

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

CHANUKAH SUPPLEMENT

TIKKUN

**CHANUKAH AND
CHRISTMAS**

• MATTHEW FOX
• THOMAS MOORE • MATTHEW KRAUS

CALIFORNIA RECALL AN EDITORIAL

A BIMONTHLY JEWISH AND INTERFAITH CRITIQUE OF POLITICS, CULTURE & SOCIETY

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2003



The New Anti- Semitism

How serious? Why now?

MIRIAM GREENSPAN • DAVID N. MYERS
AIMEE LEVITT • BARRY LANDO

SACRED THERAPY
Estelle Frankel

ISRAEL-PALESTINE: VOICES OF HOPE

Yossi Beilin • Ziad Asali • David Newman • Eyad El-Sarraj

\$5.95 U.S. \$8.75 Canada



TAKING BACK DEMOCRACY

Jo Ellen Green Kaiser • Congressman Barney Frank
Scott Russell Sanders • Henry Giroux • Stephen Zunes

Sacrifice

Baghdad c. 1995

Here is fire and wood for sacrifice, said Isaac, but where is the lamb...?

The newscaster shows without much commentary
beyond that it was smuggled the video
of the dance the men of the desert cult perform

before the dictator and his family.
As absolute as any have ever been,
he sits in a standard wing chair in the palace,

less like a king, though, than a desert god
made visible as graven image, impassive—
the obsidian-eyed attentiveness revealed

in the almost averted gaze of the camera
as it wobbles after the dancers, passing him
and over patterns on a wall suggesting

calligraphy, as in the style of the region.
Easy to think the dance was made for him,
but he must have summoned them already aware

of the usual range of their improvisations
to that ancient city near the original places.
In fact the dance is older than the city

and ugly, the steps fierce but perfunctory,
done to keep the rhythm going of music
we cannot hear, that has not been recorded,

to which they seem to imitate, preempt
the famous cruelty: pierce themselves with daggers
and stakes though fleshy parts of their upper arms,

and onto a spot just above the hip
one shuffling man applies a pistol barrel,
and spins out of the frame with the jolt of the discharge.

Then they bring out the child and lay him down
and lay a blade across his naked belly—
but what cuts away suddenly is the tape,

leaving a black moment before the men
return bringing the boy with them, unhurt,
having danced what might be required, what has been,

by the great God or else some little ones
whose relevant texts are never texts alone,
but a scriptiform bramble in the midst of which,

after whoever is saved by whatever quirk
of grace, the rest are tangled, rams in the thicket.

—Jason Sommer

2 LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

6 **PUBLISHER'S PAGE:** *Walls—do they make us safer?*

7 **EDITORIALS:** *Lessons for 2004 from the California Recall; A Peace Treaty for Israel; Actualizing the New Bottom Line;* plus a guest editorial by **Stephen Zunes** on the *Democrats' Attack on Howard Dean* (13).



FEATURES:

16 Taking Back Democracy

What will it take to recreate a “democratic commons”—that time and place where politics will once again have meaning? TIKKUN editor **Jo Ellen Green Kaiser** looks to Benjamin Franklin for answers in *A Politics of Time and Space* (17). **Barney Frank**, in an interview with TIKKUN, shares his provocative common sense (21), while **Scott Russell Sanders** offers a new vision of the good life in *Common Wealth* (24). **Henry A. Giroux** and **Susan Searls Giroux** challenge us to renew democracy by *Taking Back Higher Education* (28).



33 The New Anti-Semitism

What's new about it? And is it real, or just another fantasy of the Jewish establishment? **Miriam Greenspan** maps out the complex and painful terrain of what **Phyllis Chesler** calls *The New Anti-Semitism*, on the rise in the Arab and Muslim world and growing in the West as well (33). **David N. Myers** investigates its rise in France in *Fear and Faith in the French Republic* (43). **Aimee Levitt** offers the personal perspective of *Une juive sur la rue Mouffetard* (46), and **Barry Lando** counters that it's Israeli policy, not anti-Semitism, fueling anger in France (49). And **Gayle Kirshenbaum**, in *Zionism and Its Discontents* (51), argues it's the moral viability of the Jewish State that's at stake.

54 Israel-Palestine: Voices of Hope

David Newman explores the political geography of Israel's separation wall in *Barriers or Bridges?* (54). (See map of the Wall on p. 56.) **Julie Oxenberg** and **Dan Burnstein** interview **Eyad El-Sarraj** about his work as a psychiatrist in Gaza and his vision for peace (59). **Ziad Asali** drafts a possible peace plan in *Palestine and Israel: Unkind History, Uncertain Future* (66). And **Yossi Beilin**, in an interview with TIKKUN, talks about what went wrong at Camp David and Taba, as well as his new Israeli peace party (70).

80 Happy Holidays

Thomas Moore (80) and **Matthew Fox** (83) ponder the deepest meaning of Christmas, while **Matthew Kraus** offers a resolution to Christmas-Chanukah tension in *A Chanukah Proposal* (85). (Our **Chanukah Supplement** between pages 80 and 81 provides a spiritual guide for Chanukah.) And **Earl Pomerantz** explains, in humorous detail, *How the Jews Lost the Lead* to Christianity (88).

ARTICLES:

74 **Jonathan Granoff** on overcoming the nuclear threat.

77 **Estelle Frankel's Sacred Narrative Therapy** offers a new approach to spiritual healing rooted in Jewish tradition, and useful for therapists and healers of every background.

96 **Arthur Waskow** on *Veterans Day*—and transforming the way we celebrate it.

Opposite: “Sacrifice,” by Jason Sommer.

Front Cover: *Bone Chained* by Kathleen Fox. Courtesy of Getty Images.

REVIEWS:

91 **Daniel Lazare** reviews **Baruch Kimmerling's** exposé of Ariel Sharon, *Politicide*.

92 **Radical Children.** **Stew Albert** reviews the most recent book by the son of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg, and **Neil Gordon's** *The Company You Keep*.

Inside Back Cover: **Sikkum: Books** TIKKUN Recommends.



Sikkum: TIKKUN RECOMMENDS ...

Healing Israel/Palestine

Michael Lerner
North Atlantic Books, 2003

The most recent book by TIKKUN's editor, Michael Lerner, is the only book of its kind on the market: a genuine attempt to tell the story of the Middle East struggle from the 1880s through July of 2003 with a balanced pro-Israel/pro-Palestine perspective, that accepts the legitimacy of both people's narratives and explores the ways that both peoples have "missed the mark," and have failed to recognize the humanity of the other.

Healing Israel/Palestine deals with all the tough questions: Right of Return, one-state versus two-state solutions, boycotts and divestment, whether terror will ever stop, what you can do right now to make an impact, separation of synagogue and state, the role of the United States, and much more. The Q & A section is particularly useful for social change activists who want to learn how to talk constructively with partisans on both sides of the debate.

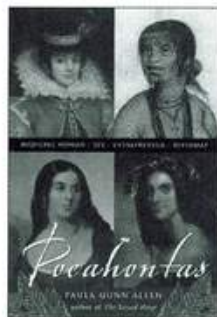
We are counting on our readers to make sure that local bookstores stock this book (Publisher's Group West is the distributor they can order from), since our publisher does not yet have the bookstore clout to ensure that this new paperback gets the attention it would be backed by big money. You can also order it directly from us for study groups at a lower price; instead of the market cost of \$16.95, we'll send you 10 or more for \$12 each.



Pocahontas Medicine Woman, Spy, Entrepreneur, Diplomat

Paula Gunn Allen
HarperSanFrancisco, 2003

Pocahontas is a fascinating and provocative retelling of the encounter between English colonialism and the Native Americans through the story of this prominent Native American woman, who came to London and may have been murdered (Allen suggests it may have been a conspiracy of many to poison her). Paula Gunn Allen is a professor emerita of English and American Indian Studies, and her book gives powerful insight into the relationship between Native Americans, American colonists, and the British.



Taking Our Places The Buddhist Path to Truly Growing Up

Norman Fischer
Harper Collins, 2003

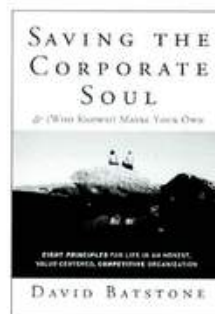
Norman Fischer is a Zen priest, and, like so many other American Buddhists who were born Jewish, he brings to his Zen consciousness a special sensitivity to social reality, and an emphasis on those stands within Buddhism which tie self-realization to the healing of others on the planet. Thus, the Bodhisattvas are "awakening beings not only because they themselves are aiming toward awakening, but because their aim is to awaken other beings." And like many of the great meditation teachers connected to Spirit Rock in Woodacre, California, Fischer promotes a practice of compassion, attention to the needs of others, and persistence in the face of all kinds of distractions and disappointments. His latest book is a compendium of spiritual wisdom for peoples of all faiths.



Saving the Corporate Soul & (Who Knows) Maybe Your Own

David Batstone
Jossey-Bass 2003

Batstone is executive editor of our sister magazine, *Sojourners*, and his book reflects the moral sensibility that distinguishes *Sojourners* as a beacon of Christian social ethics. Written like many advice books to corporate leaders, *Saving the Corporate Soul* speaks a plain language, making it clear that the eight principles advocated will enhance business performance, improve stockholder satisfaction, "fortify a business" reputation, and enhance its capacity to manage its network more effectively. The principles go from "The directors and executives of a company will align their personal interests with the fate of stakeholders and act in responsible ways to ensure the viability of the enterprise" (anecdote to Enron, perhaps?) to "A company will pursue international trade and production based on respect for the rights of workers and citizens of trade partner nations." Let's hope this book is widely read by corporate leaders.



TIKKUN

Editor
Michael Lerner
Associate Editor
Peter Gabel
Senior Editor & Associate Publisher
Jo Ellen Green Kaiser
Managing Editor
Deborah Kory
Poetry Editors
Carolyn Forché, Joshua Weiner
Assistant Poetry Editor
Lisa McCullough
Jewish Book Editor
Jonathan Schorsch
Literary Editor
Julian Levinson
Music Editor
Ya'acov Gabriel
Associate Literary Editors
Phillip Lopate, Francine Prose,
Linda Zisquit
Contributing Editors
Stew Albert, Bradley Shavit Artson,
Michael Bader, David Biale, Charles Derber,
Arnold Eisen, Mordechai Gafni, Susannah
Heschel, Mark LeVine, Ruth Messinger,
Michael Tomasky, Naomi Wolf
Art Director & Assistant Editor
Eric Zassenhaus
Advertising Director
Dana Van Blair
Media Editor
Evan Derkacz
Assistant to the Editor
Dominique Lando
Editorial Assistants
Esther Fishman, Stephanie Mackley,
Nicole Parisi-Smith, Judah M. Rittman,
Blythe Robbins, Nicole Spicer, Rachel Starr
Design and Production
David Van Ness
Contributing Artists
Russ Ando, Seth Berkowitz, Leela Corman,
Tim Davis, Chris Dennis, Brian Hubble,
Javier Aguilar Icaza, Eric Jahnke, Jon Krause,
Josh Neufeld, Stan Shaw, Jon Straus, Oenone
Terrill, Gary Tharler, Philip Vanderyken
Web Design
David King, Jer Welter
Publishers
George & Trish Vradenburg
Controller
Valerie Bach
Office Manager
Judy Tergis
2342 Shattuck Avenue, #1200
Berkeley, CA 94704
510-644-1200
fax: 510-644-1255
magazine@tikkun.org
Visit the TIKKUN website at
http://www.tikkun.org

Editorial Board
Rachel Adler, Gar Alperovitz, Michael Berenbaum, Heather
Booth, Charles Burack, Jay Cantor, David Cohen, Dan
Cohn-Sherbok, Elliot Dorff, Marc H. Ellis, Leslie Epstein,
Sidra Ezrahi, Gordon Fellman, John Felstiner, Nan Fink
Gefen, Saul Friedlander, Laura Geller, David Gordis, Arthur
Green, Colin Greer, Bert Jacobson, Reuven Kimelman,
Daniel Landes, Tzvi Marx, Daniel Matt, Jo Milgrom, Elliot
Neuman, David Newman, Ilana Pades, Robert Pinsky,
Judith Plaskow, Letty Cottin Pogrebin, James Ponet, Arnold
Rachlis, Aviezer Ravitsky, Michael Sandel, David Saperstein,
Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, Howard Schwartz, Chaim
Seidler-Feller, Gerald Serotta, Rami Shapiro, Stanley
Sheinbaum, Uri Simon, Arthur Waskow, Steve Wasserman,
A. B. Yehoshua, Idith Zertal

Letters to the Editor

Fighting Terrorism

To the Editor:
When Israel first became a state, David Ben-Gurion instituted actions to make only *one* Jewish army the instrument of the state, and put down the Stern Gang and Irgun Svi Leumi in several bloody battles.

The big problem for Israel is that the Palestinians are unwilling to dismantle the terrorist organizations—Hamas and Islamic Jihad, etc. Until this is done, all your plans are just wishful thinking.

Your magazine continually blames Israel for almost all peace initiative failures. What magazines in the Arab world call for the Palestinians to have *one* security force, responsible to the Palestinian Authority, and to put down their terrorist militias? My bet is there are none.

Your magazine's plans, programs, and other peace initiatives are motivated by the best intentions in the world, but as George Bernard Shaw once said, "the

road to Hell is paved with good intentions." You are all good and kind people, but your ideas would lead Israel to disaster.

RONALD GINSON
Lee's Summit, MO

Editor Responds:

Had the British required of Ben Gurion, as a precondition for ending the British occupation of Palestine, that he eliminate the major terrorist groups headed by (later to be Israeli

Prime Ministers) Yitzhak Shamir and Menachem Begin, the British would still be there today. No Israeli patriot, no matter how distressed at Jewish acts of terror, would have put their energies into fighting fellow Jews until a Jewish state was actually created and recognized by the international community. At that point, Ben Gurion had the strength within his own community to act against the terrorist smuggling of guns, and he did so by sinking a ship loaded with weapons intended for Begin and Shamir. Similarly, once Israel



Articles in TIKKUN do not necessarily reflect TIKKUN's stance on any issue. TIKKUN's positions are presented in our editorials.

TIKKUN (Vol. 18, No. 6, ISSN 0887-9982) is published bimonthly by the Institute for Labor and Mental Health, a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization. TIKKUN, 2342 Shattuck Ave., #1200, Berkeley, CA 94704. TIKKUN subscribers are members of the Institute for Labor and Mental Health. Publications mail agreement number: #1549111. Canada mail distributor information: Express Messenger International; P.O. Box 25058; London BRC, ON N6C 6A8. Printed in USA. Printed on recycled paper.

SUBSCRIPTION ORDERS, CHANGES, AND PROBLEMS:

Call 1-800-395-7753 between 8:30 AM and 5:00 PM PST, write TIKKUN Subscription Service, P.O. Box 460926, Escondido, CA 92046, or email subscribe@tikkun.org. \$29 for 6 issues, \$56 for 12 issues, \$83.50 for 18 issues. Institutional subscriptions: \$50 for 6 issues. Add \$10 per year per sub for Canada and Mexico, \$14 for all other countries outside the U.S. Please pay for all orders in U.S. funds (including postal money orders) or with checks drawn from a U.S. bank. Visa/MC/AmEx/Disc also accepted. Please allow 6-8 weeks for any subscription transaction, including receiving your first issue, solving subscription problems, or changing your address. (Bills and payments may cross in the mail.)

Manuscript submission: Do not send letters of inquiry. Unsolicited manuscripts not accepted via email. **Fiction & Non-fiction:** Send to 2342 Shattuck Ave., #1200, Berkeley, CA 94704. **Poetry:** Joshua Weiner, Dept. of English, 3101 Susquehanna Hall, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742. Our evaluation process may take up to four months. Submissions without a self-addressed stamped envelope will not be returned. Copyright © 2003 by the Institute for Labor and Mental Health. All rights reserved.

Letters to the Editor: Via mail or email to magazine@tikkun.org. Letters may be shortened for space.

Advertising and Permissions: Contact Dana Van Blair, 2342 Shattuck Ave., #1200, Berkeley, CA 94704; (510) 644-1200; dana@tikkun.org.

Distribution: International bookstores and newsstand circulation by BigTop Newsstand Services, a division of the IPA. For more information call 415-643-0161 or fax 415-643-2983 or e-mail: info@BigTopPubs.com.

Postmaster: Send address changes to TIKKUN, P.O. Box 460926, Escondido, CA 92046. Periodical-rate postage paid at Oakland, CA and additional mailing offices by the Institute for Labor and Mental Health, 3137 Telegraph Ave., Oakland, CA 94609.

withdraws from the West Bank and Gaza, and the Palestinian people have actually achieved a state in all of the West Bank and Gaza, it will be possible for Arafat to do what he cannot do now—show the Palestinian people that they've actually achieved something worth fighting for, and that the terrorists pose a risk to that achievement. To expect him to be able to mobilize the force necessary to suppress the terrorists when the Occupation continues is a way to continue the Occupation forever. Though we at TIKKUN believe that the Palestinian people would be far better served by a policy of absolute and principled non-violence, we don't believe that their failure to pursue that path shows that there is no one with whom to negotiate or proves that the Palestinian people do not desire peace.

Whither Progressive Zionism?

To the Editor:

Is it possible to be a progressive and a Zionist? I have always thought of myself as both, but never before has there been such division between progressives and Israel.

I have always supported Israel, her right to exist, and her fight against oppression and death. I have never thought settlements or roadblocks or curfews were productive but rather humiliating and degrading, but then I ask myself, what else can they do? What can Israel do to protect itself and allow its citizens, Jew and Arab alike, to live in peace?

Such a crossroads is hard for me.

I have always looked upon Zionism from a liberal and progressive standpoint, and I wonder does anyone else see it as well? A Zionism which loves the state of Israel and wants to do justice for the Palestinians? Is there anyone else out there who feels the way I do?

JARED
Ann Arbor, MI

Editor Replies:

A year ago we formed the Tikkun Campus Network and we now have groups on several campuses and are building more. The Tikkun Campus Network, a branch of The Tikkun Community, is pro-Israel and pro-Palestine, believing that Israel needs to be secure and Palestine needs to be free. Please spread the word to other students: We are having a Tikkun Campus Network gathering at Brown University, February 13-16. More info: campus@tikkun.org

To the Editor:

As a very worried and concerned Israeli citizen, I would like to support [Labor Party Knesset member] Avraham Burg's words ["A Failed Israeli Society Collapses While Its Leaders Remain Silent," printed in *The Forward*, August 29, 2003] and also ask—why are such voices not heard clearly and strongly here? Only in the pages of *Ha'aretz* do we hear such opinions—and there seems to be no real grassroots action that one can support apart from the *Mifkad Leumi* run by Ami Ayalon and Sari Nusseibeh [in English, "The People's Voice" <http://www.mifkad.org.il/eng/PrinciplesAgreement.asp>].

I have just read two very disturbing pieces in this weekend's newspaper which illustrate the effect the Occupation is having on the Israeli population: one by Batya Gur describing the humiliating and totally inhuman treatment of an old Arab man by some young border police-women on one of Jerusalem's streets, and the second by Gideon Levy describing an even worse and tragic example of uncaring and thoughtless behavior at a roadblock, which resulted in a woman giving birth behind a rock in the dirt and the death of the newborn.

Is this the land which I have chosen? Where are the ideals, the courage, the moral beauty that drew me here—where is our hope, both as Jews and as human beings? All buried beneath the Occupation—or perhaps, in a different narrative. Perhaps they never really existed and I simply was drawn into the myth?

GILLIAN HIRSH
Israel

To the Editor:

This morning I woke to find two contradictory stories. I opened my email to find TIKKUN's "The Nightmare Continues." I then heard the breaking news of two suicide bombings in Israel.

In one week, I and my family plan to make *aliyah* (move to Israel) fulfilling a dream and an obligation that we feel toward the Jewish state. We are not fanatics in any way, we simply believe in taking advantage of the opportunity that belongs to our generation to live in our land. We are realistic about the obstacles we face in moving, yet we feel that we can no longer watch Jewish life from the sidelines. We each have professions (surgeon



The Zohar Pritzker Edition, Volumes One and Two

Translation and Commentary by
DANIEL C. MATT

"Daniel Matt's translation of the Zohar is a masterful approach to one of the most enchanting and intriguing texts of religious literature. This new edition will be read and reread with delight and fervor by teachers and students alike."

—Elie Wiesel

The first two volumes of *The Zohar: Pritzker Edition*, translated with commentary by Daniel C. Matt, cover more than half of the Zohar's commentary on the Book of Genesis (through Genesis 32:3). This is the first translation ever made from a critical Aramaic text of the Zohar, which has been established by Professor Matt based on a wide range of original manuscripts. The extensive commentary, appearing at the bottom of each page, clarifies the kabbalistic symbolism and terminology, and cites sources and parallels from biblical, rabbinic, and kabbalistic texts.
Volume 1, \$45.00 cloth
AVAILABLE IN DECEMBER 2003:
Volume 2, \$45.00 cloth



Stanford
University Press

800-621-2736 www.sup.org

LETTERS

and architect) that can contribute to the betterment of the lives of Israeli citizens and would not differentiate between helping Jew or Arab. We are looking forward to a good and peaceful life.

What is especially discomfiting, however, is your magazine. From what I have read, you are not interested in real news or fair play. I wonder how many of your writers have even been to Israel lately. The Israelis I know are scared. They are threatened, and they are holding up their end of the Road Map and beyond (releasing prisoners is not part of the deal) while Abbas refused to even confront terror groups. Palestinians are inconvenienced and impoverished. Israelis are dying.

Perhaps because we are children of Holocaust survivors, I cannot ignore the gift of a Jewish haven. We will do everything in our power to strengthen it. I am amazed that your magazine can time and time again work to do everything but. You may think you are being fair and evenhanded, but you are phenomenally destructive. Who is being evenhanded in the Palestinian camp toward Israel? Please reexamine your position. It is ultimately a very dangerous one for Jews.

SHARI MENDES
From the internet

A Bi-National Israel

To the Editor:

TIKKUN makes some interesting observations and I agree with most of its stances on moving the so-called Road Map forward. I take exception to its unilateral call for Palestinians to renounce their "Right of Return" without calling on Israel to revoke its "Law of Return." To me they're inseparable issues; you can't have one to the exclusion of the other.

The whole idea of accepting and institutionalizing the partitioning of Palestine into separate states is anathema to me. To accept partition is to naively accept the premise of contemporary political Zionism that it has no further territorial ambitions in the Middle East. In other words, Zionism would have to publicly renounce its fundamental premise—the ingathering of all Jews throughout the world to Eretz Israel. This is highly unlikely and, as such, pro-

vides the greatest impediment to the resolution of the conflict.

I certainly agree with TIKKUN (and perhaps you don't share the contemporary Zionist worldview) that Jews should be allowed to live anywhere in Palestine (including Jordan, I assume, which is really "Eastern" Palestine), provided native-born Palestinians can live in their own country (Israel, or "Western"



Palestine). What I suspect, however, is that you still hold to the principle that Israel should remain an exclusively "Jewish" state (the premise of most Israeli and non-Israeli Jewish liberals), which would indicate that you favor a "bi-national" Palestine in the West Bank and Gaza, but not a bi-national Israel. Wouldn't a bi-national Israel in all of "Western" Palestine fulfill this goal?

The only genuine solution is for Israel to recognize the inherent flaws in its original design and correct them; i.e., recognize the rights of its Arab inhabitants on the same basis as its Jewish citizens. All this nonsense about "demographic majorities" is nothing but a red-herring to avoid the fundamental flaws in Israel's own definition of itself as well as a smokescreen to perpetuate the Occupation. Israel should either annex the territories and provide the opportunity for equal citizenship, or get out entirely. It appears that Israel is willing to do neither, and the creation of an "independent" Palestinian state on slivers of occupied territory won't solve the fundamental problem.

Zionism frequently invokes sacred scripture to justify its actions (perhaps this is why Zionism plays so well with fundamentalist and extremist "Christian" groups in this country). What Zionism consistently fails to mention is its founding patriarch (and namesake) Jacob's intention of incorporating the native inhabitants of Canaan (the Canaanites, among others) into the Israelite community. Wouldn't now be an excellent opportunity to accomplish Jacob's intention?

Praying for an undivided, bi-national Israel,

BURT WEISSMAN
Bellflower, CA

Editor Replies:

The "Right of Return" controversy is dealt with in detail in Healing Israel/

Palestine, the latest version of which should now be in your bookstore. We'll try to publish a detailed debate about this issue sometime in the next two-three issues.

Moses and Arafat

To the Editor:

Moses took the Israelites out of Egypt, raised their consciousness, and, during the forty years of wandering in the desert, shaped them into a tribal fighting force. Nevertheless, Moses did not lead his people into the Promised Land.

Each phase of nation building requires a leader with different abilities and qualifications. Gorbachev eased the Communist yoke of his people, but being a Communist himself, he could not give them the freedoms they desired and the Soviet Union disintegrated. It was his successor, Yeltsin, who laid the foundations of a free Russia.

Similarly, Arafat raised the consciousness and hopes of the Palestinian people, but being a slave to his terrorist habits, he cannot bring them to the Promised Land of peace and prosperity. He cannot liberate his people from the moribund cycle of violence and suffering. It is up to the Palestinian people to realize that they need a new leader who can eliminate senseless terror and organize an open and responsive government to collect taxes, build schools and factories, and collect the garbage. It is time for Arafat to recognize his limitations and let his people go ... toward a better future without him.

ALEXANDER KIMEL
Fort Lee, NJ

Open Hearts, Open Minds

To the Editor:

May I congratulate Michael Lerner for his truly brilliant editorial "Closed Hearts, Closed Minds" (September/October 2003). The world is in desperate need of the changes put forward by Lerner—it must somehow learn to substitute greed and the quest for power with concern and caring for our fellow human beings. To bring about this change is a gigantic task—how do we persuade people to abandon the "I'm alright, Jack" outlook which is so prevalent in our society? How do we get people to accept that the indiscriminate bombing of towns and cities is, to say the

least, the most inefficient way of persuading their residents to sign up for our version of "democracy"? Such actions, of course, simply increase the determination of the bombed to seek revenge against the bombers—witness the chaos prevailing in Iraq.

One way, perhaps, to get Lerner's message across is for every priest, vicar, parson, and bishop in the Western world to deliver a sermon based on your article—and repeat it at weekly intervals.

JOHN DEAN
Westerham, UK

To the Editor:

My heart, mind, soul, and spirit are with you completely in the struggle for a more loving and peaceful world. But I suggest a slight shift in the area of struggle. The political arena still needs to be addressed, but the greatest gains for a better world will be realized in the struggle for the evolution of human consciousness.

Until more people see the world as you and I see the world, we will continue to fight a losing and frustrating battle. Beautifully conceived and eloquently expressed rational arguments for the "new bottom line" will continue to fall on deaf ears.

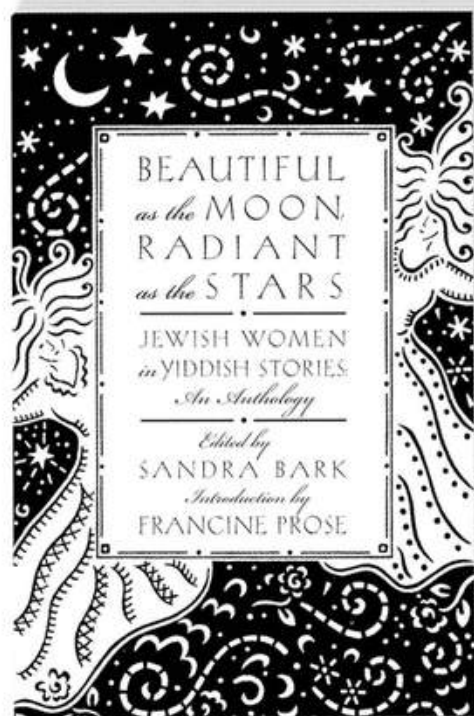
Worldviews will transcend when hearts, minds, and souls open to the possibility of spiritual growth. I believe that peace and harmony in this world will increase with the effort to facilitate the spiritual growth of all people.

This strategy can also be very frustrating ... for how do we facilitate this growth? One significant answer has recently been revealed to us. Your friend, Ken Wilber, and many others have conceived, through extensive research and their own meditative reflection, maps of the evolution of consciousness. When the world's religious leaders become more aware of these maps and begin to affirm their efficacy, the moves toward deeper and broader levels of awareness and Spirit will gain the catalyst they have lacked.

If TIKKUN ever decides, as one part of their strategy for world peace, to promote and facilitate ubiquitous spiritual growth, I would give all of myself in support of you in that effort.

STAN CROSS
Winston-Salem, NC

The history in their hearts is preserved in their words.



"What a delightful read!"

A wonderful peek into feminine Jewish lore that's often whimsical, sometimes heartbreaking, but always significant. It is a book of heritage and of life."

—FAYE KELLERMAN, AUTHOR OF *STREET DREAMS*

"An important resource for years to come."

—MIRIAM WEINSTEIN, AUTHOR OF *YIDDISH: A NATION OF WORDS*

"This book is like an archaeological excavation, digging beneath the present to unearth the forgotten skeletons of moments, thoughts, minds, and souls buried even deeper. Reading it is like breathing those dry bones back to life."

—DARA HORN, AUTHOR OF *IN THE IMAGE*

Visit our Web site at www.twbookmark.com
AVAILABLE IN PAPERBACK WARNER BOOKS

An AOL Time Warner Book Group Company

Walls

George Vradenburg

As winter approaches and we enter the holiday season, I want to talk about “walls.”

Walls seem particularly relevant this year.

There is the Wall of the Second Temple in Jerusalem, the rededication of which we celebrate at Chanukah.

There is the Wall between church and state that empowers us in this country to exercise our Jewish religion as we see fit, without interference from a State chosen by a non-Jewish majority.

There is the Wall that Israel is currently building through the West Bank.

We have constructed Walls for protection, to keep out “others” that might do us harm or infringe on our freedoms. We did not want non-Jews to enter our Temple to defile our sacred sites or texts. We do not want the State to enter our daily lives and instruct us on the “right” way to practice our religion. We do not want suicide bombers to enter our public places to kill us.

But Walls can be a trap. Walls can confine us, physically and spiritually. Walls can keep out new ideas and weaken our capacity for renewal. Walls can separate us from others and lead us to become indifferent or ignorant to the suffering of those on the “other” side. Walls between religion and the State can elevate the material and secular over the sacred and deprive us of needed spiritual energy in our public life.

And finally, there is our responsibility for *tikkun olam*—healing and repairing the world—that places an affirmative obligation on us to ignore walls between the Jewish and non-Jewish world and seek to end oppression and suffering everywhere it exists.

So, we must be wary of Walls, understand their dangers, put them in their place, and recognize their protective capacity, but deny them the power to keep us from our responsibility to “others.”

This season, let us not forget that on the “other” side of the Western Wall lies the Dome of the Rock, a sacred Islamic site whose common Abrahamic heritage is shared by Jews and Muslims.

This season, let us not forget that on the “other” side of the Wall, protecting our religious liberty, lies a State that must ultimately be subordinated to the sacred values of

life, liberty, and compassion that derive from God.

And this season, let us not forget that on the “other” side of the Wall through the West Bank is a Palestinian people whose suffering we must recognize and whose national aspirations are entitled to our respect and support.

If we allow Walls to make us indifferent to what is on the other side, what we have created to protect us will end up draining our ability to engage in the world we are charged to heal and repair.

In our individual lives, we take for granted our responsibility to alleviate suffering when it occurs within our family or to our immediate friends. And most of us assume that responsibility in our local community, for fellow Jews, and in our schools and colleges.

But few of us know how to address the oppression or suffering of those with whom we are totally unconnected, geographically or otherwise. Yet, is there less value to a life in Bangladesh than to a life in our own neighborhoods? Is oppression less unjust in Iraq or Rwanda than it is in Los Angeles?

But what are we to do in the face of great distance and no obvious and easy ways to help?

Many look to government and urge an increase in foreign aid as the only way to address poverty, malnutrition, and illiteracy. But foreign aid is of limited effectiveness, particularly where government corruption is rampant and there are few established means for delivering healthcare and education. There are, however, many private non-governmental organizations that are quite effective, and they all need volunteers and resources.

Many would deal with the denial of religious and political liberty with words of advocacy or prayer. Others will argue that there are times when words are not enough and that military intervention is necessary to dislodge the oppressor.

One very concrete means of engagement is to join the Tikkun Community, an interfaith group dedicated to bringing about a world of justice, peace, and ecological sanity.

Whatever our view of how best to act to heal and repair the world, we must act to fulfill our responsibility for *tikkun olam*.

As we celebrate our religious holidays in an environment of political and religious liberty, we must not let the Walls we construct to protect us become barriers to acting on our responsibility to those on the other side. □

George Vradenburg is co-publisher of TIKKUN.

Recall in California

Lessons for the 2004 Elections

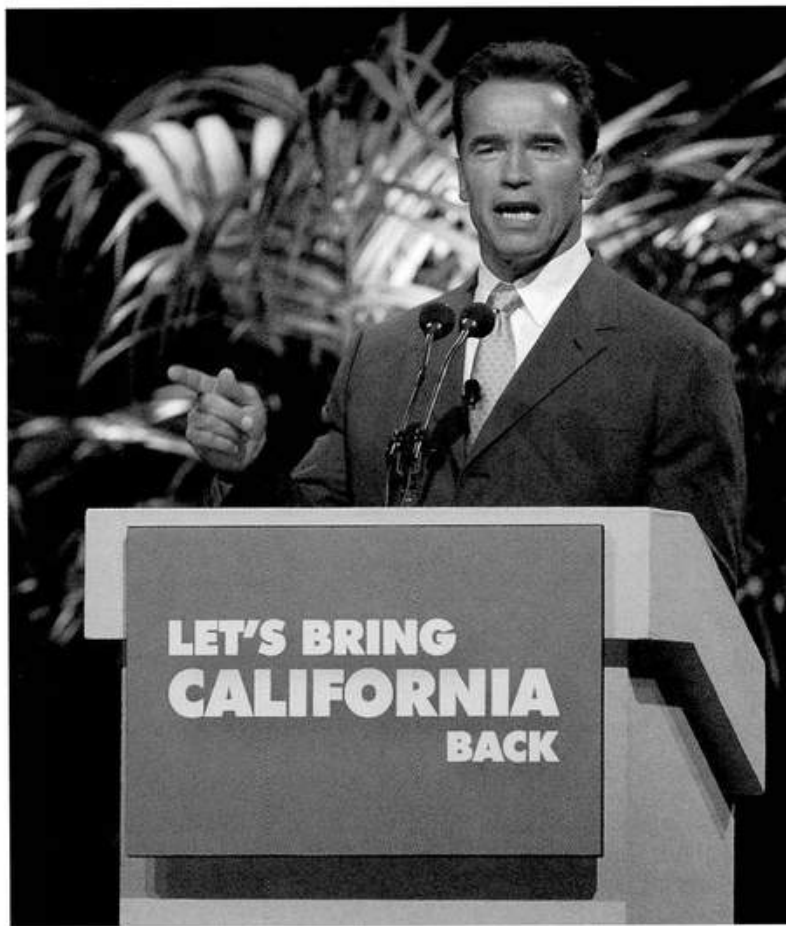
Michael Lerner

Liberals and progressives, still reeling from the recall of Grey Davis and the election of film star Arnold Schwarzenegger, are engaged in a frantic effort to understand why it happened. Explanations range from the political and personal incompetence of Davis ("he was cold and aloof and had no friends" and "only won reelection a year ago because he was facing an anti-choice, ultra-conservative Republican rather than someone like Schwarzenegger who was moderate on the social issues like abortion and gun control") to the sinister power of the Republicans to steal elections ("they have so much media power that they can take an empty shell like Schwarzenegger and turn his media fame into political popularity, and their huge finances can pay referenda canvassers to collect names for anything these Republicans want on the ballot") to Schwarzenegger isn't all that bad ("after all, he has the Kennedy clan to moderate him through the power of his wife") to Schwarzenegger appealed to the racist elements of the Republican party ("because tax cuts are really just an acceptable way of expressing racism toward Latinos and Blacks who, in the fantasy of white suburbanites who fueled the Schwarzenegger victory, are the primary recipients of government services").

These explanations have some elements of truth, but they protect liberals and progressives from having to address more fundamental and difficult questions, namely: 1) What kinds of legitimate needs are being expressed in the Rightward shift of the population? 2) What have liberals and progressives failed to do or say or deliver that makes them unattractive to the electorate?

These questions fueled our research at the Institute for Labor and Mental Health—the parent body of *TIKKUN* magazine—and led us to develop a Politics of Meaning and an Emancipatory Spirituality. Through our research we concluded the following:

1. Most people in this society hunger for recognition and connection with others which is seldom provided by their jobs or work, and is systematically undermined by the



dynamics of the competitive marketplace and its ethos of selfishness and materialism. People feel lonely and desperate, and blame themselves for not having achieved the kind of life they expect would give them a sense of meaning and purpose (since, in a meritocracy, where you end up is where you deserve to be). This applies to people who have "made it" financially as well as to those who have not, since many of the former do not achieve the kind of human connections or recognition that they feel would give their lives meaning. Underneath the "I'm cool and I've got my life together" facade that most people hide behind, there is deep self-doubt and depression that makes many Americans desperate to find some kind of community of meaning. They seek to connect to something which will help them transcend their own personal sense of not having created the kind of life they fantasize almost everyone else has.

The political Right provides a solution for many of these people in the form of what Peter Gabel calls an "imaginary community"—e.g. fundamentalist churches, synagogues or mosques; or in the form of nationalist triumph ("we beat those evil Iraqis"); or some other transitory "we" (as in "we" almost won the World Series or the Super Bowl). This momentary sense of connection provides temporary compensation for a life otherwise filled with the deep isolation inherent in the "looking out for number one" society.

Yet these compensations are temporary, and the community imaginary, because when people have to return to

the world of work and the economic realities of daily life, they find that the spirit of “we” has not tempered the vast and subverting and isolating realities produced by the competitive marketplace. Those who yesterday might have been part of the same religious or nationalist celebration are today, in the world of work, willing to take advantage of you and advance themselves at your expense without thinking twice. This disappointment generates a great deal of anger that is either directed inward or—when effectively manipulated—outward, in the form of crusades against some “other,” who is blamed for having created the feeling of alienation and lack of connection that would not exist otherwise. Who these “others” are differs from historical moment to moment and from country to country, but the theme is constant.

The anger being expressed at American Indians who were unfairly using their casino revenues (a gift allowed them in part to compensate for hundreds of years of abuse) to support their interests is one such example of this cycle. Another example is the anger directed at undocumented workers who’ve been allowed to obtain drivers licenses even though they “cheated” by coming over the border illegally.

2. Many people feel unseen, misunderstood, and disrespected by liberals and progressives—and by the vast governmental apparatus the liberal forces champion. What they hear over and over again from liberals is sympathy for everyone *but* ordinary Americans and their plight. So, for example, they hear that liberals are ready to march on behalf of the suffering of the Iraqi people (in our view a quite appropriate thing to have done), but feel no comparable willingness to address the feelings of depression, helplessness, and anger that Americans are feeling about their daily lives. Quite the contrary—they watch as liberals and progressives put all their energy into benefits for those who are deemed “oppressed,” e.g. the Native Americans and their casinos, the undocumented immigrants who are perceived as being rewarded for breaking the rules, while “the rest of us” follow the rules but suffer through empty lives nonetheless.

The message of liberals and progressives seems to be some variant of “You already have achieved the good life for yourselves, you’ve already ‘made it,’ you already have fulfillment and happiness, so stop being so selfish and share what you have with others.” But most Americans don’t experience their lives as having already “made it,” and they feel deeply misunderstood and disrespected by these liberals and progressives who are so out of touch that they won’t bother to look and see what the lives of ordinary Americans are like. When we at the Institute for Labor and Mental

Health *did* look, quite systematically, at the lives of thousands of Americans, we found, and continue to find in our ongoing research, that the lives of Americans are filled with pain and depression. And they are naturally angry at those who seem not to notice or care anything about their lives.

This anger is magnified dramatically when people encounter the bureaucracies in their own local, state, or federal government. Because government employees are given zero incentive to be responsive to the people they serve (in part because of demands that they prove them-

selves to be “efficient” or “productive” in response to endless conservative assaults on the “wastefulness” of government), and instead focus their attention on protecting themselves by rigidly adhering to rules that often have no relevance to the realities facing them, people often feel disrespected and demeaned by the way the bureaucracy treats them. I still remember acutely the feelings of rage I had when, as a homeowner, I applied for a permit from the city government to make

some minor adjustments to my property and found myself confronted by a bureaucrat who acted as though he was doing me the biggest favor in the universe to even bother to talk to me. There was no way to get the bureaucrats I faced to be responsive to my needs or even to treat me as though I deserved some modicum of respect. If I wanted to “show them” that I deserved respect, my only option would be to de-fund the government by joining a tax revolt or by voting for some candidate who would express anger at “big government.” Because I am firmly committed to using government to rectify racial and economic oppression, I didn’t go that route, but I could easily understand others who might.

3. Many people are scared. No matter how powerful and successful they may look from the outside, on the inside they feel genuinely insecure. They know that many aspects of their world are built on a house of cards. They’ve watched the collapse of Enron, the Silicon Valley electronics economic miracles of the Nineties, and other seemingly solid economic institutions, and they know that their own lives are similarly vulnerable. They’ve been knocked over the head by 9/11. In the face of their fears, they want to have strong leaders who seem able to stand up to the frightening forces in the world. That’s why they often feel so much contempt for the Democrats who, driven by a frenzy of endless compromising, appear to stand for absolutely nothing. The wimpiness of Al Gore is legendary: Even when he won the popular vote for President, he wouldn’t fight for himself and his victory. Gray Davis was this kind of a weakling also. Faced with the Enron-generated energy crisis, he was willing to tell the truth that the crisis had been manipulated by the energy

*Many people are scared.
No matter how powerful
and successful they may
look from the outside, on
the inside they feel
genuinely insecure.*

companies, but then, in astounding cowardice, capitulated to their demands and saddled Californians with a huge bill to pay the scoundrels off.

Liberals tend to be liberal about their liberalism—they won't fight for what they believe in, and many Americans feel they can't trust their security in the hands of these kinds of cowards. No wonder, then, that the perfect candidate to challenge these Democrats would be the Terminator, a man whose entire persona is that of a tough, aggressive, unbending defender of the people. And yet the Democrats continue to draw the wrong lesson—imagining that if they can present themselves as less principled and more like the Republicans, that will be the path for their own survival. Even Nancy Pelosi, the House Democratic Minority Leader, has faltered. While in her San Francisco district she presents herself as anti-war—in accord with majority sentiment in the one area of the State of California that voted overwhelmingly (4-1) against the Recall—in Congress she first supported the \$87 billion supplemental package that Bush requested for the ongoing occupation of Iraq before rejecting it. And, as Stephen Zunes points out in the guest editorial that follows, she joins with other House Democrats in seeking to curb free speech and open debate in the Democratic Party when the issues concern Israel and Palestine.

Indeed, on the Middle East, as on so many other issues, the Democrats believe that their best bet lies in trying to out-Republican the Republicans. This weak-kneed strategy is a guarantee of future electoral failure, and a recipe for macho candidates like the Terminator to appear on the scene and play to the discontent that these Democrats have generated. For Americans for whom the world of television, movies, and the lives of the celebrities often feels more real than their own lives, it is sometimes easier to imagine security deriving from a comic book figure or a media-constructed personality than from a real person with his or her inevitable contradictions and deficiencies.

Our methodology here is to find the rational kernel embodied in the irrational. The analysis of many on the Left has the opposite flavor: It starts from the assumption that people who voted for the Recall are screwed up, fools, or simply hateful, and fails to ask what might actually be legitimate in the anger people were expressing at Davis, the Democrats, big government, etc.

Yet to address these issues and the underlying needs in a serious way would take a radical transformation in the approach of liberals and progressives, whether they be John Kerry or Wesley Clark centrists, or whether they be Howard Dean, Dennis Kucinich, or Green Party leftists.

*On the Middle East, as
on so many other issues,
the Democrats believe
that their best bet lies in
trying to out-Republican
the Republicans.*

The first step they will have to take is to overcome their tendency to reduce all issues to economic terms ("it's the economy, stupid") and recognize the hunger for meaning, connection, recognition, love, and caring as deep needs that are systematically thwarted. They will then have to present a program that seeks to change our economic, governmental, and cultural institutions in ways that address those needs (something I've laid out in *Spirit Matters: Global Healing and the Wisdom of the Soul*). Finally, they will have to stop defending government as it is currently constituted

and become powerful critics—not only of the ways that the government is handmaiden to the competitive marketplace, but also of the way government alienates and disrespects the people it is meant to serve.

Though government workers' unions would strongly oppose any campaign that challenged their vested privileges, progressives should be asking for a real transformation of government so that its workers are selected and promoted for their idealism and

commitment to a politics of meaning conception of government: namely that it exists as a mechanism for each of us to show our caring for our neighbors, and that it is only valuable if it does in fact succeed in showing that caring. It would follow that those employed by us would be expected to serve with a spirit of caring for each of us, and a genuine commitment to making government feel like an instrument of our collective caring. Government employees should be regularly assessed by the people whom they have been serving, and public response to the way that they are being treated should directly impact any given person's ability to stay in government service as well as their level of pay. If we can't find people who are willing to serve the community as

TIKKUN CAMPUS NETWORK NATIONAL STUDENT CONFERENCE

MARCH 5-7, 2004
BROWN UNIVERSITY

Celebrate Purim at Brown—
and Build a Voice for Middle East Peace
and a Spiritual Politics

INFO: michaela_matt@brown.edu
or <http://www.tikkun.org/community/campusnet/>

EDITORIALS

a vocation, and as an expression of their own idealism, then government services will have to shrink. Ironically, however, and despite the fears of the government employee unions, such an attitude would increase people's willingness to fund governmental programs and would be a realistic way to save their union members' jobs. Instead of hiding behind civil service protections, government workers could foil the assault by the Right if they themselves became champions of this new way of assessing and evaluating governmental programs.

Yet it will take more than this to divest the liberals and progressives from their self-destructive identification with government programs that do not really succeed. People would have a vastly different assessment of liberals and progressives if they were putting forward programs that really had the potential to solve the world's problems, rather than promoting makeshift attempts to alleviate the worst suffering generated by a social order that these liberals and progressives seem willing to protect. If, for example, instead of fighting for less repression of the homeless, they fought for a national program to *once and for all* eliminate homelessness or poverty or inadequate health care. Imagine how different American politics would have been had the Clintons, instead of proposing a monstrosity of a health care plan, proposed and fought for a single payer plan—and then stuck with that ideal even while Republicans dominated Congress (though that itself was a product of the failure of the Democrats, not just an inevitable development). If people felt that the Democrats stood for something and fought for it, they'd feel much more respect for them.

This is one reason people like Bush—he sticks to his guns (so to speak) rather than altering his beliefs daily to fit the latest developments in the polls. It is that kind of backbone (unfortunately in service of policies that are often repulsive) that generates respect and a sense of safety: you know what you are dealing with, and you get what you are offered, in contrast to wishy-washy liberals who are ready to jump on to anyone's bandwagon if that will keep them in power for a few more days. This is why Nancy Pelosi-style leadership is so problematic for the Democrats, just as it would be were the Democrats to nominate a Lieberman or some other Republican look-alike for President. The received wisdom

of playing to the moderate center is deeply misconceived. And despite all the commentators to the contrary, Schwarzenegger wasn't elected because he was perceived as a moderate, but because he was perceived as having the strength to stand up to the big government crowd and the special interests. (This is ironic, given that his core political supporters are the corporate special interests who have always benefited from the "less government regulation" philosophy espoused by Republicans who seek to subvert government so that corporate interests can more effectively dominate our lives).

Nancy Pelosi's rise to House Minority Leader held great promise until she identified herself with the Ariel Sharon forces and joined other Democratic leaders in attacking Howard Dean for his momentary dovishness regarding Israel/Palestine

(please read Stephen Zunes' editorial on this topic, which follows on page 13). However the point is not to replace Pelosi, but rather to change the culture that makes some feel that supporting Bush's \$87 billion request, or praising the President (as she did) the day after the invasion of Iraq, or suppressing free speech in the Democratic Party on Israel/Palestine, is a politically opportune move for the Democratic Party.

In *Spirit Matters* I've detailed what a progressive politics would look like that addressed these issues in a way that would speak to the American people rather than simply put them on the defensive and blame them. I don't mean here to demean those who do take this approach. I must admit that I myself felt momentarily discouraged when there was not a louder cry of outrage when Schwarzenegger's assault on women was documented. But even then, I reminded myself that had the Democrats really believed that sexual assault had taken place, they should have arrested Schwarzenegger the day before the election. Their failure to do so either reflected their wimpiness, or a sense that the charges would backfire and appear to be merely political (which it would have, given the long history of Clinton/Gore/Davis Dems *being* merely political and not principled). And given the still smoldering resentments against excessive "political correctness" that has been used to portray almost all men as sexist, the moral foundation for charges against real situations of abuse has been undermined sufficiently that it was difficult for many Californians to separate their reaction to the Schwarzenegger abuse charges from their generally unfavorable reactions to what they consider to be "feminist excesses." My point here is not to excuse this reaction, but to understand it. Until this kind of discussion takes center stage, and we see a politics of meaning with an emancipatory spirituality at its core, don't be surprised if people end up feeling safer and more recognized by George Bush and reelect him even as they tell pollsters how they disagree with many of his policies.

Los Angeles Tikkun Conference

November 23
Details: www.tikkun.org
or 510-644-1200

Get Involved

Please join the Tikkun Community (at www.tikkun.org or with the card enclosed in this issue of *TIKKUN*) and buy a friend a guest membership for the holidays (they'll also get a free subscription to *TIKKUN* and a copy of *Healing Israel/Palestine*).

Israeli-Palestinian Peace Accord

But Israel Won't Sign On!

Congratulations to former Israeli Justice Minister Yossi Beilin and the Palestinian leadership for having designed a peace accord which they signed in Jordan and which in almost all respects follows the lines detailed in the TIKKUN Resolution for Middle East Peace.

Former Palestinian Information Minister Yasser Abed Rabbo, involved in the formulation of the "Geneva Accord" (because of the help of the Swiss government), told Israel Radio that the Palestinian Authority endorses the plan.

According to the Israeli newspaper *Ha'aretz*, the agreement includes the following points:

- The Palestinians will recognize Israel as the state of the Jewish people.
- Israel will withdraw to the 1967 borders, except for certain territorial exchanges, as described below.
- Jerusalem will be divided, with Arab neighborhoods of East Jerusalem becoming part of the Palestinian state. Jewish neighborhoods of East Jerusalem, as well as the West Bank suburbs of Givat Ze'ev, Ma'aleh Adumim, and the historic part of Gush Etzion—but not Efrat—will be part of Israel.
- The Temple Mount will be Palestinian, but an international force will ensure freedom of access for visitors of all faiths. However, Jewish prayer will not be permitted on the mount, nor will archaeological digs. The Western Wall will remain under Jewish sovereignty and the "Holy Basin" will be under international supervision.
- The settlements of Ariel, Efrat, and Har Homa will be part of the Palestinian state. In addition, Israel will transfer parts of the Negev adjacent to Gaza, but not including Halutza, to the Palestinians, in exchange for the parts of the West Bank it will receive.
- The Palestinians will pledge to prevent terror and incitement and disarm all militias. Their state will be demilitarized, and border crossings will be supervised by an international, but not Israeli, force.
- The agreement will replace all previous agreements and UN Resolutions.

The October 12 ceremony in Jordan to mark completion of the document was attended on the Israeli side by Beilin, who headed the Israeli negotiating team; Members of Knesset (MKs) Chaim Oron, Amram Mitzna (Labor) and Avraham Burg (Labor); former MK Nehama Ronen, who ran in the Likud primaries late last year; Brigadier General



Former Palestinian Information Minister Yasser Abed Rabbo (left) and former Israeli Justice Minister Yossi Beilin (center) meet with Egyptian Presidential Advisor Osama el-Baz (right) about the "Geneva Agreement" on October 13, 2003.

(reserve) Giora Inbar, and author Amos Oz. Other Israelis party to the initiative include former IDF chief of staff Amnon Lipkin-Shahak, Labor MK Yuli Tamir, and several Meretz MKs.

The Palestinian representatives also included former ministers Nabil Kassis and Hisham Abd al-Raziq, and two leaders of the Fatah-affiliated Tanzim organization, Kadoura Fares and Mohammed Khourani.

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon is said to have described the document as "the greatest historical mistake since Oslo." His predecessor was equally withering. Former prime minister Ehud Barak, who left office in early 2001, several months after the intifada broke out, said on October 13 it was unfortunate that the Labor Party had permitted some of its members to formulate such a "delusional" peace plan, according to *Ha'aretz*.

Our task is to build widespread support for the plan in the United States. We've been arguing all along that the right strategy is one which puts forward a full plan for the resolution of the conflict, rather than simply to focus on this or that outrage. So, while we at TIKKUN will continue to critique the building of the Wall, the destruction of Palestinian homes, the targeted assassinations, the expansion of West Bank settlements, and the blank check that Bush has given to Ariel Sharon, we will also continue our work with Congressional representatives and others to familiarize them with the perspective of the Israeli peace movement and the plan that *would actually end this struggle*. Are you available to be a contact person or a member of a delegation visiting your locally elected officials to inform them about these developments, explain to them the ideas behind them, and let them know that there are many Americans who think that peace and reconciliation, not domination and control, are the most effective paths to security for Israel and justice for the Palestinians? If so, please join the Tikkun Community at www.tikkun.org and contact Robyn@tikkun.org (510-644-1200) to find out how you can be directly involved.

A New Bottom Line

Will You Help Promote It in Your Profession or Workplace?

When people ask you “what exactly is the political part of a spiritual politics?” tell them the following: We seek to change the definitions of productivity, efficiency, and rationality, which today are understood to be measured by how much money or power a given corporation, government operation, social institution, or social practice tends to generate. Instead we want corporations, social practices, and institutions to be judged efficient, productive, or rational not only to the extent that they maximize money or power, but also to the extent that they maximize people’s capacities to be loving and caring, and ethically, spiritually, and ecologically sensitive—to the extent that we are able to transcend narrow utilitarian thinking and respond to each other with a genuine feeling of awe and wonder and radical amazement at the grandeur of creation and the miracle of human life and consciousness. If that were The New Bottom Line, we’d quickly have to reorganize our economic, political, and social institutions.

But how, exactly? In *Spirit Matters: Global healing and the Wisdom of the Soul*, I offer some ideas about what this could look like in the spheres of law, health care, and education. Peter Gabel’s writings in *TIKKUN* have gone even deeper into the sphere of law, and he and Nanette Schorr have played an important role in creating a nationwide network of lawyers who are engaged in the discussion of what changes are needed in our legal system and how to go about building a movement to seek those changes. We need and want that same discussion to take place in every sphere of

work and professional life.

To get that started, we need people who would be interested in being listed as the contact person or group coordinator for a wide variety of fields. In listing some here, we only mean to suggest breadth, but there are many other areas that we’d list if you suggested a willingness to be listed as the coordinator or contact person to get this discussion started. We want people who could organize this discussion among: doctors, engineers, high-tech industry workers, architects, teachers from K-12, academics, social workers, psychologists, government workers, Teamsters, machinists, secretaries and office administrators, non-profit workers, city planners, investment firms, financial enterprises, foundations, churches, synagogues, mosques, musicians, journalists, filmmakers, media workers, restaurant and hotel employees, dentists, accountants, police and fire personnel, and scientists.

We would list your name, and when several people contacted you to show an interest (which might happen right away, or it might take a few years till anyone actually starts to show an interest) we’d help you formulate the way to get the discussion started in your arena. We’d hope that in some short amount of time you’d be able to help create an ongoing discussion in your profession or workplace, and that eventually it would lead to the creation of a regional conference of people doing your kind of work, or to the creation of a small work group that would meet at the national conventions of your profession or union. Sound like something you’d like to help us realize? Contact us at: NewBottomLine@tikkun.org.

Edward Said

We join with those who are paying tribute to a great thinker and writer whose contribution to contemporary intellectual life deserves our respect and appreciation. Said was a powerful and passionate advocate for his own people, the Palestinians. We particularly respected the way he publicly challenged Arafat and his thuggish ways. And Said was one of the first Palestinian intellectuals to recognize the importance of the Holocaust in shaping Jewish self-understanding.

We often wished Said could sympathize with the plight of European Jews and the way that their returning to the place they perceived to be their ancient homeland was not an act of Western colonialism. He never took the step of acknowledging that Palestinian resistance to Jewish



immigration in the years when Jews were trying to escape the gas chambers of Europe or the displaced persons camps of 1945–48 was immoral. This resistance fueled anger toward Palestinians and was later used by Jews to justify ignoring the plight of Arabs when the tables were turned and they

became refugees (this was also immoral).

However, Said went further in creating a basis for reconciliation between our two peoples than any other Palestinian intellectual of his time. Given the continuing difficulties Palestinians face in getting their story told, we respect the resolute and courageous way that Said fought for his people when he could have merely used his considerable intellectual talents to pursue his own fame and fortune as an academic, like most contemporary intellectuals do. □

Attacks on Dean Expose Democrats' Shift to the Right

Stephen Zunes

In one of the relatively few policy differences that have brought serious fireworks to the campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination, former Vermont governor Howard Dean has been attacked by two of his principal rivals as well as the House Democratic leadership for calling on the United States to take a more "even-handed role" as the chief mediator in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Dean declared that the United States should work to "bring the sides together" and "not point fingers" at who is to blame. Says Dean, "It means bringing them together in a constructive way."

However, Senators John Kerry and Joseph Lieberman have denounced the former Vermont governor for his moderate stance. Senator Lieberman went as far as to claim that Dean was essentially calling on the United States to "compromise our support for Israel," and that taking a more balanced position in the peace process was tantamount to "breaking commitments to longtime allies."

Dean has dismissed such attacks, pointing out accurately that he is a strong supporter of Israel and that his position on Israeli-Palestinian issues is essentially the same as former President Bill Clinton.

When Dean pointed out that Israel would have to remove an enormous number of settlements in the Occupied Territories to achieve peace, Senator Lieberman strongly objected, insisting that the number of settlements evacuated by Israel should be up to the parties in negotiations. However, despite eight years of peace talks in the 1990s, throughout which Palestinians demanded that Israel withdraw from its settlements in the Occupied Territories or even just suspend construction of new ones, the number of settlements nearly doubled. Sharon's insistence on incorporating most of these settlements into Israel has made a final peace agreement unfeasible, since it would divide the West Bank into a series of non-contiguous units that would make the creation of a



viable Palestinian state impossible. Furthermore, the Fourth Geneva Convention—to which both the United States and Israel are signatories—categorically declares that transferring civilians onto lands seized by military force is illegal. UN Security Council resolutions 446, 452 and 465 explicitly call on Israel to withdraw from these settlements. Given that Lieberman declared that Iraqi violations of UN Security Council resolutions justified invading Iraq, overthrowing its government, and occupying the country for an indefinite period, it is ironic that he apparently now believes that such UN resolutions can be violated with impunity.

For years independent analysts, including experts on negotiation and mediation, have observed that the U.S. policy of largely supporting Israeli positions regarding the extent of the Israeli withdrawal from Palestinian land conquered in the 1967 war, the Israeli settlements in the Occupied Territories, the status of Jerusalem, and other outstanding issues has made a negotiated settlement with even the most moderate Palestinian leadership impossible. The result has been that many Palestinians have given up on the peace process and have instead thrown their support behind radical Islamic groups that have engaged in a series of horrific terrorist attacks against Israel.

However, Senator Kerry claims just the opposite, declaring that if Dean as president had made such a remark calling for a more even-handed approach, "it would throw this volatile region into even more turmoil."

Such desperate attacks by two presidential hopefuls who now see the upstart Dean surging ahead of them in public opinion polls should not be surprising. What is far more significant, however, is that leading Democratic

*Stephen Zunes is an associate professor of politics and chair of the Peace & Justice Studies Program at the University of San Francisco and the author of *Tinderbox: U.S. Middle East Policy and the Roots of Terrorism* (Common Courage Press, 2003).*

POLITICS

members of the House of Representatives have joined the attack against the former Vermont governor.

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, Assistant Minority Leader Steny Hoyer, and House Democratic Caucus Chairman Robert Menendez led dozens of other top Congressional Democrats in writing a letter to Dean on September 10 strongly criticizing him for his statements. Other signatories included such Democratic stalwarts as Howard Berman, Gary Ackerman, Robert Matsui, Tom Lantos, Nita Lowey, Barney Frank, Patrick Kennedy, Edward Markey, Ellen Tauscher, Linda Sanchez, Jose Serrano, Harold Ford, and Shelley Berkley.

The letter characterized Dean's call for a more balanced approach by the U.S. government in the peace process as somehow bringing into question his commitment to Israel's right to exist in peace and security.

To have virtually the entire Democratic House leadership openly criticize a policy statement by the front runner for their own party's presidential nomination is unprecedented and is indicative of Pelosi's determination to make clear that such voices of moderation have no place in the Democratic Party.

Pelosi and other Democratic leaders are essentially pushing the old canard that only by supporting the policies of Israel's rightist government can one support the state of Israel. Many Israelis, of course, reject such an assertion, arguing that the policies of Israel's current rightist government are unnecessarily repressive, contrary to international law, and counter-productive to Israel's security by creating terrorists faster than they can be killed.

Despite Governor Dean's repeated and categorical denunciation of Palestinian terrorism, the House Democratic leaders also declared that Americans must "raise our voices against all forms of terrorism" and that "this is not the time to be sending mixed messages."

In their letter, the House Democratic leadership also declared that U.S. policy must be "based on unequivocal support for Israel's right to exist and to be free from terror," even though Dean has never given even a hint of believing anything to the contrary.

These Democrats appear to have adopted the same logic of the Republicans who insist that only by supporting Bush Administration policies can one support America and that any questioning of U.S. foreign policy is indicative of being soft on terrorism.

In reality, moderate Israelis have repeatedly called upon the Bush Administration to take a more even-handed approach in the peace process and to press Prime Minister Ariel Sharon to compromise on the settlements and other issues. They recognize that the ongoing Israeli policies of repression and colonization only encourage terrorism and that Israel would be far safer by ending the occupation. Kerry, Lieberman, and the House Democratic leadership, however, demand that Dean should instead follow lock step

in support of President Bush's strident backing of Israel's rightist government.

You would think that Dean would be one of the last people whose commitment to Israel would be put into question. His wife, Judith Steinberg Dean, is Jewish and has close connections with mainstream Zionist circles. Their children have been raised Jewish. His campaign co-chair, Steve Grossman, is the former president of the American-Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC). His only trip to Israel, which took place last fall, was organized and paid for by AIPAC and he did not meet with any prominent Palestinians or Israeli peace activists. Dean has described his attachment to Israel as "visceral."

In fact, Dean has been widely seen as a hawk on Israel and Palestine. He has stated that his position is closer to the right-wing AIPAC, which allies itself with Israel's ruling Likud Bloc, than it is to Americans for Peace Now, which identifies with the Israeli peace movement and the more liberal Israeli parties. Much to the chagrin of peace and human rights advocates, Dean supported the Bush Administration's recent \$9 billion loan guarantee to Sharon without conditions, such as freezing new settlement activity in the Occupied Territories. Dean has repeatedly stated his belief that the major issue in the conflict is Palestinian terrorism, not the Israeli occupation that has spawned it. He has told the *Washington Post* that Israel has every right to assassinate Hamas "terrorists" as "enemies in a war."

Such positions have led many Democrats concerned about peace and human rights in the Middle East to abandon Dean and back the campaign of Ohio Congressman Dennis Kucinich, who supports the position of the Tikkun Community, the Israeli peace movement, and the Zionist Left.

However, Dean is apparently not right wing enough for the House Democratic leadership.

What is significant about their strongly-worded attack on Dean is that nothing the former Vermont governor has said about taking an even-handed position in the peace process is the least bit indicative of any slippage of his support for Israel's legitimate security interests or from positions he has emphasized in the past.

First of all, a strong case can be made that Israeli compromise on territorial issues would actually enhance Israel's security. The Palestinian Authority and the entire Arab League at the Beirut summit last year declared their willingness to provide security guarantees for Israel and full diplomatic relations with Israel in return for a total Israeli withdrawal from territories seized in the 1967 war. Even if such a proposal could not be completely trusted, Israel would be far more secure within its internationally recognized pre-June 1967 borders than trying to defend an archipelago of illegal settlements and isolated military outposts amidst a hostile population.

Secondly, advocating a more even-handed position on the outstanding issues of the peace process does not preclude having a special affinity with Israel for ethnic, religious, ideo-

logical or other reasons. If there is a conflict between two parties, it is certainly possible to be a good and loyal friend of one of them and have a well-grounded distrust of the other, but still take a balanced approach regarding the merits of the particular positions in the dispute—in this case the settlements, the extent of the Israeli withdrawal, and the status of Jerusalem.

Dean has never claimed that the United States should be neutral between freedom and terror, simply that the U.S. government should play the role of a real mediator rather than a partisan regarding the outstanding issues in the peace process.

However, the Democrats declared that it is “unacceptable” for Dean to suggest that Israel might also need to compromise.

Ironically, one could even argue from the opposite point of view: that it is wrong to be “even-handed” between an occupying power and those suffering under the Occupation. A strong case can be made that while Palestinian terrorism must cease unconditionally, it is Israel, not the Palestinians, that has the moral and legal obligation to make the major concessions at this stage. Indeed, the Palestinian Authority’s positions regarding Jerusalem, the settlements, and the Israeli withdrawal are far more consistent with international law, UN Security Council resolutions, and the positions of most of America’s allies than are the positions of Sharon’s government or the Bush Administration.

Dean’s perspective is essentially that of former President Clinton and his chief Middle East negotiator Dennis Ross, who oversaw the failed Israeli-Palestinian peace talks. The Clinton Administration’s position corresponded closely to that of former Israeli prime minister Ehud Barak and the hawkish wing of the Labor Party, which served in coalition with the rightist Likud Bloc and oversaw a dramatic expansion of Israeli settlements during the 1990s. While such a position proved inadequate in securing the peace and is well to the right of the Israeli peace movement and the Tikkun Community, the Clinton/Ross/Barak position did at least accept in principle the idea that substantial Israeli withdrawal from the Occupied Territories was necessary and desirable in order to end the violence and make Israel secure.

What is disconcerting about the Democratic leadership is not only that it has rejected the Zionist left and the Israeli peace camp, but now rejects the centrist Israeli position advocated by Dean and other supporters of the Clinton Administration as well. Instead, Nancy Pelosi and her fellow Democratic leaders are now insisting on adherence to the policies of President George W. Bush, House Majority Leader Tom DeLay, and Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon, who see the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as simply part of the

“war on terrorism,” requiring ongoing Israeli occupation and repression with at most allowing for some limited Palestinian autonomy over a series of non-contiguous urban cantons.

Meanwhile, Congressional Black Caucus Chairman Elijah Cummings of Maryland has reported that the House Democratic leaders have made it clear to him and other CBC members that supporting an even-handed approach to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that insures peace and security for both parties is “not enough,” and that they too must insist that the United States back Sharon’s positions in the peace process.

In March, Pelosi and other Democratic leaders signed a letter to President Bush insisting that the peace process must be based “above all” on the end of Palestinian violence and the establishment of a new Palestinian leadership. There was no mention of any reciprocal actions by the Israeli government. The letter also came out in opposition of any other government or other entity having a role in the monitoring of progress on the ground.

In response to widespread reports by Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and Israeli groups like B’Tselem, Rabbis for Human Rights, and Yesh G’vul regarding serious and widespread human rights abuses by Israeli occupation forces against the civilian population during its military offensive in the West Bank last year, Pelosi and other Democratic leaders went on record declaring that the Israeli attacks were completely justifiable and were aimed “only at the terrorist infrastructure.” She also praised President Bush’s “leadership” in supporting Sharon, whom the president declared to be “a man of peace,” though in a speech before the AIPAC convention in April, Pelosi denounced President Bush for suggesting that Israel needed to freeze construction of new settlements in the Occupied Territories, claiming that it gave comfort to Israel’s enemies.

It is unclear what political advantage could be gained by the Democratic leadership from taking such positions or engaging in attacks against Dean, the current front-runner for the Democratic presidential nomination. According to a nationwide public opinion poll this past May from the Program on International Policy Attitudes at the University of Maryland, a clear majority of Americans not only recognized that the Bush Administration is biased towards Israel, but, when asked about what position the United States should have, a full 73 percent stated that the United States should not take either side in the conflict.

In other words, Senators Kerry and Lieberman and the House Democratic leadership have gone on record supporting the policies of the Bush Administration against the

(continued on page 32)

*Dean has never claimed
that the United States
should be neutral between
freedom and terror, simply
that the U.S. government
should play the role of a
real mediator.*

Toward a **DEMOCRATIC COMMONS**

Only 55 percent of American adults voted in the last presidential election. While that grim number exposes the current crisis our democracy faces, it doesn't explain it. Those of us who do not vote are not apathetic. We all want change. We want a world where the poor have enough to eat, where even the worst off have a place to call home, where we can breathe the air and drink the water. We want to be known and respected abroad as peace-makers, not warriors. We want to know our leaders hear our voices and act on our highest values.

We don't vote because there is a fundamental disconnect between what we want and what we get after each election. The political world does not map onto our private world. We have lost the place where that connection happens, a place activists increasingly call the commons. The commons is the world we all share, the civil society in which we interact with others to make meaning. In the articles that follow, we examine what we need to recreate a democratic commons, that time and place where politics once again will have meaning.

Jo Ellen Green Kaiser, Senior Editor and Associate Publisher

A Politics of Time and Space

Jo Ellen Green Kaiser

Even as George Bush administers what he calls “American democracy” abroad, the idea is ailing at home. Few people vote, and few people believe their vote counts. We want change, but ordinary citizens rarely feel empowered to achieve it. Government seems to be run by a “them” over there, rather than an “us” right here.

The Left, in the last year, has taken up the question of democracy by attacking the anti-democratic strategies of the Right. In particular, the Left correctly has critiqued the recent California recall as part of a larger right-wing and Republican attempt to undo the effects of properly conducted elections. It’s true that recent Republican maneuverings, along with John Ashcroft’s anti-democratic Patriot Act and the Bush-appointed FCC’s attempts to support media monopolies, have all been efforts to silence opposition and promote one-party rule. The Republicans, however, are not alone to blame for the crisis American democracy faces. For at least a decade now, voters have complained that even those who go through the paces to get votes are hardly paying attention to the concerns of actual voters.

America is a republic based on a representative model of democracy. Politicians are supposed to represent the highest aspirations and deepest desires of the citizenry. Instead, American politics has turned into a marketplace, where candidates spend more time courting big donors than ordinary folk. Even worse, the market mentality extends down to the very way in which we conceptualize what it means to be a citizen. Rather than active participants in society with a stake in how we want our world to be, citizens are conceptualized as consumers, picking from a menu of pre-established choices that tend to stress only our material needs. Usually, we react to this kind of political marketing the way we react to other annoying commercials—we turn it off.

Yet, we know this is the wrong response. We want to have a say in how we are governed. We are not simply apathetic. The California recall was an example of the kind of frustration most of us feel. For all the craziness, for all the Gary Colemans and Angelynes—and despite the fact that it was engineered by the Right and benefited the Right—the recall



was an attempt by ordinary folk to take back the democratic process. For the first time in a century, perhaps, your friend or neighbor really could run for governor—and did. For the first time in a long time, big money couldn’t influence your vote because even though the politicians tried, there simply wasn’t enough time for them to mobilize the television ads and staged appearances that money can buy. For the first time in a long time, an election wasn’t about two behemoth political parties fighting a game on a playing field in some distant place, but about the desires (however misdirected) of Joe and Jill voter.

Though the Left has gained some adherents by saying so (and that’s all to the good), American democracy is not in trouble because of the actions of a cadre on the Right. Karl Rove and his gang, with the help of September 11, have only exploited an already existing problem. American democracy is in crisis because, for the most part, it no longer has yielded a government of the people, by the people, and for the people. American democracy is in crisis because it no longer reflects the values and highest aspirations of the individuals that form it. American democracy is in crisis because it has become a government of parties rather than of citizens.

Wanting To Participate

What is preventing us from replacing this market-driven politics with a politics of meaning? Why has it proven so difficult to put the *demos*, the people, back into democracy?

Democracy is an idea and an ideology, but that does not mean it subsists in the ether. As Marx said, ideas do not spring out of the air, fully formed; they must be rooted in material circumstances.

Today, American culture lacks the kinds of spaces—literal, material spaces—which democracy needs to flourish. And, in an equally material dimension, though we don’t

TOWARD A DEMOCRATIC COMMONS

often think of it that way, American culture lacks the time for democracy to grow and flourish. Citizens simply don't have the space and time to formulate, enunciate, and act upon their highest ideals. In this parched environment, democracy has become reified, an idea no more alive than the physical flag used to represent it.

Benjamin Ginsburg and Matthew Crenson, in their book *Downsizing Democracy*, suggest that more people would be motivated to participate in democracy if they were really invited to do so. It is true that when people feel they are not needed—when the work of citizenship is being done for them—they have less incentive to participate. As Ginsburg and Crenson argue, the invitations currently being made to us to “get involved” in the political process do not really invite our full participation. For example, the last time I tried to get involved in a conventional electoral campaign, I was told to stuff envelopes for a letter inviting large donors to a fundraiser to which I was not invited. My job was to make the money flow, not to participate myself—and this was a campaign for one of the most progressive Democrats in the country.

Even if we were invited to participate fully, however, it is not clear that more of us would. Most ordinary Americans simply don't have the time and space to create the kind of democracy we want. When people say they are “too busy” to vote, we should not, *pace* Barney Frank, tell them to “get over it.” We should take them seriously. Precisely because politics-as-usual is so unappealing to so many, we can't and don't want to just “plug in” to existing structures. We want to create the kind of politics and the kind of politicians that will be meaningful for us. Yet rebuilding a democracy seems too daunting, and so we do nothing.

Finding Space

The model democratic citizen of the American Republic is, by almost unanimous consent, Benjamin Franklin. His *Poor Richard's Almanac*, stressing the values of industry and parsimony (hard work and saving), became the bible for the American bourgeois, while his numerous activities on behalf of the Republic, from setting up the first subscription libraries to founding the University of Pennsylvania to signing the Declaration of Independence to negotiating treaties with the French and British, mark him as a truly committed citizen.

Franklin's example is instructive because he made up democratic institutions as he went along. For most of his life, his city, Philadelphia, was ruled directly by a British governor and indirectly by the British monarch. Franklin didn't set out to create a democracy. Instead, he began by noticing that his needs, and the needs of other citizens, were not being met. He couldn't afford to buy books but wanted to read them—thus he saw the need for a library. He owned a business, and was afraid it would burn down—thus the need for a fire department. He regretted he had not been able to obtain a formal education as a child—thus the need for a school for

poor children and a college for those wishing to continue their studies. These civic improvements led him on to urge political change as well. That is, his efforts within civil society led him to advocate political change, rather than vice versa.

Today, many of us see the same need for improvement to our civil society. Many of us don't have adequate health care—thus the need to reform the health care system. Many of our schools are failing our students—thus the need for a better educational system. In this issue, Henry and Susan Searls Giroux argue that without a critical pedagogy citizens will be unequipped to translate their personal values into larger issues (again, the California recall furnishes a good example, as citizens were unable to see how their personal frustration was being taken up and used by the Right). We see the homeless increase in our streets—thus the need to create housing and offer mental health care for the poor. Some are trying to address these problems, but report that they feel they are running into a brick wall. Most of us feel the problems are impossible. Frustration, anger, impotence are the watchwords of the day.

How did Franklin make such dramatic inroads, so quickly, into the problems of his day? He was practical, and thought carefully about how to use his space and his time. He did not put his energies into lobbying politicians, though he did some of that. He did not throw money at the problems, though eventually money was collected and he was generous with his own. What Franklin did when he perceived a civic problem was gather a few influential friends in a dedicated space for discussion, and hold a series of conversations—not meetings, but conversations—about the problem.

Franklin's *Autobiography* reads in part like the search of a man to find the spaces to make things happen. He loves to read and talk about reading, but books are expensive and hard to find. To satisfy his desire for ideas, he begins a debating society, the Junto, that starts out with a couple of his friends meeting in a local tavern. The tavern is a public place, and others who come are attracted to these young men who talk so earnestly. So, even though the Junto starts with a handful of men so poor they sleep on cots at their workplaces, it eventually grows, through word of mouth, to include men who live in their own homes. Finally, one man offers his back shed as a meeting place, and suddenly Franklin has his library. The tavern and the home as a meeting place for friends—these are two spaces critical to Franklin's ability to develop community.

The space of citizenship, it turns out, was as important for Ben Franklin as the idea of citizenship. As a number of political theorists—among them Jürgen Habermas, Gaston Bachelard, and Margaret Kohn—have noted, democracy literally requires a place to meet. Modern American life increasingly lacks those spaces. Government buildings are closed after dark and sometimes during the day too in this era of “heightened terror alerts.” Libraries and schools are restricted. The town square is largely gone, replaced by the

shopping mall. In cities and towns, the café is still a viable meeting spot. More and more Americans, however, have moved out of the small towns, villages, and even suburbs that defined our communal past and into new gated communities that lack even a local Starbucks.

In an excellently composed study titled *Behind the Gates*, sociologist Setha Low examines these new kinds of communities. She finds that people move to gated communities precisely to create “community.” They particularly seek an idealized, Norman Rockwell kind of environment in which “there is no fear, no crime, no kidnapping, no ‘other’ people, where there is a reassuringly consistent architectural and physical landscape, amenities and services that work, and great neighbors who want exactly the same thing.” What they lose, however, when they attempt to lock out the “other,” are precisely the kinds of public spaces that make real community possible. In these gated communities, there are no stores, no cafés, no truly public spaces besides the “club pool.” Neighbors pass each other in locked cars, drive into locked garages, live in houses that are locked day as well as night. In searching to create a space for community, modern Americans have created the most anti-public kinds of spaces imaginable.

To enable a viable democracy, Americans once again will have to find or create shared spaces for public discourse. These spaces must thrive on the micro-level. While the public square will eventually be necessary for mass change (which, sadly, is one reason cities and universities have taken pains to remove them), the kind of empowerment people need to move from frustration to action will happen first among small groups of friends and colleagues, meeting in congenial places. We need to get out of our cars and out of our locked homes and into our local coffee shops, bookstores, and clubs. We need to rediscover religious space as public space, as the impulse that moves us toward something beyond ourselves can be a political as well as a spiritual one.

Simply meeting with friends in a communal gathering spot may seem like too small a step to take. But as Margaret Kohn discovers in her study, *Radical Space*, socialism came to Europe largely as a result of the creation of “houses of the people” and “houses of labor” in which workers could gather and socialize after hours. Indeed, the largest leftist movement of the past several years in the United States—the anti-globalization movement—has formed in safe houses and artist co-ops where activists have gathered to create puppets and plan strategy both before and during events. And the Right has always made effective use of churches as centers for political strategy—indeed, much of the power of the fundamentalist right no doubt stems from the weekly reinforcement right-wing activists get from meeting together in social as well as spiritual communion.

Finding Time

If we are too busy to vote, however, how will we have time to meet up for regular chats with friends?

Americans now work more hours per day and more days per year than any other people in the industrialized world. In 2000, Americans worked an average of 1878 hours per year—that’s over seven hours a day, every weekday, with no vacation days. And many Americans have no vacation days—the average vacation allowance is a scant eight days off after one year on the job, and ten days off after three years (these facts and more can be found in John de Graaf’s anthology, *Take Back Your Time*). Compare that to the four to six weeks most Europeans take off each year as a matter of course. Americans who cobble together several part-time jobs get no vacation at all.

Economists and political scientists often insist that this emphasis on labor is what has made America into an economic powerhouse. They cite the energy and work ethic of our Founding Fathers, particularly (yes) Ben Franklin, as an example of the importance of hard work in creating a middle-class republic. Well, Ben Franklin was a hard worker, but he was not a believer in overtime. In his *Autobiography*, he lays out his ideal daily schedule—with an eight-hour workday. Even this schedule was one Franklin himself was unable to keep. He writes that his schedule “gave me the most Trouble, and I found that tho’ it might be practicable where a Man’s Business was such as to leave him the Disposition of his Time, that of a Journey-man Printer for instance, it was not possible to be exactly observ’d by a Master who must mix with the World.” That is, a young person with few responsibilities could afford to work steadily for eight hours a day because his affairs would be personal and could be accomplished in the evening, but an older person with responsibilities to business, community (and family, though Franklin does not say this) would have to take time out of an eight-hour workday to manage his life well.

In American life, however, there is no dispensation for the time we need to conduct our daily affairs. Workers of all classes are expected to serve capital from 9 to 6 or beyond. It’s no wonder we eat at the desk—the one-hour “lunch” break is the only time we have to conduct our personal business. Because all adults in most households work outside the home, when we return home we are faced with the work of the house—the laundry, dish-washing, cooking, shopping, and cleaning that are legitimate jobs in their own right. Those with children struggle to create quality time with the children (quantity time having become a thing of the past). In such a day, there is scarcely space for the reading, music, and conversation that Franklin himself valued so highly.

*To enable a viable
democracy, Americans
once again will have to
find or create shared
spaces for public
discourse.*

TOWARD A DEMOCRATIC COMMONS

Citizenship is itself a kind of work, and it is work for which we have no time. In the very Locke-ian society to which we belong, political ideas are assumed to spring free-form from the *tabula rasa* of pure thought. We assume, for example, that on any given issue citizens will be able to read a brief paragraph summary and rationally come to a reasonable conclusion, upon which they can then vote. Never mind that legislators spend hours crafting such proposals, or that considerable amounts of money are spent to interpret and market candidacies to us.

We know we cannot understand a ballot proposition after seeing one or two commercials and attempting to read the dense jargon in which it is written. We know that we cannot judge how well a person will govern on the basis of one or two stump speeches and the endorsement of some like-minded pols. We know we need time to read, to discuss, to digest the ideas we are being asked to evaluate. But we do not have this time, and thus some of the frustration and disempowerment we feel. The only feeling worse than not being able to participate in the electoral process is the feeling that you have been given a large and unusual opportunity that you are inadequately prepared to take advantage of. This is the feeling most of us have as we approach the ballot box.

We need, according to Jonathan Rowe, a temporal commons, "a pool of time available for work that the market neglects" (in *Take Back Your Time*). Like Scott Russell Sanders (whose piece follows on page 24) and Robert Putnam, Rowe argues that there is a symbiosis between the needs of capital and the needs of the community. If we have no time to care for our community, the community will eventually be unable to support the market. Perhaps. What is certainly true is that a democratic society cannot exist without a temporal commons. To become engaged citizens, people need at the very least time to read and discuss issues with friends. Even if invited to participate, they need to feel that they have the time available to volunteer for civic duties that will bring them closer to the political process.

One Solution

Oddly, some of the very technologies that have constrained our time may enable us to take it back. For the most part, advances in technology have made us more productive but not saved time—as Juliet Schor has shown, our spending simply has grown to match our increased wealth. The internet, however, while feeding into this get-and-spend cycle (infamously in the dot.boom era), also creates a way for overworked people with the means to own computers to connect with others in the corners of time they have available. We can discover information online, when we have the time—whether that is at 6AM before the baby wakes up, at lunch when we redirect our business browser to our favorite activist sites, or after we come home from work. Through these online connections we learn about issues important to us, and can connect with others interested in the same issues.

In fact, when the internet began, its founders hoped it would create utopian communities online. That largely has not happened, for one simple reason. Virtual space is not the same as physical space. Communities only can form in physical space, as people communicate face to face. That is why organizer Paul Loeb, writing in *Take Back Your Time*, believes that the most effective organizing today combines "online organizing with traditional grassroots outreach in a way that helps us keep up with the issues we face, even while living busy lives."

The piece that had been missing, up until recently, was how to connect that online and offline presence. One solution has been discovered by the Howard Dean campaign. The great success of that campaign—and it is a methodological success—has been to use a for-profit online program called "meetup" to connect online activists to physical meeting times and places. With this program, participants choose the time and place they wish to meet. Anyone who happens upon the meetup—whether online or in person—is welcome to attend. Thus the meetups create a truly public space that can exist at the interstices of an otherwise private and tightly scripted life.

Other campaigns (notably John Kerry's) have tried the meetups and been less successful, largely because they have overlooked Ginsburg and Crenson's point—that participation in such events is most effective when participants feel their presence is truly needed. The Dean campaign has allowed participants to set their own agenda for the meetups, thus creating the feeling among volunteers that their participation really matters. This bottom-up strategy could be used more widely. In fact, the Tikkun Community is planning a similar effort by encouraging local groups to create monthly salons at places and times of their own convenience and discuss items they feel to be most relevant to their group.

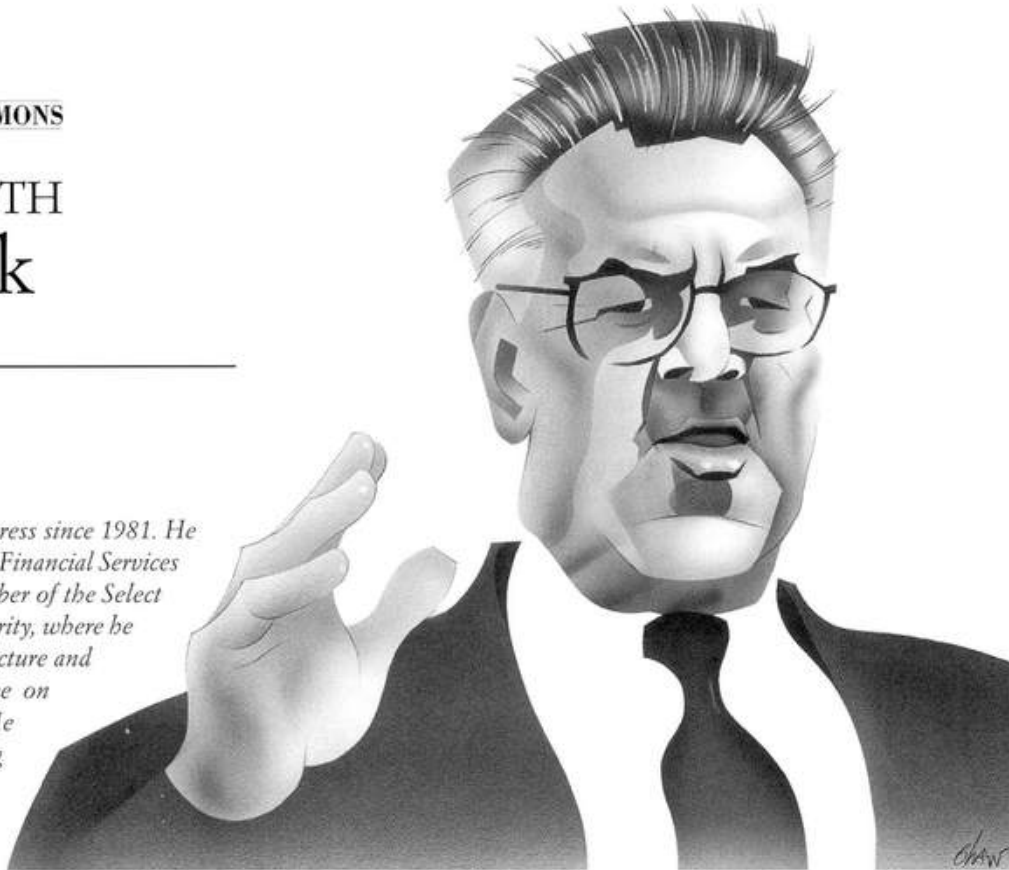
If we believe in democracy, we will need more efforts like these. To build our political society we need to begin with our civil society, literally building non-commercial spaces like libraries and town squares where we can gather. We also need to look at zoning laws that encourage greater population density, making cafes, bookstores, and other meeting places easily accessible. At work, we must encourage commons areas, where we can talk during breaks. Just as importantly, we must create the time for these conversations. We must continue to guard the eight-hour workday and five-day workweek. We must call for flextime and adequate vacation time—which means more than two weeks a year. And we must continue to take advantage of technologies like the internet to make the most of the time and space we do have.

In short, we must revitalize our civil society so that each of us can use the time we do have to meet in public spaces about matters that concern us so that we feel that we are making a real difference. Those of us who can participate in this way will vote. We will be busy, but busy with a politics of daily life that is also a politics of the nation. □

AN INTERVIEW WITH Barney Frank

Jo Ellen Green Kaiser

Barney Frank has been in Congress since 1981. He is the Senior Democrat on the Financial Services Committee and is also a member of the Select Committee on Homeland Security, where he serves on the Subcommittee on Infrastructure and Border Security and the Subcommittee on Intelligence and Counterterrorism. He talked with *TIKKUN* about the upcoming presidential elections, the media, and how progressives can get more people involved in politics.



JO ELLEN GREEN KAISER: I wanted to talk with you about the state of democracy in our country today. In the Eighties, we talked a lot about voter apathy, but today what's happening with our democracy seems to be different. People now seem more interested in issues but discouraged from participating. Some of that discouragement is coming directly from the Bush administration. I'd like to ask you about the so-called Patriot Act, sections of which I know you've worked to repeal, and the proposed "Victory Act." Can you comment on the way those acts disempower citizens and restrict rights many consider basic to democracy?

BARNEY FRANK: I voted against the Patriot Act and I'm glad to see there is increasing unhappiness with it and more people are coming around to our viewpoint. On the other hand, I have to reject the point of your question which is that this leads to lack of voter participation. As much as I disagree with the Patriot Act, there is nothing in it that discourages voter participation.

I'm a great critic of the Bush administration, both domestically and internationally in most respects, but it's kind of hard to blame the Bush administration for voter turnout in 2000 and before. I still think the problem with voter non-participation is partly a mistake that some of my good friends on the Left make. They exaggerate the extent to which voting is irrelevant. If you tell people that nobody pays attention to you, that only big money counts, that politicians aren't interested in what you think, you shouldn't be surprised that people won't vote.

Jo Ellen Green Kaiser is Senior Editor and Associate Publisher of TIKKUN.

I believe that it is important for there to be participation. I wish my friends on the Left would urge people to get into Democratic primaries. The best way to express their dissatisfaction is to do what Jesse Jackson did, with great success during the Eighties—get into the Democratic primaries and show what strength you've got in those primary turnouts.

GREEN KAISER: Don't you think though that one of the key elements of the Patriot Act is that it makes people afraid to criticize government and in that way turns people off from the idea that that is part of ...

FRANK: You are doing what I am critical of. You are feeding into this notion that there is some risk in voting. There isn't. In the first place voting is a secret ballot. Secondly, no, I don't like the Patriot Act, [but] there has not been any significant numerical attack on dissidents. What's been the worst about this administration is that they've been especially unfair to immigrants who are not in the country legally.

With regard to American citizens, people have been criticized some for dissent, but that even has turned around. A lot of my Democratic political friends have learned that they get into more trouble for not speaking out against some of these policies than for speaking out. There is a terrible case in South Carolina where they arrested a man for holding a sign, and told him he wasn't in the free speech area, and I object to that, but to compare this to the McCarthy period or World War II or Vietnam, there's been much less repression. We have done better in defending civil liberties now than we did in World War II, Korea and Vietnam.

GREEN KAISER: A positive way of talking about this comes from a sociologist who talks about two different

TOWARD A DEMOCRATIC COMMONS

grids in American society, the personal and the national. Somehow civil society is no longer a significant grid. Putnam talks about this too, that people have a hard time moving from their intimate personal lives to the national scene, to feel that they can make that jump and make a difference in the world of politics.

FRANK: I understand there is this sense. But one, I don't think there is anything being done officially to create it, and two, it seems to me that too many people on the Left reinforce it instead of combating it. There are no institutional obstacles to speaking out.

There are obstacles to voting—there are these mechanisms that have made it difficult. One of the things that we have is this very unfair rule that prevents people who have been convicted of certain crimes from voting. The problem, as we know, is that the laws are not enforced equally. There are young black men in jail now for doing the same sorts of things that Al Gore and Bush did with regard to controlled substances, but Bush and Gore haven't lost their right to vote.

But as to the point you're making, of people not feeling empowered, I really have one thing to say to them: Get over it! Vote! Voting does count. The right wing has shown that. There is no logical basis for people not to vote. I think there is too much indulging people in their sense of angst, "oh, poor me, the world is so distressing, I don't feel empowered, so I won't vote." I am deeply offended by that. It undercuts our effort to win on some very important moral issues.

GREEN KAISER: Howard Dean has this new technique, using the meet-ups, as a way of trying to get past that [feeling of disempowerment]. I went to one of them and was shocked—80 percent of the people there had never been involved in a presidential campaign.

FRANK: Did you ask, were there any institutional obstacles? You are confirming my point. There was no reason they couldn't have done that [before] except for their own lack of understanding of the possibilities.

GREEN KAISER: They needed something else. They needed someone to organize something for them.

FRANK: What's the matter with these poor babies? They don't have enough moral gumption and intelligence? I'm serious! Stop indulging this weakness on the part of people.

In Howard Dean's case, I think what's clearest is not the methodology, but the substance of the situation. Many Americans have felt very strongly against the war in Iraq. They were, unfortunately, in the minority, unfortunately because I was one of them—I voted against this, as did a majority of Democrats in the House, although not in the Senate. Howard Dean correctly read the situation, saw that there was a great deal of opposition that was not being met, and quite intelligently from the strategic standpoint made himself the leader of the movement of people who had been against the war in Iraq.

In fact, I don't think the techniques that Howard Dean is using are working for some of the other candidates who are trying to use them imitatively, because in this case there is a substantive issue; he is the only Democratic candidate with the chance to win the nomination who voted against the war in Iraq.

GREEN KAISER: You are writing off Kucinich?

FRANK: Yes. For a chance to win the nomination? Of course he has no chance to win the nomination! Indulging one's wish-fulfillment isn't bad, but why are you writing off Al Sharpton?

GREEN KAISER: I'm not.

FRANK: You think he has a realistic chance to win the nomination?

GREEN KAISER: He has a realistic chance to influence the nomination.

FRANK: That's not what I asked you.

GREEN KAISER: No, I don't think he [Sharpton] can win the nomination.

FRANK: You think Kucinich can. You don't know, or you don't want to say? [Or are you] acting like a politician and not answering me?

GREEN KAISER: [laughs] Many people believe the highest priority of 2004 is to beat Bush. Is there any line beyond which liberals and progressives shouldn't go? If so, what are the criteria for our vote besides electability?

FRANK: Where the line is beyond which liberals and progressives shouldn't go is a lot harder to answer in the abstract than in the particular. I've been working very hard this year, so I'll pass on the hard part and answer the easy one. Given the very large differences that exist between every single Democratic presidential candidate and George Bush on a wide range of issues, and given the fact that on no issue is any of the Democratic candidates worse than Bush, a decision to vote for the Democratic nominee against Bush should be a very easy one for liberals. Even on the question of the war in Iraq, while I wish the other Democrats had voted against the war as I did, the relevant question to me in deciding about the presidency is not how they reacted to George Bush's having boxed them in, in 2003, but whether or not as president any of them would be inclined to create a similar box, and I don't think that they would.

Now the harder part of this is whether or not you take electability into account in picking among them. And here there is an abstract formula I think that works—the greater the differences among them on important moral issues, the less important electability is. If a couple of the candidates are extremely preferable to some of the others on issues that reflect your core values, then you take some hit on electability, I believe, to support those candidates. On the other hand, nobody really believes that you disregard electability altogether, and if I thought the important thing to do was to pick a candidate with whom I was in the most agreement without regard to electability, I'd probably run myself.

GREEN KAISER: Clearly, people are still afraid of terrorism, and in your book, *Speaking Frankly*, you talk a lot about speaking to people's values and not just to issues. I wonder how you feel we should speak to people's needs for security and safety.

FRANK: There are a couple of ways we can do that effectively on the Left. Who protects us against terrorism? Public officials. Fighting the war against terrorism is quintessentially a public job. One of the major debates between the parties, liberals and conservatives, is the role of public vs. private, what can the public sector do, what can the private sector do. One of the things we can do is to point out that with this orgy of tax-cutting that George Bush is engaging in, plus his focus on the military problem overseas, the very people we rely upon to protect us at home—police officers, investigators, firefighters, the whole apparatus of the law enforcement system, medical technicians, etc.—[their funding is] all dropping.

GREEN KAISER: That's not coming out. One of the other questions I wanted to ask you was about the role of the media, especially these new FCC rules that are encouraging media consolidation, making big media bigger and leaving less room for independent voices.

FRANK: You are exactly right. One of the frustrations that all of us have on the Democratic side is that the media has done such a poor job. It's one of the biggest deteriorations I've seen in the past thirty-five years that I've been engaged in politics, the diminution in the extent to which public affairs are intelligently presented in the mainstream media.

When I started in politics, there were media outlets that had to make money to stay in business, but that wasn't why they were there. They were people who wanted to run a newspaper or TV station who wanted to be in the business of disseminating information about public matters. Now, we have, on the whole, virtually every mainstream media part of some corporate entity, and they are no longer people who have to make money so they can put out the news. These are people who put out the news so they can make money.

GREEN KAISER: Do you think we are going to be able to roll back some of those FCC changes?

FRANK: Yes, I've been very encouraged by that in both the House and the Senate. In this case, there is a willingness of some on the Right to join others of us on the liberal side, and I think we are going to be able to do that.

GREEN KAISER: To go back to my original question, I'm wondering if the lack of media coverage of the nuts and bolts of what is actually happening is also one of the reasons people feel that they cannot get involved.

FRANK: It's not that they can't get involved, but that's a good point. That is, I do know that on the liberal and radical wing of the Democratic party there is some frustration, people saying, "Oh, I don't hear anybody saying what I want." Part of the problem is that people are saying it but

not hearing it as much. That may contribute to people's disappointment, though it's still not a logical reason not to go out there and fight for what you believe in. I don't think you need the media to ask, well, is there a difference between whether Nancy Pelosi or Tom DeLay is the most important member of the House of Representatives. Anyone who does not understand what an enormous difference that would make, I have difficulty figuring out if they have any mental process at all.

GREEN KAISER: I can't resist asking you about Bill Moyers' comment that the "Republicans will do anything to win an election except get more votes."

FRANK: It's true. This is a growing problem, what they're doing in Texas—this one, we have finally been able to get the media to focus on.

GREEN KAISER: The Texas ...

FRANK: The general pattern of the Republicans. Generally, the rule is, you have an election, and you are disappointed if it doesn't come out your way, but you abide by the results and you wait until next time. Increasingly, they are finding ways not to do that. None of them are illegal, but they mean a constant ongoing political effort, there is never any rest period, and we have to respond in kind.

GREEN KAISER: I want to ask you to look forward—where do you see American politics going?

FRANK: I am pessimistic about public policy which makes me optimistic about politics. I wish things weren't going so badly for us, but the Bush foreign policy is in a shambles, the economy may be picking up some but not in a way that is going to help unemployment, people who care about the environment are distressed. I think that there has been an overreaction to the Right and I think this is reminding some people that, hey, wait a moment, government is not such a bad thing after all. I think that people are ready to focus.

I don't want to exaggerate the Right's win electorally—George Bush did lose the popular vote to Al Gore by more than anybody who has ever ultimately been named president, and if you throw in the 3 million who voted for Nader and the half million for Buchanan, people who were for a bigger government role got 3 million more votes than the people who were against it. What happened was that the Republican right got a temporary boost in popularity because Bush happened to be president during September 11. I think that is eroding. One of the things you want to show people is that it's things like September 11 that make you really need government.

I think we are going to be able to get the public to connect the dots, they will understand that you can't go for tax cut after tax cut and not see a substantial reduction in services that may be provided through government that are important for the quality of your life. That's what I'm optimistic about.

GREEN KAISER: Thank you very much. □

Common Wealth

Scott Russell Sanders

Let me tell you two stories, then invite you to decide which of them points toward the country where you'd rather live.

In one story, a man I'll call Sam wakes up in his luxurious condo. Hearing sirens tear through a nearby street, he fights off a feeling of panic by remembering the fences and guards protecting his place from the riffraff of the city. The windows are sealed shut, of course, because the air outside is foul with fumes, but Sam is comforted by the whirring of an air purifier in his bedroom.

In the kitchen, not trusting what flows from the tap, he drinks bottled water that his cash has brought here from France. He thinks with satisfaction of the way those numbers in his bank account make things appear and disappear, like magic. As he eats, the TV advises him what he can do with his money. He doesn't pay attention until a good ad comes on—like one for an exercise machine that will turn your body hard in fifteen minutes a day. He glances at the sports pages but ignores the rest of the newspaper, which is too depressing.

Instead, he reads the cereal box. On the back are instructions telling how he could win a Caribbean cruise for his family, but he can't imagine going anywhere with his ungrateful kids, even if his ex-wife would let them out of her clutches. He doesn't recognize most of the ingredients listed on the box, although he's sure they must have been scientifically approved. Finished eating, he leaves the dishes on the table as he left the towels in the shower and yesterday's clothes on the bedroom floor, for the maid to clean up.

Then Sam climbs into his SUV and pushes through morning traffic, the other cars making way for his bulky vehicle. On the drive, he calls his broker to discuss a few stock tips, calls his accountant to review an offshore tax shelter, calls his ex to argue over the kids' tuition. He lays on the horn when anyone fills the lane in front of him, and he gives no quarter to the few, harried pedestrians trying to cross the street.

As he walks from the parking garage, a sweat breaks out on his forehead. Already the day seems unseasonably hot, and Sam wonders for a moment about that global warming business. Entering the arctic cool of his office, however, he brushes the worries aside. The employees greet him, and he sees in

their eyes admiration for the fit of his suit, the shape of his haircut, the authority in his stride.

His secretary has laid out the day's tasks on his desk. It will be a lot to get through before he leaves at 6:00 to see his shrink, but he'll manage; he always does. The trick is to make your decisions and not look back. Sam isn't sure how he'll fill the evening—maybe try out the new sushi bar. Before opening the first folder, he glances in a mirror to straighten his tie. The man gazing back at him is happy, secure, fulfilled, his life charged with meaning. It is a man blessed with everything that money can buy.

...

You see variations on that story every day on television and billboards, in magazines and malls, and you hear upbeat versions of it from pundits and politicians. Before I say anything more about it, let me tell you another story, one you rarely hear in public but one I suspect you know in your bones.

A man I'll call John wakes in the small house that he and his wife, Kate, have been slowly fixing up. Soon their daughter will start babbling in her crib. Their son is already awake, singing as he draws. Through open windows John hears the calls of crickets and birds. Kate breathes peacefully beside him. A dog barks, a hammer rings, and from downtown comes the whistle of a train. Since the conversion to fuel cells and electric motors, the traffic hardly makes a sound, and the air smells of flowers instead of exhaust.

Because Kate was up late the night before rehearsing with the community band, John tiptoes from the bedroom. After a few minutes of meditation, he bows to the morning, and goes to take a shower. The water, heated by panels on the roof, drains from the tub into an irrigation system in the yard, which is planted in wildflowers and prairie grasses. Like the garden, the light he shaves by is powered by the sun, from photoelectric shingles.

As he is drying off, John hears his daughter's waking cry. While he changes her diaper, the two of them talk, John in a playful speech he learned from his own parents, the baby in a musical prattle. He is feeding her pureed carrots when Kate comes into the kitchen, smelling of shampoo. She kisses him, and they talk over plans for the day. She'll walk their son to school, then bicycle to her lab. He'll take the baby to daycare at the library, where she can play while he works a shift at the circulation desk. Since he's working half-time while the children are young, John can do the rest of his job by computer

Scott Russell Sanders, professor of English at Indiana University, Bloomington, is the author most recently of *Hunting for Hope* (Beacon 1998), *The Country of Language* (Milkweed Editions 1999), and *The Force of Spirit* (Beacon 2000).



For the past two decades, U.S. politics has been dominated by efforts to ransack the commons, increasing the wealth of a few at the expense of the many.

from home. On her way home, Kate will stop by the farmers' market to collect salad makings for a pitch-in supper with neighbors.

After the meal, if there's enough light, John and Kate and the children will tend their plot in the community garden, or they'll visit with Kate's parents and arrange for some weekend babysitting. After the children go to sleep, John and Kate may watch a documentary on PBS, or may crawl into bed early and read for an hour before sleep.

It will be a full day—but then all their days are full. As he pushes the baby in her stroller toward the library, John thinks of the riches they enjoy. The nation is at peace. The city is a humane and handsome place, with abundant green space, decent housing for everyone, and programs to serve the needs of children and the elderly. He and Kate work at secure and useful jobs. They share a snug house, with friends nearby and neighbors who look out for them.

Nearing the library, John takes a path through a prairie that occupies land reclaimed from a former oil depot beside the river. The river, once filthy, is now clean enough for swimming. As a member of the local land trust, John played a small role in restoring this place, and that work makes him proud. He is admiring the dance of leaves and light on the prairie when he notices the baby has grown still. Following her gaze, he sees a goldfinch bobbing on a coneflower. The bird lets loose a song, which makes the baby clap her hands and laugh, and John laughs with her.

• • •

Having heard both stories, you may think I've made the first one too dark, the second too bright. But if I've exaggerated the differences between these two views of the good life, it's only because we're being fed sugarcoated versions of the first story every waking hour, and we rarely taste the second story at all.

The dominant media in our society—including most tele-

vision programs, films, magazines, Internet sites, and advertisements—tell us that happiness, meaning, and security are to be found through piling up money and buying things. Whatever troubles us, shopping can fix it; whatever hollowness we feel, shopping can fill it. A recent billboard for cigarettes used the slogan, "Get More Stuff," and that might serve as the motto for our entire commercial culture.

Our political culture delivers pretty much the same message—which isn't surprising, since the corporations that flood the media with their ads also fund political campaigns. After the September 11 attacks, when Americans longed to know how we could help our country, politicians told us to run up some debt on our charge cards. When Americans wondered how we could reduce our dependence on oil, and thus our entanglement with despotic regimes in the Middle East, our leaders told us to hit the roads and fill the airports. As we look around at this richest of nations and see public debt piling up, hospitals closing, schools failing, forests dying, prison populations swelling, farmland disappearing under subdivisions and malls, children going without medical care, and countless people sleeping on the streets, our leaders offer us a tax cut, so we'll have more money in our pockets. And 40 percent of those cuts will go to the richest 1 percent of Americans, who already have more money in their pockets than they know what to do with.

For the past two decades, U.S. politics has been dominated by efforts to ransack the commons, increasing the wealth of a few at the expense of the many. This plundering might take the form of clear-cutting in national forests, drilling in wildlife refuges, grazing on public lands at below market costs, tax subsidies for the nuclear industry and agribusiness, pork barrel highway projects, industrial pollution of air and water and soil. The looting of the commons has been carried out through the privatizing of prisons, the

TOWARD A DEMOCRATIC COMMONS

use of tax dollars for religious schools, the commercial rip-off of the airwaves and the Internet, the scouring of the oceans by factory ships, the draining of aquifers for development, the opening of parks to snowmobiles, the patenting of organisms, the elimination of the estate tax, and so on. The net result of all this plundering is to diminish the wealth we hold in common.

Our politicians, manufacturers, and merchants seem not to notice that we hold any wealth in common. The story they tell is almost entirely about private wealth and private solutions. If the streets are unsafe, instead of reducing the poverty that causes crime, buy an alarm system, move into a gated community, pack a gun. If the public schools are failing, instead of fixing them, put your kids in private schools. If the water is tainted, don't work to end pollution; buy your own supply in bottles. If the roads are clogged, don't push for public transportation; buy a bigger car. If cancer is epidemic, instead of addressing the causes, try the latest therapies. If Social Security looks insecure, instead of overhauling the system to safeguard everyone, funnel the dollars into private accounts, so those who guess right on the market will win and those who guess wrong will lose.

A week before the September 11 anniversary, a two-page ad in the *New York Times* for a cell phone service used the slogan, "Get More," and then listed two dozen things you would get more of by purchasing this product, including more laughs, more party invites, and more second glances; with this phone you'd also get more friendly, available, motivated, and involved; you'd get more time with your kids, more of what you want, "more and more and more." Those claims are almost entirely false, of course, and we could laugh them off if they weren't beamed at us, on behalf of one product or another, through every channel of communication, twenty-four hours a day.

• • •

Viewed against this background, my opening story about Sam, though plenty dark, should not seem exaggerated. Sam is the ideal consumer, the unbridled ego wooed by all the ads. He thinks only about himself—his appearance, pleasure, and power. He feels no gratitude to the countless people, living and dead, whose labors support him. He is scarcely aware that he lives on a planet along with millions of other species, nor that he draws every drop of his existence from the wellspring of Nature. He looks no deeper for meaning than his own cravings. While the world decays around him, he tries to buy his way to happiness and health, as if he could withdraw inside a cocoon of money. Sam's story is dark because it is demented, a self-centered fantasy that leads to loneliness for the individual and disaster for the world.

By contrast, my story about John may sound too good to be true, yet nothing in his life is beyond our reach. He measures his wealth by the well-being of his family, friends, and neighbors. He understands that his own health and

the health of everyone he loves depends on the health of his community, its air and water, its parks and schools, its councils and courts. He sees himself as belonging not merely to a city but to a watershed, a bioregion, and ultimately to the Earth. Rather than defining himself as a consumer, he seeks to be a conserver. Rather than chasing after fashion, he savors everyday gifts. He finds joy in the voice of a child or a bird, in music and books, in gardening and strolling, in sharing food and talk. He finds meaning in caring for other people and for his place. It's clear that many of John's fellow citizens embrace this vision, for their city is infused with a spirit of cooperation, compassion, and ecological wisdom. To live in such a way, people need not be saints nor sages; they need simply be awake to the real sources of the good life.

I'm guessing that everyone reading these lines has at least glimpsed this vision—which is why I suspect you know John's story in your bones. You've dreamed of living in a household and a neighborhood suffused with love and respect. You've dreamed of living in a community that is just, beautiful, harmonious, and durable, a community that values all its citizens, that makes room for other species, that draws energy from wind and sun, that meets many of its own needs from local sources, that nourishes learning and the arts, and that protects these blessings for future generations. You've dreamed of belonging to a nation of such communities, and to a world of such nations.

The work of creating wise and loving communities begins with cherishing our common wealth. I speak of it as "common" because it's ordinary and because it's shared. By "wealth" I don't mean money, but the actual sources of well-being. I mean the soils, waters, and atmosphere; the oceans and prairies and forests; the human gene pool and the plenitude of species. I mean language in all its forms, including mathematics and music; every kind of knowledge, from folklore to physics; and all manner of artifacts, from satellites to shoes. I mean the practical arts such as cooking, building, herding, and farming; the art of medicine; the traditions of civil liberty and democratic government. I mean wildlife refuges, national parks, and wilderness areas, as well as museums, libraries, and other public spaces.

You won't see these treasures for sale in the mall. You won't see them advertised on TV. You won't discover them in corporate balance sheets or the Gross National Product. You'll rarely hear them spoken of with pride by politicians, who seem hell-bent on auctioning off everything that might have the word "public" attached to it.

Where you're likely to hear people talking about our common wealth is at a block party, a union meeting, a street festival, a concert in the park. You're likely to hear such talk among people cleaning up a river, planting trees on a ravaged hillside, reclaiming an abandoned rail yard for a playground, turning a trash-filled lot into a community garden. In short, you'll hear testimony to our shared wealth

*We need to speak up, to say
boldly why we fight for good
schools, why we build houses
for the homeless, why we protect
open space, ... why we honor
government as a defender of
the common wealth.*

wherever people come together to preserve, restore, or create something for the good of the community, and not merely for their own private advantage.

...

What's being sold to us every day as the "American way of life" is mostly a cheat and a lie. It's an infantile dream of endless consumption, endless novelty, and endless play. It's a pacifier for the ego to suck on. It's bad for us and bad for the Earth.

We need a new vision of the good life. We need a dream worthy of grown-ups, one that values simplicity over novelty, conservation over consumption, harmony over competition, community over ego.

Fortunately, many people sense this need. Across our country and around the world, people are shaping a new story about the sources of peace and plenty. You can see the story come alive in farmers' markets, Habitat for Humanity building sites, food coops, town theaters, land trusts. You can witness the story unfolding in citizen forums and simple living collectives, in hospices, in shelters for abused women and children, in efforts to restore eagles or wolves. Those who are acting out this new story are recovering wisdom known to our ancestors but largely forgotten in our hectic, narcissistic age.

Love of our common wealth is the root impulse behind the countless acts of gratitude and kindness that ordinary people perform every day. We all feel it, but we don't always know how to speak of it, or we speak of it so quietly that our story is drowned out by the blare of consumerism.

We need to speak up, to say boldly why we fight for good schools, why we build houses for the homeless, why we protect open space, why we look after the ailing and the elderly, why we pay taxes without grumbling, why we honor government as a defender of the common wealth. In a culture drunk on private greed, we need to declare why we're committed to the public good. In a society obsessed with competition, we



need to say why we practice cooperation. In a culture addicted to instant gratification, we need to champion long-term-healing and the welfare of future generations.

Again, I'm not saying that such ways of thinking and acting mean we're paragons of virtue; they only mean we're awake to the sources of well-being. In spite of what the media tell us, we know that the good life is not for sale. We understand that the good life is something we make together in households and communities, in partnership with other people and in harmony with Nature. We realize that happiness, health, security, and meaning come to us largely as gifts, and we feel called to preserve those gifts, enhance them if we can, and pass them on.

The glorification of private wealth will go on around the clock, in every medium, without any help from us. We need to counter that chorus by lifting our voices in praise of the wealth we share, recalling how our lives depend on one another, on generations past and future, on the bountiful Earth and all its creatures, on the spirit that lifts us into being and sustains us through every moment and reclaims us in the end. □

Take Back Higher Education

Henry A. Giroux and Susan Searls Giroux

It's no news that post civil-rights America has been characterized by a declining interest in and cynicism about mainstream national politics. What is much less discussed is the way this crisis in American democracy has been heralded and exacerbated by the nation's increasing skepticism (or even overt hostility) toward the educational system at all levels. Cynicism about politics and skepticism about education have become mutually reinforcing tendencies that to be understood must be analyzed in tandem.

Consider the following statistics: Soon after the invasion of Iraq, *The New York Times* released a survey indicating that 42 percent of the American public believed that Saddam Hussein was directly responsible for the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. CBS also released a news poll indicating that 55 percent of the public believed that Saddam Hussein directly supported the terrorist organization Al Qaeda. A Knight Ridder/Princeton Research poll found that "44 percent of respondents said they thought 'most' or 'some' of the September 11, 2001 hijackers were Iraqi citizens." A majority of Americans also believed already that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction, that such weapons had been found, that he was about to build a nuclear bomb, and that he would unleash it eventually on an unsuspecting American public. None of these claims had any basis in fact, as no evidence existed to even remotely confirm these assertions. A poll conducted by *The Washington Post* near the second anniversary of the September 11 tragedy indicated that 70 percent of Americans continued to believe that Iraq played a direct role in the planning of the attacks. What does this represent, if not a crisis of pedagogy—both formally and informally in the public sphere?

Democratic politics demands the full participation of an educated populace. It demands a public willing to challenge its elected officials and its laws—and change both when necessary. One can't happen without the other, and now it appears both are in jeopardy.

Henry A. Giroux and Susan Searls Giroux teach at Penn State University. His latest book is *The Abandoned Generation*. Susan Searls Giroux's most recent book (co-authored with Jeffrey Nealon) is *The Theory Toolbox*. Their forthcoming book *Take Back Higher Education* will be published by Palgrave in March of 2004.

The Conservative Attack

Emptied of any substantial content, democracy is imperiled as individuals are unable to translate their privately suffered misery into broadly shared public concerns and collective action. As multinational corporations increasingly shape the content of most mainstream media, privatizing public space, civic engagement appears more and more impotent and public values rendered invisible. For many people today, citizenship has become reduced to the act of

buying and selling commodities (including candidates) rather than increasing the scope of their freedoms and rights in order to expand the operations of a substantive democracy. As market values coupled with rising bigotry undercut the possibility for providing a language in which vital social institutions can be defended as a public good, politics is uncoupled from democratic

values. And as social visions of equity recede from public memory, unfettered brutal self interests combine with retrograde social policies to make security and safety a top domestic priority.

Curiously, astute readers of the national political scene have little interest in (and are often woefully ignorant of) the state of education beyond a heartfelt sound-byte or two. And educators seemed to have lost the language for linking schooling to democracy, convinced that education is now about job training and competitive market advantage. While both sides hold common concerns and seek deliberative action to redress public opinion, both suffer from the shrinking of core American values—a concern for notions of publicness, for equal access and opportunity, equality and autonomy.

If the liberal-left seems particularly disheveled and ineffectual at this point in history, however, conservatives appear to be the masters of persuasion and organization. Working for decades at grassroots organizing, they have taken both pedagogy and politics deadly seriously.

The conservative push against education at all levels began in the 1970s, following the white working and middle class backlash against Civil Rights era programs such as affirmative action and busing. Conservatives eager to reach out to this constituency (and unwilling to constrain big business in the interests of working families) adopted a strategy to address their educational if not their eco-

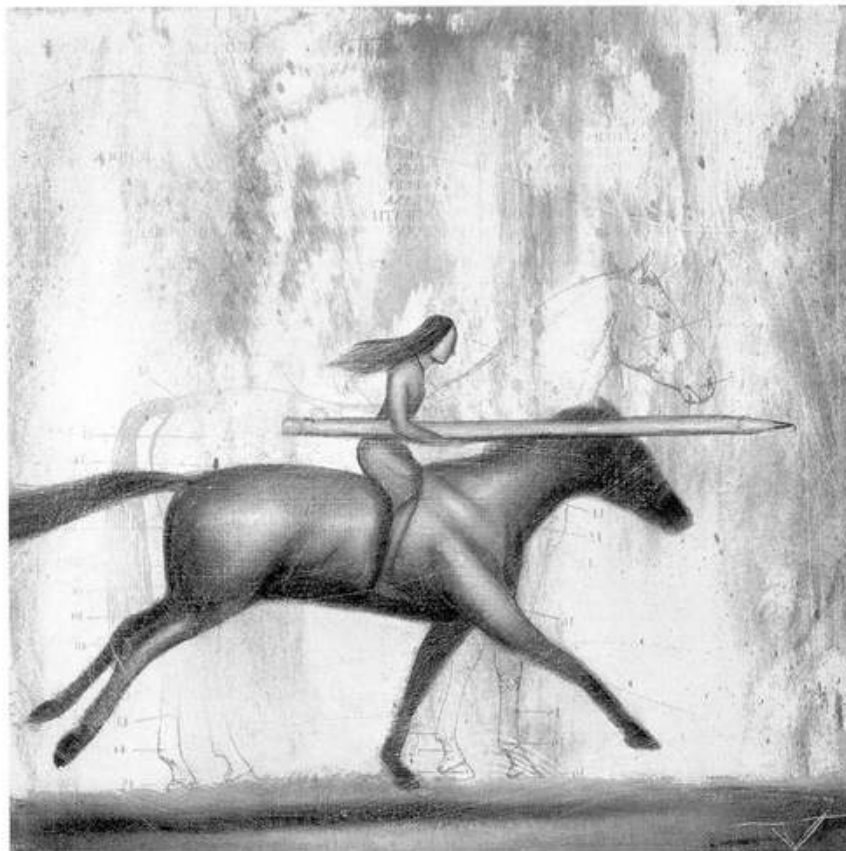
*Democratic politics
demands the full
participation of an
educated populace.*

conomic concerns. Yet, they were careful to avoid the overt racism of their predecessors who attacked the rights of minority children to attend desegregated schools or to access post-secondary education. Public schooling was increasingly defended as a private rather than a public good. And with the shift away from public considerations to private concerns, privatization and choice became the catch phrases dominating educational reform for the next few decades.

The attack on all things public was accompanied by attempts to empty the public treasury. Education became one of the first targets of neoliberals, neo-conservatives, and fundamentalists advocating market interests over social needs and democratic values. With the publication of *A Nation at Risk*, the Reagan administration gave the green light to pass spending cuts in education—cuts that have been obligatory for each administration to follow. Reconceived as a “big government monopoly,” public schooling was derided as bureaucratic, inefficient, and ineffectual, producing a product (dim-witted students) who were singularly incapable of competing in the global marketplace. In short, schools had committed “an act of unthinking, unilateral educational disarmament,” the report accused. A clever strategy to be sure, as it provided a ready scapegoat to legitimate the flight of U.S. manufacturing to markets overseas. Schools were to blame for increased joblessness and insecurity—not the rapacious greed of corporations eager to circumvent U.S. minimum wage laws, federal taxes, and environmental regulations, while breaking the back of unions at home.

Similarly, higher education was accused of harboring a hot-bed of leftist academics, promoting culture wars that derided Western civilization, and, in a post-9/11 era, engaging in dissent conservatives characterized as treason. Higher education was portrayed as the center of a class and race war in which the dreams of the white working class were under attack because of the ideological residue of professors tainted by the legacy of radical Sixties politics. The division and distrust between “elitist liberals” and a white working class was now complete and utterly secure. Employing a mobile army of metaphors drawn from Cold War rhetoric, the Right succeeded in a propaganda campaign to turn the popular tide against both public and higher education.

The conservative push against education has only strengthened under the Bush administration. As Senator Robert Byrd stated in a Senate floor speech, President Bush has had no trouble asking Congress for \$87 billion in supplemental funds to rebuild Iraq but has refused to allocate the \$6 billion needed to fund his educational reform program or for that matter the resources needed to fully fund educational programs for our neediest students. As Byrd



puts it, “I wonder how the Senators who object to the cost of my amendment ... to add \$6.1 billion for Title 1 education programs to fully fund money Congress authorized for fiscal year 2004 ... will view the President’s request to add \$60 billion or \$65 billion or \$70 billion to the deficit to fund military and reconstruction activities in Iraq. I wonder if they will be comfortable voting to support a massive spending program for Iraq if they cannot bring themselves to support a comparatively meager increase in education funding for American schoolchildren.” Of course, it will not only be school children who will be suffering from budget shortfalls, but also university students who have to grapple with skyrocketing tuition, decreasing student aid, fewer course offerings, and a generally watered-down education.

Educating for Democracy

The most important casualty of this attack on education is democracy itself. One of the central legacies of modern democracy, with its roots in the Enlightenment classical liberal tradition (and most evident in the twentieth century in the work of W.E.B. Du Bois, Bertrand Russell, Jane Addams, and John Dewey, among others) is the recognition that a substantive democracy simply cannot exist without educated citizens.

Of course, these views have not been held universally. For some, the fear of democracy itself translated into an attack on a truly public and accessible education for all citizens. For others such as the progressive Walter Lippman, who wrote extensively on democracy in the 1920s, representative democracy entailed creating two modes of education. One mode would be for the elite, who would rule the

TOWARD A DEMOCRATIC COMMONS

country and be the true participants in the democratic process, and the other mode of education would be designed for the masses, whose education would train them to be obedient workers and passive spectators rather than participants in shaping democratic public life. Progressives like Du Bois, Dewey and Adams, however, rejected such a bifurcation of educational opportunity outright. They believed that education for a democratic citizenry was an essential condition of equality and social justice and had to be provided through public and higher education.

While Dewey, Du Bois and others were right about linking education and democracy, they had no way in their time of recognizing that the media culture would extend, if not supercede, institutionalized education as the most important pedagogical force in developed societies. The work of education now takes place in a range of spheres other than formal education, including the news, advertising, television, film, the internet, video games, and the popular press, in addition to schooling. Yet, the dispersion of education only underscores with renewed urgency the significance of formal spheres of learning. Unlike their commercially-driven popular counterparts, such sites of pedagogy must provide citizens with the kinds of critical capacities, modes of literacies, knowledge, and skills that enable them to both read the world and participate in shaping and governing it. We are not claiming that higher education is a disinterested space, but that in its best moments it works through altogether different interests (i.e. it self-consciously educates future citizens capable of participating in and reproducing a democratic society) than the commercial values promoted by corporations.

In spite of their present embattled status and contradictory roles, universities and colleges remain uniquely placed to prepare students to both understand and influence the larger educational forces that shape their lives. Such institutions by virtue of their privileged position and dedication to freedom and democracy also have an obligation to draw upon those traditions and resources capable of providing a liberal and humanistic education to all students in order to prepare them for a world in which information and power have taken on new and potent dimensions.

Part of such a challenge means that educators need to rethink the important presupposition that higher education cannot be separated from the imperatives of an inclusive democracy and that the crisis of higher education must be understood as part of the wider crisis of politics, power, and culture. Recognizing the inextricable link between education and politics is central to reclaiming higher education as a democratic public sphere. Most importantly, any viable

notion of critical pedagogy must demonstrate that there is a difference between critical pedagogical practices and propagandizing, critical teaching and demagoguery. A critical pedagogy should be open and discerning, fused with a spirit of inquiry that fosters rather than mandates critical modes of individual and social agency. Pedagogy should provide the theoretical tools and resources necessary for understanding how culture works as an educational force, how higher education connects to other sites of pedagogy, and how identity, citizenship, and agency are organized through pedagogical

relations and practices. Rather than viewed as a technical method, pedagogy must be understood as a moral and political practice that always presupposes particular renditions of what constitutes legitimate knowledge, values, citizenship, modes of understanding, and views of the future. In this context, pedagogy should not be viewed as an *a priori* method, but an object of struggle over assigned meanings, modes of expression, and directions of desire as these bear on the formation of the multiple and ever-contradictory versions of

the "self" and its relationship to the larger society. Hence, pedagogy as a critical practice should foster the classroom conditions that provide the knowledge, skills, and culture of questioning necessary for students to engage in critical dialogue with the past; question authority and its effects; struggle with ongoing relations of power; and prepare themselves for what it means to be critically, active citizens in the inter-related local, national, and global public spheres.

Further, if higher education is to be a crucial sphere for creating citizens equipped to exercise their freedoms and competent to question the basic assumptions that govern democratic political life, academics will have to assume their responsibility as citizen-scholars by taking critical positions; relating their work to larger social issues; offering students knowledge, debate, and dialogue about pressing social problems; and providing the conditions for students to have hope and believe that civic life not only matters but that they can make a difference in shaping it. In spite of neo-conservative and neoliberal claims that economic growth will cure social ills, the market has no way of dealing with poverty, social inequality, or civil rights issues. It has no vocabulary for addressing respect, compassion, decency, and ethics or, for that matter, what it means to recognize anti-democratic forms of power. These are political issues not merely economic concerns. A political system based on democratic principles of inclusiveness and nonrepression, in contrast, can and does provide citizens with the critical tools necessary for them to participate in investing public life with vibrance while expanding the foundations of freedom and justice.



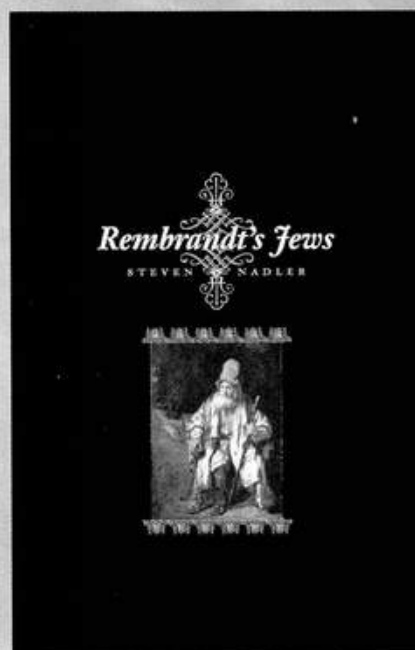
Fighting Back

Given recent pressures to make higher education conform to the dictates of a color-blind (and pro-American) public policy, another important challenge facing educators is the need to address the ongoing role that racial politics has played in shaping both the liberal arts curriculum as well as more general questions of how race structures access to and opportunity within higher education. One approach might address the series of intellectual shifts governing the transition from classical rhetoric (once the center of the liberal arts curriculum) to philology to an aesthetic formalism that redefines culture as nonpolitical, universal, and race-free. Part of what can be illustrated in such an analysis is that the contemporary call for a "return" to a thoroughly deracinated, formal engagement with the disciplines that make up humanistic study is impossible because race historically has always been a part of that construction.

Moreover, in attempting to further understand how interconnecting philosophical, political, and social forces work on the past and present development of university curricula, it is necessary for those of us concerned about higher education to provide a more complicated account of the emergence of fields like literary studies (ground zero of the culture wars) by situating their institutionalization in contexts that have been largely ignored or untheorized. We refer specifically to the impact of events such as the rise of Social Darwinism and racial science as well as mass European immigration that posed significant challenges to the classical liberal principles that have in turn dramatically influenced the role of the university in the shaping of an active and critical citizenry.

Equally important is the need to address the rolling back of educational opportunity and access for minority students at all levels of schooling, but particularly in higher education, by focusing on spiraling tuition rates, changes in qualifications for grants and financial aid, challenges to affirmative action, debates over "standards" and overt attacks on (and defunding of) "politically correct" curricula, programs, and departments—particularly race/ethnic studies. We need to address these events as so many strategies of a post-Civil Rights backlash that threaten not only the civic mission of public and higher education to prepare all citizens for critical participation in self-government, but also undermine any pretense to "freedom" and "equality"—tenets once central to liberal democratic politics.

Another challenge that needs to be addressed in order to "take back" higher education is the threat that neoliberalism and corporate values pose to higher education and the necessity to once again remind ourselves that democratic rather than commercial values should be the primary concerns of the university. While the university should equip people to enter the workplace, it should also educate them to contest workplace inequalities, imagine democratically



Rembrandt's Jews

STEVEN NADLER

There is a popular and romantic myth about Rembrandt and the Jewish people.

One of history's greatest artists, we are often told, had a special affinity for Judaism. With so many of Rembrandt's works devoted to stories of the Hebrew Bible, and with his apparent penchant for Jewish themes and the sympathetic portrayal of Jewish faces, it is no wonder that the myth has endured for centuries.

Rembrandt's Jews puts this myth to the test as it examines both the legend and the reality of Rembrandt's relationship to Jews and Judaism. Steven Nadler leads us on an engrossing tour of Jewish Amsterdam, then and now, building a deep and complex account of the remarkable relationship between Dutch and Jewish culture in the time of Rembrandt.

"An engaging introduction to a fascinating moment in both the history of Jewish-Christian relations and the history of art. Readers will find Nadler's clear prose and general approach accessible and appealing, and his personal anecdotes make this rich and complex history even more vivid."—Michael Zell, author of *Reframing Rembrandt*

32 halftones, 16 color plates
Cloth \$25.00

Available in bookstores.

The University of Chicago Press
www.press.uchicago.edu

organized forms of work, and identify and challenge those injustices that contradict and undercut the most fundamental principles of freedom, equality, and respect for all people who constitute the global public sphere. But higher education is about more than job preparation and critical consciousness raising; it is also about imagining different futures and politics as a form of intervention into public life. In contrast to the cynicism and political withdrawal that media culture fosters, a critical education demands that its citizens be able to translate the interface of private considerations and public issues, be able to recognize those undemocratic forces that deny social, economic, and political justice, and be willing to give some thought to their experiences as a matter of anticipating and struggling for a better world.

If right-wing reforms in higher education continue unchallenged, the consequences will reflect Lippman's desire for a bifurcated civic body. In other words, we will have a society in which a highly trained, largely white elite will be allowed to command the technoinformation revolution while a low-skilled majority of poor and minority workers will be relegated to filling the McJobs proliferating in the service sector. In contrast to this vision, we strongly believe that education cannot be confused with training, and that if educators and others are to prevent this distinction from becoming blurred, it is crucial to challenge the ongoing corporatization of the university while upholding the legacy of a social contract in which all youth, guaranteed the necessary protections and opportunities, once again symbolize the hope for a democratic future. In short, we need a democratic project and the need to recapture our commitment to future generations by taking seriously the Protestant theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer's belief that the ultimate test of morality for any democratic society resides in the condition of its children. If higher education is to honor this democratic social contract, it will have to not only reestablish its obligation to young people, but also reclaim its role as a democratic public sphere.

Take It Back!

Though we have titled this essay "Take Back Higher Education," we are not advocating that any one ideology—even a progressive one—"take over" the university. Our aim is indeed to open up the university community to a wider spectrum of debate. But at the same time, we are not shying away from taking a very particular ethical stand. "Take Back Higher Education" is a call to action for educators, parents, students, and others to reclaim higher education as a democratic public sphere, a place where teaching is not confused

with either training or propaganda, a safe space where reason, understanding, dialogue, and critical engagement are available to all faculty and students. Higher education, in this reading, becomes a site of ongoing struggle to preserve and extend the conditions in which autonomy of judgment and freedom of action are informed by the democratic imperatives of equality, liberty, and justice.

Higher education has always, though within damaged traditions and burdened forms, served as a symbolic and concrete reminder that the struggle for democracy is, in part, an attempt to liberate humanity from the blind obedience to authority and that individual and social agency gain meaning primarily through the freedoms guaranteed by the public sphere, where the autonomy of individuals only becomes meaningful under those conditions that guarantee the workings of an autonomous society. "Take back" is a reminder that the educational conditions that make democratic identities, values, and politics possible and effective have to be fought for more urgently at a time when democratic public spheres, public goods, and public spaces are under attack by market and ideological

fundamentalists who either believe that markets can solve all human affairs or that dissent is comparable to aiding terrorists, strategies that share the common dominator of disabling a substantive notion of ethics, politics and democracy. □

ATTACKS ON DEAN (from page 15)

overwhelming majority of the American people, partially validating claims by the Green Party that the Democrats are essentially no different than the Republicans.

In many respects, Howard Dean is a quintessential centrist Democrat. However, he has been able to attract a following that, on average, is considerably to his left in large part because he had the common sense to oppose the U.S. invasion of Iraq and to forcefully articulate the frustration and anger among rank-and-file Democrats against the Bush Administration.

Perhaps that is why Kerry, Lieberman, and the Democratic Congressional leaders hope to sabotage his campaign, fearing that Dean's extraordinary popularity for having the courage to stand up to the Bush administration's policies in Iraq and elsewhere will further expose their own shameful pandering to the president's foreign policy agenda.

Whether this flap will end up hurting or helping Dean's chances for the party's presidential nomination remains to be seen. However, it is a sad testament as to how far to the right the Democratic Party has gone. □

The New Anti-Semitism

Miriam Greenspan

What's New About Anti-Semitism?

Wall Street Journal reporter Daniel Pearl is forced to say he is a Jew who comes from a Zionist family before he is decapitated on video by Pakistani Muslim terrorists, his head held aloft as a warning to Jews everywhere. Signs at peace rallies scream: "Death to Jews" and posters in college dorms read "Jews=Nazis." The official newspaper of the Palestinian Authority declares that the Holocaust is a myth which the Jews have exploited to get sympathy. Jordanian children learn that the Torah is "perverted" and that Jews have only "their own evil practices" to blame for the Holocaust. Egyptian television viewers watch forty serialized installments of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. Academics spearhead a campaign to shun Israeli professors simply on the basis of their nationality. An anti-Israel rally on an American campus shows a photo of an eviscerated baby with the tag: "slaughtered according to Jewish Rites." A Jewish student wearing a yarmulke at Yale University is attacked by a Palestinian in his dormitory. Neo-Nazi violence against Jewish people and institutions escalates throughout Europe. Millions of Muslims, indoctrinated by state-sponsored propaganda, believe that Israel is responsible for September 11.

Anti-Semitism has been called "the longest hatred" and, judging from events like these, it has retained its extraordinary durability. In recent years, it has morphed and globalized into an ugly mix of neo-Nazi violence; Islamist religious

Miriam Greenspan is a psychotherapist in private practice and author of *A New Approach to Women and Therapy* and the recently published *Healing Through the Dark Emotions: the Wisdom of Grief, Fear, and Despair*.



and racial Jew-hating; Palestinian terrorism; ultra-Left anti-Zionism; and the demonization of Israel throughout the world, particularly in the Arab and Muslim nations and in Palestine. *The New Anti-Semitism: The Current Crisis and What We Must Do About It*, by Phyllis Chesler, is a vital contribution to understanding the resurgence of this virulent new strain of anti-Semitism in our time, which Chesler aptly describes as "more threatening and dangerous to Jews than anything that has occurred since World War II."

Chesler thoroughly documents not only the potent rise of neo-Nazi hatred against Jews in Germany, Austria, Russia, Poland, France, and other European countries, but also the religious and racial anti-Semitism that is daily fare in Arab and Muslim nations. The most vicious propaganda in

the media since Hitler described Jews as a race of vermin to be exterminated is now widely disseminated in the Middle East, including Palestine. Depictions of Jews as rats, lice, snakes, demons, parasites, hook-nosed liars who made up the Holocaust, evil Nazis, and treacherous conspirators who plot to take over the world, are injecting whole populations with anti-Semitic toxins on a scale that is historically unprecedented.

Chesler does not present a detailed socio-economic analysis of how anti-Semitism has functioned historically to displace the rage of oppressed populations onto an all-purpose Jewish scapegoat. For this kind of analysis (which certainly holds true for the oppressed masses in the Muslim world), Michael Lerner's *The Socialism of Fools: Anti-Semitism on the Left* is indispensable. Published a decade ago, Lerner's warning that anti-Semitic trends in the Third World, combined with economic and social conflict in America, could augur a period of renewed and heightened

THE NEW ANTI-SEMITISM

anti-Semitism, has proved all too prescient. The crucial contribution of Chesler's book is her detailed presentation of the confluence of anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism—the complex hybrid of bigotry that is emerging today. “The anti-racist anti-Zionist,” says Chesler, “has a lot in common with the old-fashioned racist anti-Semite.”

Israel has become “the Jew of the world—scorned, scapegoated, demonized, and attacked.” The core of her argument is that Jew-hatred, Holocaust denial, and violence against Jews in the Arab and Muslim nations, as well as in Europe, Asia, and the United States, are “sympiotically” nourished by a dogmatic form of anti-Zionism promulgated by students, intellectuals, academics, and progressives. The Palestinian Intifada is suffused with this new anti-Semitism and its supporters around the world are infected with it. In short, the new anti-Semitism is “the last acceptable prejudice” on both the Left and the Right.

The confluence of anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism is present, according to Chesler, when Jews in the Diaspora are held responsible for Israeli policy and targeted for verbal and physical attack. When it is held that all groups are entitled to nationalist aspirations except for Jews; that Israel doesn't deserve to exist while the racism or oppressiveness of any other nation doesn't call for its wholesale elimination. When acts of violence against Israeli civilians and Jews throughout the Diaspora are justified as political strategy. And when Israel is held to a higher standard than any other country and demonized in the family of nations (for example, when the UN recurrently condemns the Occupation while out-and-out genocides escape criticism). Increasingly, Holocaust-denial or worse—blaming the Jews for the Holocaust—is a strong feature of the anti-Zionist onslaught in the Arab and Muslim world, as is the invidious equation of Zionism and Nazism. And most disheartening of all, the confluence of anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism is present in the Palestinian uprising, which is riddled with organized Jew-hatred pumped into the population on a daily basis in schools, mosques, and on the streets.

Those of us who have noticed how Leftist statements against Israeli policy easily spill over into a generalized, vitriolic anti-Jewish sentiment, or those who haven't spoken up on listservs, at demonstrations, in academic or feminist forums for fear that raising the issue of anti-Semitism will mark them for attack or shunning, will be grateful to Chesler for this brave book. So will anyone who genuinely wants to understand how and why the new anti-Semitism is taking hold on North American campuses, European streets, Muslim schoolrooms, and in the West Bank and Gaza. While reading it, I experienced two incidents that vividly

illustrate two prominent aspects of the new anti-Semitism: Holocaust hostility and anti-Semitism masquerading as anti-Zionism. The first occurred the day I learned that my elderly father had just had a massive heart attack and was lying in a hospital in Queens. Speaking to the I.C.U. nurse, I wanted

to let her know that my father would need to be sedated, since being hospitalized caused him to relive his Holocaust trauma. I got as far as “You need to know that my father is a Holocaust survivor ...” before she interrupted me, screaming: “So what? Don't talk to me about being a victim and don't expect that you people are going to get any special treatment here.” The next day, addressing a group of graduate students about grief, fear, and despair in an age of global threat, I cited Israel/Palestine as an area in which repeated cycles of traumatic grief turned to rageful acts of vengeance that undermined the prospects of peace. A woman approached me at the end of my talk, a palpable hatred radiating from her eyes, and launched into an anti-Israel rant. “The Holocaust justifies absolutely nothing,” she spat out (though I

hadn't mentioned the Holocaust). “The Jews are not entitled to anger or grief. Only the Palestinians are justified in their anger.” Her vaguely threatening last words were: “I hope you get what you deserve for what you're saying.” I wondered how a call for mutual compassion could arouse such hate.

Both the nurse and the student were enraged by the idea of Jews as Holocaust victims. While the nurse's hostility was a frontal assault, the student's rage erupted in a pseudo-rational political argument, couched in an anti-Zionist “position.” I was struck, in both cases, by what Chesler calls the new “permissibility” for remarks of this kind. Increasingly, Jews in the popular imagination have jumped the divide, from post-Holocaust Victims to Jewish/Zionist Villains. And that jump has everything to do with Israel.

Vituperation: How We Talk About Israel, Palestine, and Anti-Semitism

Any discussion of how anti-Semitism masquerades as anti-Zionism is bound to be volatile. It's hard for many Jews, much less gentiles, to define what exactly anti-Semitism is. Except for its most virulent forms e.g. Jew-hating by neo-Nazis, we may wonder if something is truly anti-Semitic, or if Jews are just defensive and paranoid. (A history of genocide will do that to you). What is the relationship between anti-Semitism and Middle East politics? What does it have to do with the establishment of the State of Israel? With the Intifada?

The tone of conversations about questions like these easily turns to a hateful war of words that resembles, on a



For Further Reading:

Phyllis Chesler, *The New Anti-Semitism: The Current Crisis and What We Must Do About It*. Jossey-Bass, 2003.



verbal level, the violent clash of Jews and Arabs in Israel and Palestine. Many Leftists cultivate a studied blindness to anti-Semitism around the world and conclude it is largely a thing of the past. Others charge that anyone who raises the flag of anti-Semitism in relation to the Israel/Palestine conflict has the ulterior motive of “silencing” legitimate criticism of Israel. On the other hand, right-wing Jews often take the view that any criticism of Israel is *by definition* anti-Semitic. There’s very little neutral or calm ground here in which to have a reasonable discussion. Anyone who contemplates the tinderbox of the Middle East is likely to feel at some point a mixture of sorrow, anger, fear, despair, and confusion. We humans generally don’t do very well with feelings like these. We tend to become either avoidant and silent on the one hand, or desperate and dogmatic on the other.

As a card-carrying Leftist for the past forty years, I’ve seen repeatedly that Leftists are hardly exempt from these human frailties. Both Michael Lerner and Chesler address the striking fact that old and new Leftists have a history of minimizing and being silent about anti-Semitism, in contrast to loudly condemning racism directed at people of color. The charge of anti-Semitism is often treated like an insult rather than taken seriously as a political criticism, on its own merit. These lapses and silences, for people who are ostensibly champions of the oppressed, can only be explained by irrational bias or emotional blockage. Generally speaking, those who subscribe to rigid orthodoxies of the Left or Right are fond of reducing the confusing morass of violence in the world to simplistic dualistic allegiances: Victims to be Championed versus Villains to be Vilified. Competing moral and political claims leave us in a state of confusion and anxiety that are dispelled by taking a “hard line.” Not surprisingly, most thinking on the subject of Israel, Palestine, and anti-Semitism is limited by pre-selected information and dominated by either/or dichotomies: either the Palestinians are anti-Semitic or Israelis are racist Zionist colonialists. Either anti-Semitism has nothing to do with the righteous acts of violence of the downtrodden Palestinian people or anti-Semitism is the sole reason for their discontent. Either Israel is the

Promised Land of milk and honey, the only democratic government in the Middle East and therefore unassailable, or it is a Nazi-like apartheid state bent on racial genocide and therefore must be eliminated (or held to a utopian standard that pertains to no other nation on earth). This kind of thinking, conversing, demonstrating, and hollering doesn’t get us too far. I would venture to say that in the turbulent global realignments of the twenty-first century, adhering to rigid Left/Right “lines” is actually interfering with our ability to understand the political landscape. Understanding anti-Semitism today requires some open-minded critical thinking that doesn’t necessarily line up with any particular “orthodoxy” and doesn’t fall into the trap of either/or thinking. Chesler is eloquent in her plea for this kind of informed free-thinking, and she is to be commended for her contribution in this vein.

Having said all this, let me be clear that I don’t lay claim to neutral “objectivity” on this subject. I openly state my bias: As a daughter of Holocaust survivors born in a refugee camp, I am passionately concerned about the fate of the Jewish people. I identify with Palestinians languishing in refugee camps and, at the same time, I am angry about the rabid anti-Semitism on the streets of the West Bank and Gaza. I feel a profound sense of betrayal in relation to my Leftist brothers and sisters who obsessively condemn Israeli sins while consistently ignoring tyranny, misogyny, and anti-Semitism in the Muslim world; who excuse the murder and mutilation of Jews in Israel; who have recurrently failed to understand anti-Semitism, much less to raise their voices or rally against it. I am tired and saddened by all the polarizing accusations and pseudo-rational fact-mongering and would like to see something resembling a civil conversation on the subject of the new anti-Semitism.

In the midst of a subject bathed in much heat but little light, this essay has four goals: 1) to clarify what anti-Semitism is; 2) to make the case—with Chesler—that a particular style of anti-Zionism is increasingly the new face of anti-Semitism on the Left; 3) to argue that this anti-Zionism is part of a larger politics of hatred that corrupts the legitimate grievances of the Palestinian people; and 4) to shed some light on how Jews themselves are often unwitting accomplices in supporting such a politics.

Ten Easy Ways to be an Anti-Semite

Anti-Semitism is a hardy and resilient plant, able to thrive in all sorts of climates. When China opened its doors to Westerners, one of the first ideas it warmed to was that of Jews as an evil people. Korea and Japan have been fertile ground for the dissemination of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. Anti-Semitism can easily become part of a particular ideology (like fascism) that seeks dominion. Have you heard the quick summary of Jewish history and tradition? They tried to kill us. We survived. Let’s eat. Any Jew who has a passing familiarity with the Jewish holidays has a gut knowl-

edge of anti-Semitism. Yet, despite its long history, anti-Semitism is not very well understood. The trauma of Nazi genocide, on the one hand, and the (seeming) absence of anti-Semitism in the United States, on the other, befuddle many into believing that Jew-hatred is largely a thing of the past—and that only Jewish “paranoia” keeps bringing it up. In fact, anti-Semitism is a deep, abiding irrational bigotry that has a life of its own in various forms of social organization and culture. At its root, it is an age-old form of scapegoating Jews for anything that scares or threatens a population—thus relieving national and ethnic leaders of their responsibility for injustice, and giving the populace a common Enemy to rally around (hence, “the socialism of fools”). It tends to come in “waves”—periods of calm followed by periods of heightened violence (when rulers are threatened or the ruled are distressed).

It's not surprising that we're currently on the upswing of a new wave. Given the end of days apocalyptic feel of the twenty-first century, we should expect anti-Semitism (and all kinds of racism and xenophobia) to be on the rise. In times of fear, anti-Semitism is a great crowd-pleaser, and this era of uncertainty, terrorism, re-alignments of power, economic decline and globalization, and unprecedented threats to the earth itself, is not likely to be the exception to this rule. Hence, since September 11, the myth of the “international Jewish conspiracy” is enjoying a spirited revival. In a recent article in the Sunday *New York Times Magazine* entitled “How to Talk About Israel,” Ian Buruma notes that this myth is increasingly and openly voiced in the halls of power not just in the Middle East but in Japan, Britain, France, and even in that bastion of Israel support, the United States. “American foreign policy and ancient prejudices,” says Buruma “are reinforcing each other in a vicious cycle.” The linkage of the Israeli Occupation and aggressive American “neo-colonialism” in the media and on the Left has taken on a distinct anti-Semitic flavor that fits very well with the rise of fanatic Islamism in places like Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Iran, Afghanistan, etc.—where the United States and Israel are not “critiqued” for their policies but hated as the Infidel. Leftists, including Jews, who are fond of debating Israel's right to exist, or who scapegoat Israel for Western imperialism should be aware that their efforts are grist for the anti-Semite's mill.

An important aspect of anti-Semitism's hardness is the fact that those who fear and hate Jews know how to link their bigotry to despised ideologies. In communist countries, where capitalism was the Enemy, Jews were said to be the Leading Capitalists. In capitalist countries, where commu-

nism is the Enemy, Jews are smeared as leaders of the Communist Conspiracy. Today, among Leftists, the Enemy is global capitalism and imperialism; and once again, Jews in the “cabal” around Bush and company are seen as the motor force behind American “neo-colonialism” and are taking the rap for the W.A.S.P. elite. (As though Bush, Cheney, and Rumsfeld would not be warring in Iraq if it weren't for those Bad Jews). Furthermore, Jews are fast becoming the identified Terrorists of the age—witness the scapegoating of Israel and Jews for September 11, which, in Islamo-fascist quar-

ters, is being called an act of Zionist terrorism designed to turn the West against Islam. Of course many people who subscribe to this belief also praise Osama bin Laden as the mastermind behind the attacks. But then rational consistency is hardly the hallmark of anti-Semitism. The hallmark of anti-Semitism is bigotry and hatred. The ideological labels attributed to Jews—Communist, Capitalist, Imperialist, Terrorist, Zionist—are simply ways to paint Jews as the Enemy and thereby contribute to campaigns of hatred around the world that are essentially displacements of fears and legitimate griev-

ances onto history's most popular scapegoat.

“The international Jewish conspiracy” lie is paralleled by the idea, popular in Leftist circles, that Jews hold inordinate power in social life. According to this view, Jews, comfortably ensconced in the United States, are a dominant rather than oppressed group; and therefore all talk of anti-Semitism is bogus. Some go further and say that the fabled “monied Jews” are a lobby of power-hungry evildoers who have hijacked American foreign policy on Israel, presumably to keep Israel a stronghold of racist apartheid oppression of Palestinians. What's wrong with this picture? The focus on Jewish economic privilege in the United States conveniently ignores the fact that targeted attacks on synagogues and other Jewish institutions have been and continue to be planned by terrorist groups—and have been successfully executed in the United States as well as Europe and South America. Are we to ignore the threats against Israel, or against Jews worldwide, because American Jews are, for the most part, safe in their homes? Are we to say that synagogues that hire security guards to check for weapons on the High Holidays are simply “paranoid” and “overreacting” to threats on Jewish life? While we may agree or disagree with the right-wing bent of mainstream Jewish organizational politics, we cannot deny the simple fact that Jews are still threatened as Jews, perhaps not very much in the United States (though the bombing of a Jewish school in Los Angeles should give us pause) but certainly

The hallmark of anti-Semitism is bigotry and hatred. The ideological labels attributed to Jews—Communist, Capitalist, Imperialist, Terrorist, Zionist—are simply ways to paint Jews as the Enemy.

in Israel and around the world. Must we still remind those who see Jews as a "dominant" group that the Jews in Germany were at the height of emancipated assimilation, having risen to positions of great prominence in the professions, business, and politics, when Hitler came to power and devised and executed the Final Solution? Most Germans in the 1930's believed that Hitler was a funny little clown whose appeal would blow over. Many now put their faith in the belief that anti-Semitism will disappear if the State of Israel and the Jewish people perfect themselves; and that Islamo-fascist terrorism will go away if the U.S. stops being an international bully. Anyone who can still find a modicum of reassurance in such beliefs has not learned the lessons of history. While Jews may be safer in the United States today than they have been anywhere and at any point in history, a politics of hatred that targets Israel and Jews is always dangerous and should never be minimized.

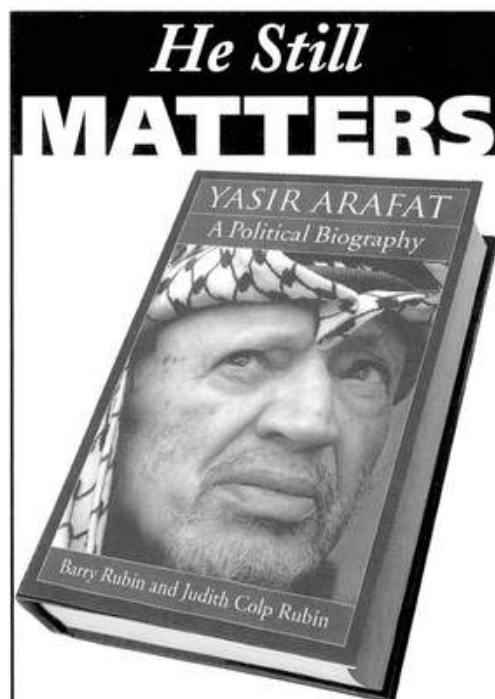
Anti-Semites who wish to become proficient in the art of the longest hatred can do so by following some or all of the following ten maneuvers:

1. In times of trouble, blame the Jews (or Israel).
2. Say that Jews are no longer victims of anti-Semitism because they are economically privileged (i.e. all Jews are rich and rich Jews are worse than rich gentiles).
3. Pander to racist stereotypes such as: Jews are arrogant, money-grubbing, power-hungry, self-interested, narrow-minded, clannish, cheap, showy, schemers and plotters who seek world dominion, and religious vampires who drink the blood of non-Jewish children, etc.
4. Remain silent about anti-Semitism even if you recognize it, or better still, react contemptuously when Jews bring it up.
5. Use ideology to mask Jew-blaming, i.e. point to Jews as the "leaders" (and true culprits) of whatever bad thing you hate that you think threatens you, e.g. capitalism, communism, imperialism, terrorism, Bushism, AIDS, you name it (Jews are currently being blamed for all of these).
6. Always judge Jews by a double standard, i.e. if Jews are not better than good, they are worse than bad, e.g. if Israel is racist, it doesn't deserve to exist.
7. A particular variant of the last step, but worthy of its own enumeration: Jews in power are more blameworthy and vile than gentiles in power.
8. Excuse acts of violence against Jews on the basis of one ideology or another, i.e. they have it coming to them.
9. Hold Jews everywhere responsible for the policies of the Israeli government, i.e. if you're Jewish, you're personally responsible for Ariel Sharon.
10. And last but by no means least: blame Jews for anti-Semitism e.g. even the Holocaust is our fault. Or, better still, deny that anti-Semitism exists or ever did, e.g. there was no Holocaust, the Jews made it up so that they could come to Palestine and oppress Arabs while plotting to take over the world.

These ten ways to practice anti-Jewish bigotry have worked well historically; they work regardless of cultural diversity; and, in the new post-Holocaust, post-Hitler variants, they are working well today. Virtually all them are rampant in the Middle East.

The Demonization of Israel

Approaching the Israel/Palestine question, I'm reminded of the old story about three blind people touching an elephant. The guy with his hands on the trunk thinks it's a snake. The guy with his hands on the leg says it's a tree trunk. The guy touching the torso is sure it's a wall. We all share the "blindness" of partiality yet speak as though the whole and only truth belongs to us. How many readers of *The Nation* also read *The Jewish Week*? How many readers of the official Palestinian Authority newspaper also read *Ha'Aretz*? One can find "facts" to support almost any position one takes about Israel and Palestine. The facts themselves are in dispute and most of us are not Middle East



"Admirable, impressively documented"

—*The Wall Street Journal*

"Strong and Compelling"

—*Booklist* (starred review)

\$27.50

At bookstores everywhere.
www.oup-usa.org

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

THE NEW ANTI-SEMITISM

scholars. What we choose to believe and whose “line” we adhere to depends a great deal more on where our “gut” emotions lie than most people would care to admit. And those gut feelings can include a conscious or unconscious bias against Jews, as well as a conscious or unconscious bias against Arabs. The history of Jewish/Palestinian relations will always be a contested one, written as much out of our unstated, primitive passions as by our collection of favorite excised “facts.” Historical myths tend to be unchanging and unbending—they do not accommodate to uncomfortable contradictions. They maintain their integrity at the cost of disconcerting facts that might raise anxiety about whether we are the good guys or the bad guys—especially in areas where two moral imperatives co-exist.

The contested history of the Middle East is encapsulated by two fundamental mythic narratives. The Zionist narrative is that the great State of Israel was created by the blood, sweat, and tears of the Jewish people and came to birth after the genocide of the Holocaust, a phoenix arising from the ashes of Jewish history. Israel is the Promised Land—the flowering of the Jewish dream of Return for 2000 years; and its democracy is a shining light in the midst of a sea of theocratic, oligarchic, and non-democratic Muslim nations. The Palestinian narrative is that Jews were a foreign entity who created a colonial outpost in a territory to which they had no right; that they harassed, murdered, and displaced the indigenous population, and created the dismal horrors of fifty years of refugee camps for the natives. Jews now occupy a land that is the exclusive entitlement of those who lived there before the Jews arrived. They have humiliated and oppressed Palestinians on the West Bank and Gaza for decades and seek permanent domination of Palestinians who want only justice and the right of return to their own land.

There is a grain of truth in both these stories, surrounded by falsehoods. As it is said, a little knowledge is a dangerous thing—and a partial history becomes a dangerous myth. Along with reducing the complexities of history into a simple hero and villain dichotomy, these myths are conspicuous for what they leave out. Dogmatic Zionists tell their story as though nobody lived in the land to which the Jews returned (“A land without a people for a people without a land”); and as though hundreds of thousands of Palestinians didn’t have to be displaced for the homeland to be Jewish. Dogmatic Palestinian nationalists and terrorists tell their story as though Jews did not have a continuous presence in the land of Israel; as though Jews stole rather than purchased the land from Arab landowners; as though Arab anti-Semitism never did and still doesn’t exist; as though the refugee camps had nothing to do with the fact that Palestinian leaders refused the state offered them by the UN in 1948, or the fact that the Arab nations preferred to let Palestinians simmer in their hatred of Jews for generation after generation rather than give them aid or welcome them into their borders.

The most obvious fact about the Israel/Palestine conflict is the one that both of these narratives leave out, namely that the history of this neck of the woods is a story of two competing, equally valid nationalisms for one tiny bit of turf. Anti-Semitic anti-Zionism is distinguished by its attempt to totally delegitimize Jewish nationalism while upholding a triumphalist nationalism for Palestinians. Israel has no “right to exist,” say ultra-Left anti-Zionists. From my perspective, this statement has a genocidal ring. Perhaps this is because I remember my first four years in the refugee camp, where ideological debates about Zionism were a luxury no Jew could afford. We were “Zionists” of necessity. Jewish quotas existed in every one of the few countries willing to receive us—except for Israel. Zionism had a primal definition: the will to live as a Jew in a nation that would open its doors to us and defend us from annihilation.

Among those who accept the right of Israel to exist, the battle between pro-Palestinian and pro-Israel nationalists hinges on the Israeli Occupation and West Bank settlerism, on the one hand, and Palestinian terrorism, on the other. Palestinians who are subject to Israeli power are justifiably angry and entitled to resist and oppose domination. Decades of humiliation of Palestinians in the Occupied Territories have increasingly, and justifiably, drawn condemnation of Israeli policy. The failure of the American Jewish establishment to criticize Israeli abuses of power has led many to feel that Jews just don’t get it when they are not “victims” but “oppressors.” However, this Victim/Oppressor dualism tends to blind one to the reality of anti-Semitism on the part of the “Oppressed.” Anti-Occupation revolt is not the same thing as anti-Zionism; and anti-Zionism doesn’t have to be infected with anti-Semitism. But the Intifada has linked all of these, and that link is embodied in the suicide bomber.

In the course of the last three decades, and particularly in the last three years of the Intifada, the once-popular post-Holocaust narrative of Jews as Victims is being re-written. In a complicated twist on an old theme, Jews—represented by the State of Israel—are increasingly being seen as the world’s Villains. The Occupation and Israeli expansionism have fed into and bolstered a new version of the old myth of Jews as a perfidious race bent on world domination.

To understand this, we must have some knowledge of the history of Arab and Muslim anti-Semitism. Millions of Muslims today go to their local mosques and hear their preachers sermonize from the Holy Koran. What do they hear? That God Himself describes the “black inner selves” of the Jews. That the Jews are a race apart, an evil “Other” responsible for terrorism, Western moral degeneracy, and imperialist Empire. That Jews use the blood of non-Jewish babies for their infernal Jewish rites. That Israel is the instrument of Satan, a cancerous tumor in the Middle East, an Imperial threat to Moslems everywhere. That the Holocaust was a hoax perpetrated by the Jews in order to justify their will to dominate Muslims and rule the world.

And they are called to act: the Jewish Infidel must be destroyed.

This mix of Nazi racial anti-Semitism, Islamo-fascist ideology, and Jew-hatred disguised as anti-imperialism and anti-Zionism is striking. The Nazi imagery has been added to Islamic stereotypes of Jews that have existed for hundreds of years. The Grand Mufti of Jerusalem spent the war years in Berlin, where he visited Hitler and picked up some tips from the master. Since then, Nazi anti-Semitism has thoroughly penetrated the Arab and Muslim world—including the Palestinian refugee camps and the West Bank and Gaza. In Cairo one can enter any bookstore and find a full range of “respectable” anti-Semitic literature openly displayed and widely read, including so-called “revisionist” books of Holocaust denial, and sixty or more editions of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. High-tech broadcasting—combining the aura of objective “information” with the stink of Jew-hatred—links drugs, arms, pornography, stock market scandals, and all manner of evil to the Zionist plot to rule the world. (For example, “investigative journalists” reported that Israel introduced AIDS to Egypt via Jewish prostitutes).

After Israel’s decisive victory in the Six-Day War, Islamic fundamentalism and the hatred of Israel, Zionism, and Jews intensified. Envy of the Jews for their military and economic prowess played no small part in this, since the mass of Muslims in Arab nations (as well as Palestinians who are impoverished not only as a result of the Occupation but because of their own corrupt leadership) live daily with poverty and powerlessness. The Palestinian cause has been corrupted by the potent anti-Semitism of Arab and Muslim cultures; and the terrorist wing of this cause—supported and, to some degree, funded by Arafat—is infested with it. So long as the Occupation continues, this form of anti-Semitism will be provoked, under the cover of legitimate revolt. But this doesn’t mean that Arab and Muslim anti-Semitism will disappear when the Occupation ends. Indoctrinated hatred dies hard.

In the West, the fear of demonic Jewish power was also heightened by the Six-Day War, following a long post-Holocaust period in which, for obvious reasons, the fear of Jews was dormant. The fact that Jews were able to outlive Hitler’s plan appealed to nations that had just been at war with Germany. Jewish victims evoked guilt and pity. The creation of the Jewish State, on a psychological level, was



What we’re seeing in the Middle East today, on the extreme wings of the Israel/Palestinian conflict, is a politics of hatred

related to guilt that the world stood by and let it happen. Let the poor Jews have their state, we don’t want them anyway, was the logic of the United Nations. Hence for several decades after the Holocaust, Jews were treated to a grace period of an all time low in anti-Semitism in the West.

After 1967, the image of Israel flipped: from being the land of the Noble Victim to the land of the Arrogant Victor. The tables turned and Palestinians—who, up to this point, hadn’t been championed by anyone, including their own Arab brethren—became the next Victim contest winners. By the rules of this game, there cannot be two National Victim groups—only one. Palestinians have become the cherished Victim group of the moment. (Anyone who doubts that this kind of “radical chic” exists might recall the Left’s love affair with the Black Panther Party and the willingness to overlook its violent and misogynist excesses). Holocaust denial—the extreme pole of Holocaust fatigue and Holocaust hostility—is a necessary ingredient of contemporary anti-Semitism. If Jews are to be depicted as Oppressive Villains and not Meek Victims, their history of persecution has to be minimized, forgotten, or denied; Jewish desperation for a national haven from persecution in both

European and Muslim nations has to be re-written. Stereotypically, Jews are supposed to be pasty-faced Yeshiva bochers, passive wimps, and effeminate men who pose no threat. If they are macho (like the State of Israel), they are Really Bad—more bad than anyone else (steps 6 and 7 of the anti-Semite’s creed). The victimized Jew of the Holocaust was a “safe” Jew for the culture—hunted, murdered, disempowered, miraculously outliving the piles of cadavers in Nazi photos. But then this Jew went too far. This pathetic Jew has transmogrified into a demonic threat—the Israeli Jew, armed to the hilt and raining down missiles from the sky—the repository of the greatest evil, identified with imperialism, terrorism, Nazism, and world-wide conspiracy, the national Scapegoat in a post-September 11 world. The flip-flop from elevation to demonization is in full sway. The Islamist demonization of Jews as the Infidel is paralleled by the delegitimization of Israel by anti-Zionists.

The fact that anti-Semitic stereotypes of Jewish power are part of the demonization of Israel doesn’t mean that the Israeli Occupation is justified. It doesn’t excuse Israeli expansionism. It doesn’t mean that Israeli militarism is better than

any other militarism in the world. It is not. But it is also no worse—which is to say it is terrible, and it must be opposed. But it must be fought as a mistaken and corrupting strategy in the long war between Jew and Arab nationalists in this part of the world—not as what the right wing demagogue David Duke calls “Jewish supremacism.” The occupying Jew is no more the all-purpose devil than the terrorist Palestinian is the all-virtuous victim.

Many today argue that Jews who were once victims have indeed become villains on the world stage, that Israel has brought the new anti-Semitism upon itself by being joined to American Imperial interests. That hatred of Israel is “justified.” Apart from the dangerous practice of conflating Jews with Israeli policy, a logical question that arises from this line of thinking is: if Arab hatred of Israel is “justified,” is then Jewish hatred of Arabs and Muslims for anti-Semitism “justified”? And if so, where will all this “justified” hatred get us?

I would argue that what we’re seeing in the Middle East today, on the extreme wings of the Israel/Palestinian conflict, is a politics of hatred, which I define as any politics that relies on racist stereotypes; that joins the twin fervors of ultra-nationalism and fundamentalist religion in its demonization of the Enemy; or that is dogmatically entrenched in the political dehumanization of an unredeemably Evil “Other.” When all of these features are joined together, the mixture is highly dangerous and inflammatory. This mix exists now in the Middle East, on both sides of the conflict. Racist attitudes towards Palestinians by the expansionist ultra-nationalist wing of the Israeli government and rampant anti-Semitism in Palestine have escalated the hatred on both sides.

The politics of hatred of Israel rests on the denial of the fact that the Jewish State, despite its mighty arsenal, has been the target of eliminationist Arabs since its birth. In the long war between Israel and the Palestinians, Israel is still—it has never stopped—fighting for its life. Leftists like to point to U.S. support for Israel’s seemingly unassailable military force as evidence of its status as the archetypal Oppressor Nation. But imagine where Israel would be if it didn’t get this support? Those who hold to the belief that Israel is invulnerable have obviously never spent the night in a sealed room, wearing a gas mask and trying to comfort a child while hoping that the SCUD missiles whizzing by are not tipped with chemical or biological poisons. In the uncertain and shifting geo-political alliances of this era, the military prowess of Israel in a Muslim world seething with Jew-hatred could easily be undone by a number of possible scenarios. One might consider what could happen if Iran’s Muslim fundamentalist government, currently being supplied with Russian nuclear technology, were to develop nuclear capability within striking distance of Israel. Or if an autonomous Palestinian state joined forces with its Arab neighbors, who were more than willing to supply the thousands of eager volunteer Jihadists needed to vanquish the Zionist Infidel.

Any politics which dehumanizes, demonizes, and scapegoats Jews and Israel is a politics of hatred. And regardless of its “reasons” and justifications, a politics of hatred is always a lost cause.

The Self-Hating Jew

It’s hard to ignore the fact that many of the loudest Left-wing voices of one-sided condemnation of Jews and Israel are Jewish voices. Chesler explains how such attacks are often marked by an unconscious attempt to distance the “good” (politically-correct) Jew from the “bad” (politically incorrect) Jew, in order to achieve an illusory feeling of safety. While “self-hating Jew” can be used as an epithet, internalized oppression is still an important concept. Women, blacks, and Jews internalize the damaging social messages of misogyny, racism, and anti-Semitism. Jewish shame and self-hatred are largely unaddressed features of Jewish psychology. I grew up with this shame and it took me years to recover my sense of dignity as a human being from the traumatic imprint of genocidal assault that is my roots. As well as shame, fear that has mutated to anger directed at other Jews is a prominent element of internalized anti-Semitism. Virtually all of the ways that Jews try to survive and adapt in cultures that periodically erupt in Jew-hatred are marked by these features. Assimilationists declare their Jewishness null and void, thus trying to erase the problem. Often these are Leftists who keep a low Jewish profile, don’t speak up for themselves, downplay, avoid, or deny the existence of anti-Semitism, or blame other Jews for “provoking” it. Those with a strong or visible Jewish identity, on the other hand, can become Israel do-or-die ultra-nationalists who attack other Jews as “self-haters,” mistaking legitimate opposition to Israeli policy as betrayal and abandonment by one’s own family, so to speak. When a Jew feels radically endangered in the world, it’s a lot safer to attack other Jews than to confront anti-Semitism.

The trauma of traumas in Jewish history is the Holocaust, and it continues to work its indelible mark on the Jewish psyche. Psychological features of genocide trauma are operative not only in direct survivors and their descendants but in every Jew alive who knows that Hitler would have liked to snuff us all out. This trauma is triggered every time a suicide bomber explodes another self-propelled pogrom onto the streets of Jerusalem, Haifa, or Tel Aviv. Mutilated children, limbs flying out of buses, Israelis lynched while mobs of Palestinians rejoice and dance in the streets, children killed in front of their mothers in kibbutz bedrooms, dancers at a wedding, people at a seder blown to pieces, and on and on. How can Jews hear and read about such events and not be (re-)traumatized? Jews who are unaware of the impact of the Holocaust or annihilatory anti-Semitism on their own psyches often end up blaming Jews for provoking the suicide bomber, or calling friendly critics of Israel “worse than Nazis,” or allying themselves with the pro-Palestinian soli-

darity movement while ignoring the anti-Semitic overtones in this camp. Shame can take many forms, including a rigid ideological dogmatism. That is, Jews passionately arguing against their own nationalism (and only their own nationalism), their own people, or even their people's survival. Much of the agitated, over the top quality of debates about Israel and Palestine, from the Jewish side, is connected to this traumatic imprint. We yell at each other when our hearts are flooded with traumatic fear or grief. The fact that Michael Lerner, who has championed one of the most balanced pictures of the Israel/Palestine conflict, has been attacked by both Left and Right-wing Jews, is a sad testament to the reality of Jews who are caught up in a traumatized response to traumatic events. Internalized self-hatred, shame, denied fear, traumatic grief, and misplaced anger are features of Jewish psychology that anti-Semites can count on. Most Jews have some work to do in this area.

The Politics of Hatred

It is fashionable in certain political circles to justify and legitimate hatred as a rational response to oppression and injustice. The psychiatrist Willard Gaylin devotes his study, *Hatred: the Psychological Descent into Violence*, to dispelling this idea. He makes a critical distinction between hatred and justified anger or rage. A group can oppose injustice without resorting to hatred. As Gaylin defines it, hatred is more than an emotion; it is a form of delusional thinking that demonizes an Enemy. It is the sick glue that binds the hater to the object of his hatred. The desperation in the Palestinian camps does not explain or justify acts of terrorism committed by Palestinians, says Gaylin, because hatred is not a rational emotion, or a viable political program. Hatred is a social disease, and it is highly contagious: "I have heard many say, in defense of Palestinian hatred, that after generations of being kept in squalid refugee camps ... feeling frustrated and humiliated by the exercise of Israeli power, Palestinians are 'entitled' to their hatred. This is a sad misunderstanding of the nature of hatred. Hatred is not an entitlement like health care. It is a disease (that) may infect others, but it inevitably destroys the hater, diminishing his humanity and perverting the purpose and promise of life itself. No one is entitled to hatred any more than he is entitled to cancer."

When hatred spreads in a population, acts of barbarism like suicide bombing are the consequence. And when such acts are socially legitimized and converted to a political program, the result is what Gaylin calls a "culture of hatred," i.e. a group with a shared history in which the leadership, the



educational institutions and the dominant religious forces indoctrinate the members of the community with the venom of hatred on a daily basis. Gaylin makes the case that, at the current time, Palestinian culture—regardless of just claims to the land occupied by Israel and righteous anger at displacement and dispossession—has become such a culture. I would add that peace-loving Palestinians are also victims of this culture. As one Palestinian mother, quoted in Chris Hedges' *War Is a Force that Gives Us Meaning*, puts it: "The children are fed ... hatred for the Jews from the day they are born.... All they hear is that we have to get rid of the Jewish enemy. The call to fight is pumped out over the radio and the television. The trucks go through the streets of the camp praising the new martyrs and calling for more."

Conscripting children to blow themselves up to kill the Jewish Infidel and live forever in Paradise, far from being a legitimate political strategy, is a horrific form of child abuse.

Since a distinguishing feature of a culture of hatred is the daily indoctrination of the entire population, that feature does not yet exist in Israel as a whole, says Gaylin. But it does, I believe, exist in some portion of the Jewish settlements on the West Bank. Certainly the long conflict between Israel and the Palestinians has stoked the hatred on both sides, contributing to what Gaylin calls the "assault on morality" that war requires. On one side, a vibrant sub-culture of anti-Semitism infects the authentic nationalism of Palestinians, exacting a burden of revenge that is as destructive of their national aspirations as the suicide bomber is to himself. On the other side, Israeli Jews, caught up in a reenactment of the trauma of a history of annihilation, become more and more corrupted by the fantasy of force as a solution to fear, and thus give more and more to a futile, ugly, and murderous Occupation, to fundamentalist nationalist settlerism, and to collective reprisals that resemble, in lesser form, aspects of their own history of persecution.

And so the dance of death continues until, as in a Shakespearean tragedy, there is no one left on the stage. This annihilatory destruction of life is exactly where hatred and the politics of hatred leads.

While hatred may be a perennial human pathology, it doesn't come naturally. It has to be taught. In *War Is a Force that Gives Us Meaning*, Chris Hedges argues that "ancient hatreds" don't generally explode of their own accord. They need the drums of war to goad them on. These drums are beaten by leaders on both sides, who foment hatred to justify war. Even the seemingly most intransigent ethnic and religious conflicts (like that amongst the Croats, Serbs, and

Muslims in the former Yugoslavia), are actually manufactured wars, fed by nationalist propaganda. Wars require lies and myths. The Zionist and Palestinian myths have promulgated years of increasing mistrust and hatred, not because Palestinians are inherently more anti-Semitic than any other people, nor because Jewish settlers are inherently more racist. The war between Israel and Palestine has been goaded by leaders on both sides who are tragically short-sighted, or worse, corrupt and morally bankrupt. "Nationalist triumphalism," as Chris Hedges refers to it, egged on by these leaders, is a plague that easily lends itself to the "collective psychosis" of war. Both Sharon and Arafat are war criminals who have cynically manipulated the intense nationalisms of their people into a long war that has accomplished nothing but to escalate the hatred, killing, and "psychosis" on both sides. "War gives a justification to what is often nothing more than gross human cruelty and stupidity," says Hedges. "It allows us to believe we have achieved our place in human society because of a long chain of heroic endeavors, rather than accept the sad reality that we stumble along a dimly lit corridor of disasters."

The psychosis of war thrives on the culture of victimhood, and both Jews and Palestinians have come by their cultures of victimhood honestly. It is this clash of two cultures of victimhood, on a psychological level, that keeps this long war going. Each side bent on proving that it has "no choice" but to defend itself by ever increasing rounds of barbarism on one side and military might on the other. "Once a group or a nation establishes that it alone suffers, then all other competing claims to injustice are cancelled out," says Hedges. "The nation or the group falls into a collective autism ... and does not listen to those outside the inner circle. Communication is impossible."

At this late date in the dance of death embraced by both Jew and Arab, calling either side "just" or "unjust" may be no more useful than saying that the Capulets and the Montagues were justified in their orgies of revenge. Justice and injustice exist on both sides. Peace, for the beleaguered victims of both nationalisms, has less to do with political correctness than it does with reconciliation. And reconciliation is, among other things, a spiritual undertaking. As peace-maker John Paul Lederach puts it, reconciliation is only possible when all parties can let go of a bitter past in order to bring about a human future for the generations to come.

On the more hopeful side, if corrupt leaders whip up the fires of racism, hatred, triumphalist nationalism, and war, such leaders are not invulnerable. They can be forced to step down—but only by their own people. There is yet hope that both Israelis and Palestinians will say "no" to the leaders on each side who are destroying their chances for peaceful co-

existence. This will take considerable courage for peace-loving Israelis and Palestinians (who must defy the culture of hatred and who are labeled "collaborators" by their own terrorist organizations and subject to "street justice"—including murder). Here are some hopeful facts: 69 percent of Israelis say they would give up all or most of the settlements for an enforceable peace; and 71 percent of Palestinians say they want the violence to end. These numbers point to the fact that just as hatred is aroused under certain conditions and by certain leaders, it can die down and make way for

something resembling a "live and let live" outlook. This kind of outlook would go a long way to putting out the fires of anti-Semitism and racism in this part of the world. Perhaps then future generations of Israelis and Palestinians will be raised not on fear and hatred but on mutual tolerance.

Hatred, terrorism, and war, in ever more frightening forms, are the plagues of the 21st century.

Prayers For Peace

Where do we go from here?

Those of us who envision a less dangerous and crazy world need to raise our voices in opposition to militarism and violence in all its forms as a solution to global fear and unsafety. Since anti-Semitism always diverts people's attention from the true causes of violence and injustice, an active opposition to anti-Semitism is critical to the success of any movement for peace and justice—in Palestine or anywhere else. Such a movement must stand as squarely against the alarming rise of Islamo-fascist terrorism and Arab and Palestinian anti-Semitism, as it does against Western imperialism, globalization, and racism. Where are the enlightened progressive activists who will even utter the word "anti-Semitism" on their lists of political grievances? Those of us who do political work related to Israel and Palestine might note if we are as comfortable raising the issue of anti-Semitism as we are opposing Israeli policy. If not, why not? Are we frightened to "come out" as Jews? Do we blame other Jews for provoking hatred against us? Are gentiles afraid to be "tainted" by their identification with visibly "out" Jews? Is our politics corrupted by an anti-Semitic bias? Or by apathy to Jew-hatred?

As an activist for decades, Chesler ends her book with a chapter entitled "What We Must Do." Her suggestions are clear and sound: 1) face the fact that Israel is under threat; 2) move beyond ideological reflexes and think beyond the boxes of Left/Right, pro-Israel/pro-Palestinian, etc.; 3) as Jews, learn to be more tolerant, "less rigid and rageful towards one another"; 4) be fair to Israel; 5) form Jewish-Christian alliances; 6) form alliances with Palestinians; 7) restore campus civility; 8) fight "the Big Lies" (the Jews killed Jesus, Jews control Wall St., Jews own the media); 9) honor the dreams of peace. Chesler's wisdom in the ways of

(continued on page 84)

Fear and Faith in the French Republic

David N. Myers

I: Fear

The dark clouds that lurk over France's Jewish community have been duly observed. Frequent reports in the American Jewish press, as well as a detailed article in a spring 2003 issue of *Vanity Fair*, chronicle the dramatic rise in the number of anti-Semitic acts over the past three years. Similarly, there has been ample discussion of the persistently anti-Israeli character of the French media and intelligentsia.

I first read these reports with a healthy dose of skepticism, in large measure due to the often shrill alarmism of Jewish community activists in the United States, who have argued over the past year that anti-Semitism is dangerously on the rise in the U.S. Prepared to encounter a similar exaggeration in France, I discovered a different and disturbing reality when I arrived for a month-long visit in May. A good number of French Jews were confused and scared—with some wondering whether the time has come to make plans to leave France. Symptomatic of this fear, the pages of the weekly *La Tribune Juive* were filled with advertisements not only for vacations and youth programs, but also employment seminars in Israel.

This fear has led to subtle but significant changes in behavior. One Jewish colleague confessed his apprehension about reading a Hebrew language newspaper on the metro; another warned against allowing one's children to wear a *Magen David* (Star of David) in public. These concerns might have been written off as isolated paranoia were it not for the corroborating testimony of other Jews—for example, the high school teachers whose stories are collected in a volume entitled *Les territoires perdus de la République* (2002). The teacher-witnesses and their Jewish students are routinely subjected to anti-Semitic threats and violence, without response from school or state authorities. The resulting routinization of anti-Semitism is the true "lost territory" of the once-grand French Republic, in which Jews have invested a great deal of faith from the time of the Revolution. After all,

David N. Myers is professor of Jewish history at UCLA. He is the author, most recently, of *Resisting History: Historicism and Its Discontents in German-Jewish Thought* (Princeton, 2003).



it was in the Revolution's aftermath that formal legal emancipation was granted to French Jews in 1790-91.

Those who have recently engaged in anti-Semitic threats and acts are often Muslim youth of North African origin whose sense of social deprivation and cultural displacement has found a convenient target in French Jews—especially those who live in close proximity to them in the gritty *banlieues*. And yet, the social resentment of the French Muslim underclass is only part of the story, a necessary but not sufficient condition for the deep malaise of French Jews. A diverse array of factors play into this malaise: the political and religious radicalization of Islam in Europe; the demographic disparity between—and hence political weight of—France's Muslims and Jews (six million vs. 650,000); the long-standing French fascination with the Orient; the increased salience of the Palestine question in French public life, and perhaps most significant, the hostility of the French political establishment toward Israel.

Here is where context makes all the difference in the world. In the United States, criticism of Israeli government policy does not readily bleed into anti-Semitism for at least two reasons: first, anti-Semitism is not deeply rooted in the soil of American culture; and second, support for Israel is a virtual *sine qua non* for political success in the United States, as figures like Paul Findley and Jim Moran found out the hard way. By contrast, anti-Semitism has a long, though jagged, history in France, perhaps no more clearly symbolized than by the Dreyfus Affair of 1894. In that infamous case, *raison d'état* inspired a false and furious condemnation of a Jewish army captain on charges of espionage, which in turn generated a sizeable ground swell of anti-Jewish expression at the popular and elite levels. Anti-Jewish sentiment hardly disappeared in twentieth-century France, as the murder of some 80,000 Jews under the Vichy regime tragically attests. In more recent times, the hostility of the French political establishment—joined by leading public intellectuals and media sources—toward Israel has tapped into the long-running current of French anti-Semitism.

Much of my own recent involvement in American Jewish communal affairs has been devoted to validating the right of

Jews or others to criticize Israeli government policy. Such a battle would make little sense in contemporary France. For among French intellectuals and academics, particularly of the Left (my own natural home), there seems to be a growing assumption that if one supports Israel—that is, the right of the state to exist, not Ariel Sharon—one somehow leaves the French body politic. Such is the case with a good number of my French Jewish colleagues, who have little trust in Ariel Sharon, and regard Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza as morally bankrupt and politically disastrous (in fact, many of them are veterans of 1968, and possess distinct, even fond, memories of their earlier days as Trotskyites). And yet, they are unabashed in their support of Israel's right to exist.

To be sure, Jewish communal organizations, here and in France, have done more than their share to advance the equation between support for Israel and support for Israeli government policy. This, after all, is the organizing principle of AIPAC (the American Israel Public Affairs Committee), one of the great success stories in the annals of American lobbying. And yet, it is possible in American political culture—in part through the work of groups like Americans for Peace Now and the New Israel Fund—to balance criticism of Sharon and support for Israel. This balancing act is both a reflection and cause of the high level of comfort experienced by Jews in American political life.

Neither the same comfort level nor confident support for Israel exists among Jews in France. The broader political culture—comprised of politicians, media, and intellectuals—not only equates support for Israel with support for Sharon's government; it evinces little understanding or compassion for the painful chapters of the Jewish past that led Jews to seek a homeland, for the interests of some five million Jews who have no other home than Israel, or for the complexities of Zionism itself. To evince such understanding today is to risk marginalization. And this is exactly how the Jewish intellectuals with whom I spoke felt. In fact, most related how they had been compelled to break off social relations with erstwhile ideological comrades because the latter failed to comprehend why Israel should exist at all.

The antagonism of French political culture toward Israel has not been constant, as Ian Buruma recently recalled in his important *New York Times Sunday Magazine* article, "How to Talk about Israel." On the contrary, France was a reliable friend, strategic ally, and leading arms supplier of Israel through the 1950s and early 1960s. However, the end of the Algerian conflict, followed by the arrival of Muslim immigrants from North Africa, prompted a gradual recalibration of France's Middle East interests, including its relationship with Israel. The symbolic climax of that policy shift came in 1967, when Charles de Gaulle issued his famous judgment in the wake of Israel's victory in the Six Day War. Intoxicated with their own power, the Jews had become "*un peuple d'élite, sûr de lui-même et dominateur*" (an elite people, sure of itself, and dominating). De Gaulle later qualified

this statement, with its debt to old anti-Semitic claims about the quest for Jewish power. But whether or not it was intended, he was laying the psychological and rhetorical ground for a form of penance for his fellow Frenchmen. It was only decades later that France slowly and awkwardly began to confront its ignominious Vichy past. This belated process, as the Barbie and Papon trials demonstrated, were deeply wrenching to the French collective psyche, and required a certain amount of emotional escape. De Gaulle's formula from 1967 provided an effective outlet: the Jews, once powerless and pitiable, the victims of Nazism and Vichy, were now the oppressors. This proposition, which wipes clean the historical and moral ledger against gentile Europe, may well be at work in criticism of Israel in France and elsewhere on the Continent today.

But while De Gaulle's statement from 1967 may serve as an *Urtext* for this rather unsettling mechanism of self-absolution, it also had a much more immediate and direct impact. It curiously reinforced the contours of the great French Republic. Those who did *not* fit into the Republic were the uppity Jews—proud, defiant, "sure of themselves." Those who *did* fit in were Jews who abjured power of their own, choosing to submit to a French polity that had bestowed citizenship upon their great-grandparents. A quaint vision, though not without its own deficits—especially if we recall the still-resonant words of Clermont-Tonnerre, the advocate of Jewish emancipation in the French National Assembly of 1789: "The Jews should be denied everything as a nation, but granted everything as individuals."

French Jews largely accepted the *quid pro quo*. As they increasingly distanced themselves from the beliefs and practices of their religious tradition, they willingly ceded large portions of their corporate identity. With gusto, they embraced the Republican ideal of *laïcité* (laicity) which eschews group difference in the name of a common French political culture and simultaneously frowns upon the entry of religion into the French public square. And they have remained steadfast in their faith until today. Even those French Jews who feel isolated from contemporary French political culture often express unreconstructed admiration for the ideal of *laïcité*.

II: Faith

How could this be? How could French Jews, embittered at the failure of the system to defend them, express such faith in this central tenet of the same system? In the first instance, the faith demonstrated by French Jews in the ideal of *laïcité* reflects a long-standing feature of Jewish history in the diaspora: the instinct to ally with state power. This instinct rested on the assumption, extending back to ancient times, that Jews required physical protection by the political sovereign in order to survive the complex triangulated relationships (Jews, sovereign, populace) in which they found themselves. In exchange, they would pledge total loyalty to

the ruler and provide beneficial economic services as well. This was an arrangement that brought much benefit and stability to Jewish communities in the Middle Ages. But the Jews were also a readily available and effective lightning rod for social resentment, liable to be expelled, or worse, if their utility lapsed. In this sense, their very dependability was linked with their expendability. Hannah Arendt called attention to the vulnerable features of this relationship—the “royal alliances” of the Jews—in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, noting that these features did not disappear with the end of a medieval corporatist system, but survived into the modern era of nation-states. To Arendt’s mind, the dependence cultivated by these alliances with state power had devastating consequences, conditioning Jews to a suicidal passivity whose danger was fully exposed during the Second World War.

Without accepting Arendt’s starkly deterministic view, we can learn much about the French Jewish predicament by recalling this alliance and the sense of dependence it inculcates. From the time of their emancipation—and as a direct result of it—French Jews have felt grateful for the state’s embrace. Concomitantly, they have been prepared to weaken their own communal bonds, to “divert ourselves entirely of that narrow spirit, of Corporation and Congregation, in all civil and political matters,” as one upstanding French Jewish leader declared in 1791. Of course, it is also true that a disproportionate number of Jews have been involved in progressive and revolutionary causes, in France and elsewhere. But the germane point is that modern Jews have frequently allied themselves with the political establishment, especially in liberal democratic regimes that speak in and act on the language of individual rights. True to form (and to their own history), Jews in France have clung to a vision of French politics that valorizes the state, and the individual’s link to it, above all.

And they have not gone unrewarded for their loyalty. Jews have integrated and intermarried into French society. They have achieved a fair measure of material comfort. And they have attained high status in many areas of French public life—education, culture, and even politics (two Jews, Léon Blum and Pierre Mendes-France, have served as Prime Minister). To be sure, this story of acculturation is unfinished. A large chapter is still unfolding—that dealing with the immigration of hundreds of thousands of Sephardic Jews from North Africa over the past half-century. In general, this group of Jews manifests a far more substantial degree of ritual traditionalism and ethnic pride than the more acculturated Ashkenazic population. At the same time, it is interesting to note, as sociologist Sylvie Strudel observed in *Votes juifs* (1996), that North African Jews in



the quasi-ghetto of Sarcelles outside of Paris were electoral supporters of President Jacques Chirac.

In fact, most Jews with whom I spoke felt a bond of allegiance with Chirac. This is curious, since he is widely perceived as far more pro-Palestinian than pro-Israeli—and at a time when they feel deeply threatened by anti-Israeli expression. And yet, Chirac is remembered and admired for his declaration in July 1995 that France failed in its responsibility during the Second World War by “deliver(ing) those she was to protect to their murderers.” Chirac’s sense of responsibility is not insincere. He seems to hold to a vision of an inclusive and tolerant French Republic in which Jews have an historic place. But in the tradition of de Gaulle, there is an unspoken proviso to this tolerant stance, which in fact extends back to the social contract forged in the wake of the French Revolution: Jews can and should belong to the Republic, but they should not be too “sure of themselves.” They should not exhibit overt signs of their ethnic or religious distinctiveness.

Here too, French Jews have often rallied around the flag of the grand Republic. One of the most well-known of contemporary French Jewish intellectuals, Alain Finkielkraut, explains his own sense of obligation to France: “The French version of democracy is the republic. It is not the Anglo-American model. It is necessary to defend this version because (the French) model of integration is superior, I believe, to the one that prevails in America and in England.”

An intriguing hint of this distinctiveness of French democracy came in an interview granted by former Prime Minister Laurent Fabius in May to *Le Monde*. In it, Fabius urges that France submit “neither to fundamentalism nor to communitarianism”—the twin evils threatening French society. It is not difficult to imagine why, in our current world, Fabius would inveigh against fundamentalism. But what was his beef with communitarianism? Here a bit of cultural translation is required. In the French context, communitarianism signifies more than the right of groups operating within a liberal order to preserve some measure of their groupness à la the Amish in

(continued on page 48)

Une juive sur la rue Mouffetard

Aimee Levitt

It's nine o'clock, dinnertime in Paris, and I'm walking down the rue Mouffetard thinking about my own dinner, thinking about the Roman ruins that are supposed to be somewhere on the rue Monge, thinking about the postcards I promised to write, thinking about the smell of the dead leaves in the garden of the Musée Rodin and the hats in Le Bon Marché, thinking about nothing very much at all. It's easy to think about nothing when you're walking through Paris and don't know French because there's no intelligible conversation to distract you. People's voices become just more white noise, blending in with the traffic, less obtrusive than dogs barking and church bells clanging. I saw Charlie Chaplin in *The Great Dictator* yesterday, and now I want to conduct myself among the French like a silent movie character, dramatic gestures, small dance moves to recover from tripping over curbs, a big, sheepish *pardon, je suis un américain stupide* smile whenever a stranger tries to talk to me and I don't understand what they're saying—that is, whenever a stranger talks to me.

The rue Mouffetard is full of students, which is not surprising since it is in the Latin Quarter. Three boys are walking on the sidewalk a little behind me. Did they make me nervous at the time, or do I just think so in retrospect? I'm walking on a narrow, cobblestoned street after dark. It's slightly sinister, possibly a scenario for a World War II spy movie. I see a map of the arrondissement posted up ahead. I go to look for the rue Monge, the boys follow me and then pass me, and then they turn and laugh—or did they laugh later?—and one of them shouts something at me, and I prepare my sheepish smile until he gives me the finger and disappears behind the sign, and I realize that the last word he said was "*Juive.*"

"Juive" is one of the few words I understand because two days ago, I left a café with my friend Angela, with whom I'm staying, and a man on the street yelled something at us, possibly a request for money, which we ignored, and then he yelled something else. Angela, whose French is far better than mine, said it sounded like he had called us "Jewish bitches." The word for a female Jew in French, she explained, is "juive." Ah, yes, like "juif," as on the yellow stars I saw on display in the Holocaust Museum in Washington and at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem. A few hours

Aimee Levitt is a writer living in Chicago. This is her first published piece.

later, I was walking alone by the Seine when another man shouted "juive" at me, too. Maybe he was North African. The French, Angela told me, blame the North Africans for the recent rise of anti-Semitism in France. *Real* French people aren't anti-Semitic. They've put up plaques, in French and in Hebrew, in the Marais, the old Jewish ghetto, now home to fabulous gay men, commemorating the Jews who had been "evacuated" during World War II. But that was all the fault of Vichy. The real French are very sorry.

I don't know if those boys are actually French, or just evil imposters who make the rest of France look bad. But the way they said "juive," a drawn-out sneer, a jeer really, "*juuuuuuuive*," and then the finger, and the laugh ... it seems almost too evil to be believable, the sort of textbook anti-Semitism our teachers always warned us about in Hebrew School, and which I later believed never really existed because it was far too overt, because after Hitler and George Wallace, you'd think people would be too *enlightened* to be overt about their anti-Semitism. Wouldn't they?

The first incident was ambiguous, the second one, too. Maybe Angela was hearing things and I was swayed by the power of suggestion. But this time was real. They definitely said "juive." They dragged it out, they said it loud, they gave me the finger. There was some effort that went into that "juive." Not much, but enough so I would know I was a juive and that a juive was not a good thing to be.

When I was younger, I secretly hoped for a moment like this. I was going to fight back, say something great, and then, if necessary, I would become a martyr. It was easy to make plans like this because the town I lived in was half-Jewish—it was the sort of town where they had to close down the schools on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur because otherwise the classrooms would be too empty—and the chances of anyone, least of all me, becoming a martyr to anti-Semitism were roughly the same as being swept away by a tsunami off of Lake Michigan. And now, about fifteen years too late, here is the moment where I have a chance to stand up against bigotry or at least get beaten up a little for a good cause, and instead I become small and quiet. I tuck my hands into my pockets, my chin into the collar of my coat, I stare at the rue Monge slanting its way across the bottom of the map, and I say nothing and let them get away.

I could blame the language barrier. I don't know how to say "Yeah I am, wanna make something of it?" in French.

Or “anti-Semitic asshole.” But a simple “oui” might have done something. It would have turned me into a fighting Jew, a Warsaw Ghetto Jew, not a passive, straight-ahead-to-the-cattle-car Jew. I want to find a fabric store that’s still open, get some yellow cloth, and cut out a star to pin to my coat. You want a juive? I’ll give you a juive. How about the sort of juive you handed over to the Nazis in 1943? Yeah, *that* juive. The one that makes you sorry enough to put up plaques all over the Marais and to dig an underground memorial behind Notre Dame.

But, oh, why bother? If they can yell “juive” at a stranger in the street, they won’t feel any shame in seeing a yellow star. Maybe they don’t even know what a yellow star means. And they obviously have means of identifying me, even if I don’t know what *they* are. I’m wearing a knee-length black coat over jeans and carrying a backpack, just like any other girl student in Paris. My gym shoes might have given me away as an American, but as a Jew? And three times in two days? And in the dark?

Suddenly I am reduced to one of those nasty nineteenth-century caricatures we saw in a slide show one long-ago day at Hebrew School. My nose starts to grow into a hook that turns downward six inches from my face. My backpack grows, too, into a peddler’s sack, full of all sorts of useless crap that I’ll charge good Christian people far too much for and which makes me hunch over, like *Australopithecus africanus*. My feet inside my nice, American gym shoes turn into hooves, and I begin to emanate a fetid, disgusting stench, like old chicken fat perhaps. And, for the *pièce de résistance*, the horns, coming out of each side of my head, glorious, brilliant horns of light made of bright blue neon because this is the twenty-first century after all. These are magnificent horns. They light up the entire rue Mouffetard. They say, “Boys, the juive is here, just ten feet ahead of you. Come and get her!” Oh, hell, throw in a yellow star, too, even if it will embarrass the remorseful plaque putter-uppers. Make sure it’s made of the same glow-in-the-dark stuff as the identifying badges the souvenir-sellers under the Eiffel Tower wear after dark so tourists will know where to buy keychains and little models to take to the folks back home. How else could you spot a juive in the dark? How else would you know what to look for? And why would someone who hates Jews enough to jeer at them randomly in the street go to all the trouble to learn?

“What does a Jew look like?” Angela asks me when I get home. What a Jew looks like... There is no other way to say it. A Jew looks like me: dark hair, dark eyes, pale skin, the sort of face that makes other Jews know me instantly,



even before they learn my last name. It’s not prejudice or political incorrectness. It’s a simple fact. There are Jews who really do look like Jews. I don’t mind being one of them. What’s wrong with looking like what you are?

Sometimes, though, I imagine an alternate Holocaust life for myself. I would either have to hide or die. I could never be able to pass as anything else. (But on previous trips to Paris, I’ve most often been mistaken for Italian, sometimes Spanish or Greek, once Dutch. No one ever said juive. No one even said Russian.) Which of my friends would hide me? Who could I trust? Or would I have fought in the Warsaw Ghetto, or at Sobibor, or with the French Resistance, or with the partisans in the Russian and Polish forests? That would have been more exciting than hiding in Anne Frank’s attic, romantic even. Of course I would survive. The only stories I knew, and therefore the only models I had for my Holocaust fantasies, were survivor stories.

When I was fifteen, I learned that some of my father’s family had been murdered in the Holocaust, the brothers and sisters of my great-grandparents who hadn’t left Latvia when the going was good.

This is how many of the Jews of Latvia died:

When the Nazi invasion in 1941 was imminent, the Latvians became convinced that they would somehow be given their independence from the Soviet Union if they saved the Nazis the trouble of killing all the Jews. Maybe the Nazis had offered them a deal. So they did the murdering themselves. Not that it did them much good because the Nazis got them, too, in the end.

Did the Jews consent to getting shot peacefully, or did the Latvians hunt them down, haul them out of cellars hard enough to dislocate their shoulders, chase them through the streets of the villages? In my nightmares, there was chasing. There were Jews running from their neighbors who brandished knives and hot poker and guns and who knows what else. There were dogs with sharp, snapping teeth,

THE NEW ANTI-SEMITISM

maybe horses who knew how to punch with their hooves and stampede small children to death. The villages would have been surrounded, all escape routes blocked. In my nightmares, I hid in an icebox, but they found me anyway. In the middle of the panic, there must have been some sort of plan. It would have been impossible for any Jew to survive. Which is why we have no stories.

When I think of these relatives, and also the relatives from another branch of the family in White Russia, I feel ashamed. There are so many things I would rather be feeling. I should be sad, maybe even angry. But instead I feel shame. Why didn't my relatives, my representatives in the Holocaust, fight back, or survive, or do anything I could have been proud of? Instead they were killed by their neighbors, herded off to

the camps, gassed immediately if they were lucky, put to work if they weren't. I used to think the workers would have been the lucky ones, but those were the survivors, not the ones who got worked or starved or frozen to death, or shot randomly during SS target practice, or who ran into the electric fence because they couldn't stand it anymore. My relatives were not survivors. And maybe I'm not, either, since I couldn't even fight back when someone yelled "juive" at me in the street, and then I walked the two miles home, afraid the Métro would make me even more conspicuous, because, for the first time I can remember, I was ashamed of my Jewishness, just as those boys had intended me to be. A simple "oui" was all I had to say. But I said nothing. So instead of hating them, I hated myself. □

FEAR AND FAITH IN THE FRENCH REPUBLIC (from page 45)

this United States. It connotes the intrusion of unseemly religious or ethnic particularism into the public sphere. Its most dastardly forms are the *signes ostentatoires*—the ostentatious signs of religion—that so violate the republican principle of *laïcité*. And the most ostentatious of these signs at present is the *voile*, the veil worn by Muslim girls and women.

As in the late 1980s, France is once again aflame with debate over the right of Muslim girls to wear the veil in public school classrooms. In 1989, France's highest court, the Conseil d'état, issued a somewhat murky ruling that the veil or related head-covering could be worn in school if a certain set of conditions were met (if it not be ostentatious, intimidating, proselytizing, disruptive, etc.) and at the discretion of local school officials. As Pierre Birnbaum has shown in *The Idea of France*, this convoluted ruling and the highly charged interpretations that followed yielded discontent on both sides of the divide for years to come. Not surprisingly, the debate has reached a feverish pitch again, now fueled by a combustible mix of locally generated xenophobia (whose standard-bearer is Jean-Marie Le Pen) and a home-grown Islamic revivalism. In recent months, the pages of *Le Monde* and other newspaper have been consumed by commentaries on the question. For example, Laurent Fabius weighed in with fierce opposition to the veil in the classroom—and, for that matter, other "ostentatious" religious signs like the Jewish *kippah* or the Christian cross. Anticipating precisely this logic, France's Chief Rabbi, Joseph Sitruk, expressed support for the right of Muslim girls to wear a veil and Jewish boys to wear a head-covering.

Interestingly, the cohort of French Jewish intellectuals and academics with whom I spoke all registered opposition to the veil in the classroom, even if it meant that the *kippah* would also be excluded. They argued that in France one had the option of choosing a private religious school in which such symbols could be freely displayed. Public schools, by contrast, were the bastions of the ideals of the State, and by extension, of the grand republican value of *laïcité*. Only by upholding these values could France—and

its unique form of democracy—survive. And only by upholding these values, one might add, could French Jews fulfill the old emancipatory bargain according to which they were permitted to enter French society.

III: Finale

So what is one to make of this juxtaposition of fear and faith in the French Republic? In the first instance, it is quite clear that my Jewish colleagues held to a vision of state and society sharply at odds with the traditions of cultural pluralism and multiculturalism that animate American democracy at its best and most diverse. The French democratic (i.e., republican) ideal requires a ceding of one's ethnic and religious particularism to the *volonté générale*. This is the price to be paid for holding together a coherent notion of French political, social, and cultural identity.

What makes this proposition so unsettling is that the same Jewish intellectuals who expressed unquestioned faith in it are now fearful that the French Republic might sell them down the river. At once grateful for their enfranchisement in France, they nonetheless feel afraid that anti-Israel sentiment—and conversely, their own support for Israel—might push them beyond the bounds of the French body politic. In this sense, the current Middle East crisis runs the risk of exposing their submerged particularism in ways that will prevent their continued "passing" into French society. There is, of course, nothing new in this predicament. It is part of the tension and vulnerability that always accompanied Jewish alliances with state power. And yet, in today's France there is a new potency and urgency to the age-old condition, as Jews find themselves caught between fear and faith in the Republic, uncertain of whether support for Israel revokes their membership in the French polity—indeed, unsure of themselves in a deeper collective sense, as de Gaulle might well have wanted. This is a most troubling development, one that Jews everywhere, including those of us inured to inflated claims of anti-Semitism in America, must pay heed to. □

Jewish Fear and the French Republic

Barry Lando



David Myers writes at length about the predicament of French Jews who support Israel but not Ariel Sharon. They fear that “the French Republic might sell them down the river” and feel that “their support for Israel might push them beyond the bounds of the French body politic.”

I understand those fears, but disagree with Myer’s explanation of their causes.

One fundamental source, he says, “is the hostility of the French political establishment to Israel.” It’s a sentiment not found in America, he continues, because, unlike France, “anti-Semitism is not deeply rooted in the soil of American culture.”

An astonishing view, but one expressed by many recent American commentators on France. True, Americans did not deliver 80,000 Jews to Nazi gas chambers. They did, however, slam doors shut to those attempting to flee the Holocaust. From the highest levels of the U.S. government on down, anti-Semitism was rampant in the United States during World War II. Indeed the Anti Defamation League (ADL) recently criticized Harry Truman posthumously for anti-Semitic remarks in his personal diary. And Richard Nixon’s anti-Semitic expletives were all over the Watergate tapes.

“Anti-Semitic” France has already had three Jewish Prime Ministers.

The latest survey (2002) by the ADL shows that about 30 percent of the French hold views which the ADL calls anti-Semitic. That statistic is roughly the same in the other major countries of Europe. In the United States, according to the ADL, the figure is less, but still very disquieting: 17 percent of all Americans are “unquestionably anti-Semitic.” That’s thirty-five million adults. It’s also an increase of 5 percent since 1998.

Another factor supposedly distinguishing the United States from France, according to Meyers, is that “support for Israel is a virtual *sine qua non* for political success in the

United States.” True but, particularly of late, the reason for that support is only partially because of sympathy for Israel. It is much more a product of the enormous political clout of the pro-Israel lobby.

French Jews have political influence far beyond their numbers but nothing to match the muscle of their American cousins. As a result, French politicians—as well as the media—can afford to be more balanced in their critique of Israeli policies.

Myers criticizes France’s “broad political culture” for neither understanding nor sympathizing with “the painful chapters of the Jewish past,” nor “the complexities of Zionism itself.” Firstly, the French regularly have their noses pushed into the disgrace of their Vichy past, unlike Americans who have never had to confront their own abandonment of the Jews in World War II.

Secondly, the justification of the Shoah may have worked in the past to excuse or at least explain Israel’s militant actions; but that’s before Sharon unleashed his tanks, helicopters, and missiles. Nowadays, in Europe at least, the time has passed when defenders of Israel can explain away the country’s increasingly bloody actions by wrapping the Jewish state in the Holocaust. The “complexities of Zionism” may make for an interesting historical dissertation, but Europeans now understand that if the Jews had extremely painful chapters in their history, so do the Palestinians—right now.

But wait, says Meyers, the French gain a certain grim satisfaction in depicting the Jews—once powerless and pitiful victims of Nazi and Vichy oppression—as brutal oppressors themselves. It “wipes clean the historical and moral ledger against gentile Europe.” And so it does, but whatever happened to Ockham’s Razor? Why are those who search for such abstruse explanations and criticize the “anti-Israeli” media in France unable to accept the clear cut motive for the growing condemnation of Israel and those who defend her? That is, the outrageously brutal and arrogant actions of Ariel Sharon, which can no longer be passed off as tit-for-tat retaliation for terrorist attacks.

Former French Prime Minister Michel Rocard wrote to

Barry Lando is a Canadian who has lived in France for the last thirty years. He was a long-time producer for Sixty Minutes and currently works as a freelance writer.

THE NEW ANTI-SEMITISM

Sharon in December 2001, accusing him of generating “anti Israeli feelings in the entire world.” “People like me,” he says, “who fought anti-Semitism from their youngest age are unable to stand against the torrent of anger and hate which you have unleashed.”

In fact, some of the most forthright criticism of Israel today in the French media comes from leading Israelis themselves—the kind of comments which would draw shrieks of “*judéophobie*” if they were uttered by French politicians or pundits.

But why should anger against Sharon be directed wholesale against the Jews of France or a Jewish-American woman strolling on the Rue Mouffetard? The credit for that belongs less to anti-Semitic propagandists than to those Jewish leaders and intellectuals in France who insist on identifying the entire Jewish community with Sharon’s brutal measures. David Meyers mentions the connection, but then drops the argument. In my mind, it’s key.

The prime Jewish organization in France is the Representative Council of Jewish Institutions in France (CRIF). Actually, the CRIF, whose leadership has veered to the right in the past couple of years, represents only a minority of French Jews—probably about one out of seven according to an estimate in *Le Monde* earlier this year—but, *faute de mieux*, it’s viewed by the media and politicians as spokesman for the entire community. Its leaders do nothing to correct that illusion.

Over the past two years—in official statements, government lobbying, and public rallies—the CRIF has been outspoken in its support of Sharon’s belligerent policies. It has also espoused the charge—breath-taking in itschutzpah—that criticism of Israeli actions is just another form of anti-Semitism. That same line is promoted by the Israeli government and Jewish leaders around the globe.

The upshot, as Israeli writer Uri Avneri points out, is that “Many good people, who feel no hatred at all towards the Jews, but who detest the persecution of the Palestinians, are now called anti-Semites. Thus the sting is taken out of this word, giving it something approaching respectability.”

Myers writes that because of the work of groups like Americans for Peace Now and the Tikkun Community, the U.S. public has a more nuanced view of the relationship of Jews to Israel: that Jews can support Israel but not Sharon. But that’s not the case in France. Indeed, the hundreds of thousands of Sephardic Jews who have immigrated here over the past half-century from Arab countries—many with family members also living in Israel—are much more vocal in their support of Sharon’s hard-line policies than the traditional Ashkenazic population.

Those few groups critical of Sharon, like Peace Now, are

small, underfunded, and much less visible than in the United States. Many other French Jews may disagree with Sharon’s tactics, or at least feel uncomfortable supporting them, but they keep their concerns in house. The only loyal course, as Jews in the Diaspora have been lectured for decades, is to back the government chosen by the people of Israel—no matter what its policies.

That’s how a lot of American Jews view their option. But in France there’s an additional driving force: fear. Many French Jews see themselves, once again, as a threatened

people, besieged: 650,000 Jews confronting an increasingly militant French Arab/Muslim population, ten times their size—a precarious situation, they note, not unlike that of tiny Israel.

This is true even though President Chirac’s Interior Minister, Nicholas Sarkozy, has taken a very tough line since last Spring on anti-Semitic attacks. The number of incidents have declined over the past few months; a fact that has been publicly acknowledged by the CRIF. Many American Jewish leaders, however,

continue their drumbeat against the French government.

According to a recent interview with *The Forward*, CRIF president Roger Cukierman intimated that some American Jewish groups might even be planning to establish their own lobbying operations in France to influence policy and finance candidates, though, as he points out, it is illegal under French law. “I don’t think they should,” he states. “Efforts by American Jews to influence French politics have a damaging effect, since many in France, as elsewhere in Europe, are already suspicious of an American Jewish lobby that they believe is influencing a deeply unpopular American foreign policy.”

But it’s not so much a physical fear that one encounters these days among French Jews but a fear of losing their privileged perch. Whatever happens in the Middle East, in France the Arab/Muslim community can only gain in power and influence. After all, it’s already 10 percent of the population, and—compared to the Jews—woefully under-represented in government, business, and the media. That’s all going to change, and quickly—which is what drives the fear among the French intellectuals that David Myers describes.

But that process didn’t have to be so threatening to French Jews.

Years ago, French Jews and Arabs often worked and lived side-by-side in the same neighborhoods; many of their leaders fought together against racism and anti-Semitism. Now, most such bridges are burned. The hatred and distrust only get worse.

What’s wreaking havoc is not French anti-Semitism but the policies of Ariel Sharon. □

*It's not so much a
physical fear that one
encounters these days
among French Jews
but a fear of losing
their privileged perch.*

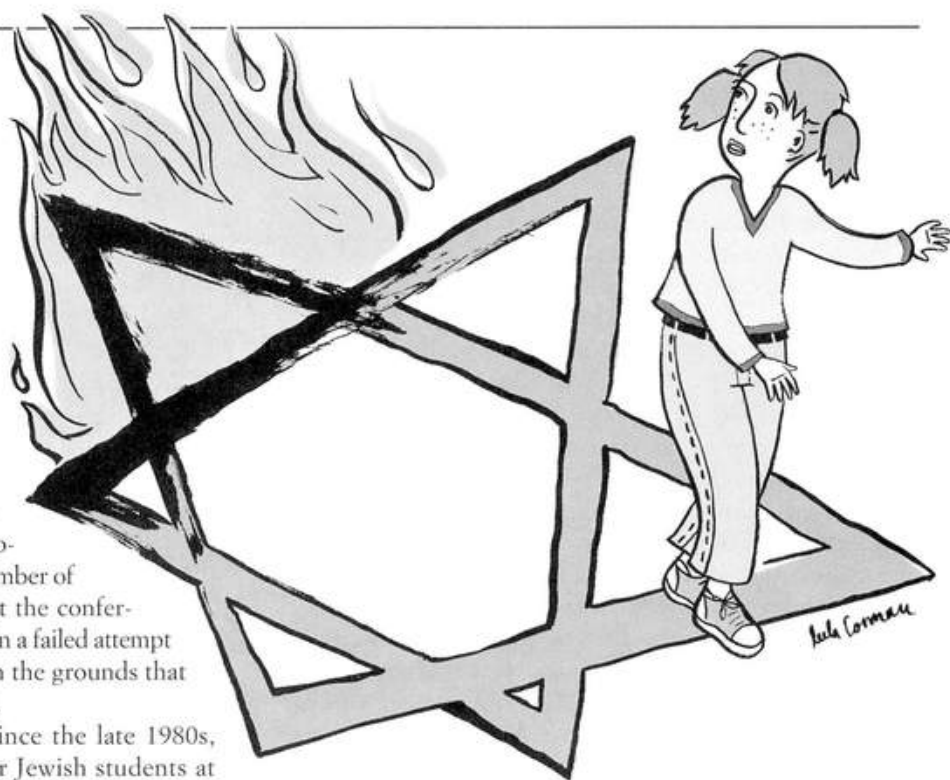
Zionism and Its Discontents

Gayle Kirshenbaum

Over the past year, a campus-based campaign for divestment from companies that do business with Israel has outraged Jewish students across the country; at MIT, Harvard, Columbia, Barnard, and the University of California campuses, more than 9,000 students, faculty, and alumni have signed anti-divestment petitions. When 400 students gathered last fall at the University of Michigan for a pro-divestment conference, a near equal number of Jewish students demonstrated against the conference, and two even sued the university in a failed attempt to ban certain conference speakers on the grounds that they would incite anti-Semitic violence.

Little, it appears, has changed since the late 1980s, when, as an editor of a magazine for Jewish students at Michigan, I was roundly condemned for running a debate on whether Israel should be compared to apartheid South Africa. At the time, today's students would have been seven and eight years old. Just beginning their formal Jewish education, most of them undoubtedly could have identified Israel as the Jewish State; many would have been familiar with the Israeli flag, a map of Israel, and some might have already donated their quarters to the cause. Their nascent understanding of Judaism would have been, as it was for me, nearly indistinguishable from Zionism. By second grade, they would have known, if nothing else, that being Jewish means supporting the Jewish State.

Traditional American Jewish education has left today's students in a particularly hazardous existential position. The divestment campaign, while not anti-Semitic, has put their Zionist-Jewish identities under siege. By definitively placing Israel in the same pariah-state camp as South Africa, the campaign is highlighting not just Israel's oppressive policies in the Occupied Territories, but their ideological rationale. Zionism itself is on the table, and Jewish students have reacted with a degree of fear and fury proportionate to the role Israel plays in their understand-



*Zionism itself is on the table,
and Jewish students have reacted
with a degree of fear and fury
proportionate to the role Israel
plays in their understanding of
themselves as Jews.*

ing of themselves as Jews. Many cannot comprehend a political critique of Zionism because they never learned to conceptualize it as a modern political movement distinct from Judaism. There is no communal memory of the Jewish world of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a world which, while maintaining a metaphoric longing for "Jerusalem" in its liturgy, fiercely debated the wisdom and moral prospects of a Jewish state. Many of the Jewish students defending Israel are not facing Palestine solidarity activists across a political fence; they're standing in a parallel universe, a realm where Israel transcends politics and Zionism is the only possible expression of Jewish peoplehood.

Gayle Kirshenbaum, a former editor at Ms. magazine, has been active in Arab-Jewish coalition projects and anti-racism education programs for Jewish communities in New York City.

• • •

Growing up in a small Michigan town in the late 1970s, I was a member of Young Judaea, the youth movement of the Zionist women's organization, Hadassah. From the ages of eight to eighteen, I was one of thousands of kids across the country schooled in Israel's political and military history. At summer camp, we spent nights creeping through the woods to simulate the trials of Jewish refugees from Nazi Europe smuggled into British-controlled Palestine. We discussed the merits of kibbutz-style socialism, lived in tents like Zionist pioneers, and debated the most effective means to create a more democratic, egalitarian Israel. Israel captured our imaginations in a way that our religious education never had. Liberal Zionism, we believed, offered us a vision of ethically informed nation-building and the opportunity to escape—if we moved to Israel—what we perceived as the materialism and spiritual emptiness of American Jewish life.

While we were more concerned with Israel's future than other Jewish teens, our view of the past was no different. We felt entitled to automatic citizenship in a country we had never seen, a homeland resurrected from our Biblical memory. We were taught little about the hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees who were denied the right to return to their actual homes after the war of 1948. We learned of the struggling Jewish settlements in the new state and their valiant collectivist efforts, but not of the hundreds of Palestinian villages erased from the map when Israel was created. Our utopianism developed within the confines of traditional Zionist thought. Some of us became quite uncompromising in our nationalism and ultimately turned on our sponsors, the women who funded our summer camps and came to watch us perform Israeli folk dances on visiting day. We rejected what we considered their bourgeois, fund-raising focused Zionism. We believed that, ideally, every Jew in the world would move to Israel.

Today, Young Judaea is going strong and many American Jewish groups are devoting increasing funds to ensuring a Zionist consciousness among young, assimilation-prone Jews. Hadassah has joined other major funders to launch a \$210 million program to bring eighteen to twenty-six-year-olds to Israel for ten days as a kind of Jewish identity shock treatment. Whereas I spent a year in Israel on a Young Judaea program, a quicker fix apparently has appeal: Four years into the program, more than 30,000 young adults from around the world have claimed, as the program puts it, their "birthright" to visit Israel. And in January, a coalition of prominent Jewish organizations launched the first ever "Israel Education Month," which featured curricula teaching Israel advocacy skills and promoting the message that Israel "is an essential

The displacement of European Jewry was an explanation but not a moral justification for the displacement of Palestinians.

component of being Jewish." Even the Reform movement (a.k.a. the Union of American Hebrew Congregations), American Jewry's liberal wing, has worked in lockstep with other groups to shore up Zionist sentiment; last year, a memo from UAHC's education department urged Reform educators and rabbis to inculcate in their confused students not only a love of Israel, but the graver understanding that "if we care only about ourselves and not about Israel, we do not properly serve the Jewish people."

Zionism, however, cannot continue to serve, without consequence, as the workhorse for uninspired American Jewish leaders and educators. Many continue to rely on pro-Israel programming and fund-raising to maintain a shallow sense of unity and purpose in a fragmented community ambivalent about religious faith. As a new parent, when I imagine the Jewish world my son will inherit, I see a community that will continue to wither, intellectually and spiritually, as a result of the ideological uniformity it has imposed on itself. As a Jew who no

longer identifies as a Zionist, I have been relegated to the political purgatory of invisibility; non-Zionism is a non-identity in most American Jewish communities, liberal or not. Far from our collective self-image as a questioning people, the American Jewish community continues to suppress the most fundamental questions about the moral viability of the Jewish State.

• • •

For many years, I maintained faith in what I believed was Zionism's original utopian promise. Like most liberal Jewish supporters of Israel, I believed that the creation of a "just, Jewish society," as we envisioned it in Young Judaea, would be made possible with the end of the Occupation and through a two-state solution. I participated in Jewish-Arab dialogue groups where the Jewish participants asserted, as a strategy for reconciliation, a model of mutuality: the notion that Palestinians and Israelis are equally aggrieved, equally responsible parties to the conflict. When the Arab participants rejected this model, the Jews would walk away from the group bereft of goodwill, convinced that our ostensible dialogue partners had rejected the higher value of our shared human experience. We recognized Palestinian suffering and wanted them to recognize ours, to understand, above all else, that the actions of Jews and Israel should always be read "in context," that Jews' historic persecution and Israel's militarism are to be recognized as an understandable, if undesirable, dialectic.

A wide-lens perspective on our respective histories is crucial, of course, to achieving true peace, but Jews cannot seek understanding as a form of absolution. Current liberal Jewish dialogue and organizing efforts on campuses and

elsewhere, such as the new Tikkun Campus Network, are rife with opportunity but poised to fail unless Jews can confront Israel's history with a willingness to see injustice unconditionally. "Dialogue" should cease to imply mutuality; effective anti-Occupation work must be rooted in an explicit recognition of the asymmetrical power relationship established between Israelis and Palestinians when Jewish towns were founded on the ruins of Palestinian villages.

While American Jews' persistent insecurity as a minority in a country that failed to rescue Jews during World War II, and the yearning of Jews everywhere for safe haven, is reasonable according to the emotional logic of a history of persecution, it is logic that Palestinians have never had any obligation to accept. It is we, now, who are obligated to take responsibility for our own fear and power. For people of conscience in the Jewish world, teachers, community leaders, and parents, this would mean developing a revolutionary vision for Jewish education—a vision that moves beyond a critique of the Occupation and allows students to form their own questions about Israel's "right to exist." We must begin to imagine an era when Jewish youth come to understand that the displacement of European Jewry during the war was part of the explanation, but not a moral justification, for the displacement of Palestinians from their homes.

Liberal Jewish education must also begin to recognize Palestinians' oppression on its own terms, not merely in terms of its impact on Israel's moral character. While many Jews have rightfully been compelled to work against the Occupation out of a sense that Jews' memory of suffering should inform a Jewish government in its exercise of power, the liberal critique is also tinged with both Jewish exceptionalism and contempt for Palestinians as the burdensome lower caste. Many of us were raised to believe that Israel was charged with a mission to serve as a "light unto the nations" and that the Occupation undermines that special, "chosen" role. Rather than hold Israel to account as a Jewish state betraying its destiny, we should hold Israel to the basic human rights standard it has set for itself as a self-described democratic state. Peace requires that Palestinians acquire their full humanity in the eyes of the next Jewish generation—that we release them from their forced role, as enemy or moral anvil, in our story.

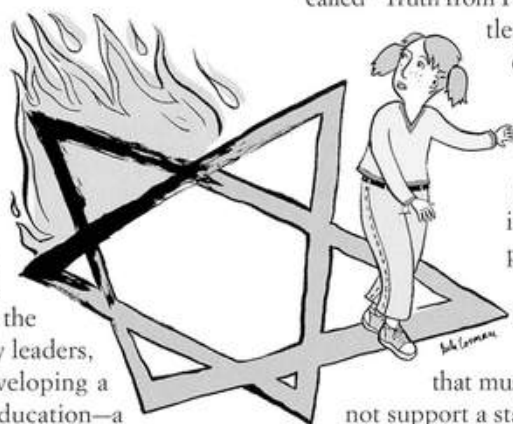
This would mean, at root, that Jewish students of all ages would have the opportunity to grapple with the dehumanizing capacity of all nationalist movements, including Zionism. While "Zionism equals racism" is as reductive as all political slogans, simplifying a complex political movement that was fueled by impulses beyond colonialism and has encompassed

visions other than Jewish political dominance, it speaks to what Zionism has wrought in the lives of Palestinians and the minds and hearts of Jews. Our institutional privilege in Israel proper has a direct ideological connection to Israel's apartheid-like military rule in the territories. Jews' views and treatment of Palestinians exist as part of a single continuum that crosses the Green Line, extends beyond Israel, and travels all the way back to the earliest days of Zionist settlement, when Zionist intellectual Ahad Ha'am, in an 1891 essay called "Truth from Palestine," wrote that the first Jewish settlers, "treat the Arabs with hostility and cruelty, trespass unjustly, beat them shamelessly for no sufficient reason, and even take pride in doing so."

While a two-state solution remains the most likely outcome to the conflict, it must not remain the only possible, or permissible, vision among peace-minded Jewish students, activists, and educators. I believe that Jews have a legitimate connection to historic Palestine that must be recognized and honored, but I do not support a state officially established, as Israel is, to serve the interests of a single people. Among non-Zionist Jews, there are many of us who envision a single, democratic, secular state that would guarantee the full equality of all its citizens as well as their religious and cultural rights.

I've landed in this radical corner of the American Jewish polity as the result of both a changed political vision and a changed emotional relationship with a country I've lived in and loved. When I first arrived at Ben-Gurion airport at the age of seventeen, I relished my newfound majority status and the palpable sense of the power it afforded me. I had never in my life seen a machine gun, and suddenly they were everywhere, carried by Jewish soldiers, and I looked at them both, the soldiers and the guns, with admiration. When I go to Israel now, I see the soldiers as the teenagers they are, many raised with the same insularity and suspicion of difference that characterized the small, majority Christian town where I grew up. My adult life in New York City, arguably the most racially, ethnically, and religiously diverse community in the world, has fundamentally altered my sense of home, belonging, and safety.

In a time of unprecedented suffering among Palestinians and Israelis, American Jews must be willing to look to the future with a full understanding of the past, and to know what their support for Israel, and Zionism, means. As hatred in the region deepens, Jewish educators must confront, finally, the implications of our nationalism. When the values of military security, homogeneity, and privilege are chosen, we must be clear with ourselves, and our children, about what is abandoned: belief in our shared human rights and the possibility of existential security within a universalist ethos. □



Barriers or Bridges?

On Borders, Fences, and Walls

David Newman

I am sitting in my office at home in the suburban community of Metar. Located in the south of Israel, north of Beer Sheva where I teach at the local university, the view from my room looks out over the semi-arid landscape of the Southern Hebron hills. Just two kilometers to the north is the southern section of the green line separating Israel from the West Bank. As night falls, I see the lights of numerous cars driving along a dirt track through the hills. These cars belong to Palestinian workers who are returning from temporary jobs inside Israel. Since it is now illegal for Palestinians (those few who are still allowed to enter Israel) to bring their cars into Israel, the majority simply leave them at the "border" checkpoint and are picked up by taxis sent by their employers. But there are always some who break the army rules and find a way in. In this southern part of the country, the border is still "soft,"—there are numerous points of entry and exit, and, as long as there are no major security incidents in this region, it will probably go on for some time. Until, that is, the government of Sharon and Netanyahu decides to extend the so-called security fence around the whole of the West Bank, creating a permanent physical barrier to what little movement still takes place.

There's the old saying that good fences make good neighbors. But one is always left wondering whether, had there been some good neighborliness in the first place, there would ever have been a need for fences. Fences and concrete walls may bring about "good" neighbors, but only because they prevent any contact with them. The neighbors are neither "good" nor "bad"; they simply become invisible. Waking up in the morning in the Israeli town of Kfar Saba, or the Palestinian town of Qalqilya just two kilometers away, and seeing a concrete wall outside the window where once there was the urban landscape of the "other" is, for many of us, even more threatening.

David Newman is professor of political geography at Ben Gurion University in Israel, and editor of the International Journal of Geopolitics.

Invisibility breeds ignorance, and ignorance breeds fear.

The debate about borders and their deeper significance has re-emerged in a profound way in Israel during the past year. The unilateral construction of the separation wall (which is actually both a fence and a wall and is known here as the "barrier") between Israel and the West Bank has been couched in terms of "security measures" and "political borders," but has raised basic questions concerning the nature of borders. Are they barriers or bridges? And how will the construction of this physical boundary affect relations between Israelis and Palestinians if and when—*inshallah*—we have some stability and mutual security on the ground?

This debate isn't occurring between the pro-peace and pro-occupation groups inside Israel, but amongst the pro-peace groups themselves. There are two factions: the ex-security, defense establishment groups, and the social scientists and anthropologists. The defense establishment groups view the world through the unimodal prism of physical security. They believe a peace agreement—which would necessarily include Palestinian statehood and Israeli withdrawal from the settlements—is a prerequisite for peace, but they also believe that an even bigger fence, and a higher wall, must be erected to ensure that Palestinians stay on their side of the border. They would allow for a limited number of controlled transit points with only the minimum necessary movement of people (mostly day laborers) and goods (mostly Israeli producers seeking entry for their surplus goods into a neo-colonial Palestinian marketplace). It is not reconciliation these groups seek, but "security," which comes in the form of prevention of "undesirables" from entering into Israeli space. On the other side of the debate are the soft social scientists and anthropologists who believe that borders should not be barriers, but must instead be points of contact, interaction, and cooperation. By their formulation, the border is a zone of transition, where joint activities take place and where the first steps towards cooperation and mutual understanding sow their first seeds. Borders should not be thought of only in terms of just concrete lines and barbed wire fences, but

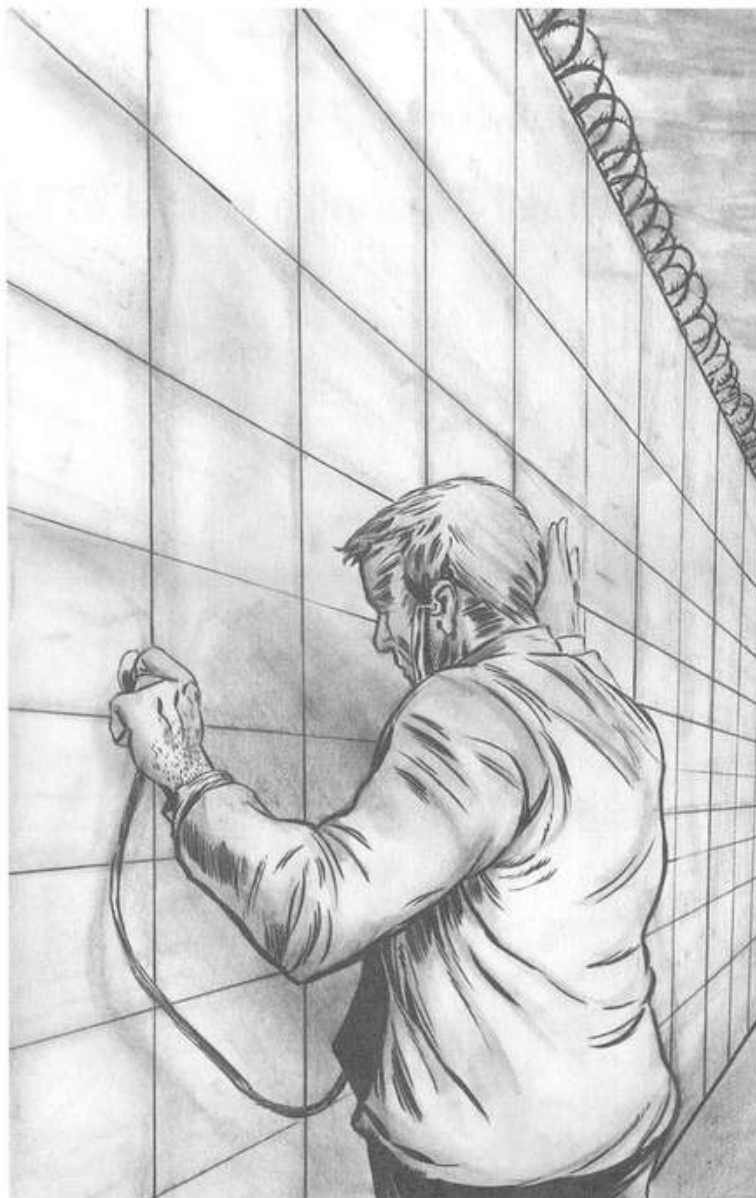
*There's the old saying
that good fences make
good neighbors ... but
these neighbors are
neither "good" nor "bad;"
they are simply invisible.*

should also be seen as places of interaction, as frontiers where previously separated people begin to communicate and tread gingerly over the line into the space of their neighbor—where they share mundane life experiences like shopping in the market, drinking coffee, eating falafel in the roadside café, and waiting for the bus at the same terminal.

Unfortunately, it has taken the establishment of a physical scar on the landscape (the environmental and ecological damage which has already resulted from the construction of this fence/wall is horrendous—but since it has been done in the name of the God of security, no one is able to oppose it, nor does it have to be authorized by the civilian planning committees) to wake people up to the fact that the borders in our minds and psyches have *already* existed for the past fifty years. They did not disappear when we proclaimed the so-called “erasure” of the Green Line in 1967. That we don’t live in the same villages, shop in the same stores, send our children to the same schools—these are a testament to the borders that have shaped our lives.

The few post-1967 prophets, such as Yeshayahu Leibowitz, knew what they were talking about when they told us that occupation was evil, that there was no such thing as a benign occupation, and that eventually we would pay the price for controlling another people. For the first twenty plus years of occupation, we lived without physical borders and it “worked”—meaning there was very little violence perpetrated against Israeli civilians. But the younger generation of educated, politically frustrated, and self-empowered Palestinian activists who emerged during that period were not willing to be controlled or occupied by another country, regardless of its military might. Out of this generation was born the first Intifada in 1987—after which a new geography of fear began to set in. That was when borders began to be erected—not in the form of fences and walls, but as roadblocks and checkpoints. We never really believed that one day there would be a real wall out there. And here we are at the turn of a new millennium, in the so called global era of the borderless world, and what are we doing? Constructing a ten-foot high concrete wall and a parallel layer of barbed wire, reminiscent of the worst types of borders that have ever been created in history.

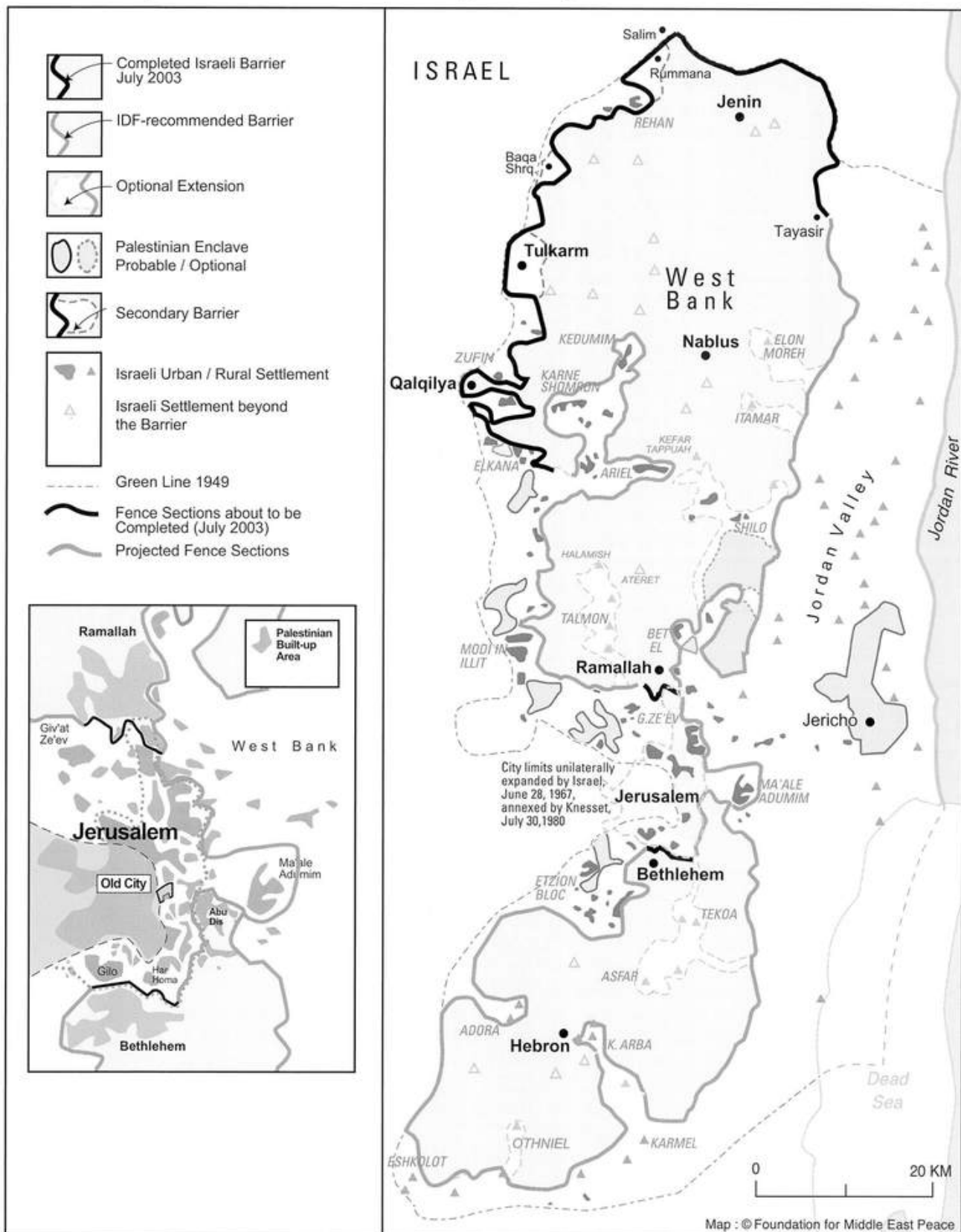
The wall, which has been constructed over the course of the past year, reflects fear, not a longing for peace and reconciliation. There is a widespread belief in Israeli society, which derives from the visceral, gut-level fear so many Israelis harbor, that a Berlin-type wall (albeit there are not, as yet, watch towers with armed guards waiting to fire on anyone attempting to cross the border) will enhance safety and security. It didn’t take long, of course, for this false assumption to be shattered. No wall, however high, or fence, however barbed, can ever hermetically seal a country from the threat of violence and terrorism if the underlying reasons and motivations for it are not removed. The fences and walls simply create new challenges for the peace



spoilers who, spurred on by fundamentalist ideology, will always find a way to wreak havoc and carnage on innocent Israeli civilians. Conversely, since the wall is unilaterally imposed and unilaterally managed by Israel, it does not deter the Israeli army tanks and airforce helicopters from wreaking havoc on innocent Palestinian civilians when retaliating against Hamas perpetrators.

In some parts, the separation fence runs along the course of the Green Line, which has separated Israel from the West Bank ever since 1948. We assume that this default line will, one day, be the eventual border of the new State of Palestine, not because it is a good or sensible line, but because it is the one political line that has existed throughout the past fifty years. It is the line that each and every one carries around with us in our minds, in our mental maps, when we envisage the shape of Israel and its boundaries. But the new fence deviates from this line in a number of places. In an attempt to keep as many of the illegal Israeli settlements inside Israel as possible, the separation fence has been pushed to the east, annexing land which does not belong to Israel under the assumption that this new line will

Israeli Separation Wall as of July 2003, West Bank



eventually become a de facto political boundary in a future peace agreement. This scenario is completely unacceptable to the Palestinians. But then who in Israel really cares what the Palestinians think? It's the same old story: first we create the facts on the ground and somehow expect that the whole world will fall into line with these new realities.

In addition, a new territorial zone has been created, a small strip of land running parallel to the Green Line, but on the Israeli side of the separation fence. Within this area there are a number of Palestinian villages that are not part of Israel (their residents do not have Israeli citizenship) and whose residents are now cut off physically from their brothers and sisters in the West Bank. They have become the new spatial hostages of the conflict—trapped between the old and the new borders of separation, citizens of nowhere, living in a territorial vacuum. What will be their fate if, indeed, the separation fence becomes a future political border? Will they become Israeli citizens against their will such as the residents of East Jerusalem? Will they be transferred back to the West Bank in exchange for the “painful transfer” of Israeli settlers from the West Bank back into Israel? Has anyone given this any thought? After all, these are only people trying to make a living—they are only of secondary importance to the God of security and the ethos of defense which determines most things of any significance in this country.

On the other side of the new line, many of the settlers now see themselves as hostages to the new fence reality as well. As many settlements as have been artificially included on the Israeli side of the fence have been excluded as well. These settlers are opposed to the construction of the fence because they are more vulnerable than in the past. Suicide bombers who cannot make it past the wall will now turn their attention to the settlements. And if, indeed, the fence becomes the basis for discussion as a permanent border under a future peace agreement (including territorial exchanges for the land which has been annexed), then the settlers cannot be left in any doubt—they will have to evacuate their homes and go back where they belong, inside Israel. Forget about contemporary notions of shared space, of Jewish citizens living under Palestinian sovereignty—the Palestinians don't want Israelis residing in their midst, while the settlers want Jewish sovereignty. Ten, twenty years down the road—who knows? But it will simply not work during the first stages of conflict resolution and implementation.

Despite the fact that this year's budget has been one of the most difficult and austere ever experienced in Israel's welfare state, there is plenty of money for the continued construction of the fence. Finance Minister Netanyahu has cut subsidies to

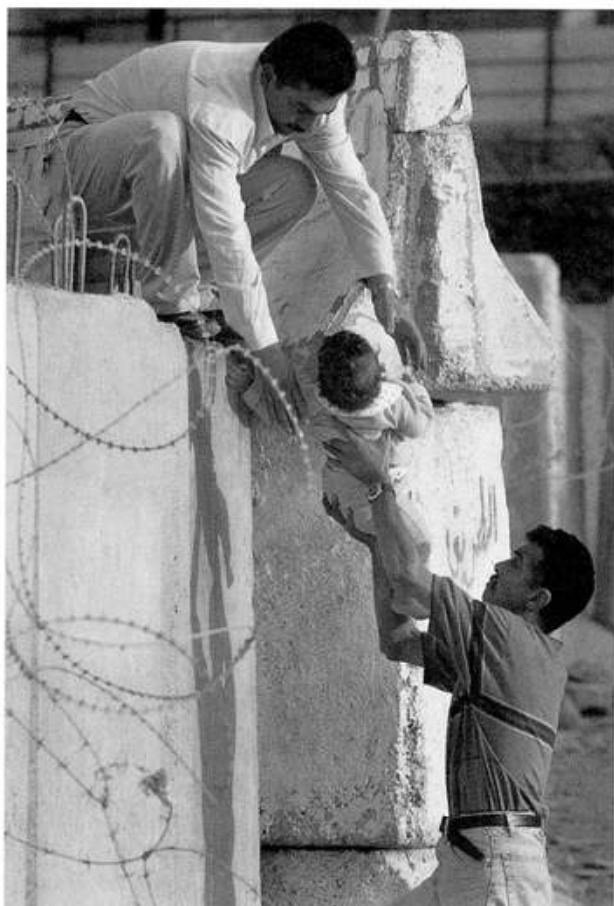


Palestinian boys gather to watch an Israeli army armored bulldozer work on the wall near the West Bank town of Qalqilya.

single parents and the unemployed, and the gap between rich and poor has reached new heights—second only in degree to the United States. There are no spare resources available except for the continued construction of the separation wall. For this purpose, the budget remains unlimited.

At one level of understanding, this fence does create the geographic contours of “independence” and “security.” But at another, deeper level, it is forcing us to contemplate the whole notion of borders, boundaries, and nations. Why, for example, do we need borders at all? If we want to share our space and live in a borderless region, then we should simply get rid of the wall as part of a peace agreement and let the grass roots interaction between Israelis and Palestinians—not just in the borderland but throughout Israel-Palestine—take its own spontaneous course. It would be great, of course, but we can't avoid the harsh realities of the current situation. We are killing each other. Fear, violence, and hatred run rampant on both sides of the divide. The wall is a mistaken endeavor, but we are not ready for a borderless world. States—especially those that have been involved in bitter conflicts and mutual violence—desire exclusivity. Our notions of borderless worlds and shared spaces are only as good as the mutual desires of the two peoples. It may work in Western Europe today, but Bosnia, Cyprus, and Israel-Palestine (to name but a few) haven't quite arrived there yet. Maybe one day we'll be ready for a single state in which neither of the two national groups feel threatened—physically or demographically—by the other. But we are a long way from that scenario.

The process will be slow and must start with a recognition of Palestinian independence and an end to the Occupation, a major decline in violence on both sides, followed by the gradual opening of the walls and the sharing of each others' experiences—past and present. If we make it that far during the next ten years, then perhaps we can talk about the complete



A Palestinian man passes his child to a friend over the concrete wall separating East Jerusalem from the West Bank town of Abu Dis.

opening of the border and the final removal of all remaining physical signs of the fences which we create. Hopefully then we will be able to think about new post-national political arrangements rooted not in past fears and the securitization discourse, but in mutual recognition and respect for our neighbor. Perhaps then we will be able to share the small piece of real estate which is Israel-Palestine without continually fearing that the "other" wants it all for himself.

But if this is to happen, then our borders must be as elastic as possible. They must, from the outset, be points of contact and transition. They have to be places where we can create new economic enterprises—factories and commercial centers—where both Israelis and Palestinians participate in their management. They have to be places where trans-boundary municipal and local government authorities deal with common problems, from the disposal of waste and garbage to the very pressing concerns of managing the environment and preventing further ecological destruction. They have to be places where Palestinians can freely enter Israel to find employment or to benefit from the beautiful Mediterranean coastline, and where Israelis can freely enter the Palestinian State to visit religious shrines and holy sites in Hebron and Nablus. They have to be places where the

formalities for crossing the boundary are kept to a minimum and where, over time, people simply forget that they are crossing a border at all.

It is in the realm of the mundane, the daily life practices of people living in and around the border, that cooperation is necessary. There needs to be joint management of the environment so that we can put an end to the continuing destruction of the fragile ecological balance in the area. There is no reason why the industrial and domestic effluents from the West Bank should flow untreated into Israel, destroying the quality of life for all. And why should separate Israeli and Palestinian municipalities, located a kilometer or two from each other, continue to have separate, inefficient, and costly systems of garbage disposal, road maintenance, and fire services? Public utilities could be organized much better on a trans-boundary level with the benefit that normal people on both sides—not politicians, diplomats, or "enemies"—meet each other and share the same concerns and habits of daily life. This process will take a lot of hard work by well-intentioned people. It will take mutual sharing of narratives and histories and the reinforcement of beliefs in the "other" as something inclusive, rather than exclusive. It will require a whole new generation of youngsters growing up in a non-threatening environment for the borders, both natural and imagined, to finally dissolve.

As I sit and reminisce from my Negev window, looking at the cars stealing across the dirt track from Israel into the southern part of the West Bank, I am reminded that this is the route that our common forefather, Abraham, took on his frequent journeys from Beer Sheva to Hebron. He, like so many of the neighboring communities in this region, was a Bedouin. He went where life's necessities took him, as did most Bedouin and tribal communities throughout Asia and Africa until the Europeans came along and superimposed their notions of territorial fixation and rigid nation state borders, preventing them from moving as freely as they did in the past. Abraham did not experience territorial borders, nor did he allow himself to be influenced by personal borders. According to Biblical texts, he was a man who reached out to the "other" across borders through acts of kindness and good deeds. He did not stop to ask whether the strangers at the entrance to his tent were members of his group or not. He got up to greet them and offered them food and shelter before checking whether they had the correct "entry permits" or "visas." He was the person who gave birth to both of the nations which are fighting for exclusive control over this scarce territorial resource.

If we are destined in the modern world and because of mutual fears to live with borders, then we must adopt Abraham's, and not Sharon's, model. Our borders must be elastic. They must be open rather than closed. They must be places of interaction and meeting, rather than fear and humiliation. Most of all, they must be the bridges to the future, rather than the barriers of the past. □

INTERVIEW

AN INTERVIEW WITH Eyad El-Sarraj

Julie Oxenberg and Dan Burnstein

Dr. Eyad El-Sarraj is a psychiatrist and serves as director of the Gaza Community Mental Health Program. He is the Secretary General of the Independent Palestinian Commission for Citizens' Rights and has also received international recognition and award for his service in the field of human rights.

JULIE OXENBERG: Can you describe the Gaza Community Mental Health Program and the work that you do there?

EYAD EL-SARRAJ: The Gaza Community Mental Health Program is comprised of 220 staff working at eight centers throughout Gaza Strip and four of them deal with victims of domestic violence. In these centers we try to educate women, to train them and find jobs for them so they can be independent.

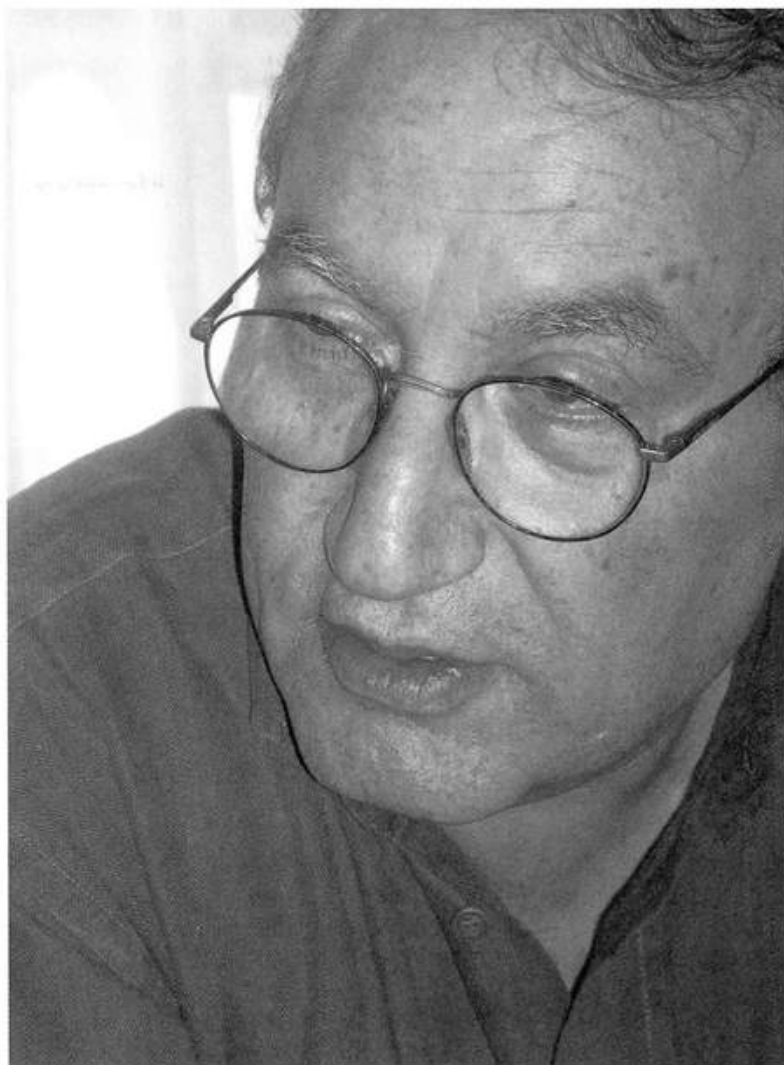
We have other projects in which we work with children and victims of torture and violence in general, plus we do work with the normal community of psychiatric patients. We have accumulated experience over the last fourteen years with children and adults who have been tortured. Victims of torture suffer from the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder and need rehabilitation. About 25 percent of adults in Gaza have been in jail at one time in their lives.

DAN BURNSTEIN: 25 percent of the population have been in jail?

EL-SARRAJ: Yes, 25 percent have been in jail at one time and 70 percent of those have been tortured. So you can imagine the impact of that on society.

We also produce our own video stories about the lives in Gaza. We have one called "Life Next to Death." It is about Palestinian families who live next door to Israeli settlements. It is dangerous. The situation fills people with hate because of the comparisons. These settlements are like the best beaches in Florida and next to them are the refugee

Julie Oxenberg, Ph.D. is a clinical psychologist and writer in Cambridge, Massachusetts. She also serves on the National Advisory Board of the Tikkun Community. Dan Burnstein is president of negotiatorpro.com and teaches negotiation and political science. Oxenberg and Burnstein are founding a think tank to explore the intersection of psychology, spirituality, and politics.



camps. Not only that, but if a settler decides he wants to go to Israel he has to cross Gaza, so all the roads will be blocked for him. And all 1,200,000 Palestinians have to wait until he passes. Sometimes it takes an hour. People wait in their car with their children, their wives. Palestinians have to go to their work, to the hospital, wherever. Nobody cares. The attitude is like: "So what? Let them wait."

There are people who say that we teach hate in our school curriculum. We don't need curriculum in schools to teach hatred. We're taught by the settlers and by the Israeli soldiers everyday. You don't need anybody to teach you.

OXENBERG: In previous writings you've discussed the impact of a "national identity of defeat and humiliation" that affects the Palestinian community. Can you describe this a little bit, and do you see any connection in that sense of identity to the Jewish sense of identity experienced as a result of the Holocaust?

EL-SARRAJ: In so many ways the Palestinians and the Israelis, and Jews in general, are alike. In many cases they are the mirror image of each other. Of course there are differences. But being the victim is an important fact. Because if I am the victim, that automatically means that you are the aggressor. And this is where Palestinians and Israelis are the same. The Palestinians see that *they* are the victims and they have very good reasons to believe this. And the Israelis

INTERVIEW

believe *they* are the victims and they have very good reasons behind them to believe this. Jewish victimization has occurred for centuries and now it is being intensified by paranoia, which is caused by Palestinian violence, and of course the violence only increases that paranoia and that fear.

Palestinians and Israelis are also alike in the sense that they are not nations. Jews are a religion, not a nation, I believe. And the Palestinians were never a nation. Palestinians were part of the Arab people. They were part of Greater Syria under the Ottomans. So both now want to have a national identity.

Both sides now want a national state. They want to show their identities to themselves. And that identity has to do with the question of past defeat. People cling to their identity so much because they want to prove to themselves that they are not defeated. Jews are now clinging to the "Jewishness" of Israel in order to prove they are not defeated by their history of oppression and humiliation, and Palestinians want a Palestinian state now in order to be defiant against their sense of defeat and humiliation.

OXENBERG: When I heard you last year spoke of the need for Israelis to "liberate themselves from their own pathology." Do you have any ideas of ways that mental health professionals or others can help each community to liberate themselves from this pathology?

EL-SARRAJ: Well this liberation is something that has to be so dramatic. Paranoia at the communal level cannot be resolved by people just talking to each other. You would need at least 10,000 psychiatrists and psychologists to make a difference. No, you need a dramatic action, like electroconvulsive therapy for a whole nation. That kind of drama was achieved by Anwar Sadat. The best way of reaching a paranoid is by self-exposure. I can tell you a story ...

One day I was going to my clinic in downtown Gaza. A long time ago I had a private practice. In the afternoon I used to go there. One day in the middle of downtown, on the main street in Gaza, there was a big crowd in the middle of the street. I could not keep driving so I parked my car and I walked the rest of the way. But I was so curious, there were so many people blocking the street, shouting and screaming. I moved through the people and it turned out they were circling around one man who had a sword and was doing this (gestures with sword). Everybody was frightened, but they wanted to reach him.

The man was frightened. He was defiant but so frightened. And he was one of my patients. I recognized him. And I sensed that they were going to kill him. Suddenly if he lost control, they were going to jump on him and he would be beaten to death. There is so much violence. So I reached out to him all the way, until I came face to face with

him. I called him by his first name and I said, "Ahmed!" And he said, "Dr. Eyad!" He came and jumped on me and threw down the sword. And then I walked out with him. I risked something. But he would not have talked to just anybody. I called him by his name and then I opened my arms like this (gestures wide). He still had the sword, right? He could have killed me.

This is what Sadat did for the Israelis. He exposed himself when he came to Jerusalem and he said: "No more war." And the Israelis loved it. They came out of their paranoia. They had been filled with paranoia, but they trusted him and Israel became his constituency. If he had run for office he would have been the president of Israel perhaps. He was so popular in Israel.

Then the Israeli people, coming out of their paranoid shell, forced Begin to make peace with Egypt—though when Sadat was coming in the plane they expected him to do something terrible, they feared something would explode, or he would kill somebody. Golda Meir was very suspicious. And others. But look what happened. The impact, for

instance, on Weizmann, who was the defense minister, was dramatic. Weizmann was a hawk, an extreme hawk—perhaps from personal experience because he lost his son in the war. And he came out from this experience a man of peace. We must have that drama.

We need a Palestinian who can win the confidence of the Israeli public. Unfortunately Arafat missed it. And of course the Zionist propaganda made it as if he is the only villain. I don't like him. I don't agree with anything he has done. But he is not the only villain. The real villains are Barak and Netanyahu and Peres. Peres is a coward, Barak wasted so much time, and Netanyahu is an extremist. These extremists play on the emotions.

Palestinians need an Israeli Sadat. Palestinians need somebody to come and tell them "Look, I will not destroy any more homes. I will not deny you your basic human rights. You have been through so much because of us. We are sorry. We are sorry because we didn't mean to hurt you. We only wanted to build a nation, a home for Jews. We are sorry, and we want to live with you in peace." This is what I call an Israeli Sadat. That would make the drama.

OXENBERG: You think it would help?

EL-SARRAJ: Absolutely. It would be so dramatic that people would change overnight, as they did after the Oslo agreement.

When the people were signing the Oslo Accords at the White House I was having a conference in Gaza called "Mental Health and Peace." Hanan Ashrawi opened the conference and asked me, "How did you know about this

*Palestinians and Israelis
are also alike in the sense
that they are not nations.
Jews are a religion, not a
nation, I believe. And
the Palestinians were
never a nation.*

date?" It was the 13th of September when they signed the peace treaty. We held the conference on that date. Approximately 700 people were involved.

And people were shouting in the streets. We went out to see. The crowds of Gaza were in the streets. Some of the children were hugging the Israeli soldiers, giving them olive branches and chocolate. It changed the people dramatically. The same people were throwing stones two hours before. Suddenly, they became peace loving.

We did a study on some of the children, before and after signing the peace treaty and the peace demonstrations. We found that participation in these peace demonstrations was dramatically affecting the psychology of the children. It helped them get over the impact of trauma—raising the Palestinian flag in a victorious way in these peace demonstrations, singing, and so on. It was very beautiful. So, instead of having 10,000 psychiatrists going from home to home with a plan to change 10 percent with guaranteed success ... [laughs] ... you need a drama. And the drama can come from one people, or one person who has the credibility. That was the chance of Yassir Arafat. He messed it up. That was the chance of Rabin. He was in the process. I believe that is why the extremists killed him. They felt the danger.

OXENBERG: They felt that he was really making a move?

EL-SARRAJ: They felt that he was going to sell out Israel. This is why they killed him. But I tell you this is one of the reasons why Arafat has survived, why no one has killed him.

OXENBERG: Do you think that is one of the reasons why he hasn't taken that step?

EL-SARRAJ: Yes. You risk your life. This is why Abu Mazen will not be killed. He will not take that step.

OXENBERG: Short of this dramatic action on a large scale, do you think there are smaller gestures that everyday people could be making to one another across communities?

EL-SARRAJ: Yes, of course. Let me explain ...

I've asked myself: "Are they evil by nature, these Jews? Or are they stupid, born mentally subnormal? Why are they doing this?" It's unbelievable. And I found after long, long thinking about it that they are not born evil. And they are not stupid. They are psycho-pathologically disturbed.

I say to different people, "This Occupation will have one day to end. It can't continue forever. You have two options. I tell you, Israelis, you can be humiliating, oppressive, and that we have endured. But in the end we have to live together." I believe that we have to live together. Everybody believes that. "So why don't you use this period of Occupation to make good relations and plant the seed of love and respect with the Palestinian people? You here are not the political decision makers, but at least you are the

representatives of your own people. Show us the good side of Israel. Show us the good side of being a Jew. So we can say, 'These people are nice people.'"

You know why Palestinians are struggling the way they're struggling right now? Because of insults.

OXENBERG: Insults?

EL-SARRAJ: Accumulated insults. The soldiers in the streets call out, and I saw this myself. "Where is your ID, monkey? Where is your ID?" And they ask him for his ID

and throw it on the floor and then say: "Go on, get it." They ask this of a very old man they don't know. And they ask so many people to tell them dirty jokes. *In the middle of Gaza.* And these are respected people. The tension is so high. I saw one day a man tearing his shirt saying, "Shoot me, I won't take it anymore! I'm not going to take my ID from the ground!" And so on.

OXENBERG: These stories sound so much like the stories from the Holocaust.

EL-SARRAJ: Yes. These Jews are not born evil. They are not born stupid. They are disturbed. They are psychologically disturbed. They are frightened. And they project their fears in such an aggressive way. What we have now is a process of trying to repress their guilt. They dehumanize the Palestinians. They try to humiliate them.

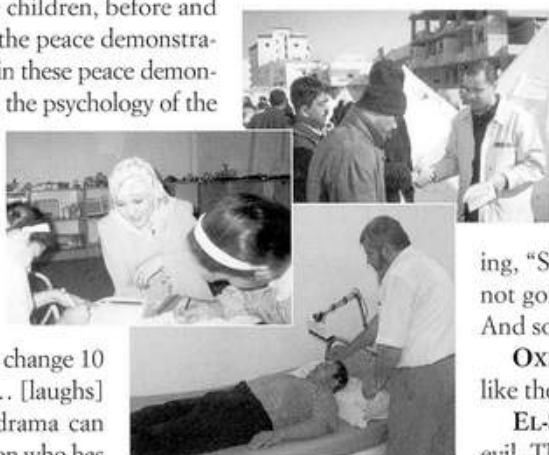
This is pathology. It is a pathology of trauma, paranoia, a repression of guilt, which has resulted in violence, aggression, and dehumanization of the other side, plus a narcissistic belief in the victimization of "Us." This is what the Israelis do to our people. It is what the Jews *risk Israel for*, because it is this pathology that makes it easy for extremists to control. Extremists manipulate this fear. They manipulate it so well. We know it from our side. The extremists need the people to feel a sense of victimization.

BURNSTEIN: How would you envision Israelis breaking free from this pathology?

EL-SARRAJ: How? The method you mean? As I was saying we need a dramatic impact on the Israeli side. We need something very deep. Either somebody exposing himself from outside to this paranoid community like Sadat did, and then the community will begin to come out of their paranoid shell, or you need something dramatic inside—an Israeli leader of vision and wisdom and courage to tell these people: "Look, this is the true story. This is the truth." The shock would be like an electric shock. But it would have an impact.

OXENBERG: So no longer playing to the fear?

EL-SARRAJ: Somebody of the caliber of Moshe Dayan. Somebody of the caliber of Weizmann. Somebody of the caliber of Ben Gurion. Whoever comes will have to say to the people: "This is the true story. And this is how we can



INTERVIEW

get out of it. We have to face it." The Germans who persecuted Jews, committed the Holocaust, all these horrible crimes, they could not go forward without going through a process of facing their guilt. Jews need to go through a similar process.

BURNSTEIN: Can we go to the big picture for a moment? What proportion of the Middle East conflict do you think is political—over land and water—vs. historical vs. religious vs. cultural?

EL-SARRAJ: Ah. Well I think that it is basically a political conflict in the sense that the Jews wanted to establish their identity in a state. In response the Palestinians had to begin resistance and now they want to establish their own state.

I believe that religion has been abused by both the Zionist movement and by the Islamist movement. We need to neutralize God. Religion is very important and it has been abused severely. *God has been abused.* If you believe in God as a Jew, and I believe in God as a Muslim, you have to believe that God has created all humanity. I am as chosen as any Jew. And the Jew is faithful to God as any Muslim, or as any Christian. This is very important. But what has happened is that Jews have created their own God, and Muslims have now created their own God, and Christians have their own God. And all these Gods are fighting.

Islam and Judaism were used by these movements because of their sense of defeat. But God cannot be defeated—God can only be a winner. That's how we all see God. That's how the Muslims see God. When you come to the side of God you may be killed, but you are still a winner.

BURNSTEIN: And the cultural element?

EL-SARRAJ: Well religion is part of the culture, but the culture of the Arabs.... Let me tell you a story about the culture ...

Arabs are affected so much by the tribal mentality. The tribal mentality is complex. A part of it is the honor of man, which can be defined according to protecting the status of the woman of Islam.

Then there is revenge. You have to show the enemy that you can take revenge. All these traditions came from the desert. Look at the Bedouins. If a Bedouin is attacked in his tent, and he does not respond it means that he is finished. Next time they will finish him. You have to take revenge.

Then there is hospitality. The Bedouin has to be hospitable because he can be lost in the desert and he will need someone to look after him. So he has to be hospitable to others. That's why we are so hospitable.

And also you have to make "*Sulha*."

OXENBERG: *Sulha*?

EL-SARRAJ: *Sulha* is making peace. If you kill me now,

my family will have to kill you, so we will go after your children and their children, until revenge is taken. And then, our family can rest in peace with honor. If they don't take that revenge, our family will be dishonored within the community. The only way in which we can stop this killing is if the guilty party, your family, you, come forward and say in front of all the other families in the community: "We are sorry for the mistake and the crime of our son by killing your son. We take full responsibility. And we apologize, and we express our wish to live with you in peace." This is literally

what they do, what they say. If my family is an honorable family they will have to accept this, otherwise they will be dishonorable.

You see, on the one hand you have to take revenge to regain the honor, *but if you are offered peace you have to accept it, once you have been offered an apology.* Otherwise you will be dishonorable. And what happens is that immediately afterward the relationship between the two families becomes stronger. They marry from each other's

families, and they become one tribe. And this is the history of tribalism. They make tribes from this tradition, making peace, and they become stronger together against others.

OXENBERG: So apology is very important to the process of making peace.

EL-SARRAJ: Yes.

OXENBERG: Do you believe that at this time the Palestinians would accept a two-state solution along the lines of what the Saudi plan offers, what TIKKUN is proposing, a real withdrawal from the Occupied Territories?

EL-SARRAJ: Yes. Absolutely. The majority will accept it immediately. *But that will have to come with an apology.* With an apology they can hear, so they can go through a period of grief. They need it. You see, peace is not just a treaty. Peace is a long-term relationship. It's like two people fighting, a couple fighting amongst themselves. And she wants to kill him because she thinks he wants to kill her. And now they have decided that because of their children they have to live together. Well, if they want to live together happily they have to go into therapy, and go through a process of reconciliation, they just cannot go on. So, making peace is a process. The beginning of the process is the signing of a treaty.

OXENBERG: Do you think that a shift in the psychology of each community is necessary before either will be able to sign a treaty?

EL-SARRAJ: Well, the signing of the treaty should be coupled. To allow for the signing you need a powerful and capable Israeli leader who can say: "This is right. This is what the people have to respond to." And you need an Arab leader saying: "We have gotten an apology. We have to live together with Jews in this land." The Jews still see it as: "Even if you

You see, peace is not just a treaty. Peace is a long-term relationship. It's like two people fighting, a couple fighting amongst themselves.

give the Palestinian state everything, they will still deny our existence, and our right to be Jews in this part of the world." So Jews need that acknowledgement.

The Holy Land. This is the Holy Land for everyone. No one has the monopoly of love on this land. Muslims, Jews, Christians, Hindus, whoever, can love it. Why not? And the Jews should have this acknowledgement.

BURNSTEIN: Do you think that the Jews need an apology for random suicide bombing?

EL-SARRAJ: Well, ahh. I think that we will end up examining every case of killing on both sides. I think that there are so many war crimes committed by the Israelis against the Palestinians, and against the Arab peoples. I know a story told by Ruhoma Marton (Israeli psychiatrist and founder of Physicians for Human Rights) ...

She said when she was nineteen she was an Israeli soldier stationed in the Sinai. In the middle of the night, a bunch of Egyptian soldiers would come. They were exhausted, thirsty, and hungry. They wanted food; they wanted water. And the Israeli officer would order killing them. She said: "And then I disbelieved all these messages about the purity of the Israeli Army."

We know so many people who were killed. And when the Israelis occupied Gaza in 1956, the Jews took people, young men, and put them against the wall, and shot them. It happened a few times in Hanoun and in Gaza. These are war crimes. Demolishing homes, destroying the rights of people, torture, you name it. After there is reconciliation there should be some kind of pardon.

BURNSTEIN: Pardon?

EL-SARRAJ: Pardon. Because everybody was part of the resistance, everybody was part of the Israeli army.

BURNSTEIN: What about the psychological impact of an apology going the other way, from Palestinians to Jews. The Jews have a certain amount of paranoia based on 2000 years of persecution. Do you think that an apology going the other way would have an impact?

EL-SARRAJ: No. I don't think so. I think that Jews, and Christians, need their right to have their identification with Israel, with that land. This is what has been denied to them by the Arab people. That's the most important thing. But in the process they were the original aggressors. It is they who need to apologize. It is not a mutual apology. They have to admit that in the process of trying to make Israel, they have killed so many Palestinians, they have uprooted so many of them from their own homes, and so on. They have to apologize for that. The Palestinians did only what is natural which was to resist.

BURNSTEIN: What do you think that American Jews and American Palestinians can do to promote the establishment of a just peace in the Middle East?

EL-SARRAJ: I think that the majority of Jews are intimidated by the minority—as the majority of Arabs are intimidated by the minority. Jews should make their voices heard against the extremists who control, in order to have an impact. What has happened is that Jews are left as bystanders. Some of them do not care, some of them do not know, and the majority are hiding. Who speaks? The extremists. And these extremists fit very well in that full picture. Bush, Sharon, Bin Laden, Yassir Arafat, Saddam Hussein. These are the people who are in control. And I

think that is the task of the Jews—to make their voices heard. Because Israel continues on a path of self-destruction, and we're all going to suffer, not just Israelis but everybody.

By the way, I like TIKKUN very much. I think it is one of the very important voices in the wilderness that needs to be heard.

OXENBERG: Along these lines, a writer for TIKKUN, Peter Gabel, in his article "Spiritualizing Foreign Policy" (July/August 2003) highlights the fun-

damental desire we as humans share for recognition of our inherent worthiness and sacredness. Underneath the symptomatic behavior of suicide bombing and Israeli military brutality, do you see evidence that Palestinians and Israelis long for recognition from each other of their inherent existence, worthiness, and sacredness as a people?

EL-SARRAJ: Absolutely. I think the majority of people do recognize each other and do recognize the need to live in peace and security and to work together. Only the minority on both sides are exploiting the sense of defeat, the war, the violence, religion, in order to control and to pursue their own fantasy of nationhood.

OXENBERG: Do you have ideas of ways to break through the power of that minority?

EL-SARRAJ: The silent majority should start to speak out. That's the way. And it is difficult because the power of the extremists is so intimidating. Jews who say something against Israel are said to be "self-hating Jews." Palestinians who say something against militant Islamists can be seen as traitors. This is the problem. They are so intimidating, these powers. So you need courageous people who can really keep saying it until a majority of people start to have an impact. Especially in a place like America and a place like Israel. These are democracies. Political leaders will have to listen to the majority.

OXENBERG: Gabel also talks about how fear and defensiveness between people reproduces itself in a process of "rotating paranoia," through which the inherent human longing for love, recognition, and peace gets repeatedly short-circuited by a paranoid fear of the other.

EL-SARRAJ: Yes.

I think that the majority of Jews are intimidated by the minority—as the majority of Arabs are intimidated by the minority.

INTERVIEW

OXENBERG: This fear then both produces and elicits defensive behavior, thereby “rotating” and reinforcing itself. You’ve talked about this process of paranoia and seen it manifest between Israelis and Palestinians. Have you seen times when this paranoiac process eased? If so, what allowed that to happen?

EL-SARRAJ: Dramatic processes like, on the communal level when the peace process was signed I saw the dramatic easing of paranoia. When Sadat came I saw the dramatic easing of paranoia. On the individual level you have Palestinians and Israelis who live in these mutually paranoid communities. *But when they meet they love each other.* I know so many Israelis. They are my friends. And I know so many Jews who are my friends, like any Muslim, any Arab, any Christian. Even sometimes better. So on the individual level we have no problem. It is on the communal and national level we have a problem.

OXENBERG: Do you think that if individuals responded to the destructive acts from members of each other’s community differently that this could make a difference?

EL-SARRAJ: Absolutely. The cycle of revenge is perpetuated by the extremists, and by the emotions, right? If one of the sides, say the Palestinian side, starts nonviolent resistance, the Israelis will begin to feel confident in themselves. They will begin to come out of their shell of paranoia and start to look at Palestinians in a different light, and start to stretch out their hand. It would be different. If the Israelis stopped the killing, stopped taking revenge for every suicide bombing, then the Palestinians will have to think of the Israelis differently.

In the period between 1992–2000 in Gaza there were very few cases of suicide bombing and they were to a large extent controlled. When Hamas committed a bombing in 1996, the whole Palestinian community was so much against it. “What are you doing this for? We want to build a relationship now with them. We want to continue the peace process.” Everybody was against it.

OXENBERG: So did that reaction from the community halt or slow down any wave of suicide bombings that might otherwise have occurred?

EL-SARRAJ: Yes. Of course, not totally, and I think this is one of the serious mistakes of Yassir Arafat that he did not collect all the arms from Gaza and the West Bank and burn them all with the Israeli IDs that we were given. Two things we have to give up: Israeli IDs and guns.

OXENBERG: What about the issue of nonviolent resistance? Might the Palestinians be more effective if they initiated a fully organized nonviolent resistance movement against the Occupation that reached out internationally?

EL-SARRAJ: I think that it is the best form of resistance that people can use. That humanity can use. And you cannot make enemies with this strategy. You see, with every bullet you can kill an Israeli, but you lose ten others because they hate you. With nonviolence you don’t have enemies,

you only have winners. You win the hearts of the Israelis, of Jews, of everybody in the world. They respect you because of your higher moral ground. Even if you are killed by the aggressor this movement should carry on. This is the best form of the resistance.

Second, on the human side, I believe no one has the right to kill anyone, for any reason. From the religious point of view, no one has the right to use violence against another. No one. Thirdly, violence is politically counterproductive for the Palestinians. I know. With our children we have used violence in the last 30–40 years. Look at the results. Now I say: “Ok, you did not achieve liberation. Why don’t you try nonviolent resistance for one year? Maybe it will work? And nobody is killed. And we don’t need to die. We want to win.”

OXENBERG: Do you think the community might adopt that strategy?

EL-SARRAJ: No ... [laughs] ... Unfortunately, it will take years because this is a tribal culture. A culture of revenge.

BURNSTEIN: On both sides.

EL-SARRAJ: Yeah, of course. Both are tribal.

BURNSTEIN: What do you think the appeal of fundamentalism on both sides is?

EL-SARRAJ: It is the intimidating force of God. God is on my side not on yours. That is very powerful. There is a sense of defeat and the need to feel that if I want victory, and God is victory and God cannot be defeated, then I am not defeated. It is the last resort. Nationalism can be defeated. But God cannot be defeated.

OXENBERG: Do you feel that suicide bombing comes from this motivation as well?

EL-SARRAJ: Yes. Suicide bombing is done by people who have decided that this life is no longer worth living. I think that basically it is an act against defeat. But they have to make their justification. And their justification is that “We are not defeated. We have glorified death by conquering death. We believe that when you die, you begin life.”

OXENBERG: Michael Lerner, in his book *Healing Israel/Palestine*, identifies numerous moments during the Oslo process when a real change in the psychology and spirit of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict could have occurred and didn’t. One such moment happened after Rabin was assassinated. Lerner suggests that Peres then could have capitalized on Israeli outrage and grief and taken this opportunity to make a far-reaching push for peace, including an effort to change the fundamental attitude toward the Palestinians in Israeli society. Instead, pandering to the right, Peres stressed the need for Jewish unity and then authorized the assassination of a well-known Hamas leader (“the engineer”), which predictably led to retaliatory attacks against Israeli civilians.

EL-SARRAJ: Oh that’s Peres, yes. Weak, weak leader.

OXENBERG: At that moment, when retaliatory strikes occurred against Israeli civilians, Lerner says Arafat could have clamped down hard on Hamas.

EL-SARRAJ: No, no, he didn't.

OXENBERG: But he could have, and then rejected the whole strategy of violent protest, like you've been saying—highlighting its counterproductive impact and immorality—and advocated for an organized Palestinian strategy of nonviolent protest against the continued Occupation. He didn't. After a wave of suicide attacks Peres lost his bid for re-election and Netanyahu took office.

How do you understand such choices by leaders on both sides at these critical junctures?

EL-SARRAJ: Well these are not leaders of the magnitude we need. I mean the Arab-Israeli conflict is such a big conflict you need big leaders. *What we are given are dwarfs, not giants. We need giants.* Like Nelson Mandela. Like Anwar Sadat. Like Rabin. But we are left with dwarfs. And this is a tragedy. Peres has a Peres Institute for Peace, doesn't he? He was one of the major factors to destroy peace, because of his weakness. When you are weak you cannot make decisions. You respond by tribal revenge. This is not a leader, this is a layman. Any layman can be in his position and bomb the Palestinians. Any layman who was in the position of Arafat can implement the revolving door policy and play games.

These are not leaders. You need leaders who can make decisions and stand with their decisions. Barak with a big baby face has a baby mentality. Netanyahu, an extremist. These are not leaders at all. Peres is to blame because he was part of the peace coalition, he was one of Rabin's associates, he was part of the Oslo process, and it was he who managed to betray it. It was very sad. He went against this engineer, then he killed so many people in Qana, in the refugee camp.

OXENBERG: Qana?

EL-SARRAJ: Yes, in Lebanon. Shortly after he took office. He wanted to be a strong man so he went into Qana and killed people. What happened? He alienated the Arab voters in Israel. The majority of them did not even go to vote. "The hell with him," they said. And Netanyahu? The Palestinians said: "This is a man of peace? Suddenly killing people in the middle of Gaza?" Because of the pathology he does not see it, the Israeli military does not see it, they should look at history. Every time you kill anyone you bring two more. The resistance will never finish. You kill the engineer, they'll have ten engineers. You kill one fighter, his own family will come after you. It's so stupid. Not stupid—pathologically disturbed.

OXENBERG: Two final quick questions. Do you have any thoughts about the Road Map?

EL-SARRAJ: Well, I think the whole world is full of cynicism about this really. So I can't add anything to that. But I want to add some hope. That yeah, OK we don't trust Bush, a fundamentalist that is preaching democracy, we don't trust Sharon, an extreme war-monger, his history shows us. We don't trust Arafat, we don't trust Abu Mazen. Right?

We trust ourselves. I believe that if the majority of people everywhere, Jews and Palestinians, Arabs and Muslims can make their voices heard, these people that we do not trust will have to act to win our support. They have to make public statements urging the Road Map and the reforms of the Palestinians. The Israelis should do the same, and the American Jews should do the same. So we can force these people who we do not trust, equally, to do something.

But, at the end of the day, the political reality of the axis of evil—the American administration, the Israeli military Occupation, and

the Arab dictatorships—will prevail until the voice of the people is heard, and that will take some time.

OXENBERG: Is there anything other than what you have said so far that you think the TIKKUN Community specifically can do to help in this process?

EL-SARRAJ: TIKKUN has been doing a lot to raise the voices of wise progressive Jews. I have read so many of the articles whenever I can get a hold of them either on the Internet or in paper when I can get them here. I believe that the Tikkun Community represents the majority who have been silenced by the minority. And I hope that TIKKUN will continue to be a good representative of Jews and Americans I can identify with, as equal human beings.

OXENBERG: Anything else you want to add?

EL-SARRAJ: You know one thing that American Jews can do to make a difference? Come to Gaza. Let the people in Gaza meet you, and see that you care, that you are working for justice, that you are decent human beings. American Jews should come here. You will be welcomed.

BURNSTEIN: And American Christians?

EL-SARRAJ: More important for Jews to come. We have to make peace with Jews. When you meet someone personally, and see their humanity, it makes a difference. Tell your friends in TIKKUN and elsewhere, "Come to Gaza." Thank you. □



Gaza Community Mental Health center.

Palestine and Israel

Unkind History, Uncertain Future

Ziad Asali

For a conflict that has been described as intractable, insoluble and “centuries old,” the most dramatic feature about the Palestine-Israel conflict is the near unanimous agreement about the contours of its final resolution.

The majority of the Palestinians, Israelis, Arabs, Jews, Americans, Europeans, and people all over the world as well as global institutions and bodies are in support of an outline that goes as follows:

1. A two-state solution, Palestine alongside Israel, with borders established on international legality defined by UN Resolution 242, with minor mutually agreed-upon adjustments.

2. A shared, open Jerusalem with the Arab part serving as a capital for Palestine and the Jewish part serving as the capital of Israel.

3. The end of occupation and settlements.

4. A fair and equitable solution to the refugee problem, based on international legality, with resettlements, compensation, and redress of moral and psychological grievances.

5. An end of conflict and a complete cessation of violence between Israel and all Arab States, including Palestine, with open borders and normalized relations for all.

6. A Marshall Plan to rebuild Palestine and provide an underpinning for a lasting peace.

The Alternatives

The alternatives to this solution—one secular state, a bi-national state, continued occupation and apartheid, or mass transfer of millions of Palestinians—are not worthy of serious discussion at this point in our history, although they are bandied about. Jews did not struggle to be free of gentile domination and to have a state of their own only to end up giving it up to live in a secular state. A bi-national state requires a minimum of cooperation and coordination between equal partners, an option that we do not have at this point in time. Transferring millions of people is a political and physical fantasy that cannot be realized. There is no possible reason to expect that the Palestinian people will give up their national project for independence. They will

never accept living under apartheid nor settle for a rump, truncated, or dependent state. All these options are but varying recipes for continued strife.

If the question is when do we achieve the solution rather than what kind of a solution are we to expect, it is supremely frustrating to witness the unending murders, injuries, demolitions, and the sheer destruction and fear that people on both sides must endure before sanity prevails and peace is restored. It is hard to imagine in these days of turmoil, but it is indeed possible, that both people can live, build, enjoy, and contribute to humankind.

Palestinian parents should not live in fear that their children will be killed by an Israeli soldier or a missile while walking to school just as Israeli parents should not live in fear that their children will be blown up by a suicide bomber on the bus that takes them to school.

Why then do we have such a congruity of spoken objectives and paucity of implementation? Why is the will of dedicated extremist minorities in each society able to frustrate the will of the majorities and exercise its veto power with spectacular acts of violence against innocent civilians on both sides? Why are so many hundreds of millions across the globe concerning themselves so seriously with a conflict that is thousands of miles away on a small piece of land?

A Brief History

Before we explore these questions, it is important first to ground ourselves in the historical context of the current conflict. I present here the briefest possible synopsis of its history: Jewish people, persecuted in Europe and denied elementary justice came to the conclusion that they had to band together and establish a Jewish state free from gentile oppression. They started to immigrate to Palestine around the end of the nineteenth century, secured a legal foundation for their homeland from the British in 1917, and from the United Nations in 1947. Israel was established on 78 percent of the land of Palestine in 1948 and hundreds of thousands of Palestinians left and became refugees. In 1967 the rest of Palestine, known as the West Bank and Gaza, was captured by Israel in the Six-Day War and has remained under occupation ever since. Around three and a half million Palestinians live under occupation as we speak, making it the longest lasting occupation of modern

Dr. Ziad Asali is president of the American Task Force on Palestine. www.american taskforce.org.

times—and the quest of the Palestinians for their freedom from this occupation and for establishing their own state is at the core of this conflict.

The problem with history is that it has been around for too long. It has provided arguments, based in fact, fiction, or perceived wisdom, for each party to the conflict and even to those who seem to have no axe to grind.

The Two Narratives

There are two basic irreconcilable narratives that draw sustenance from history: In the most simplistic terms, the Jewish Zionist narrative, driven by memory of the Holocaust, claims the Holy Land as the Promised Land which is the patrimony of the Jews ordained by God and no one else has the right to it. Expansion, settlement building, expropriation of Palestinian lands, and appropriation of their water resources are natural consequences of this ideology. Security considerations evoked to demolish homes, transfer people, or punish cities and towns with curfews, closures, impoverishment and humiliation find a receptive audience in subscribers to this narrative. Extremists in the settler movement and fanatics in political or military circles want to hold on to the dream of Eretz Israel free of Palestinians. They think they can militarily defeat the Palestinians and extinguish the idea of Palestine in Arab minds. They have no patience for those who voice concerns and raise issues of Palestinian national rights, demographics, or basic human rights.

The Palestinian narrative, again in its crudest and most elementary form, is a tale of dispossession by an alien, more powerful force with a bogus religious claim to the land. It is a tale of suffering from continued land-grabbing, dispossession, disinheritance, and displacement coupled with powerlessness and the virtual absence of an organized and effective military. It is oblivious to the suffering of the Jews in Europe and to the Holocaust and innocent of any knowledge of pogroms or ghettos. All it feels is its own victimization and illegal usurpation of what it once had. A sense of justice violated and dignity insulted infuses and sustains its psychology of resistance. This mix has led to, and will continue to feed, a violent and bizarre phenomenon that has defined the Palestinians like no other people: the phenomenon of suicide bombing and political murder of civilians. Extremists, be they secular or religious, have refused to accept the Israel of 1948 or 1967, and hope to liberate the land from Zionism. They view the two-state solution as a

compromise of the weak and have used all means to frustrate a political compromise.

Fear and Loathing

These two narratives have come to blows, and have bred political establishments in both societies, whether religious or secular, that contribute to a sense of monopoly on victimization. Steeped in fear, anger, and frustration, a significant minority of each population has little room for acknowledging, let alone feeling, the pain of the other. Even more starkly, one can say that each segment views the suffering of the other as just revenge and deserved punishment. Compromise sounds to such people like appeasement and weakness if not outright treason. With every act of murderous violence inflicted on civilians, people in each society become increasingly receptive to the racist, fascist arguments, sometimes openly stated but more often felt and implied, that “they are not human; they understand nothing but force and violence; we should never show them any mercy because they will think it is a sign of weakness; a face for an eye; and time is on our side.”

On the other hand, there is a growing sense of battle fatigue—devastated lives and economies, a sense of fear and despair of a better future for the children. The Palestinians fear that they may never have a state, and some Israelis fear that the future of Israel itself is in doubt. There is genuine concern on both sides for the corrupting and decaying influence of the conflict on both societies.

If history has taught us anything, it has taught us this: Left to their own devices, the Palestinians and Israelis will simply not be able to resolve this conflict. The gross imbalance of power between the parties, the erosion of the political clout



of the peace camp on both sides, the depth of hostility that breeds a phenomenon like suicide bombing, and the hardening of Israeli attitudes manifested by tolerance of missiles directed at urban centers, are but a few factors that support such a conclusion. Were it a viable option, the rest of the world, as well as some American administrations including this one, might wish to take a Rhett Butler approach—to walk away and frankly not give a damn. All serious people, however, realize that this not possible.

The Story of Our Times

The Palestine-Israel conflict is the central story of our times; it encapsulates in a tiny patch of land, with a small number of people, the sum total of large human conflicts throughout history. An incendiary mix of religions, cultures, civilizations, races, and ethnic groups has provided the historical setting for the clashes of modern times: liberation versus oppression; freedom versus occupation; self-determination versus colonialism; fanaticism versus secularism; traditionalism versus modernism; capitalism versus a mix of defunct socialism or feudalism; justice versus power; chaos versus complexity; corruption versus idealism; the third world versus the white man and his proxy; and F16s versus suicide bombers. Indeed, there are many more elements of drama within and among these societies that do not allow this conflict to be neatly contained and confined to the combatants.

But of all the political and social ills that afflict the Arab and Muslim people, the Palestine story has captured their imagination and touched their core feelings of violation and powerlessness. This is the stuff that breeds terror. A metaphysical, absolutist, cold cadre of operatives seeking self-annihilation is roaming the land. A self-replicating enemy that is driven by issues put to deadly use. An enemy that you can defeat not by annihilation, but by denying it the opportunity to exploit issues that burn in the hearts of young people yearning to fight injustice.

Fear, anger, despair, injustice, and an almost exclusive sense of victimization on both sides have their most damaging consequences in narrowing the space needed for policy options. Public discourse is stunted, simplistic, and crude. Sloganeering has taken the place of honest analysis in many political and media circles. It is easier in this climate to follow the safe course of demonizing and dehumanizing the "other." To assume the worst and to impugn the motives of the other is much safer than to explore possibilities of compromise and work out solutions, wherein you run the risk of being labeled as naïve at best, and a sell-out at worst. Politicians, even the few with courage, are caught in this logic and find it more prudent to assign all blame to the declared enemies on the other side than to forthrightly address their own constituents. The tried and true policies of the past, built on total mistrust with aggressive intent, are much more convenient to pursue and will bring about yet

more catastrophes and mayhem. These fundamentally violent policies have born this rotten fruit. Their logic, which traps traditional decision makers on either side, makes it imperative to have a third party intervene and take charge to lead us all out of this deadly impasse.

U.S. National Interest

Make no mistake: We in this country have a fundamental national security interest in addressing and resolving, rather than merely "managing," the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. No single decision we make can top the resolution of this conflict to enhance our national security. We also happen to be the only party in the world that is capable of doing so. We have the leverage, with billions of dollars doled out to Israel annually, and \$100 million dollars given to the Palestinians annually. We have the political, military, and social tools needed to make our choices and proposed solutions carry the weight we want. We have media with the global reach to add credibility to the policies that we may choose to adopt. Our longstanding, tried, and tested commitment to the existence and well-being of Israel should give it enough assurance that we will stand by our commitment and see it through. The Palestinians have but one party left in the world that can deliver to them a state of Palestine, and that is America.

The fact is that we are the one indispensable party to the solution. We have historically leaned heavily towards Israel. It has been an emotional issue, a domestic policy issue. We have managed to steer it in such a way that it has not adversely affected our relations with the Arab and Muslim governments, but it has affected our relations with their people. The seething anger of the Arab and Muslim people had not manifested itself to us prior to 9-11, and the power of incitement of Arab satellite TV stations had not channeled the anger of the masses against us so visibly before. The Palestinian issue has not motivated Bin Laden and Al Qaeda, but it is the key to diffusing and containing their influence. It is in our interest as Americans to do so. Dealing seriously with this issue is not, as some claim, caving in to terrorism; on the contrary, it is precisely the best tool to defeat it.

Our choice to support a State of Palestine alongside Israel, as voiced by President Bush on many occasions, should be the beginning of establishing a genuine democratic, constitutional state with modern tools of governance, transparency, free speech, free enterprise, and free men and women protected by law. This, more than any other decision, will help steer that region away from the scourge of terrorism and fanatical religious extremism. The United States itself has lacked credibility in its failure to be an honest broker in the past; the Tenet, Mitchell, and Zinni proposals, and more recently the Roadmap, have all cried out for implementation. None of these proposals is perfect, however; it is now our challenge to implement what we

proposed, adopted, and celebrated. The plan of the day is the Roadmap, which both the Palestinians and the Israelis have accepted.

We, like all enablers, have let violations of this agreement go unpublicized, unchecked, and unpunished. We have condemned terrorism with every breath we exhale and asked the Palestinian Authority to "do more" to eradicate it. All successive prime ministers of Israel have been unable to root out terrorism, including Sharon, who placed no limits on his army as they dealt out collective punishment to the whole Palestinian society. No Palestinian Authority can accomplish this task outside a political framework. Viewing and dealing with this conflict exclusively as a security problem without resolving the political issues simultaneously has been a miserable policy failure. It is, in fact, a recipe for extending the period of suffering and mayhem.

What is to be done?

It is time that we think more of our children's future than our father's past. Should we decide to measure up to the task of resolving this conflict in our time, we have the following steps to ponder:

1. We need to agree clearly on objectives such as the proposed historic compromise of a two-state solution based UN resolution 242. Confidence building measures that are supposed to lead us to an "End Game" are doomed because the parties involved have consistently failed to demonstrate any measure of good will that justifies confidence.

2. We need to establish bridges among people and institutions that support the historic compromise of all religions, ethnicities, and backgrounds. Such bridges need to develop into political mechanisms and tools to impact decision making.

3. We need to isolate extremists, both secular and fundamentalists, and to expose their threat to peace and to universal values of equality of people. Each group has a special obligation to speak out against extremists within its own ranks and to condemn their actions.

4. The United States can begin to seriously resolve this conflict only if it has the political will to do so. Its credibility will be measured by the public and the measures it takes to:

- a. Support a two-state solution based on U.N. Resolution 242.
- b. Lead the parties to implement the existing agreements and bring to a halt any and all measures, including the wall/fence, that preclude the compromise.
- c. Provide for and oversee a program for security in the West Bank and Gaza. Creative options that would place United Nations or NATO troops under American supervision should be explored. Security will never be provided by any of the local combatants, and it has to be a third party domain.

d. Oversee an International Economic Aid package to rebuild the country and secure the peace.

5. Palestinian leaders, in and out of office, should promulgate and generate support for a document about their own vision of the "Final Status." Clear positions need to be articulated about the controversial issues like Jerusalem, refugees, and borders. All acts of violence against civilians should be condemned and must cease. Honest communication with the people about the needed compromises cannot be avoided much longer. This process should lead to debate, reform, and elections.

6. Arab leaders must also share the collective responsibility for compromise, and those who shirk this responsibility must face political consequences. They should engage their public and the world in support of the Beirut Arab League resolution of March 2002 to end the conflict.

7. Israeli supporters of the historic compromise, in and out of office, should organize and state their position in public. Renunciations of metaphysical claims that justify land grabbing are fundamental to ending the conflict. Occupying other people's land and lording it over them cannot be sustained. Incremental land grabs that preclude the formation of a viable Palestinian State must cease. Violence against civilians must cease. Jewish people in Israel and all over the world must hold those who perpetrate the measures taken in their name into account.

8. We, all of us, need to push in every way we can for expanding the scope of freedom in the Arab and Islamic World. This cannot be done by forcing a grotesque emulation of Western democracies, but rather by a steady program of opening up and securing economic opportunities, educational reform, and accountable governments. The West can genuinely help rather than pontificate and condescend. The Palestinian issue should be removed as an excuse or justification for all the actions that Arab governments undertake.

9. American and international institutions and individuals should organize a superfund to support the private sector and provide humanitarian aid to rebuild the Palestinian society.

The measures just outlined can lead to resolution of this conflict. This is not a good versus evil saga. It is rather a sad tale of two peoples caught in a web of debris from an unkind history.

Nothing we do, however, can substitute for a serious understanding of the issues, one that keeps our grasp on universal human values intact as we labor in our quest to do the best we can. This issue has become too serious to be left to politicians alone. When future historians write about our era, they will either ask what went wrong or how catastrophe was avoided. It is up to us, all of us, to provide them with an answer. □

This issue has become too serious to be left to politicians alone.

AN INTERVIEW WITH Yossi Beilin

Yossi Beilin was the chief negotiator for Israel in the Oslo Accords. He has held ministerial positions in the governments of Yitzhak Rabin, Shimon Peres, and Ehud Barak. Most recently he served as Minister of Justice from 1999–2001. He is the author of several books, including *Israel: A Concise Political History*, *Touching Peace*, *The Manual for Leaving Lebanon*, and *Manual for a Wounded Dove*.

TIKKUN: Ten years ago you negotiated the Oslo Accord. Why did the Oslo process fail?

BEILIN: Both parties did not do what they could have done to implement the process. Palestinians could have done more to prevent their extremists from torpedoing the process by disarming them. The Palestinian Authority was afraid of having a civil war, which is understandable, but they could have done more. And that still remains the case—I think it is fair to demand that they do their utmost to disarm their extremists.

On the Israeli side, after Prime Minister Rabin was murdered because of his peace-oriented perspective, Benjamin Netanyahu came into power to put an end to the Oslo process. His biggest success was that by May 1999, at the end of the five years, there was not even a beginning of the negotiations for a permanent solution.

The idea of a five-year process with interim steps came from previous processes, including the process that led to the withdrawal from Sinai. Even then, at the time of Oslo, I tried to convince Rabin to go to a permanent solution immediately, but he believed it was premature. But I cannot prove that going for such a solution would have been successful.

TIKKUN: We at TIKKUN met with Yitzhak Rabin at the time of the signing of the Oslo Accords, and we urged him to use that moment to change the political dynamics in Israel by actively embracing the possibility of peace and reconciliation that those Accords represented. We urged him to immediately upon his return to Israel ask Israelis to open their hearts and homes to the Palestinian people, to engage in acts of repentance and reconciliation, to learn Arabic, to make friends with Palestinians, and to build the kinds of personal relationships that would be appropriate for two peoples living in peace. But instead, Rabin returned with a different message—one that seemed to be aimed more at placating the Israeli Right than at fostering a new consensus for



peace in Israel. He gave Israeli people a message of caution and distrust, assuring them that he didn't really trust the Palestinians, that he would be very careful and go slowly, that he wouldn't give away too much, and that he was still a military general cautiously engaging with an enemy. No wonder, then, that even during the Labor government there was no new level of understanding of the suffering of the Palestinian people generated by the Israeli Occupation, no understanding of the impact the increasing numbers of checkpoints and settlers was having on them.

BEILIN: This is a very serious and important analysis. We could have done a lot more to educate our constituency for peace—and that is also true of the Palestinians. What we did was exactly what you said. We told ourselves that this was our only option, but our perception was very problematic.

TIKKUN: Do you think that the Palestinians were being irrational in rejecting what Barak offered them at Camp David in the summer of 2000?

BEILIN: Well, this was the most far-reaching offer by any Prime Minister of Israel to the Palestinian people. Having said that, I don't mean that the Palestinians could have or should have accepted it. And the Palestinians also made some important concessions that they had not previously offered—for example that the Jewish neighborhoods in Jerusalem could be under Israeli sovereignty. If one weighs up the concessions on both sides it would be fair to say that Israeli concessions were bigger, maybe because we could give more. The result of Camp David should have been more negotiations, not a proclamation of "collapse" or

explosion. And if we had started the negotiations first, and then gone to Camp David, Camp David would have been far more productive.

TIKKUN: So why did Barak demand a summit?

BEILIN: This is one of the biggest mysteries—why Barak pushed for it. He kept telling us that in order to work out a real deal with the Palestinians, he needed to sit with Arafat and convince him about the need for an agreement. But then, when he got to Camp David he never met with him. He could never explain this behavior. Barak was committed

to peace, was ready for a historical compromise, but knew nothing about how to do it.

Then, we continued the negotiations under impossible circumstances at Taba. It was a mistake to go there without a real coalition in the Israeli government ready to make a peace accord. Those negotiations created the impression that even we—the peace-oriented members—couldn't reach an agreement. And I think had we more time, we could have reached an agreement. Barak once said publicly that he had done the Taba agreement only to prove to the peace forces

Please sign this yourself, have others sign, and get public endorsements from community organizations, churches, synagogues, mosques, labor unions, professional organizations, local city councils, universities, non-profits, and elected officials. Please continue to collect signatures and endorsements to bring to the conventions of major political parties in 2004. info: www.tikkun.org

A RESOLUTION FOR Middle East Peace

WHEREAS we recognize the humanity and fundamental decency of both the Israeli and Palestinian people, and wish to see them living in peace with each other, side by side in a safe Israel and a safe Palestine,

AND WHEREAS we abhor acts of terror, violence and denial of human rights,

AND WHEREAS the continuation of this conflict is destructive to the people of the Middle East, counter to the best interests and values of the United States, and might contribute to an increase in anti-Semitism and anti-Arab prejudices,

WE THE UNDERSIGNED ENDORSE AND URGE OUR PUBLIC OFFICIALS TO ENDORSE AND TAKE STEPS TO IMPLEMENT THIS RESOLUTION:

BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED THAT THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES URGES THE PRESIDENT TO:

SeeK an immediate end to violence and terror in the Middle East by introducing an international buffer of genuinely unbiased and neutral forces to separate and provide protection for Israelis and Palestinians and meanwhile use the resources of the U.S. to bring about the following resolution of the conflict:

(a) Return of Israel to its pre-1967 borders, with minor border modifications mutually agreed upon (language adopted at Taba in 2001 by both parties to indicate that a few Israeli border settlements and the Jewish sections of Jerusalem including the Wall would be incorporated into Israel, and that Arab sections of Jerusalem including the al-Aksa mosque would be incorporated into Palestine);

(b) Creation of an economically and politically viable, democratically governed and human-rights-respecting Palestinian state in all of the pre-1967 West Bank and Gaza including East Jerusalem;

(c) An international fund to provide compensation for Palestinians and to assist in resettling Palestinian refugees inside the borders of the new Palestinian state, and to provide compensation for Israelis who fled from persecution in Arab lands, and to resettle Israeli settlers within the pre-1967 borders of Israel;

(d) Peaceful relations, economic cooperation, and diplomatic recognition of Israel and the Palestinian state by surrounding Arab and Islamic states;

(e) Sharing by Israel, Palestine and surrounding Arab states of the water and other resources of the area and joint cooperation to preserve the region's ecological wellbeing;

(f) Active participation of Palestine and Israel, in cooperation with international forces, to protect both countries from the inevitable violence and terrorism that will continue after this peace agreement has been implemented—recognizing that some groups will continue to use violence against Israel even after it has returned to its pre-1967 borders or against Palestine even when its government and the majority of its people seek to live in peace with Israel;

(g) International guarantees of the safety and security of both Israel and Palestine, either through bilateral mutual defense agreements with the United States, or some similar arrangements with a credible international force which will protect Israel and Palestine from any states or terrorist groups that have hostile intentions;

(h) The creation of institutions in both societies designed to eliminate the teaching of hatred and stereotyping in the media, religious communities, and educational systems, and to support educational and social practices aimed at building trust and cooperation between the Israeli and Palestinian peoples, fostering repentance for past violations of human rights, and promoting a new spirit of reconciliation, recognition of the humanity of the other, and generosity towards each other.

Sign and return to The Tikkun Community, 2342 Shattuck #1200, Berkeley, CA 94704

NAME

ADDRESS

EMAIL

ISRAEL-PALESTINE

within his own party that agreement was impossible. But if that was in fact his intention at the time, I would say that convening those negotiations was a reckless move. On the other hand, Shlomo Ben Ami, who was leading our delegation at Taba, concluded that negotiations would never work.

TIKKUN: What specific issues came up at Taba that would lead one to conclude that an agreement with the Palestinians is actually impossible?

BEILIN: In my view, nothing.

TIKKUN: In our *Resolution for Middle East Peace*, we call for compensations for Palestinian refugees, but we don't call for the Right of Return. There are people in the American Left who critique us for this, claiming that Palestinians would never settle for an agreement that did not explicitly acknowledge that Right of Return.

BEILIN: The Palestinians have to understand—and I believe that those who negotiate with us do in fact already understand—that there is no chance that Israel will accept any Right of Return to Israel. Israel might admit back many refugees on some other basis, e.g. humanitarian concerns, but not as a Right of Return. If it is the case that eventually we take back into Israel a symbolic number of Palestinians, and I think eventually we will do that, then the argument will be about the wording of this arrangement—and I feel sure that the words can be found. We can find the right words which do not insult anyone. Eventually the Palestinians will have the options referred to by the Clinton plan: A Palestinian state, rehabilitation within the Arab countries where they currently reside, third countries which will invite them, and Israel in the context of its own sovereign decision. I think those who say that the Palestinians will always demand a Right of Return are exaggerating—because the truth is that they know that the solution for Palestinian refugees will involve these different elements, so the argument becomes largely one about finding the right words that won't offend either side.

TIKKUN: We've suggested that Israel offer 15,000 refugees each year for the next thirty years—thus communicating to the Palestinians that it wasn't just a pure token number, and communicating to the Israelis that it will not be a number sufficient to overwhelm and undermine the State of Israel.

BEILIN: If you omit one zero, you may be in the right direction for a solution.

TIKKUN: Do you have a strategy?

BEILIN: We are hoping to create a new political party in January which will put forward a new strategy. Many people didn't vote in 2001 and 2003. About 35 percent of the Israeli population identify in some way with the Left, about 35–40 percent who identify with the Right, and the others are in-between. Our first aim will be to reactivate the peace camp, and then to convince the centrists who supported us in the early '90s to support us again. We will need to have a clear plan. We will have to put forward a permanent solution for the Palestinians, new ideas on the role of religion and state,

ways to reorganize the army, programs for social justice, etc. If people understand our aims it will be easier for them to identify with us. We aim to be a peace and justice party, not just a peace party. We are hopeful that some Labor and Shinui voters will become voters for this new party.

TIKKUN: George Bush Sr.'s refusal to provide loan guarantees until Israel stopped expanding settlements led to the defeat of Shamir and the election of Yitzhak Rabin in 1992. Some Israelis tell us that the only way change is likely to happen in Israel is through similar pressure from the United States in opposition to the settlements.

BEILIN: I think we'd be stupid to wait for that to happen from the United States. Our aim is not sanctions from the United States against an Israeli government. We need to focus in a more positive way. I do hope that the U.S. government will become much more decisive about the Road Map—it became the only game in town for awhile, and then they forgot about it. U.S. citizens could help by doing what the Tikkun Community is doing—seminars, public conferences, attempts to bring Israelis and Palestinians together—and of course to help the peace movement financially. We are fighting against the tide. But you in the United States are also fighting against the tide, and the tide in the American Jewish community is worse than in Israel. In Israel we have a parliament, opposing parties, and people accept the legitimacy of opposing the current government. In the United States things are far worse, because there is no acceptance by many in the American Jewish community that this kind of critique is legitimate.

What you in the Tikkun Community are doing is very important, particularly in your work with the Congress and the Administration. They are not exposed to the ideas of the peace camp. The general effort to share with Congress the ideas of the peace camp is very important, and to let Congress and the Administration know that when AIPAC tries to represent itself as the only legitimate voice in the Jewish world, that this is false. AIPAC tries to marginalize everyone who doesn't agree with them, and the Tikkun Community can play an important role in challenging that. Emphasize the controversy, clarify that there is not only one voice, make it clear that no one voice speaks for all American Jews or all who support Israel.

TIKKUN: AIPAC says that it is not a political voice taking sides, but it always represents Israeli government policies—whatever they might be at the time. If a democratic majority chose a peace oriented government, they'd support that as well.

BEILIN: This is a lie. They claim to be merely an instrument of the Israeli government, but this is just not the case. They have their own ideology. They are financed by people from the extreme Right in American Jewry, and then use more liberal or democratic people as a fig leaf. Many people at the grassroots level are very moderate—it is not an organization of rightists, but *it is led by Rightists*. Many people

involved in AIPAC are not even aware of how much of a Right wing organization they are in.

When we in the Labor Party were in power, both Barak and Rabin were very critical of AIPAC. The leaders of AIPAC will pretend that they tried to support our government, but they did it half-heartedly, and privately they undermined us. They get a sigh of relief when a Rightist government comes to power.

I represented the Israeli government and they were not ready to help us when we had a peace-oriented government. For example, we in the Israeli government believed that it was very important for us to link aid to Israel with aid to Egypt. AIPAC didn't agree, as recently as 1999 and 2000, so they tried to separate Israeli aid from Egyptian aid, so that they could get Congress to stop giving aid to Egypt. They always do it in a delicate way, but it was done, and the Administration and Congress knew that this was what AIPAC was trying to accomplish and that it was directly contravening the intent of the Israeli government.

So, the Tikkun Community's attempts to put forward a different voice is very important, even if you don't have as much money or power as AIPAC. It is very important to raise a voice that is credible and cannot be dismissed. Of course, AIPAC will do what it can to make sure that anyone who does raise such a voice is perceived as not credible.

TIKKUN: Even you, the former Minister of Justice in the

last Israeli government, will get dismissed as a marginal voice?

BEILIN: Of course. That's exactly what they will try to do to me and to you. So it is very important to bring together a variety of different organizations to work together in D.C. It would be very difficult for any one organization to have the necessary clout, be it Israel Policy Forum or Peace Now or TIKKUN.

TIKKUN: Yes, but unfortunately it's not so easy to get these groups to work together. We've invited these groups to work in coalition with us, but they don't do it with us or with each other.

Meanwhile, there have been claims of growing anti-Semitism in the world, and some of it linked to anger at Jews for the policies of the State of Israel.

BEILIN: There is real anti-Semitism, and some of it is connected to the policies of Israel, the state that was created in part to relieve, not accentuate, the insecurity of Jews in the world. This isn't to be blamed on Israel—of course it is the fault of the anti-Semites. But we in Israel should be careful about the consequences of some of our actions. The current government says that the targeted killings of Palestinians are necessary to protect our Israeli citizens. But Israel should take more responsibility for the impact of our actions on Jews around the world whom we are endangering in the name of defending our own citizens (though these targeted killings do not make Israelis safer either). □



For additional information, or to request an application, click on the 'volunteer' link at www.ajws.org, send an e-mail to JVCVol@ajws.org, or call 1-800-889-7146 ext. 653

Overseas Volunteer OPPORTUNITIES

with *The Jewish Volunteer Corps*

Seeking Jewish men and women to volunteer for a period of one month to one year to assist community organizations in Africa, Asia, Latin America, Russia and Ukraine.

JVC volunteers are motivated Jewish men and women, from young professionals to retirees, who provide humanitarian aid in the form of technical assistance and training.

Dedicated people throughout the developing world are working to combat poverty, disease, illiteracy and hunger in their communities. As a member of the Jewish Volunteer Corps you can be a part of their struggle.

JVC Volunteers receive reimbursement for their round-trip airfare, evacuation insurance, and, if needed, a small cost-of-living stipend.

The Jewish Volunteer Corps is a program of American Jewish World Service (AJWS), a not-for-profit organization founded to help alleviate poverty, hunger and disease among the people of the world regardless of race, religion or nationality.



Power Over the Ultimate Evil

Jonathan Granoff

There are approximately 30,000 nuclear weapons in the world, 90 percent of which are possessed by Russia and the United States. The United States has about 11,000 nuclear weapons, and the Russians have about 19,500 nuclear weapons. Thousands of these are Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles; they are armed, targeted and poised, waiting for three short computer signals to fire. These hair trigger devices represent the devastation of approximately 100,000 Hiroshimas and pose a horrific threat to life. From the moment the early-warning systems cry danger (real or cyber-glitch), the U.S. government allows itself less than twenty five minutes before launch keys are turned in retaliation; experts believe that the Russian government allows itself less than ten.

The nuclear weapons which were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki were the equivalent of 15,000 and 12,000 tons of TNT (trinitrotoluene) respectively. Bombs in the megaton (equivalent to a million tons of TNT) and multiple megaton range are now in the arsenals, and some are even in excess of twenty megatons (20,000,000 tons of TNT). A five-megaton weapon would represent more explosive power than all the bombs used in World War II, and a twenty-megaton bomb more than all the explosives used in all wars in the history of the world.

Over time, through accident or design, human fallibility will cause the unacceptable use of these weapons. Additionally, the possession by some states is the strongest stimulant to others to acquire them.

In a stunning assertion of militarism and U.S. unilateralism over international cooperation and the rule of law, the Senate voted on September 17, 2003, mostly along party lines, to fund steps toward the development of new nuclear weapons. Some of these weapons are called "mini-nukes" and are ready to be integrated into conventional war fighting plans while others are modifications of existing weapons designed for new targets. This funding represents an enormous shift in the basic rationale for the production and use of nuclear weapons.

Previously, deterrence doctrine was designed to ensure that nuclear weapons would not be used, or at least only used as an absolute last resort. The bizarre logic was that if each nuclear equipped party has enough weapons to inflict

unacceptable damage to the other—even after being hit with a nuclear attack—then neither would actually dare to use their arsenal.

In the new doctrine, nuclear weapons are viewed as usable, as a standard part of military strategy like other explosives. Simultaneously, this shift challenges the moral taboo against use and undermines the commitments made under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), now with 188 member States, to negotiate the elimination of nuclear arsenals.

The reality of such contemplated use of nuclear weapons has yet to dent the public debate. Like the response to the banality of evil that made possible the Holocaust's Final Solution, today's world remains numb to the banality of nuclear weapons.

Until now, there has been an international consensus that the proliferation of nuclear weapons posed a paramount threat to the security of the world. President Bush has challenged this presumption. In his 2003 State of the Union address he said, "*The gravest danger facing America and the world is outlaw regimes that seek and possess nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.*" The emphasis has shifted from the weapons themselves to concern for regimes, and the policies that arise from this shift are dramatic. Instead of a policy of containment and elimination of weapons through international law, we are now seeing a policy of "regime change" based on U.S. unilateral decision making. This is very hazardous to international order, and we are only beginning to see its consequences in the aftermath of the Iraq war.

Moreover, rather than working to fulfill treaty commitments for disarmament, the U.S. Nuclear Posture Review of 2002 calls for proliferation:

The need is clear for a revitalized nuclear weapons complex that will ... be able ... to design, develop, manufacture, and certify new warheads in response to new national requirements; and maintain readiness to resume underground nuclear testing if required.

The U.S. National Security Strategy emphasizes that the United States will take anticipatory preemptive action. Since the Nuclear Posture Review calls for incorporating nuclear weapons into conventional war fighting capabilities, we now have a doctrine that can rationalize the pre-emptive use of nuclear weapons.

North Korea's response should come as no surprise. It is easy to understand why the rest of the world is so afraid.

Jonathan Granoff is president of the Global Security Institute and a member of the Advisory Board of TIKKUN.

We should all be afraid.

Mohammed El Baradi, Director of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), recently stated the situation clearly:

These are double standards. On the one hand, the U.S. says that the proliferation of nuclear weapons must be fought. On the other, it perfects its own arsenal. This is not acceptable... The US Administration demands from other states not to have any nuclear weapons, while it fills its own arsenals... If we do not give up such double standards, we will have even more nuclear powers. We are at a turning point now.

The steady, albeit slow, progress in building peaceful relations based on the rule of law has reversed, just as fear and uncertainty have been emphasized. Various arguments are used to rationalize this intentional process: fighting terrorism in the wake of 9-11, eliminating despotic rulers, stopping the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. But actions, such as instituting a war without clear UN Security Council authorization, speak louder than any doctrines.

The extent of the hazard has not been grasped and political arguments have not swayed the hearts of the people nor the decision makers. Worse, the irrationality of the quest to address the problem by building more weapons of mass destruction remains inadequately challenged.

Neither reason nor imagination is sufficient to grasp the magnitude of what we have created. The International Court of Justice, in its landmark opinion in 1996 on the Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons stated: "The destructive power of nuclear weapons cannot be contained in either space or time. They have the potential to destroy all civilization and the entire eco-system of the planet." The Court unanimously concluded that there is a legal duty to negotiate the global elimination of nuclear weapons.

Nuclear weapons exemplify a thoroughly modern dilemma where the means of pursuing security undermine the end of obtaining security. As Thoreau said, "Improved means to unimproved ends."

The Mayor of Nagasaki pleads with us to understand the human dimensions of one relatively small atomic bomb:

The explosion of the atomic bomb generated an enormous fireball, 200 meters in radius, almost as though a small sun had appeared in the sky. The next instant, a ferocious blast and wave of heat assailed the ground with a thunderous roar. The surface temperature of the fireball was about 7,000 degrees C, and the heat rays that reached the ground were over 3,000 degrees C. The explosion instantly killed or injured people within a two-kilometer radius of the hypocenter, leaving innumerable corpses charred like clumps of charcoal and scattered in the ruins near the hypocenter. In some cases, not even a trace of the person's remains could be found. A wind (over 680 miles per hour)



slapped down trees and demolished most buildings. Even iron-reinforced concrete structures were so badly damaged that they seemed to have been smashed by a giant hammer. The fierce flash of heat meanwhile melted glass and left metal objects contorted like strands of taffy, and the subsequent fires burned the ruins of the city to ashes. Nagasaki became a city of death where not even the sound of insects could be heard.

After a while, countless men, women and children began to gather for a drink of water at the banks of the nearby Urakami River, their hair and clothing scorched and their burnt skin hanging off in sheets like rags. Begging for help, they died one after another in the water or in heaps on the banks. Then radiation began to take its toll, killing people like a scourge (of death expanding in concentric circles from the hypocenter. Four months after the atomic bombing, 74,000 people were dead and 75,000 had suffered injuries, that is, two thirds of the city population had fallen victim to this calamity that came upon Nagasaki like a preview of the Apocalypse.

When Mahatma Gandhi heard of this horror he pondered: "What has happened to the soul of the destroying nation is yet too early to see."

The psychologist Robert Jay Lifton has described part of the cost to the small handful of nuclear weapons states as "a collective form of psychic numbing." Our readiness to unleash, in short order, devices that will rapidly transform cities into concentration camp-like ovens numbs our moral sensitivities. These weapons are ovens with wings.

Even George Kennan, the distinguished American diplomat who originated the Cold War containment policy toward the Soviet Union, a man not normally associated with moral admonitions, warns us:

The readiness to use nuclear weapons against other human beings—against people we do not know, whom we have never seen, and whose guilt or innocence is not for us to establish—and, in doing so, to place in jeopardy the natural structure upon which all civilization rests, as though the safety and perceived interests of our own generation were more important than everything that has taken place or could take place in civilization: this is nothing less than a presumption, a blasphemy, an indignity—an indignity of monstrous dimensions—offered to God!

This expression of human arrogance hides a fundamental weakness, a failure of respect for the power of love, God's greatest gift to us. That power is denied by this threatening violence. This ultimate violence is idolatry without boundary, exalting human ideas and force above the creator's gift and the very life of the creation.

The violence of threatening to unleash the Apocalypse represents an immorality of vast proportion and calls us to an affirmation of faith of vaster proportion. We cannot be

passive in pursuing this capacity. The words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., burn through the haze of today's news reports:

The fact that most of the time human beings put the truth about the nature and risks of nuclear war out of their minds because it is too painful and therefore not "acceptable," does not alter the nature and risks of such war ... if modern man continues to flirt unhesitatingly with war, he will transform his earthly habitat into an inferno such that even the mind of Dante could not imagine.... I do not wish to minimize the complexity of the problems that need to be faced in achieving disarmament and peace. But I think it is a fact that we shall not have the will, the courage, and insight to deal with such matters unless in this field we are prepared to undergo a mental and spiritual reevaluation—a change of focus which will enable us to see that the things which seem most real and powerful are indeed now unreal and have come under the sentence of death.... It is not enough to say "We must not wage war." It is necessary to love peace and sacrifice for it ... we have inherited a big house, a great "world house" in which we have to live together—black and white, Easterners and Westerners, Gentiles and Jews, Catholics and Protestants, Moslems and Hindus, a family unduly separated in ideas, culture, and interests who, because we can never again live without each other, must learn somehow, in this one big world, to live with each other.... This means that more and more our loyalties must become ecumenical rather than sectional. We must now give an overriding loyalty to mankind as a whole in order to preserve the best in our individual societies. This call for a worldwide fellowship that lifts neighborly concern beyond one's tribe, race, class, and nation is in reality a call for an all embracing and unconditional love for all....

Developing this love is not only a personal path to salvation but a necessity for human fulfillment and survival. As King said, "When I speak of love I am not speaking of some sentimental and weak response which is little more than emotional bosh. I am speaking of that force which all the great religions have seen as the supreme unifying principle of life. Love is somehow the key that unlocks the door which leads to ultimate reality." Our choice is Dante's hell or a door to ultimate reality.

What must we do?

The first step toward a solution is a sober acknowledgement of the problem and a profound commitment to change.

It is imperative that our goal of obtaining the universal elimination of nuclear weapons be grounded in strong moral positions. Since fear can cloud reason, we must awaken an activism based on an equally strong motivation. For this issue, vision requires courage; thus, spirit matters.

The mystery that placed the power of destruction in the binding forces of the atom has placed the healing power of love in our hearts and further gifted us with both the courage and wisdom to use that power effectively. King's stand is correct: "I refuse to accept the cynical notion that

nation after nation must spiral down a militaristic stairway into the hell of nuclear annihilation." With faith that we can be guided by and have confidence in our love of life, should we not commit to cause our country to disavow its unlawful, immoral policy of failing to negotiate the elimination of nuclear weapons? Will you join this call from the conscience of humanity?

We have the choice to respond to this call of conscience. With the help of each, which is a gift in our hands to choose, and the help of God, which is a gift surely granted, we can and will become the change we want to see.

We can change our government's conduct to reflect our human values. The policies that diminish the threat to use nuclear weapons and lead to their elimination have already been painstakingly negotiated in the NPT. They include a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, deep cuts in the arsenals, reduction of the operational status of the weapons, a diminished role of weapons in policy planning, and negotiations leading to elimination.

The commitments under the NPT are an excellent foundation, but they are certainly not enough. For example, the entire budget for all inspections under the IAEA is less than \$90 million per year for the whole world, while the US alone spends more than \$97 million per day on our nuclear arsenal. The need for changing economic allocations is obvious.

Compared to what might arise in the future, addressing nuclear weapons is now relatively manageable. There is presently only a small group with arsenals. That group includes Israel, Pakistan and India, who are not in the NPT, and five countries under the treaty—US, UK, China, France, and Russia. The materials needed to make bombs can be monitored and controlled if sufficient funds are spent. The political will to come to very low numbers, and then begin serious negotiations to create a secure regime to move toward abolition, could be galvanized with proper political leadership. It is sufficient to invoke fears of terrorism to generate support to eliminate this threat. Nearly everyone agrees that nothing could be more hazardous than if terrorists gained access to these devices.

If we do not move quickly to curtail this capacity for self-destruction that science has given humanity with this obviously dangerous technology, how do we intend to constrain and control the next generation of weapons of mass destruction? It is time that this technology be subject to law and morality. Nothing less than our humanity and future is at stake.

We need to further awaken the public and generate the political will to fulfill our existing commitments. We need to compel our political leaders to take clear, morally coherent positions and commit to work for abolition.

At a minimum, we must demand that every candidate for national office describe their aspirations and plans to reduce and eliminate the possession and threat of nuclear weapons in every country in the world. □

Life as Sacred Narrative

Estelle Frankel

More and more in my work as a healer, I find myself venturing off the beaten track of psychodynamic psychotherapy and talking to my clients about their spiritual journeys. For many years I was reluctant, as a clinician, to come out of the closet as a religious person. Though the words of ancient sacred text would often echo between the lines of my clients' narratives, in the service of maintaining therapeutic neutrality I kept these personal musings to myself. Over time, as I gained confidence and perhaps a bit of *chutzpah* as a clinician, I began selectively sharing spiritual teachings from the Jewish mystical tradition with my clients. Almost invariably, these occasions have led to a deepening of insight and occasionally to a therapeutic breakthrough. The spiritual perspective offered by Jewish mysticism has opened up new possibilities for healing and transformation.

In the work of spiritual healing, our notion of who we think we are begins to expand. In a sense we are given new eyes, the ability to see ourselves from God's perspective, as it were—from the vantage point of the Infinite. Though we may only be able to hold that expanded vision of ourselves for brief moments at a time, such sight can have a profound effect on our identity. Instead of being overly identified with our problems and pathologies, we can also begin to appreciate our perfection and purpose. And instead of feeling isolated and alone in our pain, we can begin to experience ourselves as part of a larger whole in which our individual stories reflect the larger story of which all people are a part.

One of the ways we can connect with the "larger" story is by immersing ourselves in sacred myth in a process I call "sacred narrative therapy." Jewish mystics of old understood that the stories contained in the scriptures and ancient legends—known as *midrash*—were not just meant to be taken as historical accounts of what happened to our ancestors, but as mythic renderings of what each and every one of us undergoes as we embark on the healing journey of



awakening. For the Hassidic masters, the entire cast of biblical characters lives within each and every one of us, representing dimensions of the soul.

Through the Lens of Sacred Narrative

I have found my own spiritual narrative in the book of Esther. As I put myself in Esther's shoes, I imagine that she must have struggled for years to understand why *she*, a Jewess, was chosen to be the queen of Persia and Media. Taken against her will to be part of the King's harem, Esther waits nine long years before the mysterious events of her life reveal their significance and meaning. When the king's minister, Haman, plots to kill all the Jews in the kingdom, Esther finds herself in the unique position of having the power to save her people. Suddenly, the providential nature of her strange fate becomes clear, as we hear in her uncle Mordecai's impassioned plea: "Who knows if only for the sake of this moment in time, you were chosen as queen." (Esther 4:14) Esther's personal destiny, which had been a complete conundrum up until then, suddenly takes on a sense of historic urgency and significance. Suddenly it becomes clear that she must put her own life on the line in order to save her people.

I love the book of Esther precisely because it is so much like our lives—full of mystery and hidden twists in the plot. The name Esther, which implies hiddenness (*seter*), teaches us about God's hidden and mysterious pathways in our lives. To reflect this, God's name seems to have been intentionally left out of the narrative, appearing only as a hidden acrostic (see Esther 5:4). In the book of Esther, what begins as bad luck is, in the end, reversed into good fortune; events that initially appear to be "by chance" turn out to be providential. The casting of lots or *purim*, suggests a certain randomness; yet, the unfolding of events in the book of Esther reveals that nothing happens by chance alone; even those things which appear to be arbitrary or unlucky—part of the cosmic lottery, as it were—in the end, turn out to be deeply meaningful.

Adapted from Sacred Therapy: Jewish Spiritual Teachings on Emotional Healing and Inner Wholeness. © 2003 by Estelle Frankel; by arrangement with Shambhala Publications, Inc., Boston, www.shambhala.com. Estelle Frankel is a psychotherapist and teacher of Jewish mysticism.

SPIRITUAL HEALING

In this stage of my life I, like Esther, find myself struggling to discover the hidden hand of the divine in the many obscure and inexplicable aspects of my life. In particular, I often struggle to make sense of the events that led me to return to the Diaspora after having made *aliya* to Israel in my youth. Though I had intended to spend my life in Israel, fate brought me back to the States, where my destiny has unfolded in ways I never could have imagined. Though I grapple with self-doubt at times, wondering whether I made the right choices at different turning points in my life, when I view my life as though it were a sacred narrative—inscribed on a *megillah*—the broken pieces of the puzzle begin to come together and a coherent story emerges. This story reveals how all the conscious and unconscious choices I have made, as well as the random, chance events that have shaped my being, come together in a meaningful fashion to reveal my unique essence. Finding this sense of meaning and coherence seems to be one of the important tasks we all face in mid-life, as we inevitably reflect on choices we made earlier in our lives.

As I discovered in my musings over the book of Esther, something always shifts in our experience of life when we view it through the lens of sacred narrative. Instead of the disjointed and often incomplete stories that comprise our lives, a thread of meaning begins to weave the chapters together revealing their hidden connections. In these moments we often have a sense that our lives have unfolded exactly as they were meant to, mistakes and all.

The Shattered Vessels

Another myth that I find myself repeatedly turning to in recent years is Isaac Luria's myth of the shattered vessels. This sixteenth-century creation myth, which describes creation as originating in a cosmic catastrophe, can be understood as a mystical metaphor for the universal experience of transition.

Beginning with a paradoxical process known as *tzimtzum* (withdrawal), the *Ein Sof*, or Infinite, Boundless One, is said to have contracted itself, creating an empty space within which the finite realm might come into existence. Into this womb-like space, the *Ein Sof* emanated a single ray of light. This primordial light was so powerful, however, that it is said to have shattered the very vessels created to contain it. As a result of this shattering, or *shevira*, sparks of the divine light became scattered and trapped in the material world, where they await redemption. Until all these fallen sparks of divinity are restored to their source, according to Luria, the world remains in a broken state, needing *tikkun*. This task of *tikkun* is the very purpose of all existence, and each of us has a role in its fulfillment.

In addition to hinting at the redemptive possibilities that can arise from crisis, Luria's three stages of divine unfolding describe the ongoing process of how life continually renews itself through creation, disintegration, and re-generation.

Tzimtzum, *shevira* and *tikkun* are part of the molecular structure of the cosmos. All that are born into being pass through these three gates. And at every transition point in the life cycle, when one stage of life ends and another begins, we inevitably pass through these three gates.

Since many people seeking therapy do so at transition points in their lives, Luria's myth provides a useful paradigm for placing the universal experience of transition into a larger mythic context. For instance, when we are going through a painful "ending" in our lives, knowing we are in the *shevira* stage of a transition may make it easier to accept the feelings of disorientation and grief that arise when the very ground on which we have stood is shifting. If we feel a sense of vertigo and dread as old life structures dissolve, we can be reassured that this disintegrative stage will be followed by a time of healing and reintegration. Knowing we are on a journey that has distinct stages, and being able to "name" these stages, helps us place our personal experience within a larger context.

The shattering of the vessels can also be understood as the Kabbalah's unique idiom for talking about what Buddhists refer to as life's essential impermanence. As soon as something is created, its dissolution is already at hand. The vessels of creation, the finite forms created to house the infinite, are, by design, not only impermanent, but also essentially imperfect—for no finite vessel can ever fully contain the infinite. The shattering of the vessels is an inevitable outcome of creating an embodied universe, much as error is an inevitable part of living. In fact, it seems that God intentionally created a flawed universe in order to give every creature a role in its restoration, and so that perfection might be reached through imperfection, and wholeness through brokenness.

For those of us who, like myself, have difficulty accepting imperfection, the myth of the shattered vessels provides a comforting reminder that imperfection is inescapable since it is woven into the very fabric of creation. Each of us is given some broken piece or character flaw we will have to work with in our lives—our own inner chamber of darkness. Our job is to illuminate these "dark" and uninhabitable places within our souls so that our defects or imperfections ultimately become the cracks or openings through which our inner light can shine forth into this world.

Knowing this can help us relax into life, as imperfect as it is, so that we may take joy in doing our share of the work of *tikkun*. For if God can make a big mistake that ultimately gives rise to the possibility of *tikkun*, then perhaps each of us can find ways to be holy "fixers" in this imperfect life of ours.

Making Peace With Imperfection

This particular understanding of Luria's myth provided a potent healing metaphor for Sandy, a thirty-nine-year old woman who was struggling with depression. Though on

the surface of things it seemed as though Sandy had everything people dream of—a loving marriage, children, and a successful career as a schoolteacher—she was dissatisfied with almost every area of her life. Nothing felt good enough to her. As we explored her feelings of dissatisfaction in therapy, it became clear that her unhappiness stemmed from an inability to accept the ways her “real life” failed to match up with her idealized images of life.

As the daughter of wealthy and highly successful parents, Sandy had been groomed throughout her privileged childhood and young adulthood to work hard and succeed. She had indeed been highly successful throughout her school years, graduating at the top of her class and going on to complete a graduate degree in education. So long as she was able to devote herself completely to her work and studies, Sandy felt relatively content. Things began to change, however, when she married and had children. Balancing career and family, Sandy found that she was no longer able to live up to all her ideals. She was not the kind of mother she had imagined she would be, nor was she able to progress in her career as rapidly as she had hoped. Instead of revising her goals and ideals to accommodate her current reality, she became increasingly frustrated and depressed. Sandy also harbored feelings of disappointment in her marriage. Though her husband worked hard as a teacher, he was unable to provide the kind of financial security that she had grown accustomed to in her childhood. Having to live within a tight budget was not something Sandy was prepared for.

In therapy, I challenged Sandy to confront the ways she was spoiling her “real life” by always comparing it to some imaginary “ideal life.” We began to explore how her unconscious search for perfection and her clinging to idealized images from the “past” was a defense against accepting the real nature of existence as both impermanent and imperfect. Using the myth of the shattered vessels, I suggested to Sandy that it might be easier for her to make peace with her life if she accepted the fact that impermanence and imperfection are simply woven into the very fabric of existence. As we discussed Luria’s myth, something finally began to click for Sandy. The image of the shattered vessels seemed to touch her deeply, opening up the possibility of self-forgiveness and of living more gracefully with life’s inevitable changes.

As Sandy’s fortieth birthday approached we began planning a ritual together based on the imagery of the shattered vessels. The *kavanah* or intention of the ritual was to let go of perfection. Sandy spent the week before her fortieth birthday preparing for the ritual by writing down on a scroll all her childhood hopes and dreams for how she “imagined” her life was going to be. She then placed this scroll in

a beautiful ceramic vase that she had owned for many years and had deeply treasured. Sandy brought these ritual objects to our next session, in which she planned to break the vase and burn the scroll.

We began the ritual by creating a sacred space and lighting four candles—one for each decade of her life. After sitting in silence for several minutes, Sandy read what she had written and expressed her desire to be freed from the way her attachment to “perfection” and the “past” was keeping her from appreciating her current life. As Sandy proceeded

to smash the ceramic vase and burn the scroll, she was overcome by a tremendous wave of grief. Through this act of *shevira* she was finally able to face her grief over the way her life had turned out. By shattering the vase, something she had been deeply attached to for a long time, Sandy was finally able to release herself from the grip of the past. And in expressing her grief she felt more ready to accept her real, though imper-

fect life. Sandy then took the broken pieces home with her, with the intent of using them in a mosaic that would be a visual reminder of the wisdom of the shattered vessels.

Sandy will probably continue to struggle with perfectionism all her life. Therapeutic rituals are no panacea, and certainly no substitute for long-term work on oneself. Yet, they do have the power to awaken us to new insights, and long after their enactment they continue to leave an imprint on our psyches. In discovering a sacred narrative that illuminated her personal struggles, Sandy felt confident she would be able to hold on to the insights she gained in therapy.

Opening Doors

When we go beyond our personal predicaments and open doors to the sacred dimension, we come to experience our lives as resonant to a much greater matrix of meaning in which any transition we undergo, whether it be a birth, death, divorce, illness, or disability, may initiate us into the larger mysteries of life. As we find reflections of our individual lives in sacred myth, we tend to feel less alone in our suffering; our personal struggles shift from being simply personal, and instead are seen as mirroring sacred processes that occur throughout creation. By locating ourselves within the crucible of sacred myth, we are midwifed on our journey of transformation by the archetypal forces embedded within the myth.

Carl Jung once said that modern man’s tendency to “pathologize” stemmed from the fact that we had forgotten how to “mythologize.” The gods live on in us in as symptoms rather than as living archetypes. In sacred narrative therapy we relearn the ancient art of myth-making so that we can begin to view our lives as sacred stories—as living embodiments of Torah. □

*In sacred narrative
therapy we relearn
the ancient art of
myth-making.*

The Eternal, Holy Night

Thomas Moore

It is no accident that the festival of Christmas occurs at the time of year when the darkness has reached its low point and winter light begins to appear. Christmas is the honoring of light and the hope that comes with the end of nature's and the human soul's dark night. In the symbolic turning of time, Christmas is that part of the annual cycle that invites us to leave darkness behind and enter a new way of being, to start a new "year," that is, a new era of enlightened decisions rather than unconscious acts.

The most stirring songs of the season, "O Holy Night" and "Silent Night," and the popular verse-tale "Twas the Night Before Christmas" explore the emotion of night, especially this night on which light once again shows itself. We honor this mythic night full of hopeful appearances—angels with their song, flying reindeer, kings bearing gifts of gold and spices, a lowly stable aflame with the brilliant arrival of the divine child.

Historically, Christmas was heavily influenced by the Roman festival of Saturnalia, a time of revelry and feasting when the burden of rules was suspended and values were turned upside down. Its arrival reminds us of certain values that we forget during the rest of the year. Why not learn from Christmas Saturnalia to be more forgiving and less moralistic, not to justify our existence by hard work alone but to find meaning in play and celebration, and to give more of ourselves to our children?

One of the most dangerous developments in contemporary religion and spirituality is the stress on rules, authority, heavy moral repression, and highly abstract and intellectual belief. Even new spiritual movements are often joyless and depriving. The modernism of the twentieth century created a largely disenchanted world in which we must now live. Most of what was enchanting in life fell to scientific analysis and historical research. The enthronement of fact chased the magic into cartoons and television programs about witches and spells and away from our homes and neighborhoods. The re-enchantment of daily life is crucial to getting over our dour moralism, our draining workaholism, and our melancholic belief in hard research. If you have lost

Thomas Moore is a psychotherapist and author of many books, including Care of the Soul and The Re-Enchantment of Everyday Life. www.careofthesoul.net.



Christmas is a feast for everyone, an opportunity to restore hope and to take part in meaningful and deeply-felt rituals, and to reconnect with our common humanity.

enchantment, you are liable to divisiveness, intolerance, and aggression. If you don't love life, you are more susceptible to hating your neighbor.

Christmas gives us a remarkable antidote to the stern, demanding deity of self-righteousness—Santa Claus! This demi-urge, this spiritual figure who lives at the top of the world is jolly, generous, and fat. The only other spiritual father images I know that are even close to being so jovial and life-affirming are certain representations of the Buddha, where he is round, smiling, and accommodating. If we all had this kind of a god-image, we might be able to get along with each other and find peace among ourselves through

ILLUSTRATION BY DENONE TERRILL

the sheer enjoyment of life. War is an expression of deep emotional disturbance, severe neurosis, and the utter loss of humanity. Christmas is a feast for everyone, an opportunity to restore hope and to take part in meaningful and deeply-felt rituals, and to reconnect with our common humanity.

Of course, Christmas is overly commercialized, and people accordingly spend too much money, time, and energy buying gifts, which seem to get more expensive every year, but I am not one of those who think we need to restore the "true" spirit of Christmas, the austere theological mysticism of belief. The solution to all of the extravagance is not to become moralistic and insist on a severe, mental and virtuous observance. We need to deepen our observances, not dismiss them.

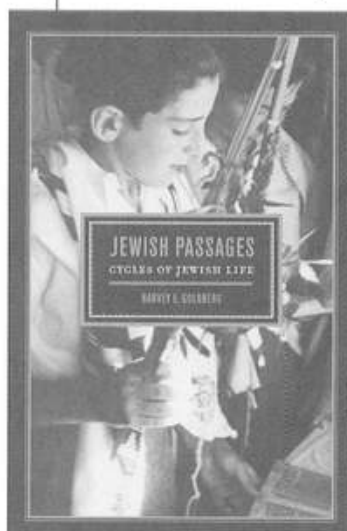
I like to speak of the soul of Christmas as well as its spirit. The soul of Christmas is low, embodied, tolerant, diverse, not always virtuous but humorous and earthy. The soulful side of Christmas comes forth in the preparation of family and community meals and the reenactment of traditional customs. I think we have it right when we go shopping, make cookies, sing carols, and trim trees. We might deepen these traditions by giving thoughtful, heartfelt gifts, contacting old friends, and giving more than usual attention to children. And we should all give each other—adults and children—at least one toy, as a symbol of our retreat from seriousness, ambition, and work. It honors the child in the manger, who is not an image of silly, naïve childishness, but of new life, hope, fresh vision, and imagination.

The Christian liturgy of Christmas begins with the song, "A child is born, a son is given to us." Imagine this as the birth of the child-image, the spirit of renewal, and an end to old habits. Isn't this exactly what the world needs at this moment? We remain within the old categories of thought, and try to "win" our battles and overcome our "enemies." This child in the stable, this light to the world, taught us in his maturity to love our enemies. Imagine the Saturnian foolhardiness of that vision! This teaching sounds so naïve that it has been easy to dismiss, but in the context of Christmas it is the expression of a new way of seeing and doing things. Especially in times of widespread war, we could endeavor to love our enemies and to never justify the violent death of children caught in political conflict.

The child in the manger, Santa Claus magically bestowing gifts on everyone, the kings and angels honoring the birth of a new thing—none of this is naïve, sentimental, or impractical. Christmas is not only a celebration of the possibility of peace, it is a challenge to live differently. We need a shift in paradigm, a deep change in our mentality, if we are to care for each other and relieve human suffering.

Some call this philosophy of mine "lite," superficial, and even superstitious, but I believe it touches the very heart of our problems. I think that if you become too spiritual—insisting only on meaningful actions and highly intellectualized understanding—the human community suffers a loss

Transforming the World



JEWISH PASSAGES

Cycles of Jewish Life

HARVEY E. GOLDBERG

"A scholarly achievement that is also a great bar-mitzvah gift, with tremendous value for anyone in Jewish Studies including rabbis and members of synagogue study groups."

— Jack Kugelmass, editor of
Key Texts in American Jewish Culture

\$27.50 hardcover

THE WAY THINGS ARE

*Conversations with Huston Smith
on the Spiritual Life*

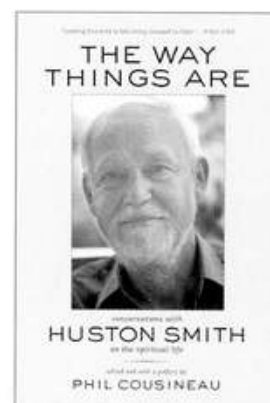
HUSTON SMITH

*Edited and with a
Preface by Phil
Cousineau*

"I can't think of a more moving and beautiful, more rigorous and wise, book to help us through these troubled times."

— Pico Iyer

\$24.95 hardcover



THE FLOWER OF ANARCHY

Selected Poems

MEIR WIESELTIER

*Translated from the Hebrew
by Shirley Kaufman, with the Author*

"A master draftsman of Tel Aviv's bleaker landscapes, Wieseltier is also a brutal observer of his society. ... All is here, in translations that faithfully convey both the harshness and the clarity that have made Wieseltier one of the most influential Israeli poets of this time."

— Peter Cole, author of *Hymns and Qualms*

\$39.95 hardcover, \$16.95 paperback

At bookstores or order
(800) 822-6657 www.ucpress.edu

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS

of soul, and that loss is the source of conflict. The stern, frowning, spiritual zealot seems to enjoy divisions and wars and political battles; while the soulful holy fool appreciates the beauty and richness of other cultures, eating their food, playing their music, and embracing their spiritualities.

I am sometimes asked to sum up my writing in a few words. I don't hesitate: "Lighten up!" Recently some students gave me a bumper sticker with those words in bright letters. But isn't this the punning message of Christmas, the festival of light? I think we best celebrate this time by lightening up and opening our hearts.

Let this baby be born in you. Be a humble manger. Let your light and your levity show. Let the Christ-nature, blessedly free of dogma, church, law, moralism, and belief, shine in you like the divine child aglow in so many paintings of nativity. Understand that nativity happens in you, in your family, and in your community, or it happens only for show. Unless you are Christmas, then this festival is only a story to tell and not a myth to live.

This year, we can remember the good people on all sides who have died and have been hurt in war and conflict. We could allow the new light to take up residence in us so radically that we couldn't tolerate the thought of bloodshed for puny political purposes and insane fantasies of ownership and belonging. You don't have to be a genius to understand that there is another way, that peace is both imaginable and practicable. But it will only happen if the new life represented by the Christmas crèche is lodged deep in our thoughts and feelings. The joys of Christmas can congeal into a philosophy that affirms life radically and translates into soulful political action.

The promising vision of that child in the stable has never been fully realized. It has been hidden beneath neurotic concerns of membership, authority, exclusiveness, and belief. Its very soul has been largely out of reach because it has been so intellectualized and moralized. The story of Christmas is simple but not simplistic. It can become a philosophy of life without any mediation of church or academic theology.

The Jesus of religion is not a mere philosopher or teacher. He comes from another reality, and so at his birth there is no room for him at the inn, an image of accepted human society. He is comforted by animals, received by shepherds, and acknowledged by kings and wizards. By nature he is outside the box of normality.

To take him to heart requires being outside the box yourself, discovering that when you think radically about love as a basis for life and culture, there will be no room in the inn for you. You will be eccentric, ostracized perhaps,

and eventually even crucified. You will be like some Gnostic visitor, someone who fell to earth to awaken those who have fallen asleep and have forgotten the wisdom that would make human life effective.

At the same time, if you have had your Christmas, you will have a light in you that will make your life worthwhile. You will be deeply satisfied for being a stranger in a familiar land, involved with this life and yet mysteriously connected to the stars and beasts. You will be what the Gnostics called "anthropos," alive with a vital humanity within you. You will see past the pragmatics and self-concern of those not yet born in soul and spirit, not yet aware of how deep and vast our human nature is.

For all its charm, Christmas is a stark reminder that to be fully human entails hosting another cosmic self that transcends the petty needs of any particular insecure nation, family, or personality. It is an outsiders' festival, suggesting that the perspective of the stars and beasts be included among our concerns. If we were to take the veil of sentimentality off Christmas, we might be startled to discover that there

is an alien in our very make-up, a being gifted with a vast potential for love and creativity, but one so foreign to ordinary values that his story takes him directly from Bethlehem to Golgotha, from the wooden stable to the wooden cross.

The stars were right that night, that eternal and recurring night, when childlike hope was born into the world. This year, Mars will be bright in the sky during the Christmas season. He is an archon of war and aggression, and there is no denying his terrible influence at this time in history. But the spiritual traditions say that he has a good side—he strengthens, fortifies, and sharpens everything we do. This year might be the time to firm up our notions of what it means to be religious and spiritual, what it means to love our enemies, and what it means to make peace.

The red star that shines over Bethlehem this season holds the message that real strength lies in the substance of our ideas, the depth of our character, and the power in our souls. Overt aggression always betrays the collapse of that internal strength. Mars doesn't bless bloodshed; he promises a real peace that comes from the maturing of emotions and ideas.

The same is true of the child shining in the manger. There is deceptive strength in the simplicity of that scene. I would hope that the Christians who display that crèche would be generous in offering it openly to the world, and that those who are not Christian could enjoy it without taking offense. It displays a secret embedded in all of life: the promise of renewal, birth, beginnings, a spiritual cosmos alive with song and light, extreme peace and indomitable hope. □

*This year might be the
time to firm up our notions
of what it means to be
religious and spiritual,
what it means to love our
enemies, and what it
means to make peace.*

The Divinity of Christmas

Matthew Fox

TIKKUN spoke with Matthew Fox about the meaning of Christmas. What follows is an edited transcription of his comments.

The Christmas stories are just that, stories. They are not historical stories—the material about the manger, the Magi, the animals surrounding the birth, the angels announcing good news to the shepherds—but they are rich and profoundly archetypal stories which draw upon the Biblical material that was well known to many. In one such story, Isaiah talks of the way that the people of Israel don't know God as well as the ass and the ox do—"The ox knows its owner and the ass its master's crib, Israel knows nothing, my people understands nothing." (Is. 1:3) This a message that is repeated throughout the Gospel. Sometimes four-legged animals are closer to God than even the chosen people, and divinity arrives among the *ani'im*, among the poor, the powerless, the disenfranchised. God at times may be closer to those who are at the bottom of the ladder than to those who act arrogantly at the top of skyscrapers. So the news of Jesus's birth goes out first to the shepherds, the people at the bottom of the totem pole who smell like sheep because they hang out with the sheep. It is the *ani'im* who are the first to really know God and know where God's glory really lies.

The Christmas story, then, is quite a political story. And all the more so when you put it in an imperial context—either that of Rome in the first century or the United States in the twenty-first century—and you see how very revolutionary it is to be calling the poor and the downtrodden "children of God" and bearers of God's "glory." The words from the angels to the shepherds, "Glory to God in the highest and peace to all people of good will," are ecumenical, truly universal, a promise that grace is available to all by way of the *ani'im* or shepherds. This universality is typical of wisdom literature in the Bible.

The infancy narratives are a miniature of the whole Gospel story. The good news of God with us, *Emanuel*, is

Matthew Fox is founding president of the University of Creation Spirituality and author of 26 books, including One River, Many Wells: Wisdom Springing from Global Faiths. www.creationspirituality.org



there, but there are also hints of future struggle and even death. (The story says that the ruler at the time, Herod, wanted to kill the new born Jesus, just as most prophets face the danger of violence from those who do not wish to hear their message or fear that that message may supplant them.)

One of the deepest meanings of Christmas is that we are all called upon to be bearers of a new kind of wisdom. The church has often obscured this message by making Jesus the only son of God, but in fact, everyone who bears wisdom is really a son or daughter of God (a theme that was already in the Jewish tradition before Jesus). Yet the story tells us where to find the Christ—and by "Christ" I mean the wisdom of God. Jesus represented the wisdom of God in his period, just as many others did. It is most useful to think of the season of Advent (the four weeks building to Christmas in the Christian liturgical cycle) as the birthing of Christ within us. Meister Eckhart put it wonderfully: "What good is it to me if Mary gave birth to the son of God some 1400 years ago and I don't give birth to the son of God in my person, in my time and in my culture?" Everyone, he taught, is here to be a mother of God. Mary is an example, but just an example. "We are all meant to be mothers of God," he said. "We are all here pregnant with God!!!"

And when? At the time when darkness is most profound and scary. Of course we have no idea when Jesus was actually born, but early Christianity chose the time of the winter solstice, which had already been a major holiday in the ancient world. The story tells us that divinity leaps forward "in the middle of the night," in the darkest moments. It is then that the wisdom of God leaps into human history.

Then, we ask, under what circumstances does wisdom leap into human history? We can look at our own time and see that it happens through the kinds of activities and life

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

orientation that were developed by a Gandhi or a Martin Luther King, Jr. or others who bear evidence of being “sons or daughters of God.” Darkness is not something to be afraid of—there is a silence, a mystery, a not-being-in-control about darkness, that creates the space for divine wisdom to appear and leap into people’s hearts (which is why Christians celebrate mass at midnight on Christmas). The authentic creativity of justice-making can happen most effectively in the darkest of times. Sacred light comes through in a special way to overcome the forces of darkness. And that, I think, is why people identified the winter solstice with the season of the celebration of the birth of the divine.

The commercialism of Christmas can very much subvert this message. That’s why some Christians today are refusing to buy gifts at Christmas and instead insisting that the gifts we give be those that we make ourselves, so as not to participate in the agenda of the larger corporate culture which so commercializes Christmas. The point is to move away from buying and selling to the deeper notion of giving gifts. There is nothing unspiritual in itself about gift-giving. But when it gets whipped up in the consumer frenzy of

shopping that we often see in early and mid-December, judging competitively each other’s and our own gifts, then the deeper meanings of Christmas gets distorted.

In many ways the birth narratives are a New Creation Story in the Bible. The Magi, who are pagan figures, are searching the heavens for a sign of a new birth. The feelings of the stories are those of awe and wonder that echo a new creation story. But the new creation is really meant to be a feeling in the human heart come alive again.

Francis of Assisi is accredited with the focus on the manger, the animals, and the child at Christmas. The manger emphasis also brings back the echoes of the first chapter of Isaiah. Christmas is therefore an affront to adulthood. It harbors an intrinsically unsettling and challenging message—that divinity is in the child, in the homeless, and that wisdom will be found among the young and the playful and those still capable of “radical amazement” (as Heschel used to say). One way that I define the mystic is “the divine child within us wanting to play in the universe.” So Christmas is a moment to honor and celebrate that divine child who is the divine wisdom and who is eager to be born in every one of us. □

THE NEW ANTI-SEMITISM (continued from page 42)

peace is one of her most valuable contributions to this anguishing subject: “Two competing rights can coexist,” she says, “when no one is wrong and no one is right. Perhaps we must learn to ‘sit with’ a problem, for as long as it takes, until progress is made in a nonviolent way. Instead of warriors with bombs and chemicals, the world needs warriors of peace with wise words, patience, and faith to outlast the guns of war and the sands of time.” Amen.

Hatred, terrorism, and war, in ever more frightening forms, are the plagues of the twenty-first century. It seems to me that if this era is asking anything of us, it is to understand hatred in all its forms and to find another way to conduct ourselves as a species. Lest we feel a bit burdened by the scope of this *tikkun olam* project, let me add: I believe that even small deeds can contribute toward creating a less hateful world.

I’m reminded of a conversation I had with my father many years ago. He told me that after the Holocaust, upon his return to Poland, he contemplated his future. Of his extended family of eleven siblings, parents, cousins, aunts, and uncles, only a brother and sister had survived. The pogrom in Kielce (forty Jews killed on a train) took place soon after his return, reminding him that the rage to annihilate the Jews was not over. “I had one thing on my mind,” he said, “to kill as many Germans as possible and then to join my brothers and sisters in the next world.” I was shocked. All of my life, I knew my father as a sweet and gen-

tle man, the soul of kindness and compassion. I had no idea that he’d nursed a suicidal hatred before concluding that vengeance would not be a fitting memorial for the dead. It would not bring back his family or resurrect the lost Jewish world. It took him a while, he confided, but he renounced his hatred and decided to live as a Jew and to raise a family.

This would be his victory, his defiance of Hitler’s message of hate.

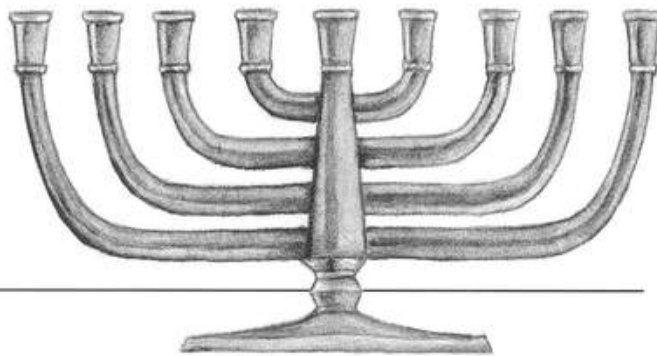
Renouncing hatred, in all its forms, is the only thing that will save us—Israeli, Palestinian, Tutsi, Hutu, Croat, Serb, Muslim, Christian, Jew, Hindu, Buddhist, Kurd, man, woman, and child. Are Palestinians “justified” in nursing their rage at Occupation until it becomes a deadly hatred of Jews? Are Jews “justified” in turning their fear of annihilation and their anger at Arab terrorism into a blind and spiteful Occupation? Where will this get us? Will it bring back the dead on both sides? Will Arab mothers be able to lift their children in their arms in a free society rather than send them to their deaths in order to take down another Jew? Will Jewish mothers be able to put their children on a bus without fear

that they will never see them again except, if they are lucky, at the morgue? Will hatred bring about two states in Israel and Palestine? Will it bring justice? Will it bring peace? Will it do anything at all except spill more innocent blood and poison the soul of the hater? To paraphrase a forgotten 1960’s anti-war song: When will we ever learn? When will we ever learn? □



A Chanukah Proposal

Matthew Kraus



To a considerable degree, the Jews survived as a vital group and as a pulsating culture because they changed their names, their language, their clothing and with them some of their patterns of thought and expression. This ability to translate, to re-adapt and re-orient themselves to new situations, *while retaining a basic inner core of continuity*, was largely responsible, if not for their survival, at least for their vitality.... Assimilation properly channeled and exploited can thus become a kind of blessing, for assimilation bears within it a certain seminal power which serves as a challenge and a goad to renewed creativity.

—Gerson D. Cohen, “The Blessing of Assimilation in Jewish History,” 1966

Inscribed on the invitation to a Christmas party were the disturbing words “Have you been naughty or nice?” There is nothing wrong with being invited to a Christmas party, but it bothered me that the theme of moral accounting was being imposed upon me in December. Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur mark the period for Jews to consider when we have been “naughty or nice.” The invitation, by assuming that everyone adheres to the ideology of Christmas, unconsciously invalidated the Jewish time of ethical judgment.

We all have stories around this holiday season that reflect the impact of Christianity on Judaism. Even though as Jews living in America we are constantly exposed to secular American culture, Chanukah is the time when we most acutely experience Christianity and the Christian element of America. Indeed, the relationship between Christmas and Chanukah represents one of the major ironies of American Jewish life. During this holiday we celebrate the Maccabees’ victory over the imposition of a non-Jewish culture, in this case, Greek religion. And yet, around the same time of this festival of Chanukah we feel the most assaulted by a non-Jewish culture, in our case represented by the Americanized incarnation of the Christian religion. We see Christmas trees, lights, and shows everywhere. We persistently hear Christmas songs and exhortations to have Christmas spirit. Santa Claus, reindeer, and

crèches surround us. Many experience over-emphasis of Christmas and under-emphasis of Chanukah in our children’s schools. Let me make clear that I am not against the celebration of Christmas. Nor do I claim that, like the Syrian Greeks, Christians celebrating Christmas are seeking to eliminate Judaism. Rather, I am expressing what I feel as a Jew—the irony that the tension and conflict between Judaism and Christianity erupts most acutely during Chanukah, that is, during the holiday that recalls the tension and conflict between Jews and non-Jews.

Around the same time of this festival of Chanukah we feel the most assaulted by a non-Jewish culture, in our case represented by the Americanized incarnation of the Christian religion.

For most American Jews, the meaning of Chanukah is summed up in the *Al Hanisim* prayer that we insert into the daily liturgy during Chanukah. According to the prayer, “in the days of Mattathias, son of Yohanan, Hasmonean High Priest, and his sons, a wicked Greek government arose against your people Israel, causing them to neglect your Torah and violate your laws.” The prayer further describes how God miraculously enables the underdog Maccabees to defeat the powerful Greeks because of their zealous commitment to Judaism. The story is simplistic: we celebrate the defeat of the pernicious, evil, Greek culture by Jewish culture. As the prophet Zechariah says in the *haftarah* for the Sabbath during Chanukah—“not by might and not by power, but by my spirit.” Chanukah, in prayers like the *Al Hanisim*, commemorates the triumph of Judaism over Hellenism, of Jewish spirit over non-Jewish spirit, of Jewish culture over non-Jewish culture.

Yet this traditional story, so deeply encoded in our liturgy, obscures the real story of Chanukah. The real story reveals a different, more intricate picture, one we can find if

Rabbi Matthew Kraus is an associate professor of Classics and chair of the Jewish Studies program at Williams College.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

we look again to the sources. There we will find accounts like that of the Jewish delegation and the triremes (triremes were Greek warships). Recorded in the *Second Book of Maccabees* (4:18–20), this story provides the background for the subsequent revolt led by Mattathias and his sons. Under the general heading “The Atrocious Sins of the Hellenizing Usurpers,” Jonathan Goldstein, in *II Maccabees*, translates the passage this way:

When the quinquennial games were being celebrated at Tyre in the presence of the king, the abominable Jason sent a delegation representing the Antiochenes from Jerusalem bearing three hundred drachmas to pay for the sacrifice to Herakles. The bearers themselves, however, decided not to use the money for a sacrifice, since that was not proper, but to donate it to be spent for another purpose. Jason, in sending the delegation, had intended that the money be contributed for the sacrifice to Herakles, but because of the bearers it was contributed for the fitting out of triremes.

This oft-neglected passage contains a startling detail that raises a crucial question with far-reaching implications. What kind of Jews finds it improper to sacrifice to Herakles, but deem it acceptable to participate in a Greek athletic contest? These “Antiochenes from Jerusalem” can only be hellenized Jews who comfortably negotiate a synthesis of Jewish and Greek culture. They are sufficiently hellenized to receive the support of the extreme hellenizer Jason and at the same time sufficiently Jewish to receive the pious endorsement of the openly anti-Greek *Second Book of Maccabees*. This episode complicates the oft-cited notion of a stark conflict between Jewish and non-Jewish.

Indeed, scholars no longer portray post-biblical Judaism in black-and-white. Just as today, the Jewish people in Maccabean times consisted of many groups with a diversity of approaches to Judaism. There were Jews in this period who completely accepted, moderately assimilated, or vehemently opposed Greek culture. It was this factionalization of Jewish society, and not the fact of hellenization on its own, that was primarily responsible for the cultural struggle. The famous historian of Hellenistic Judaism, Viktor Tcherikover, in *The World History of the Jewish People: The Hellenistic Age*, puts it nicely:

So many latent conflicts were at work within Jewish society: political differences between the supporters of the Seleucids and the adherents of the Ptolemies, social conflict between the aristocracy and the common people, and ideological conflict between the Hellenizers and the adherents to tradition. The historical process had brought Jewish society to the threshold of a crisis. It needed only the slightest spark for the situation to explode into open war.

So, despite the story told by prayers like *Al-Hanisim*, the fact is that Hellenism itself was not necessarily the primary evil force in Jewish culture. To be sure, there was a conflict

between a hellenistic state and the Jewish community. But this aspect of the conflict was essentially political, not cultural. Antiochus IV did pass decrees prohibiting the practice of Judaism and he defiled the Temple. But these acts were a result of his political policy and were primarily carried out to enhance the political power of the Syrian kingdom, not because of any hostility on his part to Judaism *per se*. So the actual version of the event distinguishes between the cultural struggle waged essentially among Jews over how far to hellenize Jewish culture from the political struggle between Jews and the Greek government over who would rule Judea.

It might surprise us that many hellenized Jews were not politically allied with the Greeks but remained fiercely loyal to Judaism. A greater surprise is that even those Jews who criticized Hellenism were open to its influence—in fact, much of the success of the Maccabees themselves can be traced to their successful adaptation of Hellenism: they used Greek military techniques which led to military victory; they claimed close kinship with the Greek city of Sparta (1 Macc. 12:5–23); and their historians adopted Greek literary forms (e.g., the *Second Book of Maccabees*) which enhanced the power of the Maccabees and promoted the commemoration of Chanukah itself. The writer of the *Second Book of Maccabees* drew on Greek traditions like Socrates dying for philosophy to create their own stories of martyrs like Eleazar dying for Judaism (2 Macc. 6:18–31). Just as the account of Socrates strengthened commitment to Greek philosophy, so too did the martyr accounts intensify commitment to Judaism. From this point of view, the Maccabees miraculously won this cultural battle for the character of Judaism with the selective utilization of Greek achievements. So the victory of the Maccabees was, to quote Zechariah again, “not by might, nor by power, but by spirit”—through the adaptation of Greek modes to Jewish culture.

This account of the Chanukah narrative is not new, reflecting as it does the scholarly consensus for the past thirty years. However, the implications of the true story

Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation

Publication Title: TIKKUN. Publication Number: 0887-9982. Filing date: 10/01/03. Issue Frequency: Bimonthly. Number of issues published annually: 6. Annual subscription price: \$29. Complete mailing address of office publication: 3137 Telegraph Ave., Oakland, CA 94609. Complete mailing address of office of publisher: Patricia and George Vradenburg, 2901 Woodland Dr. NW, Washington DC 20008. Publisher: Patricia and George Vradenburg, 2901 Woodland Dr. NW, Washington DC 20008. Editor: Michael Lerner, 2342 Shattuck #1200, Berkeley CA 94704. Managing Editor: Deborah Kory, 2342 Shattuck Ave. #1200, Berkeley CA 94704. Owner: Institute for Labor and Mental Health, 3137 Telegraph Avenue, Oakland, CA 94609.

Total Number of Copies (Net Press Run): yearly avg. 20,611; most recent 20,588; paid/requested outside-county mail subscriptions: yearly avg. 9,596; most recent 9,772; paid in-county subscriptions: yearly avg. 0, most recent 0; sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors, counter sales, and other non-USPS paid distribution: yearly avg. 8,660, most recent 8,829; total paid and/or requested circulation: yearly avg. 18,257, most recent 18,601; free distribution by mail outside-county: yearly avg. 374, most recent 373; free by mail inside-county: yearly avg. 0, most recent 0; free distribution outside the mail: yearly avg. 800, most recent 500; total free distribution: yearly avg. 1,174, most recent 873; total distribution: yearly avg. 19,431, most recent 19,474; copies not distributed: yearly avg. 1,180, most recent 1,114; percent paid and/or requested circulation: yearly avg. 93.96 %, most recent 95.52 %.

have not made a serious impact on our celebration of Chanukah. For example, in the recently published prayer book of the Reconstructionist movement, *Kol Haneshamah: Shabbat Vehagim* (1996), the Al Hanisim prayer remains unchanged—the conflict between Judaism and Hellenism remains the central theme of the story. This is particularly striking since the Reconstructionist movement is well known for its opposition to the ethnocentric heritage of Judaism. The Reform movement's *Gates of Prayer* eliminates the particular reference to Greeks in the English, while leaving the Hebrew virtually unchanged. This version reduces the narrative to a more general struggle between Jewish and anti-Jewish forces. The non-Jew as cultural bogeyman assumes a vaguer persona, but still continues to haunt us.

I propose a different response, one that correlates with the true story of Chanukah and at the same time addresses the current tension between Jewish and non-Jewish culture. Let us focus not on might nor on power, but on spirit alone. *Let Chanukah be the time when we celebrate the successful adaptation of non-Jewish culture into Judaism.* Every holiday has a particular theme or themes—Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are times of introspection and moral judgment, Sukkot reflects nature and its bounty, Passover commemorates freedom, Shavuot sacralizes Torah. Some holidays even specifically address the issue of non-Jewish/Jewish relations—Yom Hashoah soberly reminds us of the horror inflicted by the regimes of Europe. Purim recalls the precariousness of Jewish assimilation in the Diaspora—we may wear the masks of the cultures around us, but Hamans exist who will try to destroy us. Passover vilifies the Egyptians and Tisha B'Av laments most of the remaining disasters inflicted upon Jews. But these necessary holidays only represent one side, albeit real, of the Jewish/non-Jewish encounter. The Chanukah story has been used that way too, but a careful re-reading of the sources invites us to rethink the holiday in terms of the potentially positive results of our relationship with non-Jewish culture.

Many Jews may assimilate to non-Jewish culture, losing their Jewish identity. Chanukah, however, reminds us of the vitality we gain when we encourage the assimilation of non-Jewish culture, as the Maccabees succeeded in their assimilation of Greek culture. Objections immediately arise. Assimilation of contemporary customs and values can corrupt Judaism. Why should we celebrate, for example, the pervasive internalization of narcissistic consumerism in Jewish communities, a spirit dominant in American society as a whole? Why should we celebrate the decline of devotion to Jewish study resulting from the prevalent anti-intellectual American zeitgeist? Why do we need to celebrate assimilation, the well-known pernicious bane of Jewish existence?

*Let us focus not on
might nor on power,
but on spirit alone.*

Rather than constructing a dichotomy that pits the evils of assimilation against its benefits, however, we should adopt a more balanced position—sometimes assimilation benefits Judaism, sometimes it has a corrupting influence. We all probably agree that assimilating the virtues of democracy and tolerance has helped Judaism. Sometimes, the effects of assimilation are not so clearly beneficial—for example, many Jews still disagree about the place and extent of feminist values in Judaism. As far as rituals are concerned, for most Jews, a Chanukah bush goes too far,

but lights and decorations in the window meaningfully adapt non-Jewish seasonal customs to the mitzvah of publicizing the miracle of Chanukah. This is not the place to resolve these debates. Rather, seeking to celebrate the successful assimilation of non-Jewish culture challenges us to make explicit the essential values and customs

in non-Jewish culture that might enrich Judaism.

Another objection could be raised. When we consciously adapt elements of non-Jewish culture, we may lose our *kavanah*, the proper feeling. We may focus on the non-Jewish origin of the custom, rather than its Jewish re-creation. We may feel defeated by the intrusion of a non-Jewish element rather than victorious through its reformation into an essentially Jewish practice. It is, however, precisely this feeling of being assimilated rather than doing the assimilating that we need to confront. Rather than myopically decrying the curses of non-Jewish culture, let us take Chanukah as an opportunity to celebrate the historical ability of Judaism to adapt, to re-form, to re-construct the non-Jewish in order to conserve, preserve, and enrich Judaism. Let Chanukah be the time to rededicate ourselves to this process of assimilating to Judaism lest we be assimilated from Judaism. Then we will not feel that we are victims of a dominant culture, but rather creative formers of Judaism.

We need a holiday that says, "Thank you God for the miracle of not being overwhelmed by a foreign culture, but rather adapting a foreign culture to Jewish customs and values." Numerous authorities have often noted that Jews have many customs deriving from non-Jewish sources: the quintessentially Jewish seder emerged from Greco-Roman dining customs and Rosh Hashanah comes from Babylonian kingship festivals. The Hebrew language, the scientific study of Judaism, liberal Judaism, modern Yiddish literature, and Jewish nationalism can be attributed to the active engagement with non-Jewish society. Nevertheless, while we often acknowledge our adaptation of the non-Jewish world we never *celebrate* this adaptation. Chanukah is the appropriate time for such a commemoration because the story addresses the theme of the relationship between Jews and non-Jews. Instead of feeling assaulted by the onslaught

(continued on page 90)

"You switched for pork?"

"Never underestimate the power of forbidden foods. A lot of Jews eat it already. They chew peppermint leaves, so you won't smell it on their breath."

"I may be wrong, but I don't see a huge cross-over from pork."

"How about 'Sunday' and pork?"

"Will you stop with 'Sunday?' 'Sunday's' nothing. I mean, when it comes to days of rest, Saturday's the better choice. It's a day sooner."

"I always thought it was too soon. I wasn't tired yet."

"Look, we're talking about frills."

"Frills are important."

"We're bigger than frills. We've got a great religion. Something so meaningful, people risk death to be part of it."

"I wouldn't bring that up at the recruitment sessions."

"But that says something. It says it's worth it. Now, think. Go to the essence. What is it about us you really like?"

"I like Jesus."

"Good. Why?"

"He's nice."

"Lots of people are nice."

"Not as nice as Jesus."

"But isn't there something more than his niceness?"

"Well, he says if you believe in him you won't die. Which, to be honest, I find a little confusing."

"Why?"

"I thought if you believe in him, you do die."

"Not always. And even if you do ... wait a minute. I think you hit on something."

"Forget the whole thing?"

"You just said it. Dying isn't bad for us, because we've got ..."

"... what?"

"You know this. We've got ..."

"I have no idea."

"Think. Something we've got that they don't. And that thing is ..."

"Just tell me, okay?"

"Heaven! We've got Heaven!"

"Jews have heaven."

"Very hazy. I asked my Dad about it. He was barely coherent."

"And he's a rabbi. Wait, I get it. If we've got heaven, and they don't ..."

"... we don't really die..."

"... and they do! That's perfect! Heaven. Heaven's great!"

"Better than lying in the ground."

"Way better."

"You know, when you think about it, our whole religion's more people-friendly. With them, it's 'The wrath of the Lord ...', and smiting, and '... Cast a pestilence upon the land.' We're not like that."

"I was kind of sensing we weren't. But I was wondering if it wasn't just, you know, like a come-on, and the wrath came later."

"I don't think so. I think we're basically wrath-free."

"Didn't Jesus yell at some moneychangers ...?"

"Okay, so we're not wrath-free. But we're definitely reduced-wrath."

"Then, that's it. That's what we sell. A reduced-wrath religion, Heaven at the end, and pork—and Sunday, for those who prefer it—as a bonus."

"I like it."

"It's good, isn't it?"

"It's very good. But we need one more thing. A deal closer."

"No circumcisions?"

"Simon, I think we're there."

□

A CHANUKAH PROPOSAL (continued from page 87)

of Christmas and Christianity, let us affirm Judaism's ability to successfully absorb the non-Jewish. Let us not always feel threatened by our surroundings, but rather see our environment as an opportunity to enhance Judaism. Let Chanukah be the time not of recalling the defeat of hell-enization, but rather the victory of Judaization.

Revisioning Chanukah as a holiday devoted to our interactions with other cultures would also open up opportunities for new customs and rituals. Why not devote Chanukah to a study of Jewish heroes who successfully integrated Jewish and non-Jewish culture? We could study Philo or Maimonides who combined Jewish and Greek philosophy. Medieval Spanish Jewry offers a wide array of poets/scholars/statesmen like Shmuel Hanagid, who adapted Arabic poetry to create beautiful Hebrew poems. We could mention moderns like Debbie Friedman who has applied American musical forms to create spiritual Jewish music. Chanukah could become a week in which we celebrate the various folkways which Judaism has adapted—each night representing a different culture—one night of Ashkenazic foods and Yiddish songs and stories, the next, Yemenite foods and songs and stories, then Ethiopian, then American, the next with Israeli, and then with Sephardic folk traditions. Another idea—a Chanukah festival that celebrates the various Jewish communities from around the world. Such a festival could be an opportunity to learn about and enjoy different Jewish *kehillot* and see how they have adapted their native cultures to Judaism.

Debbie Friedman's musical adaptation of Zechariah's words provides both a marvelous example of Judaization and a poetic encapsulation of this Chanukah proposal. She reinterprets Zechariah by adding six words to the prophetic verse: "not by might, and not by power, but by spirit alone, *shall we all live in peace.*" Let Chanukah be the time when we celebrate how Judaism can harmoniously and healthily adapt the spirit of the age.

□

How the Jews Lost the Lead

Earl Pomerantz

Once upon a time, there were twelve Christians. Well, not “Once upon a time”—this isn’t “The Three Bears” with Christians, it’s real. There was a time when there were twelve Christians. Thirteen, if you count Jesus, who came and went, and then came back. Twelve, thirteen, maybe some girls who hung around, not a large crowd, especially for a religion. Tell your boss you’re in a religion with twelve people in it, and you’re unlikely to get the day off for one of their holidays.

Of course, if you follow religion at all, then you know that Christianity, whose followers once numbered in the teens, grew bigger and now, well, they’re huge. Not that I’m saying that’s surprising or undeserved. Christianity’s a fine religion, with lots of comforting and inspiring things in it. People seem to like it. And I say more power to them. They’re a big success and that’s great. And I mean that.

It’s just ...

Okay, I’ll admit it. There is this tiny tinge of envy. But, be fair, can you blame me? Christianity grew out of Judaism. We came first. Though it’s hard to believe today, there was actually a time when there were a lot of Jews and no Christians whatsoever. Not even one. There were restricted golf courses and nobody was playing on them. Now they’re this enormous, superstar religion and, well, we’re still around, but really small. And to be honest, it’s tough to take. The sturdy, older brother watching his quietly charismatic sibling zoom past him. You’re standing there wondering, “What happened?”

I mean, there’s nothing wrong with being a minority religion. We’re on the map, people have heard of us. When they say Judeo-Christian, we’re Judeo. It’s just that once in a while, you can’t help imagining what it would be like to be the majority, and have the President—a Jewish president, because we’re the majority—come out on the first night of Chanukah and light a huge menorah on the White House lawn.

But maybe I’m being ungrateful. When you think about it, it’s a miracle we’re here at all, considering the more than occasional efforts to wipe us out. Jews log in at a perfectly acceptable 13 million worldwide, which, though not

hundreds of millions, like you know who, is better than nothing. Ask the Ishmaelites and the Chaldeans if they’d like to have 13 million descendants walking around instead of nobody. When’s the last time you took in a Canaanite movie or picked up some Philistine take-out? Everyone’s gone, except us. And I’m certain, way back, betting was very heavy in the other direction.

*Once in a while, you
can’t help imagining
what it would be like
to be the majority.*

Still, one can’t help hearkening back wistfully to the era—a short era I’ll admit, but an era nonetheless—when there were more Jews than Christians. In that brief period during the BC’s, if you leaned theologically in the direction of one God that nobody can see, Jew was the only game in town. Everyone else was sacrificing virgins and praying to cats.

Then, came the ADs. Of course, Jews didn’t know it was the ADs, they just thought it was more time. But they were wrong. The ADs meant more than counting the years up instead of counting them down. The ADs brought Judaism a new baby brother, a brother who would one day leave them, at least religious popularity-wise, in the dust.

Change was in the air. Trouble in the Holy Land, the Romans pushing everybody around. In times like these, Jewish tradition calls for a messiah to show up and straighten things out. And, to be sure, there was no lack of applicants for the job. Messiah candidates, usually badly dressed, with wild eyes and crazy hair, would stand on some high place where everybody could see them, and loudly proclaim, “I’m him!” or, more loftily, “I’m Him!” (Of course, it’s really “I’m He,” but people rarely warm to a messiah who’s smarter than they are.)

They were all fakes. Every one of them. They’d draw some early heat, earning a free meal or a place to stay, possibly a complimentary pair of sandals, but sooner or later, reality did them in. They’d make prophecies that never came to pass, or some sick person would cry, “Heal me!” and they’d just look at them. Game over. After that, they were just irritating pests who eventually had to go out and find a job.

But then, someone came along who, to this day, is viewed as the genuine article. We’re told of an ability to heal with a touch, walk on water, and make a small amount of food go a really long way. Jewish onlookers, desperate for a messiah, couldn’t help but take notice. The right guy at the right time.

He got twelve followers. Not too impressive considering

Earl Pomerantz is a two-time Emmy award winning television writer whose work has appeared in “Television Quarterly” and the Los Angeles Times. He’s been Jewish all his life.

the things he was pulling off, but Jews, even desperate ones, are a highly skeptical people. When you tell Jews there's this guy out there doing miracles, the standard response is, "Go away, I'm busy." Or, if they're funny, "Let him try selling flannel in the desert. Now, that would be a miracle."

Of course, you can't blame early Jews for not viewing with awe a religion that had twelve people in it. For a religion, twelve is a precariously puny number. Romans sweep through in a bad mood—goodbye, Christians. A plague wipes them out in twenty minutes. Followers get jobs out of town, they start families and can't make the meetings, another messiah shows up giving away camels—these guys were hanging by a thread. Borrowing a desert metaphor, when you're in a twelve-man religion, your membership card's written in sand.

A larger membership was urgently needed. It was grow or go. And growing wouldn't be easy. The problem? To convince Jews, stubborn people to begin with, to abandon a religion of thousands of years and throw in with twelve zealots proclaiming that theirs is the one true way. Oh, and one more thing. If the Romans caught you being one, they nailed you to a cross.

I imagine—and since I wasn't there imagination's all I can go on—that there had to have been some sort of committee. A marketing team, devising strategies for attracting Jews to the fledgling faith. Maybe later, they'd present their suggestions to the twelve man congregation, but to hammer out the basics, I see a smaller contingent. Maybe two people, say, Matthew (formerly Murray) and Simon (formerly Sam).

If this meeting had been recorded, we'd know what it was that saved Christianity from extinction, and paved the way to the great success it enjoys today. Since it wasn't, I'll have to make it up. We open on an early AD gavel pounding on a table, or maybe a hand hitting an indoor rock.

"I call this meeting to order."

"Murray, it's just you and ..."

"Excuse me. It's Matthew."

"What?"

"When I was Jewish, I was Murray. Now I'm Matthew. With two 't's."

"Sorry. Matthew. What I was saying is it's just you and me. There's no need for protocol."

"You're right, Sam."

"Simon."

"Sorry."

"Okay. Now, what we're here to do is to come up with appealing ideas to win converts and swell our ranks. Because if our ranks don't swell ..."

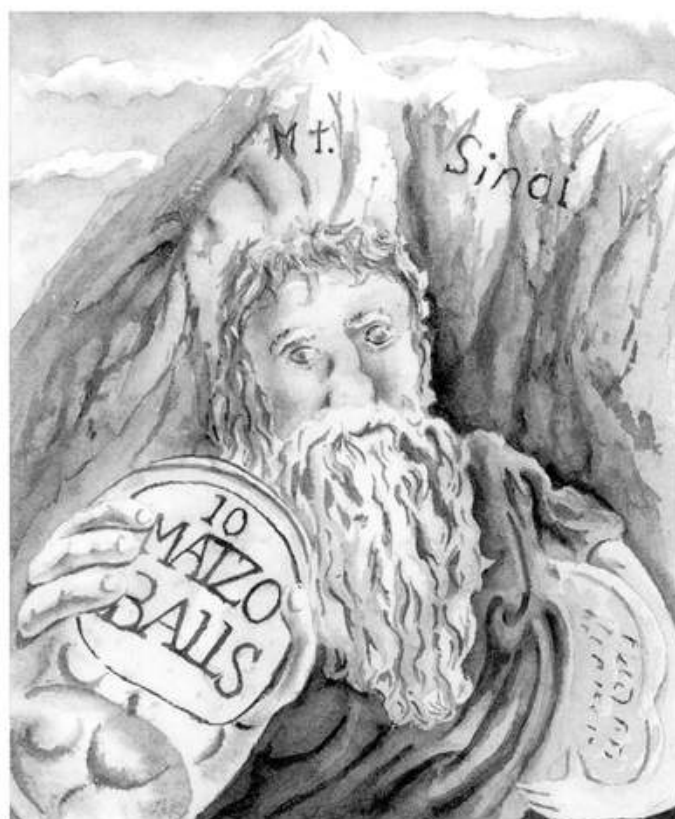
"... we're headed for oblivion."

"That's a depressing way to put it."

"But it's true, isn't it?"

"It might be. But I'd prefer a sunnier attitude."

"May I be candid? I never wanted to be on this committee. My strength is picnics and outings. I don't even know where to start."



"It's a tough assignment, I agree. Why don't we start by looking at the things that make us different."

"We're certainly qualified to do that. We used to be Jews; now, we're this. By the way, what is this?"

"What is what?"

"What we are. You know, like our name. Jews are Jews. Who are we?"

"There's another committee working on that."

"Good. 'Cause it's embarrassing when someone asks, 'What do you call yourselves?' and I say 'I don't know.' It shows a lack of imagination. Maybe we should have a temporary name. Like we wear these fish emblems, maybe we should call ourselves Fishtians."

"I think we're wandering here."

"Sorry. What's our job again?"

"To convert the Jews."

"Right."

"And to do that we need to consider what is it that makes us different?"

"I know a difference."

"What's that?"

"Their Sabbath is on a Saturday, and ours is on Sunday."

"I don't think you're getting the concept."

"You wanted different. I gave you different."

"Think about it. Do you really think the opportunity to pray on Sunday instead of Saturday will send Jews flocking to our midst?"

"Oh, I see. It's not just different. It's different and better."

"Exactly. Maybe we should draw from experience. What was it about us that made you want to switch?"

"That's easy. Pork."

Sharon's Politicide

Daniel Lazare

■ *Politicide: Ariel Sharon's War Against the Palestinians* by Baruch Kimmerling. Verso, 234 pp.

Baruch Kimmerling's valuable new study of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is actually an examination of two conflicts, one between Jews and Arabs and the other among the Jews themselves. The first is most readily understood in demographic terms. Israel's population currently stands at about 6.2 million, eighty percent of it Jewish. The population of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, currently stands at about 2.6 million, of which only about fifteen percent is Jewish, while the population of the Gaza Strip is now approaching 1.3 million, with Jews just a tiny fraction of the total. While pre-1967 Israel remains overwhelmingly Jewish, the combined population of Israel-Palestine, both of which are under Tel Aviv's thumb, is now split 54-46 between those who are Jewish and those who are not.

For traditional Zionists, this is bad news, but things are likely to get even worse in the decades to come. By the year 2020, for instance, with the population of historic Palestine (the entire expanse between the Jordan and the Mediterranean) projected to grow some 50 percent, Jews will account for only 43 percent of the total. In Israel proper, the Jewish majority is expected to drop to around 65 percent over the same period. Even if it gave up the Occupied Territories tomorrow, the Jewish state would find itself signifi-

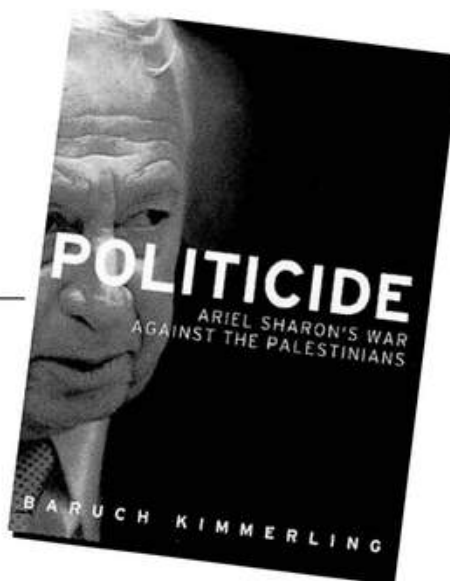
cantly less Jewish with each passing decade.

This is the "demographic dilemma," as it is famously known, and it feeds directly into the second conflict, which concerns what the Jewish state should do in response. Because it never got around to drafting a formal constitution back in 1948, Israel has been able to sidestep all these years what political scientists call the "sovereignty question," i.e. who rules and in whose behalf the

Is Israel ruled by a government of the people, by the people, for the people? Or is it of, by, and for the Jewish portion exclusively?

state is to be governed. Is Israel ruled by a government of the people, by the people, for the people? Or is it of, by, and for the Jewish portion exclusively? Does sovereignty lie with flesh-and-blood human beings or with the ancient Canaanite deity known as Yahweh, who, according to Genesis 15, gave to Abraham and his descendants the entire expanse "from the river of Egypt to the great river the Euphrates"? Or, finally, as secular Zionists have long maintained, does sovereignty inhere not in God but in Eretz Yisrael, which is to say the land itself?

Each answer implies a different political response. If secular democracy is the answer, then a shifting demographic balance between Jews and non-Jews is intrinsically no more problematic in Israel than in, say, Long



Island or Queens. Shifting demographics also may not matter if you believe in a sovereign deity since the Torah says there is no problem with Jews ruling over a menial non-Jewish population composed of "hewers of wood and drawers of water" (Josh. 9:21). But if

you believe in Jewish democracy, it matters a great deal, since such a thing is impossible in the absence of a massive Jewish majority. It also matters if you believe in the land itself since the historic heartland of Eretz Yisrael is in fact Judea and Samaria, both located in what is now the West Bank. While many Israelis would be happy to jettison this particular piece of real estate, the official ideology of the Jewish state makes it supremely difficult.

Thus, to Kimmerling, "the annexationist camp [finds] itself in an impossible situation: one patriotic imperative, to possess the sacred land, contradict[s] the other patriotic imperative, to insure a massive Jewish majority on the land."

This is the problem bedeviling Israeli and Jewish politics in general: what to do about territories that Israel can neither hold onto nor give up. So far, the logic of Israel's position has pushed it to what Kimmerling calls

(continued on page 95)

Daniel Lazare is the author most recently of *The Velvet Coup: The Constitution, the Supreme Court, and the Decline of American Democracy* (Verso 2001). He is currently at work on a political study of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam for Pantheon.

Nobody Knows Best

Stew Albert

- *An Execution In The Family* by Robert Meeropol. St Martin's Press, 2003.
- *The Company You Keep* by Neil Gordon. Viking, 2003.

My mother cried on the night of June 19, 1953—the night they executed Ethel and Julius Rosenberg. They were accused of giving atomic bomb secrets to the Russians and somehow being responsible for the Korean War. But to my mother and father they were young Jewish parents, who maybe did some things they shouldn't have, but were being killed because they were Jewish.

It's not that my parents loved Communists. My mother never forgave local Reds "for having a picnic on Brighton Beach during Yom Kippur." But in Brooklyn at that time, it was hard to find an adult Jew who didn't have a friend or relative who was at one time a party member or at least a fellow traveler. And they all pictured the Rosenbergs as being like their old friends from City College.

"Believe me," they said, "it has nothing to do with them being Red or Pink, if they were goyem, they'd get off with a slap on the wrist." I was thirteen at the time and my family was semi-Orthodox. I had attended the very Orthodox Young Israel of Bedford Bay Hebrew School. I used to walk door-to-door raising money for Israel and I loyally supported America as it bombed North Korea back to the stone age. But the Rosenberg case

stuck in my head. The Brooklyn Eagle had featured a drawing of Ethel being burned alive in the electric chair with smoke coming out of her head. And in photographs she looked like a kindly school teacher.

I got an impression then that has stayed with me to the present—that deep down, something was really wrong with America, that beneath the glittery surface it was a scary place to live. And I never stopped wondering about the Rosenberg sons, then six and ten years old. What must it have been like to lose their parents in such a gruesome way? I was sure they were doomed souls who would lead miserable lives.

I found out otherwise when the Rosenberg children went public in the 1970's and sued lawyer Louis Nizer who had written a nasty book about their parents and had appropriated their death house letters. They'd been adopted by excellent individuals who raised them to be proud of their birth parents and to respect their values. Anne and Abel Meeropol were splendid, if imperfect, parents, both former Communist Party members. Abel wrote two legendary songs—"The House I Love In" and "Strange Fruit." The Jewish Board of Guardians of New York had sued to block the Meeropols and to put the young Rosenbergs in an orphanage, declaring it was to protect the children against Communist indoctrination, but fortunately they failed.

I was greatly cheered to find out



Ethel and Julius Rosenberg on their way to Sing Sing Prison following their conviction in March 1953.

that Robby and Michael Meeropol (as they came to be known) were like me—60's radicals. They co-authored *We Are Your Sons*, in which they told their tale and argued for their parents vindication and complete innocence. They began devoting considerable time and spirit to an ongoing campaign to discover and publicize the truth about their parents.

Robert Meeropol has now written a follow up to *We Are Your Sons*, a riveting memoir called *An Execution In The Family*. In it, he describes, in sparse and honest prose, what it was like for him to live through the killing of his parents, and what happened afterwards. Meeropol always believed his parents were completely innocent of any illegal activity—that they were picked out because they were Communists at the height of cold war hysteria and McCarthyism. It's understandable that Meeropol believed this. Beyond his natural inclination to vindicate his own parents, the actual

Stew Albert was a Sixties peace activist. An original Yippie. He is the author of the soon to be published *Who The Hell is Stew Albert?* You can find him at <http://hometown.aol.com/stewa/stew.html>.

court case presented against Julius and Ethel was a blatantly obvious concoction of lies. However, the U.S. government's subsequent release of the so called "Verona Papers"—a U.S. translation of Soviet coded messages about spying activity in the United States—has called some of Meeropol's life-long beliefs into question.

The Papers clear Ethel Rosenberg of being involved in a spy ring, but they point to Julius as a member of group that supplied technical and military information to Soviet intelligence. They also strongly suggest that

*How could his parents
place themselves,
and especially their
children, in such
great danger?*

he was not involved in stealing atomic secrets. The Rosenbergs were indeed framed but, perhaps it wasn't only because they were Communists. Julius may have been a non-atomic spy and Ethel may have known about his illegal activities.

Meeropol doesn't just rely on government documents. At least one old friend of his father offered him some information that points to the possibility of Julius's involvement in passing scientific information to the Soviets. This possibility, not surprisingly, created a simmering emotional crisis for Robby Rosenberg Meeropol. He has no issue with anyone, in any fashion, helping the Soviets, who were then at total war with Nazism. But how could his parents place themselves, and especially their children, in such great danger by engaging in clandestine and illegal activities?

Radical parents taking chances with their children's lives was not just an issue for the 1930's generation of rebels and their kids. In *The Company You Keep*, a novel by Neil Gordon, the

dangerous decisions that new lefty parents make in the 1960s and how their kids feel about them is the central organizing theme of this dramatic, fast paced, extremely realistic, and provocative work.

The arc of Gordon's tale is the effort of a former fugitive father to get his seventeen-year-old daughter living in England to return to the United States and testify at a parole hearing in Michigan. He fled in the 1970's from a bank robbery and murder charge stemming from a politically motivated "action" that was carried out by an ultra-militant Weather Underground break-away group. Eventually he abandoned his daughter in a hotel room when she was just ten years old.

The former revolutionary, in disguise and under an assumed name, is working as a liberal public interest lawyer in the Catskills when he is accidentally discovered by an ambitious, but eventually well-intended, young journalist. The protagonist enlists some former Weathermen and a few surprising friends, including several Republicans, to help him persuade his daughter to return for the parole hearing. They all communicate with the daughter via e-mail (indeed, the book is made up entirely of their e-mails and, finally, the daughter's solitary response) and try to explain why a wonderful person like her father would cruelly abandon her.

The portrait of fugitives on the run and the various methods they use to avoid detection is alone worth the price of admission to this story. There are moments of absolute freedom as well as vivid portrayals of the fugitive life as a kind of prison without bars. There are those who love being out-laws and remain so even after the political dream is over, going into the pot profession or stolen art salesmanship and others who surface, resume their education, careers, become upstanding progressive citizens and can now be listed among the world's greatest parents.

While the book is totally fictional,

Contemporary Jewish Writing in Hungary An Anthology

Contemporary Jewish Writing in Hungary

An Anthology

Edited by Susan Rubin Suleiman
and Éva Forgács

Contemporary Jewish Writing in Hungary features works by twenty-four of Hungary's best writers who have written about what it means to be Jewish in post-Holocaust Eastern Europe. \$24.95 paper | \$60.00 cloth

Jewish Writing in the
Contemporary World
Please ask for a complete list
of titles in the series.

Studies in Jewish Civilization, Volume 14

Women and Judaism

Edited by Leonard J. Greenspoon,
Ronald A. Simkins, and Jean
Axelrad Cahan

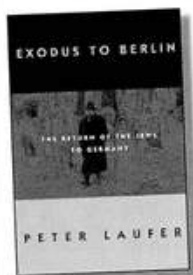
The lives of Jewish women throughout the ages are illuminated and celebrated in this dynamic anthology, which features the insights and research of historians, sociologists, artists, theologians, and philosophers. \$29.95 paper

University of Nebraska Press

Publishers of Bison Books
www.nebraskapress.unl.edu
800.755.1105

"Is there a place for Jews in Germany?...Laufer's journey to Berlin is a ride full of revelations."—Marc Fisher, *Washington Post*

PETER LAUFER Exodus to Berlin



The surprising story of the return of the Jews to Germany. In vivid narrative and highly personal

interviews, Peter Laufer brings this scene to life, including a revived neo-Nazi violence.



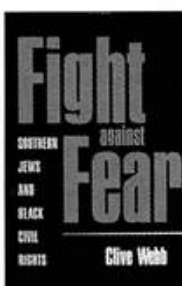
Ivan R. Dee, Publisher

www.ivanrdee.com

At your bookseller, or order toll-free
1-800-462-6420 with a major credit card.

"A must read"

—American Historical Review



FIGHT AGAINST FEAR

Southern Jews and
Black Civil Rights

Clive Webb

WINNER OF THE SOUTHERN JEWISH HISTORICAL
SOCIETY INAUGURAL BOOK PRIZE

"Webb's research is both broad and deep... His account is the fullest narrative that we have of what southern Jews would, could, and did do to help African-Americans."
—Leonard Dinnerstein, *Reviews in American History*

NOW AVAILABLE IN PAPERBACK

AT BOOKSTORES | 1-800-266-5842

www.ugapress.org | THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA PRESS

BOOK REVIEW

its characters do genuinely resemble in composite form actual folks that I once might have run into. Indeed one of the characters, a bartender by profession, mentions visiting me and my wife, as well as a number of other real-life characters.

The Weather Underground is a controversial group even among hard-core New Left survivors, and the novel is not an unmixed apologia for its actions. The novel brilliantly conveys the political infighting within the group and the shame that many of its former members feel about their actions. What's amazing, however, is that they are still very loyal to each other even though they've left their pasts far behind them. A former Weather member, now a highly respected college professor who invited Weather critic Todd Gitlin to address his seminar, nonetheless meets with the novel's main fugitive on the run and risks everything to help him. He doesn't particularly like the guy, but like a difficult family member, he in some way loves him.

The sins of the Weathermen are best summed up in their treatment of children. Their arrogance and dogmatism in pursuit of their political struggle led at one point to a kind of reckless disregard for life. Perhaps like the Rosenbergs, these sixties radicals gambled with their own lives and the lives of their children. Can the children forgive them?

As *The Company You Keep* suggests, had the vision of the Weathermen and so many other New Left radicals been realized—instead of the far more deadly and destructive Nixon, Reagan, and double Bush vision—the resulting world would have been kinder, safer, more loving and just. September 11 may not have come to pass. The cruelties done to the kids and others happened in the context of their parents' life and death struggle for a more just world. In this context lies the possibility and hope of forgiveness.

Robby Meeropol began wondering whether he was angry at his parents

during an event sponsored by The Rosenberg Fund for Children (RFC). Meeropol founded the non-profit group with the idea of helping children whose parents were in trouble because of their progressive politics and activities. The kids would be supported by a trust fund similar to the one his birth parents' lawyer established for him and his brother. One of the kids at the event asked him why he wasn't angry. Meeropol at first thought the question was about anger at the government. Indeed the youngest son of the Rosenbergs, perhaps under Cuban revolutionary influence, used to have fantasies about lining all the prosecutors and judges responsible for his parents' death up against a firing squad wall. But Robby soon realized that the kid had asked him why he wasn't angry at his parents.

It isn't until the end of the book that Meeropol finally allows himself to wonder about his anger. If he now believes that his father may have been involved in politically motivated illegal activity and that his mother knew about this project, what does he think of Julius making this decision with a couple of kids in tow? The author doesn't come to an easy conclusion. It was a time of war against the Nazis. Americans in massive numbers, including those with children, were fighting against Germany and Japan. The Rosenbergs can be seen in this light as volunteer soldiers battling for their beliefs. Yet Robby, himself a devoted parent, doesn't know if he would have made the same choice as his parents did. He seems at times to feel a mixture of admiration and abandonment for his heroic but possibly reckless parents.

In a dramatic scene portrayed by Meeropol, Neil Gordon's fiction and Robby's memoir actually merge at a fund raising party for the RFC at the home of former Weathermen Bernardine Dohrn and Bill Ayers. Their adopted son, the birth son of Kathy Boudin who served a long prison sentence, speaks up, allowing that Robby

has had an even more difficult life than he has.

What for Robby tips the balance of his feelings in favor of the Rosenbergs—and I imagine the revolutionaries of both generations—is the legacy of bold resistance to hideous oppressors that they left to their children. They bequeath an inheritance of idealism, courage, and audacity—one that on most days overwhelms the understandable hurts and agonies of childhood abandonment.

Robert Meeropol accepts his parents' legacy, but in his own way. He

puts forward a life-affirming concept he calls Constructive Revenge: taking his anger and rage at what was done to him and turning it into something good and hopeful. He believes that pain can be the parent of bold, imaginative acts and compassionate institutions that weaken oppression and strengthen hope. This is the motivation behind his work at The Rosenberg Fund for Children. Robby is not sure if his birth parents would support his manner of carrying on the family tradition. He describes occasional imaginary conversations with them about

the Fund. Sometimes they all argue. The Rosenbergs put his work down as a feel-good project. Perhaps they think it shows that their son has some unarticulated resentment toward them? Why isn't he organizing workers against fascism and imperialism? Other times Ethel and Julius support the RFC. A few compliments are exchanged and then parents and child change the subject and discuss the fall of the Soviet Union. There will always be bumps in the road for Robby Meeropol and his birth parents. But then what family is perfect? □

SHARON'S POLITICIDE (from page 91)

"politicide," his term for the total eradication of Palestinian nationalism. Deep down, right-wing Zionists like Sharon believe that there is room for only one nation in the strip of land lying between the Jordan and the Mediterranean. Therefore, Palestinians must surrender any and all national aspirations so that Jews can fulfill theirs. But since it is impossible to destroy a nation politically without impinging on its physical existence, Kimmerling writes that politicide might well lead to something more—an assault not just on the Palestinian nation, but on the Palestinian people via their mass expulsion to Jordan, Egypt, and other points beyond.

Such a transfer could take many forms. Israel could encourage the Palestinians to leave "voluntarily" by making life in the Occupied Territories so miserable that they have no choice. Or it could simply force them out at gunpoint. But since it is two conflicts we are talking about here, policies that would alleviate one might very well aggravate the other. Specifically, Israel could not implement such a drastic and inhumane measure without giving up what little democracy remains. This in turn would spark a revolt by Jews both inside and outside the Jewish state who don't care to follow Sharon and his crew down the primrose path to fascism. Likud might resolve one civil war only at the cost of triggering another.

Kimmerling, a professor of sociology at Hebrew University in Jerusalem and the University of Toronto, has a rare talent for staring a problem full in the face, however grim and forbidding it might be. With George W. Bush's farcical "roadmap" already a dead letter, his book serves as a timely and important reminder why all such efforts will go nowhere as long as the underlying political and demographic issues remain unaddressed.

This is not to say that *Politicide* is fault-free, however. To my mind, it suffers from two shortcomings. One has to do with the remarkable symmetry that now characterizes the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, an issue that Kimmerling touches on but never fully explores. This is unfortunate because it is in fact the essence of the problem. Not only are intolerant nationalists and fanatical religious fundamentalists more and more influential in Israel, but, thanks to Hamas and Islamic Jihad, they increasingly dominate Palestinian politics as well. As dedicated as the current Israeli government is to the goal of politicide, the intransigent wing of the Palestinian movement is also. Both sides are dominated by authoritarian elements that believe that the two camps are in a fight to the finish; that one or the other must predominate; and that while democracy may be fine for Europeans and North Americans, it is unsuited to the harsh political terrain of the Middle East. Rather than pulling apart, the two sides

are in some respects converging.

In addition, Kimmerling is overly sanguine concerning the role of civil disobedience. Referring to the Israeli draftees who have refused to serve in the Occupied Territories, he argues that if only the broader peace movement rallied to their side, "the result would be massive civil disobedience that would bring down the entire system of colonization and oppression." If only it were so. Yet Israel is not the Mississippi and Alabama of the twentieth century; for historical and ideological reasons, it is in fact a far tougher nut to crack. In order to do so, both sides need to do more than refuse and resist; in addition, they must begin the more difficult task of jointly reexamining their most fundamental political assumptions. Now that Israelis and Palestinians have painted themselves into a corner, progressive elements on both sides of the divide must begin figuring a way out, not separately but together. This may sound far-fetched, yet supposedly more "practical" two-state solutions have turned out to be even more so. If Jews and Palestinians are to avoid the Levantine version of MAD—mutual assured destruction—they must realize, to quote *Politicide*, "that their fates are intertwined, that their interests are mostly mutual and not mutually exclusive." If so, the end result may not only be that they "cease being enemies but ... find that their common interest lead them to become close allies as well." □

Veterans Day

Mourning the Past, Transforming the Future

Arthur Waskow

Since Passover 1968, ten days after Martin Luther King was murdered, I have been drawn again and again to fusing the celebration of holy days that mark the past with the creation of holy actions to transform the future.

For years I have done this with Jewish festivals. Now, as American society struggles with the deepest crisis of democracy since the Civil War, I find myself drawn to the same process with American holy days.

Some embittered leftists, I have discovered, dismiss holy days like the Fourth of July as belonging to “them,” the Bad Guys. Certainly those in power try to frame these sacred days to uphold their power. But we need not bow to their making idols of the sacred. Take, for example, Veterans’ Day: Tuesday, November 11.

It began as Armistice Day, when in 1918 World War I came to an end at eleven o’clock that morning. I remember as a student in the public schools standing solemnly for a full minute of utter silence at that hour every year.

And then it became a day to remember and honor the veterans who had suffered most from those wars our government had sent them to. Good wars or bad wars, voluntary or conscripted service—we honored the veterans because they bore the brunt of “our” decisions.

This year, what to do?

Let us name Veterans Day as the focus time to—

SAVE OUR SOLDIERS—BRING THEM HOME ALIVE NOW.

On that day, let us gather at military bases, recruitment centers, Veterans’ Administration hospitals, and military cemeteries.

Gather in vigils with a tone of mourning for the dead and maimed, and of deep concern for those in danger. Stand mostly silent with perhaps some music in a mostly minor key.

We do not present the usual array of speakers representing every shade of progressive and radical opinion. If anyone speaks, it is a veteran. If there are any other words, they are the names of the dead and wounded.

These are not hostile “rallies” or even nonviolent civil disobedience. We are not there in a mood of anger and hos-

tility, but one of yearning and determination.

If people ask us, “But now Iraq is shattered. What’s your alternative to the US occupation?” we answer: “First, for the sake of America: if we’ve stuck our head in a suicidal gas oven, the alternative is to pull it out. Second, for the sake of Iraq: Transfer power immediately to the UN, with a mandate for an Iraqi election. The Iraqis will be far more effective in cleaning up the mess we’ve made than we, the destroyers, can possibly be.”

Besides these specific thoughts for Veterans Day, what is at stake in this approach?

For every community and every people, the seasons of our joy and sorrow bespeak our deepest values. Those seasons were originally defined not casually but because they bespoke moments of transformation that the people did not want to forget. So the first function of these days is to Remember.

But they rarely serve for memory alone.

We may turn these days into binges of buying and consumption, saying these are our highest values.

We may turn them into celebrations of bloody war and shattered cities, saying these are our highest values.

We may turn them over to Presidents and Pentagons and Corporations, saying that our culture is no longer drinking from the wellsprings of democracy.

Or—we can turn these holy days into a time to seek new transformations.

Perhaps the oldest example of the model of continuous retransformation is the Passover Seder. It calls us to remember that the power of Pharaoh vanished before the hurricane of transformation that split the Red Sea and carried a people into freedom.

Yet the Passover Seder looks not only at those days long ago but at the present and the future. For the Seder teaches us that in *every* generation a Pharaoh will rise against us to enslave and destroy us. And it teaches us that in *every* generation, every human being must go out from slavery to freedom.

Every one of us must become one of the midwives who defied Pharaoh’s murderous orders. Every one of us must become Pharaoh’s own daughter who broke the Pharaoh’s law to save a life. Every one of us must become one of those who stood weeping at exactly the eleventh hour in 1918 and said, “No, Not again, Never again, Stop.” □

Rabbi Arthur Waskow is director of The Shalom Center and the author of Godwrestling—Round 2. You can receive the biweekly “Shalom Report” by writing www.shalomctr.org/subscribe.html.

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

תיקון

This year, give

Chanukah & Christmas Gifts

that challenge, rather than strengthen, the
competitive marketplace and its values.

1. A guest membership in the Tikkun Community (which includes a one-year subscription to TIKKUN, plus a TIKKUN lapel pin with both Israeli and Palestinian flags)
2. A subscription to TIKKUN
3. A copy of *Healing Israel/Palestine*, the latest book by Rabbi Michael Lerner
4. A Tikkun video tape
 - a. Rabbi Michael Lerner on the current realities of the Middle East
 - b. A video tape of Deepak Chopra, Cornel West, and Rabbi Michael Lerner (90 minutes)
 - c. A video tape of Rabbi Michael Lerner, Dennis Kucinich, and Jonathan Schell
 - d. A video tape of Marianne Williamson, Yitzhak Frankenthal, Jim Wallis, and Muna Aghawani
5. Re-introduction to Judaism: a set of audio tapes by Rabbi Michael Lerner on a new Global Judaism.

TO ORDER:

You can order any of these by calling 510-644-1200
or emailing magazine@tikkun.org or go online to www.tikkun.org
Tell us the name & address of your gift recipients and we will include
a holiday greeting when we send them the gift!!!