can constitute a special interest group does not mean that creating a disproportionate influence over Congress and the White House is the best strategy for enhancing the future of the Jewish people.

There are people in Israel who secretly wish for the victory of anti-Semitism everywhere. That would confirm another Zionist myth on which we were brought up: that Jews will not be able to live anywhere but in Israel, because anti-Semitism is bound to triumph everywhere. But the United States is not France or Argentina; it plays a critical role in the Middle East. Israel's national security, as established by all Israeli governments since Ben-Gurion, is based on total support from the United States—military, political, and economic.

If I were asked for advice, I would counsel Jewish communities throughout the world as follows: break out of the vicious circle. Disarm anti-Semites by breaking the habit of automatically identifying with everything the Israeli government does. Let your conscience speak out. Return to the traditional Jewish values of "That which is altogether just shalt thou follow!" (Deut. 16:20) and "Seek peace and pursue it!" (Psal. 4: 14). Identify yourselves with the Other Israel, which is struggling to uphold these values at home.

All over the world, new Jewish groups that follow this way are multiplying. They break yet another myth, that the duty of Jews everywhere is to subordinate themselves to the edicts of the current Israeli government. They know that the true duty of Jews worldwide is to cling fast to Jewish values. □

High School in Jerusalem

Noah Hertz-Bunzl



Not long ago two Israeli generals in full uniform came to address my high school class. The purpose of their visit was to assign us tasks for handing out medicines to Jerusalem residents in case of biological attack. We were shown how to dispense and administer anti-anthrax medicines, and how to address crowds in Arabic and Russian, as well as Hebrew. They explained that they would have many other, more important tasks to handle at such a time, and that this was one of our responsibilities to the state.

This is no joke. This is a typical day for me at school in Jerusalem. Politics are an integral aspect of daily life here, and education is no exception.

High school in Jerusalem is, in short, far different from my high school in Princeton, New Jersey, where I lived until

I went to live in Israel for a year. I do believe Zionism is valuable. It breeds feelings of collectivity and community that are so impossible to find in our modernized, globalized world—the knowledge that people are behind me, and in front of me, and I know that we are standing together, at least in some nominal way. But I worry that the kind of Zionism that brings generals to school goes beyond building community to promoting xenophobic mistrust. I worry that inherent in the unity is racist and bigoted attitudes towards the Other, and that the inclusion I feel is not supportable without the exclusion of the Other.

One morning recently we assembled at school to hear a lecture by *Ha'aretz* newspaper correspondent, Amira Hass, who lives in Ramallah. She described, in detail, daily life for Palestinians in the Territories, and showed us the casings of grenades and tear gas containers she had found in her neighborhood. The room filled with screaming and shouting. Just as Hass began to describe the Israeli media's conformity to the military's version of events, she was interrupted by a girl

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ISRAEL

in the front row who shouted, "You'd feel different if your son was serving!" and went on to talk about the deaths of Israeli soldiers. When we broke into discussion, a junior who lives far into the West Bank asked why she should have to lie on the floor on the way to and from school, so as not to be hit by stones. This time it was Amira Hass's turn to shout: "Tell me, do you have water in the summer?" she asked, "because the villages surrounding your settlement don't." The two became embroiled in a shouting match about Israeli water and electricity lines, and how they "incidentally" only reach Jewish communities.

When a boy, a senior, got up to talk about the war of 1948 and why the Arabs shoulder the responsibility for their own miserable fate, a history teacher interrupted, "We all know the history—don't waste our time." Another senior, a recent immigrant from South Africa, dignified looking with a long goatee, stood up to talk about apartheid; you can imagine the crowd's reaction—the room descended into chaos. Haas agreed with him, though, noting the slow and strategic impoverishment of the Arab communities. As she left, she received boos from the crowd, and shouts accusing her of working against the interests of the state.

Politics is immersed in all levels of education. Even the curriculum can be political to the point of being ridiculously xenophobic. For every unit one covers in history, for example, one has to additionally cover the relationship between

that unit and the Jews. Seniors spend the entire year exclusively studying the Holocaust. By Ministry of Education law, all reports on any subject whatsoever must have at least a quarter of their length reserved for covering the Jewish connection. This can be troublesome to the point of inanity, as I learned the hard way writing a paper on medieval Christian sects, and spending most of our time in English class analyzing whether Jay Gatsby was an anti-Semite.

When we have class political discussions, which happen frequently, the attitudes can be very distressing. There are many explanations for the mild insensitivity and even blatant racism that I see, but sometimes I don't even know how to respond. When five Palestinian children died in Gaza by running into an Israeli bomb, and the general reaction by my fellow classmates was, "What does it matter, they will grow up to be terrorists anyway?" I didn't know how to respond. When a boy in my class recently burst into tears, screaming "Arafat is Hitler, Arafat is Hitler, and everybody is afraid to say it!" I didn't know how to respond. I don't know how to live a Zionism that is not limited by this "us versus them" mentality.

Jerusalem is a world away from Princeton, New Jersey. Despite all of the chaos, the interaction and community that I find here is compelling. Yet it's not exactly the Zionist dream I had expected. There is so much here to love, but so much that needs to change before this land sees peace. □

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The Violence of Curfew

Sam Bahour

"Oh God, please tell Sharon to end the curfew by this Saturday so I can go to school."

This is how my secular, eight-year-old daughter, Areen, put herself to sleep for two weeks prior to the opening of the new school year. Areen, like so many others here, has turned to the divine powers to intervene in ending the Israeli military curfew that has been imposed on Palestinian cities, villages, and refugee camps in the West Bank for the last six months. As global diplomats slowly deliberate about how to proceed after September 11 and the failure of the Oslo Peace Accords, Israel is systematically destroying Palestinian society, and with it, any hopes for a future reconciliation between the two peoples. What's equally disturbing is that this destruction is sanctioned by Israeli judicial and political institutions and is happening in full view of the world community.

The military invasion of Palestinian-controlled areas, the F-16's and the sixty-ton Merkava battle tanks that have rampaged Palestinian cities for two years now, the thousands of Palestinian civilians and some elected officials who have been imprisoned without charge or trial, the acres of olive groves that have been bulldozed, the Israeli settlements that have never, ever ceased expanding—these are the most visible aspects of Israel's attempt to destroy the infrastructure of Palestinian society. But few people realize that the policy, euphemistically known as "curfew," is every bit as destructive to the fabric of society as the tanks rumbling through our streets. By forcing at gunpoint, tank, and barrel two million Palestinians to remain in their homes, the Israeli military is, in effect, criminalizing an entire population.

Some who attempt to justify Israeli Occupation will say curfew is much less brutal than other means the Israeli army regularly uses, and thus should not be spoken about in such harsh terms. For the sake of argument, let me explain in personal terms, especially to my Israeli neighbors, what curfew does to individuals, families, businesses, and schools. I will let each reader reach their own conclusions about what the world should expect from Palestinians and Palestinian refugees in the coming years.

Sam Bahour lives in Al-Bireh, the West Bank, and can be reached at sbahour@palnet.com. He is co-author of Homeland: Oral Histories of Palestine and Palestinians (1994).



Total Lockdown

The Israeli military curfew is not the kind of limited curfew sometimes applied to minors in American cities. When Israel applies a curfew upon Palestinians it is total, comprehensive, and unannounced: businesses close, schools are dismissed, government offices lock their doors, pharmacies shut down, and medical services are, for all intents and purposes, inaccessible to the public. This total lockdown is accomplished by Israeli jeeps, tanks, and armored personnel carriers roaming the narrow Palestinian streets with loud speakers notifying all, in an awful Arabic accent, to go home

*Let me explain in personal terms ...
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or risk being arrested or shot. This announcement is regularly accompanied by rapid machine gun fire in the air and the detonation of tear gas canisters and stun grenades in the open markets—to make sure people get the message. If the closure takes place in midday, within a maximum of sixty minutes the city becomes a ghost town. If the closure is announced during early morning hours (5–7 AM), as has increasingly been the case, the city never wakes up.

After a day, or two, or three—or in the case of Nablus, eighty-eight—of being locked inside the house continuously for twenty-four hours, one's nerves begin to fray. With 50 percent of Palestinians living in households averaging seven persons, 91 percent of which are overcrowded (i.e. more than one person per room—see www.pcb.org) parents and children alike become quickly agitated. Physically, the lack of exercise starts to set in and muscles become stiff. Even when curfew is lifted for a few hours one does not have time to think about anything but stockpiling food for the next lockdown and rushing to work in an attempt to do a week's worth of tasks in four to six hours. I, personally, have two slipped discs that require me to regularly walk for exercise.

PALESTINE

For five months, we have been imprisoned every evening by Israeli curfew, so walking the streets of Ramallah, absorbing the summer's cool night breeze, is condemned to our memories. The physical price I pay is living with a continuous electric current that flares down the back of both of my legs and awaking many nights to painful leg cramps. My two girls, Areen and Nadine (two years old), are starting to show the lack of exercise in their physical build. My wife, Abeer, miraculously stays fit holding together our family life—keeping up with the household chores, continuously playing with our girls to keep their attention off the occasional tank or jeep rumbling down our street, and rationing our supplies just in case the intermittent lifting of the curfew is cancelled.

After nearly two years of continuous Israeli destruction, the Palestinian economy is in a severe recession, and thousands of families are not able to stockpile enough basic food stuffs to get them through until the next lifting of the curfew. Per capita income declined by 12 percent for the year 2000, and by a *further* 19 percent in the year 2001. The share of the Palestinian population now living below the poverty line (U.S. \$2 per person per day) is currently estimated at 45–50 percent (www.worldbank.org)! These startling numbers don't faze Israeli leaders, who continue to send their soldiers to wreak havoc on our lives. Israelis—soldiers and citizens alike—have come to the ludicrous belief that the more Palestinians are battered, the more Israeli cities and civilians will be safe. It is a sad state of mind, and similar in logic to the belief that bombing Iraq will promote U.S. interests at home and abroad.

Going Out of Business

From a business perspective the situation is extremely bleak. Although we go through the motions of being employed when curfew is lifted, deep down we know better than to believe we can sustain this pace for much longer. The great majority of companies have lost the ability to keep employees onboard. The significant businesses that remain active in the economy do so out of a duty to their country and their employees, but with a progressively diminishing hope that the end of Occupation is near. For those lucky enough to still have a job, the majority are having curfew days deducted from their salaries. This deduction means that workers are receiving paychecks cut by 10–50 percent, depending on the month.

An increasing number of Palestinians who have the ability to do so have chosen, or were forced, to leave Palestine in search of employment elsewhere. In the beginning of the intifada, this was limited to individuals; today entire companies are contemplating taking their operations elsewhere. In reality, the Israeli right-wing dream of the “transfer” of Palestinians out of Palestine has already begun, silently and voluntarily—provoked by two years of Israeli aggression.

For those of us remaining home, the natural aspiration

of career-building has been replaced by a slow recognition that we are rapidly falling behind in our professions and may never be able to get back on track—a daunting personal realization, especially for those that have the luxury to leave.

Interestingly, an Israeli friend recently reported that waves of Israelis are also leaving Israel. Large numbers of prominent Israeli families have sent their children abroad to study, leaving behind diminishing world-class Israeli universities. Israeli businesses, partly due to the intifada and partly due to the declining global markets, are relocating abroad. Sharon's solution to this emigration from Israel is not to end the Occupation and put the region back on a path of peace, but rather, to import Jewish—or nearly Jewish—immigrants from Russia, Ethiopia, Argentina, New York, Eastern Europe, and elsewhere.

Back to School?

For students, the nerve-racking reality that schools and universities will be disrupted for yet another year is inexplicable. As my daughter's prayer illustrates, even third-graders are feeling the damage caused by the disruption of the educational system. Throughout thirty-six years of Israeli Occupation, Palestinians prided themselves on having one asset that not even the harshest policies of the Occupation could take away—their minds. Traditionally, education was second only to family in Palestinian life. Universities managed to hold classes and graduate students throughout many years of crisis. Daycares, elementary schools, and grade schools never faced conditions that caused prolonged closures; but today, with the calm but insidious Israeli policy of curfew, all of this has changed.

Curfews are accompanied by closures, which means that Israeli military roadblocks and checkpoints are erected to separate Palestinian cities and villages from each other. These closures inevitably impede many students from getting to school or university. Israeli Caterpillar bulldozers have actually dug up roads leading in and out of some villages, leaving mounds of dirt that block access in or out. These villages are basically open-air prisons. It is commonly felt in Palestine that an entire generation has been sentenced by Sharon to illiteracy or, at best, ignorance.

The world community watched closely this fall when the Palestinian school year was about to commence, to see if Israel would lift its five-month curfew to allow Palestinian children to return to their classrooms. The curfew was indeed lifted, from 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM, but the freedom was short-lived.

On the fifth day of school, our daughter Areen anxiously put on her school uniform and ate breakfast. For her, this was an important day because the textbooks that were delayed the first days of school (because of military closures and travel restrictions) were supposed to arrive and be distributed to the students. Areen couldn't wait for her English reading book. At 7:30 AM we headed to school. At

7:45 AM and with a big kiss, I dropped Areen off at the Friends Girls School and headed to an 8:00 AM business meeting at my office. As I usually do in business meetings I turned off my mobile phone in order not to be disturbed. I will not turn it off again.

At 9:15 AM we were interrupted with news that Israeli tanks and jeeps had entered the city center and were announcing that the cities of Ramallah and Al-Bireh were under total military curfew. Israeli jeeps rumbled through the streets announcing that anyone caught in public would be arrested. By the time I turned on my phone to call my wife, three other people in my meeting were already on their mobile phones assessing the situation. Abeer, who was at home with our two-year-old daughter, was frantic. She had been trying to call me after seeing and hearing an Israeli armored personnel carrier on our street announcing the closure. Was Areen in danger? Who should go pick her up from school? How could we go out, given the curfew and Israeli military vehicles in the streets? Has the school administration advised the students of the situation? How was Areen, who is very emotionally sensitive, reacting? Is school still in session? These and a hundred other questions rush through your mind in such predicaments.

Abeer turned on Israeli radio and heard the Israeli plan: the Israeli military had put Ramallah under full curfew starting at 9:00 AM, and would only lift the curfew from 1:00–3:00 PM to allow parents to leave their workplaces and take their children home.

After getting through to the Friends Girls School's hotline, we were assured that the gates of the school had been secured and that the school day would continue as scheduled. Although still a little nervous, we trusted the school administration and knew that if they felt the children were in any immediate danger they would advise us.

At 1:45 PM we closed our office and everyone headed out to pick up their children. I went home instead to pick up Nadine, Areen's little sister. When we had left the house that morning, Nadine asked me to promise to take her with me to get Areen from school. I'll be damned if I'm going to let an illegal foreign military occupation make me break a promise to my daughters. Nadine was waiting for me at the front porch window. She rushed downstairs wearing her new pink tennis shoes, a pink hat and a pink purse strapped across her chest. She was ready to hit the town.

Nadine and I arrived at Areen's school a little early, and I had the opportunity to chat with some of the other parents who were also waiting. In twenty minutes we all vented our anger and frustration, discussed the political situation, and even joked around a bit about our collective predicament.

As the end-of-day bell rang the students rushed, as always, to the main gate. The older students knew what was going on, the younger ones did not. Areen came out of her building with a smile from ear to ear and her bright pink Jansport backpack on her back. She waved a big bulky book in the air. It was her new English reading book. Nadine gave her sister a big hug and kiss, and we were on our way. While walking to the car, I asked Areen if she heard about the curfew. She had not. She told me that they probably kept it from them so they

would not be scared. She asked if she could buy an ice cream cone for her and her sister before going home. After quickly stopping for three ice cream cones we headed straight home. We pulled in the driveway at 2:40 PM and as we got out of the car an Israeli jeep passed on the main Jerusalem Street next to our home announcing through a

loud speaker, "To the people of Ramallah, the curfew is applied. Anyone in the streets will be arrested."

Life Between Curfews

Added to the daily grind the Israeli military phenomenon of house-to-house searches, which take place day and night while the curfews are imposed, and you'll have a sense of how we have lived for the last five months. If my youngest daughter exemplifies the effect of curfew on Palestinian children, then her first set of words—"dab-babeh" (tank), "naqelet jonnood" (armored personnel carrier), "tayyara" (fighter jet)—convey the challenge we face to rehabilitate an entire generation. A ray of hope is that she sometimes refers to Israeli soldiers as "Ammou" (uncle).

Those of us who have not lost any family members to this madness feel lucky. Those of us who still have all of our utilities intact cannot complain. Those of us who are still employed are thankful to those investors that remain engaged in Palestine. Those of us who are lucky and thankful are rapidly becoming a minority here.

So as the world causally watches the entire Palestinian people be terrorized by the most sophisticated form of violence possible—Israeli Occupation—life goes on. And as the Israeli military generals dream up new ways to batter Palestinians into submission and strip away every sense of public and personal security, I will be reading with my daughter her new English reading book and wondering about tomorrow's curfew schedule.

We have already been locked down and school has been closed for the Jewish New Year and the Jewish Day of Atonement. As my Israeli neighbors prepare for their Sukkot holiday season, I wonder if they would join my daughter's nightly prayer for her school year to proceed uninterrupted. In the meantime, we will continue to build our state between curfews. □

I'll be damned if I'm going to let an illegal foreign military occupation make me break a promise to my daughters.

Count Me In

Nan Fink Gefen

It's difficult enough being a Jew these days, but we converts have special issues that emerge as the conflict in Israel increases. I open a letter from an old friend: "It's terrible what's happening in the Mideast," she writes. "It's so sad. I can imagine how you must feel." This woman, my closest childhood friend, doesn't finish her thought. If she did, she might say something about the irony of me being a convert. We grew up together, two little Protestant girls, and through the decades I told her about my anti-Vietnam War activities, my involvement in progressive, feminist causes, and finally my conversion to Judaism. Although I changed religions, she knew I'd always fought against violence and oppression. Yet here was this people I'd embraced with full consciousness, engaging in acts against the Palestinians that were reprehensible by most standards. How could I bear it?

Another day I'm talking with Claire, a convert I've been mentoring. We're discussing the ins and outs of Jewish life, and I ask her how she feels about the situation in the Mideast. She falls silent, then says how awful it is. We commiserate about the loss of life and the violence on both sides, but I want to push the conversation further. "When I converted, I thought I was joining a people who were moral and just," I tell her. "Jews symbolized this to me. It had to do with the Holocaust and Jews being innocent victims, and then building the state of Israel upon high ideals."

Would I say these words so easily to a non-Jew or to someone who was born Jewish? Probably not. "Looking back, it was unfair of me to expect this, and even condescending," I continue. "It's too much to ask a people to be more righteous than others."

Claire sighs. "Yes. But they shouldn't be *less* righteous...." A nerve has been hit, and we both back off. If we continue, we'd have to speak about our disappointment and our disillusionment. Eventually the question would emerge: Do you regret converting?

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I.

When I became a Jew in the mid-Eighties, I understood that Israel was part of the package. I spent time in my newly adopted country with great enthusiasm and appreciation and even entertained the idea of moving there someday. My consciousness first was raised when I met Jeremy Milgrom, an Israeli Reform rabbi who wanted to buy a home for himself and his family in Jerusalem. To the amusement and disapproval of those who knew him, he refused to view houses that had belonged to Arabs before the 1948 War of Independence. The history books told us that Arab leaders had encouraged their compatriots to flee Israel during the war. Milgrom, however, argued that Jews had no right to these places, since they really belonged to the Arabs who had once owned them.

I began to study Israeli history in greater depth, and I learned that the relationship between Jews and Palestinians was not what I had thought. The Palestinians hadn't just fled during the War of Independence; many had been expelled, or had run for their lives, losing everything they had. When the first intifada erupted in 1987, I wasn't surprised, given the historical treatment of the Palestinians by the Jews. No longer could I pretend to myself that the Israel government was the "good guy" in the struggle with the Palestinians.

My feelings of disappointment were sharp, but soon the intifada was over. As the Oslo peace process accelerated, I felt hopeful that a great healing would take place and two peoples at last would live side by side in peace. Israel was only a young country, after all, and as oppressive as it had been toward the Palestinians, these actions could be understood and even forgiven, given the Jewish people's history.

II.

I turn on my computer and sort through the usual bunch of reports about "the situation," as it is called by the Israelis. I read with despair about the invasions into Gaza
(continued on page 79)

Where Corporations Fear to Tread

Antonia Juhasz

On Saturday, August 31, I joined some thirty thousand people in the streets of Johannesburg, South Africa to protest the corporate globalization policies overtaking the United Nations World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD). The International Forum on Globalization (IFG) had hosted a two-day teach-in in Johannesburg a few days earlier to raise awareness about these issues and offer alternatives. While Saturday's march was a celebration of global dissent, many of us marched with heavy hearts, as we had hoped that the WSSD would be a celebration in itself. It was to mark the success of the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), also known as the Rio Earth Summit, and chart the way forward for global, social, and environmental sustainability. Unfortunately, the dreams of Rio were dashed in Johannesburg. Among the ruins, however, were born some germs of hope, including a step forward in the fight to rein in the world's multinational corporations through "corporate accountability" legislation. Thanks to corporate scandals such as the collapse of Enron, the time is ripe for a corporate accountability movement in the United States. The potential success of such a campaign globally is furthered by the other major victory in Johannesburg: a newly strengthened and enlarged anti-corporate globalization movement.

The Promise of Rio

The 1992 Rio Earth Summit was a historic watershed. It placed the environmental crisis at the top of the international agenda, and linked environment with development in a new paradigm of sustainable development. Governments, including the senior Bush administration, made many commitments in Rio, including legally binding and enforceable international agreements to protect people and the environment—known as Multilateral Environment Agreements (MEAs), such as the Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change and the Convention on Biodiversity; a commitment by developed countries to provide 0.7 percent of Gross National Product in aid to developing countries and to transfer environmentally-friendly technologies; and the cre-

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ation of an institutional structure at the United Nations to enforce these measures based on transparency and democratic participation of governments and civil society.

Over the past ten years admirable work has been done to fulfill these commitments. However, far more attention has been paid to implementing the corporate globalization agenda of liberalized trade and investment policies enforced by the World Trade Organization (WTO), the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and others. While the agreements of Rio have floundered, the institutions of corporate globalization have thrived with political and financial support that has turned them into the world's dominant international institutions. While the products of Rio focus on social and ecological sustainability, the institutions of corporate globalization focus on profit maximization and wealth for the few. Not surprisingly, therefore, the world is facing even greater environmental and economic crises today than in 1992.

The Failure of Johannesburg

Rather than use the WSSD as an opportunity to make good on his father's commitments made in Rio, the junior President Bush, under pressure from the right wing of the Republican Party, did not even bother to show up. However, while his absence was an affront to democratic multilateral cooperation among nations, it should not be mistaken for a lack of commitment to the outcome of the Summit. On the contrary, the Bush administration had set an aggressive agenda for the Summit that it had been pursuing for over a year. The agenda involved halting any progress toward the fulfillment of the commitments made by President Bush's father at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio, and the enactment of specific corporate globalization policies. The Bush administration's success lead many to describe the WSSD as "Doha + 10" instead of "Rio +10," referring to the dominance of the WTO agenda (the most recent WTO ministerial meeting was held in Doha, Qatar ten months ago) over that of the Rio agenda.

Not only did President Bush Jr. withdraw from the Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change before the Summit began, but his administration's refusal to negotiate any new

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binding multilateral agreements ensured that no new agreements would emerge from the Summit. In addition, the Bush administration weakened the existing MEAs by leading the push to subordinate them to WTO rules. Several non-governmental organizations and friendly governments stopped the worst U.S. proposal on MEAs; however, the final Implementation Plan of the WSSD supports the agreement made at the WTO Doha Ministerial in which the relationship between MEAs and WTO rules would be decided by the WTO itself. The IFG will pay close attention to this crucial fight between the environment and trade rules that will most likely be played out at the WTO's next ministerial meeting in Cancun, Mexico in September 2003.

The Bush administration was also successful in seeing "public-private partnerships" emerge as an official outcome of the Summit. These partnerships, largely between multinational corporations and governments, are part of a broader privatization agenda that has already turned the providing of basic services such as water and electricity into a multibillion dollar global business performed for profit. The Bush administration already has implemented such public-private partnerships at the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID). One such initiative, the U.S. Energy Assistance Partnership Program, was established by about eighty utilities and regulatory partnerships in thirty-two AID-assisted countries. Among other things, it has accelerated the deregulation and privatization of publicly owned utilities in developing countries. The experiences of many of these countries make California's energy deregulation look like a success story, as I describe below in the case of Enron's global doings. In the context of the WSSD, the biggest problem with these public-private partnerships is that they, rather than new binding government commitments for the provision of vital human resources, became the Summit's official outcome.

There were some official victories to the Summit. One such victory was that of the Women's Alliance of Ministers and the Women's Caucus in preventing the removal of language relating to human rights in the context of health. In addition, several U.S. NGOs were extremely successful in raising awareness about the Bush administration's agenda at the WSSD among the American public when they heckled Secretary Powell (the head of the U.S. delegation in Johannesburg) during a speech, receiving extensive media coverage. However, as Dr. Vandana Shiva has written, all similar victories were "merely success in preventing further regress." One real push forward came with the inclusion of corporate accountability language into the Plan of Implementation of the WSSD.

The Way Forward: Corporate Accountability

The global movement to create meaningful, binding, and enforceable conventions on corporate accountability—a movement that has been growing for decades—finally took

shape in Johannesburg. Led by international environmental organizations such as Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace, activists called for a UN Convention on Corporate Accountability. While a full convention was neither expected nor achieved, they did succeed in having the following language included in the Plan of Implementation:

[Countries will] Actively promote corporate responsibility and accountability, based on the Rio Principles, including through the full development and effective implementation of intergovernmental agreements and measures, international initiatives and public-private partnerships, and appropriate national regulations, and support continuous improvement in corporate practices in all countries.

While not perfect, this language does open the door to new international agreements on corporate accountability.

As outlined in a report by Friends of the Earth International, such a convention would establish checks and balances on corporate behavior and ensure that companies must earn a "license to operate." It would require governments to impose the following duties on publicly traded companies, their directors, and board-level officers:

- report fully on their environmental and social impacts;
- ensure effective prior consultation with affected communities, including the preparation of Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) and full public access to all relevant documentation; and
- take the negative environmental and social impacts of their activities fully into account in their corporate decision making.

It would guarantee legal rights of redress for citizens and communities adversely affected by corporate activities, including:

- access for affected people anywhere in the world to pursue litigation where parent corporations claim a "home," are domiciled, or listed;
- provision for legal challenge to company decisions by those with an interest; and
- a legal aid mechanism to provide public funds to support such challenges.

It would establish human and community rights of access to and control over the resources needed to enjoy a healthy and sustainable life, including rights over common property resources and global commons such as forests, water, fisheries, generic resources, and minerals for indigenous peoples and local communities; and rights to prior consultation and veto over corporate projects, against displacement, and to compensation or reparation for resources expropriated by or for corporations.

It would establish (and enforce) high minimum environmental, social, labor, and human rights standards for corporate activities—based, for example, on existing international agreements and reflecting the desirability of special and differential treatment for developing countries. It would

establish national legal provisions for suitable sanctions for companies in breach of these new duties, rights, and liabilities. It would extend the jurisdiction of the international criminal court to try directors and corporations for environmental, social, and human rights crimes and establish international controls over mergers and monopolistic behavior of corporations. Finally, it would establish a continuing structure and process to monitor and review the implementation and effectiveness of the convention.

These principals are equally applicable at the local, state, national, or international level. The inclusion of language referencing corporate accountability in the WSSD Plan of Implementation opens the door for an international movement. Thanks to a rash of corporate bankruptcies and scandals, the time is ripe for such a movement, even in the United States. But we need to act quickly before the door closes.

A Door Opens in the United States

On July 30, 2002, President Bush signed the Sarbanes-Oxley Act into law, saying that "the era of low standards and false profits is over; no board room in America is above or beyond the law." While the legislation itself is not monumental, the fact that this president signed it is. An administration that until this point had done nothing but preach the dogma that corporations must be given as much freedom from government regulation and oversight as possible was establishing new corporate regulations.

The president's signature on the Sarbanes-Oxley Act was a clear sign of how far the corporate globalization model has fallen. With the collapse of Enron and Worldcom, with the innumerable corporate scandals implicating the likes of Citigroup and Anderson Consulting, and with the ravages to individual savings and the economy as a whole that have followed, even the Bush administration could no longer make the case that we can trust corporations to do what is right either for society or for themselves. The president had no choice but to act.

The Rise and Fall of Enron

The failure of the corporate globalization model and the need for corporate accountability legislation is best depicted by the rise and fall of the Enron Corporation. In a March 22, 2002, report titled "Enron's Pawns," the Sustainable Energy & Economy Network and the Institute for Policy Studies (SEE/IPS) demonstrate how Enron became a global giant as a consequence of corporate globalization policies—particularly the systematic dismantling of regulatory systems in the United States and abroad. Prodded by the Reagan administration in the 1980s, the World Bank and IMF have been pursuing deregulation and privatization of the power and energy sectors for two decades. Enron has been one of the leading beneficiaries of this process—acquiring pipelines, transmission lines, and power plants all over the world. From 1992 to 2001, Enron received \$761 million from

the World Bank and \$4.68 billion from U.S. taxpayers through institutions such as the Export/Import Bank for risky overseas project it might not otherwise have undertaken.

Enron's overseas operations rewarded shareholders temporarily but often punished the people and governments of foreign countries with price hikes and blackouts. The SEE/IPS report provides the following examples, among others. In 2001, eight people were killed when police were brought in to quell riots in the Dominican Republic after blackouts lasting up to twenty hours followed a power price hike that Enron and other private firms initiated. In 1993, the president of Guatemala tried to dissolve his country's Congress and declare martial law after rioting ensued following a price hike that the government deemed necessary after selling the power sector to Enron. In India in 1997, police hired by the power consortium of which Enron was a part beat nonviolent protestors who challenged the \$30 billion agreement—the largest deal in Indian history—struck between local politicians and Enron. Global energy deregulation has resulted in the energy needs of the vast majority of people affected—from the poorest to those in need of power for businesses, hospitals, schools, and other public services to function—being routinely sacrificed for Enron's gain.

Enron thrived and fell under corporate globalization's rules. At the time of its collapse—then the largest bankruptcy in U.S. history—it was the seventh largest corporation in the

"Lucid and eloquent"
—*Publisher's Weekly*, starred review



The Journey Home
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United States and the sixteenth largest corporation in the world. In the last quarter of 2000, Enron made \$377 million in profits. Enron Chairman and CEO Kenneth Lay netted \$123 million in 2000, ten times his 1998 figure. Lay has made additional gains this year as he cashed in options and sold shares to net nearly \$23 million since November 2002 (as recorded by Darren Puscas in his *A Guide to the Enron Collapse*, published by the Polaris Institute, February, 2002). Not only did this wealth not trickle down, but much of the most recent gains were stolen from ordinary citizens. Enron's corporate muscle enabled it to gain control over what were supposed to be its government regulators, allowing it to act potentially outside of the law and certainly to the detriment of society. While government regulators stood silent, California taxpayers lost at least \$30 billion in an energy fiasco in which the massive rise in costs of energy, which may well have been falsely generated by Enron and its ilk, translated into massive profits for those same companies. Again, the government stood silent as Enron executives cashed in on their stock options, while their retirement savings to stock—were unable to sell due to a lockdown on selling that Enron defended as a normal function of a pension "management change." They had to sit by helpless and watch as the value of their stock plummeted.

As the tangled web of Enron's corporate schemes unfolds, it becomes increasingly clear that Enron benefited from the widespread reliance on the market to perform the functions of government oversight and regulation and from policies shifting government spending to subsidize corporations rather than publicly provided services. Indeed, it benefited so well from these policies of corporate globalization that it literally imploded upon its own greed, taking the incomes of people around the world with it. The need to regulate corporate activity could not be made more clear.

The "Corporate President" Acts

The Enron scandal and the flood of corporate bankruptcies and scandals that soon followed cost millions of jobs, billions of life savings, and devastated whole economies. In response, in a speech on July 9, 2002, President Bush outlined both the need for new legislation and described new executive orders he had written for increased regulations, oversight, and enforcement of corporate behavior. In this speech, the president made several important statements that we must hold him accountable for and use in a campaign for real corporate accountability legislation. In the speech, the president said that *strict new laws* are needed to hold corporations to higher ethical standards. He stated that "self-regulation is important, but it's not enough." He called on government to "do more to promote transparency and ensure that risks are honest" and to "ensure that those who breach the trust of the American people are punished." He created a new Corporate Fraud Task Force, headed by the deputy attorney general, which will target major accounting fraud and other criminal

activity in corporate finance and suggested several measures to strengthen the regulatory abilities of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC).

The president's closing words, however, demonstrate the limits of his proposals: "Tougher laws and stricter requirements will help. Yet the American system of enterprise has not failed us. Some dishonest individuals have failed our system. Now comes the urgent work of enforcement and reform, driven by a new ethic of responsibility." Ultimately, the president blames unethical corporate leaders rather than innately flawed policies. Anyone who has taken a high school economics course, however, understands that it is the nature of corporations to operate in a manner that maximizes their profits and returns to shareholders. It is the job of governments to make corporations act ethically and in ways that benefit society as a whole. While the president's proposals are but minor steps in the right direction, his calls for increased regulation to hold corporations accountable cannot go unnoticed. We must use these words, and the realization that this president would not utter them if he did not believe that the American public was demanding real change, to ignite a campaign for meaningful, binding and enforceable corporate accountability legislation.

Our Time To Act

In Johannesburg, thirty thousand people—lead by the people of South Africa—joined in protest. It was a moment of North-South unity in the anti-corporate globalization movement that is becoming increasingly more common. We marched, among other things, against the corporate globalization policies overtaking the WSSD, against water and electricity privatization, and against the policies of Bush administration. However, we also marched in favor of the hope of Rio. One embodiment of that hope is the united call for corporate accountability legislation at the UN and around the world in local, state, and national governments. For a movement that is often defined by what we are against, this is a clear example of what we are for. It is time to make this vision a global reality. □

To learn more and get involved, please contact the
International Forum on Globalization
at www.ifg.org, ajuhasz@ifg.org,
or **Friends of the Earth** at
www.foe.org, matt@foe.co.uk.

To read more about the
Convention on Corporate Accountability,
go to <http://www.foei.org>.

TIKKUN has proposed a
Social Responsibility Amendment
to the U.S. Constitution that follows similar lines.
For a complete text of TIKKUN's SRA go to
[www.tikkun.org/renewal/index.cfm/
action/social_justice.html](http://www.tikkun.org/renewal/index.cfm/action/social_justice.html).

Youth and the Politics of Domestic Terrorism

In a post-September 11 Era

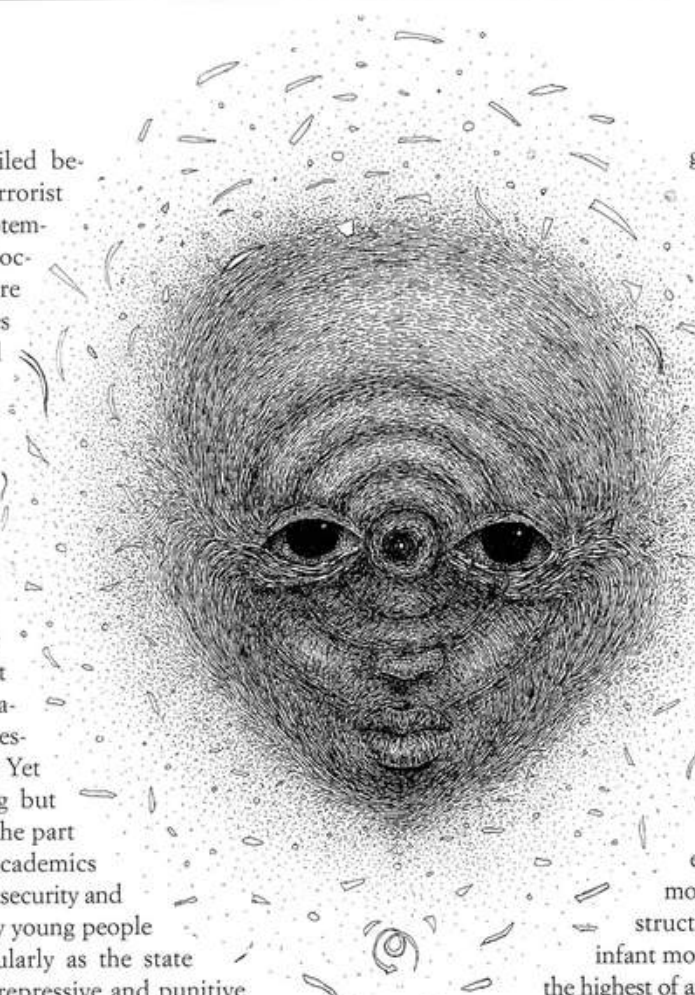
Henry A. Giroux

Already imperiled before the terrorist attacks on September 11, democracy appears even more fragile in the United States in this time of civic and political crisis. This is especially true for young people. Critics have had a great deal to say about new anti-terrorist laws that, in the name of "homeland security," make it easier to undermine the basic civil liberties that protect individuals against invasive and potentially repressive government actions. Yet there has been nothing but thunderous silence on the part of many critics and academics regarding the ongoing insecurity and injustice experienced by young people in this country, particularly as the state increasingly resorts to repressive and punitive social policies. Our society's single-minded association of the terms "terrorism" and "security" with a violent attack against property and persons ignores the forms of domestic terrorism suffered by children who are homeless, poor, hungry, neglected, lack decent medical care, or suffer physical abuse by adults.

To some degree, children have been this summer's media sensation. The relentless focus on the kidnapping of young

girls—incidents of which, as the national media networks have pointed out, are actually in decline even if media interest has recently skyrocketed—have exposed one aspect of children's vulnerability. But the media's emphasis on these extraordinary acts has simultaneously obscured the more ordinary but no less horrific indices of children's plight. Twenty percent of children are poor during the first three years of life and over 13.3 million live in poverty; 9.2 million children lack health insurance; millions lack affordable child care and decent early childhood education; in many states, more money is being spent on prison construction than on education; and the infant mortality rate in the United States is the highest of any other industrialized nation.

When broken down along racial categories, the figures become even more despairing. For example, "In 1998, 36 percent of black and 34 percent of Hispanic children lived in poverty, compared with 14 percent of white children. In some states, such as the District of Columbia, the child poverty rate is as high as 45 percent." (These figures are taken from Child Research Briefs, "Poverty, Welfare, and Children: A Summary of the Data," available online at www.childtrends.org, and Childhood Poverty Research Brief 2, "Child Poverty in the States: Levels and Trends From 1979 to 1998," available online at www.nccp.org.) While the United States ranks first in military technology, military exports, defense expenditures and the number of millionaires and billionaires, it is ranked



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eighteenth in the gap between rich and poor children, twelfth in the percent of children in poverty, seventeenth in the efforts to lift children out of poverty, and twenty-third in infant mortality. (These figures largely come from Children's Defense Fund, *The State of Children in America's Union: A 2002 Action Guide to Leave No Child Behind*.) One of the most shameful figures on youth, as reported by *New York Times* writer Jennifer Egan, indicates that "1.4 million children are homeless in America for a time in any given year ... and these children make up 40 percent of the nation's homeless population." (Jennifer Egan, "To Be Young and Homeless," *The New York Times Magazine*.) Unfortunately, for the nation's children, the disappearance of social safety nets, crumbling public education, widespread homelessness, poverty, and disease make for bad TV.

Children have fewer rights than almost any other group; consequently, their voices and needs are almost completely absent from the debates, policies, and legislative practices that are constructed in terms of their needs. In the last election, for example, candidate George W. Bush appeared to give some support to children when he insisted that "the biggest percentage of our budget should go to children's education." Soon after he took office, however, he passed a 2002 budget in which forty times more money went for tax cuts to the wealthy than for education. Not only that: Bush also passed a punitive welfare reform bill that requires poor, young mothers to work a forty-hour week and at the same time cuts low-income childcare programs. Sending children to underfunded schools and then home to an empty house seems an unlikely way to improve their education.

All this is not to suggest that adults do not care about youth, but most of those concerns are framed within the realm of the private sphere of the family. We don't hear about homeless children, which is a social phenomenon, but about kidnapped children, which is, despite media insistence, largely an individual phenomenon. Tellingly, even the response to child abductions is more "get tough on crime policy," never an analysis of the systemic failure to provide safety and security for children through improved social provisions. The fact is that children in our society seem absent from any discourse about the future and the responsibilities this implies for adult society. Instead of seeing children as the carriers not only of their parents' genes but of our society's ideals and dreams, children at best have become little more than objects, defined through the debasing language of advertising and consumerism.

To see the abdication of adult responsibility for children we need look no further than *Time* magazine. Its cover story of January 2002 featured a picture of a baby on the cover with the large caption, "You're on Your Own, Baby." This story suggests that in the age of Enron, risk is now the primary fact of adult life, so much so that the next generation will have to take care of itself since adults have too much to worry about already (given that their 401K retirement funds

no longer provide the necessary safety net for the future). The overriding message is that adult society shoulders no responsibility for shaping children's future, thus affirming the irrelevance of both children and the future itself.

A second, earlier *Time* cover story of August 6, 2001, goes even further, pointing to children themselves as a cause of social ills. Titled "Kids Have Too Much Power," this story avers that young people are spoiled rotten, almost entirely defined by an inflated sense of self-importance and the urge to shop. Rather than looking at the way corporations carpet bomb youth as young as two, three, and four years old with endless commercials that, as Ralph Nader points out, sell them "Bad diets, fat and sugar, teaching [kids] to be addicts," the story projects the power of adult society onto youth, releasing adults from any responsibility for how they use their own power. Missing from this article is the recognition that if young people buy into a consumer culture and its unbridled narcissism and quest for goods, the nature of the problem may not rest exclusively with either parents or children. On the contrary, if kids are narcissistic over-shoppers, the causes (and solutions) lie instead in the corporations that make money selling kids worthless goods, in the media and advertising industry that leads kids to believe that consumerism is the ultimate expression of citizenship, and in our school systems that reinforce the language of commercialism by legitimating its presence on athletic scoreboards, school walls, curricula materials, and almost every other aspect of school life.

What is happening to children in America? Lawrence Grossberg argues that what is new about the plight of children is that they have always served as a "kind of symbolic guarantee that America still had a future, that it still believed in a future, and that it was crucial to America to invest in that future ... [and that] The [current] rejection of childhood as the core of our social identity is, at the same time, a rejection of the future as an affective investment." ("Why Does Neo-Liberalism Hate Kids? The War on Youth and the Culture of Politics," *Review of Education/Pedagogy/Cultural Studies*.) Grossberg correctly suggests that the war being waged against youth cannot be separated from the need of many adults to discount their responsibilities as engaged citizens and to erase the obligations of the future (I have taken up a similar argument in my book, *Stealing Innocence*). This is a battle conducted by those adults laboring under the logic of an alleged pure market system that only pays homage to a excessive individualism while simultaneously undermining the bonds of sociality and the nature of social obligations.

I believe that the United States is at war with young people, especially those marginalized by class and color, but all youth are targets. This is a war waged by liberals, conservatives, corporate interests, and religious fundamentalists against those public spaces, goods, and laws that view children and youth as an important social investment, and it includes a full-scaled attack on social services, the welfare

state, and the public schools. Peter Cassidy argues that young people are being subjected to forms of emotional violence and privacy intrusions that were unimaginable twenty years ago, except for prison inmates. In "The Last Brick at Kindergulag," he claims

a veritable Kindergulag has been erected around school-children, making them subject to arbitrary curfews, physical searches, arbitrarily applied profiling schemes, and ... random, suspicionless, warrantless drug testing.... If you're a kid in the U.S. today, martial law isn't a civics class lecture unit. It is a fact of life as the war on drugs, the war on violence and a nearly hysterical emphasis on safety has come to excuse the infliction of every kind of humiliation upon the young.

Youth have become the central site onto which class and racial anxieties are projected. Their very presence represents *both* the broken promises of capitalism in the age of deregulation and downsizing *and* a collective fear of the consequences wrought by systemic class inequalities and a culture of "infectious greed" that has created a generation of unskilled and displaced youth expelled from shrinking markets, blue collar jobs, and any viable hope in the future.

Even worse, however, when children are not being commodified or defined through marketing, they are often portrayed as a danger to adult society rather than the source of our social future. This is particularly evident in the slew of

Hollywood films about youth that have emerged in the last twenty years, such as *187*, *Black and White*, *Gummo*, *Jawbreakers*, *Bully*, *Traffic*, and *Blue Wave*. Young people and teens in these films are seen as dangerous, mindless, addicted to drugs, and socially irresponsible.

In recent times, a whole generation of youth have been labeled as superpredators, spiraling out of control—kids, not corporate culture, not corrupt government institutions, not the church. One vivid example of such an attack can be seen in a provocative advertising campaign sponsored by the Bush Administration's White House Drug Control Office and run extensively in both print media and on TV. Driven by a dead-end moralism as it taps into a culture of fear, the campaign serves to both punish youth and prevent any reasonable analysis about the causes of terrorism. Shot in stark black-and-white, the ads begin with close-ups of the faces of exclusively dark-haired teenagers (no blond, suburban kids in this group). Their faces appear in rapid succession on the TV screen. Each teenager admits matter-of-factly in short staccato sentences a litany of horrendous crimes they allegedly helped people commit. The mantra includes: "I helped murder families in Colombia," "I helped kids learn how to kill," "I helped a bomber get a fake passport," and "I helped blow up buildings." After each admission, a different youthful face repeats any one of the following refrains: "It was just innocent fun," "Hey,

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some harmless fun," or "All the kids do it." The ad ends with the message: "Drug money supports terror. If you buy drugs you might too."

The most recent batch of anti-drug ads are even more offensive. Using the same signature message "Drug money supports terror. If you buy drugs you might too," they demonize youth in more extreme fashion. Here is one example from an ad titled, "Timmy." In this ad a young boy facing the camera says matter-of-factly "I kill mothers, I kill fathers, I kill grandmothers, I kill grandpas, I kill sons, I kill daughters, I kill firemen, I kill policemen. [pause] Technically, I didn't kill these people I just kind of helped." It is difficult to tell if the qualification is for added effect or if the insanity of the charge became clear, if only as an afterthought.

Ostensibly a blow against the war on drugs, but framed as part of the war against terrorism, the ad campaign suggests that children are, in part, responsible for promoting terrorist campaigns being waged all over the world, including those directed at the United States on September 11. The goal of the campaign is to shame young, casual drug users by leading them to believe that the drugs they purchase help pay for terrorist activities, especially those acts engaged in by the Al Qaeda terrorists who attacked New York's World Trade Center and the Pentagon. What is so disturbing about these ads is not only the lack of evidence establishing a direct link between Al Qaeda's terrorist activities and the drug trade, but also the presupposition that American youth who casually engage in drug use are somewhat responsible for such terrorist acts. According to this logic, people who fill up their cars with gasoline or buy diamonds would also be responsible for such acts since terrorists groups make millions from both the diamond trade and oil profits. But don't expect any ads to appear soon condemning yuppies who buy gas for their SUVs or Hollywood starlets who wear diamonds for sponsoring terrorist campaigns around the globe. Adults would not tolerate such an irresponsible, blanket accusation. But an accusation that appears irresponsible and fallacious when applied to adults seems quite reasonable when applied to young people.

One could dismiss this ad campaign as symptomatic of the "war on youth" if it were an isolated event. Unfortunately, it is not. A few examples will suffice. In 1997, Congressman William McCollum of Florida captured this sentiment, however crudely, by claiming that contemporary youth "... are the most dangerous criminals on the face of the earth" (Cited in an editorial, "Criminalizing Youth," *CounterPunch* (December 20, 2000), p. 2). Shortly after the Littleton school shootings, Barbara Kantrowitz and Pat Wingert in *Newsweek* described kids as having a dark side and wrote that youth culture in general represents "*Lord of the Flies* on a vast scale." The *Time* covers also are a piece of this war against kids.

Youth within the economic and cultural geography of neoliberal capitalism occupy a borderland in which the desir-

ing machine of commodification exists side by side with the imposing threat of the prison-industrial complex. The war against youth can largely be understood as part of the fundamental values and practices of neoliberal capitalism and the complex cultural and economic operations of this assault can no longer be ignored by either cultural theorists or theorists of political economy. As Jean and John Comaroff observe in "Millennial Capitalism: First Thought on a Second Coming (*Public Culture*):

As the expansion of the free market runs up against the demise of the welfare state, the modernist ideal in which each generation does better than its predecessor is mocked by conditions that disenfranchise the unskilled young of the inner city and the countryside. Denied full, waged citizenship in the nation-state, many of them take to the streets, often the only place where, in an era of privatization, a *lumpen* public can be seen and heard. The profile of these populations reflects also the feminization of post-Fordist labor, which further disrupts gender relations and domestic reproduction among working people, creating a concomitant 'crisis of masculinity'; a crisis as audible in U.S. Gangsta rap as in the South African gang rape, as visible in the parodic castration of *The Full Monty* as in the deadly machismo of soccer violence or the echoing corridors of Columbine High. This is not confined to youth or workers, of course ... but it is magnified among them.

No longer seen as a crucial social investment for the future of a democratic society, youth are now demonized by the popular media and derided by politicians looking for quick-fix solutions to crime. In a society deeply troubled by their presence, youth prompts in the public imagination a rhetoric of fear, control, and surveillance—made all the more visible with the 2002 Supreme Court decision upholding the widespread use of random drug testing of public-school students. Such random drug testing of all junior and senior high school students who desire to participate in extra-curricular activities registers a deep distrust of students and furthers the notion that youth have become a generation of suspects. Schools increasingly resemble prisons, and students criminal suspects, who need to be searched, tested, and observed under the watchful eye of administrators who appear to have less interest in education than in policing. Trust and respect now give way to fear, disdain, and suspicion. Moreover, this perception of fear and disdain is increasingly being translated into social policies that signal the shrinking of the democratic public sphere, the hijacking of civic culture, and the increasing militarization of public space.

Police and drug-sniffing dogs have now become a common fixture in public schools. In many suburban malls, young people (coded as youth of color) cannot even shop or walk around without either appropriate identification cards or in the company of their parents. Excluded from public spaces outside of schools that once offered them the opportunity to hang out with relative security, work with mentors

in youth centers, and develop their own talents and sense of self-worth, young people are forced to hang out in the streets, while increasingly subject to police surveillance, anti-gang statutes, and curfew laws, especially in poor, urban neighborhoods. Gone are the youth centers, city public parks, outdoor basketball courts, or empty lots where kids can play stickball. Play areas are now rented out to the highest bidder, "caged in by steel fences, wrought iron gates, padlocks and razor ribbon wire." (Cited in Robin D. G. Kelley, *Yo' Mama's Disfunktional!: Fighting the Culture Wars in Urban America*. Beacon Press, 1997.)

Instead of providing a decent education to poor young people, we offer them the growing potential of being incarcerated, buttressed by the fact that the U.S. is one of the few countries in the world that sentences minors to death and spends "three times more on each incarcerated citizen than on each public school pupil" (Heather Wokusch, "Leaving Our Children Behind," www.commondreams.org); instead of guaranteeing them food and decent health care, we serve them more standardized tests; instead of providing shelter to homeless children, we house them overnight in jails, such as the Bronx House of Detention; instead of providing them with vibrant public spheres, we offer them a commercialized culture in which consumerism is the only obligation of citizenship. For many young people and adults today, the private sphere has become the only space in which to imagine any sense of hope, pleasure, or possibility. Neoliberalism with its emphasis on market forces narrows the legitimacy of the public sphere by redefining it around the related issues of privatism, consumption, and safety. Big government, recalled from exile after September 11, is now popularly presented as a guardian of security—security not in terms of providing adequate health care or a social safety net, but of increasing the state's role as a policing force—resulting in the ongoing abridgement of basic freedoms and dissent, the criminalization of social problems, and the prioritizing of penal methods over social investments. Ardent consumers and disengaged citizens provide fodder for a growing cynicism and depoliticization of public life at a time when there is an increasing awareness not just of corporate corruption, financial mismanagement, and systemic greed, but also of the recognition that a democracy of critical citizens is being replaced quickly by a democracy of consumers. The desire to protect market freedoms and wage a war against terrorism, ironically, has not only ushered in a culture of fear but is also dealing a lethal blow to civil freedoms. At the heart of this contradiction is both the fate of democracy and the civic health and future of a generation of children and young people.

Under this insufferable climate of increased repression and unabated exploitation, young people and communities of color become the new casualties in an ongoing war against justice, freedom, social citizenship, and democracy. As the foundations of the national in-security state are being solidified through zero-tolerance policies, anti-terrorist laws,

soaring incarceration rates, the criminalization of homelessness, racial profiling, and anti-immigration policies, the forces of repression become more integrated, marked by an increasing combination of various elements of federal and local law enforcement agencies. As despairing as these conditions appear at the present moment, they have become the basis for a surge of political resistance on the part of many youth, intellectuals, labor unions, educators, and social movements all over the world. Under such circumstances, it is time for intellectuals, parents, young people, and others who inhabit a wide variety of public spheres to take a stand and remind themselves that collective problems deserve collective solutions and that what is at risk is not only a generation of young people and adults now considered to be either a generation of suspects or a threat to national security, but the very promise of democracy itself.

The greatest challenge Americans face does not come from crazed terrorists, but from the ongoing battle to expand and deepen the principles of justice, freedom, and equality on behalf of all citizens, but especially young people, who are quickly becoming an abandoned generation. This is not going to take place, as Bush's policies will tragically affirm, by shutting down democracy, eliminating its most cherished rights and freedoms, and deriding communities of dissent. On the contrary, any attempt to enact real patriotism—if the pledge to "liberty and justice for all" is to mean anything at all—must begin with the current state of crisis among youth rather than devolve into the jingoistic posturing currently fashionable among U. S. Congressmen and the acolytes in the press who have spent the last decade peddling market moralities and mentalities at the expense of democratic values. The struggle for democracy has to be understood and engaged through politics, not vacuous moralism, and if politics is to be reclaimed as the center of individual and social agency, it will have to be motivated not by a culture of fear but by a passion for civic engagement, ethical responsibility, and the promise of a substantive democracy. As Noreena Hertz observes, "The political state has become the corporate state," and the implicit contract between the state and the citizen, which is fundamental to a strong democratic society, has been broken. (*The Silent Takeover: Global Capitalism and the Death of Democracy*.) When corporate power relegates economics and participation in the market greater respect than those forms of political agency that are central to creating vibrant democratic public spheres, citizenship is reduced to market rituals and democracy is hijacked in the interests of reproducing vast inequalities of power, influence, and wealth. The effects of such a situation are especially dangerous for young people marginalized by class and color whose rights and dignity are already being eroded under the increased push by the Bush administration towards national security, the dismantling of civil liberties, and the widening militarization of everyday life. □

Toward a Pedagogy of the Oppressor

Michael Kimmel

This Breeze at My Back

To run or walk into a strong headwind is to understand the power of nature. You set your jaw in a squared grimace, your eyes are slits against the wind, and you breathe with a fierce determination. And still you make so little progress.

To walk or run with that same wind at your back is to float, to sail effortlessly, expending virtually no energy. You do not feel the wind; it feels you. You do not feel how it pushes you along; you feel only the effortlessness of your movements. You feel like you could go on forever. It is only when you turn around and face that wind that you realize its strength.

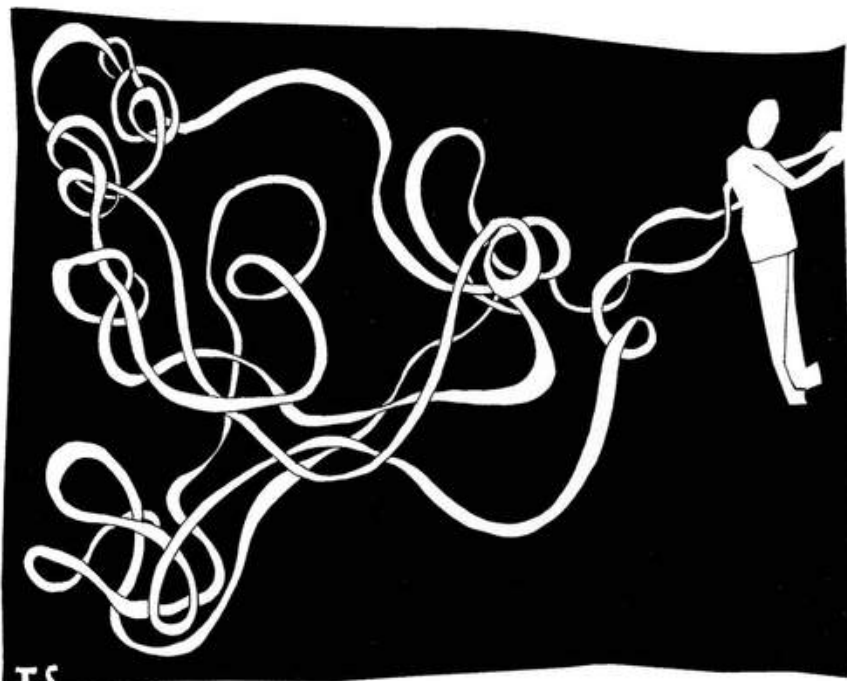
Being white, or male, or heterosexual in this culture is like running with the wind at your back. It feels like just plain running, and we rarely if ever get a chance to see how we are sustained, supported, and even propelled by that wind.

It is time to make that wind visible.

In recent years, the study of discrimination based on gender, race, class, and sexuality has mushroomed. Of course, the overwhelming majority of the research has explored the experiences of the victims of racism, sexism, homophobia, and class inequality. These are the "victims," the "others" who have begun to make these issues visible to contemporary scholars and lay people alike. This is, of course, politically as it should be: The marginalized always understand first the mechanisms of their marginalization; it remains for them to convince the center that the processes of marginalization are in fact both real and remediable.

When presented with evidence of systematic discrimination, many members of the "majority" are indifferent, sometimes defensive and resistant. "What does this have to do with me?" they ask. Some mention several "facts" that, they believe, will absolve them of inclusion into the superordinate category. "My family never owned slaves," "I have a gay

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friend," "I never raped anyone," are fairly typical responses. Virtually none seems able to discuss white people as a group. Some will assert that white people are dramatically different from other white people (ethnicity and religion is more important than race); others maintain that white people, as a group, are not at all privileged. And virtually all agree that racism is a problem of individual attitudes, prejudiced people, and not a social problem.

Such statements are as revealing as they are irrelevant. They tell us far more about the way we tend to individualize and personalize processes that are social and structural. And they also tell us that majority members resist discussions of inequality because it will require that they feel guilty for crimes someone else committed.

Even those who are willing to engage with these questions also tend to personalize and individualize them. They may grudgingly grant the systematic nature of inequality, but to them, racism, sexism, and heterosexism are still bad attitudes held by bad people. They are eager to help those bad people see the error of their ways and change their attitudes to good attitudes. This usually will come about through "better education."

Those of us who are white, heterosexual, male, and/or middle class need to go further; we need to see how we are stakeholders in the understanding of structural inequality, how the dynamics that create inequality for some also benefit others. Privilege needs to be made visible.

Making Privilege Visible

To be white, or straight, or male, or middle class is to be simultaneously ubiquitous and invisible. You're everywhere you look, you're the standard against which everyone else is measured. You're like water, like air. People will tell you they want to see a "woman doctor," or they will say they want to see "the doctor." People will tell you they have a "gay colleague" or they'll tell you about a "colleague." A white person will be happy to tell you about a "black

ILLUSTRATION BY TIFFANY SANKARY

friend," but when that same person simply mentions a "friend," everyone will assume the person is white. Any college course that doesn't have the word "woman" or "gay" or "minority" in the title is, de facto, a course about men, heterosexuals, and white people. But we call those courses "literature," "history," or "political science."

This invisibility is political. This was first made visible to me in the early 1980s, when I participated in a small discussion group on feminism. A white woman and a black woman were discussing whether all women were, by definition, "Sisters," because they all had essentially the same experiences and because all women faced a common oppression by men. The white woman asserted that the fact that they were both women bonded them, in spite of racial differences. The black woman disagreed.

"When you wake up in the morning and look in the mirror, what do you see?" she asked.

"I see a woman," replied the white woman.

"That's precisely the problem," responded the black woman. "I see a *black* woman. To me, race is visible every day, because race is how I am *not* privileged in our culture. Race is invisible to you, because it's how you are privileged. It's why there will always be differences in our experience."

As I witnessed this exchange, I was startled, and groaned—more audibly, perhaps, than I had intended. Being the only man in the room, someone asked what my response had meant.

"Well," I said, "when I look in the mirror, I see a human being. I'm universally generalizable. As a middle-class white man, I have no class, no race, and no gender. I'm the generic person!"

Sometimes, I like to think that it was on that day that I became a middle-class white man. Sure, I had been all those before, but they had not meant much to me. I enjoyed the privilege of invisibility. The very processes that confer privilege to one group and not another group are often invisible to those upon whom that privilege is conferred. What makes us marginal or powerless are the processes we see, partly because others keep reminding us of them. Invisibility is also a privilege in another sense—it is a luxury that only white people have in our society not to think about race every minute of their lives. It is a luxury that only men have in our society to pretend that gender does not matter.

While this story took place over twenty years ago, I was reminded of it recently when I went to give a guest lecture for a female colleague at my university. (We teach the same course on alternate semesters, so she always gives a guest lecture for me, and I do one for her.) As I walked in to the auditorium, one student looked up at me and said "Oh, finally, an objective opinion!"

All that semester, whenever my female colleague opened her mouth, what this student saw was "a woman." Biased. But when I walked in, I was, in this student's eyes, *unbiased*, on objective opinion. Disembodied Western rationality—

standing right in front of the class! This notion that middle-class white men are "objective" and everyone else is "biased" is the way that inequalities are reproduced.

Let me give you another example of how power is so often invisible to those who have it. Most of you have email addresses, and you write email messages to people all over the world. You've probably noticed that there is one big difference between email addresses in the United States and email addresses of people in other countries: Their addresses have "country codes" at the end of the address. So, for example, if you were writing to someone in South Africa, you'd put "za" at the end, or "jp" for Japan, or "uk" for England (United Kingdom) or "de" for Germany (Deutschland). Even if you write to someone at a university in another country, you have to use to country code, so, for example, it would be "ac.uk" for an academic institution in Britain, or "edu.au" for an educational institution in Australia. But when you write to people in the United States, the email address ends with "edu" for an educational institution, "org" for an organization, "gov" for a federal government office, or "com" or "net" for commercial internet providers. Why is it that the United States doesn't have a country code?

It is because when you are the dominant power in the world, everyone else needs to be named. When you are "in power," you needn't draw attention to yourself as a specific entity, but rather, you can pretend to be the generic, the

TWO JEWS ON A TRAIN

*Stories from the
Old Country and
the New*

ADAM BIRO

TRANSLATED BY
CATHERINE TIHANYI

"Somewhere between Isaac
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matchmakers, gossips, immi-
grants, a golf-playing rabbi. . . .
Between the lines are tales of
the fragility of love, friendship
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storyteller and his apparent love of the material. He has a light
touch and the tales are short, but packed full of imagery and
emotion."—Sande Brawarsky, *Jewish Week*

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universal, the generalizable. From the point of view of the United States, all other countries are "other" and thus need to be named, marked, noted. Once again, privilege is invisible. In the world of the Internet, as Michael Jackson sang, "we are the world."

I was reminded of reaction from the privileged recently when I appeared on a television talk show opposite three "angry white males"—three men who felt that they had been the victims of workplace discrimination. The show's title, no doubt to entice a large potential audience, was "A Black Woman Took My Job." In my comments to these angry men, I invited them to consider what the word "my" meant in that title, that they felt that the jobs were originally "theirs," that they were entitled to them, and that when some "other" person—black, female—got the job, that person was really taking "their" job. But by what right is that job theirs? By convention, by a historical legacy of such profound levels of discrimination that we have needed decades of affirmative action to even begin to make slightly more level a playing field that has tilted so decidedly in one direction.

The Invisible Knapsack

One way to understand how privilege works—and how it is kept invisible—is to look at the way we think about inequality. We always think about inequality from the perspective of the one who is hurt by the inequality, not the one who is helped. Take, for example, wage inequality based on gender. We're used to hearing that women make about seventy-one cents for every dollar made by a man. In that statistic women's wages are calculated as a function of men's wages; men's wages are the standard (the \$1) against which women's wages are calculated. In this way, the discrimination against women is visible—doing the same job, they earn less, just because they are women.

But what if we changed the statistics? What if we expressed men's wages as a function of women's wages? What if we said that for every dollar earned by a woman, men make \$1.34? Then it wouldn't be the discrimination that was visible—it would be the privilege. Just for being a male, a male worker received an additional thirty-four cents. This is what sociologist R. W. Connell calls the "masculinity dividend"—the unearned benefits that accrue to men, just for being men.

One could easily apply this to race, class, and sexuality. Perhaps no one has done that more successfully than Peggy McIntosh, in her celebrated essay on what she calls the "invisible knapsack." The invisible knapsack contains all the little benefits that come to us simply because we are white, or straight, or middle class, or male. We have to open up that knapsack, dump its contents out and take a look at all the very different ways that these ascribed characteristics (those we were born with) have become so obscured that we have come to believe that the events of our lives are the

results of achieved characteristics. Making gender, race, class, sexuality visible—both as the foundations of individual identity and as the social dynamics of inequality—also means that we pay some attention to the differences among them as well. *Just as all forms of inequality are not the same, all forms of privilege are not the same.*

For example, race and gender appear, at least on the surface, to be based on characteristics present at birth: one's sex or race. That means that they are always visible to an observer. (Well, at least nearly always. There are, of course, people who change their biological sex, or who dress differently from established norms, and those who try and pass as members of another race.) Thus the privileges based on gender or race may feel even more invisible because those privileged by race and gender did nothing to earn their privilege.

Two other dimensions of identity—sexuality and class—are not immediately visible. One can more easily pass as a member of a privileged group. But sexual minorities also may feel that their identity is not a social construction but the fulfillment of an inner essence—i.e., it is more like race and gender than it is like class. While race and biological sex may be evidently inborn, biologically based and/or "God-given," sexuality also feels like that, to both heterosexuals and homosexuals.

Class, however, does not. In fact, class seems to feel exactly the opposite—as a status that one was not born with but that one has earned. Class is less visible than the other dimensions because while our objective position in an economic order depends on empirically measurable criteria (income, occupation, education), class as an everyday experience rests on other people's evaluation of our presentation of self. It is far easier to pass as something we are not—both for people of modest means to affect the lifestyle of the rich and famous and for very wealthy people to affect the styles of the poor. While most of us would like to have everyone think we are wealthier than we actually are, it is often the case that the truly wealthy want everyone to think they are less wealthy than they are. We may dress "up" while they dress "down."

Class can be concealed and class feels like something we have earned all by ourselves. Therefore, class privilege may be the one set of privileges we are least interested in examining because they feel like they are ours by right, not by birth.

The Souls of White (and Straight and Middle Class and Male) Folk

It's difficult and often unpleasant to acknowledge that all the good things that have happened to you are not simply the result of your hard work and talent and motivation but the result of something over which you had no power.

This realization, in turn, often leaves us feeling powerless, impotent. We can become mired in guilt. Some people argue that guilt is a negative emotion, and that we shouldn't have

(continued on page 48)

Masculinity & American Militarism

Nancy Ehrenreich

Commentators discussing the U.S. attack on Afghanistan mention gender primarily as a justification for aggression. One of the benefits, they tell us, of dumping tons of bombs on Afghan targets and installing a pro-U.S. government in the country, is that now Afghan women are free to get schooling, shed their burqas, and walk the streets. But aside from this cynically opportunistic use of women and feminist concerns as an excuse to justify U.S. aggression abroad, there hasn't been much focus on gender in either public or (at least in my experience) private discourse on events since September 11. The silence is surprising, for a close look at American ideas about gender roles—especially ideas about masculinity—reveals that those ideas have supplied important emotional and metaphorical fuel for the government's recent military actions in Afghanistan, and for increased American bellicosity around the world.

Of course the reasons for both the attack and the American response are complex. Many factors have no doubt motivated the United States' actions in Afghanistan, both before and after September 11. Likely suspects include: Cold War thinking—the U.S. tried to “set up” the Russians in Afghanistan, hoping that the region would become “the Russian Vietnam”; oil—the best means of accessing the expansive (and landlocked) Caspian oil reserves is through Afghanistan; and domestic politics—Bush is in bed with both oil and weapons-producing interests, and has clearly needed something to distract the nation's attention from the flagging economy, as well as the Enron fiasco.

Nevertheless, to understand the particular *virulence* of U.S. reactions to September 11—both at the level of the government and among the general population—we need to understand American norms about masculinity. Under the set of unstated ideas about what makes a “real” man, dis-



proportionate violence is the only viable response to an extreme experience of victimization such as the attack of September 11.

Masculinity and Violence

Masculinity has been defined as the “images, values, interests, and activities held important to a successful achievement of male adulthood in American cultures.” It’s what “real” men have, and what women and “sissies” lack. It protects boys from getting beaten up, helps men attract women, and proves males’ heterosexuality (even when they’re gay).

Of course, ideas about masculinity vary from one ethnic group to another, as well as from one institutional context to another. But an idealized American image of masculinity dominates the media, the advertising and film industries, and mainstream American culture in general. And that set of gender-linked behavioral norms is coercive, putting pressure on men to conform just as norms defining femininity coerce women.

To be a “real” man, a male cannot be fearful, indecisive, conciliatory or weak. A boy or man who is *not* sufficiently masculine will be stigmatized as a sissy, ostracized as a “mama’s boy,” or stereotyped as gay. These gendered tropes associate weakness and victimization with both femaleness and inadequate masculinity, conveying the message that a male victim of violence is an inadequate man. Unless, of

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course, he responds in kind. In fact, the rhetoric of highly masculinized activities in this society (including football, the military, and big business) is all about how defeat feminizes and humiliates the defeated—and how it must be revenged by victory. Thus, fear of the feminine, and the related fear of being seen as gay, play a crucial role in enforcing masculine gender norms on men.

According to William Pollack, author of *Real Boys* (billed as the male analogue to *Reviving Ophelia*), psychological literature supports this association between masculinity and violence. Fathers often enforce violent gender norms on their sons, he explains, while mothers accede to this “boys don’t cry” socialization out of fear that their boys will be stigmatized, ostracized, or even subjected to harassment and physical violence if they don’t. Reading Pollack’s book, I was reminded of a colleague who told me about her eight-year-old son, who was attacked by another boy on the way home from school. She was strategizing with him about talking to the other boy (“use your words, not your fists”), finding another route home, or perhaps going to the boy’s parents, when her husband walked in and immediately began demonstrating choke-holds.

The idea that males are and must be violent contributes to social malfunction in countless ways. Perhaps the connection between violence and masculinity has a relatively trivial impact on most men (that is, if you consider the inability to cry and difficulty expressing emotions as trivial). But it can produce very deleterious effects in some—as illustrated by the tragic and destructive rifts between three generations of fathers and sons depicted in the film, *Monster’s Ball*. Fears of having, or being seen as having, inadequate masculinity have been tied to bullying behavior, to woman battering, and to school massacres like Columbine. In a society characterized by highly punitive treatment of gender nonconformists and an exaggerated, unattainable masculine ideal, violence may seem a necessary way for both conforming and nonconforming males alike (both “jocks” and “Goths,” both “bullies” and “wimps”) to prove their masculinity.

Masculinity and War

Of course, war—that most violent and decisive of human acts—is the paradigmatic masculine enterprise. Military service is one of our rites of manhood; it makes men *men*. And war makes *nations* masculine, too. It creates and reinforces a masculine national identity—a sense that our nation is strong, determined, decisive, brave, proud, and so on. Moreover, war establishes the masculine identities of those individuals who plan and orchestrate military engagements, assuring that, although younger, poorer, browner, and blacker soldiers do much of the actual fighting, the top brass still enjoys the masculine aura of the military.

Thus, war-making, in the broad sense (including not just fighting but also strategic planning), is a very *masculinized* undertaking. As such, it requires conformity to masculine

norms—by all those participating, whether male or female. In her study of a “war games” exercise for security affairs analysts conducted by the RAND Corporation, Carol Cohn observed that participants in the exercise equated masculinity with the willingness to use force and to sacrifice the lives of one’s own country’s citizens. In contrast, participants saw *non-violent* solutions, such as negotiation, as signs of weakness and inadequate masculinity. Anyone suggesting such options immediately lost legitimacy in the game and was unlikely to be taken seriously from that point forward. J. Glover describes a similar dynamic among soldiers during the Vietnam War, arguing that they operated under “a cult of hardness which stigmatized moral doubts as sentimental weakness.”

Similarly, Susan Jeffords, in her famous study, *The Remasculinization of America*, found that Vietnam imagery in films and books of the 1980s conveyed the message that the Vietnam War was lost because long-haired protestors caused the military to take an insufficiently aggressive stance to prosecuting it. Lynda E. Boose, in her more recent study, expands on Jeffords’ analysis, arguing that Vietnam produced a great deal of national anxiety about inadequate masculinity during the 1980s, with the resultant rise of what Boose and others call “hypermasculinity.” During this period, the paradigmatic male action film figure went from James Bond, with his suave suits and small revolvers, to Arnold Schwarzenegger, with his comic-book-hero-sized body and guns as big as his rather sizeable arms. Revealingly, G.I. Joe bulked up in the ’80s, too. Today the doll’s physique is as unrealistic for men as Barbie’s is for women—and American males’ insecurity about their masculinity has reportedly increased as well.

Boose argues that the Gulf War was, for both George the First and the public at large, a chance for the nation to redeem itself—to regain its lost masculinity after Vietnam. It was also, of course, an opportunity for a president plagued by the “wimp factor” to refurbish his own image. George Senior had once remarked that he wanted a “test by fire” like Lincoln had faced in the Civil War. He arguably tried to create such a test for himself in the Gulf—only unlike Lincoln, he picked a fight he was sure to win.

Masculinity and the “Enemy”

The masculine ideal to which men and nations are expected to aspire is also a *white* ideal. Despite the fact that close to half the enlisted men and women today are people of color, the glorified symbol of military hypermasculinity is still a white man. From John Wayne to Sylvester Stallone to Josh Hartnett (from *Black Hawk Down*), the vast majority of our celluloid war heroes are white.

In contrast, the image of the *enemy* that occupies the national psyche (and often animates the American film industry) is both non-white and feminized. In war (and action) movies the white masculine hero is often counterpoised

against an exoticized, demonic, and dehumanized nonwhite (and often physically disabled) opponent. And of course, most of the "real life" wars the United States has seen fit to fight since World War II have been against nations of color: Korea, Vietnam, Grenada, Iraq, and now Afghanistan.

Joanne Nagel says that Theodore Roosevelt's concept of masculinity involved "adventurous but civilized white men [who] tame or defeat savage men of color." Providing a modern illustration of the same attitude, George, Jr. repeatedly contrasts the nonwhite "rogue states" he wants to attack with the "civilized world" (led, presumably, by an *uber*-civilized United States). In treating Arab and Asian nations (his "axis of evil") as "uncivilized," Bush suggests that they are barbarians, and that U.S. military force is needed to protect the world from their savage destructiveness.

In addition to seeing American enemies as nonwhite savages, our national consciousness feminizes them as well. In the iconic lexicon of our good guy/bad guy world—epitomized today by Bush's "you're with us or against us" rhetoric—if the American war hero is hypermasculine then his opponent must be the opposite. Thus, Jeffords finds that in Vietnam imagery the enemy is often associated with feminine qualities. Given the way in which our gender categories associate weakness and defeat with the feminine, it's not surprising that, just as sports opponents are disparaged with feminizing imagery, so military enemies are feminized as well. In a striking recent example, a flyer that has circulated in New York City shows Osama Bin Laden being sodomized by the World Trade Center, with the caption, "You like skyscrapers, bitch?"

In short, American masculinity is not only defined as violent, but also as violent towards particular types of people. Toni Morrison has argued that immigrants to the United States become "Americans" by subordinating people of color—that dominating racial minorities is part of how one attains legitimate membership in American society. I'd add that not only do individuals become *American* by subordinating people of color; they become *masculine* as well. That is, our notions of noble, principled masculinity include the idea that being able to dominate nonwhites is part of what makes a man *manly*. It shows that he's civilized, that he engages in beneficial, *principled* violence.

This racing and gendering of military opponents helps to explain why "our" violence in response to the September 11 attacks tends to be seen as brave, rational, principled, justified, and noble, while "their" violence—the violence of the hijackers—is seen as cowardly, irrational, unprincipled, unjustified, and unadulteratedly evil. In short, it explains

why our response is seen as noble self-defense rather than lawless revenge.

Atrocious as the attacks in New York, D.C., and Pennsylvania were, they certainly weren't cowardly. But in a society in which the "enemy" is unconsciously thought of as nonwhite and feminine (i.e., female-like), it's hardly surprising that Susan Sontag was so excoriated for saying that the September 11 terrorists were brave—a comment that was treated as practically treasonous. To associate the attackers with masculinity in that way disrupts the entire

edifice of gendered racial identities upon which our national sense of self is based.

Thus, I'd argue that the public's generally enthusiastic support for Bush's attack on Afghanistan is at least *partially* attributable to this idea of masculinity as violent and racially superior, and the equation of victimization with racial minority status and demeaning femininity. In the national psyche, the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon—icons of U.S. economic and military power—registered as a

symbolic emasculation of the (white) United States by (non-white) foreigners. The collapse of the World Trade Center towers posed a fundamental challenge to our national sense of identity as *the* superpower of the world. The loss of American worldwide politico-military dominance that the WTC's fall symbolized (but didn't come close to actually *producing*, of course) was that much more viscerally disturbing because it triggered a set of gender associations that identify the nation with the demeaning, feminized role of the (nonwhite) victim.

Of course, the only way (within the set of cultural meanings I am describing) to escape such a humiliating, victimizing role is to respond with violence—to recapture the nation's masculinity by the use of massive military force. Understood in these terms, the U.S. bombing of Afghanistan (whose toll has already exceeded that of September 11) was a *gendered* response, prompted by a feeling of emasculation and aimed at regaining a virile sense of national masculinity by retaliating in kind.

Thus, our association of masculinity with violence, and femininity with defeat, helps to feed a revenge mentality that justifies reacting with extreme and disproportionate violence to any experience of victimization. That mentality probably accounts (at least in part) not only for global war-mongering in reaction to acts of terrorism, but also for boys who slaughter their classmates in response to social ostracism, men who beat their wives for perceived unfaithfulness, and a national death culture in which state-sponsored slaying is a routine response to murder.

*The U.S. conducts itself on
the world stage like a
teenage bully, picking on
those smaller and less
powerful—in some part
based on a flawed concept
of masculinity.*

Masculinity without Violence

If we ever hope to develop a more reasoned and reasonable national response to conflict, we need to attend to the harmful effects of our current definition of male-ness, rejecting the equation of compromise and mutual understanding with weakness and failed masculinity. The psychologist Pollack says the key to preventing violence by boys is first, to eliminate the sense of personal shame that at-risk boys feel about their perceived inadequate masculinity and second, to help them feel empathy for others. Secure masculinity and empathy. I'd suggest that we, as a nation, are sorely lacking in both. The country's leaders still seem obsessed with proving our national (and their personal?) masculinity to the world. And empathy with our attackers has been labeled unpatriotic in post-September 11 discourse. Any effort to explain or understand the terrorists, or the regions of the world from which they come, is seen as condoning their behavior. Empathy is dismissed as treason.

Perhaps this explains why the United States' reactions to September 11 strike me as so adolescent. Obsessed with attaining a hypermasculinity that no nation (or man) can achieve—fixated on impressing the girls (for, as Jeffords points out, mothers, sisters, and girlfriends are the audience for the performance of male masculinity through war)—the United States conducts itself on the world stage very much like a teenage bully. Like the bully, we pick on those much smaller and less powerful than we—and react

with wildly destructive fury when someone catches us with our pants down.

Indeed, the history of U.S. military engagements over the last fifty years or so reveals, in Boose's words, a pattern "of a progressively escalating use of force and an increasing reliance on weapons of mass destruction demonstrably disproportionate to any imputed threat." This pattern is extraordinarily dangerous, suggesting as it does "a psychic quest that becomes compulsively more urgent with each successive proof of its impossibility." Like the Christians searching for the Holy Grail, American administrations are engaged in a futile fight to attain for themselves and their nation an unattainable masculine ideal.

And now, of course, the Bush administration—poised to dramatically escalate the low-visibility military campaign it has been waging against Iraq for years—is talking about nuclear weapons. That fact, along with the cartoonish hypermasculinity of George, Jr.'s cowboy rhetoric ("smoke 'em out," "hunt 'em down") suggests that poor Shrub, as Molly Ivins calls him, experiences even more gender anxiety than his father suffered. Like a batterer cycling into ever-greater abuse of his family, our nation is cycling into ever-increasing acts of violence against other nations—especially nations of color. While the reasons for American acts of imperialism are always multiple and complex, I suggest that a flawed concept of masculinity is partially to account for this extremely destructive, and incredibly dangerous, temper tantrum. □

TOWARD A PEDAGOGY OF THE OPPRESSOR (from page 44)
to feel guilty for the things that happened generations—even centuries—ago.

Yet guilt may be an appropriate, even necessary feeling—for a while. Guilt isn't always a "bad" emotion after all. How would you feel about hearing Germans say that they "really don't want to feel guilty" about what happened there? "After all, I never personally sent a Jew to the gas chambers." If our guilt does not freeze us in abjection, it can motivate us to transform the circumstances that made us feel guilty in the first place, to make connections between our experiences and others' and to become and remain accountable to the struggles for equality and justice around the world. Guilt can politicize us. (Perhaps that's why we often resist it?)

While noble in intention, however, this posture of guilty self-negation cannot be our final destination as we come to understand how we are privileged by race, class, gender, and sexuality. Refusing to be men, white, or straight does neither the privileged nor the unprivileged much good. Renouncing privilege ultimately substitutes an individual solution for a structural and social problem. Inequality is structural and systematic, as well as individual and attitudinal. Eliminating inequalities involves more than changing everyone's attitudes.

Trying to rid oneself of bad attitudes, renouncing one's unearned privilege, also, finally, brings us no further than the feelings of impotent despair that we often feel in the

face of such overwhelming systemic problems. We feel lonely. We feel isolated from our friends, our families, or our classmates. It's the loneliness of the long distance runner against the wind.

The struggles against inequality are, however, collective struggles, enormous social movements that unite people across geography, race, religion, class, sexuality, and gender. Participating in these struggles to end inequality brings one into a long history of those who have stood alongside the victims of oppression, those who have added their voices to the voices of those who had been earlier silenced. Examining our privilege may be uncomfortable at first, but it can also be energizing, motivating, and engaging.

Even more energizing, if exhausting, can be to explore the ways in which race, class, gender and sexuality intersect and interact. "Where does the black person stop and the woman begin?" ask some writers. How can one analyze the totality of one's experience without examining the ways in which all these categories coincide, collide, contradict? Do we dare explore the ways in which race, gender, class, and sexuality interact in the lives of those who are privileged by one or more of these identities? Examining those arenas in which we are privileged as well as those arenas in which we are not privileged will enable us to understand our society more fully, and engage us in the long historical process of change. □

Writing a Jewish Life

Lev Raphael

I grew up in a minefield. As a child of Holocaust survivors, I never knew when I might say or do the wrong thing and spark a devastating comment from my parents, something so dark and humiliating that I would feel as if the ground under me had exploded and a whirlpool had opened up and swallowed me alive.

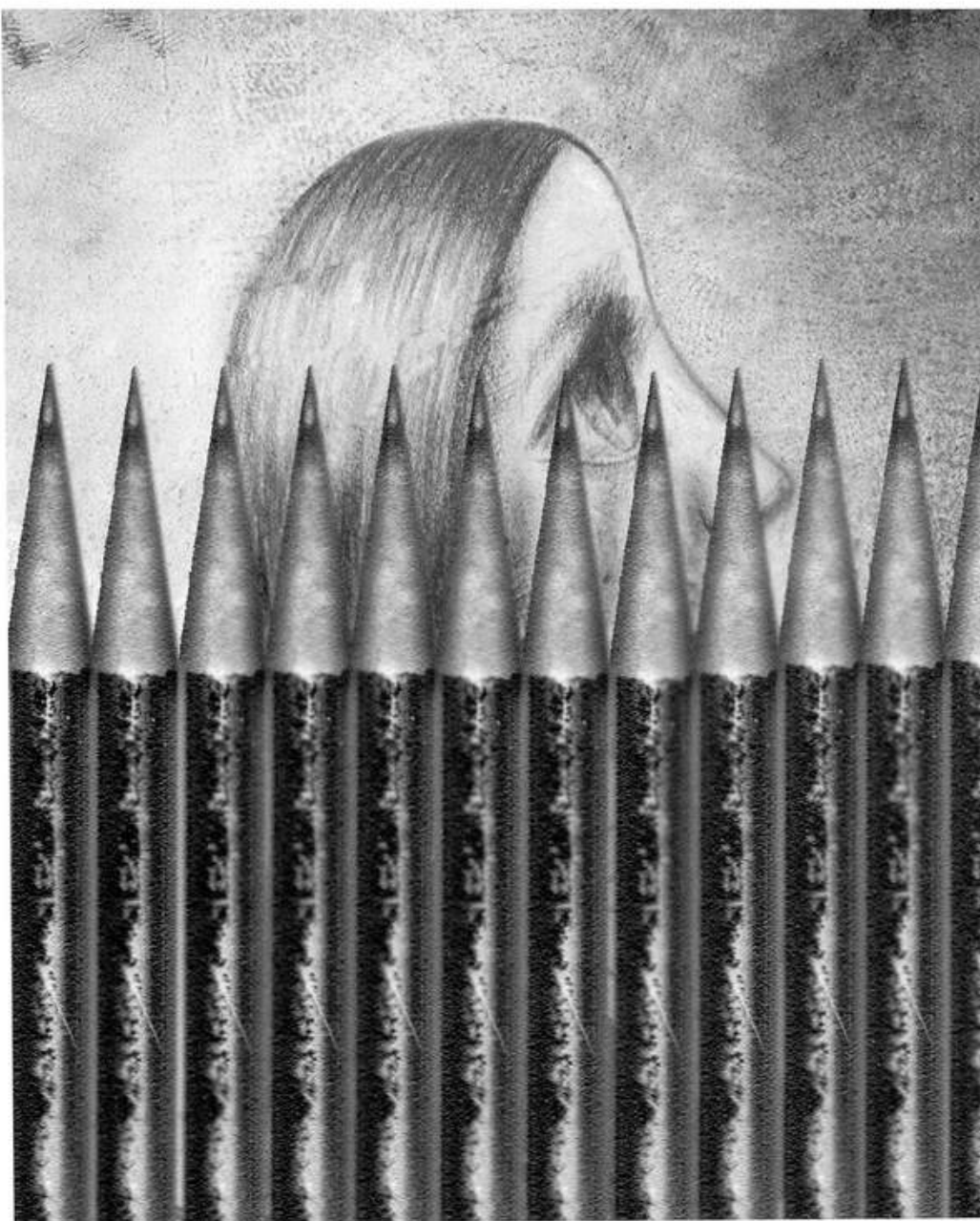
Nothing could be wasted in our home, nothing could be thrown out. If I were scraping some unfinished food from my plate into the garbage can, I might be greeted with, "You know what we would have done for something like that in the war?"

No, I didn't know, not really, and I was afraid to ask, because I was wasting food when my parents had starved during the war. How could I be so thoughtless and cruel?

Of course, it was always "the war"—as if no other war had ever occurred in human history and no other tragedy had ever befallen the Jews. It was the air we breathed, the silence between words, the beast in the jungle waiting to spring. It was the horrible nightmares my father had, nightmares that had him crying out wordlessly, waking everyone up except himself. Their grip was so fierce that my mother had to shake and shake him to bring him back. I never knew the content of those dreams, just their coordinates: the war.

For me, growing up, there seemed no other significant experience in the world but that war, the one that had stolen from my parents their family, their friends, their home, their country, their past. There were no mementos of their lives in Europe before the war, hardly any photographs. Even

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memories were in short supply because they were dangerous—they invariably led to pain.

But there were mines, everywhere, waiting to explode.

Like the time when I was around eight years old, making a hand puppet from an old white sock on which I'd crayoned a face. He was going to be a superhero, so I tied a handkerchief around his neck to make the cape. But he needed an emblem, which I drew on his chest with gold glitter. A bolt of lightning. It looked so good I drew a second one and showed it to my mother, expecting praise and smiles. I was the kind of kid whose school art projects were almost always misshapen—these even bolts of lightning were a real triumph for me.

"It's just like the SS insignia," she said. So, the everyday scene of a child showing off his creation to a parent—played out tens of thousands of times in every family—was turned into a lesson of unpredictability and shame. It could happen anytime, anywhere. Whatever I was proud of could set off

PERSONAL ESSAY

an explosion, could take my mother or father away, could crush me into insignificance.

And there were more than just these spare and critical comments. There were flashes of something closer to narrative, like flares lighting up the scene of devastation on a battlefield, or eruptions of some smoldering volcano. Who can remember what set them off? A song on the radio, an article in the newspaper, even something in my homework. Anything. Everything.

Though I was a mouthy kid, I had no words with which to respond. What can a child say when he's having after-school milk and cookies and somehow the war has joined him and his mother at the table, as inappropriate and ineluctable as death?

"In the ghetto," I remember my mother telling me, "we ground up glass and wrapped it with a little food to put in the rat holes, then stuffed the holes with whatever we could find." My mother seemed proud, and I think I was supposed to admire her cleverness. The resourceful Jews trapped by the Nazis, taking care of themselves.

But all I could think of was the rats, imagining them coming through the walls, my walls. Even as an adolescent, I was silenced. Once, while frantically looking for my keys, I threw things around my room and left without picking up the huge mess on the floor. When I returned, my mother told me it was just like when the Nazis stormed into her house in 1941 and started tearing it apart.

Tolstoy famously wrote that "all happy families are like one another; each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way." But I think that doesn't hold true for families of Holocaust survivors because we share a common landscape, the one that Lesbian Jewish poet Melanie Kaye/Kantrowitz, described this way: "where I came from was/burned off the map."

What might be a little different is that my search for understanding of what happened to my parents, what had spoiled and twisted their lives and left me an inheritance of terrible ambivalence about being Jewish, led me to become a writer.

In other words: a traitor, a spy, a betrayer of family secrets.

How did it happen?

I was in love with storytelling from an early age. My mother read to me, but I learned to read by myself quite well and quite early—partly through studying the captions to photos in *LIFE* magazine—and I was also writing little stories myself. In second grade I discovered science fiction and wrote a story about an alien who landed on earth, looked around and didn't like what he saw, so he flew away. Surprise, surprise.

I was a stranger in a strange land, and I don't just mean America, I mean my family. Novelist Elizabeth Benedict puts it this way: "The living room. The most treacherous country of all." Even in second grade, I was trying to make sense of this alien territory that was home.

My parents spoke Yiddish and read a Yiddish newspaper, had Jewish friends, and yet looked down on American Jews. Partly, it was because American Jews had done so little to help my parents when they immigrated to the United States in 1950 and had even failed to live up to promises of support, but mainly because, to them, American Jews were inauthentic, a cheap imitation of the real thing. The real thing was the Jewish Atlantis, a lost and mythical Yiddish-speaking land that had been destroyed by catastrophe, burned off the map.

Even though my father kept his store open on Saturday, he and my mother made fun of the Reform rabbi who drove to the shul down the block, and mocked the *ungemacht* (overdone) hats of the women going to services. "It's an Easter parade!" And my father often told variations of a joke I'm sure many of you have heard. A woman asks her Orthodox rabbi to say a *bracha* over her new car and he refuses: "What are you, crazy? Who does such a thing?" She finds a Conservative rabbi, and he also says no, but more politely. The reform Rabbi she locates is affable and says, "I'd be happy to—but first you have to tell me—what's a *bracha*?" That was my father's verdict on American Jews, the smiling disdain of a man who grew up in the same part of the world as Elie Wiesel but never set foot in a synagogue after the war.

For a long time during the war, my father had to pretend to be Christian. He learned to read the Latin prayers so well that he forgot how to read Yiddish and had to be taught by my mother when they met after the war. My multilingual mother, who prided herself on her literacy, not only remembered her native tongue, but, as she would be happy to inform you, spoke a pure and literary Vilno Yiddish. The Yiddish she heard in America made her cringe. What she encountered in the United States was no better than a Yiddish version of Brooklynese, or, you should excuse the expression, Pig Latin.

My parents made me attend an Arbeiter Ring Sunday school, but I never enjoyed it much. Why should I? Despite speaking Yiddish, these were people my parents didn't have an ounce of respect for, especially the ones who had offered my mother a job when they saw her work in Brussels, but reneged on the promise. She had been teaching Yiddish literature at a Bund-organized school whose students were either survivors or hidden during the war. They thought she was terrific in 1947 in Brussels, but, in 1950 New York, they thought she was nobody. I'll never know why. But I can still recall the way one of my younger teachers looked at my mother the first time they met, sometime in my early teens, mouth slightly agape, clearly drinking in my mother's beautiful Yiddish with as much rapture as a Czarist Russian emigré meeting someone claiming to be Anastasia.

When my consciousness of Israel started to develop, I asked why my parents hadn't gone there after the war and the answer was unswervingly angry from my mother: "Live

with all those Jews! I had enough of them in the ghetto and the camps!" So—being with Jews, being Jewish itself did not seem something to be proud of. Worse, it was dangerous.

We had an uncle in Israel. There were pictures of him and his family. Why didn't my mother write to him? She didn't say it outright, but it had to be because he and her other brother had managed to escape from Vilno into Russia when the Nazis came, and she was left to take care of her parents. Left. A small word that covers an enormous tragedy. The five of them were on the last train from Vilno, but the Russians cleared it of Jews at the border. My mother's brothers ran after it, urging my mother and their parents to run too, but they couldn't. And so the three of them made their way back to Vilno, on foot, 400 kilometers my mother said, with bombs falling around them. Take care of her parents? Impossible—the Nazis shot her father at Polar and gassed her mother at Treblinka.

In first grade, perhaps around the time of the Eichmann trial, a girl at school told me that "they threw Jewish babies up in the air and caught them on bayonets." This was a people I wanted to identify with?

I don't think it's an accident that my favorite book as a little boy was *The Three Musketeers*, which I read over and over so many times that it annoyed my mother, and the book's binding broke and frayed. It's a novel where swords are wielded not against infants but adults, a book where a solitary young man plunges into a tumultuous world of adventure in which he triumphs. It's true that little boys often imagine themselves as powerful and daring because they are surrounded by giants, but for me this book had deeper resonance. I see now that it was a story of conquest while the few stories that were emerging from my parents were anything but heroic, at least as a boy would understand them. My parents had been victims; people had tried to kill them. Later I would learn that it wasn't just—just!—the brutal machinery of Nazism that they faced.

My father had cheated death twice before being imprisoned in Bergen Belsen. Once as a slave laborer in the Hungarian army when a Hungarian officer had lobbed a grenade at him and missed, a second time when he was standing in front of a firing squad and the RAF started bombing the area and he escaped. And he had cheated death a third time at the war's end when the train he was on from Bergen Belsen was stopped by the U.S. Ninth Army, and the Jews crammed onto it were saved from being machine-gunned and thrown into the Elbe.

Though I was an extroverted and noisy child (my mother said that she always knew where I was in our large,



*I knew what it was
like to feel out of place,
criticized, different at
home and in the world.*

rambling apartment), I spent much of my growing up deep inside books. From an early age, if I liked an author, I read everything that person had written, some of the books twice or three times. Call it training to be a

writer, call it escape. It served both purposes very well.

I read four or five books a week from the local library housed in a turn-of-the-century Gothic pile, always relishing my own choices over what was assigned at school, which was

usually less interesting and less complex.

For years I read science fiction and history, fascinated by alternate universes and by maps of Europe that showed vast territorial changes. Look at one page, a country exists. Turn the page to another century, and it's gone. I knew something about such disappearances. I read obsessively about dolphins, about attempts to communicate with them. Of course I

was interested in this kind of investigation—wasn't I living in a murky submarine world of my own, with connection out of reach?

But when I discovered Henry James in junior high, where an English teacher had assigned his short novel *Washington Square*, something precious beckoned to me. Though I wouldn't have been able to express it at the time, this story of the shy, ungraceful daughter tyrannized by a contemptuous father struck home, struck a chord in my home. I knew what it was like to feel out of place, criticized, different at home and in the world.

It may be hard to remember, but the 1950s and 1960s were not remotely like the 1970s—there was little open discussion of the Holocaust yet. As Alan Mintz has written in *Popular Culture and the Shaping of Holocaust Memory in America*, in the post-war celebration of victory over fascism there was no room in America for this dark story without a happy ending. American Jews themselves were busy entering American society and making their mark, and for the most part they didn't want to hear what survivors had to say, so Holocaust survivors often felt stigmatized and silent. Survivors didn't have moral stature yet, and the whole subject was painful and embarrassing. I knew no better way to stop a discussion with my Jewish friends' parents than to say, "My parents were in concentration camps."

My parents were not only burned and branded by the past, they were resentful of the present in which money was extremely tight and their suffering only seemed to count for something among their network of friends who were all Holocaust survivors. My parents were angry, and their anger could erupt unexpectedly. With all their wealth of languages—Yiddish, Russian, Polish, Czech, German, French and more—they spoke English with embarrassingly heavy accents and could become enraged—in public—over

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what seemed to me to be trivialities. They embarrassed me, and in my grammar school classes I had the misfortune of being the only child of immigrants in a crowd of children whose parents were all comfortably bourgeois *yekkeh's*. My classmates had large allowances, went to summer camps, joined the boy scouts, even traveled outside of New York for vacations. New England. Florida. California. These were all impossible for me.

A difficult environment to grow up in, but a rich field of observation—yet it remained buried treasure for years. I took creative writing courses in high school and college and discovered a stronger facility with language and imagery, with words, than I'd known I had. But my writing was as far away from myself as possible, and by that I mean as far away from my world, my own observations, my truest knowledge. The fiction that I wrote expressed my desire to erase my difference, to flee into another reality, any reality. My writing was profoundly un-Jewish, it said nothing about the Holocaust, and ignored my growing sexual conflict.

I was afraid of outrage and retribution both from non-Jews for being Jewish and from Jews for being either bisexual or gay. I had seen and studied the incredible uproar in the Jewish community generated by Philip Roth's *Portnoy's Complaint*, which was published as I entered adolescence. The book terrified me for its defiance of taboos, for its open shouting at Jewish fearfulness and restriction. Roth once observed that what really made the book so infamous was that no one expects a Jew to go crazy in public. Not Jews, and especially not non-Jews, who as Portnoy says, "own the world and know absolutely nothing about human boundaries."

This was not mere rhetoric to me, this was real. My parents had seen their neighbors in Poland and Czechoslovakia eliminate human boundaries. And so I was afraid not only of betraying them, but also of exposing myself to potentially hostile goyish eyes. No wonder my fiction was full of disguises. It read like a series of desperate flares sent up for help.

But my creative writing professor in college understood those flares, and kept encouraging me to write something real. And even though I shared with her my confused sexuality, it took until my senior year before I was ready to begin claiming my talent as a writer. I was deeply in love with a non-Jewish girl who wanted to marry me, and the many layers of conflict were boiling over.

I needed her. I loved her. She loved Christmas—could I have a Christmas tree in our future home? It seemed impossible. Every time I walked down an imaginary road to our life together, I stumbled. What about our children? I knew nothing about how to raise a Jewish child, but I couldn't stomach the idea of raising a non-Jewish one. It would make me even less connected, less authentic, less me.

That was the year I read Henry James' *The Portrait of a Lady* and finally found an entrance into myself. It's a story of

a free-spirited, independent, optimistic woman who finds that a huge inheritance leads into the blind alley of a loveless, cold marriage. Understanding at last the nature of her trap, she sits in front of a fire, mulling over what her life has come to, realizing that her imagined home of free expression and love openly given and received is really "The house of dumbness, the house of deafness, the house of suffocation."

I read that passage at three in the morning and was never the same again. That was the house I lived in. I saw it, felt it, finally had the words.

For several years my old college writing professor had urged me to write something real. Now I was ready. My writing started to take on an emotional depth and color that was new, and in less than two years, I began a story that was completely unlike anything I'd ever written before. It opened with a paragraph describing a boy's father and how the boy felt around him. I knew it was the doorway into a story I had to tell, and was afraid to tell. After I called my writing professor and read it to her on the phone, she urged me to keep writing, in fact made me agree to write a section, call her and read it to her, write another, call her, and so on until it was done a day and a half later. I was terrified—I was alive.

It turned into a story about the son of Holocaust survivors who felt alienated by his parents' past and crushed by it.

I was in a graduate writing program at the time and my workshop, including the crusty, gray-haired professor, hated it. They took turns dissecting my little story for an hour or so and then the professor disdainfully picked through the remains and pronounced it worthless. Did that mean anything? *A simn a loksh ofn bord*, as they say in Yiddish. The story won a prestigious writing prize judged by a famous editor and was published in *Redbook*, which had four and a half million readers. I made a lot of money and I received fan mail, realizing for the first time the power of being able to touch someone with what you write.

My parents were not touched; they were angry and disappointed. They had tried in their own way to shield me from the Holocaust, and here I was writing about it—and them—in disguised ways and writing about my own feelings. I wasn't supposed to have any feelings. My brother helpfully told me not to do it again.

I was devastated by their criticism, but I wasn't silenced. Winning the prize and getting published had given me more than enough positive feedback to feel emboldened to keep writing. I realized their approval was not a prize to long for. After all, as Janet Malcolm says, "Art is theft. Art is armed robbery. Art is not pleasing your mother."

Writing the story led me to consciously confront my troubled legacy as a child of survivors, and for the first time I started to read furiously about the Holocaust, steeping myself now in what for years had merely been bits of narrative gleaned from my parents, conquering my own nausea and fear of entering that Kingdom of Death. The timing couldn't have been better. It was 1978, and Helen Epstein

had made headlines with her book *Children of the Holocaust*. Holocaust curricula were being introduced all over the United States, and Gerald Green's miniseries, "Holocaust," was filling America's TV screens.

I think that we children of Holocaust survivors can tend to feel we know a lot about those nightmare years in Europe, given the way they have left an imprint on our parents. But, like many others, I actually knew little in the way of facts before I began my reading of hundreds of articles and books of all kinds. I came to see that I had wanted to know less because the Holocaust had stolen my parents' past not just from them but from me, and had made reminiscing a dangerous and bleak prospect. This reading led me to teach a soul-stirring course on the Holocaust at the school in New York where I was an adjunct professor, and made me contemplate the possibility that my writing could serve a larger social purpose as opposed to being my individual path to success.

That's why the next five to six years were particularly frustrating. I was unable to sell a single story, anywhere. Rejections seemed to come by the pound. Perhaps I was young and overconfident and suffering from New York fantasies of greatness. Perhaps people weren't as ready to read fiction about the Second Generation as I had thought. I'll never know. What I do know is that it took being transplanted to Michigan—where I went to do a Ph.D.—to end the drought.

A black friend had told me she never felt so black as when she moved from New York City to Michigan and I have to tell you that East Lansing made me feel very Jewish. I, who had never been to a Passover Seder until I was twenty-three, sought out High Holy Day services for only the second time in my life. I moved into a Jewish students' co-op. I found myself attending Orthodox services; the feeling of sitting there for hours every Shabbat was like being wrapped in a warm and life-giving tallis.

This shift towards Judaism really had begun for me in New York before I left because my overwhelming immersion in reading about the Holocaust, about how Jews had died in Europe from 1933–1945, had left me hungry to know how they had lived. Though I'd read books of Jewish history before, I knew nothing about Judaism, and so I turned to books like Abraham Joshua Heschel's *The Earth is the Lord's* and Milton Steinberg's *Basic Judaism*. I found myself proud of my religion and fascinated by it.

In Lansing people at the minyan helped me learn prayers, learn what they meant, learn the structure of the services so



I found myself attending Orthodox services; the feeling of sitting there for hours every Shabbat was like being wrapped in a warm and life-giving tallis.

and became a *baal teshuvah*, one who returns. That same year I held the Torah during Kol Nidre, chanted by a Holocaust survivor with all the passion of a professional Old World Cantor. I felt exalted and faint, and that night I dreamt that someone was singing *Av harachamim*—merciful father. Isn't that what I needed?

Michigan—which we Jews there like to call the land of michigoyim—had other surprises for me. I met a nice Jewish doctor—with two sons. Not exactly what my parents had hoped for. I had supposed that they would cut me some slack because my brother had married a Catholic whom my mother called a "Poylisheh dripkeh," but we were both considered disappointments.

My partner had grown up with Orthodox Judaism forced on him without explanations. Whenever he'd ask why something was done, the answer was always "because." Well, together we started exploring how to connect ourselves to Jewish life, and I'm happy to say that our growing devotion to Yiddishkeit in many forms had a profound impact on one of my stepsons, who is now a Hillel Director.

This involvement with Jewish observance, which had been totally foreign to me, also led me to ask a simple question: if I truly had something to say, who was my audience? At the time I'd been trying to publish in national and literary magazines—but what about Jewish publications? *Andekt America*, right?

That was clearly the answer, and through the 1980s I steadily published again in places like the *Baltimore Jewish Times*, *The Detroit Jewish News*, *Agada*, *The Reconstructionist*, *Hadassah*, and even a Jewish magazine called *Shmate*.

By 1990 I was ready to publish a book of stories, *Dancing on Tisha B'Av*, whose subjects are children of survivors, coming out, anti-Semitism, and homophobia. I started touring bookstores and synagogues around the country and was amazed at the outpouring of gratitude for my work—and by the stories people told me. Quite often they were about secrets, about how individuals had found out they were Jewish in extraordinary circumstances.

I felt called. I recast a novel I'd been working on for years as a novel about secrets. *Winter Eyes* tells the story of Polish Jews who not only leave Europe but leave their Jewishness behind, or try to. They raise their son Stefan as a Catholic, and the book charts the price of hiding in this family.

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After that novel I was drawn in different directions—children's literature, psychology and education, memoir, a book about Edith Wharton. But the years of writing and speaking about the Holocaust and its impact had worn me out, and I needed a break. I also felt that my sense of humor never found expression in my work, and that was troubling. So in the mid-1990s I turned to writing mysteries. These were not just any mysteries, but academic satirical mysteries with a Jewish gay protagonist. That's probably niche marketing at its finest.

My amateur sleuth's partner was the character who appeared as a child and teenager in *Winter Eyes* and so here, too, was a thread of Second Generation anxiety and pain as well as an attempt to deal with Jewish identity.

Twenty-three years as a published writer have taught me that publishing is a hazardous enterprise at best, an arena of life where it would be best to inject your self-esteem with novocaine if such a thing were possible. A writing career is as unpredictable as the stock market, exhilarating on some days, crushing on others.

These past two decades of writing have also made it clear that no matter what kind of success I achieve, it will not redeem my parents' pain but only my own. I think this is a realization that many children of survivors have to come to. The infamy that struck our parents' lives can't be erased. That doesn't diminish what we've accomplished, only sets it in a more realistic context. When I look back at my beloved *Three Musketeers*, I see there is as much sorrow as excitement, as much pain as romance. The book isn't just a stage for swaggering swordplay—it is filled with loss, betrayal, loneliness, and death. Yet D'Artagnan survives with his honor intact. He grows up.

My latest project, on the immediate post-war years in Europe, brings me back to that kitchen table where I sat with my mother after school, and it's something I feel as called to write as anything that has ever seized my imagination and stirred my dreams and opened my word-hoard, as the Anglo-Saxon poets used to say.

After the war, my parents met in a displaced persons camp and wound up in Belgium. My mother, from a prominent Bundist family in Vilna, became a teacher at a Bund school in Brussels that I mentioned before, whose students were child survivors of the Holocaust or Jewish children hidden in Belgium by priests and nuns and other citizens. The Belgians did a particularly fine job of hiding Jews, especially Jewish children. But these children had lost not just years of schooling, they had lost their connection to yiddishkeit, and my mother taught Yiddish language and literature in an atmosphere of safety, love, and excitement. From what I have gathered, these were extraordinary times. People were alive again, and Brussels was a small *gan eden*, a paradise, after the sufferings of the war.

My mother always spoke fondly, joyfully of this time in her life, of the bakery on the first floor of their building

whose early morning breads wafted them awake, of the squeaky tram line on their street, the delicious fresh vegetables they couldn't seem to find in New York, the oddities and humor of living in a bicultural and bilingual country. They lived in Anderlecht and my father learned Flemish, while my mother's pre-war French flourished.

I heard about the plays her students performed; I saw her look at photos of them with affection and longing. She had kept the going-away present she had been given—a gorgeous clutch leather bag—wrapped and untouched. She loved her students, and in researching a book about this school and this special time of rebirth, I have been searching for and finding some of them. My mother's favorite student lives in Melbourne, but I've been able to interview her in Brussels and Houston.

This book may take years. There are people I need to interview face-to-face in Los Angeles, Montreal, Toronto, Brussels, Melbourne. I'm anxious to contact those elderly survivors whose insight and recollections I need, though I also know this is a complex story that cannot be rushed. It is a book I was born to write, combining memoir, travelogue, history, psychology. It will be a journey and a joy.

For me, writing has proven to be a catalyst, a laboratory; it has led to a deepened Jewish consciousness, profound connections with my people, bridges built between Jew and non-Jew, gay and straight. It has healed my own inner world and I have seen it as *tikkun olam*. I hope that everything I write says in one way or another what Jews say after someone has had an honor during a torah service, *yasher koach*, may your strength be multiplied.

And that is especially true since September 11. One consistent thread in firsthand accounts of the Holocaust I've read is the response to shocking news, and particularly the news about the concentration camps.

In memoir after memoir, report after report, one hears Jews trapped in ghettos or in hiding saying, "It can't be true. It's not possible." People didn't behave like that. Germans couldn't behave like that—they were so civilized, so cultured. My parents were among those who doubted the truth; it was simply too grotesque.

Initial accounts in American newspapers of Nazi atrocities were greeted with disbelief, as Walter Laqueur describes in his book, *The Terrible Secret*. When the Polish representative, Jan Karski—an eyewitness to the operation of the Belzec concentration camp—came to America to report what was happening in Poland, Justice Felix Frankfurter told him, "I can't believe you." He did not think that Karski was lying, he simply could not assimilate the unimaginable.

On September 11, I stayed by the TV Tuesday morning from the moment my youngest stepson called to tell me the World Trade Center was on fire and a plane had hit one of the towers. Even though I saw the second plane hit and then heard the news about the Pentagon, I quite literally

(continued on page 56)

Notes From Central Park

Dorien Ross



1 *This is the kind of day* we all wait for. The humidity breaks and the air clears. Big white clouds drift by unhurried, and the long nap of summer is on. There is a field in Central Park named The Great Lawn. Though I've yet to go there, I love the name, and I say phrases to myself like, "The Great Lawn spreads out before me...."

I pass a carousel with wooden horses, but then I can't find it again. Like the Great Lawn, it has an illusionary quality. Then again, so do all carousels. The music in the distance, children appearing with outstretched arms reaching for rings and then disappearing back into the shadows. Or it may be that all wooden



horses have this quality. Small ones in antique shop windows, large ones in the grassy backyards of families, miniature ones on the shelf in a child's room. They appear and disappear.

I've been tracking angels for some time now. Cynthia Ozick's angels can only be known by the smell of their burning feathers.

Whole flocks flew over Eastern Europe in search of more hospitable countryside, as the dark night of Europe approached. Bruno Schulz's angels leave silver footprints, scented stigmata, which appear as white spots on the biographies of our hearts. Chagall's angels float in white nightshirts above a star-studded shtetl sky. But Harry Lieberman's angels are the only Jewish angels I have ever actually seen. Awkward and childlike, they keep watch over a vanished world and all its hopes and prayers.

Rilke's angels, though deeply spiritual, strike me as beyond religion. I realize the very thought is blasphemous. But they are the dark angels. Angels of awe. And if they come from God, then it is a dark and awesome divinity, pulling us towards our fate, kicking and screaming. Demanding that we change our lives from the inside out.

Dorien Ross is the author of the novel *Returning to A* (City Lights Books, 1995). Her work has been published in *Best American Essays* (1991). "Notes From Central Park" is an essay from a work in progress of the same name.

Wim Wender's angels, tremendously appealing in their sympathies, are of course intellectual angels. They, too, are tracking. Recording in small notebooks the moments when the human spirit is in various states of longing for the divine. These angels lean into our moments to encourage us towards optimism, away from despair. Their leanings are rarely successful.

Rockinghorse angels are of no use to anyone, and this is why I love them. They don't protect anyone as a guardian angel might. They exist only as witness to the whimsy of childhood in a world that leaves us all too fast. A world where objects were animated, and each and every thing spoke to us, telling us stories, when we were put to sleep or left alone. There is no child who has not spoken with a horse. And it is no accident that Kaspar Hauser was left in his prison with only a tiny rockinghorse to play with. When he finally came out into the world, as an adult who had never seen another human, he spoke with stars, rocks, chairs, and humans equally. They said he was brilliant, and beyond explanation, neither crazy nor bitter. He never let go of his rockinghorse friend.

2 *It is afternoon.* I've had no crazy episodes yet. Weeping but not depression. Fear but no paranoia. Perhaps a leaning has occurred. Just this small shift is enormous. I still don't want to see people. They bounce off me, leaving me exhausted. But watching trees has become a major pastime.

Every color of green here, every insect that crawls on my arm, each bird sound has tracks back into memory. Green light under trees. Pale blue sky. And boat clouds that make you want to say, "O look, this one is a big ship with a smokestack, and that one a sail...."

I am afraid I will run out of memories. This is my constant fear. Ben and I are in our old GMC truck with rectangular mirrors that stick out the side, which gives Ben no end of pleasure because even then they didn't make them like they used to and we, even in our twenties, were already



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relics. We are driving down some country road in the Adirondacks and it's green as can be, with wide leaves speeding by. The wide leaves of summer. Dusk is coming on and the cooling air rushes in through all the open windows. I am sitting up close to Ben's strength. A kind of physical strength I never had.

He's singing—"Buy me a copper kettle, buy me a copper coil, fill it with new made corn meal and never more we'll toil...." Ben's deep voice is booming out over the engine noise, out into the night. There is something about his mood when he sings that has an almost holy quality.



Ben was a physical man, with no ability to express himself in words. All his wisdom was in his hands and in the way they touched the objects of the world. He could build anything. But his inability to express any thought or feeling created fits of rage and

tantrums of physical anger that caused him to leap out of our moving truck one night on the turnpike, cursing the fog and flinging his arms into the air like Job. He hurled obscenities at God, whom he believed was on his case. And so he was.

When Ben was open, when he wasn't raging, his soul was as large as the day itself. And then he would sing and in his voice there was all the unexpressed muteness of his being. And I, under his arm, felt a kind of protection I have never again experienced. It was the last of my childhood, but I didn't know that then. Back then it was just Ben and Dale forever in their twenties, driving always down country roads in old trucks, alternating between rage and wild openness.

3 *Will there come a time* when all those who have vanished return to us? Will it be before death, or nearing to death, that we will see more and more clearly the friends of our childhood? Even the small black ants crawling in the dust between my feet as I sit on the bench of the outdoor stage. Feeling the sun as it warms the chilled air. Watching the birch trees swirl. Each leaf a small pinwheel catching the sun and turning silver before my startled eyes.



And "The Bones," our black labrador mutt with one yellow eye, will he be there also? And Ben's blue eyes when they were clear of anger. Blue as a high August day. Will this color blue be waiting? And will all be forgiven? □

WRITING A JEWISH LIFE (from page 54)

could not believe what I was seeing. I'd just been in New York a day before and had flown past the World Trade Center through clear skies.

When my stepson said, "Oh my God, the tower's collapsing," my first thought was, "It's just on fire. The smoke and dust is from the fire."

Only later did I realize that, despite the evidence of my eyes, my stepsons' alarm, and the reports from commentators on the scene, I had immediately sought a less painful truth. Even though I had television, I, like Jews around the world during World War II facing the growing evidence of Nazi genocide, was vainly searching for a ray of hope.

When the first plane hit, my father was only three blocks away from the World Trade Center. Had circumstances been a little different, he might have been right on the scene and his car might have been one of the dusty, shattered hulks whose images have filled the news.

"Don't ask," he said. "It was like the war. The explosions—"

It was the fourth time in his life that he had escaped death.

Feeling the shock, feeling the sense of violation, the terror, but particularly the disbelief that has hit New Yorkers and the country as a whole, it is only now, some fifty years after my parents arrived in this free country, that I have a real inkling of what it must have felt like to say during the Holocaust, "This can't be happening. It's not possible." I feel closer to what my parents went through, in a strange and horrible way.

The unimaginable has come home, which makes the world all the more in need of healing, and writing, and praise. Yes, praise. The Polish poet Adam Zagajewski put it this way in a poem published by *The New Yorker* soon after September 11:

Try to praise the mutilated world. Remember June's long days, and wild strawberries, drops of wine, the dew.
The nettles that methodically overgrew the abandoned homesteads of exiles.
You must praise the mutilated world.
You watched the stylish yachts and ships; one of them had a long trip ahead of it, while salty oblivion awaited others.
You've seen the refugees heading nowhere, you've heard the executioners sing joyfully.
You should praise the mutilated world.
Remember the moments when we were together in a white room and the curtain fluttered.
Return in thought to the concert where music flared.
You gather acorns in the park in autumn and leaves eddied over the earth's scars.
Praise the mutilated world and the gray feather a thrush lost, and the gentle light that strays and vanished and returns. □

The House of Inspection

Heather Folsom

LONG AGO A PRISON WAS DESIGNED, the Panopticon. Prisoners would be isolated in separate cells that were organized like a stack of rings around a central tower. By special devices, the inspector in the tower would be able to see each prisoner but the prisoners would not be able to see the inspector. The prisoners could never be certain whether they were being watched or not. This combination of isolation and the sense of being observed was to lead to moral reflection and rehabilitation. Versions of the Panopticon were constructed from time to time; the most uncompromising was the experimental women's prison at A—.

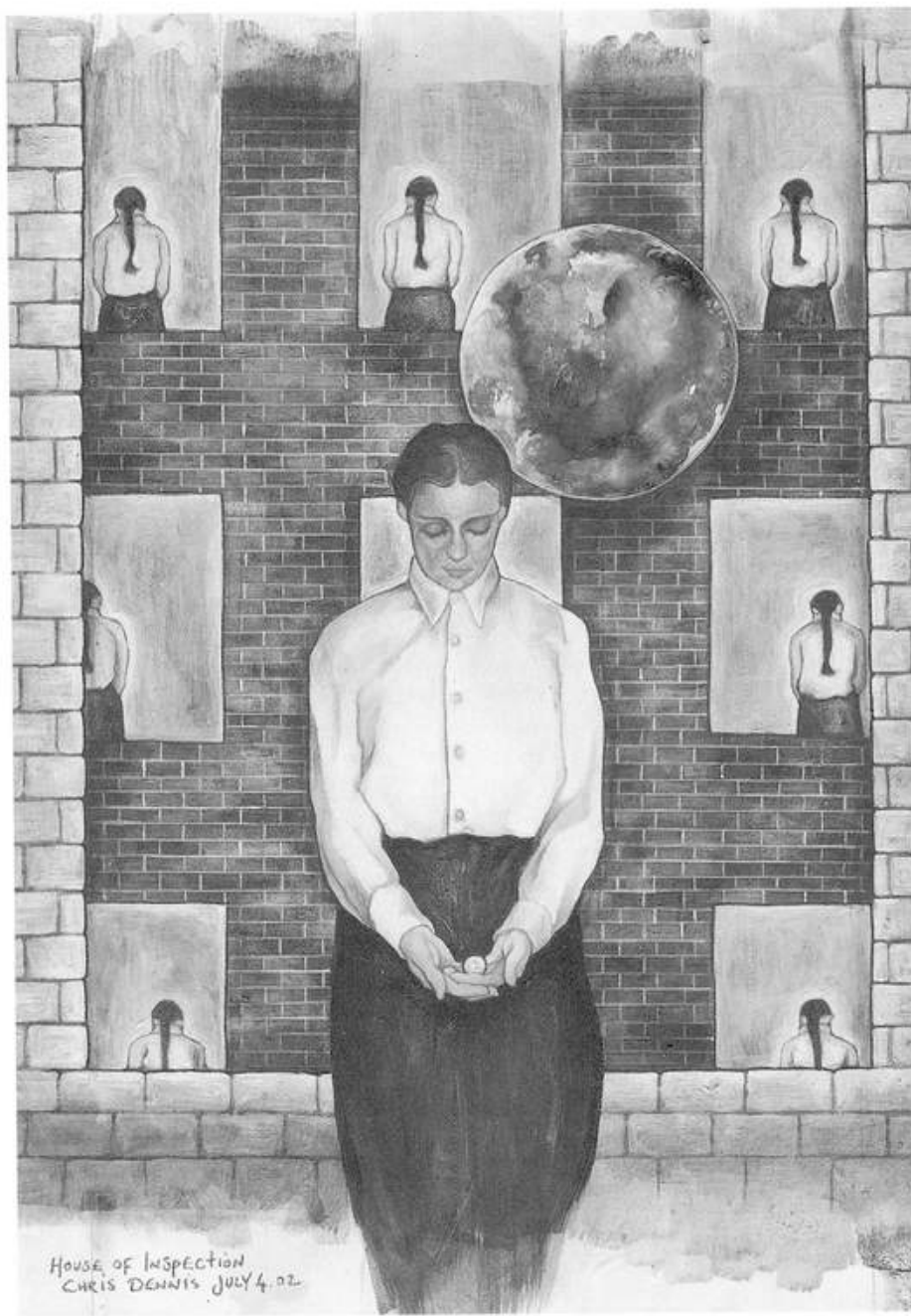
I awoke in despair. Outside the window, the inner wall of my cell, the sun's movement could be gauged by subtle changes in the black of the Tower. Another aimless day had begun.

I was used to austerity. A spy, I had thrived on it, alone and patient. In those days I had been the hidden one; concealment was my pleasure and my power. Now I was the one who was spied upon, by unseen guards within the Tower. Microphones detected each sound. It was unbearable. My only wish was for suicide, which, of course, was denied me. I could not force myself to get up. I closed my eyes again.

At that moment I heard something new. A faint rasping, coming from somewhere in the wall beside my bed. I have perfected the art of impassivity; I gave nothing away, though my thoughts and pulse were racing. Had privation driven my senses over the edge into hallucination? Was this some experiment emanating from the Tower? Or could it possibly be something outside its implacable order?

After awhile the rasping stopped. Whatever its cause, the novelty gave me the strength to get up.

I forced myself to stay away from the wall and go through my daily routine. Eventually night came, though the light in



my cell remained on, as always. Lying down, I heard the sound again. It now sounded more like scratching or scraping. It would stop from time to time, then start up again.

The next day was altogether different. There was no scratching to greet me when I awakened, but I felt hungry, thirsty, full of excruciating impatience. I made every effort to appear unchanged, to mask my feelings of anxiety and excitement. At last it was time to lie down again. The blessed, mysterious sound had returned.

The episodes of scratching continued for several days. One night there was a momentary change in pitch: it went up, then there was silence. I rolled over next to the wall, as if turning in sleep. An almost imperceptible hole had appeared. I watched it through half-lidded eyes.

Heather Folsom is a writer and psychiatrist. A version of this story will appear in her book of short stories, *Philosophie Thinly Clothed* (Cadmus Editions, 2003). © Heather Folsom.

A few nights later a tiny sphere emerged from the hole, rolled a little distance, and came to rest on the floor. Was it possible the prisoner in the cell next to mine had succeeded in a gamble of contact? Could the object be dangerous? My only fear was that it would be taken away. I let a couple of days go by. Then, dropping a piece of bread on it, I was able to unobtrusively pick it up. I looked at it on my tray. Not knowing what to do, I put it in my mouth. When it came in contact with a tooth, there was a vibration. I pushed it more firmly with my tongue.

I felt a pattern of long and short pulses like a simple code I had learned in childhood. But the message now was nothing I had heard before.

It was a barrage of rantings of every description, delivered at a tremendous pitch of intensity. There were outpourings of prejudice and hatred, fantasies of violence accompanied by curses and epithets, psychotic rhapsodies, monologues of suicide and self-mutilation. Every possible perverse act and fantasy was described. I stayed awake at night, spent my days, bathed in the stream of words. What was the source of this mayhem? Could it be my jailers? It seemed impossible, such an intense pressure of expression from the faceless desolation of the Tower. If this were some new form of mind control, I chose to submit.

Eventually I tapped my tongue against the sphere. The current of language flowed on, ignoring me. I attempted to interject myself several times. At last I succeeded in getting out a complete phrase.

Suddenly there was a response, a curse at my stupidity, but nonetheless, a reaction from some unseen soul. My gratitude surprised and frightened me. I retreated into listening.

I began to recognize others: some by their characteristic turns of phrase, some by their familiar rhythms and hesitations, and some, of course, by their signature preoccupations. A few gave their names or cell numbers, most went by pseudonyms.

There was no limit to the violence of the ravings. It seemed to fill a desperate need, beyond reaction to the misery of imprisonment, to something deeper: a demand for complete exposure and understanding. What would have happened if speakers had been able to confront each other in person? Fights to the death, I supposed. The exchanges replaced something essential which had been utterly exhausted during months and years of isolation. The dark—even detestable—passions of others were better than the vacuum of one's own depleted imagination. Newcomers to the system were easy to recognize: hesitancy and restraint gradually gave way to fluency and freedom beyond reckoning.

We were all sentenced to life without parole, a fact that haunted every waking moment. The arrogant Tower believed it knew its captives, and in knowing us, controlled us. But the hidden world of words was our truer life, which

the Tower, for all its vigilance, never suspected. The system was our deliverance.

Then the colloquy changed. Crimes were confessed, tales told. A few of us were more reticent; I seemed to be the most reserved of all. Once in awhile I would make a comment, most of the time I was content to listen. Occasionally I revealed a story from my past.

Gradually, almost imperceptibly, something happened to me: for the first time, I began to feel that I was part of something. It was odd, I felt repelled and drawn closer at the same time. I followed with interest the lives of each prisoner. I awakened each morning in the river of narrative, I fell asleep in it at night.

So much was shared, and so continuously, it came to feel like the sharing of thought itself, unalloyed by inhibition or even by language. All this at A—, the most unlikely place on earth, and therefore the most necessary.

The tenor of our reflections continued to change. Now there were occasions of agreement—the yearning for freedom, the dread of death, the haunting of regret. At times a melancholic mood, bordering on despair, descended on us. There were even periods of silence, not because we were absent, but because we had no words for our grief. We were profound, foolish, brilliant, wrong, vulnerable, our greatest and worst selves. There was time for everything. Ultimately, there was an expectation of everything.

Breakout was a topic that was discussed in a variety of ways, most commonly as a joke, an impossible hope. Suddenly we became electrified with the idea, unified and passionate. A tremendous craving burst forth, to see beyond the Tower to a city, a stretch of desert, a mountain. The talk was of nothing else—what was missed, what was dreamed of, and finally, how it would be done. The risks were great: we faced the loss of our salvation, communication itself. But such was our longing, we agreed to go forward.

We embarked on a program of distractions, taking turns enacting crises that required attention from the Tower. At a designated time, a few prisoners would stage attempted suicides, heart attacks, or psychotic episodes. Simultaneously, other prisoners would work on weakening the walls between the cells and on the more difficult walls that bordered the outer corridor. We drilled and scraped with the most primitive of tools, then passed tools through holes between cells. We constantly commented on our progress, shared frustrations and warnings, offered advice. When it was my turn to create a distraction—an attack upon the hated inner wall which was to end with injuring my leg—I threw myself into the task without reservation. Others cheered me on. I signaled for them to stop, fearing my performance might be compromised. The system went silent. The profundity of that silence, the camaraderie and presence of it, stopped my breath.

The time for breakout was near. We had a rapid count-off system for checking in. We had backup plans—anyone

could ask for help; if someone missed three check-ins in a row, a rescue group would be sent to that location. We practiced and drilled until everything was automatic.

The night before the breakout we feigned sleep but held a giant party. We became sentimental, silly, told jokes and stories. We knew we should rest but we were too excited. There was apprehension, too. What if it were all a hoax? What if we failed?

Though I was nervous and tired the next morning, I forced myself to eat breakfast as usual. It suddenly occurred to me that I would soon be viewing the others whose disembodied minds I now knew as well as my own. I felt impatient. I worried that perhaps we looked different to the eyes in the Tower. I lounged, tried to appear relaxed, felt particularly exposed. We were subdued, mostly silent. From time to time someone blurted out an anxious thought.

We were well into the final check-in round, ready for our roles in the breakout. The moment came. We attacked the walls between the cells, weakened by months of surreptitious drilling. The walls crumbled. Groups formed in designated cells and hurled themselves against the weakened outer walls, which gave way in jagged sections. Still communicating only by the system, we awaited the arrival of the guards.

As expected, not enough guards were sent. It seemed unlikely that the Tower would be prepared for a complete uprising. After all, the principle of the prison was isolation.

Not even the all-seeing Tower could have guessed the unanimity of our effort. We heard them shouting in surprise and disbelief.

Another contingency of guards arrived, but it was too late and there were still too few of them.

We heard their exclamations but we did not speak. This seemed to further unhinge them. We bound them and left without a word.

Upon reaching ground level, the unexpected happened: in one body we turned, not outside to freedom, but inside. We were impelled to enter the Tower, to triumph over the structure that had oppressed us for so long.

We surged into a vast cylinder of a room. From the inside, its wall was transparent. A ramp spiraled upward, dotted every ten yards or so with an observation guard-post. At the posts, overturned chairs gave evidence of the haste with which the guards had fled. In the center of the room, the empty superintendent's chair slowly rotated. We rushed up to the posts, each of us driven to find our cell.

I found mine. There were the holes in my walls, made only moments before. A few guards had broken free of their bonds and were running in confusion through the ravaged cells.

We, too, were confused. At the culmination of our attack, standing at the observation posts and looking back at our cells, a strange quietude gripped us. Astonishingly, it

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FICTION

seemed to be regret at our incipient parting.

A moment later, a sense of urgency coursed through the system. We ran to the underground garage and climbed into transport vans and staff cars, grabbing available clothing as we went. I managed to procure a civilian jacket. We started the engines, opened the doors and headed out into freedom.

In the nearest city, I jumped down from the van and signaled my good-byes. The van disappeared. I removed the sphere from my mouth and put it in my pocket. The change was as shocking as a fall into icy water. I was alone.

Familiar patterns of survival returned. I obtained money and checked into a hotel. Then, just when I expected to be most active and purposeful, I lost all energy. I stayed in the hotel room, ordering from room service, sleeping, reading newspapers, and watching TV for news of the breakout. Nothing. There were sounds all around, yet the world seemed unnaturally silent. I started angrily talking to myself, "Have you turned into one of those prisoners who can't make it on the outside?" To prove I wasn't, I threw myself into my old life. But I could not stop wondering why there had been no mention of the breakout.

Cursing myself for my foolishness, I went back toward A—. I stayed across the valley and watched the prison through binoculars. For several days no one came or left. Unable to contain my curiosity any longer, I made my way to the prison.

The gates to the garage were unlocked. A few vehicles were inside, but there was no sign of activity. My new gun drawn, I advanced into the garage and took the first staircase up to the Tower.

At first the huge cylinder seemed unchanged. The chairs were still overturned at the observation posts, the room appeared empty.

I heard a voice. Someone in a guard uniform was rotating in the superintendent's chair and talking on the telephone. She hadn't noticed me. She seemed to be dissimulating that everything was functioning as normal. She hung up.

I crept up behind her and placed my gun against her head. The guard had a gun in her holster but she didn't even try to reach for it. She seemed, inexplicably, bored. She waved a hand toward the ramps.



Hours of Inspection
Chris Downey, July 4, 95

To keep my gun in place, I had to circle alongside the chair. Was some trap being set? It didn't have the familiar feel of one. Did the Tower still hold some covert powers?

The phone rang and the guard answered. Having a gun-barrel at the back of her head didn't seem to trouble her. Again she seemed to be reporting that all was as usual.

When she hung up, I jerked the gun sharply against her head and asked for an explanation.

Instead of answering, she sighed, got up, and started to walk over to the ramp. Momentarily, I flicked my eyes away from her and out toward the cells. I could hardly believe what I saw.

The walls were still in shambles but the scene was transformed. Many cells were jammed

with furniture. Some cells contained two, even three occupants.

The guard continued toward the ramp; I was right behind her. She started to raise her hand. I grabbed it and pinned it behind her back. She cursed and told me she was trying to point to her mouth.

Of course.

I put my hand in my pocket, found the sphere, and positioned it in place. In that instant of relief I knew—the river of rhythms, the connection of mind and word, had become a necessity to me. I was shocked at the profundity of my reaction. I started trembling.

But something discordant was present, a cacophony of novices and strangers. It was the babble of early days: hatred, misunderstanding, power struggles. I broke in and demanded to know what was going on. Greetings swarmed back at me.

I was further undone, almost weeping. Could it be that I cared so much to be recognized, to be welcomed? Someone I knew explained that almost everyone had returned and taken up residence in their old cells. The newcomers were guards and prison personnel, even the superintendent.

I ran up the ramp and looked out to my cell. Two interlopers had made it their home. I announced I was returning. Some activity began, but it wasn't fast enough to suit me. I added, more forcefully, they had five minutes to clear out. I reminded everyone that I was a loner.

In response, the sphere pulsed wildly, its version of hoots of laughter. □

Elie Wiesel and the Question of Palestine

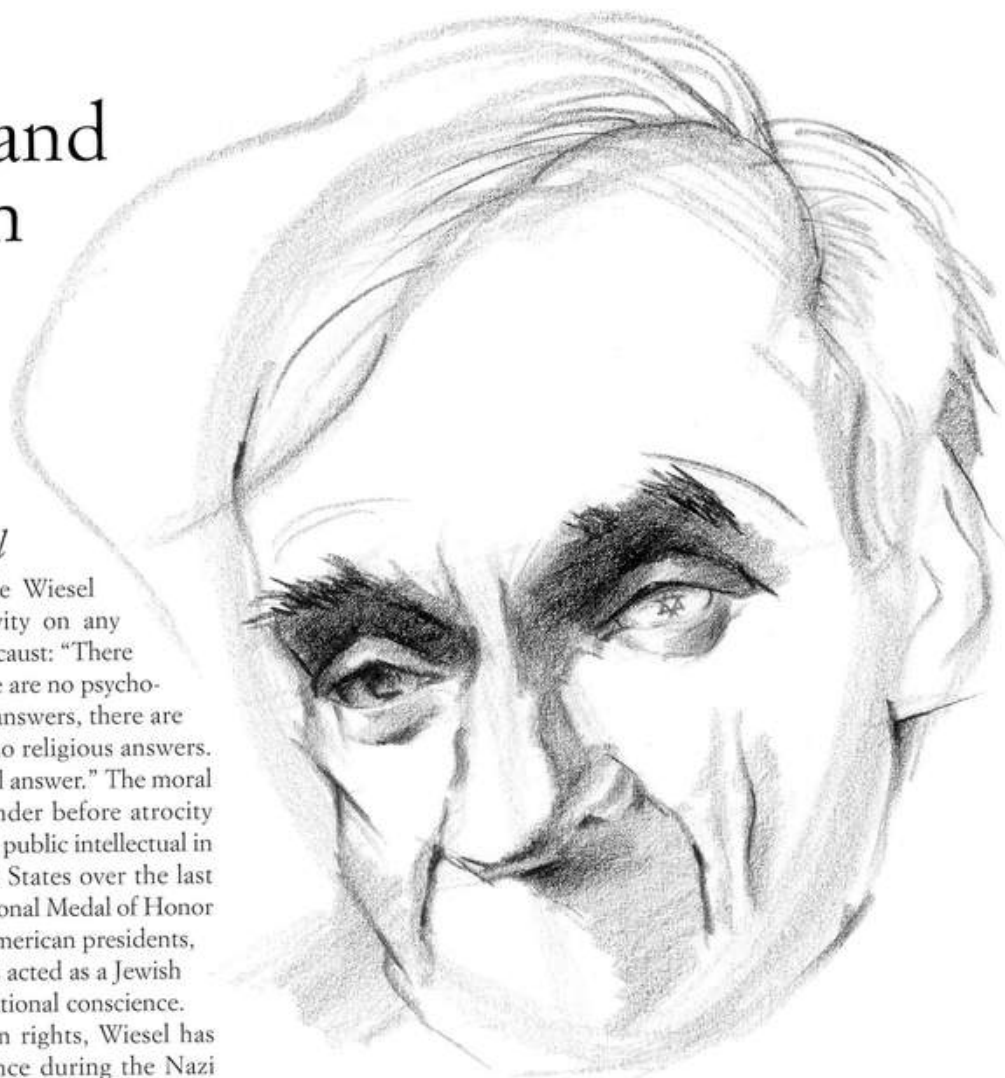
Mark Chmiel

The Witness of Elie Wiesel

In his 1986 Nobel lecture, Elie Wiesel spoke with characteristic gravity on any attempt to reckon with the Holocaust: "There are no theological answers, there are no psychological answers, there are no literary answers, there are no philosophical answers, there are no religious answers. The only conceivable answer is a moral answer." The moral themes of silence and being a bystander before atrocity have been central to Wiesel's work as a public intellectual in his adopted homeland of the United States over the last four decades. Winner of the Congressional Medal of Honor in 1985, confidant of and advisor to American presidents, author of over forty books, Wiesel has acted as a Jewish guardian of memory and as an international conscience. In his many interventions for human rights, Wiesel has drawn upon his own bitter experience during the Nazi years. He once confessed, "I am obsessed with silence because of the silence of the world. Where were the humanists, the leaders, the liberals, the spokesmen for mankind? The victims needed them. If they had spoken up, the slaughterer would not have succeeded in his task." Over the decades, the European Christian churches, the American Jewish community, and even the pre-war Zionists have come in for Wiesel's critical questioning because of their silence, prudence, faint-heartedness, or interest in priorities other than saving European Jewish lives.

Wiesel has also goaded his fellow citizens to respond to the suffering of victims today. In the last thirty years he has put his ever-increasing prestige at the service of a variety of causes. In a 1974 interview, Wiesel confided to his interlocutors: "I don't think [the Jew] should become obsessed with only Jewishness. I think he should be obsessed with everything else as well. I am. I was obsessed by Biafra; I think I was among the first to fight for Biafra. I saw the children's pictures in the newspapers and I couldn't sleep."

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After the Holocaust, can Wiesel justify his silence about the Palestinians?

Accordingly, Wiesel's concern has been extended to Holocaust survivors, Russian Jews, the Vietnamese boat people, Bosnian and Kosovar victims of ethnic cleansing, Tibetans under Chinese occupation, and Miskito Indians in Nicaragua. In these cases Wiesel has minimized politics and instead emphasized the moral role of witness. His time-honored strategy has been to listen to the cries of those victims whose upheaval reminds him of his own. As he has moved from one crisis to the next, he has shared his time and energy with the victims and their allies.

Yet, throughout this illustrious career, Wiesel has been plagued by one controversy, a controversy as to how his apothegms against silence and his philosophy of witness apply to what Edward Said has called "the ethical

dimensions of the Palestinian issue." Jews as various as Noam Chomsky, Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg, and Israeli journalist Matti Golan have been critical of Wiesel's position on Israel and the Palestinians. How has the Nobel Laureate and advocate of remembrance addressed the question of Palestine?

The Innocent Occupation

In an essay "To a Concerned Friend" shortly after the June 1967 War, Wiesel tried to reassure French writer François Mauriac that he need not worry about Israel acquiring a conqueror's mentality. In this letter, Wiesel stressed that the meaning of victory in the Jewish tradition is primarily victory over oneself and that victory does not depend upon crushing one's opponent, "for this reason too the Jew has never been an executioner; he is almost always the victim." He considered the Israeli Occupation of the West Bank and Gaza necessary, but also declared it to be "the most humane and least oppressive possible." For Wiesel, Israel was the victor that didn't want a conflict; the conqueror who refused to engage in retribution. In what will serve as his refrain on Israel in the troubled decades to come, Wiesel later stated, "the Jewish fighters did not become cruel. They became sad." Implicit in Wiesel's letter was the assurance to Mauriac that one need not worry about such sad, i.e., humane, soldiers.

According to Wiesel, what Israel's critics found so hard to forgive was that Israel had not sacrificed its honor or its purity. He contended, "It is because Israelis commit no sacrilege and profane no mosques, that they are resented." In addition to being militarily triumphant, Wiesel maintained that Israel was morally unimpeachable, unlike so many other states in the international arena. He characterized Israel's conquest to be a moral victory above all, for Israel's "national independence has not been achieved at the price of human dignity," despite the fact that it required displacing seven hundred thousand Palestinians in 1948. Indeed, Wiesel accused Israel's judges of hypocrisy, reciting a litany of political horrors around the globe about which "the world remained silent," even though people somehow found the time to criticize Israel. Finally, he offered the following principle, which linked the Holocaust and Israel: "The nations that kept silent during the Holocaust ought to keep silent now as well. The world that then condemned itself by its silence has lost all right to judge Israel now." In Wiesel's formulation, the European Jewish experience dominates the Middle East: Because "the world" didn't respond to Jewish suffering during the Holocaust, that world has no right to find fault with Israel as occupier of Arab lands in 1967.

Still, Wiesel expressed hope in future reconciliation between the Jews and Arabs. He conceived that this was the true vision of Israel, but, regrettably, felt extremists influenced Arab leaders. Such leaders did "not take the hand extended them, and therein lies the tragedy." Wiesel did not

remark to Mauriac that shortly after Israel began its occupation, plans went through for Jewish settlements on occupied Palestinian lands; Palestinians were also the victims of Israeli collective punishment and deportation, which violated international law. Thus, 1967 witnessed Wiesel assuming the role of a mystic pacifist lauding the military triumph of an innocent, even passive, occupying power.

Confronting the Suffering of the Palestinians

Several years later, in 1979, Wiesel attempted to address the Palestinian movement for liberation in his letter "To a Young Palestinian Arab," published in *A Jew Today*. There, he expressed a desire to make human contact with the Palestinians and to further the goal of mutual understanding. He wished to confront the "pain" of the Palestinian, since that was what separated Jew from Arab, and, in so doing, to judge himself, since another's suffering was a call to his own responsibility. With his habitual suspicion of political matters, Wiesel emphasized that his engagement came out of a moral commitment: "I draw this to your attention from the start, because I do not understand and am wary of politics."

In this letter, Wiesel insisted that both sides had valid arguments. What touched him deeply was the human, ethical dimension of Palestinian suffering. But for each Palestinian complaint, Wiesel countered with a corresponding Jewish trump that served to fault the Arabs: "If only they had taken into account Jewish suffering also, the Jewish right to also claim its sovereignty on its ancestral land." He urged the Palestinians to adopt what he characterized as a particularly Jewish response to suffering: rather than inflict a justified vengeance on an unfeeling world, the Jewish survivor chose to take a stand on behalf of humanity. In contrast, Wiesel framed the Palestinians' response to their suffering as terrorism: they killed innocent Jews who had already known enough suffering and death. He thought that his Palestinian interlocutor would surely describe these violent acts as the work of extremists; however, Wiesel asserted, "they acted on your behalf, with your approval, since you did not raise your voice to reason with them. You will tell me that it is your tragedy which incited them to murder. By murdering, they debased that tragedy, they betrayed it."

In short, although Wiesel started this letter with a hope to connect at an ethical level with the Palestinians, he gradually moved into blaming the Palestinians and averting his eyes from the political causes of their grievances. In this encounter with the Palestinian, Wiesel instinctively adverted to the incomparable suffering of the Holocaust and the way Jews supposedly transcended that brutality in an amazingly humanistic way. He compared Palestinian responses to suffering under Israel with Holocaust survivors' responses to suffering in Europe. What he did not do was raise the pertinent issue of what Zionist Jews in

Palestine did with their European-based suffering before and after the Holocaust in their quest for a Jewish state outside of Europe and, after 1948, what Israeli Jews had done with their historical inheritance of affliction in relation to the indigenous Palestinians. Wiesel admitted that he felt responsible for Palestinian "sorrow" which, in historical terms, was caused by the mass dispossession since 1948 and military occupation since 1967. But he didn't specify what he felt compelled to do as a result of feeling responsible for this sorrow and he did not acknowledge any wrong-doing by Israel as a direct agent in causing Palestinian suffering.

Political critic Edward S. Herman maintains that "if 'terrorism' means 'intimidation by violence or the threat of violence,' and if we allow the definition to include violence by states and agents of states, then it is these, not isolated individuals or small groups, that are the important terrorists of the world." In his rebuke of the Palestinian embrace of violence, Wiesel chose not to condemn how Jewish terrorists, like Menachem Begin in the Irgun, engaged in murderous activities against the British and the indigenous Arab population in Palestine or how in the 1950s, Israel attacked the villages of Kafr Kassem and Qibya. In his letter to the Palestinian, Wiesel did not comment upon various Israeli policies in the Occupied Territories during the 1970s, which were, apparently, enacted on his behalf as a Jew by the Jewish state, according to his own logic in criticizing the Palestinian. He had not raised his voice (outside of Israel, anyway) to reason with the Golda Meirs and Yitzhak Rabins who promoted illegal Jewish settlement in the Occupied Territories, negated the existence of Palestinians, denied their right to return to their homes, and opposed their political right to exercise national self-determination. Given his own outspoken views on the nature of witness, did this silence indicate Wiesel's approval of these Israeli policies? How could the twentieth-century's renowned advocate for speaking out against injustice not speak?

The Responsibility of Jewish Intellectuals

Wiesel's dedication to defending Israel was called upon in a most serious way in 1982, during the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. Since the invasion constituted an undeniable and unprovoked aggression, international criticism was directed at Israel. During this time, some Israelis engaged in the kind of dehumanizing rhetoric that Arab leaders had directed at Israeli Jews in 1967. For example, General Rafael Eitan stated, "When we have settled the land, all the Arabs will be able to do about it will

be to scurry around like drugged roaches in a bottle."

More than at any time in the recent past when he sought to justify Israeli actions, Wiesel was now on the defensive. In an interview in early September 1982, he depicted Israel as being "forced to take cruel and distressing measures," though he did not indicate why or how Israel, long lauded for its "purity of arms," was so forced to destroy a city full of innocent civilians. But what Wiesel found most distressing over the course of the summer was the widespread expression of hate towards Jews and the State of Israel. He

In what will serve as his refrain on Israel in the troubled decades to come, Wiesel later stated, "the Jewish fighters did not become cruel. They became sad."

believed that the press was engaging in distortions and did not show Israel's perspective. He applauded Israel for remaining remarkable, as its democratic character had been preserved even during the war. Wiesel still avowed that no country was in a position to give moral lessons to Israel.

In the September interview, Wiesel's interlocutor pointed out that, "as a survivor of the Nazi terror, you have taught that silence is the greatest sin, that it should always be avoided." He asked Wiesel if it was not those Jews, now critical of Israel's invasion, who

were best upholding Wiesel's own teaching. Wiesel's response was twofold. As a general principle, Jews should observe, "but not pass judgment. Our role is to witness." In specific, Wiesel admitted to feeling hurt and grief over what he had witnessed, but criticism was out of the question: "I have a principle. I am not Israeli, I am a diaspora Jew, and the price I pay, the price I chose to pay for not living in Israel, especially in times of danger, is not to criticize Israel from outside its borders. When I have something to say, I go there and say it. Sometimes I am received with anger, but I do it nevertheless. That is my taboo, and I stop on that line." Through this period, he clearly considered Israel to be the main victim, as it was not the Israeli invasion that he deemed excessive, but the discourse of Israel's critics, some of whom were Israeli and, like Wiesel, Holocaust survivors. For Wiesel, the responsible Jewish intellectual should simply have expressed total loyalty to Israel.

A week after Wiesel's article appeared in London, Lebanese Christian militias ruthlessly murdered hundreds of Palestinian civilians in the Beirut refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila. Although Israeli military forces did not take part in the actual atrocities, they trained, armed, and, in effect, allowed the Phalange killers to proceed with their butchery. The events at Sabra and Shatila precipitated even more revulsion than that already expressed by world opinion against the Israeli invasion. Once again, Wiesel was pressed for a response. He granted that, since 1945, he had not known a Rosh Hashanah as dark as the one of 1982. But even in the face of this mass murder at the time of the

Jewish New Year, Wiesel's devotion to Israel remained undiminished: "It is not that I accuse or indict anyone, and surely not the people of Israel, but I felt sadness, incommensurate sadness, almost disarmed."

Such remarks indicate Wiesel's inability and unwillingness to speak critically in the face of the wanton destruction of Palestinian civilians, although he had rightly produced such trenchant criticism of Poles and Germans, popes and presidents, for not speaking out during the Nazi years. When confronted with the horror of a cold-blooded massacre of Palestinians in Beirut, Wiesel could not bring himself to address this atrocity; instead, he recalled the Holocaust: "Perhaps if we had told the story [of the Holocaust] more convincingly, if we had prevented the trivialization and cheapening of what was and remains a unique catastrophe, things would not have happened this way." A year before, Zionist leader Nahum Goldmann articulated a quite different point of view: "To use the Holocaust as an excuse for the bombing of Lebanon, as Menachem Begin does, is a kind of *Hillul Hashem* [sacrilege], a banalization of the sacred tragedy of the Shoah [Holocaust], which must not be misused to justify politically doubtful and morally indefensible policies."

The Intifada and Public Criticism of Israel

Throughout the 1980s, Palestinians in the Israeli-occupied territories continued to face harassment, expulsion, arbitrary arrest, restrictions on movement, land confiscation, demolition of homes, and political repression. In December 1987 a spontaneous uprising of Palestinians began in the Gaza Strip and soon spread to the West Bank, taking the form of a massive and, for the most part, nonviolent, civil insurrection against the Israeli Occupation. The media showed vivid scenes of Palestinian youths throwing stones at the powerful Israeli army. Soon these demonstrations of Palestinian courage and desire for independence led to greater sympathy for their struggle and forthright criticism of Israel's harsh measures, such as Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin's insistence on ending the revolt with force, beatings, and might. The stakes of the Israel-Palestine conflict were featured more prominently in the U.S. media and some American Jews became even more vocal in their criticism of the Israeli Occupation, with proposals for a two-state solution being taken more seriously.

In the spring of 1988, when he was in Israel, Wiesel visited the Gaza Strip and subsequently gave an eyewitness report in an op-ed in *The New York Times*. He began his testimony by reflecting on the relative normalcy of Gaza, in contrast to its recently acquired reputation as a cauldron of Palestinian resistance. He noted that the Israeli military forces were "more felt than seen" as were "the implacable plight of tens of thousands of refugees who dwell in inhuman conditions in two camps nearby." Wiesel talked with a

few Palestinians as well as with young Israeli soldiers, and he raised many urgent questions: "How should one deal with the sufferings of the Palestinians? Is insensitivity the answer? Isn't a Jew called upon to be sensitive to his fellow human beings? How then is one to reconcile the needs of security with Judaism's concept of humanism?" His discussions led Wiesel to raise the obvious question: "Should Israel be above criticism?" His response: "No one says that." Wiesel admitted Israel's "shortcomings," but he objected to how the Israelis were being presented as "bloodthirsty," or, in circles favorable to Arab causes, the way "Israel is being compared to Hitler's Germany, its policy to Nazism, and the Palestinians of today to the Jews of yesterday. How are we to convince Israel's political adversaries that the Holocaust is beyond politics and beyond analogies?"

Wiesel acknowledged his sympathy for the Palestinians who had been isolated and "betrayed by the whole world," including other Arab nations. When they had been condemned to be non-persons, "why shouldn't they have chosen violence as a means of attracting attention to their existence and their dreams of obtaining national identity?" Wiesel's wording here is interesting—some Palestinians chose violence since some Israelis denied their very existence (Golda Meir), and both political blocs, Labor and Likud, attempted to crush the Palestinian dream of obtaining not so much "national identity," but national freedom. Wiesel agreed that in modern civilization, self-determination is "a sacred principle," and that such a principle applied to the Palestinians; but he questioned exactly what this Palestinian self-determination was, as he attested that the Palestinians had been dangerously expanding their goals.

Israel, on the other hand, "did not want those territories" Wiesel assured his readers—"they were imposed on Israel in war." Such imputed passivity is at odds with the explicit Israeli determination to create "facts on the ground" with Jewish settlements; the territories weren't "imposed," they were desired for political and economic ends and then taken. In short, Wiesel conceded that he did not accept all that Israel had done in response to the intifada, but he felt obliged nevertheless to come to the aid of the Jewish State.

Over a year and a half later, as the intifada had changed the political contours and debate of the Israel-Palestine conflict, Wiesel introduced a symposium for the U.S. Zionist monthly, *Midstream*, on the current crisis. He asserted that Jews were entitled to discuss Israeli policy since whatever happens to Israel will affect Jewish life everywhere. In the present context of what he called the "recent Palestinian riots," Wiesel maintained that discussion by Jews about Israeli policy "must be anchored in a deep attachment to and love of the Jewish State." Only those who had expressed solidarity with Israel in the past were entitled to speak now, and their privilege was only to "voice their sadness when faced with certain events taking place in Israel."

He repeated his untiring principle, "In personal terms: I refuse to see myself in the role of judge over Israel. The role of the Jew is to bear witness; not to pass judgment." Perhaps in response to those critics who had accused him of silence, Wiesel interpreted this principle as not constituting a "vow of silence." Modifying his earlier view that the diaspora Jew could say nothing at all about Israel, he now averred, "We may ask all the questions; but the answers belong to the Israeli people." Wiesel's stance begs its own question: Who benefited from this anguished call for questions? Not the Palestinians who were held in administrative detention, whose land was expropriated, and whose homes were demolished.

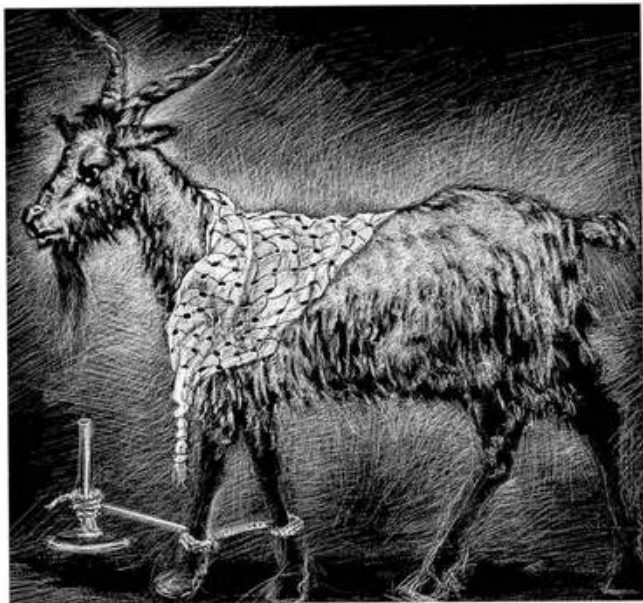
Retrospection and Reckoning

Certainly after the first intifada, events moved at a dizzying pace in the Middle East: the August 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the U.S.-led war on Iraq in 1991; the U.S.-brokered Madrid Negotiations; the Oslo Accords between Israel and the PLO; the reciprocal, reactionary violence of Jewish and Islamic fundamentalists; the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin; Israeli redeployments, and the battle over continued Israeli settlements and Jerusalem, even as the Palestinian Authority attempted to exercise control in territories partially ceded by Israel. Throughout the 1990s Wiesel's position on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict remained consistent with his long-standing defense of Israel, although there emerged some interesting shifts, admissions, and nuances not present in his public work before.

Many American Jews and liberals had long shared Wiesel's views on Israel: don't speak critically about Israel and don't acknowledge fundamental Palestinian rights. As Wiesel grew in public stature with increased connections to American power, he became a part of the prevailing consensus on the assumed U.S. role in promoting a "peace process" between Israel and the Palestinians. Like Israeli leaders, Wiesel even modified his views on Arafat, becoming willing to at least consider Arafat a "partner in peace." In general, Wiesel came to adopt the terms of the dominant U.S. discourse: his mission was to overcome the fanaticism of the extremists and terrorists, even as he continued to hope for miracles and exalt Israel's commitment to peace. This discourse obscured how the "peace process" further marginalized the Palestinian people, with the dismissal of their fundamental rights.

Nevertheless, Wiesel evinced greater discomfort about the evolution of Israeli society in recent years. In his memoirs, he wrote freely about the many currents in Israel that disturbed him. He realized that by speaking plainly he was likely to antagonize some Israelis who believed that, unless he lived in Israel, he had no right to criticize what they do.

Wiesel justified his speaking out this way: "Oh yes, I know the formula, having used it myself at times. A person who does not live Israel's ordeals and challenges has no right to criticize its decisions. Never mind. I shall speak out, because the situation is too serious and the stakes too high for me to remain silent. An ancient philosopher said: When truth is in danger, silence equals guilt." Previously, Wiesel had not found the stakes too high when it came to criticizing Israeli policies towards the Palestinians. But he became so



disturbed by what Israelis were saying about other Jews that he had to leave behind his long-standing formula and address these concerns in a forthright way.

One of the issues that bothered Wiesel was the hostility toward his own person, which he noticed after he won the Nobel Prize in 1986: "And so I learn that Israel is the only non-Arab country where, along with the praise, there were negative articles on the Nobel committee's decision—not many, but enough to make me sad. A journalist from the extreme right scolds me for not living in Israel; one from the extreme left is angry because I have not sufficiently espoused the Palestinian cause. Once again I am told that by choosing to live in the Diaspora, I have sinned against Israel." Wiesel then lamented the fanatic divisions between secular and religious, the frequent tone of rancor that did not allow for dignified discussion of serious matters, and Israelis' supercilious tone toward diaspora Jews as second-class Jews. Wiesel was also unnerved by the 1996 assassination of Yitzhak Rabin and Baruch Goldstein's massacre of Palestinians at prayer in Hebron in 1994. Both Yigal Amir, Rabin's assassin, and Goldstein were committed to a racist and extremist religious ideology that dehumanized the Palestinians and threatened other Israelis who had a different view on peace negotiations. About Goldstein, Wiesel exclaimed, "There can be no justification for the murderous act of a religious man, a physician whose calling it was to save lives. What was it in Israel's political climate that made this criminal act possible?" Yet Wiesel could not

remain focused on these troubling realities. Instead, he concluded his reflection by turning to "Israel's young people, who will soon be summoned by the army. I think of the dreamers in front of the Wall. I think of all those mothers and fathers who lost their sons in combat. In times of doubt it is their faces that represent the eternal image of Israel." Such eternal images were more consoling than the reigning vituperation in Israel.

In *And The Sea is Never Full*, Wiesel wrestled more with his position on the Palestinians. Evidently feeling that he had to address this issue more directly than he had previously, he contended, "Indeed, I can say in good faith that I have not remained indifferent to any cause involving the defense of human rights. But, you may ask, what have I done to alleviate the plight of the Palestinians? And here I must confess: I have not done enough. Is an explanation in order? In spite of considerable pressure, I have refused to take a public stand in the Israeli-Arab conflict. I have said it before: since I do not live in Israel, it would be irresponsible for me to do so. But I have never concealed how much the human dimension of the Palestinian tragedy affects me." However, earlier in his memoirs, Wiesel had cited Albert Camus, "not to take a stand is a stand."

While Wiesel did express his existential empathy with Palestinian suffering, he refused to examine the historical and political causes of their suffering, except to blame the Arab nations or the Palestinians themselves. In bearing witness, he instead expressed paeans to Israel (as after the 1967 War), or, when things got out of hand, confessed anguish and sadness (as after the Lebanon invasion and the intifada). As he desired that Israel be a land of poets and dreamers, he did not really reckon with Israel as a powerful state, enthusiastically backed by the United States, with the same capacity for realpolitik characteristic of other governments in the international state system. In his various defenses of Israel, Wiesel alleged that any assertion that the victim had now become the victimizer was tantamount to anti-Semitism, a useful rhetorical strategy for neutralizing criticism. The historical record and ample documentation of Israel's policies of exclusion, dispossession, and violence—from the UN, international human rights groups, and Israeli human rights groups—could then be quickly dismissed as another expression of the world's contempt for the Jews. Wiesel may have been personally incapable or unwilling to penetrate the systematic distortions in the Israeli narratives and to criticize Israeli practices towards the Palestinians. But in his silence he opened himself to the criticism that his moral maxims—for which he has been accorded respect both by powerful and powerless alike—were suspended when it came to his own favorite State of Israel.



Paying Up Personally

In a gathering with Dominican monks after World War II, French writer Albert Camus commented on Pope Pius XII's manner of addressing the then-unnamed Holocaust: "What the world expects of Christians is that Christians should speak out, loud and clear, and that they should voice their condemnation in such a way that never a doubt, never the slightest doubt, could arise in the heart of the simplest [man or woman]. That they should get away from

abstraction and confront the bloodstained face history has taken on today. The grouping we need is a grouping of [men and women] resolved to speak out clearly and to pay up personally."

There is no doubt that Elie Wiesel would agree with Camus. In his 1986 Nobel Peace Prize address, Wiesel carried on in a similar vein, "We must always take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented. Sometimes we must interfere. When human lives are endangered, when human dignity is in jeopardy, national borders and sensitivities become irrelevant."

As each day we read more sickening reports of the deaths of innocent Palestinians and Israelis in an increasing spiral of violence, the urgency to speak out clearly, pay up personally, and interfere with injustice becomes even greater and requires an exacting moral courage. On so many issues, Wiesel has called on every person to speak in witness. But when it comes to Israel, it is people like Baruch Kimmerling, rather than Wiesel himself, who have heeded the call. Here is part of an article Kimmerling, an Israeli, published in *Kol Ha'ir* February 1, 2002:

I accuse those people, of all ranks, who order the black flag hoisted above them, and those who follow their unlawful orders. The late philosopher Yeshayahu Leibovitz was right—the Occupation has ruined every good part and destroyed the moral infrastructure upon which Israeli society exists. Let's stop this march of fools and build society anew, clean of militarism and oppression and exploitation of other people, if not worse.

I accuse everyone who sees and knows all of this of doing nothing to prevent the emerging catastrophe. Sabra and Shatila events were nothing compared to what has happened and what is going to happen to us. We have to go out not only to the town squares, but also to the checkpoints. We have to speak to the soldiers in the tanks and the troop carriers—like the Russians spoke to their soldiers when they were ordered to retake control in Red Square—before entry into Palestinian cities turns into a murderous urban warfare.

And I accuse myself of knowing all of this, yet crying little and keeping quiet too often. □

Homage to Barbara Myerhoff

Voice of the Shechinah

Thomas R. Cole

When the anthropologist Barbara Myerhoff died in January 1985, just shy of her fiftieth birthday, she left a number of unpublished papers, manuscript notes for her popular talks on storytelling, and field notes from her unfinished work with immigrant Hasidic Jews in Los Angeles.

Myerhoff is best known for *Number Our Days* (1978), her inspired study of impoverished elderly immigrant Jews living in Venice, California. (The film version won an Academy Award.) *Number Our Days* vividly portrays a generation born in the Eastern European shtetl, now stranded at the western edge of American culture. *The New York Times* reviewer Charles Silberman saw it as a wisdom book, an antidote to the alleged narcissism and self-preoccupation of the 1970s: "In showing us the cultural alchemy by which these men and women convert poverty, infirmity and neglect into lives filled with meaning and celebration, [Myerhoff] teaches us more about the proper way to live than all the self-help books combined."

Academics debate the scholarly merits of *Number Our Days*. But Myerhoff was never the quintessential academic. She was also a social worker, a filmmaker, a storyteller, a much-loved teacher, and public figure. A quest for transforming experiences, for self-clarification, runs through all her work. Myerhoff was attracted to certain genres of cultural action: the hunt, the voyage, the search, the quest. Her passionate search for wisdom and wholeness struck a deeply responsive chord in her readers.

In 1984, Myerhoff was diagnosed with cancer. Facing death as a nonobservant Jew and a spiritual seeker, Myerhoff worked on her final ethnographic film with Lynn Littman and Vikram Jayanti. *In Her Own Time* revolves around Myerhoff's experiences as an ambivalent initiate into Fairfax's Hasidic community of Orthodox Jews. Using the lens of her own illness and dying, Myerhoff introduces us to this vibrant community. They wrap their arms around her, try to help her recover, and begin to teach her the religious practices, sacred literature, and language with which she was



surprisingly unfamiliar. In the end, she never crossed the border between participant observer and observant Jew. "I have known about anthropology as a way of life," said her colleague Paul Bohannon, who wept upon seeing the film, "but I have never known it before as a way of dying."

Recently, I've had the honor of writing the introduction to Myerhoff's final posthumous volume, *Stories as Equipment for Living: Late Talks and Tales of Barbara Myerhoff* (edited by Marc Kaminsky, Deena Metzger, and Mark Weiss)—a manuscript still in search of a publisher. *Stories As Equipment for Living* (a title borrowed from Kenneth Burke) gives us glimpses of the Myerhoff we never came to know. It contains the culmination of a lifetime of thought about how stories serve as vehicles of cultural meaning and individual soul-making.

Myerhoff came to understand and tell stories both as carriers of culture and as unique, mysterious, individual organisms. Stories have lineages, they have histories and futures, they carry culture, they bestow meaning, and they construct the world. At the same time, every story carries its own mystery and is always unfolding through an innate yet indeterminate process of development. Myerhoff's interest in storytelling corresponded with a broad revival of Jewish storytelling—scholarly, performative, and homiletic—that began in the 1980s.

Myerhoff broke the conventional boundaries so dear to the hearts of professional academics. She wanted her ethnographic stories to make a moral difference. She wanted to strengthen our capacity to care for her informants, to deepen our own emotional and spiritual resources to bear suffering. Her stories bear the mark of the rabbinic injunction: *chesed v'emet* (truth in the service of loving-kindness).

For the last two years, Barbara Myerhoff has gazed out at me from a poster (produced by the Jewish Women's Archive and Jewish Women's Project of NYC) that hangs in my study. "Some day I'll be a little old Jewish lady myself," reads the quote from the film version of *Number Our Days*. If Myerhoff were alive today, she would undoubtedly be recognized as the kind of exemplary elder our culture needs so badly. □

Thomas R. Cole is the author of *The Journey of Life: A Cultural History of Aging in America* and a producer of two recently released documentaries *Life Stories* and *Still Life: the Humanity of Anatomy*.

Danny Pearl

Thane Rosenbaum

In the Middle East, where martyrdom is measured only in human sacrifice, where human bombs are indistinguishable from human remains, where the sound of an explosive is both an anthem and an alarm, where the future of the Palestinian people is mortgaged all too cheaply for the price of shrapnel, and where a slice of pizza can be a final meal or what's still grasped at the end of a severed arm—in short, in a region so grisly, why is the murder of Daniel Pearl a special reminder of what it means to be a Jew in an unspeakably horrible post-September 11 world?

"I'm a Jewish American. I come from a ... on my father's side ... a family of Zionists. My father's Jewish. My mother's Jewish. I'm Jewish. My family follows Judaism. We've made numerous family visits to Israel. In the town of B'nei Brak in Israel, there's a street called Haim Pearl Street, which was named after my great-grandfather, who was one of the founders."

Those are not my words. They were the final words of Daniel Pearl. But they weren't his words, either. He was forced to say them by his captors right before he was decapitated. And all of it was videotaped, not as a ransom note, because their hostage was dead, but as a scripted ritual murder, complete with a script for Pearl to recite, a passion play performed by those far too passionate about who this particular victim was.

Since these were the words of the murderers, it's fair to ask what was intended by this communication? Surely they could have killed Pearl without the cameras rolling, without him having to read these molesting lines of dialogue before his head was severed and held aloft like a trophy. Why did his murderers go through all this choreography when a simple bullet would have done nicely? In lieu of giving Pearl his last rites, they treated themselves to a party over his spilled blood.

There has been much written about the ethical and journalistic values that were either tarnished or elevated by making the entire video of the execution available over the Internet. I don't have a strong view of whether the *Boston Phoenix* performed a morally transgressive act, or whether they simply, in relying on the killers' own archival instincts, reported the news in the most graphically accurate way possible.

Thane Rosenbaum is author of Secondhand Smoke and, more recently, of The Golems of Gotham, published by HarperCollins.

What I do know is that such matters of taste and judgment are ultimately a distraction from a more central point. The video offered a new development in the Daniel Pearl story. Its newsworthiness was not that a murder had taken place. That was old news. Daniel Pearl was dead. That we already knew. But what we didn't know, and perhaps this was something we needed to know, was that Pearl's murder wasn't designed as a simple death, not just another routine casualty in an exponentially escalating Middle East, Persian Gulf body count. These men were obviously hardened killers, desensitized to human loss. They are not natural tear-shedders. Had Pearl pleaded for mercy, it surely wasn't forthcoming. They were inured to death, and yet somehow this death among others was a special one, rousing them from the complacency of their usual endeavors, enough to make a show out of it.

Daniel Pearl's murder had to be recorded and preserved, if not for posterity, then as a kind of prurient, hard-porn reminder of the special hate for Jews that animates the consciousness and convictions of his murderers. The video, more than anything else, speaks not only to the execution, but goes beyond it, to an entirely different type of crime, one done to the spirit—the murder of the soul. It is this crime, as much as the decapitation, that depravedly speaks to what was inside the hearts of the men who killed him.

But first, a lesson from another era worth recalling at this time. The Nazis, in addition to everything else that might be said about them, were geniuses at genocide. They knew that the body was beside the point. In order for there to be a true final solution, it wasn't enough to merely exterminate Jews physically. It was equally necessary for them to be divested of dignity, to be reduced to hollow men and women, empty of spirit and life. All those forced separations, the branding of those yellow stars, the humiliation that came from shaved heads and numbered arms, the prolonging of imminent death. These acts of torture were yet another dimension in the Nazis' death strategy: The defilement, the extinguishing of hope, the erasure of identity, the starvation of the spirit. Soon the soul would die; the body would follow. Had the Nazis killed no one, but instead had endlessly dehumanized Six Million Jews, would they not have been guilty of mass murder and genocide?

The Daniel Pearl execution video, and the shamefully barbaric acts that it recorded, is damning evidence of a similar pathology: The impulse to kill his spirit before even

(continued on page 76)

Rising Up With the Boss

Bruce Springsteen and the Politics of Meaning

Michael J. Bader

■ *Bruce Springsteen: The Rising*. Sony Music Entertainment, Inc. 2002.

Popular music can't make a revolution but it can definitely make us better human beings. It can evoke feelings of pain and joy that we too often numb ourselves from experiencing. It can help comfort us in our suffering and keep hope alive during times of despair. And popular music can give people a common experience, however transient, from which they can challenge what "is" and move toward what is possible. Whether it be the gospel-based songs of the civil rights movement, the folk music stories of working class struggle, or the music that came from and inspired the anti-war and women's movements, some popular music has always reflected the search for healing and transcendence.

Transcendence in today's political environment requires that we speak to the feelings of isolation and meaninglessness that the selfishness of the marketplace continually evokes. As Tikkun has argued for many years, social change today requires that we have a politics of meaning. Fortunately, there are musical artists whose songs can capture the spirit of such a politics. In my view, Steve Earle is one such songwriter. Michael Franti, Billy Bragg, Lauryn Hill, and Ani DiFranco are some others who come to mind in this regard. But the most profound voice in popular music today inveighing against

spiritual alienation and emotional disconnectedness comes from New Jersey. I'm speaking, of course, about Bruce Springsteen.

I am biased. I first heard Bruce Springsteen on the Jersey Shore in 1970 when he played at my high school prom in Rumson, New Jersey. At that time, Springsteen was the lead guitarist, songwriter and singer for a popular band called Steel Mill. What I remember most about that night is not his gifted storytelling or his musical virtuosity (these traits were to develop over time). What I remember is that he had "attitude"—street tough, alienated, angry—and that his songs were about longing, usually sexual longing. In fact, my memory of Springsteen that night is completely intermingled with memories of making out with my girlfriend. For me, Springsteen expressed alienation, rebellion, and sexuality. He angrily rejected authority like I did (although my rejection involved organized radical politics more than Springsteen's) and expressed lust and romantic desire like I was trying my awkward best to do.

Springsteen has always touched me in this way, capturing something real about both the alienation of everyday social life and the struggle against this alienation. Nowhere is this more apparent than in his latest album, *The Rising*.

Although much has been made of the fact that Springsteen wrote most of the songs as a response to the events of September 11, the core themes—



loss, alienation, and the redemptive power of love, empathy, and passion—are universal.

Invoking the image of rescue workers climbing the stairs of the World Trade Center in "Into the Fire," Springsteen first speaks of the pain of someone left behind:

*I need your kiss, but love and duty
called you someplace higher
Somewhere up the stairs, into the fire*

The song, however, inevitably becomes one of collective redemption:

*May your strength give us strength
May your faith give us faith
May your hope give us hope
May your love give us love*

Springsteen constantly blends the personal and the social, speaking to a private pain or longing while suggesting that healing is a communal experience. One of the most intensely personal songs on *The Rising* is called "You're Missing." Grief is measured here by the most intimate details

*Coffee cups on the counter, jackets
on the chair
Paper on the doorstep, but you're
not there....*

And yet this account of private grief is immediately followed by the title track "The Rising" in which individual mourning is transcended through a communal experience:

*There's spirits above and behind me,
Faces gone black, eyes burning
bright,*

Michael Bader is a psychologist in San Francisco and the author of *Arousal: The Secret Logic of Sexual Fantasies* (St. Martin's Press, 2002).

MUSIC REVIEW

*May their precious blood bind me,
Lord,
As I stand before your fiery light....
Come on up for the rising,
Come on up, lay your hands in mine,
Come on up for the rising
Come on up for the rising tonight...*

Springsteen's live concerts are often likened to revival meetings, and he actively embraces the parallel. They are intended to create an intense feeling of relatedness, even to the point of using a "call-and-response" form. We, the audience, finish his sentences, sway to his rhythms, and answer his questions. For Springsteen, one of the purposes of his live performances is to connect in a primal way with his audiences and create a temporary experience of an ecstatic community, a community based on dancing, singing, and on the joy of collective experience. He creates this experience in his audience and enacts it *with* the audience while he's performing. In the middle of a song at one concert I attended, Springsteen let himself "float" out onto the upstretched hands of his fans who gently passed him about 20 feet into the audience and then back to the stage. No other performer that I know of could or would do such a thing without fear of physical injury.

Springsteen's attempt to create an inclusive "we" with his music and his concerts has evolved over time, moving from themes of personal rebellion to more explicit social critiques. One of the most powerful elements of his music has always been his capacity to invite and create empathy for the "other." Whether it be the alienated youth of *Born To Run*, the blue collar workers who populate *Darkness At The Edge Of Town*, *The River*, and *Born in the USA*, the outlaws and desperate victims left behind by the so-called Reagan Revolution in his album *Nebraska*, or the migrant workers and dispossessed of *Tom Joad*, Springsteen sends a message that we are all each other's keepers, that we are all passengers on the same metaphorical "train." As he sings in the song "Land of Hopes and Dreams":

*This train carries saints and sinners
This train carries losers and winners
This train carries whores and gamblers...*

No one should be left behind in Springsteen's vision of social change.

Springsteen's appeal to my generation, the baby-boom generation, derives not just from encouraging our empathy for others but also from his giving voice to the special longings and conflicts that we, ourselves, face. Many of us grew up feeling, with Springsteen, like outsiders, held back by and resisting authority. And yet, like him, we grew up and became authorities ourselves. Many of us acquired material comfort, married, and had children. No longer part of a clear out-group we had to face the problem of identity and meaning, and many of us thought we found it in creating families. Springsteen traveled down this road with us and wrote about the journey. In "Living Proof," from his album *Lucky Town*, he describes the exquisite and transcendent beauty of watching his newborn baby:

*In his mother's arms it was all the
beauty I could take
Like the missing words to some
prayer that I could never make
In a world so hard and dirty so
fouled and confused
Searching for a little bit of God's
mercy
I found living proof*

At the same time, many of us also came to feel guilty about acquiring the material and emotional markers of success. In the song "Better Days" from his album *Lucky Town*, for example, Springsteen chides himself—and us—for embracing victimhood in the face of having access to so many of the good things in life. We should, instead, celebrate and cherish these good things, and not let our guilt rob us of their pleasures:

*It's a sad funny ending to find your-
self pretending
A rich man in a poor man's shirt...
There's better days shining through.*

At the same time, some people felt that the love, pleasure, and meaning that they found in their personal lives, while vitally important and worthy of celebration, was not social and political enough. Springsteen was not satisfied with his epiphany that conventional forms of love and family were to be celebrated, not resisted. After *Lucky Town*, he went on to record the album *Tom Joad* in which he invoked the spirit of John Steinbeck and Woody Guthrie to talk about the damage done by poverty. His most recent work *The Rising* pulls from universal human themes of loss and transcendence to argue that meaning is only created in relationships of love and mutual understanding (in his song "Paradise," Springsteen even invites us to empathize with the experience of a suicide bomber).

Some people argue that because liberals and conservatives, Ted Koppel and the National Review seem to like Springsteen's music, it therefore lacks "edge," diminishing its relevance to a progressive movement. It is true that, unlike someone like Steve Earle, Springsteen is cautious about taking a too-radical political stand. This criticism misses the point. First, I presume that we'd want music that might sponsor a social movement to be popular. Second, it is obvious that any type of music, however "edgy," can be co-opted by the Right or exploited by the marketplace. After all, Dylan sold "The Times They Are A'Changing" to the accounting firm of Cooper and Lybrand and John Lennon's song "Revolution" was used in Nike commercials! Springsteen himself was embroiled in just such a conflict in 1984 when Ronald Reagan evoked his song "Born in the USA" (in actuality a scathing denunciation of American hypocrisy) to sponsor his reactionary form of patriotism.

The real problem with judging Springsteen's political relevance is that there is no radical social movement around able to appropriate it. The problem isn't his. It is ours. □

The Lives of Cities and People

Paul L. Wachtel

■ *Between Eminence and Notoriety: Four Decades of Radical Urban Planning*, by Chester Hartman. Center for Urban Policy Research, 2002.

A few years back, during a summer spent in southwest France, I was struck by the “bigness” of small French medieval cities and towns. Urban centers of five or ten thousand people felt more alive, had much greater “presence” than do American cities fifteen or twenty times the size. I lived that summer near Cahors, which, with a population of about twenty thousand, felt so much bigger than New Haven, where I had gone to graduate school, that I virtually wore out my computer’s mouse checking and rechecking the population figures that were so counter to direct experience.

One of the key components of this feeling of substance and vitality was the absence of suburbs. In most of these cities, right outside the city is the country. The population density is sustained (without high rises, of course) right up to the beginning of farmland. The result is that these small urban centers, retaining many of the physical and interactional features of medieval life, *feel* like centers in a way that relatively few American cities do. They are places where people congregate, interact, fill the streets, and in the process sustain a surprising amount of culture for their small numbers.

It is easy enough to imagine a course of urban development in which

the virtues of the urban centers of the past and the liberating possibilities introduced by technological advances over the centuries were synthesized to yield an increasingly more pleasant and satisfying way of life. Instead, however, in most American metropolitan areas, we have created patterns of housing, commuting, and political organization that have largely turned their back on the age-old patterns in which human communities were constructed.

Chester Hartman’s new book, *Between Eminence and Notoriety*, highlights the folly—and the human costs—of this trajectory. Like Jane Jacobs, who wrote the foreword to the book, Hartman knows how cities actually work, how people *experience* the way our streets and neighborhoods are structured and the patterns of living and human interaction that they foster or inhibit. From the very first chapter of the book (which follows a long and fascinating autobiographical introduction tracing Hartman’s lifelong participation in the struggle for social justice and genuinely liveable cities), Hartman conveys a vision of urban planning centered on *people* rather than on the physical structures that serve (and, so often, misserve) them.

His analysis begins with a particularly interesting case, the redevelopment of Boston’s West End in the 1950s and 1960s. The West End is noteworthy because it was one redevelopment project where what went wrong did not hinge on race, so often the hidden subtext in our society. The people who were being moved out of

the West End were white, and this circumstance helps illuminate how (*in addition* to racism) greed, class bias, and sheer stupidity about the nature of human experience and urban life have powerfully shaped the ways our cities and their surrounding metropolitan areas have evolved.

Decent affordable housing is a basic human right.

According to the rhetoric and the rationale of the project, the residents of the West End were being forced out of their homes and neighborhoods for their own good, because they were living in a “slum.” But as Hartman demonstrates clearly, the people who lived in the West End were, for the most part, stable and hard working, as well as highly satisfied with their neighborhood. As he points out, the income of most West Enders could have enabled them to live elsewhere if they had preferred. The reasons they did not choose to do so had a great deal to do with the neighborhood’s greater resemblance to the concentrated and highly interactive towns and villages of earlier times than to the suburban sprawl of the contemporary American landscape.

Hartman later extended his studies of the injustices and ironies of urban “renewal” to a variety of other projects, most notably in San Francisco. The findings were very similar. Perfectly viable housing and vital neighborhoods with strong social networks were destroyed for so-called “higher uses,”

Paul L. Wachtel is CUNY Distinguished Professor of clinical psychology at the City College of New York. His most recent book is *Race in the Mind of America: Breaking the Vicious Circle between Blacks and Whites* (Routledge, 1999).

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BOOK REVIEW

and the residents were uprooted and scattered. Far from improving their lot, for many the result was not only housing at least as "substandard" as what they had to leave (and, of course, lacking in the sense of community that had sustained them and enriched their lives), but also substantially higher rents that put a great strain on their families' budgets.

Of course, as Hartman amply demonstrates, the welfare of those forced out was never really the point of these projects. The profits of developers and the needs of the more upscale residents who later moved in were the real aim from the beginning. But what is also apparent from the pages of *Between Eminence and Notoriety* is that in many respects, the faulty assumptions that underlie our housing and neighborhood patterns do not really serve the middle class very well either. Hand in hand with the injustices and insensitivities endured by the poor and working class residents who were removed from neighborhood after neighborhood across America was a larger emptiness that stemmed from a failure to understand what had made neighborhoods like the West End work so well for those who lived there. The American middle class has more freedom and more possessions than any group of comparable size in the world's history, but in the process, tragically and unnecessarily, we have lost touch with other equally essential sources of security and satisfaction that have sustained people in the kinds of communities that have characterized human settlements for millennia. The "advantages" of middle class life have been achieved at a cost that the residents of neighborhoods like the West End understood far better than did the "experts" who moved them out.

Hartman's book provides a valuable alternative to the impoverished thinking that all too often passes for expert opinion on the proper development of our nation's metropolitan areas. His many concrete policy recommendations are at once radical and eminently sensible.

Central to his overall approach is a carefully argued case for decent, affordable housing as not just a "need" which we should try our best as a society to fulfill but a basic *right*. Related to this conceptualization are innovative proposals that shift the focus of concern from housing ownership to housing tenure, that is, from the prerogative to buy or sell to the security of being able to *stay* if one wishes. Central to his proposed approach are wide-ranging limits on the ability of owners of rental property to evict people without very clear just cause. (Hartman points out that in fact the law already recognizes many ways in which the rights and prerogatives of property owners are limited, from zoning regulations and housing codes to eminent-domain laws and restrictive covenants.)

Interestingly, Hartman's concerns extend to people who do own the place they live in, and his prioritizing of tenure over ownership serves in fact as a protection for them as well. He notes that property tax increases—often the consequence of the very renewal or "gentrification" processes whose consequences for the *unpropertied* I have already discussed—can make it difficult even for people who own their homes to stay put, and he offers progressive alternatives to the right-wing prescription to this problem embodied in California's Proposition 13. In doing so, he pierces through the purely economic and formalistic meanings of "ownership" to the more human and experiential realm of *control over one's life*, for which ownership is a mere proxy. Keeping a sharp focus on the concrete human experiences that so often recede before the abstractions of economists, planners, and policy makers, Hartman creates a beachhead for a potentially even more sweeping reexamination of the tired verities that impede creative solutions to social problems. Whether in the southwest of France, the West End of Boston, or contemporary Sunbelt suburbs, that human experience is the real "bottom line" to which we should be attending. □

Civilization and its Discontents

The Golden Years

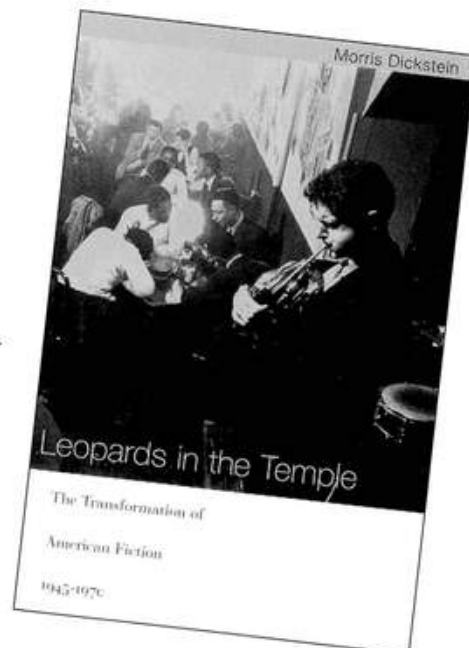
Mark Shechner

■ *Leopards in the Temple: The Transformation of American Fiction: 1945–1970*, by Morris Dickstein. Harvard University Press, 2002.

I can give no stronger endorsement to any literary study than to say that it makes sense. By that I mean two things that are distinctly different but obviously connected: one, that I understand it—which is anything but a given in literary studies these days—and two, that its arguments have the ring of truth about them. In brief, that the writing is *both* lucid and sensible. Morris Dickstein's *Leopards in the Temple: The Transformation of American Fiction: 1945–1970* makes sense; it is lucid and sensible and then some. It manages also to be engaging, comprehensive, measured, penetrating, voracious, provocative, worldly, and even courageous. Dickstein seems to have soldiered bravely through all of Jack Kerouac, John Updike, and Gore Vidal as well as the late novels of James Baldwin. Written in an agile and resourceful English and well stocked with the reading of a lifetime, *Leopards* combines the rigor of a fully-engaged intelligence with certain of the qualities of the fiction it studies: memorable characters, a supple prose, a rambling sort of thematic coherence, and a pro-

fusion of details. But then, I expected nothing less.

In 1977, Dickstein published a pioneering book on the literary aesthetics of the 1960s, *Gates of Eden: American Culture in the Sixties*, which appeared at the time an audacious effort to invent an intellectual profile for an episode in our history—the cultural revolution—that was widely held to have no intellectual life at all. The backlash of the 1970s widely dismissed the previous decade as little more than a breakthrough into public life of seditious Dionysian energies that banished ideas, and literature along with them, to the dustbin of history. Not so, responded Dickstein; the era was a virtual freeway of ideas; it was both energized by ideas and haunted by them, and the merging lanes of European dialectics, rock music, erotic utopianism, protest politics, and social mobility had given rise to a vital and lasting literature that included the New Journalism, black humor, Black (i.e. African American) protest fiction, war fiction, highway fiction, Jewish novelists and poets riding the wave of post-Holocaust regeneration, and new paradigms of reading and composition. Norman Mailer, Jack Kerouac, Thomas Pynchon, James Baldwin, Donald Barthelme, Tom Wolfe, Hunter Thompson, John Barth, and Allen Ginsberg were the emissaries from the new sensibility to literary culture. James Jones was still



out on patrol; Gore Vidal, Tennessee Williams, and Truman Capote were reporting in from the sexual front; James Baldwin and Ralph Ellison were pioneering a modern voice for the fiction of race and racism; Saul Bellow was casting a cold eye on the moral anarchy around him, while off in private corners were ironic mandarins like Robert Lowell and Vladimir Nabokov and an agonized, self-abusing voluptuary, Philip Roth. Joseph Heller and his dark comedy, *Catch-22*, caught the mood of the whole: all at once it was hilarious and mordant, subversive and overdrawn, pop-artish and embittered.

What was Dickstein up to? Was he trying to rescue the Sixties for what his mentor, Lionel Trilling, used to call "mind," or was he just zoning out? Neither. He was being what his education prepared him to be: a dialectician. He saw in hindsight that the cultural upheaval contributed to literature as much as it took from it and that, in the zone of creative tension occupied by fiction, Apollo and Dionysus were locked in the old fraternal embrace in which both are nourished and renewed. And a varied and prismatic literature, as a crucible of sensibility in which the world is constantly being recreated for us, remains our most reliable window on the struggle. "I've operated," he wrote, "on two premises, both of them loosely, Hegelian—first, that each phase of culture is coherent and full of meaning,

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BOOK REVIEW

that it can be read like a text, and second, that it's precisely our texts—novels, poems, songs, polemics, autobiographies—that can shed light on the larger text. In other words, the culture of the arts can illuminate the texture of feeling and opinion in the culture as a whole."

Since *Gates of Eden*, I've been waiting for the other shoe to fall, and now it has: with Dickstein's new book on American fiction, *Leopards in the Temple: The Transformation of American Fiction: 1945–1970*. The book takes its title from the parable of Franz Kafka in which "leopards break into the temple and drink to the dregs what is in the sacrificial pitchers; this is repeated over and over again; finally it can be calculated in advance, and it becomes part of the ceremony itself." The leopards in this case are the writers who emerged from the margins of society after the war to stake a claim for themselves at the vital center of American literary culture. Jews, African Americans, homosexuals, "city boys and country boys, the children of immigrants and the children of sharecroppers," took advantage of general American prosperity, wholesale upward mobility, and increased leisure time to become writers, artists, and intellectuals. It was a period of increased production, most spectacularly manifested in the vast housing tracts that redefined suburbia and the V-8 Fords and Rocket 88s out there flashing their hubcaps on the interstate. But the production of books was just a step behind. An America hungry for goods was in the market for significance as well, provided that it came packaged as entertainment.

Leopards in the Temple revisits the 1950s and then ambles forward through later decades, making the case that popular images of a prosperous, tranquil, carefree Fifties blown sky high by an insurgent and revolutionary Sixties is no more than cartooning, a freeze-drying of the complex social fabric into a few iconic pictures for an exhibition: the suburban tract home and its two-car garage on one wall, the Symbionese Liberation Army kidnapping Patty Hearst on the other. Those are striking

images if you are keeping a scrapbook, but they belie the complexity of both decades and, as seen through the lenses of fiction and film, their continuities. Dickstein's argument in both books is that the disenchantment and rebellion that flourished in the 1960s had already been beta-tested in literature, music, and film a decade earlier and had uncovered a vast a popular audience. When it hit the streets in the mid-Sixties, fueled by anti-war and racial passions, the ground had already, in a way, been laid. The popular arts not only paved the way for the revolution, but the novel in particular opened a window to it. More amply and more precisely than any sociology could be, the novel was in touch with its spiritual core.

As Dickstein now sees it, World War II "shook Americans loose from their local moorings, from religious roots and isolated lives in small towns, from urban ghettos and other homogenous communities.... City boys and country boys, the children of immigrants and the children of sharecroppers were thrown together for the first time, like an accelerated version of the melting pot or a poster for the Popular Front." In one sense, the war proved to be socially integrating, but in others it was destabilizing: outsiders like women, blacks, and Jews, working class and rural Americans, having seen the world, were not ready to retreat gracefully back into their kitchens, ghettos, or menial jobs. A stimulated consumer economy and a new prosperity aroused expectations and sharpened differences. "The fruits of this prosperity were not spread equally. African Americans still faced formidable barriers as to where they could live and work, but even for them the war opened many doors that could never be shut again. It was not long before the good life became the sovereign right of every American, at least in theory—and that theory would cast a long shadow."

It was the new social mobility, both the reality for some and the broken promise for others, that brought the leopards into the temple. Dickstein finds them in Ralph Ellison's *Invisible*

Man, Flannery O'Connor's eccentric Misfit and Displaced Person, Norman Mailer's *White Negro*, the ecstatic vagrants of Allen Ginsberg and the highway illuminati of Jack Kerouac, the misunderstood adolescents of J.D. Salinger, the refugees, forlorn grocers, and bedraggled saints of Bernard Malamud, the frustrated, burning husbands of Richard Yates, John Cheever, and John Updike, the loopy, heartsore intellectuals of Saul Bellow, the Old World decadents of Vladimir Nabokov, the baffled hedonists of Philip Roth. "These characters, all in some ways projections of their distinguished authors, are like Kafka's leopards in the temple, implosions of the irrational, children of the Freudian century, sharp-clawed primitives who would somehow be integrated into the once-decorous rites of American literature, who would become American literature."

One draws a deep breath at this and notices uneasily that a mighty big shoe-horn—it looks like a steam shovel—is trying to jam a lot of writers into a fairly tight social category. I'm uneasy seeing the likes of Ralph Ellison, Allen Ginsberg, James Baldwin, Truman Capote, William Burroughs, John Cheever, and Paul Bowles, to pluck a few names at random out of Dickstein's hat, recruited to a teeming literature of economic expansion. Dickstein himself seems happy to leave his syntheses behind to get down to what he does best: reading books, reading films (anything is text), and reading authors. Dickstein is a writer of the middle distance, somewhere in the fertile midlands between Grand Theory and Abstracted Empiricism, to borrow terms from C. Wright Mills. The book resembles an exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery, with Dickstein as docent. The pace is hectic, but then there is a lot to see. The individual galleries are titled "War and the Novel: From World War II to Vietnam"; "The New Fiction: From the Home Front to the 1950s"; "On and Off the Road: the Outsider as Young Rebel"; and "Apocalypse Now: A Literature of

Extremes." But the whole thing might as well be titled "Civilization and Its Discontents: The Golden Years." Dickstein reminds us constantly that in art, Sigmund Freud is the presiding spirit of the age, though not just as the sexual revivalist who authorized the breakthrough extravaganzas of Norman Mailer, Allen Ginsberg, William Burroughs, and Philip Roth, but also as the tragic philosopher, who saw sublimation and instinctual renunciation as the necessary prices to be paid for maintaining civilization. Both Freuds, to be sure, authorized the inward turn that marks this literature. The book's great drama is that of consciousness, restless in its shackles and longing for release.

The books that loom large, then, are not always the best books, though Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1952) appears to do double duty as a book of immediate cultural importance and in all "perhaps the single best novel of the whole post-war era." And yet it does not appear to be as resonant as J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in The Rye* (1951) or Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* (1955), early rebellions against the demands of maturity "focusing on a young man's refusal to assume the social responsibilities the world is too eager to impose on him." These "not-growing up" novels prefigured the work of Kurt Vonnegut, Philip Roth, and, a generation later, Jay McInerney. *On the Road* in particular summed up the longing for escape from the 1950s' tyranny of respectability and enforced sanity, and sent a wave of recognition through many other writers, from Updike to Nabokov to Ginsberg to Kesey to Mailer. "The genius of *On the Road* was to attach the new restlessness to the classic American mythology of the road, and to use it to express a subversive set of values—exuberance, energy, spirituality, intensity, improvisation—that would challenge the suburban and corporate conservatism of the 1950s." Kerouac's cadences as well, jazz-like and improvisational, taught others to "go with the flow."

Yet even as a literature of flight and freedom was gathering momentum,

there were writers for whom the road was a cul-de-sac and the blue horizon a mirage. "Two dark, ironic works, John Barth's *The End of the Road* (1958) and Richard Yates's *Revolutionary Road* (1961), offer a counterstatement to the kind of self-liberation celebrated by Kerouac, mythologized (soon afterward) by Ken Kesey, explored ambivalently by Updike and Cheever, and transformed

into deviant or criminal passion by Mailer and Nabokov."

Dickstein's masterful tour of the era and its literature is like a Wordsworthian spot of time; it rolls through all things, and its sheer momentum is spellbinding. It is a book full of discoveries—I count the stories of Tennessee Williams and Richard Yates among them—resurrections—John Cheever and

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BOOK REVIEW

Paul Bowles, for example—revisions, like the centrality of Jack Kerouac, and brisk, lifelike portraits of the main writers of the age. Dickstein knows the terrain of postwar fiction better than anyone, and *Leopards in the Temple* gives us all access to what a quarter century of reading has taught him.

And yet there is one break in the momentum that sends a shudder through the whole system. It is Saul Bellow, who was the most dramatically Freudian novelist of his generation and also the only American novelist of that era to win a Nobel Prize. He also wrote against the grain of the apocalypse—against even liberal meliorism—sometimes bitterly so, and emerges from Dickstein's book as a bit of a loose cannon who betrayed sour, even racist, social attitudes in his most despairing books, *Mr. Sammler's Planet* (1970) and *The Dean's December* (1983). "With ... 'sexual niggerhood' as its subject, *Mr. Sammler's Planet* can be read as an inversion of [Mailer's] 'The White Negro,' inspired by the same fantasies and imagery. But Sammler gives Norman Mailer's argu-

ment (and William Blake's language) a racist spin...." There is no blinking the fact that Bellow placed himself on both sides of the issue of the erotic utopia—one man Dionysus-Apollo that he was—and that in moments of disenchantment he simply let fly with fulminations against it. He stands apart from all other writers in this book, because only in his diatribes could he be taken for a social novelist. Elsewhere, in *Seize the Day* (1956), *Herzog* (1961), and *Humboldt's Gift* (1973), he set up shop as an epiphany artist, a metaphysician of the secular, achieving his best moments by discerning in the tangled affairs of the heart and the maze of metropolitan life, royal roads to the unconscious or intimations of immortality. As Dickstein rightly comments, "*Herzog* is not a novel of action but a state of mind." Given his bias—that the postwar era was a time of social fiction, albeit one that took its stand on the mutinous imperatives of the self—Dickstein is at a loss to signal that there was anything special about Bellow, since only in the books in which he surrendered to the

topical and fell prey to attitude did he connect to his time and place.

None of that clouds the enormous achievement of *Leopards in the Temple*, which combines the comprehensiveness of the literary survey with the incisiveness of the book review, a book review sustained over 228 pages without ever slackening into cliché or jargon. Language here has a longer breath than in *Gates of Eden*, a more confident respiration, long rolling paragraphs instead of epigrammatical bursts. Such a style permits Dickstein the amplitude, the meandering contemplative voice of a mind freely meditating on its subjects, beholden to no law but the imperative to get it right. Refusing grand theory, while being keenly aware of historical and political context; sensitive to tremors in the *Zeitgeist*, without ever losing sight of an author or a book's particularities; confidently cross-referencing the arts—painting, fiction, and film—without confusing realms, Dickstein proves to be a cultural critic of a rare sort, who defies the vulgarities of Cultural Studies while showing how it ought to be practiced. □

DANNY PEARL (continued from page 68)

bothering with his body, to force him to reveal the only name, rank, and serial number that these people cared about—his Jewish parentage. And while he was indeed an American, he was going to receive a Jewish death. Make no mistake about it: Before he was killed, Daniel Pearl was first branded. And even after his death, the humiliation continued in the showcasing of his severed head.

The knife may have slit Pearl's throat, but the words that were forced out of his mouth were equal in their violence, an act of spiritual murder that preceded his physical death. He did not speak these words of Jewish identity proudly, because they were not his words. He would have perhaps chosen to say something else altogether. Instead these words were given to him as an alibi for his murderers, justification for their cause and the manner in which they carried it out. There was no remorse, but rather giddy and purposeful satisfaction.

This is the way it always is with murderous anti-Semitism: The persecutors are obsessed with their ideology or religion, and it reaches a boiling point of fanaticism. But they're not all that particular about the passions of their victims, whether they too are obsessed, in this case, with being Jewish. To the Nazis it didn't matter whether the gas was going into the lungs of practicing Jews or Jews who had never stepped foot

inside a synagogue. These were deaths without any reprieve or pardon. All that mattered was that the victim was Jewish, regardless of how tenuous their connection is to the tribe, or how adamantly they claimed to fit in elsewhere.

It is not surprising that the Pearl family wished to highlight Danny's humanistic, universal impulses as a way to convince his killers that they had the wrong man. But his killers didn't care. Actually, they had the right man. It must have been a tremendous coincidence for them to learn that the Pearls had a street named after them in Israel. Indeed, his murderers had hit the hostage jackpot: A Jewish-American journalist with Zionist roots. But they would have killed him anyway, even if he had never been to Israel, even if he didn't know what a Zionist was. Daniel Pearl transcended the ranks of a mere prisoner. His murderers marked him for death because of one central truth in his biographical data: Stripped down to his essence, Daniel Pearl was a Jew.

But imagine this, if Daniel Pearl had been an American journalist and a practicing Catholic, would they have required him to recite his relevant church affiliation? And would they have had him beheaded? Whether one chooses to see the tape or not, the gory message is clear: all Jews are now Daniel Pearl. □

One True Thing

Roger S. Gottlieb

- *One True God: Historical Consequences of Monotheism*, by Rodney Stark. Princeton University Press, 2001.
- *Holy War, Holy Peace: How Religion Can Bring Peace to the Middle East*, by Marc Gopin. Oxford University Press, 2002.

Islamic fundamentalists crashing planes into buildings, anti-abortion activists murdering doctors, leaders of the Christian Right proclaiming that God hates feminists and homosexuals—these and countless other examples have led many Americans, especially since September 11, to believe that passionately held religious beliefs necessarily lead to violence, unreason, and a totalitarian desire to dominate unbelievers. A rational and peaceful society, it seems, requires that religion be private and held, if at all, in a mild-mannered, luke-warm way.

Such people might well find support for this view in *One True God*, at least with regard to the motivational power of the great monotheistic traditions. As opposed to paganism or more “philosophical” theologies like Buddhism or Taoism, claims sociologist Rodney Stark, monotheism has a unique ability to motivate. It inspires missionizing, drives adherents to terrible conflict with unbelievers and heretics, and—in the case of Jews—enables perseverance despite centuries of persecution. Stark maintains that monotheism’s unique power lies in the guarantees it offers to

believers: in exchange for devotion and faith, the One True all-powerful God provides all the rewards such a unique being has at “His” disposal. Minor-league deities don’t have the clout, and cosmic principles can’t offer the Personal Touch of a universal divinity. Since they have found the Word of the One True God, believers are entitled to stuff their beliefs down others’ throats (also known as missionizing) or punish unbelievers. Without the particularism of such a faith, Stark tells us, majority groups have little reason to expand (and thus Buddhism in India could not sustain itself against a resurgent, more monotheistic Hinduism); and minority groups (like progressive, “philosophical” American reform Judaism) head towards assimilation. The only way to curb monotheism’s necessarily aggressive tendencies is to allow a number of different forms of belief to coexist with it. If state support is lacking, each particular form of (say) Islam or Christianity will seek out its own “market niche,” and will be driven towards social civility in the hopes of attracting more followers and not arousing the resentment of its competitors.

Stark’s wide range of knowledge opened my eyes to a good deal of historical information; for instance, concerning the large extent of Jewish missionary activity during the days of the Second Temple and after; how little Catholicism actually has spread in Latin America; and how the most extreme anti-Semitic outbursts in



Medieval Europe always corresponded to times when Christianity was facing an external threat.

Despite his erudition, however, Stark’s account of religion seems to me to vacillate between the confused and the obvious. The supposed special motivating quality of monotheism would be news only if secular and non-monotheistic societies were markedly less violent than monotheistic ones. What happens, however, when we realize that Chinese emperors and many indigenous pagans managed to find plenty of reasons to make war on their neighbors without believing in “One True God”? Sadly, secular ideologies like Communism or Nazism, the pseudo-rational development schemes of the World Bank, and rapacious corporate policies have more than their share of victims as well. The religious arrogance of monotheism is simply an example of a drive to control or exploit that can be equally manifested in economics or politics. The problem is thus not “religion” per se, but rather religion—and politics, and economics—which promote destructive and unjust attitudes and actions.

Further, Stark’s oddly one-sided thesis about how the attraction of monotheism lies in its superior “exchange relation” between a believer and the “One True God” repeats this mistake. If monotheism were only about getting favors from Big Daddy, why would it include circumcision, turning the other cheek, and giving alms? Monotheism offers, but it also demands, and those demands are not just about “getting

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what we want," but about changing who we are so that we may better serve humanity. Religion's moral core and demand for self-transcendence, combined with numerous other factors from the rise of democracy to the creation of global cultural networks, lead some contemporary versions of monotheism to be both serious and deeply committed to ending violence and oppression of Others. Stark seems to have missed voices from Michael Lerner and John Cobb to the Berrigans and King. All of these are committed monotheists, and also respectful of those who are not. To paraphrase John Cobb: such monotheism may be very different than what we had in the past, but it is no less monotheistic.

Well-informed about religion's history, Stark seems to have missed the way its present and future contain some fundamentally new elements. Just as we cannot understand contemporary science by exhaustive knowledge of Aristotle, Newton, or even Einstein, so we cannot necessarily understand the moral qualities of today's monotheism by our knowledge of the Crusades, Islam's treatment of minority Christians, or even the Reform Judaism of the 1950s.

If Stark thinks that religion is (at least part of) The Problem, Mark Gopin is a passionate believer that it can be (at least part of) The Solution: in particular, part of a just peace between Palestinians and Israelis. An expert on conflict resolution and a participant in peacemaking and reconciliation, Gopin believes that "rational" and calculating processes of secret negotiation between each side's elites will simply not do the trick. Political pressure and personal histories frustrate attempts to reach minimum levels of mutual agreement. Here Gopin's detailed account of what went wrong between Barak and Arafat, the one place where real peace seemed directly within reach, is fascinating (if depressing). Also, in the powder keg atmosphere of the Middle East, negotiations which don't somehow involve or speak to the cultures and beliefs of the

masses are too easily derailed by vehement rejectionists on either side. One car bomb, one arrogant visit to a Holy Place, and we're back at square one.

As a supplement to high-level, "first-track" negotiation Gopin proposes the power of religious tradition—in particular, the kindred connections between Muslims and Jews in certain texts and narratives. We share a cultural link to

*A just and moral peace
is not guaranteed by
religion, but it is fully
compatible with it.*

Abraham and Isaac, Ishmael and Hagar, with all the complexities of promises and exile, hospitality and rejection, rage and reconciliation that their narratives contain. Gopin provides rich readings of these narratives, as well as inspiring accounts of religious attempts to forge some human connection across the Green Line. And his impatience with the way the secular political forces tend to neglect religious peacemaking is warranted. Like Stark, those who think that religion only messes up the situation are seeing only one side of the matter.

Gopin's appeal to religious values is not simply about people being "nice" to each other—as if a simple call to basic religious morality could end the conflict. Rather, it is about self-consciously using religion's power to shape behavior, create a narrative understanding of human experience, and offer hope in dark times. It is about taking what Stark correctly identified as religion's power to motivate, and using it for specific, and to some extent politically defined, ends. A just and moral peace is not guaranteed by religion, but it is—as Gopin shows through evidence and imagination—fully compatible with it.

In the end, neither Gopin nor Stark are "right" or "wrong" about what religion is. As Scott Appelby put it,

the "sacred" is fundamentally ambivalent—it dwells in the midst of conquest and peace, hate and love, a narrow constriction of dogma and a recognition that we are all made in God's image. Since religion in and of itself does not determine which of these sides will surface, we must envision the concrete moral character of religion as always in part determined by non-religious factors: by emotional trauma reproduced from generation to generation, as in Palestine-Israel; by failed modernization projects which leave the poor with little voice but that of the mosque, as in much of the Arab world; by a popular culture of destabilized gender roles and a threatening media culture of glitz, sex, and stupidity, as in the American Christian Right; or by an attempt to replace war with peace, as Gopin envisions. A simplistic concept of religion, for either good or ill, will not help us understand the world's pain and the demons that drive us to cruelty. □

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COUNT ME IN (continued from page 32)

and the tightening of controls over the Palestinians. Immediately my sympathy goes to the Palestinians, and I'm outraged about what Israel is doing. But then I wonder: Am I being disloyal? For a moment I see myself as an ungrateful convert who has received so much as a Jew but who is unwilling to stick by her adopted people. Guiltily I remember my sorrow for those Israelis who have been killed by Palestinians. I've been watching the mounting death toll, greatly afraid for my friends and my husband's relatives who live in Israel. But in truth, I must say that I believe the scale of Israeli and Palestinian wrongdoing is out of balance in this conflict, and that Israel has inflicted greater harm, although both sides have surely suffered.

Thankfully, many of my friends and compatriots in the peace movement share this opinion. They're born Jewish, and even though some of them fear going against their upbringings, they don't wonder if they're being disloyal in the same way as I do. Their anger about what is happening helps me recognize mine, and it quiets that voice in my head that says that converts shouldn't speak out.

Many other converts don't have this kind of support, and they stay far away from political involvement. It's too threatening or too dangerous. Recently, one of my students, Raphael, told me that he avoids news about the political situation in Israel because he knows that it will upset him. After he converted, he married into a family that considers criticism of Israel to be high treason, and he wants to keep his relationship with his in-laws intact. Another convert, Paul, says that he became Jewish because of what it offered him spiritually. He has no interest in going to Israel, and does not identify at all with the country—except as the well-spring of Judaism. If he were to pay attention to what is happening there, it might disillusion him and the loss would be too great. Maria, a North American, thinks she has no right to say anything about what Israel is doing. As a convert, she already feels like an outsider. People in her conservative synagogue support Sharon's actions and see the Arabs as the problem, and who is she to disagree?

III.

Most converts in the United States are not prepared for the complexity of dealing with Israel. It's no wonder that they push the subject aside, concentrating on being Jewish in their own communities. In so doing, they're not different from the majority of Americans who were born Jewish and have preferred to focus on enjoying a full, rich life in this country instead of dealing with all the Mideast *tzuris*.

Still, these last few months have broken through the wall of denial for many people. As visions of Israeli destructiveness and Palestinian suicide bombings show up on our television screens, as acts of anti-Semitism increase, the question begs: Where do you stand in this conflict?

Most of us, born-Jews and converts alike, can hardly



answer this question. There are too many prevarications, too many amendments, too many qualifying phrases. And the emotions rage. I've heard of couples having terrible fights about this issue even though their opinions are not that far apart. It's just too hard to pinpoint the pain, to name its roots; sometimes it's easier to argue.

My Israeli friend Jane had one of these fights with her son a few nights ago. She accused him of not acknowledging the damage done to the Palestinians, and he said she was being too hard on Sharon and the Israelis. Around and around they went, citing facts and figures, calling upon experts' opinions as validation. Only when they both began to talk about their fear could they disengage. The subject no longer became who was right and who was wrong, but how scared they both were about where this conflict was leading. They shared their worry that anti-Semitism might increase as images of Israeli aggression are seen around the world. They spoke of their concern about the emotional and spiritual well-being of Israeli soldiers who have been fighting in the territories. In the end they talked about the Black Flag, the flag that every Israeli soldier is supposed to raise if he or she is given an immoral order, and that image gave them both hope.

Too many of us don't talk about the Mideast conflict, even with those close to us. But we should. We can respect the degree of emotional difficulty the conflict holds for us by taking the time to drop below the surface and locate our feelings, describing them at length to each other even though they're contradictory. It's here that we can move toward compassion.

When I converted, I never dreamt that I'd care so much about what Israel does, or that I'd someday be in such agony about the conflict with the Palestinians. But I knew that my life was irretrievably altered. I was now tied to something much larger than myself, the Jewish people, for better or for worse. My commitment to heal the world became part of my Jewish practice, *tikkun olam*. I realized I couldn't do the work of transformation all by myself, but I was compelled to do my part. As a convert, I said: "Count me in." I still say that today, without regrets. □

Yippie Reflections

Stew Albert

On October 5, I marched in a large anti-war demonstration in Portland, Oregon. The paper says six thousand attended and *Indy Media* says it was closer to twelve thousand. I put the figure somewhere in between. It was a very mixed crowd, from people even older than me to young kids. Old ladies in tennis shoes and some very edgy punks. It was a long march, that began and ended with a rally. My favorite sign? "We're back!" And we are. On the same day, thousands marched around the country from San Francisco to New York City—even in Brattleboro, Vermont. Over a million and a half turned out in Italy and, a little while back, a half million in Blair's England. Thousands of Geneva Swiss took to the streets. Will it matter? Probably not for now. Will Bush permit demonstrations in America when we go to war? Probably, but it won't be easy getting permits, and you better not try it if you don't have one. Unless, of course, you're into masks, bandanas, and blood.

My big question is: How many people demonstrated yesterday who never demonstrated before? And how can we get millions more to join our demonstrations?

As someone who marched, wrote, spoke, and sometimes rioted against the Vietnam War, I can't help seeing the new anti-war movement and its manifestations through the eyes of a temporally-based double-vision. Moving from back then to now and passing unavoidable judgments.

We had better speakers back in the Sixties. Rallies today tend to present laundry lists of demands and nobody really listens. The most enjoyable part of the rally are those private community-sustaining conversations that take place as the speakers drone. Today they have endless demands, back then we had Mario Savio's moral vision and Abbie Hoffman's satiric edge. (Of course we had our share of boring speakers, too.) I do admit that a few of the speeches at the Portland event were good, offering a compelling analysis of the new American empire and its barbaric imperatives.

Stew Albert was a founding Yippie, editor of the Berkeley Tribe, a candidate for Sheriff of Alameda County, and an unindicted co-conspirator in the Chicago 8 trial. He can be reached through his website <http://hometown.aol.com/stewa/stew.html>



But there were too many on the platform and the organizers haven't quite a theatrical sense of when to end their events. So large demonstrations get smaller and smaller as people drift away and the rally takes on a depressingly absurd tone and eventually it feels like there are more people on the platform than in the audience.

The organizers and the speakers and the demonstrators are reluctant to criticize the latest Bush enemy, Saddam Hussein. Negative references are passing and brief. We were like that with Uncle Ho and the Viet Cong. Our disillusionment with America was

replaced with an idealization of its enemies. Still, Saddam isn't worthy of being on the same planet as Ho and if the new movement wants to expand its base it should not be afraid of hurting a tyrant's feelings.

We aren't against invading Iraq because we are interested in protecting the Iraqi government. Who among us doesn't want it overthrown and replaced by a democracy? But we know, and so does most of the world, that Baghdad shouldn't and can't be destroyed in order to liberate it. The Left that opposes Bush's proposed hideous war should create committees of solidarity with the Iraqi people, in the same way that pro-Palestinian groups are developed. Building a massive movement depends on not having moral double standards.

And a word to my new anarchist friends who think of the Yippies as proto-punks. I am pleased to accept your compliment. But remember, the wild stuff in the Sixties happened only after years of more polite behavior that failed to draw sufficient attention. People need to go through the process of trying moderate forms protest first. They should not be rushed or frightened by your behavior in the streets. Remember that when you chant, "The streets belong to the people," you must mean all people, even the liberals.

Now a word of advice to myself and my peers. Let's not turn into those grouchy, know-it-all old leftists that we couldn't stand—the people who told us that even nonviolent sit-ins were adventuristic. To eventually succeed, this new movement is going to walk on difficult roads we never dreamed of, with technologies that in our day only existed on *Star Trek*. We should get ready to take a new road, and hopefully in the process reclaim our sense of wonderment and the transformative power of imagination. □

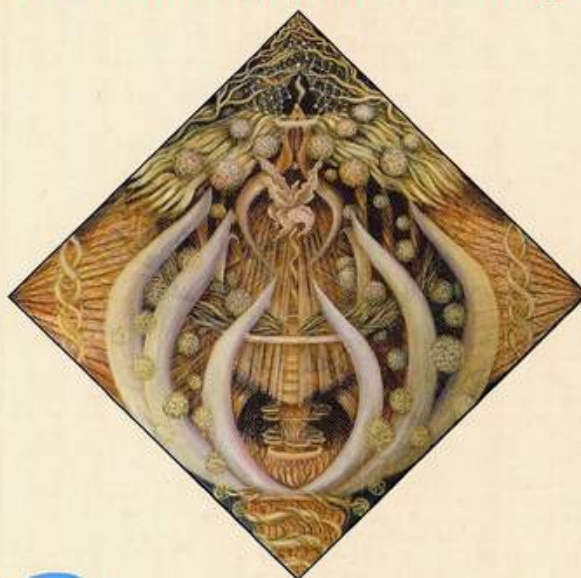
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