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TIKKUN

Reviews:

Steven Kellman on Michael Walzer

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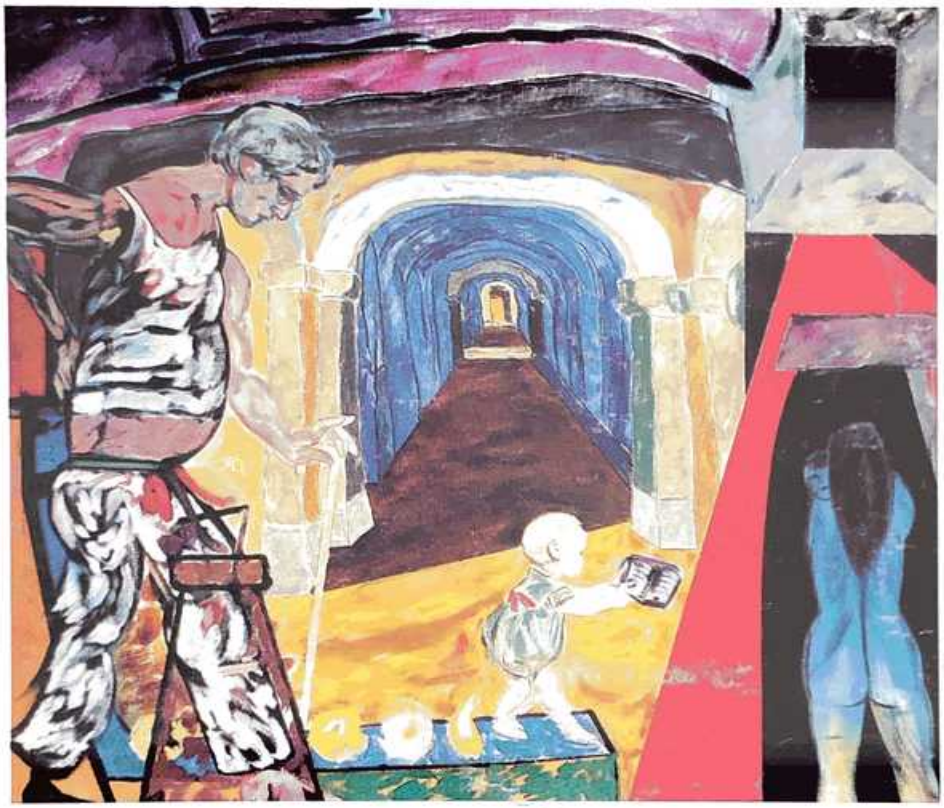
Robert Goldenberg on the Halachic Process

A BIMONTHLY JEWISH CRITIQUE OF POLITICS, CULTURE & SOCIETY NOV./DEC. 1987 $5.00

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Radical Perspectives on the Confrontation of Spirit & Science

Peter Gabel, Betty Mensch & Alan Freeman, Gary Peller



Welfare Reform
Alvin Schorr

Israeli Literature
Yael Feldman

Last Reflections
Barbara Myerhoff

Neo-Compassionism
Michael Lerner

Leadership & Community In Judaism
Reuven Kimelman

JESSE JACKSON & THE JEWS

A dialogue with Jesse Jackson. Plus: How We Should Think About Jackson by Ann Lewis, Fred Siegel, David Saperstein, Norman Birnbaum, Abbie Hoffman, and David Twersky.

ANNUNCIATION

Don't be dismayed, woman, by my fierce form.
I come from far away, in headlong flight;
Whirlwinds may have ruffled my feathers.
I am an angel, yes, and not a bird of prey;
An angel, but not the one in your paintings
That descended in another age to promise another Lord.
I come to bring you news, but wait until my heaving chest,
The loathing of the void and dark, quiet down.
Sleeping in you is one who will destroy much sleep.
He's still unformed but soon you'll caress his limbs.
He will have the gift of words, the fascinator's eyes,
Will preach abomination and be believed by all.
Jubilant and wild, singing and bleeding,
They'll follow him in bands, kissing his footprints.
He will carry the lie to the farthest borders,
Evangelize with blasphemy and the gallows.
He'll rule in terror, suspect poisons
In springwater, in the air of high plateaus.
He'll see deceit in the clear eyes of the newborn,
And die unsated by slaughter, leaving behind sown hate.
This is your growing seed, woman, rejoice.

June 22, 1979
from *Ad Ora Incerta* (At An Uncertain Hour)

PRIMO LEVI
Translated by Ruth Feldman

Ruth Feldman, translator of *Moments of Reprieve*, is a poet living in Cambridge, Massachusetts. This selection will appear in the collected poems of Primo Levi, to be published next year.

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Elliott Abrams

To the Editor:

Congratulations! *Tikkun* may not "transform the world" overnight, but you certainly are succeeding in presenting provocative alternatives to the conventional wisdom that passes for thought in much of our popular debate.

I was particularly impressed with Eric Alterman's recent essay on Elliott Abrams. As Alterman shows, no administration official has more contempt for Congress than the Assistant Secretary of State of Inter-American Affairs. In his dealings with Capitol Hill, Abrams has understated the level of U.S. government involvement with the "contras," relied on the most narrow and technically accurate responses to committee inquiries, and, on at least one occasion, lied to a Congressional committee. This pattern of deliberate deception led me and more than one hundred other members of Congress to call for his dismissal.

Mr. Alterman told Abrams's tale with style and bite. It appears that we are stuck with this Assistant Secretary for now. But perhaps that's for the best. With a discredited Abrams rallying the forces for contra aid, we may finally succeed in defeating a policy that should have self-destructed long ago.

Edward F. Feighan
Member of Congress (D-Ohio)
Washington, DC

[illegible]ust Betrayal

To the Editor:

Marie Syrkin maintains that "Jewish organizations, led by Stephen Wise," actively protested on behalf of European Jewry during the Holocaust. As evidence, she quotes Breckinridge Long of the State Department complaining about "the aggressiveness of our Jewish friends."

There are two problems with using Breckinridge Long as a source for such a claim. First: He was emotionally unbalanced. He imagined enemies ("wolves") lurking around every corner; he feared the horde of "communists, extreme radicals, Jewish professional agitators, refugee enthusiasts" whose aim in life, he suspected, was to make his life miserable. His diaries are filled with wild exaggerations, paranoid fantasies, and baseless conspiracy theories. Hence, the fact that Long grumbled about "the aggressiveness of our Jewish friends" does not necessarily prove that they were indeed "aggressive" in the accepted sense of the word.

Second: It is not always clear from Long's diary entries exactly which Jews he had in mind when he complained about "Jewish aggressiveness." In Long's befuddled mind, a wide range of Jewish groups were lumped together as "extremists" and "agitators," and in his diary he often made no distinction between, for example, Stephen Wise (head of the American Jewish Congress) and Peter Bergson (head of a dissident pro-rescue group with which Wise often clashed). In his entry for April 20, 1943, Long criticized a series of protests and

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attributed them to "one Jewish faction under the leadership of Rabbi Stephen Wise"—when in fact the protests in question had been organized by Peter Bergson's group.

The most important lesson to be learned from the diaries of Breckinridge Long is that sometimes even the most anti-Jewish of State Department bureaucrats could be influenced by the threat of Jewish political clout. Thus, while Long personally lobbied against the creation of a governmental agency to rescue Jews from Hitler, he later endorsed the creation of that agency (the War Refugee Board) as a necessary concession to Jewish voters whose support Roosevelt would need come November. "I think it is a good move—for local political reasons—for there are four million Jews in New York and its environs who feel themselves related to the refugees and because of the persecution of the Jews, and who have been demanding special treatment and attention," Long wrote on January 24, 1944. "This will encourage them to think the persecuted may be saved and possibly satisfy them—politically. . . ." Ironically, many of those who shaped American foreign policy during the Holocaust years were influenced by the implicit threat of losing the Jewish vote, despite the fact that Stephen Wise and his colleagues in the American Jewish leadership vigorously denied the existence of any "Jewish vote" ("There is not and should never be a Jewish vote," according to Wise). If Wise and company had been as "aggressive" as Breckinridge Long and Marie Syrkin erroneously imagined them to be, it is entirely possible that the Roosevelt Administration would have moved to rescue more Jews.

Rafael Medoff
Jerusalem, Israel

The West Bank

To the Editor:

I was overcome by emotion upon reading your editorial "The Disastrous Occupation." We here have almost given up hope that we'd see the day in which an American Jewish public voice, loud and clear, would inform us that you too realize that our love of the Jewish people and of Israel, and our resolve to be true to our Jewish values, are irreconcilable with support for our state's policies regarding the Palestinians.

Swimming, to borrow your phrase, "against a current of cynicism and despair," we are more hopeful now having learned that not all American Jews can be nudged into entrusting the destiny of Israel into the hands of its power-establishment. We are relieved that you too see the black flags of militarism, racism, and oppression rising above Mt. Zion. In face of what appears to be a fixated paranoia, causing Jews on both sides of the ocean to blindly and compulsively worship the physical-military body of Israel, we are reassured by the evidence of your understanding that our nation is body *and soul*, and that it may be mortally endangered by the "daily damage being done to the *heart* of Israel."

Yes, it is now that we need your courage and your caring. Yes, those of us "who want to embark on a path toward recognition and reconciliation with the Palestinians" need your "loud and unequivocal support." "For Jerusalem's sake," yes, do not be silent—but speaking up is not enough.

It could perhaps be enough in the times of occupation, but it is no longer the burden of occupation we carry since 1967. That burden which we were reluctantly willing to carry has become our most coveted and precious possession. *Annexation* is now the reality and that means that the soul of Israel, as we and you had known and loved, no longer exists in its expanded body. It means that *Israel is no longer a democracy*—and that is a statement of fact, not a judgment. Since in the annexed territories we impose a military rule over close to 1,500,000 people who are not given political, legal, and human rights, we have become a democracy like South Africa, for one of two peoples and in some areas only. It means that *Israel is no longer Zionist*, since Zionism in reality meant working to establish, and then to build and defend, a Jewish independent state in the ancient Land of Israel, in accordance with modern-day political and moral principles. It never meant staging a replica of Joshua's conquests. Annexation means that *our side of the conflict is no longer right*, since it openly denies others that self-determination in their homeland it has always claimed for itself, and willingly chooses to oppress the other people, or to expel them forcefully, forever and ever. It means that *Israel is no longer a peace-loving state*, because annexation has made the keeping of the territories, rather than peace, its national interest. In order to "embark on a path toward recognition and reconciliation" the policy of annexation must first be abolished—which is as much as saying that our state must first stop being its present self.

Annexation could not occur without your unconditional support. Since it did occur, we must regard those of you who give their money to our government and its agencies responsible for aggravating our situation. I am therefore asking you to withhold, gradually but emphatically, your financial support from our authorities as long as the policy of annexation is in effect. Have no fear of weakening our stand in face of the Arab threat. Our body is mighty and strong. Help save our soul from the threat of annexation.

Oleck Netzer
Nonviolent Resistants to Annexation
Tel Aviv, Israel

To the Editor:

Your last issue was rich and stimulating and once again, the magazine seems to be filling a gap in a continuously outstanding way. I thought the article by Ophir (Vol. 2, No. 2) was a reason for bravos. What he said needs to be stated clearly—so much that is written on the Palestinian issue reflects fuzzy thinking.

Your editorial on what the Palestinians should do, however, wasn't much different from what we find in the *New Republic*, or even *Commentary*. Yes, they should come out and declare they

Errata

In "An Extra Pair of Eyes: Hebrew Poetry under Occupation" by Hannan Hever in Vol. 2, No. 2, the translation of A. Eli's "Palestinians" and of Laor's poem about Leena Hassan Nabulsi are based on translations by Moshe Ron. *Tikkun* regrets having omitted this attribution.

We erroneously listed Pantheon as the publisher of Anton Shammas' forthcoming novel *Arabesques* in the Sept./Oct. 1987 issue (p. 22). The book will be published by Harper & Row in 1988.

want a peaceful solution, one that involves the return of Israel to pre-1967 borders. Again and again Arafat has stated this in interviews—and the response from Israel has been gunfire and stepped-up repression in the occupied territories. The fact is that only Arafat could have been able to garner enough compromise to limit the PLO's demands for a mini-state, not the whole of Israel. Like him or not, he remains the most plausible leader. The best one for Israel to deal with.

To say he should step down is to echo Israel's hawks. Poll after poll, interview after interview, article after article, states that the overwhelming number of Palestinians feel they are represented by the PLO. That is fact; to believe otherwise is fantasy. Dangerous fantasy at that because the alternatives, realistically speaking, are worse: George Habash's violence or Islamic fundamentalism. The alternatives spell out a rejectionist front. Shamir might want that. Do you? If not, you must deal with what exists.

Also, in the face of preventive detention, mass reprisals and the burning of houses on the West Bank, can you really expect the Palestinians to become angelic Quakers? And for how long? It's well known, for instance, that the response to the PLO on its best behavior during the year before 1982 was the Israeli invasion of Lebanon.

Jacqueline Swartz
Toronto, Ontario

To the Editor:

Thank you for featuring 20 years of Israel's occupation of the West Bank (*Tikkun*, Vol. II, No. 2). It is my opinion, however, that the *Tikkun* editorial position is based more on emotion than on logic. I understand how difficult it is to view a horrible situation and not visualize a solution. The solution in this case, however, lies in the spiritual and not in the political.

The only real chance for peace is the conversion of the Arab world from a feudal, dogmatically religious world to a democratic, spiritually religious world. In order to accomplish this Israel must concentrate on maintaining its spiritual integrity in the midst of a "modern" antispiritual world. Until that time, retreating from the West Bank or any such political strategy will only change the nature and location of the war, not its essence.

Every Shabbat as we return the Torah to its ark, we intone "All its ways are peace." Let a word to the wise be sufficient.

Eliyahu Ellman
New York, New York

To the Editor:

Many a "stranger" understands better our peoples' situation than some of our own clever and intelligent ones. Is it such a hard thing to understand a simple matter that you need two parties to agree to make peace? One cannot make peace by himself if the other party does not want it.

I work in the engineering office of the cities and transit authority. There are many Moslems and Arabs working here from Iran, Egypt, Pakistan, and even the West Bank (which they call "Occupied Jordan"), and the only thing they agree upon is that one day, after much more blood spilling, they will take back their "robbed away 'house.'"

No Jew wants war! But they want us out from there, this way or another. We have no choice ... either we stay and defend ourselves, if we have to, or we give up our nationhood, freedom, and past religious, cultural, and historical ties with this our land and the city of Jerusalem that King David built. It is a desecration to the memory of my gassed parents and dozens of other family that we have our own brothers defending our new enemies.

Jacob Kiffel
Brooklyn, New York

To the Editor:

The special feature, "Twenty Years on the West Bank," in your recent issue of *Tikkun* should inject salutary leavening into a public discussion that has been all too feeble in this country. [However] ... Meron Benvenisti fails to make clear why the colonial model does not apply to the occupation. The colonial model does not require that reasons for the state of affairs reside externally, nor does it stand in some sort of counterposition to domestic pluralism. Nor, for that matter, would most colonialists recognize (prior to decolonization) the presupposition that they "will return to their mother country and release the conquered from bondage." The colonial model does presuppose domination and the denial of rights: this may occur internally or externally and, in this sense, there may indeed be "no real difference between the Arabs of Israel and the Arabs of the territories." Most salient of all, perhaps, is the fact that colonialism, practiced internally or externally, sooner or later, far from maintaining domestic unity between state and citizenry, usually fractures the domestic polity and threatens the legitimacy of the political order.

Lyman Legters
University of Washington
Seattle, Washington

Olliemania

To the Editor:

Opinion polls now have confirmed your excellent analysis of last summer's Olliemania. Support for the contras has dropped to pre-Ollie levels, proving your point that what people were responding to was not North's policy, but his advocacy of a moral vision—however flawed in our eyes.

We really thought your editorial hit the nails on the head—with one exception. You do the left a disservice by blurring a fundamental distinction:

You suggest that given *our* historical celebration of civil disobedience, we progressives can't get on a high horse about North's flouting of the law to serve *his* moral vision. But civil disobedience, as exemplified by the heroes of the left—prominently including Martin Luther King, Jr., whom you mentioned—is based on a fundamental premise strikingly absent in North's actions.

Civil disobedience is intended not to circumvent the rule of law, but to strengthen it by making laws more just. Thus, in civil disobedience one breaks the law in full public view and accepts the legal consequences in order to focus attention on the injustice of a particular law. North, however, tried not only to circumvent the law, but to deceive the lawmakers.

Civil disobedience, moreover, as promoted by the left is nonviolent, whereas Oliver North's actions were directly intended to abet violence.

Finally, for a person like North in government employment the equivalent of civil disobedience is public resignation, since a civil servant is sworn to uphold the law.

We fear that by forgetting these

critical distinctions your editorial may weaken progressives' confidence in their own commitment to the rule of law—precisely the grounds on which we are regularly attacked by the right. Since the rule of law is fundamental to any vision of democracy, we progressives must constantly strengthen our commitment to it, reiterating the critical distinctions between lawlessness and civil disobedience.

Therefore, we felt that we could not let pass unchallenged a confusion of the inspired witness of a Martin Luther King, Jr., and the conniving malfeasance of an Oliver North—even in an editorial with which we otherwise so heartily applaud.

Frances Moore Lappé
J. Baird Callicott
Institute for Food and
Development Policy
San Francisco, California

Left Strategy

To the Editor:

I found Posner's article and her implicit definition of the "left" (cf. your contest) persuasive. I agree that the old left-right appellations are no longer adequate, but I suspect that the widespread unwillingness to identify with the left (exemplified in Boyte and Evans's response to Posner) is in some cases an expression of timidity, a residue of the fifties, and in others influenced by the strenuous individualism or either free-market economics or contemporary versions of anarchism or libertarianism.

One of the most important features of Posner's leftist position is her trenchant assertion of *societal* responsibility. To call it "statism" does not negate the distinction between a society committed to the well-being of all its citizens and one committed to the welfare of those who manage to take care of themselves and/or one another. If such institutions as government and the economy are nationwide, why must efforts to change their policies and practices focus exclusively on local associations and organizations? To sidestep the issue of a "social democratic minimum" is to acquiesce in values that work to the disadvantage of many.

As I see it, what Posner is concerned with is not the society or state in opposition to the community, but the wider community as one to which we as individuals, as well as all the less inclusive communities in which we are involved, belong. Like Boyte and Evans, Posner does see the need for efforts at social change to begin in the local community. This is where the problems are encountered. But one thing Posner confronts, and they avoid, is the question of the social, political, and economic structure of this society. Local organization as such cannot prevail over institutionalized inequities and injustices which, while manifest at the local level, are a function of more pervasive forces. Only by recognizing this and acting upon it in an organized way can face-to-face groups begin to become a significant force for social betterment.

Beth J. Singer
Brooklyn College
Brooklyn, New York

God and History

To the Editor:

Arthur Waskow's brief essay "Between the Fires" (Vol. II, No. 1) shows his usual insightful capacity to weave together Torah reading with the unveiling of the mysterious in historical process and to offer pointers to the ethical path we need to walk toward redemption.

In my view one of Arthur Waskow's most valuable contributions to contemporary theology is his powerful linkage between the Holocaust and the danger of future nuclear annihilation. I find this much more authentic than the insistence of Emil Fackenheim on the absolute uniqueness of the Holocaust and his connecting of it solely to the state of Israel. This makes the memory of the Holocaust mostly unusable as a way of reflecting on the threats which all humans are experiencing today, aggravated by the technology of global mass violence. We need to remember the Holocaust as a collective memory for all of us, to make sure that the planetary Holocaust does not happen. This perspective brings us together in solidarity, rather than making the Holocaust a tool of an absolutized nationalism.

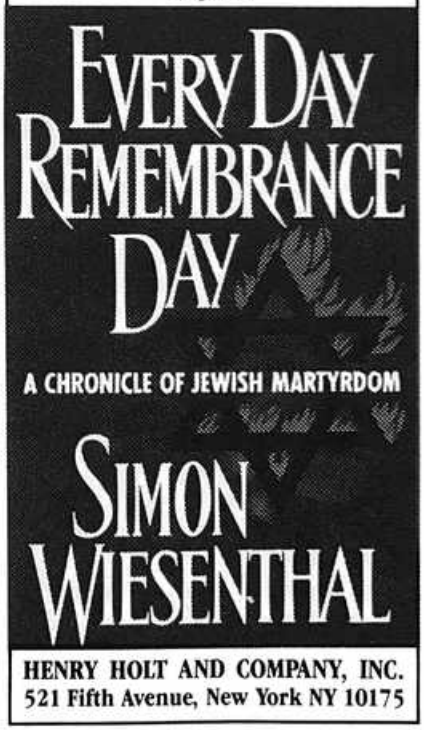
The question that needs to be asked about Arthur Waskow's *Tikkun* essay is, What is he really trying to say about God? Is he constructing a new theodicy

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to suggest that God allowed the Holocaust to happen to the Jews as a service to the rest of humanity in order to avoid the final Holocaust of us all? If so, then my answer is to groan and shriek: No, for God's sake! Making the Jews the scapegoat or the sacrificial people, even for the good end of avoiding the greater destruction, has all too much the evil logic that fed the first Holocaust.

As a Christian, I find such a pattern of thought all too familiar. It sounds like making the Jews the collective Christ, sacrificed as surrogate for the rest of us. It reminds me of the Christian story of Caiaphas, speaking as a prophet in the council of the high priests and Pharisees, in the gospel of John, saying:

> You know nothing at all; you do not know that it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation should not perish (John 11:50)

Would Arthur Waskow like to be a contemporary prophet-teacher who says that the Jews of Europe were the exemplar people whose death was necessary so that all humanity should not perish? Let us, for God's sake, take responsibility for our own evil impulses as evil and not suggest that it is God who does this evil for the greater good, or even that this evil represents the immanence of divine energy. One scapegoat theology of the past did not help us to avoid further scapegoats but became the model to justify making scapegoats of others, especially of the Jews.

However, I think that Waskow is trying to say something more complex than this, but I fear that it could be too easily misunderstood in such a fashion. He is suggesting that the providential God who sat in the heavens and planned rewards and punishments has been dethroned. Humans have taken charge of history. But which humans? It is not all humans who have taken charge of history but a white male elite who have gotten control of the vastly expanded power made possible by advanced technology. Most women and third world people share little in access to such power and the decisions it affords. Perhaps we can say that, for this small group of humans who can destroy us all but whose power could be used to make a world where all could have the basic necessities, humans have taken on the role of the divine. This means that the misuse of power by that elite to destroy the Jews of Europe needs, at the very least, to be drilled into all our consciousnesses, so we can ask how this great power can be used for better ends than mass destruction. But I would hesitate to identify amoral energy with God, as Arthur Waskow seems to do. For me, God has to do with the moral call to respond to the good impulse, rather than the evil one. The use of vastly expanded power to destroy rather than redeem is the presence of the demonic, not the divine.

How then do we respond to God's call to use such power for good? Isn't a key part of the problem that this power is concentrated in the very same hands of a small circle who have gotten into this position precisely by monopolizing power and access to world resources by oppressing women, working people, and third world people? The monopoly on power of that white male power elite needs to be overcome and diffused among women, peasants, and working people. The social reorganization of power is an essential part of avoiding another ultimate Holocaust.

The capacity to dominate is greatly reduced simply by the diffusion of power. But this will happen only if, along the way, we also catch an alternative vision. Here I see Arthur Waskow's call to learn to stop and celebrate Shabbat to be very important, although, again, the people addressed are primarily the white male ruling class. It is the white male ruling class who want to pursue the workaholic life-style seven days a week, and that is because they don't have to do the physical labor. People who work hard physically usually know how to rest. But surely for those who want to drive everyone else to endless labor, it is key to stop and rest and, in that rest, to learn that life, not work—community, not self-defense—is the real meaning of human existence.

Rosemary Radford Ruether
Garrett Theological Seminary
Evanstan, Illinois

Soviet History

To the Editor:

I fully agree with the analysis made by Prof. Suny of "Gorbachev and Soviet History" (*Tikkun*, Sept./Oct.

(Continued on p. 81)

Contest Update

We invited our readers in the July/August issue of *Tikkun* to send us their ideas for a new name for what is currently called "the liberal and progressive forces." In response, we've received scores of interesting suggestions and many wonderful letters.

A name that comes close to expressing some of the ideas articulated in *Tikkun* is "Neo-Compassionist," suggested by James D. Kidd of Salem, OR. On page 9 in this issue you will find an editorial discussing the name and these ideas. But while neo-compassionism comes close to describing the specific politics of *Tikkun*, for that very reason it is inadequate as a word or expression to designate the full panoply of the liberal and progressive forces—we need a word that includes New Deal liberals as well as anti-nuclear activists, feminists as well as ecologists, democratic socialists as well as liberals solely committed to reforming the worst excesses of corporate greed. In our original contest invitation we explained why words like "the left" or "progressive" don't really communicate effectively—and though we've received many suggestions, we've decided to keep the contest open for a while longer. We invite you to send us your ideas.

Among the suggestions our readers have sent in:

• American Green • Evolutionary Democratic • Participatory Democratic • Social Democratic • Progressive Democratic • Radical Democratic • Reconstructive Democratic • Radical Traditionalist • Social Humanist • Rational Humanist • Political Humanist • Egalitarian • Creative Communitarian • Populist • Communitarian • Meliorist • Tikkunist • Tikkunocratic • Transforming • Righteous Left • Radical Centrist • Heartist.

Send suggestions (and comments on the suggestions made above, if you wish) to *Tikkun* Contest, 5100 Leona St., Oakland, CA 94619.

"This book will remain for ages to come."*

*Simon Wiesenthal:

(Renowned Nazi hunter, Director of Jewish Documentation Center)

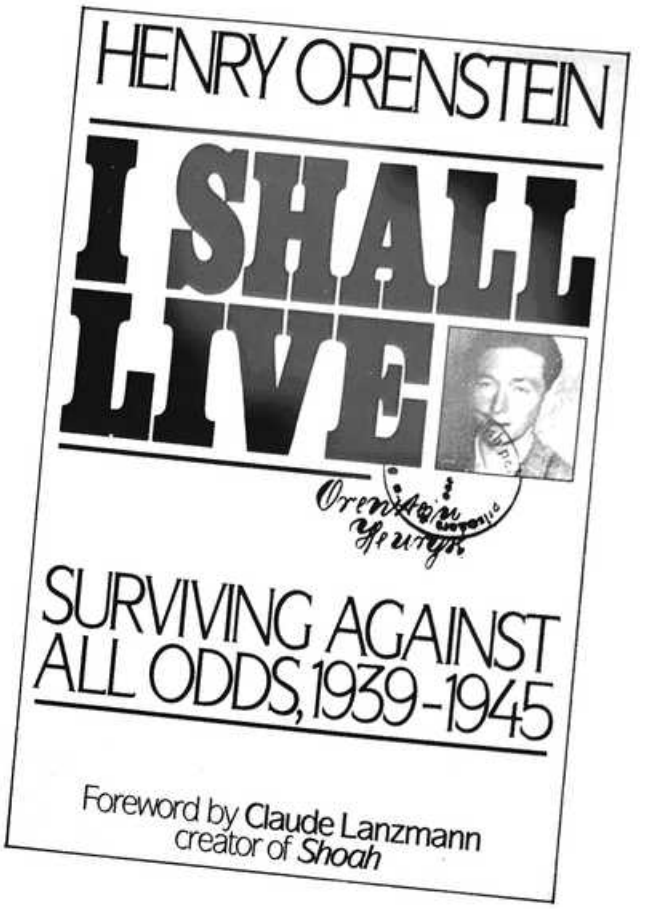
"I read the book in a single day; I found it so compelling it was hard to put down. A picture is drawn of a man who managed to stay human amidst inhumanity.... We should be glad such a detailed account of a true survivor...will remain for ages to come."

Claude Lanzmann:

(Creator of *Shoah*)

"An adventure...almost novelesque in the extraordinary succession of miracles which enable the young man to remain among the living so as to eventually tell his story forty years later with Voltairesque ferocity and often sheer and invigorating joy.

"From one ordeal to another, outwitting death time after time, Henry Orenstein, an intelligent, soberly pessimistic Candide, is possessed by a will to live so prodigious that he seems able to maintain his spirit while overcoming the most improbable odds."



Menachem Begin:

(Former Prime Minister of Israel)

"...An important contribution to bring out the facts about the cruelty of Nazi Germany, of the heroic efforts for the survival of our brethren."

Nathan Perlmutter:

(Former National Director, Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith)

"Riveting. Because the book is innocent of the affectations and devices of fiction, it is so overwhelming an experience that half a century later you are there, experiencing the fears and, remarkably, experiencing the will to live. Orenstein prevails as did Jewry and, reading him, we do too."

Lucy S. Dawidowicz:

(Author of *The War Against the Jews*)

"This is a stirring account of a struggle for life against all odds. Once you begin this book, you won't be able to put it down."

Allan A. Ryan, Jr.:

(Former director of the Office of Special Investigations of the Justice Department)

"*I Shall Live* is a poignant and deeply moving testament to the human spirit, and to ferocious courage in the face of hopelessness... No reader can be left untouched by it."

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Publisher's Page

The pope's visit to the U.S. was an extraordinarily difficult experience for those of us who decided to protest against him when he was in this country. Although the visit is now over and I am busy with other matters, my thoughts go back to that experience, puzzling over its meaning and worrying about its implications. I am still troubled by what happened.

In early July we called for demonstrations to take place during the papal visit in protest of the pope's meeting with Waldheim and in protest of the lack of Vatican recognition of Israel. (See the Sept./Oct. *Tikkun* for a more detailed discussion of the reasons for demonstrations.) In the intervening time before the pope's visit Michael Lerner, *Tikkun's* editor, argued our point of view in the national media and with national leaders. On the local level we worked hard to organize a demonstration and a teach-in in San Francisco to coincide with the pope's visit there.

Being "out there" as proponents of protesting the pope, we quickly learned that the issue was so charged with emotion and so threatening that most people simply did not want to deal with it. They were disturbed by our pointing out that the same Vatican which played a role in generating 1,900 years of anti-Semitism is once again acting in disturbing ways toward the Jewish people. People were afraid that calling for demonstrations would be seen as Jewish intolerance of Catholics. And some leaders were afraid that demonstrations would hurt the progress they had supposedly made with Catholics.

The upshot was that we faced a wall of hostility as we began to raise the issue—broken occasionally by calls from people who supported us. We were attacked by leaders who privately told us that they really understood the value of what we were doing but couldn't publicly acknowledge it. Even those who did support us felt intimidated by the media barrage hailing "the historic breakthroughs" in Rome and in Miami.

As the day of the demonstration approached, events began to take on an almost nightmarish quality. Ugly, violent, frightening calls came into our office. We had no idea if people were going to come to the demonstration and teach-in. The police were uncooperative and there was a surrealistic edge even on the level of getting our equipment into a city rearranged for the pope's visit.

The demonstration itself, however, was a wonderful and powerful event. Several hundred people showed up to make known their dissatisfaction with the pope's treatment of the Jews. Many Holocaust survivors demonstrated alongside us. The spirit of respect for Catholics, but unacceptance of the pope's actions, was summed up by "Catholics, Yes/Waldheim, No," which was chanted as people walked from the demonstration to the teach-in.

Likewise, the teach-in was remarkable. Mary Gordon and Daniel Landes, two *Tikkun* authors, spoke along with several other Jews and Catholics about Catholic anti-Semitism, and the large crowd stayed late into the night to hear them.

But you probably wouldn't know about these two events unless you had been there. Likewise, you wouldn't know about the Jewish demonstration in Miami at the airport when the pope arrived, or the demonstration in Los Angeles of several hundred Holocaust survivors, or the small demonstration in San Diego in support of the one in San Francisco. The news blackout was almost complete.

Why were these demonstrations not reported by the huge press that followed the pope's journey? Part of it possibly can be explained by timing. Our demonstration was held in the early evening, too late in the day for East Coast press to include it in their morning papers (although certainly not too late for possible next day morning electronic media coverage.) Yet we know that timing is just one consideration in media coverage.

A few days before the pope's arrival in San Francisco we were told by a reporter for a major U.S. newspaper that the word had come down from above to cut the coverage of the pope's "Jewish problem"—that there had been enough coverage in the paper already. What did this mean? That the powers-that-be thought the subject was no longer of interest to the American people? That it was too hot? That they felt there needed to be a "positive image" of the pope's visit projected? That pressure was coming from influential outsiders to stop the coverage? I do not know the answer to why this happened or why the press did not cover the Jewish demonstrations.

I've described here some of the upsetting things that happened to those of us who were involved in the pope issue. In a way our experience mirrors the issue itself—New Age people would call it taking on "the karma." Divisiveness and fear have kept Jews through the ages from speaking clearly to the larger world about the impact of Catholic anti-Semitism on their lives. And the nightmare of anti-Semitism, although receded far into the background, shadows our lives. □

Editorials

Neo-Compassionism

Neo-Compassionism is hardly an elegant title, but it seems to capture important parts of *Tikkun*'s emerging political philosophy. We haven't closed the contest yet (see p. 6), but for the moment let's talk about why this (invented) word captures some of what has been most lacking in the vision of liberals and the left, both inside the Democratic Party and in the wide variety of social change movements.

Why "neo"? The "Old Compassionists" were the liberals of the Democratic Party and the left who began to set the American political agenda in the 1930s. Their primary focus was on the unfair distribution of the material wealth of American society. The central claim of the Old Compassionists was that a small minority of Americans had benefited from capitalism but the overwhelming majority had been left out. What was needed was a restructuring of the society so that its material well-being could be redistributed in an equitable manner.

Liberals and the left tended to disagree about how this could best be accomplished. Liberals argued for government policies that would leave the fundamental capitalist organization of the society alone but would stimulate employment (as it turned out, largely through military expenditures) while creating a cushion of social services to offset the greatest inequalities. The left, on the other hand, argued that such tinkering might improve the material lot of the majority but would do so only at the expense of minorities at home and through the increasing exploitation of third world countries abroad.

Both were right. By the late 1960s the vast majority of Americans had benefited sufficiently from the programs of government expenditures and social support systems so that they no longer felt an urgent need to support liberal politics—particularly once Republicans like Nixon demonstrated that the concepts of welfare, unemployment insurance, social security, and programs for the aged were being supported by mainstream conservatives. (Even in the 1980s adopted New Deal economic strategies designed to reduce unemployment and maintain economic prosperity through deficit spending, largely for military purposes, are at levels well beyond anything ever dreamt of by liberal Democrats.) The left tended to argue, and convinced most liberals, that the caring shown for the vast majority of white Americans through the economic programs of the New Deal must now be extended to others—to the poor, to minority groups, to women who had previously not even been considered part of the potential work force.

The Old Compassionists, then, defined their compassion in terms of material well-being. And, as increasing numbers of people achieved this material well-being, the Old Compassionists were seen primarily as concerned about the minorities in the U. S. and the majorities abroad who had been left out of the general material prosperity. Most Americans had supported this expansion to others in the 1960s, when they thought the economy could afford it. Many became less willing to support such programs when, in the 1970s, renewed international competition seemed to threaten the general prosperity and to validate the conservatives' contention that America could no longer afford the always rising costs of programs that the Old Compassionists seemed to advocate.

Moreover, the conservative critique of the Old Compassionism focused on one important problem: The money being spent to help the oppressed didn't really seem to make a dent. Liberal compassionism wasn't working, so why support these "tax and spend" policies of the Democrats? The conservatives argued that the free marketplace automatically would solve the country's problems by a general increase in the well-being of everyone if capitalists were allowed to pursue their own

Fundraising Board: Applicants Needed

Tikkun is a tax-exempt non-profit magazine, and, like virtually every other magazine of its type, it depends on substantial donations to keep afloat. The tremendous enthusiasm which *Tikkun* has generated, its dramatic subscription growth, and the serious attention it receives in the world of public policy, in Congress, in the intellectual world, and in the media demonstrates our importance. Now we need serious help in fundraising.

We wish to constitute a Fundraising Board made up of two kinds of people: potential large donors to *Tikkun* and people with special skill in raising funds.

If you are interested in being part of this venture, please send a letter about yourself and what role you might play to Nan Fink, publisher, 5100 Leona Street, Oakland, CA 94619.

corporate interests free of government constraints and high taxes. This was a misleading argument for two reasons: First, the programs to fight poverty had been systematically underfunded, thanks to the conservatives themselves; and second, the only real program to eliminate (as opposed to alleviate) poverty would be full employment—and both conservatives and liberals had been unwilling to support calls from the left for the kind of economic restructuring that would make full employment possible. While the critiques were unfair, they were well received by people who were, in any event, feeling somewhat alienated from liberals and the left.

Yet this growing disillusionment had little to do with economics. Rather, the alienation from the left was rooted in a growing sense of the majority of Americans that the left, and liberals who followed in their wake, had little caring or concern for the real pains and frustrations that most people faced in the society. The compassion had turned to contempt—now that America had grown relatively prosperous and that prosperity had been shared by a majority of Americans, liberals seemed to care little about the lives and pains experienced by most people.

The perception that liberals and the left cared little for American working people was accentuated during the sixties and seventies. Not everyone was as extreme as leftists who berated white working-class Americans for their "white skin privilege." Yet there was a continuous barrage of accusations from the left that seemed to suggest that most Americans were fundamentally sexist, racist, materialistic, or in some other way "bad." And the deep concerns of many Americans—for a stable family life, for security from crime, for a meaningful religious community—were often brutally mocked.

Is it any wonder, then, that a New Right could emerge and speak to the deeply felt needs of many Americans? Even after the Reagan victory in 1980, it never occurred to the left or to liberals in the Democratic Party that there was something fundamentally wrong. Instead, they found it easier to dismiss the Reagan victory as a product of Reagan's communication skills with the media or of the spirit of selfishness—neither explanation suggesting abundant respect for the American people.

The idea for *Tikkun* Magazine grew out of our experience in listening to the American public and hearing their pain and their frustration with the liberal and progressive forces. Nan Fink worked as a social worker in the Midwest with displaced workers. I worked as a psychologist for the labor movement, serving as director of the Institute for Labor and Mental Health in California. We and our co-workers listened to literally thousands of American workers in the years 1976–86, and we came away with an empirically rooted analysis of the experiences that led so many people who should be strong advocates of the left to instead fundamentally distrust the left. We found that even those who voted for Democratic Party candidates (as we suspect they will again in 1988 in even larger numbers) have a fundamental distrust of the Democrats and the left, feel condescended to and misunderstood, and feel more trust for right-wingers with whose specific programs they often disagree. All too often they will vote for right-wingers, sensing that in some basic way their lives are more respected by people on the right, even if those people don't really have the best ideas for solving their problems.

In our years of work with American working people we discovered that most Americans are profoundly dissatisfied with their lives. Many experience only the scantiest satisfaction in their work lives. And they are profoundly dissatisfied with the quality of their personal relationships. They are often appalled by the absence of an ethical and spiritual framework in the society that can provide a context of meaning within which they can locate themselves, their families, and their endeavors. Yet few of these people would ever say so in national opinion polls—or even admit any of this to friends in most circumstances. The reason is simple: while there is widespread unhappiness, most Americans understand their own experience in a meritocratic framework. The dominant society insists that it is organized on a principle of merit—you can make it if you really try, and what you end up with is a product of who you are and how hard you've tried. What you get is what you deserve. So, if you are unhappy in any way, you have only yourself to blame.

Once people buy this framework, they have little sympathy even for themselves or their own complaints. It seems illegitimate to talk about the stress and sense of meaninglessness that they experience at work—isn't it their own faults that they don't have better and more fulfilling work, after all? Similarly, it seems wrong to experience dissatisfaction in personal life. As pop psychologists, columnists, and talk show hosts are all too willing to tell them, if things aren't working, they must learn to "take responsibility" and make things better for themselves.

Ironically, all the talk about "equal opportunity" that they hear from liberals and the left actually intensifies the socially sanctioned process of self-blaming. If it really is true that the society is full of opportunities—opportunities that must be extended to the "few" who have been heretofore excluded—then how can people not feel bad about what they have "made of their opportunities." The obvious response here is to mouth the dominant rhetoric, but to privately feel resentful of

all those who are making them feel bad about themselves.

A Neo-Compassionist approach focuses on the psychological, emotional, ethical, and spiritual deficits of contemporary life. While a "Neo" doesn't deny the need for expanding social and economic benefits to the most oppressed or fighting for programs like health care and housing or extending "rights" to new areas (the older forms of compassion), s/he insists also on the priority of a new kind of compassion: a compassion for the ways that our society, as currently structured, fails to provide adequate opportunities for nonalienating work and a fulfilling personal life embedded within an ethically, spiritually, and emotionally fulfilling social order. Neo-Compassionists, hence, will talk about the crisis in family life, stress at work, the need for moral values and ethical commitment, the importance of religion and spiritual life—and place these concerns at the center of politics rather than reducing politics, as some liberal Democrats appear to do, to a struggle for more material goodies, poverty programs, individual rights, and productivity. Americans need a framework of meaning and purpose, communities with a shared ethical vision, and a society that promotes mutual caring every bit as much as it needs a strategy to compete with the Japanese or a new plan to reduce the deficit or even to cut spending on defense.

I used to sympathize with those whose first reaction to all this is to dismiss it as mere psychologizing and moralizing. Until I spent ten years exploring the life experience of American workers, I, too, believed that talking about the "pain" in people's lives was a moral cop-out, a way of avoiding the real issues like poverty, racism, and imperialism. But what I discovered in my work at the Institute for Labor and Mental Health was confirmed by the electoral victories of the right in the 1980s—and reconfirmed when the right even won important elections in areas of the midwest where Reagan's policies had caused huge economic dislocations and unemployment. What I discovered was that these very real manifestations of what we used to call "alienation" in the 1960s had become the central reality in the daily lives of most Americans. The New Left had been most correct when it talked radically about the failures of capitalism, only it had never taken its own analysis seriously enough to ask how it applied to the lives of those who were not responding to moralistic calls to support the struggles of others. New Leftists and the liberals who inherited their worldview in the 1970s abandoned what was seen as the "utopianism" of the early New Left and instead focused on the "hard-nosed" issues like poverty, American interventionism abroad, and racial discrimination.

The women's movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s at first seemed to be picking up this more qualitative strand of politics when it created small groups for "consciousness raising" in which women met to discuss their daily experiences with sexism. These groups undermined self-blaming by helping women see that many of the pains in their own lives, heretofore experienced as reflections of their personal inadequacies, were better understood as reflections of sexist social structures or conditioned by the way both men and women had bought into sexist attitudes and life patterns. The profoundly radicalizing experience of these groups created a core of women's leadership, the impact of which remains central to the liberal and progressive movements of the late 1980s. But unfortunately, these small groups were not incorporated centrally in the organizing strategy of the women's movement in reaching out to working-class women. Instead, the ERA and narrowly defined legislative goals took central focus, and the empowering effect of helping people understand the relationship between their own personal lives and the larger social structure was never translated into a mass politics.

Neo-Compassionists, then, wish to pick up on the strengths of the early women's movement but to broaden that agenda so that it addresses the full range of human needs that are frustrated by contemporary social arrangements. Neo-Compassionists do not deny the importance of the traditional social change agenda—we are committed to the struggles against apartheid and racism, militarism and nuclear armaments, sexism and the destruction of the natural environment. What we insist, however, is that we will never win these kinds of struggles if we ignore the issues that are closer to the immediate experience of most Americans: the insecurity that they feel in family life and personal relationships, the frustrations and alienation of the world of work, the doubts about the ultimate meaning and moral worth of so much of their lives. The right has gained the confidence of many Americans by speaking to these issues—even if the solutions offered are often distorted. No progressive movement will ever receive the mandate to make the other kinds of changes it seeks to make unless it can first connect with people's concerns about these pressing issues of daily life. Ironically, by attempting to talk to these concerns we restore to the immediate political agenda a fundamental critique of American society that had been dismissed as "too radical" by those liberals who thought they would make more hay by fighting for a highway program or for slight reductions in defense spending.

Neo-Compassionists, for example, will insist that the liberal and progressive forces must become a "pro-family" movement. The right made dramatic inroads when it claimed this as its issue because in talking

about the social causes for problems in the family it helped relieve self-blaming. We reject their explanation—their attempt to blame the crisis in the family on gays and women's liberation or on the individual rights of political liberalism. But we understand why the very attempt to connect personal life experience to larger social realities was experienced as liberating, and through this process the right gained the loyalty of many people who may have questioned some of the details of their reasoning. The right seemed to care about the pain people were experiencing in their personal lives, while the left seemed focused only on the old compassion.

For this very reason, no attempt by liberals to seize the "pro-family" label will work if the analysis is confined to providing economic benefits for families. Certainly a pro-family movement must call for expanded childcare, health care, housing, and care for the elderly. But it cannot be a mere repackaging of the list of liberal demands around the rhetoric of "family." Rather, we will be taken seriously only if we enter into the actual emotional experiences that make family life so difficult and provide an alternative framework for understanding why loving relationships are so hard today.

A Neo-Compassionist analysis would talk about the impact of the world of work on family life. It would show how powerlessness and an inability to use intelligence and creativity has a cumulative effect that is sometimes described as "stress at work," sometimes as "alienation," sometimes as "depression," sometimes as "lack of energy and excitement about life." Instead of feeling angry at those who have shaped the world of work, most Americans believe in the meritocratic ideology that cautions that if we haven't found work fulfilling we have no one to blame but ourselves ("you can make it if you really try.") This internalized blame is brought into the home, repressed by denying that work has any importance. While we try to forget about it (by narcotizing ourselves with t.v., alcohol, drugs, aerobics, politics, sex, religion), it nevertheless seeps into our personal relationships, interfering with our ability to be intimate and loving. Similarly, the Neo-Compassionist would talk about specific ways that life in our competitive market system helps to foster narcissistic personality types who are geared to treat others as objects to be manipulated—and how this interferes with their ability to be loving and available for intimacy in personal life. Further, the Neo-Compassionist would talk about the ways that families and friendships in the past were embedded in larger communities of meaning—the religious world, the political movements, the union movement—that provided a framework for each specific relationship, and how the individualism, moral relativism, and materialism of a capitalistic society works to undermine those kinds of communities. In short, the Neo-Compassionist deals with family breakdown and the crisis in friendships by acknowledging the pain and helping people to see that their pain will only be finally alleviated when it is possible to make fundamental changes in the social order. Yet that understanding itself is empowering and deeply reassuring and could lead, for example, to a movement to restructure the world of work in the name of creating a society that is safe for family life.

Similarly, the Neo-Compassionist will address the spiritual crisis of contemporary society. The worldwide rise of religious fundamentalism deeply disturbs us. But we reject the knee-jerk liberal assumption that most people attracted to the new religious consciousness are either naive or fascist. We know that the dominant culture has failed to speak to basic human needs for a spiritually meaningful existence—and that relative material prosperity has failed to generate morally enriched communities. While we deplore the reactionary politics that often accompany emerging religious communities, we know that many people are attracted to religion for good reasons, even if they sometimes buy into the conservative politics that is often made the cost of joining. A Neo-Compassionist politics will affirm the healthy part of the complex of reasons that draws people into religion and will fight for a progressive politics that acknowledges the spiritual truths in the religious worldviews, even as it rejects sexism, national chauvinism, and the uncritical subordination of intellect to an irrationally constituted authority.

Those who expect to play a useful role in generating a politics of compassion in the larger American society must begin with real compassion for themselves, their own families, their own communities, and their own traditions as well. When we turn to Judaism and the Jewish community we find many elements that must be rejected and struggled against—and *Tikkun* has been doing just that in challenging the conservative politics in the Jewish world and a materialism and self-centeredness that has even manifested itself in American synagogue life. Yet, while we have vigorously challenged our community and our tradition, we are also deeply moved by the wisdom that can be found by studying our history and our religion, our sacred texts and our contemporary literature, and by listening to our elders and learning from their experience. We do not advocate uncritical acceptance, but compassion and caring. We believe that those who are willing to approach the Jewish world with that kind of compassion will find a deep spiritual tradition that can empower them to understand and dialogue with those from different religions and cultural backgrounds who are in rebellion against the

spiritual emptiness of most advanced industrial societies. Our universalism, then, does not imply a rejection of the particularism of our tradition but an attempt to share the lessons of our own unique tradition and to cull from it lessons that would be useful to all of humanity. We believe that, approached with a similar attitude of compassion, most of the great and lasting religious and cultural traditions could yield similarly valuable and liberatory insights.

All this is a lot to ask. Developing enough compassion for others who do not share our own lifestyles, politics, or inclinations, so that we can find the common core of concerns and formulate ways to communicate with them, requires almost superhuman effort. But it is absolutely essential. We can have compassion for those who fall back into a more narrowly construed politics, congratulating themselves for the high moral purpose of fighting against racism, sexism, or militarism. The political movements of the sixties ended up tearing themselves apart with vicious mutual backstabbing—all in the name of people being more caring to each other. People can be very uncompassionate toward each other as they blame one another for not being compassionate enough.

We have no choice but to try. A politics that does not begin to address the issues raised by Neo-Compassionism is bound to fail. Yes, we may see a liberal Democrat triumph in 1988—but liberal Democrats will be riding the wave of revulsion at the excesses of the Reagan years, not a commitment to a new politics of social change. When they take office in 1989, they will know that they do not have the mandate to engage in the kind of struggle with entrenched elites of wealth and power that would be indispensable to make fundamental change. Such a mandate will only be available when liberals and the left are perceived as worthy of trust. And they will never win this until they adopt a Neo-Compassionist politics and worldview.

This, then, is an answer to the question "what label" should we use in the short run, but it is also a way of introducing *Tikkun* to the approximately 5,000 new readers for whom this is their first issue. *Tikkun* has grown dramatically. We welcome you into the ongoing discussion and hope you will share it with others in your life, from friends and family and co-workers to political activists and presidential candidates—in fact, with anyone who may be wondering how to make the 1990s different from the 1980s.

Editorial Reflections

Israel and South Africa

The announcement in September that the Israeli cabinet had taken several steps to further reduce Israeli ties to South Africa was a welcome step. But it was not enough. Israel's substantial military ties to one of the world's most repressive regimes are morally intolerable. And they are politically self-destructive. No short-term benefits to the economy can possibly be worth the long-term enmity that these military arrangements justifiably engender around the world. Nor is it unrealistic to expect that if these ties are not ended voluntarily and speedily, future military aid from the U. S. will be conditional on their cessation—quite conceivably under terms far less favorable to Israel than it could negotiate were it to move speedily to end this disgraceful liaison.

Let Our People Go

Many of us who vigorously support arms reductions will nevertheless participate in demonstrations against Gorbachev when he arrives for the summit. We shall be demanding full and free emigration for Soviet Jewry and an end to all forms of harassment of our people in Russia.

Now is the time, before the demonstrations, to insist that the organizers take steps to prevent these demonstrations from being used, as they have been in the past, as a platform for the sectarian political goals of various cold-warriors. It takes no courage in Ronald Reagan's America to be anti-Soviet. (Witness the support of these demonstrations by the very "Jewish leaders" who counseled restraint and timidity in dealing with the pope.) But it may take considerable courage for us to articulate publicly our demand that organizers for Soviet Jewry publicly disassociate themselves from those who oppose any agreements with the Soviet Union. Indeed, the popular support we need to back up our demand that the U. S. government press hard on the issue of emigration may decline precipitously if the public begins to perceive that the struggle for Soviet Jewry is being counterposed to the efforts to reduce tensions between the superpowers. Organizers of the demonstration, then, must make special efforts both in the pre-demonstration publicity and in the speeches at the event to ban any attempts to support cold war rhetoric or attempts to weaken public support for arms accords.

Cut Off the Contras

Any plan to keep the contras alive—e.g., keeping money "in escrow" pending the outcome of negotiations—sends the wrong signal to Central America. The Sandinistas have already taken important steps to demonstrate their willingness to comply with the desires of their neighbors for peace. The reopening of *La Prensa* and the relaxation of constraints on the most reactionary elements in the Catholic church indicate a willingness to satisfy their critics, even at the expense of inviting domestic subversion. If the contras believe that the failure of their own negotiations with the Sandinistas will lead to the refunding of their dirty war, they will have absolutely no incentive to engage in good-faith bargaining. Nor should the Sandinistas be expected to provide continued opportunities for those who openly advocate the violent overthrow of their government, while the U.S. continues to set aside funding to make that overthrow possible. We should not expect from Nicaragua a higher level of civil liberty during wartime than the U.S. itself tolerated during, say, WWII or the Korean War.

President Reagan has acted in a consistently dishonorable way. Speaker Wright's attempt to work with Reagan on a peace plan has now definitively come to naught, and Wright himself, commenting on a new list of demands for Nicaragua that Reagan issued in October, sees the president as a prisoner of the far right. Just as Reagan tried to label centrists opposing him on the Bork nomination as soft on crime, he will try to label centrists who balk on further aid as losing Nicaragua to the Communists.

It's time for the rest of us to warn the notoriously chicken-hearted centrists in the Democratic Party that they have as much to lose from a liberal reaction against contra funding as from the always-feared right-wing backlash. The faint-hearted must not be allowed to let right-wingers drag us down a path toward war (even war fought by Central American surrogates). We have reached a decisive moment, and any Congressional votes that keep alive the conflict by giving hope to the contras that continued fighting will eventually win greater aid must be understood as the ultimate betrayal of all our hopes for peace.

The Pope and the Jews in Retrospect

The 700 people in San Francisco who responded to *Tikkun's* call for demonstrations in protest of the pope's meeting with Waldheim and his refusal to recognize Israel disproved the oft-repeated statement that everyone but a tiny fringe were supportive of more conciliatory approaches.

Many of those who participated were demonstrating not only against the pope but against a cowardly and silly Jewish leadership that had described the pope's audiences with Jews in Miami and then in Rome as "historic breakthroughs." It was bad enough to have achieved nothing—worse still to proclaim nothing as an important accomplishment. The leaders who went to Rome had to admit privately that they had made no progress on Waldheim or Israel, but they insisted that they would be getting a new statement from the Vatican on the Holocaust—and this, they reasoned, might at least break new ground. The pope dispelled this illusion in Miami; after receiving the obeisance of Jewish leaders, he proceeded to defend the role of Pius XII during World War II. Had there been a single person of integrity in the room, s/he would have interrupted and protested this act of arrogance and historical atrocity. Instead our leaders indulged their self-importance in smiling participation as the pope once again insulted the Jewish people. What possible incentive have these leaders given the Vatican for serious future concessions by their willingness to honor the pope at the very moment that he displays the contempt which informed his meeting with Waldheim? □

Welfare Reform, Once (or Twice) Again

Alvin L. Schorr

Welfare reform seems slated to be a perennial feature of our political scene. It was a Nixon and then a Carter slogan. In his second term, President Reagan resurrected welfare reform, and now every Democratic candidate for the presidency favors it—whatever it is. Several reform bills have now been introduced in Congress. Little that is new and much that is old is offered, and no current proposal is likely to produce a more efficient welfare system.

Welfare reform seemed fresh during the War Against Poverty, when economists such as Milton Friedman and James Tobin conceived of a system without social workers or a bureaucracy—a federal "negative income tax" that would be virtually self-administering. For many years, a welfare recipient who found work lost in welfare payments what was gained in earnings. Instead, an incentive formula would produce carefully graded reductions in government payments as income from work increased. For example, $100 from a job would lead to a decrease of $50 in one's welfare payment. Since it would be in their self-interest, recipients could be counted on to seek work.

For a while only experts seemed excited, but in 1969 President Nixon placed his Family Assistance Plan (FAP) at center stage. Debate raged throughout his term of office and, in the end, Congress produced a bill that ran to more than four hundred pages. A seasoned lobbyist for the AFL-CIO testified that he couldn't understand the bill, doubted that Congress did, and was certain that administrators would not. In any case, the proposal was defeated. Meanwhile, an incentive formula had been grafted onto the AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children) program. Congress tinkered with it from time to time until, at the beginning of the Reagan administration, an amendment to the Budget Act virtually did away with it. The incentive formula cost the government money and the administration concluded—a sound conclusion, on the evidence—that it was not increasing the work effort of recipients.

Why the Nixon reform failed despite support from liberals and conservatives was heatedly argued afterwards. I had thought that the incentive formula was much overrated. If assistance standards were decent, the formula would lead to welfare payments for people who were moderately well off, so it seemed certain that the standards would not be decent. Evidence that neither welfare workers nor recipients understood the incentive formula cast in even deeper doubt the likelihood that it could provide an incentive.

The technical problems mirrored a political problem, that conservatives and liberals who supported welfare reform had quite different ideas about what it would achieve. When each side understood what the other hoped to get, both turned critical. By the time FAP was defeated, it appeared that President Nixon himself had lost interest in it. The Carter administration produced its own version of welfare reform, more painstakingly designed and even more determined in its emphasis on work, but by that time Congress was weary of the matter.

The new drive for welfare reform was sparked by the president's State of the Union message in February last year, charging his Domestic Policy Council with the task of arriving at a strategy that would "be judged by how many [welfare] recipients become independent of welfare." It is a fair guess that the White House had very little idea what in particular they intended. They were at a loss for domestic initiatives, and welfare seemed a good target. By the end of the year, the Domestic Policy Council came up with an idea that cannot entirely have surprised Reagan watchers, that is, that welfare should be a local responsibility. However, a sweeping return of welfare to state or county responsibility does not appear likely in a Democratic Congress. The real effect of the White House study was to set off an outburst of studies and ideas.

Proposals came from everywhere—the Congress, governors, academics, and professional organizations. Though sponsors ranged from mildly liberal to far-right, the proposals displayed a remarkable uniformity of tone. In general, they gave strong emphasis to parental or, actually, paternal support, to training people for work, and to requiring trainees to work. They gave varying degrees of attention to necessary supports for work and training, such as day-care for children and continued health coverage for people who went off assistance. The term "social contract"—a contract between the recipient and the welfare agency—turned up repeatedly. Many proposers argued that little or no increased funding

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would be necessary because savings would be realized in the reduced need for assistance. (I call this argument the welfare experts' Laffer Curve.) Proposals from liberal sources invariably incorporated a national minimum standard of assistance.

Proposals were far from extravagant, but, in its work on these ideas, Congress felt even more constrained by budgetary limitations. Its strongest constraint was being told that added cost would raise the threat of a presidential veto. None of the bills pending in Congress during the summer therefore included, for example, a national minimum standard of assistance.

Three bills appear to be major contenders: the House Ways and Means Committee bill (H.R. 1720), the House Education and Labor Committee bill dealing with the language of work and training programs (H.R. 1720 as amended—the Hawkins amendment), and the Senate Finance Committee bill (the Moynihan bill).*

Basically, these House and Senate bills rework current provisions about work and training, provide services such as day-care, strengthen financial incentives (in greater and lesser degrees), and enlarge the classes of recipients for whom work or training would be mandatory. The bills would require states to provide aid to certain needy families with two parents. Under current law, states may limit such help to single-parent families, and about half the states do. All the bills would continue Medicaid for a "transitional" period if recipients leave welfare for jobs. AFDC would be renamed—the Family Support Program in the House bill and the Child Support Supplement Program in the Senate bill.

A notable difference among the three bills is political. The Moynihan bill has been packaged as replacing an obsolete AFDC program with a new and modern program that responds to changed family circumstances. It stresses parental obligations; meeting need is presented as secondary. In the very organization of the bill, parental support, work, and training precede language about meeting need, accounting for the word "supplement" in the program title. The government supplements what the parents are obliged to provide. In the current climate, it is a powerful presentation. This possibly accounts for the characterization of the proposal in an otherwise skeptical *New Republic* article as promising "a genuine breakthrough." In fact, none of the bills under discussion appears to depart fundamentally from existing law.

The Hawkins amendment to the House Ways and Means Committee bill raises an issue of legislative protocol. In general, Ways and Means is in charge of welfare legislation, and Education and Labor is in charge of employment legislation. The question of which committee is responsible for the employment portion of welfare legislation has not previously arisen quite so sharply. Welfare reform is regarded as important, to be sure, but committee prerogatives are political matters and are *really* important. Failure to resolve this issue could delay or interfere with enacting a bill.

* * *

As the bills overlap considerably, I will deal with the central issues, adding a couple of my own, and indicate differences among the bills as each set of ideas is dealt with.

First, *the implicit assumption about work*: It has widely been said that there is a broad consensus about the essential ingredients of welfare reform. If this is really so, it has been achieved because liberals have assimilated the conservative belief that the poor are not attached to the work ethic. Either liberals have assimilated it, or they have failed to understand the implication of regarding welfare recipients as if they were different from other people, poor or otherwise.

The conservative assumption was offered in a few clear words in the *New York Times* last March by Michael Novak. "The attention of the nation," he wrote, "is focusing less these days on ... low income and more on a concept designed to describe the *new* problem: 'behavioral dependency.'" This is his definition of the new behavioral dependency:

> Even if the nation had full employment, even if there were labor *shortages*, a significant number of American citizens would hardly be in a position to improve their own condition, because of their own behaviors. They are dependent on the public purse; they are also not coping well on their own behalf.

Novak is characterizing those with low incomes, including, he explains, those who do not work full-time and those who are not concerned with "getting married and staying married." (Give some thought to the latter.) Rehabilitation, Novak makes clear, depends upon personal will—his own term. President Reagan has said, "Some people choose to live in the street."

It is important to entertain this view in the context of the fact that real family income has been declining since 1973. The fifth of families with the lowest income has one-third less buying power than a corresponding

*A bill introduced in the House (H.R. 3148) by Rep. Willis D. Gradison, (R-Ohio) is identical to the Moynihan bill. Not fully discussed here are H. R. 3200 and S. B. 1655, the so-called Republican welfare reform bill, introduced in the House by Rep. Bob Michel and in the Senate by Senators Robert Dole and Alphonse D'Amato. Also not included in this discussion is an amendment to H.R. 1720, prepared in the House Energy and Commerce Committee, dealing with transitional entitlement to Medicaid. Its provisions are rather more liberal than the transition provisions in the Ways and Means Committee and the Moynihan bills.

group in 1973. Economists Sheldon Danziger and Peter Gottschalk calculate that the income of families with children is now almost 7 percent lower (in real money) than in 1973.

What is going on? Basically, high unemployment is compounded by falling wage rates. New jobs are created as old jobs are wiped out but, unfortunately, relatively low-wage jobs are replacing higher paid ones. Economist David Ellwood has calculated that in 40 percent of poor two-parent families at least one adult has worked full-time all year. Is it not ludicrous, he writes, to talk about lack of incentive with regard to people who are working full-time and are still poor? Moreover, much of the growth of employment in the last decade has been part-time. Women in particular work part-time because they cannot find full-time employment. Over five million people are now in that situation. Everyone knows that the increasing number of single-parent families has contributed to general income problems. Not so generally known is that two-parent families account for a larger share of the increase in poverty since 1979.

In short, wages have been sliding downward for the last fifteen years, and we have had the longest stretch of high unemployment since the Great Depression. Until a few years ago, the resulting loss in average family income tended to be masked by rising levels of income maintenance. But lately, and especially in the last six years, income maintenance levels have been severely cut. For instance, ten years ago two-thirds of the unemployed received Unemployment Insurance, but today fewer than one-third receive it.

Discussing the counterposing of such positions as Novak's and the vulgar facts just recited, sociologist William Julius Wilson has observed that conservative views of the underclass and the culture of poverty nevertheless appear to many people to explain a phenomenon that is otherwise inexplicable. They read about a rise in long-term dependency and even what is old seems new, or new in magnitude. Liberals, Wilson maintains, are required not simply to contradict but to explain in a manner that carries conviction. In a series of phrases tossed off not, after all, at random, he writes that "such explanations should emphasize the dynamic interplay between ghetto-specific cultural characteristics and social and economic opportunities . . . the relationships between joblessness and family structure, joblessness and . . . crime, teenage pregnancy, welfare dependency."

Just so. Poverty and unemployment have effects, such as poor living conditions and malnutrition, that are linear, and they also have effects that are less directly but extensively demoralizing. In a sense, then, liberals tend to speak of first causes and conservatives of derivative causes. All the bills are responses to such analyses as Novak's and fail to address broader issues of job availability and wage levels. Incentive and obligation to work are made the central issue for recipients. In failing to emphasize first causes, and permitting welfare reform to appear as the central strategy for dealing with poverty, liberals accept the Reagan agenda and the arena of derivative causes. Aside from its neglect of broader issues, the difficulties that this agenda creates in designing welfare reform will become evident as we proceed.

In 40 percent of poor two-parent families at least one adult has worked full-time all year. Is it not ludicrous to talk about lack of incentive with regard to people who are working full-time and are still poor?

Second, *the social contract*: If society owes families a minimum subsistence level, adults equally owe society a responsibility to work and to behave in conformity with social norms. Therefore, cash payments and assistance in preparing for and finding work would be provided in exchange for an effort to be punctual and conscientious in training and in work, to provide good care for children, and so forth. Abstractly considered, this social contract is a reasonable and moral idea, but in practice it does not work.

Current law and the House and Senate bills provide states with a variety of ways to enforce a contract. They can reduce benefit payments, or substitute vouchers for cash, or withhold payments entirely. The recipient has no way to enforce the contract. Suppose, for instance, that a mother has been assured a place for her child in a day-care center while she attends classes, yet no place is available, its hours are all wrong for her, or the child is the wrong age. Or she is promised training that will lead to a job; she would like to repair electronic equipment, but the state human services department only has a contract for training of beauticians or stenotypists, of which locally there is an oversupply. There is nothing she can do. This side of the contract rests entirely on the willingness and capacity (read, funding level) of the state to deliver services, and the record is not encouraging. What kind of contract is that?

More profoundly, the social contract is a return to the so-called services strategy of the 1950s and 1960s. That is, social workers (called case managers, in current

jargon) were to sit down with recipients and discuss what had to be done. They were to provide skilled counseling and coordinate resources that were needed. After a time, the recipient and social worker were to meet again and evaluate progress. The Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (now Health and Human Services) assured Congress that rising welfare caseloads would be arrested by such a strategy and, for some years, Congress invested very heavily in it. It simply did not work. Indeed, a principal argument for President Nixon's FAP, summarized in Senator Moynihan's *The Politics of a Guaranteed Income*, was that this strategy had been demonstrated to be unworkable.

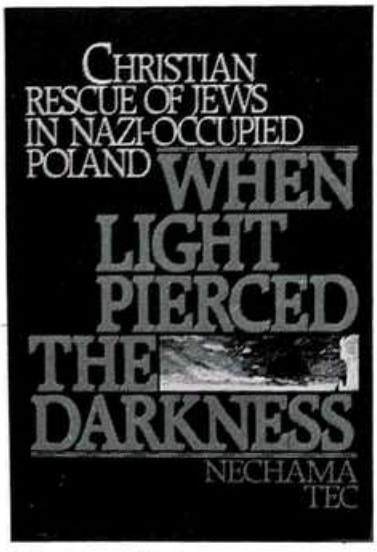
If the services strategy was not workable thirty years ago, it requires true ignorance of the environment of state human services departments around the country to believe that such an approach could be made to work now. During the summer, at the request of Senator Howard Metzenbaum, the General Accounting Office staged a meeting in Cleveland to discuss the proposed welfare legislation. Administrators testified that they would be unable to administer the provisions of the House and Senate bills. Many human services departments cannot manage to answer the telephone, let alone conduct a civilized interview. They have been stripped of staff; the staff they have has been downgraded—some have only an eighth or ninth-grade education; and they have been buffeted, blamed, and drowned in impossible regulations and requirements. Nor do the various proposals contain a hint of recognition of the unreadiness of the Department of Health and Human Services for conscientious administration of social contracts.

The Ways and Means Committee bill requires that there be a contract between the agency and recipient. The Moynihan bill appears to encourage but not require a contract. Indeed, it does not even require the agency to consult the recipient in arriving at an employment plan. As matters now stand in these agencies, it is in any case doubtful that contracts would be written and followed up on, and consulting the client's wishes is not the norm.

Third, *work, training, and social services:* Work is the emblem and banner of the reform drive. An effort to encourage and help recipients prepare for work is certainly worthwhile. The experience of departments offering work and training makes clear that many more recipients would like to work than are able to find jobs. Who, if there were an alternative, would want to live at these income levels and be hassled in the intricate ways developed by human service departments? The Reagan administration itself conducted a definitive demonstra-

(Continued on p. 85)

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Surviving Stories: Reflections on *Number Our Days*

Barbara Myerhoff

Ernest Hemingway is reputed to have remarked that all stories that go on long enough have the same ending. The question, then, is not how things finally end, but how they unfold, and how much time there is for the unfolding. This essay is the story of how things have unfolded in the allegedly doomed, small community of elderly Eastern European Jewish immigrants who live at the edge of the Pacific Ocean in Venice, California.

They have lived there for nearly three decades, scratching out a precarious existence that is as vibrant and intense as it is fragile, built out of the historical and symbolic riches of the people's common Yiddish background in the shtetls of the Old World, which they left as young people. Coming to America at the turn of the century—before the Holocaust destroyed their culture and their kin—they escaped the intractable poverty and anti-Semitism that had restricted them, to make a new life for their children, to provide them with the freedom and educational opportunities that contributed to making those children one of the most successful immigrant generations in American history. On retirement, the elders moved west to enjoy the Yiddishkeit at the beach community and to develop a new, syncretic culture that freely mixed Jewish, European, and American elements which combined to help them meet the difficulties of old age: poor housing, inadequate transportation, frail health, dangerous neighbors, insufficient income, remote medical attention, and the like.

Cut off from their highly assimilated children and wealthier Jewish neighbors, they turned to each other and revitalized their common values—Judaism, socialism, Zionism, social justice, learning, philanthropy, community, solidarity, autonomy, and American patriotism—and used these as the basis for a way of life well suited to meet the severe hazards of old age. Their social life has long been focused on the Israel Levin Senior Adult Center, a Jewish community day center sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Los Angeles and directed by Morrie Rosen, whose dedication to this group qualifies him for designation as one of the *Lamed Vav*, the thirty-six Just Men who exist in each generation and by their compassion and generosity help hold up the world.

The community has been documented amply and in many media. In 1972 I began an ethnographic study of it, funded in part by the National Science Foundation. This was the basis during the next ten years for a film, a book, a play, and a cultural festival. The film, called *Number Our Days*, appeared in 1977, directed and produced by Lynne Littman for KCET, the public television station in Los Angeles, and to everyone's astonishment it won the Academy Award for Best Short Documentary Film, giving it wide visibility. My book by the same name was published in 1979. In 1980 the University of Southern California Center for Visual Anthropology mounted an exhibit of the elders' artwork and folklore as part of a cultural festival of Yiddishkeit. And in 1981 the Mark Taper Forum of Los Angeles performed the play *Number Our Days*, directed by John Hirsch. I have lectured widely about the Israel Levin Center people, conducted scores of discussions, received hundreds of letters. Everyone eagerly asks, "How does the story end? What has become of them?" If the discussion goes on long enough, they also ask, "How did they respond to seeing themselves portrayed? How has the publicity affected them?" Then, "How has the work changed you?" These are among the questions I will explore here....

What has become of them? They have not died out. This, then, is a collection of surviving stories that tell how the elders have survived; a collection of persisting, not yet told stories offered in response to the questions the studies and portrayals have raised. All stories of surviving are miracle tales, and these are no different. The seniors of the Israel Levin Center were expected to have died out years ago. How could they continue? From the beginning their circumstances were perilous. Twelve years later, they are more burdened and imperiled than ever. Housing is more expensive. They are older—

Barbara Myerhoff (1930–1985) was chair and professor of anthropology at the University of Southern California. She is best known for her book Number Our Days *and the Academy Award-winning documentary by the same name. The following is excerpted from an essay left unfinished at the time of her death. The essay in its entirety, prepared for publication by Marc Kaminsky, will appear in Jack Kugelmass's* Between Two Worlds: Ethnographic Essays on American Jewry, *forthcoming from Cornell University Press.*

now in their nineties and up—more cross, more frightened and fragile with each passing year, but sharpened, honed by the burden and blessing of knowing how remarkable they are in their heroic and improbable persistence. They have outlived statistics and enemies....

Somehow, the Israel Levin Center still brings in close to five hundred people for major events. The boardwalk and benches along the beach still accommodate the arguing Zionists, socialists, agnostics, Orthodox men and women who have not ceased to participate in local and national political and cultural events, as if their debates and critical evaluations are all that keeps public life on course. And still in the Center there are singers, poets, musicians, declaimers, dancers, teachers, artists, those who circulate *pushkes* and hold rummage sales for charity, always on the lookout for ways to raise money for Israel, for the poor and the needy. That they themselves are alone, poor, in delicate health, ill-housed, threatened with expulsion by developers, rapacious landlords, and entrepreneurs, physically endangered by winos, muggers, self-absorbed youths on bicycles and skateboards—this in no way alters their sense of commitment to their community, defined as anyone in need, preferably but not necessarily Jewish. Of course, many individuals have died; many have left for board and care, old age homes, or convalescent hospitals. But the number of familiar faces—people that I have recognized or known well since 1972—is endlessly reassuring whenever I return.

Since these people do not die when predicted, the problem of severing relations with them becomes very complex and painful. Lynne Littman and I struggled with it continually. After our documentary film, Lynne went on to work on feature films (considered a defection by the elders) and I to study the larger, more complex regenerating Jewish neighborhood of Fairfax (considered choosing youth over age by the members.) Both of us return periodically and experience culture shock each time we come back. Reentering this arena, resonant of our own grandmothers, filled with people who continue to inform our choices and imaginations, is a wrench: always the fear that a cherished face will be missing, a lively friend confined to a walker. And there is always their anger if we have stayed away too long; their accusations of infidelity. (Who has replaced them in our affections? Now that we are "rich and famous," do we no longer need them?) The rush of grateful familiarity and sense of belonging are always accompanied by floods of guilt. We are children again, eager for their approval, achingly imperfect and vulnerable. And for me, the anthropologist, there is always the problem of having missed information as well as people whenever I am away. It is only our monographs that end. The lives of our subjects persist after we have stopped looking and listening.

The elders somehow have become our touchstones, the fixed and reliable planets by which we navigate our lives and morality. After a particularly materialistic and vulgar bar mitzvah or a skeptical, shallowly felt religious service, I find myself rushing back to the Center, to reground myself in their changeless, fully lived, deeply embedded form of Jewish practice. Lynne returned there for a blessing before her marriage, and though it was not spoken, she wanted their acceptance of her non-Jewish husband. Their children would be raised as Jews. The elders liked her husband's socially committed politics, which he practiced at that time as an investigative reporter. Lynne was called to light the Sabbath candles that day. Their union was approved. To whom else would Lynne go for a blessing? Her mother lives in New York. Her grandparents are dead. We need the grandparental generation for such occasions, and if we have not got our own we borrow them....

I returned on one memorable day, to touch base before surgery. It was to be a hysterectomy, a personal operation. I whispered news of this to Morrie, who, to my astonishment and acute embarrassment, announced it over the loudspeaker and asked people to pray for me. It took all my self-control to sit through the little ceremony, reminding myself that all prayers are statements of goodwill and, as such, useful, even powerful. Anyway, I was an anthropologist, trained to locate objectivity when needed. As I left, several women shouted to me that all would go well, they or their daughters had had such an operation, it was nothing. "Besides," yelled Manya, "how could you fail to recover when you got two hundred atheists praying over you?" Thus, they gave me their blessings, laughed at themselves, and demanded a little gratitude, all at the same time. Theirs is not a world in which something is given for nothing. Everything is built around exchange. There are no beggars, no charity, only webs of donors. And so their irony made me laugh, restoring my perspective, mending my embarrassment. We were in this together, and I left them knowing why I had come. This attitude of theirs was what I had so often seen carry them through the worst of times; it was the subtle, sturdy stuff of surviving....

* * *

The play *Number Our Days* was a qualified success. The audiences loved it; the critics had reservations. The Center members, bussed in for a benefit performance, took over as usual. Jennie informed one of the wealthy patrons in the front row that he should change seats with her. It was wrong that the Center members were given seats farther back, with their problems in hearing and seeing. He agreed; with some embarrassment, and soon the first few rows of patrons had been replaced

by the elders. As soon as the play began, Bessie shouted to the actors that she couldn't hear them. "Speak up. We don't hear so good."

"Good," echoed John Hirsch, the director. "It's what I've been telling them all along."

After intermission, the sound of crackling cellophane was heard from all over the theater. The elders had come from a breakfast in their honor just before the play and had brought along extra lox and bagels for a snack later in the day. They unpacked their leftovers, and the theater was pervaded with the unmistakable smell of fish. The play continued with a heightened atmosphere of realism. Some of the audience members complained about the "unnecessarily exaggerated immigrant characteristics" of the people in the play. In one of the scenes, a newcomer complained about the elders to the anthropologist: "But why must they always shout and gesture?"

The question is not how things finally end, but how they unfold, and how much time there is for the unfolding.

"Because they can't hear," she replies in exasperation.

Nevertheless, at the reception, a well-dressed, late-middle-aged Jewish gentleman could be overheard complaining to his wife, "But I still don't see why they had those terrible accents. And why do they have to shout all the time?"

And the Center elders argued all the way home on the bus as to whether the representation had been faithful to them. "We don't really argue that much, do we?" Some would say yes, some would say no.

The selective identification and recognition of characters, by the elders, by other Jews portrayed in the play, and by the audience, was a fascinating issue. The elders wanted more control over their portrayals, though they more or less agreed that the depiction of them was faithful. Still, they wanted the play as a platform upon which to mount their ideals. Younger Jews in the audience reacted to the elders in ways that suggested their accommodation to the immigrant generations of Jews in general and their own immigrant past. Those who had eschewed it were embarrassed and annoyed. Those for whom it struck a nostalgic and sentimental response were warmed, even thrilled by the overt display of Jewish "ethnic" markers of identity. More than was the case with the film or the book, it was possible to read Jewish responses to the play as a kind of barometer of people's adaptation to their social history, their degree of assimilation, and at a deeper level, their attitudes about very complex and personal issues such as their relationships with parents, grandparents, the elderly in general, and the prospects of their own aging....

Members' reactions to their portrayals often demonstrated an almost bewilderingly close identification. This was particularly evident in Center people's responses to the film *Number Our Days*—by its nature the most concrete, repetitive, public, and affective of all the portraits we made of them. Film and photographic images are overwhelmingly persuasive mirrors, relatively recent inventions in the array of reflecting surfaces people have used to know and identify themselves. There have always been many kinds of reflecting devices so used....

In simpler, stabler times, occasions for reflection were assured, the birthright of all who lived within the web of meanings and tales that constitute a coherent culture. When all the heroes and demons, animals, deities, plants, and stones are variations of oneself, like a dream in which the dreamer retells versions of himself/herself in all the characters envisioned, every story is "my" story, about "my" family and predicaments, past and future. But now surfaces and stories are provided not from within the indigenous reservoir of agreed-upon understandings in the group; they are given and withheld by outsiders. Accidents—people displaced and disrupted from their native countries and culture—may loosen the web of meaning that held people together and thus may lose them the occasions in which they find themselves "properly"—familiarly and appropriately—understood and reflected. And politics is an immense factor: Disenfranchised, disdained, marginal people are at a loss for mirroring media, and thus often cannot recognize themselves anywhere. If they are seen at all, it is likely to be in caricature, in such simple and negative stereotypes as to be disorienting and damaging.

In our time, the stories we hear and the pictures we see that give us images of "ourselves" are most often out of our hands; they have been centralized, packaged, mixed, and sold. It is not unusual to meet, as I did lately, an educated, very intelligent young woman who confessed that she was addicted to television soap operas because "they are realer than my own life." The characters move faster, are more sharply etched, simplified, exaggerated; they come right to the point; the plot unfolds more powerfully, dramatically, coherently; motives are clear, emotions unmistakable. Whether she likes it or not, those tales have more punch than her own meandering, erratically unfolding story in which plot and outcome are obscure and slow in their revelation. Here the television image holds the experienced reality of a life, and we, the "originals," are the faded, bored copies.

People's responses to themselves on film have long fascinated ethnographic cinematographers, for ethical as well as theoretical reasons. If people unsophisticated about technology die after their "images have been taken," has the photographer stolen their souls? If whole villages disappear in a slow pan shot across a horizon, how are they to be brought back? When people are shown photographs or, more powerfully, movies, they can often be observed kinesthetically to shape themselves into the person they see, verifying the "authentic" filmic version. The French cinematographer Jean Rouche has written on this extensively, noting that among Africans he was filming, in a documentary on trance behavior, individuals seeing themselves in a possessed state on film were likely to fall into trance again. Is the original behavior authentic and the second trance a replication, somehow false because not spontaneous? Is one real because unself-conscious, and the other more real because it is more conscious? Societies tattoo markings on their citizens to show them to themselves in a new light: "Now you are an adult, you are marriageable, a full member." These are lessons made palpable, literally embodied. We become emblems; we are what we display. Likewise, the secondary trance, induced by the camera's presence, inscribes societies' teachings and, at the deepest physiological level, recreates its images. Perhaps it is a "cine-trance," manufactured by the camera's eye, or an "ethno-trance," an expression of a culture's interpretation of itself, made more sharp, triggered by the heightening of reflexive consciousness that is one of the hallmarks of human experience and one of the points of all cultural performance.

The same process can be observed in interviewing. When one takes a very long, careful life history of another person, complex exchanges occur between subject and object. Inventions and distortion emerge; neither party is the same. A new creation is constituted when two points of view are engaged in examining one life. The new creation has its own integrity but should not be mistaken for the spontaneous, unframed, life-as-lived person who existed before the interview began. This could be called an "ethno-person," the third person who is born by virtue of the collusion between interlocutor and subject.

Subjects know this intuitively, and for some the emphasis is on how they are changed by being interviewed, while for others the interest is on how the interview changes the interlocutor. One of the Center members whom I had chased for nearly a year, trying to pin him down to do a life history session, faced me at last and explained his refusal. What I wanted was a serious thing, almost like making a golem, an idol, he said. It would forever alter both of us. "If I would tell you my life and you would really listen, it would change you, and what right have I to do that? On the other hand, if I would tell you my life and you would really listen and not be changed, why should I waste my time?"

For him, it was not worth the risk, but that was unusual. Most Center members wanted desperately to be included. They had very few remaining opportunities for being seen, remembered, attended. And being left out, particularly being left on the cutting room floor, was a real trauma.

"It's bad enough that you left me out [of the film *Number Our Days*] in Los Angeles. Now the movie shows in Detroit where my daughter lives, and you left me out all over again." Manya never forgave us. Each replaying was a fresh erasure of her existence.

Mr. Stoller, on the other hand, was thrilled. "You gave me back my wife by this film." He was referring to the close-up of a photograph of his wife of nearly fifty years, focused on during an interview with him in his room. "After all this time, she comes back to me." The photograph sat on his dresser in his room facing him every day. How, then, had we given it back? It could only be that seeing it blown up so very large had an impact on him, making it more alive than the version in his room. But more than that, it seemed to me that viewing his wife's picture in a public setting, seeing her being seen by all his friends and fellows, there in the Center, gave her image a heightened reality. Additional life was breathed into her photograph when it was held up to the watching world. There were witnesses who could attest to her existence, to their marriage, who could see his continuing love for her. The audience cospectatorship brought her back into living society and briefly, magically, returned her to him with a power the picture lacked when, standing mutely on the dresser, it was viewed by him alone....

Now, years and hundreds of viewings later, I still find things in the film I hadn't noticed before. And watching people's responses to particular moments is also a source of research data. In one scene, an older woman without a partner dances tentatively at first, then picks up momentum and ends up dancing with great verve, alone and grave, slapping her thighs to the music. It is an emblematic moment, in which one can see the crystallization of years of experience: the steps, leading up to the courage to be so alive though alone, are laid out like pebbles marking a path. Audiences of all ages and both sexes often gasp at that image. And Gita, the proud ballerina who is accompanied in her dance by her blind husband, becomes another such emblem. He holds her wrist with reverence, and it is evident that he still sees her beauty.... At this instant the Center is no longer a miniature arena; it swells to become as im-

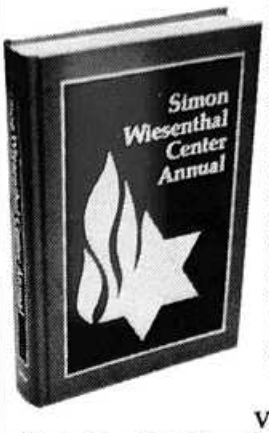
mense as the grandest stage in one of life's most exalted enterprises. The common human impulse for beauty and an exhibition of grace are identified; the couple is not any longer cute or endearing but magnificent. Such a transformation can only be *felt* through film, and audiences consistently find that a mysteriously moving moment.

One of the lessons of the film, which I incorporated into the book, bore on my decision to include myself overtly, as part of the story I was telling. The decision to include me had been made on strictly utilitarian grounds: It sped things up and allowed us to discuss some of the invisible issues. Serendipitously, exposing how I learned about the elders' lives and how theirs affected mine turned out to be of great interest not only to anthropologists but to lay people as well. That the observer is a part of all s/he witnesses has long been a truism. That the process of the witnessing is very interesting and instructive was not as clear when we began. Unexpectedly, the film's representation of my discovering and responding to the members' lives proved to be a modeling and a teaching. Somehow, audiences were less removed from the elders because I was a more familiar figure—American-born, middle-aged, a bridge. Since so much of the receiving of cultural traditions requires a witness, since so much of what the older people lacked and needed were witnesses, it was absolutely right that I filled that role in the film. None of this was evident to us at the time. In retrospect, the showing of the listening and receiving was as important as showing the offering and telling of stories and traditions. The transmission of culture requires two parties in a complex process, and the role of both parties should be made explicit.

Theirs is not a world in which something is given for nothing. Everything is built around exchange. There are no beggars, no charity, only webs of donors.

This lesson from the film was incorporated into the book. The decision to include myself was immensely liberating. I was able to expose and explore my conflicts and choices, instead of presenting them as hardened, closed states or facts; I could unfold them as processes, resonant with elements originating from the research situation and my own personal reactions. It felt more honest, deeper, and finally simpler than any anthropological work I had ever done. I felt more of my

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reactions being used, holistically, as we are taught to study societies. I was thinking with my viscera, feeling with my brain, learning from all my history and hunches and senses. This notion of holistic knowledge was part of the lecture I was used to giving my students when introducing them to the idea of participant-observation, but it felt as though I was practicing it for the first time, and I could never imagine trusting my own or anyone else's work as fully without some signposts as to how the interpretations were arrived at and how the anthropologist felt while doing so....

* * *

The "final" arena of visibility in which the elders "appeared"—an exhibition and celebration entitled "Life Not Death in Venice: From Victims to Victors"—grew out of an incident described at the end of the book. One of the Center members was killed by a bicyclist who ran her down. The cyclist claimed he "didn't see her," though she was directly in front of him. It was emblematic of all that had grown increasingly apparent to them over the years—the elderly were invisible. After the extensive coverage and attention provided by the film, many members had become very sophisticated about manipulating their

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images and had grown sensitive to the power they could mobilize by reaching a broader, sympathetic outside public. An article in the newspaper entitled "Death in Venice" decried the death. The elders took up the headline as a battle cry, made placards reading "Life Not Death in Venice," and, led by Morrie Rosen's always deft political sense, arranged a procession down the boardwalk, accompanying a mock coffin (a refrigerator carton painted black, carried on a child's wagon), calling attention to their need for a safety zone where they could walk without being imperiled by bicycle and skateboard. Much media coverage assured them the attention they desired, and, indeed, they were successful. A city ordinance prohibiting wheeled traffic in the area was enforced. The photograph of the parade became the logo for an exhibition of folk art and a celebration of Yiddishkeit that we mounted at the University of Southern California in 1980. The title was our mnemonic device for remembering how important it was that these people were learning to empower themselves by appearing in public and commanding attention.

Increasingly fascinated by their self-depictions, I began to pay more attention to a mural painted by the elders along one entire wall of the Center, portraying their peregrinations from the shtetls of Europe, through the sweatshops of New York, ending up at the beach in Venice. It is a complex piece of self-portraiture, worthy of an extended analysis. For our purposes here, two features are striking. At the heart of the mural is a picture of themselves as young people, parading, marching in union demonstrations, picketing, carrying placards, much as they had done in response to the Venice death. Here then, is an old model, alive in their history and imaginations. Secondly, two of the figures in the last panel are mere outlines, empty of color. I had assumed the mural was simply unfinished at that point. Then I overheard two women discussing it. "It shows us before we came together, so we really didn't exist completely."

"No," the other woman rebutted. "It's because we are unfinished. No matter how old, we are still growing and new things can come in."

The people seem to have a boundless capacity for passionate, meaningful, self-determined lives, full of irony, dignity, humor, and conscience.

We underestimate folk art. I had looked at this piece for years without fully understanding it. How much else would they have to say about their paintings and drawings, which hung about on the Center walls? What were the visual images that accompanied or elaborated the stories that I knew in much greater detail? Periodically, some of them would bring in a few paintings. I had known them as consummate storytellers. Now I became aware that their visual pictures were rich and vivid, too. Completely self-taught, overcoming a religious tradition which forbade portraiture and the depiction of images, they made art objects....

The Center members, I am convinced, will remain indomitably themselves, impervious to outsiders and intrusions on their customs and morality as long as they live. One of my most vivid memories of a recent visit with them reinforces my realization of the extent of their self-determination. I was going to Jerusalem, where I had agreed to take their messages to put in the *kotel*, the western wall of the Temple, along with their notes to relatives, used clothing, old jewelry, a used set of dentist's tools, a pair of drapes, and other miscellaneous items to be given to friends and family. As I was trying to juggle the implements, feeling very much like a refugee myself, Beryl called me aside. "I will give you here one dollar. When I left Russia seventy years ago, my father did this for

me. 'Beryl,' he said, 'take these ten rubles and find a poor man in America who needs them. That way your trip will be safe. You will be a *meshiach mitzva*, a blessed messenger on a sacred journey.'"

Others overheard him, and before I knew it, I had nearly two hundred dollars in crumpled bills to deliver to the needy in Israel. An intense argument immediately began as to who should receive the donation. "Not the anarchists!"

"Whatever you do, not the ultra-Orthodox. They're against Israel!"

"You should find the Arabs who need it the most—that's true charity!" The blind, war orphans, for education—all were passionately urged on me as the proper cause. With no consensus, I felt free to decide for myself, realizing that no one would be happy with my choice.

After much searching, I settled on an organization that provided care and work for elderly Jews and non-Jews who were unable to live on their own, Lifeline for the Elderly. Founded by Miriam Mendilow, the original group had been homeless and helpless elderly people caught in the cross fire of various wars. They knitted, crocheted, embroidered, bound old books, made cards, and raised funds to support themselves in a sheltered workshop. They were very appreciative of my offering and insisted on giving me dozens of items they had made to return to the Jews in Venice who had kindly sent them the donation.

I came back to Venice, bearing the return gifts and filled with apprehension.

"What do you mean, you gave it to the elderly? What good does that do anyone? You must support youth, they carry on the future. Besides, why have you brought these things back? Don't those people know we don't take charity? We were giving to them!" In the ensuing commotion, I slipped away, but not before I heard a discussion developing as to how they could auction off the gifts I had brought back and use the funds to send money to Israel, to the really needy people, and the ones who wouldn't try to send back anything in return.

★ ★ ★

This then has been a reprise of some of the stories of survivors, the surviving stories not elsewhere recorded. There are scores more; it is endless. There is no telling how much more unfolding will occur or how long it will take. It cannot be called a tragic tale or a predictable one. On the contrary, the people seem to have a boundless capacity for passionate, meaningful, self-determined lives, full of irony, dignity, humor, and conscience. No one who has spent sufficient time among them or looked very closely at their lives can feel any way save delight, wonder, and, finally, awareness that it is a privilege to have shared this time and this place with them. □

Psalm 8

David Curzon

"When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers"
I recall an unshaven Yugoslav shoemaker
my mother took me to when I was ten
who carved my foot's last in wood,
and remember the edge of his cut leather,
the clean line behind the knife,
and his thick stitches binding, for a childish
ingrate, the crafted object to be worn away.

"You have crowned him with glory and honor."
And yesterday I came across a photo
from a lost campaign in a poor country:
a bandit has pulled off his hat
and stands at attention against a wall,
not defiant, not contrite, merely dignified.

David Curzon is a poet living in New York City. His poems "At the Sea of Reeds" *and* "The Chosen People" *appeared in Vol. 2, No. 1 (January-March 1987)*, p. 117.

Leadership and Community in Judaism

Reuven Kimelman

The history of Judaism is as much a history of leadership as a history of ideas. As Jewish life in antiquity affirmed the primacy of Torah over Temple, priestly leadership gave way to rabbinic. In modern times, since the synagogue functions both as school and temple, its leadership is bound to reflect both priestly and rabbinic patterns. Which pattern is likely to predominate and the effect on the nature of Judaism is the subject of this inquiry.

From Priest to Rabbi

The fall of Judea and the destruction of the Temple by Babylon in 586 B.C.E. were watersheds in biblical religion. No other ancient culture survived the destruction of its temple, the devastation of its capital, and the exile of its leadership. If Judaism were to weather the Babylonian exile, an explanation had to be forthcoming. According to the prophets, these disasters were a consequence of divine punishment or at least a suspension of divine protection. It is probable that the Jews in Babylon who reconstituted themselves as a religious community accepted their exile as a punishment and believed that they were in need of expiation and atonement.

The exile, however, presented unprecedented problems for the penitent community. Initially, the priest sought to maintain his dominance over religious life. Lacking authority to offer sacrifices on foreign soil, however, the priest's special status and authority weakened. Since priestly mediated atonement was no longer available, alternative schemes for reinstatement into God's good grace could make headway.

The major alternative was that of the prophets and teachers. They had not only an explanation for the tragedies but a tradition and a literature from which to ferret out ways of reconciliation. Thus, the quest for atonement and expiation led to the study of sacred teachings as the indispensable religious activity. As religious authority became associated with knowledge of sacred literature, books tended to displace the cult as the source of the sacred for the people. As long as the Temple was standing the priest was perceived as indispensable. Once the necessary link between the cult and the sacred was sundered, the idea that the link between the divine and the human was a sacred book could be entertained. Mastery of the book then established a new status in the religious hierarchy. As temple-centered communities generated authorities who were adept at the cult, book-centered communities generated authorities who were skilled at interpretation.

Similarly, as intrinsic holy space was no longer available, intrinsic holy time gained in prominence. Thus, it is of no surprise that the Sabbath as holiness in time assumed greater significance than it had before the exile. It is Isaiah of the Exile who associates the Sabbath with maintaining the covenant. Even the foreigner who attaches himself to the Lord shall be welcome in God's house of prayer by virtue of Sabbath observance (Isa. 56). It is also not accidental that the importance of the Sabbath as the cornerstone of the covenant is underscored by the prophet of the Exile, Ezekiel: "Hallow My Sabbaths, that they may be a sign between Me and you, that you may know that I, the Lord, am your God" (Ezek. 20:20). Indeed, this very prophet who unremittingly calls the exilic community to repentance is the one most rooted in Torah literature.

The new factor in the social impact of the Sabbath in Babylon lies in its distinguishing Jews from their gentile neighbors and uniting them with their Jewish compatriots, albeit not their neighbors. The Sabbath, especially in exile, superimposes a spiritual neighborhood on the physical one. The result is that common ideology and practice become as significant as common geography in the generation of community. Although the Sabbath is designated the sign of the covenant, sociologically it serves as the seal of the covenant. It is the day that the exiles become confirmed as the people of God.

In sum, the experience of the exile sowed the seed which allows Judaism to germinate into a book-teacher-Sabbath-community-centered religion in contrast to a sacrifice-priest-temple-land-centered religion. Through this development a territory-limited national religious culture was transmuted into a world-portable religious community.

When the Jews returned to Jerusalem these differences in religious thought and practice caused conflict between the returnees and the Jews who remained in the

Reuven Kimelman is an associate professor of Judaic studies at Brandeis University and chief program associate of CLAL, the National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership.

land and who are referred to as the high priestly group. The bone of contention was the locus of the sacred. For the high priestly group the sacred was restricted to the Temple cult; for the returnees, the sacred was to be found also in the newly covenanted life of the community. The high priestly group strove to keep the cult within the confines of the Temple and the priesthood. The returnees endeavored to diffuse the sacred throughout the community. They were accordingly overjoyed at reviving the practice of setting up booths for each household for the Festival of Tabernacles. At the same time, they tried to elevate personal religious behavior to cultic status. Moreover, the returnees obliged all in the knowledge of Torah by having a public reading and explication of Scripture. Such a requirement necessarily led to the development of Scriptural hermeneutics. This, in turn, worked to undermine the belief that Scripture is limited to its literal meaning. In order to assure the proper observance of the biblical commandments, the community required members to assume obligations not explicitly specified in Torah. These developments were all in the direction of enlarging the community subject to Torah and increasing the application of Torah to life. Hence, more and more of the community was gradually incorporated into full religious membership.

From Priesthood to Kingdom of Priests

The experience of the exile enabled the community to perceive the contingent nature of the priesthood. Once it became apparent that the priesthood's access to the sacred need not be exclusive, the path leading to its obsolescence was embarked upon. Isaiah of the Exile foresaw the day when the people would be called "priests of the Lord" and termed "servants of our God" (Isa. 61:6).

The public reading of the Torah in, most likely, 444 B.C.E. marks the transformation of a religious innovation from the exilic period into a permanent theological reality. The critical stages of this change are documented in three chapters of the Book of Nehemiah. Chapter eight reports that care was taken to render the Torah comprehensible to all the people. Chapter nine describes the ceremony of atonement. Besides a public expression of penitence, the ceremony contained a prophetic review of biblical history. It climaxed in a solemn act of renewing the covenant, but no priestly confirmation was required. The people confessed their sins and pledged allegiance to God by committing themselves to follow His Torah. The confession made mention not only of personal unfaithfulness but also of "our kings, our rulers, and our priests who have been unmindful of the commandments" (Neh. 9:32, 34). It is noteworthy that of all the sacred days in the Torah only the Sabbath is mentioned, indeed highlighted. Chapter ten emphasizes that, besides the priests and levites, all the rest of the people undertook to walk according to the Law of God and to observe and practice all His commandments.

These three chapters encapsulate the lessons the community learned in exile. They admit to being punished for being unworthy of divine favor. They affirm the centrality of the Sabbath and the Torah. And they accept the prophetic position that the ruling powers of Jerusalem had not been conduits, but obstructors of divine grace. The covenantal ceremony adds to biblical religion the insights gained from the experience of the exile. From then on they became an integral part of the covenantal experience of Israel.

As intrinsic holy space was no longer available, intrinsic holy time gained in prominence. Thus, it is of no surprise that the Sabbath as holiness in time assumed greater significance than it had before the exile.

Israel was now in both the social and theological position to take up the original divine charge to become a kingdom of priests. According to Exodus Chapter nineteen, this signifies not only that Israel is God's own people, set apart from the rest of the nations, but that, since the whole world is God's, Israel is to be dedicated to God's service among the nations as priests serve within a society. Moreover, the life of Israel is to be commensurate with the holiness of the covenant of God. This covenant encompasses her whole life, defining her relation to God, to her neighbors, and to herself.

The Birth of Rabbinic Judaism

The ceremony of renewing the covenant, as it has been described in Nehemiah, leads directly to the study of Torah and then to Rabbinic Judaism. Through this ceremony, the public recitation of the Torah achieved the cultic status of a convocation, thereby transforming the general exhortations to study in Deuteronomy 6:7 and 11:19 and Joshua 1:8 into structured acts. From that time forward, the history of Judaism becomes the history of the interpretation and application of Torah. What began with Moses was consummated under Ezra. That Ezra, the prototypical rabbinic Jew, was considered heir to the whole biblical heritage (and, by association, his successors the rabbis) lies in the fact that

rabbinic tradition considered him to be a second founder of the Torah, greater than the High Priest, and a prophet. Indeed, if Moses had not preceded him, Ezra would have received the Torah (*B. Sukkah* 20a, *Kohelet Rabbah* 1.4, *B. Megillah* 15a, *B. Sanhedrin* 21b).

Although it is true that Rabbinic Judaism emerges full-blown only centuries later by virtue of the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 C.E., its seeds were already sown by the prophets in the First Temple period. What becomes the Rabbinic way of thinking can trace its roots back as far as Jeremiah. He comes close to speaking of the Torah and the word of God as parallel terms (Jer. 6:19, 8:8f). He was also the prophet most anxious to point out the contingency of the Temple in the scheme of biblical religion by proclaiming that God had not originally intended to require the sacrificial system (Jer. 7:22, cp. Lev. 23:37). Instead, Jeremiah held to the position, as did others, that Israel's adherence to God's word and covenant suffices for them to become His people (Jer. 7:23, 11:4; cf. Exod. 19:5).

It should therefore be of no surprise that it was Jeremiah who envisioned a future in which

> men shall no longer speak of the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord, nor shall it come to mind. They shall not mention it, or miss it, or make another. At that time they shall call Jerusalem "throne of the Lord" and all nations shall assemble there, in the name of the Lord, at Jerusalem (Jer. 3:16f).

According to some commentators, Rashi and Abarbanel, for example, Jeremiah looks forward to a time when the locus of the sacred will be transferred from the Ark of the Covenant to the community of the covenant, making it unnecessary to construct another ark. So successful would the replacement be that the old forms will not even be missed. Still, Jerusalem will retain its importance as the city of God. The prophet realized that for God's presence to be everywhere, it first must be somewhere.

Rabbinic leaders established Judaism on the foundations of study of Torah, prayer, fasting, practice of the commandments, and acts of loving-kindness, all of which claimed to be in one way or another surrogates for the cult. The genius of Rabbinic Judaism expressed itself in presenting innovation as renovation. The new meanings, it must be emphasized, were not put forth as something new but rather as emphatic realizations of something very old. The rabbis claimed to be doing nothing more than raising to the explicit what had been implicit. Their plan consisted of fully realizing Ezra's and Nehemiah's program to put the holy within reach of all, so that the biblical ideal of creating a priestlike holy people could be attained. They were so successful at connecting the old with the new that discontinuities were almost imperceptible to future generations.

The rabbis used the language of the past, especially familiar terms with exquisite associations, only to endow them with new meaning. The language of the Temple cult was enlisted in the service of the rabbinic programs of piety, which dared nothing less than the sanctification of a whole people. In this way, the rabbis turned the world into the Temple by making all of life a religious experience. They hammered this idea into Jewish consciousness by formulating new blessings. These blessings were for the performance of *mitzvot*, the enjoyment of the world, the washing of the hands, and the study of Torah.

Performance of *Mitzvot*

The rabbis did not confine their discussion of the Temple's destruction to the departure of the divine; for them, the removal of the walls of the Temple could show as well that the divine could not be delimited spatially. Razing the Temple walls liberated the sacred and allowed the concentrated holiness to pervade the world, just as shattering a bottle of scent perfumes a room. If the psalmist had rhapsodized that "the earth is the Lord's," then the next step was to see the world as the Temple. For the rabbis, all of Israel was obliged to take this step and assume heretofore priestly roles. All of Israel could participate in this *mitzvah*-centered life, which was to be patterned after Temple ritual and punctuated with periods of holiness. Temple drama was relocated onto the stage of life. Thus, the daily regimen prescribed by the rabbis was comparable to that of a religious order. "Holiness was not given to the priests alone," the rabbis believe, "but to the priests, to the levites, and to the rest of Israel, as it says in Leviticus 19:1, 'Speak to the whole community of Israel and say to them, You shall be holy'" (*Seder Eliahu Rabbah* 16, ed. Friedmann p. 72). Hence, when fulfilling a *mitzvah* which enhances the distinctive character of the people of God, the rabbis ordained that the words "Who have sanctified us by His commandments" be incorporated into the accompanying blessing.

The Enjoyment of the World

The rabbis most frequently chose to evoke the divine by focusing on natural pleasures, be they aesthetic or sensual. As a result, aspects of life which are normally impervious to the sacred become infused with holiness because of blessing-recitations.

These blessings stir our eyes to see the world as God's temple. Through them we recognize "How great ... God's dwelling-place is; how vast His domain" (*Baruch* 3:24). For "in the truest sense the holy temple of God is the whole universe" (Philo, *The Special Laws*

1:66; cf. *Mekhilta bo.* 16, ed. Horovitz-Rabin, p. 58). "See and thou shalt praise" was the leitmotif of the blessings. As Isaiah urged us, "lift high your eyes and see who created these" (Isa. 40:26). Is not the divine handiwork recognizable everywhere if one would but lift the eyes? Does not all creation rhapsodize its Maker? Through blessings, the rabbis understood, creation is both noticed and exalted. Indeed, it is sanctified, for sanctification comes through perceiving the connection with the divine.

Since it is sacrilegious to appropriate objects from the Temple for personal use, viewing the whole world as a Temple might render everything off limits. By reciting a blessing, however, we become denizens of the Temple, and everything comes within our reach. The rabbis also viewed blessings as helping us to see ourselves as guardians rather than as landlords of the universe. Reaping benefits from the world without proper acknowledgment verges on brigandage. Acknowledging God's lordship, however, grants entrée into His whole domain (*B. Berakhot* 35b).

Much of modern Judaism, because it has neglected the study of Torah and a way of life which is responsible to the sacred, has felt the need to remodel the rabbi into a priestly figure.

The rabbis did not rest until they had filled the day with one hundred blessings to satisfy minimum adult spiritual requirements. After all, if one hundred sockets are required to hold the tabernacle together, then one hundred blessings are needed to make the spiritual structure of creation apparent. These blessings take note of good smell and taste, rising up and lying down, the intake of food, and the elimination of waste. Blessings celebrate the spectacle of lightning, falling stars, majestic mountains, and stretches of wilderness. The roar of thunder has its praise, the sight of the sea and rainbow its response. Beautiful animals and even beautiful people, according to some, are praised, as are trees in blossom, the new moon, new clothing, new houses, and even, according to others, the first legitimate taste of sexual delight. Indeed, man will be held accountable for foregoing those legitimate pleasures that God would have him relish.

Domestic life, according to the rabbis, should take on the importance of the Temple cult. Just as the Temple served as the locus of the indwelling presence of God and a place of atonement, domestic peace, according to the Talmud (*B. Sotah* 14a), draws in the divine presence, and the table functions as an altar: "As long as the Temple stood, the altar atoned for Israel, but now a man's table atones for him."

This quotation appears in two contexts. One context mentions feeding the poor (*B. Berakhot* 55a). Here the table serves as a source of atonement apparently because of the many good deeds occasioned by its use in showing hospitality to the poor. The rabbis held that hospitality to wayfarers is greater than greeting the divine presence (*B. Shabbat* 127a); indeed, extending hospitality could be on a par with the daily sacrifice (*B. Berakhot* 10b). Such is the significance of the table that it was a medieval practice to bury the benevolent rich in coffins made out of their own tables. The expiation of the table was added to the expiation of death.

The Washing of Hands

Once the Passover Seder replaced the paschal offering and attendant ritual in the Temple, it became acceptable to endow eating with cultic associations. Dining took its cultic cues from sacrificing, and the diner was viewed as a priest. Washing before eating became a requirement just as priests "washed upon entering the tabernacle and upon approaching the altar" (Exod. 40:32, see 30:19). Thus, the biblical word "to wash" is rendered in the rabbinic Aramaic translation as "to sanctify." This parallels the rabbinic ruling that the blessing over bread should immediately follow the washing because Psalm 134:2 is interpreted to mean "Sanctify your hands and bless the Lord."

So they taught, "Sanctify yourselves" to refer to preprandial washing and "And be ye holy" to refer to postprandial washing (Lev. 11:44). And what if they are not washed? "Just as soiled hands render one unfit for the Temple service, so do they render one unfit for meal-related blessings" (*B. Berakhot* 51b). And what if they are not wiped? "Whoever eats bread without first wiping his hands is as though he eats impure food" (*B. Sotah* 4b). Elevating dining to a cultic level allowed it to be perceived on a par with acts of divine worship in the Temple (Bahya Ibn Asher, *Bahya's Writings*, ed. Chavel, p. 496).

The hand-washing ceremony upon arising in the morning also referred to priestly service (Rashba in *Beit Yosef* at *Shulchan Arukh, Orach Chayyim* 4); indeed, it was deemed to be a miniature immersion (Rashi at *B. Berakhot* 16b-top). In fact, ancient Jews were praised as "a sacred race of pious men [who] at dawn lift up holy arms toward heaven from their beds, always sanctifying their hands with water" (*Sibylline Oracles* 3:573, 591-93 as in *The Old Testament*

Pseudepighra, ed. Charlesworth, I., p. 375, n.t.3).

The blessing recited upon such washing is "Praised are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, Who has sanctified us by His commandments and commanded us regarding washing the hands." But the biblical commandment for the ritual washing of the hands is directed at the priesthood. Precisely, priestly holiness has become the model for all of Israel (*Seder Eliahu Rabbah* 16). The idea of Israel as a priest-people so captivated the imagination of the rabbis that they considered the priestly washing of the hands outside of the Temple to be incumbent upon all. The practice encapsulated the biblical ideal so well that it was deemed ordained by God (*Sifre Numbers* 116).

The Study of Torah

The rabbis were uncharacteristically unrestrained in ascribing cultic significance to the study of Torah. It was considered tantamount to participation in the Temple cult, and it was considered equivalent to the daily sacrifice. Studying the biblically ordained laws of the sin-offering was accredited as if one had actually offered the required sacrifice. And studying the laws of the cult was as if the Temple were then being rebuilt. If the study of Torah conferred priestly prerogatives, then it is no wonder that "a sage's public exposition of Torah was as if he had offered fat and blood [of the biblically prescribed animal sacrifice] on the altar" (*Avot DeRabbi Natan* 4). Indeed, the study of the Torah could elevate one to the level of High Priest. Finally, one rabbi went so far as to assert that "one who occupies himself with the study of Torah has no need of the burnt offering, the sin-offering, the meal-offering, or the guilt-offering" (*B. Menahot* 110a). The rabbis resolved the problem of the absence of the Temple by proclaiming the expiatory power of study of Torah, Judaism's portable temple (*Midrash Tanhuma, aharei* 10). In the eyes of some, the expiation of Torah study exceeded that of prayer, fasts, good deeds, and, as we have seen, even sacrifices.

The development of this understanding of Torah highlights the distinctiveness of Rabbinic Judaism. Other groups laying claim to the Bible also had to come up with replacements for the Temple cult for either geographical or ideological reasons. Those succeeding laid claim to creating a purer cult or offering a more perfect sacrifice. This approach clung to cultic imagery. The best-known example held that sacrifice-expiation required death, whereas the remission of sins required the shedding of blood. Only one

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Years

Anna Margolin

Translated from the Yiddish by Kathryn Hellerstein

Like women, much loved yet never sated,
Who stroll through life with laughter and with anger
In their eyes of fire and agate—
So are the years.

And they were also like actors
Who mouth Hamlet half-heartedly for the market,
Like noblemen in a proud country
Who seize rebellion by the nape.

And see, how demure they are now, my God,
And mute as a crushed clavier.
They grasp at just anybody's impulse and mockery as at love
And seek you, not believing in you.

Anna Margolin (1889–1952) was a highly acclaimed Yiddish modernist poet. This translation will appear in Handbook of American-Jewish Literature, *Greenwood Press, 1988. Kathryn Hellerstein is a poet and translator living in Philadelphia. Her poem* "A Universal Language" *appeared in Vol. 2, No. 2.*

Zionism on the Analyst's Couch in Contemporary Israeli Literature

Yael S. Feldman

Emphasis on ideologies and spiritual issues . . . is characteristic of frustrated leaderships when they lose their hold on the communities they wish to lead. Intensive preoccupation with questions of ideology is typical . . . of leaders who are no longer in a governing position.

Yonatan Shapiro, *The Formative Years of the Israeli Labor Party: The Organization of Power 1919–1930*

What happened to the Zionist cultural revolution? Where has it disappeared? Why are its creators ashamed of their creation? Why are they going back to the ghetto-culture or "down" to the culture of the West?

Gershon Shaked, *No Other Place: On Literature and Society*

Psychoanalysis appealed above all to people who had lost their origins in soil, ritual, and tradition.

Erik Erikson, "Autobiographic Notes on the Identity Crisis"

What is the correlation between the literary status of an ideology and its entrenchment in everyday life? Does an emphasis on ideologies indeed indicate the loss of their "governing position," as some sociologists argue, or does such a preoccupation signal a recharging of these ideologies in the struggle to regain their extraliterary power? The choice presented by these opposing views may determine one's prognosis for the future and nature of the State of Israel. When applied to the contemporary literary scene in Israel, one's choice could suggest either the total bankruptcy or the effective revival of Zionist ideology. Whichever one chooses, a matter as much of personal political bias as of theoretical stance, it is clear that the political upheavals of the seventies and eighties have been accompanied by a reshuffling of the traditional boundaries of the literary domain. Leading novelists and poets such as A. B. Yehoshua, Amos Oz, and Natan Zach have produced essays that exhibit profound ideological engagement; major poets such as Dalia Rabikowitz, who had previously advocated art for art's sake, have written political poetry; and literary scholarship has directed its attention to the political context and to the social consequences of fiction, art, even popular song. Clearly, the pendulum has swung toward what the late literary scholar Paul de Man called "the foreign affairs, the external laws of literature."

The question of whether this is a conscious departure from an earlier state of the art may be best answered by the opening of A. B. Yehoshua's *Bizkhut HaNormaliut*, 1980 (literally On Behalf of Normalcy but rendered in English *Between Right and Right: Essays on Zionism*, 1981):

> If anyone had told me fifteen years ago that the day would come when I would publish a book of essays on Zionism, I would have dismissed him with a smile. At that time I saw Zionism as a settled issue, something that had been justified both politically and historically, and whose truth had been recognized by most of the human race. Since the War of 1967 we have found that questions we had thought to be "settled" were not so—neither for us, nor for the outside world.

Yehoshua's statement demonstrates a dramatic shift away from the professed nonideological position initially taken by the first "State generation"—the writers of the sixties. This change of heart may be readily attributed to the 1967 victory and its aftermath; it would be a mistake, however, to regard the change as a total reversal. From the vantage point of the 1980s, it is hard to maintain the view that noninvolvement characterized as fully as it was believed the so-called *Gal Hadash* (new wave) in Israeli literature. A close examination of the complete works of Yehoshua and Oz, the central figures of the novelistic new wave, suggests that their escape from the social realism of their predecessors to the ivory tower of universal parables and psychological archetypes did not last long. In view of their recent pronouncements, one cannot help suspecting that their earlier stance was not a rejection of ideology per se but a challenge to and a critique of the aesthetic and ideological norms of the previous generation. Yehoshua's anticipation of the

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questions aroused by the 1967 war is a case in point. In his novella *Mul HaYe'arot* (Facing the Forests), published in 1968 but written a few years earlier, he treats fictionally the very issues he discusses in his essays a decade later—the legitimacy of the Zionist claim to the land when confronted with the roots of the Arabs in the land—symbolized in the story by the ruins of an Arab village hidden under the young trees of the Keren-Kayemet forest.

A similar phenomenon can be detected in the "new" literary criticism, identified as a "science" of literature or "semiotics," that has developed in Israel since the late 1960s. Partially inspired by the Anglo-American New Criticism of the forties and fifties, this professed nonideological approach, as formulated by its propagators at the Tel Aviv University Department of Poetics, takes as its object the phenomenon of literature as a whole, its inherent modes of existence, and its principles of operation. A close look at the results of this ostensibly objective criticism reveals a devaluation of the authorial voice of the past—of its poetics as well as its politics. By developing their own reader-response criticism, declaring the contemporary reader-interpreter the source of meaning, semiotic critics in Israel have supplanted the authority of their predecessors and undermined the ideological context of their writing. Under the pressure of a new political constellation, this latent revisionism has recently come to the fore in Israel. The result has been the gradual turn toward political commitment now taken by Israelis who formerly advocated noninvolvement in literary criticism as in literature itself.

This process is exemplified by the career of the Israeli poet and critic Natan Zach (b. 1930). Zach was the first to define "The Stylistic Climate of the [Israeli] Poetry of the Fifties and Sixties" (1966). Since the late fifties, Zach has been engaged in a critical analysis of the poetry of Natan Alterman, the recognized spokesman of the pre-State generation. Couched in purely literary terminology, Zach's analysis was ostensibly a critique of Alterman's poetics; yet because Alterman had held a central position in the cultural and political leadership of his generation, Zach's critique must be interpreted as a rejection of the ethos of the founding fathers. The submerged ideological impulse of his venture is unmistakable, particularly in light of his subsequent development. In his 1983 collection of essays, *Kavei Avir (Air Lines: Talks on Literature,* not yet available in English), Zach continues to probe the roots of "Israeli romanticism"—the cult of death and of suicide that he detects in contemporary fiction, those "forbidding games" he would like to exorcise.

Zach's reproach in *Air Lines* is still indirect, since he never spells out the link between the romanticizing of death, aggression, and destruction in literature and the cult of heroism and the glorification of the Masada complex in real life. More recently, however, the poet has openly retracted his earlier positions. Aligning himself with the long tradition of engaged Hebrew writers such as Gordon, Bialik, Brenner, and Greenberg, Zach no longer endorses the poetics of noncommitment that he derived from the New Criticism. In a 1984 article, he calls for the poet to become involved again by "writing on the mirror [of art] what may be later inscribed on the walls [of reality]."

Two decades ago, such an admonition would have been unthinkable for either Zach or his novelist peers. "I don't feel obliged to cry out," said Oz in 1966. "The presupposition that such an obligation exists derives from the perception of the writer as the heir of the prophet." The date of this quip is instructive. The year 1966 symbolically signifies the last date that efforts would be made to guard the universalism and individualism cultivated by the young novelists of the sixties. In the next decade, Oz and his peers would be sucked up—perhaps against their better judgment—into the political vortex. Whoever was not shaken to his foundations by 1967 was so by 1973; and whatever was not turned over by 1977 became so by 1982. It is therefore the new literary trends of this period—ending with the Lebanon War in 1984—that are the subject of this analysis.

Autobiography as Identity Crisis

The new trend in contemporary Israeli fiction has been often categorized as "realistic," yet this realism is a far cry from the crude social realism of the pre-State generation. The ways contemporary writers deal with the ideological crises of their time are often more indirect and submerged than those of their forefathers. To a great extent, they concern themselves with those "unsettled" issues addressed by Yehoshua or with the "disappearance" of the "Zionist cultural revolution" lamented by Gershon Shaked. Interestingly, this search for answers often takes the fictional form of a *personal* identity crisis. This personalized treatment of crisis differs from the literature of the sixties in that it is not content to portray the existential groping for meaning of a universal everyman. In fact, with its specificity of local color, much prose fiction of the seventies borders on what can be defined as ethnic or regional literature.

This is the literature, moreover, of a variety of voices given only scant hearing a decade earlier. These voices expose the pangs of naturalization felt by new Sephardic immigrants in an Ashkenazi-oriented society, as in the works of Amnon Shamosh and Eli Amir, and the parallel experience of Holocaust survivors in a sabra (native)

culture, a theme developed mainly by Aharon Appelfeld. Others portray specific urban milieux—Jerusalem (David Shahar, Shulamith Hareven, Hayim Be'er), Tel Aviv (Yaakov Shabtai and Yitzhak Orpaz), or Haifa (Yehudit Haendel), as well as the provincial atmosphere of veteran towns like Petah-Tikva (Hanoch Bartov, Ruth Almog) and nameless other *moshavot* and villages (Yehoshua Kenaz, Yitzhak Ben-Ner). Finally, these are the voices of new women novelists, joining the hitherto isolated Amalya Kahana-Carmon (Hareven, Almog, Shulamit Lapid, and others). Since most of these writers had been writing earlier, one could say that the hegemony of the young writers of the sixties is challenged by writers who had been hatching on the periphery of the literary scene but had not been accepted into the mainstream by either the literary establishment or the reading public. After a decade or so of incubation, the more mature work of these writers "suddenly" burst onto center stage, reshaping and redefining the contours of contemporary Israeli fiction.

Interestingly, most of these works reveal the need to work through the conflicted realities of the present by means of a variety of autobiographical displacements. Never before has the mainstream of Israeli literature offered such a welter of fictional autobiographies, childhood reconstructions, or stories told through a child's consciousness. The presentation of autobiographical material runs the gamut from detached omniscience (Shabtai) to childlike subjectivity (Kenaz, Yoram Kaniuk), or to the varied viewpoints of multiple narrators (Benjamin Tamuz, David Shitz), while one also finds what may be called the typical autobiographical modality, the tension between the mature narrator of the present and his naive childhood persona (Shahar and Bartov). The retrospective confrontation between the two aspects of the protagonist's self-image is instrumental in overcoming crises of identity; it enables the author to juxtapose yesterday's values, aspirations, and dreams with today's disappointments and frustrations.

The roots of this trend are found in early experimentations on the peripheries of the literary world and in early works of such writers as Tamuz, Nissim Aloni, and Pinhas Sadeh, who later turned elsewhere. Its high point, however, came in 1969, with Shahar's Proustian cycle of novels, signaling the breakthrough of the genre, and with works by Bartov, Oz, Appelfeld, and Be'er throughout the seventies. The ascendance of this genre may signify the coming-of-age of Israeli fiction. It is a symptom of the need to come to terms with one's own past on an individual, not merely a collective, basis. At the same time, a certain ideological disorientation has inspired the search for a redefinition of life's verities through autobiographical retrospection.

Even in the most personally idiosyncratic of this genre, Shahar's cycle, *Heichal HaKelim HaShevurim*, 1969, 1971, 1976, 1983, 1986 (*The Palace of the Shattered Vessels*, 1975) the narrator's recalling of the past constantly converges on the painful realities of present-day Israel. The year 1936 functions as a magnetic center from which his narrative proceeds and to which it repeatedly returns. The calamitous explosion of Arab riots that year marks the end of the ten-year-old narrator's Edenic childhood in Jerusalem and signals the beginning of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the solution to which is still not foreseeable. Similarly, Shahar probes with unique adroitness the delicate Ashkenazi-Sephardi and secular-religious coexistences within the Jerusalem of his childhood, fully aware of the ramifications of these explosive social issues in contemporary Israel.

Bartov's fictional autobiography, *Shel Mi Ata, Yeled?*, 1970 (*Whose Little Boy Are You?*, 1978), is a retrospective guided by the coincidence of the protagonist's bar mitzvah and the outbreak of World War II in 1939. Around this very personal childhood trauma, a whole range of ideological oppositions is woven and examined. Labor Zionism is tested in relationship to religious Zionism, urban bourgeois culture, Diaspora existence, the old *Yishuv*, and, finally, nascent Arab nationalism.

For the younger novelists, 1948 functions as the critical event of childhood. It is natural for Oz to organize his protagonists' experiences around the major conflicts that split the *Yishuv* before the War of Independence, the conflicts between pragmatism and romanticism represented in his stories by the sharp differences between the child's father and mother and by the political division between Labor Zionism and Revisionist Zionism.

The common feature of these and other fictional autobiographies is the author's need to weave together the unique continuum of past and present that can define a "self," an "identity." What also emerges, however, is the degree to which the personal remains inseparable from the collective and the ideological in Israeli experience. This inseparability appears even more dramatically in several recent novels wherein the autobiographic impulse is transposed into a family chronicle. In these works, a personal life story is expanded to the dimensions of several generations in the spirit of Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, published in Hebrew in 1972. The span of time usually corresponds to that of the *Yishuv*, the Jewish settlement in Palestine-Israel. This is the case with *Reqviem LeNa'aman*, 1978 (*Requiem for Na'aman/ Chronicle of Family Addresses: 1895–1975*, published in 1982) by Tamuz, *HaYehudi HaAharon*, 1982 (The Last Jew) by Kaniuk, to a lesser degree the as yet unfinished trilogy *Rahok MiPeninim* (More than Pearls) by Moshe Shamir,

and *HaMe'abev*, 1977 (*The Lover*, 1978) by Yehoshua, in which Grandmother's birthdate is 1881: "... Do you know history? The *Bilu* group came then to the land ... the beginning of Zionism." The unsuccessful marriage of Yehoshua's Yehuda in *Gerushim Me'uharim*, 1982 (*A Late Divorce*, 1984) also reflects the division between the good old days before 1947–48 and the deterioration of the familial relationship later on.

In another recent novel, *HaGevirah*, 1983 (The Mistress) by Orpaz, this trend is followed to its parodic conclusion. The protagonist's name, Izzi (Sternberg) Ornan, brings to mind the author's name but recalls even more closely the name Uzzi Ornan, one of the members of the cultural group known as "the Young Hebrews" or "Canaanites," which calls for a break with "Diaspora Jewishness," for a cultural and political integration within the Middle East, and for a return to the prebiblical, Canaanite mythology. In the novel, Izzi Ornan conducts futile research into the archetypal structure of the Canaanite fertility goddess, the "Great Mother," while engaging in an equally hopeless intimate relationship with the human embodiment of this mythic image, Atalia, the "mistress." Paradoxically, Atalia, who represents "beautiful Israel," is childless and her struggle against the forces of evil (identified as the political right) is doomed to fail.

Almost all of these extensive chronicles and semi-allegorical social novels have been written since the late 1970s. A decade earlier, Israeli writers indulged in telling their own individual histories, but by this time the relative freedom they had enjoyed is no longer approved. In the crisis of identity that stimulated these recent novels, the personal and the ideological are so thoroughly interwoven that the works fall short of being either historical or psychological novels. They are hybrids in which an identity crisis is projected into the outline of a *collective* history or a representative personal life story, resulting in both cases in the creation of a "group self" rather than an individual identity.

Psychoanalysis as Metaphor

Such literature does not deal with the intrapsychic conflicts of the individual. Erik Erikson may have been right in asserting that psychoanalysis appeals mostly to people undergoing an identity crisis, and Freud himself may have served as his prime example, but, despite the manifest Jewish participation in the development of psychoanalysis, Freudianism was not unequivocally accepted by all quarters of Israeli society. The "archeology of the soul," Freud's favorite metaphor for psychoanalysis, may have been partially replaced by the archeology of the soil. If Erikson is correct in interpreting psychoanalysis as Freud's attempt to solve his identity crisis by "recovering a sense of mastery over the past," then Zionism may have served a similar function for Israel. Adherents of Zionism may have eliminated the need for Freudian introspection by attempting to gratify their sense of mastery over their common past by physically returning to their origins, their actual contact with the soil. Moshe Dayan's intense preoccupation with archeology is only the best-known example of this disposition. It is generally borne out by the cult of the soil—agricultural as well as archeological—practiced by both literary protagonists and their real-life Zionist models.

Although the intriguing history of the reception of psychoanalysis by Israeli culture has yet to be told, it is abundantly clear that Freudianism and Zionism were locked in an uneasy coexistence almost from the beginning. The tension between these two competing solutions to the Jewish malaise, the products of turn-of-the-century Vienna, can be traced to the experiments of the first HaShomer HaTzair pioneers who came from Vienna in 1920 and tried—though not very successfully—to reconcile the two. It can also be detected in Agnon's ambivalence toward both and may be responsible for Gershom Scholem's notorious disavowal of Freudianism, as well as for Dov Sadan's later misgivings about Freudian literary criticism.

Naturally enough, this tension was less palpable with regard to Jungian psychology. One can conjecture that, despite Jung's alleged anti-Semitism, his collective unconscious and communal archetypes could more readily accommodate a culture founded on national revival, historical commitment, and collective ideology. This does not mean, of course, that Freudian individual psychology has not had its place—both in a naive attempt to put it to work for the collective cause, particularly in the educational system of HaShomer HaTzair, and in a conscious defiance of this very cause, especially by the literary Modernists of the 1930s.

Never before, however, was Freudianism put to the task of analyzing the collective cause itself. Never before was Zionist ideology placed on the analyst's couch as it has been in recent Israeli literature. It would seem that, precisely when the assurance of rootedness in the land began to crack, psychoanalytic reasoning gained prominence in Israeli thinking. What is therefore unique about contemporary fiction is not that it puts Zionism "on trial," but that it does so by means of psychoanalytical analyses. Some of these are covert analyses—as in the autobiographical introspections of Shahar and Bartov and the family dramas of Oz and Shabtai; others are more overt, as in Yehoshua's psychoanalytic "allegories." Ironically, the conclusion emerging

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A Dialogue with Jesse Jackson

As liberals and progressives, people in the Tikkun *community rightly resist the tendency within the Jewish world to reduce all political issues to "Is it good for the Jews?" Indeed, we maintain that what is best for the Jews is a larger social transformation that would create a more just, peaceful and loving world. For that very reason, many of our readers have been attracted to the political ideals articulated by Jesse Jackson. Whether or not they end up supporting the Jackson candidacy in the Democratic Party primaries—a decision that is for some based not just on political affinity but also on political assessments like "Can he win?"—many of our readers have appreciated in the past the willingness of Jackson to identify with the various social change movements, those forces which could eventually help to make healing, repairing, and transforming the world possible.*

Yet rumors of Jackson's anti-Semitism have persisted. So it seemed important to us to begin a dialogue with Jackson that explored some of the issues in his relationship to the Jewish community. In the dialogue that ensued, we pressed hard for clarity on points where we suspected there might be some ambiguity in the interpretation of his remarks. Rather than focus on the areas of common agreement around progressive politics, it seemed important here to explore areas of potential conflict—and to push (not always successfully) for the kind of clarity that would satisfy those who have been concerned about Jackson's position on "Jewish issues".

The first part of the dialogue was conducted on August 10 and the second part on September 2, 1987. We asked a variety of distinguished people in our community to respond to the dialogue or, if they so chose, to comment on the question "How should we think about Jackson and/or the Jackson campaign for the Presidency?"

In subsequent issues we hope to publish other comments on the issues raised by this dialogue, as well as to explore the ideas of other important candidates for the presidency in both parties.

Michael Lerner: It is the perception of many in the Jewish world that before the 1984 elections you spent a lot of time criticizing Israel and supporting the causes of various Arab nations. More recently you appear to be more evenhanded. Some people in the Jewish world see this switch as based purely on political opportunism. What exactly has changed in your thinking, and what made it change?

Jesse Jackson: Nothing has changed. My positions are consistent; perhaps communication has changed. My position to support Israel's right to exist with security within secure boundaries is a consistent position. My position to support a homeland or a state for Palestinian people, that they might be liberated from a nomad status, is a key to peace in the Middle East and to the stability of other Arab nations as well as the security of Israel.

I support the revival of Lebanon and its territorial integrity. It is to our distinct national interest to have normalized trade ties with the Arab world. If in the Middle East we cannot protect America's interest (and now we're less able to do so), we cannot protect the interests of our allies. I supported Camp David, and I support Camp David accords being revived now. Although there were missing elements from that accord, Camp David was a step in the right direction, and it was a mistake for Reagan to let the Camp David accords collapse and not expand upon them.

Michael Lerner: How do you mean to expand upon them?

Jesse Jackson: To expand to include the elements that were left out—to include other Arab nations, to include the representative of the Palestinians, because the accords would be incomplete until all the Arab nations, or as many as possible, are in it and a permanent place for Palestinians is resolved.

Michael Lerner: Is it your sense that the Arab nations—Syria, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran, Libya—would accept the existence of a State of Israel now?

Jesse Jackson: They already accept the State of Israel as a fact. They negotiate now in relation to that fact. There is no evidence of them using, for example, their collective might in a contrary way, because they know that their relationship to America is in some measure conditional upon their acceptance of Israel's right to exist. They also know that in some measure Israel has the right to defend itself militarily, and so what you have there is a de facto acceptance of Israel's right to exist.

Michael Lerner: So you think that de facto acceptance could be made de jure?

Jesse Jackson: Yes, if we were aggressive in our diplomatic efforts. The present diplomatic efforts have failed. They have offered false security to Israel, but each day things are becoming less secure for everybody. Under Reagan, we've increased our military investment in the Middle East. But we've also increased our insecurity in the Middle East. In seven years of Reagan there are more Americans dead, more Americans held hostage, more Israelis dead, more Arabs dead, more chaos, and now we are on the brink of war, or really in a state of undeclared war, in the region. In the process of pursuing that policy, our government apparently pushed Israel into some positions that are now a source of vulnerability.

We are less able to protect our own interests in the Middle East, and therefore less able to protect Israel's interests. The American flag is not a badge of honor or security in that region. The American flag flew above the dormitory in Lebanon, but the Marines were killed. The American flag flew above American University in Lebanon, and some of its staff were taken hostage. It flew above the U.S.S. Stark, and it was blown up. And so now we find ourselves in the region with too few friends, too much exposure, and the inability to protect our interests and that of our allies.

Michael Lerner: One thing that we've questioned in *Tikkun* is whether the interests of the people of the United States are the same as the interests of some of the oil companies of the United States in the Middle East. I wonder if you could tell me what you think are "our interests" in the Middle East, exactly?

Jesse Jackson: Well, our interests are, first, human interests. Approximately one hundred and twenty-two million human beings live in the Middle East. There are twenty-two nations in the Middle East. And we have geopolitical interests in the Middle East.

Michael Lerner: By that you mean . . . ?

Jesse Jackson: The geography, the politics, where it is located are of interest to us. The Persian Gulf as a transportation artery through which oil is transported is of interest to us. So our interests are moral, they're human, they are geopolitical, they are national security interests. Right now we are becoming less able to protect those interests. We are becoming isolated in the region, so much so that now we're having to try to protect the Persian Gulf unilaterally in a situation that is very delicate.

Michael Lerner: Well, I'm not a hundred percent sure I understand one part of this, about our geopolitical interests. In your conception do those geopolitical interests you cite involve an international struggle with the Soviet Union to prevent them from expanding their influence?

Jesse Jackson: That's one feature. Certainly we would be in a substantially weaker position in the world if the Soviets, in fact, were occupying the Middle East. If the Soviets, in fact, were occupying the Middle East, and occupying the oil reserves, occupying the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz as an artery of transportation, we would be much weaker as a nation. On the positive side, we are much stronger if we have a Middle East in which we have substantial influence. We can engage in communication, various forms of commercial trade. Where America has bilateral relations it will help protect our interests in the region.

Michael Lerner: It is the perception of many Jews that this is not a time in which Syria or Iraq or Libya are willing to make peace with Israel. They would read your words to mean that in order to have more influence, the United States should tilt away from a special relationship with Israel and be more evenhanded, where evenhanded means, to some extent, abandoning the special protection that the United States has offered Israel.

Jesse Jackson: America has a special interest with Israel. That relationship must continue. America helped to found Israel. America helps to sustain it with outright annual grants. America's interest and will to protect Israel is substantial and seems unequivocal. America has an interest, a special interest, with Saudi Arabia that likewise must be protected, and you can see, as the relationships have become more exposed now, just how fragile those interests are. America has a special interest with the gulf states and keeping the Strait of Hormuz open, so much so it is willing to flag Kuwaiti tankers in order to keep it open. So America has several interests in the region. Supporting Israel is an interest that is to our distinct national interest to protect and to preserve, but it would be fair to say that we have other interests as well. If we cannot protect our other interests, and cannot protect our own interests, we cannot protect Israel's interests.

Michael Lerner: If that means strengthening forces that in the meantime see themselves as wanting to struggle against Israel, doesn't what you're saying amount to a tilt away from Israel and towards giving more military support to the enemies of Israel, possibly more economic support as well?

Jesse Jackson: No. That would not be my perspective. American interests must be first defined: Our needs can be reconciled with Israel's needs, its need to exist with security within internationally recognized boundaries. America would be hard put to do without the Saudi Arabia relationship. America needs Saudi Arabia. America needs bilateral relations and multilateral relations with the gulf states. All of America needs the Strait of Hormuz open and free, and so we have needs in the region, and we must protect all of our needs. Our interests are reconcilable.

Michael Lerner: Doesn't what you're saying lead in the short run to giving more military and/or economic support to forces that may be willing to accommodate to some of America's economic needs for oil but that simultaneously want to destroy the State of Israel?

Jesse Jackson: I think that you use the word "oil" as a buzzword there, which is not what I'm saying. It's what you're saying. That's not what I'm saying.

Michael Lerner: Yes, that's what I'm asking, because, we don't need the Strait of Hormuz for the sake of showcasing Kuwaiti democracy. We don't need the alliance with Saudi Arabia because of the good example they set on human rights. We need them, presumably, because of their economic strength, not because of their moral or political strength.

Jesse Jackson: We need them because of their geopolitical position relative to the Soviet Union. We need them because of the role they occupy in the Middle East. We need them because in many instances they have proven to be dependable to us. We need them to stabilize oil prices in the crunch, and their helping to stabilize oil prices has been an immense asset to American security and the American economy. So our relationship with them and our needs for a mutual relationship are substantial. But there's also an understanding between this country and the Saudis. They will not abuse our relationship to attack the State of Israel, and they have not.

Michael Lerner: And you think that same kind of understanding could be made with Syria, for example?

Jesse Jackson: I think we should try. It's a challenge, and it's necessary, and even possible if we work at it. We have not in the last seven years worked diligently on developing more favorable relations with Syria. My point of view is simply this: The more that our country can neutralize adversaries or win friends, the more it is capable of protecting our allies' interests. The less able we are to communicate with our adversaries, the less able we are to protect ourselves or our allies against them. So it is wholly irrational to have a country as militarily powerful as Syria is with contiguous borders with Israel, feeling no constraints if it chose to attack. That's just basic and simple military strategy.

Michael Lerner: And what kinds of constraints could they be convinced to accept by the United States?

Jesse Jackson: Well, the constraints could be economic considerations, trade, and mutual development. The constraints could be military, because we are committed to supporting Israel and its borders. The constraints could be diplomatic in terms of the free movement of their people, and so if we have enough of a relationship to have diplomatic constraints that make a difference, and economic and trade constraints that make a difference, then we are able to improve relations.

A classic case would be Egypt. If we had maintained the same attitude toward Egypt that we had in 1967, if we had not gone through a transformation and some redemption, then the Camp David accords would not have been possible. Just as we, through aggressive diplomacy, were able to improve relationships with Egypt, it can apply to other nations as well.

Now, let's go a step further. The most significant act to protect Israel's right to exist in the Middle East was not a military act. It was a diplomatic act. It was Camp David. To get the largest nation in the Middle East to agree not to take up arms against Israel, that diplomatic agreement was the biggest military agreement in the history of the region. That's why I stress aggressive diplomacy and economic, cultural, and trade ties, because the more people trade with each other, the more they culturally exchange, the more they pull barriers down. They reduce reasons to fight.

Michael Lerner: Is there anything in your experience in Syria, or subsequent to your visit to Syria, that leads you to believe that the Syrian dictatorship, which is perceived by many Jews as ruthless and irrational, would actually be rational and suspend its desires for the destruction of Israel, and/or respond to the kinds of initiatives you're talking about?

Jesse Jackson: Frankly, we do not know what's possible diplomatically with Syria in the last seven years, because we have not worked on trying to improve relations diplomatically in the last seven years. When I went to Syria to bring Goodman back, clearly Assad was making an overture to Reagan, and a small window opened. Reagan sent a letter thanking Assad for releasing Goodman, but then the window closed back again. Now President Carter has been to Syria subsequently several

times, continuously asking for more dialogue. If we employ more dialogue, and more diplomacy, and more trade, perhaps we will increase our influence.

Michael Lerner: Let me turn to the Palestinians. Let's start from some of the history. What right do you think the Jews had to return to Palestine at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century? Was that return, in accord with the Zionist vision, a righteous act, or was it, as the Palestinians claim, either an extension of European colonialism or, at the very least, an unjustified usurpation? In other words, was the Zionist vision legitimate from the start, or is it only justified now because it succeeded and it's an existing fact?

Jesse Jackson: Let me answer it in this way. The Jews had a need for a homeland, and the political settlement was reached. I accept the political settlement as reality without getting into the religion of the matter. The incomplete work at that time was the failure to finally work out an accord on getting a homeland for Palestinians as well. It is precisely that crisis that lingers.

Michael Lerner: *Tikkun* Magazine has argued that Zionism can be justified on the same grounds that today justify affirmative action programs, namely that there was a group facing historical oppression, that it had a right to have the historic picture rectified—even if in so doing other groups were temporarily disadvantaged, and even if some of the people so disadvantaged were not themselves personally responsible for the original oppression that is being rectified. This is the same kind of argument with which *Tikkun* supports affirmative action for Blacks.

Jesse Jackson: That's an interesting argument, but I don't think it's a good analogy. Many of the same Jews who support affirmative action—applied, in that instance, at all costs—do not support affirmative action being applied at substantially less cost in this society. Affirmative action here may have to do with setting some seats aside in a university or law school. Affirmative action for Zionism had to do with uprooting people from lands. The rectification there was a very painful uprooting: a series of wars took place. Affirmative action has not been a bloody series of wars in this country.

Michael Lerner: There could have been bloody wars here had the American whites responded in the same way to Blacks that the Palestinians responded to Jews.

Jesse Jackson: Now the difference is that American whites accepted the guilt and the burden of slavery. They accepted the guilt and the burden of segregation. The American whites knew that they were morally wrong in conducting slavery. They knew they were morally wrong in conducting legal segregation, and an American white court of nine white males said separate but equal was illegal, and subsequently the majority population conceded the illegality of the historical behavior toward Black people. It was determined by the courts of this country that slavery and segregation were wrong, illegal, and immoral and that affirmative action would offset historical negative action—the negative action was documented fact—and there is no evidence that affirmative action hurt the majority white population. In fact, it improved everybody because it broadened the base of opportunity, and affirmative action has not applied specifically to the Blacks. It has affected women, who are fifty-three percent of our population, and Jewish women have been beneficiaries of that. It affected Hispanics. It affected Blacks as well. So it's a very different situation.

Michael Lerner: But for those of us Jews who have supported affirmative action—which is a large number of American Jews—our situation is not that our great-grandparents owned slaves. We came to the United States after slavery had been abolished, and nevertheless recognize that the historic oppression of Blacks in the society was something that had to be rectified, even if that meant that some people who were not directly involved in being oppressors were going to, in some way or other, lose positions, or suffer in some way.

Jesse Jackson: Slavery's not a Black-Jewish issue. It is a White-Black issue. There are Jews who were slaveholders, just as other whites were slave owners, and they were not distinguished by their religion, but their privilege came from their race. They were not denied privilege because of their religion. Blacks were denied citizenship because of race. Many white American families came to this country after slavery was abolished; but affirmative action applies to everyone. The other point is that Jewish activists were among the leaders in supporting Bakke. They argued that opening up doors for Blacks and Hispanics represents a source of denial and pain for Jewish people.

I understand the concern with the use of quotas as a ceiling to deny upward mobility according to one's own abilities. Here, quotas were recommended by the courts as a remedy to establish a floor if those timetables and affirmative action fail. It was always a last resort if voluntary goals, timetables, and affirmative action failed. So it was unfortunate that some of our former Jewish allies seized the quota issue, which was a last resort, as if it were a first resort. The result of losing the Bakke

decision has been a generation of Blacks and Hispanics who have been irreparably damaged.

Michael Lerner: Many of our readers are people who support the demands for affirmative action and publicly opposed those people in the Jewish world who backed away from it. What I'm asking you conversely is whether you see any merit in the claim that the world as a whole has some responsibility on the same principle of affirmative action to deal with several thousand years of oppression of Jews. Do Christians in particular, who generated the ideology of anti-Semitism and created the context within which there was widespread genocide of Jews, have a corresponding responsibility on a worldwide level to rectify what happened to the Jews in the past?

Jesse Jackson: Well, what you're suggesting is that Israel at one level is an expression of international affirmative action and, given the historic negative action, the international affirmative action was corrective surgery. However, surgery half done jeopardizes the patient. In this instance, not spending the same effort working out the Palestinian solution has left surgery half done. That's why we now have hostility forty years later, as opposed to the peace that was the original vision.

Michael Lerner: I'm going to switch for a second to another topic. Do you think it was reasonable or wise for the pope to meet with Waldheim?

Jesse Jackson: That was a decision that the sovereign head of the Catholic Church and head of a sovereign state had to make. He had some moral obligation because Waldheim was a Catholic, and his obligation to give private counsel. His obligation to reduce hostility and try to increase communication was a part of his responsibility. You could not very well demand of the pope whom he should meet and not meet with.

Michael Lerner: If there had been a worldwide movement to isolate the head of South Africa and the international head of the church was to meet with that person after the United States and other countries had decided not to meet with him as a symbol of opposition to what he stood for, certainly you would see that there was something wrong in breaking that boycott.

Jesse Jackson: The pope has ties to Catholics in South Africa. So he maintains his relationship to his church and tries to use his church as an agent to change the system. Israel has ties with South Africa diplomatically, sells arms to South Africa in substantial quantity, though the whole world is trying to isolate South Africa.

Michael Lerner: Speaking again from the standpoint of liberal Jews in the United States, we're against that tie with South Africa and are pressuring Israel to break that tie. So the same moral right with which we criticize Israel on that might lead us to criticize the pope for his ties to a former Nazi, regardless of the fact that he's Catholic.

Jesse Jackson: You have the right to that point of view. You ask me my point of view. I suggest the pope made his decision as the head of his church and head of a sovereign state. If you challenge his right to use his judgment, then you open yourself to his challenging your religious obligations or your state obligations.

Michael Lerner: I agree. I think that I would want to use one law, one moral law for all . . .

Jesse Jackson: Right.

Michael Lerner: . . . and the same criteria that we apply to Israel, we'd want to apply to others as well.

Jesse Jackson: So that's why if you apply that one moral law, you have to urge Israel to be very aggressive in trying to get freed of the moral law that's been broken with the West Bank occupation.

Michael Lerner: We often hear people making moral demands on Jews. And because we take our history and our moral tradition seriously, many Jews respond to these appeals. Some Jews feel, however, that when it is Jews on the receiving end, Jews who are being oppressed, there is a curious silence from all those who seek us as allies. So when it comes to Nazis or Soviet Jewry, there isn't the same kind of commitment from other oppressed groups that we try to give to oppressed groups when they're being oppressed. Do you understand why Jews might feel that at all?

Jesse Jackson: Well, Black American soldiers died fighting Nazism. We have Ralph Bunche, a Black American who helped to found the State of Israel. Yet Israel is selling arms to the people who are oppressing their allies of forty years ago. I take the position that we should not hold Israel to any higher or lower moral standard. It would be fair to say that Israel has gained from the high moral expectations the world has for it. It is never to one's disadvantage for other folk to have high moral expectations of you.

Michael Lerner: Some Jews respond by saying, "all of the moral concern of the world didn't lead to very much in the way of material support when the Jews

were being wiped out in Europe." When you mention the Blacks fighting in the Second World War in the United States Army, there's very little reason to believe that most of those people thought that the reason that they were involved in that war was to save Jews, or to deal with the special oppression of Jews.

Jesse Jackson: It's hard to think of who the Blacks were at that time who were making policy decisions, but certainly Black soldiers fought strongly and courageously. There are two other dimensions of that as well, I would think. One is that Black Americans were the first to get to Dachau and Buchenwald concentration camps. Paul Parks, former secretary of education of Boston, got to Dachau first, with a unit—a segregated unit—of Black soldiers. Dr. Jones, I think his name is, in Philadelphia, got to Buchenwald first. And there's very little acknowledgment of those roles.

Fifty to fifty-six million people were killed. The Holocaust crimes were the most heinous, but fifty-odd million people were killed. That's why the world must say, on the one hand, never again to a Holocaust, but also never again to unbridled fascism, because it was unbridled fascism and fanatical racism and classism that precipitated such a human scourge. And that is why people who were the victims of that and those who were the survivors of that situation should staunchly resist the Fourth Reich, which is South Africa. I mean every moral and ethical imperative that made us say no to Hitler and the Third Reich should make us say no to Botha in the Fourth Reich. One difference in the Third Reich is that so much of Hitler's dirt was in the dark. Many people found out very late just what was happening. In the case of Botha, he is bold, public, has nuclear power, an open relationship with America, an open relationship with Israel, is receiving arms from Israel, and even some of the Jews in South Africa who were victims of Nazi camps are operating within the context of that system. It is that entanglement that makes a very complicated and yet a morally challenging situation.

Michael Lerner: The same kind of call for the extermination of a people exists today in an overt way in some of the Arab countries toward Israel. It may seem fanciful to an American when they hear the PLO covenant calling for the elimination of the State of Israel and the sending back of the Jews to "the countries where they came from," just as it may seem fanciful when they hear Syrians talking about pushing the Jews into the sea, but from the historical experience of the Jewish people, this is again a call for genocide that is at least as serious in its possibilities as any other genocide.

Jesse Jackson: Any call for genocide against any people is wrong. However, there's a difference between what's remotely possible and what's actual and real. The Palestinians cannot drive the Jews into the sea. The South Africans are driving Blacks into the sea. The South Africans are occupying militarily a majority population and, unfortunately, the Israeli government has been in complicity with the South African regime.

Michael Lerner: Let's get back to the double standard question. It turns out, if you study the actual realities of South Africa and military and economic aid, that, number one, a great deal of that military aid comes from Germany and France. But when you listen to most Black Americans, the focus is exclusively on Israel. Similarly, Saudi Arabia plays a major role in economically providing South Africa with oil and with other needed economic benefits, but there's rarely any public outcry from Black Americans indicating and publicizing an upset with Arab countries for providing help to South Africa. Isn't there a double standard applied to Jews and to Israel?

Jesse Jackson: Here you have a situation where Israel gets about three billion dollars a year from the U.S. for three million people. All of Africa, a half billion people, gets one hundred and seventy-nine million dollars. There is a double standard where Israel is the substantial beneficiary and is not resisting that double standard. Right?

Michael Lerner: Yes. The U.S. should provide more aid to Africa.

Jesse Jackson: Yes. And that's the first fact. Secondly, when the congressional report came out about selling arms to South Africa, I contacted the embassies of France and Germany and Britain as well, and when I went to Japan, I challenged Japan's expanding role in South Africa. So a significant number of leaders have challenged other nations as well. The relationship between American Blacks and Jews is different, however, than American Blacks and Germany, or France, or Britain. The context of the relationship is different, and there are different expectations for Israel than for Germany and Britain and France. Our domestic relationships are different. Our religious relationship is different. Our historical relationship is different. We've not been in contention with the British or the French over the course of affirmative action, as a case in point. We've not been in contention with the British or the French in the struggles over quotas that we've gone through together in the last twenty years. Whoever is doing business with South Africa is wrong, but Israel is such a substantial beneficiary, Israel is subsidized by America,

which includes Black Americans' tax money, and then it subsidizes South Africa. Some of what America cannot do in South Africa directly because of the laws, it is doing through Israel as a conduit.

Michael Lerner: I want to deal with Farrakhan. Farrakhan, described as your former ally, called Judaism a gutter religion and praised Hitler. Do you think Jews were being reasonable to demand that you dissociate from him and renounce that kind of thinking?

Jesse Jackson: On one level there's been an overreaction to Farrakhan, as if Farrakhan has state power. He does not. So there is a certain exaggeration in the reaction. You, being the intelligent person you are with your background, should also deal with what has been Farrakhan's public explanation about Hitler: that he was saying that he was great to his people. That was not an adjective I would use; Hitler was wicked to the world, wicked, immoral, sinful.

If I were in Germany at the time of Hitler, I would have been with Bonhoeffer and that group of theologians who sought to overthrow Hitler, because he was consummate evil in the world at the time and was a threat to the whole human family. That's my position on that. Calling Judaism a gutter religion is wrong.

You know every text has a context. Newspapers tend to report that anti-Semitic dimension, but not the racist dimension. I remember that the Anti-Defamation League sent out a stack of papers to every publisher in America to discredit my campaign, which was a blow to the number of Black Americans who supported that campaign. We were threatened. Kahane announced he was going to picket my home.

Michael Lerner: Most *Tikkun* readers have no sympathy for Kahane.

Jesse Jackson: But he made the threat against my home; that was the context.

Michael Lerner: But our fascists we denounce. Liberals in the Jewish world publicly denounce Kahane and say this guy has no right to speak for us. The question is whether you will denounce fascists in the Black world.

Jesse Jackson: Kahane threatened to march on the home of a presidential candidate who was Black in the United States of America. It was a very visible challenge. It is in that context that this whole Farrakhan thing got started. It was unfortunate, and we would do well to move on. I have given major public statements about it, and I will not continue to prolong it.

Michael Lerner: Well, Jesse, I'm saying this not to embarrass you or to catch you up....

Jesse Jackson: I know you're not.

Michael Lerner: ... but to try to open your thinking to people who want to support you but can't understand why you wouldn't dissociate more clearly from Farrakhan.

Jesse Jackson: Let me tell you this. When the Nazis were going to march on Skokie, I was there in the pulpit of the temple with my family, and when Gorbachev was talking disarmament I confronted him about Soviet Jewry. I was there, and before sixty million people at the democratic convention I restated my position. I am not going to wallow in that. I have no need for it, and no one else who wants to go forward should have a need to go back into that.

Michael Lerner: I'm not talking about back then, but subsequently. There have been rallies in which Farrakhan has been a spokesman for very explicit anti-Semitic statements ...

Jesse Jackson: Do not give me the assignment or the responsibility to address your relationship with Farrakhan. That is not fair. You don't give yourself the burden to check all white people in this country.

Michael Lerner: I would certainly think it would be fair for you to ask Jews running for office to dissociate themselves from Kahane, and to say that Kahane is not the kind of Jew they want to have anything to do with.

Jesse Jackson: If you want to start comparing how we approach problems, some of us approach problems differently. You called it process. You have to exercise judgment in resolving problems. You can't give me the assignment of how to solve a problem, as I will not you.

Michael Lerner: Well, let me ask you another question. Farrakhan's rallies ...

Jesse Jackson: For example: You would not want me to draw a line on support or nonsupport for Israel on its trade with South Africa. You would not. Am I right?

Michael Lerner: Right.

Jesse Jackson: Well, that's enough. That says it all. Here's another matter where it can be resolved with process. It cannot be resolved using your method.

Michael Lerner: Okay, let me ask you about anti-Semitism in the Black world apart from Farrakhan. Do you have any sense of, any strategy for how to reduce anti-Semitism in the Black world, and do you feel yourself having any special responsibility in relation to that issue?

Jesse Jackson: Every chance I get, I appeal to people to be nonracial, to not be anti-Semitic, to not be racist, not be fascist, and I'm consistent with that position. You see there's a difference between European anti-Semitism, where many Europeans took the position that theologically related to Jews and Jesus. That was peculiar to the character of European theology. Hitler built upon that disposition, did he not? Now, my only experience from a Black point of view is that Black churches, strong institutions, do not take this same theological position on Jews and Jesus. We see Jesus as a Jew, and we see good guys fought for him and bad guys killed him. We see that as a human predicament as opposed to a Jewish trait. Do you see what I'm saying?

A lot of Blacks and Jews are in contention, not over things theological and philosophical, but over day-to-day relationships, which is something that's infinitely more reparable, if it's worked at. But, for example, right now the Black South African kinship is stronger, very visible, and many people make judgments about allies and adversaries based on that. Many Blacks, for example, see in my campaign a ray of hope and so, the more that it is attacked and in ways that people feel unwarranted and unjustifiable, then it simply rubs them wrong. I would hope that calmer heads prevail and we would press forward.

Michael Lerner: Why should Jews who are committed as Jews support your candidacy?

Jesse Jackson: Well, many Jews have, with whom I shared a domestic vision. Those who want to join in the struggle to wipe out malnutrition, establish affordable health care, housing, who want to stop the importation of drugs, who want to stop the exportation of workers, and the exportation of jobs, those who want to improve the quality of life in our country, those who want to end the arms race, those who want to shift from corporations merging to get them to plan to reinvest in America, retain our workers, reindustrialize our nation. We have a lot in common. My track record in social justice and economic justice is more substantial than any of my competitors. For those with whom I've worked over a twenty-five-year period, with whom I've labored in the trenches, with whom we've shared civil rights demonstrations, and peace demonstrations, and environmental demonstrations, and with whom I've been at the plant gate when they closed on workers without notice, those with whom I've been at the shipyard, with those with whom I've worked on the domestic vision, my credentials from that struggle are more substantial than anybody else's have been. And I can be trusted to fight for social justice. April 25th, when I was at the peace march against intervention in Central America, against South Africa, I was the only candidate there. When Ben Linder was killed, I called his mother and his brother. Mrs. Linder was our guest of honor at PUSH in Chicago. When the Nazis were going to march on Skokie I was there. When somebody was needed to confront Gorbachev I was there. So I've been there for a long time. In foreign policy, if those progressive Jews want somebody with the courage and the intelligence to fight for a comprehensive Middle East peace plan, rather than a series of war plans, I will engage in that process, and in my experience I have met with enough of our allies and adversaries to be able to make a real difference. People who have only met your allies can't help you very much, because it is our adversaries we must be protected from. The very nature of defense is to defend you not from your allies, but to defend you from your enemies. I take the imperative that Jesus put forth, love your enemies, as a very strong imperative, not a romantic one that's empty. By that I mean this: If you love your enemy, which is a big challenge, you will not turn your back on your enemy, because you will not expose yourself. If you love your enemy, you will talk with your enemy, even if you don't want to talk. That's what diplomacy obligates you to do sometimes. If you love your enemy, you may work hard enough to neutralize your enemy, and that's a victory of sorts. If you love your enemy, you may be successful enough to convert your enemy. It happens sometimes. By the way, when I was in seminary, the theologian that drove me the most was Rabbi Abraham Herschel. I have an autographed copy of every book he ever wrote.

It is not right for either us or our adversaries to overstudy, to over-examine the Black-Jewish relationship apart from other relationships. It's like taking a flower out of a pot to see if it's still growing. It's the way to kill it. When a Black was killed at Howard Beach, there were no studies on Black-Italian relationships or whatever the ethnic group was that did it. When the Blacks were robbed in Forsythe County, Georgia, there was no rush to study Blacks and Southern Baptists. So sometimes the continuous investigation of how Blacks and Jews are doing is a way of isolating both. I want to move beyond investigation to cooperation.

Michael Lerner: I want to ask one thing, finally, about Christianity, because it's something that is another level of concern that's sometimes raised about your candidacy

coming from deep Christian roots. Do you think that there is any validity to Judaism as a religion after Jesus? Has Judaism's intrinsic value been supplanted by Christianity, and, if not, what is the validity of Judaism?

Jesse Jackson: I think there is intrinsic worth to the Jewish religion, to the Pentateuch, the Torah, God's relationship with Jewish people. Christianity draws its roots from Judaism, and Christians believe that Jesus was the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy and that he has brought a message in the world beyond justice, the message of redemption and love. I happen to think that redemption and love are critical to at-one-ment or atonement. So Jesus brought a special dimension, because he, of course, was of the Jewish religion. No one can deny the validity and the intrinsic theological worth of Judaism.

* * *

Lerner: You've made several visits to campuses in which you've spoken about the importance of a Black-Jewish dialogue. Could you talk more about that?

Jackson: As a moral imperative and as a matter of survival Blacks have had to choose dialogue. And even though sometimes we've faced violence from others, we haven't had the option to retreat or the luxury to not talk to them. The key to progress is dialogue, whether it is with Jewish groups or with the Irish, or Italians, or other groups.

Lerner: I've been told that you've actually challenged anti-Semitism on campuses when you've found it among Black students and stood up against it. Could you tell us about that?

Jackson: I have not found any anti-Semitism among Black students that needed to be stood up against. I have encouraged dialogue, particularly in light of tensions that have emerged because of tensions around the Bakke decision which had a direct effect in limiting Black opportunities, and in light of the Israeli-South African military relationship. In light of these it is important that we talk to each other and not at each other.

Lerner: I am told that you've had a history of caring about Soviet Jewry. Could you tell me more about your thinking on that topic, including what led you to confront Gorbachev on this issue?

Jackson: I believe we must fight for human rights everywhere. And I've fought for these rights everywhere. The key to world peace is justice. So I told Gorbachev that although I support all the efforts to reduce nuclear weapons, and that was my primary reason for talking to him, that if he wanted to make a contribution towards creating an atmosphere of trust he should change the situation of Soviet Jewry. He said that there was no problem. So I challenged him and said that there was a problem and that he had to deal with it if he really wanted to use this historical moment to achieve international peace.

Lerner: Governor Mario Cuomo has said in a speech in late August 1987 that this was a good time to move toward ending the Cold War. What do you think of this idea?

Jackson: We must unthaw the ice between the superpowers. Both countries are behind the ice, and opportunities for peace and development are frozen. We should push for mutually verifiable arms reductions, for cultural and trade exchanges. Most Americans have never seen a Russian, and so there is fear. Pepsi Cola has eighteen plants in the Soviet Union and they are expanding. Trade ties and cultural exchanges open up the possibilities for reducing tensions. If we didn't have diplomatic relations, if we didn't have trade ties, it would be more difficult to get Soviet Jewry free. It is because of these ties that we can negotiate to improve human rights.

Lerner: I want to switch now to discuss some of what the New Right calls "the social issues." Could you say something about your views on abortion?

Jackson: That women should have the right to make choices about their own bodies is a constitutional right. Abortion is not the right moral choice, I believe, except under very special circumstances—e.g. where it is medically indicated or where the pregnancy is a product of rape or incest. But women have those rights to make their own decision under the constitution. I believe that sex education should begin earlier in the educational process. The other thing I want to note is that a lot of people who talk about the sanctity of the fetus don't seem to care much once the child is born. They don't fight for child care, they don't fight for health care, they don't fight for Head Start programs—and this, I think, is terribly inconsistent.

Lerner: Could you talk about gay rights?

Jackson: I believe that gays have a constitutional right to not be discriminated against. One doesn't have to endorse or participate in a particular lifestyle to fight

for their rights. You don't have to be a female to fight for the ERA, you just have to be a civilized human being. You can endorse the rights without embracing the lifestyle.

Lerner: Is there anything you want to say to the readership of *Tikkun* that I should have asked you about but I didn't?

Jackson: I think it is important for Blacks and Jews to build a coalition together. We share common struggles. When the Nazis went to Skokie and the ACLU defended their right to march, I thought that this was going beyond reason and causing much pain to the Jews there, and I brought my family and I went to the synagogue where the Jews were assembled and shared their risks. I think that we must learn to stress our commonalities and not just our differences. I think that we must stress dialogue. I think that the Jewish leadership is setting a very good example here in their relationship with the pope. It is a difficult situation for them, given the pope's position on recognition of Israel, and that was complicated further by the meeting with Waldheim. The Jews were hurt by this—but I'm glad that the Jewish leadership engaged in active public and private diplomacy with the Vatican rather than just withdrawing into pain and hostility. I use that approach myself in all situations. With this kind of dialogue we can reduce tensions and create understanding. I happen to think that the Jewish leadership's approach here was a very good example of how to go about solving our problems and creating a dialogue between Blacks and Jews. □

Reflections on the Dialogue with Jackson

David Twersky

In a relapse into the rhyming rhetoric that distinguished his 1984 campaign, Jesse Jackson says that he wants to "move beyond investigation [of Black-Jewish relations] to cooperation."

Unfortunately for both American Jews and for his campaign—in fact, for the Democratic Party as a whole—Jackson reveals himself to be insensitive to and ignorant of the historical experience of the Jewish people, and utterly unsympathetic to the central issues of Jewish concern.

He refuses to condemn the pope for receiving Kurt Waldheim, dismissing the issue because the pope had "some moral obligation" to "give private counsel" to the Austrian Catholic, and made a decision as a "sovereign" head of state.

When asked why people of good will could ask the pope not to meet with, say, a leader of white South Africa, Jackson brings up the inflated and tired charge about Israel's diplomatic and military ties with Pretoria (which also resulted from decisions by sovereign heads of state). In English, Jackson is telling Jews not to preach to him (or the pope) until they've cleaned up Israel's act.

In discussing his reaction to Israel's relationship to South Africa, Jackson explains that "the relationship of American Blacks [to] Jews is different," than with other countries that have supplied weapons systems to South Africa. "We've not been in contention with the British and the French over the course of affirmative action," he says. Well, maybe so, but not too many Frenchmen died for civil rights in Mississippi either. Jackson's view of the current state of relations between Jews and Blacks is one of contention and strife. Yet, when asked, he denies encountering any Black anti-Semitism, only justified resentment over Jewish opposition to quotas and Israel's support for South Africa.

Jerusalem's relations with Pretoria have been inflated by Israel-bashers; even so, they are disquieting, to say the least, and recent policy changes, including the imposition of limited sanctions announced by the Israeli cabinet at the end of September, are welcome. But the Israeli cabinet's progress began last April and received significant press attention *before* the *Tikkun* interview; this could not possibly have escaped Jackson's attention. Yet it receives no mention at all; rather, Jackson raises the charge of Israeli cooperation with apartheid not once, but six times.

Jackson's problem with the Holocaust is that there is too little "acknowledgment of [the] roles" of Black American servicemen who fought the Nazis. Furthermore, while "the Holocaust crimes"—Jacksonese for

the destruction of European Jewry—"were the most heinous" committed by the Nazis, "fifty to fifty-six million people were killed." He reveals not a trace of understanding of the singular horror of Hitler's war against the Jews. The six million are lost among the other war-dead, among whom he lumps groups whose fate was similar to the Jews, like Gypsies and homosexuals, but also the dead of the S. S., whom President Reagan honored at Bitburg.

Jackson may be right in seeing "unbridled fascism [and] racism" at the core of the Nazi experience, but what does he mean by "classism"? Could he mean the reduction of tens of millions of people to a function of an arbitrarily superimposed class definition, like the kulaks in the Soviet Union exterminated by Stalin?

The lesson of the Holocaust, according to Jackson, is that the "Fourth Reich" should be fought. The Fourth Reich is South Africa.

Without apologizing for the abhorrent racist policies of South Africa, I find the comparison rather disturbing. There are many terrible things going on in South Africa, and the system must be overturned; there is even killing of Black children in the townships, of Black political leaders, and of Black workers struggling to survive in harsh and unsafe conditions. But there is no planned systematic program of race extermination in South Africa. The white-controlled economy depends on masses of Black workers. The Nazis on the other hand, were intent on wiping out even those Jews who might have benefited the Reich. Had the Nazis treated the Jews in occupied Europe the way Blacks are treated in South Africa, millions more would have survived the end of the war.

By comparing South Africa to Nazi Germany, and by implicating Israel in the guilt of South Africa, Jackson is telling America Jews that he has at least as much, if not more, of a claim to the status of victim than they, and that they—and Israel—have no special moral authority.

Jackson does a bad job of explaining away his association with the virulently anti-Semitic Louis Farrakhan. Farrakhan never praised Hitler, according to Jackson, he only said that the Nazi leader had been "great to his people." But Hitler was ruinous for Germany. The war he initiated killed millions of his people, led to partition, and forfeited Germany's "world historical role." All Jackson has to say in response is: "That is not an adjective I would have used."

According to the Jackson version, Farrakhan "got started" on the Jews in the context of a threat by Meir Kahane to march on Jackson's home. But as Michael Lerner pointed out in the interview, Jewish leaders in this country and in Israel have been consistent in denouncing Kahane. Jackson, however, refuses the "assignment" of distancing himself from Farrakhan and does not want to "wallow" in the past. But Farrakhan was too close to him for Jackson to evade the assignment of making a clear statement repudiating the racist views Farrakhan continues to espouse. That he once again evaded the issue is hardly reassuring.

The worst thing about Jesse Jackson as revealed in the interview is his position on Israel. He claims to support Israel's right to exist within secure borders, but one does not get the impression that as president he would act to insure that security.

When Jackson says that although "the Palestinians cannot throw the Jews into the sea, the South Africans are driving Blacks into the sea," he is wrong on both counts. South African Blacks do not face wholesale extermination. If the threat posed by Palestinians and Arab states to Israel has diminished, it is because of Israeli military superiority which depends on continued American support—something to which candidate Jackson refuses to commit.

Instead, he denounces America's "increased ... military investment" in the Middle East. He also counts "more Israeli dead, more Arab dead" in the Reagan years, presumably blaming the administration for the Lebanon and Gulf Wars. "Now, we are on the brink of war," he says, again referring to the Gulf. And yet, he also believes that the U. S. must defend its interests in the Gulf.

In calling for a revival of the Camp David process, Jackson echoes the Likud's line. Even George Shultz is ahead of Jesse. I am not nitpicking here. For someone running for the presidential nomination of a major party, not to have an understanding of the differences between the Camp David and the international peace conference framework is inexcusable. Jackson displays no familiarity with the complex issues of Mideast diplomacy he says he wants to pursue with renewed vigor. Neither is his innocence (I am being charitable) about Syria very convincing.

In describing the Saudis as important to America because "of the role they occupy in the Middle East," Jackson ignores their huge oil trade with South Africa and widespread reports of Saudi threats to cut off financial assistance to Jordan if King Hussein enters peace talks with Israel, even in an international framework. Moreover, Jackson uses identical language—"a special interest"—to describe the U. S. commitment to Israel and to Saudi Arabia. How is Jackson different from Mobil Oil?

Actually, Jackson's problems with Israel go back to its creation. Although he claims to "accept the political settlement [in 1948] without getting into the religion of the matter," he also believes Zionism meant "uprooting people from lands." Jackson is painfully ignorant of the historical reality. He claims that the "incomplete work"

in 1948 was the failure to get a "homeland for Palestinians as well." But the Arab states and the Palestinian leadership, not Israel, rejected the U.N. Partition Plan in 1947, which called for a Palestinian state alongside a Jewish one, launching a war against Israel which ended with many Palestinians uprooted from their homes.

For Jackson, however, the guilt lies with the Jews. In refuting Lerner's comparison between affirmative action for Blacks and the post-Holocaust Jewish need for a state, Jackson claims that American whites "accepted the guilt and the burden of slavery," something Israeli Jews presumably still have to do.

I don't know whether to ascribe Jackson's language to his ignorance or to his animus. For an American president to speak of the "settlement" which established Israel might refer to the Partition plan; does Jackson advocate Israeli return to the 1947 pre-Independence War lines? What is his definition of secure borders, usually a code for borders more—not less—defensible than the 1967 lines?

American Jews, according to Jackson, "have to urge Israel to be very aggressive in trying to get freed of the moral law that's been broken." The Arabs have been victimized, or must be given the benefit of the doubt because Reagan has made few attempts to speak with them. Israel has broken the "moral law."

Black churches, Jackson says, have not taken the traditional European Christian "theological position on Jews and Jesus," which nourished anti-Semitism. But Jackson has merely substituted Zionism—and other legitimate expressions of the pursuit of Jewish self-interest—for Jewish culpability for the crucifixion.

American Jews who heed the complex wisdom of *Pirkei Avot*—"If I am not for myself, who will be? But if I am only for myself, who am I?"—will be sympathetic to the idea of forging coalitions to recapture the political discourse, and the White House, in 1988. Coalitions between Jews and Blacks will continue to be a key factor in any future successful Democratic campaign. Unfortunately, Jesse Jackson's candidacy undermines that relationship and the chance of a Democratic victory next year.

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David Saperstein

Who is strong? He who conquers his inclinations. Who is a hero? One who makes an enemy a friend.
The Talmud

The conversation between Rev. Jesse Jackson and Michael Lerner was what Martin Buber has termed a "mis-meeting." Two people who have so much to say to each other talked past one another and missed the opportunity to meaningfully address common issues. Lerner and Jackson did not meet each other as individuals, but as strange and rather distant symbols. An opportunity was lost.

Jesse Jackson has long had a Jewish problem. He knows it and we know it. It is not just a political problem, but a human one as well.

For the past three years, Rev. Jackson has been working rigorously to confront this problem, to sensitize himself to Jewish pain and to Jewish history, to overcome estrangement and suspicions, and to wrestle with the political and personal issues that kept him at a distance from the Jewish community. In this one interview, he may have set back three years of intensive and disciplined work, reverting to expressions of insensitivity and misunderstanding which have been the foundation of his past tensions with the Jewish community. This interview is so replete with misunderstandings about the Mideast situation, about Jewish views on affirmative action, about the Holocaust, and about Jewish fears and hopes as to make it almost irreconcilable with his statements and activities of the past few years.

Similarly, for the past year, Michael Lerner and *Tikkun* have been struggling to create a new type of Jewish consciousness, progressive in orientation, willing to think innovatively, to ask questions that the Jewish establishment has been unwilling to ask, and to raise issues that others would prefer to avoid. He, too, has set back this effort with an interview that failed to illuminate most of Jesse Jackson's activities since 1984, an interview which (perhaps because Lerner was playing the "devil's advocate") is as narrowly focused an interview as any neoconservative magazine would have done.

The "mis-meeting" was sad, perhaps, in some ways even tragic. My primary concern, however, is less with the interview itself than with its context and its political and personal ramifications. What few Jews know is that, for three years, Jackson with scarcely a misstep sought, through word and deed, to carve out a political position that is open to Jewish concerns without sacrificing the integrity of his positions or ignoring issues where the Jewish community and he differ. Among these actions, which should have laid the groundwork

for a vastly improved relationship with the Jewish community were the following:

•He has begun speaking of "secure borders" for Israel (i. e., changes in the pre-1967 border configuration to ensure Israel's security), as opposed only to "internationally recognized" borders (i. e., return to the pre-1967 borders);

•He has openly supported the Camp David accords and the approach embodied in it, often to the chagrin of his Arab-American supporters;

•In front of the entire world, he confronted Gorbachev in Geneva on the issue of Soviet Jewry;

•In press interviews on South Africa, he has taken the position that while Israel should be criticized for its relations with South Africa, it was a distortion to single Israel out. Rather, all nations dealing with South Africa should be criticized, including our allies and the Arab countries which traded oil with South Africa. When the State Department report came out on April 1, 1987, detailing the involvement with South Africa of Israel and other U.S. allies, Jackson again resisted singling out Israel and protested to the ambassadors of all the nations involved;

•He has given positive public speeches on Black-Jewish relations with some nationally prominent American Jewish figures (ironically reported far more extensively in the Black and general media than in the Jewish media) calling for significant improvements in relations; affirming the need for compromise and understanding; detailing the common agenda of the two communities; and, most importantly, standing his ground against hostile Black youths who accused him of selling out;

•He has entirely dissociated Farrakhan from his 1988 campaign;

•In the wake of the Bitburg controversy, he visited a concentration camp and issued an eloquent statement about the unique meaning of the Holocaust.

Tragically, this interview fails to grapple with most of these developments.

To be sure, from the Jewish community's perspective, Jackson's "transformation" was by no means complete. He still refused to criticize Farrakhan directly. His statements on the Middle East reflected an unnuanced analysis that, if implemented into political programs, would have been alarmingly dangerous to Israel's security. He still manifested a disturbing discomfort with Jews whenever confronted with these lingering divisive issues —a discomfort which Michael Lerner's interview exemplifies, focusing as it did on issues on which change in Jackson's position has come most slowly.

But, on the whole, Jackson's positions were a vast, vast improvement over those espoused in the 1984 campaign, and they must be recognized as such. Any political candidate who reaches out to the Jewish community over a period of time should receive tangible and meaningful expressions of appreciation and encouragement. Yet, we failed to respond to Jackson's initiatives.

For three years, Jackson's efforts have been received by the Jewish community with apathy and silence. While the Jewish right-wing has celebrated the "conversion" of Jesse Helms, the latest Senate *baal teshuvah* (based on a few token actions on Israel), liberal Jews and their leaders have been indifferent to Jackson's growth and to his many efforts to reach out. The result was a candidate who was increasingly disappointed and frustrated that positions taken so publicly and consistently, positions which earned him significant criticism from long-time allies, were accomplishing nothing positive with the community to whom they were addressed. It was almost as though the community was waiting for Jackson to slip up so as to validate their worst fears. Now, faced with an interview which legitimizes renewed Jewish criticism of Jackson, the real question is how the Jewish community should respond.

We can merely ignore the contradictions and complexities of Jackson and pick up where we left off three years ago, launching a campaign of confrontation and castigation that will make Jackson the lightning rod in another Black-Jewish confrontation. The result will poison the atmosphere of the 1988 campaign, perhaps fatally weaken the Democratic party in the election, and lead to the further deterioration of Black-Jewish relations.

Alternatively, we can focus on the contradictions in Jackson's record, on the complexities of the man, and continue to work with him and speak to him rather than at him and about him. The result would be to focus attention on the merits of our criticism of specific positions with which we disagree without turning our response into anti-Jackson hysteria and another Black-Jewish confrontation. We can educate the Jewish community and the American public on both the positive evolution of Jackson's views as well as on the lingering problems the interview delineated.

The most important reality the Jewish community must keep in mind during the 1988 election is that for the vast majority of the Black community, Jackson's views on the Middle East and Farrakhan are irrelevant to their support. To the extent that these issues are of concern at all, polls indicate that the substantial majority of Blacks disagree with Rev. Jackson. They support Rev. Jackson because he has become a symbol—no, he has become *the* symbol—of Black aspirations to be accepted as a legitimate force in American political life, because

he articulates the pain on the streets and speaks for the still restrained rights of minorities in America, because he is a powerfully effective political presence in America who raises moral issues other candidates fail to address. Indeed, even for Jackson himself, the Middle East and Farrakhan are issues of only limited importance.

We can work with Jackson, publicly stating our differences even while encouraging the steps he has taken to reach out to our community. We can do so without sacrificing the integrity of our positions, the views we espouse, the values that we hold—and without asking Jackson to sacrifice his.

I have known Jesse Jackson over many years. I have seen him grow and wrestle with difficult issues and personal hang-ups. We have not always seen eye to eye on specific issues. But he has been as willing to listen and to learn as he has been to try to convince me of his views. And, in keeping with the Talmudic insight with which I began, Rev. Jackson has shown real personal strength in seeking to overcome his own estrangement from the Jewish community. It will take similar strength from the Jewish community to work with Jackson to make him a friend.

I'm certain it is worth the effort. □

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Fred Siegel

There have been at least as many Jesse Jacksons as there have been Richard Nixons. In one guise there has been the earnest minister preaching temperance, hard work, and restraint; then there has been the global ambulance-chaser, the media hound whose actions have belied the words of his sermons. Jackson, the spokesman of "home truths," the moral tribune of the poor, has also been the pinky-ringed shakedown artist, the fruits of whose efforts for the poor have often produced contracts for his friends and retainers. Then there is the apostle of Christian nonviolence who has allied himself with political gangsters and third world dictators. Recently Jackson was, first for the cameras, the spokesman for an interracial response to the tragedy at Howard Beach and then, off camera, the supporter of a Black nationalist-led boycott of all white-owned businesses.

Chronologically, Jackson, who was an integrationist when the going was good during the mid-1960s, became a proponent of a Booker T. Washington-like emphasis on Black self-reliance in the early 1970s. This was the Jackson who not only served for a while as the neoconservative's ideal Black leader because of his emphasis on self-reliance, but also the Jackson who in 1978 proposed a Black-Republican political alliance. The next new Jackson carried his emphasis on Black self-reliance toward a hard-edged third worldism, the anti-Zionism of which, greased by Arab oil money, blended easily with his down-home distaste for Jews. The irony of the Reverend's third worldism, its message aside, is that Jackson is so classically American in his relentless self-promotion and vaulting ambition.

In February 1985 Jackson was pushed into what has become his latest incarnation as the spokesman for all the losers in the global transformation of the economy. If I'm precise about the timing, it's because it was in February 1985, in the wake of the Democrats' landslide 1984 defeat, that leading liberal columnists who had already noticed the monochromatic character of the Rainbow Coalition began to speak derisively of Jackson as a "hot dog" and "the mouth that roars."

To make matters worse for Jackson, it had become more and more difficult to peddle third world panaceas. In fact, with the rise of Colonel Khadafy, who allegedly had earlier supplied Jackson with money, the third world had become downright unpopular. The trajectory of American opinion, from the Libyan attacks on the Rome airport to the murder of Leon Klinghoffer at the hands of Arafat's associates, left Jackson in an awkward position. When Khadafy, speaking to Farrakhan's Nation of Islam, called upon Blacks to form their own army and rise against white America, Jackson was forced to repudiate him or forfeit any last pretense of filling Dr. King's nonviolent role. Not surprisingly, like any shrewd politician, he began to repackage himself by emphasizing the very real social problems at home that had been exacerbated by the Reagan adminstration.

The newest Jackson reached out to farmers terribly hard hit by the recession of the early 1980s and to factory workers devastated by plant closings. As he told some reporters, he was following the advice George Wallace had given him: A politician has "got to lay down the grass where the goats are."

He also moved, after a fashion, to mend his fences with Jews. The man never too busy to stand in front of a camera publicly refused to repudiate Muslim minister Louis Farrakhan; but under great pressure, he did produce a grudging written criticism issued *sotto voce* by his Washington office. For his supporters and associates, the form of Jackson's perfunctory comments spoke against their substance. In fact, as the *Tikkun* interview with Jackson makes abundantly clear, far from repudiating Farrakhan, the good Reverend has sought to justify his friend's words as a response to Jewish hostility. And while Jackson has of necessity kept his distance, Jackson's

political entourage is still in close contact with Farrakhan. According to a report in the *New York Times*, Jackson's retainers took pains at a recent Farrakhan rally to emphasize that the differences between the two men had been grossly exaggerated.

If the *Tikkun* interview suggests that Jackson is very reluctant to separate himself from Farrakhan's version of Black nationalism, it also shows the "newest" Jackson, one who seeks to minimize his political liabilities through a "dialogue" with Jews. This detente of sorts has been highlighted by Jackson's somewhat incoherent thirty-second question to Gorbachev on the plight of Soviet Jews, a passing gesture which cost him nothing. If I'm grudging in my account of this very brief event, it's because so much else of what Jackson did indicated that his outreach to Jews was little more than a tactical ploy.

In January 1985, when the lives of the Falashas stranded in the Sudan were in peril, the widely respected mayor of Jerusalem, Teddy Kollek, called upon Jackson to ride to the rescue, but this time Jackson, afraid of angering his Arab patrons, refused to mount his steed. Instead, brandishing his selective nonviolence, he sniffed something about the 2,000 Falashas representing a military asset to Israel. In June 1985, when the TWA highjackers demanded that Israel free 700 Shiite gunmen, the always even-handed Jackson described the gunmen as hostages and instructed Israel on its moral duty to carry out the swap. The following month, Jackson presented in a television interview two examples of the doublespeak which embodies his double standard. Giving Arafat more than the benefit of doubt, he asserted that the PLO leader wanted a free and secure Israel as much as anyone else. Jackson also explained that the problem with Castro, like himself a much misunderstood figure, was not that the Cuban dictator's jails were overflowing with political prisoners but that the always articulate Castro did not know how to express himself in "clear language." Not surprising from a man who once explained "Apartheid was worse than Hitler. Hitler was a man for a season. Once he was exposed he was rejected."

Finally, an example of Jackson's subconscious boiling up to the surface: In an article for *USA Today* calling for interracial cooperation in the face of economic dislocation, a worthy ideal, Jackson explained: "The 80 percent who are worse off economically than six years ago *must find a scapegoat*—thus a rise in anti-Semitism" (Emphasis mine.) Once again, Jesse will no doubt explain that he has been "misunderstood." The man's embraces are as intimidating as his punches.

The ugly reality is that, barring any startling new revelation, Jackson's media tactics have for the moment defused the Jewish issue for the general public. But given Jackson's opportunism, there is little reason to assume that, should conditions change—with, say, a new Arab oil boycott as we head toward oil shortages in the 1990s—Jackson's deeply felt hostility to Jews would not reappear. Jackson, grateful to the Saudis, as his answers to Michael Lerner suggest, for oil at $18 a barrel, no doubt could justify abandoning Israel as an act of American gratitude. In such a context, Jackson's anti-Semitism could be cloaked in the language of American national interests.

Part of what makes Jackson so dangerous is that the opportunism he shares with many other politicians is coupled with a grant of nonaccountability from both his Black supporters and the press. Jackson can withstand indiscretions and failures that quickly would have sunk a white politician. He has, for instance, lied repeatedly about his relationship to Martin Luther King, made blatantly sexist comments, massively mishandled as the *New York Times* has reported recently, the federal funds received by Operation Push, and frequently lapsed into bouts of rhetorical incoherence, all to no effect. Jackson, like Washington's "mayor for life" Marion Barry, need never pay for his wrongdoing: he has only to reach for his civil rights credit card. This has led Atlanta's Mayor Andrew Young to comment bitingly; "Only in America can someone who could not be elected mayor, governor, or Congressman run for president."

If anything, white criticisms, no matter how justified, seem only to intensify his supporters' loyalty as in the case of an earlier roguish preacher, Adam Clayton Powell. Jackson himself is skilled at playing on these sentiments, as when he remarks in the present interview that criticism of his 1984 campaign was tantamount to racism. At another point in the interview, Jackson, playing on the reality of the vast and often justified reservoir of Black anger, implied intimidatingly that opposition to his campaign was bound to engender hostility in his flock.

Leaving aside those all too eager to be taken in as they were in the 1960s by the likes of Huey Newton, most Jewish leftists and liberals seem genuinely troubled as to how to relate to Jackson. They are embarrassed when Jackson's record is laid out before them, and they readily admit that, like Ronald Reagan, Jackson not only speaks but actually thinks in terms of bumper sticker slogans. A substantial number are willing to strike a devil's bargain, much like the one which the neoconservatives have struck with the fundamentalist preachers. That is, just as the neoconservatives minimize the unsavory qualities of their allies in the name of achieving their long-term political objectives, many liberals think that they can use Jackson to advance social justice.

Those who think working with Jackson, the moral questions aside, is a low-risk and potentially high-gain venture may think otherwise after the Democratic National Convention next August. While liberals and

leftists are pleased by the prospect of a Jackson sufficiently strong to dictate the direction of the Democratic Party, the Republicans are pleased as well. Jackson, along with the Reverend Falwell, is one of the two or three most unpopular men in America in survey after survey. There is nothing that could please a weakened Republican Party more than to salvage the election by campaigning not on their economic record but against Jackson.

The great majority of Jewish liberals and leftists are, I suspect, deeply divided. They are drawn to Jackson's current rhetoric of economic populism but repelled at the idea that they might be voting for a Black version of George Wallace. Many will probably end up supporting the candidacy of Illinois Senator Paul Simon. Simon, a very liberal Democrat, who as a Congressman was repeatedly reelected from a conservative rural district and has long made economic justice the center of his concerns, is a candidate of great integrity. When Simon, a Lincoln scholar, entered the race in Iowa, he quickly shot past Jackson, his growth proportionate to Jackson's decline.

I'm personally partial to Simon, but even if Simon were not in the race, I'd be unable to support Jackson. In refusing to repudiate Farrakhan, Jackson has insisted on distinguishing between the sinner and the sin. In turn, Jews ought to trust the tale and not the teller. It's the tale of a deep-seated double-standard which ought to trouble not only American Jews but Democrats everywhere. □

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Norman Birnbaum

At the time of President Reagan's visit to the Bitburg Cemetery (May 1985), I accompanied the Reverend Jesse Jackson to Europe. He had been invited to the European Parliament by a group of parliamentarians, to Berlin by church and disarmament groups, and to Bonn by church organizations. He spoke (with former Chancellor Kreisky of Austria) at a ceremony of commemoration at a concentration camp site in Alsace, and addressed the West Berliners (and by radio and television, the East Berliners, too) on the fortieth anniversary of Germany's capitulation. There and in Bonn, he urged on the Germans their responsibility to draw the lesson of their history by working for international detente and for human solidarity in areas like South Africa. (A sizeable segment of West German opinion, alas, sympathizes with the racists.) I was struck by his grasp of the tragedy of European history and by the specific incidence of the tragedy of European Jewry within it. We called on Heinz Galinski, the head of the Berlin Jewish community—who promptly raised the issue of Jackson's views on the Palestinians. Galinski has a reputation in Germany for plain speaking, and Jackson obviously sensed that the man is both formidable and serious: the ensuing discussion was a gain for both.

Jackson's sensitivity, historically, comes from his rootedness in the Black experience of American history. It is something other than ours. As he told his European hosts, at the end of the war the Germans were freed of Hitler, the Americans GIs who were white returned to an imperial and prosperous nation, and the Jewish people were able to found a state. The Black American soldiers, some of whom had been the first to enter the concentration camps, returned home to humiliation and segregation. The Reverend Jackson's enormous personal pride is, in part, pride at the endurance of his people—and he does consider that those with a view from below may know rather more of our nation and its history than those whose existence has been markedly comfortable. The Jewish immigrants portrayed by Irving Howe in *The World of Our Fathers*, to be sure, had their own view from below: it cannot be said, however, that all of their children and grandchildren have retained a sense of the initial Jewish experience.

America's Blacks have not forgotten that our republic lived, for almost the first century of its existence, with slavery—and with racism thereafter. Since so many Blacks have been so poor, their leaders have been especially attached to our traditions of social reform (which are surely more noble than those aspects of American life represented by Ivan Boesky.) Jackson's recent campaigning among farmers facing foreclosure and workers menaced by plant closings suggests a larger design. A new coalition for social justice in the United States will seek to create conditions for a larger solidarity —which alone can provide some defense, in bad times as well as good, against racism (and, let it be said, anti-Semitism.) The Jewish community would do well to recall that our fate here is connected not to our economic and social success alone, but to the willingness of large numbers of our fellow citizens to work with us as fellow citizens. Jackson, like a good many thinkers (plenty of them Jewish) has seen that citizenship has to be extended into the economic and social spheres, and that it is not merely a matter of voting.

The Reverend Jackson's recent efforts to extend a hand of friendship and recognition to the Jewish community have been met with insensitivity and harshness. He has taken his distance from Farrakhan where it counts, within the Black community. Surely, this

important American leader has other things to talk about with us than the insistent demands of some that he agree to their interpretation of the world. (On matters concerning Israel, too many American Jewish leaders apply a double standard. Israelis and American Jews are allowed to take positions which are declared utterly illegitimate when Jackson and other Americans take them.) The absurd spectacle of a group of Jewish fundraisers receiving all the Democratic candidates recently, but excluding Jesse Jackson, does not bespeak a maximum of good judgment. Without Black votes, there can be no Democratic victories—and the Blacks, for reasons that strike them as sufficient, recognize in Reverend Jackson one of their major leaders.

It is time for the Jewish community to rethink its relations with the Reverend Jackson. That effort, however, must also entail a new attempt to attain a truer view of our own history and future in America. Not the least of the gifts Jesse Jackson has given to his Jewish friends is this. As a Protestant minister, he has recalled some of us to the prophetic roots of our own tradition. □

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Abbie Hoffman

I worked on Jackson's campaign in 1984, even after the Hymie remark. I gave dozens of speeches on his behalf. On foreign and domestic policy issues we see eye to eye, but he won't get my support this year.

I believe in separation of church and state. If you are close to his campaign it seems more like a religious revival than an American campaign. If you go to the office there aren't a lot of political analysts there—it's more like a prayer meeting.

Jackson's cultural positions aren't acceptable to me. I'll take one that is particularly important to me, because I've just written a book about it: the issue of required urine testing to determine who takes drugs. This is the new loyalty test of the 1980s, part of the hysteria from having the drug menace blown way out of proportion. His staff people totally ignore my criticisms on this point. And Jesse has supported mandatory testing.

I can't raise this with the Rainbow Coalition, because Jesse Jackson is the Rainbow Coalition—it only exists where he is at the time. The staff and the directors have no control over him. They all call him "Reverend" with bowed heads. There is no attempt to spread the charisma. He could do a lot to spread the Rainbow Coalition and make it more than just him. He could go around the country and pick key people who would be in his cabinet if elected and they could then function with some real authority in his campaign. By using personalities that are known in all the critical areas of government—people who could articulate progressive ideas—he could make this Rainbow Coalition more than a one-man issue. Instead, what Jesse is doing is using 70–80 percent of his time to help elect local Black politicians in southern elections. This, of course, is a good thing, but it doesn't build a Rainbow Coalition that is a real political party.

Jesse didn't support Mark Green, for example, when he ran for the U. S. Senate in New York. Green is as progressive as you are going to find in America. It was a clearcut race. Many people believed that he didn't get involved because Green was white. In that same election Jackson supported a Black running against Pete Rodino, who has a good history on civil rights and progressive legislation. The feeling was that he supported the Black simply because of color.

There is a second political criticism I have. Jesse Jackson is first and foremost a Democrat. So if his ideas are rejected by the Democrats he has absolutely no intention of bolting from the party. In some ways one could sympathize with Blacks who are willing to bolt towards the Republicans, because they see that they are being held captive by a political party that takes them for granted. But Jesse doesn't have real independence. The Rainbow Coalition isn't preparing to be a potential third party. To be a captive of the Democratic Party renders you powerless—I don't care what color you are.

Of course, if he were the Democratic Party candidate, I would be overjoyed. But I don't think it is possible. Since it isn't, he has an extremely large public exposure which he should use to raise issues. But there's no point if he just raises issues to speak as part of the seven dwarves seeking the presidential nomination. He should raise the issues in a way that makes clear that we could have a third party in America that speaks to the needs of Blacks, poor whites, people who got screwed by the steel industry, farmers, and the small homeowners. Jesse is the perfect person to build a real movement of this sort—but it would have to have the built-in threat of the possibility of going somewhere outside the Democratic Party. It must say, "You Democrats, if you want to look like Reagan, if you want to talk like Reagan about the Red Menace, about people cheating on their welfare state—if you don't address the basic problems, we will go out and build another party." When he's ready to say that, he will have my support.

When you look inside the machinations in the Democratic Party since 1984, at its changes in structures, you see that almost all of it was aimed at attempting to isolate, control, and manipulate Jesse Jackson and his constituency. The question is whether this country is

ready to accept a Black president. I don't believe that it is. Therefore, it is incumbent to build a party that will be ready to accept a Black president, or a Jewish president, or a woman president, or a gay president—a president who stands for a whole different set of issues (for example, universal hospital care).

Cuomo gave a speech calling for an end to the Cold War that was equal to or possibly more progressive than anything Jesse Jackson is saying. So Jackson is tending to move towards the middle—and we have to pull him back. But the structure of the Rainbow Coalition doesn't allow us to do that. And if this continues to be true, perhaps we should just work on local campaigns and local struggles, because we won't get our money's worth out of a national campaign, and we will just come out of it exhausted and depressed.

Culturally, Jackson makes attacks on casual sex and calls for cleaning up rock music in ways that sound no different to me than the conservative cultural right. There is a constituency out there that thinks that your sexual life and drugs and the music you listen to are your own damn business—and this is where his religious background does become relevant.

I would sooner support Pat Schroeder. On the issue of environment, on the issue of women's rights, on the issue of cultural freedom, on the issue of urine testing (90 million Americans will be tested in the next three years) —on all these I am more confident in Pat Schroeder.

I'm surprised that in this interview Jesse doesn't say something stronger about Farrakhan, because I have heard him say elsewhere that he dissociates himself and that Farrakhan will play no role in his campaign. Of course, if I thought that Jesse were anti-Semitic, that would be adequate grounds to dismiss him. Organized Jewry often defines anti-Semitism as meaning anyone who opposes any of Israel's policies. For them, Peace Now (Shalom Achshav) does not exist, *Tikkun* does not exist. I see the larger Jewish community, as a whole, as hawkish, moving dangerously towards Republicanism, forgetting its roots in the ghetto, becoming class oriented. Given this context, I think there is a bit of scapegoating happening towards Jackson on this question of anti-Semitism.

When I was a little kid, no matter what the issue, whether it was Sputnik or influenza or whatever, they always wanted to know, "is this good or bad for the Jews." I think we have to have a much broader framework. Being Jewish for me is a way of life—it's championing the underdog, it's the kids on the corner saying "The emperor has no clothes on," being the constant critic, the constant heretic, being the outsider, being the one who can look at society with eyes connected to one's brain and not being distorted by a blind faith in religion. I think that what's good for the Jews is what's good for the whole world, not just for the Jews. It's not good for the Jews that a small oligarchy owns most of the world's natural resources. In this sense Marx, Freud, Spinoza, Emma Goldman, and Gompers were all Jewish heroes. They were people who didn't assimilate in the fundamental sense that they chose not to go for the money, not to adopt the values and mores imposed by the particular power structure in whose land they were passing through at that time. They were the outsiders, the troublemakers, the dissidents: God bless them in Russia, in South Africa, all over the world, but they and we are a minority in the Jewish world. So the main problem for me is not the Jewish issue in connection with Jackson.

In 1984 supporting Jackson was a different matter than it is today. In 1984 the Democrats didn't have a chance, so why not have someone up there who could make some good points. But in 1988 the teflon has peeled off, the election is up for grabs, there's a chance to make some important political points, and what we see is spineless, gutless Democrats versus self-centered Republicans. All we are seeing is a broadening of the middle.

Unless the structure of the Rainbow Coalition is changed so that people can actually influence it directly—and not just by trying to get Jackson's ear—then there is nothing to support. If it changes, I'd work for it full time. □

Abbie Hoffman has been a political activist for more than a quarter of a century and is author of nine books, including the just published Steal this Urine Test: Fighting Drug Hysteria in America, *(Penguin-Viking, 1987).*

Ann Lewis

As political director of the Democratic National Committee in 1984 I watched Jesse Jackson's first campaign from a ringside seat. And I do mean ringside—the conflicts which characterized that campaign went beyond the usual rough and tumble. I saw something else, too: a political leader whose own innate abilities also went beyond the usual.

In the last three years, I have watched the further evolution of Jesse Jackson and especially his relations with the Jewish community. In private meetings and in public events, Jackson has made himself available to Jewish leaders and responded to Jewish concerns. His recent speeches on the future of the Jewish-Black coalition reflect the current realities in both communities: not that we agree on every issue but that the issues on which we do agree are so much more numerous and so much more important, that it should, it must, be possible for that coalition to thrive.

There are, of course, disagreements. In his approach

to the question of Middle East peace, Jackson expresses a position that will be familiar to readers of *Tikkun*, but that is still controversial in the larger Jewish community: an international peace conference from which no one is excluded *a priori*. He was a strong supporter of the Camp David accords and critical of this administration for abandoning them. But now, Jackson says, we must take the next logical step. If we really expect to achieve a meaningful settlement, we must be prepared to negotiate with our enemies. We don't need to negotiate with our friends.

For those of us committed to coalition politics, this last statement is too often a wish, rather than a reality. We spend too much time and energy negotiating with our friends. Or those who should be our friends. The extensive discussion of Louis Farrakhan is an example. Jackson has said publicly that Farrakhan will play no role in his campaign, that he disapproves of his comments about Judaism, and that he considers Farrakhan an individual of no political influence who is the chief beneficiary of the current controversy.

But—and it is here that the debate with the Jewish community becomes tender—Jackson has also stated that he does not condemn any individual as such. He has and will criticize actions and statements, but because he believes in the possibility of redemption, he will not "denounce" Farrakhan the person, as he has been asked to do. This refusal has been a source of distrust within the Jewish community. In the controversy over Farrakhan, Black and Jewish experiences diverge.

In the Jewish experience, any overt expression of anti-Semitism must be taken very seriously indeed. The world, including some Jews, ignored the anti-Semitic rantings of Adolf Hitler; we have learned never to take such comments lightly again. We may have had to distinguish between public and private attitudes (how many of our business friends belonged to restricted clubs?), but about public statements the lines were clear. Anyone who spoke like that out loud was an enemy; how much worse their private thoughts must be.

In the Black experience, a different standard applies.

A lobbyist for civil rights legislation deals with elected officials of every region and attitude; among the older generation, many openly identified with—and led—segregationist regimes of the old South. A Black organization working for economic progress deals with business leaders across the political spectrum, as Jackson did in dealing with the Cook County, Illinois business and political establishment. So much of the current American power structure held and openly expressed racist attitudes in recent decades that Black strategists overlook past comments and work for present gains.

It is no surprise to us that Jesse Jackson has a background different from most of the people who read these pages. It is those differences that enable him to reach out and lead so many Americans who have previously felt excluded from our political system. And because this ability to lead offers so much promise to the future of liberal politics, I, too, hope that we can stop focusing on the differences and start working toward our common goals.

If we do want to move on, this article and other statements offer a full list of issues on which we could work together, beginning with economic justice. Jackson's proposal for reinvestment of pension funds to strengthen local infrastructures deserves thought and attention, as do his observations on the relationship and responsibility of multinational corporations to America's current trade deficit and declining middle-class wages.

In the general election of 1984, something dramatic happened in American politics: the rate of Black voter turnout approximated that of white turnout for the first time in our history. In 1986, the same ratio prevailed, enabling Democrats to win Senate seats in critical states. I don't know many factors that could have caused this breakthrough besides the Jackson candidacy. The historical effect is undeniable, the importance to Democratic candidates of these additional votes enormous.

Today, as we begin organizing for the election of 1988, progressive, politically active Jews must make a number of decisions, our political strategy, our candidate, and—whoever our candidate—our relationship with Jesse Jackson and his campaign.

After seven years of regressive administration which threatens civil liberties, rolls back civil rights, and works to undo social and economic progress, we have in 1988 a real chance to win. The nomination of Robert Bork—and the prospects for more Supreme Court nominations in the future—alone reminds us how high the stakes and how important this next election. The reckless attacks on government have led to a turnaround in public attitudes and greater support for more responsible government activity than we have seen in years.

The winning coalition of the eighties has to include the progressive Jewish community and the rainbow supporters of Jesse Jackson. We need to work together to win. We will need to continue to work together to govern in the years thereafter, with our joint commitment to social justice, economic opportunity, and a truly moral government. □

Ann Lewis is a Democratic strategist and commentator.

All They Are Saying: A Survey of Center/Right Periodicals

Milton Mankoff

As if Attorney General Meese hasn't drawn enough fire from the Left and Center for Wedtech and the Iran/contra scandal, the Right has now excoriated the work of the commission he authorized to combat pornography. Terry Teachout, writing in *Commentary* (August 1987), denigrates the so-called Meese Commission for *failing* to effectively threaten freedom of expression. Teachout approvingly quotes Irving Kristol's plea that "If you care for the quality of life in our democracy then you have to be in favor of censorship," a sentiment reminiscent of "We had to destroy the village in order to save it."

The author claims the Meese Commission didn't challenge Supreme Court rulings providing First Amendment support for virtually all pornographic publications. This alleged timidity limited the Commission's recommendations to suppression of porn only on grounds of "social harm." The author scoffs at this strategy the commissioners adopted which required ideological alliances with radical feminists like Catherine MacKinnon and Andrea Dworkin. Such allies view not only pornography but heterosexual intercourse as violence against women. Furthermore, to demonstrate pornography's harm, the Commission had to utilize what Teachout feels is inherently suspect social science research. (In this regard the Commission majority seemed to recognize its "error," for it realized early on that extant scholarship could not support its prejudices and proceeded to misinterpret, belittle, or ignore it).

Teachout sheds crocodile tears at the specter of an army of fundamentalist Christian soldiers throwing out Joyce, Lawrence, and Nabokov along with *Hot Cock Nazi Masters* if liberals don't overcome their knee-jerk aversion to censorship. When push comes to shove, however, he contends "If it is necessary to trade *Ulysses* ... for a world free of Times Square and child pornography, what principled person would hesitate to choose the latter?"

This stance is problematic over and above its being a *non sequitur*. Even the Meese Commission denied there is much child pornography generated for commercial gain. Its few producers are already vigorously prosecuted when apprehended. As for "Times Squares," after eschewing the "social harm" rationale for censorship, Teachout cannot articulate the basis for his passions. He lamely alludes to the Founding Fathers' thoughts, but subsequently admits they were mute on pornography. Is he simply aesthetically repulsed? Or does he advocate censorship because fundamentalists insist upon it even though he doesn't share their views?

Teachout pretends he is alone in carefully reading the Commission's Final Report and recognizing a sheep in wolf's clothing. Interestingly, he ignores the ACLU's 1986 *Polluting the Censorship Debate*. Barry Lynn, its lawyer-minister author, exposes the Report's biases and dangerous policy recommendations. He also refutes virtually every premise upon which censoring pornography rests (e. g., sexual speech should be less protected than other speech, pornographic themes are increasingly violent, porn leads to sexual assault and insensitivity toward the abuse of women).

Unlike others who *only* view pornography as benign or even beneficial (i. e., as a fantasy outlet for frustrations, sexual aids, sex education), Lynn acknowledges it may reinforce sexism. Yet, he convincingly argues such material is neither a necessary nor sufficient condition for women's subordination. Pornography's blatancy probably makes it ideologically less effective than the far more pervasive subtleties of advertising and popular culture. As for its perils to civilization and promotion of sex crimes, Lynn cites the case of Japan, surely a society Teachout and other believers in traditional social controls admire. It turns out that Japan has ubiquitous pornography, including much violent material involving young girls as victims. Despite, or, perhaps because of this, Japan boasts an incidence of reported rape one-seventeenth of ours. □

Milton Mankoff is associate professor of sociology at Queens College, City University of New York.

Radical Perspectives on the Confrontation of Spirit and Science

People expect Tikkun *to take on the sacred cows of our age—when they are the belief systems of political conservatives. But we are also interested in questioning some of the fundamental assumptions held in the liberal world as well.*

The special focus of this issue is on the creationism/evolution debate. Our concern is not *to defend creationism—no one in the Jewish world agrees with the version of creationism held by Christian fundamentalists. (Even those Jews who believe that the Torah is literally true are quick to point out that the Christian interpretations on which creationism is based do not correspond to the Hebrew meanings of the terms.)*

What we want to do, however, is to challenge the assumptions about the world that are built into the typical liberal response to this issue—namely, that anyone who believes in creationism must be some kind of nut, that anyone attracted to it is necessarily locked into a reactionary worldview, and that the existence of the Enlightenment may be at stake in the struggle against creationism. Instead of starting from the assumption that liberals and progressives have the corner on all truth about the world, we assume that there may be some important insights buried in the perceptions of others. In presenting sociological, legal and philosophical analyses we uncover some of these insights.

Most importantly, we use the specifics of the creationism/evolution issue to raise deeper and more abiding questions about the authority of Science (with a capital 's'). We are not challenging the value of the enterprise of science as such, but, rather, the metaphysics that is typically associated with this enterprise—what is often called "the scientific worldview." Peter Gabel's article assumes and builds upon an extensive philosophical literature, both in the European phenomenological tradition and in the works of Critical Theory, that has attempted to show the inevitable distortions that result from thinking that science has become Science. In playfully asking us to rethink our assumptions about nature, Gabel leads us into some of the most fundamental questions about the nature of reality and, at the same time, shows us how closely connected ontology and politics can be. Betty Mensch and Alan Freeman then show how the fundamental questions raised by Gabel's article are reproduced in the law, as courts find themselves increasingly faced with the not implausible claim that when science becomes Science, it starts to resemble the establishment of religion. Finally, Gary Peller places the whole debate in the context of the cultural politics of the South, where lower-class whites seek to find in creationism a way of resisting the technocratic rationality of the new corporate South.

The Biblical claim that "the whole world is full of God's glory" takes on a new political significance when reading these three essays together.

Creationism and the Spirit of Nature

Peter Gabel

We are led to Believe a Lie
When we see With not Thro the Eye

William Blake

I grew up in New York City during the 1950s, and most of my friends from that period regard the creationists as a bunch of nut-cases who are for some reason being taken seriously by a significant percentage of the American population and even by the mainstream media. Their attitude is not surprising to me because we all received a normal, northeastern liberal education, and we all were taught that Darwin's theory of evolution, which was based upon science, had long since put to rest theories about Divine Creation, which were based upon superstition and fantasy. Darwin's theory was presented to us not as "just a theory" or as one view among others, but rather as the discovery of a new truth, very much like the discovery that the earth was round rather than flat. So to my generation of middle- to upper-middle class white New Yorkers, the resurgence of creationism seems a little like a resurgence of the Flat Earth Society—something one might expect to occur in the hills of Appalachia but not something to be taken seriously in the courts of the United States or on the evening news.

I now see this attitude as a tragic expression of being

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unable to fully experience existence, or what might be called the "inside" of the world. To understand what I mean by this, think of a green plant near a window that leans toward the sun. We have all seen this many times—the upper leaves and branches seem to stretch in a sensual way up toward the warmth and the light, while the lower leaves and branches do the best they can and curl around toward the sun with the same apparent desire and intention. A scientist would tell us that it is mere sentimentality or "personification" to think that the plant is leaning toward anything, that what is "really" going on is something called "photosynthesis," a process by which the chlorophyll in the plant combines with light to produce oxygen. Within the scientific paradigm, the plant is drawn to the light not because of any sensual desire for the warmth and light of the sun, not, in other words because of any intentional movement of the plant as an embodiment of life, but simply because plants, in the words of a leading biology text, "capture light energy and use it to form carbohydrates and free oxygen from carbon dioxide and water" as part of their natural functioning. Ascribing intention or desire to the plant's movement attributes an immanence or inner life to the plant that is not observable by objective, impartial methods, and therefore cannot qualify as "knowledge" according to science.

Although most people I know would be inclined, if asked, to explain the plant's movements by using this kind of scientific model, there are a number of things about it that are unconvincing. For example, anyone who has actually watched a house plant grow toward the window over a period of time can't help noticing how *unified* the plant's movements are—or in other words how much it seems to move toward the sun as a whole organism. Science undoubtedly has an explanation for this ("efficient conservation of energy" or the like), but this kind of explanation cannot capture the sense of sensual unity that one senses in the plant, the sense of pleasure that seems so manifest in the bend of the upper stem and the stretch of the highest leaves and that seems to contrast so strikingly with the droop of plants denied access to the same sunlight. To the scientist, this may sound "merely subjective" and like a species-centered projection, but this sense that I have (and that I claim *we* have) that the meaning of the plant's living movement exceeds the photosynthesis explanation is a very strong one.

Can this intuitive "sense" of the plant's life be the basis of a kind of knowledge of the plant, a kind of knowledge that may correspond more closely to the plant's actual existence than the scientist's knowledge can possibly do?

To answer this question, we must look more carefully at the method of gaining knowledge used by the scientist and notice how this method may serve to limit what the scientist is able to see. First of all, the scientist begins his or her inquiry by taking the position of a detached observer who treats the plant as an object. From this position of detachment, the scientist cannot "sense" anything about the meaning of the plant's movements because to "sense" something in this way requires the opposite of detachment—it requires engagement with the plant's life through a kind of empathy or intuition. Instead, the scientist sees only light rays, green goo in the plant tissue (named "chlorophyll" by the scientist), chemical transformations resulting for some unknowable reason from their interaction, and the production of a new chemical substance (called "oxygen" by the scientist). What the scientist finally calls photosynthesis is most certainly a kind of knowledge about what occurs chemically in green plants exposed to sunlight, but it is a kind of knowledge that derives from the objectification of the plant, from treating the plant as a kind of "thing," albeit a "living thing."

But if the plant isn't a thing, there is no way that the scientist could know it, because the scientist's way of looking can see only things and properties of things. Objectification of phenomena allows one to see these phenomena only from the outside, and if they have an inside, we can know of it only through the use of some other method—that is, through empathy and intuition.

There would be no problem with the theory of photosynthesis if scientists were content to show some humility and limit themselves to the claim that green plants, when observed like objects, reveal regular chemical changes which lead to the production of oxygen. But most natural scientists have long since abandoned this kind of humility, assuming instead that *the knowledge of phenomena gathered by the use of the scientific method corresponds to the nature or "being" of the phenomena themselves*. This is reflected in the notion that the plant leans toward the window in order to fulfill its natural function of producing oxygen through photosynthesis. There is nothing in the scientists's observation of the plant that could give him or her access to why the plant moves as it does—on the contrary, as we have just seen, the methodological constraints imposed by the twin processes of detachment and objectification preclude the acquisition of any knowledge of the meaning of the plant's movements as a living organism. The "nature" of the plant, its capacity to sprout from a buried seed and to produce the green life of "chlorophyll" and to lean toward the sun and, for that matter, its capacity to wilt and die—all of these things are inaccessible to science, and science can never hope to explain them. What we might call the *existence* of the plant, the unique presence that animates the branches and leaves,

can only be grasped by embracing the plant in an intuitive movement of comprehension from one living being to another.

It is by opening up this channel of intuition that we can recover and begin to develop a kind of knowledge of life that corresponds to the nature of life as something existing rather than something dead, like the scientist's world of objects. You may have thought I was slightly crazy in talking about the plant's sensual stretching as an expression of its desire for warmth and light. But from a point of view that is capable of affirming the truth of intuitive knowledge, it is the scientist who appears slightly crazy for suppressing all of the perceptions of the plant's movements that could make sense of the plant as a form of life and for treating the plant as a kind of "photosynthesis machine." It is the scientist who must suppress the most immediate reactions to the plant's movement that spring from his or her humanity—that the plant is beautiful in its reaching toward the sun, that it looks and smells healthy, that its presence adds vitality to an otherwise sterile room—and who must convert the plant into a mass of chemicals before feeling he or she can know anything legitimate about it. But doesn't it make more sense for these initial reactions to be credited as giving us direct knowledge of the plant's existence, leaving to science the task of using its distinctive instrumental methods—detachment, objectification, the examination of chemical transformations—to analyze (but not account for) how oxygen is produced? This approach would accord to the plant its ontological status as an existing form of life, and yet allow science to give us useful knowledge about plant biochemistry not accessible to intuition. From this point of view, we could free ourselves to see the plant as a presence like ourselves, desiring the nourishment of the sun's warmth and light and undergoing vibrant physical transformations as this desire is realized. We could free ourselves to see the unity of spirit and matter that characterizes the plant's and our own existence, and without which this existence is not even conceivable. And we could also envelop the use of science within a qualitative and moral surround that is given by natural life itself in the immanent relation we feel toward the plant as beautiful and good—as miraculously alive and "here," no less than we are.

Wouldn't it be better for our children to learn something like this in elementary school before being sent into labs to dissect frogs or to memorize chemical formulas about photosynthesis? Wouldn't we have "liked school" better and perhaps even appreciated science more if we had been allowed to see the world in a way which requires love and natural empathy rather than a detached and manipulative "smartness" in order to "do well"?

II

This brings me to the debate between evolution and creationism, a debate which is influenced in every way by the failure of either side to grasp the truths that I have just sketched out. (It may seem arrogant to put it this way, but I honestly regard these as simple truths, self-evident to children before they are pressured to believe in Science or God as a condition of being accepted and loved.)

The theory of evolution as developed by Darwin and his followers is roughly as follows: We do not know how life began (more on this problem later), but once living species appeared on earth and began to proliferate, their evolution was guided by the law of survival of the fittest. Every species has been subject to the threat of extinction by either natural disasters, climatic changes, or by being killed and eaten by other species, and those that have survived have been those most capable of adapting to their then-existing natural environment. The "motor" of adaptation, according to Darwinian theory, has been a process of genetic mutation—accidental changes within the gene pool of particular species caused alterations in the physical characteristics of those species which enabled them to adapt most effectively to the natural dangers confronting them, and therefore to survive where others were wiped out. Thus the extraordinary capacity of a chameleon, for example, to change its color and hide from predators by blending into the background environment is the result of a genetic mutation occurring long ago which enabled the chameleon to survive while other similar lizards perished—and all of the species that we see surviving on earth in some way owe their survival to this same process, which Darwin called "natural selection." The existence of human beings, in whom consciousness has evolved in the service of adaptation and survival, must be understood as an outcome of this natural historical process.

The short answer to all this is that *my* existence is not explained by any of it because my *existence*, my sense of being an existing someone here typing on a computer cannot be explained by anything at all. To the degree that I feel present to myself as me, nothing could possibly have "caused" me because there is no way to get from something not me to me without something entirely original coming into existence—namely, me. And the same goes for you. In other words, although it may sound good to say "human beings evolved from the lower species through adaptation via natural selection," if we remember that every particular so-called "human being" is actually an existing someone whose sense of being-there as a me *must* be entirely original, then the theory of evolution seems at a minimum to be leaving out something—namely, the actual existence of everyone. And once we try to insert

the reality of actually existing into the theory, we run into another basic problem: If I actually exist as a me present to myself here as an original someone, and if I am descended from the apes and so on down the evolutionary line, then each one of those prior beings must have existed also, since you can't get to me from something not me, and we are all me's from our own point of view. The more we think about reality "from the inside," in other words, the more it becomes clear that the theory of evolution can only be true if earlier beings existed as we exist. We must have some interior relation, presence to presence, to that green plant in the window.

Would we not have "liked school" better and perhaps even appreciated science more if we had been allowed to see the world in a way which requires love and natural empathy rather than a detached and manipulative "smartness" in order to "do well"?

Like the theory of photosynthesis as an explanation for the plant's leaning toward the window, Darwin's theory of evolution was constructed by using the scientific method with its twin first-principles of detachment and objectification. During his famous Beagle voyage, Darwin observed the species sealed in the fossil record as well as the immense variety of species around him as "living things," and he saw what you can see when you look at things that way—transformations of the bone structure of armadillos, peculiar variations in the beaks of finches; or in the size of tortoises depending on their islands of residence—in other words alterations in the physical appearances of life-forms as they appear to a detached observer "from the outside." In this respect, his research may or may not have been accurate, but it was certainly a legitimate attempt to amass the kind of knowledge that can be learned by using the methods he employed. But to say that the fact of adaptive physical transformations over time demonstrates that nature "follows the law of survival of the fittest" and that adaptive changes result from genetic mutations is to assume that the methods of the natural sciences are adequate to understand how and why life develops as it does. This could only be true if the existence and development of living beings could be understood by a method that objectifies them and studies them "from the outside" when as we have just seen, neither my presence as an existing someone nor the fact of evolution itself is even conceivable from this vantage-point. *The method of knowing the phenomena does not correspond to the nature or "being" of the phenomena observed.*

This problem of there being a disjuncture between sciences's way of looking at the life-world and the nature of the life-world itself has begun to cause some serious problems for contemporary theorists of evolution, who have continued Darwin's quest with great earnestness and good faith and have been trying to improve upon Darwin's original theory while using the same objectifying methods that they believe to be the only way you can really "know" something. (I use "objectifying" rather than "objective" because the scientific method is in fact as subjective as any other—that is, it proceeds via the *subjective* act of objectifying the phenomena observed.) Recent analysis of the fossil evidence, for example, has suggested that Darwin's theory may have been wrong even on its own terms, that survival of the fittest through gradual and progressively more adaptive inherited characteristics cannot explain why some species have survived and others have not. Two of the most prominent modern researchers, Stephen Jay Gould and Niles Eldrege, have argued that the fossil record indicates new species do not arise gradually as a result of a steady evolution from their ancestors, but rather seem to appear fully formed in sudden bursts, after which they exhibit little or no change for millions of years. They have argued that this theory, which they call "punctuated equilibrium," is consistent with Darwin's notion of natural selection, since the periods of rapid speciation seem to occur in the context of small local populations where new adaptive mutations are likely to flourish, while the long periods of equilibrium or stasis seem to result from the homogenizing influence of large, centralized populations in which new and favorable mutations are likely to be diffused by the sheer bulk of the populations through which they must be spread. Nonetheless, the theory of punctuated equilibrium does seem to suggest that for vast periods of geological time, plants and animals have co-existed in a more benign fashion than that implied by Darwin's images of "struggle" and "fitness," and some biologists like Richard Lewontin have argued for a much more complex approach to evolution than that offered by either Darwin or Gould and Eldredge, emphasizing that life-forms do not simply respond to their environments in the passive way implied by the idea of adaptation, but rather constitute this environment as well through a whole range of active interventions emerging from their own historically specific needs. Thus the theory of evolution is now many theories, each with its own proponents, and with each proponent

trying to show that "the data" support his or her own point of view.

When I say that this new diversity of perspectives has caused serious problems for contemporary scientists, I do not mean that the scientists themselves consider the disagreement to be problematical. To them, as Gould recently argued in *The New York Times Magazine*, evolution itself is a fact, but Darwin's account of evolution was never more than a hypothesis always subject to revision to accommodate new data. And in fact the true scientific method can never really claim to *know* anything for certain about the world precisely because it can only see the "outside" of things—it can never penetrate to the heart of any matter, so to speak, but must limit itself to the perpetual correlation and re-correlation of so-called "objective" facts as they are manifested at the surface of the world. Every hypothesis, no matter how well-documented by recurrent observation, might be proved false by some new piece of evidence. Indeed the absolute skepticism and doubt that haunts the scientific method has been enshrined as a kind of absolute virtue by the high priest of the philosophers of science, Karl Popper, who conceived the now generally accepted (but wrong) proposition that no theory can even count as a theory unless it is "falsifiable" by science's own methods for recognizing "evidence." In an environment dominated by these kinds of assumptions, robust differences of opinion regarding how to interpret the data are cause for celebration rather than concern.

The problem has come rather from the creationists, who share none of the scientists' assumptions about what we might call "knowability" and who have been trying to exploit the evolutionists' internal disagreements as providing perfect evidence of the squabbling that results when people lack faith and therefore cannot grasp the nature of things. My aim is certainly not to defend the creationist credo that the Bible must be taken as literally true, that God created life on earth 6,000 years ago, that the species existing today are those that survived the great flood and emerged from Noah's Ark, and so forth. But the creationists have been able to touch that dimension of people's ordinary experience that sees life in all its forms as expressive of some in-dwelling and miraculous beauty and goodness, and that knows with a certain intuition that this in-dwelling presence must be at the heart of any true knowledge of the world. However absurd the strict content of their views may be, and however evil may be the association of these views with with right-wing militarism and anti-communism and with a servile dependency on fundamentalist preachers who purport to speak for an authoritarian God, there is something correct and admirable in their refusal to accept the hegemony of science as a privileged source of truth. And as is the case with many other public issues facing the American people (like the human need for deep and lasting emotional commitments embodied for most people in the idea of the family, and like the human need for continuous forms of community rooted in an ethical vision of a good and decent way of life, which today is spoken to more by the church than by any secular institution), it is the apparent inability of liberals and the left to address the deepest questions of reality and existence that is partly responsible for the appeal of right-wing movements who do address them, although often in profoundly distorted and destructive forms. If the theory of evolution equates itself with the denial or marginalization of the spiritual dimension of existence, asserting that people's intuited perceptions of a spiritual presence and meaning in nature are either pure superstition or at best a private matter, incapable of the kind of verification that science requires before something can be said to be "known," then people are going to turn elsewhere to search for a community where their most fundamental insights are validated and respected.

You cannot reach 1 by adding 9's to 0.999, and even if evolutionists keep studying the fossil record and revising their hypotheses until infinity, they will never understand what they are looking at until they change their way of seeing to encompass what the paleontologist and theologian Teilhard de Chardin called the "the within of things." This requires not some new scientific instrument but rather an inward letting-go that allows the scientist to overcome his or her detachment in relation to natural phenomena in favor of an immersion in the life-world of these phenomena as they exist "from the inside." The method of knowing that emerges from such an immersion is not the correlation and analysis of objectified bits of data characteristic of the traditional scientific method, but rather the *comprehension* that results from intuition and empathy, a comprehension whose objectivity derives from the natural affinity or likeness that unites the scientist as a living being with the life-forms whose truth he or she is trying to "get to know." It is only as *me* as an existing someone and not as a depersonalized "observer" that I am able to comprehend the meaning of your movements and gestures, and even if I misunderstand you, it is only by intensifying my immersion in your world, refining my intuitive judgment via an empathic reevaluation of the "data" manifested as the living unity of your movements, that I can possibly correct myself. And my "knowledge" that I have done so is founded entirely on the comprehension that results from my capacity *to put myself in your place*—it is a kind of knowledge whose validity rests not on "proof" but on the self-evident

insight that emerges across the differentiation of our presences out of the commonality of our being. Since our relation to earlier forms of life can only have been an "evolution" if they also in some way share our being, we can gain access to the development of these life-forms and to our relation to them only by founding our research on these same methods—that is, by approaching them as differentiated presences like ourselves and putting ourselves in their place in order to comprehend them. If you want to understand a spider, for example, you cannot get very far by examining its behavior "objectively"—to grasp the intricate unity of its movements, you must try (and this often takes a great deal of empathic watching with constant self-correction for anthropocentrism or "projection") to put yourself in the spider's place—that is to imagine yourself existing inside a spider's body, living in its unique socio-historical and morphological situation.

From this point of view, evolution must be seen as a continuity of existence manifesting itself through embodied beings who are interiorly related intergenerationally and across the alteration of their physical forms. And as existing beings, the various species must be understood as engaged not in despiritualized and quasi-mechanical "behavior" animated by "instincts" (a made-up explanatory scheme deriving from the objectification imposed upon life-forms by biologists) but as engaged in intentional action given direction and meaning by the same desire that animates us: the desire to live (or to put it more negatively, to survive), the desire to realize their spirit in the world through the creation of meaning, and the desire for social confirmation and inclusion through recognition and love. It is perhaps worth emphasizing again that there is nothing species-centered about this way of looking at other life if we can let go of the specialness that we have too long reserved for ourselves and allow ourselves to see that the various species "exist their worlds" as much as we do. The ant carrying a leaf and the spider dropping backwards down from the ceiling to anchor a web give a perpetual unity to their organization of dispersed matter that both manifests their presence as existing someones who are "in there" doing the unifying and reveals our commonality of being by virtue of our capacity to comprehend the meaning of what they are up to.

Admittedly, it is one thing to "comprehend" the world of a group of spiders in the way that I am describing and quite another to extend this comprehension to understanding intuitively and from the inside the transformation of physical forms and probably also of consciousness itself that constitutes evolution. Such a task would require that it be possible to reconstruct the life-world of species who have left few artifactual indications of their socio-historical, material, and morphological "situations" (the latter referring to what it's like to live out a particular experience from within a given body-type). The only work I have read personally that attempts to do anything approaching this is de Chardin's *The Phenomenon of Man*, which is essentially theological rather than "comprehensive" in the sense I have been suggesting—that is, it seems to me to impose upon a very abstract and sweeping survey of evolutionary history a religious "ascent" toward God through the development of thought and through the universe becoming conscious of itself (via the medium of Man) as a convergent unity of spirit. It may be that de Chardin could have revealed such a direction within the evolutionary process in a way that would have enabled readers to recognize or comprehend its truth, but doing so would have required concrete studies of particular transformations across and within species that showed how such an ascent made these transformations intelligible. But if such studies were actually done, I believe we would see that the realization of desire for survival and for love, under natural and social conditions that have often contradicted these desires (or placed them in contradiction with each other), would be at the heart of evolutionary movements. Thought and self-consciousness may have advanced the ability of humans to survive under difficult circumstances, but it seems to me more doubtful that they have made us any "better" or more moral or more loving than the rest of God's creatures.

But however the limits of our access to the "interiority" of the fossil record may inhibit our gaining knowledge of specific evolutionary transformations, there is no reason why we cannot begin to develop some preliminary post-Darwinian notions of how evolution must occur in light of the spirituality manifested in every life-form as both presence (or existence) and desire. If we seek to comprehend the transformations of life-forms through immersion and intuitive description, we must first of all abandon the idea that such transformations can be explained entirely or even primarily by chance genetic mutations. This idea, deriving as it does from the objectification of the physical body of a living organism, has always imposed a dualism of body and spirit on living beings, implying that one thing-like entity, called a gene, causes a change in another thing-like entity called a "physical characteristic," without any involvement of the spiritual wholeness or life-force which unifies every organism's actual development. But if we let go of the holding-back or detachment which allows us to convert the body into an object and instead bring our life into relation with the life around us, we cannot but see every organism as a unity

of body and spirit existing in (or towards) its world. My genes, in other words, are not things inside me; they *are* me insofar as I am embodied, insofar as my body is "where I am."

From within this holistic perspective, it may be that what traditional evolutionary science thinks of as an adaptive physical change resulting from a chance mutation is actually a gradual intergenerational transformation in the bodily form of like beings who commune and reproduce (so-called "species"), emerging originally from some individual or collective "sense" of how to overcome a morphological limitation on the realization of desire under specific material and socio-historical constraints. Instead of Steven Jay Gould's Darwinian account of how pandas have developed a prehensile digit resembling a thumb, imagine the following scenario: Some pandas who have inherited large wrist bones from their closest relatives, the bears, get the idea of using these wrist bones to hold and strip bamboo shoots by grasping the shoots between the bone and "thumb" that is the first digit of their paw. This will enable them to more easily munch the bamboo that surrounds them in their obscure forest habitat and also "disalienate" them by cooling out some of the internal antagonisms that have resulted from fighting over currently scarce food supplies (by making the bamboo shoots easier to eat.) This first generation begins to try to use their wrists in this way, but with very limited success because they lack a wrist muscle to give them the needed control and in any case the wrist and paw muscles they do have stiffened up due to age. But their children pick up on the idea empathically—they "identify" with their parents out of love and take up the same project at an early age, sure that it will lead to something good, and eventually they actually understand it in its full social and gastronomical complexity. Starting so early in life to try to manipulate their wrist bones to act as an extra thumb, they are marginally more dexterous than their parents, though still significantly inhibited by the missing muscle. Over the next several generations, the project becomes deeply internalized in the group, perhaps partly through socially constitutive bamboo-munching rituals, until the idea of the new thumb and the developing practical sense embodying this idea becomes *part of what it is to be a panda*. In others words, the very being of the panda is partly constituted by the social-cultural rhythms of panda life, including the intentional organization and coordination of "sense" which animate the panda's bodily movements. Eventually and after many more generations, this "sense" of being-towards-grasping-things-with-our-paws is passed on empathically to the pre-natal embryo before its body has formed, and when coupled with the internalized tradition among the pandas (as well as their esteemed ancestors, the bears and raccoons) of possessing exceptional coordination for using their forelegs in feeding, the desire for the thumb generates a transformation of the panda's musculature—one of the tendons which normally attaches to the panda's "real" thumb becomes attached instead to the embryo's wrist-bone. And this "trait" now becomes part of the bodily form that pandas reproduce through love-making; it becomes part of their embodied "pandaness," or if it is really necessary to keep the concept of "genes," the trait is now "in" the panda's genes insofar as genes are living carriers of the panda's morphological essence as opposed to being purely physical "things" which cause changes in a despiritualized physical body.

Intuitive comprehension always reveals qualities of experience in the other that impel us in some moral direction.

This particular reinterpretation of Gould's well-known defense of Darwin (see *The Panda's Thumb*, in which he purports to explain the same phenomenon through adaptation via genetic mutation) may be incomplete in various ways, but I offer it only as an example of how one might go about trying to conceive of evolutionary change while remaining true to the being or nature of living phenomena. It is a testament to people's fear of moving beyond the limitations of scientific "objectivity" that so many people have been willing to believe for so long in a theory of evolution that posits such a spiritually empty vision of natural history (life-forms "adapt" in the service of mere "survival") which is in turn explained by such implausible mechanisms as chance mutations. This is not to deny that unexplained mutations occasionally do occur and have profound effects on the life-world of every species, nor is it to deny that sometimes evolutionary developments result primarily from the survival-value of given physical characteristics (like, for example, the black-winged "peppered moths" who out-survived white-winged moths when soot from nineteenth-century factories blackened surrounding trees, making the white-winged moths easy prey for predators). But to be able to think that these accidental events furthering the banal, and in itself, essentially meaningless objective of survival could be sufficient to account for the development of existence itself requires a repression of our relation to the "within of things" that suggests a terror of being sucked into a vortex if we dare to abandon the terrain of exteriority as the only legitimate locus of objective knowledge. To gain a true comprehension of panda life and development would require a long im-

mersion in their world and history that I haven't yet done (maybe it was their cultural domination by the larger bears that played a key role in propelling the pandas to seek the autonomy provided by a paw that could grasp), but I couldn't begin to do it without taking the risk of opening my heart to theirs, or in other words without trying to *understand* them. Only then could I begin to see "the data" in a way that could reveal its vital meaning.

III

The implications of what I am saying here go much deeper than the debate between evolution and creationism because if we could succeed in freeing knowledge from the grip of science and affirm the objectivity of intuitive comprehension as the only route to understanding and communicating about the *being* of things, we might also begin to transform the way people think about politics and ethics, about the meaning of their own lives and the lives of others and about what kind of world we should be trying to create. The success of the proponents of science in linking knowledge of the truth with a method requiring that one look "at" things from a detached and "unbiased" standpoint, while relegating intuitive comprehension to the private realm of personal belief, has had the effect of introducing doubt into the soul of the universe and destroying people's confidence that their own instinctive perceptions and needs could possibly be the basis for deciding what it is that everyone wants and needs. The core of the ideology of science is that you can only know something if you erase yourself, and this leads precisely to a society of erased selves in which people experience each other largely as anonymous strangers without any common anchorage, passing each other with blank gazes on the street and purporting (in order to guard their inaccessibility in the name of privacy) to have no idea what anyone else feels or thinks. We are so preoccupied with being detached observers peering out at an "outside world" created by others that when a pollster tries to use scientific methods to determine public opinion on any given issue, each person nervously tries to guess what he or she thinks others would say. As a result, public opinion turns out to be the opinion of no one, and with everyone feverishly reading the papers or listening to friends or watching t.v. to try to figure out what to think, democracy turns out to be mainly drifts of "rotating otherness" in a world where no one feels empowered to affirm his or her own existence.

Obviously, this is somewhat of an exaggeration—if things were really this bad we would have had a nuclear war by now—but the belief that scientific methods are "hard" and therefore yield knowledge while intuitive methods are "soft" and therefore yield only opinions both expresses and reinforces an underlying feeling that there can be no objective basis for political or ethical judgments, that "no one has the right to speak for anyone else," and so forth. The denial, implicit in the scientific method, that one can achieve direct intuitive knowledge of the "within of things," and the ethical relativism that springs from it may help to explain the creationists' insistence that the Bible must be read as literally true in every respect. Their rigidity may be an example of what psychoanalysis calls a "reaction-formation"—they need to believe that the Bible reveals absolute spiritual truth to the faithful in order to defend themselves against an underlying insecurity, fostered by centuries of the dominance of scientific ideology, that they do actually have the capacity to claim any direct knowledge of spiritual truth that would reveal in some nonrelative sense what is good for human beings or how people ought to live their lives. Of course, it would be absurd to blame this underlying doubt and "detachment" on the ideology of science alone—at the deepest level, it results from our alienation from one another and our anxiety that if we made ourselves present to each other with the full openness required to feel certain of our spiritual commonality, we would be too vulnerable to rejection, humiliation, and pain. The effects of science have been not so much to cause our "holding back" as to reinforce its legitimacy by allowing us to deny that this kind of intuitive, spiritual certainty is possible.

Overcoming our fear of each other requires much more than launching an assault on the scientific method, but I think it would be an unqualified step in the right direction if we abandoned the illusion that analytical detachment provides us with a privileged form of knowledge and validated the objectivity of what we learn from our passionate immersion in the life-world into which we have miraculously been thrown. No one will ever be able to "prove" the objectivity of intuitive knowledge by scientific methods because these methods proceed via an objectification designed to make intuitive feeling invisible—but it is equally true that the distinctive vitality that characterizes the immediacy and "pull" of being alive is accessible to us through the engagement of intuitive comprehension alone. What establishes the potential objectivity of intuitive knowledge is neither the so-called "neutrality" of science nor the blindness of faith, but the experiential recognition that the passion and need animating each of us animates all of us; that we can rely on our own fundamental need for the confirmation and love of others, for example, as the basis for knowing with certainty that this need fundamentally motivates all living things.

The reason that this kind of spiritual knowledge has political and ethical importance is that unlike scientific

knowledge, spiritual knowledge reveals itself only in an ethical form. Scientific knowledge like physics or chemistry or, for that matter, evolutionary biology is incapable of pointing in any ethical direction because it limits itself to what I have been calling the "outside" of the world. By objectifying phenomena and examining their physical properties from a detached standpoint, the scientist turns the world into a mass of thingified information and processes, yielding a kind of "object-knowledge" which may be useful but which cannot be good or bad. Adopting this scientific attitude requires at least a temporary repression of any relationship one might have to the phenomena being investigated, and if this repression becomes permanent (which is what occurs when the scientist confuses his or her own act of objectification with the belief that the phenomenon under investigation *is* an object), one can engage in torture without being aware, at least consciously, that one is doing anything wrong. This or something like it is what permits scientists who work for cosmetics companies and the executives who employ them to maim and kill animals with a clear conscience while testing the toxicity of lipsticks—either they think that the animals are thing-like (perhaps "instinctual organisms") or they are able to ignore the issue altogether because they have been educated to believe that only scientific knowledge is "real" while spiritual knowledge is "just a matter of opinion."

If, on the other hand, the cosmetics scientists (or their employers or co-workers) were to let go of their detachment and open themselves to the being of these animals, and if they were educated to understand that the knowledge gained by this immersion in the animals' experience is no less real than the knowledge gained by testing lipsticks on animals conceived as physico-chemical organisms, they would be unable to avoid an ethical crisis. This is because their comprehension of the truth of the animals' suffering would be a kind of knowing that points in a definite ethical direction—their capacity to grasp this suffering would derive from their own identical capacity to suffer, and so they would know that it should end. To put this another way, intuitive comprehension always reveals qualities of experience in the other that impel us in some moral direction through our own experience or revulsion or longing or exhilaration—we can only know suffering in the other through the pain it engenders in ourselves. The scientist who is capable of knowing his or her laboratory animals in this sense cannot avoid deciding objectively, on the basis of what is good for life, whether it is right to torture animals to improve the ornamentation of human lips.

The point here is not to emphasize animal rights in particular, but to suggest that the validation of intuitive comprehension can have a profound ethical impact on every aspect of life because the very nature of intuitive knowledge makes you want to free desire and vitality from the various forms of repression that contain it. Once you "get" that hierarchy and inequality are dehumanizing and that this isn't just a matter of opinion, arguments in favor of these ways of living based on "efficiency" or some other objectifying slogan lose all of their force: Instead of feeling inadequate and anxious about whether you really have grasped the intricacy of the argument, you can comprehend the arguer's alienation just from the sound of his voice and the blank stare in his eyes, and the only question is whether it's worth it to try to unbury him so that he can come out and actually experience what he's talking about. Similarly, taking action against the existence of nuclear weapons no longer requires that you know a lot (or anything) about systems of bilateral verification or the percentage of missiles that might penetrate a star-wars' defense shield or any other "object-knowledge" of that kind because you don't have to know these things to move away from extinction and toward vitality and love. In fact, you have to not know it, at least not in too much detail or with too much interest.

Finally, it seems clear to me that the ecology movement would increase its social power if it placed greater emphasis on the validity of intuitive knowledge as a source of direct insight into the nature of being (and therefore into how we ought to *be* being) than it has so far done. Instead of speaking only or even primarily about "balancing the eco-system" or "protecting the ozone layer" in a way which still relies too much upon scientific knowledge to guide ethical action, ecologists should speak directly to people's souls and help them to trust that what they see with their souls (through the experience of beauty or disgust, for example) is actually there. Gaining confidence in this kind of sight is essential to being able to transcend the deadening objectivity of media policy experts and other scientized professional knowers, and to feel at once empowered and compelled to do what you always know was right. □

Religion as Science/Science as Religion: Constitutional Law and the Fundamentalist Challenge

Alan Freeman and Betty Mensch

It is a sorry tribute to the fragility of our social structure that the frustrations experienced by schoolchildren and their parents so quickly lead to bitter disputes in courts of law. Consider two stories. In the first, a boy in Louisiana received a homework assignment on evolution from his science teacher. When he recited in class that "God created the world and God created man," the teacher graded his work "unsatisfactory." The boy's father turned out to be Louisiana State Senator Bill Keith, who saw in his son's experience yet another instance of the way in which the public schools were systematically undermining the religious faith that he and many other parents consider the absolute foundation of family and community life.

Senator Keith introduced—and in July 1981 saw enacted—a state law called the "balanced treatment" act, which required that whenever evolution was presented in the public schools, students should also be given materials describing "the scientific evidences for creation and inferences from those scientific evidences." In response, in December 1981 a group of Louisiana public school teachers and parents started a lawsuit against the governor of Louisiana to prevent enforcement of the new law on the grounds that it amounted to an unconstitutional "establishment" of religion, forbidden by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution.

The second story begins in Mobile County, Alabama, where parents complained that their public schools were teaching the "religion of humanism and leaving God out of the equation." One parent found it necessary to "re-educate his children on a day-to-day basis" after school. His children, he reported, were ridiculed because of their belief in creation. Another parent stated that he had more than once seen his children in tears over the conflict between the religious values they learned at home and the moral relativism dogmatically taught in the schools. Over six hundred such people brought a lawsuit against the local school board, alleging that the board, by teaching the "religions of secularism, humanism, evolution, materialism, agnosticism, atheism and others," was infringing their right to the "free exercise" of religion, thereby violating the First Amendment of the United States Constitution.

Both cases arise under the "religion clauses" of the First Amendment, which provide that no law shall be passed "respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." These clauses represent two related, yet different, constitutional notions—that of "establishment" on the one hand and "free exercise" on the other. The basic idea of the establishment clause is suggested by its name—its paradigmatic violation would be an officially mandated and publicly supported church. As interpreted more broadly, the clause has come to mean that government is not supposed to take any stand for a particular religion as against others, or for religion in general as against its absence. In fact, where a law, like the one in Louisiana, is challenged as violating the establishment clause, the Supreme Court requires that the law, to be valid, must have been adopted for a secular purpose, that its principal or primary effect must be one that neither advances nor inhibits religion, and that it must not result in excessive entanglement of government with religion. Invoking this rule, the Louisiana plaintiffs charged that Senator Keith's "balanced treatment" law, while ostensibly enacted to expand the curriculum in the name of academic freedom, was really enacted to promote the cause of fundamentalist religion.

The Alabama case, however, arose under the seemingly different notion of the "free exercise" of religion. The core idea of the free exercise clause is personal (or family) autonomy with respect to choice of religious belief or practice. The most extreme example of a law violating the free exercise clause would be one prohibiting the practice of a particular religion. Even seemingly neutral rules or practices, however, may be experienced as burdensome or even devastating by adherents to particular faiths. Thus, a rule conditioning the receipt of unemployment benefits on a willingness to

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accept work on Saturday was struck down when challenged by a Seventh Day Adventist whose religion mandated a Saturday Sabbath. So, too, the parents in Mobile are claiming that the secular curriculum mandated by the school board serves to coerce their children into adopting a worldview inconsistent with their religious beliefs, and in so doing to undermine the freedom of families to follow their own religion.

On the surface, establishment and free enterprise appear to raise separate constitutional issues. In fact, they are intractably interdependent. The Louisiana case, for example, originated with the experience of Senator Keith's son, who, in effect, had his religious belief ruled "unsatisfactory," surely an experience that implicates free exercise values. Keith's response was to sponsor legislation that would take the burden off of his son by placing his religious beliefs right there in the classroom as a parallel version of science. Yet that move triggered an establishment clause problem, since the state had acted to advance the interests of a particular religious viewpoint. Inevitably, protection of "free exercise" as guaranteed by the First Amendment requires some degree of that "establishment" which the First Amendment simultaneously prohibits. Moreover, what is ultimately at stake in resolving establishment clause issues may be free exercise values—in Louisiana, those of nonfundamentalists who feel, with some justification, threatened and coerced by the political success of a fundamentalist program. Thus, the free exercise rights of Senator Keith and his family stand in contradiction to those of nonfundamentalists, mediated only by the murk of modern establishment clause doctrine.

Similarly contradictory are the issues raised by the Mobile case. Every time someone claims a free exercise exemption from otherwise valid rules or practices, establishment clause issues arise immediately. To exempt anyone on religious grounds automatically prioritizes that claim against others denied the exemption. To use the example mentioned earlier, why should the Seventh Day Adventist be relieved from Saturday work, but not someone who wants to sleep late or to spend more time with children? The answer, which seems to violate the establishment clause, must be that claims rooted in religion are more important than those lacking such a foundation.

It gets even worse. Not every claim, even if rooted in the most deeply held religious belief, will be granted. Every grant increases the level of administrative inconvenience; many claims will inevitably be denied, producing a hierarchy of religious beliefs and practices, with some considered worthy of accommodation and others considered not so worthy. The result is the establishment clause problem of favoring particular religions and disfavoring others. Jews, for example, have been on the losing side of some notable (and infamous) cases, such as the one decided two years before the Seventh Day Adventist case, which refused to exempt an Orthodox Jew from a Sunday closing law, or the one decided in 1986 (opinion by Justice Rehnquist) refusing to exempt an Orthodox Jewish psychologist from Air Force dress rules to the extent of letting him wear his yarmulke while on duty in a military hospital.

Thus, to validate the claim of the parents in the Mobile case would serve to exalt their religious dissatisfaction with the public school curriculum over other dissenting voices not rooted in similar religious belief. One way to avoid the implicit establishment clause problem is to transform the free exercise claim of exemption into an establishment clause challenge to the very validity of the government practice. That is exactly what happened in Mobile, where the complainants chose to challenge the ostensibly secular school curriculum as in fact dogmatically indoctrinating their children with the "religion" of "secular humanism," in violation of the establishment clause.

Since there is nothing fixed or objective about the categories "secular" and "religious," difficult philosophical issues must be confronted to deal with the Louisiana and the Alabama cases. Both raise the problematic distinction between science and religion. In the Louisiana case, religion seeks to appear as science, so that fundamentalist creationism can elevate itself to a status that exactly parallels scientific evolution. At the level of pure logic, at least, the claim is not so easily dismissed. In the Mobile case, science (at least in the broader form of a secular public school curriculum) can be recharacterized as religion by revealing it to be a dogmatic and ideological worldview. Here, too, the issue cannot easily be dismissed. Theoretically, then, if creation science satisfies a respectable notion of "science," why can't it be made part of the public school curriculum? Similarly, if "secular humanism" looks, acts, and sounds like a religion, how can we tolerate its dogmatic presence in the public schools?

Despite the presumption of reasoned resolution usually associated with legal analysis, it may well be that the issues cannot be decided at the level of logic alone. Instead, it may be necessary to recover their social meaning and, ultimately, to face the contradictions necessarily associated with a secular liberal society in which the price paid for religious freedom has been the privatization and trivialization of the religious experience, as well as its exclusion from the arena of significant public affairs.

The Louisiana case reached the United States Supreme Court under the name of *Edwards v. Aguillard*.

This was not the first time that creationism and evolution had found themselves pitted against one another in court. Nearly everyone has heard of the famous *Scopes* "monkey" trial in Tennessee in 1925, with its dramatic confrontation between the wily rationalist, Clarence Darrow, and the grandiloquent defender of traditional religion, William Jennings Bryan. Few people realize, however, that the *Scopes* case never resolved whether the teaching of evolution could be banned in the schools: the case was ultimately decided on a technicality.

Not until 1968 did the U. S. Supreme Court decide the issue. In *Epperson v. Arkansas* the Court struck down, on establishment grounds, an Arkansas statute banning the teaching of evolution in public schools. In a snidely dismissive opinion, perhaps reflecting the complacency associated with the high point of liberal hegemony on the Warren Court, Justice Fortas characterized the statute in atavistic terms, a product of ignorant religious bigotry.

Fundamentalists have come to understand what the left has been pointing out with some consistency: Certain liberal presuppositions, especially about the primacy of "self," the relativity of values, and the authority of positivist science, are themselves a kind of orthodoxy.

Justice Black, himself a product of southern populism, offered a troubled and prophetic concurring opinion in *Epperson*. Black attacked the view that Darwinism's claim to truth was any more absolute than the creationists' religious claims. ("Perhaps no scientist would be willing to take an oath and swear that everything announced in the Darwinian theory is unquestionably true".) He emphasized, moreover, the fact that many people still believed that the theory of evolution subverted their religious faith. That meant that a state which permitted the teaching of evolution was no more obviously "neutral" with respect to religion than a state which prohibited it.

Having lost the power to prohibit the teaching of evolution altogether, fundamentalists opted for a new ploy, the "balanced treatment" approach. The basic tactic, first adopted in Arkansas and later by Senator Keith in Louisiana, was to presuppose two equally defensible *scientific* accounts, and in the interest of "academic freedom" to require that they be given equal time. Thus, if evolution were part of the curriculum, it would not be treated as simply "true" but, rather, would be balanced by a supposedly secular version of creationism, one carefully cleansed of references to God.

In 1982 a lower court struck down the Arkansas statute, with the A.C.L.U. helping the winning side and the Moral Majority assisting the losers. Scientists celebrated the victory. A day after the case was decided, Senator Keith in Louisiana amended his own bill, which was then pending, to make it appear more secular than the Arkansas act upon which it had been modeled on. He also tried, through legislative hearings, to emphasize the "academic freedom" issue, promoting an ostensibly secular value—pluralism.

These efforts could not, however, erase the well-documented reality that "balanced treatment" legislation in Louisiana and elsewhere was the product of a well-orchestrated, nationwide, fundamentalist political program. This became the determinative fact for the Supreme Court in *Edwards v. Aguillard*. On June 19, 1987, the Court announced that the Louisiana statute violated the establishment clause of the First Amendment because of its essentially religious purpose.

Under the test employed by the Court, ostensibly neutral legislation may nevertheless be invalid if adopted for a "religious" purpose. Thus, the Court must investigate political and social contexts in some detail. For example, a law requiring a moment of silence during the school day does not, on the surface, bear any relationship to religion and might be passed to promote calm, thoughtful reflection in the public schools. Yet the same law, when urged by religious groups which have already been frustrated by the ban on school prayer, could (and has) run afoul of the "purpose" test. Thus, in *Edwards* the Court concluded that the claim of secular purpose for the Louisiana statute was, in fact, "a sham," its real purpose being to "restructure the science curriculum to conform with a particular religious viewpoint."

By seizing on this characterization of purpose, the court evaded the two hardest issues in the case—the status of creation science as "science" and the effect of the evolution curriculum on the free exercise rights of students such as young Keith. These points were not lost on the two dissenting justices, the archconservatives Rehnquist and Scalia. In an annoyingly clever and sophisticated opinion they raised some difficult issues. They questioned the Court's reliance on the purpose test, noting the elusive boundary between the characterizations "secular" and "religious" and stressing as credible Louisiana's desire that its students be exposed to competing viewpoints. The dissenters

also, not unjustly, characterized most recent establishment clause decision making as incoherent and chaotic, a point which has been made by many legal scholars as well. (For example, according to the Supreme Court, a state may lend school texts to parochial school students, but not tape recorders and maps; it may pay for bus transportation to parochial schools, but not pay for field trip transportation to secular educational sites.)

The dissent also pointed out, though not so forcefully as had Justice Black in *Epperson*, the underlying free exercise issue ignored by the Court's mode of disposition. That issue was destined to reappear. In fact, even before the Supreme Court decided *Edwards*, Judge Brevard Hand had decided the Mobile case on March 4, 1987, under the name of *Smith v. Board of Commissioners of Mobile County*. In a lengthy opinion Hand announced that the teaching of secular humanism constitutes an establishment of religion violating the First Amendment rights of complaining parents. Although Hand's decision was recently (August 27, 1987) overturned by an intermediate appellate court, the case will almost surely be appealed to the Supreme Court.

In his decision, Hand actually banned from the Alabama public schools forty-four textbooks which, he said, promoted the godless "religion" of secular humanism. The case thus represents a nightmare for the liberal sensibility, a rising up of outrage and frustration which, directed principally against textbooks, comes uncomfortably close to book burning in spirit. The liberal temptation, of course, is to quash that spirit, given all of its intolerance and closed-mindedness.

Nevertheless, the *Mobile* case raises issues which liberals cannot ignore. Most significantly, fundamentalists have come to understand what the left has been pointing out with some consistency: Certain liberal presuppositions, especially about the primacy of "self," the relativity of values, and the authority of positivist science, are themselves a kind of orthodoxy, not unlike religion, an orthodoxy that is found suffocating by those who do not share its assumptions.

Moreover, the public schools, as the training ground for future citizens of the United States, have long been considered the primary transmitters of liberal values. None other than Earl Warren himself, in his famous opinion in *Brown vs. Board of Education*, characterized public education as the "very foundation of good citizenship," a "principal instrument in awakening the child to cultural values, in preparing him for later professional training, and in helping him to adjust normally to his environment."

Recent revisionist-left histories of the public school system have emphasized the degree to which schools have played the role of assimilators, quashers of difference, and trainers of "decent," like-minded citizens, while also reproducing and stabilizing existing social hierarchy. Fundamentalists can hardly be faulted for having now reached a similar conclusion. Thus, schools are a sensible target of attack by those who do not want to be taken over by liberal ideology, which fundamentalists see as simply an alien faith.

Taking advantage of this perspective, Judge Hand carefully exposed in his opinion the antireligious ideological core of public education. He emphasized the influence of John Dewey, long considered the father of modern education. Dewey had dismissed religions existing during the 1920s and 1930s as "outmoded" and believed society should not guide itself by those "old beliefs" but, rather, by "new ethics derived from modern scientific doctrine in both the biological and physical sciences." Old religion must be cast off, he said, and "we must be militant in our new religion," with the school system being the key "instrument" for social improvement. In fact, in an essay entitled "Religion in Our Schools," Dewey outlined four basic elements of this new "religion": Right and wrong reside only in consequences; there is no cosmic guarantee of meaning; children should be liberated from their past and their parents; and "value processing" is the most wholesome way to proceed through life.

Hand focused particularly on the ideological presuppositions of "selfish" psychology, such as Maslow's emphasis on a hierarchy of "needs," with "self-actualization" at the top. Carl Rogers, the psychologist with perhaps the most influence on modern education, was described as emphasizing "value clarification," premised on the view that "only you can judge your own values, you are the designer of your life, you are the most important person in your life." Thus modern psychology teaches us that values are "matters of preference and taste in personal opinion and they cannot be known to be right or wrong or true or false. They have to do with one's own desires and fulfillments and self-satisfaction." Is this science? If not, what is it? Even Robert Coles of Harvard, a psychiatrist generally considered to be on the political left, testified he felt for the parents in their complaints and struggles because the textbooks under scrutiny contained a quantity of "social and cultural rot."

As a convincing example of this "rot," Hand described modern history texts as almost entirely omitting all mention of religion, even in accounts of the abolitionist, women's suffrage, temperance, civil rights, and peace movements. "The role of religion in the lives of immigrants, and minorities, especially southern Blacks, is rarely mentioned," and religion, "where treated at all, is generally represented as a private

matter, only influencing American life at some extraordinary moments." Those who know that religion has played a vital role in American history and also in the daily lives of many Americans find such textbooks shallow and inaccurate, while those for whom religion continues to be of prime importance find them offensively antireligious.

Perhaps Judge Hand is straining the legal doctrine in declaring secular humanism a religion for establishment clause purposes, but his basic point—that the schools do convey a pervasive message of extraordinary spiritual shallowness—cannot be ignored, nor can the fact that the message is not simply "neutral" and "objective" but, rather, deeply ideological and alienating to those whose perspective is more spiritually based. Others similarly alienated by school requirements in the past have, in fact, won court cases under the free exercise clause. In 1943 Jehovah's Witnesses were exempted by the Supreme Court from the public school's compulsory flag salute. For them, the salute amounted to bowing down before a "graven image" in violation of the Ten Commandments. In 1972 the Court exempted Old Order Amish communities from otherwise applicable compulsory education laws. Those intensely religious communities found incompatible with their way of life the requirement of public education beyond the eighth grade. Yet to follow through on the logic of Hand's opinion and tailor the curriculum to the needs of fundamentalist families would surely run afoul of the establishment clause, as the Louisiana case illustrates. Once again, paradoxically, the First Amendment's guarantee of free exercise seems to require an "establishment" prohibited by the same First Amendment.

The recent fundamentalist challenge to public school education, therefore, raises some valuable points, not just about the difficulty of formulating a coherent legal doctrine, but also about the nature of modern liberal society. As leftists have been pointing out for years, our worldview consistently elevates the "self" above community and reduces morality to a question of personal subjective preference, while finding objectivity only in a despiritualized version of nature as a collection of positivist "facts." Many fundamentalists (few of whom fit the caricature of the ignorant, redneck buffoon, out of touch with the modern world) are educated and financially successful people who find themselves dissatisfied with the emptiness of a wholly secular society, one which defines success only in terms of self-advancement. The conversion experience, the experience of being "born again," brings a new sense of fellowship with others in the religious community, along with a new sense of moral rootedness and certainty. A love of sharing usually replaces selfishness, and the world, both social and natural, takes on a spiritual significance which cannot be captured by positivist, scientific description. Thus, the new life, after conversion, seems vastly more rewarding than the sterility associated with the dominant culture.

As Brevard Hand suggested in *Mobile*, deep religious experience cannot be contained within the closed paddock of pure "privacy." Marx pointed out long ago that liberal legal ideology insists upon defining religion, like property, as a "private" right, divorced from one's experience as "public" citizen. The establishment and free exercise clauses are premised on the possibility of maintaining that public/private boundary: one is "free" to be religious, but only as part of one's private life. High school history texts tell us that this ideology of privacy was the historical fact about American religion, but they do so only at the expense of accuracy.

It is hardly an accident, then, that the single historical example of religion that fits the privacy model, the one all too often hauled out to represent the possibility of religious "freedom," is the idiosyncratic antinomianism of the great Rhode Island dissident, Roger Williams. His separatist version of sectarian Protestantism maintained its purity only by being rooted in unsullied private experience, insulated from an impure world. In its extreme version, only Williams and his wife, *by themselves*, could commune with God (and it has been said, perhaps jokingly, that he wasn't all too sure about her). It is somewhat ironic that, in the name of "neutrality," legal doctrine has in effect established Williams's version of Christianity as the constitutionally mandated model of religion itself.

This narrow model ignores the fact that for most people religious conversion means a singular *loss* of private self, and a transformation in one's relationship to others that simply cannot manifest itself in a secluded self-centered realm. Thus, to take one especially troubling and politically charged example, a person who deeply feels the moral and spiritual significance of fetal life finds it difficult to hold that view as a purely "private" religious concern, somehow separate from and irrelevant to a "public" secular world where fetuses are murdered daily. Yet, of course, to one who does not share the pro-life religious conviction, the antiabortionist movement represents only the attempted illegitimate imposition of a dogmatic moral/religious view on what should be a matter for free, private, subjective choice. In fact, no less than evolution, the abortion issue raises intractable establishment clause problems which the courts have generally chosen to ignore.

The fundamentalists' legal challenge to the public school curriculum not only forces us to confront the troublesome incoherence of the category "religion" but

also compels a similar reexamination of that mainstay of modernism—"science." If creation science can demonstrate that it is, in fact, "science," or if positivist science is itself better characterized as a part of liberal ideology, how can the latter retain its exclusive academic franchise without seriously infringing the religious freedom of those who adhere to the former?

Thus, the fundamentalist challenge has also forced scientists to confront the shallowness of their traditional claims to intellectual authority. The antagonism between American fundamentalism and science, which did not occur before the turn of the century, was not only attributable to the closed-mindedness of fundamentalists in the face of Darwinism. During the early part of the twentieth century, scientists were zealous—even evangelical—in their claim that natural science could uncover all the mysteries of the universe. Social and psychological sciences quickly linked themselves to natural science in the claim that an understanding of natural processes was sufficient for an understanding of human nature and society. Science alone was "neutral," "objective," and "factual," while religion, a relic of the past, could be discarded as biased, subjective, and superstitious.

The eminent evolution scientist Stephen Jay Gould has recently stressed the extent to which science is inevitably immersed in its cultural context, with no claim to ahistorical objectivity.

Increasingly, scientists allowed themselves to be portrayed as a new elite priesthood whose expertise rendered them beyond question or criticism. In the process, scientists of the early twentieth century rejected religion at least as much as vice versa. Now, of course, especially under the threat of nuclear war, scientists themselves are starting to question the sufficiency of a scientific method uninformed by moral judgment (C. P. Snow is a leading example), but that insight and self-criticism is a recent one within the scientific community.

The most sophisticated of the creationists have, in fact, seized upon real points of vulnerability within scientific thought. Positivist science has long been based upon a strict subject/object dichotomy—there is an "out there" world of objective "facts" to be observed, tested, and verified according to a single, neutral scientific methodology. According to the foremost philosophical defender of this version of science, Karl Popper, the key criterion is "falsifiability"—that is, to be "scientific" a claim or hypothesis must be subject to tests capable of falsifying it. Applying Popper's rule, Freudian psychology, for example, fails to qualify as "science."

Crucial to Popper's scheme is the availability of procedures for testing the hypothesis; there must be a shared understanding about taking measurements and interpreting results. At that point, Popper's scheme breaks down; he fails to rebut the reality that any attempt to objectify falsifiability is no more than a matter of convention. Scientific communities, not unlike their religious counterparts, are hermeneutic endeavors, communities of tradition organized with reference to authoritative texts. Religious creationists have their Bible; scientific evolutionists have for their text the rocks. Each community has its own interpretative criteria, procedures, and conventions, which are ultimately self-referencing.

The dynamic of scientific truth is its shifting of paradigms, as Thomas Kuhn has demonstrated. The continuing worldview of a scientific community means much more than its mundane effort to gather and test "facts." For example, in evolution science itself there is now great tension between the paradigm of "gradualism" and that of "punctuated equilibrium" (the latter being much more consistent with the possibility of some sudden extraterrestrial intervention), or between the paradigm of "functionalism" (everything has its purpose) and that of just plain whimsy.

Science is thus a changing human culture rather than a static objective methodology, and the nature of the "facts" being observed cannot be divorced from the assumptions of the particular paradigm from within which the observation is taking place. The theoretical split between subject and object, so basic to conventional scientific thought, thus disintegrates.

The Kuhnian emphasis on paradigm shift, which sophisticated fundamentalists are starting to cite for its undermining effect on traditional claims to scientific certainty, underscores a point long made by Marxists—that scientific methodology cannot claim any objective, transcendent separation from social and political life. Science is rooted in the culture within which it operates, and its underlying presuppositions are always a part of that social context. One need only point to the insidious history of intelligence testing or eugenics, with its strong racist as well as anti-immigrant thrust, to show the effect of culture on what is, at any given time, considered to be scientific fact.

One response of the scientific community to fundamentalist attack has been to redescribe science, not

dogmatically, as a body of objective facts, but rather as a continuing quest, a mode of free and critical inquiry, in a world always of ultimate uncertainty. There is some concern now to stress openness and to maintain tolerance of diverse and outlandish theories. This accords with the relativity and uncertainty stressed by, for example, modern physicists, who understand the artificiality of the subject/object distinction.

While fundamentalists employ not only Popper (how can evolution be "falsified"?) but the most sophisticated insights of critical antipositivism to debunk the status of evolution as science, the "science" they invoke to legitimize the status of creationism is dogmatic, outmoded, and essentially premodern. According to George Marsden of Calvin College, fundamentalist thought is oddly preoccupied with facticity, insistently literal, and still rooted in a Baconian philosophical past.

Their reading of the Bible, for example, is characterized by an insistence of heavy-handed literalism. The words of the Bible are "fact," just as nature contains facts; theirs is really the old Enlightenment view that the two sets of facts are ultimately consistent, both revealing somewhat mechanically the perfection of God's design. The intellectual background of modern fundamentalism thus lies in works such as Paley's *Natural Theology*, the favorite nineteenth-century text demonstrating the great correspondence between religion and an understanding of the natural world. In that sense the modern creationists are not really rejecters of conventional rationalism but, rather, too eager in their embrace of an outmoded, overliteralist form of rationality. Regrettably, modern fundamentalism has been drained of the splendid allegorical thought of the great eighteenth-century American evangelical movement. The literalism of modern fundamentalism seems a poor replacement and often gives it an oppressiveness of spirit.

The defensive posture of fundamentalist creation science vis-à-vis evolution has forced its proponents to make their demands in the name of a supposed "academic freedom" which only barely conceals that oppressiveness. In fact, the fundamentalists' dogmatism is such that one suspects that, given the opportunity, they would happily do away with evolution science altogether; all too often, in the name of "good marketing strategy" they have successfully pressured textbook editors to omit references to evolution, even in the absence of prohibitory legislation.

Moreover, the creationist ploy rests ultimately upon a fallacious duality, reminiscent of the famous Pascal's wager (a pragmatic argument for adoption of Christian belief premised on the existence of *only two choices*—Christianity and nonbelief). There are for them only two possibilities: creation science or, grudgingly, evolution science. Unfortunately for that position, creation myths abound in human culture generally. Strikingly spiritual accounts of humanity's relationship to nature, ones that transcend the duality of science and religion, appear in many Native American accounts of creation, as, for example, that of the Iroquois. Lest one discard such accounts as "not science," it is becoming increasingly clear that one can do "science" worthy of the name within a worldview informed by an intense and religious spirituality.

Ironically, the allegorical and spiritual tradition of early creationist scientists today finds itself being celebrated by a leading evolution scientist who steadfastly proclaims his allegiance to science while challenging the rigid orthodoxy of his scientific colleagues. None other than the eminent evolution scientist Stephen Jay Gould has recently stressed the extent to which science is inevitably immersed in its cultural context, with no claim to ahistorical objectivity:

> Scientists are not robotic inducing machines that infer structures of explanation only from regularities observed in natural phenomena.... Scientists are human beings, immersed in culture, and struggling with all the curious tools of inference that mind permits—from metaphor and analogy to all the flights of fruitful imagination that C. S. Peirce called "abduction".... In any case, objective minds do not exist outside culture, so we must make the best of our ineluctable embedding.

Gould's most recent book, *Time Arrow, Time's Cycle*, ends with what John Updike has called a "surprising burst" of Christian artwork illustrating the Judeo-Christian notion of an "arrow of time," which proceeds in a manner simultaneously cyclical and progressive. As he describes this artwork, Gould is speaking in a voice starkly reminiscent of the greatest American evangelical of them all—the eighteenth-century titan, Jonathan Edwards, whose "History of Redemption" reveals a conception of time virtually identical to Gould's.

Gould has explicitly invoked other seventeenth and eighteenth-century sources to support his own challenge to the oppressive paradigms of functionalism and gradualism in evolution science. Gould recently celebrated in a magazine article the work of William Whiston, an ardent creationist and Isaac Newton's successor at Cambridge, who has "descended through history as the worst example of religious superstition viewed as an impediment to science." Gould argues that Whiston's work is no less scientific, or Newtonian, for that matter, for its having been informed by an unswerving belief in biblical creation. He sees Whiston's work, whatever its motivation, as presaging the currently counterhegemonic paradigm of "punctuated equilibrium,"

as opposed to "gradualism." (Whiston, for instance, attributed environmental change to the periodic appearance of comets; modern scientists think maybe meteorites did it.)

Despite his respect for early Christian creationist scientists, Gould has no sympathy for their modern literalist fundamentalist would-be counterparts. He testified against them in the Arkansas case that preceded *Edwards v. Aguillard*, celebrates their legal defeats, and calls their science a "sham." Paradoxically, for Gould, whose own critique of scientific presumption is so careful and sophisticated, the bottom line is that "science *has* taught us some things with confidence," while creation science, on the other hand, is "false." Thus, Gould retreats behind the convenient wall that separates "science" from "religion." At this point he is on the shaky epistemological ground we have surveyed before.

The lines that divide the secular from the religious, or science from religion, are, of course, indeterminate, incoherent, and indefensible. Nevertheless, the Supreme Court got it right in *Edwards v. Aguillard*, and for as close to the right reason as that body could articulate. The real issue is not epistemology; it is politics. It is only at the abstract level of logic that creation science and evolution are fungible curricular units, or that secular humanism is as much a religion as Roman Catholicism.

As often as law seeks to resolve issues through appeal to abstraction, its practitioners discover that they must seek guidance in the messy particularity of context. The point, evocative of Oliver Wendell Holmes's famous quip ("The life of the law has not been logic; it has been experience"), is as applicable to religion cases as it is to any others. The questions to be asked about these struggles between fundamentalists and the public schools are: Who are the proponents and why are they doing what they are doing? What will happen if they succeed? What else is planned? What is the larger political program of which these challenges are just a part? Whose program is it?

The Supreme Court, in *Edwards*, through its quest for the "purpose" behind the "balanced treatment" law, sought political context and found it in the particular Louisiana legislative history and, as stressed by retiring justice Lewis Powell and Reagan appointee Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, in the nationwide, organized, fundamentalist efforts to legitimize "creation science."

The real political implications of both "creation science" and the attack on "secular humanism," however, reach well beyond what any Supreme Court justice was willing to acknowledge. Undeniably, there are particular and sincere fundamentalists who feel themselves suffocated by secular liberal orthodoxy. Equally undeniably, however, they have allowed their demand for "accommodation" to be appropriated and exploited by those associated with the most extreme right wing of the Reagan legal agenda, people like Meese and Reynolds in the "Justice" Department. In the current social climate, "accommodation" has become inseparable from a political agenda that would also include the reintroduction of school prayer, the elimination of affirmative action, the curtailment of free speech, the perpetuation of legal disabilities for gays and lesbians, the illegality of abortions, and the authority of states to disregard the protections of the Bill of Rights altogether—in short, the right-wing "revolution" epitomized by the nomination of Robert Bork to the Supreme Court.

This is not to say that our current postliberal society offers much to satisfy our spiritual needs. As the right knows all too well, we must confront the sterility of our modern culture, its rampant narcissism, its oppressively false dualities (e. g., public and private, science and religion), and its pervasive alienation. Nevertheless, a disturbing parallel comes to mind. It is all too ugly a fact of history that Nazi success in Germany was in part based upon an accurate perception that German bourgeois culture offered little to satisfy the German yearning for community and for moral significance. The anger and frustration of those alienated by German liberalism were not inauthentic, even though they were too easily manipulated into hysterical nationalism. Our task now is to recognize and hold in check the potential for fascism created by a similar alienation in our own culture, as it is experienced by fundamentalists who feel disaffected from America's orthodoxy of secularism. Yet we must do so with a political agenda that draws on something other than a mindless resort to the same liberal clichés that created the spiritual void in which we live today. □

Creation, Evolution, and the New South

Gary Peller

It is striking how widely creationists have been condemned for their attempt to get public schools to teach biblical creationism alongside scientific evolutionary theory, and for their assertions that the teaching of "secular humanism" to their children conflicts with their religious freedom. From what I can see, an incredibly broad cultural spectrum, encompassing the entire center of national self-identity, has constructed creationists as a shared enemy, an "other" through which the American mainstream can identify itself as "not them." From this vantage point, the creationist movement represents ignorance, intolerance, book-burning, religious fanaticism, and similar evils. Having thus conceived the movement, its opponents rest satisfied in their own identities as heroes, safeguarding the freedom to read and learn and believe from the suffocating narrowness of religious dogmatism. The supporters of evolutionary theory cast themselves as enlightened and vigilant protectors of the sharp line between church and state. I think that this picture of the controversy between evolutionary theory and creationism is wrong. For one thing, it is way too national. Seeing the issues through an ACLU prism, where what is at stake is "the separation of church and state," sanitizes the conflict by representing it in the abstract terms of liberal political philosophy rather than as an actual lived struggle for meaning, power, and identity waged between particular people in particular communities and institutions. This nationalizing perspective treats the controversy from the outside, external to the local social relations that give it life, as if such controversy could arise anywhere, and, filtered through the grand concepts of church and state or religion and science, its meaning would be the same whatever its locale.

But these are not abstract positions that some abstract people somewhere happen to hold. The evolutionist/creationist debate is, first of all, uniquely regional, rooted in the particularities of the contemporary South and inscribed with the markings of southern history. And even this regional focus is too wide. The conflict is also, unmistakably, a class struggle between two distinct economic (and cultural) groups. On the one hand, the college-educated, upper middle-class leaders of the new South tend to support the teaching of evolutionary doctrine because it seems to be the most rational, scientific way to explain the origin of human life. The creationist movement is embarrassing to this cultural mainstream because it reveals how "backward" the South still is, in contrast to their chamber of commerce boosterism which presents the South as nationalized, as just like the rest of the country, only warmer and more polite.

On the other hand, the creationist movement draws much of its support from working-class and poor southern whites for whom the transformation from the old South to the new South has meant the exchange of one set of rulers for another, the replacement of one discourse of power and justification with a newer, updated, more nationally acceptable version. For many southerners, creationism is part of a developing rhetoric of resistance against the reigning ideology of the new South, just as religious revivalism provided popular release from the public demands of deference and servility in the old South. The site of the rebellion is public education because schools are the institutions where the new South ideology has worked most dramatically to marginalize working-class southern whites under the guise of meritocracy and equal opportunity.

The struggle between these groups is waged in the rhetoric of evolution and creation, but the conflict is about much more than what is taught in biology classes. Rather, it is about the language through which the social world more generally is to be understood and justified, about why some kids go to fancy colleges and others go to vocational schools, about who gets heard and who gets ignored in PTA meetings and school board discussions, about who gets served and who does the serving in the fancy hotels of new South cities and towns. What is at stake here is not simply the interpretation of the origin of human life in the distant past; the struggle is also about the distribution and justification of social power in the living present.

In the old South, the wealthy, aristocratic southern "gentlemen" who exercised political, economic, and cultural authority did not justify their favored status through the scientific norms of impersonality, neutrality, and objectivity, but rather with a particular blend of

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patriotism, honor, religious devotion, virtue, historical destiny, and, of course, racism. The rigid social hierarchies of southern communities within which wealthy whites, middle-class and poor whites and Blacks were segregated according to specific and unalterable social roles were infused, in the ideology of the rulers, with a sense of naturalness and legitimacy, as something akin to a divine order. In the perverse merging of Christianity, racism, and classism, God was supposed to have made Blacks less than human, justifying their position at the bottom of the social hierarchy; working whites were superior to Blacks, but they lacked the "breeding" and "refinement" ever to hope to join the ruling class. Accordingly, the creationist account of the origins of life did not conflict with the rhetoric through which social status and worth was distributed. The commitment to religious narrative as a way to make sense of the origin of the world was shared by the rulers and ruled alike.

Now, this is not to say that everyone experienced religion the same way. For the wealthy, religious worship was a continual part of their more general culture. Church provided yet another realm of refinement, civility and honor. Just as they exercised secular authority with the resignation and benevolence of civic and historical calling, so they attended church with an attitude of compliance with religious duty. Their services were quiet and composed. Gentlemanly and ladylike appearances were publicly displayed. Ministers called for the sublimation of passion and the subordination to divine authority. But for both Blacks and working-class whites, though they attended different churches with different rhythms and different sermons, religious experience broke the continuity of daily life by providing a place to resist and reverse the social norms of the wealthy. In churches across the South, they developed their own cultural rhetoric, separate from and opposed to the reigning ideology that ruled everyday life. Here, in contrast to the public repression of passion that the ruling culture associated with refinement and civility, religious experience was infused with emotional release. The hold of reason and the seemingly endless destiny of daily life were rejected as superficial and temporary. Instead, church was experienced as a passionate spiritual transcendence, where rhythm counted more than words, where tent-revivals and holy-roller services became festivals of the spirit, where dancing and chanting and speaking in tongues were signs of salvation and redemption, where preachers sang and shouted and then sang some more, and where the dignity denied in daily life could be imagined before God.

To understand the significance of creationism today, it is necessary to comprehend this unique historical function of southern religion. The creationist movement is continuous with the traditions of the southern working-class in looking to spiritual transcendence as a means to resist public ideology. While many liberals acknowledge and celebrate the role of Black churches in fighting the social structure of the old South, they often treat white, working-class religion with disdain. But despite the complicity of working-class whites in the public culture of racism, the fact is that they were also marginalized and excluded from significant social, political and economic power. At least in part, they shared with Blacks an experience of social life where they were subservient and where their subordination was justified by the superior rationality, refinement, and breeding claimed by the wealthy. Both Blacks and working-class whites rejected this ideology most openly and intensely in religious life. There the value system of day-to-day life was exactly reversed. And just as the civil rights movement reflected the church-based revolt of Blacks against the powerful in the old South, so the creationist movement today reflects the church-based revolt of working-class whites against the powerful in the new South.

While there are some, mostly rural, communities where the old-money, old-line southerners still reign, in most cities and towns they have been retired to their estates; their self-serving ideology of historical destiny, divine order, and paternalistic benevolence is no longer taken seriously. In terms of who is in authority, and what kind of ideology now defines the mainstream of day-to-day life, the old order has collapsed.

Instead, over the past two decades, the cultural, political, and economic center of the new South has moved from aristocratic families to the chambers of commerce. Today, the kind of dominant power that the old-line Southerners once possessed is exercised by a loose coalition of politically moderate, college-educated white southerners, a small group of middle-class Blacks, and a large contingent of corporate managers and executives who moved from the northeast into new southern suburbs when their employers, wooed by promises of warm weather and a loyal, grateful, non-union workforce, relocated their national headquarters to the Sun Belt. Along with this change in personnel has come a change in cultural style. The new South rhetoric is enlightened and progressive; integration is an assumed good, and racist appeals are taboo; education is valued and religiosity is viewed as primitive; the favored politicians are more like Jimmy Carter and Sam Nunn and less like John Stennis or Herman Talmadge. In contrast to the feel of authority in the old South, the new South power structure is on-the-go rather than leisurely, meeting in business lunches rather than through old-money families, attired in grey rather than white, and decidedly corporate, centralized, and managerial rather than personal, local, and communal. And, although the rhetoric of science

had nothing to do with the way that the powerful in the old South rationalized their position, it has everything to do with the way that authority is justified and institutional power is exercised in the new South. It is as if, along with the air-conditioning of the buildings, came an air-conditioning of consciousness. The new ideology of power is, like the scientific discourse of evolutionary theory, cool, dry, crisp, and professional. The edges of the world are not blurred with the haze of heat and humidity; they are sharp. Everything is explained analytically. There are no loose ends.

Evolutionary theory is preferred to creationism in this new South mindset not simply because the creationist account is religious and thus violates the legal separation of church and state, but more deeply because the evolutionary account embodies the same norms of objectivity and impersonality that are supposed to characterize the general exercise of public power by the new southern elites. In the new ruling ideology, the contrast between evolution and creationism represents the difference between objectivity and subjectivity, neutrality and bias, impersonality and will. Scientific representations, like the evolutionary account of life, are neutral and objective. They proceed on the basis of the passive, disinterested observation of external data. The scientist must be impersonal, lest his particular beliefs and values affect his clinical study of the data. And the data itself must be treated as objective. The scientist cannot ascribe subjective characteristics like will, intent, or motive to what he observes since such characteristics are unverifiable matters of conjecture and opinion rather than proof. Accordingly, the story of evolution, the account of life forms changing and adapting in functional response to external stimuli, disciplined by the reward and punishment economy of survival and extinction, is superior to the creationist version because it is value-free; it does not bear the subjective bias of interpretation.

Just as evolutionary theory is the prescribed discourse for biology teachers, the ideology of objectivity, neutrality, and impersonality constitutes a more general mainstream rhetoric within which community life itself is said to follow from the objective, neutral, impersonal workings of functional social interaction. The scientific discourse of evolutionary theory is mirrored first of all in the way that public power is represented. In contrast to the old South's projection of paternalistic benevolence, new South leaders present themselves as akin to scientists. They believe that the structure of community life is determined technocratically, by neutral, objective, disinterested authorities—urban planners, lawyers, financial experts, and other university-trained professionals—and thus social decision making is presented as the result of expertise applied to objective conditions rather than the product of interest or will. Similarly, the scientific rationale provides the language of current social hierarchies to be represented. In contrast to the old South ideology of divine order, social status in the new South is said to be the result of individual merit and personal achievement. While affirmative action for Blacks might be required to remedy past injustice, in general the social divisions of the contemporary South are taken as the natural workings of the neutral, impersonal economic market, which is supposed to work much like natural selection does in evolutionary theory. The market establishes an economy of reward and punishment where individual initiative and educational merit lead to high status and indolence and ignorance result in low status. The distribution of power and prestige is not, in the official ideology, the result of the subjective, messy struggle of politics, nor the product of domination by a particular social group, but rather the objective, neutral functioning of a natural meritocracy.

Schools are a critical site for this new South ideology of meritocracy, especially because equality in educational opportunity is supposed to be the basis for a functional sorting according to skill and aptitude. It is therefore not surprising that the new South influence has been felt most strongly in the transformed language and tone of public education. Formerly, schools were experienced as something like an extension of maternal authority—teachers told stories about their lives, taught according to methods passed down from the older faculty, comforted worried students who looked to them for emotional support, led prayer before lunch, shouted at unruly classes, and disciplined with the physical contact of the paddle.

In the new South discourse, public education must be free from the possibility of subjective bias. Schools are to be operated apolitically for public good by unbiased specialists with doctoral degrees in educational administration. The relation of the school and the home is depicted with wall charts detailing the importance of parental "input." Teachers are trained according to the latest field-tested methods of instruction; they follow a centrally prescribed curriculum. They are professionally certified and there is a constant call for objectively verifiable ways to measure their performance and effectiveness. And, just as the teachers and administrators play the scientist-like role of disinterested expert, the students themselves are represented in the official discourse as objectified data. Students are categorized from early grades according to verbal and computative development; they are grouped for greater teaching efficiency in separate learning tracks. They are tracked according to their performance on nationally

standardized tests, purified of local and cultural influence to satisfy the scientific norms of universality, impersonality, and neutrality. Their performances are then represented in the objectified form of a computer printout, complete with discrete, national percentile comparisons for each analytical category of cognitive development. The significantly lower scores received by lower-income students are presented, not as evidence of a problem with the tests, but rather as the result of "low socio-economic status" or, in the bureaucratic acronym, "low S.E.S." Educational paths are determined in consultation with specialized guidance and career counselors who use performance on the tests and psychological profiles as objective evidence of "aptitude" and suitability for various occupations.

However it is all represented in the objectified discourse, from the viewpoint of working-class and poor people what has really changed is simply the composition and ideology of the ruling class.

Moreover, the new discourse of discipline is just as clinical. There is no more paddling by a teacher invoking the wishes of "your daddy and momma." Instead, a student who misbehaves is said to have exhibited "inappropriate behavior," which then becomes the basis of a joint therapeutic effort between teacher, guidance counselor, and child. The student might be put on a behavior modification program manifested in a "contract" between the child and the teacher establishing a reward structure for "positive behavior" and a punishment structure for "negative behavior." A chart is maintained to record progress. Just as the various species are, within the evolutionary account, supposed to have adapted to the external, material environments, so the new educational rhetoric imagines the student as an adaptive entity whose behavior will be transformed according to changes in external stimuli of reward and punishment. And, just as the evolutionary theory is grounded in the clinical distance of the scientific method, so the general tone and feel of schools in the South today are characterized by an antiseptic, clinical distance between professionalized educators and objectified students.

The evolutionist account of the origin of human life is, in short, only one part of a broader web of discourse that constitutes the dominant ideology of power in the new South. For the new group in authority, what is at stake is not simply the curriculum of biology classes, but in a symbolic sense the more general curriculum of everyday life; the same mode of interpretation that is supposed to distinguish evolution and creationism is also supposed to distinguish impersonal and functional social stratification from the class domination and racial bias of the old South.

But, however it is represented in the objectified discourse, from the viewpoint of working-class and poor people what has really changed is simply the composition and ideology of the ruling class. The basic social structure is still incredibly rigid. There is still an identifiable class in power. Today it is the upper-middle class rather than the plantation owners and somewhat integrated rather than lily-white. But Blacks by and large still hold the lowest paying, most subservient jobs. And working-class and poor whites, like most Blacks, are still excluded from any significant positions of power or influence in the community. The whites have become, in the eyes of the new South, merely unenlightened "rednecks" whose lack of college degrees justifies their subordinate status. And poor Blacks have become the unfortunate victims of a history that might correct itself in a generation or two. Of course, this point is never explicit. It is simply implicit in the ruling culture's arrogance that its own wealth and power have been earned and are deserved, and that its patronization of Blacks is enlightened and progressive. Today, the unalterable destiny of social class is communicated, not by invoca-tion of divine order, but by computer printouts telling working-class parents their children are slow, by guidance counselors directing low-income students to training as plumbers, electricians, and service workers in vocational schools, by the continuing segregation of neighborhoods by wealth and race.

The creationism movement is one of the ways that working-class whites are resisting the new order. Just as religious experience opposed and reversed the dominant ideology of the old South, so religious discourse today provides the language to invert the reigning meaning system of the new South. And just as public schools are a critical site for the production and administration of social stratification under the guise of scientific rhetoric, so the strongest challenge to that ideology has been lodged in community struggles over education.

At one level, the creationist movement is merely about trying to lessen the alienating, colonized feel of public education by re-introducing local, home-based religious beliefs back into schools. But at a deeper level, the debate between evolutionary theory and creationism is the symbolic face of a broader conflict over the basic terms by which social life is understood.

The creationist discourse differs from the evolutionary approach precisely because it reverses the scientific representational norms of objectivity, impersonality, and neutrality. Creationism poses subjectivity, personality, and interest as the significant, and legitimate, mode for understanding the world. In terms of the issue of the origin of life, the creationist account of Genesis is a narrative; in contrast to the flat depiction of adaptation to an economy of extinction and survival, it inscribes the story with the will, intent, and motive of God, and the willful choices of man in relation to the personalized divine authority. Its version is historical and subjective rather than universal and objective; it treats the issue of origins by looking beyond the objective manifestation of life forms to the subjective motivation of cause.

Just as the creationist account sees the subjective, motivated hand of God in the story of Genesis, so it also constitutes an implicit rejection of the ruling ideology's depiction of current social life as the product of an impersonal, objective meritocracy. Instead, the narrative structure of creationism demands an accounting that looks beyond the objective manifestations of technocracy and science to the motive, interest, and will of those in authority. Just as it rejects the interpretation of life's origin as an impersonal adaptation to functional necessity, it also suggests that the segregation of children according to cognitive level as measured by standardized tests is not the disinterested application of educational science but a social practice inscribed with a particular history and serving particular interests. Creationism, in short, rejects the notion that the clinical distance of science is neutral and pure. It implicitly contends that behind the veneer of objectivity and impersonality are motives of particular people and groups, whose status and prestige are the result of historical power and will rather than a timeless adaptation of merit and function.

When you look around southern communities today, it is striking how strictly class lines are drawn—by neighborhood, by school district, by tracks within schools, by restaurants and bars, by employment offices, by the cultural codes through which some are treated as important and others as ignorant. It is as if the measure of progress in racial integration has been bought at the price of heightened class domination. The creationist movement is one mode of popular rebellion against this current situation. It is one of the ways that the scientific, apolitical ideology of social life can be cracked to reveal the subjectivity and politics behind institutional practices, and one of the ways that the economically exploited can symbolically deny the reigning message that their social status is a result of their own inadequacy. Accordingly, I see creationism in large part as an authentic reaction against social hierarchy by those who are mistreated in the current order. Of course, it would be disingenuous to ignore the plain facts that the creationist movement also has repressive and authoritarian tendencies; its adherents are vulnerable to a new exploitation of their alienation and rage by the corporate ties, and big money-organizations of the religious Right. But it is wrong for progressives to conceive of creationists as the enemy, as simply a right-wing backlash to enlightened reform of schools in particular and the South generally. As a human response, such a reaction ignores the pain of subordination and humiliation that lies behind the creationist critique; as a political response, it forestalls the day, imagined by all southern populists, when the economically exploited, both white and Black, will overcome the divide-and-conquer tactics of the rulers and join together in remaking the social life of the South. □

Cutting off the world's end from the sun's domain

Simon Lichman

They say that babies heal all things
like breaches in time.
They say there's a hole in the nets of time
where the sun sinks into sailors' dreams.

Oh, I hear them saying this and that
but all I know is heaven can't be fooled
by the dark ones of ourself
climbing over the wall between the worlds.

Simon Lichman is a poet living in Jerusalem.

Book Review

The Social Critic as Kibitzer

Steven G. Kellman

Interpretation and Social Criticism by Michael Walzer. Harvard University Press, 1987, 96 pp.

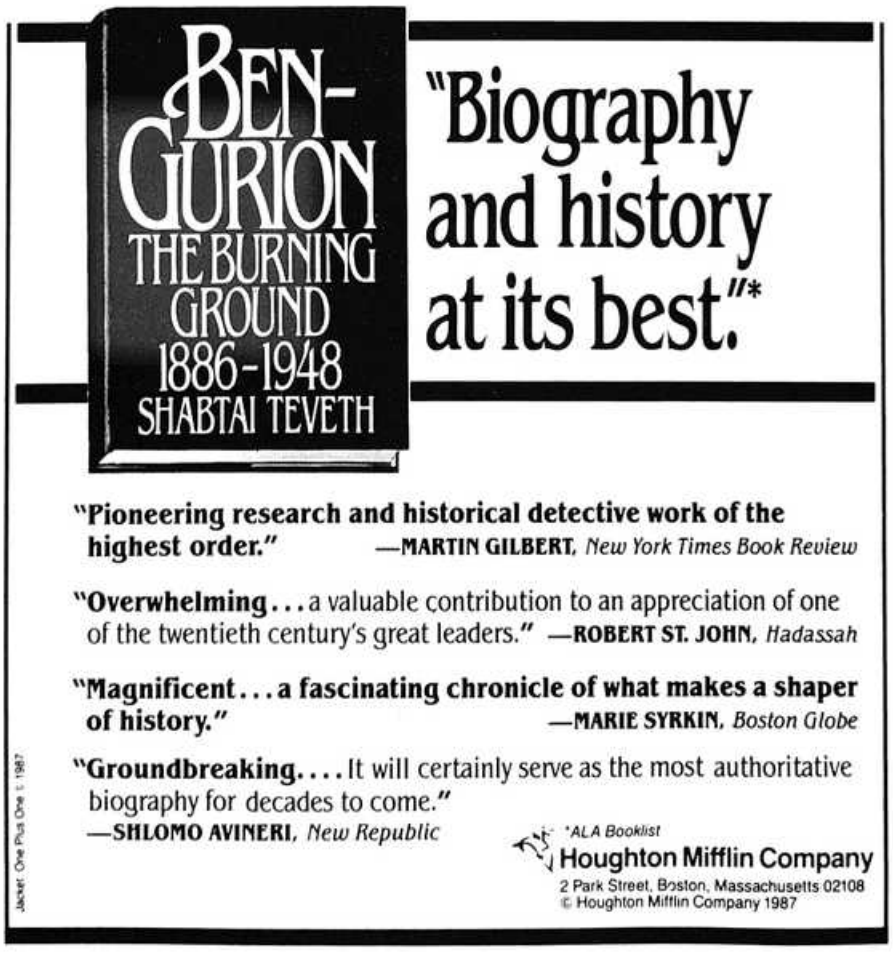
By what authority and with what possible hope of being heeded does Amnesty International send letters and telegrams to Albania, Libya, and Kampuchea asking the regnant regimes to cease the imprisonment, torture, and execution of their own citizens? On May 13, 1987, the international human rights organization began a campaign to persuade the government of Iran to outlaw crucifixion, amputation, flogging, and lethal stoning as instruments of public policy. To date, despite the enlightened logic of concerned outsiders, there is no evidence that the rulers in Tehran have modified their stringent penal code.

In principle and in practice, Amnesty International refrains from involvement in the specific politics of individual countries. Instead of appealing to particular national traditions or customs, it invokes minimal universal standards of human social behavior. Summarizing AI's report on Iranian human rights abuses, the June/July 1987 issue of *Amnesty Action* notes that "Amnesty pointed out that its work is based on international human rights law that applies to all countries of all legal, religious, political, or cultural backgrounds. Amnesty added that it takes no position on Islam or Islamic law or any other legal system as such." It is an attempt to attain what philosopher Thomas Nagel, in his 1986 book of that name, calls "the view from nowhere," the vantage point beyond all vantage points, free of the partisan spissitude of a particular context. However chimerical its presumption of objectivity and quixotic its quest for international justice, AI has been responsible for the release of thousands of prisoners during its twenty-six years of existence.

Michael Walzer does not dispute the value of such efforts, but they do not qualify for his description of social criticism in *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, a pithy brief for what he calls "the connected critic." The new book is a transcript of three lectures that Walzer, a professor of social sciences at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton, delivered at Harvard in 1985. The three are linked in creating a model of and arguing for social criticism as a family quarrel, not as a disjunctive epistle to strangers.

Of three principal paths in moral philosophy—discovery, inventory, and interpretation—Walzer is most comfortable with the third. Commenting on the system of values in which most of us find ourselves, Walzer contends: "We do not have to discover the moral world because we have always lived there." What we must do is maintain and renovate where we live. Walzer's paradigm of the critic, whether moral or social, is someone who is in the world, practicing immanent not extrinsic analysis. Detached from detachment, from the modernist mystique of marginality, Walzer assigns precedence over the dispassionate stranger and the estranged native to "the local judge, the connected critic, who earns his authority, or fails to do so, by arguing with his fellows—who angrily and insistently, sometimes at considerable personal risk (he can be a hero too), objects, protests and remonstrates. This critic is one of us."

Steven G. Kellman is professor of comparative literature at The University of Texas at San Antonio. Author of The Self-Begetting Novel *and* Loving Reading: Erotics of the Text, *he received the 1986 H. L. Mencken Writing Award.*



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Despite the sexual bias of the pronoun "he," it is a fitting model for the current historical moment, for what used to be assailed is now hailed as "working within the system." Walzer is a prophet of the age in which Tom Hayden has gone from incendiary to assemblyman and Andrew Young from Southern jail cell to Atlanta City Hall.

In Chapter Three, "The Prophet as Social Critic," Walzer argues specifically for biblical prophecy as a prototype for what the social critic does. In this, he sees Jonah, off to Nineveh to rail against the abominations of an alien people, as an anomaly. Walzer characterizes Jonah as a universalist and a minimalist incapable of genuine conversation with his audience. "Whatever the religion of the inhabitants of Nineveh, Jonah appears to know nothing about it and to take no interest in it.... The prophet comes and goes, an alien voice, a mere messenger, unconnected to the people of the city."

Amos, in contrast, was, according to Walzer, a man speaking to the men of his own culture. Neither utopian nor metaphysical, Amos was continuous with the society he interpreted. He spoke their language. "Amos's prophecy is social criticism," claims Walzer, "because it challenges the leaders, the conventions, the ritual practices of a particular society and because it does so in the name of values recognized and shared in that same society." He was the dissenter as leading patriot. By Walzer's account, no one is a prophet except in his city. By Ahad Ha-am's distinction between prophet and priest, between the man of God and the man of the people, Walzer's conception of the social critic is closer to the priest.

Walzer is not just prattling when he uses the term *kibitzer* to portray the social critic, as moral discourse is a product of the dialogic imagination, an unfinished conversation, whether real or implied. "We become critics naturally, as it were, by elaborating on existing moralities and telling stories about a society more just than, though never entirely different from, our own." However, there is no final story, no possibility of appeal to a definitive text. The permanent indeterminacy of society and criticism is what leads Walzer to declare: "Morality, in other words, is something we have to argue about." And continue to argue about.

Scholars may, as Walzer concedes, argue with his reading of Amos, but whether he is accurate in characterizing him as a connected critic and Jonah as a detached one is irrelevant to the purposes of the book. *Interpretation and Social Criticism* is an exercise in social imagination, in conceiving of what a social critic would be like if he or she fulfilled the role to which Walzer is most attracted. To that end, Walzer's argument does not stand or fall on whether Jonah, like the Marxists and Jean-Paul Sartre, in fact belongs to the camp of universalist outsiders, and whether Amos, like the Russian Social Revolutionaries and John Locke, is a connected critic. The examples are simply engines for social conversation, which is the activity most crucial to Walzer.

Though he quotes *Pirke Avot* 1:10, "Love work, do not domineer over others, and never seek the intimacy of public officials," as sage support for distance as a prerequisite to the intellectual life, Walzer might well have cited Rabbi Zadok's injunction in *Pirke Avot* 4:7 against alienation: "Do not keep aloof from the community." Walzer's social critic is part of an interpretative community, even—and especially—when he faults its other members.

The preface to *Interpretation and Social Criticism* promises "a larger book dealing with the practice of criticism in the twentieth century—a more explicitly political book, for which this book constitutes a theoretical preamble." We might have to wait until Walzer refines his concept of community for that sequel. Where does one culture end and another begin? The fact of the matter is that we converse in communities; and not only are they not discrete, but they overlap and reconstitute themselves around different issues. Perhaps critics are always both Amos and Jonah.

An American Jew, for example, who measures Israeli theocracy against the ideals of secular liberalism is both *mishpocheh* and an intruder. Yet, if we believe in something like "the family of man," the same might be said of his or her comments on Iran. Nowhere is Walzer more a Jew of the 1980s than in his discomfort with universalism and his sentimentalization of particularism.

From the splendid fastness of rural Vermont, Alexander Solzhenitsyn de-

nounces the iniquities of the West. It is unlikely that the Russian émigré watches Monday night football or "Wheel of Fortune" or that he reads *People*, *PMLA*, or *Tikkun*, that he speaks the language of the culture he interprets from the outside. By contrast, Michael Walzer is one of us, a connected critic, especially when, examining economic inequities and foreign adventurism, he expresses his dissent. In some communities, Kampuchea for example, the connected critic is almost inconceivable. For them, and for us, Nuremberg, the Hague, and "a decent respect to the opinions of mankind" are a crucial counterpoint. I would not want to have to choose between the ACLU, arguing its positions in terms of complex American legal traditions, and AI, defending a culture-free ideal of human rights. But, in interpreting the two modes of social criticism, *Interpretation and Social Criticism* makes a useful contribution to the continuing conversation. □

BOOK REVIEW

Halakhic Creativity

Robert Goldenberg

The Halakhic Process: A Systemic Analysis by Joel Roth. Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1986, 398 pp.

In this work a leading theorist of contemporary Conservative Judaism lays out his philosophy of halakhah. Dr. Joel Roth, author of the responsum that underlies the recent decision of the Jewish Theological Seminary to admit women to its rabbinical and cantorial schools, has been insisting for years that Conservative Judaism and its various agencies must take more seriously their assertions of loyalty to traditional halakhic Judaism, and he has now produced a full articulation of what such assertions imply: the foundations of halakhah and the procedures whereby the authors of halakhic rulings reach, or ought to reach, their decisions.

Roth presents here a fully developed conception of the nature of halakhic decision making. Examining such matters as the range of rabbinic authority (he finds it very wide, including even the right to set aside explicit rules of the Torah), the relevance of extra-halakhic considerations in determining the law (again very wide, though always at the discretion of the rabbinic decision maker, the *posek*), and the determination of eligibility to exercise the rights of a *posek* (he identifies both intellectual and religious criteria), Roth draws upon numerous texts from all stages in the history of the rabbinic tradition, from the Mishnah to the twentieth century, to achieve a clear, coherent, and responsibly articulated conception of Jewish law. In this reviewer's opinion, Roth provides a fair statement of classical rabbinical teaching on the subject matter at hand. Whether Conservative Jews will now be guided by it is another question entirely.

In essence, Dr. Roth's theory of Jewish law rests on two axioms: (1) "The document called the Torah embodies the word and will of God, which it behooves man [sic] to obey, and is, therefore, authoritative" (he calls this "the *grundnorm* of the halakhic system"); and (2) "*Ein lo la-dayyan ella mah she-einav ro'ot.*" The second of these is a frequently quoted Talmudic principle which means, "The judge has only what his eyes see"; in other words, any legitimate decision maker is free to judge a question that has come before him according to his own view of the situation. Each of these axioms is modified and elaborated on in the course of the book, but between them they provide the foundation of his view of Jewish law.

The style of *The Halakhic Process: A Systemic Analysis* is very much in keeping with its substance. Consider the two principles quoted above. The first, offered in the author's own language but difficult to read, must be parsed with some care and rests on a German technical term drawn from the writings of a theorist whose authority is never defended. (Dr. Roth depends very heavily in this book on the jurisprudential theory of Sir John Salmond but never explains who Salmond was or why his view of the law was chosen to play this important role.) The second is offered in transliterated Hebrew, perhaps the hardest presentation for the nonfluent lay reader to follow. The book is replete with such transliterated terms and phrases, and the sole use of Hebrew typeface in the entire volume—three inarticulate grunts written in Hebrew characters on pages 345–47—suggests that Roth's preference for transliteration is fully conscious.

While there may have been budgetary reasons to avoid bilingual typesetting, the implications are important. The frequent use of transliteration has the same effect as the generally heavy and overly complicated syntax and logic with which the book is written: It puts off the lay reader and renders this volume a private address by one member of the elite to his peers. The implied choice of audience for this book is entirely in keeping with its message.

The theory of Jewish polity implied by Roth's conception of halakhah might be called egalitarian elitism: Every member of the elite must be allowed full and, in principle, equal exercise of the authority to which he (or she?) has been admitted, but those outside the elite must understand they have no claim at all to share this power. Thus the evidence of scientific experts is relevant to halakhic decision making,

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but only as rabbinic *poskim* (decision makers) interpret that evidence. Even with respect to questions that halakhah is not suited to answer (e.g., "whether the earth can sustain more than a certain number of inhabitants"), only the *posek* can legitimately choose among the various answers that experts in different fields might provide. Again, whether most American Jews of our time would be willing to live under a system governed according to such a theory is a question that Roth scarcely acknowledges.

How are the leaders in such a polity to be chosen, and to whom are they responsible? The first answer is fairly clear: They are chosen by their teachers, by those already admitted to the governing class. As Dr. Roth notes, there are traditional guidelines for making such judgments: A student must be learned and capable of clear reasoning and articulate explanation, and a student must be judged by his/her teachers to be properly "God-fearing," which Roth apparently takes to be a measure of "commitment to the halakhic process reflected in behavior." The second criterion, however, is very hard to gauge.

According to the *grundnorm* cited above, the entire halakhic system rests on acceptance of "the document called the Torah" as embodying "the word and will of God." As one progresses through Dr. Roth's exposition, however, the scope of rabbinic power to reshape this document—to determine its official meaning, and to set aside even its explicit rules as the interpreters see fit—seems to keep on growing. Midway through the book, Roth puts the problem as follows:

> If the power of the sages includes even the right to amend or abrogate the undisputed or accepted will of God, as embodied in those norms designated as *de-oraita*, is it not the case that the system recognizes the sages as God, rather than recognizing God as God? And if this is the case, does it not follow that the God-centered legal system has collapsed because of the sages' usurpation of God's place within it?

Dr. Roth's answer to this question amounts to a claim of sincerity:

> If an act is carried out by one whose intention is to establish his own systemic primacy over that even of the Torah, the act is one of *ultra vires* [i. e., it exceeds the legitimate exercise of rabbinic authority]. If, however, the action is motivated by a real concern for the preservation of the primacy of the Torah itself within the halakhic system, and if the situation is such that this preservation can be accomplished best through the abrogation of one of its dictates, the very same act of abrogation, which in the first case would be one of *ultra vires*, would not be so in the second case.... *Yirat shamayim* [fear of Heaven] on the part of the systemic authorities assures that their actions are taken *Le-shem shamayim* [for the sake of Heaven].... In other words, the assurance that rabbinic legislation abrogating the Torah is secondary, not primary, is dependent upon the personal virtues required of the authorities of the system, which include the characteristic of *yirat shamayim*.

Since only rabbis can legally judge the sincerity of other rabbis, however (I speak of this world, not some other), this answer has accomplished very little. Functionally speaking, the rabbinic elite in Dr. Roth's view is responsible only to itself.

One of the remarkable features of this book is its repeated insistence that the "halakhic system" is not subject to review on the basis of considerations drawn from outside its own framework. One of the earliest statements of this insistence puts it this way:

> Any quest to establish the "truth" of the historical claims of the Torah is irrelevant to the halakhic process.... The halakhic system *qua* system is independent of any considerations of the accuracy of the historical claims of its basic norm.

Elsewhere we read that any challenge to rabbinic authority is "an argument from outside the system, and is, therefore, not valid systemically." This claim is not strictly illogical, but one hopes for more in defense of a religious way of life. If halakhic Judaism is to be governed as Dr. Roth proposes, why should people choose to live according to its dictates? If one portion of a community claims to speak to the entire community in the name of God, if all other members of the community are asked to yield their autonomy to this self-regulating elite, may one not ask for a less circular defense of this ambitious demand? Dr. Roth emphatically refuses to address this question every time it seems to arise.

Yet the question is legitimate. As long as traditional Rabbinic Judaism is presented on a take-it-or-leave-it basis, we cannot be surprised at the number of Jews in our time who choose to leave it. The one task not undertaken in this otherwise admirable book is the most important task of all: to find a religious reason for accepting the yoke of Torah that will stand up to historical and theological inquiry. This task will require the development of nonfundamentalist conceptions of Torah (and of God and of Jewish peoplehood) such that reasons of this kind can emerge from them. It will not be easy to do this, but until it has been accomplished the seemingly endless crisis of modern Judaism is going to continue. The "leap of faith" required for this task is to believe it can be carried out, and perhaps the final word of encouragement should come to us from those same sages whose authority we seem to have rejected: We are not obliged to complete the work, but neither are we free to abandon it while it still remains undone. □

MIDRASHIM

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LETTERS

(Continued from p. 6)

1987). But I missed the mention of additional reasons why we should take glasnost seriously and dismantle the simplistic belief in "monolithic Communism" which has governed Washington's foreign policy since World War II and which has caused us such tragic loss in blood and treasure in Korea and Vietnam.

It should have become obvious long ago to the various administrations in Washington, Republican as well as Democratic, that the idea that the Kremlin would ever be capable of lording it over billions of non-Russian people—in the manner of the late British empire—is absurd. There is no question that some utopians in the Kremlin still cling to the belief in a worldwide Communist society, same as our fundamentalists and their counterparts in Islam have their fervent dreams of a world ruled by a universal faith in Jesus Christ or Allah respectively.

However, the Soviet Union has other serious concerns which must be taken into consideration in shaping an effective and sound American foreign policy. In a recent article by one of its resident correspondents in the Soviet Union on Soviet ethnic minorities, Bill Keller writes of the "white-man's burden attitude, common among Russians" (*New York Times* 8/30/87). This may sound ironic, but it does not surprise those of us who have taken a longer look at Soviet and *Russian* history. Moscow and the Russian people realize that in spite of the confrontational tone that has become standard language between Washington and Moscow, they can talk to us; there are no national territorial issues involved. But the renaissance of Islamic fundamentalism, which, as we have seen, knows no frontiers, has started to infect the Central Asian people of the Soviet Union in spite of seventy years of anti-religious indoctrination. It appeals to their ethnicity. Furthermore, the Soviet Union is aware of the danger to its East Asian empire by the awakening Chinese giant. Ideology has no place in these purely national issues and we have already witnessed border clashes between the Communist Soviet Union and Communist China, and also between the latter and Communist Vietnam. The Chinese have a saying: "Life is for a long time." They have never forgotten the so-called "unequal treaties" which took pieces of what China considers its territory or sphere of influence from a weak China in the past. They have already settled the issues of Hong Kong and Macao. Now they are talking about the MacMahon line, their border with India, which they have never accepted. The Soviets must be fully aware that one of these years—and the Chinese are patient and can wait twenty-five, fifty, even one hundred years—Peking will bring up the Chinese-Soviet border for review.

Whether or not glasnost succeeds, the above-cited two problems will have to be faced by Moscow before long, and it is imperative that we discard the sterile anti-Communist and anti-Soviet view of the past and take the whole picture into consideration in order to arrive at a realistic and effective American foreign policy for the 1990s and the future.

Walter Sheldon
Lido Beach, New York

Women Returnees

To the Editor:

Professor Debra Kaufman's interesting discussion of the return to Orthodox Judaism of women who had formerly been identified with liberal women's causes and movements aroused in me a strong desire to read her full study of the subject. Two questions emerged out of the paper published in *Tikkun* (July/August 1987).

First, the issue of the centrality of sexuality and familial roles in the process of teshuvah (returning) must be examined. While not denying the importance of these motives, I would assign them a secondary position in relation to the primary interest or motive underlying the "return" of Western youth. This is the cognitive need—the aspiration to construct an order of meaning within the context of an ancient tradition, which can be translated into ethical imperatives. The place of sexuality among the complex of motives involved in contemporary teshuvah should be indicated in some way by Dr. Kaufman.

Second, the relationship of these women "returnees" to the counterculture, as described by the author, must be questioned. "As is so often the case where apparent polar oppositions reveal hidden affinities, the 'coming home' of these baalot teshuvah may not be so dramatic a departure from their countercultural roots or from a feminist tradition as it seems at first." What continuities exist specifically? I would contend that the continuities which do exist are not to the counterculture, which has been rejected through teshuvah, but to the secular culture of their parents—a culture which provided meaning, moral order, and defined sexual roles.

My own research on the subject of contemporary teshuvah has demonstrated that baalei teshuvah indeed move from one "universe of truth" to another, but carry with them certain principles which hold for both. Thus, they believe that an objective standard of truth exists; that the criterion for arriving at it is rationality; that ethical imperatives derive from a rationally based world view.

Talmud Torah has replaced science. But it is still intellectual toil which brings salvation. Baalei teshuvah maintain faith in the rational pursuit of truth. It is the very continuity with the secular ethos which molded the baal teshuvah's cultural orientation prior to teshuvah that makes Talmud Torah plausible as the central symbol of Judaism during and after conversion.

It would seem likely that the same elements of continuity exist within the sexual and family orders. Certainly the behavior of baalot teshuvah constitutes a radical departure from the irrational antinomian and naturalistic trends within the counterculture. They return to a rather "straight" way of life—sober, somewhat ascetic, absolutely ordered, and distanced from the disorientation of the experimenting, innovative, and rebellious counterculture.

The parameters of contemporary teshuvah have been determined by a yearning for the very values of order and rationality which undergirded the secular universe—that secular universe which tottered during the youth of the baalei teshuvah and whose basic values they have retained, albeit in transfigured form.

Janet Aviad
Jerusalem, Israel

Debra Kaufman responds:

Although a satisfactory response to Prof. Aviad's questions about my study

must await my book-length treatment, several comments are in order. Prof. Aviad's first question about the centrality of sexuality and familial roles in the process of teshuva raises some important issues. Her landmark study of the process of teshuva concentrates on Israeli and American baalei teshuva in Israeli yeshivot. I, on the other hand, interviewed and observed women in communal settings across the United States. I chose this population to present a case study of American women who, for the most part, grew up during the decades of the women's movement and who then elected to live their lives as part of the Jewish religious right.

Different life-course stages and different contexts may yield different emphases when respondents recount motives and describe needs. This is not to deny that baalei teshuva wish to construct an order of meaning in their lives but that time and context may change the emphasis in the way such needs are expressed. For instance, baalei teshuva may very well emphasize the intellectual process and the rational pursuit of truth when they are learning within a yeshiva. But among those baalot teshuva in my study (only a quarter of whom ever studied in a baal teshuva yeshiva either in the United States or Israel), somewhat older and more likely married, the rational pursuit of truth was never mentioned as a primary motive of return nor as an important reason for maintaining their commitment to Orthodox Judaism...

Therefore, although the women in my study emphatically recount their "returns" in terms of searching for a system of meaning, for "authentic" and "official" values, their search was narrated in the language and motives consonant with the concerns, values, and experiences of women. It is generally assumed that social movements in religion and politics thrive when they provide explanations for everyday life problems. The politics of personal life (familial and sexual issues) have been at the forefront of American popular consciousness for at least the past twenty years. Concerns about the familial and sexual structuring of society were as prominent in the New Left as they are in the New Right today. While Talmud/Torah provides a system of order and is indeed a central symbol for the women in my study, its centrality is expressed in the way it speaks to them about their everyday lives as women in the sex-segregated setting of Orthodoxy: primarily as wives and mothers. In Orthodox living, women's real lives are not primarily given spiritual meaning by intellectual toil or the rational pursuit of truth. For many of these women their journeys ended when they found a system of meaning that not only met their "cognitive" need for meaning, but one which bridged their public (religious) and private (familial, personal) roles in a moral ordering of their social roles as women. Through these social roles they are not just psychologically anchored but sociologically anchored in an ethical system which moves beyond the subjective feel-good truisms of psychology or any of the other sciences of the individual.

Feminism

To the Editor:

Feminism has failed William Gold of Northampton, Massachusetts. Terribly sorry. Should readers need a reminder: In the Sept./Oct. *Tikkun*, Gold, responding to the roundtable discussion of feminism in the July/Aug.issue, despaired because, having been embraced by the academy, feminism has been "disciplined to death." The "heart, core, and foundation" issues of Gold's version of feminism turn out to be "peace" and "abortion rights" (not necessarily an obvious pairing), and he finds each shockingly slighted by the roundtable participants. Here is Gold's list of particulars:

(1) Ann Lewis, no academic, by the way, but one of the Democratic party's most canny and capable analysts and operators, states that "the majority of the people in this country are glad we have the military.... " Does Gold deny this? Surely Lewis is right. The question, then, is how feminists respond to this social and political exigency. I do not concur fully with Lewis's pragmatic approach, but Gold's wholesale collapse of the existence of the *military* into *militarism* is historically inept and shoddy. The real question is, What kind of *military* is appropriate to a democratic society. By definition a society cannot happily coexist with *militarism*?

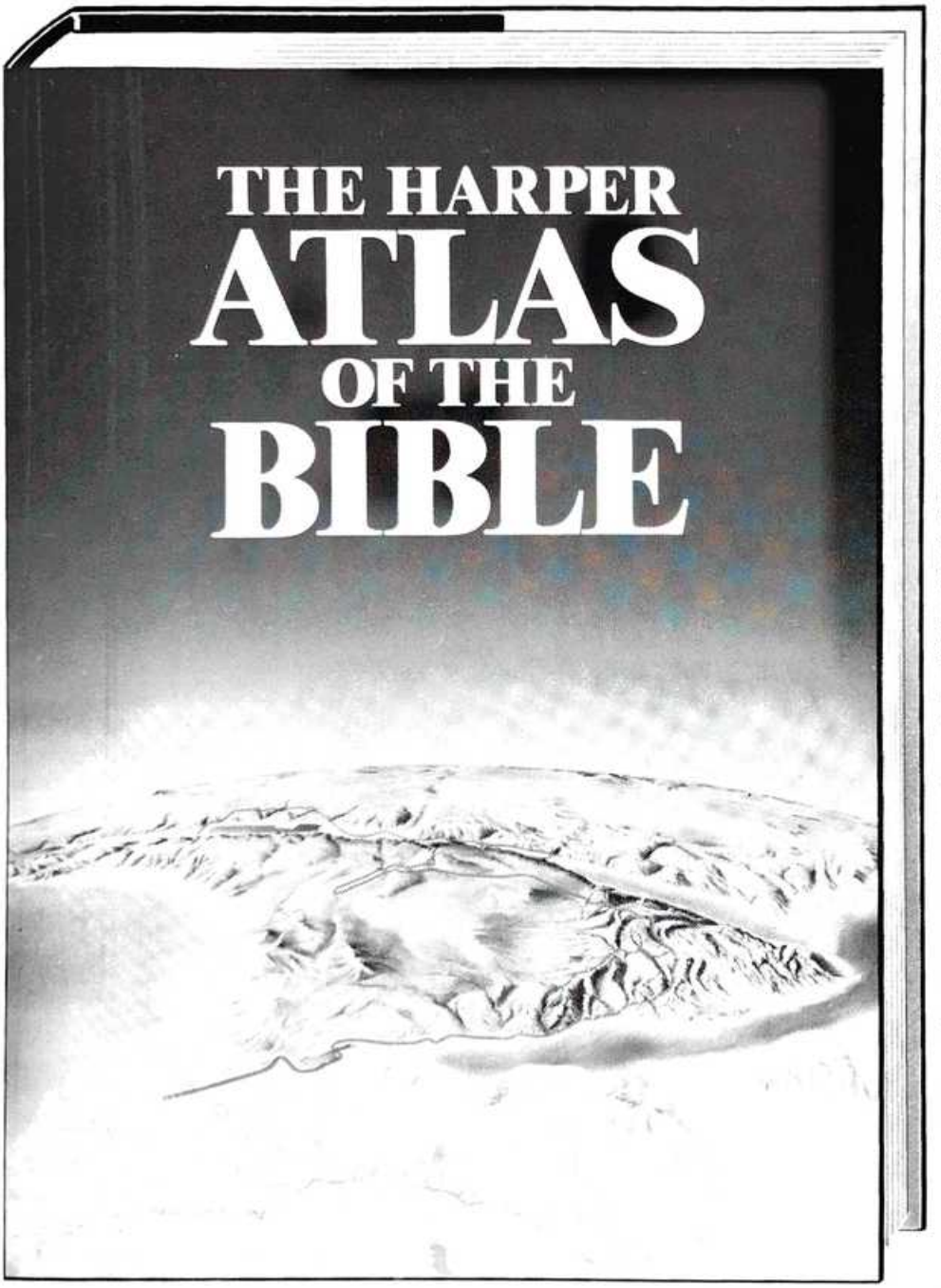
As I write, Pres. Cory Aquino is fending off the latest and most serious threat against her government by military renegades and her words to the rebels are harsh: "Surrender or die." The only reason she remains in power and alive is the fact that her defense minister and the bulk of the army remained loyal.

My point in recounting this is to remind Mr. Gold of something easy to forget if one is a resident (as he is, as am I) of Happy Valley in western Massachusetts and that is that you do not have to be Oliver North to recognize that the world is a perilous place. Gold apparently believes the vast majority of Americans are nasty militarists for being glad a military exists. This is trite. Better to do as Lewis had done, to acknowledge public support for a military and then think of what sort of military it should be and how to check slides into baneful militarism. We are in no danger of an internal insurrection that threatens to topple a democratically elected regime, but to presume that no dangers of any kind exist is to live in never-never land. My own feminism is strongly antimilitarist and that is not incompatible with acknowledging the need for some sort of defense.

(2) Gold "tsk-tsks" Stimpson and Ruddick for stating that one can be a feminist and militarist and he does so in a way that hints that this is their position. Very nasty. Sara Ruddick is an eloquent and thoughtful antimilitarist theorist, one with the courage to recognize that, historically and currently, feminism and militarism, maternalism and militarism, have, alas, sometimes been allied. Ruddick, in her work and her life, strives to disentangle maternal thinking/feminism from militarism—but she operates with no illusions. Stimpson, though less identified with feminist antimilitarism than Ruddick, is a powerful spokeswoman against that particular construction of male bluster and nationalistic excess we know as militarism.

(3) Finally, there is abortion. Gold is dismayed because the *only* mention of abortion at the roundtable was my own "disapproval" that sex selection is being used as a reason to abort. Does Gold, then, favor sex selection as a ground for abortion on demand? Doesn't this have a slightly fascist feel to it—eliminating the wrong sex in this case? And, as he surely knows, the fetuses disproportionately selected out on these grounds are female. For a woman and

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a feminist to be concerned may not meet Gold's criteria for ideological correctness but it at least keeps us in a universe of moral concern that no amount of sloganeering will, hopefully, soon eliminate.

Jean Bethke Elshtain
University of Massachusetts
Amherst, Massachusetts

Deconstruction

To the Editor:

I'm grateful for Gary Peller's ("Reason and the Mob," *Tikkun*, July/Aug. 1987) unusually lucid account of what is normally a very murky area. But that very lucidity displays the weaknesses in the enterprise. I shall not provide a deconstructive reading of Peller's own text, which would, of course, show that it lacked any determinate meaning.

The point I want to emphasize is that Peller is not as immune to the enlightenment disease as he proclaims. The social reformer in him lives uneasily with the deconstructionist. This comes out most clearly near the end when he tries to undermine the nihilism sometimes associated with the doctrine.

The "message of social construction ... is hopeful" because it undermines the justification for "the way things are," for the "status quo distribution of wealth, power, prestige, and freedom." Hold on, Professor Peller ... the way things *are*? Really, now! Didn't you just tell us that that notion is inadmissible, that society is a text capable of an infinite variety of readings? Society can be "remade by us," Professor Peller tells us. But why should we re*make* it when no matter how it is made, it is always indeterminate? The real deconstructionist motto ought to be this: Until now social reformers have only sought to re*make* the world; the point, however, is to re*read* it.

Francis Schrag
University of Wisconsin
Madison, Wisconsin

Gary Peller responds:

I appreciate Prof. Schrag's kind words about the lucidity of my article on deconstruction, but I think they must be undeserved. My primary goal was to suggest how the deconstructive approach to interpretation encourages an activist engaged in political practice. The reason for this focus was precisely to address the kind of concern that Schrag raises—the idea that, because the deconstructive stance claims that representation can never be objective and determinate, one who adopts the methodology therefore can never assert a particular view of the way the world is and the ways that it ought to be reformed without engaging in self-contradiction.

This view of the deconstructive attitude is understandable; to the extent that the approach has become a kind of academic radical chic, many of its practitioners have assumed the posture of ironic, sophisticated critics who stand outside social life and who can't really believe in anything because everything is indeterminate and bound up with a particular historical rhetoric of interpretation. But the message that everything is interpretation is only a reason for despair if one believes the Enlightenment ideology of truth that deconstruction is posed against, namely, the idea that the validity of description or of reform depends on the repression of passion, interest, and subjectivity in favor of reason, neutrality and objectivity.

In my article, I tried to show that this ideology of truth and knowledge supports a particular distribution of power and prestige. I suggested that deconstruction is a valuable analytic in this social situation because it provides a way to expose the subjective, political, socially-created nature of forms of knowledge that claim to be beyond politics and power. But this is not supposed to be some objective proof that things are a certain way or that they ought to be changed.

The deconstructive approach only serves in this sense negatively, to clear the intellectual field of the false criteria of truth and validity that are currently presented as reasons for not engaging in social struggle, e. g., because one does not have a theory for social change that is neutral and objective. This is a nihilist position only to the extent that it suggests that there is no way to interpret text, event, or social relations without the marks of subjectivity and social power.

Once we understand that there was no neutrality and objectivity anyway, that the realms of knowledge and reason were always social categories bearing the marks of social power, then the deconstructive approach is not negative but rather invigorating. By suggesting that we are always inevitably in the struggle of politics and that there is no escape to the contemplative realms of knowledge and reason, the deconstructive practice encourages active political action to remake the world according to our own particular, interested, passionate, and partial views.

In short, the merging of deconstruction and social activism are not inconsistent. I don't claim that my view of the way that the world is or ought to be changed is itself determinate, objective, or dispassionate. What I am trying to assert is that the lack of objectivity or neutrality is meaningless; despite the fact that society is capable of an infinite variety of readings, there is nothing invalid about struggling for one's own view of the world; there is no reason to submit to the reigning test of validity and truth.

Tikkun Discussion Group Update

We've received many enthusiastic letters from readers in response to our invitation to help people set up *Tikkun* discussion groups in their local areas. If you want to be part of such a group, send your name, address and telephone number to *Tikkun* Discussion, 5100 Leona St., Oakland, CA 94619—we'll connect you with other people in your area.

Some of the places we've heard from: New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, San Francisco, San Diego, Seattle, Philadelphia, Detroit, Baltimore, Collins (Iowa), Austin, Santa Monica, Wichita, Nassau County (NY), Moorestown (NJ), Highland Park (NJ), Bellevue (WA), Sherman Oaks (CA), Laguna Hills (CA), and Waukegan (IL).

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WELFARE REFORM

(Continued from p. 18)

tion of recipients' devotion to the work ethic. As has been noted, 1981 legislation more or less did away with the payment formula that was said to provide an incentive for work. There was an outcry from liberals and professionals, who argued that inevitably many would stop working. Why should welfare mothers work if they would not come out ahead—might indeed lose Medicaid? Nevertheless, follow-up evaluations, by the General Accounting Office, among others, found that few gave up jobs.

Despite difficulties, welfare mothers work. Their work is episodic, as the kind of work they can get is likely to be, and is interfered with by illness and other family emergencies. They are often compared invidiously to married mothers with children, three-fifths of whom are in the labor force. However, fewer than one-third of married working mothers work full-time year-round. The mountain that looms or should loom over all these discussions is that, in a country operating at a high level of unemployment, welfare recipients are for various reasons (poor education and skills, single parenthood) at a disadvantage in the competition for jobs. This is *why* they are welfare recipients.

The relative success of programs aimed at assisting work depends, in large measure, on the availability of supporting services—education, training, help in searching for a job, child care, and transportation. The Ways and Means Committee bill (with or without the Hawkins amendment) requires states to provide such services. However, it is not clear that the whole complement must be provided everywhere in a state or in sufficient quantity. Chances are, services would be limited or even scarce. The Moynihan bill lists a variety of services that states "may make available," thus making it clear that states alone will decide which services they will provide.

In the end, states might answer to the lure of federal money, in expanding services, and the major bills design their bait in somewhat different ways. The Moynihan bill would "authorize" a richer federal match for state money, tapering off to current match levels after a federal expenditure of $140 million. "Authorize" is an important term because it has little meaning unless Congress subsequently appropriates funds. An indication of what might happen is that, despite all the talk about work and training, appropriations for the existing Work Incentive Program have declined in the past several years from almost $400 million to $133 million. On the other hand, the Ways and Means Committee bill would make more federal money available than is available now, without limitation by the appropriations process, but would require states to contribute a larger share than they do now. This shifts the question from how much Congress would be willing to appropriate to how much state legislatures will spend. Governors urging welfare reform on Congress have argued that they cannot afford to spend any more than they already do.

Under current law, in general, adults and older youths in AFDC families must sign up for training or work, unless they are caring for a child younger than six. The Moynihan bill would extend this requirement to families with children three to five years old and would permit states, if they choose, to require parents with one and two-year olds to sign up part-time. All the bills would permit voluntary enrollment in training programs by any recipient.

The requirement that a mother participate in a vocational program is perforce a requirement to obtain childcare, especially for young children. The Ways and Means Committee bill would require only part-time participation for parents with children under six, and for parents with children under three only if care of unspecified quality is available for $200 a month. The Moynihan bill does not provide even so much protection, and it is not clear that the mother would have the right to decide or question the arrangement a state makes. The Hawkins amendment excuses parents with children under three from participation. In the absence of greatly expanded services and under the pressure envisioned in all the bills, it seems likely that mothers would turn to informal arrangements with neighbors or others who will care for one or more children. There is nothing wrong with such an arrangement—many mothers prefer it to congregate care—but such homes are generally not regulated or inspected and many offer poor, if not actually unsafe care.

I have so far avoided fashionable, if loose, arguments about the effects on the family of various measures, but one has to ask what will happen to these children. There is a sense of an auction under way: One bill bids exemption of mothers with children under three and another bids "under one year of age." The Republican bill,* not generally reviewed here, would lower the age

*The Republican bill contains no benefit improvements at all and none of the incentive provisions (transitional Medicaid, allowance for child care expenses for six months after taking a job) that appear in greater and lesser measure in the Ways and Means Committee and Moynihan bills. Pursuing the president's agenda, it provides for exempting states from federal law for AFDC and a variety of additional programs (Food Stamps and Head Start, for example). There is no limit on the number of states that might gain such waivers. Among all the bills, it would provide the most draconian requirements about participation in work programs but fails to specify even minimum opportunity for training or realistic provisions for child care. The country might be returned to pre-1935 days, when states provided for needy residents in wildly varying measure—some not at all. It is hard to imagine that a Democratic Congress would pass such a bill.

of exemption to six months. It is as if the argument of egalitarians that women have a right to work is being pressed to absurdity and women—poor women, to be sure, disproportionately minority women—are being bludgeoned with it.

Mandatory enrollment is a charade, in one sense. All bills pending provide that states use a priority system for enrollment, taking into account particularly those who wish to enroll and whether the state can provide necessary services. Thus, scarcity of services will probably limit the number that are made to enroll. Experience indicates that no state will nearly exhaust its list of people who must participate. Meanwhile, public resentment about exploitation of welfare by recipients presumably will be allayed. So what's wrong with that? But there is another sense in which mandatory enrollment is desperately serious; penalties are levied for failure to cooperate in work or training—generally a reduction in the already very low level of assistance, and some people will suffer them. A more serious set of consequences derives from the issue, to be discussed later, of whether these reformed programs will save money.

Fourth, *child support*: For perhaps thirty years, the federal government has been steadily increasing pressure on welfare departments to collect support from absent parents, discovering the problem and announcing a new campaign, as each old one fades from mind. The record is not good. By 1985, a little more than half of all single mothers were awarded child support. About one-half of these received the full amount of the award, and one-fourth received less. One-fourth of those awarded received no child support at all. The average annual payment—declining since 1978, when it was $2,746—was $2,215.

This is a considerable disappointment to federal officials and to Congress, which passed new and even sterner Child Support Enforcement Amendments in 1984. Among a variety of measures, Congress required that employers withhold child support from a father's wages if he were one month in arrears. Both the Ways and Means Committee and Moynihan bills would strengthen existing procedures. Both bills strengthen measures to establish a child's paternity, and they require stronger instruction to courts in setting the amount of child support. The Moynihan bill would require that wage withholding occur immediately, that is, whether there was a default in payment or not. It has been argued that wage-withholding tends to get an employee dismissed or, anyway, not rehired. Such a result would certainly be counterproductive for the program.

There has been much speculation about the decade-long decline in child support payments, but little attention seems to have been paid to the coincidence between this decline and the one-third decline in the income of low-income families. The level of child support awarded by judges has also been declining. It seems entirely likely that less is being awarded and less is being paid because the fathers have less. At the GAO-sponsored meeting in Cleveland, a Welfare Rights representative argued that the best way to increase child support payments would be to direct training programs to individuals receiving General Relief rather than to AFDC mothers. (General Relief is a state or local relief program for individuals and others not entitled to AFDC.) Tens of thousands of the fathers of AFDC children receive General Relief, she said, and a training program directed to them would help them provide child support as well. As the average payment for such a man in Ohio is $120 a month, there should be little problem about incentive to participate.

This observation affirms in a different context that Congress is addressing only derivative causes. Broad unavailability of jobs for people with poor education and skills—many of those people not in the AFDC program or entitled to be in it—is the first cause. Flailing about may obscure but will not solve the child support problem.

Fifth, *savings*, or *no net increase in cost*: Will welfare reform focused on job training or mandatory work save public money? No or yes, depending on what is meant. Demonstrating savings in a scientific manner is, of course, an exceedingly complex task, rarely undertaken. Caseloads go up or down for powerful external reasons—a rising or falling unemployment rate, change in the definition of eligibility, demographic changes. People who have had no help leave welfare for jobs. It is hard to establish which of those who are leaving at a particular moment would have left in any case.

If savings means that the cost of training and supporting a welfare recipient's work effort is recaptured in declining caseloads, the answer over the years has been "no" or, at best, "not demonstrated." A study by the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC), itself established to demonstrate what work and training can do, concludes that "in the short run, these programs will often cost rather than save money." Projecting savings into the future when, of course, judgments become more speculative, MDRC estimates there may be modest savings. About current legislative proposals, Senator Moynihan himself spoke of "a desperate social reality"—how few welfare recipients could be helped initially by job training and placement programs.

The grandiose claims of governors and state administrators generally turn out, on examination, to be unfounded. Michigan's MOST program, for which $570 million in savings has been claimed over a three-year period, was described by a *Detroit News*

editorial as nothing "more than blue smoke and mirrors." Extensive claims have been made for California's GAIN program, but, as of the past April, the program had been operating for more than four months in only two of California's fifty-eight counties. Modest savings in Massachusetts's ET program are more plausible but have been disputed within the state. In contrast with Michigan and California, enrollment in ET is voluntary and the state's unemployment rate has been under 4 percent for several years now. (California's has been 6.7 percent and Michigan's 8.9 percent.)

In answering the savings question, it is important to understand how extensively the Department of Human Services has developed administrative devices for denying and terminating assistance to entitled families. Suppose, for example, the department sends a letter requiring a visit or a document. The letter is lost or stolen, or received but incomprehensible. The client fails to respond and is terminated. A phenomenon has developed that is known in the business as "churning," in which cases are terminated only to have people reapply and demonstrate eligibility within a month or two. It is a good guess that such people have been eligible all along and that someone—the recipient and the worker are equally culpable—has made an error. The Center on Social Welfare Policy and Law has estimated that in 1984 roughly one million entitled families were denied AFDC because of the administrative practices that create churning.

The point of this seeming digression is that the more complex welfare administration becomes, the more opportunities are afforded for informal and improper denials of assistance. This is particularly the case with mandatory work programs, where the number of judgments that must be made is multiplied. The aforementioned MDRC report puts this delicately: discussing a requirement that recipients participate in training activities, the report says that the obligation is imposed "not with the purpose of maximizing participation per se, but to help or motivate recipients to obtain jobs and reduce dependence on public assistance." "Help" and "motivate" are, or course, euphemisms. Consider the dilemma of a woman whose child has been placed in circumstances she regards as utterly unsuitable. Might she be motivated to give up welfare even though she does not know how she will manage? Work and training requirements used in this way (generally, in the way they have been used) reduce costs, yes.

By the time this appears in print, one of these bills may be law, but I think that unlikely. The Moynihan bill is too close to Republican views. The president might sign it, especially if whatever is liberal or costs money in it is further compromised, but that would presumably lose it all but the most conservative Democratic support. The Ways and Means Committee bill and the Hawkins amendment might cost as much as five billion dollars over five years. It is said that the president will not sign it, and Congress could not muster the necessary majority to override a veto. And there is the problem of precedence to work out between the Ways and Means and the Education and Labor committees. With no bill enacted, both parties could go into an election blaming the other for failure to pass welfare reform. Both parties may think that is a better course than defending adding to the deficit, on one hand, or worsening the burden of recipients, on the other hand.

In fact, no legislation is probably the most desirable outcome at this juncture. Virtually all legislation involves trade-offs. The Ways and Means Committee bill contains modest improvements, including some that have not been discussed here. For example, all states would have to provide coverage for needy two-parent families—a more modest expansion than it sounds or it would not have made it this far. If one could have the bill precisely as it stands, it is at least arguable that the improvements would be worth the cost in harassment and denials of assistance to desperately needy women and children. As a practical matter, however, this bill will not survive precisely as it stands. It will have to be compromised with other bills in the House; then the House bill will have to be compromised with the Senate bill; and the threat of a presidential veto will hover over all the negotiations. Little will survive that is even modestly worthwhile.

As for the Moynihan bill, the only unequivocal liberalization is a similar provision requiring coverage for two-parent families. The rest of the bill trades off even more that would hurt welfare recipients—a mischievous provision, for example, that would allow as many as ten states to gain exemption from most of the federal requirements that govern AFDC. Although states would be required to assure compliance with antidiscrimination laws and other current protections for recipients, HHS would be authorized to continue funding even if they did not meet such assurances. States would be able to substitute federal money in what had been state-financed programs, thus defeating the general federal purpose of upgrading programs. And so forth.

As Gouverneur Morris said, "No constitution is the same on paper as in life." Even provisions in the bills pending in Congress that may sound supportive and rehabilitative would be turned, in the real life of welfare administration, to restrictive and punitive uses. And the state human services department, already so chaotically administered, would be burdened with more responsibilities and new reorganizations. Does it not cheapen political discourse to propose to enact in something called welfare reform this collection of old ideas, trivial

ideas, and inflated rhetoric? A more recent quotation comes to mind, from Edna St. Vincent Millay: "Watch the great words go down. . . ."

If welfare reform is not enacted this second or third time around, what should a liberal candidate for the presidency be proposing? He or she would understand that welfare reform is an agenda that was established by the Reagan White House—a diversion from the main point.

The main point is wages and jobs. For example, the real value of the minimum wage has declined by almost one-third since President Reagan took office. Economist Sar Levitan has proposed that it should be raised from $3.35 to $4.35 an hour, that is, to its traditional level of one-half of the average American wage. With respect to job creation, one worthy approach would be rebuilding and redirecting the financial arrangements that once stimulated home construction—the Home Owners Loan Corporation and the preferences provided to banks that provided home mortgages. This would help employment in an industry that has been hard hit, while it would produce residential housing, a serious national need in itself. Shifting expenditures from defense to public employment, to the extent that that is prudent, would shift funds from capital-intensive to labor-intensive enterprises.

Income maintenance programs need to be restored. For example, Unemployment Insurance urgently needs expansion and benefit improvement. One may think that this would involve vast new expenditures, but as I have explored in *Common Decency*, substantial improvements can be achieved without large expenditures by shifting priorities within programs. It will not be possible really to reform welfare until such broader steps are undertaken. Human services departments are now somewhat in the situation of a MASH medical station. One sees haste, inefficiencies, and blood everywhere, but it is pointless to insist on taking the time for sweeping reform.

For the moment, terribly low standards of assistance ought to be raised at least a little—that much is clear. Because human service departments cannot cope constructively with further change, the first task will be rehabilitation of its administrative capacity. This will have a modest cost in the provision of additional, better qualified personnel. Congress itself has, by long years of attempting to micro-manage welfare, created one of the most serious administrative problems. Congress will have to establish central purposes and guidelines and refrain from the shower of detailed rules that has been characteristic of its attentions. This might carry a cost to Congress, but it will be measured in restraint rather than money. Then, in the light of broader reconstruction, will be the time to work out the mission of a national welfare program and how best to achieve it.

In the process of presenting such a challenging, if practical and realistic, set of ideas to voters, a candidate would be teaching the electorate about unemployment, poverty, and the welfare problem. It is a mature, presidential role, and it would be refreshing. □

LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNITY

(Continued from p. 30)

victim could become the lamb of God, and the high priesthood was limited to a singular victim. Locked into a biblical cultic imagery, it was impossible to go beyond the assumption that mediation is required to approach the divine. It rested its claim only on the superiority of the mediation.

The rabbis, however, transcended cultic imagery by promoting the centrality of Torah study. For them, language and thought serve as the equivalents of altar and sacrifice. Once logology replaces ontology, Torah study can be substituted for the sacrificial cult. By transforming language and thought into portals of the sacred, Torah study opens up the high priesthood of learning.

What is the biblical basis for the cult of Torah replacing that of the sacrifice? There are no pertinent prophetic passages comparable to those which extol the value of obedience and heartfelt prayer. The answer lies in the capacity of Torah study to obviate the need for mediation by recreating the presanctuary reality of Sinai. As poetry reading, Torah study can reproduce the generative experience of Sinai (*Midrash Tanhuma, kee tavo* 1). Being the holy of holies, the Torah enables the shimmerings of the divine to be refracted through the human mind. Since transcendence is glimpsed through its lens, it is not surprising that it was accorded the wherewithal "to apprehend the divine will" (*Avot DeRabbi Natan* 4).

You shall be holy, "for I the Lord your God am holy" suggests not only that God is the model but that the entrée to the holy is by becoming holy. Through Torah, holiness is added to Israel. Indeed, its study reveals the architect's plan and thus the purpose of creation (*Genesis Rabbah* 1.2).

Such learning is not conceived primarily as memorization and erudition but rather as a response to the divine imperative to be involved with wisdom day in and day out (*Midrash Tanhuma, re'eh,* 1). The blessing associated with Torah study praised God for having sanctified us through commanding us to be preoccupied with Torah.

Unsurprisingly, the rabbinic doctrine of life doubles as its doctrine of salvation (*Mishnah Avot* 2:8, 6:9).

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Thus, "Whoever reviews the halakhot may be assured of inclusion in the World to Come" (*B. Megillah,* 28b). Moreover, "Whoever teaches Torah in this world will get to teach it in the next" (*B. Sanhedrin* 92a). For "Just as there are halachic deliberations below so are there halachic deliberations above" (*Midrash Tenhuma, shmot* 18). Indeed, "Not a day passes without the holy one, blessed be He, innovating halacha in the Court on high" (*Genesis, Rebbah* 49.3). Since everything in this world is experienced on a grander scale in the next, the future life can be envisioned as a vast academy for the study of Torah with God Himself overseeing the deliberations (*Seder Eliahu Rabbah* 3).

That this vision fired the imagination indicates the success of Rabbinic Judaism. It transformed a people into either eternal students or dreamers. Continuing education was taken literally, for Rabbinic Judaism aimed at nothing less than to rabbinize all of Israel.

The rabbinic program did not so much as make Judaism democratic as it made Jewry aristocratic. If all Jews are descendants of kings, as the rabbis never tire of telling us, then they merit access to the royal way. The biblical ideal may be understood as a "kingship of priests" or as a "regal priesthood." Whatever the case, when Yannai asks God to "make all of them kings, all of them priests" (*The Liturgical Poems of Rabbi Yannai,* ed. Rabinowitz, I., p. 320) he is spelling out in full the implications of the aristocratization of Jewry.

By expanding access to the once-exclusive priestly prerogatives, all were becoming religiously enfranchised. The result was the transformation of all of Israel into the equivalent of a religious order. The Bible had already laid the groundwork for this idea by enjoining circumcision for even nonpriests (compare Lev. 21:5-6 and Deut. 14:1-2), and by mandating the donning of a fringed *tallit* which with its cord of blue calls to mind priestly garments (Exod. 28:28,37).

The Passover ceremony, as mentioned above, played a pivotal role in extending the aura of the priesthood to the whole people. As Philo noted, the universal offering on this day raised all "to the dignity of the priesthood ... [for] on this occasion the whole nation performs the sacred rites and acts as priest ... [indeed] every dwelling house is invested with the outward semblance and dignity of a temple" (*The Special Laws* 2:145, 148).

The rabbis furthered this tendency by ordaining the universal recital of the Hallel Psalms on festivals and by transferring the daily recital of levitical songs to individual Jews. Moreover, just as the times of statutory prayer correspond to the timing of the daily sacrifices, so, some held, proper posture during such prayers should emulate that of priestly worship (*J. Berakhot* 1.1). Hai Gaon even proposed that the introductory and concluding three steps forward and backward of the prayer are modeled after the priestly pattern of approaching and leaving the altar (in *Beit Yosef* at *Tur Shulchan Arukh, Orach Chayyim* 123).

Simply put, Rabbinic Judaism aimed at eliminating the laity by incorporating it into a priestlike order. At the same time, however, it should not be forgotten that traditional priests continued to merit deference at certain ceremonies. Nonetheless, their specific duties, however on the decline, were carried out under rabbinic aegis. Power did not follow patterns of deference.

Ways to sense the holiness of the high priesthood

were opened up. One way, as we have discussed, consisted of being as attentive, preoccupied, and meticulous with regard to Torah as the High Priest was with regard to the cult.

The second way concerned liturgy. The Yom Kippur liturgy confers on each worshipper the honorary degree of High Priest. The high point of the Yom Kippur service is introduced by a detailed description of the Temple service on the Day of Atonement. We follow the prescribed procedure of the High Priest's baths and ablutions, the selection of the various offerings, the High Priest's entrance into the Holy of Holies amid a cloud of incense to cleanse it of the sins of the people, and his symbolic purification of the outer altar and the rest of the sanctuary. In a dramatic climax, worshippers in the synagogue prostrate themselves, as the people and the High Priest did in the Temple, and each worshipper repeats word for word the ancient confession that the High Priest uttered for himself and his household. At that moment, the liturgy transfigures all worshippers into high priests confessing directly to God and praying for themselves and their households. All become committed to purging themselves of any impurity and to purging their homes of all that mars their sanctity. Once a year, the rabbis afford us a taste of the high priesthood. By aiming for the high priesthood, the priesthood becomes attainable.

Nonetheless, it is misleading to describe the rabbi as the new priest. The rabbi has no exclusive cultic role in Rabbinic Judaism. His presence is not indispensable. There is nothing that a rabbi can do that any committed, knowledgeable, observant Jew cannot do. His presence does not guarantee the efficacy of any rite. Ordination does not empower him to expiate sins, mediate prayers, or intercede on another's behalf.

Although the plan of Rabbinic Judaism does not reject priestly Judaism outright, it lets it wither from neglect. If all are lords, why sustain a House of Lords?

The success of the rabbinic program depends upon the community involving itself in intensive Torah study and the interweaving of its private and social life into a sacred whole. The rabbinic assumption is that the religious life is made up of individual and communal obligations as opposed to clerical and institutional ones. A community not meeting these qualifications would slip back into making hard distinctions between clergy and laity. There are signs that the modern period has witnessed precisely this backsliding to the natural religious situation. Forgetting one's nobility is the greatest of temptations.

Modern Judaism

Much of modern Judaism, because it has neglected the study of Torah and a way of life which is responsive to the sacred, has felt the need to remodel the rabbi into a priestly figure. The transfiguration of the rabbi not only led to donning special rabbinic vestments and preaching down from a raised platform, but also to endowing rabbinic presence with cultic significance. Ceremonial efficacy became dependent on rabbinic presence. An outstanding example is marriage. According to Jewish law, there is no ceremony which can bind a Jew and gentile in sacred matrimony. Yet, many modern Jews are of the opinion that the presence of a "rabbi" can render the illegal legal. Through the magic of cultic power rabbinic presence transforms the profane into the sacred. Is it not paradoxical that some Jews of rational bent are most susceptible to magical appeals?

Bar Mitzvah is another case in point. In Rabbinic Judaism religious majority is attained by entering into a life of obedience and commitment to the Commandments. This is the literal implication of the term bar mitzvah. The candidate, as it were, says, "As a Jew, I am commanded, therefore I am." Insofar as modern Judaism regresses from the rabbinic pattern, it believes that one is *"bar mitzvahed,"* implying something that a rabbi does to you. Strangely, for many it implies that the rabbi performed a sacred act which is seen as exempting the young adult from further study of Torah.

The practice of some modern synagogues on Yom Kippur is just as instructive. Rather than all bowing down during the reenactment of the ancient Temple rite as if they were high priests, many a contemporary worshipper, in the name of modernity, chooses to remain a spectator observing the rabbi and cantor perform it for them. Those of such a mind find no difficulty in preferring the rabbi to offer prayers on their behalf rather than praying on their own.

On the other hand, the more rabbis relish the priestly role, the more likely they are to monopolize the pulpit as if they had an exclusive claim on instruction. In such cases, prominence given to the sermon frequently eclipses the significance of the reading of the weekly portion of the Torah. Indeed, the more priestlike the preacher, the less Torah-centered the sermon. Nothing underscores disparities like condescension. Although the modern expression of surrogate Judaism results from the collusion of both laity and rabbinate, it still seems paradoxical to find Jews vehemently opposed to the ancient priestly sacrificial cult slavishly adhering to its contemporary psychological counterpart.

Post-Modern Judaism

Fortunately, as Jews move into the post-modern period, they liberate themselves from the tyranny of mod-

ern categories. Our post-modern age is witnessing an increasing number of rabbis setting "priestly" deportment aside in order to enhance congregational participation in the religious life.

Disenchanted with the role of surrogate Jew, such rabbis seek to extricate constituents from debilitating dependencies and set them on the path of study and practice for a maturer religiosity. Rejecting the priestly role which allocates them power at the expense of the laity they aim to reinstate the rabbinic model of empowerment. The most tangible sign of this shift is the spread of interactive teaching of Torah from the pulpit. Such congregations are perceived to be Jewish growth centers as much as cult centers. It takes the rare teacher to understand that effective pedagogy is the art of making oneself dispensable.

Such pedagogy must be all too rare. Most of the modern period has witnessed not only reliance on rabbis for vicarious observance, but dependence on "the great authorities" for vicarious decision making. The pervasive fear of qualified personnel to assume responsibility for decision making indicates a similar lack of faith in the rabbinic program. Rabbinic Judaism is not just the displacing of priestly authority by rabbinic authority, but a reconceptualization of the nature of religious authority.

The Maharal of Prague, unlike his contemporaries, perceived the real logic of the rabbinization of Torah study. In describing "the path of Torah," he writes:

> It is more fitting and more correct that one should determine the law for himself directly on the basis of the Talmud, even though there is danger that he will not follow the true path and not decide the law as it should be in truth. Notwithstanding, the sage has only to consider what his intellect apprehends and understands from the Talmud and if his understanding and wisdom mislead him, he is nevertheless believed by the Lord when he decides in accordance with his mind's dictates ... and he is superior to one who rules from a later prepared code without knowing the reasons which are the ground of the decision. Such a one walks like a blind man on the way. (*Netivot Olam, Netiv Hatorah* 15)

Similarly, when the Talmud (*B. Hullin* 44b with Maharsha *ad loc*) points out that only by engaging in independent halakhic analysis does on deserve to eat the fruit of one's labor, it underscores the implicit goals of rabbinizing Jews, namely, to empower them to study, to weigh opinions, and to come to conclusions. The individual's informed struggle for truth is at least on a par with its compliance. For the mind steeped in Torah there can be no exemption from conscientious struggle. Authentic Rabbinic Judaism has little tolerance for surrogates. The goal of rabbinization aims at nothing less then making the decision makers coextensive with the intellectually empowered.

Nonetheless, the return of the post-modern rabbinate to the classic ideal cannot be reduced to a function of the rabbinate. Rabbinic initiative alone is inadequate to the task. Laity needs to shed its defensive cloak of passivity and assume responsibility for its growth in Jewish learning and living. If all Jews were learning Jews, surrogate Judaism would go the way of the sacrificial system. In the interim, the rabbi will have to serve as *primus inter pares*, not a far enough cry from the rabbi-priest of the modern era, but a step closer to the role model teacher of Rabbinic Judaism. □

ISRAELI LITERATURE

(Continued from p. 34)

from these analyses is that Zionism—once the "cure" for Jewish Diaspora neurosis—is now perceived as a pathology in its own right, a new Israeli neurosis.

Although the most explicit thematic exploration of the Zionist neurosis has taken place on the stage, in plays written by Yehoshua Sobol from 1974 on, similar concerns abound in most prose fiction of the same period. Most instructive is the subtle shift in the use of psychoanalytic models in A. B. Yehoshua's writing. While his early work implicitly accepted the tenets of Freudian "anthropological" psychology, in his later work he employs Freud's clinical insights as social metaphor. Yehoshua uses psychoanalysis not as a method of personal self-discovery (as used recently by the young writer David Grossman in *Hiyuch HaGedi*, 1983 (The Smile of the Lamb) but as a system of classification, a metaphoric grid for diagnosing the ills of society as a whole. The madness he pictures is made tangible by his characterizations, but its meaning grows out of the interpersonal relationships among them, that is, out of their social or national context. Yehoshua is immersed, then, in the collective Israeli neurosis. This may explain why *A Late Divorce*, although presented almost as a collection of family case histories, is liable to be read as a political allegory.

Although Yehoshua himself has rejected such interpretations, his *Essays on Zionism* openly lead Zionism to the psychoanalyst's couch. Ignoring the question of the legitimacy of psychohistory, Yehoshua attempts an oedipal explanation for what he terms the "Jewish neurosis." By casting the Jewish people as son, God as father, and Zion as motherland, Yehoshua concludes that the Diaspora is a neurotic compromise, an attempt to solve the conflict between the claims of a domineering father and a child's love for a weaker mother (the land). Diaspora existence has enabled the Jewish people to

remain loyal to their father while satisfying their love for their mother only by long-distance yearning. To the familiar notion of antagonism between religious Jewish history and the Zionist renaissance, Yehoshua proposes a cure made possible by identifying the psychodynamics of the neurotic symptom, namely, Diaspora existence.

In Yehoshua's novels, the danger of the neurosis is brought home via several modes of displacement and defamiliarization. In *The Lover*, an Arab youth introjects the fears of Diaspora persecution and reflects, as in a mirror image, the Zionist dream of revival, of return to normalcy. On the other hand, a lost Jewish grandson of Sephardi stock, a native of the Old City who had emigrated to Europe, returns to collect his inheritance from his dying grandmother only to be adopted by Adam, the protagonist, as surrogate lover for his estranged wife, Asia. Here the psychoanalytic interpretation of Zionism is readily detectable: the return of the prodigal (grand)son ostensibly brings back to life the two mother figures of the novel, thereby reversing the original, neurotic oedipal triangle. Both Grandmother and Asia (the surrogate mother/lover) are initially presented to the reader only through their dreams. Their regression to the unconscious metaphorically signals the loss of the reality principle attributed to Zionism as a whole (represented by Grandmother, born in 1881) and to its partial realization in Asia (the State of Israel). The cause for this retreat from reality lies with Adam. Failing to secure a male heir, he compensates by material achievements, which reach their peak, predictably, after 1967. Unlike the classical model, Yehoshua's Oedipus does not have to fight and kill to win his way to his mother's bosom. Here the weakened husband seeks him out, hoping for a vicarious revival by reestablishing dyadic relations between his estranged wife and the returned son/lover.

As much as this far-fetched scenario parodies the original, it also hideously distorts the Zionist metaphor of sons/lovers coming to redeem Zion, their motherland. For Yehoshua has little faith in the applicability of the metaphor to current circumstances. The tenuous revival of both mother figures in the story is doomed to fail. The "Diaspora neurosis" is a mental rather than a geographical condition, and no simple "return" can cure it. Thus, under the pressure of the war of 1973, the lover/redeemer regresses into a Diaspora existence among the anti-Zionist Orthodoxy within Israel, the apotheosis of the Jewish neurosis in Yehoshua's ideological system.

In a bolder move, Yehoshua prevents Yehuda in *A Late Divorce* from leaving his insane wife, who incessantly talks about her excessive, superfluous other self, "an addition" she wants to get rid of. The psychoanalytic metaphor here is quite alarming. The woman's schizophrenic condition, her wish to cut herself in half, may be read as Israel's internal division over the question of the territories. Rather than addressing the political issue per se, Yehoshua dramatizes its disastrous mental consequences: the mother is torn to a point of no return, each of her children has his/her own pathology, and her husband attempts to avoid the conflicts by the typical "neurotic solution," escape into Diaspora existence. Both the despair and the parodic distortion in this novel far surpass those of *The Lover*. Yehoshua lets his protagonist obtain the formal divorce, but instead of returning to his young American mistress, he is grotesquely killed on his farewell visit to his wife in the asylum. Finally, the son born in the United States after Yehuda's death, little Moses (who has a speech impediment), is brought to Israel to be raised. Whether this conclusion is meant as a parodic distortion of reality or a wishful prognosis, what is clear is that for Yehoshua, as for most contemporary writers, Zionism is perceived in its polarization—statehood *vs.* Diaspora, normalcy *vs.* uniqueness, Israelism *vs.* Judaism.

Zionism vs. Judaism

Although this point of departure is shared by most contemporary writers, Yehoshua seems to stand alone in favor of Zionism and consequently against the existence of Diaspora. In most contemporary writings, basic confidence in Zionism as a negation of Diaspora and as an assurance against the annihilation of the Jewish people seems to be shaken. The sterile protagonist of Orpaz's *The Mistress* seeks in vain the meaning of the vow he took on a night in 1939 (probably in an initiation rite of the Haganah), while he is haunted by the memory of his mother, whom he left unattended in Europe. He feels the Zionist enterprise to be a debt to his Diaspora forefathers, a debt he is unable to repay. This failure, symbolized by his "fall" on the night of the vow, provokes a dream of escape. In the final analysis, he sees life in contemporary Israel as a recapitulation of the negative aspects of life in the Diaspora. A similar sentiment is expressed by one of the characters in Ben-Ner's *Eretz Rehoka*, 1981 (Distant Land), the native son of a veteran Israeli pioneer family who is disgusted by the corruption around him and dreams of a fresh start, of mounting a Zionist enterprise in the pure atmosphere of New Zealand.

Tamuz holds the most extreme position. In *Ya'akov*, 1971 (Jacob), he judges the Jewish state to be a brief pause in Jewish history:

> Whenever Diaspora existence is on the verge of degeneration, Jews return to their physical motherland . . . like a car that runs out of gas and turns to a gas station. . . . But the car's mission is to go on

> traveling ... and after the Jews stay long enough in their gas stations ... in the corporeal existence of state, agriculture, government ... they get on the road again; they go into exile ....

Faithful to this conception, Tamuz's later novels are thinly veiled satires in which the history of Zionism is portrayed through the degeneration of a family of early pioneer settlers, as in his 1978 novel *Requiem for Na'aman*, or through the bestialization of a contemporary scion of such a family, as in *Minotaur*, 1980 (English-language translation, 1981). Tamuz's guilty conscience as a former advocate of the Canaanite position may prompt his harsh criticism of the inadequate realization of the Zionist dream and may underlie his formulation of the mutually exclusive opposition between the Zionist state, corporeal but undesirable, and the "valorized" cultural resources perceived in Diaspora in *Mishlei Bakbukim*, 1975 (Bottle Parables).

A different approach to this dichotomy is suggested in Oz's *A Perfect Peace*, 1982. Resonating with all the ambivalence of its title, *Menuha Nechona*, from the burial prayer *El male rahamim* (God full of mercy), the novel produces a deliberately forced synthesis: the future of the kibbutz in this story and, by implication, of Labor Zionism as a whole, is to be determined by the dubious union of the native "prodigal son" and the enthusiastic Holocaust survivor. To dramatize this wishful rapprochement, Oz turns long-standing stereotypes on their heads and then has them join forces in a strange *ménage-à-trois*. The kibbutz-born Yoni is characterized as reluctant, unheroic, lacking will, and in every way the opposite of the founding fathers' expectations of the sabra. The new immigrant Azarya, on the other hand, fully measures up to the "helpfulness" his name implies. He is full of libidinal vigor, fresh ideas, and eagerness to replace Yoni not only in Yoni's neglected wife Rimona's arms but also in the dynastic hopes of Yoni's father, Yolek, the ideologue and leader of the kibbutz. As the novel closes we leave both young men living harmoniously with the ever-tranquil Rimona, whose exceptional calm finally loses its arbitrariness and becomes the conventional calm of motherhood, when she gives birth to a healthy child, "helped," no doubt, by Azarya. What is left unclear is the writer's intention in creating this "perfect peace." Is this Oz's answer to recent lamentations over the dead end at which Zionism finds itself or to guilt over the Zionist rejection of Diaspora Judaism? As with Yehoshua's *A Late Divorce*, the answer is not readily available. Irony abounds, but its target is only vaguely defined.

What clearly emerges as the indisputable core of these narratives is their unusual treatment of the generation gap. This traditional psychological/literary convention is given a twist that lifts it from its universally familiar context and places it within the parameters of recent Israeli attitudes toward Zionist ideologies.

The Center Cannot Hold

While ideological positions on the questions of nationality, the desired social order, democracy, and religion constituted a basis for political partisan organization, there was one ideological theme about which there was no political disagreement. This theme, which was connected inter alia with the idea of the productivization of the Jewish people, was that of the return to nature and to the soil.

Dan Horowitz and Moshe Lissak, *The Origins of the Israeli Polity*

In the ideological debate with other parties, Labor had a clear advantage over its rivals. It was identified with the devoted pioneers who tilled the land. Its mode of action—the pioneer settlements and the workers' union—was accepted by many of the middle-class new immigrants [the fourth aliya in the mid-1920s] as the proper and desired way. This is how Labor was identified with the Zionist revolution in Eretz Israel.

Yonathan Shapiro, *An Elite Without Successors*

While sociologists Horowitz and Lissak establish here some points of convergence within the factious State Zionist movement, Shapiro reveals the secret behind Labor's stay in power and how that consensus came into being, while inadvertently underscoring the tensions that threaten it—tensions that finally erupted in the elections of 1977, toppling Labor's political structure. Shapiro's interpretation typifies the recent sociological and ideological retrospectives of the Zionist ethos. Since 1967 it has become difficult to sustain the identification of Zionism with Labor ideology. It is precisely this sharpening of rivalry, the polarization of positions and the apparent wandering of ideologies, that created the need to redefine Zionism by looking more closely at its origins. Most symptomatic of all is the popular success of *Berl*, Anita Shapira's 1980 biography of the spiritual leader of Labor, Berl Katzenelson, 1887–1944. Written under the impact of Labor's electoral defeat, this biography was no doubt welcomed as a corrective to the then-prevalent negative image of Labor. Apart from its historical reconstruction, which encompasses the major ideational conflicts and pragmatic turning points of the era, this biography draws a portrait of a personality that is in every way a converse image of Ben-Gurion. Despite the close friendship and lifelong cooperation between the two leaders, by the time of Shapira's writing, Katzenelson was nearly forgotten. In fact, it seems it is this oblivion that inspired the book,

a tribute not only to the man, but to the movement. Katzenelson's character traits—indecisiveness, humanistic interest in people and in the arts, restlessness, inability to persist, need for changes of scene and interests—stand as counterpoints or as an alter ego to Ben-Gurion's notorious pragmatism and activism, or *bitzuism*, in Israeli parlance. One senses that with Katzenelson's premature death, Labor Zionism lost that sense of the primacy of the individual without which it could not survive.

In a sense, Anita Shapira demonstrates in *Berl* one of the ideological shifts that Yonathan Shapiro later lists among the processes that crippled Labor. Shapiro contends chiefly that "a contradiction between the professed ideology of a large part of the population and their personal behavior and aspirations has become an important component of Israeli culture as a whole." The professed ideology was that of Socialist Zionism, which put strong emphasis on the value of pioneering agricultural and communal work; the way of life was reurbanization and the return to middle-class occupations in the city, particularly in the bureaucratic system of the Labor establishment. Shapiro emphasizes the effect of this double standard on the younger generation, the potential inheritors of Labor Zionist ideology. He points out that the ongoing process of ideological rethinking became ossified; the next generation turned into good practitioners who can follow in their predecessors' footsteps but are unable to develop an independent platform for Zionism. This is precisely the problem explored by several Israeli novelists. As often happens, literature anticipated what research came to realize only later.

It is a telling coincidence that Shabtai's *Zichron Devarin* (*Past Continuous*) came out in 1977, the year that Labor lost the elections, for the book unflinchingly uncovers the psychological and ethical demoralization of the Tel Aviv wing of Labor Zionism. This work can be viewed as an urban counterpart of the kibbutz life in Oz's *A Perfect Peace*. Using entirely different structures, styles, and narrative tones, Shabtai and Oz focus on the perennial generation gap, while turning the traditional formulations upside down. Both see the family disintegrating, not because sons want to usurp their fathers, but because they possess neither interest nor resources to continue the tradition. While Oz proposes a dubious solution by opening the gates of the kibbutz to an outsider, Shabtai's protagonists live in a closed circle of death and suicide or, at best, alienation.

On another level, Oz openly injects the generational conflict with ideological significance by placing Yolek, the father figure, in a position of leadership and by including the figure of Prime Minister Levi Eshkol in the story. Shabtai's father figure, on the other hand, is a construction worker whose political identity is built of minutely detailed daily routines, habits, and beliefs. This is a grey member of the *Histadrut*, one of those nameless Socialist Zionists who were doomed to exchange the great dream of productivization on the land for the petty cash of urbanized hard labor in Tel Aviv. He is not part of the grand scheme of a large-scale dynastic revival; he cannot write highly charged letters to Eshkol, nor hope to change history, as does Oz's figure. Rather, says Shabtai, "he believed in simplicity, hard work, morality, and culture in their most elementary meaning, and he hated Revisionists, the nouveau riche, money-spenders ... and people who denounce Israel." Although the two fathers differ in social standing, temperament, style of life, and overt political involvement, they breed similar sons, who detest and reject their spiritual inheritance. Shabtai, however, refuses to coat the bitter pill: in contrast to Oz's happy ending, Goldman, the son, commits suicide, while his two "doubles," his close friends, are left to lives of alienation and futility.

The question is, of course, whether Goldman's existential angst ("he felt sadly and helplessly how everything is wasted—his body, other people, their contacts, and he himself as a part of this process") is more than a personal, mid-life crisis. Shabtai, more subtle than his peers, avoids any direct discussion of ideology, yet his portrait of Goldman's father begins: "He was a Zionist and a Socialist" and continues:

> [All his likes and dislikes] were part of a whole scheme of definite and fixed principles that covered all areas of life and action and could not allow any compromise, and which he never doubted in spite of variations and difficulties.... He knew what was right and good, not only for himself, but also for others ... and despite his generosity and sentimentality he was incapable of forgiving anyone, even a member of his family or a friend, because his righteousness bordered on insanity and his sense of justice was pitch dark, and above all because he had an unconquerable tyrannical will to enforce his principles on the whole world....

The occasion for this merciless exposition is no less startling; it is offered as a "rationalization" for the brutal killing of a neighbor's dog. In the difficult period of austerity after 1948, Goldman's father judged feeding the dog to be "a depravity": "There is no doubt Goldman's father had sentenced Noi Sombre [the dog] by what he judged to be conclusive considerations, and he killed him after he was sure the dog had to die. Even if it had been his own dog, he would not have acted any differently." The energies invested in describing this, the nature of the emotions it captures, and its appearance quite early in the narrative highlight it as a

traumatic experience in the "collective memory":

> Everything that happened then was imbued with dark violence.... Goldman's father's face was sheet white and strained because of his alarm and wickedness.... He pulled out a construction hammer and forcefully hit [the dog's head] quickly and wrathfully.... Yelling forcefully: "Let him die!" he continued hitting him as if he were insane.

This description is especially horrible because it is clear that the dog was only the poor substitute for his owner, whose way of life offended Goldman's "sense of justice" and aroused his destructive instincts:

> [Kaminskaya's] time table was always ... out of order; her days and nights freely interchanged ... and this enraged Goldman's father, who fanatically believed in a universal order in which there is good and evil, with no intermediate areas.... He refused to forgive her and he hated her and her habits, her songs and her clothing, and her black dog ....

The dynamic here is tenable: a compulsive belief in one's principles breeds intolerance, intolerance breeds fear and hatred, and these bring forth the worst—aggression.

Surprisingly, in *A Perfect Peace*, Yolek is charged with a similar "crime." In a hysterical diatribe, Yolek's wife charges him with "murder," by which she means chasing away her former lover, ruining her life, and the character murder of their son, Yoni, whom Yolek contemplates replacing with the young newcomer, Azarya. All these metaphoric murders she attributes to Yolek's pursuit of honor, "for the sake of your inflated ideas and your place in the history of the [Zionist] enterprise." Yolek's decision to displace Yoni is foreshadowed by a dream in which Ben-Gurion antagonizes the moderate and compromising Eshkol. He assaults Yolek, "roaring like an insane woman: 'This will not do; if killing is to be done, you will kill and keep silent, even by a handle of a hoe, just as King Saul killed his son.'" We recall, of course, that Saul never killed his son, but his son's name was nevertheless Yonathan (Yoni), who was indeed displaced from the throne by David. The allusion is transparent, yet mixed with another biblical paradigm, the one most prevalent in Israeli literature—the binding of Isaac.

A major theme in Hebrew literature, the "Isaac complex," gained prominence with Haim Guri's poem "Inheritance," which laments that since Abraham's trial "they are born with the knife in their heart" and is echoed in the recent play by Ira Devir, *HaAkedah*, triggered by the Lebanon war. Never before, however, has it been associated so explicitly with a rule of unbending principles, inflated ideas, or the determination of Ben-Gurion-like father figures. The most extreme formulation of the danger inherent in the absolute rule of ideologies belongs to Tamuz's *Requiem for Na'aman*, in which it constitutes the bulk of the final address delivered by the youngest member of the family:

> What were we thinking? That we have a great ideology, the answer to all problems. All that's needed is its execution. We even said, and acted upon it, that we were ready to die for it.... But what is the trouble? The problem with any ideology is that when you say you are ready to die for it, it in fact means that you are ready to kill for it.... Consequently, every idealist is a murderer, excuse the expression, or a suicidal.

This time the accusation is not directed at a specific father figure. It is the lesson of hindsight learned by the cool and levelheaded army officer, Uri, from the history of the Zionist enterprise as embodied in his family chronicles.

The critical agreement about the disastrous consequences of the rigidity of Zionism among Oz, Shabtai, Tamuz, and Yehoshua is impressive. Along with Oz's familiar Labor Zionism as embodied in the kibbutz and Yehoshua's metaphor of the Israeli family as the Zionist movement, Shabtai introduces a new internal perspective on Labor Zionism, and Tamuz a totally new external perspective—of earlier settlers, the landowners who identified with Revisionist Zionism and lately with right-wing politics. In fiction by writers of differing ages and backgrounds, the Zionist ethos is presented in a way that reveals a deep-seated sense of guilt and self-criticism, almost self-hatred. "Internal" criticism puts the blame on the founding fathers (hence the prevalent metaphor of the binding of Isaac); "external" criticism indicts the whole enterprise (at times metaphorically represented by the figure of resourceful Jacob, as in Tamuz's *Ya'acov*). All agree on the charge itself: the ossification of principles, ideas, and ideologies that has sanctified the unquestioned use of force, even murder. The outcome of this state of affairs may be a generation of followers, blindly obeying their elders' slogans, or a generation of alienated, noncommitted individuals, who, like Melville's Bartleby, "would prefer not to" participate in the game, thereby giving up the inheritance altogether.

These are dire consequences. To the extent that these consequences had been dramatized in literature even before they became the subject of sociological inquiry and public debate, Israeli novelists may be said to have been the first to have sounded the alarm. They have not been as quick, however, to suggest ways out of the predicament. As a rule, they exhibit no faith in the bearers of the future: future protagonists are either nonexistent, barrenness being one of the metaphorical

pathologies of this literature, or they are self-destructive. At best, the older generation is replaced by outsiders—psychologically speaking, a rather suspect solution. For this search for surrogate sons/lovers is only a repetition, albeit with a kind of poetic justice, of the early Zionists' search for surrogate ancestors, substituting Zion, Hebrew, and Bible for Europe, Yiddish, and Talmud. And if there is a lesson to be learned from the current disillusionment with the Zionist project, it is that external substitutes may be necessary transitional measures, but in the long run they do not work.

From a psychological perspective, Zionism was a desperate attempt to cut once and for all the Gordian knot that historical Judaism had become—the neurotic collective psyche lacking both ego boundaries and body image, a palimpsest of conflicting identities unable to reach an unambiguous self-definition. The return to the maternal matrix, the soil, Zion, was expected to cure this conflicted existence by establishing new geographical and historical boundaries. Yet, whether or not we accept Yehoshua's psychoanalytic interpretation, we must admit that Zionist oedipal normalcy, to the extent that it materialized in the first generation of founding fathers, has not had a lasting impact. In contemporary fiction, the "new" Jews are found guilty of becoming no less overbearing and forbidding than their fathers, thereby re-creating in their sons the very neuroses they had been trying to prevent. Once again the "healthy" oedipal triangle seems to have been subverted, except that this time the formerly forbidden maternal matrix is available, tempting the sons into a comfortable, childlike dyadic relationship where both paternal and sibling rivalries can be ignored and denied.

Paradoxically, the psychological regression so central to the fictional characters discussed here does not reflect the extraliterary behavior of its propagators. Oz and Yehoshua, both vociferous political activists, do not shy away from confrontations in their public and nonfiction pronouncements. Despite the novelistic criticism directed at the fathers, the real-life sons are not yet in danger of giving up the struggle or of being subsumed by the dyadic relationship. A truly inward gaze may reveal that what renders contemporary heirs of Zionism incapable of coming to terms with their predicament is less what they have consciously rejected than what they have unconsciously accepted—the wishful idea that conflicts lend themselves to unambiguous resolutions. Only when contemporary Hebrew novelists overcome this basic need for clear-cut, black-and-white solutions will they ward off the potential danger of withdrawal they so vividly portray.

The use of Freudianism in contemporary fiction as a metaphoric grid for diagnosing the collective Israeli pathology betrays a noncommitted and superficial use of psychoanalytic teachings. With rare exceptions, notably Ben-Ner's *Protokol*, 1982, there is no serious attempt on the part of Israeli novelists to reach a deeper self-understanding through a bold confrontation with the past. Despite the constant analyzing of the Zionist neurosis, there is hardly any genuine use of the introspective and retrospective modes typical of both the therapeutic process and autobiographical writing. The significance of these modes lies not in the specific content they uncover but in the psychological structures they make conscious—to make one aware of and hopefully tolerant of differences. It is in this light that one must interpret both the strong autobiographical impulse and its arrested development in Israeli fiction in the last two decades.

As this study goes to press, Israeli literature boasts a new wave of novels that have been written since 1984. At the risk of crude generalization, I would suggest that these novels share a greater measure of tolerance and patience, which functions as a corrective to the heavily self-punitive mood of earlier work. This trend begins with Shabtai's posthumous *Sof Davar*, 1984 (*Past Perfect*, 1987), in which the threat of incorporation by the mother is turned into a fantasy of self-regeneration, with Grossman (*Ayen Erech Ahava*, 1986, or See Under "Love,"), Oz (*Kufsa Shehora*, 1987, or Black Box) and Yehoshua (*Molcho*, 1987) following suit. Coming to terms with the lesser and greater inadequacies of human life—most significantly, mortal sickness and natural death—rather than with psychopathologies and murderous aberrations, is another common feature, shared, in his own way, by Kenaz (*Hitganvut Yehidim*, 1986, or Heart Murmur) as well. Most of these novels (with the notable exception of Oz's political allegory, an updated version of his 1982 *ménage-à-trois*) do not deal, at least on their surface, with Israel's political and ideological predicament. They seem instead to unwittingly support what A. B. Yehoshua, in a radio interview, has attributed to his latest novel, *Molcho:*

> The message of this novel is that we need to be more patient and tolerant. That we need to get over the nervousness that seeks immediate and unambiguous solutions to our conflicts. I am speaking about that impatience in which I have been immersed since the Six-Day War. The feeling that we have to bring things to a close right away. To make a clear break. That if we do not ... a catastrophe is bound to happen. Now I feel that more patience is needed. That process takes time. That we have to continue struggling, but we should not expect immediate results. □

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