Tikkun

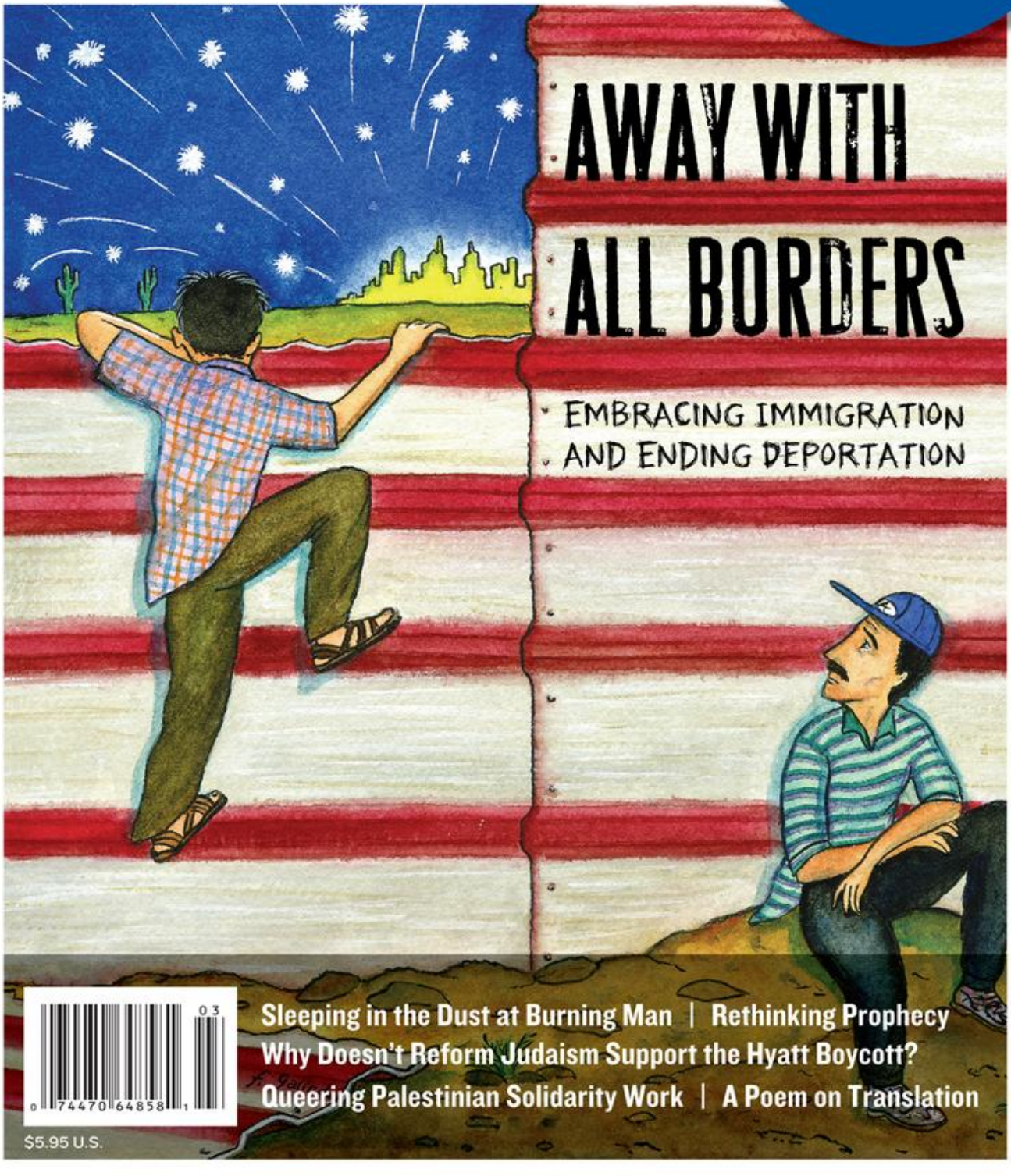
POLITICS • SPIRITUALITY • CULTURE

(tē·kün) To mend, repair, and transform the world.

SUMMER 2013

WHAT IS SPIRITUALITY?

page 55



AWAY WITH ALL BORDERS

EMBRACING IMMIGRATION AND ENDING DEPORTATION

Sleeping in the Dust at Burning Man | Rethinking Prophecy
Why Doesn't Reform Judaism Support the Hyatt Boycott?
Queering Palestinian Solidarity Work | A Poem on Translation

$5.95 U.S.

acceptance of those who are "different," and help for those in need.

It may well take many years to fully achieve a caring society, as the effort to build it will only slowly gain steam and attract the necessary strategic and tactical political support. As the movement grows, however, it will begin to give the children of those now plagued by hopelessness and fear both a practical and psychological foundation for hope, self-respect, and the creative expression of inborn talents. With a support system that makes obsolete their parents' convictions that "you're on your own" and that a gun may be their only reliable friend, these young people will have a stake in working with and trusting others, and securing thereby the humane rewards of a constructive life. In my own opinion, it is not legislation, but only the slow, hard work of building a caring society that offers a realistic solution to gun violence in America.

—Bob Anschuetz, *Ypsilanti, MI*

Have you read *Embracing Israel/Palestine*?

Order the print copy at tikkun.org/EIP or the Kindle version at Amazon.com.

Tikkun magazine is . . .

. . . a vehicle for spreading a new consciousness. We call it a spiritual progressive worldview. But what is that?

What Do You Mean by "Spiritual"?

You can be spiritual and still be an atheist or agnostic. To be spiritual, you don't have to believe in God or accept New Age versions of spirituality. You don't need to give up science or your critical faculties. We use the word "spiritual" to describe all aspects of reality that cannot be subject to empirical verification or measurement: everything pertaining to ethics, aesthetics, music, art, philosophy, religion, poetry, literature, dance, love, generosity, and joy. We reject the notion that everything worthy of consideration to guide our personal lives and our economic and political arrangements must be measurable.

What's a Spiritual Progressive?

To be a spiritual progressive is to agree that our public institutions, corporations, government policies, laws, education system, health care system, legal system, and even many aspects of our personal lives should be judged "efficient, rational, or productive" to the extent that they maximize love, caring, generosity, and ethical and environmentally sustainable behavior. We call this our New Bottom Line.

Spiritual progressives seek to build "The Caring Society: Caring for Each Other and Caring for the Earth." Our well-being depends upon the well-being of everyone else and also on the well-being of the planet itself. So we commit to an ethos of generosity, nonviolence, and radical amazement at the grandeur of all that is, and seek to build a global awareness of the unity of all being.

If you are willing to help promote this New Bottom Line for our society, you are a spiritual progressive. And if you are a spiritual progressive, we invite you to join our Network of Spiritual Progressives at spiritualprogressives.org.

Tikkun

EDITOR Michael Lerner
EDITOR-AT-LARGE Peter Gabel
MANAGING EDITOR Alana Yu-lan Price
ART DIRECTION AND DESIGN Duke University Press Journals
POETRY EDITOR Joshua Weiner
ASSISTANT POETRY EDITOR Lindsay Bernal
CONSCIOUSNESS EDITOR Phil Wolfson
FICTION EDITOR Joshua Bernstein
WEB DESIGN Craig Wiesner and Derrick Kikuchi
FULFILLMENT Chanda Jones and Alena Nikulina
COMMUNICATIONS Julie Pepper Lim

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
Gil Anidjar, Bradley Shavit Artson, David Biale, Paul Buhle, Aryeh Cohen, Arnold Eisen, Harriet Fraad, Jill Goldberg, Josh Healey, Deborah Kory, Akiba Lerner, Mark LeVine, Ana Levy-Lyons, Shaul Magid, Ruth Messinger, Or Rose, David Sterritt, Aaron Hahn Tapper, Cat Zavis, Stephen Zunes

INTERNS AND EDITORIAL ASSISTANTS
Abigail Bowman, Shani Chabansky, Ian Hoffman, Debbie Jong, Danielle Luaulu, Andrew Petonak, Martha Woolverton, and Sandra Yolles (editorial); Danielle Magee, Anna Stitt, and Jasmine Stompanato (web); Eva Anner, Cassandra Conlin, Gabriel Martinez, and Isabella Ohlmeyer (art); Matthew Bratko (operations); and Amir Sojitra (outreach).

PUBLISHER Duke University Press

905 W. Main St., Suite 18B, Durham, NC, 27701
Visit Duke University Press Journals at dukeupress.edu/journals.

Articles in *Tikkun* do not necessarily reflect *Tikkun*'s position on any issue. *Tikkun*'s positions are presented in our editorials. To submit a manuscript, visit tikkun.org/submissions.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR
Send your letters to the editor to letters@tikkun.org

EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD
Rachel Adler, Gar Alperovitz, Michael Berenbaum, Chet Bowers, Paul Buhle, Abby Caplin, Dan Cohn-Sherbok, Josephine Donovan, Elliot Dorff, Terry Eagleton, Duane Elgin, Sidra Ezrahi, John Felstiner, Margaret Flowers, Saul Friedlander, Nan Fink Gefen, Laura Geller, Ann Gleig, John P. Geyman, David Gordis, Jonathan Granoff, Arthur Green, Colin Greer, Mary Grey, Jamey Hecht, Burt Jacobson, David Kim, Reuven Kimelman, Richard La Brecque, Daniel Matt, Bob McChesney, Balmurli Natrajan, Elliot Neaman, David Newman, Greg Palast, Alan Michael Parker, David Pinault, Robert Pinsky, Judith Plaskow, Letty Cottin Pogrebin, Douglas Rushkoff, Aviezer Ravitsky, Wade Clark Roof, Michael Sandel, David Saperstein, Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, Richard Schwartz, Chaim Seidler-Feller, Gerald Serotta, Rami Shapiro, Stanley Sheinbaum, Uri Simon, Starhawk, Arthur Waskow, John Welwood

PERMISSIONS
Photocopies for course or research use that are supplied to the end user at no cost may be made without explicit permission or fee. Photocopies that are provided to the end user for a fee may not be made without payment of permission fees to Duke University Press. Address requests for permission to republish copyrighted material to Rights and Permissions Manager, permissions@dukeupress.edu.

ADVERTISING
Journals Advertising Coordinator at journals_advertising@dukeupress.edu

INDIVIDUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS
510-644-1200, subscribe@tikkun.org, or tikkun.org/subscribe

TC OR NSP MEMBERSHIP
Chanda Jones at 510-644-1200 or chanda@tikkun.org

Tikkun (Vol. 28, No. 3, ISSN 0887-9982) is published quarterly by Duke University Press for the Institute for Labor and Mental Health, 2342 Shattuck Ave., #1200, Berkeley, CA 94704, a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization.

© 2013 *Tikkun* magazine. All Rights Reserved. *Tikkun*® is a registered trademark of the Institute for Labor and Mental Health.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Tikkun*, 2342 Shattuck Ave., #1200, Berkeley, CA 94704. Periodical postage paid at Berkeley, CA, and additional mailing offices. For individual subscriptions, visit tikkun.org/subscribe. For institutional subscriptions, visit dukeupress.edu/tikkun. Individual subscription prices for 4 issues: U.S. residents, $29.00; all others, $39.00. Institutional subscription prices: print plus electronic, $110.00; electronic only, $85.00; print only, $100.00. Payment in U.S. dollars required. For information on subscriptions to the e-Duke Journals Scholarly Collections through HighWire Press, see dukeupress.edu/library/eDuke. For a list of the sources in which *Tikkun* is indexed, see dukeupress.edu/tikkun.
Printed in USA. Printed on recycled paper.

Tikkun

SUMMER 2013

3 Letters

EDITORIAL

5 Pragmatic Compromises Will Never Yield the World We Seek
Liberals need to question a capitalist assumption that too often finds support in the liberal world: that material well-being is the primary key to happiness.

POLITICS & SOCIETY

9 Boycott Hyatt and Patronize Union Hotels: A Jewish Obligation of the Union for Reform Judaism | ROSS HYMAN
Why doesn't the Reform movement honor the hotel workers' picket and boycott of Hyatt hotels?

RETHINKING RELIGION

13 Rethinking Prophecy | MORDECAI SCHREIBER
What defines a prophet? Speaking the moral truth, no matter the consequences?

17 Sleeping in the Dust at Burning Man | RON H. FELDMAN
The Talmud says "sabbath, sunshine, and sexual intercourse" offer a foretaste of the world-that-is-coming. Enter Burning Man.

SPECIAL SECTION: IMMIGRATION PAGE 21

22 Away With All Borders: The Immigration Mess
MICHAEL LERNER
To truly champion immigrants, we may need to challenge the right of nation-states to exclude the homeless and the hungry.

25 Immigration: A Difficult Love Story | ANDREW LAM
During booms, migrants are recruited. During downturns, they are demonized. It's an affair wrought with hypocrisy and cruelty.

28 The New Abolitionism: The Struggle to End Deportation
JACQUELINE STEVENS
The travails of deportation will cease only with its abolition. From Dayton, Ohio, to Washington, D.C., activists are joining forces to end this unjust system.

31 Healing the Wound: Immigration, Activism, and Policies
NORMA E. CANTÚ
To build a world free of borders and border violence, we need to address the fear motivating those who would shut the door.

Away With All Borders: Solving Immigration
page 21

Cover Image: *4th of July (View from the South Border)*. Ink and watercolor on paper, ©2013 Felipe Galindo/Feggo. (feggo.com). From the *Manhatitlan* series.

Online Exclusives

Tikkun is not just a print magazine—visit our blog at tikkun.org/daily and our web magazine site at tikkun.org. Each has content not found here. Our online magazine is an exciting supplement to the print magazine, and the daily blog brings in a range of voices and perspectives.

Visit **tikkun.org/immigration** for online-only articles associated with this issue's special section on immigration. Don't miss these lively contributions from Fred L. Hammond, Robert Latham, Kathleen M. Moore, Kate Morgan-Olsen and Catherine Gaffney, Joseph Nevins, Samuel Rodriguez and Robert Gittelson, and Carl A. Ruby.

34 How to Stop a Deportation | PUCK LO
Individuals often endure deportation proceedings in isolation, but it doesn't have to be this way. The stories of Steve Li and Laibar Singh show what is possible when communities mobilize in response.

38 Rethinking Immigration with Art | LAURA E. PEREZ
To reorient this country's immigration policy toward generosity and compassion will require serious creativity and vision. Let's look to art for inspiration!

41 Creating Sanctuary: Faith-Based Activism for Migrant Justice
BENJAMIN LORBER
When would-be migrants die in the desert, it's a religious crisis. Arizona groups have put their faith into action, defying laws and offering aid.

44 A New Social Contract: Social Welfare in an Era of Transnational Migration | PEGGY LEVITT
Many people live transnational lives yet are served by national institutions. What would a transnational welfare system look like?

47 Living in the Shadow of SB 1070: Organizing for Migrant Rights in Arizona | CAROLINE PICKER
In response to the predatory escalation of immigration enforcement in Arizona, migrants have organized Barrio Defense Committees, Freedom Rides, and more.

49 An Evangelical Perspective on Immigration
STEPHAN BAUMAN AND JENNY YANG
Inspired by Scripture and struggling to serve immigrant worshippers, the evangelical community is calling for reforms to keep families together.

51 Love the Stranger: Looking to the Torah for Guidance on Immigration Policy | ZALMAN KASTEL
We are all capable of prejudice and must remain vigilant. Perhaps that's why the most repeated commandment in the Torah is to love the stranger.

53 Awakening to the Story in My Bones: Border Crossings, Detention, and Asylum | ARIEL VEGOSEN
It is easy to become complicit with U.S. border policy—even for those whose ancestors fled violence. How can so many of us live in denial?

CULTURE

BOOKS

55 Spirituality in a Broken World
Spirituality: What It Is and Why It Matters by Roger S. Gottlieb
Review by Larry Rasmussen

58 Queering Palestinian Solidarity Work
Israel/Palestine and the Queer International by Sarah Schulman
Review by Wendy Elisheva Somerson

POETRY

72 Translation depends, not on what must be included, but on what must not be left out | by Marcela Sulak

Readers Respond

A NOTE ON LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We welcome your responses to our articles. Send letters to the editor to letters@tikkun.org. Please remember, however, not to attribute to *Tikkun* views other than those expressed in our editorials. We email, post, and print many articles with which we have strong disagreements because that is what makes *Tikkun* a location for a true diversity of ideas. *Tikkun* reserves the right to edit your letters to fit available space in the magazine.

JESUS AND CHRISTIANITY

Tikkun's Winter 2013 issue provided a wonderful opportunity to consider Jesus and the cross from several viewpoints. Although I'm not a Christian but rather a Unitarian, Jesus plays a central role in my thinking: in Freudian terms, he is my superego; in Kleinian terms, he is my "good internal object." As a former Episcopalian, I was exposed to a trinitarian view of Jesus. But to me, Jesus had never really fit the trinitarian model as much as a quaternion one: the mother, father, son, and Holy Ghost—trinitarian, perhaps, as a mother-father figure. He has all the gender traits associated with (or delegated to) women as a gentle, peaceful, nurturant presence. For example, Julian of Norwich describes the Eucharist as "his feeding his children with his body and blood as a mother does with her milk."

Jesus's gentle demeanor radiates a power that is indescribable though we observe something like it in the Dalai Lama or Martin Luther King, whose posture and facial expressions, we might say, make the loving spirit visible.
—Ann Ogle, *Santa Cruz, CA*

GUN VIOLENCE IN AMERICA

I strongly support Rabbi Lerner's call for a gunless, violence-free America, as expressed in his e-mail comments of December 15 relating to the Sandy Hook school massacre. I myself would in fact go even further, extending the scope of nonviolence to include innocent wild animals that remain targets of sport in America for an army of hunters. One need only look into the eyes of an ambushed buck and then back at the countenance of its red-jacketed stalker to know which animal is moved by the nobler instinct.

However, given the formative influence of American history and culture on its citizens, is there any real possibility that Americans could be brought, as Rabbi Lerner advocates, to give up all their firearms except hunting rifles, and allow local elected officials to keep even these under lock and key except during hunting season? And would American parents, so jealous of their right to inculcate their values in their children, ever accept a state-sanctioned school curriculum in which academic learning is bundled with moral instruction in the values and techniques of nonviolence and caring? Many Americans are religiously connected to guns, and the entire culture, including our national political leadership, is steeped in predilections and values that strongly support an acceptance of violence. These include a me-first mentality, a belief that individual prerogative is more important than community welfare, aspiration to personal power, contempt for material failure and its victims, demonization of those who are different, and the use of violence as a tool of domination.

The common denominator for all these dispositions, it seems to me, is fear of the other, which stems from the conviction that we live in an unchangeable dog-eat-dog world. Those who have that fear—whether it's Tea Party zealots who believe the government is out to get them, or the government itself, which believes America will thrive only as long as its military power is greater than that of the rest of the world combined—will always believe that guns, not the possibilities of a more caring world, are the key to their secular salvation. People holding such a belief will not only reject personal disarmament, but will also be unwilling to have their children schooled, as Rabbi Lerner suggests, in the values of nonviolence and caring. They are much more likely, in fact, to view such a state-sponsored undertaking as a plot to lower their guard against "the other" and make them even more vulnerable to government domination.

For all these reasons, I believe there is simply no direct policy path that can lead to the elimination of all homicidal firearms in America and the strict control of those used for hunting. One might realistically ask, however, about what justification there is, even in America, for the possession of firearms besides the rifles and shotguns used for hunting and sports shooting, and a single handgun in the home for possible use in extreme cases of self-defense. In any civilized society, what other acceptable uses for firearms can there possibly be?

I agree that "lesser measures" of gun control, such as background checks and the elimination of only the most egregious military-type assault weapons, are meaningless, especially when weighed against the mountain of more than 300 million firearms of every description to which Americans already have access. Yet I think one can safely bet that lesser measures are precisely what will come legislatively from the recent carnage in Connecticut. One possible such measure—the banning of high-capacity bullet clips—could in fact produce a demonstrable benefit by limiting the scope of damage done by would-be mass killers. Yet even with this measure and others, the mountain of interchangeable firearms will remain and our culture of violence—the hostile way many Americans feel, think, and act toward other people—will not change. America will remain, for all its pretensions to exceptionalism and goodness, the armed camp of the world, both civilian and military.

In the face of these realities, there is, as I see it, only one realistic hope for curbing the country's gun violence: those Americans who are actively motivated by a sense of generosity and caring must join with others of like mind to do what they can to help build a society that is marked by concern for the welfare of others, a commitment to the common good, economic fairness, compassion for society's "failures,"

MORE LETTERS

We receive many more letters than we can print! Visit tikkun.org/letters to read more.

Pragmatic Compromises Will Never Yield the World We Seek

How is it that although the Democrats won more votes in the congressional elections than the Republicans, and though Obama won a decisive majority in the presidential elections of both 2008 and 2012, the Democrats act as though it is they who are on the defensive and, while laying out a series of differences to the details of the Right's agenda, continually capitulate to the fundamentals of the Republican way of thinking on the economy, foreign policy, military policy, the environment, immigration, and more?

We've sometimes argued that the liberals in Congress and the White House need to develop a backbone so that they can stand up for what they believe in (or at least for what their constituents have been led to believe they stand for). Liberals are too often liberal about their liberalism, too ready to jump for consensus or a middle path. As a result they end up supporting new wars ("only bitsy wars, not super-big wars") and screwing over poor people and middle-income people ("just a little, not too badly") in an effort to compromise.

But that really isn't adequate to explain why over and over again the liberals in the Democratic Party seem so unwilling to go to the mat and fight it out, while Republicans seem to do that so frequently and so well.

Nor is it sufficient to point to Obama's now famed distaste for conflict and propensity to compromise even before fighting for what he supposedly believes in. If, as various psychological studies have pointed out, Obama has always been conflict averse, the question remains as to why the liberal base of the Democratic Party championed his candidacy, when there were other figures in their party (including other African American politicians) who had a far greater willingness to fight for liberal ideals?

Our answer is this: the Democrats and the liberals are constantly compromising to their right (and not to their left) because they share the same worldview and ideology of many on the political Right, even while they differ on the best strategies for implementing that worldview.

Liberals' Capitulation to the Ethos of Capitalism

The worldview to which I refer is the dominant worldview of global capitalism: that human beings are primarily interested in maximizing their own material self-interest, and that for most the bottom line comes down to economic well-being and individual rights. It's a worldview summed up by the phrase "it's the economy, stupid"—the supposed wisdom of Democratic Party consultant James Carville, whom the media dubbed the guide that helped Bill Clinton win the White House in 1992.

This is the worldview that underlies the work of the founding fathers, whose Declaration of Independence became the basis of President Obama's second inaugural address: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal and endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights, and that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

During both his 2012 campaign and his subsequent public talks, Obama has explicated "the pursuit of happiness" by describing it as "the American dream," which in turn he defines as the equal opportunity everyone should have to become financially secure if they work with full energy and lead their lives responsibly.

Obama supporters were thrilled when during the 2013 State of the Union Address Obama finally mentioned righting some of the wrongs of the past that have persisted and belie any incrementalist approach based on the fantasy that extending the "right" to equal opportunity will make our

Creative Commons/Eoin O'Mahony

We need a new worldview based not on ideas of material exchange and domination but rather on an ethos of caring for each other and for the earth.

society healthy: the persistence of poverty, inadequate support for programs that help the middle class, immigration reform, and global warming. For a president who had not mentioned these issues during many months of campaigning, just raising those and other issues at the State of the Union seemed to signal a breakthrough toward more seriousness on these topics.

Highly doubtful. Because in the final analysis, Democrats are likely to compromise away the needs of the poor, the homeless, the immigrants, the powerless of every sort, and the survivability of the planet itself in halfhearted measures that will leave future generations wondering, "What were they thinking?"

The simple truth is that the model of society upon which the founding fathers constructed our political system is one that gives priority to the private pursuit of power and money and envisions government primarily as a force to provide protection for these private interests. So when Obama made a point of reminding his listeners that much of what is needed is for people to work together to accomplish needed social goals, he did so within a larger framework that affirmed that these social goals are about providing economic well-being to more people than currently have it.

And this has been the fallback vision of the Left at least for the past 160 years—that material well-being is the key to happiness. True, some on the Left acknowledge that some people with fewer material resources are actually happier than some very wealthy members of society, but they've rarely let that disturb their fundamental acceptance of the core materialism and selfishness that is the bottom line of global capitalism. When Hillary Clinton took a step in that direction by publicly embracing *Tikkun*'s "politics of meaning" in 1993, she faced a huge onslaught of ridicule for talking about these airy-fairy-and-scary-to-some issues of meaning that transcend money as a goal for life.

Once you accept the materialist-reductionist worldview about "what people *really* want," it's very hard to take a principled stand against the elites of wealth and power—the 1 percent who now own 40 percent of the wealth in the United States. The Occupy movement tried to take such a stand when it emerged two years ago, but it burned out quickly because it refused to adopt a coherent ideology and strategy. It's hard to challenge these elites because they have the power to stop investing and can move their assets to countries judged to have "a more favorable business climate" should liberals succeed in imposing serious environmental and social justice restraints on the pursuit of individual wealth in the United States. The imminence of this threat is testified to by the suffering of people in Detroit and other cities from which the wealthy have taken flight. Liberal politicians know that standing up to the powerful would in the short run increase the economic misery in their home districts as the wealthy go on strike with their money or even move it abroad.

The Power of a Non-Utilitarian Worldview

Of course, there is something the Left could do: impose constraints on the movement of capital and on the ability of the wealthy to influence elections and control investment decisions, as well as get money out of politics by prohibiting donations to parties or candidates and requiring elections to be funded only by government donations. Our Environmental and Social Responsibility Amendment to the U.S. Constitution (ESRA) does just that, and the more people get their local city councils, state legislatures, and congressional representatives to endorse the ESRA, the more its ideas will enter into public discourse and shape the conversation.

Still, the ESRA's power goes beyond the ways in which it gets money out of politics, requires corporate responsibility, and restrains companies from moving their assets. Its real strength comes when it talks about teaching social and environmental skills like caring for each other, nonviolence, and a non-utilitarian approach to nature. Here we use the ESRA to go beyond the liberal paradigm and suggest a new ideology.

That new worldview that we seek to foster is one that sees human fulfillment not primarily or solely in the accumulation of money and individual rights, but in the pleasures of

Left: Creative Commons/KAZVorpal. Right: Creative Commons/Johann Dréo

building loving connection and mutual recognition between and among all human beings. It's a worldview that sees fulfillment in living in a society whose institutions explicitly seek to foster love and caring, kindness, generosity, ethical and ecological sensitivity, and a non-utilitarian attitude of awe, wonder, and radical amazement toward other humans, animals, and nature itself—what we might reasonably call a spiritual consciousness. We do *not* wish to impose one particular religion or spiritual path, and we want to uphold the wide variety of protections against any government seeking to impose one path toward these goals. But that should not foreclose the possibility of government supporting a wide variety of social experimentation aimed at developing economic and social forms that help us build "the caring society—caring for each other and caring for the earth."

Imagine a society in which every major decision is governed by a New Bottom Line of love and generosity, kindness and caring for others, ethical and ecological sensitivity, and awe and wonder at the universe. We've suggested several specifics of what this might look like in our Spiritual Covenant with America (please read it at tikkun.org/covenant) and our Global Marshall Plan (download it at tikkun.org /GMP.). But there is no single right path to building a caring society. Once building such a society becomes our shared goal, there is plenty of room for vigorous debate about which steps best achieve that. Yet that debate will be very different if the arguments are won or lost on the basis of which path best achieves the caring for each other and caring for the earth that we are seeking.

It is our contention that the absence of this kind of society is the source of much of the physical, psychological, and spiritual suffering of the human race ever since the emergence of class societies and patriarchy, and that creating a new global ethos based on this vision of a caring society would nurture the revolution in human consciousness that is necessary in order to create such a world.

Circular? Not in a negative way. The development of a consciousness seeking to build a caring society will take fits and starts, two steps forward and one step back, yet it will also reflect combined and uneven development.

Spiritual Wisdom to Light the Way

Leaps of consciousness in one part of the world or in one part of any given group may require years or centuries of slow and painful work, but once achieved they will stimulate growth of that consciousness very quickly in others who don't have to go through all the same steps. That is the process which made possible the development of the idea of democracy—an idea that is now ready to expand beyond its narrow and formalistic role in the political arena and become a much more powerful force through its application in the economic sphere. And it is the process by which the idea of women's liberation grew from relative obscurity just a few hundred years ago into a central part of the consciousness of the human race in the twenty-first century.

These ideas grow out of thousands of years of spiritual practice and accumulated wisdom with roots in the Abrahamic religions as well as in Buddhism, in the wisdom of native peoples, and in the earth-oriented spirituality that now finds expression in some feminist communities. As is inevitable in life, human limitations, fear, and the resultant desire for power over others (what I call the "Right Hand of God") has caused distortions in all of these religions. We need not romanticize the spirituality of native peoples or the world's many religions to acknowledge that we have something important to learn from them—namely, their view that through community and through the transformation of social institutions a more loving world can be created.

This belief was the core of the Mosaic or Abrahamic traditions in particular, as manifested in the revolution against Pharaoh and the freeing of the slaves, and in the subsequent commandments not only to love one's neighbor but the even more frequently stated commands to love and care for the well-being of "the other" (the stranger). This message of liberation has gotten twisted to support various forms of domination and exploitation, particularly during eras when religions were appropriated by ruling elites to secure their control rather than to inspire and liberate. We can understand and sympathize with the hermeneutics of suspicion with which many approach any discourse that reminds them of their previous oppressive experiences in religious communities.

And yet, without the discourse of spirituality embedded in our New Bottom Line, we end up with nothing to protect us from the dominant ideology of money, power, materialism, and selfishness that actually runs the world today. Only when we can jump out of the framework of "common sense" that requires people to accommodate themselves to reality (read: the global class society that to many appears as the only possibility) will we find liberation and freedom. And only then will we realize that this liberation both grows out

Work with Rabbi Michael Lerner on spiritual politics, his Torah commentary, and his next books! We invite college students, recent graduates, mid-career professionals, and retirees to join us in Berkeley, California. **INFO: tikkun.org/interns.**

Tikkun

of and helps sustain loving relationships, families, and a loving and meaning-oriented society.

Cultivating Faith that Change Is Possible

So what is required here is a leap of faith. Faith not in a supernatural god, though some of our members include that in their commitment to a new form of life, but in the capacity of human beings to build a world based on love, generosity, environmental sanity, and caring for each other and for the stranger. What is required is faith in the transformative possibilities of the universe, and an understanding that these possibilities will not unfold naturally and in their time but rather only when we consciously commit our lives to building the kind of world that enables them to unfold. In my own religious life, I call this faith in God, because I think of God in part as the Force in the universe that makes possible the transformation from "that which is" to "that which ought to be." Whatever it is in the universe that makes this transformation possible, that is the God of the universe. But to be a spiritual progressive you don't have to use God language. You need only commit yourself to spreading the good news that a world based on love, generosity, awe, and wonder is possible—and absolutely and urgently necessary.

You'll find these ideas developed much more fully in my books *Jewish Renewal*, *The Politics of Meaning*, *Spirit Matters*, and *The Left Hand of God*. You'll also find them in Peter Gabel's brand new and fabulously exciting book *Another Way of Seeing: Essays on Law, Politics, and Culture* and his 2000 book *The Bank Teller and Other Essays on the Politics of Meaning*. You can order any of these from Reach and Teach at tikkun.org/store.

And how do we intend to spread these ideas? There's a great deal you can do to help. These ideas will spread through the conversations that get generated when you seek to get your local city council, state legislature, and congressional representatives to endorse the Global Marshall Plan, the ESRA, or any part of the Spiritual Covenant with America. They will spread when you try to create a spiritual caucus in the political party of your choice and insist on this set of ideas. They will spread when you work with your friends, coworkers, neighbors, religious group, or members of your professional organization to create a monthly study group in which you read and discuss these books or the articles in *Tikkun*! Bit by bit, step by step.

The key is to reject the demand to be realistic and instead focus on the kind of world that we need. To the extent that you insist upon that and the New Bottom Line as the central framework for building a decent society, you will attract many people who wish it could be so, and it is your task to remind them it can be so if they stand with you and insist upon this. And I for one will be happy to come speak in your community once you have a group of people capable of organizing an evening or a Sunday gathering at which we can spread this message more fully.

As this force starts to emerge regionally and nationally, Democrats will for the first time find that they have an alternative to capitulating to the logic of the marketplace—a capitulation that has been their modus operandi for the last forty years. Our presence, to the extent that it becomes visible and confronts the deadly assumptions that now govern liberal politics, will create the space for Obama and others to move more fully into a progressive stance which will still not quite be ours, but will nevertheless be less a manifestation of fear and more a manifestation of the hopes that spiritual progressive politics has the capacity to inspire. ■

Give the Gift of Tikkun

Share your commitment to peace, compassion, and social justice by purchasing a gift subscription to *Tikkun*.

GIFT SUBSCRIPTION RECIPIENT

Name (Please print)

Street Address

City/State/Postal Code/Country

☐ One-year subscription (four issues), $29
☐ Two-year subscription (eight issues), $56

Name (Please print)

Street Address

City/State/Postal Code/Country

PAYMENT OPTIONS

Please add $10 for international orders.

☐ I enclose my personal check, payable to *Tikkun*.
☐ Please charge my ☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard ☐ Discover ☐ Amex

Card Number

Security Code Expiration Date

Signature

Order at tikkun.org/subscribe, call 510-644-1200, or mail this completed form to *Tikkun*, 2342 Shattuck Ave., #1200, Berkeley, CA 94704.

For library or institutional subscriptions, please contact Duke University Press by phone at 1-888-651-0122 or by e-mail at subscriptions@dukeupress.edu.

Boycott Hyatt and Patronize Union Hotels

A Jewish Obligation of the Union for Reform Judaism

BY ROSS HYMAN

Is it a Jewish obligation to stand up for collective bargaining rights? Here Rabbi Victor Mirelman of West Suburban Temple Har Zion, Rabbi Larry Edwards of Congregation Or Chadash, and Rabbi Brant Rosen of Evanston's Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation pray and picket in solidarity with striking Hyatt workers in Chicago.

UNITE HERE

"I WAS FIRED AFTER SPEAKING OUT against the injustices I have seen at Hyatt," says Sonia Ordoñez, a former cook for the Hyatt Regency Chicago. "I don't want to go back to having two jobs to take care of my family. We have to change this company we work for before things get any worse."

Ordoñez is one of many Hyatt workers whose struggle for fair wages and job protections is in urgent need of support from major conference organizers such as the Union of Reform Judaism.

Ordoñez immigrated to the United States to join her ex-husband after he fled the war in Nicaragua, but once she arrived she found that her husband had changed. "He started to beat me and abuse me," she says. After leaving her husband, she took on two temp jobs—one in the daytime and another at night—to support her daughter and newborn son. Temp agencies "pay a miserable wage and abuse workers' desperation," Ordoñez says, reflecting on how temp workers have lower wages, fewer workplace safety protections, and can't join unions. That's why she was delighted to land the Hyatt job and join a union. "I thanked God because I no longer had to have two jobs or work through the agency," she says. "I could finally provide for my family and spend time with my kids."

Since being fired, Ordoñez has continued to take part in her union's fight, speaking out about workplace injustices at Hyatt and urging conference organizers such as the Union of Reform Judaism to join a targeted boycott against the hotels that UNITE HERE has identified as the worst offenders.

Rabbinic Support for Collective Bargaining

Since at least 1928, the rabbinic arm of the Reform movement, the Central Conference of American Rabbis, has held that collective bargaining between workers and employers is not just a right of workers but is essential to the well-being of workers and the elimination of poverty. The Central Conference of American Rabbis has affirmed this position several times throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. On the basis of these longstanding principles, in 2000 it wrote a *teshuvah* (rabbinic response) that Reform institutions should use their purchasing power to strengthen unions and promote collective bargaining by hiring union labor.

ROSS HYMAN, an AFL-CIO researcher, is privileged to work with people of faith who stand with workers even if that requires confronting their own religious institutions. He is a cofounder of the Shomer Shalom Network for Jewish Nonviolence.

Though *Tikkun* is not officially affiliated with any branch of Judaism (or any other religion), we've always had great respect for the Reform movement in Judaism. We've been proud that since our start in 1986, a variety of the Reform movement's most significant leaders have served on our editorial board, including rabbis Alexander Schindler, Al Vorspan, and David Saperstein. Our pages have been graced by the wisdom of many who teach at the Hebrew Union College or serve as pulpit rabbis. So it is with a heavy heart that we've had to confront the issues raised in this article by Ross Hyman.

Striking workers have urged conference organizers such as the Union of Reform Judaism to join a targeted boycott against hotels that UNITE HERE has identified as the worst offenders.

The most significant purchasing power that Reform institutions command is their hotel contracts for their conferences and conventions. David Saperstein, in a 2006 issue of the *Jewish Daily Forward*, reported that "the Union for Reform Judaism's most recent national biennial convention represented a windfall of 10,000 room-nights and more than $1.6 million for Houston hotels." The full purchasing power of the Reform institutions is much greater than this if one includes all Reform conferences and conventions. In the *Forward* article, Rabbi Saperstein pledged to work with the Informed Meetings Exchange, an organization founded by UNITE HERE, the hospitality workers union, to help institutions use their purchasing power in the hotel industry to support workers. The Informed Meetings Exchange has evolved into a nonprofit, socially responsible meeting planner that helps organizations select union hotels with fair contracts and negotiate protective language in contracts with hotels so that organizations can cancel contracts without penalty if there is a labor dispute, including a boycott.

It is therefore disappointing that in 2013, several major conferences and conventions under the auspices of Reform Judaism are being held not just in non-union hotels but in the even smaller group of hotels under active boycott by UNITE HERE. It is also disappointing that the Union for Reform Judaism did not negotiate the protective language in these contracts concerning labor disputes (something that many organizations, including the United Church of Christ, routinely include). Having failed to do this, the Union for Reform Judaism also declined to use its considerable purchasing power to renegotiate the cancellation penalty in its contracts and move its conventions to union hotels, which many organizations without protective language have done.

This has all happened at a time when the Hyatt Corporation is on the offensive to dismantle the standards of fair wages, working conditions, and job protections that union hotel workers have achieved after decades of struggle. Mike Jones, a dishwasher at Hyatt Regency Baltimore, has been on the front lines of this struggle. "Hyatt used to always say that we were a family, but they cut my department from 32 people down to six while we had the highest occupancy rates in the city," he says. "Some days I was one of only two dishwashers in the whole hotel. When my coworkers and I spoke out about this treatment, three of us were fired. After a trial by the National Labor Relations Board, I can finally return to work."

A Failure to Stand with Striking Workers

The Union for Reform Judaism's most recent failures to act on the positions of the Central Conference of American Rabbis and honor hotel boycotts are not entirely surprising. The Union of Reform Judaism also declined to support the Workplace Fairness Act of 1993 or the Employee Free Choice Act of 2009. The group's refusal to support this legislation was a profound moral failure and has contributed to the crisis of wage inequality and poverty in our society.

An example of how explicit anti-union bias by board members has influenced the Union for Reform Judaism to disregard the rabbis' position on labor is the 1993 board decision of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (former name of the Union of Reform Judaism) not to support the Workplace Fairness Act, which would have brought American labor closer to Israeli labor law by preventing employers from permanently replacing striking workers. The Central Conference of American Rabbis strongly

© Bill Hughes Photos

supported the act but the Union of American Hebrew Congregations did not. Albert Vorspan and David Saperstein, in describing this lack of support in *Jewish Dimensions of Social Justice: Tough Moral Choices of Our Time*, wrote, "Some of the board members recounted sour experiences with labor unions, not only as employers, but as customers in health and service industries."

The most explicit example of the distancing by the institutions of Reform Judaism away from the rabbis' textual tradition on labor is its policy regarding the locations of its conferences and conventions. In 2013, the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism is holding its Consultation on Conscience as well as many of its L'Taken conferences in the non-union Hyatt Regency Crystal City, which has been on UNITE HERE's boycott list since July 2012. The youth wing of the Union for Reform Judaism, the North American Federation of Temple Youth, held its conference at the non-union, Hilton LAX, which has been on the boycott list since 2006. And the Union for Reform Judaism biennial conference is using the non-union Manchester Grand Hyatt in San Diego, which has been on the boycott list since 2008.

Workers picket outside a Hyatt hotel in Baltimore. "Hyatt Corporation is on the offensive to dismantle the standards of fair wages, working conditions, and job protections that union hotel workers have achieved after decades of struggle," the author writes.

Had the Union for Reform Judaism's board been true to its textual tradition, it would be holding all of its conferences in union hotels with fair contracts. The Central Conference of American Rabbis' teshuvah, *The Synagogue and Organized Labor*, states:

> We who have championed the cause of organized labor for so many decades can hardly exempt our own institutions from the ethical standards we would impose upon others. When our "constituent agencies" hire non-union labor in preference to union workers, we thereby help to depress the level of wages and deal a setback to the cause for which workers organize. We cannot in good conscience do this. If we believe that unionization aids the cause of workers by raising their standard of living and allowing them a greater say in their conditions of employment—and our resolutions clearly testify to this belief—then our support for unionized labor must begin at home. The synagogue bears an ethical responsibility to hire unionized workers when they are available.

In the past, the Reform movement did hold its conferences in union hotels and it encouraged its members to stay at these locations. The Religious Action Center used to advise its meeting attendees: "Show your support for unions. Visit hotelworkersrising.org to find union hotels where you travel. Try to stay only at unionized properties." The most recent version of traveljustly.org focuses instead on carbon offsets.

One possible explanation for the movement of the Religious Action Center away from the Jewish textual tradition on unions is that there just aren't enough rabbis and cantors in the room. In 2011 there were 120 members of the Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism. Of these only twenty-one were rabbis and three were cantors. These demographics are quite different from the decision-making bodies of several Christian denominations that are majority clergy. Another possible explanation isn't based on who isn't in the room, but who is. In addition to the generic anti-union bias that is likely to be found in such bodies, bias is also created through links to figures such as J.B. Pritzker, a principal owner of the Hyatt Corporation who gave over $900,000 to the Union for Reform Judaism and the Religious Action Center from 2002-2011. Pritzker sat on the board of the Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism around the time that the center declined to support the Employee Free Choice Act, and also when the center and the Union for Reform Judaism booked their conventions into non-union hotels.

© Bill Hughes Photos

Experience Jewish Renewal

You don't have to be Jewish for this experience to be relevant to your own spiritual life, whether or not you believe in God. Register for Rabbi Lerner's High Holiday services in Berkeley, California (people have traveled from Europe, Israel, Australia, and South Africa for the experience).

INFO AND REGISTRATION: beyttikkun.org.

It is difficult for an organization to support a boycott of a company whose owners are donating funds to that organization, even more so when one of those owners has served on its board. But it is not more difficult than what hotel workers risk every day when they have taken the courageous step of organizing for justice and calling for a boycott of their own hotels.

Why Unions Are Crucial

The institutions of Reform Judaism need to stand with hotel workers if they are going to be true to the rabbis' position that collective bargaining is a necessary component in the fight against extreme inequality. They need to stand with workers like Victoria Guillen, a dishwasher at the Grand Hyatt San Francisco, who has called for a boycott of her hotel. "Hyatt tried to fire me because I couldn't return to work three days after a C-section," Guillen says. "My coworkers fought for me to keep my job. Now I'm fighting for all the women who face abuse from Hyatt managers the way I did."

The wages that UNITE HERE members are able to negotiate in any city are strongly correlated with the union density of that city. In Chicago, where hotel union density is around 50 percent, the hotel housekeeper wage is $15.40. In Boston, union density is 60 percent and the wage is $16.98. In San Francisco, union density is 70 percent and the wage is $19.19. In New York, union density is 85 percent and the wage is $25.47. When union density is high, wages (but not benefits) for directly employed workers at non-union hotels are comparable to those at union hotels. But this is not the case for workers who are working in non-union hotels but employed by subcontractors. These workers often make close to the minimum wage without benefits and have higher room quotas. Subcontracting effectively takes away from workers the right to organize a union and contributes to our crisis of wage inequality—there is no better proof of this than the fact that employers of subcontracted workers do not feel the need to keep their wages and working conditions comparable to those in union hotels.

The chief way that workers protect their jobs against subcontracting is to organize unions and negotiate strong language that prevents their jobs from being subcontracted. When workers don't have a union, they can be fired and their jobs subcontracted at the whim of management, as Hyatt perpetrated on all ninety-eight of its Boston-area housekeepers in 2009. These firings happened while J.B. Pritzker was a member of the Commission on Social Action. Hyatt management has repeatedly told rabbis in face-to-face meetings that subcontracting is Hyatt's business model.

Workers like Elvia Bahena are fighting back against this exploitative model. "I was fired after testifying in front of the Indianapolis City Council about abuses I had experienced as a subcontracted housekeeper at Hyatt," Bahena says. "My coworkers and I filed a lawsuit alleging that the subcontractor Hospitality Staffing Solutions and nine area hotels regularly failed to pay us all of the hours we worked—and we won! I am so proud to be a part of this group of workers standing up for our rights."

Hilton and Starwood hotel chains have agreed to refrain from interfering when workers organized at specific hotels. Unfortunately, Hyatt has not remained neutral when workers organize. Hyatt has fired workers who have been actively organizing and Hyatt workers report having to attend anti-union seminars, seeing union-busting consultants in the workplace, and encountering other practices that undermine the fundamental human rights of workers to organize unions free from employer interference. Since 2005, over 5,000 workers have joined the union at Hilton and Starwood hotels, whereas only approximately 500 workers have won union recognition from Hyatt during the same period. The Employee Free Choice Act, which the Union for

Workers walk in the cold night to fight for each other's rights, having taken the difficult and courageous step of calling for a boycott of their own hotels.

UNITE HERE

Reform Judaism refused to support in 2009, would have been of great aid to Hyatt workers trying to organize because it would have brought U.S. labor law closer to the standard set by Israeli labor law. In fact, the Israeli Labor Court's recent decision that employers must be entirely neutral during organizing campaigns, as well as Israel's requirement that its companies collectively bargain with their employees once a sufficient number have joined the union by signing union membership cards, make Israeli labor law essentially the same as the conditions that Hilton and Starwood hold themselves to when they sign majority sign-up neutrality agreements. If Hyatt had any hotels in Israel, which it does not, it would be required to grant its workers there the rights that it has denied them here.

According to the Central Conference of American Rabbis' statement on *The Synagogue and Organized Labor*, "It would be unjust and injurious to all workers were we to set the standard for 'fair wages' according to the lower, non-union scale." But that is exactly what Hyatt will accomplish if it succeeds in its business model. If Hyatt is allowed to continue to subcontract to minimum-wage temp agencies and to continue interfering with the right of workers to organize unions, UNITE HERE will not be able to hold Hilton and Starwood to the higher Israeli standard for long. If Hyatt gets its way, it will be responsible for the Walmart-ization of what is now the union sector of the U.S. hospitality industry.

Join the Boycott

Workers have taken the courageous step of calling for boycotts of Hyatt hotels in the hope of persuading Hyatt to end abusive practices such as subcontracting and interfering in the rights of workers to organize. The reason boycotts are an essential tool for worker justice is that, as a result of the failure of the Workplace Fairness Act to pass, low-wage workers cannot effectively strike against a company that wants to subcontract. The company could just take advantage of the strike to permanently replace the workers. The boycott, the main way that consumers can support workers, is the new picket line. This is why the Informed Meetings Exchange always negotiates protective language in its hotel contracts that grants organizations the same power to terminate a contract during a boycott as it does during a strike. Given its complicity in depriving low-wage workers of any meaningful right to strike, the Union for Reform Judaism is morally obligated to put this language in its contracts and implement it when there is a boycott.

Hundreds of rabbis, cantors, and Jewish community leaders have pledged to honor the Hyatt boycott. They have done so because Jewish tradition teaches, in the words of *The Synagogue and Organized Labor*, "once we determine that non-union labor frustrates the mitzvah of social justice, it becomes clear that our own value commitments require that our institutions show a decided preference for hiring union labor." The Union of Reform Judaism, if it is to be true to the Reform Jewish textual tradition of fighting poverty by using purchasing power to strengthen workers' unions, must do the same. ■

Rethinking Prophecy

BY MORDECAI SCHREIBER

What defines a prophet? Is it a moral compulsion to uphold justice? Here, the Prophet Isaiah weeps over Jerusalem in a sixteenth-century woodcut by Hans Holbein the Younger.

The Hebrew Bible is a prophetic document. It contains the words of a rare breed of people who appeared in a small corner of the ancient Near East 3,000 years ago and transformed history. Or, if you will, it is a divine message articulated by those highly unusual individuals over a period of some 1,000 years, beginning with Moses, whose historicity is shrouded in the mist of antiquity, running through someone like Jeremiah, whose historicity is fairly well established, and ending with Malachi, who is probably a composite figure rather than a specific individual.

What is typical about the prophetic message is that it is loud and clear and unequivocal. Talmudic scholar Saadia Gaon compares it to the blasts of the shofar. The prophet Micah summarizes it in one sentence: "What does Adonai your God ask of you, but to do justice, and love mercy, and walk humbly with Adonai your God?" And yet, despite the fact that those prophets transformed history by bequeathing us words that have defined the morality of human civilization, we know very little about them. Bible scholars have labored long and hard in their quest for the meaning of prophecy, and yet many questions remain unanswered. As for the general public, here for the most part there seems to be a general confusion. Most people cannot tell an Isaiah from a Jeremiah or an Amos from a Hosea.

None of this should surprise us, because a careful reading of the Hebrew Scriptures shows that people in biblical times were also confused about the meaning of prophecy. The first mention in the Bible of the word "prophet" refers to *Avraham avinu*, Abraham our Patriarch (Gen. 20:1-7). Traditional commentators, such as Rashi and the Rashbam, do not take this to mean an actual prophet, but rather someone with unusual mental gifts, or someone who converses with God and receives God's favor. In Jewish tradition Moses is considered the first prophet, or the Father of the Prophets. Yet Islam and Christianity greatly expand the list of prophets, beginning with Adam. In the Bible we find God speaking to common people, such as Samson's mother, yet this does not automatically make her a prophet.

What Defines a Prophet?

While the "job description" of the biblical priest, or the scribe, or the Levite is quite clear-cut, that of the prophet remains unclear throughout the entire biblical period. In the time of Jeremiah, quite late in the prophecy period, we have false prophets, quasi-false prophets, and true prophets. Jeremiah himself during his entire prophetic career of some forty years is always doubted and scorned by the people, and barely escapes execution for sedition. This is typical of nearly all the prophets, who are rejected in their lifetime and only

RABBI MORDECAI SCHREIBER is the author, most recently, of *Hearing the Voice of God: In Search of Prophecy* (Jason Aronson, 2013). This essay is based on his book.

The New York Public Library/Art Resource, NY

What is the common denominator that makes Moses, Samuel, Elijah, Amos, and Ezekiel all prophets? Above, the four living creatures of Ezekiel's vision appear at the beginning of the Book of Ezekiel in this thirteenth-century copy of the Hebrew Bible.

recognized by later generations. While the prophets have provided us with enduring guidelines for "what is good, and what Adonai your God expects of you," they have also left us with many unanswered questions.

What is very clear in surveying the progression of prophecy from Moses to Malachi, is that over the centuries the nature of prophecy underwent profound changes, and once the era of biblical prophecy ended, the role played by the prophets was assumed by new kinds of teachers and prophet-like personalities, in and out of Judaism, who have been influencing human progress (as well as human setbacks) to this day.

How does one group together Moses, Samuel, Elijah, Amos, and Ezekiel and apply to all of them the same title of prophet? While they all have a common denominator, which helps us define those who are referred to in the Haftarah blessings as "the prophets of truth and justice," there are fundamental differences among them that need to be carefully considered. Let us first consider the common denominator. I like to refer to it as "moral compulsion." They all display the same characteristic of being possessed by an uncompromising need to speak the truth and to uphold justice no matter the consequences. It is as though they have no control over it. Amos says: "A lion roars, who will not shudder? Adonai spoke, who will not prophesy?" (3:8)

Amos cannot choose whether or not to prophesy. He is driven by his moral compulsion, which pre-empts his personal will. That said, as we go back to the stories and teachings of each of the aforementioned prophets, we begin to see vast differences between them. Moses, as is pointed out in the last chapter of Deuteronomy and further elaborated by Maimonides and others, is in a class by himself: "There never arose a prophet in Israel like Moses." To simply refer to him as a prophet diminishes his stature. He is the liberator, the law-giver, the one who leads his people to the Promised Land. He performs miracles (such as the crossing of the Sea of Reeds) that no other prophet ever performs. His life story encompasses an epic historical drama where reality and mythology intermingle. He belongs in the same class as the other founders of the world's major religions.

Samuel, the first major prophet following the conquest of Canaan, is also in a class by himself. He is referred to as the Seer, the visionary leader. He starts out in life as a priest who is transformed into a prophet. He is also a judge and a reluctant kingmaker. He lives in a time when prophecy becomes a movement, and there are schools of prophets called *b'nei neviim* (sons of prophets) who roam the countryside in search of divine inspiration. By choosing Saul as the first king of Israel, he completes the work of Moses in unifying the twelve tribes into one nation. By anointing David as the second king of Israel, he establishes the House of David, which acquires a messianic status for all time. Thus, Samuel too is not a typical prophet either. He is *sui generis*.

The next major prophet lives in the Northern Kingdom after the monarchy splits following the death of Solomon. He is Elijah the Tishbite. He is a man of the people, a folk hero, and a miracle worker, whose main mission is fighting the false prophets of the Baal supported by King Ahab and his Phoenician wife, Jezebel. Elijah is a figure of legend, and so he remains in post-biblical Jewish history, as stories about his miraculous powers become a major feature of Jewish lore. He too like the House of David acquires a messianic status as the future forerunner of the messiah.

The Moral Compulsion of Literary Prophets

The one who is the first, or among the first, to fit the "job description" of a Hebrew prophet is the prophet Amos, who claims that he is "neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet." Here biblical prophecy finally reaches its classical period of the so-called "literary prophets," the ones who have left us a written record of some or all of their prophecies,

Public Domain/The British Library

and who are perfect examples of the concept of "moral compulsion." Amos, Hosea, Micah, and the rest of the so-called "Twelve Minor Prophets" (only minor in that they left us short books), form one unit with the First Isaiah and Jeremiah, representing that classical period. Here biblical prophecy reaches a high point. Miracles all but disappear during this period. Angels are rare. Here the emphasis is on helping the poor, the weak, and the strangers in our midst. Here we have Isaiah's and Micah's vision of the End of Days and world peace. Here is where the cycle of exile and redemption starts and will continue to this day.

The final stage of biblical prophecy is represented by prophets like Ezekiel and the Second Isaiah. In Ezekiel we find the people of Judah exiled in Babylonia, and the concept of Jewish life outside the Land of Israel is born. What is also born here is personal responsibility: each person is accountable for his or her own actions. Now the Jews are no longer tribal or territorial. They can await redemption in exile and return to their land in due time. Their God is no longer tribal or territorial, but rather the one God of the universe. This monotheistic concept is further refined by the mysterious and nameless prophet whom we call the Second Isaiah. Here for the first time God is not "above all the other gods" (as we hear in the Song of the Sea in the time of Moses: "Who is like you O God *among* the gods?") Here the other gods are dismissed. Monolatry is replaced by pure monotheism. Prophetic Judaism has now reached its apex.

"What does Adonai your God ask of you," the prophet Micah proclaimed, "but to do justice, and love mercy, and walk humbly with Adonai your God." Above, a goat-shaped design appears on the first page of a thirteenth-century copy of the Book of Micah.

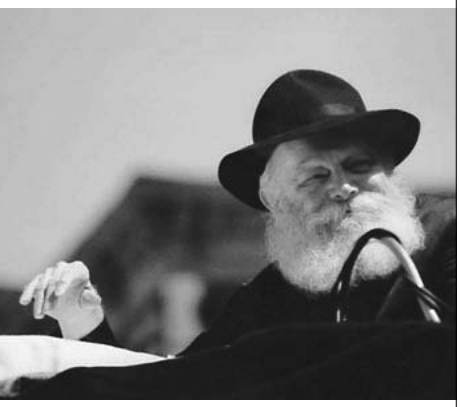
When the Jews return to their land after the Babylonian exile, the monarchy of the House of David is not reestablished. The Holy Temple is rebuilt, and the priestly hierarchy is reinstated. We still have prophets like Hagai and Zechariah, but the age of prophecy is coming to an end (though Christianity will later proclaim Daniel a prophet). In the book of Ezra, prophets like Moses ("the man of God") and Jeremiah, who predicts the return from Babylonian exile, are enshrined for all time. All Jewish law and learning will flow from their teachings. In time, their teachings will give rise to Christianity and Islam, and their influence will also be felt beyond the monotheistic faiths. The golden rule imparted to Moses in Leviticus, "Love the other as yourself," will become the golden rule of all the world's religions.

The Shift to Messianism

Another major development in the history of biblical prophecy is the shift from prophets such as Samuel and Elijah who operate in the here and now, to prophets like Amos and Isaiah who set their sights on the future. This may be the reason why, unlike a Samuel or an Elijah, they began to write down their prophecies. They were preserving them for future generations, for those who would return to their land after the destruction of the Northern Kingdom in 722 BCE and later the Southern Kingdom in 586 BCE. What is set in motion here is the beginning of the transition from prophethood to messianism. It begins with the prophets' belief in the "offshoot of the root of David" who would redeem his people, and it becomes the post-biblical belief in a messiah with supernatural powers who will appear one day to redeem his people and fulfill the prophecy of the End of Days.

This new belief gives rise to Christianity, and later to Islam. In Judaism, on the other hand, it results in messianic movements and individuals who are either self-proclaimed messiahs or are identified as such by fervent followers. Those have often been referred to as "false messiahs." The first such figure is the heroic Simon Bar Kokhba, who defeated the Romans some sixty years after they destroyed Jerusalem and the Holy Temple, and for about two years was able to rule over a free Judea. There is no record of Bar Kokhba proclaiming himself a messiah, but his great contemporary, Rabbi Akiba, did consider him a messianic figure. The Bar Kokhba rebellion was suppressed by the Roman emperor Hadrian, resulting in the slaughter of anywhere between 400,000 and 600,000 Jews, and putting an end to Jewish militarism for the next eighteen centuries.

Public Domain/The British Library



Jewish history's best known false messiah was Rabbi Shabtai Zvi (top), a seventeenth-century kabbalist. Following the Holocaust, Hasidic Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson (bottom) was also believed to be the messiah by a faction of his followers.

As a general rule, would-be messiahs have appeared after major catastrophes in Jewish history. In the Middle Ages the major catastrophe was the Crusades, which decimated Jewish communities in Europe and also affected Jews living under Islam. Here the key figure is David Alroy, who appeared in Iraq in the twelfth century and was going to take the Jews of Baghdad back to Jerusalem, but failed to do so. In the fifteenth century, the expulsion of the Jews from Spain resulted in two false messiahs, David Hareuveni and Shlomo Molcho, who were going to redeem their people. Instead, Molcho underwent martyrdom by the Inquisition, and Hareuveni disappeared from the pages of history.

Jewish history's best-known false messiah appeared after the next major disaster when, in 1648, the Cossack revolt led by Bohdan Khmelnytsky in Poland and Ukraine resulted in the death and dislocation of hundreds of thousands of Jews. Messianic yearnings ran high throughout European Jewry. Kabbalists determined the year 1648 to be the year ushering the messianic era. It is at that point that Shabtai Zvi makes his appearance in Turkey and the word spreads quickly throughout Europe and the Middle East that the redeemer has appeared. Jews all over Europe sell their property and their businesses and embark on the journey to the Land of Israel.

Zvi, a would-be messiah who turns out to be a very dramatic personality, acts as though he is God's emissary on earth. He arrives in the Holy Land where another dramatic personality named Nathan of Gaza proclaims himself Elijah the Prophet who is ushering in the newly arrived messiah. The ruler of the land at that time is the Turkish sultan, who does not take kindly to this disruption of the Ottoman rule. When Shabtai Zvi goes to Constantinople to receive the blessing of the sultan, he is thrown in jail and is given the choice of conversion to Islam or death. He chooses the first, and loses the support of most of his followers, who find themselves betrayed and humiliated. A dark cloud settles over Jewish life, and messianism loses its momentum for the next three hundred years.

But this is not where the story of Jewish messianism ends. Following the Holocaust, two things happen in the Jewish world. The first is the crowning of Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, the late Lubavicher or Chabad leader, as the messiah by a faction of his followers. As could be expected, the Jewish world has not welcomed this latest manifestation of messianism, even though the late rebbe was a much admired Jewish spiritual leader who, unlike the leaders of other Hasidic sects, had reached out to all Jews; his emissaries had been praised by Jews around the world. Moreover, the rebbe himself routinely discouraged his overly enthusiastic Hasidim from singing songs to him at the Farbrengen gatherings at his court in Brooklyn, which proclaimed him the *melech ha'moshiach*, the King Messiah.

The other messianic phenomenon dates back to Israel's victory in the Six-Day War, which led to the proliferation of settlements on the West Bank and gave rise to messianism among some settlers who have reached the conclusion that holding on to the "whole land of Israel" and rebuilding the Temple will hasten the coming of the messiah. Here again the consensus among Israelis and world Jewry does not support this view. One can only wonder what the biblical prophets would have had to say about the messianic movements that have sprung up among Jews in the past twenty centuries.

The Prophetic Legacy

Regardless of how we assess Jewish messianism, the essence of biblical prophecy remains what it has always been, namely, the unity of God, social justice, and the mission of Israel. The Second Isaiah defined this mission as "a light to the nations." God is not the exclusive God of Israel, and the purpose of the mission is not for Jews to look only after their own interest. To do so is to betray the teachings of the prophets. The prophets have taught us that God made a covenant with Abraham for a purpose, namely, "so that all the families of the earth will be blessed through you." It may be a very heavy burden, and in the post-Holocaust world it may be more than many Jews are willing to shoulder. But

Top: Creative Commons/Joods Historisch Museum. Bottom: Creative Commons/Mordecai Baron

it is not a matter of choice. Each people on this earth seem to have a purpose or mission, and each have to live up to it.

As we look at human history since biblical times, we discover that there have always been prophetic personalities everywhere, both true and false. They seem to fall into three categories: true prophetic personalities; misguided prophets; and prophets of evil. Among true prophetic personalities of our times I would point to Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Nelson Mandela, all of whom have changed their people's lives for the better not through violent means but by fighting evil with good. I would also include Theodor Herzl, who foresaw the Holocaust and enabled his people to reenter the stage of history as free people in their historical land after centuries of exile.

As an example of a misguided prophet I would point to the great philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, who sought to elevate man by proclaiming the death of God and by extolling the "Overman." While it is easy to misinterpret and misrepresent Nietzsche's teachings, it is clear that now, a hundred years after his own death, God for millions on the planet has not died, and the concept of the Overman (or the Superman) has not brought about a better world but has given rise to misguided philosophies such as Ayn Rand's "Objectivism." Finally, our age has seen and continues to see the rise and fall of prophets of evil who have sought to remake the world according to what they have believed to be the greater good, which turned out to be the greater evil. First among them is Adolf Hitler, who in his speeches before the Reichstag often referred to himself as a prophet, but whose contribution to the world has been the greatest slaughter in human history. Another is Pol Pot of Cambodia. The list goes on and on.

We are living in difficult times in America, in Israel, and around the world. There is a multitude of reasons to despair of the future. But, to rephrase Charles Dickens, while it may not be the best of times, it is also not the worst of times. The prophets did not see the world through rose-colored glasses. They were always brutally honest with their people, which is why they were routinely persecuted. But their faith in their people and in the future was stronger than that of anyone who has ever lived. Notwithstanding Isaiah's prophecy of the end of days, or Jeremiah's prophecy of the return of the exiles, it is wrong to refer to these men as "prophets of gloom and doom." Rather, they were prophets of faith and hope. ■

Michael Fox

"Burning Man provides a version of the messianic 'world-that-is-coming,' expressing deep resonance with themes of Jewish tradition," Feldman writes. Here, participants gather at Sukkat Shalom, one of many camps within Burning Man's temporarily constructed city.

Sleeping in the Dust at Burning Man

BY RON H. FELDMAN

THE TALMUD SAYS, "Three things are a foretaste of the world-that-is-coming: Sabbath, sunshine, and sexual intercourse" (Talmud Berakhot 57b). In various ways, all three of these tastes of the messianic era are to be had at Burning Man, the weeklong festival that takes place in late August near Reno, Nevada.

First is the sunshine. There is lots of it on "the playa," an ancient Black Rock Desert lakebed that is a flat and lifeless alkali expanse prone to severe dust storms. This is the site to which over 50,000 people bring all they need to temporarily construct Black Rock City, which annually appears and disappears like a desert mirage. It is simultaneously an arts festival, a performance festival, and a music and dance party where participation and immediacy of experience are valued, and various combinations of costuming and nudity are common.

According to the Burning Man Organization, the festival is an experimental community that "challenges its members to express themselves and rely on themselves to a degree that is not normally encountered in one's day-to-day life." There is an almost

RON H. FELDMAN, PH.D., is the author of *Fundamentals of Jewish Mysticism and Kabbalah* and the co-editor of *The Jewish Writings* of Hannah Arendt. In Black Rock City he camped with Sukkat Shalom, where he helped organize the challah baking, Sabbath meal, and Evening Service for over 300 participants.

A man prays beside a loaf of challah at Burning Man. "The challah we fresh-baked on the playa for 300 souls who joined us for Sabbath eve tasted slightly of dust but was, even more than usual, 'a taste of the world-that-is-coming,'" the author writes.

complete prohibition of commerce (you can only buy ice and coffee), including a prohibition of corporate sponsorships of projects (i.e., no branded gifts, no commercial logos). Participation, self-reliance, decommodification, and the gift economy are key. This is not a Club Med all-inclusive, or a music festival that is all about the headline acts, with the ticket holders mere interchangeable and passive consumers. Rather, the organizers create only the infrastructure for the participants who give each other their art, performances, and presence, thereby *making* the event.

Like Fenton Johnson, whose essay "Burning Man, Desire, and the Culture of Empire" in *Tikkun*'s Summer 2012 issue prompted these reflections, I first attended Burning Man in 2010. Unlike Johnson, who ultimately rejects Burning Man for being insufficiently critical of "transnational corporate rule or wars of aggression" and being another expression of "the absolute need of white men to impose our will on every landscape," I have found myself drawn back each year since. I think Johnson's rejection is too simplistic, overlooking ways in which Burning Man encourages a sustained critique of what "burners" call "the default world." Nevertheless, his thoughts about the festival's emphasis on immediate experience and how this expresses a yearning "for union, for communion with what many would label God" got me thinking about my strange attraction to the festival, especially since my experience has little to do with the stereotype of it being "a party with sex and drugs and rock 'n' roll in the desert" (*Los Angeles Times*, October 20, 2010).

The view I've come to is that Burning Man provides a version of the messianic "world-that-is-coming," expressing deep resonances with themes of Jewish tradition and Western culture as a whole. To be clear, I am *not* saying that Burning Man has explicitly religious elements. Rather, I'm suggesting that we see a shared human impetus for ritualized gatherings relating to the desire for freedom and transformation, and that certain practices have evolved at Burning Man that are surprisingly similar to ancient Jewish observances concerning Sabbath and festivals that articulate and arouse a yearning for a better world.

A Dusty Garden of Eden

The volunteers who briefly orient new arrivals to Burning Man greet them with the phrase "Welcome Home." By the time we've gotten there we're pretty exhausted after spending many hours driving and waiting in line, and these volunteers might seem annoyingly like Wal-Mart greeters—but then we realize that their costumes are *not* blue Wal-Mart vests, and the simultaneous sarcasm, irony, and hopefulness of "Welcome Home" tells us "we're not in Kansas anymore." Exhaustion transforms into exhilaration as we arrive at a dusty playa dressed up as a postmodern American version of the Garden of Eden. Illuminated with bright sun by day and bright lights and fire by night, this is a through-the-looking-glass inversion of Las Vegas, that other Nevada version of paradise.

Really? Black Rock City as the Garden of Eden?

Western messianism and utopianism have usually seen the idyllic future as a return to a mythic Garden of Eden. Many elements—from the suspension of commerce, to the gift economy, to the pervasive (though far from universal) nakedness—engage the myth of Adam and Eve and the innocent plentitude of Eden.

But the physical playa seems to be the very antithesis of a garden. It is a hot, dry place of dust where nothing grows, where we carry dust masks and goggles at all times in case a whiteout quickly engulfs us, where there is no escape from this one basic element. Yet, this is also a profound reminder that we are but dust: the view of modern cosmology that we are all made of stardust is very much in accord with the biblical myth that God

Ron Feldman

formed Adam from the "dust of the earth," and expelled Adam and Eve from Eden with the curse, "for dust you are, and to dust you shall return." For this week we become one with the dust, which becomes a marker of our presence and participation, a reminder that we are not awaiting a transformation but are living the transformation. The creation of this separate reality in time and place heightens the experience of being alive and awakens the desire for a better world, precisely because we are temporarily taken out of our usual routines and surroundings.

A Time to Embrace: Pilgrimage Festivals, Ancient and Postmodern

Since antiquity, festivals have been a time for gathering, partying, and sexual encounters.

The Talmud tells us joyously of specific holidays when young women invited young men into the fields for the purpose of coupling up:

> Rabbi Simeon ben Gamaliel said: there never were in Israel greater days of joy than the Fifteenth of Av and the Day of Atonement. On these days the young women of Jerusalem used to go out in white garments ... and dance in the vineyards. What would they say? "Young man, lift up your eyes and see, what do you choose for yourself? Do not set your eyes toward beauty, set your eyes toward family." (Ta'anit 26b)

When the Temple stood in Jerusalem (i.e., before 70 CE), the annual fall harvest festival of Sukkot was the main festival of the year—simply called "The Holiday." Still practiced by Jews today, it follows Burning Man by a few weeks, and while dwelling in the sukkah (booth), I've been noticing fascinating parallels. In many ways, Burning Man is a postmodern Sukkot.

During the eight days of Sukkot, the Israelites were commanded to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, live temporarily in booths made of vegetation, and make sacrifices at the Temple—that is, bring a lot of food, offer the best of it to God, and then eat the leftovers. Booths were used throughout the Ancient Near East as temporary shelters built in fields while harvesting, and Sukkot resembles harvest festivals celebrated throughout the region during which a lot of wine was consumed and fertility rituals—i.e., sacred sex—took place. As Ecclesiastes (the biblical scroll read during Sukkot) observes with clear sexual innuendo, there is "a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing" (Eccl. 3:5).

The Talmud (Tractate Sukkah) tells us that a major element of Sukkot was a ritual in which water was drawn from the spring and poured on the altar. This was accompanied by a festival that lasted all night, including giant torches that illuminated all of Jerusalem, juggling (of torches, knives, eggs, and glasses of wine), music, singing, and dancing. The Talmud says that participants did not sleep and that whoever "has not seen the rejoicing at the place of the Water Drawing has not seen rejoicing in his life." As Ecclesiastes recommends, "There is nothing worthwhile for a man but to eat and drink and afford himself enjoyment with his means" (Eccl. 2:24).

This sounds a lot like Burning Man, with its 24/7 music and dancing, performances, and free-flowing alcohol (not to mention drugs, which perform a similar function of shifting consciousness). But while it may seem like partying is the main thing, in both cases this is only on the surface; at a deeper level, the celebrations directly confront the transitory, temporary, evanescent essence of life. The opening line of Ecclesiastes speaks to this: "All is vanity." I have come to realize this does not mean life is pointless, but that life is transitory: "All is ephemeral."

This message is made real by the experience of living in a temporary dwelling, which is the major commandment of Sukkot and an essential element of Burning Man. According to the Bible, the Israelites lived in similar booths during their forty years wandering in the desert, and Sukkot reminds us of that liminal space and time between slavery

Burning Man concludes with the silent burning of the Temple (top), a sacred site where people leave notes in memory of deceased loved ones (middle). The solemnity of the Temple contrasts with the edgy playfulness of camps such as Baal-Mart (bottom).

Top and middle: Michael Fox. Bottom: Ron Feldman

Money hangs from the branches of the *Transformoney Tree* at Burning Man. Created by Amsterdam-based artist Dadara, this art installation invited passers-by to glue bills to the tree, thereby erasing their financial value.

Dadara (dadara.nl).

and freedom. In both cases it takes a huge effort to plan, build, and decorate the sukkah or theme camp. Some burners spend much of their year preparing an art, food, or performance project for one week of glory. The process of preparing and packing heightens one's awareness of what is really necessary for survival, what can be left behind, and the waste one generates (which must be packed out). Living outside is physically challenging, especially on the playa with the sun, heat, and inescapable dust. Like the Israelites, you are clearly *not* living at home; instead, your whole body enters a liminal space, re-enacting the story of the desert wandering that provided a first taste of freedom.

Transience is also the deep message of Burning Man's gift economy, which evokes echoes of the ancient practice of "sacrifice"—that is, you produce your best stuff, and then give it up. In the Ancient Near East, the best of the best was given to various gods by burning it on the altar. The smoke rises up to reach the divine realm in the high heavens. (While God doesn't eat much human food, the Bible does say that God likes the pleasing fragrance of barbecue and incense.) Similarly, at Burning Man, many—perhaps most—of the art installations are burned, surrendered in recognition of the fact that they were never really ours to keep. This simultaneously subverts the dominant culture of accumulation and, by satiric exaggeration, critiques the disposability of consumer culture. Savor it, don't save it.

The conclusion of the weeklong festivities is also similar, ending on a somber note that reminds us of life's passage. Sukkot ends with *Shemini Atzeret* (Eighth-Day Pause), a day of recovery from the previous week's activities, where Jewish tradition places one of the observances of *Yizkor* (remembrance), a time for recalling dead relatives. Similarly, Burning Man concludes on the night after the raucous partying that accompanies burning the "Man" (a large stylized statue) with the silent burning of the Temple, a nonsectarian sacred site where people leave notes in memory of friends and loved ones who have passed on. As Ecclesiastes observed, "There is a time to be born and a time to die" (Eccl. 3:2). The cycle is complete and the festival ends, to be resumed again next year in this season.

You Shall Do No Work: The Sabbath and Decommodification

While the pilgrimage and party may echo an ancient biblical pattern, it is one of Burning Man's "Ten Principles" (a clearly biblical reference—not nine and not eleven) that seems crucial to its uniqueness among contemporary music and arts festivals: decommodification, which aims to "create social environments that are unmediated by commercial sponsorships, transactions, or advertising. We stand ready to protect our culture from such exploitation. We resist the substitution of consumption for participatory experience." In addition, there are strict limitations on vehicular traffic (except for participants trying to get to their campsites, or for art cars); for the most part, it is a city of bicycles and pedestrians. The remote location also means that cell phones don't work, which is almost universally seen as a plus.

The Ten Principles delineate commonly held values that reflect "the community's ethos and culture" (included in the "Survival Guide" at survival.burningman.com). Of course, none of the principles are followed in full or consistently by either the organizers

or participants, but one can say the same about the biblical Ten Commandments. They are aspirational, and the Burning Man community is constantly debating (in an almost talmudic fashion, I'm tempted to say) the gap between theory and practice. Even if imperfectly executed, decommodification results in a self-consciously created respite from the constant drumbeat of commercial culture, from work, and from living in an ever accelerating market-driven society. People do not greet each other by asking, "What do you do?" (meaning "What work do you do?"). What one does in "the default world" is hardly discussed. Instead, people ask: "Where are you camping? Who are you camping with? What is your project?" This all contributes to a focus on participation, community, art, and shared immediacy of experience. Sensitivity to synchronicities is heightened in this ritualistic and artistic environment, and planning begins to give way to an acceptance of whatever happens in the present moment. While rather different from a silent retreat, the festival produces a similar shift in consciousness from doing to being.

It seems that the Burning Man organizers have stumbled upon a framework of rules that surprisingly echo some of the key rules of Jewish Sabbath observance (and other Jewish festivals), although the periodicity (weekly vs. annual) is different. The daily activities of commerce, work, and politics are suspended on the Sabbath, including refraining from the use of vehicles and electronics. In Hebrew, the word for sacred is *kadosh*, which at root means "separate." The Sabbath rules conspire to create a separate pocket of time and space that facilitates the emergence of an alternate reality, a manifestation of how the world could or should be, rather than how it is.

The Sabbath is not natural, but socially constructed; as the various versions of the biblical commandments put it, humans "make" the Sabbath by "remembering" to "observe" it. The Sabbath is prepared for and anticipated: one invests in it, prepares especially good food, wears nicer clothes, and invites guests to share meals and socialize, while also sharing prayers of gratitude and studying. The Sabbath is an alternate way of being that is special and better, so much so that it provides "a foretaste of the world-that-is-coming." Traditionally, one yearns for the Sabbath so much that it becomes the destination of the week, with life lived from Sabbath to Sabbath. On the Sabbath, one's weekday "work" is not what matters, and is not much discussed; there is a shift from doing to being.

Of course, the Sabbath depends on the work of the week and could not exist without it; Judaism recognizes this dialectic of interdependence between sacred and mundane. Similarly, nobody at Burning Man is under the illusion that it is autonomously sustainable or divorced from the "default" world off-playa—everyone is well aware of the preparation that must be done beforehand, and the cleanup that follows. In a phenomenological parallel to living life from Sabbath to Sabbath, some burners live their year from playa to playa—a location in both time and space—preparing, creating, anticipating.

At Burning Man these rules encourage a pervasive attitude of irony, self-awareness, and cultural critique that is more humorous than angry. People are encouraged to cover up or transform corporate logos on their vehicles or other equipment. Within the variety of camps and art projects are those with more explicitly political messages. One prominent camp has a huge sign declaring itself as "Mal-Mart," a literal inversion of the "W" in Wal-Mart, although this was changed in 2012 to "Baal-Mart," a nice biblical reference to the false god, Baal, who was repeatedly worshipped by the Israelites when they strayed from the true God.

Also in 2012, *Burn Wall Street* was a major art installation in which *Chaos Manhattan Bank*, *The Bank of Unamerica*, and *Goldman Sucks* were burned to the ground, while the *Transformoney Tree* invited participants to glue currency to the artificial tree, thereby erasing its financial value and highlighting the consensual dream that creates the financial world. There are a number of playa publications, most of which are full of critique, humor, and irony. Many refer to the Burning Man Organization as the "BMorg," obviously a reference to *Star Trek*'s anti-human Borg.

Substituting a gift economy for a market economy makes Burning Man into a giant potlatch, where one gains status by sharing more and better food, schwag, art, or experiences. However, unlike at the Native American potlatch, at Burning Man it's not just the wealthiest who are expected to give. To the contrary, it is all about "radical participation" where everyone contributes to making the event. "Radical self-reliance" is not merely a survivalist focus on food, water, and shelter, but also about encouraging shared creativity. This happens through art projects, both fixed and mobile (art cars), and theme camps with various activities and classes, from raves to yoga. Much of this manifests as individual performance and self-representation in the form of alternate "playa names" and much costuming (i.e., not "default world" clothes), all of which can result in a very intimate and powerful experience, even if it is only "on the playa." Of course, many of these experiments fall short in some way, but when everyone is a maker as well as a consumer, society and culture are radically shifted. The suspension of commerce and consumerism is no small feat, and is probably *the* critical element facilitating an experience that hints at the possibility of a different and better world, thereby arousing a messianic yearning for personal and political transformation.

Arousing Messianic Yearning

One of the lines in the daily Jewish prayers composed many centuries ago praises God for "Nourishing life with kindness . . . maintaining faith with those who sleep in the dust." For the ancient rabbis, this was an affirmation of faith in a messianic future when the dead would be resurrected. A condensed version of this—"Nourish faith in those who sleep in the dust"—was the sign welcoming visitors to Sukkat Shalom in 2010, the camp I joined in 2011 and 2012. That sign caused me to laugh out loud at the humor and irony so in keeping with the spirit of Burning Man. While the rabbinic liturgy is metaphorical, our experience on the playa is one of literally "sleeping in the dust." In this place the rabbis' affirmation has a completely new meaning: that God is with us as we *live* in the dust. This inversion, which shifts the focus from the dead to the living, does not negate but rather invigorates the traditional messianic assertion by alerting us to the possibility that God is in *this* place, and that we can "bring the messiah" right here and now. The challah we fresh-baked on the playa for 300 souls who joined us for Sabbath eve tasted slightly of dust but was, even more than usual, "a taste of the world-that-is-coming."

Of course, it is a failed attempt; in the end we too must leave, exiles from Eden. The pleasures of the playa meet the miserable traffic jam of the ironically named "Exodus," when we wait in line for hours to get on the road, not toward the "promised land" but the "default world" of work, commerce, traffic, cell phones, and politics. It is time to recover from a physical experience of sensory overload, not to enjoy the mindfulness following a silent retreat or the relaxation after being pampered for a week at Club Med.

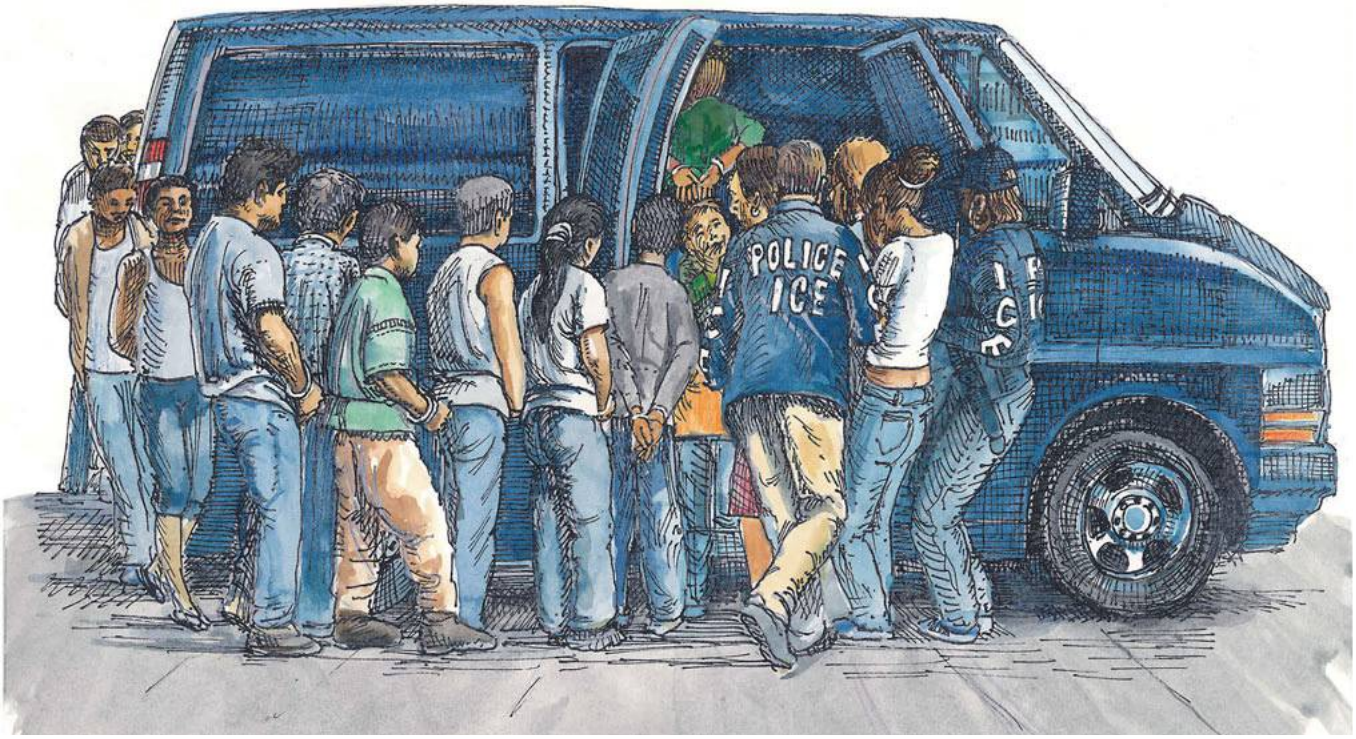
The dust—a talisman—lingers, as do the memories. More than a party in the desert, the week of art and play awakens a consciousness of, and a yearning for, a different and better world. Burning Man has been criticized on many counts, and it is far from perfect. Yet, even if the yearning is incompletely fulfilled, it is still aroused. Most of us return not as revolutionaries at the barricades, but social change agents sprinkled around the world. A framework that catalyzes a personal encounter with this yearning for a better world, whether fulfilled or frustrated, is itself rare and is a first step toward change. ■

Away With All Borders

EMBRACING IMMIGRATION AND ENDING DEPORTATION

How can we start building a society based on love and care amid militarized borders and the violence of global capitalism? In the pages that follow, some authors dream of a radical new approach to immigration policy while others draw on sacred texts to energize their faith communities around migrant rights. Others report on activist struggles ranging from anti-deportation actions to border solidarity efforts. For more on these topics, check out the online-only articles associated with this special issue at tikkun.org/immigration.

The American Dream is a Lie by Favianna Rodriguez (favianna.com).



Jan Padover (janpadover.com)

Away With All Borders

The Immigration Mess

BY MICHAEL LERNER

IMMIGRATION OPENS UP a complicated set of ethical and spiritual questions, and it's time to confront them directly.

Every country in the world uses oppressive and sometimes violent means to keep out those whom it does not want, and these actions are almost always based on both capitalist economic rationales ("there is not enough to go around, so don't let others share it") and racist feelings toward others ("they don't deserve what we deserve because they are less valuable or less truly human than we are"). There is also this phony argument: "My great-great-grandparents built up this country; therefore, I am entitled to it because I inherited their genes."

Our claim to own this part of the earth that we call "our country" because we currently live on it is fundamentally problematic. The notion of ownership of the earth and its products is a convenient fiction popularized in each generation by the latest set of victors in struggles for land that have been going on for at least the last 12,000 years. With this concept the winners justify their current power to exclude others from that land. This way of valorizing the ethos of "might makes right" has been going on for many thousands of years.

The notion that we "own" the land on which we live, foreign though this notion was to many indigenous cultures, seems so intuitive to people in modern, global, capitalist societies that it almost seems sacrilegious to question it. Yet that was precisely what the Torah and Jewish tradition set out to do over two thousand years ago.

A Spiritual Critique of Land Ownership

The Torah approaches the question of land ownership (Leviticus 25) by commanding that every seventh year be considered a Sabbatical year in which all work on the land is

RABBI MICHAEL LERNER is editor of *Tikkun*, national chair of the Network of Spiritual Progressives, and author of eleven books including the newly released *Embracing Israel/Palestine* (published by North Atlantic Books and distributed by Random House). He is the rabbi of Beyt Tikkun Synagogue-Without-Walls in Berkeley and San Francisco, California.

prohibited—no planting or harvesting. Anything that grows on that land is considered ownerless and hence available for the poor and the homeless to take. Those who have inherited land are expected during the Sabbatical year to live off of food that has been planted and harvested previously. Moreover, all debts are automatically canceled on the seventh year. The Torah goes on to ordain that at the end of the seventh cycle of seven years (or in other words, every fifty years), the last Sabbatical year will be followed by yet another year of no work—the Jubilee year, during which all land will be redistributed back to the original (essentially equal) distribution of the land among and within the twelve tribes.

Anticipating the resistance to this revolutionary notion that God can tell people what to do with what they've come to think of as "their land and their property," God tells the people, "The whole earth is Mine." The Torah recognizes that this is a revolutionary notion, so it invokes God's voice to make clear that humans don't have a right to property.

God, on the Torah account, goes on to teach us that human beings are "wayfarers" on the earth with the obligation to tend it, protect it, and share its produce with everyone—and without any right to possess it. So, no, just because you live on some land doesn't mean you have a right to it, even if some previous conqueror or inhabitant created some system that eventuated in you owning a piece of paper that claims you own it or have a right to it, or that the community in which you live validates that right.

Unfortunately, private ownership, the right to control the land and its inhabitants, is so deeply enshrined in the imperial ideologies that originated long before capitalism that even those who suffer most in this system of domination nevertheless have internalized its values. These imperial ideologies have now reached new heights of penetration into our consciousness through media and public "education" such that the vast majority of people believe in private property in ideas, land, and products. Holding this belief, they are not as outraged as they might reasonably be when the powerful "1 percent" manipulate the capitalist marketplace and corporate-controlled banks, insurance companies, media, and elected officials to create economic and property arrangements that end up materially hurting and disadvantaging the majority.

Part of the compensation that people receive in the face of these unfair arrangements is the belief that they still "own" the country in which they live—that it is still "theirs." And one way to reinforce this fantasy of ownership of the country is to rally the relatively powerless inside the country against the even more powerless migrants and refugees outside the country. Hence the popularization of the notion that "our" country will be "taken over" by "undeserving others" unless we rigorously enforce this country's borders. The demand for rigorous enforcement of the borders works to prop up popular acquiescence to the unfair distribution of wealth internally. So just at the moment when the global capitalist order is ravaging the economies of countries around the world and driving people to risk their lives to come to advanced industrial societies in hopes of supporting themselves and their families, the supporters of the unfair domestic inequalities do all they can to whip up fear of foreigners.

If we allow ourselves to dream big about immigration policy, we may find ourselves reaching past national reforms, toward a world without borders. *DREAM Act* by Santiago Uceda.

Santiago Uceda (santiagouceda.com)

Why We Need a Global Marshall Plan

The Network of Spiritual Progressives has a proposal for how to shift these dynamics of fear, xenophobia, and desperation-fueled migration: a Global Marshall Plan. It calls for the United States to take the lead in encouraging the Group of Twenty advanced industrial countries to each dedicate 1-2 percent of their Gross Domestic Product each year for the next twenty to end (not just alleviate, as the One campaign sought) domestic and global poverty, homelessness, hunger, inadequate education, and inadequate health care. If implemented in the way that the Network of Spiritual Progressives suggests, tens of millions of people who cross the borders of countries looking for economic security for their families will no longer have to do that, so the pressure on immigration will dramatically decrease. And since the Global Marshall

There's a solution to the widespread fear about whether the United States can actually absorb the world's "homeless and tempest-tost": implement a Global Marshall Plan so that people no longer feel forced to migrate in order to achieve economic security.

Plan also applies to eliminating domestic poverty and homelessness in the United States, the fear of immigrants taking all the jobs will dramatically decrease. To read more about this idea, visit tikkun.org/GMP and download the full version of the Global Marshall Plan.

Our government is currently building physical walls and conducting warfare on our borders against those who seek economic security. It's a war that will never be won: with thousands of miles of borders and tens of millions of people desperate for economic survival, many will continue to find a way to get into the United States. Meanwhile, even our most liberal politicians fail to mention the central ethical contradiction here: that it is precisely the economic policies of the United States and other advanced industrial nations that have created economic crises in the impoverished nations of the east and south, thereby pushing local farmers off their land into urban slums where they still cannot find safe, decent jobs to support their families. In short, we create the problem that causes so many immigrants to desperately seek security, and then we try to use power and military technology to keep them out and deport them.

This is why a spiritual progressive agenda insists that immigration reform be accompanied by the implementation of a Global Marshall Plan so that people no longer feel compelled to move to other countries in order to achieve economic security. It's time for the United States, the European Union, and other advanced industrial societies to agree to eliminate the economic arrangements that together create global economic suffering. These arrangements include the widespread use of GMO seeds engineered by Monsanto and other agricultural giants. They also include the use of "free trade" agreements that result in the dumping of cheaply produced agricultural and finished goods into third-world markets at cheaper prices than they could otherwise be obtained, thereby driving small farmers and small business people out of business. It is these dynamics that force people to move out of their villages and into the slums surrounding huge cities, where many face the prospect of having to sell themselves into the sex trade, risk getting caught in the crossfire of the drug wars, or get killed or tortured in a struggle between groups warring for the resources they need to subsist.

Understanding this relationship between "illegal" immigration and capitalist economics is crucial. The racism that is used to justify keeping the stranger from "our" land is a product of a deeper, mistaken intuition. The truth is that we could organize a very different way of distributing wealth and power that would in practice demonstrate to most people on the planet that there is in fact enough for everyone, and that we can live in a society that provides enough for all.

Needless to say, anyone attempting to put this kind of a message into the public sphere is perceived as an enemy and then treated with disdain, fear, and ridicule. These sorts of ideas are almost never broadcast on the public airwaves or in any other branch of media. No wonder then that most people think these ideas are unrealistic and will tell you, based on their media-driven assumptions, that people are naturally selfish and self-seeking, that they will never agree to share what they have with others, and that therefore a Global Marshall Plan will never happen, so we need borders and police to enforce our borders. And that is how it turns out that even after President Obama allows children of undocumented immigrants to stay in the United States, another 11 million are still being harassed by the various police agencies or exploited by many employers, and why all around the world refugees are being treated like hunted animals rather than as people deserving respect and care.

So here's an idea: implement the Global Marshall Plan and enact legislation to eliminate borders within twenty years (meaning that anyone can go to any country). The pressure from the impending end of borders will provide the impetus to generously fund the Global Marshall Plan, and that, in turn, will help create the circumstances in which the end of borders moves from being seen as a utopian fantasy to being a wonderful way to end the war on immigrants (and the war on drugs).

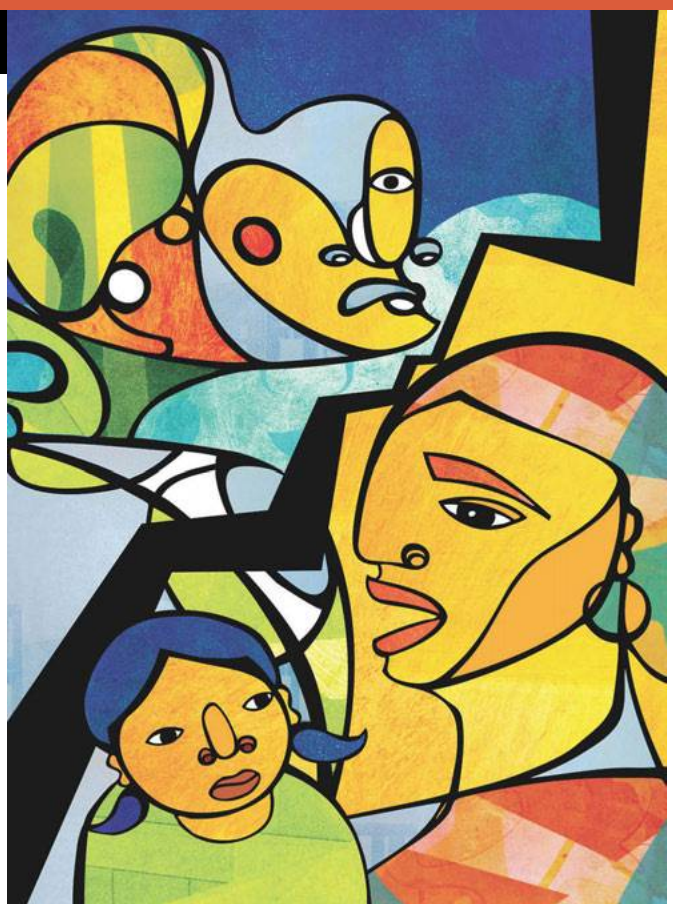
A first step is to articulate the kind of worldview that we put forward in *Tikkun* and we fight for in the Network of Spiritual Progressives (NSP). If you haven't done so yet, please join the NSP at spiritualprogressives.org. You don't have to believe in God or be religious to be a spiritual progressive. You only have to support our fight for a new bottom line of love, kindness, generosity, ethical and ecological sensitivity, and radical amazement at the grandeur and mystery of the universe. ■

Creative Commons/Ludovic Bertron

Immigration

A Difficult Love Story

BY ANDREW LAM



A father gazes across a border at a mother and child in this print by Favianna Rodriguez, titled *22% of Deportees Have U.S. Citizen Children*. "The father is depicted as an alien, alluding to the way in which inhumane immigration policy dehumanizes people," Rodriguez writes.

Favianna Rodriguez (favianna.com)

It's been a difficult and tumultuous love affair. In good times, newcomers are instrumental to the construction of the New World. They are beckoned, needed, desired. In bad times, they are the cause of all social-economic woes. They are to be ostracized, demonized, deported.

The pendulum swings: we don't want them here; we can't live without them.

Sometimes this epic romance plays out on a very human scale. Take the story that involved Sheriff Paul Babeu of Pinal County, Arizona. Running for Congress in 2012, the sheriff was tough on undocumented immigration—but he had a secret: he was conducting a love affair with Jose Orozco, an immigrant whose legal status remains in question.

The romance went sour, alas, and the immigrant lover alleged that the sheriff threatened to deport him if he came out with their story. Babeu came out as gay but vehemently denied the deportation threat. Orozco promptly filed a lawsuit.

What struck me most about this story is the contradictory nature of the relationship and how emblematic it is of the larger American narrative. We seek and benefit from immigrants' cheap labor, but we don't want to acknowledge our relationship with them. We need them; we don't want to be associated with them. In the dark of night we crawl into bed with them, but in the morning we are still in denial.

Meg Whitman, the billionaire who ran for governor in California in 2010, announced that she wanted to "hold employers accountable for hiring only documented workers." But she apparently didn't include herself.

The year before Whitman's campaign, she had fired Nicky Diaz Santillan, who in a spectacular press conference revealed that she was undocumented. She had been taking care of the Whitman's household for nearly a decade.

Santillan later testified that when she asked Whitman for help finding an immigration attorney after she was fired, Whitman allegedly told her, "You don't know me, and I don't know you."

ANDREW LAM, editor at New America Media, is the author of *Perfume Dreams: Reflections on the Vietnamese Diaspora* and *East Eats West: Writing in Two Hemispheres*. His most recent book, *Birds of Paradise Lost*, a collection of short stories, was published March 1, 2013.

Willful Ignorance and Cruel Contradictions

Most of us don't want to know about the tragedy of detention and deportation: the psychological and economic impact on tens of thousands of American-born children whose parents have been taken away by the authorities. Nor do we want to know about the abuses that take place in holding facilities or how inmates were shackled and paraded in pink underwear on the streets of Arizona. We don't want to hear about all the reported rape incidents that have still not been investigated, about the dangerous lack of health care in immigrant detention facilities where the suicide levels are alarming, or about deportees forced to take psychotropic drugs so they act docile in their long journeys back to their countries of origin.

None of these get on the news curve. Most Americans know that Kim Kardashian is pregnant but won't know that many imprisoned, undocumented pregnant women are shackled to their beds when they give birth.

We don't want to know but must know this: when a society hides behind the apparatus of draconian policies, allowing the authorities almost unchecked power to detain and deport, the only logical outcome is injustice and cruelty.

I'm no lawyer, but I know a little about the difference between *de facto* versus *de jure*. In the eye of the law (de jure),

Children of the deported "have become a major voting block, and they are not going away," the author writes. Here, children march against family separation during a rally in Phoenix, Arizona.

you are either guilty or not guilty. But in practice (de facto), the way society carries itself out is another matter altogether.

A relative of mine, someone who was once a boat person but who is now a very conservative Republican, said he's anti–"illegal" immigrant and supports deportation of all of the 11 million-plus undocumented immigrants and their families. He also happens to be a wine connoisseur, however. And one night as we were drinking from his favorite cabernet sauvignon, I asked him, "Listen, would you support ICE raiding Napa?"

"No, not Napa," he said quickly, a little shocked that I suggested it. "There's always an exception to the rule." That is to say, he wants his wine and drinks it, too. His "cab," by the way, was excellent—spicy, complex, full bodied, a wonderful nose, but perhaps chased with irony at the finish—and thanks to immigrant laborers, still affordable.

That kind of contradiction, you see, is endless, and it's deeply embedded in the American life, and sometimes deeply embedded within the same person. Here's a story I read a few years ago that stays on my mind: it's about a woman named Zoila Meyer who sat on the city council in Adelanto, a small town in southern California. She was against illegal immigration, but it turned out that she was not a U.S. citizen herself and didn't know it. She found out that she'd been voting illegally and was reportedly in a profound state of shock when they put handcuffs on her in 2009. Under the cold eye of the law, she had become eligible for deportation. Facing the possibility of having to leave her American-born children behind, she found the law completely unjust.

When it comes to immigration, one's private practice and public stance can be a conflicting mess when compared side by side, a jumble of incongruity. Take the case of former CNN news anchor, Lou Dobbs, who made himself a spokesman against undocumented immigrants (in his words, "illegal aliens") who sneaked across our southern border. Dobbs practically built his career on it, claiming that undocumented immigrants were responsible for bringing 7,000 cases of leprosy to the United States in a three-year period. The statistics were false: it was 7,000 within a *thirty*-year period. But he did not apologize for these wildly inaccurate claims. Nor did he give an interview to the *Nation* when it reported that he had undocumented workers working to keep up his multimillion-dollar estates in New Jersey and Florida and his stable of horses.

A Broken System

It's de facto that the current immigration law is broken and in dire need of an overhaul. Not only is it broken for the 11 million undocumented immigrants, it is also broken for the thousands of immigrants who are unable to get visas to work in the United States, for American businesses that can't hire the workers they need, and for the families who wait for years to get visas to join their relatives in the United States.

You don't know me and I don't know you.

Diane Ovalle (dianeovalle.com)

Since September 11, immigrants have been on the defense. Anyone seen as "the other" has automatically become suspect. The dust cloud from the destroyed World Trade Center in some way hasn't fully settled. It continues to veil our nation's once blue and gracious sky. To live in America these days, I'm sad to say, is to accept a new set of norms.

Mass deportation of undocumented immigrants who toil on our land has become the new norm. Those without proper papers get swept up in wide-sweeping government dragnets, and many are sent to detention centers to await deportation. Never mind that this norm shatters the lives of the husbands, wives, and children who are left behind.

Documented immigrants also face unfair treatments. Those with criminal records who have served time if found guilty of a crime—sometimes a misdemeanor offense—can be eligible for deportation. A classic case: A construction worker peeing in the street because no toilet was provided at his work site was arrested for indecent exposure. He was sent back to Cambodia, a country he had no memories of since he fled as a little boy. A green card holder, he left behind a wife and several children in the United States and became an exile from America, the only country he knew and loved.

Reasons for Hope

But the pendulum swings once more. The national conversation is shifting now, and the wind of change is blowing.

Immigrants themselves are speaking up. Dream Act students went to Arizona, where immigration laws are among the strictest in the country, to be arrested as part of a new civil rights movement that harkens back to the Alabama marches of the 1960s. Children of the deported voted overwhelmingly for Obama in 2012, in hope for immigration reform. They have become a major voting block, and they are not going away.

Faith leaders, too, are speaking up. An interfaith coalition is being built on the behalf of immigrants. These faith leaders all speak the idea that reform is not alien to American interests. Instead, it is very much in our socioeconomic interest—not to mention our spiritual health—to integrate immigrants. Our nation functions best when we welcome newcomers and help them participate fully in our society.

And speak we must. In America, and in the context of a free and open society, immigrants are often the canary in the coal mine. In economic downtimes they are often the first to be blamed. And in the U.S. war against terrorism, they become the scapegoat. They are a kind of insurance policy against the effects of recession. They can be laid off without legal implications, deported when their labor is no longer needed, providing a release of the social pressure valve when nothing else works.

If you out me, I'll deport you.

You don't know me. I don't know you.

If I am sympathetic to the plight of immigrants of all kinds, I have good reason: I was once a Vietnamese refugee. Like millions who left Vietnam, my family and I fled that country illegally, without passports. We entered another country without visas. That I am a writer and journalist today is due to American generosity. My Americanization story is a love story, a success story. Because America embraced me, I in turn embraced it.

But I see now that we are at a decisive moment in history, an important crossroads. In one direction is a global society defined by openness and by the understanding that we as a nation have always depended and thrived on the energy, ideas, and contributions of immigrants. It's a promised land that can only be envisioned by the newcomers to our shores who still, despite it all, dream the dream.

In the other direction is a country ruled by distrust, xenophobia, continual exploitation, the need for strengthening law enforcement, and a wall along our southern border that might one day rival the Great Wall of China. This direction creates a society that's willing to look away while an entire population lives in fear within a de facto police state. It's a country in which immigrants become the enemy.

But such is our complicated love affair. Yet I am thankful that for every "you don't know me, I don't know you," there's a poem like "One Day," which Richard Blanco, the child of immigrant parents, read at Obama's 2012 presidential inauguration. The poem speaks of hope as "a new constellation /waiting for us to map it, /waiting for us to name it—together." Us, that is, one nation built by calloused hands, bent backs, and hope—built by the tired, huddled masses yearning to breathe free. All of us. ■

New from renowned activist
SARAH SCHULMAN

Israel/Palestine and the Queer International
208 pages, paper, $22.95

"This is a great book, brave, and compassionate... Our world is a better place for its existence. Read it, please." **—Rabih Alameddine**

read more. think more. DUKE UNIVERSITY PRESS order online! *www.dukeupress.edu*

The New Abolitionism

The Struggle to End Deportation

BY JACQUELINE STEVENS

Activists march to the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement headquarters in downtown Chicago during an action to "Shut Down ICE." In response to the action, ICE canceled a "public dialogue" about plans to build a new detention camp in Crete, Illinois.

No Name Collective

Just as Americans horrified by slavery fought first for the amelioration of its harshest cruelties before realizing that the only safeguard for slaves and their own consciences was the abolition of property rights over other people altogether, the travails of deportation will cease only with its abolition, and not by any piecemeal reforms.

There are more differences than similarities between the experiences of African slaves brought to or born in the Americas and those of twenty-first century residents without certain legal documents. The institution of slavery is unparalleled for its combined extremes of harsh, often deadly violence and daily, grinding exploitation. And the choices available to the vast majority of those crossing boundaries, albeit constrained by economic and political circumstances beyond their control, differ in kind from the choices that were available to those brought in chains and kept captive by whips and guns. But both slavery and deportations are rooted in the same nativist impulses of the nation-state—impulses conducive to the dehumanization and subjugation of foreigners. The political movements responding to these blatant injustices also share important traits.

The struggle against deportations responds to scenes appearing far too regularly in our country's newspapers: the deportation of Emily Ruiz, a four-year-old U.S. citizen, who was sent to Guatemala with her grandfather after guards at JFK said his immigration records betrayed a minor, decades-old infraction; the deportation of Jakadrian Turner, a fourteen-year-old African American girl from Dallas who found herself in a mass removal hearing in a deportation court in Houston and—thinking she was going to be sent to Columbus, Ohio—agreed to be deported to Columbia; or the detention of Maria Luis, a mother kidnapped from her workplace, shackled, held in a deportation jail, and sent to a deportation court without an attorney or someone to translate from her native Mayan dialect. Without a translator, Luis was unable to explain that she had two young, U.S.-born children; as a result, they were among the thousands of children placed in state custody following their parents' detention, according to the Applied Research Council.

Then there are the thousands of Alabama residents who, on the day after the legislature passed a bill requiring scrutiny of elementary school records, pulled their children out of classes and fled their homes and jobs. From Illinois to North Carolina, federal agents have monitored the parking lots of churches known to have Latino members. Deportation officers took a Minnesota resident born in Nigeria to a bank, forced her to withdraw $1,200 and then pocketed the cash themselves, along with her jewelry before shipping her out of the country on an illegal expedited removal order, ignoring her pleas about being married to a U.S. citizen and her pending immigration hearing.

The list of injustices goes on: Minors have been deported from Chicago after being coerced to sign removal orders without attorneys or hearings before immigration judges. U.S. citizens and others with a legal right to residency have been locked up for years as they prove their claims. When a deportation jail near Los Angeles closed down, its Immigration and Customs Enforcement moved the people waiting for their immigration hearings to Victorville, aka the

Jacqueline Stevens is the author of *States Without Nations: Citizenship for Mortals* (Columbia University Press, 2009). She is a professor of political science and director of the Deportation Research Clinic at the Buffett Center for International and Comparative Studies at Northwestern University.

Middle-of-Nowhere, the sort of prison-industrial city where the U.S. government is increasingly concentrating its new deportation facilities. At the same time, deportation officials and government attorneys are lying on deportation forms and in deportation courts, conspirators to the crime of kidnapping and other violations far more heinous than the administrative infractions with which they are charging the U.S. residents in their custody. Most of those locked up by deportation authorities have longstanding ties to this country, this being the incentive for them to remain in captivity awaiting a hearing that may be postponed indefinitely.

Last year the number of deaths among those crossing from Mexico doubled from previous years. According to a report by NBC: "For the past few years, the family-owned Elizondo Mortuary and Cremation Service in Mission, Texas, has been taking in the remains of undocumented immigrants found dead in nearby counties after crossing the border from Mexico. This year, however, they had to build an extra freezer. It's become difficult to keep up with the rising tide of dead coming to them from across the Rio Grande Valley."

The Economic Effects of Open Borders

The list of deadly, violent, humiliating, illegal, and often stupid acts perpetrated by our border and deportation policies seems unending; the rational, non-racist defenses of these policies nonexistent. The single apparently sensible defense is about jobs, an argument that says much about our country's poor educational system and little about the impact of immigration on employment.

Mainstream economists agree that free movement results in a net increase in employment, and in turn to increased government revenues; in other words, immigration is a boon and not a drain on productivity for the private economy and for government coffers. In 1984, when Congress was in another period of contemplating a legislative response to large numbers of undocumented U.S. residents, the *Wall Street Journal* ran an editorial stating:

> If Washington still wants to "do something" about immigration, we propose a five-word constitutional amendment: There shall be open borders.... Trembling no-growthers cry that we'll never "feed," "house" or "clothe" all the immigrants—though the immigrants want to feed, house and clothe themselves. In fact, people are the great resource, and so long as we keep our economy free, more people means more growth, the more the merrier.

The editorial's argument was equal parts economic and, to its authors' credit, political:

> The nativist patriots scream for "control of the borders." It is nonsense to believe that this unenforceable legislation will provide any such thing. Does anyone want to "control the

Activists from Chicago and Crete, Illinois, commemorate their successful fight to stop the construction of a for-profit detention center in Crete during a photo shoot and celebration at the Anglican Mission Church of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Little Village, Chicago. *(n)IMBY 1* (top) and *(n)IMBY 3* by Jenny Polak.

Jenny Polak with thanks to No Name Collective and AKIH, Northwestern University

borders" at the moral expense of a 2,000-mile Berlin Wall with minefields, dogs and machine-gun towers? Those who mouth this slogan forget what America means. They want those of us already safely ensconced to erect giant signs warning: Keep Out, Private Property.

The *Wall Street Journal* regularly echoed this position around Independence Day and even published a 2001 piece by editorial page editor Robert Bartley titled "Open NAFTA Borders, Why Not?" The paper backed off this position after September 11, giving into the panic caused by al-Qaida, as did the rest of the country. The new Department of Homeland Security and hundreds of thousands of troops sent to the Middle East played into the hands of Osama bin Laden, who knew the attack would catalyze an irrational, expansionist military policy that would financially cripple the United States, along the lines of what happened in the Soviet Union from its occupation of Afghanistan. Instead of moving ahead on the guest worker program being negotiated with Mexico's President Vicente Fox—a first step to making the U.S.-Mexico border akin to that between California and Arizona, both states that had been on the other side of that border—the United States pursued policies that led to sharp and enduring spikes in deadly violence in both regions.

A Rising Tide of Anti-Deportation Activism

As the country contemplates new policies toward immigrants, as pundits focus on the Latino vote, and as fissures widen between the Republican Party's pragmatists and its vigilante Minutemen, one fact largely overlooked is that there is a burgeoning movement across the country seeking to slow or even destroy the deportation machine altogether, and it's not just Latinos who are behind this.

From Tacoma, Washington, to Washington, D.C., attorneys, activists, journalists, scholars, and religious leaders are joining forces with targeted communities on behalf of free movement and against government brutality. Some of these include legislative efforts, like the one Miami attorney Michael Ray described during a 2012 National Lawyers Guild workshop at which civil rights attorneys were training immigration lawyers on how to sue the government for civil rights claims. Ray recounted how, frustrated with the immigration judges' persistent refusal to accord the asylum claims of his Haitian clients with the respect given claims of people from other countries, he and four attorneys and human rights activists, asked for legislative change from their then-Rep. Carrie Meek (D-FL).

Rep. Meek gave the small group's efforts her immediate support. "She organized a lot of the meetings with Congresspeople and staff. The entire Florida delegation supported it," Ray said. Within about eight months of their initial meeting, Rep. Meek introduced a bill and it passed. The Haitian Refugee Fairness Act allowed Haitians to become legal residents without applying for a visa from a U.S. consulate abroad. Ray, who favors the abolition of deportations, estimates that as a result of this bill, 60,000 to 80,000 Haitians have acquired legal status that otherwise would have been denied them. I asked Rep. Meek, now eighty-seven, if her being a granddaughter of slaves influenced her work on behalf of Haitians. "Most definitely," she said. "America has required people to be on the outside looking in, and it takes all of us to change this."

AFSC staffer Migwe Kimemia shakes hands with former Dayton Human Relations Council director Thomas Wahlrab. Both played major roles in persuading the city of Dayton, Ohio, to actively welcome all immigrants, regardless of their legal status.

AFSC–Dayton

In the spring of 2012, a parish and activists of Chicago's Little Village responded to a call for unity with residents of Crete, Illinois, who objected to their city council's plan to allow the Correction Corporation of America to build a deportation jail. Crete President Michael Einhorn, who had been pushing for the facility, was incensed. "I'm not responsible to the people of Little Village," he said, according to a report by public radio WBEZ. Meanwhile, Crete residents collected signatures opposing the plan and members of parishes and activist groups undertook a nationally covered three-day march from Chicago's Little Village to Crete. On June 18, 2012, the Crete City Council voted to forgo further planning with the Correction Corporation of America.

Chicago-based artist and deportation abolitionist Rozalinda Borcila said Crete residents were initially skeptical: "They felt like a bunch of 'brown people' would elicit a hostile backlash." But their views shifted as Borcila explained to them that they too were stakeholders. Little Village residents were firm in their desire to protest the facility being built to lock them up. "Our proposal was, if you have 700 brown people" march through rural Crete, "we'll scare the crap out of them," Borcila said.

(n)IMBY Ink 4 by Jenny Polak. Ink on paper (11" x 14"). Based on accounts of village meetings, Polak's *(n)IMBY Ink* series commemorates the alliance of citizens and non-citizens who successfully fought to block the building of a new private detention center in Crete, Illinois.

(n)IMBY Ink 2 by Jenny Polak. Ink on paper (11" x 14").

The deportation abolitionists of Crete and Chicago are not alone. Shortly after that success, Florida anti-detention groups scuttled a decade-old plan underway that, according to a 2005 memorandum, would have allowed the Correction Corporation of America to build a 1,500-bed facility in Southwest Ranches in exchange for its agreement to pay the town $600,000 up front and 3 to 4 percent of its per diem compensation from the federal government. The opposition was an alliance of activists and lawyers who skillfully exploited conflicts between Southwest Ranches and the nearby city of Pembroke Pines, on which Southwest Ranches relies for fire and other services. The petitions and lawsuits opposing the deportation jail, including one for environmental impact assessments bearing on water and sewage treatment, appears to have eventually worn down U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officials, and a few days after Crete pulled out in Illinois, ICE itself backed down in Florida.

According to Burlington journalist and community organizer Jonathan Leavitt, the fight against what Michelle Alexander calls "the New Jim Crow" is also a fight against warehousing noncitizen residents. "Corporate prisons who only know how to maximize profits for shareholders have expanded their mission to incarcerating 50 percent of immigrants detained" in the United States, Leavitt writes in *Toward Freedom*. "Perhaps unsurprisingly the number of immigrants detained has exploded during the same period." Leavitt notes, "A group of Vermonters working out of church basements and living rooms is attempting to build a movement to push this conversation forward by passing a historic law banning Vermont's use of for-profit prisons." That bill is now in the state Senate.

Envisioning a Future Beyond the Nation-State

It is hard to say how many of those appalled by our deportation practices would favor open borders. Maybe a minority. But then again, the early protests against slavery were often about slave-owners' abusive treatment of slaves and not slavery per se. Concerned Christians or other humanitarians often pushed to ensure that masters be discouraged from cruelty, but not to end slavery entirely. After all, slavery had been around as long as anyone knew and contemplating its abolition struck many as foolhardy and thus pointless. And yet, as time wore on it became clear that as unlikely a world without slavery might seem, even more unlikely was that the institution might survive absent its loathsome abuses.

Of course some on the left might actively embrace the nation-state's territorial sovereignty, seeing this as the last bastion for democrats to stand against the tyranny of neoliberalism's global markets and a world of *homo economicus*. Such arguments of sentiment resonate with themes from *Cannibals, All: Slaves Without Masters!*, the 1857 pro-slavery tome by George Fitzhugh. Evoking the insecurity of the labor market in the North, he described the benevolent paternalism of masters toward their slaves and wrote, "Free laborers have not a thousandth part of the rights and liberties of negro slaves. Indeed, they have not a single right or a single liberty, unless it be the right or liberty to die." The book is a defense of marriage, the nation-state, tradition in general, and slavery in particular. There is as much logic in his arguments against divorce, for slavery, and against atheism as there is in his and others' defense of loyalties and the ties of nationalism.

Even amid the steady increases in the numbers of U.S.

Jenny Polak (jennypolak.com)

residents being arrested and deported, one can discern in the pattern of resistance to these trends an ineluctable progressive bent. The ratchet of humanity afforded different peoples and the protections of the rule of law over the long run generally if painfully slowly goes one way. This is an assertion with which I am aware many will disagree, and not without good cause. This is not without exception and certainly not without ongoing struggle, but the nativists who oppose half-measures are right in one respect. It seems hard to imagine that when the president responds to high school and college students by granting them quasi- or even pseudo-protection (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals means a deferral on removal, not its revocation), and when the state of Illinois grants drivers' licenses to undocumented people (even licenses that are stigmatizing and second-class or worse), and when the governor of Michigan approves state drivers' licenses for those who have received deferred action status, that this will not further integrate undocumented residents into civic life and make it more difficult to contemplate their arrests and removals.

Inspired by the Freedom Rides of the Civil Rights Movement, undocumented immigrants rode this "UndocuBus" from Arizona to North Carolina, speaking out against deportation and harassment.

Diane Ovalle (dianeovalle.com)

A Midwestern City Leads the Way

Ultimately, it is probably not capitalism but forces of commerce and adventure that long predate it that will lead to the abolition of restrictions on movement across national borders and eventually the demise of the nation altogether. For centuries parishes prohibited residence to fellow English subjects who had been born elsewhere, and the penalties for being caught in such a situation without a pass were, depending on if one were a repeat offender, imprisonment, branding, the loss of an ear, or, in the 1730s, "transportation" to the colony of Georgia. The fear was that rural poor would flood the cities and lead to chaos, not unlike fears of free movement across national borders today.

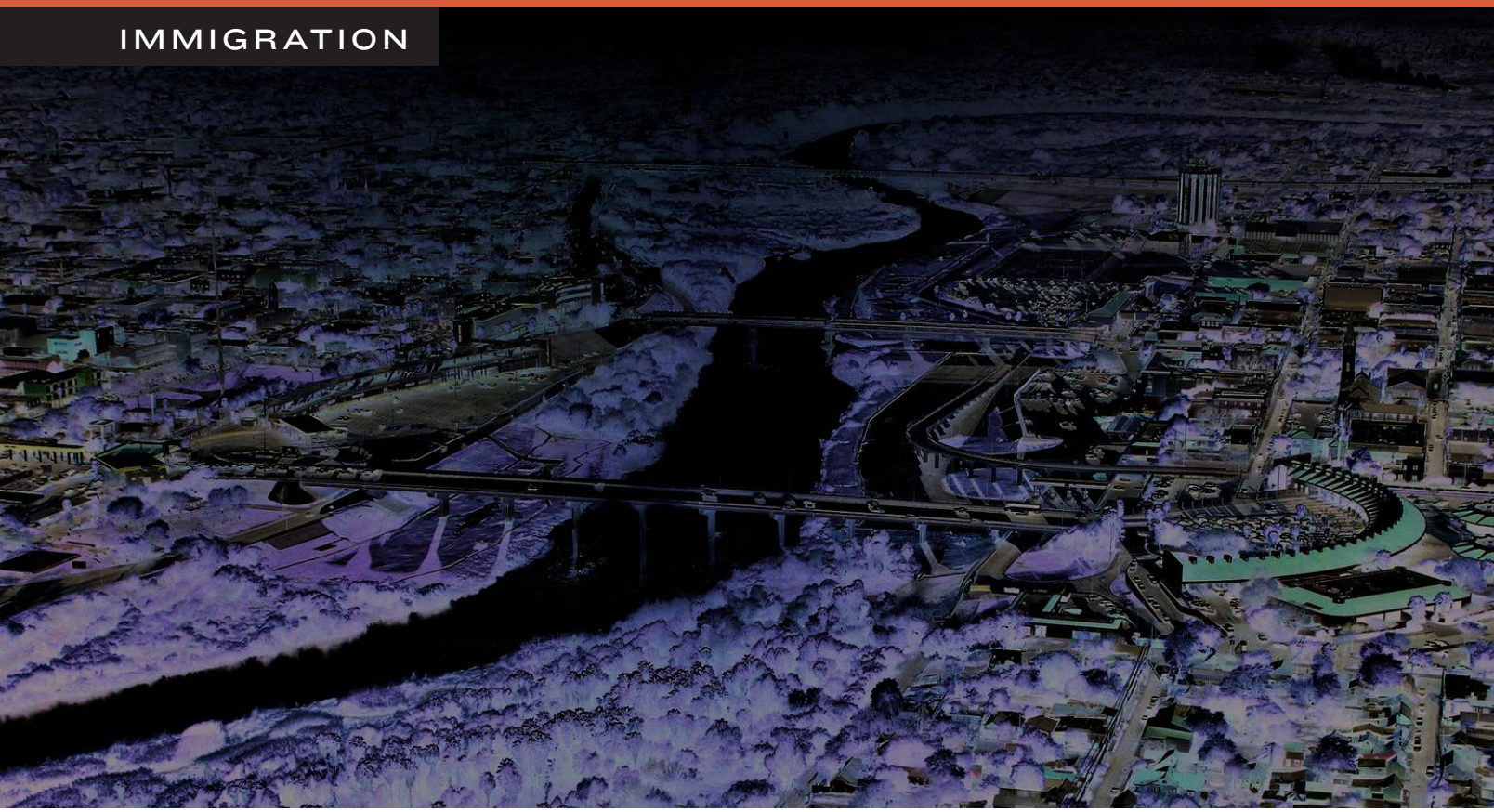
Of course today no one born in Ewell and found working in London will be deported to Georgia. You only need a toll or rail pass to go from New Jersey into New York, and a policy to the contrary would be deemed as laughable now as will similar restrictions on movement across national borders seem a few hundred years hence.

Indeed the city of Dayton, Ohio, is not waiting. In 2011 the city issued its Welcome Dayton report, a thirty-two-page document explaining why it is encouraging immigrants to settle there regardless of their legal status, even if they are not rich or computer engineers. While many cities and federal policies have targeted high-skilled immigrants for legal privileges, Dayton officials understand that an Indian professional, for instance, is more likely to desire to settle in a city that is diverse and encourages Indian grocers, music stores, and restaurants than in a city without these, regardless of the proprietors' legal status; and it knows that the prosperity of these communities will be good for the entire city.

The opening pages of the report states:

> The U.S. has a checkered history of welcoming and rejecting new people. The complaints heard historically are, "They will take our jobs," "they don't want to learn English," "they won't integrate into our culture," and similar statements are heard today about immigrants. However, our history also shows that, given time and respect, acceptance and assimilation is generally, if not universally, the norm. The question then is, will we learn from history, i.e. repeat the criticisms and resistance, or provide the welcome to our newest residents? We are asking this community to implement the Welcome Dayton plan now so we can receive the gifts inherent in all of us today, rather than wait generations before individual and community dreams can be fulfilled.

In 1860, it would have been difficult for Rep. Carrie Meek's grandparents to imagine not only that they would soon be citizens, but also that their granddaughter and great-grandson would eventually be members of Congress. Dayton seems to have arrived back from the future, and the requests it's making of its citizens are fine ones for us to be asking of our country as well. ■



Four bridges connect Laredo, Texas, to the Mexican city of Nuevo Laredo. "As children we traveled back and forth constantly," the author writes.

Healing the Wound

Immigration, Activism, and Policies

BY NORMA E. CANTÚ

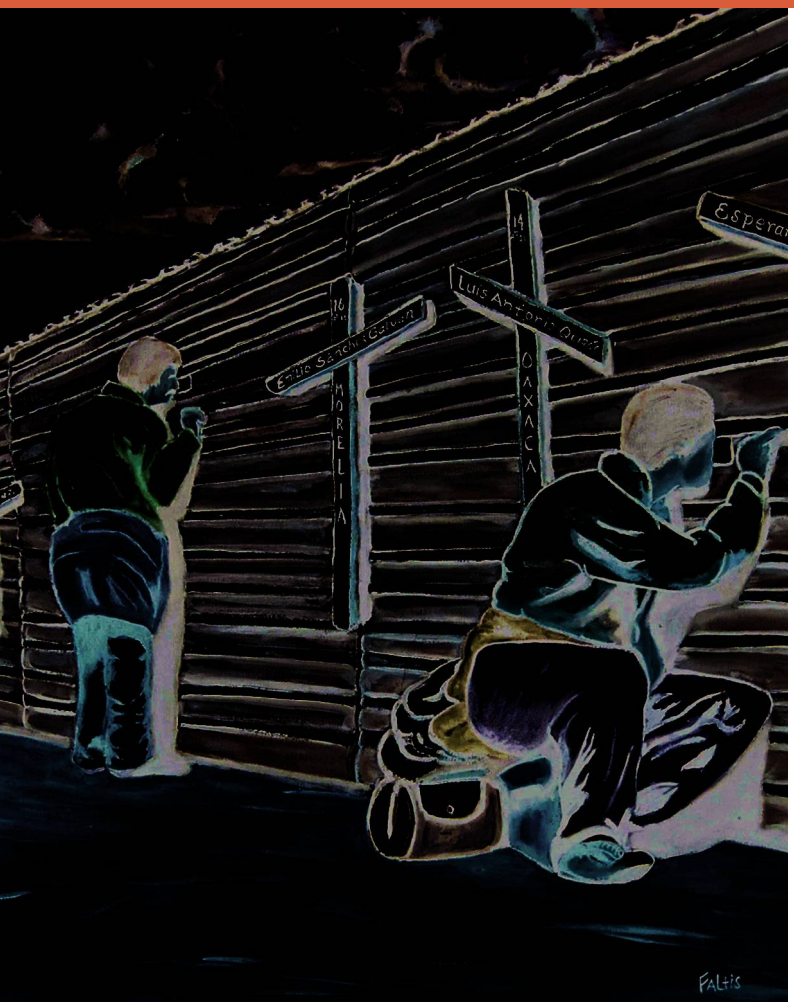
Both my paternal and maternal families have traversed the U.S.-Mexico border back and forth for generations; some uncles and aunts were born on one side, some on the other. Like hundreds if not thousands of other border families, we have maintained family ties and led lives across national boundaries. As a result, we are not your typical "immigrant family": my mother, after all, had been born in Texas—so returning to the United States from Mexico in 1948 was a kind of coming home.

For all my relatives, those who remained in Mexico and those who migrated to the United States, life has remained split. One cousin, Alicia, went to live in Los Angeles, leaving her daughter with my aunt and uncle in Monterrey, the capital of the Mexican state of Nuevo León; another cousin's child paid a coyote and came to the United States, only to be robbed and forced to return penniless. One cousin, Gonzalo, crossed the river, settled in Chicago, married, had a family, and then returned to the small farming community of Anáhuac Nuevo León, where he was murdered in a bar brawl. His family in Chicago remains unknown to us. My mother, while U.S.-born, lived in Mexico and crossed to work as a maid in a banker's home until she married. Now in her eighties, she recalls how she traveled by train every week from Laredo to Rodríguez, Nuevo León, carrying goods for my grandmother and my aunt.

As children we traveled back and forth constantly, sometimes with my parents, sometimes alone, to visit grandparents, purchase certain goods, or just visit friends and have dinner in Mexico. The same freedom was not there for many family members who did not have papers to cross into the United States. In the past, my family had moved pretty freely back and forth. Some of my father's siblings were born in the United States. As a child I often wondered why we even had a border and what it all meant to have to declare "U.S. citizen" to the uniformed young man who waved us through. But all the same, I knew it was serious business.

NORMA E. CANTÚ is a professor of Latin@ (Latina/o) Studies and English at the University of Missouri, Kansas City. The U.S.-Mexico borderlands constitute the main focus of her activist scholarship and are the main subject of her scholarly research and creative work.

Al Rendon © 2013 (alrendon.com)



Crosses on the border wall memorialize the thousands of individuals who have died trying to reach the United States. *Border Hopes* by Chris Faltis.

One time, we were returning from one of our visits to my paternal grandparents' house in Monterrey. The immigration officer asked the usual, "Where do you live?" and my sister, who must have been about five, dashed off, stating, "Voy a tomar agua" ("I'm going to drink water") as she ran to the nearby water fountain. Her answer meant that we all were ushered into a small room where another official questioned my parents, my brother, and me separately. We had been trained to answer the question with "Laredo, Texas," and from a really young age we memorized our address: 104 E. San Carlos Street. But for some reason, my sister chose to ignore the question. I remember being scared and anxious. I was about nine or so. Ultimately the officials were satisfied with our answers and allowed us to go home.

Unfortunately, these stories persist. About five years ago, some friends from Houston were visiting and crossed from Laredo to Nuevo Laredo. On their return, something triggered a secondary inspection, and the immigration officers questioned the children separately from the parents. My friend's daughter, who was about nine at the time, is still traumatized. Of course, I am certain that, had they been white, they would not have been suspect and would not have been interrogated.

Imagining a World Without Borders

Sometimes I try to envision a land without immigration and without migrants (at least without political or economic migrants): a land where people move freely and where the only motivation to travel is sheer pleasure and adventure, not economic need, or the need to flee violence or corruption. At one time, I believed that the European Union was seeking to attain such a goal—a borderless continent! But although it seems to be working out the details of free passage for its citizens regardless of country of origin and making it easier for citizens to travel for work-related endeavors, the European Union's socio-economic policies and immigration decisions leave plenty to be desired (the militarization of its borders becomes particularly apparent in its response to migrants from Africa settling in the EU countries without legal documentation). Yet, it is still a benefit to travel without having to show passports and get visas from one country to the other.

Such thoughts lead me to ask, "Why can't we do the same in the Americas?" Indeed, why not dream on an even greater scale and advocate for a Global Marshall Plan, as suggested by Michael Lerner, and for the eradication of all borders? The reimagined "world order" would be one of cooperation and mutual respect. A Global Marshall Plan would address the economic disparities that drive people out of the global South. It would enable "first-world" countries to eliminate many of the reasons for emigration. Why would someone leave their home, their loved ones, and the landscape they know and love, to come to an alien and often hostile place?

Unfortunately, the current reality is a nightmare in which NAFTA and drug trafficking continue to wreak havoc on both sides of the border. I am not naïve enough to believe that within my lifetime such a reality will exist, but I can still dream of a true borderless world where even between the various continents we will be able to visit freely and learn from each other. Borders are, after all, arbitrary, established by political exigencies, and almost always a result of treaties that end wars between countries or establish coalitions among groups of people. Borders are essentially arbitrary and tenuous.

I caught a glimpse of the changeability of borders in the late 1990s, when I visited Vietnam, where my brother had been killed thirty years earlier. We stopped at what had been the border between North Vietnamese and South Vietnamese territory: a small marker at the seventeenth parallel that honored those who had died for their country. Tears came as what I knew became palpable: my brother's death—along with the deaths of more than a million Vietnamese people and 50,000 U.S. troops—had passed into history. All that remained was this simple marker. I imagined what the Texas-Mexico border would be like in some future without borders, without the guards and the customs officials, without the lively commerce, without the pollution and

Chris Faltis

oppression of what Chicana scholar Gloria Anzaldúa once called an open wound "where the third world grates against the first and bleeds." I wondered if there would be a marker honoring all who had died crossing the Rio Grande or La Línea, all who had since 1848 suffered life on the border.

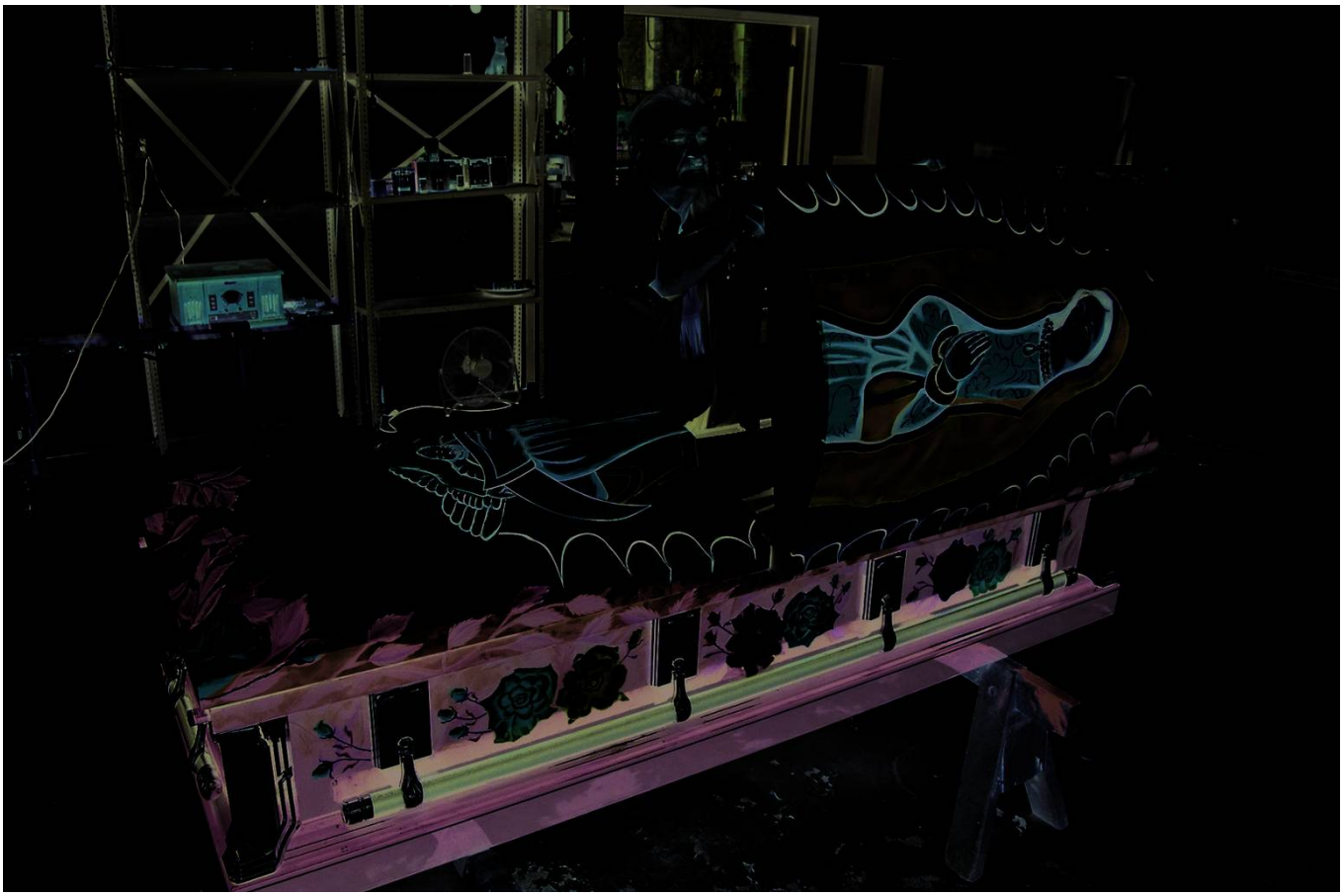
Such a vision of a future without a real border and with a marker acknowledging the history of that strip of land is comforting somehow. I am heartened by those who advocate for a change not just in the current debate on immigration from Mexico but at a more radical and dramatic level. Let's work to change our government's policies and build international or global organizations to accommodate a truly free people who can come and go, moving to where they feel they can contribute the most.

Where We Go From Here

So what now? Arguably, what can happen at a local, concrete level is a concerted effort to remedy the situation of thousands of tax-paying, hard-working U.S. residents who might not have the requisite *papeles* (papers) to grant them the same rights and privileges of others living in this country. It's important to raise awareness about the historical inaccuracy of the "us vs. them" mentality. Unless we are talking about Native Americans, and to a certain degree the Mexican American and Puerto Rican communities, the "us" was a "*them*" at some point. This is a nation of immigrants.

Like most of the world's countries, the United States needs to re-imagine immigrants' status vis-à-vis the capitalist empire-building infrastructures that undergird our global social order in the twenty-first century. In *The Shock Doctrine*, Naomi Klein demonstrates how capitalist mechanisms that undermine people's sense of self-reliance destroy social structures built on the values of humankind and replace them with destructive structures that benefit multinational corporations. It is no accident that the immigrants who came to work in post-Katrina New Orleans were abused and violated, or that those who work the jobs no one else wants are the most reviled by the conservative, right-wing Tea Party members.

"Go back to where you came from"—a phrase flung at me as I was taking a walk in Wisconsin a few days after September 11—has become all too familiar to many brown people in the wake of that tragedy. This phrase says more about the psyche of the collective than about the individual who, emboldened by right-wing media and political demagogues, finds a need to spout such venom. It is a violence born of igno-



Al Rendon © 2013 (alrendon.com)

Ronald Rocha, a photograph from the *Mi Cultura* series by San Antonio artist Al Rendon.

rance and of fear. A world free of borders and of the violence perpetrated by such borders also means a world free of fear. That is the aim.

Healing from Fear

When the wound in this country is treated, it will heal. We may have to cauterize it with policies to assuage the disease-like fear that is causing this wound. This wound has festered for over 250 years, at least since the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. It opened when Spanish conquest rent Indigenous culture apart and established a paradigm for violence. It will require bold action and daring policies to overcome this legacy of fear and ignorance. Fear on various levels has created a culture of distrust and hatred perpetuated by the militarization of the border zone, *la zona fronteriza,* first by the military, then by the Texas Rangers, and most recently by the Border Patrol and other Immigrations and Custom Enforcement (ICE) agencies. Inherent in this militarization one finds abuse and racist policies.

Our country stands at a crossroads. Even as we work on legalizing the status of the thousands of immigrants who are already part of our social fabric, we can work toward eliminating the fear and ignorance that stoke anti-immigrant sentiment and eliminating the economic factors that push people to emigrate. The massive global economy that drives migration must be re-imagined and re-conceptualized. It's time for us to update our notions of what constitutes a nation-state and what it means to be a citizen of the world with rights and privileges that all nations must respect.

At the core of the argument of those who would "close the door" to new immigrants is fear—a fear that those who come will change the landscape and the "face" of who we are as a society in the United States. The reality is that in many areas of the United States, this has already happened. An aggressive educational campaign focused on the multicultural nature and plurality of our society could, I believe, eliminate the ignorance behind that fear. Xenophobia can be eliminated, but I am not sure it can ever be totally unlearned. What will work is a radical dismantling of the structures that sustain fearmongering and a lack of knowledge about the "other." When there is no knowledge of a people's history, language, or culture, it is not difficult to become fearful and to develop policies based on that fear.

For fairness and justice to triumph, we must all work together to bring about changes at the individual level, reaching out to people in our own circles to inform those who may not have access to information. We must call on all governments to establish immigration policies that honor immigrants' human dignity and needs. And we must begin to create links with groups across borders to work toward a borderless world. ■

How to Stop a Deportation

BY PUCK LO

Steve Li embraces his mother after a news conference in 2010. Li's friends and professors mobilized a fierce campaign to halt his deportation after his unexpected arrest.

AP Photo/Paul Sakuma

On an overcast September morning that seemed like any other, twenty-year-old Steve Li woke up early and began getting ready for his classes at the City College of San Francisco.

He ignored the unexpected ringing of the doorbell, until it was replaced by an urgent pounding at the door. Moments later, as he stood in the bathroom, he heard his mother's voice as she answered the door.

What happened next is a nightmare familiar to some 11 million undocumented people who reside in the United States, many of whom live day to day with uncertainty.

Deportations are on the rise. According to data from the Department of Homeland Security, last year they hit a record high of nearly 410,000, a rate double what it had been over the previous ten years. And that number doesn't include "voluntary returns"—mostly people who are picked up by border patrol and forced to leave. Under the two Obama administrations, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has deported more people than during Bush's presidency. Nearly half of those deported in fiscal year 2012 had no criminal record, like Steve Li. Of those with criminal convictions, most were convicted of low-level offenses such as forgery, driving without a license, or drinking in public.

Too often, individuals facing deportation have endured this process in isolation, sometimes further isolated by feelings of shame. But with increasing frequency, communities—often those with the fewest legal rights—are organizing to expose and resist the violence of deportation.

It is an understatement to say that it is difficult to stop a deportation. Legal codes regulating immigration and deportation can be arcane and esoteric, and are described as among the most complicated of U.S. laws. Nevertheless, victories are possible. One ad hoc defense group convinced a state senator to intervene in a deportation. Another campaign halted a seemingly irreversible final removal order at the eleventh hour—the procedural equivalent of slamming the brakes on a train and watching it come to a screeching halt at the edge of a cliff. Other times, victory manifests in meaningful but less measurable forms: a box full of letters, an extension granted in an appeals process, or a packed room full of supporters.

The Arrest and Detention of Steve Li

While Li showered, five ICE officers searched his family's small San Francisco apartment.

Li, known for his ready smile and happy-go-lucky attitude, had lived in the United States since he was eleven. He had not realized that he was undocumented until that moment—emerging from his shower in a pair of sweats and a T-shirt—when the agents handcuffed him. The agents told Li that he would be deported back to Peru, his place of birth.

Handcuffed, he started crying.

"I didn't know what to think," he said later. "Just the thought of me going back to a country I no longer know, and I have really no memory of . . . I just went through the movements."

Li's parents, Chinese nationals, hadn't realized their visas had expired. They had lived legally in the country for decades and hadn't realized that anything had changed. They thought they were in the process of applying for asylum, Li said. Both had driver's licenses and work permits.

The ICE agents, clad in dark blue and black, interrogated the lanky, bespectacled youth. They wanted to know where his father, a small business owner, worked.

PUCK LO is a writer living in Oakland, California. In 2011 she worked as a researcher and community-building coordinator to support undocumented student organizing at UC Berkeley.

"They said they were going to help me if I cooperated with them," recalled Li, whose normally cheerful expression flickered with the memory. "They told me, 'You won't have to get deported if you tell me where your dad is.'"

"I was just shocked," he remembered. "I just kept saying, 'I don't know.' But once they found my dad, the ICE officers told me: 'You're done. You lied to me. You're going to get deported now, and we'll do everything we can to deport you.'"

Li and his mother were loaded up into separate black vans. They were not allowed to talk. Steve watched through the windows as the vehicles traced the familiar route to his father's shop. He wondered if he would make it to school today.

After the ICE agents picked up his father, Li and his parents were shackled and seated separately on a bus with about fifty others and driven to the Sacramento Country Jail. They endured long waits before being processed and were forced to sleep on dirty floors in overcrowded holding tanks. Once processed, Li was not eligible to see a judge or to consult a lawyer. All he knew was that he had a final deportation order and that he would be deported to Peru as soon as possible.

Once a person is in removal proceedings, chances of winning are bleak. People fighting their cases in immigration court must pay for their own lawyers. As a result, almost 70 percent of people detained don't have legal counsel, said immigration lawyer Sin Yen Ling, who would eventually become Li's attorney. Even with a lawyer, the path to freedom is fraught with bureaucratic obstacles.

"The legal options to stay in the United States are narrow in scope and not everyone fits within the confines of what the law requires," Ling said. "Compounding that problem is a legal system—immigration court—that operates and functions with a purpose of removing people as fast as the court can without recognizing people's due process rights."

While in custody, Li was unable to reach anyone outside the jail. The phones were only set up to call phone numbers that had prepaid accounts to accept collect calls, he said.

"It was like one day we just dropped off the face of the earth, and no one knew where we were," he said.

He couldn't reach his parents, and didn't even know if his parents were being deported. Finally, a month later, another inmate informed Li that his parents had been released.

"I was really happy, because if my parents got out, I thought that this nightmare would finally be over," Li remembered.

Soon afterward he was taken back to San Francisco, where he waited for hours in the ICE holding tank.

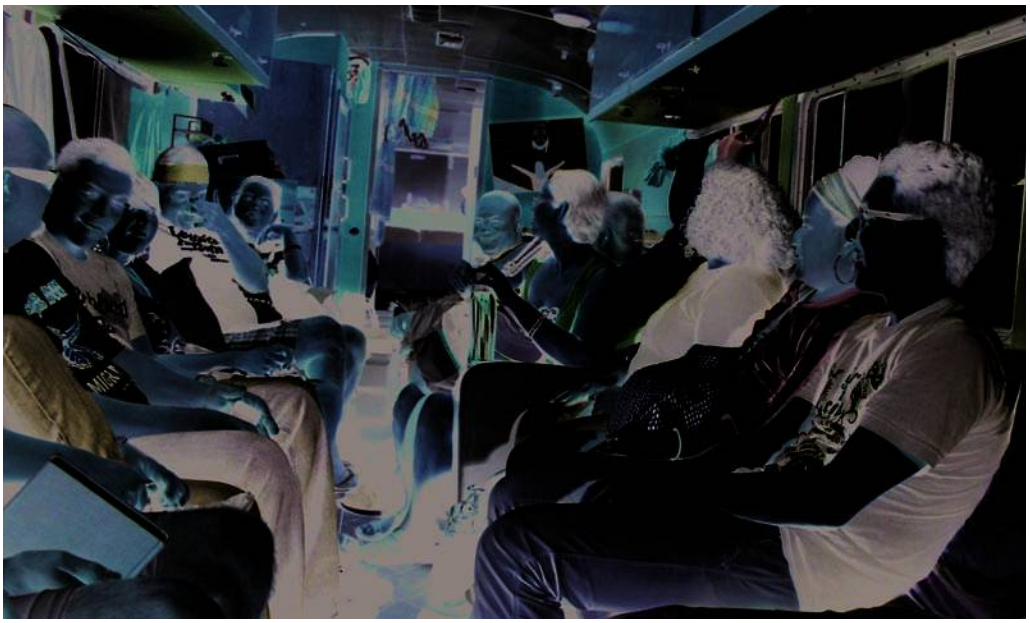
"Some people there I heard were getting released, and others were actually going to be sent to Arizona. I really thought that I was one of the people who were going to be released," Li recalled. "Until someone came in and gave me a paper saying that I had to sign it, and that I was going to be transferred to a detention center in Arizona. And if I don't sign it it's 'failure to comply,' and that I will have to go to prison for five years."

Li boarded the plane in a daze.

"At that time I really thought everything was over, that they were just going to put me on a plane and fly me somewhere without anyone knowing at all. I just felt hopeless," he said.

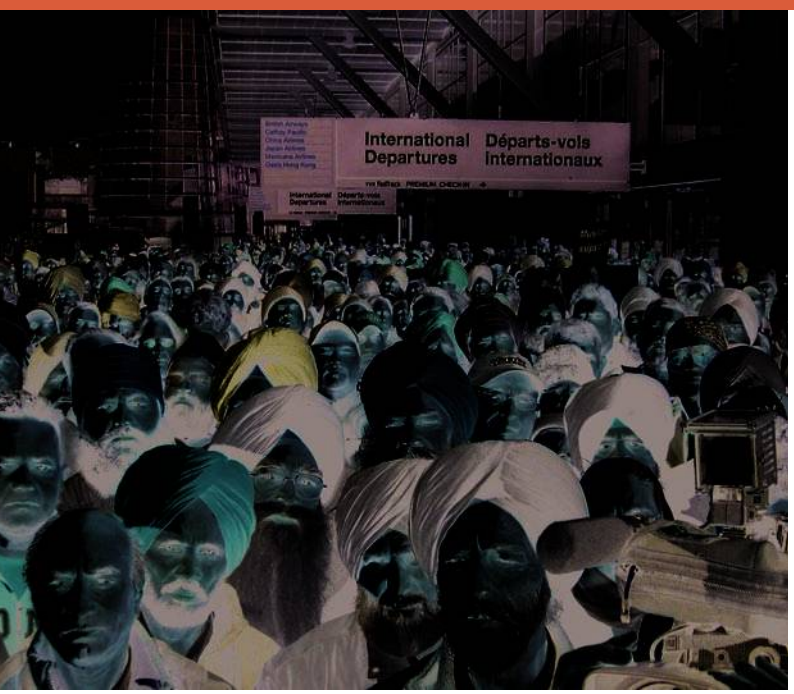
On an average day, ICE employees arrest 108 people, process 1,177 arrestees into detention centers, keep 33,384 prisoners in detention centers (for an average of twenty-nine days per person), and deport 1,057 people from the United States.

Li would spend two months in detention in Arizona, sharing a cell with sixty-four other prisoners at a facility with about 400 other people awaiting, or fighting, deportation. He watched people come and go. Some had been fighting their cases for years. Others "come in Monday and are deported on



Diane Ovalle (dianeovalle.com)

Communities are increasingly "organizing to expose and resist the violence of deportation," Lo writes. Here, undocumented activists participate in a cross-country ride for justice as part of a "No Papers, No Fear" campaign.



Roughly 1,500 protesters pack Canada's Vancouver International Airport in an effort to stop the deportation of refugee claimant Laibar Singh.

Wednesday." He passed the time helping other prisoners who needed help filling out their paperwork. He talked to them and was moved by their stories.

"They were risking their lives to come here, to the United States," he said, sounding sad. "Hearing other people who were in the same situation as I am—who were just students here trying to make something better for themselves—waiting for deportation, just really opened my eyes to this injustice that we have in America. I myself didn't know anything about this, until I finally saw it in person. And it just made me really mad."

In Arizona, Li was finally able to call home, by spending his wages of $1 a day that he made working full-time as a dishwasher in detention on the pay phone. He learned that he had a lawyer. He also heard that his friends and family were holding demonstrations and rallies, and fighting for his release.

"When I heard that, it really kept me going forward, really helped keep my spirits up," he said, looking less grim. "That there were people out there who cared about me and were fighting for me to come back home."

Looking to the Example of Laibar Singh

If a formula could be found for how to succeed in halting a deportation, it may well be culled from the tumultuous year-and-a-half campaign to keep Laibar Singh in Canada.

Three years before Li and his parents disappeared from their San Francisco apartment into the byzantine system of criminal alien removal proceedings, at the departures section of the Vancouver International Airport in Canada, Singh, a man en route to his deportation flight to India, watched with disbelief the crowd that had gathered to prevent his plane from leaving.

Singh, a forty-eight-year-old Punjabi from a lower caste in India, originally arrived in Canada in 2003 to seek asylum. Three years later he fell ill, became paralyzed, and fought his case from a bed in a Sikh temple. A few years later, he inadvertently became a local hero and national symbol.

To prevent his scheduled departure on December 10, 2007, about 1,500 protesters—South Asian grandmothers with young children, men wearing turbans, and allies from other communities—had taken over the entire international departures area. A cavalcade of cabs with Punjabi drivers had given free rides to protesters. Buses full of impassioned supporters stalled traffic on area roadways and bridges.

For hours, people continued to arrive, in droves. At the center of the commotion—amid the shouting, impromptu bullhorn speeches, and chants—was Singh, looking dignified, upright in the back seat of a taxi. He was surrounded by his community—people who saw their own grievances mirrored in his mistreatment.

Handwritten cardboard signs read: "Save Life of Mr. Singh," "Wrong Deportation," and "Shame On Haste Decision."

Airport police stared from the sidelines, looking bewildered.

"Nobody is going to move an inch!" a couple of women yelled at them accusingly in Punjabi.

Singh had entered Canada as a refugee claimant, utilizing a strategy common to many refugee seekers. He carried falsified papers that he declared as fake to Canadian immigration authorities at the time of his arrival. Although both international and Canadian refugee law recognize that Singh's entry was legal, media reports later constantly referred to Singh's entry as "illegal." Harjap Grewal, an organizer with No One Is Illegal, an anti-colonial immigrant and refugee rights group, said this characterization sowed xenophobia among white Canadians.

Until 2006, Singh worked jobs in construction and agriculture. At the same time, he continued to apply for asylum. The Canadian government denied his request. While seeking other legal alternatives, he contracted a spinal infection that left him paralyzed from the neck down. In 2007, while Singh was receiving treatment at a medical care center, he was notified by the Canadian Border Services Agency that he would be flown back to India the following day. Within hours, an angry and indignant South Asian community—mobilized by a strong independent media network serving Punjabi, Hindu, and Urdu readers and radio listeners—quickly came to his aid. They planned an emergency rally for the following morning, and 300 people pledged to support the ailing man. That evening, Singh announced that he was taking sanctuary in a gurdwara, or Sikh temple.

During the following months, No One Is Illegal, various gurdwaras, and conservative South Asian politicians formed

Source Unknown (found on noii-van.resist.ca)

a coalition to support Singh's right to stay in Canada on humanitarian grounds.

Grewal's organizing work with No One Is Illegal was unpaid. For him and his partner, Harsha Walia, organizing around Singh's case was at times "like a full-time job," he said later. Both Grewal and Walia worked with No One Is Illegal, and they were well known by the South Asian community. No One Is Illegal, according to Grewal, has enjoyed an astounding 90 percent success rate in stopping—not just delaying—deportation cases and winning full legal status for claimants applying for humanitarian relief.

Over the next half year, Grewal watched Singh's health improve during his stay at the gurdwara as a result of home-cooked meals and frequent visits from supporters. He watched Singh's face brighten as he admired drawings children made for him. The two shared stories about Punjab, the region where Singh and Grewal's families are from. Grewal talked about the solidarity work his collective engaged in with First Nations communities, and Singh expressed much interest.

Meanwhile, Vancouver's South Asian radio stations broadcast numerous talk show conversations about Singh defying his deportation order. At gurdwaras after prayer, Grewal and Walia spoke to hundreds of people at a time, distributed flyers translated into Punjabi, and participated in countless debates on immigration and race with the ubiquitous family friends everyone called "auntie."

"The conversation kept being started and talked about," Grewal said. "It got to the point where either your parents or your kids were talking about Laibar Singh."

Laibar Singh prepares to leave the Sikh temple where he took sanctuary after resisting his deportation order.

AP Photo/The Canadian Press, Darryl Dyck

The Mobilization of Steve Li's Community

In San Francisco in November 2010, twenty-one-year-old Marilyn Luu began to worry.

Usually, she saw Steve Li at dinners they shared with their former Asian American Studies professor, Sang Chi, who taught at City College of San Francisco. But for three weeks, Li hadn't returned texts or calls. So Luu went on Facebook, hoping to clear things up. She sent a message to a relative of Li's who lived outside the United States and was stunned when she received word that Li was in detention in Arizona and awaiting deportation to Peru.

Luu called Sang Chi. "We knew right away we had to do something about it," she said.

A small core group, comprised of Luu, Professor Chi, other friends of Li's, Attorney Yen, and others, began meeting every few days. They planned rallies, press conferences, and phone-banking parties to spread awareness and flood senators with messages to support Li. They collected hundreds of letters.

"Time was of the essence," Luu recalled. "Everything felt very spontaneous, very last-minute. We barely had time to put the speeches together. But it was the most amazing thing—it always worked out."

Hundreds of people came to rallies. Meanwhile, Attorney Yen brainstormed some legal and bureaucratic hold-ups that could push back Li's deportation date. She applied for a "deferred action" with ICE. If granted, Li's deportation would be delayed. If her application were denied, Yen figured, she would ask Senator Dianne Feinstein, Senator Barbara Boxer or Representative Nancy Pelosi to sponsor a private bill that would, even if voted down, automatically buy Li some time. If that also failed, she aimed to try to delay Li's deportation for six months by requesting that the Peruvian government delay issuing documents to ICE that were necessary for Li's deportation.

"Generally, if the government detains someone with a final order for more than six months, the Supreme Court requires that the government release that person if the person cannot be removed after six months," she explained.

Then, after three weeks of protests, press conferences,

and adrenaline-rushed organizing, Yen told Luu that the immigration office would be deporting Li in three days.

"We thought, 'I guess we did all we could,'" Luu remembered. "We'd better start planning for what we could do for Steve once he gets to Peru. We kind of gave up."

In Arizona, the news hit Li hard when he got on the phone with his lawyer that night.

"There was nothing else I could do," he recalled thinking. "I was just really sad. I talked to my parents, and my mom was crying, and my dad was crying too. All my friends were crying, and I was just getting really depressed."

That night, Li couldn't sleep. The next morning, he couldn't bring himself to eat anything.

He was in for yet another shock.

At the urging of Attorney Yen and others, at the eleventh hour, Senator Feinstein finally agreed to intervene. She introduced a private bill that sought to grant Li an immigrant visa and stop his deportation. While it never passed Congress (and few expected it to), the introduction of the bill alone put his deportation on hold for a year.

The same day that Senator Feinstein introduced her bill, Li was released. Later that day, he sat, incredulous, on a Greyhound bus, which plodded north through the desert landscape. He was going home.

The Mobilization to Protect Laibar Singh

For the first few weeks of his stay seeking sanctuary at the gurdwara, Singh's health seemed to improve dramatically. He regained limited arm and hand motion, and he was able to sit up. His spirits were high.

Then, by mid-August Singh's health had deteriorated. Concerned caretakers rushed Singh to the hospital. They were devastated when the following night nearly thirty uniformed officers, border services agents, and undercover officers arrived to haul him away. His deportation was scheduled to take place in five days.

"That was a brutal moment," Grewal recalled. "They arrested him, took him to a detention center. There he was put on concrete slab bed, without bedding. He was screaming."

Singh's supporters flew into action, organizing delegations at regional citizenship and immigration offices across Canada. They continued pushing for a humanitarian review of his case, spoke to the press, and delivered letters of support for Singh to politicians. Eventually, one of those politicians—Public Safety Minister Stockwell Day—granted Singh a sixty-day stay of removal.

By October, 35,000 people had signed a petition supporting Singh's right to stay on compassionate and humanitarian grounds. His advocates continued winning him stays and extensions, securing victory in twenty-day increments. But the endgame was near. In late November the Canadian government refused Singh's humanitarian and compassionate claim. They announced Singh's newest scheduled deportation date: December 10.

Tensions were high. Momentum was building, Grewal said. One demonstration in the nearby city of Surrey—a South Asian stronghold—brought out 800 passionate supporters who braved a "huge snow dump." Their efforts were completely ignored by the English-speaking press.

As a cold December approached, Singh and his supporters braced themselves. Conservative South Asian politicians continued to petition Stockwell Day, who had granted Singh's last stay of deportation. No One Is Illegal spread the word far and near that on the day of the deportation, everyone should congregate at the airport.

But nothing could have prepared Grewal for the turnout he saw on that day. It was triple what he had expected—about 1,500 people. As the massive crowd formed a protective human shield around the taxi that held Singh, Grewal thought with joy, "My job organizing is done."

"That was the energy," he said later. "People had done their own organizing—the individuals who told their kids to take off school and got their families out there. That's what a truly grassroots movement is."

After hours of raucous but peaceful protest, the Canadian Border Services Agency decided to call it a day. Singh's departure flight left without him. There was no word on a reschedule.

"For safety and security reasons, Mr. Singh's deportation has been delayed," Canadian Border Services Agency spokes person Derek Mellon told the *Canadian Press* that day.

The cheering, victorious crowd—which included an ecstatic Singh—dispersed.

Steve Li's Bittersweet Victory

Today, two years after his incarceration and whirlwind escape from deportation, Li is still quick to laugh and as easy-going as ever.

Last fall, he transferred to the University of California, Davis, where he majors in Asian American Studies. He says he's considering a career in health care, and he mentions with pride that he attended a summer program for pre-med students at Stanford University.

"That was really nice, and I got to meet a lot of students who want to go into the health care field as well," he said.

He's also speaking at events in Davis and building awareness about undocumented Asian Pacific Islanders.

But his voice drops when he mentions his parents, who, months after his own release from detention, were deported to China.

"I was definitely not expecting that," he said haltingly. "Seeing them being forced to leave the country to go back to China, a country that they have not been back to for over thirty years—and to go back without really anything to show the family was really sad."

Because of his own immigration status, Li is unable to visit

them. And his parents are barred from applying for a visa for ten years, he said.

"I definitely cannot leave the country, so I don't know really when I'll be able to see them again," he said, then fell silent.

Li himself has been able to remain in the United States, thanks to Senator Feinstein's bill, which she reintroduced in 2012. But this year, when the bill expires, Li hopes he'll have qualified for a two-year stay under Obama's "Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals" program, which allows many students who would have been eligible for the DREAM Act to stay for two years and possibly qualify for work permits.

For now, Li said, he'll focus on that—and graduating.

"There's really no plan after that," the twenty-two-year-old said. "Being an undocumented immigrant, really you can't plan in advance because you never know what is going to happen."

Political Backlash Against Laibar Singh

The year after Singh's deportation was so dramatically stopped was not easy on him or his supporters.

The English language press attacked him vituperatively, framing the costs of his illness as a burden to and abuse of the Canadian health care system. Reporters described his supporters as "a mob." Right-wing pundits accused him of "hiding" and "evading the law." Articles written by journalists often used terms identical to those they used to describe Osama bin Laden, activist Grewal noted wryly.

"This had become a national issue," said Grewal. "It really had an impact on people that was really hard—recognizing how racist a society we really live in."

South Asian parents complained that their children suffered increased racial harassment at schools. Within the broad base of South Asian community that had supported Singh, fractures began to worsen, and more conservative South Asian politicians quietly stepped away.

"Suddenly, people withdrew their support from him for political or ideological reasons," Grewal said. "Some people were starting to say stuff like, this isn't good for the community, that shutting down an airport isn't something a respectable community does."

With supporters stressed and divided, Singh's days in Canada were numbered. In October 2008, no longer able to endure living in limbo, Singh announced his decision to return to India.

It's a loss Grewal said he still feels today.

Lessons for Future Anti-Deportation Campaigns

Part of what makes organizing against detention so difficult is immigration laws are extremely technical and complex, and difficult to fight without expertise, according to immigration lawyers. People in custody are often moved rapidly and without warning.

What's more, immigration and asylum laws are different in every country and they constantly change, so it seems nearly impossible to draw any commonalities for organizing purposes.

However, deportation cases do not exist in a vacuum.

"As activists and community organizers, we are the people who need to understand the legal process but also provide options," Grewal said. "Once you've lost your hearing, a lawyer might say to you—'OK, there's nothing more you can do.' But we as organizers know that there's still plenty to do—everything from blocking a deportation to having a campaign. No politician is ever going to tell you those are options."

Looking back now, Grewal said he thinks he can pinpoint the exact moment that could have changed everything in Singh's case. It was right after the announcement had been made that Singh's deportation had been stopped. It was right before everyone went home.

"It was the highest point of the campaign—but we allowed it to go back to politicians, who said they would reflect on it to make a decision," he said. "That was our mistake. If politicians are saying you should ask for a one-year stay, then we should tell them no, we are still asking for permanent status, now."

He recalled a different sanctuary case that No One Is Illegal had worked on from 2005 to 2007. After two years of living in a church, Iranian refugee claimant Amir Kazemian was suddenly arrested and was in an immigration cell, ready to be deported. But at that moment, the years of high-profile campaigning and organizing finally came together, Grewal said.

"Immigration gave him status on the spot," he said. "We don't believe it happens, that the only victories that are possible are, get a stay, a year. But a stop of a deportation isn't a victory—status is the victory. The person being able to stay is the victory."

He added: "This is something I've been thinking about. If you're organizing without any concerns of what politicians might or might not do—they're still going to do what they're going to do. You don't need to sit at the table."

After the airport rally, Grewal recalled: "More conservative elements in the community were literally saying to us, 'Stop having these demos. We're trying to work something out here with the politicians like Stockwell Day.'"

He paused.

"What happens when you stop organizing is you lose the momentum while waiting for politicians to act," he added. "That day at the airport—what would it have been like if the airport had been shut down for more than five hours?" ■

Detail of *Undocumented Borderland Flowers* by Consuelo Jimenez Underwood. In this "map of the U.S.-Mexico borderlands, the border is a red, painful wound," the author writes.

Conseulo J. Underwood

Rethinking Immigration with Art

BY LAURA E. PEREZ

One of the areas today that most needs what art abounds in—creativity, artfulness, and vision—is immigration policy. The arts can contribute to rethinking immigration in both the popular imagination and in legal policy in ways that reflect the increasingly open, curious, and culturally interwoven nation, continent, and globe that we inhabit. The arts can also guide us toward policies crafted with greater generosity, compassion, and pragmatism than the immigration policies crafted during the nineteenth-century era of colonial U.S. imperialist expansion and pseudoscientific racism. They can guide us beyond cultural Eurocentrism toward greater openness, curiosity, and dialogue with the numerous cultures of our country and globe. When given the chance, apart from coercion, and in spite of prohibition, America's peoples have long mixed with each other—liking, loving, and learning from each other.

Laura E. Perez is an associate professor in the Department of Ethnic Studies at the University of California, Berkeley. She is the author of *Chicana Art: The Politics of Spiritual and Aesthetic Altarities* (Duke University Press, 2007).

A Visual Exploration of American Identity

Yreina D. Cervantez's *Ruta Turquesa* and *Tierra Firme*, created in 1994 as a response to the Proposition 187 initiative to prohibit "illegal aliens" from using health care, public education, and other social services, recalls the archeological fact that the peoples of the Americas moved and traded freely across what only recently—that is, since 1848—has been called the U.S.-Mexico border, and that Latinas and Latinos

in general are descended from the ancestral peoples of the Americas. The mid-1990s was also the era of English-only initiatives and of the resurgence of anti-Mexican and anti-Latina/o immigrant sentiment that recirculated the old nation-building myth that Mexicans and other "Spanish" were immigrants or foreigners, not really Americans. It is instructive that this cultural and racist chauvinism was fomented in the immediate aftermath of the United States' annexation of Mexican California, alongside anti-Indigenous sentiment that set to work redefining "real Americans" as English and other northwestern European colonists, immigrants, and their descendents, as opposed to the descendents of the Spanish, mixed-race Mexicans, other Latin Americans, African Americans, Asian Americans, and the numerous Indigenous peoples who had survived policies of extermination.

The Americas are the homelands of Indigenous peoples and Latina/os of mixed Indigenous ancestry. In response to the ubiquitous anti-immigrant query, "Why don't you go back where you came from?" Cervantez remarked to me that Latina/os in the United States *are* where they came from: the American continent.

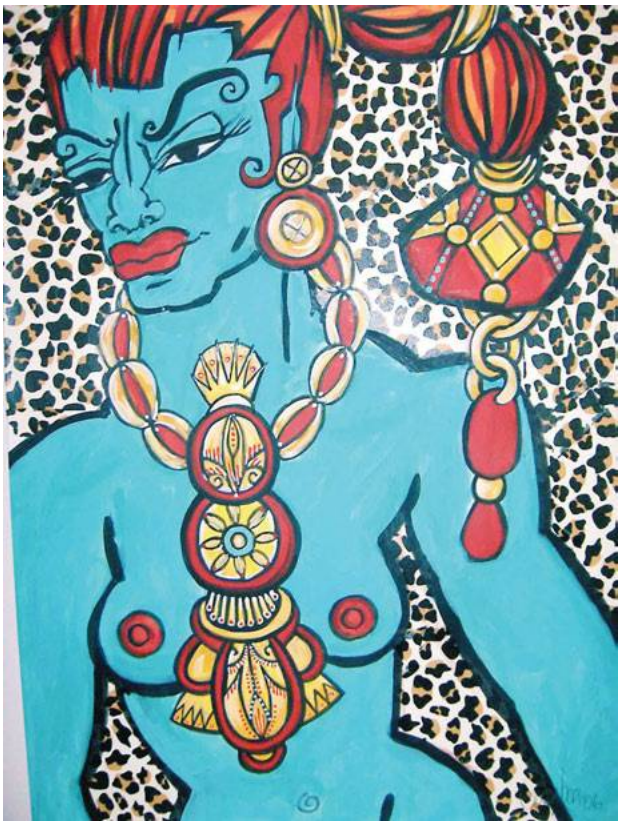
Consuelo Jimenez Underwood also reframes our way of thinking about national borders, immigration, and community. Some of her most recent weavings, paintings, and installations focus attention on the detrimental effects of U.S. border policies on the ecological communities of natural wildlife that know no such borders. Her 2011 exhibition *Undocumented Borderland Flowers* featured painted and woven maps of the U.S.-Mexico border sprinkled with the flowers "of" the four border states, appearing as they do in nature, on both sides of the border. In Underwood's map of the U.S.-Mexico borderlands, the border is a red, painful wound, the stitching from one side to the other a fragile endeavor. Against a unifying blue field, national borders and north-south divides of the continent promise to heal, over the long run. But will the Earth heal, wondered the artist to me, given the tremendous ecological damage that the region is undergoing?

Underwood's *Flags* series repictures U.S. and Mexican flags, weaving stylized, abstract flowers in place of stripes, machine guns in place of stars or flowers, and the ubiquitous triangular silhouette of the flagpole emblem as flower- and butterfly-stamped fabrics that recall tablecloths, bandanas, and housewives' summer dresses. Her work makes us rethink the nationalism that flags represent in terms of the people and other life forms that naturally inhabit the land and work to survive upon it. (See the YouTube video on *Undocumented Borderlands* posted by the Fresno State *Collegian* and the 2012 *Craft in America* PBS series episode featuring her work.)

Diane Gamboa—an artist long known in Los Angeles for her early performance art and installation work with the urban-edge Chicana art group Asco and her signature

Undocumented Borderland Flowers by Consuelo Jimenez Underwood (top), *La Ruta Turquesa* by Yreina D. Cervantez (middle), and *Flags* by Consuelo Jimenez Underwood (bottom).

Consuelo J. Underwood (top); Yreina D. Cervantez from the collection of Ramon Cervantez (middle); and Consuelo J. Underwood (bottom)



Ancient Twist (top) and *Lady Legendary* by Diane Gamboa. Mixed media acrylic on paper (24" x 18") works from the 2006-2012 *Alien Invasion/Queendom Come* series.

Diane Gamboa © 2006

walking "paper fashions" and gender-bending punkish portraits—has just completed a six-year series meditating on migration, racialization, and fear of cultural otherness. She recounts that her six-year *Alien Invasion: Queendom Come* series (2006-2012) started with her asking why only Mexicans are called aliens while others are called immigrants. In drawings and paintings of turquoise-fleshed, gender-bending powerful women (who might also be read as transgender male-to-female figures), and in related paper fashion installations and performances, Gamboa sardonically links the fear of women or the feminine, people "of color," and extraterrestrials, with mass media-produced apocalyptic imaginings of 2012. Instead of scary creatures, her Amazonian aliens are powerful and desirable. Her work humorously and pointedly suggests that "queendom come" looks pretty good.

The cultural habit of thinking of Mexicans and other Latina/o immigrants (or seeming immigrants) as aliens and illegals replays in the national imagination the B movie script of danger, contamination, domination, criminality, and subhuman difference that allows for dehumanizing treatment of Latinas/os, but when the day is done, dehumanizing others dehumanizes us, as the unpleasant, unharmonious, and ugly energy of "haters" (racists, border vigilantes, neo-nazi skinheads, cultural chauvinists, sexists, homophobes, religiously intolerant fundamentalists, and racist anti-immigrant nationalists) shows.

An Ethics of Respect and Interrelationship

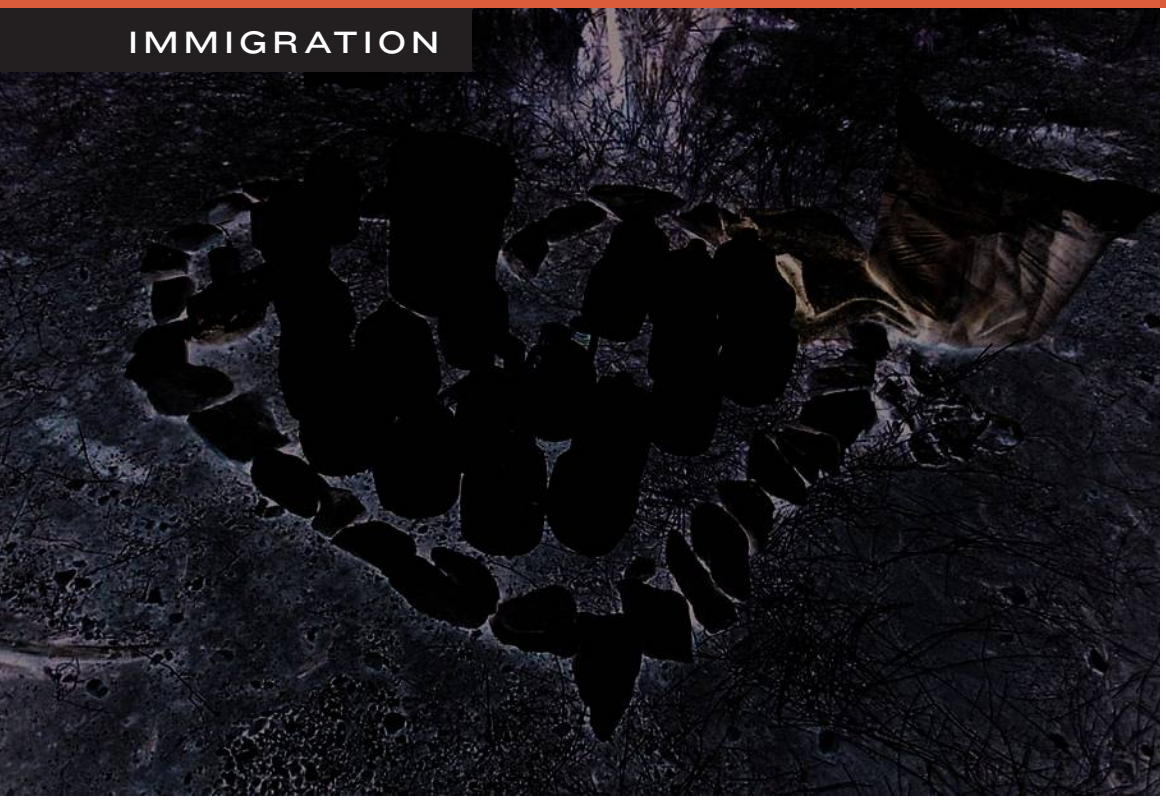
Polarizing, dehumanizing views of immigration that are rooted in wars of imperialist expansion and their attendant fears don't serve those of us born and raised during or after the Civil Rights Movements. For us, racial mixing and cultural difference are much more familiar and natural than they were to the slave-holding, Eurocentric, anti–Native American founding fathers. For at least half a century in the United States, and increasingly so, self, family, and friends are people whose ancestral roots cross various continents. Humanity appears more interrelated because we *are* more related, quite literally. When "immigration" is neither a euphemism for military invasion and colonization, nor a euphemism for slavery, nor used in an attempt to invalidate Native American reclamation to the Americas as homeland, but rather when immigration refers to the peaceful movement and resettlement of people, we can feel appreciation for those who come in search of economic, social, and political well-being. We can feel compassion for those who leave home and hearth to protect life itself against starvation, civil wars, and patriarchal or homophobic violence.

In light of ethnic and religious intolerance, and in light of the global environmental crisis, immigration policy would do well to shift to reflect a humane ethics of respect rather

than fear, of recognized interrelationship rather than false belief in essential difference, and of creative aperture rather than ethnocentric and nationalist closure. Gone are the days when immigration quotas were controlled by ideas of Eurocentric racial preference. But what should also be revised is the overwhelming preference given to highly educated immigrants and the dehumanizing insensitivity to the plight of the less educated and poor who seek the opportunity to work here. It is a myth that the United States does not need and indeed demand labor in every economic sector, and it is this fact that accounts for legal and undocumented labor immigration. The fact is that Mexican and other Latin American immigrants are an integral part of our economy, from planting, harvesting, packaging, cooking, and serving our food, to helping care for our children, homes, buildings, and cities, to making and selling our clothing, and so on through every labor sector, including the most prestigious. Disparaging, marginalizing, and yet greatly benefiting from the exploited labor of working-class immigrants is cruel, hypocritical, and unethical.

Likewise, it is in our hands to banish sexist and heteronormative biases that do not recognize that women and sexually queer people sometimes leave their countries to avoid violence that can be fatal—violence that they hope to escape by coming here. In striving for a more perfect democracy, we should rethink the biases that have favored immigrant groups from countries in which our government has vested ideological interests, while denying entry or consigning to refugee camps those from countries undergoing warfare and genocide but deemed economically or geopolitically expendable.

Rethinking immigration policy and immigration in the national imagination could, and should, pivot on casting aside the racism, sexism, homophobia, and classism inherited from a bygone era that classified some humans as less human and others as superhumans. Immigration policy should move into the twenty-first century and reflect the personal, cultural, and global well-being that arises when peoples of different cultures share their ancestral knowledge of this continent and the rest of the planet. Only then will we begin to coexist in a sustainable fashion with each other and the larger natural world of which we form a vital part. ■



Migrants crossing the Southern Arizona desert can die of dehydration if they do not stumble across provisions such as these gallon jugs of water, which were placed near a migrant trail by the faith-based group No More Deaths.

No More Deaths/Kate Morgan-Olsen

Creating Sanctuary

Faith-Based Activism for Migrant Justice

BY BENJAMIN LORBER

THE SUN SHONE OVERHEAD as we walked through migrant trails etched into the mountainous Southern Arizona desert, looking for the body of a seventy-year-old man. It was a hot afternoon in July, five miles above the U.S.-Mexico border.

For months, I had worked with the faith-based humanitarian aid organization No Mas Muertes (No More Deaths), leaving plastic gallon jugs of water, easy-open cans of pinto beans, blankets, and other necessities along trails sprinkled with clothing, water bottles, food wrappers, cell phones, children's toys, and toiletries discarded by the hundreds of undocumented migrants who risk the treacherous journey across the border every day. For months, we had found our gallon water jugs slashed and vandalized, and our cans of beans torn open and drained by agents of the United States Border Patrol intent on depriving hungry and dehydrated travelers of life-saving sustenance.

Walking through forbidding desert hills dotted with cacti and mesquite, I dreaded the moment when I would turn the corner and find the man's remains stretched out under the unforgiving sun. Two days earlier, another group of humanitarian aid volunteers had found an injured seventeen-year-old boy on the side of the road. His group of ten travelers had been scattered by a low-flying Border Patrol helicopter, he said, and he had wandered for days with the seventy-year-old man and a forty-year-old woman. When his companions grew too tired to continue, he tied a pair of red boxers to a mesquite tree and left them underneath, promising to return with food and water. The day after his rescue, volunteers found the body of the woman.

We never found the body of the man, nor did we ever learn his name.

It is well known that Jewish tradition requires the deceased to be buried speedily after death. As the soul returns to G-d, the body must not be left to linger in the land of the living. A Jewish *cohen* (priest), though normally forbidden contact with a dead body, is commanded to render the honor of immediate burial to a corpse he finds on the street, even if he is on his way to enter a temple's sanctuary on Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the year. Because the human being is made in the image of G-d, to leave the image of G-d rotting in the street (or in the desert) is to condone the desecration of G-d's name.

BEN LORBER is an activist, journalist, and radical Jew. He has written extensively about the Palestinian liberation movement, the migrant justice movement, and U.S. labor struggles. He has also worked with the International Solidarity Movement and No More Deaths. His writings can be found at benlorber.wordpress.com.

Crosses along the Tijuana–San Diego border wall remind would-be migrants of those who have perished in their attempts to cross over.

According to the Arizona-based Coalición de Derechos Humanos (Human Rights Coalition), nearly 180 human remains have been recovered in the Arizona-Sonora desert since October 2011, bringing the total since 2000 to almost 2,500. The number of dead bodies never recovered is undoubtedly much higher. The remembrance of every migrant who has died in the desert—those recovered, and those left to dust—remains as a testament to the horror of U.S. border policy, and bears witness to the cruelest injustice perpetuated by our government on a daily basis.

In the last decade, the United States has been seized by a spasm of anti-immigrant sentiment remarkable for its ferocious nationalism and uncompromising xenophobia. The persecution of neighborhoods, the raiding of workplaces, and the breakup of families by federal immigration authorities has accelerated inside this country. Meanwhile, a policy of increased and selective militarization of the U.S.-Mexico border, begun in the 1990s, has strategically sealed off urban hotspots such as San Diego and El Paso to funnel migration into the vast and treacherous expanses of the Sonora Desert in Southern Arizona, deliberately turning the parched desert into a deadly weapon of "deterrence" and casting nearby cities like Tucson into the crosshairs of the national immigration debate. Faith-based communities have a vital role to play in today's struggle for migrant justice, and in Tucson, they have put their faith into action for decades.

The Origins of the Sanctuary Movement

Throughout the history of Tucson's migrant justice movement, faith-based communities have struggled alongside threatened communities in the *barrios* (neighborhoods), on the border, and in their houses of worship to effect meaningful and lasting social change. In the 1970s, a multi-faith coalition called the Tucson Ecumenical Council worked closely with a broad swath of community organizations to support undocumented families endangered by Border Patrol and INS persecution, lobby the city to establish social services and facilities for impoverished communities, and raise money to fund legal efforts to fight deportation. Most importantly, religious leaders and congregations cultivated and maintained long-lasting personal relationships of faith and solidarity with undocumented families and communities, involving themselves directly in the struggle to better the lives of neighbors and congregants.

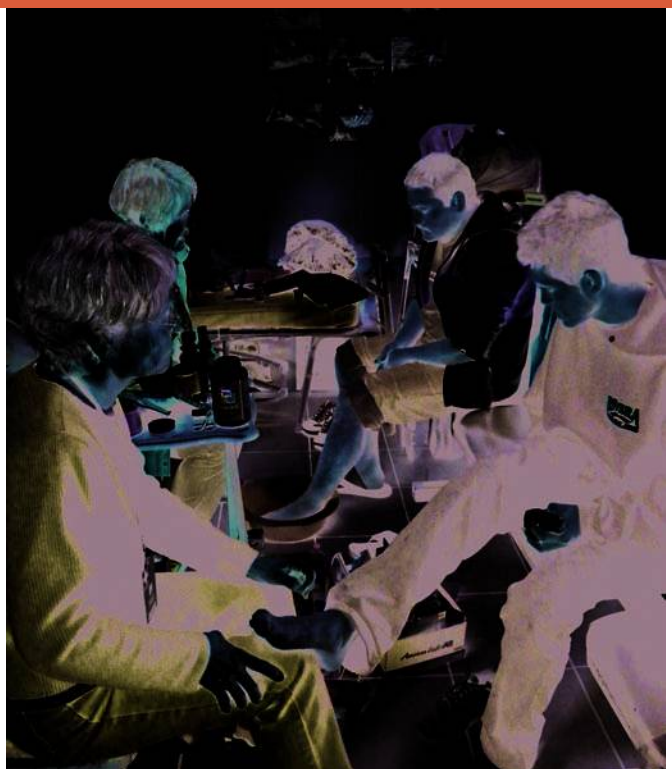
Tucson pastor John Fife, a long-time Sanctuary activist, offers this description of the movement's origins:

> It initially involved some families that needed help, and of course the church was a place where folks were to help with housing, or with food, or with clothes, or with a family crisis, or whatever it was.... There were then, as there are now, many mixed families, where, for example, the parents were undocumented, but the children were United States citizens. So our efforts to legalize or regularize the status of members of those families, who often were also members of our congregation, represented vital work to protect the integrity of our families. But basically what made it all possible were the many solid relationships developed between community-based organizations and faith-based organizations in the barrio.

Communities of faith also took a direct role in protest and activism. In 1970, when the Barrio Hollywood neighborhood held a series of marches, protests, and occupations to demand that the vast acres of the elite El Rio Golf Course be partially converted into community-oriented parks and facilities, religious groups sprang to action, holding regular prayer services on the ninth tee as a disruptive act of protest.

Because close relationships had already developed between religious congregations and migrant communities, faith-based groups working in Tucson's largely Latino South Side in the early 1980s were quick to notice the growing number of refugees arriving in the barrios to escape political violence in Central America. As congregations like Southside Presbyterian Church worked to provide emotional, legal, and material support to refugees, they came to realize that the United States was funding and assisting Central American death squads with one hand, while working to deny asylum to political refugees with the other. A group of the faithful found themselves called upon to act. "Immigration judges were turning down everyone that we would take in to apply for political asylum, and refugees were dying in the desert," recalls Fife, who was at the time the minister of Southside Presbyterian Church. Fife says Jim Corbett, a congregant in his church, came to him and asked him to consider two historical moments: the emergence of the slavery abolition movement and U.S. churches' decision to help form an underground railroad to help slaves cross to safety, on one hand, and the almost complete failure of churches to help and protect Jewish refugees during the Holocaust, on the

Creative Commons/Tomás Castelazo (tomascastelazo.com)



Volunteers provide basic medical aid to migrants injured while crossing the desert.

No More Deaths/Hannah Hafter

other. Fife says Corbett then declared, "We can't allow that to happen on our border in our time," and added, "I'm going to start a small group of folks who can help Central Americans cross the border safely without being captured by Border Patrol, and I believe that's the only ethical position that people of faith can take under these circumstances."

Six months later, when Border Patrol discovered that networks of worshippers were helping refugees cross the desert and housing them in Southside Presbyterian Church, Fife, Corbett, and the entire congregation decided to publicly defy federal law and declare their church a site of sanctuary, where refugee families could seek shelter while applying for political asylum. Citing as historical precedent the role of the church in the Middle Ages as a site of sanctuary for individuals seeking legal arbitration or protection from state persecution, the Sanctuary Movement also drew inspiration from the ancient cities of refuge of the Hebrew Bible, where individuals could escape from blood feuds or obtain a fair trial if accused of a serious crime. During a 1984 gathering of international Sanctuary activists at Temple Emanu-El Synagogue in Tucson, Dominican Sister Renny Golden said "the locus of G-d in history is discovered among the poor and the oppressed," affirming that the theology of Sanctuary recognized the Torah itself as a document of migration and exodus, and sought to bear practical witness to its commandment to "welcome the stranger in your midst, for you were once strangers in the land of Egypt" (Deuteronomy 10:19).

To explain their work, the pioneers of Sanctuary in Tucson developed a philosophy of "civil initiative," which they defined as "the legal right and the moral responsibility of society to protect the victims of human rights violations when government is the violator." The decision to declare Sanctuary was a collective one, assumed by a congregation united in faith, solidarity, and compassion. "Whenever a congregation that proclaims the prophetic faith abandons the poor and persecuted to organized violation," wrote Corbett, "its unfaithfulness darkens the way for all humankind. And when it stands as a bulwark against the violation of human rights, it lights the way. The congregational obligation to protect victims of state crimes extends beyond our individual civic responsibilities, because only in this kind of covenant community can we provide sanctuary for the violated."

By 1986, over 560 synagogues and churches across the country had declared Sanctuary, and seventeen cities—including New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, and San Francisco—had declared themselves "cities of sanctuary," instructing public employees not to cooperate with federal immigration agents. By that time, undercover federal agents had infiltrated the movement as volunteers, collecting secret tape recordings of church meetings, conversations with pastors, and worship services. Priests, nuns, and other religious leaders and community activists were arrested, indicted, and charged with federal crimes, only narrowly escaping lengthy prison sentences thanks to an international outpouring of support.

Desert Aid and the Militarization of the Border

By the end of the 1980s, the Department of Justice agreed to end all deportations to El Salvador and Guatemala, grant all refugees from those countries work permits and temporary protected status, and reform the political asylum process. But as the first incarnation of the Sanctuary Movement drew to a close, a new human rights crisis loomed on the horizon. The inauguration of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1994 made the Mexican economy, and in particular the production of corn, dependent on American imports, sending countless destitute small farmers across the border to find work. The United States responded to these effects of its own policies by cementing key urban sections of the 2,000-mile border with eighteen-foot steel walls, vastly expanding the Border Patrol, and hyper-militarizing the border with state-of-the-art surveillance technology at taxpayers' expense. These attempts to deter migration by forcing migrants to cross the treacherous desert have not deterred migration, which continues to oscillate in tune with the ebbs and flows of the U.S. economy, but have instead resulted in the deaths of over 6,000 migrant workers and the injury of tens of thousands more.

In response, faith-based communities in Tucson created the organization Humane Borders in the year 2000 to place water stations, marked by flagpoles, in critical areas of the desert. Today, Humane Borders continues to place over

20,000 gallons of water in the desert each year. Two years later, with the death toll rising, the Samaritans were formed as a brigade of medically trained, Spanish-fluent volunteers sent to patrol the desert on four-wheel-drive vehicles loaded with food, water, and medical equipment. Today, groups of Samaritans from cities across the borderlands descend daily into the desert, treating men, women and children suffering from dehydration, malnourishment, broken bones, rattlesnake bites, and, in some cases, sexual assault. Finally, in 2004, No Mas Muertes was formed to establish a permanent humanitarian aid camp in the desert. No Mas Muertes also staffs aid stations on the Mexican side of the border, in partnership with the government of Mexico, to treat migrants deported from the United States.

In 1984, the first international gathering of Sanctuary activists in Tucson affirmed that "Sanctuary is a dynamic movement that is no longer just place but more than place. . . . [it is] an event and a community." Just as the practice of Sanctuary spread beyond Southside Presbyterian Church into a nationwide movement, so today's desert aid movement has spread beyond communities of faith, as independent organizations in border towns most impacted by the crisis mobilize resources and form coordinated networks of solidarity and resistance.

In June 2012, a grassroots organization called People Helping People opened the Arivaca Humanitarian Aid Office in the 700-person town of Arivaca, Arizona, thirteen miles above the border, to offer resources, information, and support to a close-knit community that, in the last decade, has become a battleground of America's war against migration. The residents of Arivaca, who have lived for decades without a police force or town government, now face the constant presence of drone helicopters overhead, Border Patrol vehicles and checkpoints in the streets, and migrants knocking on their doors day and night, begging for food, water, or shelter.

"I think it's disgusting living in a war zone," says Leesa Jacobson, an Arivaca resident, People Helping People volunteer, and Samaritans activist, "and that's basically what we have here. It's very incongruous to have so much natural beauty around, and then to have so much human ugliness. . . . It almost gets to be normal to have to go through a checkpoint every time you go to the grocery store, and that's no good. It almost gets to be normal that Black Hawk helicopters are flying over your head, and they fly low, and you know that people are running for their lives, and getting lost, and that these are the people you will later see turning up at your front door, hurt and sick."

The Humanitarian Aid Office promotes community-based discussion, education, support, and outreach, and works to spread legal information, material resources, humanitarian aid training, and other services to unite the community in resistance and solidarity. "We have know-your-rights trainings with an ACLU lawyer that are wildly popular," says Arivaca resident and community organizer Sophie Smith. "We have regular meetings at the office that are incredible magnets for community involvement. And this community resists border militarization in a thousand small ways. People offer their homes for hospitality and respite to travelers in need, people stop on the side of the road to give food and water. . . . Now, having an office in the center of town means that people have a place to go for support when they have issues. The idea is to have a community response rather than a state-based response. Instead of calling Border Patrol, we can help each other."

Migrant Justice in an Age of Economic Violence

Today's migrant justice movement in America faces a vastly different political context than that faced by organizers in the 1980s—one marked not by the immediacy of death squads and military dictatorship but by protracted neoliberal economic exploitation. While the refugees who crossed the border then were fleeing U.S.-orchestrated political violence, today's migrants are fleeing U.S.-orchestrated economic violence. While many of yesterday's refugees came temporarily to escape brutal dictatorship and sought ultimately to return to their countries of origin, many— though certainly not all—of today's migrants cross the border to find work and build new lives in the United States.

Today, a plurality of organizations such as Humane Borders, the Samaritans, No More Deaths, and People Helping People work tirelessly to alleviate suffering at the border and in the desert, while broad-based initiatives work throughout the country to strengthen and support undocumented families and communities.

In Tucson, recent xenophobic public policy has banned Mexican-American Studies from the public school system and has authorized police to demand proof of citizenship for even the most routine traffic stop, as the Border Patrol continues to terrorize the city's proud, vibrant, and resilient barrios. In response, grassroots organizations such as Coalición de Derechos Humanos (Human Rights Coalition), Tierra y Libertad (Land and Liberty), El Corazón de Tucson (The Heart of Tucson), and countless others offer legal representation, support networks, and other vital services for families threatened with deportation, while advocacy organizations such as We Reject Racism, U.N.I.D.O.S., and Fuerza! work to raise awareness and influence public policy around specific issues. Activists and organizers continue to pressure the Tucson Unified School District to lift their ban on ethnic studies courses, while shops, restaurants, and homes throughout the city proudly display "We Reject Racism" posters to passersby, affirming their solidarity with Tucson's Latin American community.

From the Sanctuary Movement to No Mas Muertes,

faith-based resistance in Tucson, too, has changed within this evolving political context. While yesterday's congregations openly defied federal law, today's religious activism in Tucson, from faith-based desert aid organizations like No More Deaths to church-based day laborer centers like the Southside Worker Center at Southside Presbyterian Church, commits itself primarily to community support and humanitarian aid within the parameters of law. Nationwide, the New Sanctuary Movement functions as an invaluable organizing platform for congregations to resist the criminalization of migrants, support undocumented communities and advocate for political reform.

"Today, the war in poor countries is more economic than military," said California Sanctuary veteran and New Sanctuary Movement activist Ched Myers shortly after the New Sanctuary Movement's founding in 2007, "but the casualties are the same: families pushed and pulled from their homes by the displacing forces of globalization. . . . We are again confronting a painful landscape of human suffering, which again offers our religious congregations an urgent opportunity to practice our faith."

In the 1980s, faith-based communities in America practiced Sanctuary with a long-range perspective. "Today," they reasoned, "we provide shelter for the refugee in the hope that tomorrow, through the combined efforts of the entire movement, justice may prevail."

Today, faith-based migrant justice activism in America—whether it takes the form of a gallon jug of water in the desert, a day laborers' center in the barrios, a protest on the streets, or an entirely new social movement—continues the tradition of civil initiative, bearing witness to what Sanctuary founders described as "the legal right and the moral responsibility of society to protect the victims of human rights violations when government is the violator." Like the Tucson Ecumenical Council in the 1970s, congregations today must apply themselves directly to the issues facing their local undocumented communities. Through forming interfaith coalitions, building networks of material and spiritual support with community organizations, raising awareness, and taking direct action against deportation, racial profiling, and all other forms of anti-immigrant xenophobia, faith-based communities can amplify the movement for comprehensive immigration reform, bearing prophetic witness to the words of Leviticus: "The stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Leviticus 19:34). ■

"The streets of Pilsen in Chicago . . . are filled with proof of the transnational activities of their residents," the author writes. Images of roots and family appear in this mural on the side of a building in Pilsen.

Creative Commons/Adam Jones, Ph.D.

A New Social Contract

Social Welfare in an Era of Transnational Migration

BY PEGGY LEVITT

Almost every Sunday, Boston residents from the small Dominican village of Boca Canasta get together to work on projects aimed at making life better back home. Over the last forty years, they have raised thousands of dollars to build an aqueduct, fix roads and bridges, and renovate the school, community center, and health clinic. Lately, they've set their sights on helping community members in Boston. Finding ways to lower high school dropout rates and rising crime is now their focus. Like many immigrants across the United States, they are putting down roots in the place where they've moved while continuing to remain active in the economics and politics of their homeland.

A short drive from Boston, in the suburbs of northeastern Massachussetts, a community of immigrants from the villages and small towns of Gujarat State on the west coast of India has settled in affluent new subdivisions. Even as they work, attend school, and build religious congregations locally, these immigrants are also pursuing Gujarati dreams by opening businesses, renovating homes and farms, and building schools and hospitals in India.

Similar stories are unfolding in immigrant neighborhoods all over the country.

The streets of Pilsen in Chicago, Washington Heights in New York, or Koreatown in Los Angeles are filled with proof

Peggy Levitt is a professor at Wellesley College and the co-director of the Transnational Studies Initiative at Harvard University.

of the transnational activities of their residents: travel agencies, stores that wire money to relatives back home, phone cards, and homeland food items. This is because people continue to vote, pray, and invest in businesses in the places they come from at the same time that they buy homes, open stores, and join the PTA in the countries where they settle.

In the twenty-first century, more and more people will live their lives across borders and belong to several communities at the same time. Just as money follows opportunity, so labor also moves toward brighter horizons. For some people, this comes easily. They have the education, skills, and social contacts to take advantage of opportunities anywhere. Others are forced into transnational lives because they cannot provide adequately for their families at home or abroad. Either way, today's migrants are moving in a world of economic crisis, neoliberal restructuring, precarious jobs, and major cutbacks in social welfare.

Migrant-Powered Economies

As more people live transnational lives, their hard-won earnings move across borders as well. According to World Bank estimates, in 2010, officially recorded remittances (money sent home by migrants) totaled over $440 billion worldwide. In 2009, remittances equaled more than 10 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in twenty-four countries; in nine countries they equaled more than 20 percent of GDP. In countries such as Mexico or Morocco, these contributions are one of the principal sources of foreign currency; their governments, now dependent on these remittances, need to make sure the money keeps flowing.

To keep migrants close, governments institute policies such as tax and investment incentives, allowing dual citizenship, the expatriate vote, or even special immigration lines at the airport. To keep money flowing, they put programs in place that enhance migrants' contributions to development. The Mexican government, for example, matches every dollar that migrants donate with a dollar from the local, state, and federal government. Some countries even protect and provide for their citizens in the countries they move to. Supporters applaud these as welcome developments because communities that have benefitted from remittances now have the schools, roads, and health clinics that they previously lacked. Critics express fear that poor countries now rely upon migrants to propel development and to provide social services and infrastructure that should be the responsibility of the state.

The Need for Transnational Social Institutions

While increasing numbers live transnational lives, they are still served by education, health care, legal, and pension systems that are stubbornly nationally bounded. People live across borders, but the social contract between citizen and state

Participants in the Movement for the Development of Boca Canasta (MODEBO) gather to discuss local and transnational issues. Migrants from the Boston chapter of MODEBO work closely with these Boca Canasta residents to plan community projects.

Eucar Gabriel Álvarez

is still fulfilled within the boundaries of the nation-state. If we approve a Global Marshall Plan like the one called for by *Tikkun* editor Michael Lerner, it needs to support new kinds of institutions that respond to this new reality. If people grow old and sick across borders, then we need different kinds of health and senior care institutions. If communities develop using resources and skills generated across borders, then we need new kinds of community development strategies. In short, we need to rethink how social welfare is provided and how the social safety net gets spun.

Part of what drives the need for new forms of social protection and provision are the social remittances migrants send back to their countries of origin. Much of the "buzz" around migration focuses on the money migrants send home. But migration also generates social remittances—ideas, practices, skills, and know-how that circulate between people in migrant-sending and migrant-receiving countries—with positive and negative effects. Some migrants import political, organizational, and technical skills that can push politicians to be more honest and make projects and governance run more smoothly and transparently. Some introduce ideas about democracy, gender roles, and inequality that challenge the status quo. But some also introduce ideas that devalue family, deify consumerism, and put the individual before the group. Deportees from the United States often bring back "bad habits" and increase crime and insecurity. Doctors and teachers who work abroad bring back skills that can strengthen institutions serving the middle class but often turn a blind eye to the needs of the poor.

At their core, these dynamics challenge basic assumptions about how and where inequality is produced, family life is lived, and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship are exercised. When people live lives that cross borders, their class status gets produced across borders too. How, for example, do we think about class for the family that lives in government-subsidized housing in the United States or Germany but owns a brand new home back in El Salvador or Turkey? What about the families that cannot pay their rent

The construction of Boca Canasta's water tower (left), primary school (center), and cemetery (right) were all made possible through collaborative efforts of migrants and local residents.

in the United States or Germany because they are sending so much money back home? How about the transnational mothers who care for the young and elderly in Europe and the United States so they can send back money to support their own children? If they retire and return home—unable to take their pensions or health benefits with them—which government will provide for them?

Hints of the Sea Change Ahead

So what new kinds of social protections are emerging and what can we tell about who the winners and losers might be? Not surprisingly, the European Union, already a transnational entity, has the most advanced system of portable benefits, accessible to all EU nationals moving within the European Union. EU members can export their pensions to any country in the world. In general, however, it is the host country that regulates what benefits migrants can access and under what conditions. In the Gulf Cooperation Council countries in the Middle East, migrants have no right to social welfare benefits, all the more astounding given that, in places like Doha or Dubai, foreign workers make up close to 80 percent of the population. In Australia, while temporary migrants have no immediate access to social security benefits and public health services, they are refunded the contribution they pay once they return home.

Because host countries do not adequately provide and because home countries need their emigrants, more and more migrant-sending states are stepping in. The Mexican Government's Instituto de los Mexicanos en el Exterior (Institute for Mexicans Abroad) delivers an array of services to help its migrants stay healthy, become educated, learn English, and become integrated into host countries such as the United States. It partners with U.S. school districts to help them place children appropriately so that students stay in school and perform better. It also partners with hospitals, universities, and community-based organizations to provide adult education materials, offer health services at consular offices, and provide financial literacy so that migrants can build credit histories that allow them to qualify for car or home loans.

The Ecuadoran state, with its own Secretaría Nacional del Migrante (National Secretary of Migrants) allowed migrants to vote from overseas for the first time in 2006 and created a "fifth region" composed of Ecuadorans living abroad who elect a representative to the National Assembly. The new constitution, ratified in 2008, dedicates a whole section to the "right to migrate" and declares that "no human being shall be identified, nor regarded as illegal, as a result of their migratory conditions." But these efforts are neither entirely altruistic nor patriotic. Remittances account for between 6 and 7 percent of GDP and constitute the second most important source of foreign currency after oil revenues, far exceeding development assistance. In the wake of failed structural adjustment policies, economically weak countries such as Ecuador look increasingly to migrants to solve their economic and social woes.

The Philippine government, calling workers' unequal access to social benefits a case of social injustice, entered into reciprocal portability agreements with other nations to ensure that workers receive benefits wherever they reside. This reflects the Philippine government's effort to adapt to "a borderless, globalized environment, tailor-fitting legislation and practices to suit particular needs of Filipino workers, both overseas and local, in both private and public sectors."

These brief examples are the tip of a social change iceberg. They reflect a fundamental shift in the way that social life is organized and in how rights and protections should be provided for. Many people do not live lives within a single nation-state. They belong to several communities at once and embrace multiple allegiances. They earn their living and exercise their political voices across borders, although their ability to do so varies significantly by nationality, gender, and class. They raise children and care for elderly parents across borders, banishing the norm of a spatially unified nuclear family to the dustbin of history. They do this all in the context of an ongoing global economic crisis, in which more and more jobs are insecure, poorly paid, and without benefits. They do this also in a context where migrant-sending states, still unable to provide adequately for their citizens, look to migrants to drive development and growth.

When inequality, education, health, and the ability to raise families and retire are produced across borders, we need a transnational social safety net in response. ■

Deepak Lamba-Nieves

Protesters in Phoenix, Arizona, protest SB 1070 and call for police to stop collaborating with ICE.

Diane Ovalle (dianeovalle.com)

Living in the Shadow of SB 1070

Organizing for Migrant Rights in Arizona

BY CAROLINE PICKER

Arizona's 2010 immigration law may no longer be making national headlines, but the out-of-control immigration enforcement that made Arizona infamous continues to intensify, exacerbating the human rights crisis throughout the state.

The situation has only worsened since September 2012, when a U.S. District Judge allowed one of the most egregious provisions of Arizona's "SB 1070" to go into effect. The act codified the Right's strategy of "attrition through enforcement": in other words, amping up the deportation machine while also making life so unlivable for migrant people that they will "self-deport." Section 2B of this notorious law, often callously referred to as its "papers, please" provision, mandates police officers in Arizona to check the immigration status of anyone for whom they have "reasonable suspicion" of being undocumented. In other words, it makes racial profiling into law.

Fernando Lopez is one of the many Arizona residents affected by the law. In June 2011, he was followed by highway patrol for several miles while on his way to work and then pulled over.

"If you look brown, you are seen as a target," Lopez says. "We know the risk of going outside, of going to the grocery store."

Because he could not produce a driver's license, Lopez was arrested. The sheriff's office referred him to immigration enforcement, and he spent a month in a detention center in Florence, Arizona. He is still fighting legal proceedings in order to not be deported. "My bond was set really high, at $10,500," he says. "I only got out because people organized, people raised money for my bail—they made food, washed cars, even when the weather was 120 degrees outside. At the end all we have left is us.... We have to protect ourselves, fight back, organize."

CAROLINE PICKER is a white anti-racist Jew, acupuncture student, and social justice movement worker living in Phoenix, Arizona. Mostly she writes press releases and grant applications, but you can read her other writing in *make/shift magazine* or at bodiesofstory.wordpress.com.

SB 1070 Was Nothing New

Arizona has long-been a laboratory for xenophobic, racist, and nativist innovations in the war of attrition against migrant communities. The Minutemen first gathered here in 2004. That same year, Arizona started requiring proof of citizenship from public benefits recipients. Bans on driver's licenses for undocumented people and English-only rules in public schools followed. Sheriff Joe Arpaio is known for his monstrous treatment of immigrants in Maricopa County, where Phoenix is located. He holds detained immigrants in "Tent City," an outdoor jail with no temperature controls in Phoenix's brutal 110-degree summers, and has proudly called Tent City his "concentration camp." Arpaio regularly raids workplaces, setting undocumented people up with hyped-up identity theft charges merely for working to support their families, and administrates what the Department of Justice referred to as the "worst case of racial profiling" it has ever seen.

The Obama administration has overseen a record 1.4 billion deportations, and is now responsible for the deportation of approximately 1,400 people a day. Many of these deportations occur because of mandated collaboration between local police departments and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) through federal programs such as 287(g) and Secure Communities. Maricopa County was one of the first places in the country to have a 287(g) agreement, which allows police officers to be deputized as ICE agents and instigate deportation proceedings against those arrested. Secure Communities came not long after, cross-checking fingerprints instantly between the databases of police departments and ICE and therefore able to quickly identify the immigration status of anyone who comes into contact with the police, even if their charges end up being dropped. Both of these programs mean that local police officers are enforcing federal immigration laws, inextricably linking immigration, a civil matter, to the criminal system. Many, like Lopez, end up in detention and with the threat of deportation looming because of police doing immigration enforcement work.

SB 1070 and copycat legislation are spurred not just by racism and hate, but also by a corporate profit motive. Many immigrants can be detained for months or years while they are fighting their immigration cases, often in detention centers run by the same corporations that have made billions off of incarcerating victims of the war on drugs, such as the GEO group and Corrections Corporation of America, the largest private prison corporation in the world, which in 2009 identified immigrant detention as the source of a "significant portion" of its future revenue.

The Real Experts on Immigration

While families are torn apart and workers are deported every day, the human rights movement led by undocumented people from Arizona and across the country continues to gain strength. Undocumented youth have been risking deportation in order to demand that their voices be centered in the immigration debate. Indeed, President Obama's announcement granting temporary work permits to youth eligible for the DREAM Act came immediately following sit-ins staged by undocumented youth at his campaign offices in 2012.

And while the crisis in Arizona grows, undocumented people are fighting back in ever more powerful ways, such as the creation of peaceful Barrio Defense Committees: networks of neighbors, friends, and family members who are ready to protect each other from deportation and its consequences. Neighbors in these networks teach each other about their rights, how to document rampant racial profiling, and how to take action to stop deportation. Most also compose a defense plan, signing powers of attorney to assist with the impact of deportation, making it clear who will take care of

Natally Cruz, an undocumented immigrant in Arizona, speaks out about her uncle's arrest during an ICE raid in Phoenix Valley. Five of Cruz's family members have begun facing deportation proceedings.

Diane Ovalle (dianeovalle.com)

their children, pay their bills, collect their paychecks, and look after their belongings in the worst-case scenario.

Natally Cruz, an undocumented immigrant who had five family members put into deportation proceedings in a recent three-month period, says, "Now that I have lost the fear and I know my rights, the police have less power over me. . . . Organizing our own communities is the best way we can win respect and dignity."

"They make law after law without ever including our voices, the undocumented people who are most affected by these laws. We know we need to lose our fear and take action to make sure that they can't ignore us any longer," says Cruz. In July 2012, Cruz was one of four undocumented adults arrested for engaging in civil disobedience outside of Sheriff Arpaio's racial profiling trial, kicking off a national bus tour called the "No Papers, No Fear Journey for Justice." Inspired by the Freedom Rides of the 1960s, undocumented people from across the country, including Cruz and Lopez, traveled from Arizona, through the South, and ended up at the Democratic National Convention in Charlotte, North Carolina. The ride culminated with an act of civil disobedience at the gates of the Democratic National Convention, where ten undocumented activists demanded that President Obama and the Democratic Party take real action to benefit the whole migrant community and to keep families where they belong: together.

"When we do civil disobedience and risk deportation, we are just showing in public what we risk in private every day," Cruz says. "I can drive around the corner or take my son to school and I could get deported." The civil disobedience that Cruz and others have bravely engaged in sends its message loud and clear: what undocumented people, the real experts on immigration, want is an end to deportations and the right to live a life with their families without fear in the place that has become their home.

The injustices currently enacted against migrant people seek to strip away their humanity through criminalization. This is what makes the "We are Human" slogan that emerged in response to SB 1070 so powerful. The slogan also reminds U.S. citizens that we all become a little less human every time we fail to take action against the demonization and terrorization of our neighbors. By siding with migrant people in their brave fight for dignity and human rights, and by stepping up to the bar that undocumented people have set by risking everything, we all reclaim our humanity. ■

An Evangelical Perspective on Immigration

BY STEPHAN BAUMAN AND JENNY YANG

What would it mean for immigration policy if we took seriously Jesus's Torah-inspired call to love "the stranger"? This stained-glass window, *Housing the Stranger*, was modeled after a print by Maerten van Heemskerck.

Several years ago, World Relief, the humanitarian arm of the National Association of Evangelicals, started receiving calls from pastors who—in ministering to immigrants in their congregations—had suddenly come upon legal questions they could not answer. The pastors turned to us because they knew we had been serving immigrants for over thirty years. Some asked whether undocumented immigrants could serve in leadership in the church. Others asked to what extent the church could help immigrants resolve their legal status issues. These pastors' questions reflect a question the broader evangelical community is grappling with: how do we balance compassion and mercy toward immigrants with the rule of law?

Evangelicals are committed to the authority of Scripture over all of our lives, and World Relief started addressing these questions not from an economic or political perspective, but from a distinctly biblical point of view. By grounding our response in the common values of our community, we knew we could change the hearts and minds of those in our faith community, especially since Scripture has so much to say about how to treat immigrants. We knew that while immigration is often viewed as an economic or political issue, for people of faith, immigration reform is an urgent moral crisis that has fissured the many families and communities who have lived in the shadows of the United States for years.

As we started this journey of education, we knew it would not be an easy task because polls showed that few evangelicals thought biblically about immigration. The Pew Research Center, for example, found in a 2010 survey that only 12 percent of white evangelicals say that their views on immigration are primarily influenced by their Christian faith. Over the years, however, there has been a shift in evangelical understandings of immigration and attitudes toward immigrants for several reasons.

The Bible's Call to Love the Stranger

First and foremost, there is a biblical mandate to show compassion to and care for immigrants. The Hebrew word for an immigrant, *ger*, in fact, appears ninety-two times just in the Hebrew Bible. In Leviticus 19:34, God says "Any immigrant who lives with you must be treated as if they were one of your citizens. You must love them as yourself." God also repeatedly references immigrants along with widows and orphans as particularly vulnerable groups of people who deserve special attention (this happens in Psalm 146:9, Malachi 3:5, and Jeremiah 7:6, among others). In the New Testament, the idea of *philoxenia* (the love of strangers) is a call by Jesus Christ to his followers. Jesus suggests that by showing hospitality and loving the stranger, we may actually be welcoming him (Matthew 25:31-45).

Many Christians point to the passage in Romans 13:1 that says to "submit to the governing authorities" as a reason why Christians should not support immigration reform, but in fact this passage calls to mind the need to ensure our laws are working for the common good. When they are not,

STEPHAN BAUMAN is the president and CEO of World Relief, the humanitarian arm of the National Association of Evangelicals. JENNY YANG is vice president of advocacy and policy of World Relief, a Baltimore-based organization that seeks to empower the local church to serve the most vulnerable.

Creative Commons/Remi Mathis

they need to be changed. The status quo—in which some laws have been selectively ignored for decades and our legal immigration system is out of touch with the needs of our labor market—is unacceptable.

For evangelicals, immigration reform is not an issue about *them*, but rather an issue about *us*. Studies have found that immigration accounts for the fastest—and, in some cases, the only—growth in U.S. evangelicalism today. Immigrants from Latin America, Asia, and Africa are now leading the evangelical church in unprecedented numbers. Evangelical leaders are thus coming to see immigration not as a threat, but as an opportunity to "share the Good News."

As pastors and community members build relationships with immigrants, they suddenly encounter a broken immigration system in which many cannot get right with the law even though they would like to. Immigration has become not just an abstract political or economic discussion but a personal and moral issue for the evangelical community. It is about friends and real people in our community whom we have come to know in our church services and at our schools. In order to be faithful to Scripture, the evangelical community has started to ask whether we are suffering along with other parts of the body that suffer (1 Corinthians 12:12-26) and have become active in speaking up and insisting that our elected officials address the structural issues of injustice that have left millions of people on the margins of our society.

"Many cannot get right with the law even though they would like to," the authors write. Here, a mother and daughter face arrest together while protesting U.S. immigration policy outside the 2012 Democratic National Convention in North Carolina.

Diane Ovalle (dianeovalle.com)

Building Momentum for Immigration Reform

Our vision for reform is outlined in the Evangelical Immigration Table's statement of principles, signed by more than 150 prominent evangelical leaders in June 2012. The principles reaffirm our commitment to an immigration system that respects human dignity and upholds the rule of law, keeps families together, strengthens our economy, recognizes our nation's tradition as an inclusive nation of immigrants, and establishes a path toward legal status and citizenship for undocumented immigrants who qualify and wish to remain in the United States.

We stand at a moment in time when Republicans and Democrats alike recognize that our conversation about immigration must change. But elected officials often are swayed to take action when the people make their voices heard. In order to continue to build momentum for immigration reform, World Relief—as a member of the Evangelical Immigration Table, which includes the National Association of Evangelicals, the Southern Baptist Convention, the Christian Community Development Association, and the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference, among others—launched an initiative called the "I Was a Stranger" challenge in which we asked individuals, churches, campuses, and legislators to read forty Scripture passages that relate to immigrants. A simple bookmark reminds people to read through Scripture and to pray that God would give us His heart and mind as we think about and respond to the realities of immigration in our country. A video available at evangelicalimmigrationtable.com also features a wide range of national evangelical leaders (including Bill Hybels and Max Lucado) reading the words of Matthew 25.

Our primary goal for this challenge is to encourage other evangelicals to base our response to immigration upon Scripture, both in terms of how we interact with our new immigrant neighbors and how we approach immigration policy as participants in a democracy. Our goal is to ensure that we "take every thought captive" to Christ (2 Corinthians 10:5).

We are hopeful that the challenge will help mobilize thousands of individuals to continue to "speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves" (Proverbs 31:8). Immigration may well be the issue through which the American people's confidence in the political process is restored. But more than that, our response to the immigrants among us tests what we believe about our faith and our commitment to uphold the values that shape our country. ■

Love the Stranger

Looking to the Torah for Guidance on Immigration Policy

BY ZALMAN KASTEL

My mother arrived in San Francisco as a three-year-old in the 1940s. She was overheard saying the word *Fierlesher* (Yiddish for fire fighter). Her father was told that she must not speak the old language in the new country. It was a difficult time for her family as her father sought a dignified livelihood and they all adjusted to living in a new land.

The Torah demands that I empathize with the migrant because my people were strangers in the land of Egypt. We are called to go further than that and "love the stranger." That is why I am using these pages to draw on Torah sources and consider two elements of the immigration debate: a just use of "limited" resources and the role of prejudice in the attitudes to migration.

The United States is not the only country that takes harsh methods to limit immigration. Some of the reports about Africans seeking a new life in Israel have also been disturbing, and a range of anti-migrant policies and rhetoric is also being employed in many other countries across the world. In Australia, where I live, both major political parties have agreed to indefinitely detain at least some asylum seekers and undocumented immigrants who arrive by boat in third countries, such as Papua New Guinea, as a deterrent to others considering coming here. The policy is a significant shift for the ruling Labour party: only a few years back, a newly elected Labor government emphatically rejected the previous government's strategy of sending asylum seekers to a third country, Nauru. But the government turned around and adopted the same policy in 2012.

Both major political parties in Australia have agreed to indefinitely detain some asylum seekers as a deterrent to others. This detention facility at Defense Base Darwin was adapted in 2005 to incarcerate an increasing number of undocumented fishermen.

Hard Decisions about Limited Resources

A taxi driver recently told me that that he believes Australia's charity should be prioritized to benefit people living in Australia, i.e. Aboriginal people living in dire poverty. I don't think this view is unreasonable. At one level, discussions about immigration policy need to focus on the realistic choices that people of goodwill in government and the community need to make about where limited available resources will be spent. Jewish tradition teaches us that "the poor of your city take precedence" (Sifre). We need to think seriously about whether or not we are prepared to live up to the beautiful sentiments expressed by Emma Lazarus: "Give me your tired, your poor… the wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me." If we as nations are not prepared to rise to this challenge, then some prioritization of resources may be a necessary interim measure, until we can truly embrace all members of the human family.

One response to the taxi driver's argument is that many of the "non-local" poor have already arrived and have been living locally for months and in some cases even decades. The other caveat is about levels of need: it is not right to prioritize

ZALMAN KASTEL is director of Together for Humanity Foundation, an Australian interfaith organization that fosters a sense of belonging together and respect. He is an ordained rabbi in the Chabad Hasidic tradition on a journey of discovery with Muslims and Christians.

Creative Commons/Ken Hodge

Ranjini's newborn baby Paartheepan (Paari) sleeps in a bed at Australia's Villawood Detention Center, where he was born into incarceration.

Anthony Bieniak

locals' every need against the basic needs or in some cases the very survival of "non-locals" (see Chatam Sofer, Shalaon Vetushuvot 2, and Yoreh Deah 231). We need to seriously consider the statement attributed to Mahatma Gandhi, "Live simply, so that others may simply live."

Another consideration is the need to be equitable in our treatment of refugees. We are taught that in the administration of justice we must not be swept away by emotion (Exodus 23:3) and we must be fair to all. When I think about the plight of a particular undocumented immigrant, I would like to help that person, but I cannot dismiss the argument that in an unfortunate system of limited quotas, letting this person in will be at the expense of someone equally deserving who has been waiting for years in a refugee camp.

The Torah's Demand for Economic Justice

Any justification of restricting immigration on the basis of prioritizing the "local poor" is based on a situation in which the available "pie" to be divided between those less fortunate is small. This must change. We are meant to see our assistance to those in need not as charity but as an act of justice. The Torah states that if a poor person cannot get a loan in the lead up to the seventh year when all loans are meant to be forgiven, this is considered a sin for the person refusing to lend him money (Deuteronomy 15:9). This is because the person who has the ability to give is like a king's bursar, entrusted by the king to distribute funds. When the poor person cries out, it is like a citizen complaining to the king about the bursar withholding funds that the king had allocated for him (Michca Belulah).

Our tradition teaches that poverty is in part redeemed by the way in which it creates an opportunity for another to have the merit of providing for those who are poorer (Ohr Hachayim). Our decision to share our resources with individuals knocking on our door—whether they come to our houses, our embassies, or our shores in leaky boats—needs to be informed by the knowledge that ultimately all our wealth is not absolutely ours but has been given to us in trust, perhaps to share with the needy persons before us at this exact moment.

On one hand there is something beautiful about the way no expense is spared when someone is in trouble, such as an adventurer in a rowboat on the high seas who has lost her paddle. Yet, questions about the equitable use of limited public funds sometimes need to be asked. Being a citizen of one country or another doesn't seem to be enough justification for determining whether one's life is deemed priceless or expendable. Questions also need to be asked about the justice of treating some people harshly in order to deter other people from risking their lives. Australia has recently changed the law requiring plain packaging for cigarettes to discourage smoking; it could be argued that if we applied the same logic being used in the asylum seeker debate to smokers, we would be locking them up to help deter others from smoking. I think it is unreasonable and unjustifiable to punish people who have committed no crime just as a deterrent to others.

Prejudice Against Those in Need

It is tempting when refusing to assist vulnerable people to portray them as undeserving. Nachshoni, in his *Studies in the Weekly Parshah* (1989), draws on the teachings of R. Shmelke of Nikolsburg to caution against this. The Torah

states, "Beware, lest . . . your eyes will look in an evil way on your needy brother and not give him" (Deuteronomy 15:9). On a simple level, this passage warns us against having an ungenerous perspective, but Nachshoni highlights that it is also interpreted to mean that in our reluctance to help a needy person we must not ascribe evil characteristics to the person seeking our help in order to justify our refusal. A variation of this theme also appears in Yalkut Hagershuni, which reinterprets the phrase "their sin is very grave" in Genesis (18:20). This phrase about the city of Sodom is literally understood as the words of God about the inhabitants of Sodom, but could also be interpreted as the words of the Sodomites about poor visitors or migrants to their city—words used to justify their inhospitable practices.

We need to be wary of the ways in which prejudices of all kinds continue to shape our attitudes toward immigrants. Some people have argued that because there are some Muslims who are extremists, stricter immigration policies should apply to Muslims in general. Generalizing from a tiny minority to a huge majority is neither reasonable nor just. No one wants to be called a racist now that racism is widely seen as socially unacceptable. As a result, we see serious resistance to the suggestions that some of our attitudes are driven by prejudice. My colleague Donna Jacobs Sife has taught me and many others that a commitment to justice requires being alert to unconscious prejudices that many of us still have in spite of our tolerant or accepting intentions.

We are all capable of prejudice and must remain vigilant in order to observe and change it within ourselves. I caught myself having such a response last winter when I saw numerous references in my Twitter feed to a woman named Ranjini who gave birth in detention in Australia. There were some references to her being an asylum seeker. At the time, I did not click on the links to find out more—my feeling was that I had other priorities, and there may have been an element of "compassion fatigue."

However in reflecting on this, I asked myself, what if the name were Rochel instead of Ranjini and the woman were Jewish or Australian or even American? Would it have been of greater interest to me then? Was the issue that her "foreign" name brought to mind someone with dark skin and unfamiliar clothes and customs, and this got in the way of my automatically empathizing with her? Yet we are commanded, "The stranger who sojourns with you shall be as a native from among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Leviticus 19:34). In fact the most repeated commandment in the Torah is to love the stranger.

A human hand reaches out from the side of a bird in this print, *Transnational,* by Favianna Rodriguez. The bird represents people who "migrate to improve their lives," Rodriguez writes, and the hand "represents the manual labor that migrants do once they reach their foreign destination."

Favianna Rodriguez (favianna.com)

I went back to find out more about Ranjini, to put a human face to the name. In the photo that I found, I saw a smiling Tamil mother of three. I read in more detail about how she gave birth in Australian detention in January 2013. She had originally been accepted as a genuine asylum seeker but then was detained after Australian authorities made a secret determination that she posed some kind of risk. As soon as I learned these simple facts, she became no longer a foreigner with a foreign-sounding name to me, but rather a human being with a story. Yet, having grown up in a middle-class Jewish community in New York, it is still hard for me to imagine her world and the incredible hardships that she and so many others are escaping when seeking a new life in countries like Australia and the United States.

In the months and years ahead, I hope that fewer people have the need to flee their home countries, and that our governments find wise, compassionate, and equitable ways to respond to those who choose to flee or migrate for whatever reason. Until then, let us never lose sight of the humanity of the "stranger," as not so long ago so many of our forebears, such as my mother and her family, were strangers and immigrants seeking a better life in "other people's countries." ■

Awakening to the Story in My Bones

Border Crossings, Detention, and Asylum

BY ARIEL VEGOSEN

Sidewalk art in the Juarez Valley raises a call for peace in a region riven with violence from the drug war.

Before September 11, it was easier to cross between El Paso and Juarez. People's families, jobs, and favorite stores existed on both sides of the border. It is closer to walk from Juarez in Mexico to El Paso in Texas than to walk from my high school to the house in which I grew up. For many there was no separation between El Paso and Juarez. You could spend all day in Juarez and return to El Paso for dinner and vice versa.

Now there is a border fence, long lines, infrared technology, sensors in the ground, and 600 new positions for Border Patrol agents in the El Paso sector alone.

I arrived in El Paso this past February carrying more than just my bags—I came carrying my identity as a third-generation Jew whose family escaped Eastern Europe during the pogroms. Traveling with a Fellowship of Reconciliation peace delegation, I came seeking to learn how the drug war, gun violence, and immigration are entwined. I came with stories of my great grandfather who left Latvia and landed in Latin America, working in the copper mines until he made his way up north. I came with stories of name changes, walking great distances, being turned away from societies, and trying to escape violence and start a better life. I came wondering how El Paso, the "number one safest city in the United States," is a ten-minute walk from what was for many years deemed the most dangerous city in the world: Ciudad Juarez.

Somewhere in the curves and lines of my body—somewhere in a memory that is deep and rooted like the trees in my parents' backyard, from before I had all my basic needs met, before my family became white, and before we were privileged—there is this story of crossing borders illegally to find shelter from violence and give hope to the next generation.

The kind of violence that my family endured three generations ago is present and real and happening right now along the U.S.-Mexico border. Those of us who have been in the United States for generations need to remember that the fear and precariousness of migration is not just an ancient story left over in our bones—it is the condition of daily life for thousands of people.

Similar Stories, Different Times

While in El Paso, I met a woman around my age, thirty-two, at Annunciation House, a shelter for undocumented immigrants. She had to flee Mexico with her three children because her life was in danger from violence due to the drug war. The first time she arrived at the border, U.S. border agents turned her away and sent her back into danger. When she tried the second time, they told her they would detain her and separate her from her children—including her youngest, who was four months old. So she went back into the danger she faced in Mexico. She said four armed men who are part of the Mexican Federal Police showed up at her house and killed two of her brothers. Another brother was kidnapped. When her mother and father began to face harassment in the street as well, she realized her choice was either be killed in Mexico or detained in America.

On her third try, she and her children managed to cross the bridge border from Juarez to El Paso. The United States has given her a court date in 2015. Until that time she is undocumented in this country. The U.S. system of internal checkpoints means she can't get out of El Paso without a coyote's help, so for now she is stuck trying to eke out a living

ARIEL VEGOSEN is a writer, educator, dialogue facilitator, and activist who serves on the board of the Fellowship of Reconciliation. Ariel organizes programs and workshops about gender identity, food justice, interfaith community building, and nonviolent organizing. She can be reached at arielmintwood@gmail.com.

Owen Ross

Ariel Vegosen gathers with other members of her peace delegation to Mexico. In the background, El Paso and Ciudad Juarez bleed indistinguishably into each other.

in a city filled with Border Patrol agents, wondering whether this unwelcoming country will deny her asylum and send her back into danger. She asked me not to share even her first name due to fears for her safety.

As I listened to this story, I thought of my ancestors who were forced out of Eastern Europe amid pogroms and raids. The police were corrupt. There was nowhere to turn, no one to help them. My ancestors were forced to run, to flee, to pack bags quickly in the night, to walk by foot from Latvia or Lithuania to Finland, then Norway, and to eventually find their way to the United States, some coming first into Latin America and writing diaries in Ladino. We were the displaced. Talking with the woman at Annunciation House, I realized the similarities between my ancestors' stories and hers.

Recognizing My Complicity

There are 33,000 undocumented people in detention centers (i.e., prison) right now in our country. Their only crime was crossing the border. The first time a person crosses into the United States without papers, it is considered a misdemeanor, and the second time it is considered a felony. The charges are amplified if drugs are involved or if the person has any prior convictions, even if they have already served time for those convictions. The recommendation of punishment for "illegal re-entry" without a drug offense is up to ten years and $250,000 in fines.

In the El Paso Criminal Court, I heard a man named José tell the judge that he had decided to cross for a second time illegally to see his dying wife who lives in El Paso. The judge gave him eight more months in prison before his deportation date.

Many people have an economic interest in perpetuating and expanding this cruel system of detention and deportation. Kristen Connor, a lawyer in El Paso, explained to me that the pursuit of undocumented immigrants supports the local economy by supplying jobs to judges, lawyers, Border Patrol agents, and those working in the detention centers. El Paso's courthouse is brand new, and the majority of trials held there involve undocumented immigrants. Many of the detention centers are owned by private corporations that sign contracts with the U.S. government stating that the centers have to be at 90 percent capacity at all times. All of this creates an urgent demand for undocumented immigrants.

To change this system, people like me need to see the ways in which we inadvertently support it. Looking deeply at this situation, I see that I am complicit with a government that turns people away, with a country addicted to money and drugs at the expense of other people's lives. I am complicit in buying cheap goods without knowing where they come from, complicit in receiving the benefits of other people's suffering. My country's gun shops sell the majority of guns found at crime scenes in Juarez. I am complicit in the drug war, in the abuse of laborers, in the border system. My tax contribution helped build the fence. My tax contribution helped pay for the drones that loom over the border and the infrared vision that traps people late at night.

When I met with Ernie Vasquez, a Border Patrol agent, he told me that anyone who crosses the border illegally—even an eight-year-old child—is considered a threat. He informed me that Border Patrol agents are trained to shoot to stop a person who is considered a threat. When I asked what "shoot to stop" means, he said you aim for the chest area. To me, that sounds like shoot to kill.

My eyes have been covered for too long. It is amazing how easy it is to ignore a crisis of violence, a crisis of ethics, a crisis of racism, a crisis of lines and fences—of damming up the Rio Grande with concrete to create a static border. It is amazing how we can live our lives so close to the border and not know these stories of crossings, of detention, of death, of torture. I am awake now. There is no going back. There is only going deeper into this interconnection. It's time to bring an end to the violence, legalize drugs in the United States, change how our border is patrolled, bring an end to detention centers, help those who were tortured, demand that Congress enact better gun control laws, and start treating humans as priceless rather than worthless. ■

Owen Ross

Culture

BOOKS

Spirituality in a Broken World

Spirituality: What It Is and Why It Matters
by Roger S. Gottlieb
Oxford University Press, 2013

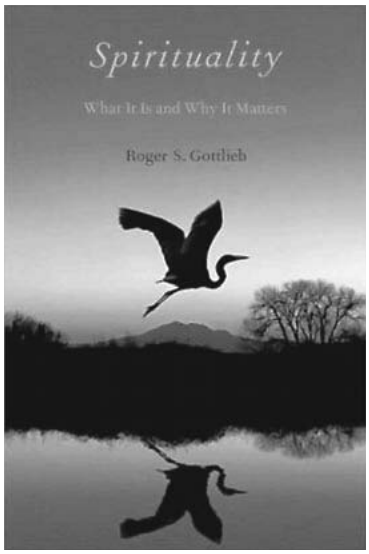
REVIEW BY LARRY RASMUSSEN

THIS BOOK on what spirituality is, what it isn't, and why it matters had to be written. For the author himself, nothing other than spiritual practices—not psychotherapy, radical politics, or a distinguished academic career—met the agony and ache that visited him and his wife: the death of their son and the severe developmental challenges of their daughter. For others, the search for transcendences and meaning-making grows out of a restlessness born of many sources. They seek a world within to match the world without and the world aspired to because most all the standard offerings of "the good life" are spiritually vacuous and fleeting, while the diseases of affluence—stress, addiction, rootlessness, anxiety, fatigue, frazzled nerves, and depression—pound on the door. Moreover, modernity finds millions alienated from the religious truth and authority of their ancestors' traditions at the same time that religious pluralism impinges in ways the ancestors never imagined. "I'm spiritual but not religious" thus has plausibility now.

Spirituality Without Religion

Spiritual insights and spiritual paths can be, and are, detached from their origins and cultivation in traditional religious communities. Gottlieb discusses how a solitary individual might thus move between yoga, meditation, and various types of prayer, all in quest of healing, only to discover she benefits "from the teachings of Buddhism *and* Christianity *and* Islam" and "that the differences between them (and there are many) are spiritually less important than the way they invite us to a life shaped by a shared understanding of spiritual virtues." Mindfulness and compassion can be practiced without becoming a card-carrying Buddhist, just as prayers of psalmic gratitude and nurture of neighbor love, including love of enemy, can be uttered and fostered without being Jewish or Christian. Gottlieb reminds us that while most present-day spiritual practices have their origin and cultivation in religious communities that stretch back millennia and are not opposed to organized religion, spiritual virtues and spiritual life now occupy a terrain of their own. This is new and, when added to the obsession with human subjectivity in the modern world, may help explain why current interest in spirituality is palpable and widespread.

Yet what is spirituality? What does the crowd wandering through the present emporium of transcendence find? For a spare 200 pages of text, Gottlieb offers an extraordinarily rich treatment of 2,500 years of spiritual teachings and practices. The distillation demonstrates that spirituality seems generic, with human longing always and everywhere tethered to belonging and desire. Spirituality seems generic, too, in that genuinely universal substance surfaces over and again, despite widely differing circumstances and cultures. According to Gottlieb, "acceptance of reality rather than resistance to it, gratitude rather than greed for more, compassionate connection to other people rather than isolation, and a profound, joyous, nongrasping enjoyment of life" all course through time and across history. The yield is identifiable spiritual virtues: "mindfulness or awareness, acceptance and equanimity, gratitude and generosity, compassion, and loving connection to other people, nature, and God." Likewise, the urge to control, possess, and separate gives way, though not without wrestling with the demons and the sacrifice of the



conventional social ego. The internal empire of the ego is, for many if not all spiritual traditions, the template of inflicted suffering and thus the focus of spiritual discipline and care.

Gottlieb's descriptive account is profoundly satisfying. The seven chapters focused on what spirituality is—"Spirit in Motion," "The Spiritual Path," "Spirituality in Religious Tradition," "Toward the Present: How Spirituality Became Modern," "Spiritual But Not Religious?" "Practice, Practice, Practice," and "Why Now?"—offer a wiser, more informed introduction than anything else I have read to date. Gottlieb's own decades-long quest and practice, worked over with the mind and heart of a searcher and teacher, is no doubt the reason. His work builds on life experience, a great deal of homework, and much practice in the hands of a pedagogue who is fully invested in his subject. Deep resonance with the best of spiritual traditions, as well as deep listening to its critics, is the carefully measured and not-a-word-wasted result.

The Radical Nature of Core Spiritual Teachings

The book's second section on why spirituality matters is as important to the author as the first section on what spirituality is. "Spirituality and Healing," "Spirituality and Nature," "Spirituality and Politics," and "Grace and Despair" are the treatments here. While each is worthy of a book in its own right, and usually comes in that form, they are integral to one another for Gottlieb and need to share the common space that connects them.

Why? Because, while spirituality sounds tame enough ("an understanding of how life should be lived and an attempt to live that way"), the core spiritual teachings are radical.

All core spiritual teachings propose a transformation across the whole of life and assert "that only through such a transformation are lasting happiness and true contentment possible."

Let me offer two examples. While not lifted from the book, they are wholly in accord with Gottlieb's account and illustrative of how it moves the reader to assess spiritual practices.

The first is a practice of "mindful breathing." In this instance, the intent is to look deeply into the roots of fear. (Buddhist practice has contemplative exercises for specific vices and virtues and their moral emotions: love, greed, compassion, anger, etc.) In his book *The World We Have: A Buddhist Approach to Peace and Ecology*, Thich Nhat Hanh recommends practicing Buddhism's "Five Remembrances" as a breathing exercise in this way:

> Breathing in, I know that I am of the nature to grow old.
> Breathing out, I know I cannot escape old age.
>
> Breathing in, I know that I am of the nature to get sick.
> Breathing out, I know that I cannot escape sickness.
>
> Breathing in, I know that I am of the nature to die.
> Breathing out, I know that I cannot escape dying.
>
> Breathing in, I know that one day I will have to let go of everything and everyone I cherish.
> Breathing out, there is no way to bring them along.
>
> Breathing in, I know that I take nothing with me except my actions, thoughts, and deeds.
> Breathing out, my actions come with me.

We'll never get out of life alive. But it is one thing to acknowledge that intellectually; it is quite another to come to terms with it deep within one's whole being. The former is easy—just look around. The latter requires the repeated practice of meditation.

Meditative practices belong to living traditions and in this case Thich Nhat Hanh, with fears for our present civilization because of its assaults on nature, adds a stanza:

> Breathing in, I know that this civilization is going to die.
> Breathing out, this civilization cannot escape dying.

Such is the stark realism of many a spiritual practice. He does not wish the death of this civilization and, as an "engaged Buddhist," works for an earth-honoring transformation of it. Yet he knows that all civilizations are mortal and that sound mental health asks us to face mortality in all forms, including our way of life.

The second illustration is drawn from a *Hemispheres* magazine article in which Nan Chase relayed her discovery of the sanity of the Sabbath in a society that boasts, rather than repents, of offering everyone everything all the time. Sabbath on such frenzied terrain, she writes, is a "mental health tool" that can "work for anyone, no matter what religion you practice (or don't practice)." It's "a way to stop the onslaught of obligations, improve your social life, keep the house clean, revive your tired marriage, elevate spiritual awareness, and improve productivity at work, all overnight and without cost!" Given results like these, her conclusion that Sabbath is the greatest gift the Hebrews gave humanity comes as no surprise.

Chase's Sabbath began in a marriage counselor's office. During their second session (it turned out to be the last), Nan and Saul Chase agreed to take a day off together once a week to improve their marriage. A disarmingly simple solution, it worked—for the marriage, for the family, and for their harried lives. Furthermore, it didn't entail new commitments: no elaborate rituals, no hours in prayer or study at synagogue.

Chase's discovery of the Sabbath as an effective mental-health tool is undoubtedly significant. Her life was the better for this ancient practice. A

saving rhythm insinuated itself into her zany week—relaxation coupled itself with recreation and good eats. And perhaps most important, quality time with her spouse and children reappeared just when it and the marriage seemed to be slipping away.

Scolding Nan Chase for a utilitarian, secular use of Sabbath would be in poor taste. Her search for a sanity-inducing "weekly holiday" only mirrors the narcissism and solipsism of millions of her compatriots and may even be the right remedy for the most anti-Sabbath society in history.

But is a healthy day off truly Sabbath? Not if Gottlieb is right about genuine spiritual practices.

A Spiritual Sabbath Seeks Liberation—Not Vacation

Take another look at Sabbath. One of the two remembrances in "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy" is *cher le'ma'aseh b'ereyshit* (in remembrance of the events of creation). All interference in the natural order is disallowed and all the "tilling and hammering and carrying and burning" that constitute the relentless human transformation of the material world are forbidden. Don't even think about commerce: "Lay off all work" is the command. And walk, don't drive. Worlds inside worlds reveal themselves to those who take notice at very low speeds. Sabbath's lesson is that the grandeur of the universe is to be appreciated on its own terms, apart from any human use and as a steady reminder of our total dependence upon a core belonging not of our own doing. So lose yourself in wonder at the giftedness of life, its pleasures, and its God. Pray, read the Torah, and enjoy. As Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel said, "Just to be is a blessing; just to live is holy."

And there is a second remembrance: *zeycher le'tziyat mitzrayim* (in remembrance of going out from Egypt). Sabbath is post-Exodus legislation. It is a remembrance of liberation from slavery and the passionate God who struggles against the anti-life forces loose in the world, just as it is a remembrance that the People of God are chosen as joint participants in the sublime cause of forging just community. Their righteousness is their part in a redemption that joins history to nature.

Here Chase's Sabbath practice falls short. It divorces spirituality from politics and economics. In the biblical Sabbath there is no such divorce, no sundering of worship and prayer from the Monday work of justice, no sundering of liturgy from daily chores and demands. Awe and wonder before the God of life ("in remembrance for the events of creation") is coupled with fiery discontent over life's violations ("in remembrance of going out from Egypt"). The God who spins out galaxies without end and assigns the cells of all creatures their tasks is the God of divine pathos who commands human transformation of the world in accord with righteousness. The Creator redeems, and the Redeemer creates, in a reach that spans inner spiritual, social, and cosmic realms. Creation's God and liberation's God are one.

Sabbath, then, is not only about personal adjustment, relief, mental health, or haven. It doesn't let the world be what it is the rest of the week, with no thought of its betterment beyond my own. No one can be whole in a broken world.

Perhaps, then, Gottlieb's book should come with a warning: spirituality is costly; only those serious about discipleship need apply. Certainly those who expect of spirituality only cheery self-help and a dose of sanity and serenity for the way they currently live will be disappointed. So will those looking for a spirituality "app" rather than life-long discipline. Genuine spirituality usually begins where we don't wish to be, in settings of suffering and emotional unease. It moves, via the rigors of practices, away from our false, troubled, or misshapen self toward a self more in tune with the sacred. And for Gottlieb, "more in tune with the sacred" means a more just world. The transformation entailed in spiritual living is, then, far more than weekend community with servings of feel-good grace. The "incomparable rewards" of spirituality are coupled to "an equally extreme set of demands" that ask for reconfigured class, race, and gender relations as they also face down the realities of a degraded environment and a diminished planet in jeopardy at human hands.

This likely means a high dropout rate, certainly for any society with the attention span of ours. Who signs on for lifelong striving, even in quest of ultimate satisfaction?

But decide for yourself and let Gottlieb's account be the guide. If there is a better one, and one better written, I don't know it. ■

LARRY RASMUSSEN is Reinhold Niebuhr Professor Emeritus of Social Ethics at Union Theological Seminary in New York City. He lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

DOI 10.1215/08879982-2307247

Give
THE GIFT OF *TIKKUN*

You know someone who ought to be reading *Tikkun*! Please buy them a gift subscription. Call us at 510-644-1200, fill out the form on page 8 and mail us a check ($29 per subscription), or order it online at tikkun.org/gift.

Queering Palestinian Solidarity Work

Israel/Palestine and the Queer International
by Sarah Schulman
Duke University Press, 2012

REVIEW BY WENDY ELISHEVA SOMERSON

"But Israel is the only country in the Middle East with gay rights." I can't count the number of times I've heard this response to any criticism of Israeli policies over the last few years. Several years ago at a public discussion about a proposal to boycott Israeli products at the local co-op, an elderly and—from all appearances—straight gentleman awkwardly mumbled something about how "homosexuals" were being treated in the "rest of the Middle East." At the time I recognized how disingenuous this concern seemed, but I didn't recognize where it was coming from. Sarah Schulman's new book provides an extended exploration about the origins of this reasoning, how to respond to it, and why queers should become involved in Palestinian solidarity by taking us through Schulman's own journey to politicization around Israel and Palestine.

Uneasy about being invited to give the keynote address at the 2010 Israeli Lesbian and Gay Studies Conference at Tel Aviv University, Schulman strives to find out more about the academic and cultural boycott of Israel called for by Palestinian civil society. Her research into the boycott deepens her understanding of the Occupation and propels her to turn down the invitation to speak at an Israeli government-funded university.

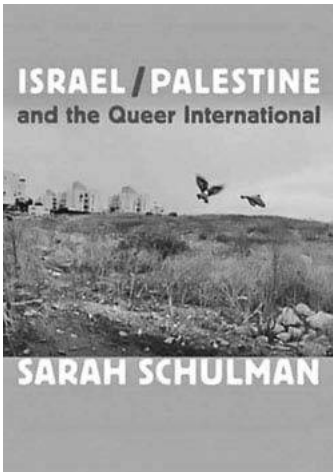
Instead she goes on an alternative solidarity trip to Israel and Palestine where she meets with queer and straight Israeli and Palestinian activists and learns about the brutalities of the Occupation in person. Bringing with her a long history of queer activism and a desire to bring together queer issues and the movement for boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS), Schulman experiences Israel's discriminatory policies, which include separate laws, roads, and water sources for Jews and Palestinians. Her deepening understanding of the Occupation and her meetings with queer activists motivate her to imagine a "variety of disenfranchised communities" around the world coming together to advocate against the Occupation and join the BDS movement.

Schulman returns from her trip excited and determined to organize a U.S. tour of queer Palestinian activists, including Ghadir of Aswat (a group for Palestinian gay women) as well as Haneen Maikey and Sami Shamali of alQaws (a group focused on sexual and gender diversity in Palestinian society). Creating a structure for understanding this tour, Schulman proposes the idea of a queer international "movement that brings queer liberation and feminism to the principles of international autonomy from occupation, colonization, and globalized capital." The queer international movement combats Israeli "pinkwashing"—a term used to describe attempts to divert attention from the Occupation of Palestine by focusing on LGBT rights in Israel—by exposing pinkwashing for what it really is: Israeli government-sponsored propaganda.

The tour that Schulman organized introduced queer Palestinians to U.S. queers. Its speakers often challenged U.S. assumptions about what it means to be queer, calling into question the supposedly universal importance of "coming out" as an international narrative. Folks in the United States also got to hear how queer Palestinians cannot separate their experiences of queerness from their experiences of living under the Occupation. Queer Palestinians spoke out against the notion that Israel serves as a savior for gay Palestinians: as Shamali neatly summarized, "there is no pink door leading to a secret pathway through the Wall for me."

Anti-Pinkwashing Activism in Seattle

I am particularly interested in Schulman's framing of queer involvement in international politics because of my own involvement in queer anti-pinkwashing actions in Seattle. Schulman's book provides a useful framework to think about how lessons learned in Seattle can be applied to global resistance against pinkwashing and a queer critique of the Occupation of Palestine.



In the spring of 2012, I was part of a group of Jewish and Palestinian American queer activists who successfully lobbied Seattle's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Commission to cancel an Israeli pinkwashing event that was scheduled to take place at Seattle City Hall. StandWithUs and the Israeli Consulate had sponsored four leaders of Israeli lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) organizations to visit the Pacific Northwest in a speaking tour called "Rainbow Generations: Building New LGBTQ Pride and Inclusion in Israel," so that they could "share the innovative work they are doing in Israel, learn from counterparts in the U.S., and build relationships for future collaboration."

What could be wrong with inclusion, pride, and collaboration? The government backing of this tour indicates that it was actually part of the cynical government campaign called "Brand Israel," a public relations program launched in 2005 to combat the growing success of the BDS movement. To rebrand Israel in a positive light, the Israeli government positions Israel as the progressive center of culture in the Middle East. Pinkwashing refers to the arm of this campaign that portrays Israel as a sanctuary for LGBT folks surrounded by barbaric and homophobic Arabs, particularly Palestinians.

Centering Queer Palestinian Voices

Schulman's motivation for her tour and our success in getting the Seattle event cancelled relied on the same strategy: centering the voices of queer Palestinians, which disrupt and reveal the racism behind pinkwashing. Our coalition of activists succeeded in getting the LGBT Commission to cancel its event by attending its public meeting the night before the event was scheduled to take place. Two of us Jewish Voice for Peace activists explained the concept of pinkwashing and that we were not opposed to hearing from individual Israelis, but that we could not support a tour backed by the Israeli government. We also differentiated between valid criticisms of Israeli government propaganda and actual instances of anti-Semitism that discriminate against Jewish people.

By addressing objections to canceling the event, we created space for our Palestinian American friends, Selma Al Aswad and Laila Assal, to tell their stories. Al Aswad described how her family history is linked to her current identity as a queer Palestinian American living in Seattle: her family relocated to Washington state after her father became a refugee in 1948 when he was expelled from his home in Palestine. She explained, "My queer identity is steeped in and inextricably linked to the dispossession of my family and community by the state of Israel." She then described how pinkwashing seeks to cover up the crimes Israel continues to commit against her family and community. Assal, a queer Palestinian American whose family has Israeli citizenship, explained that her family members are treated as "fourth-class citizens" within Israel. She described how her visits to Israel are accompanied by government harassment simply because of her ancestry. Explaining that Palestinians with Israeli citizenship represent 20 percent of Israel's population, Assal pointed out how they were not being represented on the Rainbow Generations tour.

With tears in his eyes and a voice shaking with emotion, one of the commissioners said he felt he and his colleagues had made a huge mistake because they had no idea that holding this event meant marginalizing Palestinian LGBTQ folks. Other commissioners joined in, voicing their own concerns, and when they voted to cancel the event, it was because something unusual had happened that night: queer Palestinian American stories had been placed at the center of the room. The commissioners, hearing Al Aswad and Assal's moving testimonies about their painful experiences and incredible resilience as queer Palestinian American activists, were compelled to change their minds.

Backlash: Pitting Queer Issues Against Palestine

Schulman describes some of the backlash that occurred after the Queer Palestinian tour, which included the New York LGBT Community Center's refusal to let a Palestine solidarity group meet at the center to plan activities for Israeli Apartheid Week. While the circumstances leading to the cancellation were not made public, there were accusations of anti-Semitism, and the community center's board claimed that Jewish folks wouldn't feel "safe" at the center if the Palestinian solidarity group met there. In a public statement, the center announced a moratorium on renting space to groups organizing around Israel/Palestine because "we must keep our focus squarely on providing life-changing and life-saving programs and services to the LGBTQ community in New York City."

Similarly, in Seattle, an enormous backlash was set in motion after the commissioners decided to cancel the Israeli speaking tour. Again the supposed "safety" of the Jewish community was used to separate queer issues from Israel/Palestine and render queer Palestinians invisible. StandWithUs, a pro-Occupation organization, released a response to the cancellation, claiming that anti-pinkwashing activists' goal was to shut down conversation and deny "Israelis the right to speak here in the U.S." They included a statement from the Israeli delegation about their disappointment that the commission "eliminated" the opportunity for dialogue and their sadness that the "commission, representing a minority that continues to face discrimination, also practices that same discrimination."

Accusations of anti-Semitism were couched in claims that the Israeli speakers were discriminated against based on their nationality, even though we had specifically explained that we opposed the event based on its sponsorship by the Israeli consulate. By ignoring the event's government backing, the delegation was able to use the language of "dialogue" to reverse power dynamics and position themselves as victims of discrimination. As Schulman writes, the idea of dialogue often functions as "a false equation, a nonexistent 'equality,' a substitute for political change" that erases the actual facts of the Occupation.

Under enormous pressure from the city council and Jewish institutions, the commissioners issued a written apology for "the pain, offense and embarrassment that we caused by canceling our scheduled event." They claimed that their vote did not represent "a stand for either side," but recognition "that we could not facilitate a neutral space for dialog and learning and keep the conversation focused on LGBTQ issues *versus* the larger issues of the Israeli-Palestinian relationship" (emphasis mine).

This idea that LGBTQ issues can and should be separated from Israel's Occupation of Palestine echoes the New York City LGBT's center's claim to keep its focus on LGBTQ community in opposition to "Middle East Conflict." This separation and isolation of gay identity from other identities (such as Palestinian identity) and the idea of a space for neutral dialogue capable of erasing power differences have been made possible by the mainstreaming of the LGBTQ movement and its links to homonationalism.

Assimilation and Homonationalism

In the 1960s and 1970s in the United States, gay liberation movements grew out of other liberation struggles and were deeply intertwined with feminist and anti-racist movements. Queer movements challenged capitalism, racism, and state power because gay lives were antithetical to mainstream society. However, over time, as LGBT folks gained acceptance and gay activism became institutionalized, the focus narrowed to accessing state-based rights. Operating from an assimilationist model, many LGBTQ groups have worked to gain inclusion into state institutions such as marriage and the military.

By making gay identity a distinct category aligned with the state, LGBTQ institutions have ended up separating gayness from all other aspects of our identities and aligning gay rights with state rights. Schulman describes how Jasbir Puar connects LGBT assimilation to racism through her coinage of the term homonationalism, which refers to how (mostly white) LGBT folks in the global North who have gained some legal rights adopt their country's patriotism and racism. They contrast their country's democratic culture with that of "the Other" (often Muslims) whose cultures are positioned as rabidly homophobic. These Western countries then showcase LGBT rights as symbols of their modern, progressive values.

The Israeli government has harnessed homonationalism by promoting its relatively decent positions on LGBT rights to justify its Occupation of Palestinian land and resources. Following the Israeli government's lead, pro-Occupation groups position Israel as an enlightened gay-friendly oasis in contrast to uncivilized and homophobic Palestine. These groups highlight the violence that some gay Palestinians face from their families and authorities in Palestine, but never acknowledge the violence *all* Palestinians, whatever their sexual orientation, face living under Occupation.

Civil Rights versus Human Rights

The pinkwashing discourse used in Seattle around the commissioner's decision builds on the mainstreaming of the LGBTQ movement by aligning gay civil rights with state interests and framing Palestinian human rights as a completely separate divisive, "political" issue. The Seattle City Council eventually met with the commissioners in a public meeting at City Hall to review the commissioners' decision to cancel the pinkwashing event. During the time for public commentary, representatives from Jewish and LGBTQ mainstream organizations spoke about how the cancellation caused deep pain in "the Jewish community." One person spoke about how outside groups "took a nonpolitical event and politicized what was a cultural and civil rights exchange." Many of the speakers argued that the cancellation meant "boycotting dialogue" and "squelching free speech."

These claims about harm done to the Jewish community echo the claims about Jews not feeling safe at the New York LGBT Community Center. These claims also rely on the same pro-Occupation tactic of positioning mainstream Jewish institutions as *the* Jewish community and excluding anti-Occupation Jews. Incredibly well-funded Jewish institutions such as the Jewish Federation are then able to position themselves as victims of censorship. In reality, the Jewish Federation practices censorship with its guidelines that forbid funding for any groups or events that advocate or endorse BDS or even have a sponsor that endorses BDS.

Furthermore, how did LGBTQ civil rights become cultural and "nonpolitical"? In the 1970s, it would have been impossible to position gay rights as apolitical, but since LGBTQ rights have lined up with state-based rights, pinkwashing discourse takes advantage of this alignment to separate gay rights from human rights. In an open

letter, several LGBTQ organizations expressed their disappointment over the "missed opportunity" to celebrate our community's "diversity" with the cancellation of the event. The letter went on to say that "as we head into our own significant civil rights battle in Washington State, the trust and support of the Jewish community is even more pivotal." Civil rights are now being conflated very specifically with gay marriage rights (which were up for a vote this fall in Washington) and are separated again from human rights.

Toward a Radical Queer Politic

In light of these debates about pinkwashing strategies, I am hopeful that Schulman's book can help more queer folks understand the link between queer issues and Palestine solidarity, as well as how to combat pinkwashing efforts. This book can help us learn how to respond to arguments that use the concepts of dialogue, discrimination, and diversity to promote a narrow vision of gay rights aligned with state rights. By insisting on a power analysis as part of her critique of global politics, Schulman demands that we consider who is being excluded when we focus on the "safety" and "rights" of some LGBT folks without linking these rights to anti-colonial struggle.

Schulman argues that the successful tour of queer Palestinians demonstrates that we can still mobilize "the huge progressive queer community in the United States that is disgusted by marriage and military and that longs to return to the radical social transformation implicit in a feminist critique of gender and sex roles." By centering and listening to queer Palestinian voices and decentering the state, queers can embrace Palestinian solidarity and refuse to let our identities be used to justify oppression anywhere—because true queer liberation can never come at the cost of denying someone else's rights. ■

WENDY ELISHEVA SOMERSON—one of the founders of the Seattle chapter of Jewish Voice for Peace—creates and leads Jewish rituals that integrate Palestinian solidarity and Jewish spirituality. In addition to writing and activism, she makes visual art, trouble, and macaroons in the Pacific Northwest.

DOI 10.1215/08879982-2307256

Translation depends, not on what must be included, but on what must not be left out

after Idra Novey

You enter the country next door from under the stone
Church of the Redeemer

subway exit. *No Pork Chinese Restaurant*
and *Mr. Chicken*, flank the avenue

both *strictly halal*.
The immigrant stories conclude happily

thus far: love at first sight ends
in marriage. The NGO administrator

can finally quit the dead-
end job and be a stay-at-home mom, lobbying

to remove the ice-cream truck from the park.

The baby sons resemble their mothers
or else their paternal grandfathers. Slender men
in bright shirts

lean against shiny, long black sedans, smoking
cigarettes. It is both the spawning grounds

and the death place of fiction.
The little ones learn to become miniature

predators themselves, until they encounter others
of their own kind. An aggregation

is called a school.
Visitors must check their own children

at baggage claim;
are either conveniently

or conspicuously
bilingual,

depending on their income level.
The average rainfall is silver

and distributed equally throughout the seasons.
What the bible really says

instructors stand in neat skirts beside their docile
placards,
waiting for you to ask them to dance.

There is no binary opposition—identity is where and
what time
you stand to put your make-up on,

relative to the points of time in space
of those around you,

their handfuls of brightly colored plastic,
their recession so slow you don't no

tice it at first. Polyphony is certainly possible, too,
indeed, it is the preferred

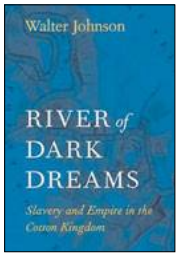
method of communication, for the birds
are sky-bound at present.

The inhabitants are friendly and curious, and the military
carry their cameras carelessly,

with the safeties off and the barrels
aimed haphazardly.

—Marcela Sulak

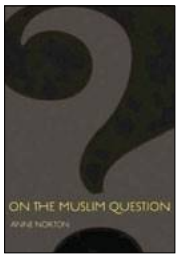
Tikkun RECOMMENDS

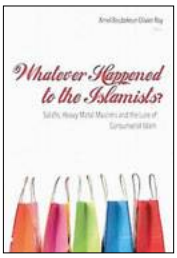


River of Dark Dreams: Slavery and Empire in the Cotton Kingdom

Walter Johnson
Harvard University Press, 2013

The American Civil War is still being fought. The racist inheritance of the South now permeates the collective unconscious of many who are taking their stand against African Americans and other people of color through this country's racist legal and prison system and also through cutbacks in government that fall most heavily on those whom this society dragged across oceans to enslave and exploit. To understand the dynamics of the present, we must perceive the peculiar way in which racism is intertwined with a global system of economic exploitation that continues to flourish, rewarding some while disinheriting many others. Walter Johnson's magnum opus puts the economy of slavery at the center of American history. His account succeeds in avoiding the sort of vulgar Marxist reductionism that misses the depth of human suffering that reached an apex in the first sixty-five years of the nineteenth century—suffering which in its modern twenty-first century manifestations continues to exact a heavy price from the bodies of African Americans and from the emotional well-being of everyone else. Johnson's detailed account of the Cotton Kingdom prepares us to understand the later manifestations of oppression and imperialism that have shaped much of the world ever since slavery was officially abolished (but more plausibly taken into new forms and globalized).





On the Muslim Question

Anne Norton
Princeton University Press, 2013

Whatever Happened to the Islamists?

Edited by Amel Boubekeur and Olivier Roy
Columbia University Press, 2012

One of the best ways to defeat Islamophobia is for people to get to know Muslims on a personal level and to become familiar with the rich complexities of Islamic life and thought as they interact with, and are to some extent influenced by, contemporary culture and thought from across the globe. Anne Norton provides us with a window into the interaction between European versions of modernity and the Islamic experience, drawing attention to how Muslims often face resistance and hatred as they enter into previously constituted elements of European society. Norton perceptively critiques the writings of Paul Berman, who has become a leading critic of Islam. She looks in particular at Berman's attacks on Tariq Ramadan, whose writing she characterizes as having "advocated the willing integration of Western Muslims into the cultural and electoral practices of the West." She argues against the notion of a clash of civilizations and describes that notion as frequently "deployed to deflect critical engagement with sex, sexuality, and sexual hierarchies in the West," explaining that "the [Muslim] enemy who would 'take our freedom,' who 'hates our way of life,' is made the excuse for giving up our freedoms and abandoning our way of life."

The articles in Amel Boubekeur and Olivier Roy's collection give a fuller sense of how one-dimensional the popular understandings and presentations of Islamic life in Western media are. *Tikkun* Contributing Editor Mark LeVine's essay on "Heavy Metal Muslims" in this collection shows how contemporary Islam is breaking out of the boundaries normally set for it by some of its orthodox exponents and many of its Western detractors. LeVine notes, for example, how Islamists, on the one hand, and "fans of extreme music" on the other, challenge both the politically and culturally dominant values of the larger society. Both, he writes, "offer alternative ways of grappling with the nihilism that has, at least since Nietzsche, been considered the most dangerous effect of modernization." Moreover, he argues, they manage to transcend countercultures based primarily on deploying and defending closed, intolerant, and sometimes violent "resistance identities." Instead, they forge what LeVine calls "project identities" that are open to dialogue, more tolerant of a divergence of opinion, and focused on envisioning a just future that does not rely on violence to be achieved. Yet LeVine is well aware that the hopeful forms of resistance he encounters in the emerging heavy metal scene are still challenged by more divisive figures who have even greater access to the public spheres within their societies. This collection provides an excellent window into these struggles.

Trouble-making Judaism

Elli Tikvah Sarah
David Paul Books, 2012

Boldly declaring that "being a lesbian is fundamental to my rabbinate," Rabbi Elli Tikvah Sarah, who serves a Progressive synagogue in Brighton, England, has written a book with the power to awaken and inspire. The trouble-making Judaism she lauds is creative, irreverent, engaged, and boundary-crossing. It's also deeply engaged with Jewish texts and theology. Her feminist-inspired rereading of traditional texts is creative, provocative, and inspiring. Her trouble-making is not confined to biblical texts, so her voice of Jewish sanity addresses many of the troubling issues facing Jewish life in the twenty-first century. Very much in the spirit of *Tikkun*, she insists that "both Israelis and Palestinians must find a way of acknowledging the other's experience and learn to make sense of the other's experience."

Give the Gift of *Tikkun*

You know someone who ought to be reading *Tikkun*! Please buy them a gift subscription. Call us at 510-644-1200, fill out the form on page 8 and mail us a check ($29 per subscription), or order it online at tikkun.org/gift.