

A Critique of Politics, Culture & Society

SPECIAL INSERT: Spiritual Activism Conference

TIKKUN

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

MAY/JUNE 2005

SPECIAL FORUM | Reviving the Labor Movement
PALESTINIAN HIP-HOP | Can't Stop the SlingShot
RUTH MESSINGER | AJWS's Executive Director

The New New Middle East

What will democracy look like
for the next generation?



\$5.95 U.S. \$7.95 Canada



Feminists Rethink Pro-Life Politics | **Eytan Fox's Films**
Strategies to End the Occupation | **Zionist Agitprop**
Spiritual Directors | **Reviews: Michel Warschawski, Beck**

Mezuzah

Look closely at the metal sleeve, a case
no bigger than my thumb. You'll see it shows
a month of prints: some dirt I carried in

under my nails or dust I carried out,
a trace of flour from bread I baked,
and inky spots from messages I wrote.

*Write them upon the doorposts of thy house
and on thy gates.* In Deuteronomy,
we Jews are told that even entrances

and exits from the home must have their rules.
If only habit could convert to faith.
My fingertips have brushed the case, a touch

as quick, unthinking as a gust of wind
across the water's surface. I've kissed my hand,
returned the blessing to my lips, hoping

a taste would help me understand our laws.
The rabbis say that guards cannot protect
a king, but Torah keeps a beggar safe.

Beneath the silver lid, a parchment scroll
is rolled too tight to let in disbelief,
the prayer facing in upon itself,

the words like lovers in a darkened room.
A name of God is written on the square—
I cannot see it, but I know it's there.

—Jehanne Dubrow

- 2. **LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**
- 7. **PUBLISHER'S PAGE:** *Hillary Vs. Condi*
- 8. **EDITORIAL:** *Terri Schiavo's Mass Appeal*
- 10. **MASH DOWN BABYLON:** *Zionist Agitprop*
- 12. **FREE ASSOCIATIONS**
- 66. **TIKKUN COMMUNITY UPDATE**

FEATURES

14. Reproductive Rights

In light of the new "culture of life," feminists are reassessing how to address the undeniably difficult issue of abortion for progressive politics. **Nina Kohl** argues that its time to stop marginalizing *Pro-Life Democrats* (14). **Jennifer Baumgardner** (15) argues that liberals have to acknowledge how traumatic abortions can be, while **Thandeka** (19) explains how religious conservatives manipulate this experience for reactionary ends.

22. Cover: The New, New Middle East

Since the death of Arafat, the Middle East has been undergoing profound changes. In *The Missing Pieces* (22), **Jerome Slater** contends that to reinvigorate the peace process we must acknowledge what went wrong during the Oslo negotiations. Taking issue with Bush's belief that democracy is sweeping the Arab world, in *Hegemonic Democracies* (26), **Joe Lockard** explains why this isn't happening. Moving to Iran, **Roger Friedland** analyzes the complex prospects of its forthcoming June elections (29).

33. Israel/Palestine: Strategies to End the Occupation

According to Michael Lerner, despite the limited withdrawal from the Occupied Territories, *Ending the Occupation* (33) is still no easy task. Continuing the discussion about the best strategies to achieve this end that began in the March/April *Divestment Debate*, he asks activists **Mazin Qumsiyeh** (36), **Jeff Halper** (38), **Michel Warschawski** (40) and **Hayyim Feldman** (42) to consider an imaginative strategy: *reinvestment*.

45. Reviving the Labor Movement

Steve Early (45) and **Peter Rachleff** (49) advocate a grassroots, bottom-up strategy for labor while **Stephen Lerner** insists that the key to labor success is a more unified, better-managed movement (50). A key issue is how to respond to outsourced Third World labor. Historian **Paul Buhle** reminds us of the positive power of immigrant Jewish workers in the past (52); **Rebecca Weiner** takes a hard look at Wal-Mart's current use of Chinese labor (53).

ARTICLES

- 62. *Spiritual Directors*, **Karen Erlichman**
- 64. *Interview with Ruth Messinger*, **Or H. Rose**

BOOKS

- 67. Christoph Reuter's *My Life is a Weapon* and Oliver and Steinberg's *The Road to Martyr's Square*, reviewed by **Hal Niedzvecki**
- 69. Michel Warschawski's *On the Border*, reviewed by **Mark LeVine**
- 71. Anne Winters's *The Displaced of Capital*, reviewed by **Paul Otremba**
- 72. Capsule Reviews

TELEVISION/FILM

- 75. *Between Sex and Country: The Films of Eytan Fox*, reviewed by **Shai Ginsburg**
- 76. *Interview with Eytan Fox*, by **Shai Ginsburg**

MUSIC

- 79. *Can't Stop the Sling Shot: Hip-Hop Arises in Palestine*, by **Ron Nachmann**

- 80. Album Review: Beck's *Guero*

Inside Back Cover: *Sikkum*: Books TIKKUN recommends



**Learn about TIKKUN's
Spiritual Activism
Conference!**
(between pages 48 and 49)

Opposite: "Mezuzah"
by Jehanne Dubrow.
Front Cover: Farzan/Corbis

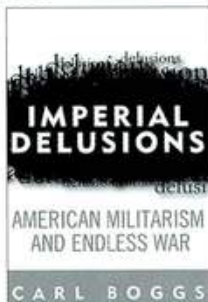
Sikkum

TIKKUN RECOMMENDS...

IMPERIAL DELUSIONS: American Militarism and Endless War

Carl Boggs, Rowman and Littlefield, 2005

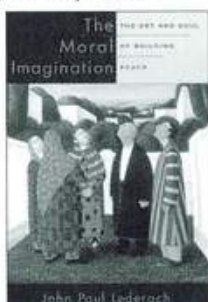
If there is one defining moment in American politics, it is militarism. In *Imperial Delusions*, Carl Boggs demolishes the lie that U.S. foreign policy is motivated by a desire to spread democracy. Arguing that America's role in the world is exclusively driven by security considerations, Boggs portrays a country dominated by the military. Moving from analyses of the influence of defense spending on the American economy to nationalism, gun culture, and American attacks on foreign civilian populations, Boggs provides a sobering portrayal of our warlike national ethos.



THE MORAL IMAGINATION: The Art and Soul of Building Peace

John Paul Lederach, Oxford University Press, 2005

A perfect companion volume to Carl Boggs' *Imperial Delusions*, *The Moral Imagination*, by distinguished mediation and conflict resolution expert John Paul Lederach explores what it means to morally transcend violence and war. A work of serious philosophical thinking, and an equally inspirational piece of religiously motivated reflections, Lederach argues that what is required is a change to a worldview that both acknowledges and rejects a notion to which we have all become accustomed: that violence is natural. Highly recommended to peace professionals and anti-war activists alike.



BEWARE OF GOD

Shalom Auslander, Simon & Schuster, 2005

This surreal, hilarious debut collection of short stories from an Orthodox Jew-cum-advertising-executive explores the intersections of traditional Judaism and popular culture. In one story, a boy plans his escape to Miami should Nazis take over New York. In another, the Angel of Death laments how Volvos and defibrillators have played havoc with his schedule. Addressing both theological and political issues—like anti-Semitism, the position of Jews in contemporary America, and God—Auslander's fresh perspective makes us think about such subjects in entirely new ways.



HOW THE LEFT LOST TEEN SPIRIT

Danny Goldberg, RDV Books/Akashic Books, 2005

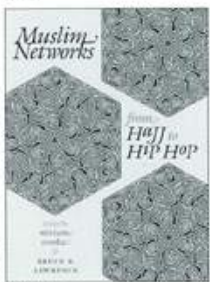
Nobody understands the intersection of youth and establishment politics like Danny Goldberg. A beautifully written broadside aimed straight at the heart of the Democratic Party, Goldberg's book charts the historical separation of this political institution from both youth culture and an entire generation of Americans. An indictment of the waning ideals of the boomer generation, as well as a valorization of the political role that young people ought to play in progressive politics, *How the Left Lost Teen Spirit* ought to be essential reading for those seeking to revive the flagging fortunes of the American Left.



MUSLIM NETWORKS: From Hajj to Hip Hop

Edited by Miriam Cooke and Bruce B. Lawrence, University of North Carolina Press, 2005

Despite the fact that most Americans have come to associate the term "network" with post-9/11 Islamic terror cells and money laundering schemes that masquerade as charities, networks have played a crucial role in the historical development of Muslim civilization. In this first-class anthology of essays, editors Cooke and Lawrence bring together an eye-opening series of pieces exploring the various political, religious, and cultural practices by which community is created in the greater Islamic world.



SCATTERED LIKE SEEDS

Shaw J. Dallal, Syracuse University Press, 2004

This semi-autobiographical novel by the former legal counsel to OAPC recounts the story of a Palestinian lawyer who returns to the Middle East after building a life in the United States. Shocked to see the conditions under which Palestinians live in Kuwait, Lebanon, and the West Bank, he grapples with how he might help his people. Dallal not only explores Britain's role in creating this tragedy and how AIPAC has furthered its effects through its influence on American policy in the region, but also paints vivid and sensitive portraits of Palestinians, putting a human face on their struggle for survival.



TIKKUN

Editor

Michael Lerner

Associate Editor

Peter Gabel

Senior Editor

Jo Ellen Green Kaiser

Managing Editor

Joel Schalit

Assistant Editor

Liz Winer

Art Director

Deborah Kory

Poetry Editors

Carolyn Forché, Joshua Weiner

Assistant Poetry Editor

Paul Otremba

Jewish Book Editor

Jonathan Schorsch

Literary Editor

Julian Levinson

Academic Editor

Akiba Lerner

Music Editor

Ron Nachmann

Contributing Editors

Stew Albert, Michael Bader, David Biale,

Charles Derber, Arnold Eisen,

Mordechai Gafni, Susannah Heschel,

Mark Levine, Ruth Messinger,

Michael Tomasky, Linda Zisquit

Editorial Assistants

Dan Apczynski, Joe Fischel,

Kate McMichael, JoAnna Minshew

Design and Production

Jonathan Wieder

Contributing Artists

Kym Balthazar, Seth Berkowitz, Chris Dennis,

Eric Drooker, Jeff Faerber, Christiane Grauert,

Jon Krause, Joseph Leone, Steven Rushevsky,

Stan Shaw, Gary Tharler

Web Design

Aleksandr Vladimirovsky

Publishers

George & Trish Vradenburg

Controller

Valerie Bach

2342 Shattuck Avenue, #1200

Berkeley, CA 94704

510-644-1200

fax: 510-644-1255

magazine@tikkun.org

Visit the TIKKUN website at

http://www.tikkun.org

Editorial Board

Rachel Adler, Gar Alperovitz, Michael Barkun,

Michael Berenbaum, Jay Cantor,

David Cohen, Dan Cohn-Sherbok, Elliot Dorff,

Marc H. Ellis, Leslie Epstein, Sidra Ezrahi,

John Felstiner, Nan Fink Gefen, Saul Friedlander,

Laura Geller, David Gordis, Arthur Green,

Colin Greer, Burt Jacobson, Ramsey Kanaan,

Reuven Kimelman, Linda Kintz, Daniel Landes,

Tzvi Marx, Daniel Matt, Elliot Neaman,

David Newman, Ilana Pardes, Robert Pinsky,

Judith Plaskow, Letty Cottin Pogrebin,

James Ponet, Arnold Rachlis, Aviezer Ravitsky,

Wade Clark Roof, Michael Sandel,

David Saperstein, Zalman Schachter-Shalomi,

Howard Schwartz, Chaim Seidler-Feller,

Gerald Serotta, Rami Shapiro, Stanley Sheinbaum,

Uri Simon, Johnny Temple, Arthur Waskow,

Steve Wasserman, A. B. Yehoshua, Idith Zertal

Letters to the Editor

To the Editor:

I was very touched by one aspect of your article on the Divestment Debate (March/April 2005) and the fact that editor Michael Lerner chose to print a critique of his own position immediately following that position. I called the magazine to comment on it and was told that there will be even more such critiques in the May/June issue. I don't know another magazine that so boldly highlights critique of its own editor's positions. That kind of commitment to a marketplace of ideas is so rare that I thought I would write and commend TIKKUN.

I can't recall, for example, a single time in the past twenty years when *Commentary* magazine or *The Weekly Standard* or any other magazine of the Right ever published a piece with this kind of overt criticism of their editorial position (letters, yes, but an actual article immediately following their presentation of a major and controversial position?). Nor can I think of an instance where either the *Nation*, *Mother Jones* or the *New Re-*



public published a piece critical of their cynicism or their anti-religious bias or their stance on anything. I'm impressed with what you do at TIKKUN and thought I should say so.

A.J. McNULTY
Chicago, Illinois

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

TIKKUN (Vol. 20, No. 3, ISSN 0887-9982) is published bimonthly by the Institute for Labor and Mental Health, a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization. TIKKUN, 2342 Shattuck Ave., #1200, Berkeley, CA 94704. TIKKUN subscribers are members of the Institute for Labor and Mental Health. Publications mail agreement number: #1549111. Canada mail distributor information: Express Messenger International; P.O. Box 25058; London B7C, ON N6C 6A8. Printed in USA. Printed on recycled paper.

SUBSCRIPTION ORDERS, CHANGES, AND PROBLEMS:

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

Manuscript submission: Do not send letters of inquiry. Unsolicited manuscripts not accepted via email. **Fiction & Non-fiction:** Send to 2342 Shattuck Ave., #1200, Berkeley, CA 94704. **Poetry:** Joshua Weiner, Dept. of English, 3101 Susquehanna Hall, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742. Our evaluation process may take up to four months. Submissions without a self-addressed stamped envelope will not be returned. Copyright © 2005 by the Institute for Labor and Mental Health. All rights reserved.

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

Advertising and Permissions: Contact Liz Winer, 2342 Shattuck Ave., #1200, Berkeley, CA 94704; (510) 644-1200; magazine@tikkun.org.

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

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

To The Editor:

I was pleased to see the coverage in your March/April issue of the efforts of the Presbyterian Church to publicize and ameliorate the condition of the Palestinian people through a proposed divestment program. I was shocked, however, to see none other than Michael Lerner condemn the program as "anti-Semitic," complaining that similar steps were taken neither against Russia for Chechnya nor China for Tibet. I would respond that neither the government of the United States nor its citizens are arming, funding, and supporting Russia's or China's actions, as they are in the case of Israel's subjection of the Palestinians.

For decades, your magazine and organization have nobly and quixotically tried and failed to persuade Americans that there is injustice in Palestine. Now, you are joined by an extensive, well-funded, American, Christian ally in your struggle and you reject them with name-calling. If you know of a better way than the divestment program to spread the message to Americans about the Israeli dilemma and the Palestinians' plight, I hope that you will reveal it.

JOHN J. MCCARTHY, JR.
Washington, D.C.

Editor responds:

Your letter is most peculiar, since the article in the March issue specifically endorses the limited and focused divestment that the Presbyterian Church supports, and for that reason it has been attacked by people in the Jewish world (though it has also been attacked by people who think the divestment should be total and not just limited and focused—but my position is in that respect identical to and supportive of the measure of the Presbyterians). Please read the article again.

To the Editor:

I have enjoyed reading your wonderful magazine for over ten years now, though I've only subscribed for the past five. The March/April issue was especially important and timely. The article "When Kosher Isn't Kosher," was really right on, up until the point where the author Aaron Gross used his article to advocate for vegetarianism. PETA must be congratulated for bringing [to light] the inexcusable practices of AgriProcessors, Inc. of Postville, Iowa and the Orthodox Union (OU) who denied any wrong doing by the *shochteim* (slaughterers) at

the processing plant. It is to Israel's credit that when the underground video footage of the practices were shown to the Chief Rabbis, both the Ashkenazi and the Rishon Le Zion Sephardi Chief Rabbi declared that the meat from that processing plant to be *not kosher* based upon the prohibition against *tza'ar ba'alei hayyim* (the prohibition against causing unnecessary pain to animals).

Although the Rabbinical tradition has taught that human beings were created to be vegetarians in the Garden of Eden, the rest of the story until the permission given by God to Noah to become a meat eater does not show vegetarianism in such a good light. The first murderer, Cain, was a vegetarian, as was Lamach. The "Sons of God" who desired the "Daughters of men" and birthed the generation of "Fallen Ones" were also vegetarians. These vegetarians became so wicked that God repented of having created them in the first place. So God sent the Flood to annihilate these people who never "got" the reason for their having been created at all. After God saves Noah, God gives him, and all future posterity, the right to eat meat provided that they respect the blood of the animal that contains the life force by not eating it.

I find no evidence that vegetarianism was the preferred direction or option for humankind, other than in some rabbinical traditions (there are other rabbinical traditions to the effect that meat was even eaten in the Garden of Eden and will be eaten in the After-Life).

I think that the reason that the vegetarian world was wiped out in our Sacred Myth was because, although they did not eat meat, they still killed animals for religious ritual and for clothing and housing, and they did this without a sense of *tza'ar ba'alei hayyim*. These humans later also killed each other without a sense of *tza'ar ba'alei hayyim*; this is how I read the section on the "Sons of the Elohim" (authorities) who just *took* the "daughters of Adam" (common folk) and created a lawless society. In my reading of Torah, I do not see the act of God allowing humans to eat that which they kill as a concession. I see it as yet another attempt to, by not eating the blood, and, later, by kosher laws, to bring humans to an indigenous understanding of the value of life, even when it must be taken.

REB GERSHON CAUDILL
El Cerrito, CA

To the Editor:

Thank you for Aaron Gross's lucid analysis of the unfortunate AgriProcessors slaughter situation ("When Kosher Isn't Kosher," March/April 2005).

Adhering to the true meaning of "humane"—having what are considered the best of human traits; kind, tender, sympathetic—we easily see there can be less-cruel methods but no humane or "more humane" slaughter or animal exploitation. Regulating AgriProcessors and the others can confuse people about this, but it can't accomplish more than that.

Only basic rights can provide a basis for true animal welfare, not just their survival till they've been exploited to the extent humans desire—the functional reality of "animal welfare." The 1990 Declaration of the Rights of Animals points the way.

DAVID CANTOR
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
RESPONSIBLE POLICIES FOR
ANIMALS, INC.
Glenside, PA

To the Editor:

I should say at the outset so there will be no illusion of dispassionate objectivity, that Bertell Ollman has been a good friend for more than thirty years, and a man I admire not just for his theoretical excellence (he was one of my gateways to Marx) but also for his imagination and courage. These latter two traits, put together, often add up to audacity, which is the best word to characterize Bertell's broadside and has paid off in the furor it has aroused—for a swift kick in the seat of a tenuous identity can be a salutary thing.

Bertell and I have shared a similar agony as we watched with mounting dismay what Zionism has wrought over the years. The "Democratic Jewish State" was supposed to normalize Judaic existence by giving Jews a homeland, but succeeded instead in exposing new rifts in an always-problematic identity. One may regard Ollman's response to the rift as *outré*, but it can also be seen as a daring rhetorical device to expose just how bizarre is the opposite course of action taken by the majority, of clinging to a traditional Jewish identity in the face of a history that has torn up its basic assumptions.

The trouble goes deeper than the endless list of human rights infractions wrought by the Jewish state in the pur-

LETTERS

suit of "security." It lies in the contradictory assumptions built into Zionist nationalism itself, which is anything but a normal species of the genus. In fact, the Jewish people lacked the essential features of nationhood: a common history based on a common language and the sharing of a common territory. Zionism did not proceed from Jewish nationalism; it had, rather, to create its nationalist preconditions through its very quest. In doing so, Zionism drew upon what Jews did hold in common: a culture, which would have been no problem in itself, except that it was organized under the sign of an Old Testament mythology—and this has proven a very big problem.

The Zionist quest tore apart the uncertain dialectic between exceptionalism and universality over which Jewish identity had hovered and forced it backward into tribalism and the cycle of revenge, i.e., terror. Set this against its contrary motion into advanced technical modernity and the dream of emancipation, and one has a recipe for perpetual crisis in what it means to be a Jew today.

The great Isaac Deutscher, who said in the Fifties that he was no longer an anti-Zionist but no Zionist either, came up with what I regard as the best, authentically Jewish, solution to the dilemma: become a "non-Jewish Jew." This identity, achieved by the most illustrious of our people, from Spinoza to Einstein, is to be the "Jewish heretic who transcends Jewry" (a "Jewish tradition," Deutscher adds).

Ollman brings a novel twist to this when he resigns from his people then says at the end of his Letter, *pace* Lenny Bruce, that "Socialism and communism are Jewish." Since he is proud to identify himself with these formations, Bertell is also saying that he hasn't really left the fold, either—and that he should be regarded, not so much as a "non-Jewish Jew," but as a "Jewish non-Jew"—about as Jewish as one can get, I should think, but then, I'm biased.

JOEL KOVEL
Bard College

To the Editor:

My strongest response to your letter [Bertell Ollman's *Letter of Resignation From the Jewish People*] came just on the last two lines, where you contemplate a hypothetical possibility of applying for readmission to the Jewish people... Was this asking for another chance?

But, of course, this ending is turning your title into a ruse, a provocation for readers, and a rhetorical device. And it can be justified as such, since your letter is indeed provocative, but your critique, as I see it, is directed at an unidentifiable object—"the Jewish people."

There is no way of not simplifying such a broad category if you wish to pinpoint it with the demands you present. Where in the world could or can one ever speak of something called "the Jewish people" as a clear notion? All through history "the Jewish people" were either an abstraction, a convenient conceptual reference for an amorphous idea, or a political tool. Even if this could be said of any people—the Jewish case, I think, is a stronger one.

Considering all of the different Jewish Diasporas of early and modern times, there was no politically organized center that was able to provide an all-inclusive sense of this identity. Yet, this has become "Jewish identity." Jewish identity is an eclectic construct. Nevertheless, this does not mean that there is no such identity. On the contrary, this identity coalesced around an idea, or what was regarded as exceptional theology. For many centuries religion was a prevalent component of it and an internal disciplinary force. It had no earthly, or rather immediate, territorial reference. But it had all along a nationalist messianic tendency and extremely exclusionary politics.

Following the Enlightenment, however, secularism did not prevent maintaining Jewish identity. It has offered itself a new idea, or probably an ideology. Its patriotism became ephemeral, but not specifically nationalistically oriented, and its political orientation was, to some degree, cosmopolitan. It has engaged in science, liberal arts, and middle class decadence. And it allowed any combination of reasoning for justifying allegiance to Jewish identity—or resignation from it. And while identity is usually coercively imposed—from within and without—in some historical catastrophic instances, holding unto Jewish identity ended up being nothing less than heroic.

What has changed the multifold features of Jewish identity is the ideology known as Zionism. This Jewish historical event has "normalized" Jewish identity; it has *zionized* it along theological dogma and strict nationalist codes of exclusion. Now we have a central coercive authority determining who is a Jew and who is not.

Zionist ideology determines what the criteria for Jewishness are. One could also call it the "Law of Israel."

Your error, Bertell, was to fall into the same trap. You end up essentializing Jewishness. You assign specific qualities to people you select, while you deny it from people you assume do not qualify. Thus, it seems, we probably begin to develop a sense of nostalgia for a Golden Age of innocence in Jewishness. But, we all know that innocence itself is an ideology.

YERAH GOVER
Queens College
The City University of New York

To the Editor:

I am sure that Ollman and Schorsch will attend to each other; I am solely interested in several malicious falsehoods that seem to me portentous in their erroneous inhumanity.

Mr. Schorsch notes that "Israeli policies toward Palestinians and Israeli Arabs have often been shortsighted, ill-conceived, and even ill-intentioned." The key word here is "often," because it implies that much of the rest of the time Israeli policy has been benign or neutral. This view is terribly mistaken.

It was a matter of Israeli policy from at least as early as 1897, the time of the meeting of the World Zionist Organization in Basle, that the Palestinian population needed to be removed from Palestine and the Jews established in their own State.... At the time, 95 percent of the population was Arab and 99 percent of the land Arab-owned. Think of these numbers, absorb them, ponder them. Is it not clear what they mean? In 1895, Theodore Herzl noted in his *Diaries* that something would have to be done about the Arabs:

We shall have to spirit the penniless population across the border by employing employment for it in the transit countries, while denying it any employment in our own country.

Out of the hundreds of similar statements from authoritative Zionist sources I choose but two:

We came to this country which was already populated by Arabs, and we are establishing a Hebrew, that is, a Jewish state here.... There is not one place built in this country that did not have a former Arab population.

—Moshe Dayan

Between ourselves it must be clear that there is no room for both peoples together in the same country...there is no other way than to transfer the Arabs from here to neighboring countries, to transfer all of them: Not one village, not one tribe, should be left.

—R. Weitz, former head of the Jewish Agency's colonization department.

Israeli policy was to remove the Arab population from Palestine by any means necessary. In this sense, it was always ill-intentioned. Please do not respond that there were often good, compassionate, and principled Jews who opposed this policy. Of course there were. The point is that structurally, systematically, it was Israeli policy to remove the Arabs; and over time, it is this policy that has prevailed.

Schorsch makes things considerably easier for himself by repeating the old vicious and often-exposed lies. "The Palestinians did not exist in any significant political or institutional sense before Zionism 'created' them...."

Welcome to the club:

"There was no such thing as a Palestinian people... It was not as though there was a Palestinian people considering itself as a Palestinian people and we came and threw them out [and] took their country away from them. They did not exist."

So prevaricated Golda Meir. Nothing surprising here.

Zionism was formed in the image of European imperialism and European, particularly German, colonization. It was quite "normal" to take over the land of a people by simply eliminating, in concept, the existence of that people.

And yet, and yet... have we not already cited Dayan to the contrary? And what are we to make of the earlier prophetic conscience and consciousness of Achad Ha'am, who reported after a journey to Palestine in 1891 that it was difficult to find any uncultivated farmland there? But more to the point was his morally furious condemnation of his Jewish brethren who, he claimed, had learned nothing from their history of suffering oppression. They should meet the Arab population with respect and friendship:

And what are our brothers in Palestine doing? The very opposite! They were servants in the country of their

exile, and suddenly find themselves in a state of unbounded liberty.... This sudden change has brought about within them a tendency towards deposits as is always the case 'when a servant becomes a master,' and they treat the Arabs with hostility and cruelty, curtail their rights in an unreasonable manner, insult them without any sufficient reason and actually pride themselves upon such acts; and nobody among us opposes this despicable and dangerous inclination.

We think that the Arabs are all savages who live like animals and do not understand what is happening around them. This is, however, a great error.

One last deeply fallacious assertion:

The notion that Israel is conducting genocide against the Palestinians is a libel, false and hysterical.... Though some Palestinians who fled during and after 1948 were forced to do so by Israel, many were encouraged by Arab leaders who declared war on Israel to escape from the conflict in the expectation that a swift victory would follow.

I have not the space available to me to refute this morass of contemptible innuendoes, but it does not matter, as the task has already been accomplished by writers like Norman G. Finkelstein in his book, *Image and Reality of the Israel-Palestine Conflict*. Mr Schorsch should remind himself of the legacy of Deir Yassin.

Jews are often given to moralistic disquisitions regarding their (and God's) beautifully high standards. The truth is that Jews are most likely neither better nor worse than other religious groups; but their rhetoric is often quite superior. When it comes to reality (unfortunately TIKKUN writers seem unable to distinguish between reality and ideology) the situation does not warrant grandiose adulation.

The crucial point of Ollman's dramatic gesture of resignation is not the appropriateness of what might be called a political performative utterance, but of the logic utilized to support its assertion. I am afraid that the Israeli state and a very large number of American Jews have failed to confront this logic, and for very good reason. It is essentially unsailable and therefore produces in the heart of one's identity, a sense of sickness and moral despair.

RICHARD LICHTMAN
Berkeley, CA

Open your heart.

Awaken your mind.

Offer them to the world.

One Spirit Interfaith Seminary is a two-year part time professional training that explores the world's religions & spiritual diversity. Designed for working adults, the program leads to ordination as an interfaith minister.

Other Programs: Spiritual Counseling, Explorations in Essential Spirituality: An Integral View, and more.

On-site NYC & distance learning available.

For more info call:
(212)931-6840

OneSpirit
INTERFAITH SEMINARY

A division of One Spirit Learning Alliance

www.onespiritinterfaith.org

LETTERS

A Letter to Bertell Ollman:

So first, let me say Mazel Tov, Bertie. So, now you'll have an Un-bar-mitzvah ceremony? You'll read the Torah backwards? You'll attempt to reverse your ritual circumcision, or maybe just issue a Declaration of Reversal of Circumcision?

Jesus Christ, Bertell, even the twelve apostles didn't resign from the Jewish people, even though they crucified him... And—what about the bagels, cream cheese, and lox, and the smoked meat sandwich—will they still taste the same? And the kishke, Bertell, the kishke!

Bertell Ollman picks up his marbles and goes to... Birobidjan? (This was Stalin's Jewish autonomous region near Siberia, the anti-imperialist answer to Zionism.)

Reminds me of Timothy Leary's line "it's time to leave the planet." And he really did resign from the planet, hurling his cryogenically frozen body into outer space. Outer space! Now there's a thought. You can never get far enough away from the Jewish people.

Finally, since you probably haven't enjoyed this letter so far, here's a story that might amuse you. A well educated, atheist Jew decided to send his daughter to a private Episcopalian girls' school somewhere in New England. Not for the religion—it was a really good school. One day she came home enthused about a new idea: God was actually three Persons: the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Her dad seized her by the shoulders, gazed into her eyes, and growled:

Listen to me: There is only one God, and *we do not believe in him! Do you hear me?*

GAD HOROWITZ
Toronto, Ontario

To the Editor:

I read the "Zion Riddims," article (March/April 2005) and I am frankly not pleased with its racism and politicization. I wish to thank you for your portrayal of me as a white Breslov Ninja-looking identity-disoriented clown. It's good to get a little window of what the bigger picture would be had I had the utter misfortune of your subliminally negative imagery of me in an article where I would have been your primary victim.

The Jamaican Jewish community by the way is *not* Ashkenazi-looking in the least. Not that it matters to you "white" American self-hating humanitarian "Jews" or to the Jew haters you serve so well in the media.

I am a blend of Yemenite, Kurdi, Iraqi, Portuguese, and Ukrainian Jews. I am 100 generations on my paternal side from Israel (or Palestine for you as I'm sure you would prefer) and as such, I do not see myself as white. I am not dressed in Ninja garb, nor do I practice "ninjitsu" and cannot see that as accurate. I can say that I was better accepted in Jamaica than I am by the self-hating commie deli-identifying Jews in the States.

My family lived in Hebron for 1,000 years and left after surviving the 1929 massacre of sixty-seven innocent Jews.

I guess with a little reggae music thumping and some more hash, the Arabs would have chilled out, huh? Nah... not likely.

YEHOSHUA SOFER HEJAZI
Jerusalem, Israel

To the Editor:

In the "Radical Hope" issue of *TIKKUN* (November/December 2004), Bram Dijkstra expressed terrific disappointment in American visual art produced during the last fifty years. Filled with troubling observations and some persuasive argument, Dijkstra's article nonetheless dreadfully flattens a domain of American culture, which, in my opinion, is filled with "radical hope."

Mr. Dijkstra writes this about Abstract Expressionism: "almost immediately after 1945, the burgeoning paranoia of the Cold War helped institutionalize a general denial of the value of socio-critical, or even simple narrative, content in art in favor of a single focus on structure and design as self-sustaining values."

Interesting, but dead wrong. Abstract Expressionism was made out of the stuff and guts of American life and history, its new-found confidence—and arrogance—its dive into the enormous metaphoric spaces of our deserts and mountain ranges, its hunger for mythic knowledge and adventure. It rejected figuration—though not always—in favor of direct expression of paint on canvas. The works of Pollock, DeKooning, Kline and Rothko, ripped and roared, raged and reveled, but also mined the deepest reverie and the sorrows of hard-earned knowledge.

If these works later became the emblems of American power, carried along by ruthless American capitalism, we can hardly blame the paintings for that. We do not, after all, leave Michelangelo's Sistine ceiling in the bosom of

Catholic papal propaganda.

Of most recent art, Dijkstra writes, "The most thoroughly reactionary achievement of postwar culture is that it has succeeded in eliminating the very concept of hope ... and has replaced it with the concept of the void (a world incapable of moral—and hence social—improvement, and devoid of any motivating force other than immediate material self-gratification)." Yet what a relief entered that art world with the gay bantering and punning of Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg, and Pop art. After McCarthy and the murderous parochialism of the 1950s, these later decades brought us women, blacks, Jews, gays, Latinos, and more. Think of the theatrical work of African American Fred Wilson, or the startling feminist photographs of Cindy Sherman, or the Jewish work of Jewish artists like Deborah Kiss and Ken Aptekar. The politics and aesthetics of the varied new groups upset hierarchies hammered into place for centuries.

Since World War II, art in America has become a many-splendored thing, a mix of voices, styles, materials, installed in conventional and outrageous venues. Vociferous instead of passive, today's art rejects the awe and "appreciation" of the past. It does not rest serenely on the wall waiting to be anointed and celebrated. There is no avant-garde anymore. There haven't been any artist-heroes since the death of Picasso in 1974. American artists are not looking for heroes—or answers, and I say, Hear! Hear!

EUNICE LIPTON
Paris, France

Intern at TIKKUN

We're looking for interns for the summer and beyond to help with *Tikkun Magazine* and the *Tikkun Community* at *Tikkun's National Office* in Berkeley, California. You can help with: The magazine by reviewing article, fiction, and poetry submissions; proofreading articles; researching illustrators.

Growing the *Tikkun Community* through development, outreach, and events locally, to our national community, and to college students.

To apply, send a resume and cover letter to Liz Winer by email at liz@tikkun.org or fax to 510-644-1255.

Hillary versus Condi

George Vradenburg

The favorite parlor game in Washington right now is speculating about a Hillary-versus-Condi race for President in 2008.

What does the appetite among inside-the-beltway pundits for that face-off say about politics in America?

First, it says that the 2008 race is wide open; neither party will have the benefit of an incumbent. While the challengers could re-offer John Kerry, his close but uninspiring performance in 2004 is causing top Democrats to go shopping. So, Hillary and Condi are viable choices in an open field.

Second, it says that we are drawn to interesting personalities and stories. Hillary, the First Wife betrayed by a First Husband impeached for lying about his non-sex sex, has a back-story full of nutritious complexity and intrigue. But the junior senator from New York has clearly established herself as a highly credible political personality and power in her own right, and her "second chance" story is one that fascinates (and infuriates) America.

Condi has her own intriguing story, starting in the post-slavery south and wending its upwardly mobile way to the position of the first black woman Secretary of State, with a little classical pianist mixed in. With her new Matrix-like wardrobe in Paris, she has emerged as a high-fashionista and world dominatrix, a variegated tapestry never before seen in American politics. While still a political personality in formation, Condi is living a complex Bush-mentored "coming of age" story right before our eyes.

Third, it says that we want to see a woman and an African American run on a major party ticket for President of the United States. A two-woman race would eliminate the degrading and distracting arguments about whether a woman could be as "tough" as a man in the presidential office. And with Condi as the Republican standard-bearer, any disquieting voices from the Right that might question the wisdom of putting a black person in the White House would be seriously muted. With Hillary versus Condi, our gender and race shibboleths would be behind us, and we could advance our destiny as a country where any Ameri-



can has the chance to become President.

Fourth, it says that a political consensus may be developing around policies of strong national defense, free trade, and fiscal conservatism. While there would be a range of differences on particular issues and on priorities, a Hillary-versus-Condi race would reinforce the momentum of the American political center away

from traditional liberalism. Without a powerful primary challenge to Hillary, progressives may be left with a minority position in a minority party.

From the perspective of the Tikkun Community—with its progressive political agenda of empathy and caring—a Hillary-versus-Condi race is not appealing. Intriguingly, in the early 1990s, Hillary spoke openly and admiringly of the "politics of meaning" advocated by TIKKUN. Yet many in the Tikkun Community (incorrectly, in my view) do not see this "meaning" perspective in her current politics. As for Condi, it would appear that religion is reinforcing her belief in a muscular use of American power to promote democracy.

As yet, the progressive segment of the political spectrum has not understood TIKKUN's essential insight—the American people are looking for a political program that reflects their spiritual yearning for meaning. Given election exit polling results highlighting the "values" issues of American voters (however imprecise that term), TIKKUN's insight has now become accepted wisdom across the political spectrum. Yet no one in progressive political America has found a "values" voice, notwithstanding the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr.

As Jim Wallis has asked in his recent best-selling book, echoing TIKKUN's insight, what *are* "God's Politics"? For example, would God have us seek peace at the expense of justice or justice at the expense of peace? Would God have us dictate a "culture of life" or accept the life choices of flawed human beings created "in his image"?

As they say, a lot can happen between now and the 2008 campaign. A Hillary-versus-Condi race probably won't happen. But a debate over God's politics will. Will the progressives find a voice that can join the debate?

To find out, read TIKKUN. The 2008 election may seem far in the future, but the new progressive political vocabulary is being invented today in the Tikkun Community. □

Terri Schiavo's Mass Appeal

Michael Lerner

The mass appeal of House Majority Leader Tom DeLay's magnificent manipulation of the media to make the case of Terri Schiavo's impending death the number-one news item at the end of March deserves a deeper look. On the one hand, liberal critics were right to suspect that DeLay's interest in the case may have been motivated by his desire to:

- a) avoid focus on his own infractions of ethical standards that were being revealed at the time, and
- b) re-ignite the divisive issues around "right to life" that have split our society around abortion.

Moreover, progressives make a powerful case against the vast majority of politicians who champion a "right to life" ideology. However, why do these same politicians—like DeLay—ignore the fact that, every single day, over 29,000 children around the world die as a result of a global economic system that provides inadequate health care and nutrition? Why do these same politicians cut funding for social services that can provide people with adequate health care? Why do these same politicians ignore their responsibility for the 100,000 deaths caused so far by the war that they initiated in Iraq? Similarly, why do they show so little caring for the lives of prisoners tortured in U.S. prisons, many of whom have recently committed suicide to avoid further pain?

Yes, there are some consistent "culture of life" proponents who oppose abortion and oppose the death penalty and oppose all wars. However, they are in the minority. They are not the vast majority of the politicians who raised their voices in opposition to Terri's husband Michael, who decided that after fifteen years in a vegetative state, his wife Terri should no longer be kept alive. Instead, most pro-life advocates gave their support to Schiavo's parents, Bob and Mary Schindler, who had never been willing to accept the medically established fact that Terri's cerebral cortex had largely atrophied and filled with cerebrospinal fluid, and thus would never regain consciousness.

Was this genuine caring for Terri Schiavo? Not according to many who work with "end of life" issues. Many argue that Terri's life and death were not being respected by her parents who, after fifteen years, refused to acknowledge the reality of her condition and allow her a respectful departure. In their zeal to make political points, the advocates for Terri Schiavo were letting this real human being be turned into an object.

Yet, despite the obvious elements of political manipulation on the part of many of the conservative politicians involved, the spark of concern ignited in millions of

Americans by this case cannot be dismissed as mere hypocrisy, any more than the pro-life sentiments in favor of banning abortion by millions of Americans can be reduced to the patriarchal aspirations of reactionary politicians that would like to return to the time when women knew their place and sexuality was tightly controlled. Something more is happening here, and it deserves to be understood. No matter how sad it is that the caring shown for the fetus in the case of anti-abortion—or for Terri Schiavo—does not generalize to a caring for others in need of help, there is still genuine and heartfelt caring in this specific moment. But why doesn't it generalize to others? What yearning does this touch in people that is blocked when faced with the suffering of others?

When looking at a mass psychological phenomenon of this sort, Peter Gabel (associate editor of *TIKKUN* and professor of law at New College of California) and I concluded many years ago that we need to look at the fundamental distortion in American life: the blocking of mutual recognition and the frustration of people's desire for loving connection. In our view, it is the yearning for this recognition and connection that provides some of the energy that underlies the healthy aspirations to transcend the limitations of the ethos of selfishness and materialism in capitalist life. But when people have been living a life in which this yearning has been systematically frustrated from earliest childhood, they are likely to be filled with rage and pain. Alice Miller's important work on *The Drama of the Gifted Child* captures some of this, as does the important work done by the Hoffman Institute in San Anselmo, California. Both provide detailed studies and clinical interventions which highlight the crippling impact on millions of children living in families where parents are unable to fully appreciate and respond to the uniqueness, beauty, and sacredness of the powerless child they have brought into the world.

For most people, this anger and pain is suppressed through careful socialization or managed through drugs, alcohol, or later channeling into aggression—in mild forms against competitors in the economic marketplace, in extreme forms against racial minorities, homosexuals, liberals, Jews, Muslims, terrorists, communists, or whoever else is the sanctioned "evil other" currently being denounced in their society.

Holding this dynamic together for most people is the (usually unconscious, but nevertheless overwhelmingly powerful) parental injunction to blame themselves for not having received the love and recognition that they deserved. Instead of feeling angry at parents or society, children inter-



nalize the experience as one that reflects their own self-worth. This makes it easier for them to accept the lack of recognition and caring that they find waiting for them in the competitive marketplace, which presents itself to them as "the real world."

And yet... there is buried within many of us a recognition

that we were in fact that helpless child that no one really responded to with the caring we deserved. That recognition is far too scary for many to articulate in a straightforward manner. But it finds expression in the surge of caring toward the fetus or, in this case, the vegetative state of Terri Schiavo. It is precisely the blameless purity of the fetus—or of Schiavo—that allows some to project onto them all the concern and caring that they were never allowed to express for themselves (or, in pop psychology terms, for "the inner child that still resides in our unconscious").

No one can "blame" the fetus or Schiavo for the pain that they may experience when life is terminated or say "they deserve it." So people finally have a moment in which they can stand up for the child that was them without having to respond to the self-punishing voices that tell them that what happened to them was deserved. And the anger that they unconsciously feel (quite legitimately) about not having been defended as a child from the hurts and rejections they experienced from parents and others can now find expression in a rage at liberals, "abortionists," and "life-exterminators" who are doing to this fetus or to Terri Schiavo what was once done to them: hurting them when they didn't deserve to be hurt.

The point of psychological analysis of this sort is not to discount this pain, or to put people down or ridicule them for acting out an unresolved childhood dynamic. On the contrary, the most pressing task for those of us who want to heal American society is to find ways to address this pain that leads people to become haters and even murderers in unconscious defense of the powerless child within. We are surrounded by people in pain. The appropriate response is not to find a more convincing argument to show how inconsistent these people are about their supposed caring for life, but instead to develop approaches to mass healing of the wounds that are cultivated by right-wing politics, lest they destroy us.

Vindication for the Iraq War?

January's democratic elections in Iraq are now being used by the American Right as proof that the invasion of Iraq was morally legitimate because it eliminated a dictator and set in motion democratic dynamics throughout the Middle East. However, those who opposed the war never doubted that it was an efficient means to achieve the overthrow of Saddam and create a social system that, while not quite democratic (did anyone notice that the entire Sunni population, battered by U.S. destruction of their cities and the mass murder of their civilians as collateral damage, massively avoided the election?), could have some positive outcomes. Nevertheless, we oppose that kind of violence, ir-

respective of its potentially positive outcomes, because:

- a) we oppose violence to achieve positive ends, no matter how noble the ends are, and
- b) we believe that legitimating violence for any noble end helps perpetuate the use of violence for political purposes.

History is not over, and some day powerful states will use violence against us—and use the precedent of the U.S. invasion of Iraq as justification. There is no vindication for violence or war, and those making this case will be remembered as people who helped undermine the feeble attempts by the world's population to move toward institutionalizing a new and lasting peaceful world. □

Zionist Agitprop

Joel Schalit

Jews lived in Israel
when Jesus delivered his Sermon on the Mount, when Mohammad conquered Mecca, and when George Washington became our first President.



Jews have had a continuous presence in Israel for over 3400 years.

Jews at Western Wall, Jerusalem, 1925

blueStar
The Jewish PR Firm
www.bluestarpr.com

Israel is a country in need of better PR. Over the course of the Al-Aqsa Intifada, media imagery of soldiers abusing Palestinians at checkpoints and children getting killed by IDF fire has helped create an international image of Israel as a ruthless colonial enterprise run by racist religious fanatics wearing military uniforms. Seeking to raise consciousness of the plight of the Palestinians, the frequently excessive rhetoric of diaspora anti-Occupation forces has

helped turn this representation of Israel into a new, totally negative form of common sense about the country that often overshadows its political and cultural complexity.

Foreign Zionists are of little help, as they react to negative media portraits of Israel as biased and level charges of anti-Semitism whenever they respond to legitimate moral criticisms of the country by social justice advocates.

Enter these two fascinating posters, produced by American public relations

firm Blue Star PR. Only a sampling of a larger repertoire of pro-Israel pieces produced by the firm and run as full-length ads at bus stops in San Francisco, they clearly take into account the city's political demographic—queer, Jewish, multiethnic—while communicating a really interesting set of political messages: Jews are actually an 'indigenous' people, Israel is actually more progressive than America, etc.

Certainly, there are elements of truth here. It's what these posters oversimplify that is the problem. To find out more: <http://www.bluestarpr.com>. □

Joel Schalit is managing editor of *TIKKUN*.

FREE ASSOCIATIONS

Human Trafficking In Israel

When we think of Israel's human rights offenses, Palestinian treatment by the IDF comes to mind. However, another kind of human rights abuse is happening regularly in Israel: human trafficking. Both women and men are trafficked into Israel, lured from countries such as the Ukraine, Moldova, Uzbekistan, China, and India with the promise of economic opportunity. Many women are smuggled across the Egyptian border, raped along the way, and then sold by public auction. When they arrive in Israel, they are forced into a life of sex slavery, having sex with ten or more men a day to pay off their "debt" to the traffickers who have paid to transport and buy them. Traffickers and unethical business owners use the same kinds of intimidation to force male workers to work long hours in terrible conditions, with inadequate food and almost no pay.

While prostitution is not illegal in Israel, Nomi Levenkron, legal director of Israel's non-profit Hotline for Migrant Workers has pointed out the fact that 99 percent of all prostitutes in Israel are trafficked women working against their will. She believes, then, that frequenting prostitutes in Israel almost always constitutes rape. Her research has also

shown that while people accuse migrant workers, Arabs, or even Orthodox Jews of being disproportionately represented among users of prostitutes, the truth is that these men come from all walks of life.

The U.S. State Department's 2004 international human rights report (released this February) highlights the fact that, though Israel strengthened

its laws against trafficking in 2004 and created a new patrol on the Israel/Egypt border, trafficking continues to be a serious problem. We at TIKKUN wonder how much of the apparent indifference in Israel to human trafficking is a result of the Occupation. Clearly, limiting Palestinian access to work in Israel has created a demand for migrant workers (though not for sex workers

per se). Police also argue that they don't have the resources to deal with traffickers because they're so busy fighting terrorism. One also wonders, though, whether the siege mentality in Israel has caused many Israelis to become hardened against all outsiders, so that they simply care less about their welfare, forgetting the Torah's injunction to welcome the stranger.

The Trials of Lawrence Summers

It was approximately two-and-a-half years ago that former Clinton cabinet member turned President of Harvard University, Lawrence H. Summers, revealed his incredible arrogance and racism by demanding that Cornel West, a tenured university professor at Harvard, meet with him on a monthly basis and prove his academic worth. Yet when West pointed out that no such demand had ever been made on any other tenured professor—and that Summers had specifically referred to West's activism as reason for suspicion—the media acted as though West was being overly sensitive. Not surprisingly, West took up a new position at Princeton. Adding insult to injury, at a January conference on the role of women in science and engineering, according to the Boston Globe, Summers argued that "innate differences between men and women might be one reason fewer women succeed in science and math careers."

Though the Harvard faculty staged a vote of no confidence in Summers in March, the Harvard board seems pleased enough with Summers' fundraising talents to keep him in his position. Despite the fact that this vote was not binding, faculty displeasure with such a reactionary university president ought to be enough to disqualify Summers from continuing in his position of leadership at one of the world's most renowned institutions of higher learning. Sadly, Summers derives much legitimacy from the support of Harvard's Jewish Studies department, and many other prominent Jews. Since Summers is a well-documented defender of Israel's policies in the Occupied Territories, Jews would be smarter to publicly criticize him for his reactionary politics and to insist that as long as Harvard's bottom line is fundraising, the media should stop referring to the university as a venerable educational institution.



AP PHOTOS/ STEVEN SENNE (LEFT), JEFF CHIU (OPPOSITE)

California Democrats

After the recall of Gray Davis as governor in 2003 and the election of Arnold Schwarzenegger, and Schwarzenegger's subsequent success in appealing directly to the voters over the heads of the Democratic-dominated California Legislature, Democrats are



reported to be "humbled" and confused. The debate goes in the predictable channels between those who say, "be more pro-business and cut taxes for the rich" and those who say "be more loyal to your traditional base of unions and minorities." Yet, what Democrats need is a vision

that can excite voters to believe in something that transcends self-interest or special-interest groups. We suggest a politics of meaning. But without such an alternative vision to regenerate loyalty and a sense of higher purpose, the only other plausible route is to find some other Hollywood celebrity to challenge Schwarzenegger. So the media has been floating trial balloons for Rob Reiner and Warren Beatty, though other millionaires may yet step forward. Little else is possible when a political party loses confidence in the power of ideas to excite its potential constituency.

What to Do About the New HIV

This past spring, U.S. newspapers began reporting on an allegedly new strand of HIV that is impervious to anti-retroviral therapy. At the same time, it was reported that HIV cases are on the rise amongst urban gay men, correlating with increased recreational crystal methamphetamine use. The *New York Times* predicted a resurgent attempt by health officials and some gay organizations to use these recent developments as leverage to call, yet again, for the curbing of promiscuous sex and for more hardball intervention approaches like monitoring behavior at clubs and bathhouses and reinvigorating fear-inducing media campaigns.

Mainstream gay authors and politicians like Larry

Kramer, Richard Cohen, and Charles Kaiser quickly followed suit, employing the shopworn tactics of condemnation and shame to whip queers back into line.

Queers ought to be skeptical of these efforts and refuse to let public fears be manipulated as moral weapons. We should aggressively shame the political practice of shaming, whether it targets who or how often we fuck, what positions we like, or where we like to do it. The landscape of gay life and gay politics entails more than libertine sex, drug use, and calls for marriage rights. We should expect compassion for each other and respect for ourselves. In short, we might begin to articulate a queer politics of meaning.

Death Penalty and the Jews

John R. Quatman, a former prosecutor in California, revealed that he was advised by a judge to get rid of Jewish jurors if he ever wanted to get the death penalty for convicted murderers. The judge, the late Stanley Golde, asked Quatman into his chambers and asked him why he had not removed a prospective Jewish juror. Golde told him that he could not have a Jew on the jury, and asked Quatman if he was aware that when Adolf Eichmann was apprehended, there was a major controversy in Israel

about whether a man responsible for the death of millions should be executed. Judge Golde warned Quatman that "no Jew would vote to send a defendant to the gas chamber." Quatman reports that he thereafter excused any prospective juror who was Jewish. Golde also advised other prosecutors that "if you have a cop case, be careful of blacks on the jury, because they don't like cops."

Tikkun-oriented Jews might be flattered by this

version of Jewish consciousness, further proof of the continuing resilience of Jewish religious values. Specifically, the anti-death-penalty consciousness that first led Talmudic rabbis to modify Torah-dictated death penalties by declaring a court "bloodthirsty" if it had used the death penalty more than once in forty years, requiring that accused murderers could only be convicted if they had been witnessed by *two witnesses* who had previously warned the defendant that the act in

question would be punishable by death. *Halevy*—if only it were true. Unfortunately, as more and more Jews have allowed Israel and its version of "tough Jews" to influence their vision of Jewish identity, more and more Jews have assimilated the ethos of moral ruthlessness of the free market and U.S. government policy. Thus, defense attorneys ought to be cautious in assuming that getting a Jew on their jury is a sure vote against the death penalty.

Pro-Life Democrats: We're Here, We're Sincere. Get Used to It.

Nina Kohl

The abortion issue is dragging Democrats down in the heartland. This became apparent to me when I moved with my family from Seattle to Milwaukee in July of 2004, just a few months before the presidential election. Wisconsin was a key battleground state and it seemed that either Kerry or Bush was flying in weekly to drum up votes. Both candidates spent election eve here, evidently feeling there was no place where their last remaining hours of campaigning could be better spent.

After living for the past fifteen years on the West Coast, what struck me most in returning to my native Midwest during a presidential campaign was how loud and clear I heard the message "don't vote for a candidate who won't protect life" in local newspaper editorials, ads, bumper stickers, and friendly conversation. With two weeks to go before the election, pro-life efforts were ramped up even further. I emailed the Kerry campaign about the feeling in the air here, and how I thought Democrats would lose the election if we didn't modify our message on abortion. Late on election night, Wisconsin, not surprisingly, was still too close to call. It ended up being one of the last states called, but it finally went for Kerry. The pundits labeled it "powder blue." We had won the battle in Wisconsin, but, polls ultimately revealed, the Democrats had lost the war, not surprisingly, on "moral values."

I had an abortion at the age of nineteen, around the time when the abortion rate in America peaked, in 1981. In my view, abortion is a symptom of, not a solution to, the problems women confront in society. As a woman who has had an abortion, I'm not in a position to judge anyone, and I wouldn't want to anyway. What I am passionate about is providing alternatives to abortion and sparing others the suffering it can cause. I'm a pro-life Democrat and, like most of us who are both progressive and pro-life, I've been fairly quiet about it up until now. But pro-life Dems are organizing, and we're silent no more, because we're convinced the un-nuanced stance our party is taking on abortion is costing us votes.

The Democrats need a new way of talking about our position on abortion. The Republicans have got us on the defensive on cases like "partial-birth" abortion and we're so

backed into a corner that we end up defending the indefensible. *We need to go on the offensive and talk about the fact that the pro-life track record of the Democrats is superior to that of the Republicans.* Abortion rates fell during pro-choice President Bill Clinton's administration by 17.4 percent. Abortion rates have risen under "pro-life" president George W. Bush by 14.6 percent.

How could a President who protects a woman's reproductive rights lower the abortion rate? By protecting her from poverty, inadequate healthcare coverage, jobs without flexible schedules, lack of affordable daycare, limited access to contraception and sex education, and fathers who don't take financial and emotional responsibility for their children.

Perhaps the Republicans have latched on to making abortion illegal because addressing the issues that drive demand for the procedure is so outside the realm of the Republican agenda. But addressing these issues is solidly inside the realm of our Democratic agenda. In essence, it is the Democratic agenda.

Comparing the Effectiveness of Republican versus Democratic Pro-Life Strategies

Instead of the full range of highly effective strategies the Democrats can offer for reducing abortions, Republicans pretty much have one strategy of questionable effectiveness: make it illegal. The only other strategy they have proposed is one with no effectiveness at all: a program that recommends people not have sex outside of marriage. You can snicker at how comically unrealistic that is, but I applaud their idealism. I honestly do. Because the truth is, the very best antidote to abortion isn't contraception, it's responsibility. If we didn't have sex outside the context of emotionally committed, stable relationships, abortion wouldn't be an issue.

The problem with the idealism of the Republican plan is that they have no plan B. Their theory is that if you have high expectations, and provide no fallback, people will rise to the occasion. How effective has that strategy proven? A review of ten state evaluations has shown that federally funded abstinence-only programs have little impact. Sex education programs promoting abstinence-only until marriage, which teach teens only to "say no," produced no

Nina Kohl is a Milwaukee-based freelance writer and public relations consultant.

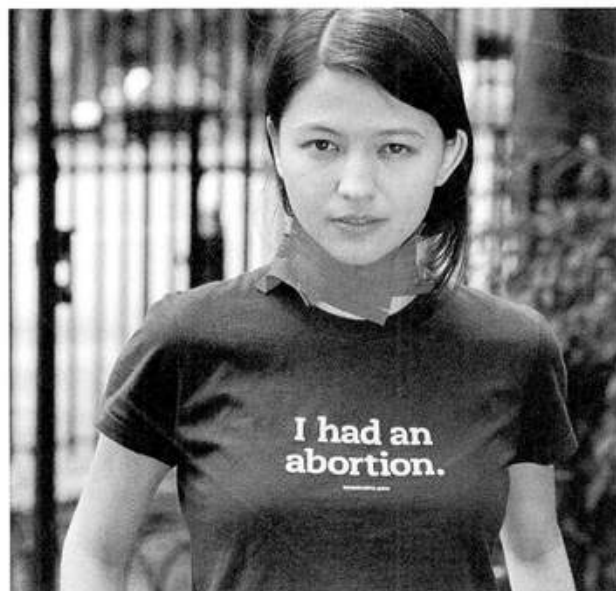
Response to Nina Kohl

Jennifer Baumgardner

Nina Kohl's story—that of a woman who has had an abortion and considers herself both progressive and pro-life—is one that I would have snorted at five years ago. Well, snort may be too glib, but I would have been suspicious about her sincerity, and certainly I would have pointed out the conflict between her personal values and her own actions. I might have even said that she was foolish and sexist to privilege a blob of cells in a woman over the woman herself.

I have been adamantly pro-choice ever since I was eight-years-old and bequeathed a “no more coat-hanger abortions” button by my mother’s feminist friend Laurie. My beliefs about abortion have evolved a great deal over the past five years, though, and I now take Nina Kohl’s story at face value: she is a woman who considers herself progressive and pro-life. Ever since I began touring the nation’s colleges promoting a book I co-wrote called *Manifesta: Young Women, Feminism, and the Future*, I (and my co-author, Amy Richards) have been bombarded with the question “Can I be a feminist and ... pro-life?” At first, we said, “No, you can’t.” Then we argued with the people who asked this question. We’d say, “You probably aren’t pro-life—I mean, pro-lifers bomb clinics and think women should be subservient to men.” Gradually, we got over our need to forcibly “educate” them and began listening. The women and men who told us that they were both feminist and pro-life weren’t clinic bombers—they often weren’t even clinic protesters. They simply felt that they didn’t want to prioritize abortion rights as feminists. They were ambivalent, but they still believed that women could make that choice.

Not only have I evolved on this topic, the abortion debate itself is finally moving forward. Clinic workers calling themselves the November Gang are pioneering new kinds of counseling, identifying the ten percent or so of women who feel troubled after an abortion and helping them. Republicans are organizing as pro-choicers and Democrats are coming out as pro-life. Recently Senator Hillary Clinton managed to put the anti-abortion factions on the defensive by challenging them to help bring the abortion rate down via good sex education to prevent pregnancy. A young feminist



named Aspen Baker co-founded Exhale, a talk line for women who, like her, had negative feelings after a very much chosen—but very emotionally complex—abortion.

I am even contributing to this shifting debate in my own small way through a project I created called “I had an abortion.” The premise is simply to encourage women to “come out” about their abortion procedures. The political reason behind it is my belief that one of the reasons it is so easy to demonize abortion is that the issue is often isolated from the very women who have abortions. One bit of activism that got me thinking about this was Pat Beninato’s website, *imnotsorry.net*, where women can post counter-narratives to the “abortion destroyed my life” stories circulated on pro-life web sites such as Rachel’s Vineyard. Meanwhile, my feminist listserve (History-in-action) discussed how invisible the more common, un-tragic abortion stories were in popular culture. One list-member, the writer Marge Piercy, suggested that there ought to be a film of women talking about their abortions. I thought it was a great idea and immediately called my friend Gillian Aldrich, a filmmaker, to see if she wanted to collaborate. She did, and we collaborated on *Speak Out: I Had an Abortion*.

In addition to the film, I made cards to be distributed to abortion clinics that read: “If you’ve had an abortion, you don’t have to be sorry”—and then listed resources, (such as non-judgmental counseling and the Religious Coalition for

Jennifer Baumgardner is the co-author of *Manifesta: Young Women, Feminism, and the Future* and *Grassroots: A Field Guide for Feminist Activism* (both Farrar, Straus & Giroux). *Speak Out: I Had an Abortion*, the documentary she co-produced with Gillian Aldrich, is available by contacting speakoutfilms.com.

long-term success in reducing sexual risk-taking behaviors or delaying sexual initiation. An independent analysis of recent federal data also showed little reduction in sexual risk-taking behavior among teens nationwide since the federal abstinence-only initiative began.

Belgium, a country where abortion is legal, has achieved the lowest abortion rate in the world, with sex education that recommends abstinence but stresses responsibility and teaches teens how to use contraception. Unlike the Republicans, Belgians have a plan B.

In June 2001, former Surgeon General David Satcher released "Call to Action to Promote Sexual Health and Responsible Sexual Behavior." The publication underscored findings about the effectiveness of comprehensive sexuality education programs that provide information about both abstinence and contraception. Evidence shows that these comprehensive programs can help delay the onset of sexual activity in teenagers, reduce their number of sexual partners, and increase contraceptive use when they become sexually active.

The religious Right seems to have forgotten that their God created sex and won't be embarrassed by an honest discussion of it. Only progressives can advocate for the kind of sex education that actually works. We can advocate for sex education that strongly encourages self-respect, abstinence, and preparation for a mature, committed relationship, but also emphasizes the need for responsibility and knowledge of contraception on the part of young people who don't practice the abstinence recommended.

Abstinence-only sex education is pretty much the only Republican strategy for decreasing the abortion rate besides making abortion illegal. It is possible that legal restrictions would help lower the abortion rate in America. But the statistical evidence on abortion worldwide suggests that whether abortion is legal or illegal has little effect on the incidence of abortion. The abortion rate is very high in Eastern Europe and low in Western Europe, though it is broadly legal in both areas. Abortion numbers are far lower in Western Europe where the procedure is legal than they are in Latin America where it is highly restricted.

Legal versus Illegal—Gains and Losses

However, some liberal pro-lifers have concerns about the impact that legalizing abortion has had. Having the option of procuring a legal abortion has increased pressure on women to abort when fetal abnormalities are present. For progressive pro-lifers that's a problem, because pro-life progressives are committed to protecting the weakest and most vulnerable among us.

Having legal abortion available can also increase the pressure to abort coming from partners, bosses or family members who are inconvenienced by a woman's pregnancy. For feminist pro-lifers that's a problem, because the woman may be pressured to relinquish her own desire to continue

the pregnancy in favor of terminating it to accommodate to the status quo.

It may even be true that the availability of legal abortion increases careless and irresponsible sex, which can have all kinds of disastrous consequences.

What we know for sure is that if *Roe v. Wade* were overturned, there would still be abortions and there would be an increase in the maternal mortality rate. The year before *Roe* was decided, 39 women died as a result of illegal or self-induced abortion, according to Ellen Goodman of the *Boston Globe*. Goodman cites research done by Stanley Henshaw for the Alan Guttmacher Institute, a nonprofit organization focused on sexual and reproductive health research, policy analysis, and public education. With legalized abortion, the maternal mortality rate has been reduced to about ten deaths per year on average, according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

The maternal death rate from abortion was in the thousands in the 1930s. Abortion was listed as the official cause of death for 2,700 women in 1930. By 1940, the death toll had declined to just under 1,700, and to just over 300 by 1950, "most likely because of the introduction of antibiotics in the 1940s, which permitted more effective treatment of the infections that frequently developed after illegal abortion," according to the Guttmacher Institute. By 1965, the number of deaths due to illegal abortion had fallen to just under 200, and by 1972 the number was at 39, due to an increase in the number of doctors performing the procedure and because abortion was legalized in states such as New York.

Most of the women who would die if abortion were made illegal would be poor. Poor and minority women are overrepresented among women seeking abortions generally. In addition, low-income women would be less likely to have the long-standing relationship with a doctor, and the funds necessary, to procure a safer abortion. Making abortion illegal would mean a return to a two-tier system in which more well-off women would have access to safer abortions than their poor counterparts. That is discrimination and for Democrats, that's a problem.

Economic Policy and Abortion "Form One Moral Imperative"

Making abortion illegal hasn't been the Democratic strategy for reducing abortion rates. We have kept abortion legal and employed a multi-faceted strategy for lowering the incidence of abortion that has proven superior to the Republican strategy. Under President Bush, "the decade-long trend of declining abortion rates appears to have reversed," according to Glenn Stassen, a professor of Christian ethics at Fuller Theological Seminary who is trained in statistical analysis.

Why is it that fewer women chose to terminate their pregnancies under a Democratic pro-choice president, and

more are terminating pregnancies under a Republican president who claims to be “pro-life”? Stassen says that rising unemployment and soaring healthcare costs are directly connected to the abortion rate. He notes that, “Economic policy and abortion are not separate issues. *They form one moral imperative*” [my emphasis].

Stassen used data from the Minnesota Citizens Concerned for Life, the Guttmacher Institute, and reporting from individual states to determine that abortion rates in the U.S. had declined in the 1990s to a twenty-four-year low at the point that Bush took office. Many anticipated that, under a conservative president, the trend downward would continue, but just the opposite happened: 52,000 more abortions occurred in 2002 than the pre-2000 conditions would have predicted, and the abortion rate among those states reporting multi-year abortion statistics rose significantly.

What Stassen’s study showed is that there is a direct connection between economic hardship and abortion. Of women who abort, two-thirds say they can’t afford a child. Half say they don’t have a responsible mate and co-earner. And, among the 5.2 million Americans without health coverage since 2000, women of child-bearing age are overrepresented.

A More Nuanced Message on Abortion

Bill Clinton was proud of reducing abortion rates in this country during his administration and said so publicly. He went on television and talked about how his administration had lowered abortion rates and what they planned to do to reduce abortion rates even further in the future. Bill Clinton was a winning Democrat partly because he crafted his message to emphasize that he was working to make abortion “safe, legal, and rare.”

While I wildly applaud Clinton’s commitment to making abortion rare, the results he achieved, and the high profile he gave his efforts to reduce the abortion rate, “safe, legal, and rare” isn’t the best slogan. Because, while we can make abortion legal, and maybe even make it rare, as a woman who has had an abortion, I don’t see how we could ever make it safe. Women aren’t merely physical creatures. I can bear witness to the fact that the procedure is emotionally, psychologically, and spiritually dangerous. Any woman who undergoes an abortion procedure for any reason should be fully informed of these risks.

In the years since Clinton’s presidency, Democrats have stopped emphasizing making abortion rare in their campaign messages. Both Gore and Kerry lost elections with,

“I’m personally opposed to abortion, but won’t impose my beliefs on others.” It’s easy to see why that was a losing message. It made these candidates look like they had no backbone. If they believed abortion was wrong, why weren’t they doing something about it? Clinton had an answer to that question—he was actively, passionately, and successfully working toward making abortion in America rare. Which made him look like a leader with conviction and vision.

Since Clinton, the logic behind Democratic presidential campaigns seems to have been that we can’t talk about making abortion rare because that might make it sound like abortion is a bad thing. But, in an age of ultrasound, when expecting parents proudly display their sonograms on their fireplace mantels in frames marked “Baby’s First Picture,” I’m afraid the cat’s out of the bag. Americans already know that abortion is ugly, so we have nothing to lose and many votes to gain by admitting this and moving on to what the Democrats are doing about it—working to make abortion rare by employing strategies with proven effectiveness.

Some who are pro-choice may believe that the best way to preserve the legal right to abortion is to send the message that a woman has an absolute right to full control over her body and that her decision to abort is no one’s business but hers. But are Americans still finding that argument convincing? According to a recent Zogby poll, there has been a shift in how Americans identify themselves on the abortion issue. Ten years ago, 56 percent of Americans identified themselves as pro-choice and 33 percent identified as pro-life. Today, pro-lifers have a plurality, with 49 percent of Americans calling themselves pro-life while only 45 percent are pro-choice.

This Zogby poll was released in April 2004, the week of the pro-choice March for Women’s Lives. It showed that only 13 percent of Americans agreed with the organizers of the march that abortion should be completely unrestricted. 56 percent believe abortion should never be legal or should be legal only where the life of the mother is endangered or where the pregnancy resulted from rape or incest (currently about one in fifty abortions occurs under these circumstances).

What should be of even greater concern to those who are passionate about preserving a woman’s right to choose legal abortion is the “graying” of the movement. The average member of NARAL, the National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League, is fifty-five years old. The average member of Planned Parenthood is older than the average member of the National Right to Life Committee

Today, pro-lifers have a plurality, with 49 percent of Americans calling themselves pro-life while only 45 percent are pro-choice.

by ten years. The Zogby poll documented this trend, showing that young people are even more pro-life than the population in general: 60 percent of eighteen- to twenty-nine-year-olds believe abortion should never be legal or should be legal only in cases of life endangerment or rape or incest.

If the Democratic Party leadership wants to preserve a woman's right to choose, they shouldn't be redoubling their efforts; they should be rethinking their approach.

I Have Seen the Future of the Democratic Party and It Is Both Pro-Choice and Pro-Life

The Democrats need to make a place for pro-lifers within the party. The Democratic Party's intolerance of dissent on the abortion issue erodes our credibility when we claim to be the party of inclusion and diversity. Republicans have been willing to run pro-choice candidates like Rudy Giuliani and Arnold Schwarzenegger and have become the party of the "big tent." Meanwhile Democrats, who famously barred Pennsylvania Governor Robert Casey from speaking at the Democratic National Convention in 1992 because of his pro-life views, have only closed ranks. Recently Dick Gephardt and Dennis Kucinich joined the long line of Democrats required by their party to switch from a pro-life to a pro-choice position in order to run for national office. And, Democratic Party chairman Terry McAuliffe refused to allow even a link to the Democrats for Life website to be included among the 260 links on the DNC's website.

Pro-life Democrats are concerned that we're losing our majority because of our message on abortion. In the 1977-78 Congress, four years after *Roe v. Wade*, Democrats held a majority of 292 seats, which included 125 pro-lifers. As the 2004 presidential election neared, Democrats comprised only 204 of 435 seats, with just 28 pro-lifers. Democrats for Life of America attributes at least part of this slide to our party's un-nuanced position on abortion.

The last two presidential elections have been close. We could be just one issue-adjustment away from victory if we more effectively communicate that *we are the real pro-life party*.

The Republicans' pro-life message is simple; it's about making abortion illegal. The Democrats' could send a more powerful pro-life message: We are working for a world where abortion is a rarity because women have the practical resources and support they need to prevent most unintended pregnancies and to carry to term those that do occur. Our broader pro-life agenda includes working for peace, economic justice, and environmental protection. On social issues we stand against the death penalty and for gun control. The Democratic Party is not only more effectively pro-life; it is more consistently pro-life than the Republican Party. □

Reproductive Choice), ways to be involved politically, and suggestions for how to raise money to assist women who cannot afford the procedure. (I've distributed about 5,000.)

The t-shirts, which were the third part of the campaign, popped into my head because the big march on Washington was coming up and I thought about all of the shirts that were being made for it: "George, Get Out of My Bush!" "Keep Your Laws off My Body!" "Abortion on Demand Without Apology!"—all of these exclamations, but no personal connection to the politically fraught procedure. I thought it would be a profound statement to wear a shirt that read, simply, "I had an abortion."

After four months of selling the shirts from my apartment, Gloria Feldt of Planned Parenthood agreed to sell the remaining 250 or so shirts from the PPFA web-store. Given that I was five months pregnant and overwhelmed with other projects besides t-shirt distribution, I jumped at the chance. The shirts were on the site for awhile when the *Drudge Report* ran an item about them. That led to hundreds of newspaper, blog, and TV stories. The shirts sold out within days. (They continue to sell through *Clamor Magazine*.)

Since January of 2004, I have received hundreds of letters and emails from women (and a few men) telling me their abortion stories. Many said that they hadn't ever told anyone until they told me; others said that they had been terrified to tell their mothers, only to learn, when they mustered the courage, that she (and sometimes a grandmother!) had had an abortion as well. Many wrote to say that they might never wear the shirt publicly, but it made them realize that they weren't alone, that other women shared their story.

Nina Kohl is out about her abortion—she owns it, which is the goal of my project. I admired her stance, even as I found a few cracks in her argument, especially her assertion that if "we didn't have sex outside the context of emotionally committed, stable relationships, abortion wouldn't be an issue." We would have fewer abortions, to be sure, but unintended pregnancy occurs regardless of relationship.

The idea of an "authentic" pro-life movement is very exciting to me. This would be a movement with some meaning, in which there is protection from "poverty, inadequate healthcare coverage, jobs without flexible schedules, lack of affordable daycare, limited access to contraception and sex education, and fathers who don't take...responsibility for their children," as Kohl herself writes. I hope she is working toward that in her own community of Milwaukee. I also hope that calling Democrats out on this topic isn't simply recycling the tired and specious claim that blue state politicians are out of touch with red state values.

"Safe, legal, and rare" was the buzz-phrase of President Bill Clinton. I agree with Kohl that Democrats have the potential to be the real pro-life party. But being an authentic pro-life party begins with supporting safe, legal abortion. Working towards "rare" has to be built on those first two values, but working to that ideal is nothing to snort at. □

Ministering to Anxiety: Take Abortion, for Example...

Thandeka

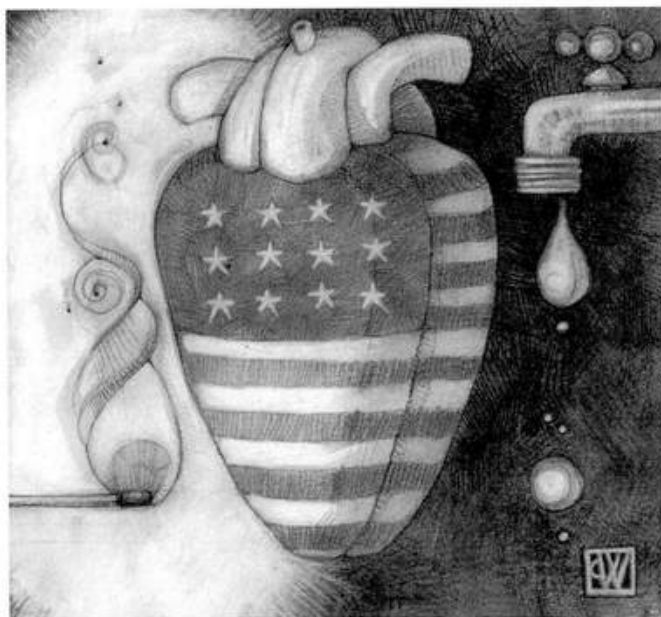
After she heard the heartbeat, she couldn't do it. That's how Andrea Brown, an unmarried pregnant woman, explained her decision not to have an abortion. "When I had the sonogram and heard the heartbeat—and for me a heartbeat symbolizes life—after that there was no way I could do it." As for Andrea, so also for thousands of women like her, who are targets of the latest strategy by conservative church groups to stop abortions (*New York Times*, February 2, 2005). When these women hear the heart and see images of their fetus, they are often flooded with feelings of grief, guilt, and shame about what they were going to do. Deciding not to have an abortion is one way they can feel good about themselves again.

This anti-choice strategy works because it ratchets up anxiety to change beliefs and behavior. The key to this "anxiety-assurance" strategy, however, is not just the creation of anxiety, but the accompanying feeling of relief that washes over a person who has made the "right" choice. The loss of anxiety can seem salvific, a positive good in itself. Instead of being outraged that her choice has become a source of distress, the woman who chooses "life" is grateful for having been "saved."

The Conservative Formula

Thomas Frank gives us a vivid image of the anti-choice movement's use of this anxiety-assurance formula in his book *What's the Matter with Kansas? How Conservatives Won the Hearts of America*. The setting is a 1991 anti-abortion-rights rally in Wichita, Kansas. Speaking there, Pat Robertson exclaimed: "We will not rest until every baby ... is safe in his mother's womb." By the end of the rally, 25,000 people stood on their feet as a sign of moral resolve, spiritual fortitude and political resolution.

Pioneered by the anti-choice movement, the anxiety-assurance strategy has become the secret weapon of the religious Right. State-by-state, city-by-city, town-by-town, issue-by-issue, conservatives organized the moral fears of such voters into election day victories. Economic and racial



integration, reproductive choice, equal protections for persons of all sexual orientations, environmental protections, even affordable housing and medical care, sustainable transportation measures, food security programs, and more may be *rights* issues for religious liberals, but they are (*im*)moral choices for religious conservatives.

The Right preyed on these voters' anxieties, focusing on their racial, sexual, and economic fears and vulnerabilities. Big-business politicians then stepped in and signed on to a winning conservative political agenda. The new science of political emotions that was born from this mix has been discussed by theorists like George E. Marcus, W. Russell Neuman, and Michael Mackuen, who conclude in their book *Affective Intelligence and Political Judgment* that voter anxiety actually has benefited politicians who know how to generate it and then use it to support their own political agendas.

Once we understand how the anxiety-assurance strategy works, we can see that middle-class and poorer Americans who voted a conservative ticket did not vote *against* their economic interests; they voted *for* the protection of the one thing they needed most: a feeling of security from their deepest anxieties.

Thandeka is a Unitarian Universalist minister, a professor at Meadville Lombard Theological School, the president of the Center for Community Values (www.the-ccv.org), and the author of *Learning to Be White: Race, Money and God in America*.

Ministering Anxiety

When conservative politicians and strategists create anxious emotions to lock their vested interests in place, they don't feel hypocritical; they feel like religious and moral shepherds of broken human hearts. But the relief they give isn't salvific. It simply stops what those politicians have just created: pain. This is the key to the Right's anxiety-based ministry. The most effective politicians raise anxiety and then put themselves into a messianic or salvational role precisely in order to reassure their flock that making the "right" choice will end anxiety and bring real relief. Even if the "right-choice" policies fail, the voters' feeling of relief will remain in place.

President Bush has mastered this strategy. During his second Inaugural Address, Bush declared that the goal of his administration's policy would be to end tyranny everywhere and to bring human freedom to all, guided by God, the author of liberty. Claiming that social divisions do not define America, Bush reminded Americans of 9/11 and other national crises: "We felt the unity and fellowship of our nation when freedom came under attack, and our response came from a *single hand over a single heart*. And we can feel the same unity and pride whenever America acts for the good, and the victims of disaster are given hope, and the unjust encounter justice, and the captives are set free" [emphasis added].

Behind Bush's words lay his primary text, Isaiah 61:1-3: "The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn in Zion...." Bush preached the Bible to stoke feelings of crisis and to relieve those feelings through reassurance. In so doing, he essentially represented himself as the Anointed One, the world's savior, the Son of Man backed by American firepower. It was a powerful message to his supporters on the religious right.

Four days later, Bush used this winning formula again when he spoke by phone to anti-abortion demonstrators at the thirty-second annual rally against *Roe v. Wade* organized by the March for Life Education and Defense Fund. More than laws are needed to stop abortions, Bush said. "We need, most of all, to change hearts" (*New York Times*, January 25, 2005).

Though it might sound innocuous to a secular liberal, every born-again Christian present knew exactly what Bush meant when he talked about the need to change hearts. He was calling on the evangelical interpretation of Jeremiah 31:33 in which Christ is seen as the fulfillment of the Lord's promise to write a new covenant of his laws on the human heart. Bush didn't have to tell his listeners *how* this change of heart would occur. All Bush had to do was preach this biblical text and they felt God's Word through Christ.

Political liberals keep missing this point. We know that conservative politicians rely on a common Christian salvational and moral language to win the evangelical vote. But what we don't understand is that the secret to the Right's success isn't that they thump the Bible—the secret is the way they summon biblical references to quell the anxiety they themselves have stoked.

The Liberal Problem

When we pay attention to political conservatives' anxiety-assurance formula, we learn two things. First, anxious hearts need an immediate emotional experience of peace. Second, the American heart is caught up in the throes of anxiety. So a liberal alternative also has to start with the anxiety level already present in the American heart.

Liberals often act as if reason is enough to change hearts as well as minds. We act as if our faith and values are born whole from reason instead of informed and shaped by our own experiences as communal, relational, physical, sentient beings. Yet liberal arguments made from reason have proven singularly ineffective over the past decade in moving the American heart.

For example, Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton spoke about abortion issues on the same day as Bush, January 24, and also, like President Bush, called for "common ground." Clinton's elegantly argued speech included an extraordinary array of statistics, evidence, logic, references to co-sponsored legislative initiatives, and personal action. The Senator told her audience *about* women as a class. But she didn't tell individual women's stories of endangerment, grief, and loss. She may have reassured liberal political activists, but she didn't touch those Americans whose anxieties over this issue go much deeper.

Liberals and the so-called Left labor under a deep misunderstanding about our country, most recently expressed by Garry Wills in his post-election essay, "The Day the Enlightenment Went Out" (November 4, 2004, *New York Times*). Wills asks, "Can a people that believes more fervently in the Virgin Birth than in evolution still be called an Enlightened nation?" and his answer, of course, is a resounding "No." He argues that "America, the first real democracy in history, was a product of Enlightenment values—critical intelligence, tolerance, respect for evidence, a regard for the secular sciences. Though the founders differed on many things, they shared these values of what was then modernity." But Wills's history is wrong. His list of Enlightenment values doesn't mention religion.

Daniel E. Ritchie, director of the humanities program at Bethel University, pointed out this oversight in his letter to the editor (*New York Times*, November 9, 2004). The actual American Enlightenment, Ritchie argues, "was neither antireligious nor anticlerical." For the founders, political liberty and religious practice were inseparable.

After correcting Wills's record, Ritchie offers liberals

advice from the heart—"the heart of an evangelical university with a strongly pro-Bush student body." Liberals need to take religion to heart. In Ritchie's words: "America's elites must ... come to understand American religion, past and present, more deeply. Until they do, they will continue to create the polarization they lament."

Heart to Heart

To begin such work, we must reclaim our religious heritage. There is no reason for liberals to give up on the Bible and the heart-language it can speak. Biblical stories that inspire us are about God and people working together. We know God is always in our midst, in "the sphere of the between," as Martin Buber calls it, the space between I and Thou. This place is not a place of reason, it's a place of feeling. It's the place where heart-to-heart work begins as a spiritual practice.

Instead of using the salvific model of the Christian evangelical Right to address the anxiety simmering in America, liberals can instead draw upon the "sphere of the between" by creating beloved communities. These communities are formed by small groups of people who always begin their spiritual work together with talk from the heart, sharing their personal stories, discussing mutually chosen texts and topics. By so doing, these groups generate communal feelings that are linked to spiritual practices and sacred texts that inspire them and sustain them as they work together on community projects as a spiritual practice.

Two stories show us why this kind of heart-work in a beloved community is where human salvation begins.

A *New York Times* article on January 15, 2004, described a group therapy program for HIV-positive people and AIDS victims in a remote area of Uganda. In these groups, the depression, sadness, and despair of these persons began to recede. Why? As one member put it: "This group didn't take the virus out of my body. ... I still fall sick. I am still weak. But at least now I'm living." Or as another group member put it, "The group told me my life was worth something." She no longer tosses and turns at night, but sleeps peacefully.

The reporter gives us the key concept: the creation of a

beloved community. "The therapy sessions drew participants together so effectively that many have continued meeting [after the outsiders left]. Some have also used their counseling groups to start business ventures together." These groups were no longer "therapy groups"—they were spiritual renewal groups. They renewed the hearts and thus the lives of the participants *and* their communities.

The second story. I often talk to congregations and other organizations about starting small groups in which members share personal stories. I have particularly fond memories of one such event. After talking with one New England congregation, I asked those present if they might be willing to meet together in small groups over a meal and talk about their emotional needs.

One of the most respected elders of the congregation stood up and slowly walked to the front of the assembly. He had wanted something like this for years, he told his fellow congregants, because he was lonely. "I do not have any friends," he finally confessed. Waves of shock rolled through the gathering. How could *he* be lonely? He was a revered and beloved member of the church.

When the group quieted down, the man spoke again, saying, "Every man in this room who is my age knows what I am talking about. Our social upbringing has taught us not to talk about our feelings. We are not supposed to be emotionally vulnerable or close to anyone except our wives."

People rose to their feet and lined up to form these new groups. Why? Heart-to-heart talk and work lowers anxiety without first raising it. Instead, the gathered community's awareness of its own collective concerns expanded and this new space gave anxious hearts the breath of life they needed for rest, repose, and renewal through shared feelings and collective action.

Evangelical Christians organize small groups and create mega-churches consisting of hundreds and hundreds of these small communities. Liberals, moderates, and the so-called Left must do the same. Our communities, however, will be religiously diverse. They will not be based on doctrinal unanimity. They will affirm persons rather than ideas. They will be a place for talking heart to heart.

We cannot ignore the anxiety-assurance strategy of the Right. While we must continue to probe and uncover the rhetoric the Right uses to raise anxiety, we cannot dismiss such anxiety with rational explanations. We, too, must speak to it. We, too, must use sacred texts. But with one difference: we won't raise anxiety to lower it. We will lower the anxiety already present in the American heart through heart-to-heart work that links immediate personal feelings of emotional and spiritual relief to public policies that actually provide Americans with structural support for a better life on earth through decent schools, jobs, and medical and other social benefits. Whether we're secular or religious, we will only speak effectively to America again when we speak from the heart. □

This summer, the Tikkun Community is sponsoring a conference for Spiritual Activists. One goal of this conference is to launch a national campaign to create thousands of beloved communities within synagogues, churches, temples, community centers, businesses, and among friends as well as strangers looking for a place to create the experience of ongoing, self-sustaining, beloved community for spiritual renewal. Join us!

For more information, visit www.tikkun.org or call 510-528-6250.

The Missing Pieces in *The Missing Peace*

Jerome Slater

It is hard to think of any international conflict in the last half-century that has been so dominated by mythology, so riddled with ignorance or ideological blindness, or so impervious to the overwhelming weight of historical evidence, logical reasoning, and moral understanding as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. To the various historical myths of the past, in the last four years a devastating new one has dominated public discussion in Israel and the United States: that in the summer of 2000 Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak made a highly generous offer to the Palestinians to end the conflict by means of a fair compromise that would give the Palestinians an independent and viable state in the West Bank and Gaza, but that Yasser Arafat rejected this solution, offered no compromises of his own, broke off the negotiations, and instigated the violence of the intifada.

This widely-believed account allows for only two possible interpretations: either that Arafat, a lifelong revolutionary, at the moment of truth was simply incapable of ending the conflict by peaceful means; or worse, that his true goal had always been not a compromise two-state settlement, but the complete destruction of the State of Israel.

Whether or not this account is accurate is still relevant, even though Arafat has passed from the scene and has been succeeded by Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen), a seemingly more reasonable and moderate man who has rejected the path of armed revolution. For one thing, Abbas is not likely to last very long in power if he cannot deliver a true peace settlement based on an end to the Israeli Occupation and the establishment of a genuinely independent and viable Palestinian state. If and when the Israeli-Palestinian peace process resumes, all the issues that have derailed the process in the past will recur.

Thus, unless both sides—but especially Israel (and the United States)—draw the correct lessons from the failures of the peace process in the recent past, history will just repeat itself. In the last four years, a growing body of analyses, memoirs, and interviews had thoroughly demolished nearly every aspect of the “generous offer” mythology—until, that is, the publication last year of Dennis Ross, *The Missing Peace: The Inside Story of the Fight for Middle East Peace* (New York:

Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 2004). The Ross book has been widely greeted in Israel and the United States as the most authoritative account of the negotiating process in 2000, primarily because of Ross's long involvement in high level U.S. officialdom: after a stint with AIPAC, Ross was appointed by Ronald Reagan as an NSC expert on the Middle East, then became the director of the State Department's Policy Planning office during the first Bush administration, and finally became the chief American negotiator and leading State Department official responsible for the making of U.S. policy in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict during the Clinton administration. Perhaps most importantly, by all accounts Ross had great influence over Bill Clinton.

The Missing Peace is a long, detailed, and seemingly moderate and objective account of the rise and fall of the negotiating process from the Oslo conference of 1993 through the Camp David summit of 2000. Despite its surface credibility, however, the book is tendentious, biased, and misleading. Its consequence, at least in the United States and the American Jewish community as well as in mainstream Israel, has been to do terrible damage to the cause of true understanding of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the American role in it.

To be sure, Ross is not an extremist, and he works hard to create the impression of fair-mindedness: he is sometimes quite critical of the Israeli mythology and leadership, and he includes just enough views that contradict his own to cover himself against charges of ideological bias. In the final analysis, though, his account amounts to a clever but quite unconvincing brief for Israel, the Clinton administration, and, indeed, himself.

Although Ross devotes considerable space to equally unreliable and misleading accounts of the Israeli-Syrian negotiating process as well as the historical background of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, space limitations here allow only for an analysis of his discussions of the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations of 2000.

The Clinton Administration, Ross, and the Oslo Years, 1993-1999

At the heart of the Oslo Accords of September 1993 were two crucial and interdependent agreements: on the

Jerome Slater is University Research Scholar in political science at the State University of New York at Buffalo. He has written widely on the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Palestinian side, Arafat agreed to end all violence against Israel in exchange for an Israeli agreement to a gradual withdrawal of troops from Gaza and the West Bank over the next five years; at the end of the five years, both sides would negotiate a permanent settlement based on Security Council Resolution 242, which essentially called for the end of the Israeli Occupation of the territories conquered in 1967. While 242 did not specifically state that a permanent peace settlement must be based on the establishment of an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, a two-state solution was the universal expectation of the Palestinians, the international community, and, for that matter, the Israeli government and public opinion.

Over the next five years, Arafat generally complied with his obligation to do his best to end Palestinian violence and terrorism. To be sure, there were several terrorist attacks by Hamas and Islamic Jihad following the Goldstein massacre of twenty-nine Palestinians in a Hebron mosque, but the attacks ended almost completely after Arafat ordered his security forces to arrest terrorists and even to work hand in hand with the Israeli security forces to identify and jail them. While Israel experienced a series of terrorist bus bombings in early 1996, in the next year there was just one Israeli killed by terrorism. Both Ami Ayalon and Israel Hasson, respectively the director and deputy director of Shin Bet at that time, have said that the effective defeat of terrorism during this period owed much more to Arafat's actions than to those of Israel.

Despite Arafat's cooperation, however, the Israelis failed to implement the spirit and often the letter of the Oslo Accords: under Rabin, Peres, Netanyahu, and Barak alike, the influx of Jewish settlers into Arab East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Gaza continually grew; Israeli checkpoints, military outposts, and roads spread throughout the occupied territories; Palestinian homes and orchards were confiscated or destroyed; specific Israeli commitments to free Palestinian prisoners, carry out scheduled withdrawals from the West Bank, and create a safe Palestinian route between the West Bank and Gaza were ignored; and the Israeli closures and restrictions on free movement of Palestinian people, vehicles, and goods caused great economic as well as psychological hardship to the Palestinians.

While Ross writes that he and Clinton were unhappy with these Israeli policies, especially the expanding settlements, the administration nonetheless refused to make any serious effort to moderate Israeli policies—doing far less, indeed, than had the Reagan and, especially, the Bush administrations. Even at the purely verbal level, Clinton/Ross backtracked from previous American policy on the settlements: under Jimmy Carter the official American position had been that the settlements were “illegal”; under Reagan, the policy was that they were “obstacles to peace”; under Bush I, American disapproval actually had some teeth, when the president, in

effect, ordered reductions in U.S. aid to Israel.

During the Clinton-Ross years, however, not only were economic pressures against Israel rejected, but even *pro-forma* verbal disapproval was further softened: the settlements were now regarded merely as “complicating factors” in the peace process. The real problem, Ross seems to suggest, was not so much the Israeli policies that he concedes were unwise, but rather the apparently inappropriate Palestinian belief that the Israelis were victimizing them: “Victimization has deep roots in the Palestinian mind.... The Palestinians’ sense of being victims also fostered a sense of entitlement ... little was required of the Palestinians because as victims, they were owed much. Responsibility was not part of the Palestinian political culture” (42).

Camp David, 2000

Despite his previous hardline policies and ideology, by 2000 Barak had concluded that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict had become too dangerous for Israeli security in the long run, and he therefore reluctantly and not unambiguously decided to seek some kind of a two-state settlement, but one that he hoped would minimize Israeli concessions. The three major issues at Camp David were how the territory and boundaries of an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza would be defined, how the sovereignty issues over Jerusalem would be resolved, and whether there would be “a right of return” for Palestinian refugees who had fled or were driven out of their homes and villages in 1948 or in 1967.

As Dennis Ross saw these issues, the Israelis were the pragmatic side, whose great need was “security,” whereas the Palestinians, with their irresponsible sense of victimization, were fixated on “symbolic issues”—like sovereignty over the Jordan River valley, Arab East Jerusalem, and the Muslim mosques on the Temple Mount/Haram (655, 663). Thus, the American strategy proposed by Ross and adopted by Clinton was “focused not on reconciling rights but on addressing needs...not what [the Palestinians] wanted and not what they felt they were entitled to” (725–26). Indeed, in his own eyes, Ross was the indispensable wise man of the negotiating process; at one point he tells Abu Ala, Arafat's main advisor in the Palestinian delegation: “You know that I understand your problems, your needs, and your aspirations very well. You know that often I explain them better than any of you do” (755).

Needless to say, the Palestinians disagreed with Ross's definitions of their real needs, “symbolic” or otherwise, considering him to be not a mediator but essentially a spokesman for the Israelis. Indeed, Ross sometimes seemed to regard the Israelis as spokesmen for him, who needed rebuking when they strayed from the correct path; after telling the Palestinians that he was “quite certain” that the Israelis would not accept anything less than a 7 percent annexation of the West Bank, he learned that the Israelis

were considering 5 percent: "I was furious. What was the point of my conveying a tough posture on issues of supposed principle to the Israeli side if they were simply going to undercut me?" (748-49).

As Nabil Shaath, a high Palestinian official under Arafat, has put it, Ross sometimes seemed to be "more pro-Israeli than the Israelis"—a judgment shared by several of the Israeli negotiators, including Yossi Beilin and Menachem Klein, who wrote that "Ross sanctifie[d] the most far-reaching Israeli demands that even ... Barak's chief of staff wasn't happy with."

The Territorial Issues

Barak was willing to accept the creation of an independent Palestinian state in all of Gaza and most of the West Bank, but he insisted on annexing enough of the West Bank territory to incorporate most of the Israeli "settlement blocs" and water aquifers near the old 1967 Green Line, as well as retaining an Israeli military presence in the Jordan River valley.

According to Ross and Barak, the Israeli offer was very generous, as the Palestinians would get almost 90 percent of the West Bank as well as an additional 1 percent of Israeli land as compensation for the Israeli annexations. While it is certainly true that this offer went far beyond anything offered by Israel before Camp David, it was considerably less generous when one looked at the details.

To begin with, the 90 percent figure cited by Ross, widely adopted in the American and Israeli media, is highly dubious. At Barak's insistence, no written records were kept at Camp David (allowing him to later "recant what he did not like," as Yossi Beilin puts it), and Israel presented no maps, so it was not clear how "settlement blocs" and "the Jordan River valley" would be defined. In fact, several impartial analyses have concluded that when the *de facto* Israeli annexations ("Greater Jerusalem," the Jordan River valley, military outposts, connecting roads, and land surrounding the settlements) were added together, the actual offer—assuming it *was* an offer—may have been no more than 75 percent of the West Bank held by Palestinians prior to 1967.

In addition, even with the 90 percent number, the land swap was highly asymmetrical, both in quantitative and qualitative terms: not only would Israel get ten times the amount of land from the Palestinian West Bank (10 percent) that it was willing to trade (one percent), but the Israeli annexations would contain valuable agricultural lands and the main West Bank water aquifers—precisely the reason the settlements were located there in the first place—whereas the Palestinians would get a small parcel of desert in the Negev. As Ross admits, most if not all of the American professionals at Camp David besides himself agreed with the Palestinians that this proposal was not fair or just, and that any Israeli annexation should be minimal and compensated for with an equivalent swap.

It was not the first time that most of the American NSC and State Department professionals disagreed with Ross—almost never successfully, unfortunately. After what Ross concedes was a "heated" discussion, he overrode their objections and persuaded Clinton not to press Barak on the matter. In an odd but revealing passage, Ross says: "I felt strongly about 6 to 7 percent annexation, and I was not prepared to lower the ceiling. Nor was I prepared to introduce the idea of an equivalent swap" (726). On the basis of which criteria did Ross decide that the Palestinians "needed" no more than 93 percent of the West Bank, nor anything more than a highly asymmetrical swap? He doesn't say.

Finally, as Robert Malley has pointed out, the Clinton-Barak proposals would have dispossessed or incorporated into Israel tens of thousands of Palestinian residents caught in the "settlement blocs," and would have effectively extended the Israeli borders so far into the West Bank as to effectively divide it into two or perhaps three barely contiguous areas.

For all these reasons, Arafat rejected the Israeli-American proposals, arguing that by accepting Israel's pre-1967 boundaries, the Palestinians had already agreed to forfeit 78 percent of the land of Palestine to Israel. Therefore, there should be no further compromises and, as UN 242 effectively stipulated, in principle the Palestinians should get 100 percent of the land conquered by Israel in 1967. In fact, Arafat was willing to make even further compromises in Israel's favor—a major point that is effectively obfuscated by Ross—for he was willing to allow Israel to annex the settlements immediately contiguous to the Green Line, which contained about 80 percent of the settlers, provided that these "settlement blocs" be limited to 3 percent of the West Bank and that the Palestinian state be fairly compensated with an equal territorial swap.

Palestinian Refugees and the Right of Return

It is likely that the territorial issues, though difficult, were not insurmountable; consequently, many commentators have assumed that it was the Palestinian insistence that all refugees must have the right to return to their homes and villages in Israel that prevented a settlement from being reached. That is not the case, however, because the weight of the evidence is that Arafat's true bottom line was an Israeli acknowledgment of its historical responsibility for the flight of most Palestinian refugees in 1948, together with an acceptance of the *principle* of the right of return; in return for this acceptance of responsibility on the part of the Israelis, Arafat indicated that the Palestinians would accept that in practice the return would be minimal.

Thus, at Camp David Arafat acknowledged that Israel could not be expected to absorb hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees, telling Clinton that "we have to find a

happy medium between the Israelis' demographic worries and our own concerns," a formulation he subsequently repeated on several occasions, as when he told *Ha'aretz*, a few months before he died, that it is "clear and obvious" that the refugee problem had to be solved in a manner that would not change the Jewish character of Israel. On that basis, a solution that preserved Israel as a Jewish state would be eminently feasible, and in fact such a solution was embodied in Clinton's final proposals (to be discussed shortly) and accepted by both the Palestinian and Israeli unofficial but high-level delegations in the Geneva Accords of 2003.

Jerusalem

The real deal-breaker at Camp David was Jerusalem. There is no significant disagreement about this between Ross and the other accounts—although there is plenty of disagreement about which side bore the greater responsibility. The facts are clear: Arafat insisted that the Palestinians must gain sovereignty over what remained of East Jerusalem, which would become the capital of the Palestinian state. On the other hand, for the first time he accepted that Israel would annex all the Jewish neighborhoods that had been placed in East Jerusalem after 1967, which added up to about one-third of the territory of what had formerly been known as "Arab East Jerusalem." Similarly, Arafat conceded that the Old City, the symbolic heart of Jerusalem, could be divided, even though before the 1967 War it had been fully under Muslim (i.e., Jordanian) control—with Israeli sovereignty over the Jewish quarter and the Western Wall but Palestinian sovereignty over the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif plateau, on which are two of the most sacred Islamic mosques.

Barak refused such a settlement, though he eventually agreed to Palestinian sovereignty over some but not all of the remaining Palestinian neighborhoods in East Jerusalem. On the crucial Temple Mount/Haram issue he was adamant—indeed, he actually ended up *hardening* the Israeli position. First, he insisted that Israel must be granted formal sovereignty over the entire Temple Mount area, including the mosques on the plateau—a demand that no other Israeli government had previously made. Second, Barak proposed that Israel should be allowed to build a synagogue on the plateau so that Jews could pray there, and he further demanded Israeli sovereignty over other nearby religious sites supposedly crucial to Judaism, referring to them as the "Holy of Holies," language that Ross claims credit for introducing into the negotiations (753).

Barak's astonishing new demands infuriated not only the Palestinians, but also many members of the Israeli delegation and its advisors. Amirav and Klein, the very experts on Jerusalem whom Barak had selected as his advisors, pointed out—among other things—that when Israel captured the Old City in 1967, Moshe Dayan had prohibited Jews from praying on the mosque plateau, precisely in order to avoid a

religious conflict with the entire Muslim world. This prohibition had stood since then, challenged only by the most extreme of the Jewish fundamentalist sects—until Barak, backed by Ross and Clinton.

Thus, clearly influenced by Ross, Clinton at Camp David supported Barak's position on Jerusalem: the Palestinians should get sovereignty over only some of the Arab neighborhoods in East Jerusalem, should get administrative jurisdiction but not sovereignty on the Temple Mount/Haram, and should even accede to Barak's demands for Jewish religious rights on the mosque plateau. Undoubtedly it was Clinton's dependence on Ross that led Yossi Beilin to conclude that "The failure of the negotiations was the failure of Dennis Ross."

The Intifada

Arafat had been very reluctant to agree to the Camp David negotiations fearing—correctly, as it turned out—that the United States would join forces with Barak to press the Palestinians to make unacceptable concessions. To meet Arafat's concern, Clinton had specifically promised him that if the summit did not succeed in producing an agreement, "under no circumstances will I place the blame for failure on you."

As the end of the summit approached, the Palestinian leader Saeb Erekat pleaded with Clinton not to break this commitment: "If you present it as a failure, the light will go out in the region, and I don't know when it will come back on." Nonetheless, Clinton did go back on his word, with just the consequences that Erekat had warned against. In a series of press conferences and television interviews, both in the United States and during a trip to Israel, Clinton (in Yossi Beilin's words) "presented Barak as a courageous man of peace who did not get Palestinian cooperation." The predictable result was to convince the Israeli public of the validity of Barak's claims about Camp David, especially his argument that he had successfully "unmasked" the real Arafat.

As Ross acknowledges, though, Arafat considered Camp David more of a success than a failure—a perfectly legitimate perspective, in my view—in that more progress toward a comprehensive settlement had been made than at any other meeting, and he repeatedly urged Clinton to resume an active role in the negotiating process. However, Ross counseled Clinton to refuse Arafat's appeals and to do nothing, on the grounds that Arafat had to see that he was responsible for the lost opportunity for peace, and would have to make the next concessions—a position that former Ambassador to Israel Edward Walker later angrily described in an interview as "absolutely stupid." Even so, once again Ross's position prevailed (though only for a time) with Clinton, who Ross describes as initially inclined to grant Arafat's request for further active American mediation.

continued on page 58

Hegemonic Democracy in the Middle East

Joe Lockard

The poster girl for neo-conservative democracy appears on the front cover of *Newsweek* magazine. Brown-haired and appealing, she is one of the Beirut protestors against Syrian occupation troops in Lebanon. It is an image that echoes and supports the Bush administration's arguments justifying its policies as promulgating a new spirit of democracy in the Middle East. This is to be the spring during which an arc of governments spreading from the Mediterranean to the Tigris to the Arabian Gulf respond to a Bush-inspired demand for popular democracy.

Impoverishment of the word "democracy" has been a hallmark of Bush administration foreign policy, although this is hardly the first U.S. administration to engage in selective or near-complete blindness towards anti-democratic practice in the Middle East. That official blindness, part of the U.S. policies that have effectively overlooked denials of civil and human rights in return for oil and stable regional alliances, has been a bipartisan work of decades. The current administration, however, has hit dizzying new heights of *chutzpah* as the putative sponsor of popular electoral democracy in the Middle East. George W. Bush would read signs for wonders, interpreting current events—the election of an Iraqi puppet government, powerless Saudi municipal elections, Mubarak's career-end grudging permission for hamstrung electoral opposition, and a prospective pull-back of Syrian troops in Lebanon—as the arrival of radical new changes. These developments change literally nothing in terms of street-level democracy and realization of human rights; rather, they are the means of collaboration with U.S. imperial power, regime stabilization through minor gestures, and *realpolitik* accommodation of changing political environments in order to sustain authoritarian rule.

Thus more accurately interpreted, the U.S. neo-conservative vision of democracy concerns the consolidation of hegemony in the name of creating responsive political institutions. A truly democratic Middle East, on the other hand, would eliminate repressive governments that have allied

themselves with U.S. interests and revolutionize societies throughout the region. Civil rights activists like Saad El-Din Ibrahim and other democratic reformers in Egypt would be able to speak from outside prisons. A fundamentally democratized Middle East might be inimical to the United States as a global superpower and leading energy consumer, but it would be fully consonant with at least one historic American ideal.

Anti-Monarchism and Pro-Labor

Democracy in the United States, with its many imperfections, was born as eighteenth-century anti-monarchism and a rejection of the divine right of kings. The contradiction between the realization of popular democracy and the perpetuation of rule by royal families, which seemed obvious given a gradually emerging concept of republican citizenship in the latter eighteenth century, escapes U.S. foreign policy-makers in the twenty-first century. Middle Eastern monarchies, which range from absolutist (Gulf emirates) to family-corporatist (Saudi Arabia) to quasi-constitutional (Jordan, Morocco), remain intrinsically antithetical to democratic government. They protect and preserve national elites while positioning themselves as a self-conceived organic link to the popular will, as symbolic trustees of national history, and—particularly in the case of the House of Saud—as the guardians of true religious faith. Saudi Arabia remains the only country in the world today named after a family, a point that seems lost in Western discussions. De-enthronement and abolition of monarchism in favor of unfettered constitutional legislative assemblies would be one of the clearest advances towards democratic practice throughout the region.

The Middle East has been particularly susceptible to the false equation of capitalism and democracy. Democratic progress has been construed frequently as the privatization of older institutions of state capitalism, creation of unregulated capital markets safe for international investment, an end to crony capitalism that drains profits or inhibits the rise of middle-class entrepreneurs, and the installation of neo-liberal economic policies that minimize social budgets while increasing military expenditures and capital subsidies.

Labor movements that once thrived in a few countries of the Middle East—Egypt, Israel, and Lebanon—have

Joe Lockard (Joe.Lockard@asu.edu) is a *Bad Subjects* editor and assistant professor of English at Arizona State University. An Israeli citizen, Joe has also taught at teachers' colleges in Israel.

become shells of their former selves. Where it existed, the power of independent organized labor and trade union movements to create and enforce worker rights has been eroded to near-disappearance, and much of the region has never had such movements in any effective sense. Economic democracy, workers' self-government, and collective ownership of the means of production—with a few exceptions such as a minority of Israeli *kibbutzim* and a few cooperative Palestinian enterprises—remain absent from the discussion.

The economic results are soaring indices of disparities between wealthy and poor, ever-increasing poverty rates, proportionally smaller middle classes, and rising labor emigration rates. This last phenomenon is particularly corrosive to democratization since it deprives relocating workers of participatory citizenship in their home societies and relieves economies and governments in their countries of origin of the pressure to change. At the same time, emigrant workers remain alienated from basic citizenship rights in the countries where they spend much of their working lives and to whose economies they contribute immensely. Any workable democratization of the Middle East must address its labor economy and the political and economic interrelationships of that economy.

Feminizing and Queering the Middle East

Achieving democracy in the Middle East means an end to government by men. This simple, radical predicate reaches a core ideology of male authoritarianism and systemic patriarchy that governs the entire region, linking more liberal gender regimes, such as Israel and Lebanon, with the most reactionary governments of the region. There can be no democracy without a fundamental redistribution of legal, economic, political, and social power toward women and their equal representation throughout the region's economies and governments. Hetero- and homosocial masculinism underlies the dominant-subordinate relations, cultural violence, and xenophobia that characterize regional antagonisms.

Gender democracy is inextricably central to any program of democratization, but U.S. foreign policy has been constructed upon ignoring the civil and human rights of women throughout the Middle East. The regimes of gender apartheid prevailing in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf areas are gross, indefensible violations of political equality. Yet the United States and most European countries, citing respect for local custom and cultural sensitivity, have chosen to overlook the enforced legal invisibility, gender subordination, and separate-and-unequal disenfranchisement of the majority of Saudi Arabia's population. There have been no widespread governmental condemnations or international efforts to bring Saudi Arabia into compliance with the UN Declaration of Human Rights and other international con-

ventions and protocols on women's equality. The same message has been clear for decades: Arab women are expendable, oil is not.

Policies that specify the unacceptability of gender apartheid in Saudi Arabia and impose sanctions in support of equal rights for Saudi women are necessary for advancing regional democratization. At the same time, the regional histories of European colonialism and U.S. neo-colonialism limit the legitimacy and public acceptability of their official voices in confronting gender apartheid, and European and U.S. government policies at present lack the credibility of sustained advocacy for human rights in the region. The advancement of women's equal rights in the Middle East must be led by the region's women with support from international organizations and law; it represents an internal social struggle against male supremacy in the Middle East's diverse societies, not a useful political whip for outsiders who have little cultural knowledge and no personal stake in democratization of gender relations. Achieving an effective balance between the leadership of Middle Eastern women and the provision of international support for gender democracy will be one of the most challenging issues of regional democratization.

The same masculinism that denies women equality also refuses it to gays throughout the Middle East. Police raids against and imprisonment of gays in Egypt, or the butchering

TIKKUN ONLINE

COMMUNITY

Receive up-to-date information on our growing international network of activists, events, and conferences.

EXCLUSIVE CONTENT

Read up-to-the-minute articles, news, and reflections by Rabbi Michael Lerner and Tikkun Magazine's stellar cast of contributors.

ARCHIVES

For \$10 a year, get access to twelve years of Tikkun Magazine.

STORE

Support TIKKUN by purchasing books and videos by Rabbi Lerner, Peter Gabel, Joel Schalit, and Michael Bader.

For more information, drop by www.tikkun.org



Current Thinking
Rabbi Lerner on the Jewish People's Role in the World
Peter Gabel on the Jewish People's Role in the World
Joel Schalit on the Jewish People's Role in the World
Michael Bader on the Jewish People's Role in the World

of gay men by Islamic fundamentalists in Gaza, are violent manifestations of authoritarian heterosexuality. In *a Time of Torture*, a report produced by Human Rights Watch, documents the growth of anti-gay repression in Egypt, with police investigations of "habitual practice of debauchery" and "contempt for religion." However, the Bush administration, whose policies at root respond to right-wing evangelical Christian morality, cannot conceive of democracy and sexuality as linked concepts and is pursuing its own anti-gay constitutional agenda. Several European Union parliamentarians, notably Claudia Roth and Ilka Schröder, have pursued this precise linkage and have sought to tie EU foreign policy and aid to support for gay rights in the Middle East. Queering the Middle East through this sort of policy initiative is one of the prerequisites for regional democratization.

Hegemonic Theologies versus Democracy

In the middle of the twentieth century, secular nationalism and internationalism provided the leading opposition to colonialism throughout the Middle East. The theo-politics of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt or of religious feudalists in the Gulf were overshadowed heavily by a mixture of secular nationalists, socialists, pan-Arabists, and the Ba'ath movement, often accompanied by alliances with the Non-Aligned Movement. In Israel, Labor movement secularism set the political and social agenda.

Early in the twenty-first century these secularisms—often no paragons of democratic practice themselves—have turned embattled and defensive. Their agendas have accommodated or have been surpassed by theology-driven politics. In some areas, religious programs for education, health, and social services compete heavily against or have replaced secular provision. The limited achievements of progressive secular politics in the Middle East beginning in the early twentieth century have been reversed: the public sphere has become the domain of theocratic forces. Ethnic, national, or international conflicts have increasingly drawn on religious lexicons of absolute divine entitlement, theological demonization of opposition, and promised extermination of enemies. Progressive secular lexicons of social justice, class analyses, and peaceful conflict resolution struggle for a public audience and frequently encounter censorship.

Religious hegemonies and their bureaucracies are by definition inimical to democracy; they demand, monitor, and police public compliance with determinative moral models of private behavior. They posit monopolistic religious faith as the sole legitimate criterion for public policy; the function of the state becomes the elimination of heterodoxy, not neutrality and protection of free expression. The exercise of dissident citizenship through democratic processes represents a threat to an orthodox religious monopoly. For hegemonic theologies, a state is acceptable only to the extent that it reflects and confirms the opinions of religious leadership.

Most important, the state exists to provide public financing for corps of religious functionaries who support the political leadership of their patrons. State religion is a public employment program for men without job skills beyond demonstrative piety.

Democratization of Middle Eastern societies means determined confrontation with and disestablishment of religious hegemonies, to a degree and in a manner specific to each society. It entails constitutional disestablishment of religion: terminating state religious bureaucracies, courts, and police; stripping public budgets from private religious social services and ending state religious school systems; fostering a public culture that promotes religious tolerance; and, where germane, prohibiting political parties with exclusivist sectarian religious platforms from organizing. In some Middle Eastern societies, this is nothing less than a prescription for civil war; however, this is also largely the secularization program that Atatürk accomplished in Turkey beginning in the mid-1920s.

U.S. intervention and alliances have repeatedly functioned to promote reactionary religious forces throughout the region and beyond, most notably in supporting the Afghani *mujahidin* during the Reagan administration. In Iraq, this same U.S. interventionist impulse is pushing political developments in the same direction of empowerment for arch-reactionary religious forces, such as the clerical United Iraqi Alliance headed by Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, which includes the Dawa Party, Abdel Aziz Hakim's Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, and the Al-Sadr movement. New Prime Minister-designate Ibrahim al-Jaafari wants Islamic *sharia* law to replace civil law, Shia religious parties are expanding their power, and an underground Sunni-Shia religious war is already in progress. In Lebanon, recent Hezbollah demonstrations in support of Syria have convinced the Bush administration, according to unnamed officials (*New York Times*, March 10), to shift U.S. policy towards endorsing Hezbollah's emergence as a political participant in Lebanon. Hezbollah, which has representatives in Lebanon's parliament, is a militant party of resistance with no significant social or economic critique; rather, it advocates Islamic supremacy as a cure-all platform. As antagonistic as the interests of Hezbollah and the Bush administration may seem, their mutual obsessions with violent extermination of enemy governments run in ironic parallel.

Violence, theocratic rule, gender supremacy, labor exploitation, and political alliances with arch-reactionary governments have acted to undermine and destroy democracy in the Middle East. Democratization involves political and cultural processes—sometimes prolonged, sometimes radically brief—within societies seeking productive syntheses of their contradictions. Nothing that the United States has done in the Middle East so far has helped bring about such syntheses or the realization of democracy. □

Democracy and the Bomb: Nuclear Poker and the Prospects for Change in Iran

Roger Friedland

On June 17, the Iranian electorate will vote. Their presidential election will take place against the backdrop of a rapidly mounting threat of an American air attack on its development of a dual-use nuclear fuel cycle and long-range missiles. By its duplicity and stealth, by its pursuit of uranium metal used only for nuclear weapons and heavy water reactors—whose spent fuel can be used to extract weapons-grade plutonium—it is evident that Iran seeks the bomb. In geo-politics, as in all things, good strategy is a question of good timing. The question is whether America has the will to wait and whether it is wise to do so. The wisdom of waiting depends on whether or not one believes the constitution will explode before the bombs do.

The Iranian constitution is an institutional contradiction—a democratic theocracy—based on two heterogeneous sources of legitimacy: elections and referenda on the one side, and clerical decision on the other. The issue facing Iran is whether it is possible to transform the law within the law—to constitutionally transform a constitution when its sources are not only beyond the law, but beyond the people, located as they are in a God whose representative on earth, the Supreme Leader, once Khomeini, now Khamenei, has consistently condemned as enemies of Islam those who wish to democratize the law and who has persistently deployed violence to destroy them, from after the revolution in 1978 with the wholesale murder of the People's Mujahadin, to vicious attacks on students and the killing of Iranian exiles including Mohammed Naghdi (right here in Rome in 1993).

Since the 1997 election as president of the reformist cleric Muhammed Khatami, who then won 69 percent of the vote, it has become clear just how much the structure of Iran's Islamic republic constrains the possibility of any kind of democratic transformation. Theocratic segments of the state vet parliamentary candidates; suppress critical press and public opinion research; make even legislators subject to criminal prosecution for their politics; prevent the passage or implementation of legislation deemed in contraven-

tion of Islam; and routinely arrest, torture, and kill Iranians understood to threaten the regime.

Khatami's reform agenda has failed. For example, parliamentary legislation to reduce the power of the Guardian Council to disqualify candidates for election was defeated by the self-same council as being inimical to Islamic law. Thousands of candidates, including sitting members of parliament, have been disqualified. As a result, the populace has fled the electoral process and the pro-clerical forces now control the *Majles*, the Iranian parliament, and are likely to remain in control for the foreseeable future. According to a professional survey in 2002, less than 20 percent of the population support a politically active clergy while 71 percent want a referendum in order to democratize the Islamic state. The absence of clerical legitimacy is manifest in the upcoming elections, where there are few clerical candidates and where candidates are not emphasizing their proximity to the Supreme Leader. The mullahs hold power, but they know they cannot deliver the vote.

So what are the possible sources of change?

The first possibility is economic sanctions. The high price of oil and natural gas provides Iran with enormous slack to buy consent. Just recently, Iran signed a \$4 billion contract to build a natural gas pipeline to India, ally of America and Israel. These natural resources will also allow Iran to withstand and evade sanctions. Even though the Americans and the Europeans have now agreed to take Iran to the UN in the event of non-compliance with demands to stop what looks increasingly like a nuclear weapons program, we know from the experience of Iraq that maintaining consensus on sanctions is next to impossible. Iraq was not only able to evade sanctions, trade sanctions were literally coming undone before the American invasion. Indeed, the current U.S. regime allows its own corporations to evade its own sanctions in Iran through dummy subsidiaries, including Vice-President Cheney's former employer, Halliburton. Iran is just too rich for economic pressures to do much of anything.

The second prospect is the use of military force. The likelihood of an American invasion is about nil. The United States does not have enough troops. Iran's military capacity is incomparably greater than that of Iraq. Iran has the backing

Roger Friedland is a Fulbright professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Rome.

of Russia, which since 1989 has provided it with nuclear technologies and huge numbers of weapons. However, air strikes and special operations like those which took place in El Salvador and Nicaragua during the 1980s are being seriously considered. According to a report by Seymour Hersh (*The New Yorker*, January 24, 2005), the Pakistanis apparently traded amnesty for their nuclear weapons pioneer, A.Q. Khan, in exchange for intelligence sharing on Iranian facilities. The United States is apparently engaged in reconnaissance operations to locate dispersed underground nuclear facilities. Indeed, Scott Ritter, the former UNSCOM weapons inspector in Iraq, now claims that President Bush has "signed off" on plans to bomb Iran in the same month as the presidential elections, June 2005. Just as the Iranians were happy to give Israel access to their airspace to take out Iraq's nuclear reactor in 1981, perhaps the Iraqis will provide airspace to help the Americans take out Iranian installations.

While military strikes might destroy Iran's nuclear capacity, they will also destroy Iran's democratic future. The United States faces a contradiction between its two objectives—promoting democracy in the Near East, which will domesticate radical Islam, and the prevention of nuclear proliferation, particularly on the part of regimes that have been major bases and financial supporters of international terrorism.

The problem with the military option is that the Iranian regime has learned to depend on war—Khomeini saw the war with Iraq as a "divine blessing" and could have stopped it in 1982, but allowed it to continue right up to his death. Former President Rafsanjani saw that war as a mechanism to create another subsidiary Islamic republic, indeed as a pathway to the "liberation" of Jerusalem. Beyond their legitimate defense needs in a nuclearized region, the Iranian theocrats seek confrontation because it allows them to mobilize the population to their side.

The mullahs today understand the nuclear confrontation with the West as another blessing. Nuclear confrontation is not only a bargaining chip to ensure the longevity of their regime, it is a mechanism for maintaining the clerical hegemonic bloc. The reformers and the radicals are united in their desire to sustain Iran's nuclear program. "If this nation is tested by a bitter experience," the Supreme Leader Khamenei recently declared, "I will wear battle fatigues and will be ready to sacrifice myself at the head of the nation.... After September 11, there was no news of the U.S. President and his deputies for two or three days. They went into hiding. I am not like that."

Not only will any strike against Iranian nuclear sites increase the power of the radical theocrats in Iran, it will be likely to destroy the project of securing a viable democracy in Iraq. In the last Iraq war, the United States agreed to bomb Mujahadin camps in Iraq in exchange for an Iranian agreement to seal their borders to prevent Ba'ath leaders from fleeing. If the United States were to attack, Iran, which has thousands of operatives and military cells in Iraq, would retaliate with a devastating counterinsurgency in Iraq and with terrorist operations throughout the world. They would try to bring their considerable linkages with Hamas to bear to destroy the fragile mechanism of peace negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians. The American democratic experiment would be in tatters. If there is a military basis for waiting—and most experts suggest that Iran's actual bomb-making is still both a few years away and easily detectable, the political reasons not to bomb are overwhelming.

If democracy will not come from the outside, what about from Iran itself? Just as the split within the French aristocracy was critical to the revolution of 1789, the split within the clerical community will be critical to the democratization of Iran.

Just as the split within the French aristocracy was critical to the revolution of 1789, the split within the clerical community will be critical to the democratization of Iran.

Many clerics understand that theocracy not only undermines the state but, equally important, erodes the legitimacy and the quality of Islam. The Khomeini-appointed prayer leader, Jalaluddin Taheri, is a good example. Taheri criticized "the gang of shroud wearers who sharpen the teeth of the crocodile of power who want to marry the ill-tempered, ugly hag of violence to religion."

There is now a growing split between those who wish to Islamicize Iranian civil society

and separate Islam from actual governance and those who wish to continue the current fusion of state authority and clerical power. Such a clerical split will not be effective until it becomes an actual social movement and/or political party. However, from Iran's historical experience, it is clear that any such movement will be ruthlessly repressed. From its inception, the regime was, and still is, much more threatened by Islamist political movements that support democracy than by secular movements. We see this from its physical elimination of the leadership and cadre of the Mujahadin shortly after the revolution while the regime allied itself with the communist Tudeh.

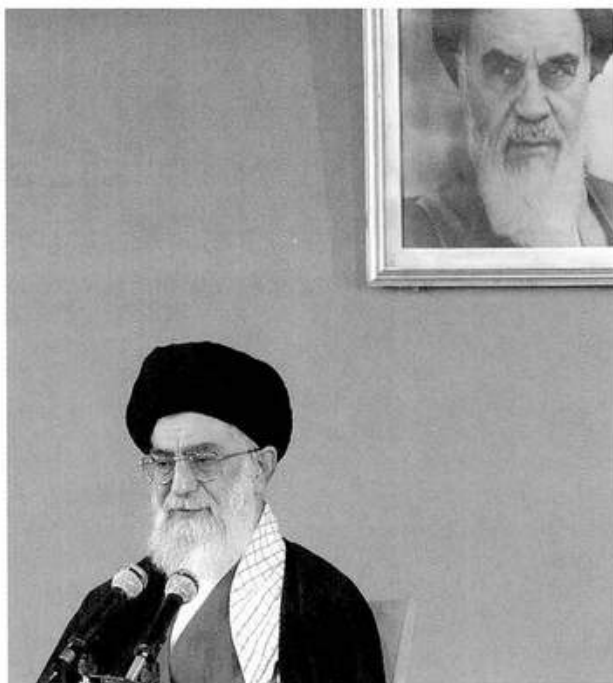
The Islamist, democratic Mujahadin had fought for the Constitution in 1905 and against the Shah. In 1980 the Ayatollah Khomeini vetoed the Presidential candidacy of Mujahadin candidate Massoud Rajavi, and in 1988 issued a

fatwa against the Mujahadin “as waging war on God” and condemned them “to execution.” Thirty thousand murdered in two months, the regime couldn’t kill them fast enough, hanging them by the dozens on cranes through the night. We see it by its displacement of Ali Hussein Montazeri as Khomeini’s heir because of his support for democracy and then his house arrest in Qom for five years in 1998. We see it in the 2002 death sentence on Hashem Aghajari, who lost his leg and his brother in the war with Iraq, and who called for an Islamic Reformation, declaring that the clergy should not stand in the way of the relationship between the people and their God.

Another critical potential source of transformation is the development of a private sector. In the Iranian case, state-controlled industries—which control 70 percent of industrial output—provide the state with leverage to prevent political challenge. The European, and now the American, strategy is to provide the inducement of membership in the World Trade Organization. If this were ever to go anywhere, the transparency and liberalization required by membership would steadily undermine the primacy of the state sector. Unemployment is a huge problem for Iranian youth, and a burgeoning private sector would provide them with an institutional space in which they could find jobs not beholden to the state, and hence create a basis for the continued development of a civil society. In Chile, market liberalization was critical to the ultimate political liberalization that displaced Pinochet and the colonels. There are limits here, however, as the Iranian reformists have a large socialist base which is against liberalization, and a past experiment in Iran with liberalization led to disastrous inflation and foreign debt. The Guardian Council already blocked a 2001 parliamentary bill to provide investment security for foreign firms.

Within Iran, there is only one force that has the numbers and the interest to demand a transformation in Iran’s institutional structure: Iran’s young people—the majority of the population—who continue to pour by the hundreds of thousands into a saturated labor market. A huge percentage of Iran’s young men and women are already unemployed; estimates range to 30 percent and beyond. These are the children born in the immediate aftermath of the Islamic revolution through a program of nationalist natalism. Samuel Huntington, whose clash of civilizations theory I reject, a long time back wrote that unemployed high school students make riots, while unemployed university graduates make revolutions. Iran is accumulating a huge reservoir of potential revolutionaries.

Iran likely has no alternative but the market, and particularly the international market, for keeping its young people in Iran and outside of radical oppositional forces. Just as Iran’s women, seeing in Khomeini a way to defend righteous Islamic families against Western decadence, consolidated his power by referendum, Iran’s mothers will not forever sit idly by as they watch their children forced into exile or



penury, unable themselves to marry and support families. In the short run, rounds of civil disobedience will be violently repressed by the Revolutionary Guards and the gangs of thugs who do the mullahs’ bidding. But eventually, one can easily imagine a situation where the jobless children ultimately bring enough popular pressure to bear that they would force a market liberalization and eventually a referendum to change the constitutional structure so that it limits the powers of the Guardian Council and the Supreme Leader. If the elite core of Iran’s organized force is loyal to the theocratic regime, as is already evident, ordinary soldiers cannot be counted on to fire on their children.

At the moment, Iran is paralyzed by internal stalemate, a civil society that is ever more distant from its leadership, and the seething resentment of its young. After losing a million people in the war with Iraq, the Iranians do not have the stomach for a bloody civil war. According to Ramin Jahanbegloo, one of Iran’s most eminent philosophers, there is talk that military elites are contemplating a coup to democratize the state. There is also the expectation that former President Rafsanjani—both a wealthy market liberal and a long-time Islamic warrior, whose children have entered politics as reformers—will enter the presidential race in order to make a deal with the Americans. Whether he would have the will and capacity to transform the Guardian Council and Expediency Council and thus open the way to constitutional change is an open question. Iran faces two interrelated choices. The first is between change through civil war versus through civil society. Can a democratic revolution succeed in Iran without force?

One scenario is transformation through the civil society, the creation of a vibrant private sector outside of state control, and the combined emergence of a movement of clerics who push for the renovation of Islam by distancing it from the state and a movement of youth pushing for economic and political reform, which could eventually

THE NEW, NEW MIDDLE EAST

force a constitutional transformation in Iran. But is there time?

The struggle inside Iran is related to that on the outside. The second choice is by what means Iran will secure greater Shiite power within the Islamic world. The Iranian geopolitical interest is now in the avoidance of military confrontation with America. This is the Shiite moment. The Great Satan, President Bush, is, in his way, the greatest ally the Iranians have ever had. The Americans have destroyed an Iranian nemesis, the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. American pressure on Saudi Arabia has for the first time given the Shiites representation in the oil-rich East Province. American and French insistence on Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon has left Hezbollah the most powerful, best-organized military force and political power there. With the coming of independent elections in Lebanon and the victory of the Iranian-born Sistani in Iraq, never before have the prospects for Shiite influence in the Near East been so great.

So the Iranian regime need not be a regional superpower that rules primarily by force and, ultimately, nuclear weapons. The conditions are ripe for it to take the Christian Democratic path, relying on political parties who bring Islam to bear on their politics through electoral politics and the creation of their own civil societies. This path offers the prospect of greater legitimacy for Shiite Islam in the long run.



The Shiites in both Iraq and Lebanon want to bring Islam to bear on their politics. In terms of personal freedoms, the Islamic democracies they fashion will not look like their Western counterparts. There is no question of separation of mosque and state. Sistani has undoubtedly achieved greater legitimacy for Islam by nationalistically forcing the Americans to agree on democratic elections than by violent power brokerage. Even if he believes that the clerics should not rule, he also believes that the rules should, for instance, regulate female sexuality in an Islamist way.

But they will be democratic. Outside Iran, domestic democratic politicization of Islam is particularly critical in that the Shiites in Lebanon and Iraq need to share power with Sunnis and Christians. The use of force, when combined with confrontational geo-politics, would only exacerbate domestic divisions that will undercut the hegemony and the legitimacy of Shiite Islam. From the other side, it is just this that Wahhabist jihadists are attempting to achieve in Iraq by increasingly attacking Shiite funeral processions and other gatherings, including Shiites who are part of the anti-American insurgency. It is perhaps the extension of political Islam in Iraq and Lebanon that offers the best prospect for democratic models of Islamic republics that may show the way forward for Iran.

And so the prospects for internal change hinge on Iran's institutional contradiction—on democracy, on popular voice—as one of the two founding pillars of Iran's Islamic republic. President Bush and Ayatollah Khamenei are both in their respective ways constrained by democratic imperatives in the world; whether they believe it or not, they are caught by the logic of the popular mandate to which both of their regimes are beholden. Their two regimes are trapped in a prisoner's dilemma, where one fears conceding anything for fear that the other will default. Iranian democracy is America's best chance to avoid war, and war will certainly destroy America's ability to promote democracy. For the Iranians, too, not only will war be inimical to the project of assuring Shiite hegemony in the region over the long-term, the failure of Iranian democracy will ultimately alienate a large portion of the Iranian public from not only political Islam, but Islam altogether. Indeed, the United States, and President Bush himself, shows just how compatible democracy and politicized religion can be. The Shiites should study the American evangelical and fundamentalist record to see how good they can have it if they play their cards right.

Part of any recipe for constitutional change in Iran is a diminution of the basis for siege mentality with actual pledges that the United States has no interest in attempting regime change through military intervention—if Iran is willing to forswear the development of its nuclear military capabilities. The Americans would have to declare that their only legitimate concern is military, not political. They would leave it to the Iranian people to decide—at least for now. In this poker game the stakes are just too high not to wait. □

Ending the Occupation, Saving Israel/Palestine: Strategy and Morality

Michael Lerner



I am firmly convinced that ending the Occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, if done by Israel in a spirit of generosity and open-heartedness, would be the necessary prerequisite for a lasting peace between Israel and the Palestinian people.

A plan to achieve that—the Geneva Accord—has defined many of the contours of what that peace could look like. The Tikkun Community was the first national organization to embrace and promote that Accord, though always with the caveat that it is not enough to have a legal agree-

ment unless each side embraces a spiritual consciousness that affirms the humanity of the other, recognizes its own sins in having treated the other side disrespectfully, and seeks genuine repentance and atonement.

There is no magic bullet that can achieve this outcome. All that we can do is to educate people in the United States and in the Jewish world to rethink their understanding of the history of the conflict, and to support Palestinians who are trying to do that on their side.

All the rest is political grandstanding and is unlikely to have much impact. The great danger of adopting a focus on divestment, or even the reinvestment that I endorse, is that it allows the conversation to switch from what a real solution is to what tactics we should use.

Rabbi Michael Lerner is the editor of TIKKUN, co-founder of the Tikkun Community, and spiritual leader of Beyt Tikkun synagogue.



One reason why some wish to make that switch is that they are using the struggle against the Occupation as their wedge against the very existence of a state for the Jewish people. They hide behind the slogan, "End the Occupation," while what they really believe is that the Occupation began the moment Jews started to return to their ancient homeland in the 1880s and started building communities. Their goal is to end the state of Israel entirely.

I don't share that goal. I don't think Arabs had any right to restrict Jewish immigration when it was Jews who were the refugees and Palestinians the people who owned land and wielded power. I don't believe that Arabs were morally justified in using their power over oil to convince England to shut down immigration before and during World War II, when Jews were desperately seeking refuge from the slaughter of Europe.

So I see the establishment and preservation of the State of Israel as an act of international affirmative action and as reparations from a world that had allowed the Jewish people to face genocide after two thousand years of oppression in both Christian and Islamic lands. I won't accept strategies that are aimed at eliminating this special protection for Jews, not until anti-Semitism has been effectively wiped out from the historical experience of the Jewish people for at least fifty and maybe a hundred years.

But, unfortunately, the way that Israel was established led to the expulsion of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians from their homes and their land, and the resulting anger, combined with the original passion to keep Palestine

a land free of a significant Jewish presence, has led to a struggle that Arabs keep losing but keep fighting. And because of that struggle, a large section of the Israeli public (people who twelve years ago voted in a peace government and hoped to see an end to the Occupation) has become convinced that Israel needs ongoing protection from terror, and that holding on to sections of the West Bank will give it that protection.

I believe that these Israelis are deeply mistaken, and that the path they have followed has empowered a minority of Jews whose goal is not protection, but the expansion of the Israeli state to incorporate major parts of the West Bank. If that process cannot be stopped and Israel does succeed, under the blanket of U.S. power, in imposing on Palestinians a deal that is far less generous in substance and in spirit than the Geneva Accord, I suspect that this struggle will continue for at least another generation or two, to the detriment of the Jewish people, the Palestinian people, and the peace of the world.

But how to reverse this process? This is the central question facing us. I am convinced that any movement that seems to be about reversing the existence of the State of Israel, or which could plausibly be portrayed in that way, is objectively serving the interests of the Occupation, because it gives to the Israeli Right the ability to mobilize fear, and through that fear to build support for keeping much of the West Bank under Israeli control. Acts of violence from Palestinians have that same political impact. And I fear that a general divestment policy could have that same impact.

That's why I'm choosing to support the kind of targeted divestment proposed by the Presbyterian Church, the World Council of Churches, and other Protestant groups—a program that is not aimed against Israel, but only against corporations directly involved in supporting the Occupation of the West Bank. And to make it clear that this is not anti-Israel, I support calling it a strategy of reinvestment, so that funds taken from corporations that help support the Occupation will be reinvested in programs aimed at supporting the peace forces and the well-being of the least advantaged inside Israel. This is not the "creative engagement" suggested by former President Reagan with South Africa, in which U.S. multinationals were encouraged to invest in the apartheid state with the hypothesis that somehow doing so would have a moderating or liberalizing impact on the society. It is rather a strategy directly aimed at keeping high profile attention on the immorality of Israel's violation of the human rights of the Palestinian people.

Recently released poll data from distinguished pollster Steven M. Cohen at the Hebrew University shows a far

more significant divestment is already taking place—a divestment of interest in and attachment to the State of Israel by American Jews. According to Cohen's study, American Jewish attachment to Israel has fallen dramatically over the past two years. Only 57 percent of those polled feel that "caring about Israel is an important part of [their] being Jewish." Cohen argues that the image of Israel promoted by Zionist organizations abroad—as perpetually under siege, always at war with its neighbors—may be good for fundraising, but is ultimately alienating to younger American Jews. As sobering as Cohen's research is, this should not be a surprise. For nineteen years this magazine has been warning Israel and Jewish leaders in this country that the systematic violation of Palestinian rights would eventually lead to a turning away from Israel, not only by the peoples of the world, but even by those Jews who remain rooted in the highest ethical traditions of the Jewish prophets.

I doubt very much that the "tough love" of divestment, targeted divestment, or even reinvestment strategies will work to wake up the Israeli people or to drive sense into the minds of the American Jewish establishment. I support the gesture of reinvestment because some exercise of power might draw some attention to the issue, but not much. What could work is a campaign to get American political leaders to endorse the Geneva Accord. If, instead of wasting energies in a divisive fight (read Hayyim Feldman's excellent account in this issue) about divestment, the anti-Occupation forces were to unite to try to put on the ballots

of the cities and states of this nation propositions endorsing the Geneva Accord, the debate would focus in a way that could actually lead to a breakthrough, because of its central message: there is a concrete alternative to war and Occupation.

It is to that end that we will be bringing people to Congress, and it is toward that goal that we invite all those who want to see a two-state solution with Israel and Palestine living in peace with each other to join with us in forming an AIPAC-style coalition that can create a more powerful voice in the circles of American policy and power. If that can be created, then our specific role as the Tikkun Community will be to try to move such a coalition into a discourse that emphasizes reconciliation, open-heartedness, and atonement—the requisite steps for building a serious and lasting peace.

We have invited several Palestinian, Israeli, and American activist colleagues deeply familiar with strategies used to achieve this reality to reflect on the best possible ways to secure a just end to the Arab/Israeli conflict. Responding to my article "Divestment and More" in the March/April edition of *TIKKUN*, and subsequent discussions of adding the tactic of reinvestment to the mix—as suggested to me by Tikkun Community National Advisory Board member Harvey Cox—we introduce Al Awda's Mazin Qumsiyeh, the Israel Committee Against Housing Demolition's Jeff Halper, Alternative Information Center founder Michel Warschawski, and the Tikkun Community's Hayyim Feldman. □

Why Divestment and Boycotts of Israel Are a Moral Necessity for Establishing a Durable Peace

Mazin Qumsiyeh

Divestment and boycotts are nonviolent tools intended to challenge situations of injustice and war and thus advance justice and peace. The use of such nonviolent tactics always raises issues of effectiveness, morality, harm done to occupied people, motivations, and precise formulations. In such a short essay, we

can only touch on key issues and provide links for further study.

I do want to state three disclaimers before we start. First, while we may draw on our experiences in other conflicts (e.g., the Zionist break of the popular boycott of Nazi Germany in the 1930s, or the more recent popular actions for civil rights, ending the war on Vietnam, and the boycott/divestment of South Africa), every situation is unique and we must remember that such examples are just that: examples to be used to develop strategies, not to copy ver-

*Mazin Qumsiyeh is co-founder of Al-Awda (The Palestine Right to Return Coalition) and the author of *Sharing the Land of Canaan*, published in 2004 by Pluto Press.*

Some Boycott/Divestment Initiatives

- Israeli groups ranging from Matzpun (www.matzpun.com/) to the Israeli Committee against House Demolitions (www.icahd.org) called for boycotts as early as 2001.
- Students of Concordia University (Montreal) called on Canada to cut diplomatic and economic ties.
- The Lutheran Church called on the U.S. government "to withhold all economic and military aid to Israel until it improves conditions for Palestinians" (as reported in the *Los Angeles Times* in 2001).
- Many resolutions calling on Divestments have introduced in city councils nationwide.
- Al-Awda initiated a campaign in 2001 against Intel for building a plant on confiscated Palestinian land. Other campaigns were launched against Caterpillar (www.stopcat.org/) and other companies.
- A number of independent boycott campaigns were initiated around the world: www.inminds.com/boycott-israel.html, boycottisraelgoods.org, www.bigcampaign.org, www.boycottisrael.org.
- Academic boycotts were called (AcademicsForJustice.org), especially in light of curbs on Palestinian education (see for example right2edu.birzeit.edu/).
- Three student-led conferences on divestment were organized in the past three years (in Michigan, Ohio, and North Carolina), and each drew hundreds of students.
- Divestment petitions and actions have been started at dozens of universities (www.divest-from-israel-campaign.org).
- Nobel Peace Prize winner Archbishop Desmond Tutu pointed out similarities between Israel and apartheid South Africa and called for boycotts (as reported in the *Guardian* in 2002).
- The Presbyterian Church, the Anglican Church, and the World Council of Churches have issued statements encouraging serious consideration of economic sanctions and boycotts as tools to address Israeli human rights violations.
- British MPs and other celebrities have called for outright sanctions especially in light of Israel's defiance of International Court of Justice ruling on the apartheid wall (www.waronwant.org/?lid=9301).

batim. Second, the most effective activism is one based on universal principles (e.g., as articulated by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights). Last, while violence and atrocities occur around the world, we as U.S. activists must prioritize action in areas where our government helps perpetrate and sustain injustice and violence. I will have more to say about these things in the sections below.

Israel Is Currently an Apartheid State from which We Should Divest

Israel's actions run contrary to international law and basic human rights conventions in many ways:

a) Both Labor and Likud governments have engaged in a process of removal of non-Jews from their lands over the past fifty-seven years and have established laws and a military shield that prevent the return of refugees and displaced people. Today, nearly 5 million such individuals are denied their internationally recognized right of return simply for not being Jewish (contrary to UDHR, UNGA 194, and countless other UN resolutions).

b) Within the Green Line (Israel's armistice borders of 1949), there are now 1.3 million Palestinians living under discriminatory rules including removal from their lands (250,000 so-called "present absentees"), lack of access to governmental services (for example, in the approximately 100 unrecognized villages), and discrimination in access to health and education.

c) Since 1967, Israel has illegally occupied the West Bank and Gaza and set up colonies/settlements, which now house nearly 420,000 Jews on Palestinian land. In doing so, it has violated scores of UN resolutions, along with the Fourth Geneva Convention.

The net result of these policies and procedures has been that nearly two-thirds of native Palestinians have been rendered refugees or displaced people, and that unemployment and poverty among the remaining Palestinians is around 70 percent. The violence of the occupied and the vastly larger violence of the occupier are symptoms of this underlying injustice.

Blaming Sharon for "tactics" while ignoring the basic structural injustice found within both Labor and Likud governments is evading the responsibility of working for just solutions. Even Avraham Burg, a past speaker of the Knesset, acknowledged in a 2003 *Guardian* article that Israel "rests on ... foundations of oppression and injustice... [and] must shed its illusions and choose between racist oppression and democracy" (*The Guardian*, September 15, 2003). Similarly, a group of prominent Israeli artists issued the following statement in 2001:

If the state of Israel aspires to perceive itself as a democracy, it should abandon once and for all any legal and ideological foundation of religious, ethnic, and demographic discrimination. The state of Israel should strive to become the state of all its citizens. We call for the annulment of all

laws that make Israel an apartheid state, including the Jewish law of return in its present form.

But this can happen in one of only two ways: a military confrontation in which Israel loses (this is impossible under the current circumstances of U.S. unconditional support), or economic, popular, and other pressure, as we are beginning to see with divestments and boycotts. Israeli society must be convinced that the price of holding on to discrimination and Occupation exceeds any perceived benefits.

Economic Tools as an Imperative and Moral Alternative for Peace Activists, Especially in the United States

Some Zionists would argue that we should be "investing" in some segments of an oppressive society to encourage change rather than use such blunt tools as blanket divestments and boycotts. This is ironic, since this was an argument used by the Zionist movement to break the boycott instituted in the 1930s by progressive Jews against Nazi Germany. In retrospect, of course, no one would suggest that "investment" in progressive segments of apartheid South Africa would have been a better strategy than the blanket boycott of South Africa. Others argue that Israel is being "singled out" for divestment/boycotts among many countries that violate human rights.

But we live in America and we fund Israel (unlike, say, China or Sudan). U.S. foreign policy appears now to favor Zionism and support Israel unconditionally, which places greater responsibility on us taxpayers and voters. Some 30 percent of our foreign aid budget goes to Israel (with a population equalling 0.1 percent of the world population). The United States has used its veto power in the United Nations Security Council to protect Israel from international law no less than thirty-six times. Further, the best U.S. military technologies are sent to Israel. Combined with direct financial military aid, this has made Israel the fourth or fifth strongest military power in the world. Israel possesses hundreds of nuclear weapons as well as massive stockpiles of biological and chemical weapons.

As Professor Joseph Levine stated in a 2002 article in the *Columbus Dispatch*:

Some people argue that it is unfair to target Israel when so many other governments deny their citizens basic human rights, and others are guilty of occupying foreign land as well. In fact, there is no inconsistency here. It is absurd to argue that whenever you direct your energy to fight abuse in one area, you must do so everywhere. Following such a course would be a recipe for total paralysis and passivity. I support any effort by others to work for human rights in China, or to end the Syrian occupation of Lebanon, but that doesn't mean I have to be working on those projects as well. That aside, there are particular reasons to focus on the Israeli occupation. Israel is singular in the degree of



economic and political support it receives from the United States. This places a special moral burden on American citizens to do something about Israel's brutal behavior, because without U.S. support, it couldn't be sustained.

Moral and other foundations for boycotts and divestment from Israel were examined in papers submitted at the London conference (see www.bricup.org.uk/home/articles.html and www.palestinemonitor.org/new_web/boycott_cover.htm).

Concluding Remarks

Occupation and oppression are maintained by economic and non-economic support. Withdrawing these sources of support constitutes a practical and nonviolent method of resistance and solidarity and serves the interests of all people in Israel/Palestine (a win-win situation for ending the root cause of the conflict). It is also a moral imperative to those who seek peace based on universal principles of equality, human rights, and justice. Silence in situations of war and injustice has been correctly described as complicity. This complicity is compounded where atrocities are committed or facilitated by our own government or groups claiming to represent our religion or political philosophy.

In my book *Sharing the Land of Canaan: Human Rights and the Israeli Palestinian Struggle*, I argue that human rights must become central if we are to arrive at a durable peace (as opposed to "pacification" based on imbalance of power). Divestments and boycotts are proven tools for the masses to advance justice and human rights (keys to peace) regardless of one's preference for particular political solutions (one state, two states, federations, regional arrangements, etc.). The histories of ending the war in Vietnam and apartheid in South Africa illustrate that grassroots activities for peace that employ such methods do work as an alternative to continued violence and injustice. □

Sanctions Against the Israeli Occupation: It's Time

Jeff Halper

If apartheid ended, so can the occupation. But the moral force and international pressure will have to be just as determined. The current divestment effort is the first, though certainly not the only, necessary move in that direction. —Bishop Desmond Tutu

I hesitate to get in the middle of a disagreement between Michael Lerner and himself, but his initial impulse to call for “limited, targeted divestment in firms that specifically work to support the Occupation of the West Bank and Gaza,” followed by his concern at having done so, embrace some fundamental issues of analysis and strategy that deserve to be aired as we all work together on being “smart,” as he argues—and morally accountable. (And I, it should be said from the outset, agree with Lerner’s impulsive side.)

The main issue from which a campaign for divestment might deflect us, says Lerner,

is how to build on the positive energy created by the election of Palestinian Prime Minister Abbas and his clear willingness to reject violence and rely on non-violence as he seeks a Palestinian state. While I believe that Ariel Sharon’s Likud and Shimon Peres’ Labor Party are unwilling to take the steps to make a real solution possible (namely, a return to the pre-67 borders of Israel, the Green Line, with minor border modifications along the lines specified in the Geneva Accord), I think it is politically smart to build on the optimism of the moment, put cynicism about Sharon’s motives behind, and focus all attention on building public support for a settlement agreement that would give the Palestinian people a politically and economically viable Palestinian state.

This sounds reasonable. Yet it minimizes the issues to the point of willfully discounting the underlying source of the problem: Israel’s explicit aim of displacing the Palestinians from the country—or imprisoning them in tiny cantons—as a necessary corollary to its exclusive claim to all the Land of Israel west of the Jordan River. How else can one reconcile the suggestion “to build on the positive energy created by

the election of Palestinian Prime Minister Abbas” with the stated belief that “Ariel Sharon’s Likud and Shimon Peres’ Labor Party are unwilling to take the steps to make a real solution possible”? The tactic of playing dumb may be politically smart, but it removes from the equation the hard analysis and pressure that are crucial for truly ending the Occupation and achieving a just and sustainable resolution of the conflict.

The problem, in the end, is not tactical; it is substantial. While building public support for a viable Palestinian state is always helpful, nothing will move Israel (and its American guardian) without a massive element of pressure. Israel, after all, feels that it has won. After decades of systematic effort, the settlement blocs and other “facts on the ground” have reached a critical mass, making it impossible (in my view) to roll back the Occupation to a point where a viable Palestinian state is possible. Sharon succeeded in transforming Israel’s control of the Palestinian areas from one of impermanent and contested Occupation to a permanent political fact when, in his meeting with Bush in April, 2004, the American administration formally recognized the settlement blocs (Israel’s “major population centers”) comprising East Jerusalem and some 30 percent of the West Bank—a fundamental policy change endorsed by the House 407 to 9 and the Senate by a vote of 95 to 3. And Abu Mazen is being set up for yet another “Generous Offer”—a non-viable Bantustan on Gaza and perhaps 60 to 80 percent of the West Bank. In this equation where a powerful state backed unconditionally by the world’s greatest power is poised to prevail over an isolated and powerless people, any civil-society strategy that does not contain a central element of pressure is doomed, no matter how much positive energy and optimism is deployed.

A campaign of sanctions, divestment, and boycotts constitutes a major—and profoundly non-violent—form of pressure. Rather than deflecting from the core issues, it throws a spotlight precisely on the forces that perpetuate the conflict but would otherwise escape public notice. Can anyone deny that the campaign to divest from Caterpillar has shed light on the issue of Israel’s wholesale demolition of Palestinian homes (12,000 since 1967), not to mention American corporate and political complicity in the most

Jeff Halper is a professor of anthropology and the coordinator of the Israel Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAHN). He can be reached at icahn@zohav.net.il.

oppressive aspects of the Occupation?

I agree that such campaigns must be selective and strategic. They must be chosen by their ability to focus attention on key elements of Israeli control and repression. They must also be framed in universal terms, since the very moral and political justification of sanctions rests on opposing intolerable violations of fundamental human rights and international law.

To withhold this instrument of pressure is to eviscerate meaningful attempts to end the process of displacement and imprisonment. It also denies an element most dear to Lerner: the moral dimension. Sanctions and divestment are based upon a moral position against injustice. They cannot succeed, they cannot mobilize support, without mobilizing moral outrage first and foremost. (How contrary to Jewish values do Israel's policies have to be before even the heads of AIPAC cry "Enough!") That is the fuel of civil-society resistance, not mere informational campaigns to affect public opinion. To our chagrin we learned that even in absolutely clear cases of moral transgression and injustice—the apartheid regime in South Africa—governments will not act justly unless they are prodded, monitored, and strategically threatened by civil society. It is here that sanctions, one of the few sources of power at the disposal of the people, play a crucial role.

A campaign of sanctions is not to be taken lightly; it is not the first step in forcing a state to cease oppressive practices. It represents an extraordinary step when, after years of international diplomacy and civil-society protests (the Occupation began, after all, in 1967), injustice and suffering have become so routinized, so institutionalized, so pervasive—when the offending country has become so resistant to normal pressures—that the international community must put its foot down. Indeed, permitting a country to violate human rights, international law, and UN resolutions with impunity undermines the very foundation of the international system and the moral standing of its members—political leaders, corporations, and citizens alike. A campaign of sanctions, then, does not constitute punishment. It does not delegitimize a particular country. It rests, instead, upon the notion of accountability and on the conviction that the targeted country has the ability to end the intolerable situation. In line with these principles, economic sanctions against Israel are not invoked against Israel per se, but against Israel *until the Occupation ends*. With this proviso it is Israel's policy of occupation that is targeted, its status as an occupying power, not Israel itself. When South Africa ended its system of apartheid, sanctions ceased and it fully rejoined the international community.

Believing that the time has come to ratchet up our resistance to the Occupation—particularly now, at this critical juncture when, in a deceitful atmosphere of “good will,” Israel is attempting to nail down its apartheid system over the Palestinians—the Israeli Committee Against House



Demolitions (ICAHN) has joined with other organizations, including Jewish and Israeli ones, in a call for selective sanctions. Keeping its strategic focus, ICAHD urges:

- limitations on sales or transfer of arms to Israel conditional upon their use in ways that do not perpetuate the Occupation, violate human rights and international humanitarian law, and, in the case of the United States, do not breach the provisions of its Arms Export Control Act;
- trade sanctions on Israel due to its violation of the “Association Agreements” it has signed with the European Union that prohibit the sale of settlement products under the “Made in Israel” label, as well as for violations of their human rights provisions;
- divestment from companies that profit from involvement in the Occupation;
- boycott of settlement products and of companies which play a major role in perpetuating the Occupation; and
- holding individuals personally accountable for human rights violations.

Harvey Cox's suggestion of “re-investment” certainly represents a legitimate and powerful *extension* of divestment, providing the funds being re-invested have first been de-invested from offending companies. And re-investment must be geared in an explicit and transparent way to demonstrably supporting organizations or companies that actively oppose the Occupation.

A lot is at stake here. If Israel as the occupying power is not held accountable for the intolerable situation that is within its ability to end, the entire international system of justice is rendered meaningless and empty. If Israel succeeds in defying the Fourth Geneva Convention and in making its Occupation permanent, if an entire population is literally locked behind walls and its right of self-determination trampled, then the ability of human rights to win out over brutal power politics and militarism is jeopardized. The implications of occupation actually prevailing and a new apartheid regime emerging should send chills down our spines. A Jewish voice of conscience, of “tough love” towards Israel, is key. □

Response to Michael Lerner

Michel Warschawski

I was asked to react to Michael Lerner's article on divestment, a topic which, indeed, is at the core of my current political reflection and action. This article, however, raises many topics beyond just divestment: the question of the Palestinian refugees and the right of return, the issue of historical responsibility, the "realistic" political solutions to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and their "ideal" horizon, and more.

I would have loved to have a dialogue with Michael Lerner on all these topics, out of a double common goal: to promote an "as just as possible" solution to a hundred-year-old bloody conflict and to build the largest possible front, in Israel/Palestine as well as in other countries, to help achieve this goal. We may have other occasions to develop such an exchange. Right now, I would like to express a few thoughts concerning the issue of pressure on and proposed sanctions against Israel, which obviously is a broader issue than divestment only.

I speak from my position as an Israeli activist, involved not only in the movement against the Occupation in my country, but also in the framework of the global social justice movement, in which this issue has been and still is being debated.

Unlike Michael Lerner, my starting points are the concepts of Right and rights. I will claim that in our era, this starting point is not only right, but smart too.

As a people who, in modern history, have been the target of racist discrimination, persecution, and even genocide, Jews have long been at the forefront of the struggle for a world based on Right and the respect for human as well as collective rights. Is it a coincidence that Rene Cassin was, together with Eleanor Roosevelt, the architect of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, until now the most progressive document adopted by the international community on that issue? I don't think so. It is not an accident either that this declaration, as well as the Geneva Conventions, were adopted just after World War II and the victory over Nazism. Behind these historical documents is a lesson the international community drew from the dark days

of fascism: the duty of humankind (and its institutions) is to protect itself from tyranny, discrimination, and racism by creating rules and laws that lay out what is and is not tolerable, and by implementing these rules, by force if necessary.

Rights and the rule of law usually represent the interests of the weak against those of the strong, of the powerless against the powerful. The strong don't need laws to protect them; they have the power. In that sense *the true alternative for humankind is the law of the jungle, which is the rule of might, or the rule of law based on rights*.

Today, Israel is strong and believes it can ignore international law and disrespect the basic rights of the people under its domination. It is definitely not right. It is not smart either, because the day after tomorrow Israel could be the weaker power again. This is why I believe that those who defend a climate of impunity for Israel, rather than demanding that the Israeli state enforce international law and the UN resolutions are not serving the true interests of the Israeli people. To be a true friend sometimes means stopping someone from harming others, because it is not right *and* because it may, sooner or later, harm the one who is ignoring the law. I must add that I suspect some unconditional "friends of Israel," especially some Christian fundamentalists, of backing Israel in order to push it to its own destruction. On the other hand, many of those calling for international pressure on Israel to respect what is Right, do so out of a true friendship towards the Jews and a sense of responsibility towards the Israelis.

Of course, Israel is not the only country in the world that violates international law. So what? As a Jew and as an Israeli, I feel more responsible for the misdeeds of Israel than for those of any other country. I call for sanctions, not only to "punish" it for its war crimes and violations of basic human rights, but also to help steer it away from a situation of impunity that may lead it right to the abyss.

Pressure sometimes means sanctions. At the World Social Forums, in Mumbai and Porto Alegre, we had hot discussions about the most efficient types of pressure to exert on Israel: selective civil actions (boycotting of products from settlements), selective boycotts (of the arms trade), sanctions (suspension of international agreements that give some privileges to Israel), or diplomatic pressure?

It is my opinion that the most effective strategy must take into account two central concerns:

(a) What can be concretely achieved in a specific country at a specific moment. It is obvious that a concrete objective

Michel Warschawski is a veteran journalist and peace activist. He founded the Alternative Information Centre in Jerusalem, a Palestinian-Israeli organization that disseminates information, research, and political analysis on Palestinian and Israeli societies as well as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, while promoting cooperation between Palestinians and Israelis.

that can mobilize tens of thousands in Belgium may have no echo in the United States, or that the European Union can, in certain circumstances, be pushed to take measures, while such a perspective is impossible in the United States, with the present administration. In other words, one must be concrete and motivated by the will to have a real effect on the Israeli public and/or the Israeli government.

(b) Not to create any ambiguity whatsoever with a campaign of "boycott the Jews." (This is a real concern in some European countries.)

Recently, many Israelis, and not necessarily from the radical Left, have been discussing the issue of sanctions against Israel—last month B'Tselem initiated a seminar of Israeli Human Rights organizations, under the title "Calling for Sanctions?"—and it is fair to say that most Israeli human rights organizations are divided on the issue. More recently, a group of Israeli political, social, and human rights activists have issued a call that says: "We call upon the international

community—states, NGOs, international civil organizations—for help, and ask them to help us 'protect Israeli society from itself'.... to force the Israeli government to respect the international humanitarian norms, and if it will not do that, to impose 'smart' sanctions on Israel..." This document goes on to list many "smart" sanctions, which mainly involve the suspension of privileges granted by the international community to the state of Israel; suspension—until Israel decides to respect the UN resolutions and international humanitarian law.

I wish to leave the last word to a great lady, a great Zionist, and a great Israeli leader. Former general secretary of the Israeli Labor Party and former Minister of Communication and the Arts Shulamit Aloni wrote, four years ago: "Our only hope today is that an international intervention will oblige us to accept an imposed peace, before we commit crimes against humanity" (*Ha'aretz*, May 8, 2001). □

Divestment: Not the Right Question

Hayyim Feldman

Where among the tenuous diplomatic developments in Israel/Palestine since the election of Mahmoud Abbas and the reelection of George W. Bush can we identify a real source of hope? As Rabbi Michael Lerner suggests in his reconsideration of limited divestment, hope is not to be found in the delusion that Ariel Sharon or his Labor partners are now prepared to do more than groom Abbas for another "generous offer" of a truncated Palestinian bantustan. Nor is it to be found in a return of the same old corrupt and autocratic Palestinian leadership circles to their former pragmatic willingness to tactically renounce armed violence while they fail to cultivate nonviolent resistance, peace-making activity, or a culture of reconciliation at the grassroots level.

Rather, hope is to be found in the fact that the possibility of a return to negotiations is helping create a more responsive attitude among many Israelis, Palestinians, and Americans—a greater openness to the possible emergence of a movement toward the reconciliation that people already hunger for. It's no use to nurture the passive "hopes for change" that David Gordis praises (see *TIKKUN* March/April 2005) without also acting vigorously to bring about that

change. In fact, it is precisely the futility of hopeful pleas for fair negotiations that has turned toward divestment many people who are searching for a more effective approach.

Does the prescribed tikkun (remedy) fit the malady? I agree with Rabbi Lerner that there are both moral and political arguments against total divestment from companies doing business with Israel. However, I would like to reframe what that moral argument is. The movement to divest from South Africa was not deterred when our right-wing opponents challenged us for not first pursuing divestment from the Soviet Union. Divestment campaigns are always one-sided in that they necessarily single out some particular target. But that selection is not necessarily based on a moral calculus of who the worst abuser of human rights is. Sure, anti-Semitism can motivate people of ill will to bash Israel, but there are also plenty of innocent reasons to focus on Israel/Palestine.

Jews, Arabs, Muslims, and Christians all have strong reasons based on identity, culture, and faith to be extra attentive to events in the "Holy Land." We in the United States have a responsibility to challenge first and foremost the devastation being wrought in our name and with our money. Finally, it is reasonable to judge Israel's Occupation of Palestine to be the world's most urgent political problem because it helps cultivate support for international terrorism and jihad. And because it is a tinderbox that could ignite

Hayyim Feldman is a grassroots leader in the Tikkun Community—Boston. For a copy of his Open Letter to the Somerville aldermen, email him at hjf@theworld.net.

broad, even nuclear, global conflict.

The moral flaw of calls for total divestment from Israel stems from the fact that, unlike South Africa, the Israel/Palestine conflict is not simply between right and wrong, but rather between the legitimate claims and needs of two traumatized peoples—in pursuit of which both have often resorted to illegitimate and heinous means as well as to mutual demonization and blame. That is what has made this mess seem not only intractable but also morally impenetrable—so much so that it has become polarizing even among people of good will who are sincerely concerned with peace, justice, and human rights.

On the one hand, for nearly two generations the Occupation has been the central reality shaping lives and events in Israel/Palestine—the suffering of Palestinians, the increasing insecurity and international isolation of Israel, the militarization, the spiritual coarsening, and the emergence of depraved perversions of religion among both peoples—and it is the main obstacle to a resolution of the conflict.

On the other hand, another real impediment to a just peace is the tendency within the Palestinian (not to mention Islamist) national narrative, pre-dating the Occupation, to portray the Jewish people in the land of Israel/Palestine as interlopers, and to refuse to acknowledge that they have become a nation with legitimate national rights. Combine this attitude with the fact that armed Palestinian groups target any and all Israeli Jews for attack, and many Israelis believe—mistakenly, but not without foundation—that violence, not peaceful relations on the basis of equal national or civil rights, represents the true desire of most Palestinians.

The objective of a divestment campaign is generally to delegitimize the targeted regime. In the case of Israel/Palestine the question is: Which regime does the cam-

paign delegitimize—the military Occupation or the state of Israel itself? In other words, the moral problem with efforts to divest from Israel is not so much that they are one-sided, but that they are double-edged.

Case study: Somerville, Massachusetts

The Israel vs. the Occupation distinction doesn't cover all the wrinkles of existing divestment initiatives. I live in Somerville, Massachusetts, where an ambiguous divestment resolution proposed to the Board of Aldermen recently generated the most divisive political battle anyone could remember, and deeply split the anti-Occupation majority. The campaign's most lasting legacies are the gestation of Somerville's first ever organized right-wing Zionist presence, and a ban slapped by the Board of Aldermen on considering *any* Israel/Palestine-related resolutions for the foreseeable future. The Somerville Divestment Project (SDP) called for divestment (1) from companies involved with Israel's human rights violations, or that make and sell equipment to Israel for use in the Occupation, and (2) from Israel Bonds.

When criticized for "singling Israel out," the organizers took cover under the Israel Bonds portion of the resolution, countering that the city employees' pension fund had purchased government bonds from no other foreign country besides Israel, and that they merely wanted to stop this singling out of Israel for financial and political support. This ignored the fact that what they named their "Socially Responsible Investment" resolution called *not* for divesting from companies supporting human rights abuses, but from companies supporting human rights abuses *by Israel*. It also lost them the opportunity to build a case for the singling out of Israel they were in fact proposing.

However, the same Israel Bonds provision that gave a semblance of cover against the "singling out" charge also muddied the waters between selective and total divestment, in that it targeted the state of Israel per se. Speaking psychologically, Israel Bonds are particularly emblematic of the buyer's identification with the State of Israel; that has long been their main purpose. But the association is not just psychological; the SDP's website describes Israel Bonds critically as funding the resettlement of Jewish immigrants "*in Israel*." In response to being called "anti-Israel," SDP spokespeople would quickly "forget" Israel Bonds, and claim to be addressing only the Occupation. But despite speaking in the name of international law, the group refused to acknowledge the UN-guaranteed right of the Israeli Jewish people, like other peoples, to political self-determination in the form of nation-statehood. Not surprising for a group whose founder and some other leaders, in other contexts, openly "oppose the existence of the colonial-settler state of Israel."

Israeli peace activists, right, reach over a yellow line symbolizing a border to shake hands with Palestinian peace activists during a joint demonstration at the Al-Ram checkpoint north of Jerusalem on the road to the West Bank town of Ramallah.



AP PHOTO

The sad fact is that many progressive opponents of the Occupation refuse, in the name of a shortsighted and self-defeating “unity,” to break with those who are mired in anti-Israel hostility and its rejectionist political platform. The implicit unifying call: “Palestine, Yes! Israel, Maybe?”

Even if the language of the proposal had explicitly limited divestment from Israel Bonds to the duration of the Occupation, which it did not, by that logic one could advocate divestment from all companies that do business in or with Israel, as well as boycotts of all Israeli products, academics, sports teams, musicians, and so on, “until the Occupation ends.” To undertake actions in the name of selective, Occupation-focused divestment that are so clearly directed at the Israeli state and people as a whole seems spurious to say the least and can’t help but raise suspicions about the underlying motivations.

The sad fact is that many progressive opponents of the Occupation refuse, in the name of a shortsighted and self-defeating “unity,” to break with those who are mired in anti-Israel hostility and its rejectionist political platform. The implicit unifying call: “Palestine, Yes! Israel, Maybe?” A “peace and justice movement” that permits the denial of the experience, needs, rights, or beloved Divine spark of either Israelis or Palestinians cannot advance any coherent vision of a just peace. Neither its most Occupation-specific call for divestment nor any other program it may adopt will be able to attain very broad reach. It is baffling to me how few of my Somerville-area anti-Occupation comrades who worked on the divestment campaign realize that it was their own feet they had lined up in their political sights.

Occupation-Focused Divestment

But what about divestment initiatives that are unambiguously directed against the Occupation and have a broader strategic framework of circulating empathy and advancing a plausible vision of peace? Gordis rightly points out that in advocating limited divestment of that sort, Rabbi Lerner has not adequately responded to the strong moral or political objections he himself makes against total divestment. I have tried to show that the moral objections, properly framed, do not apply to a carefully selective campaign, which could present a legitimate case for focusing on the Israeli Occupation. Its persuasiveness would depend in part on its ability, beyond advocating divestment, to also communicate real concern for the dignity and well-being of both peoples, as well as for their human and national rights.

Nevertheless one might ask if selective divestment can avoid doing the kinds of damage Rabbi Lerner describes in

his *political* argument against total divestment, so starkly manifest in Somerville despite the ostensible targeting of the Occupation? The movement to divest from South Africa made great strides in accruing political power to an anti-apartheid consensus that was already remarkably broad when that campaign was launched. Can a divestment initiative directed closely against Israel’s Occupation serve as the vehicle for the educational work of *building* the broad anti-Occupation consensus from which we are now so distressingly remote?

I wish I could say yes, because refusing to invest in an unjust military Occupation is simply the right thing to do. But while the principled pursuit of a clear conscience is often a good thing, as a solitary guide to action it is so far from adequate as to be in effect self-indulgent. Would the Presbyterian Church–USA (PCUSA), Jewish Voice for Peace, and the Tikkun Community be the ones to define “divestment from Israel” in the public mind? With no African National Congress equivalent in the wings to provide unifying vision and leadership, a clamor of discordant pro-divestment voices is certain; it is already underway. (The National Lawyers Guild, for example, calls for divestment from Israel and from all companies with investments in Israel, until, among other things, Israel implements the right of all Palestinian refugees “to return to their homes.”) In the cacophony, the fine distinctions made by *some* anti-occupation divestment proponents will be just another riff, lost on most observers.

Even a model divestment action like the PCUSA’s can still exude the faintly lingering odor of anti-Semitism, as Mitchell Plitnick’s account suggests, arising in this case from the church’s traditional, perhaps vestigial, theological objectification of Jews as the “root of evil,” in need of conversion. In responding, we would do well to emulate the attitude of Reverend Susan Andrews of Bethesda, Maryland:

As Presbyterians, we have two very deep commitments at stake. One is our passion for justice, particularly the occupation of the Palestinian people. The other is our deep, affectionate relationship with our Jewish brothers and sisters. I hope, as we proceed, that we do not pit those two deep convictions against one another. We have to figure out a way [to hold both] . . . and not water down either one. It is a hard balance.

For progressive Jews to *only* defend our non-Jewish allies, Christian or otherwise, against trumped up charges of anti-Semitism (of which there are plenty, and vicious) when they justifiably criticize Israel, and not *also* help them learn to avoid stumbling in the muck, is to be irresponsible to them, as well as to ourselves.

As a statement applicable across all kinds of human conflict (say, while going through, or watching close friends go through, a difficult divorce), one could not ask for a more lucid summary of the challenge of progressive spiritual politics. For progressive Jews to *only* defend our non-Jewish allies, Christian or otherwise, against trumped up charges of anti-Semitism (of which there are plenty, and vicious) when they justifiably criticize Israel, and not *also* help them learn to avoid stumbling in the muck, is to be irresponsible to them, as well as to ourselves.

Explaining why the promotion of a new, open-hearted and compassionate spirit must remain our primary charge, Michael Lerner identified the core problem with divestment precisely: If the discussion shifts to debating the strategy when it needs to be focused on convincing people to end the Occupation, that's the mark of an ineffective strategy, however morally justified. The PCUSA's long history of involvement with Israel and Palestine largely reflects just such a spirit, yet the main result of its decision has been to focus discussion on the divestment strategy itself. A move that alienates many Presbyterians who were until now in solidarity with the church's "progressive middle path" hardly seems a viable organizing strategy toward building a broader consensus.

Maybe the disruption caused by moving beyond public statements into decisive action of any kind is an inevitable but necessary growing pain. But I recall that when three Episcopal bishops protested outside the Israeli consulate in Boston in October 2001, the public media coverage and the difficult private discussions they generated were focused much more on conflicting views of what is happening in Israel and Palestine than on whether public protest is an acceptable form of political expression.

Finding the Right Question

How do we hold our inner center while moving into the discomfort zone of public political action, so that we can act with integrity? By paying close attention to finding the right question to start from, one that allows us to identify the real longings that drive our political engagement, and the obstacles to realizing those longings.

When repeated urgings to awaken a spirit of empathy and compassionate recognition have been so demonstrably

uninteresting to all three major parties to the conflict, we must not only continue trying to get others to "do the right thing," but also to seek ways through which we and those whom we mean to organize can recover a sense of our ability to initiate a realignment of spiritual and political forces by our own hands-on compassionate action. We need an optimism not only of the will, but of the heart.

"Divestment, yes or no?" is not the best starting place for this conversation. Rather, we should ask: what kind of action program could make the best vehicle for the educational and organizing work of building a consensus against the Occupation based on a spirit of solidarity that refuses to let go of either Israelis or Palestinians or ourselves? I do not mean to reject involvement in all divestment efforts *a priori*; we should honestly weigh the merits of divestment against other possibilities, and reevaluate as, *im yeret HaShem* (G-d willing), the political terrain shifts—not only at a national level, but within each Tikkun Community chapter in light of its local circumstances.

I wrote an open letter to the Somerville aldermen in which I proposed that regardless of how they voted on divestment, they should please *also* pass a resolution in which they would do three things:

- support an end to the Occupation and the creation of a Palestinian state consisting of the West Bank and Gaza, "the two neighboring states to live at peace, accepting one another as full and legitimate members of the regional community of nations";
- urge all parties, including Somerville residents, to pursue such a resolution of the conflict; and
- sponsor and participate in a series of facilitated small-group conversations throughout the city—as has happened with regard to several other issues over recent years—in which participants would both listen to one another deeply, in open dialogue, and consider possible actions toward achieving peace along the lines above.

Within three weeks, the proposal had forty signatories, with some measure of support from four of the ten voting aldermen. Twenty co-signers did not tell me where they stood on divestment. Of the other twenty, there were (I'm not making this up) ten for and ten against the SDP resolution. I think that's the kind of bridge our movement needs. □

Only 12.9 percent of all U.S. workers are united in unions. Reformists agree on the causes, but disagree on the cure. Leaders at the SEIU advocate a top-down solution, merging unions to create a unified, global strategy. Other reformers advocate a bottom-up strategy, opposing global capital with local grassroots activism. The debate will come to a head at the AFL-CIO's convention in July.

Labor Debates How to Rebuild Its House

Steve Early

After an ideological rift that existed through labor's greatest growth spurt, the conservative American Federation of Labor (AFL) and the once-radical Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) finally merged in 1955. This marriage between two previously hostile labor federations curtailed further conflict between the craft and industrial unions, but it produced an unhealthy kind of "labor peace." To keep that peace, the union movement avoided introspection, internal debate, and any public airing of union differences. Meanwhile, employer resistance to collective bargaining continued to grow while the percent of workers joining unions began a long and slow decline. From a high point in the early 1950s, when unions represented 35 percent of all workers, today only 12 percent of all workers (and just 8 percent in the private sector) are union members.

In 1995, labor's facade of unity began to fade. John Sweeney, now president of the AFL-CIO, had the audacity to challenge his predecessor, Tom Donahue, an heir to the cold war labor leadership of Lane Kirkland and George Meany. Sweeney's subsequent election was the first such upset victory in one hundred years. During the battle between him and Donahue, there was an equally rare outbreak of programmatic discussion and disagreement about union tactics and strategy. Even though their competing campaigns were rooted in rival AFL-CIO executive council factions, the very existence of an election contest helped legitimate dissent and debate at lower levels of the labor movement. For the first time in living memory, the federation's national convention—the one that chose Sweeney, the reformer, over Donahue, the incumbent—was actually worth attending.

In recent months, Sweeney's failure to arrest labor's decline has triggered another round of "criticism/self-criticism"—even more participatory than the last. As TIKKUN



went to press, this contentious process had yet to generate opposition candidates for top positions up for election at the AFL-CIO's "golden anniversary" convention in July—although they could still emerge. So far, the challenge to Sweeney has come from a non-electoral bloc of dissident unions—the New Unity Partnership (NUP)—which first unveiled its criticisms of the status quo in a September 15, 2003, *Business Week* article, entitled "Breaking Ranks With The AFL-CIO." After last fall's demoralizing defeat of labor-backed Democrat John Kerry, NUP's biggest affiliate—the 1.6 million member Service Employees International Union (SEIU)—upped the ante by issuing a

Steve Early is a Boston-based organizer for the Communications Workers of America and a frequent contributor to Labor Notes.

SPECIAL FORUM: REVIVING THE LABOR MOVEMENT

more urgent ultimatum to the AFL-CIO: either change (our way) quickly or we're leaving! This headline-grabbing move by SEIU president Andy Stern soon backfired as fellow labor leaders and allies of the SEIU like Bruce Raynor and John Wilhelm, leaders of the recently merged garment worker and hotel and restaurant employees unions (UNITE-HERE), quickly pulled out of their controversial partnership. That doesn't mean, however, that the debate about labor's strategy and structure is over.

The gist of SEIU's complaint with the current union movement is that there are too many small unions—Stern argues that they lack the size, political clout and bargaining strength to go after the megacorps (like Walmart) and corporate oligopolies (like Big Pharma) that dominate U.S. society. According to Andy Stern, even bigger labor organizations lack sufficient “industry focus,” with several different ones often representing workers at the same corporation. He contends that union members won't be able to go on the offensive again—as they did in the 1930s—until the AFL-CIO's fifty-eight affiliates consolidate themselves into fifteen or twenty much larger entities, each focused on a particular industry, with more resources and less overlapping jurisdiction. As the AFL-CIO's largest and fastest-growing union, SEIU offers itself up as a model for membership expansion, modernization, and bureaucratic consolidation, complete with a new breed of “senior managers” and college-educated field staffers recruited in large numbers from outside its own ranks.

Since Stern took over as SEIU president from Sweeney in 1996, more than forty of its local affiliates—about 14 percent of the total—have been put under trusteeship as part of the union's own “New Strength, Unity” program. (Trusteeships are a form of headquarter's control in which elected local officers are replaced temporarily by national union appointees.) SEIU health care, building services, and public sector members have been re-organized into separate entities—often huge statewide or multi-state “locals” with as many as 130,000 or 240,000 members. Smaller-scale local bodies—no matter how democratic or activist they may be—have become an anachronism “in an era of corporate mergers,” Stern argues. They only “made sense years ago”; today, a truly “local union structure does more to handicap workers than it does to help.”

To be effective, SEIU contends, organized labor must mirror the market scope and mimic the corporate structure of business. To woo employers into collective bargaining relationships, unions must demonstrate they can “add value” to a corporation—for example, by helping private nursing homes and hospitals to secure greater public reimbursement for their patient care costs or to fend off patient lawsuits. And, to boost their legislative influence, unions should be ready, like SEIU, to deploy tens of millions of dollars, an army of paid staffers, and many member-volunteers to aid political causes like the Dean and Kerry campaigns or

Americans Coming Together (ACT).

In the mainstream media, this pragmatic, corporatist, and seemingly quite effective model has been favorably counter-posed to depictions of troglodyte “labor bosses” from declining unions. The most outspoken of these—Machinists' president Thomas Buffenbarger—has, in the *New York Times Sunday Magazine*, mocked the media-savvy Stern for “setting up a blog” and wanting “his own TV show” like Donald Trump. In an interview with reporter Matt Bai for the magazine's admiring January 30 cover story on Stern, what Buffenbarger most disliked about his SEIU colleague “is that he looked and sounded so much like management.” Other old guard figures have expressed similar disdain for Stern, Wilhelm, and Raynor based on their being Ivy League graduates. “If change is needed in our sector of the movement, then the unions of the building trades are best qualified to undertake those changes,” complained AFL-CIO Building and Construction Trades leader Ed Sullivan in a recent letter to Sweeney. “We neither need nor want advice from self-appointed labor ‘gurus’ who couldn't tell a spud wrench from a paintbrush.”

Such blue-collar bluster isn't very productive—and distracts from the fact that there are substantive disagreements about whether union renewal should be based on the SEIU model. The real question is not whether change is needed, but whether that change should come from the top down or the bottom up. Stern's suggestions are a management-based, top-down solution. Many rank-and-filers, like those associated with the unofficial Detroit newsletter, *Labor Notes*, instead have long argued that “putting movement back in the labor movement” requires greater grassroots activism. *Labor Notes* contributors Jane Slaughter and Dan LaBotz write in their edited compendium, *A Troublemaker's Handbook: How To Fight Back Where You Work—and Win!*, that the best-laid plans of headquarters officials will fail to reverse labor's decline if there's not a corresponding transformation of union functioning—on the job and in local communities:

Some union leaders know the stakes, and some of them are thinking big, with a strategy for organizing and a long-term approach. Where these leaders sometimes fall down is on the question of how to build enough power to carry out their ambitious plans.... Too often, they see workers as a supporting cast, with the union's officials and staffers as the real power players and stars. Yet, if a union doesn't offer potential recruits an organization actually based on workers' power, that wins good contracts, and belongs to the members, where's the incentive to join?

In its many stories of job safety and health struggles, anti-discrimination campaigns, strikes to protect medical benefits, and efforts to defend immigrant rights, *Troublemaker's* also suggests that unions should be more than just a vehicle for contract bargaining, grievance handling, new member recruitment, and political activity. The Teamsters, meat

packers, farm workers, flight attendants, nurses, public employees, and factory hands profiled in the book succeeded in making their workplace organizations stronger because they “built daily relationships of mutual trust, cooperation, and common courage”—one-on-one with their co-workers.

As University of Kentucky Professor Paul Jarley observed recently in *Labor Studies Journal*, this “task of creating or recreating union communities in workplaces is enormous”—even when the “institutional inertia” of many unions doesn’t stand in the way. “Suburbanization, labor mobility, and job turn-over have made strangers of many workers,” Jarley writes. “Telecommuting, contingent employment, and the physical setting of some workplaces (e.g., call centers) have further isolated them” in ways that didn’t exist “when the industrial union movement took root in the early to mid-twentieth century.”

Drawing on both his academic research and experience as a white-collar union leader at U-Mass Amherst, sociologist Dan Clawson, author of *The Next Upsurge*, argues that unions must have an approach that is both issue-oriented and people-centered, and emphasizes long-term relationship building:

In my union, our largest meetings and highest degree of participation have come when something important is at stake, when the union is taking a stand on an issue that matters in people’s lives. It’s important to have food, and drink, and a chance for people to spend time with old friends and meet new ones, but it’s also important that the union is addressing an issue that people care about, and showing at least the potential to make a difference.

In *Solidarity Forever*, the crucial last chorus is “we can bring to birth a new world.” Unless we offer workers a vision of new birth, and provide a credible means to make a difference, they have little reason to seek out union networks instead of some of the many other networks available to them.

Among the new competing workplace networks available are faith-based ones like those profiled in the *New York Times Sunday Magazine* just three months before its cover story on the “charismatic” Andy Stern. In a piece entitled, “With God at Our Desks,” writer Russell Shorto described the rise of Christian evangelism, plus other forms of religious expression, in increasingly well-organized and management-sanctioned workplace “affinity groups.” A similar report in the *Boston Globe* on February 1 revealed that more “like-minded employees” are “bringing faith to work” in both white-collar and blue-collar settings. These groups are often organized under the cover of “diversity” programs created by management in high-tech corporations like Intel, which has long discouraged employees from developing a “shared interest” in unionization.

Less conservative faith-based groups are able to act as community-based supporters of workplace organizing, bar-

gaining, and even strikes—through national networks like Jobs With Justice (JWJ) or Interfaith Worker Justice. In Boston, JWJ’s forty-member coalition of labor and community organizations includes Catholic priests influenced by liberation theology. They have actively supported recent nursing home organizing by Brazilian, Haitian, and Latino workers who belong to their parishes. JWJ is also enlisting lay ministers from small, immigrant-based evangelical Protestant churches—who may be immigrants themselves or who have members of their congregations with job-related problems.

The AFL-CIO union most engaged with JWJ for the last eighteen years is the Communications Workers of America (CWA)—a leading advocate of both community-labor coalition building and union revitalization rooted in actual workplaces. CWA is a “general union” that attempts to unite workers in a wide range of occupations and industries—including telecom, manufacturing, the airlines, newspapers and electronic media, printing and publishing, higher education, health care, and the public sector. At their best, CWA councils or locals that have diversified in smaller cities—like Buffalo or Poughkeepsie, New York—now function as the “one big union” in town. They promote mutual aid and solidarity among workers from many different bargaining units and backgrounds, which helps to transcend some of the parochialism of both craft and

You call this a DEMOCRACY?



Paul Kivel has done it again by exploding another myth about our troubled land—the nation that we Americans call “middle class.” Instead he shows us how we are ruled by a handful of top dogs and what we must do if we want to get those dogs out of our lives. Hurray!

— Jim Hightower

\$17.95 (pbck) plus \$4 s&h / \$29.95 (hdcvr) plus \$4 s&h

The Apex Press

777 United Nations Plaza, Suite 3C, New York, NY 10017

800.316.2739 / www.paulkivel.com

single-industry organizations, plus separate private and public sector groupings.

At a Queens College conference debate about the future of labor last December, CWA Executive Vice-President Larry Cohen issued a singular (if still secular) call for unions to examine what really makes them tick—arguing that “the inner life of the union is what sustains us.” In the face of “a collective bargaining crisis, driven by the worst management repression of workplace rights in any democracy, active members are the best and only hope for reversing this,” Cohen said. “If anybody thinks we’re going to defend workers’ rights based on the way we structure, rather than on the way we mobilize, they are kidding themselves.”

While supporting voluntary union consolidation—of the sort which has added several hundred thousand members to CWA nationally—Cohen sees the real issue as “how mergers can change union workplaces, lead to more active shop stewards, and [foster] greater membership involvement.” As CWA’s executive board pointed out in January, “Unions work best when they are organized from the workplace up, not the top down. Strengthening the role of stewards and workplace mobilizers is critical for effective collective bargaining, organizing, and political action. Without effective stewards, there is little likelihood we will be successful in any of these areas.... Leadership, at all levels, must reflect the diversity of CWA members, including younger workers. New leaders should be developed and promoted from within our own membership.”

The union’s bottom-up strategy has been best explained and defended by some of its leading local activists. Based in Newark, New Jersey, Hetty Rosenstein points out that her Local 1037 “has grown from 4,800 members to 7,700—and most of that is attributable to organizing by shop stewards.” Local 1037 members are employed as social workers for the state—and at private, non-profit agencies acting as contractors for New Jersey’s Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS) and other departments. In 1037, Rosenstein says, “we mirror the employer’s structure” by having the local’s 300 stewards act as “a union counterpart to management” at dozens of DYFS worksites in thirteen northern New Jersey counties.

If you visit any of these offices, not every worker may be able to identify correctly the name and number of their local. Nor will they all know Rosenstein’s name, even though

she is a leading critic of privatization and received press recently for responding to the state’s last foster child abuse scandal with a successful campaign for caseload caps, hiring of more social workers, better training and support for them, and better service delivery for DYFS clients. But 1037 members are almost certain to know who their steward is because of the local’s heavy investment in recruiting, training, and nurturing the people who comprise its own workplace infrastructure. “A good steward is essential,” explains Rosenstein. “The union must exist where workers spend eight or nine hours a day, not in a union office many miles away.”

In 1037, stewards sign up all new hires, assist members with personnel (and personal) problems, distribute information about contract and legislative issues, represent their co-workers in meetings with management, encourage the wearing of union buttons and T-shirts—every Thursday, many members wear red to work, CWA’s color—and recruit door-to-door canvassers for political campaigns. “Just eighteen months ago, the state was trying to dismantle DYFS,” Rosenstein says. “Its original ‘reform’ plan called for contracting out most of our work to non-union private vendors. But,

because almost every DYFS office has active stewards and members—real worksite leadership—we were able to turn this around in the legislature and within the department.”

“Would that have happened in a mega-local?” Rosenstein asks. “I don’t think so. The leadership of that kind of local wouldn’t have had the time or the inclination to care that much about a couple of thousand social workers. And, even if they cared, they couldn’t possibly know the work well enough to bargain about the kind of details covered in our agreement with the state on caseload caps and new hiring. Content matters—and our local is small enough to focus on what concerns our members and their clients the most.”

Like many other union reformers, Rosenstein sees Andy Stern’s vision of forced consolidation of local and national unions as counter-productive—a shortcut favored by those who think there’s “not enough time left or talent out there to develop grassroots leaders.” What labor needs, instead, she believes, is “thousands of new shop stewards.” When united by a clear, multi-faceted strategy, these and other active members can link up with their counterparts in many different workplaces and local unions—at home and abroad—in successful efforts to “reshape public policy and defeat even the largest corporations.” □

“If anybody thinks we’re going to defend workers’ rights based on the way we structure, rather than on the way we mobilize, they are kidding themselves,” says CWA Executive Vice-President Larry Cohen.

A “Labor Intensive” Strategy

Peter Rachleff

At noon on a beautiful June day in suburban Minneapolis, eighty-five women and men streamed out of a US West corporate “campus” building, each one carrying a pink, lime green, or lemon yellow square. Each square bore a single letter in black paint. Laughing, they lined up to spell out “D-O-W-N-S-I-Z-I-N-G A-T U-S-W-E-S-T = R-O-A-D-K-I-L-L F-O-R Y-O-U.” They marched to a highway overpass half a block away, took their positions, and held their signs up to the traffic speeding below. Local TV news cameras rolled. Horns honked, especially from big trucks. “Listen,” one woman said to another, “They support us!”

This action, the first ever undertaken by these white-collar workers, was several weeks in the making. Contract negotiations between their union, the Communications Workers of America (CWA), and the fourteen-state “baby Bell,” US West, had gotten bogged down over management demands for staffing cuts, the right to outsource work, and higher worker co-pays for health insurance. CWA activists sought to put pressure on management by organizing their rank-and-file members to communicate the union’s stance directly to the public. They hoped to demonstrate, on the one hand, that the members knew what was at stake and were united, and, on the other, that the public was sympathetic to the workers and might turn against the company. Given the growing number of complaints aired in the media about customer dissatisfaction with phone, Internet, and related services, these were not far-fetched ideas.

The strategy proved successful. US West management returned to the bargaining table with an improved offer, averting a strike later that summer. The action also left this local with an energized membership. Attendance at union meetings went up, participation in union elections rose, and more people were willing to run for offices.

The US West example demonstrates how much can be accomplished with a strategy that links the “internal”—the mobilization of the membership—with the “external”—communication with the public, in order to put pressure on management. Even in a hostile political climate with a largely unsympathetic mass media, and even in a legal climate that limits unions’ options, this sort of “labor intensive” strategy, not only brings immediate results but also

alters the long-term balance of power. Unions can again merit the name “organized labor” as they fight not only for their own members’ material interests but also for the larger community, who, in this political/economic climate, are experiencing reductions in the quantity and quality of services they receive.

That same summer, bus drivers represented by the Amalgamated Transit Union went on strike in the Twin Cities. Poor and working-class inner city residents were far more impacted by the strike than were suburban commuters. When the local media suggested that the strike was not having a major impact since highways were not gridlocked, the union devised a strategy to enhance the voices of communities of color. Rank-and-file bus drivers were surveyed for their church affiliations and then, after being given crash courses in public speaking, were dispatched to approach their ministers and fellow congregants. Their goal was to seek common ground (the preservation, if not expansion, of bus routes, decent wages, and benefits for working people who hailed from diverse communities) around the strike and the future of mass transit. These actions generated letters, phone calls, and emails to the media and the management of the transit service, as well as a collective statement by a number of Twin Cities clergy.

Here, then, was another application of a “labor intensive” strategy. Union leaders and activists recognized union members and their off-work relationships and networks as “resources.” With some direction and education, they could play an important role in shifting the balance of power in a labor-management conflict. This particular experience even had the positive outcome of helping to inspire the organization of a Twin Cities Clergy and Labor Network, which has become a resource in other labor conflicts since.

The Minnesota Association of Professional Employees (MAPE), an 11,000-member public employee union, is applying this sort of strategy in its new “Public Employee Pride” (PEP) campaign. The political discourse in the once-liberal state of Minnesota is now driven by right-wing radio talk show hosts who fuel hostility to taxation and public services, and scorn for the workers who provide them (who supposedly receive “Cadillac” benefits while leaning on their shovels). In this climate, stories abound of public employees hiding their careers from their neighbors, keeping low profiles at community meetings, and doubting their own worth as workers and citizens.

The PEP program has taken shape to turn this situation

Peter Rachleff is professor of history at Macalester College. He worked as an educational consultant to the CWA and MAPE in the two campaigns he describes in this article.

around. It began with labor history and strategy lectures at lunchtime meetings in local workplaces, and it has grown to include: email and telephone trees for communicating labor issues worker to worker and petitions circulated by workers in response to anti-worker, anti-government blather from pundits and politicians. It is also working with locals in specific departments, from the Pollution Control Agency and the Department of Health and Human Services, to produce position papers for public distribution that will advocate for the expansion of services in order to better the quality of life for all Minnesotans. At some point, MAPE expects to use various forms of public demonstrations, informational picketing, guerrilla theater, mass lobbying, and the like—but all of this will lie on the foundation of member participation built through PEP. It is hoped that these tactics will feed into a contract campaign in the summer of 2005 with the goals of preserving health benefits and improving wages for

state employees. Strengthening members' commitment to the union and the union's relationships to the wider community will follow from such success.

This "labor intensive" strategy seeks no short cuts—no political white knights, no charismatic union leaders, no loquacious lobbyists, no brilliant consultants—to pull the union's chestnuts out of the fire. Union leaders and activists turn first to their members, offering them education, information, strategies, tactics, resources, and targets for action. In turn, membership involvement, empowerment, and ownership will grow. There will be more activists with responsibility to recruit yet more members to the on-going campaign, to make inroads into student, patient, client, and consumer communities and bring them on board.

Through such "labor intensive" strategies unions can fight their immediate battles in ways that will build workers' power in the future. □

A Winning Strategy to Do Justice

Stephen Lerner

Justice, justice shall you pursue...
—Deuteronomy 16:20

The current debate in the labor movement is a debate about how best to pursue justice. Not just for the 8 percent of private sector workers who have unions, but also for the 92 percent of workers who don't. If you believe that strong unions are at the center of how workers achieve justice in our country and the global economy—and if you believe that strong and growing unions are essential to a resurgent progressive movement—then union members' precipitous decline in numbers and power is a crisis for all who dream of a just and equitable society.

To pursue justice requires vision, faith, core values of right and wrong, and a plan and strategy to win. When workers attempt to organize a union, we challenge powerful and often selfish interests, risk family livelihoods, and begin a personal and collective march to freedom. To take this risk, people need a vision of the promised land and of a radically better world to be won. Workers also need organizations that have the strength, resources, and focus to help win victories against the richest, most powerful corporations in modern history.

Stephen Lerner is the director of the building services division of SEIU. For more on the debate within labor, see the SEIU website, www.Unitetowin.org © Copyright SEIU, 2005.

In the late 1970s, I worked with the International Ladies Garment Workers Union on a year-long strike in South Carolina. Workers voted for the union, every worker went on strike, and not one of them crossed the picket line. Despite arrests and beatings, workers, inspired by the hope of better lives, stood strong day after day. Sadly, the strike mirrored the crisis workers all over the country have found themselves in: they were ready to sacrifice for a better life but regularly lost. Bravery and hope alone weren't enough. The strike was lost because there wasn't a plan or strategy that gave these workers a real chance to win.

A few years later, in the 1980s, I began working with Justice for Janitors in the building service division of SEIU. Decent wages and benefits for hundreds of thousands of janitors and other building service workers were being threatened with extinction. Outsourcing, subcontracting, exploitation of a new immigrant work force, and aggressive attacks on workers' union rights had led to wage concessions, lost health care, shifting of full-time jobs to part-time, and tens of thousands of jobs going nonunion.

At that time, SEIU looked like much of the current labor movement. Janitors' work in Los Angeles was going almost completely nonunion, with wages dropping from \$10 an hour to minimum wage. We didn't have a strategy to win, and there was not much prospect of developing one when members who did the same work and faced the same employers were divided into competing local unions.

Workers and the union felt hopeless, as victory was defined as trying to hold onto what we had, not organizing and building a growing movement of low-wage immigrant workers.

Five years later, instead of losing, Los Angeles workers were celebrating victory. Undocumented immigrant janitors had struck, sat in, and stood up to a city government that used police to attack a peaceful march. More than 6,000 workers had won union representation and a city-wide contract. Why did janitors win in Los Angeles when garment workers lost in South Carolina? How did janitors go from soul-numbing defeat in the 1980s to inspiring victories in the 1990s and beyond?

Workers had engaged in all kinds of grassroots, rank-and-file activity—but they won because their campaign in the streets was part of a larger strategy. There was literally a worldwide plan to win. From Denmark, where the key cleaning contractor was based; to pension funds in New York that owned buildings; to immigrant, community and religious groups that united in support for the campaign—there was a comprehensive plan and large-scale resources to support the struggle. The Los Angeles campaign demonstrated that undocumented workers would take incredible risks to lift their families and communities out of poverty if there was a plan that gave them the confidence that they could beat a multinational corporation with hundreds of thousands of workers around the globe.

It would be nice to rewrite history and say this victory led to spontaneous upsurges around the country. It would be easy to claim that leaders who previously didn't want to organize immigrants saw the light and opened their arms to these workers. But the truth is both more complicated and sobering. The simple fact is that the majority of local building-service unions were run by entrenched bureaucrats who didn't want to organize or change. They were more interested in maintaining their personal power than rising to the challenges of a new workforce and a new economy. Poor workers all over the country were being held hostage in powerful local fiefdoms that, in the name of local union autonomy, claimed it was their right not to change. SEIU faced a choice and a challenge: accepting the road block these local leaders represented or remaking the union so that workers could win and take on nonunion employers.

SEIU chose to change. Locals with corrupt leaders were trustee'd, and workers in small, ineffective locals that competed with each other were given the opportunity to merge into larger locals that had the strength to win. Money that had been used to maintain a steadily weakening bureaucracy was shifted to building new strength by helping more workers join. Local unions across the country joined together to make a national plan for how to help workers organize the entire industry.

Because of the choices SEIU made, the grassroots activity of janitors in twenty-five metropolitan areas now pays off. They have helped tens of thousands of workers gain a union,

won master agreements that set higher standards in whole metro areas, won health insurance, and started to roll back the practice of part-timing jobs. This wouldn't have happened if the union had refused to take on the internal obstacles that stood in the way of workers winning.

All of this takes us to the current debate in the labor movement. It is clear that what unions are doing isn't working for union members or the tens of millions of workers who aren't in unions. The labor movement's structure, culture, and priorities stand in the way of workers winning.

The AFL-CIO's fifty-eight unions often divide workers in the same industry, lack a comprehensive strategy to win, and fail to devote major resources to helping more workers join so everyone will be stronger. A classic example is the airline industry, where workers have been taking huge pay cuts and losing their health care and pensions. Workers at any given airline are divided into multiple unions, which then vary from airline to airline. Non-airline unions have merged with or organized isolated groups at an airline or two, keeping their dues income up but further dividing workers' strength. Carriers like Jet Blue that seek to bring down pay and benefit standards have no unions at all. While each union's leaders jealously guard their autonomy, they stand in the way of coordinated worker responses to the changes in the industry—and families' futures are being destroyed.

Some well-intentioned activists and some apologists for the status quo have tried to contrast "bottom-up" organizing with what they label as a "top-down" approach [*Editor's note: See Steve Early's piece in this issue of TIKKUN*]. It's a silly critique because in the real world it's not a question of either/or—local or global. Of course bottom-up, labor-intensive activity is one contributing factor in most winning campaigns. But by itself it is rarely enough. In a world of regional, national, and global corporations, bottom-up activity makes a difference only when it is part of a larger strategy to raise standards in whole companies and whole industries. Whether they intend it or not, those who denigrate big-picture strategies as "short cuts" offer no alternative to workers except to accept continued decline with the failed program of the past twenty years.

We live at a critical juncture in history. Actions we take and choices we make will help determine what kind of country and world we live in. Since 1996, the choices SEIU has made have helped more than 700,000 janitors, home caregivers, hospital and nursing home workers, and other working people gain unions. We have shown that it is in our power to make difficult political changes within individual unions—and the labor movement as a whole—that set the stage for organizing and winning, and for helping to fuel a stronger progressive movement in America. Our experience and belief is that unions in the twenty-first century can heed Michah's calling to "do justice and love goodness" (6:8)—if only we have the humility and the courage to change. □

The Labor Movement and the “Jewish Question”

Paul Buhle

Just three generations ago, a conservative poster reading “Vote CIO... and Get a Soviet America” featured an indelibly Jewish face; for anti-Semites, Jews were by their nature labor radicals. An absurd caricature, it contained nevertheless an industrial-sized grain of truth.

The Jewish character of the appeal for labor solidarity—across all race, ethnic, and geographic lines—was rooted deeply in a particular diaspora experience with universal implications. The staggering American labor mainstream, never much inclined toward that kind of solidarity, needs the lessons more now than ever.

Let’s go back for a moment to the 1890s, the days of massive Jewish immigration to the United States. Imagine adolescent young women, unskilled laborers, mobilizing against the sweatshops in which they worked. Imagine the gatherings of starveling strikers, perhaps members of the United Hebrew Trades or newly opened *Arbeter Ring* (Workmen’s Circle), urged on by beloved poets as well as labor orators to hold out a few days more. It would be easy to say that these poor immigrants had no choice but to be internationalists. They felt close in spirit to their Eastern European relatives, raising community funds for victims of the Czars as they struggled to build institutions in the new land. Treated as nonwhites, the boldest could *feel* non-white, without shame.

These culturally rich Jews knew that they could not democratize, let alone revolutionize, America without non-Jewish comrades. So the building of a labor movement was always seen as broader than the Jewish community, and Jewish socialists (often changing their names) went out among the non-Jewish proletarians from the first days, sometimes rising to leadership roles. Some joined the Industrial Workers of the World or “Wobblies,” formed in 1905 as the first all-inclusive, completely egalitarian labor organization in the United States. Others found democratic opportunities closer to home, in trades like textiles, furs, jewelry, and (later on) the electrical industry, where an array of ethnic groups and some nonwhites struggled together toward industrial unionism. The most impressive single organization of its day was, in many ways, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, an independent and radical-leaning

organization of Jewish, Italian, and other workers, led by Sidney Hillman with his militant wife, Bessie Abramowitz (herself an important organizer), close at hand.

There were contradictions galore, of course. Activists had to survive an increasingly tyrannical (and Jewish) Sam Gompers at the head of the American Federation of Labor, which represented only a sliver of American workers. In the Cold War era, organized labor lost (or purged) a large quota of its Jewish idealists. In a generation, Jewish workers migrated out of the shops into helping professions and sometimes into unions—and into what was now a thoroughly bureaucratic AFL-CIO. Uninterested in organizing women workers of the growing clerical categories or the mass of non-unionized people of color, and wedded to Cold War weapons programs and corporate globalism as job bonanzas, labor had truly hit dead (and deadly) center.

By the late Sixties, however, a new Jewish radical generation was already making waves. These were the New Leftists and their successors, who by their energy and dedication became local leaders and organized for internal reform of the Teamsters, joined an old (and Jewish-led) campaign for unionizing health workers, and worked as middle-level staffers or higher in service and communications unions, even among the familiar garment unions (where Bruce Raynor, president of UNITE before its merger with HERE, remains along with Andy Stern the foremost Jewish-American union leader). When the stumbling, conservative leadership of AFL-CIO was tossed out in 1995, it’s true that most Jewish top officers were ardent supporters of labor’s Old Right—but the overwhelming proportion of younger Jewish organizers and rank-and-file activists went with the progressives. Some of these radicals and family members found a new but familiar home in the revived Workmen’s Circle branches—a natural place for Jewish labor sympathies, and a good place to leaf through an issue of *TIKKUN*.

Now we’re further down the bumpy road, faced with labor defeats but also with a workforce more immigrant-based than at any time in a century. Memories of the old Industrial Workers of the World return, because organized labor must become interracial, cross-border, and culturally alive once again—all in the Wobbly fashion, but also in the way imagined by those early Jewish idealists—or it has no future at all. □

Paul Buhle wants to give a “2005—It’s a Wobbly Year” button to anyone who asks. Go to www.wobblyshow.org for details.

Wal-Mart, China, and Global Labor Rights

Rebecca Weiner

Too often today, progressive discussions on labor rights seem disconnected from actual laborers. It's not just that Republicans have convinced lower-income Americans that progressives are liberal elites interested only in gay marriage and flag burning. It's that we progressives have not articulated effectively enough how our values support real people's needs. If we cannot offer a vision that meshes with workers' everyday lives, it's no wonder that they, like so many who feel powerless today, will act only on short-term interests, often to their own long-term detriment.

Take progressive calls to boycott Wal-Mart and the Chinese-made goods it often sells.

The Problem with Wal-Mart

Today, socially conscious people often denounce Wal-Mart. Liza Featherstone decries the exploitation of female employees in their U.S. stores. Barbara Ehrenreich details Wal-Mart's abuse of undocumented workers, who are sometimes locked in overnight to force them to finish unreasonable shifts. The discrimination suit *Dukes v. Wal-Mart* alleges the company systematically keeps female workers in menial roles. The Service Employees International Union (SEIU) seeks to organize a \$25 million "war-chest" for an all-out drive to unionize America's Wal-Mart workers. The National Organization for Women (NOW) encourages members to boycott Wal-Mart.

Certainly, Wal-Mart makes a high-profile target. With sales of \$244.05 billion in their 2003 Annual Report, over 5,000 store "units" worldwide, and a new U.S. store opening planned every 1.2 days in 2005, Wal-Mart is retail's undisputed 800-pound gorilla today, controlling some 50 percent of all retail sales in America. "Organizing Wal-Mart



is the fight for service workers now," says Nick Rudikoff, field researcher with SEIU, since Wal-Mart is so large that it sets industry standards. When Wal-Mart, for instance, pays workers barely minimum wage and limits many to thirty-eight hours a week so that they are classified "part-time" and ineligible for benefits, other discount chains, from Target to Payless Shoes, follow suit.

There's also an even darker side to Wal-Mart (and its clones) that many Americans focus on less than on their abuse of U.S. employees: sourcing policies overseas that affect the workers who make discount goods. Workers like, for instance, Wang Xiao.

As chronicled in the *Washington Post*, Wang worked for Anjia Shoes in Dongguan, Guangdong Province. Under pricing pressure from customers (which Chinese labor activist Liu Kaiming says included Wal-Mart and Target), Anjia sought ever-cheaper raw materials, while demanding ever-longer hours from Wang Xiao and her colleagues. Ultimately, Anjia bought glue for fixing shoe soles to uppers

SPECIAL FORUM: REVIVING THE LABOR MOVEMENT

that they now say they didn't realize contained the neurotoxin n-hexane.

When Wang first noticed numb fingers and weak knees, she wrote it off to seventeen-hour workdays at Anjia, and tried to ignore it. The thirty-three-year-old mother of two was saving so her family could move from their hut in Tiegang Hamlet to a proper home in a village with real schools for the children. Chasing that dream, Wang Xiao put in still longer hours at Anjia—until she couldn't work at all.

Wang—and some forty of her colleagues—ended up paralyzed. China, which has long banned independent trade unions, has also limited worker's compensation laws, and its once-vaunted national health care system has been gutted and partially privatized as part of economic reform. All Wang Xiao's savings went into hospital and doctors' fees. When their money ran out, Wang ended up back in the hut in Tiegang, her husband feeding her and rubbing her numb hands, their dreams of a better life destroyed.

China's Troubled Labor Market

China, like Wal-Mart, is often targeted by progressives for labor rights abuses. Liu Kaiming's Shenzhen-based Institute for Contemporary Observation (ICO) has documented hundreds of factories with wage, work-hour, and worker-safety violations. The anti-sweatshop group National Labor Committee (NLC) likens many Chinese factories to "prison camps," whether or not they actually employ forced or prison labor. And in a phone interview Dr. Thea Lee, Chief Economist of the AFL-CIO, suggested Americans should avoid buying Chinese-made goods altogether.

Charges against China, like those against Wal-Mart, stem from real abuses. The NLC, along with its Hong Kong-based China Labor Campaign (CLC), recently reported on Guangdong-based Pou Yuen Factories, which make Puma Shoes. Pou Yuen routinely requires 80 to 100 hour workweeks at a base of thirty-one cents per hour, with up to one-third of that salary deducted for "room and board" (crowded dorm cots and cafeteria food that workers charge includes moldy rice and spoiled meat). Another NLC/CLC report, on Heyi Toys (which makes "bobble-head" sports figures for Wal-Mart, Target, and elsewhere, see: www.nlc-net.org/campaigns/he-yi/he-yi.shtml) includes worker-provided time sheets showing up to twenty-hour workdays, and pay stubs showing workers were paid for just under half of their overtime hours.

A recent U.S. Congressional Executive Committee on China (CECC) report details widespread safety abuses: "16 million Chinese workers are exposed to toxic or hazardous conditions in the workplace. Many... suffer from occupational diseases." Wang Xiao knows what that dry phrase really means.

Wal-Mart and China are integral parts of a spiral-to-the-

bottom in labor rights. When labor threatens to organize in mid-wage Eastern Europe or Mexico, some companies leave for China, where labor organizing is banned. Other companies leave coastal China, where wages have risen in recent years, for China's interior, or for still poorer countries like Bangladesh.

How can progressives best help end this spiral? Should we, as NOW and the AFL-CIO's Dr. Lee suggest, boycott Wal-Mart and Chinese goods? Or is that just a convenient way for well-meaning middle-class NOW members, AFL-CIO economists, and readers of TIKKUN to feel like they are making a difference? Do boycotts really help abused workers at Wal-Mart and in China?

Who Benefits?

Not according to most Wal-Mart shoppers, many of whom feel too poor to shop elsewhere. Take Claudia B., house-cleaner and mother of four, who drives thirty minutes for Wal-Mart groceries because, for instance, "the toaster pastries my kids like are \$1.77 a box there, instead of \$3.99 at Walbaum's. That's a big difference!"

Wal-Mart's benefits to low-income consumers are too often given short shrift by progressives, as Featherstone has also noted. Boycotts risk making progressives what one Featherstone source called "those people [who] can afford and fit into" high-end clothes.

Similarly, outsourcing isn't wholly evil. Buying, Liu says, from over 1,500 Chinese factories, Wal-Mart directly or indirectly supports tens of thousands of Chinese jobs; however rotten the conditions, any job can be better than star-

BY NICOLE SCHULMAN



There are many problematic issues arising from the global labor market Wal-Mart and China have helped create, and much room to creatively demand change. But boycotts, which attack the endpoint of the supply chain, risk depriving poor Chinese of desperately needed jobs, and poor Americans of affordable goods. Instead we must

In China, the problem is less with labor-law content than



with enforcement. Chinese law requires an eight-hour workday, with two hours of daily overtime maximum at time-and-a-half, but abuses are clearly widespread. A Beijing official confirmed China has about one labor rights inspector per 14,000 workers (versus 1:1000 in the United States, and 1:500 in Western Europe). ICO's Liu says these resource-strapped inspectors focus mostly on permanent residents (*hukou* 'residence permit' holders) in the towns whose leaders pay their salaries. So China's estimated 150 to 200 million "migrant workers" like Wang Xiao (still termed "migrants" even when they live and work for years in towns where they have no *hukou*), may have no one protecting their rights at all.

Today, China's economic reforms have bifurcated. Educated workers in major coastal cities increasingly enjoy developed-world lifestyles. But as Wang Xiao discovered, privatized healthcare and disappearing safety nets mean that unskilled and semi-skilled workers often move back into poverty faster than they escape it, and businesses have too little incentive to improve. Paralyze forty Wang Xiaos, the attitude has been, and 400 more will run to take their place. Ongoing gaps in urban-rural infrastructure and local government corruption are also factors. The bottom line is, as China's newly-rich coastal areas boom, its poor are getting poorer—and labor law abuses are a key cause. Tellingly, the World Health Organization recently declared that, for the first time since 1949, China's rural life expectancies are falling.

Again, progressives can help tell this story better. The key is not "boycotting China," but requiring companies like Wal-Mart, that want to sell Chinese goods here, to ensure those goods are made and sourced in compliance with Chinese and U.S. laws.

Codes of Conduct

Many U.S. firms have signed Codes of Conduct, pledging careful attention to labor laws. Even Wal-Mart claims it "hires a third-party agency to conduct routine visits of overseas factories," checking compliance.

Unfortunately, Liu explains, "there's huge variation in how companies enforce Codes of Conduct.... Name-brands like Nike or Reebok, who contract with relatively few factories, and have been pushed by past campaigns, are fairly serious." Liu describes in-house inspectors at leading firms making four to six surprise factory visits per year, some past midnight, to protect against forced overtime or other hidden abuses.

But, Liu says, "retailers, who contract with hundreds or thousands of factories, and focus more on price than on protecting brands, have trouble doing serious inspections even when they want to." And Liu sees big variation in what retail corporations really want or are willing to do. He named Sears among retail chains that "seem to be trying, though they're far from perfect." But many discount retailers, Liu says, "just give lip service. Wal-Mart is the worst. Their compliance

department arranges annual inspections, announced well in advance, for window-dressing. Then their procurement people pound factories on price and delivery schedules, creating pressures that exacerbate the worst treatment of workers."

NLC research bears this out. Documents smuggled by workers from the Heyi Toy factory include an internal memo to managers on "special measures" to be taken before a scheduled Wal-Mart inspection. These include: "First-aid kits in all departments should be unlocked. Emergency exits should be unlocked too...."

Heyi employees (who, recall, produced timesheets showing regular twenty-hour workdays) also smuggled out a "cheat sheet," which workers were paid three days' salary to memorize pre-inspection. Among the questions and approved answers:

Q: Under normal circumstances, how long is your overtime?

A: "Till 8:30 P.M. At most, two hours per day.

Q: If you make a mistake at work, is there a penalty?

A: No, the team head and foreman will teach us with patience.

Q: How many people live in a dorm? Do you feel crowded? Is there enough light?

A: About 10 people. It is not crowded. There is enough light.

Q: Are you happy here?

A: Yes.

Progressives can and should demand Wal-Mart and others do better. More flexible than boycotts are comment cards, letters to editors, ethical investment funds, and the voting booth (see more suggestions at www.nlcnet.org). We can require U.S. retailers to educate contractors on Codes of Conduct, assist them in complying, and ensure procurement teams avoid the extreme price/delivery pressures that undermine compliance. We can suggest alliances with respected labor rights groups for external monitoring, and ask details (How often are suppliers inspected? Who inspects and how are they trained? Are inspections announced in advance?).

The argument to make for U.S. workers is that not only is supporting Chinese labor rights the right thing to do, it also reduces structural gaps between U.S. and Chinese-made costs, now kept artificially high by labor rights abuses in China. That is the ethical way to ensure that good manufacturing jobs have a fair fighting chance of staying here and that any outsourcing proceeds fairly.

Rights to Organize

Finally, progressives should support the rights of Chinese workers to collective bargaining. Historically, worldwide, for all the ups and downs of union history, collective bargaining has been key to bettering conditions for unskilled workers. Unions brought Americans weekends, forty-hour workweeks, worker's compensation, and a living wage. But

for historical and political reasons, centered on stability and the drive for growth, China's leadership legally bans all but the official All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU).

Liu and other activists charge the ACFTU is too cozy with local governments, which often hold equity in companies they regulate, to meaningfully demand change. Liu described union heads who are also company managers or government officials. "This benefits everyone but workers. ACFTU just collects dues." Even a recent meeting of business executives, many under local government pressure to form ACFTU branches in their China operations, concluded that the union's real goal in creating more branches seemed to be harvesting the 2 percent of payroll that companies must legally set aside to fund ACFTU branches once formed. Because the business people didn't see ACFTU chapters as having real value, the group recommended relying on national laws requiring ACFTU branches only if workers themselves demand them. The lack of such widespread demand is itself noteworthy.

Laws banning independent unions prevent China's workers from organizing to protect themselves. This also hurts workers worldwide, again keeping Chinese costs artificially low. Again, progressives can help by keeping ourselves informed, and informing others (the article, the letter, the ballot box).

We can also ask firms facing high turnover, pilferage, and other signs of poor loyalty to consider whether more generosity might not improve returns. We can ask companies to ask themselves: is it really more cost-effective over time to fight unions, or to deal with their concerns? In the United States, for instance, Costco is known as union-friendly, but *Businessweek* reports just 20 percent of Costco workers have chosen to join unions. Wal-Mart faces a new \$25 million war-chest for a full-on organizing drive, and a raft of pending lawsuits. I know which CEO seat I'd prefer.

A New Bottom Line

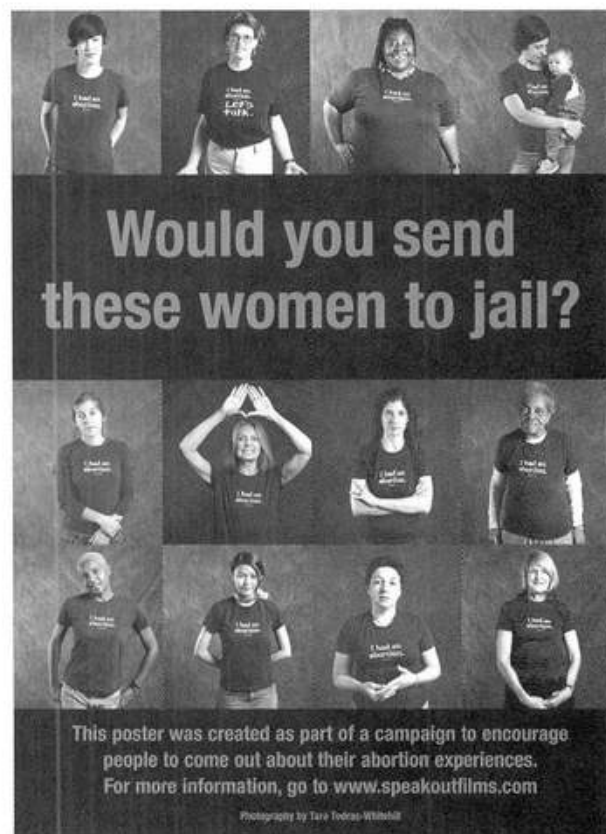
Information sharing has already begun to make a difference in China. Under pressure from media, NGOs, and wildcat instability, China's new leadership has begun taking steps to better enforce labor rights. On November 1, 2004, Premier Wen Jiabao signed into law China's toughest-yet regulations on labor rights inspections, giving inspectors power to levy heavy fines and recommend criminal sanctions against repeat violators. Wen has also praised the All-China Women's Federation (ACWF), which contacted Anjia Shoes after getting a letter from the husband of a colleague of Wang Xiao's. ACWF efforts brought labor inspection crackdowns, and Anjia is now paying medical bills for Wang and her colleagues; some may recover.

Unskilled Chinese workers, perhaps emboldened by new leadership sympathy, are increasingly voting with their feet, creating worker shortages in the most exploitative industries and areas, which, in turn, are starting to force better condi-

tions. Guangzhou, facing labor shortages for the third year in a row, has dropped laws limiting worker travel, and many firms report rising wages and more frequent inspections.

China's leaders, while not yet accepting independent unions, reportedly support overhauling the ACFTU to refocus it on protecting migrant and other workers. Wal-Mart recently accepted ACFTU branches into its Chinese stores: a good sign about Wal-Mart, or a bad sign about ACFTU? "The jury's still out," says AFL-CIO's Thea Lee. "We're closely watching ACFTU's changes. Long-term effects aren't yet clear." But a stronger ACFTU, active in a unionized chain of Chinese Wal-Marts, might offer interesting opportunities to strengthen worker rights worldwide. Other firms have gone much further. Reebok, for instance, requires Chinese contractors to permit elected "worker committees," a baby step toward true collective bargaining rights.

As worker rights begin to improve in China, progressives can help speed the process there and demand improvements here. We need companies, citizens, workers, and consumers to rewrite the bottom line, including labor rights among "quality" factors we seek. A new bottom line for labor offers a compelling global vision that will help heal rifts between progressive labor goals and the laborers progressives want to support. That, not boycotts, is the way to get stores we can patronize and goods we can buy with a clear conscience, and a fairer world. □



continued from page 25

The Palestinian intifada broke out at the end of September 2001, following Ariel Sharon's armed visit to the Temple Mount plateau. One day earlier, Erekat carried a personal request to Ross from Arafat: that the United States use its influence to stop Sharon from going to the Mount, lest a catastrophe should occur. Ross refused, saying that U.S. influence would only make matters worse: "We won't dissuade him, but we may incite him" (728). It was a lame response: what, exactly, would U.S. action incite Sharon to do? Visit the Temple Mount?

In Ross's view, while Arafat didn't plan the intifada, he seized on it to pressure the Israelis: "Sharon's visit gave him a perfect pretext to allow violence to erupt" (730); Ross evidently does not notice that if Arafat wanted a pretext, it was odd of him to request the American government to help in denying him one. Nor does Ross refer to the conclusions about the intifada reached by the investigation of the blue-ribbon international (and Bush-appointed) Mitchell Committee, as well as by Israeli and American scholars, leading Israeli investigative journalists, the research division of the Israeli Military Intelligence, and by the top leadership of the Shin Bet.

In this consensus account, Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount was not a "pretext" for but the spark that set off a spontaneous uprising of the Palestinian people, despairing over a seven-year "peace process" that had promised the end of the Israeli Occupation but had actually led to its expansion, greater Israeli repression, and deepening Palestinian humiliation and impoverishment. As put by Ami Ayalon, who as head of the Shin Bet was in an excellent position to know: "Yasser Arafat neither prepared nor triggered the Intifada. The explosion was spontaneous, against Israel, as all hope for the end of occupation disappeared, and against the Palestinian Authority, its corruption, and its impotence. Arafat could not repress it.... Without [a peace process he could] fight neither against the Islamists nor against his own base. The Palestinians would end up hanging him in the public square."

Even so, it is probably true that over time Arafat gained a considerable degree of control over the intifada, and perhaps he could have ended it if he so chose. It does not follow, however, that his failure to do so proved he was not interested in a peaceful settlement. The more persuasive explanation of Arafat's ultimate acquiescence in the intifada is that he hoped

it would pressure Israel into making more concessions that would make a fair two-state settlement possible.

If that was his strategy, it worked, at least up to a point. Negotiations did in fact continue at Taba, Egypt and the Israeli position at Taba was considerably more forthcoming than it had been at Camp David. It is another matter whether Arafat's strategy was morally justified. Advocates of nonviolent resistance, of course, will not think so. On the other hand, it is worth remembering that there was little or no outright terrorism during the first six months of the intifada, for during that period—that is, until after the election of Ariel Sharon—the Palestinians attacked only Israeli military forces and the most extremist settlers in Gaza and the West Bank, rather than civilians inside Israel itself.

Put differently, the intifada began as an armed revolution, not as terrorism. The Western tradition has long upheld the right of revolution against repression or occupation. In the eloquent words of Yasser Arafat, "The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants." Oh, right, that was Thomas Jefferson.

Still, there is no doubt—as Mahmoud Abbas and many Palestinians have now clearly concluded—that whatever the immediate gains of the intifada, it ultimately failed, for it brought about the election of Sharon. That is the brute fact, and it has had dire consequences. Even so, it would be well to observe that Sharon's election and what fol-

lowed tell us more about the blindness and moral obtuseness of the Israelis than about the Palestinians.

The Clinton Parameters

After Camp David—and, in a sense, despite Dennis Ross—even Barak was not quite willing to close the door on negotiations; reluctantly and under pressure from his own administration, he authorized secret negotiations with the Palestinians. These negotiations continued—despite or, perhaps, because of the outbreak of the intifada—right up to the eve of Sharon's election in February 2001.

In November, two months after the intifada broke out, Clinton—this time, Ross admits, overriding his own continued objections—decided to return to an active role in seeking a peace settlement. On December 23, the president met with the Israeli and Palestinian negotiators and offered a set of "ideas" (or "parameters," as they came to be known) for settling the conflict, whose essence was this:

"Yasser Arafat neither prepared nor triggered the Intifada. The explosion was spontaneous, against Israel, as all hope for the end of occupation disappeared, and against the Palestinian Authority, its corruption."

—Ami Ayalon

■ On the territorial issues, Clinton proposed Israeli annexation of 4 to 6 percent of the West Bank, so as to incorporate into Israel settlement “blocs” containing 80 percent of the settlers; the Palestinians would be compensated by a land swap of 1 to 3 percent.

■ To accommodate Israel’s security concerns, the Palestinian state would be “nonmilitarized,” and an international peacekeeping force, including Israeli forces and radar installations, would remain in the Jordan Valley for three years.

■ On the Jerusalem and Old City issue, the Palestinians would get all the remaining Arab areas and Israel all the existing Jewish ones. On the crucial issue of the Temple Mount/Haram, Palestinians would be given sovereignty over the mosque plateau, the Israelis sovereignty over the Western Wall, including (another victory for the Ross/Barak team) “the Holy of Holies of which it is part.”

■ For refugees, there would no right of return; instead, the Palestinians would be offered international economic compensation and a choice to either return by right to the state of Palestine or to resettle into any other country that would accept them—possibly including the return of “some” refugees to Israel, but subject to Israeli agreement.

There is no doubt that these proposals were a significant advance. On the other hand, nothing was put in writing—Ross explains that he and Clinton feared that Arafat might just “pocket” them and make new demands—and the offer

was temporary, as it was to be explicitly rescinded when Clinton left office a month later. Indeed, the proposals came close to being an ultimatum, for they were presented on a take-it-or-leave-it basis: As Ross put it, “Negotiations could take place within the parameters, but not on the parameters themselves” (751). What was “within” the parameters and what wasn’t would be determined by the United States—effectively, by Ross. When Arafat sent Abu Ala to talk to Ross about the Palestinian concerns, he responded (tongue in cheek?): “I will not talk about the ideas. The President won’t let me. We must have an acceptance first before I can talk about them” (754).

Both Barak and Arafat responded in writing and in considerable detail to the Clinton proposals. The “parameters” were just that—very brief, broad, and vague, leaving open or unclear a number of issues, some of them crucial. Neither side could be expected to accept them without much more negotiating—for which there was very little time.

Predictably enough, Ross writes that while Barak had reservations, they were within the parameters and therefore constituted a general acceptance of them, but that Arafat “stiffed” Clinton with reservations that were essentially “deal-killers.” Ross offers no evidence for these characterizations, but we now have the full text of Arafat’s response and detailed descriptions of Barak’s response from interviews with, and memoirs of, leading members of his admin-

Notes on Sources

Both Yossi Beilin, a member of Barak’s cabinet in 2000 and head of the Israeli delegation to the Taba conference, and Gilead Sher, Barak’s chief of staff and lead negotiator at Camp David, have published books on the Israeli-Palestinian negotiating process in 2000–2001: Beilin, *The Path to Geneva* (New York: RDV Books, 2004); Sher, *The Israeli-Palestinian Peace Negotiations, 1999–2001* (London: Frank Cass & Co., August 2005). Also, Robert Malley, the leading Israeli-Arab expert on Bill Clinton’s National Security Council and a member of the U.S. delegation at Camp David, has written a number of articles challenging the received mythology in general and Dennis Ross in particular (see especially Hussein Agha and Robert Malley, “A Reply to Ehud Barak,” *New York Review of Books*, June 13, 2002; Malley, “Israel and the Arafat Question,” *New York Review of Books*, October 7, 2004).

Also, two major scholarly books on the negotiations are now available: Charles Enderlin, *Shattered Dreams* (New York: Other Press, 2003); and Clayton E. Swisher, *The Truth About Camp David* (New York: Nation Books, 2004), both of which contain extensive interviews with

the leading participants in the negotiations. In addition, a number of American, Israeli, and Palestinian scholars have written demythologizing journal or magazine articles, including Hussein Agha, Alexander Downes, Akram Hanih, Arie Kacowicz, Baruch Kimmerling, David Matz, Jeffrey Pressman, Ron Pundak, William B. Quandt, Yazid Sayegh, and Jerome Slater. Important newspaper articles have been written by Henry Siegman of the Council on Foreign Relations and Deborah Sontag of the *New York Times*.

Finally, a number of other Israeli and Palestinian participants have refuted the Ross-Barak line, either in interviews in *Ha’aretz* or in articles of their own: Moshe Amirav and Menachem Klein (scholars and advisers to Barak at Camp David), General Amnon Shahak and Colonel Shaul Arieli (Barak’s main military advisers), Ami Ayalon (Director of the Shin Bet), General Amos Malka (Director of Military Intelligence for the IDF), and Colonel Ephraim Lavie and Mati Steinberg (from the research division of Military Intelligence). The English edition of *Ha’aretz*, in whose archives department most of the articles or interviews can be found, can be accessed on the internet at www.haaretzdaily.com.

istration, especially Gilad Sher and Yossi Beilin, the lead Israeli negotiators at, respectively, Camp David and Taba [See Notes on Sources].

Barak sent a twenty-page response to Clinton, in which he "accepted the Clinton ideas as a basis for continued negotiations ... as long as the Palestinians also accepted them," but then pointed out that many of the proposals conflicted with the Israeli positions and requested "clarification" on every issue. Most importantly, Sher and Barak himself have stated that both in statements to the Israeli Cabinet and in his response to Clinton, Barak made it unmistakably clear that he would never "sign any document that transfers sovereignty on the Temple Mount to the Palestinians." If that was Barak's true bottom line—and there is no reason to doubt that it was—then (Ross' claims notwithstanding) the Israeli response was tantamount to rejection on one of the two most crucial issues in dispute.

Similarly, Arafat had "reservations"—i.e., significant problems with—the Clinton proposals: settlement blocs, territorial percentages and boundaries, the division of Jerusalem, a continuing Israeli military presence within the state of Palestine, and, above all, the right of return. Except for this last issue, in my view all of Arafat's objections or requests for clarification were perfectly legitimate, and he was right to be concerned that the Clinton "ideas" could be interpreted by Israel in a manner that effectively undercut the president's intentions.

What was not defensible, however, was Arafat's seeming intransigence in appearing to insist on a literal right of return: he ended his letter to Clinton with the flat statement that "we cannot accept a proposal...that does not guarantee the right of the refugees to return to their homes." If Arafat truly meant that in a literal fashion, his response *was* a deal-breaker—although no more so, and probably less so, than Barak's position on the Temple Mount. However, in light of repeated reassurances from Arafat himself as well as most other major Palestinian leaders, both before and subsequent to the Clinton proposals, in the end it was highly likely that the Palestinians would separate the "right" from a highly limited implementation of that right—as, in fact, Abu Mazen and other leading Palestinian officials did in the Geneva Accords. On the other hand, there is no evidence to suggest that Barak's adamance about the Temple Mount was in any way qualified.

Taba and Geneva

Neither Camp David nor Barak's and Arafat's responses to the Clinton parameters constituted the end of the negotiating process, for on January 18–28, 2001, the Israelis and Palestinians—though not the Americans—met again in Taba, Egypt, and made far more progress than ever towards a final settlement. Remarkably, Ross barely mentions the Taba negotiations (his index contains no mention of them), and then only to dismiss their significance in two sentences. Not really so remarkable, of course, since the main argument of Ross's book is that Camp David demonstrated that Arafat was incapable of reaching a settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. For that matter, given Ross's self-image as the indispensable man in the negotiating process—the

one who, more than the Israelis and Palestinian leaders themselves, understood and could reconcile their true needs—it will not do for him to admit or even notice that there was an inverse correlation between his degree of involvement and progress toward a settlement: only some progress—as well as some backsliding—took place at Camp David, when he was fully involved; considerably more progress took place after Camp David, when he was much less involved; and the greatest amount at Taba, when he wasn't involved at all.

Of course, the main reason for the progress at Taba is that the Israeli delegation—now headed by Yossi Beilin—moved a considerable distance from Barak's closing position at Camp David. On the territorial issue, the Israelis were now willing to settle for 4 to 6 percent of the West Bank and an improved though still not equal swap; the Palestinians agreed to accept an Israeli annexation of 3 percent of the West Bank, provided Israel would accept Palestinian annexation of a quantitatively and qualitatively equivalent parcel of Israeli territory. Clearly, then, on this issue the two sides were not far apart.

Similarly, the refugee issue apparently was close to resolution: Beilin writes that "almost full agreement was reached with respect to principles for resolving the problem"—essentially those embodied in the Clinton parameters.

As for Jerusalem, though there was progress, an unbridged gap remained: both sides basically accepted the Clinton formula that "Arab areas are Palestinian and Jewish ones are Israeli," but they could not yet reach agreement over the crucial symbolic issue of sovereignty over the Temple Mount/Haram.

*What was not defensible,
however, was Arafat's
intransigence in appearing
to insist on a literal right of
return: "we cannot accept
a proposal...that does
not guarantee the right of
the refugees to return to
their homes."*

In October, 2003, the Geneva Accords finally resolved both the refugee and Jerusalem issues on the basis of a tradeoff: the Israelis conceded sovereignty over the Haram to the Palestinians, and the Palestinians accepted the Clinton proposals over refugees, meaning that Israel retained its sovereign discretion on whether they, or how many of them, would be admitted to Israel.

Conclusion

As I have indicated, *The Missing Peace* is not uncritical of Israel: Ross writes that “each side” failed to demythologize its historical narratives or to undergo the process of psychological transformation that is necessary for a genuine reconciliation and comprehensive peace. Similarly, he is critical not only of Palestinian violence but also of Israeli settlement policies and other behavior in the Occupied Territories.

Nonetheless, it is the criticism of the Palestinians in general and Arafat in particular that is given far greater space and weight. To be sure, Yasser Arafat was hardly anyone’s idea of a statesman, evidently not even for most Palestinians, who have greeted the ascension of Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) with relief and hope. Yet, once Arafat realized he had no hope of regaining all of historic Palestine and sought instead a two-state solution, his cause was just.

That does not mean, however, that Arafat’s strategies to attain this goal were necessarily wise or morally acceptable, for in hindsight it is clear that he made a disastrous strategic error in not seeking to end the intifada in response to the Clinton proposals. However vague and inadequate the Clinton “parameters” were, they formed the basis for the significant progress that was made at Taba a month later. Just as importantly, the looming catastrophe of a Sharon-led Israel should have persuaded Arafat that he now had no choice but to confine Palestinian efforts to achieve justice to diplomacy and, perhaps, nonviolent resistance—like Mahmoud Abbas today.

Put differently, even if one concedes that Arafat’s risky strategy—using or acquiescing in the use of force as leverage to improve the Palestinian negotiating position—was evidently successful from Camp David to Taba, there is no avoiding the conclusion that Arafat grievously failed to recognize when to stop. Brinkmanship in a just cause might be defensible—but only if you stop short of going over the brink.

None of this, however, makes Ross’s overall conclusions defensible. Neither the historical record, nor the overwhelming majority of other studies and first-hand accounts (including those of key Israeli officials), nor Ross’s own detailed recounting of the negotiating process supports his astonishing arguments that Arafat “never prepared himself,” let alone the Palestinian people, for the necessary “hard compromises,” namely “that they would not get 100 percent on Jerusalem or borders or refugees ... and maybe

most important, that they did not have to be responsible. Being a victim has never been compatible with responsibility.” (768, 769, 775).

From 1988 onwards, Arafat had repeatedly stated that he would accept a two-state settlement based on full Israeli withdrawal from the territories occupied in 1967, an Israeli acceptance of Palestinian sovereignty over the Haram, and an at least symbolic acknowledgment of a Palestinian right of return. Not only does Ross offer no serious rebuttal or critique of Arafat’s argument that the Palestinian compromise was its willingness to accept Israeli statehood in 78 percent of historic Palestine (the pre-1967 borders), but he also ignores the clear fact that in the course of the overall peace process, from Oslo through Taba, Arafat offered a number of significant *additional* concessions: he accepted that the Palestinian state would be demilitarized (or “nonmilitarized”), meaning that Israel would permanently remain overwhelmingly more powerful; he accepted the loss of some additional Palestinian land to accommodate most of the West Bank settlers; he accepted the loss of large portions of Arab East Jerusalem to another 200,000 settlers; he accepted Israeli sovereignty over the clearly Jewish parts of the Old City and over the Western Wall; and on most occasions he signaled his willingness to abandon the literal return of Palestinian refugees to their original homes, land, and villages in Israel.

Above all, what Ross cannot or will not acknowledge is that there is no moral or power symmetry between the Israeli Occupation and the Palestinian resistance, nor any symmetry between the Israeli and Palestinian “real requirements” or “genuine needs” that Ross so confidently believes he is in a unique position to identify and reconcile. The Palestinian needs are based not on an unwarranted “sense of victimization,” but on real injustices that have denied them their national and human rights; while Israel, of course, has genuine security needs, its security is undermined rather than enhanced by its futile efforts to maintain the Occupation, repress Palestinian nationalism, and deny the Palestinians a viable state. Thus, Israeli intransigence arises far less from its legitimate needs than it does from its mythology, symbolism, and ideology.

What makes *The Missing Peace* so devastating to the cause of truth and understanding is precisely the fact that it is written not by an extremist or someone ignorant of the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but by a highly knowledgeable Jewish moderate. It is a cause for despair if we Jews, of all people, cannot distinguish between oppression and resistance, cannot understand or refuse to acknowledge clear injustice—at least when it is our brethren who are the perpetrators rather than the victims. So long as this moral blindness continues, in Israel and to a great extent in the American Jewish community, the chances for a stable peace and a genuine reconciliation between the Israelis and the Palestinians will remain slim. □

Reflections on Spiritual Direction and Tikkun Olam

Karen Erlichman

With the 2004 U.S. election results, the continuing threats to civil liberties, and the ongoing war in Iraq, many people are struggling daily with despair. At the same time, these feelings of hopelessness and grief are matched by an equally powerful desire for meaning and belonging, a hunger for spiritual guidance and connection to the Sacred, and a renewed commitment to *tikkun olam*, the healing and repair of the world.

Organized religion recognizes these desires for meaning and connection, but often we need a more direct, personal contact alongside or instead of an organized, communal setting. To explore such personal, spiritual, and political challenges, we now have a new resource in the Jewish community: the spiritual director.

Once a month I drive down to Palo Alto for a meeting with my spiritual director. We sit together, a lit candle on a small table between us, and I share with her some of the challenges, questions, and joys that have been present in my life over the past month. My director has a spiritual practice that is Quaker and Buddhist, and her comfort with silence has been a salve for my bereft Jewish, feminist heart. Each time we meet, together we find graced common ground in the presence of God.

Spiritual direction is an ongoing contemplative relationship in which a spiritual guide or director serves as witness and support for people exploring the Divine presence in their lives, discerning their spiritual path, and grappling with other related questions. Spiritual direction, also referred to as spiritual guidance or companioning, is a practice that originated in the Christian traditions. There have also been aspects of spiritual companioning in the Jewish tradition of *chevruta* (one-on-one) partnership.

Within the last ten to fifteen years, the practice of spiritual direction has attracted a number of Jews to its ranks. Programs like Mercy Center in Northern California and the Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation in the Washington, DC area, have expanded their ecumenical approach to invite and welcome more Jews. In 1997 the groundbreaking book *Jewish Spiritual Guidance*, by Carol Ochs and Kerry Olitsky,

was published, and since then two new distance-learning Jewish spiritual direction training programs have emerged—Lev Shomea and Morei Derekh—and a national network of over one hundred Jewish spiritual directors is in formation.

Several years ago, I felt pulled toward becoming a spiritual director myself. I had thought about entering the rabbinate at various times in my life, but had been turned away first because I am a woman, then because I am in an interfaith relationship. I had turned to the secular practice of psychotherapy instead, but my work, while fulfilling, did not answer my call to spiritual healing. When I finally answered that call, I admit that I was angry with the tradition of my birth, which had exiled women, gays, lesbians, and the intermarried from its rabbinical ranks. I chose instead to study spiritual direction from within the Catholic tradition that had birthed it, and in a community of learners from a variety of faith traditions.

My first day of class at Mercy Center was September 13, 2001, two days after the tragic events of 9/11 in New York and Washington, D.C. During the weeks and months that followed, many of my psychotherapy clients and directees came to our sessions grieving and struggling with questions of faith and about the conservative political situation in this country. We prayed silently together and joined our *kavanot* (intentions) for healing the country and healing the planet. The Sisters of Mercy have a long tradition of liberation theology and progressive social change work; their devotion to peace and justice is unwavering (Mother Teresa, for example, was a Sister of Mercy). This ongoing attention to the work of peacemaking was a consistent thread throughout my entire three-year training.

In addition to my training at Mercy Center, I also wanted a place to learn and study spiritual direction with other Jews. I contacted Rabbi Amy Eilberg, who agreed to facilitate a Jewish spiritual directors' training group, and we met monthly for nearly three years. I was able to bring my experience from Mercy Center into a Jewish framework, which has been invaluable.

I understood from the beginning that to be a spiritual director meant tuning in to God's presence and desires for us as individuals, communities, and nations, even for our world as a whole. The mitzvah and practice of *tikkun olam* are clearly embedded in the foundation of spiritual direction. I look to

Karen Lee Erlichman, MSS, LCSW is a licensed clinical social worker in private practice in San Francisco, and a faculty member at the University of California-San Francisco.

the wisdom of our sages for words of affirmation: "If I am not for myself, who will be for me? But if I am only for myself, what am I? And if not now, when?" (Hillel; Pirke Avot 1:14)

Each year, one of the returning guest lecturers in my training program was Don Bisson, a Marist brother and Jungian scholar, who has been a spiritual director for over twenty-five years. One of the classes he taught was focused on spiritual direction with the poor and the marginalized. Brother Don had lived in Oakland, California where he provided spiritual direction in some of the most marginalized and disenfranchised communities in the city. He cautioned us about the grave risk of spiritual direction becoming a commodity rather than a calling and a path of spiritual service. He expressed concern about spiritual direction succumbing to capitalist marketing and profit greed, and advised us to continually engage the question of how we intended to make spiritual direction available to those marginalized communities. Brother Don's wise words have stayed with me, particularly as I pray and ponder the question of how spiritual direction can be a practice of healing not only for individuals and groups, but also for tikkun olam.

Last week in my spiritual direction group, one of the women talked about the need for peacemaking in our world and noted that part of our work as spiritual directors involves making peace in our individual lives and relationships, with ourselves and God, and then expanding it to a larger practice of peacemaking. We had each brought in a photo from a magazine or newspaper that had moved us to prayer. Then we placed each picture on the center table and sat in prayerful silence. Most of the pictures were inarguably political: the defrocked Methodist lesbian minister, 6,000 red candles flickering for World AIDS Day, the mutilated body of an Iraqi child. The atrocities of the world bring us to prayer.

How does the practice of spiritual direction inspire and

nourish us in our political activism for tikkun olam? As both spiritual seeker and companion, I offer and receive spiritual direction one-on-one as well as in groups. The people with whom I meet monthly for spiritual direction discuss their spiritual, emotional, and political challenges and questions. We savor the refuge and comfort that comes with silence, and listen for the movement of HaShem in silence, Torah, and the unfolding midrash of their lives. They are all passionately and creatively engaged in the work of tikkun olam in their careers, relationships, and communities. Spiritual direction offers a sacred and cherished place for them to bring their hopes, dreams, and struggles; the relationship itself becomes a *mishkan*, a sanctuary, in which together we attend to presence of the Divine. Spiritual direction also connects us to the Source of Light that illuminates the path for both director and directee, individually and together, and guides us in our work for peace and justice.

The times I spend with my directees and with my own spiritual director almost always generate a renewed sense of passion and creativity, particularly about issues of social justice. Today, as I exit the freeway and drive through the suburbs to my director's house, I anticipate what might unfold in our session. I trust that spiritual direction will remind me to encounter the Other prayerfully rather than hatefully, and to listen patiently, as if through God's ears and eyes.

My teachers at Mercy Center often begin and end our study sessions with the following chant that honors this ministry of spiritual direction; I have translated it into Hebrew. May it sanctify the *avodah*, the holy work, that God has entrusted us with, that of tikkun olam.

Sacred is the call; awesome indeed the entrustment.
Tending the holy, tending the holy.
Brukha HaKriah; Nora'a bayerusha.
L'tapel bikedusha, l'tapel bikedusha.



HARTLEY FILM FOUNDATION
WISDOM ACROSS THE AGES

SEEING IS BELIEVING

THE HARTLEY FILM FOUNDATION OFFERS THE BEST DOCUMENTARIES AND AUDIO MEDITATIONS ON WORLD RELIGIONS, SPIRITUALITY, ETHICS AND WELL-BEING FOR INSPIRATION AND EDUCATION.



TO SHOP OR FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT US AT: WWW.HARTLEYFOUNDATION.ORG OR CALL US AT: 800 937-1819
RECEIVE 10% OFF BY TYPING IN: "TIK" WHEN ASKED FOR A DISCOUNT CODE ONLINE OR BY PHONE.

An Interview with Ruth Messinger

Or N. Rose

Ruth W. Messinger is president and executive director of American Jewish World Service (AJWS), a humanitarian organization providing non-sectarian grassroots development and emergency relief in developing nations. AJWS currently funds one hundred and sixty development and emergency relief projects in thirty countries in Africa, Asia, and the Americas, and forty Jewish renewal and human rights projects in Russia and Ukraine through its Jewish Community Development Fund. Prior to assuming leadership of AJWS in 1998, Messinger served for eight years as Manhattan borough president. In 1997, she was the first woman to secure the Democratic Party's nomination for New York City mayor. This interview explores the relationship between Ms. Messinger's social justice commitments and her Jewish identity.

OR: What led you to AJWS after spending twenty years in public service?

RM: It was a total accident. After losing the mayoral contest to [Rudolph] Giuliani [in 1998], I first looked for work in the non-profit sector. After several unsuccessful attempts, head hunters began pointing out something that should have been obvious to me, but wasn't at the time: no local non-profit was going to hire me for fear of jeopardizing their relationship with the city government.

After coming to terms with this fact, a friend of mine told me about an opportunity at AJWS—which surprisingly, I had never heard of—so I applied. I must admit that until I began the job, I did not realize the extraordinary personal power of this work: it has forced me to consider more deeply the Jewish roots of my work for social justice.

OR: What are the “Jewish roots” of your activism?

RM: First and foremost, they are family roots. My maternal grandfather and my mother were very important role models for me. My grandfather, I. Edwin Goldwasser, was the first executive director of the New York Jewish Federation [now UJA Federation]. My mother, Marjorie Wyler, served for many years as director of public relations at the Jewish

Theological Seminary [JTS]. One of the most powerful memories from my childhood is of Christmas day: JTS insisted on remaining open on this non-Jewish holiday, but the only people who came to work that day were the local black women employees who could not afford to take time off. My mother always went to work on Christmas day to show her colleagues that there was a Jew in their office who understood the absurdity of the situation.

OR: And what about Jewish texts, rituals, and traditions?

RM: The more I study, the more I realize just how complicated is the legacy of Judaism on issues of social justice—the roles of men and women, the relationship between Jews and non-Jews, and so forth—and the need to shape our lives around those resources—textual and ritualistic—that best help us face the challenges of the contemporary world.

One fundamental Jewish teaching that guides my work as an activist is the Jewish concept of duty—*mitzvah*. As Americans, one of the strongest components of our identity is our commitment to individual rights—“life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” In a time when many people speak of these rights and seek to enjoy them as entitlements, Judaism reminds us that we have a responsibility to create, protect, and extend them to as many people as possible.

OR: Some people ask why AJWS focuses so much of its attention on helping non-Jewish causes when there are Jews in need of aid. What is your response to this question?

RM: I believe that as members of an international Jewish community, we have a deep understanding of the interconnection of our world—that poverty, hunger, and disease anywhere affect us. The American Jewish community currently enjoys a level of affluence and influence that is unique in our history. With these gifts comes great responsibility. We have the resources to make significant contributions to Jewish and non-Jewish causes.

OR: AJWS has garnered a great deal of attention of late for its tsunami relief efforts. What are some of the other projects you are working on at present?

RM: Of the many projects we are involved with at present—HIV/AIDS work in Africa, empowering women through micro credit lending, and our Volunteer Corps—I feel com-

Or N. Rose, a regular contributor to Tikkun, teaches at the Rabbinical School of Hebrew College in Newton, MA. He recently served as a scholar-in-residence for the AJWS rabbinical student mission to El Salvador.



pelled to say a few words about the genocide in Darfur, Sudan—perhaps the worst humanitarian crisis in the world today. To date, more than one-and-a-half million African farmers have been violently driven from their homes by the government of Sudan and the militias they have armed, referred to by the farmers as *Janjaweed* (evil men on horseback). Despite repeated calls from humanitarian organizations and United Nations agencies, there continues to be a systematic program of expulsion, rape, and murderous vio-

**To learn more about the work of the
American Jewish World Service:
American Jewish World Service
45 West 36th Street, 10th Floor
New York, NY 10018-7904
800-889-7146
212-736-AJWS (2597)
www.ajws.org**

lence that has taken more than 200,000 lives. As Jews, we have an increased moral obligation to respond, to speak out, and to take action against ethnic cleansing. The epithet “never again” cannot be reserved for Jews alone. We must be guardians of this call for action, responsive to all attempts by any people to annihilate another people.

OR: Why do you think the Jewish community has contributed so much more money to tsunami relief efforts than to Darfur?

RM: This is a complicated issue to say the least. One important reason is that the tsunami was a “natural” disaster, whereas Darfur is a “human” catastrophe. Contributing funds to relief efforts in Southeast Asia does not require of people the same moral focus as Darfur. With Sudan, one has to learn about the issues, take a principled stand, and hold people accountable for their actions. This makes giving much more complicated.

OR: What are some concrete steps the Jewish community can take to alleviate the suffering in Darfur?

RM: To begin with, we need to raise much more money. While AJWS has gathered over \$9 million for tsunami relief, we have managed to collect only \$600,000 or so for Darfur. Additionally, the Jewish community has to use its political power to increase pres-

sure on the U.S. government and the international community to persuade the UN Security Council to do what must be done to end the violence and suffering. Sudan must be forced to improve access to the camps for humanitarian aid workers and supplies, and it must be sanctioned until the *Janjaweed* is disarmed and the region secured. The African Union troops need an expanded mandate under Chapter VII of the UN Charter to protect civilians. Should the no-fly zone over Darfur be violated, enforcement by NATO forces will be necessary.

OR: The pain and suffering in our world can feel overwhelming, even for the most dedicated activists. What advice do you have to offer to those of us who are sometimes demoralized by the brokenness of our world?

RM: The answer is very simple: we cannot retreat to the convenience of being overwhelmed. Yes, the task is enormous, but rather than spend valuable time lamenting this fact, we have to get to work. □

What We're Doing: A National Tikkun Community Update

Robyn Thomas

Tikkun East Bay and Tikkun San Francisco

The Middle East Political Advisory Committee (MEPAC) was founded by Tikkun member Gene St. Onge for the purpose of meeting with Representative Barbara Lee to talk about the Separation Wall being built throughout the West Bank.

After a successful get-together with Representative Lee, the Committee decided to continue working together as a coalition of organizations to support Congressional action that promotes a just peace in Israel/Palestine in accordance with international law.

Tikkun East Bay (Northern California) and Tikkun San Francisco chapters are remaining involved with MEPAC in order to have a stronger voice with elected representatives and are now setting up meetings in an effort to educate legislators about the Jayyous Campaign in the West Bank.

Contacts: Heather Merriam
(heathermerriam@yahoo.com) and
Jesse Feldman (jessefeldman@yahoo.com).

Tikkun West Los Angeles

Israelis and Palestinians want the world to know that they desperately want peace. They are hoping to prove it by flying 10,000 kites with a message of peace, on May 20, from more than fifty locations on both sides of the Separation Wall between Israel and Palestine. The project was started by two artists, one a Palestinian and one an Israeli, after hearing a story about a child flying a kite amidst the rubble of his war-torn neighborhood. Our own West L.A. Tikkun Community is working hard to support this effort with publicity and fundraising to help make sure the project will get the attention it deserves—and other Tikkun Communities around the country are stepping up to help with fundraising, spread the word, and fly kites on May 20 in solidarity with the effort.

Getting the kites off the ground is just the beginning. With the help of more than eighty participating Israeli, Israeli/Arab, and Palestinian organizations, 10,000 Kites plans to put the message of hope into action with educational programs and materials to promote ongoing dialogue, a documentary film for widespread exposure, murals, banners, billboards, and a website to visually reinforce the desire for peace.

Robyn Thomas is the Executive Director of the Tikkun Community.

The beauty of the 10,000 Kites project is that it represents the hopes and dreams of both Palestinians and Israelis that want to express their desire for peace and reconciliation. Yael Samuel of the West L.A. Tikkun Community is Executive Director of 10,000 Kites. (www.10000kites.org).

Contact: Yael Samuel (yael_samuel@hotmail.com)

Tikkun Corpus Christi

On February 19, Corpus Christi Tikkun—along with the South Texas Alliance for Peace and Justice (STAPJ), Texans for Peace, and Veterans for Peace held a one day community forum entitled “Peace and Reconciliation in the Middle East?” The purpose of the event was to “build bridges and help forge a better world.”

Speakers included Hedy Epstein, a Holocaust survivor and champion for Palestinian/Israeli peace; Sarwat Hussain, with the Council on American Islamic Relations; Karen Batiyov, with the International Solidarity Movement; Mohammad Al-Atar, with Palestinians for Peace and Democracy; Lynne Canning, National Organizer for the Tikkun Community, and many more.

Texas A & M University students who attended the event reported being just “blown away” and plan to work on bringing in films to educate other students at the university about the issues of war and peace, the Israeli/Palestinian conflict and social justice.

Contact: Ann Smith (smtann@stx.rr.com).

Tikkun Hires New National Membership Director

We are pleased to announce the addition to our staff of Simone Richmond as National Membership Director. Simone was part of the founding staff of Other Press—a small, scholarly press dedicated to interdisciplinary and multicultural studies. Simone has spent the last three years working with Peace Action, a grassroots lobby that promotes a shift in U.S. foreign policy toward a respect for human rights. She is delighted to begin supporting and sustaining the international membership of the Tikkun Community as we work together toward global democratization, economic justice, generosity, and trust; and toward peace in ourselves as well as in the world. The Tikkun Community is humbly grateful to the anonymous member who gave us the generous donation to fund this full-time position. □

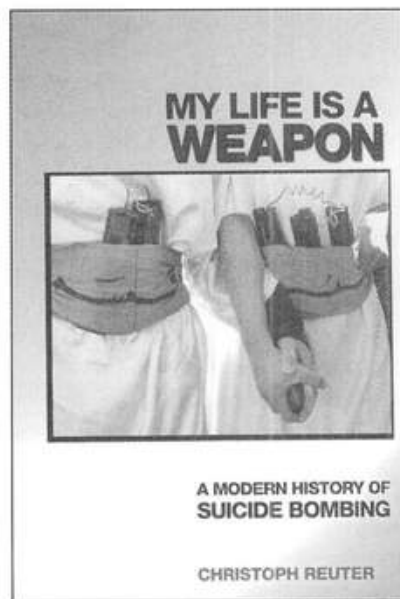
Packaging the Suicide Bomber

Hal Niedzviecki

- *My Life is a Weapon: A Modern History of Suicide Bombing*, by Christoph Reuter, Princeton University Press, 2004
- *The Road to Martyrs' Square: A Journey into the World of the Suicide Bomber*, by Anne Marie Oliver and Paul Steinberg, Oxford University Press, 2004

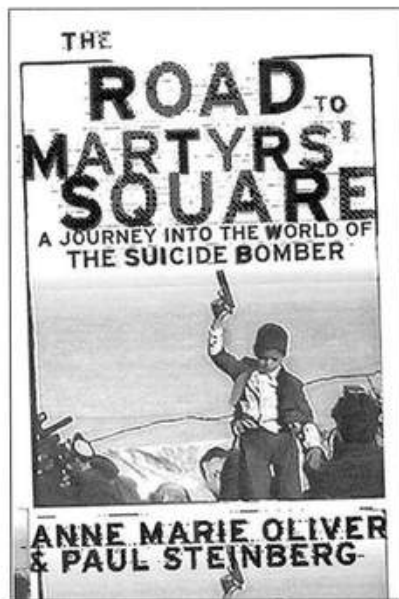
Invulnerable and inscrutable, everywhere and nowhere, the suicide bomber is the millennial version of the serial killer. Bugaboo of the twentieth century, the serial killer sprang out of displacing industrial economies, the random anonymity of urbanization, and fetishistic individuality reinforced by the ideologies of an emerging popular culture. The twenty-first century suicide bomber also emerges out of displacing cultural forces, but in an entirely different context. In the world of the suicide bomber, globalization subverts identity through Western culture's relentless assault on locality, post-industrial capitalism's rootless fluidity, and the continuing legacy of colonialisms—old and new.

Just as hundreds of books have tried to understand the serial killer, many new books are now emerging to grapple with the nature of the suicide bomber. German journalist Christoph Reuter, a reporter for progressive German news weekly *Die Zeit*, gives us the portentously titled *My Life Is a Weapon: A Modern History of Suicide Bombing*. Not to be outdone, Anne



Marie Oliver and Paul Steinberg, Oregon-based academics, dub their book *The Road to Martyrs' Square: A Journey into the World of the Suicide Bomber*. As might be guessed by big titles attached to relatively slim texts (neither book breaks the 200-page mark), despite their many insights, both books inevitably leave us with more questions than they do answers. Nevertheless, these are valuable texts that help us look deep into the eyes of their subjects: people who, regardless of the socio-economic and political circumstances that propel them, are still killers. And yet to read these books is to be hypnotized, only to wake up haunted by a sense of having understood something we are helpless to articulate.

My Life Is a Weapon is the more disappointing of the two books. Moving



far too quickly through everything from medieval Arab history to ongoing developments in Israel/Palestine, Japan, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, and Turkey, Christoph Reuter veers between first person reportage and quick recaps of past events that may or may not have lead us to present reality.

However, some of Reuter's initial observations on the nature of the suicide bomber are helpful and worth noting. "After a life devoid of any previous significance, he now becomes a powerful ideal; his very name inspires fear. In his own person, he has realized Andy Warhol's dictum that everyone is allotted 'fifteen minutes of fame.'" Reuter also emphasizes the point that attackers are not always "fanatical, single, uneducated men from the slums." Middle class, married, educated, and secular people also set out on suicide bombing missions. So what weird confluence of popular culture and politics needs to occur to create the suicide bomber?

Hal Niedzviecki is the author of several books, most recently of the novel *The Program* and the non-fiction book *Hello, I'm Special: How Individuality Became the New Conformity*. For more on his work, visit his website, www.smellit.ca.

Reuter tries to find connections between specific Middle Eastern conflicts and the spread of suicide bombing as an ideology. He cites the Iraq/Iran war in the 1980s as a suicide “renaissance” with thousands of Iranians, most of them adolescents, encouraged to rush, unarmed, at Iraqi positions while being systemically mowed down. Reuter also takes us deep into Arab history, citing examples of martyr-assassins and suicidal religious warriors who emerged out of the schism between Sunni and Shi’ite Islam. However, in Reuter’s account, it is not until the rise of Lebanese Shi’ite organization Hezbollah that suicide bombing receives its most successful and paradigmatic contemporary articulation.

Hezbollah, Reuter argues, created an environment in the early 1990s in which “the suicide bomber becomes an idol which others strive to emulate.” For the first time, individuals who are neither militarily nor religiously inclined are systematically attracted to the ideology of suicide bombing. Encouraged by an organized, quasi-governmental religious entity, they are outfitted with bomb belts and meticulously employed as a way to win against better-armed and -outfitted opponents such as the Israelis.

Mixing healthcare, education, and welfare services with a fundamentalist religious rhetoric of holy struggle and traditional revolutionary militancy, Hezbollah pioneered an ideology of martyrdom that helped throw the Israelis out of Lebanon, and continues to plague American forces in Iraq today. It helped—but maybe wasn’t essential—that the foe around which Hezbollah formed this ideology was the Jew, a long-hated regional rival, reviled in the foundational texts of the religion they purported to represent. Through Hezbollah we arrive at the era of the suicide bomber. This is, of course, also our era: a twenty-first century caught between past and present, stuck in a quagmire of technologically dispensed future fantasies, intractable historical legacies, infinite destructive

possibilities, and rapidly diminishing resources.

Reuter compares the Hezbollah zeal for martyrdom to the way northern Canada’s Inuit have hundreds of different names for snow and ice. Death announcements required a new language—a *shahid as-said*, or “happy martyr” would often be joined by a *shahid al-mazlum*, an “unintentional martyr” after Israel banned the movement of cars with only a single driver in their self-declared security zone in southern Lebanon. Language is part of culture; to introduce new words is to introduce new ideas and codes of behavior. Hezbollah’s fusing of previous theological concepts of *jihad* with the new notion of the *shahid*, of martyrdom with new military technologies and quasi-political/social structures produced not just semantics but horrifying realities—realities that would quickly spread throughout the Arab world and beyond.

Anne Marie Oliver and Paul Steinberg dramatically recount the spread of the ideology of the suicide bomber from Lebanon to its apex in the Occupied Territories. Their “journey into the world of the suicide bomber” is actually several different lengthy visits to the West Bank, Gaza, and Jerusalem. Reuter looks into the eyes of the bomber and turns away, but Oliver and Steinberg linger in the stare until they’re wholly and utterly entranced. Their urgent and hypnotic text plunges readers into a place where, as they write, “an entire world view is marked in the most minute of details.” Indeed, this is a book of visceral detail: smells, sounds, and sights form a text that the authors themselves describe as “part memoir, part travelogue, part journey into the underground media of the intifada.”

Oliver and Steinberg invite us to vicariously experience the heated atmosphere of the Territories. They describe everything from children’s songs (“move from one fig tree to another/teach them stabbing with knives”) to detailed frame-by-frame

descriptions of martyr videos. These videos are the bloody Palestinian equivalent of reality television. Widely disseminated, traded, and collected, they depict suicide bombers getting ready—psyching themselves up—for their coming “martyr operations.”

Describing one video called “The Giants” that documented a suicide bombing trio who dubbed themselves “Force Three” and planned to take hostages and/or blow up a bus, our writers delve as deeply as they possibly can into the psychological depths revealed by grainy, oft-taped-over video. “We get the feeling that life has never seemed better to them—so intense, so exuberant, so full of meaning.... They just can’t believe they’re about to become martyrs, about to take their place in the roster of great men.... They’ve never gotten so much attention in their lives.”

Again it’s clear that the attraction of becoming a suicide bomber is not the fantasy of being rewarded with virgins in heaven, but the intense feeling of being noticed in a world where *being noticed*—preferably on video—has somehow become a sole crowning achievement in and of itself. While it’s unclear how much these men believe in the political cause or their ascendancy to heaven, it is evident that they believe utterly in the inescapable glorious moment they are creating for the camera. Like serial killers who taunt the police through notes and calls carefully parcelled out to the media, the suicide bombers also have a model: if they follow the script, stay on message, and perform well, they can be assured of their fame—in this world, not just the next.

Oliver and Steinberg aren’t satisfied with videos, however. They want real live perpetrators, and in a gripping, horrifying scene they manage to visit a rare survivor. Here is ‘Uthman, one of the Force Three who, much to his bewilderment, survived a bullet through his brain and a stint in an Israeli jail. We find ‘Uthman spending his days lying on a pallet on the floor. In a hot

crowded room filled with family and friends, the two Americans interrogate the sweat-covered invalid whose “eyes bulge out of his sockets,” whose “body spasms and tremors” and whose speech is “punctuated by stammers and stutters as if a lightening storm had erupted in his head.”

Struggling to make sense of his current circumstances, ‘Uthman takes his questioners and the crowd of onlookers through the attempted act (in which he was shot before he could blow up the bus) and the confusing aftermath. “Actually,” he finally concludes, “this was a boon for me.... I prayed that I would be martyred and not be put in prison. Allah answered my prayer, and he made me like this, twisted by the Jews like this.... So, you know, Allah, May He be praised and exalted, wanted this boon for me, so you know, he made me like this.... Sometimes the feeling comes over me that I am the happiest man on the face of the earth.”

Why is ‘Uthman so happy? The authors leave us to ponder this, and in the process remind us just how far we are from understanding what a suicide bomber actually wants or effects in society.

In North America, suicide bombers are feared, hated, and largely non-existent. Surely, more people die in traffic accidents every year than have died in the last century at the hands of suicide bombers. But, as with that rare creature, the serial killer, the suicide bomber is compelling and everywhere—featured in television shows, movies, books, and, most of all, the news media. This, of course, perpetuates the myth of the omnipresent, blood-thirsty Islamic terrorist who could strike at any moment, against any target. The fear the myth inspires is more powerful than any damage suicide bombing tactics are likely to inflict on an enemy. So the real question becomes: How can we dispel the myth and rob the suicide bomber of his only real power—terror?

As these books make clear, the sui-

cide bomber—a real person from a real family—becomes an instant symbol and emblem once the deed is done. Reality is replaced by myth. The new truth is disseminated via news broadcasts, trading cards, graffiti slogans,

and staged, pre-prepared videotapes. So it is that suicide bombers are branded, marketed, and made ultimately unknowable, both by the horror they spread and the paradoxically anonymous fame they receive in return. □

Israel's Forgotten Left

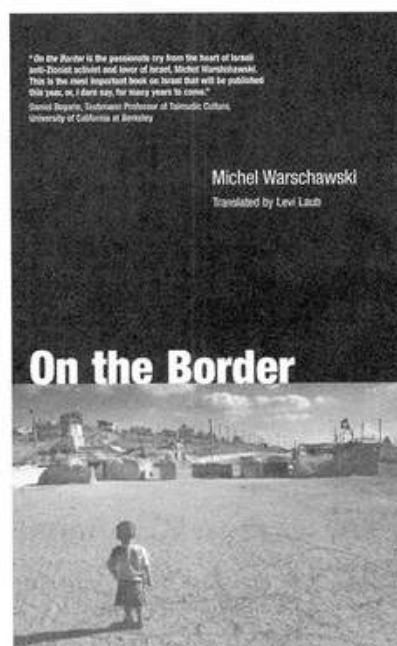
Mark LeVine

■ *On The Border*, by Michael Warschawski. South End Press, 2005

I approached this book with some trepidation, not least because I began reading it at the same moment the latest pair of Israeli and Palestinian “peacemakers”—Ariel Sharon and Mahmoud Abbas—shook hands, and in so doing temporarily raised the hopes of the world for a peaceful resolution to the world’s most intractable conflict. As someone who studies Israel/Palestine and its century-long conflict for a living, what was another book by a disgruntled leftist going to teach me? And since I’ve spent a fair amount of time at the Alternative Information Center in Jerusalem, which Michael Warschawski (known to comrades as “Mikado”) directed from 1983 to 1999, how much else was there left to know about the “real” causes of the violence between the two communities?

It turns out that the answer to both is quite a lot—not just about a much-overlooked aspect of the history of Israeli political culture, but also about how to hold on to hope for a better future when cynicism bred of constant disappointment has become the default setting for approaching even the hint of peace and compromise between Palestinians and Israeli Jews.

As its title hints, *On the Border* seeks



to tear down the walls of what Warschawski describes as “the biggest ghetto in Jewish history,” the State of Israel. The ironic use of “ghetto”—a word almost synonymous with the Diaspora—suggests rightly that the author harbors strong feelings against Israel’s history and contemporary political realities. A Franco-German Jew who immigrated to Israel as a teenager in the 1960s, a time when he was an advanced student of Talmud, Warschawski clearly seeks to help readers cross over the seemingly airtight borders of Israeli and Palestinian nationalist iden-

Mark LeVine is a contributing editor to TIKKUN.

tities to envision a future that is pluralistic and truly democratic for the inhabitants of both societies.

To read *On the Border* is to be reminded that Israel has always had a radical movement for peace that was as principled and far-thinking as it was unrealistic and unlikely to sway most Israeli Jews to its positions. The most important development in this movement's history was the expulsion of a small group of dissidents from the Israeli Communist Party (*Rakab*) in 1962 for the crime of questioning the dominant Stalinist ideology and for advocating a return to the values of a democratic and truly internationalist socialism. This group would go on to form the Israeli Socialist Organization, or *Matzpen* ("the Compass"), and the vituperative reaction from the dominant Zionist Left to their existence demonstrates how much of a threat they were considered to be in their heyday by the powers that be.

Matzpen was considered more radical and threatening than the more well-known Communist Party (home to most Israeli Palestinian voters and anti-Zionist Jews at that time) in good measure because it served as a conduit to the European socialist Left after 1967, when the movement was beginning to suspect that the Zionist socialism of the ruling Labor Party was masking increasing oppression of the recently conquered Palestinian population. At the same time, Warschawski explains that the "radical anti-Zionist positions of *Matzpen* and its unconditional support for the struggle for Palestinian national liberation" (which included some of the earliest Israeli contacts with the emerging Fatah movement) led it to gain many followers among the post-1967 generation of Israeli-Palestinians and even urban Israeli-Jewish youth who had absorbed the anti-establishment sentiments of 1960s America and Europe. Indeed, the Jewish establishment was frightened enough to organize "anti-*Matzpen* seminars" for college freshmen and seniors to quell the growth of critical anti-Zionist

thinking among Israel's youth.

Part of what made *Matzpen* interesting, dangerous, and yet ultimately marginal to Israeli politics was that it articulated a specifically Diaspora-derived "anti-tribalism" harking back to a pre-World War II Yiddish socialism, or Bundism. Yet if this position won sympathy on American and European campuses from the likes of Pete Seeger and Rabbi Elmer Berger, in Israel such a return to the world before the Shoah was, of course, ideologically and psychologically impossible for most people. Inter-

*To read On the Border
is to be reminded
that Israel has always
had a radical
movement for peace
that was as principled
and far-thinking as
it was unrealistic.*

estingly, however, *Matzpen* was not just anti-Zionist, it was ideologically antagonistic to the larger existing Arab state system, which it saw (correctly) as an artifact of imperial interests that needed to be overcome as much as Zionism did. This position—a "socialism without borders"—led *Matzpen* members to develop ties to Arab nationalists and socialists that included some of the first face-to-face meetings between Israelis and citizens of Arab countries since the establishment of Israel.

The evolution of *Matzpen* and the larger socialist movement in Israel is one of the main narrative threads of the book, and should inspire the reader to look deeper into the history of Zionism's main internal gadfly. As important for me, however, is Warschawski's brutally honest description of both the toll that a life of activism took on his family (especially his children), and the

difficulty, if not impossibility, of ever forming true friendships with comrades "across" the national border—in this case Palestinians. As the great Algerian Jewish anti-colonial writer Albert Memmi described so well, "the colonial relationship" is so all-encompassing and involves such an imbalance of power, rights, and privileges between activists of the colonizer and colonized that true friendship, which "must be based on common lives, common experiences and common problems," becomes nearly impossible.

This reality adds yet another poignant dimension to the struggle for peace and justice in Israel/Palestine, in which activists, precisely because they spend so much of their lives on—in fact crossing over—the borders separating the two warring communities, feel most at home with each other yet can never overcome the many divides between them.

In response to a reality in which the borders between Israelis and Palestinians remain, for many of the former, also a frontier (and thus a space "to be conquered;" in the language of Zionism, "saved," "redeemed," or "reclaimed"), Warschawski puts forth an identity that is not Israeli, but instead harks back to a much earlier, yet more cosmopolitan time: an *'ivri* (or, Hebrew) which in its original connotation means to pass, cross over, or even transgress. It is those Palestinians, and especially those Israelis (considering their historic power over the former) who can adopt such an identity who become the true "fighters for liberty and brotherhood." In their hands, a shared future for both societies can be found. The history of the radical peace movement among both societies that *On the Border* so intimately relates serves as an example of, and a warning about, why it has been so difficult to build a truly post-nationalist Israeli and Palestinian identity. It will most likely remain so in the near future, no matter how many handshakes the world witnesses between aging leaders searching for a place in history. □

Anti-Capitalist Poetry

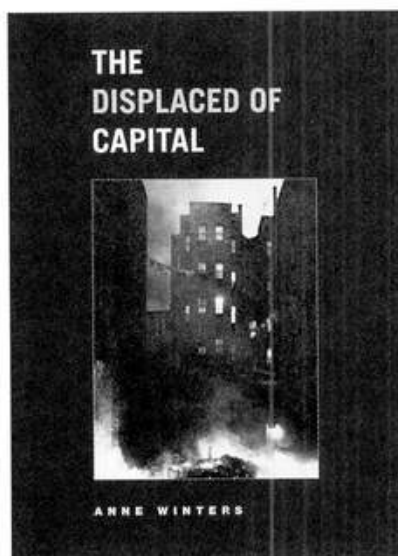
Paul Otremba

- *The Displaced of Capital*, by Anne Winters. University of Chicago Press, 2004.

Almost twenty years after the publication of her first book of poems, *The Key to the City*, Anne Winters's second collection, *The Displaced of Capital*, continues her commitment to a poetry that is as artistically rigorous as it is politically progressive.

As the book's title suggests, most of the poems in *The Displaced of Capital* take on political subjects, viewed through the author's own heterodox version of Marxism. Situated in Winters's hometown of New York, Manhattan is portrayed as the crisis-ridden center of a market-driven culture collapsing in on itself, as those on the fringes have moved within the city's confines. As the speaker of the title poem (which first appeared in *TIKKUN*) observes, "the displaced of capital have come to the capital."

The poems in this new collection are global in their concerns. While the poet stays rooted in New York, walking down Broadway she can see signs of the entirety of empire in signs like, "O'Donnell's, Beirut Cafe, Yonah's Knish." These names do not signify sites of resistance to a homogenous American culture. Rather, they represent the establishment and consumption of global Otherness by America. Or, to quote the above speaker again: because I'm here in New York the paper tells me of here: / of the Nicaraguans, the shortage of journeyman-jobs, the ethnic / street-corner job-markets where men wait



all day but more likely the women / find work, in the new hotels or in the needle trades.

Sensitivity to social justice might be a motivation for Winters's poems, but it is not the only one. Through the immediacy of images, an improvised-sounding, rigorous musicality, and far-ranging sentences, *The Displaced of Capital* conveys complexities of feeling and thought while avoiding didacticism and ideologically motivated polemics. The collection opens with "The Mill-Race." Beneath the nightmarish omen of a "July thunderstorm unfurling over Manhattan," the speaker describes people on a bus coming home from work:

each face tilts up to the windows'
shadowless yards of mercuric green
plate glass. An
interspace then, like the slowing of
some rural
water-mill, a creaking and dipping
pause

of black-splintered paddles, the irregularly
dappled off-lighting—bottle-green
—the lucid slim sluice
falling back in a stream from the
plank edge.

The striking music of these severe yet appealingly plangent lines, the concentration on bringing the experience emotionally into focus, and the naturalness with which the metaphor of the water-mill arises, indicate a formal excellence and imaginative richness that place Winters' work at the forefront of today's poetry.

The Displaced of Capital is arranged into two parts, with the first devoting seventeen of its thirty-four pages to a long sectioned poem, "An Immigrant Woman," which functions as the book's emotional and ethical heart. It chronicles the speaker's relationship with Pilar, a South American immigrant and victim of "the Violence." The poem offers a complex portrait of the two women as they deal with the inhumane living conditions of their neighborhood and the death of Pilar's daughter, which results from those conditions. Yet, the piece's self-consciously impersonal title suggests how deeply Winters understands the paradox of the personal poem, which inevitably becomes universalized at the moment we read it, threatening to erase the identity the poem wishes to make visible.

In other words, Winters does not make the dangerous mistake of addressing social inequality by turning politics into art. As the philosopher and literary critic Walter Benjamin might have said, she "responds by politicizing art." The danger of such a response, though, is that it can lead to art that disguises its participation

Paul Otremba is *TIKKUN*'s assistant poetry editor.

in capitalist culture so that attention to poetic form only produces the illusion of resolution of real social conflict. Yet Winters does not pretend that her poems hold a privileged position outside of politics. Nor do her poems claim they can offer compen-

sation. She's too canny, too smart, too good a poet to make such an error.

When the speaker of the "The Mill-Race" states, "Nothing's / left over, really, from labor," this also includes the poem, itself. If Anne Winters' poems

provide resistance to a culture that needs economic inequalities and strips people of their identity, they do so by making such inequalities visible—a visibility that in *The Displaced of Capital* constitutes a rare, humane vision worth sharing.

Capsule Reviews

- *The London Years*, by Rudolph Rocker. AK Press, 2005.

It's hard to imagine a better role model than the protagonist of *The London Years*. The narrator of this autobiography is an absurdly hard-working soul with the song of freedom in his heart. Whether stepping in to save Yiddish-language publishing in pre-World War I Great Britain even though he barely knows the language, or subordinating his global aspirations to the local demands of East End sweatshop workers, Rudolph Rocker is a down-to-earth hero who blows his horn best by muting it.

The reader with a soft spot for progressive politics will be hard-pressed to avoid falling in love with him. This is one case, though, when passion seems thoroughly justified. TIKKUN readers will thrill at Rocker's tales of political organizing among the destitute Eastern European Jews who came to England to escape persecution in their homelands. Though Rocker's prose is more workmanlike than wondrous, the style suits his story perfectly.

It helps greatly that he is so generous of spirit. As Rocker recounts his wide-ranging experiences as a political activist and publisher, he goes out of his way to show solidarity with progressives of every stripe. He even manages to find something good to say about Karl Marx, which is no small feat for an anarchist.

To be sure, some of Rocker's sunniness in *The London Years* comes from the fact that he wrote the book as an old man looking back over his life through the brightly tinted monocle of memory. He remembers, not in order to take stock of his experiences, but because he wants them to become a rootstock for future radicals. This gives the book a slightly propagandistic feel, as if each incident in it were packaged as a lesson for young anarchists to absorb and analyze. But the effect is so mild that it's actually a relief.

More importantly, Rocker's decision to prioritize deeds over words gives readers the sense that sectarian disagreement should be dispensed with at the first opportunity. In light of

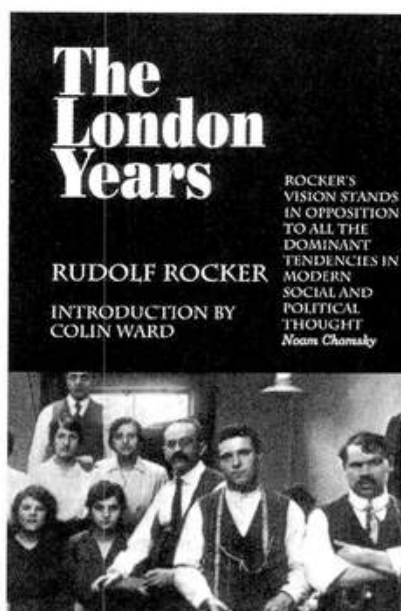
everything Rocker and his radical brethren accomplished in the face of intense government resistance—this book is a reminder of how bad Imperial Britain could be—it seems ridiculous to sit around discussing terminology. Whether your sympathies lie with Howard Dean or Guy Debord, *The London Years* is the perfect call to action for a Left in danger of losing the will to act. —Charlie Bertsch

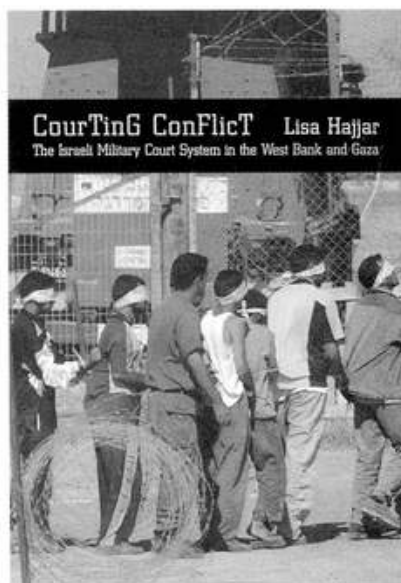
- *Courting Conflict: The Israeli Military Court System in the West Bank and Gaza*, by Lisa Hajjar. University of California Press, 2005.

Overwhelmed by media imagery of Israeli soldiers confronting civilian demonstrators, for the average newspaper reader, it'd be hard to imagine that a military court system has been exercising equal control over the Occupied Territories since June 1967. Yet, on a scale of ten to one, this IDF-vetted judiciary has been responsible for sealing the fate of hundreds of thousands more Palestinians than any unit of army conscripts has ever been.

The greatest challenge for a book like *Courting Conflict* is not only explaining how central this institution really is to the Occupation, but why social justice advocates ought to be as familiar with it as they are with the conduct of the IDF.

Lisa Hajjar goes a long way towards





achieving this goal. Neither a history of the Israeli military court system, nor an anthropological study, *Courting Conflict* is a philosophically-informed, interview-packed analysis of how the Israeli army's judicial system works in relation to Israeli civil law, and how it uses the law to unjustly reinforce the Occupation. Breaking down everything from the problem of settlers working as Judges to questions about the responsibility of military court interpreters, Hajjar asks a great number of disconcerting questions about the Occupation's military judiciary: Are confessions ever tossed out because of coercion? What, exactly, constitutes coercion? Does the Israeli Military Court accept the Geneva Convention for this purpose? What is the process by which defendants are arrested, detained, tried, and sentenced? And what is the value of this system when Israeli soldiers are both the witnesses and the arresting officers? Hajjar concludes by stating that the best Palestinian detainees can expect is to plead their case out of court, for a reduced sentence.

At its core, *Courting Conflict* argues that what the GSS (General Security Services, or Shin Bet) does in relation to the military courts is torture Palestinians into confessions. While I disagree with some of Hajjar's analysis of

Israel's citizenship laws, she does a great job of contextualizing the players in Israel's military court system within Israeli society as a whole, sensitively identifying the moral tensions their positions engender.

Hajjar's work, while at times naïve, is an admirable first step on the long road to sorting out the myriad abuses the Israeli state apparatus will have to answer for after the Occupation is concluded. —Cynthia Hoffman

■ *Iraq, Inc.: A Profitable Occupation*, by Pratap Chatterjee. Seven Stories Press, 2004

Every war has its profiteers. From defense contractors and oil companies to technology concerns, engineering firms, food suppliers, and even ball-bearing manufacturers, war has always been a boon for business. The list is indeed endless, and the war in Iraq is clearly no exception. With a Congressionally-approved budget of 80 billion dollars for the 2005 fiscal year to fund the occupation, there's no doubt that many firms are making a tidy bundle off of this conflict. The question is what makes this cash handout different from all others.

In *Iraq, Inc.* Pratap Chatterjee, editor of *CorpWatch* makes the argument that the conflict in Iraq represents the first *outsourced* war. Under U.S. government coordination, billions of taxpayer dollars are being paid to private sector companies to provide military support, transportation, and reconstruction services at historically unprecedented rates. Chatterjee documents how much of this money is being spent hiring American security firms (read "mercenaries") to do everything from work as interrogators at U.S. Army-run prisons, to protecting government and corporate officials working in Iraq. In turn, many of these contractors hire subcontractors of their own, importing workers from around the globe to fill



Noted writer Jacqueline Rose uses her considerable analytic and psychoanalytic skills to provide an unprecedented perspective on Zionism. Analyzing the messianic fervor of Zionism, she argues that it colors Israel's self-image to this day.

For anyone concerned with the conflict in Israel-Palestine, this timely book offers a unique understanding of Zionism as an unavoidable psychic and historical force.



"Jacqueline Rose offers—with intellectual honesty and fair-mindedness—new and very compelling explanations of the gap between the theory and practice of Zionism."

—Avi Shlaim, Oxford University
Cloth \$19.95 ISBN 0-691-11750-0

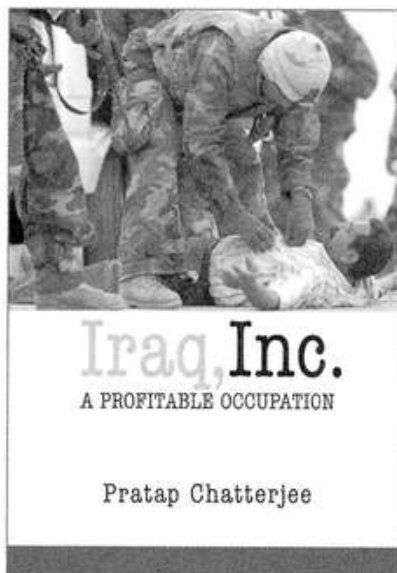
Celebrating 100 Years of Excellence
PRINCETON 800-777-4726
University Press Read excerpts online
www.pup.princeton.edu

BOOK REVIEW

skilled and unskilled positions.

Military contracts have been a bad joke for years. Simple mechanical tools found at the corner hardware store continue to cost the Pentagon hundreds of dollars. Through interviews with employees and research into contracts, *Iraq, Inc.* details how these costs are yielding even bigger margins than ever. And with "cost plus contracts," there apparently isn't any incentive to cut costs either. But *Iraq, Inc.*, like many other similar pieces of investigative reporting, is not just about facts. It's also a sadly predictable morality tale about the human costs incurred by a profit-driven foreign policy.

To that end, Chatterjee supplies ample information about what this new model of revenue generation is costing the Iraqis. Unemployment remains in the millions. Teachers hold classes in schools where fans don't work and toilets won't flush. Doctors have to watch babies die in hospitals where incubators are stacked against



walls and in corridors because there isn't enough electricity or clean water to run them. Citing numerous other similar instances of misery, one cannot fail to see the worst of all possible motives for this war—one that the standard invocation of spreading freedom and democracy will never satisfy.

—Jane Credland

- *Spinoza's Modernity: Mendelssohn, Lessing, and Heine*, by Willi Goetschel. University of Wisconsin Press, 2004.

In his account of *Spinoza's Modernity*, Willi Goetschel seeks to rescue the early modern philosopher from dustbin status. He finds in Spinoza a challenge to the universalist pretensions of European thought, a challenge he claims survived covertly in the work of Moses Mendelssohn, G.E. Lessing, and Heinrich Heine. Spinoza—banished from Amsterdam's Jewish community in 1656 for his denial of a legislative, transcendent God—hovers as the specter of modern Jewish thought. Of note, then, is the rendering of Spinoza's "Jewishness," which Goetschel argues constitutes his modernity, one based more on Spin-

oza's identity than his oeuvre. Spinoza's indisputable outsider status—an excommunicated lens-grinding Portuguese Jew philosophizing in Holland—constituted the material basis for his practice of critique. Exiled beyond the existing parameters of the universal, Spinoza produced a concept of critique that refused to pit the universal and the particular against each other. Rather, the universal itself, infinitely conceived, would be a product of the unending accumulation of particular effects.

Spinoza's critique is evident in his practice of biblical criticism in the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*. Spinoza "reads" miracles as evidence of particularity rather than as indicators of universal truth. This move leads Spinoza to a proto-pragmatist concept of truth as an "aspect of praxis" in the world. Heinrich Heine stands alongside Spinoza in the book's final chapters as an antidote to Hegelianism. History and thought lack ends. Credit is due Goetschel's performative consistency: his book lacks a conclusion. The connections with today's most pressing cultural concerns—connections promised by the book's primer notes—are left open for the Spinozist reader to contemplate on his or her own.

What is novel about Spinoza is the identification of theology as the realm of the particular. Philosophy's grammar makes universal claims, but the operations of theology in Spinoza's counterintuitive reading reveal the particularity of the individual on earth. It is the preservation of uniqueness and difference, particularity itself, that constitutes both Spinoza's Jewishness and his modernity. But if Spinoza's challenge is made clear, the problematic implications of his politics are too, a point Goetschel concedes. Nonetheless, this book is a valiant effort to confront these problems and the challenge is to be welcomed. Goetschel deserves praise for revealing Spinoza's singularity and relevance. —Knox Peden □

Candle of Hope

Created by Israeli and Palestinian craftswomen in a rare and remarkable collaboration of peace. Portion of proceeds benefits bereaved families.

Purchase with Purpose



Honey scented hurricane candle with hand embroidered gift bag and tea light \$36

www.hopecandle.com

413.586.5771

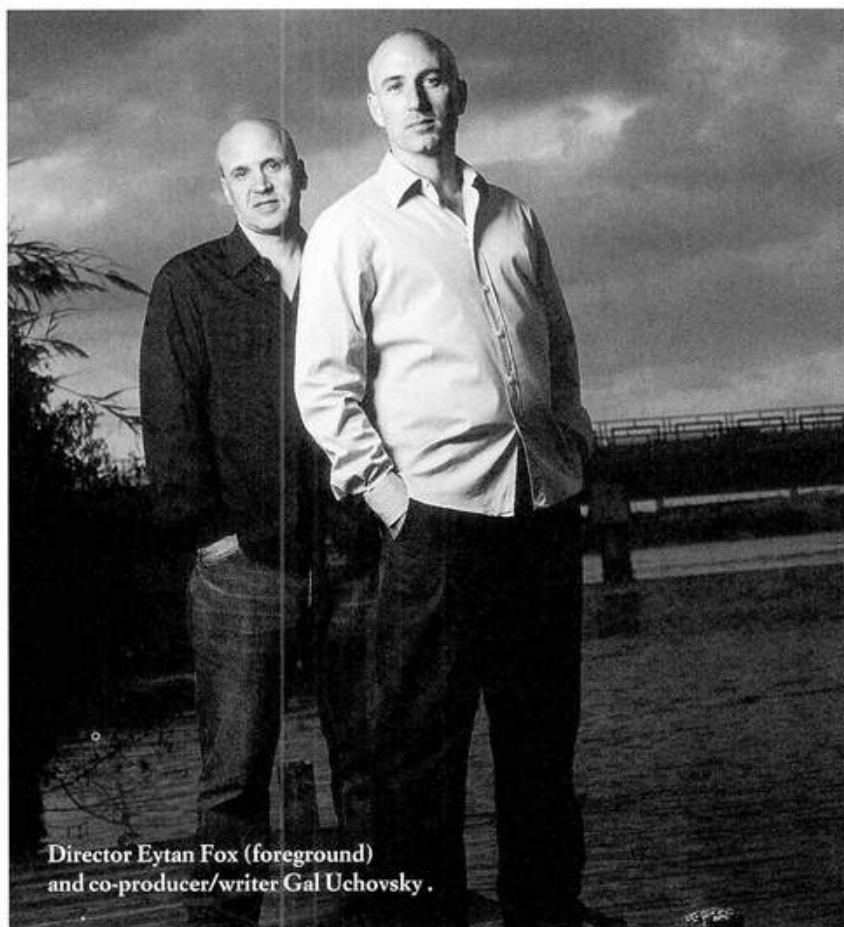
Between Sex And Country: The Films of Eytan Fox

Shai Ginsburg

It is the middle of winter and the ground is covered with snow in a remote Israeli army outpost near the border with Lebanon. In a crowded room, sitting on an army bed, Yossi, a young lieutenant, is studying a map, preparing for an ambush his platoon has been assigned for that night. Next to him, Jagger, his second in command, is playing his guitar. "Will you stay with me if I lose a leg?" asks Jagger. "That could actually be convenient for certain positions," retorts Yossi. "And what if my face gets all burnt, and I have only one eye left? ... What if I die and you haven't even told me that you love me?" Jagger persists. "And what if I die," Yossi loses his patience, "because instead of going over the action today, you decided to be a nudge?"

This scene from Eytan Fox's prize-winning film, *Yossi and Jagger* (Israel, 2002) exemplifies the central theme that has preoccupied Fox throughout his career: the friction between the private and public spheres that shapes much of contemporary life in Israel (and has haunted Jewish life in Palestine since the beginning of its national settlement in the late nineteenth century). In Fox's films and TV dramas, that friction is often presented as a tension between the sexual interests of his characters—in particular, though not exclusively, homosexual interests—and a preoccupation in their surroundings with matters of national security, including military service, the Lebanon War, the first Gulf War, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Shai Ginsburg is assistant professor of Hebrew and Jess Schwartz Professor of Modern Hebrew Literature at Arizona State University.



Director Eytan Fox (foreground)
and co-producer/writer Gal Uchovsky.

Yossi and Jagger follows the daily routine of soldiers stationed at a secluded outpost and the homosexual affair between its two main characters. At the center of the drama lies Yossi's unwillingness to "come out" and make public his sexuality. Jagger insists, "We'll take our next vacation together in Eilat and we'll book a room and ask for one bed, king-size, queen-size, I don't care ... and when I finish the ser-

vice, I'm telling my mother, and you're coming with me to meet her and my father." Yossi, on the other hand, recoils: "This is how it is. I never promised it would ever be different. So you have a choice: either live with it or leave." Yossi accepts the masculine code of the army, which also colors the film's articulation of Israel's security concerns, and refuses to compromise it for the sake of his relationship with Jagger.

While Yossi and Jagger carry on an affair that they must conceal, Jagger is pursued by Ya'eli, the platoon's female

clerk, who is unaware of his sexual orientation. The romance between the young woman and the soldier is an important component of the Israeli military myth. Fox's film thus juxtaposes Yossi and Jagger's affair—sexually explicit yet bound to remain repressed—and Ya'eli's platonic-romantic fantasies of Jagger, which, while never realized, become the "official, public story" about Jagger's character.

After (1990), Fox's graduation project from the Department of Film and Television at Tel Aviv University, similarly deals with issues of masculinity, homosexuality, and military service. The film takes place during the Lebanon War (1982–1986), and portrays Erez, a ruthless platoon commander who hazes Jonathan, one of his subordinates. The night before the pla-

toon is scheduled to move into Lebanon, the soldiers receive a short leave ("after," in Israeli military slang) in Jerusalem. As Jonathan strolls through Independence Park at the center of the city, he spots his commander and follows him as he enters the public restrooms. There, Jonathan can hear the noises emanating from one of the stalls, as Erez is having homosexual sex. Fox neither criticizes the politics of the War nor reflects on the rifts it has created in Israeli society; in fact, as in his other films, he builds on crude stereotypes to sketch social and political issues. At the center of the film is not political but sexual drama—the struggle of Jonathan and Erez to place their sexuality within Israeli society.

In *Song of the Siren* (1994), Fox likewise chisels the same themes into relief.

Based on Irit Linur's best-selling novel of the same name, the movie tells of Talila Katz, a yuppie Tel-Avivian advertising executive who searches for true romance in the midst of the national hysteria of the first Gulf War (1991)—to the sound of sirens that warn the public of impending scud attacks. She moves back and forth between Noah Ne'eman, the clumsy but good-hearted food engineer, and her cynical yuppie ex-boyfriend, Ofer Strassberg. Unlike Fox's other films, *Song* highlights and glorifies heterosexual romance. Still, it too explores the relationship between the private and the public, as Talila strives to locate a space for herself in which she can realize her romantic fantasies despite—or in defiance of—the public preoccupation with the "really important" matters of life and death.

An Interview with Eytan Fox

Shai Ginsburg: *What brought you to do a movie about the Holocaust, and why now?*

Eytan Fox: Making movies takes a long time. When you say "now," you're talking about a process that takes years to mature. As an Israeli, you grow up with the Holocaust as a central component of your soul, of your psychology. It is part of my ongoing attempt to understand the psychology of Israeli society, of Israeli masculinity, of the Israeli man. In my most thorough attempt thus far to analyze or deconstruct, to gain a true, renewed understanding of the Israeli man, I got to the Holocaust. I also got in touch emotionally with the realization that it begins there: our forefathers—our grandparents, at times also our parents—who came from the Holocaust and arrived in Israel, tried to produce a new Jew in the Sabra—strong and fearless, who would take upon himself our defense, and we were preoccupied with defending ourselves. But something very hard was

being made inside [this new Jew], very complex emotionally, very stuck, very limited. This is the man portrayed in *Walk on Water*: a man who finds it difficult to be a spouse, who finds it difficult to be a human being, who truly lives, feels, experiences, who is truly hurt, loving—all the things that a human being should be.

I started working on the film after [the Israeli TV drama] *Florentin*. I traveled to the U.S. and developed a few ideas. But precisely living in the Galut [diaspora], far from home, brought back the issue of the Holocaust. Living far from Israel, observing it, and trying to understand it brings back the Holocaust; you realize that it's within you and it may explain a few of your fears, a few of your characteristics, and those of other men who are your brothers, your good friends, or your father.

SG: *Do you see any connections between Florentin and Walk on Water?*

EF: There are recurring themes in all of

the things that I have made. They all deal with Israeli identity, Israeli collective psychology. Probably masculinity occupies me more than femininity but, obviously, the one doesn't exist without the other. *Florentin* deals with the New Israel that tries to get free of all kinds of fetters, the fetters of the past. This film presents the man with whom the characters in *Florentin* correspond.

SG: *You started working on the movie while Netanyahu was the Israeli Prime Minister, and continued to work on it during Barak's and Sharon's governments...*

EF: In many respects, Netanyahu, Barak, and Sharon are the protagonists of *Walk on Water*. All could have been cast in this movie. I am not sure they all could have changed in the way the hero of the movie does. But, then again, you see what's happening these days with Sharon... on the deep, psychological level; don't think they differ from each other. They all grew up as... men of struggle, who felt that they had to be warriors, and strong warriors at that. They all [wrestled] with the need and

Between 1997 and 2000, Fox created the commercially successful—and critically acclaimed—television series, *Florentin*. Following a pattern quite familiar in American TV, the series follows the lives of a group of twenty-somethings who live in the Florentin quarter in southern Tel Aviv. Like the characters of its American counterparts, these are self-engrossed singles who shy away from any explicit political or social commitments and try instead to discover their personal presents and futures. They seem to live in a detached bubble, protected from the political and ideological hustle and bustle of Israeli reality. In the fifth episode of the first season, however, the bubble seems about to explode as reality forcefully intrudes with the assassination of Prime Minister Rabin.

The characters must suddenly examine themselves and their ties with Israeli reality. Still, the series does not turn into a socio-political study; on the contrary, in the following seasons the assassination and its psychological remnants dissipate and the characters are left unscathed within their bubble again.

Indeed, *Florentin*'s innovation lies not in its political subtext, but in its sexual one: Fox sets at the center of the series openly gay characters whose sexuality is presented as accepted without much ado. The series normalizes the quest for sexual identity and the discovery of queerness, setting it in the middle of Israeli urban culture.

Fox's latest film, *Walk on Water* (2004), is currently showing in theaters in the United States. The movie's pro-

tagonist, Eyal, is a Mossad agent who is asked to befriend Pia and Axel, two German siblings, in the hope of tracking down their grandfather, a Nazi war criminal who was responsible for the ethnic cleansing of a whole region in Germany; among his few survivors are Eyal's supervisor and late mother. Pia lives on a kibbutz, and when Axel comes to visit her, Eyal introduces himself as a tour guide to the young German and takes him on a tour of the country. Despite their differences, the two men grow closer, but their relationship becomes strained when Eyal discovers that Axel is gay and that the man he picks up at a nightclub in Tel Aviv is Palestinian. Much relieved when Axel leaves Israel, Eyal is then sent after Axel to Berlin in the hope that the grandfather will show up at his

ability to change, each in his own way, but not truly.

SG: You underscore the political aspects of your movies. Do you see them as political movies?

EF: Even if at times I prefer to relate to myself and my movies as less political, you don't have any choice but to take responsibility for their political implications. Everything is political. Even a movie such as *Song of the Sirens* is a kind of a political statement; the outcome is something political. In that particular case it could say "let's create something normal, something that is non- or anti-ideological, something normal in the Western, urban sense."

I might have become more political in recent years.

SG: I have noticed in your works an opposition between the private and the political; will you comment on this tension?

EF: I always try to examine the connection between the private and the collective. At times, there is a conflict between the private and the collective. It is most apparent in *Yossi and Jagger* and in *Walk on Water*: the correspon-

dence, the gap, the short-circuiting between the private and the collective. We all grew up in a reality that presents one with a monolithic model for masculinity; to all of us it was clear that, if we come from "good families" and have all of our organs and are healthy, we go to the army when we're eighteen, to combative, elite units. Many of us finally realized that this does not suit us, that there is a gap between who we were supposed to be and who we really are. There's perhaps even an unwillingness to be that masculine man; he and what he should be or do are viewed with reservation and criticism.

From this perspective, to set Axel and Eyal—the two main characters of *Walk on Water*—against each other is part of the attempt to shatter, shake, and change; to force the Israeli man to face the alternatives to his masculinity, to his being, to his life, to his worldview. I think that, at least in Tel Aviv, many young men and women are much closer in their character, energies, and attitudes to Axel than to Eyal.

Perhaps the fact that I am a homosexual director who deals with homo-

sexual characters sets up a mirror that produces a conflict with or a contrast to a hegemonic reality, to what was and still is the dominant representation of men in Israeli cinema. And perhaps there are characters, realities, and conflicts of the kinds that I present in my movies that produce a confrontational dialogue, that produce the conflict or the gap between the private and the collective, between myself, who represents a somewhat different world, and the more collective world, the world of the majority.

That's why I cannot understand film critics in Israel who have argued, for instance, that *Yossi and Jagger* is a mainstream and conformist movie, a movie that tries to flatter its audience. This is incomprehensible when you talk about a film that represents an affair between two male officers in the IDF. Ten or fifteen years ago, such a film would have been impossible. On the level of its content, the film is very radical, almost revolutionary, and it refuses to communicate with the familiar and rooted axioms or worldviews that dominate our reality.

son's—Pia's and Axel's father's—approaching birthday party.

Despite a dense political plot that juxtaposes the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Israel's obsession with the Holocaust, and Israelis' ambivalence towards Europe in general and towards the "new" Germany in particular, the film's main concern is the intense relationship between Eyal and Axel. Their interaction provides Fox, once again, with the opportunity to reflect upon the tension between personal and collective space. Eyal's commitment to the national mission comes with a heavy price: the destruction of the family. The opening scene shows Eyal in Istanbul tagging a Hamas member who takes a boat trip with his wife and young child; though Eyal establishes eye-contact with the child and exchanges smiles with him, he nevertheless proceeds to assassinate the boy's father. Eyal then returns to Israel and, after celebrating his success with his fellow Mossad agents, he returns home to dis-

At the center of Fox's film lies the wounded heterosexual family unit and, more specifically, the role men play in undoing it.



cover the dead body of his wife, who has committed suicide and left a note accusing Eyal of killing everything that comes near him. Obsession with Israel's national security, Fox suggests, undermines the ability to set up viable interpersonal relationships—not only for Palestinians, but for Jewish Israelis as well.

The burden of the collective story impinges not only on the Israeli but on the German family as well. The Nazi past that lingers beneath the façade of normalcy of Pia's and Axel's family ultimately undoes it: when Pia discovers that her grandfather is not dead, as her parents have assured her, and that they have maintained ties with him in his hiding place, she severs her ties with her parents. Traveling to India, she meets an Israeli and follows him to his kibbutz, but once he discovers her family history, he breaks things off with her; this pattern repeats itself in all of her subsequent relationships with Israeli men. The logic that undermines the Palestinian, Jewish-Israeli, and German families is similar, if not the same.

At the center of Fox's film lies the wounded heterosexual family unit and, more specifically, the role men play in undoing it. The movie sets up the growing relationship between the male-chauvinist Eyal and the homosexual Axel as a *tikkun* of that broken vessel. The transformation that Eyal undergoes throughout the film—the dismantling of his macho façade—is apparent. Yet Axel also has to change

in order to grapple with his family history and position as a German vis-à-vis Israel; his transformation, while not as obvious, is as important as Eyal's and forms the climax of the film. The salvation of the family, the film ultimately suggests, lies in protecting the purity of the private sphere and repelling whatever elements of collective, national ideals that subvert it.

Fox is accused at times of being a conservative filmmaker, because his films do not criticize or ironize the socio-ideological reality in which they take place. This marks a departure from traditional Israeli film-making which, until recently, and unlike American Hollywood cinema, has explicitly focused on socio-ideological themes and used its characters to comment upon Israeli society and its foundational and dominant ideologies.

Indeed, Fox has little to say about the Israeli social and ideological narrative; often, he seems simply to accept it as determining the material conditions within which his characters must realize themselves and their sexuality. In this sense, his films represent the ever-growing influence of American commercial cinema and television on Israeli media. His films create the impression that sexuality and gender are somehow detached from the hot political issues that preoccupy Israeli society. They have more to do with the personal decisions of his characters to accept their authentic selves (or their inability to do so) than with the social reality in which they live. □

WITH A LITTLE
MIRACLE YOU CAN
FIND LOVE ON THE
OTHER SIDE



Bronze 33½" w x 25" h x 2½" d
Sculptor: Ze'ev Willy Neumann

A Limited Edition of Twelve Casts for
the Glory of the Hebrew Letters:
"The World is Founded on the
Aleph-Bet"

Will suit Jewish Institutions, Cultural
Centers and Private Collectors

For Information Contact: Willy

718-349-1100

212-362-4578

zwilly10024@yahoo.com

www.zwneumann.com

Can't Stop the *SlingShot*: Hip-Hop Arises in Palestine

Ron Nachmann

We watch a group of five rappers prepare for their first show in their hometown. Dressed in requisite hip-hop style—football jerseys, baseball caps, and the like—the performers primp nervously and practice their rhymes, while they talk about their pre-show jitters. This could be any crew of kids in the world that's recently found a voice in the global phenomenon of rap music. But the impact hits as we watch them enter a modest club to their friends' greetings, and then hit the stage after one of them gets on the mic and announces: "We are PR, the first rappers from Gaza."

PR stands for Palestinian Rappers, one of the ten groups portrayed in *SlingShot Hip Hop*, a documentary-in-progress about Palestinian hip-hop by filmmaker Jackie Salloum. Judging from the trailer for the movie, which opens with the above scene, *SlingShot Hip Hop* is shaping up to be a uniquely compelling portrayal of hip-hop music's impact on resistant Palestinian youth culture.

Between its early-seventies roots in black and Latino neighborhoods in the Bronx, and its current status as a hyper-commodified global phenomenon, hip-hop music held sway as young African-America's musical voice of social protest and alternative reportage in the late eighties and early nineties. During that blossoming era, rhymer Chuck D., of the seminal political rap group Public Enemy, famously called



hip-hop "the black CNN."

While the genre has gotten comfortable and therefore lyrically insubstantial at home, it has been localized worldwide—from Germany to Japan to Mali—as a vehicle for political commentary and action. Rappers worldwide speak to the concerns of their people in their own languages. That's also how it's manifested in the Middle East; Israeli rappers, for example, range from the nationalist MC Subliminal to the progressive politics of artists like Sagol 59.

SlingShot features rhymer and producers from both inside Israel and the

Occupied Territories, moving from Nazareth and Ramallah to Jenin. The film also prominently features female rap acts like the Akko duo Arapeyat, and solo artist Abir, from Lod.

According to Salloum, most of the challenges that she faced in making the film had to do with traveling with the MCs between Israel and the Occupied Territories. "Getting the MCs living in Israel into the West Bank and trying to get them permission to get into Gaza was very difficult." Despite the difficulties, she was able to shoot a poignant scene in which DAM, a seminal Palestinian rap trio from the Israeli town of Lod, visits and graffiti's the separation wall in the Aida refugee camp in the West Bank. Looking at the

Music editor Ron Nachmann is a journalist, editor, and culture worker living in San Francisco. For more about *SlingShot Hip Hop*, visit www.jsalloum.org.

wall, one of the rhymer's notes, "I feel small. Not small in size compared to its height, but small [compared] to the powers that support this."

As with all Palestinians in the Occupied Territories, separation and restriction have had a deep impact on these young practitioners of a globalized musical form. "I asked the MCs in Gaza about their wishes. They said that one of them was to one day go to Jerusalem or any part of Palestine besides Gaza. It's crazy to think about, considering they live only an hour and a half away from Jerusalem."

Salloum, a Palestinian-American artist, first encountered Palestinian hip-hop when she heard DAM's "Meen Erhabe?" ("Who's the Terrorist?") on public radio. After creating a video collage of non-mainstream news footage of the Intifada for the song, Salloum decided to chronicle the nascent scene itself, and started shooting in Israel/Palestine in 2003. She aims to finish the film by late this year.

Although Palestinian hip-hop as such is less than six years old and created in dire circumstances, it seems to have reached a remarkably sophisticated and focused level. "Palestinian hip-hop is extremely self-reflective," Salloum notes, "and [the rhymer's] often make calls to their own community to better itself. But there's a fundamental understanding that the Occupation and racism are the main problems they face."

Unsurprisingly, *SlingShot Hip Hop* gives a snapshot of a young Palestinian generation looking to thrive artistically in a situation drenched in anger and despair. Salloum points to a scene in which DAM member Tamer talks about the group's goal of making enough money through music to build an art school for the Arab kids in Lod.

"The MCs see hope through their music," Salloum says. "Hip-hop is not an end in itself for most of the rappers. They're using it to bring people together in their community and inspire them. At the same time that they're all paving roads and reaching new ears,

their hope is challenged by watching and feeling the Israeli Occupation continuing to take lives, trees, and land."

More information about *SlingShot Hip Hop* is available at www.slingshothiphop.com. □

Capsule Reviews

■ *Guero*, by Beck. Geffen, 2005

It would be a tall order to trace anything about the oeuvre of hip-hop-era avant-folkie Beck Hansen to his affiliation with the West Coast-based Church of Scientology, to which his Presbyterian minister father first led him in his teen years. Judging from his newest album, *Guero*, Beck doesn't seem likely to win any regression therapy awards from L. Ron Hubbard's Hollywood co-religionists either. Instead, this Los Angeles based artist retains his place in a heritage of wandering, multi-faceted, secular Jewish musicians—somewhere in between Bob Dylan and the Beastie Boys, and a direct descendant of the avant-garde impulses of his Swedish-American performance artist mother Bibbe and his grandfather, the influential Fluxus performance artist Al Hansen.

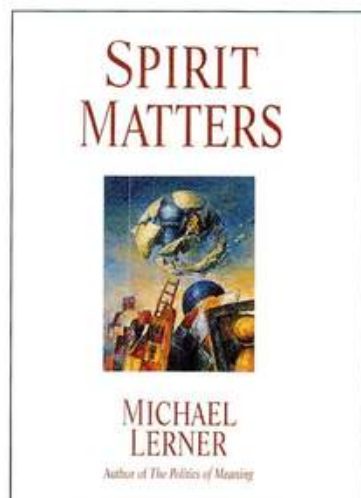
From his first album releases in the early Nineties, Beck has consistently taken the cue from fellow Jews. Encompassing in his style both Dylan's most imagistic, stream-of-consciousness, Dadaist, lyrical moments (i.e., 1966's "Subterranean Homesick Blues") and the kind of dense funk 'n' scratch audio collage that the Beasties displayed on albums like the 1989 *Paul's Boutique*, the thirty-four-year-old singer-songwriter has reached a new level of confidence with *Guero*. Both lyrically and musically, the album seems split between ominous prophecy and sunshiny joy. The loping "Earthquake Weather" speaks of "somethin' comin'/sky is purple," and the crankily



rocking "Chain Reaction" grumbles apocalyptically of a "pawn shop clock tickin' out like a bomb." On the other side of the emotional tide, Beck summons the spirit of the Beach Boys on "Girl," reaches for hope on "Nazarene" ("Kindness will find you/when darkness has fallen"), and launches into pure, thumping affirmation on "Hell Yes."

As with his last two full-length recordings, on *Guero*, Beck swings through a stereotypically contemporary multiplicity of genres, blending elements of hip-hop, folk, blues, and 1960s Brazilian pop into an understated *gevetch* (gumbo-style stew). As Beck expresses a classically Jewish rootless cosmopolitanism in his chameleon-like cultural eclecticism, one cannot but note the brilliant irony of the title he chose for this album. Roughly translated from Spanish slang as "white boy," *Guero* subtly represents the inherently multicultural character of American Jewish life today, as exemplified by Beck's unselfconsciously fluent ethnic cross-dressing style of composition. Dianetics most certainly might be a part of the mix. But white, not entirely quite. —RN

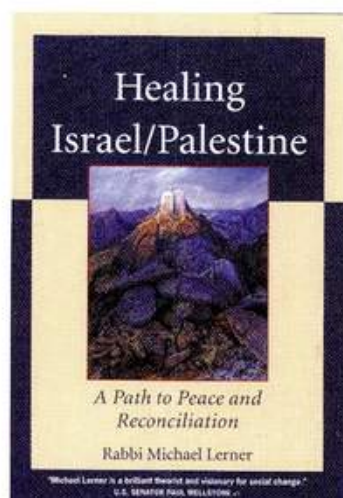
Books by Tikkun Authors



SPIRIT MATTERS

By Michael Lerner

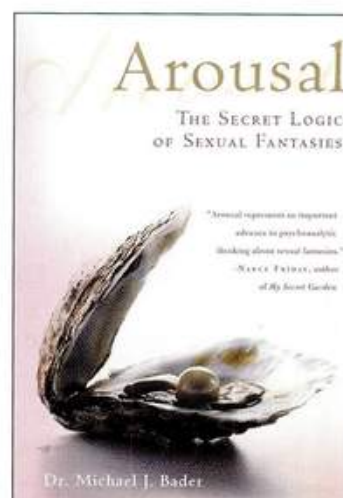
The foundational text of the TIKKUN philosophy: The critically-acclaimed call for stronger spiritual values that outlines what a New Bottom Line would look like in every aspect of American society. **Hampton Roads Publishing ■ \$19**



HEALING ISRAEL/PALESTINE

By Michael Lerner

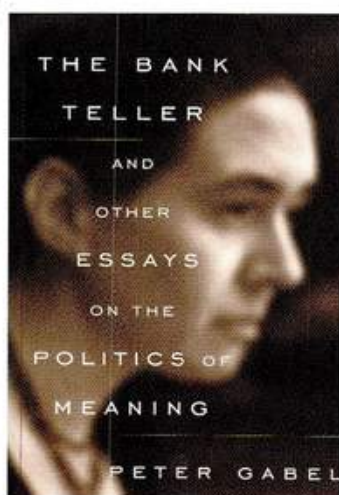
A bold, balanced, and concise history of Zionism for progressive Jews who want to find a way to be both pro-Israeli and pro-Palestinian, with a clear blueprint for a final peace settlement. **North Atlantic Books ■ \$14**



AROUSAL

By Michael J. Bader

A psychoanalyst, Bader presents a new theory of sexuality that both explains our most intimate fantasies and shows how the social world becomes embedded in our unconscious minds. **St. Martin's Griffin ■ \$17**



THE BANK TELLER

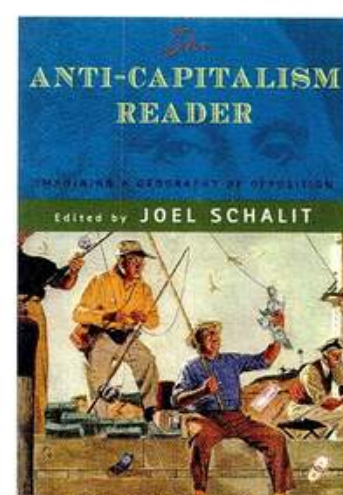
By Peter Gabel

When human connectedness and our aspirations for love and recognition disappear, we need TIKKUN Associate Editor's groundbreaking vision of a community-centered, loving and transformed world.

Acada Books/New College of California Press ■ \$27

**Order
online
from
tikkun.org
or call**

(510) 644-1200
All prices include shipping.



THE ANTI-CAPITALISM READER

By Joel Schalit

The first North American collection on the past, present, and future of anti-capitalism. Featuring interviews with Antonio Negri and Thomas Frank, with essays by members of the *Bad Subjects* collective.

Akashic Books ■ \$19