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

TIKKUN

Current Debate on the Causes of Mental Illness
Michael Bader & Reginald Zelnik
Poetry *Jorge Luís Borges & Abraham Sutzkever*
Fiction *Zvi Jagendorf*

A BIMONTHLY JEWISH CRITIQUE OF POLITICS, CULTURE & SOCIETY JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1990 $5.00

PROSPECTS FOR HUMAN LIBERATION

Michael Lerner



Reflections of a Second-Rate Mind
Woody Allen

Spinoza: The First Secular Jew?
Yirmiyahu Yovel

The Orwell Mystique
Sven Birkerts

Palestinian Tax Revolt
Sidra DeKoven Ezrahi

Pro-Life Ideology
Katha Pollitt

Hannah Arendt & the Jews
Jeffrey C. Issac

The Eel & Zionist History
Benny Morris

The Middle Class & Inner Life
Ruth Rosen

Else Lasker-Schüler
Evan Zimroth

PLUS

David Biale on the Revolution in Eastern Europe and the Jews;
Miriam Campanini on Women at the Wall; Abraham Brumberg on Polish Anti-Semitism;
Bob Blauner on the Continuing Legacy of American Racism;
Arthur Blaustein on Socially Conscious Novels.

Fingertips

Abraham Sutzkever
Translated by Ruth Whitman

. . . Once on a winter night,
when I put my cold fingers
into the pocket of my fur jacket,
my fingertips felt living silk—
a tender dove of paradise
in the dovecote of my pocket.

It was only a fragment of paper that I had once
gently fed
in my garret
with cooing words.
And because I felt it was a shame to part with them
and also because I didn't trust my red cat with it,
I took the paper with me to a joyous rendezvous
outside, where black mirrors cracked in the shadows.

Then my fingertips became
drunk with tenderness. Why not? Trapped
in my pocket
was the soul of the world.

And my fingertips can swear
they have never felt such tenderness anywhere,
even after undressing a little spring cloud
in the heart of my beloved.

Just today, when either I had lost it or someone had stolen
the world from my pocket—
they became drunk
from the tenderness again—
my fingertips.

The tenderness of young Mozart, of a Stradivarius?
The tenderness of a rose, protected by the jealousy of
thorns?

In my pocket today they brushed against my memory.

1971

TIKKUN

A BIMONTHLY JEWISH CRITIQUE OF POLITICS, CULTURE & SOCIETY — VOLUME 5 NUMBER 1

2 Letters
5 Publisher's Page
6 Editorials: Toward an End to the Cold War; Nan Fink

Articles

7 Eastern European Earthquake, Middle Eastern Aftershock — *David Biale*
9 To Beit Sahur and Back — *Sidra DeKoven Ezrahi*
13 Random Reflections of a Second-Rate Mind — *Woody Allen*
16 After the Cold War: Possibilities for Human Liberation — *Michael Lerner*
19 The Eel and History: A Reply to Shabtai Teveth — *Benny Morris*
23 At the Margins: Hannah Arendt — *Jeffrey C. Isaac*
27 Pluralism at the Wailing Wall — *Miriam Campanini*
31 Anti-Semitism in Poland (Again) — *Abraham Brumberg*
35 The Black Swan of Israel — *Evan Zimroth*
40 Spinoza, the First Secular Jew? — *Yirmiyahu Yovel*
43 From Bensonhurst to Ballot Box — *Bob Blauner*

Poetry

45 The Golem — *Jorge Luís Borges*

Current Debate: The Nature of Mental Illness

46 Schizophrenia and Family Responsibility — *Reginald E. Zelnik*
48 A Response to Reginald E. Zelnik — *Michael J. Bader*

Fiction

51 Simple English Usage — *Zvi Jagendorf*

Book Reviews

57 *Contested Lives: The Abortion Debate in an American Community* by Faye D. Ginsburg — *Katha Pollitt*
60 *The Politics of Literary Reputation: The Making and Claiming of "St. George" Orwell* by John Rodden — *Sven Birkerts*
62 *The Good Life: The Meaning of Success for the American Middle Class* by Loren Baritz and *Fear of Falling: The Inner Life of the Middle Class* by Barbara Ehrenreich — *Ruth Rosen*
66 Novels with a Moral Conscience — *Arthur I. Blaustein*

Cover art: *Pity,* by Asaph Ben Menachem. Oil on canvas, 1984, 39 x 27 inches. Courtesy of Yoram Kolerstein.
Inside front cover: Abraham Sutzkever, author of "Fingertips," is the foremost living Yiddish poet. He was born in Poland and came to Israel in 1947. Ruth Whitman's translation of his book *The Fiddle Rose* will be published by Wayne State University Press this spring.

TIKKUN

Editor:
Michael Lerner
Publisher:
Nan Fink
Associate Editor:
Peter Gabel
Managing Editor:
Amy Wachspress
Assistant Editors:
Peter Cole, Nancy Watzman
Assistant Publisher:
Craig Sumberg
Editorial Assistant:
Valerie Sacks
Administrative Assistant:
Tedd Siegel
Contributing Editors:
E. M. Broner, Todd Gitlin, Josh Henkin, Christopher Lasch, Ruth Messinger, Ilene Phillipson, Anne Roiphe, Lisa Rubens, Gina Morantz Sanchez, Milton Viorst, Steve Wasserman, Eli Zaretsky
Book Editor:
Michael Kazin
Fiction Editors:
Rosellen Brown, Marvin Hoffman
Poetry Editor:
Marge Piercy
Literary Editors:
Phillip Lopate, Francine Prose
Israel Office:
Aaron Back, Beth Sandweiss
Editorial Consultants:
David Gewanter, Josh Weiner
Interns:
Adina Hoffman, Rebecca Lemov, Corey Robin
Proofreader:
Tom Hassett
Typesetting:
Turnaround, Berkeley
Production:
Ari Davidow, Bob Steiner

Editorial Board

Martha Ackelsberg, Rachel Adler, Gar Alperovitz, Michael Bader, Michael Berenbaum, David Biale, Rachel Biale, Norman Birnbaum, Heather Booth, David Bromwich, Abraham Brumberg, Jay Cantor, David Cohen, Gerald Cromer, Dorothy Dinnerstein, Elliot Dorff, Peter Edelman, Leslie Epstein, Sidra Ezrahi, Gordon Fellman, John Felstiner, Gordon Freeman, Saul Friedlander, Maurice Friedman, Amos Funkenstein, Laura Geller, Herbert Gold, David Gordis, Arthur Green, Colin Greer, Morton Halperin, David Hartman, Richard Healey, Robert Heilbroner, Burt Jacobson, Marc Kaminsky, Wolfe Kelman, Reuven Kimelman, Daniel Landes, Hillel Levine, Irving M. Levine, Milton Mankoff, Tzvi Marx, Daniel Matt, Marshall Meyer, Jo Milgrom, JoAnn Mort, Raquel Newman, Ilana Pardes, Yoram Peri, Robert Pinsky, Judith Plaskow, Letty Cottin Pogrebin, Aviezer Ravitsky, Lillian Rubin, John Ruskay, David Saperstein, Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, Howard Schwartz, Chaim Seidler-Feller, Gerald Serotta, T. Drorah Setel, Gershon Shaked, Stanley Sheinbaum, Carol Ruth Silver, Uri Simon, Daniel Thursz, David Twersky, Al Vorspan, Arthur Waskow, Arnold Wolf, Seth Wolitz, A. B. Yehoshua, Idith Zertal, Steve Zipperstein

Letters

Tikkun *reserves the right to select, edit, and shorten all submissions to the Letters section.*

SINGLES

To the Editor:

I would love to see a personals column in *Tikkun,* as suggested by Yael Frimstein's letter to the editor (*Tikkun,* Sept./Oct. 1989). It is difficult for me to locate single Jewish men who would be liberal enough to read *Tikkun,* and placing an ad in your magazine would be quite a "screening device" for me. I often ask a man when getting to know him whether he has ever read *Tikkun.* If he responds, "Huh?" I feel an internal sigh of disappointment.

Jeanne Witter
Coral Gables, Florida

To the Editor:

About six months ago, I set eyes on your journal for the first time and was immediately overwhelmed by a sense of having discovered a community of kindred spirits. A fantasy sprang to mind: going to a big meeting of all the people who publish and read your fine magazine (I hadn't yet found out about the *Tikkun* Conference of Liberal and Progressive Jews). [Editor's Note: The next conference will be held in Los Angeles on Jan. 20–21. See insert this issue.] This thought was followed by the recognition that among this group, there would be other singles who are progressive, intelligent, and, in short, "thinking, caring people who are not afraid to take unconventional stands on ethical and moral issues of Jewish relevance."

I share the "frustration and disappointment that intelligent Jewish progressive singles of all ages feel when they cannot connect with potential partners" and have secretly wished that *Tikkun* would publish personal ads for and from singles.

Carla Willis
Brookline, Massachusetts

To the Editor:

It is always hard to meet Jewish people and certainly hard to meet those Jews with a political and social

Tikkun (ISSN 0887-9982) is published bimonthly by The Institute for Labor and Mental Health, a nonprofit corporation.
Editorial offices: 5100 Leona St., Oakland, CA 94619; (415) 482-0805. Book reviews: Michael Kazin, Dept. of History, American University, 4400 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Washington, D.C. 20016; (202) 885-2415.

Copyright ©1990 by The Institute for Labor and Mental Health. All rights reserved. Opinions expressed in *Tikkun* are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the Editorial Board or those of the people listed on the masthead. Unsolicited manuscripts must be accompanied by a SASE, or they will not be returned.

Israel office: Rehov Gad 8 Aleph, Jerusalem 93622; (02) 720455.
משרד בישראל: רחוב גד 8א, ירושלים 93622; (02) 720455
Subscriptions can be placed by calling (800) 825-0061. $30 for 6 issues, $60 for 12 issues, $90 for 18 issues. Add $7 per year for all foreign subscriptions (including Canada and Latin America). Please pay for all orders in U.S. funds (including postal money orders) and with checks drawn from a U.S. bank only. Institutional subscriptions: $40 for 6 issues. Limited availability of back issues—inquire at editorial office.
All subscription problems can be dealt with by our subscription service: *Tikkun,* P.O. Box 6406, Syracuse, NY 13217; (800) 825-0061. Please allow 6–8 weeks for any subscription transaction, including receiving your first issue, solving subscription problems, or changing your address. (You may get a bill or a renewal notice after you've already paid or renewed. Please disregard. Bills and payments cross in the mail.)
Articles appearing in *Tikkun* have been indexed in *Political Science Abstract, The Alternative Press Index, Book Review Index, Index to Jewish Periodicals,* and *Religion Index One: Periodicals (RIO);* in *Magazine Index, Magazine Index Plus, Academic Index,* and *Public Information,* all available from Information Access Co., (800) 227-8431; and in *The Left Index.* Book reviews appearing in *Tikkun* have been indexed in *Index to Book Reviews in Religion (IBBR).* 16 mm and 35 mm microfilm, 105 microfiche and article copies are available from UMI, 300 North Zeeb Rd., Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Selected articles are also available via *Tikkun Online* in the Jewish conference on the WELL. Audiotaped back issues of *Tikkun* are available free of charge for blind or visually impaired people. Contact the library at the Jewish Braille Institute of America, Inc., (212) 889-2525. U.S. newsstand distribution by Eastern News Distributors, Inc., 1130 Cleveland Rd., Sandusky, OH 44870.

consciousness of merit. No, this would not be an "undignified" service because *Tikkun* readers would treat it with respect.

Danielle Ofri
New York, New York

To the Editor:

You may think this a contrived account, but it is not. I am a new subscriber and opened my first issue toward the back, in the hope it might contain a singles personal ad section. Seeing it did not, I approached the magazine more traditionally, and began with the letters to the editor—which began with Ms. Frimstein's letter!

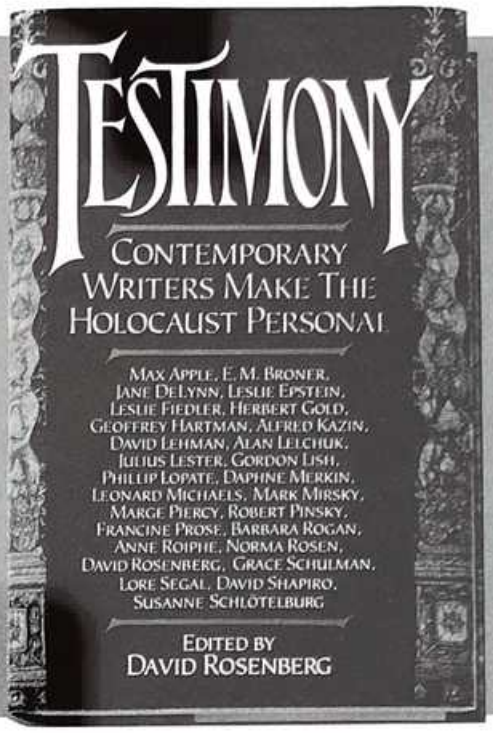
I find I face what Ms. Frimstein faces and in some of the keener points she makes I am her counterpart here in sunny Boca Raton.

By all means afford us the opportunity described and so well supported in her letter. A final thought—does Ms. Frimstein have travel plans that might bring her in the vicinity of Boca Raton anytime soon?

H. George Kagan
Boca Raton, Florida

"In the middle of the twenty-first century when our children's children ask what it was like to live as a Jew a generation after Auschwitz, *Testimony* will remain as a compelling statement for our time."

—Dr. Michael Berenbaum, Project Director of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum



Available at bookstores everywhere, or call 1-800-733-3000.

TIMES BOOKS
RANDOM HOUSE

Personal Ads & Classifieds

Rate: $2.50/word. Twelve-word minimum. Deadline: six weeks before cover date of issue. All personal ads must use a *Tikkun* box or commercial mail service for replies. Phone numbers and addresses not acceptable. Rate for *Tikkun* box: $18/listing. Send check or Visa/Mastercard number to *Tikkun* Classifieds, 5100 Leona St., Oak., CA 94619.

Chomsky, Herman, and the Press

To the Editor:

Carlin Romano's discussion of my work with Noam Chomsky on the American media ("Slouching Toward Pressology," *Tikkun*, May/June 1989) brings to mind F. H. Bradley's definition of metaphysics: the finding of bad reasons for that which we know by instinct. Romano's substantive critique of the book focuses on its alleged methodological failings, which include everything but the kitchen sink: excessive reliance on library sources, a fatal "refusal to quote journalists on why they report what they do," an assumption of "blackhearted" motives on the part of journalists, "selectivity in choice of data, dogmatism about basic principles, contempt for the historical conditions of social practices," and so on.

Paradoxically, despite these seemingly overwhelming methodological defects, Romano finds that our detailed and extensive case studies, which apply our model to major episodes of media coverage of the Indochina wars, elections in Central America, and other matters, "hit home," and he criticizes them only on minor details. He contends, however, that while we make sense as press critics, "as press theorists they founder." The quoted statement is not based on an examination of our theory and model, which he nowhere discusses. It rests on the fact that we "cannot accommodate such minutiae" as why the *Times* covered Bitburg so intensively, or "Would the *Times* ... have been a vastly different paper if Harrison Salisbury had beaten out Rosenthal for the top job?" I concede that our model cannot cope with such minutiae, but it is obvious that Romano's criterion could never be met by any theory of the media—or by the theory of gravitation for that matter—and displays a profound misunderstanding of the logic and role of theoretical analysis.

Romano traces our analytical failures back to Chomsky's linguistic theories. This connection, which Romano nowhere relates to the content of our book, provides an admirable case of preconceived ideas (Romano's) shaping a review in the face of clear internal evidence to the contrary. Our first chapter, which lays out a detailed structural model to explain mass media behavior and performance, includes no "innate processes" and describes the evolution and interaction of structural relationships which are neither universal nor static. In tracing the origin of our alleged flaws to Chomsky's linguistics, Romano overlooked the fact that the author sequence is Herman and Chomsky, which, reversing the normal alphabetical arrangement, should have given him pause in attributing our methodology to Chomsky. In fact, our

opening chapter was written by me and our model can be traced, if one is inclined to tracery, to a distinctly structural analysis of the workings of the corporate system in my 1981 book *Corporate Control, Corporate Power.*

Romano puts great stress on our alleged failure to talk with journalists about why they do what they do. In actuality, we have spoken with dozens of journalists, and the information derived from such discussions, along with the detailed examination of media content and the facts available to the media which they used or ignored, helped shape our model and influenced our case studies. Two important elements in this model are media sourcing practices and feedback pressures on media personnel. What we do *not* do, which Romano implies to be a crushing defect, is to check out why reporters handled news stories as they did. This is, of course, quite irrelevant to determining whether a general hypothesis is confirmed. Many authors, for example, have examined different forms of corporate ownership and financial connections for effects on corporate performance, without thinking it necessary to check out each CEO's perceived objective. In the present instance, if the press follows the government's lead in dealing with elections in El Salvador and Nicaragua, to a degree where they ask entirely different questions in the two cases, a model based on government agenda-setting power is vindicated no matter what goes on in journalists' minds as they engage in this dichotomous behavior.

Romano further accuses us of attributing bad motives to journalists. This is incompatible with our structural approach and we repeatedly deny that ill intentions have substantial explanatory value. For example, in *Manufacturing Consent* we write that the operation of the filters in our model "occurs so naturally that media news people, frequently operating with complete integrity and goodwill, are able to convince themselves that they choose and interpret the news 'objectively' and on the basis of professional news values. Within the limits of the filter constraints they often are objective. . . ."

Romano's evidence that we impute ill motives is our occasional use of the word "suppress" to describe journalistic procedure. In its relevant dictionary usage, suppress means to "withhold from the public." This certainly describes reporting which presents material on constraints on *La Prensa* in Nicaragua but fails to make available information on even more severe press repression in El Salvador. Whether this is based on evil motives is complicated and requires inferences that we do not make. The reporters may ignore attacks on the press in El Salvador because they know such stories would be killed upstairs, or because the dichotomous treatment is internalized, or because of biased sourcing processes. Romano's statement that, in contrast to Hertsgaard, who attributes bias to sourcing processes, we attribute it to "evil intentions" is thus a two-sided error: one of our key filters is sourcing processes, and it is simply false that we ascribe journalists' behavior to evil intentions.

Romano's selectivity is egregious. He cites two "fellow leftists" on Chomsky's deficiencies, but takes one (Parini) out of context and fails to cite any of the scores of readily available accolades to Chomsky by other fellow leftists. In the few instances where he discusses the substance of our book, Romano chooses carefully and ignores context: for example, he cites our claim that the media failed to mention the degrading use of the underwear of the murdered U.S. religious women in El Salvador, which he notes the media might have avoided on grounds of taste. This is possible, but he fails to mention that the media also ignored many less tasteless details, such as their bruises and other physical damage; the refusal of the official Salvadoran doctors to examine the women without face masks; the media's failure to interview the peasants who were forced to bury the bodies; and their neglect of the medical evidence at the trial. These and other matters lend additive weight to our claim that the media treatment of the murder of the women was antiseptic, and in sharp contrast with their repeated detailing of Popieluszko's bruises and other injuries and reconstructions of the indignities he suffered. Romano also fails to mention our evidence of the media's continuous interest in the responsibility at the top in connection with Popieluszko, and their refusal to report on or investigate this in the El Salvador case.

While admitting that we make some good points and even usefully prod establishment journalists, Romano wonders why we keep at it and accept marginalization. He does not recognize that exclusion from mainstream debate is the inevitable fate of critics who attack the media and system on fundamental premises and call for radical structural change. And he does not understand that we do not expect to influence those with a large vested interest in the status quo, and are not eager to be accepted by them. While we would like to reach a larger public, we are only interested in doing this with our central message intact. Thus if our audience is only in the hundreds or hundreds of thousands we must reach it and hope to see these numbers grow.

Edward S. Herman
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Carlin Romano responds:

Ed Herman misrepresents my article. I'd hardly say, for example, that I criticize his and Chomsky's case studies (on such matters as the Indochina wars) "only on minor details." In fact, I suggest in my article that they've failed to persuade mainstream opinion on some major claims about those wars. And I suggest that some major claims in their case studies may be false. Falsity is hardly a minor detail of a case study.

I also can't share Herman's pride in his structural model. At the same time that Herman accuses me of "a profound

(Continued on p. 68)

Tikkun Interns

Interns do the full range of *Tikkun* activities, from editing, proofreading, and reading incoming manuscripts to phone solicitations, leafletting, mailing, and other office chores.

- Summer 1990. Minimum 32 hrs./week. No pay.
- Sept. 1990–June, 1991. One paid position, $500/month, minimum 32 hrs./week. Several unpaid positions minimum 25 hrs./week.

Send detailed, self-revealing letter along with comments and suggestions for *Tikkun* to Michael Lerner, 5100 Leona Street, Oakland, CA 94619.

Publisher's Page

Nan Fink

Over the past year I have experienced a great deal of ambivalence about remaining on as publisher of *Tikkun*. After much soul searching, I have finally decided to leave the magazine. While I am relieved that I've come to a decision, I feel very, very sad. It is so painful for me to say goodbye that I can hardly find the words to write this column—my last publisher's page.

Despite my sadness, however, I know that I need to take this step. For a long time now I have wanted to fully immerse myself in writing. My writing, which is extremely important to me, has been on hold while I've been working as publisher. In the earlier stages of the magazine I didn't at all mind postponing it in order to throw myself into creating *Tikkun*. However, I've become increasingly unhappy about putting it off. At this point in my life I realize that I won't do the writing I want to do unless I restructure my life.

This desire to have more time to write is certainly a major part of my decision to leave the magazine. However, there is another reason which concerns the magazine's direction. Although I am very proud of *Tikkun* and think it is doing extremely important work, I personally have become less and less comfortable with the model upon which it is based.

When Michael Lerner and I began *Tikkun* we chose to model it after other successful intellectual magazines that feature in-depth analyses of common concerns. We wanted to create a vehicle through which ideas could be introduced and debated within the liberal/progressive world and within the American Jewish community. In order for the magazine to be taken seriously we knew that it had to resemble other comparable publications in form. While we had some misgivings at the time about the rigidity of the form, we accepted its limitations. Our goal was to influence the important discussions of the day, and that took priority over other concerns.

I don't regret that we used this model. In a very short time *Tikkun* has become an important participant in public discourse on many particularly sensitive issues. For example, *Tikkun*'s position on the Palestinian question has helped to broaden the debate about Israel and the intifada within the Jewish world.

However, as much as I support the work of the magazine, I have felt increasingly out-of-step with this model. There are many levels of human experience that do not fall within its parameters. I am attracted to a more holistic approach, one that sees things less in terms of dichotomies and one that values personal experience. I resonate much more with expressions of connectedness and a respect for process.

Over the years we've tried to make the magazine more inclusive. But the model can be stretched only so far. Unfortunately, if *Tikkun* were to adopt another form it would probably be marginalized in a way that would make it less effective in the public arena.

Because of my desire to write and because of my desire to work within a more feminist context, I've reached the point where I am ready to leave *Tikkun*. I am going at a good time: the magazine is strong. The subscription base is larger than ever. After last fall's financial crunch, the magazine is in solid fiscal shape—thanks to the contributions of so many of you. In the future the magazine will need further help from its friends and supporters, but the prognosis is good. The magazine had a very successful conference in the San Francisco Bay Area in November 1989. Nine hundred people attended—despite the earthquake—and the spirit was strong. From all signs the conference in Los Angeles in January 1990 will also be a great success. The magazine has an extremely able staff and helpful volunteers, editorial board members, and friends. And the community around the magazine is growing—*Tikkun* discussion groups, the Committee for Judaism and Social Justice (CJSJ) groups, and informal *Tikkun* salons exist in increasing numbers around the country.

Above all, *Tikkun* has the leadership of Michael Lerner. Michael's vision, intelligence, and insight are a great gift to all of us. He works harder than anyone I've ever known, and his dedication to the work of *Tikkun* is unflagging. With great courage he has established himself as a strong progressive voice for peace in the Jewish world. His contribution is enormous, and I am grateful for having had the opportunity to have been his partner.

The experience of working on the magazine has been rich for me. I have been touched deeply by the generosity of spirit of so many of our readers. I've learned that there are an incredible number of people who care about *tikkun olam*. And once again I have found that people can make a difference by their actions.

I want to give *Tikkun* my blessing that in the years ahead the magazine will continue to grow in stature and wisdom; that it will increase its presence in the Jewish world; that its readers will take the spark of community and spread it through their lives; and that it will continue to lead the way in healing and transforming the world. □

Editorials

Michael Lerner

Toward an End to the Cold War

It still seems that the U.S. will have to be pulled kicking and screaming into the new realities posed by a potentially post-cold-war world. It is not just intellectual conservatism or emotional rigidity that keeps our policymakers from imagining the good they could do if they were to divert the vast resources wasted on the defense budget into rebuilding our cities, providing housing and jobs for the poor, providing adequate health care for all, retooling our economy, and developing comprehensive programs to address worldwide hunger and the ecological crisis. The structure of our system itself held them back.

In the post-World War II period we avoided dealing with the limits of a capitalist economy by institutionalizing massive government spending under the guise of defense spending. Conservatives could have it both ways: they could denounce government interference in the economy and simultaneously use defense spending to prop up a marketplace that little resembled the free market ideal being touted.

That same market ideology today becomes a massive obstacle to rational thinking. Defense spending continues at levels that are obviously unnecessary, because many Americans believe that the only way to keep employment high and the economy humming is to keep up this wasteful use of our resources. Similarly, given the failure of the elites of wealth and power to provide adequate social support for the unemployed and for workers who need to learn new skills, most workers reasonably fear that closing defense plants will create massive unemployment and enduring pain. No wonder, then, that many Americans react with caution and sometimes hostility to the idea that the cold war is over. They will have to be convinced that ending the cold war may serve their interests.

That's our task. Liberals and progressives need to promote a public dialogue about what America could look like now that the cold war is waning.

We propose the following: a national day to celebrate the end of the cold war, perhaps in June or July. The celebration should have some of the characteristics of an "end of the war celebration"—music, dancing, games, and so forth. But it should also provide an opportunity for local communities to have teach-ins and small group discussions in which people fantasize together about their vision of a post-cold-war America.

Nan Fink

With the same grace and dignity that she brought to the enterprise of creating *Tikkun,* Nan Fink has now decided to leave the magazine so that she can pursue her own writing.

Nan has been a wonderful partner in the process of creating *Tikkun*. She came to *Tikkun*'s parent body, the Institute for Labor and Mental Health, after years of having worked as a psychotherapist, a teacher of social welfare at a university, and a researcher of the problems facing displaced workers. She brought with her an acute sense of the injustices in American society and a determination to use her resources to change things. Together we developed the idea for *Tikkun* and then went about the challenging process of getting the magazine off the ground.

Nan poured her energy, her smarts, her resources, and her loving presence into the task. While her official title was "publisher," she was de facto co-editor of the magazine, not only making important editorial decisions but helping determine the directions in which the magazine would move. She brought a deep feminist sensibility into the daily operations and the conceptual framework of the magazine. Her calming and centering presence made it possible for us to weather the constant verbal attacks and death threats we have received because of our criticism of Israeli policy in the West Bank. Her wisdom taught many of us how to think about changing the world in a way that would embody joy and spiritual sensitivity. As a convert to Judaism, Nan showed the Jewish world once again how much converts could strengthen and enrich our community. Her work as a powerful woman leader shaped the creation of an egalitarian *Tikkun* community and spurred our efforts to incorporate feminist themes and encourage women writers.

Nan was our teacher, our guide, our benefactor, and our friend. The Jewish people owe her deep gratitude for her contribution to the creation of a voice for liberal and progressive Jews. Although Nan is right to say that the magazine is strong (in no small part because of her efforts) and will continue without her, for those of us who were privileged to work with her, Nan's departure is difficult. We will deeply miss her. □

Eastern European Earthquake, Middle Eastern Aftershock

David Biale

Revolutions represent the triumph of the unexpected. Who would have predicted a few short years ago the cascade of events in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe that has culminated with the demolition of the Berlin Wall and the return of Alexander Dubcek? The end of the cold war, which seemed a thoroughly messianic expectation during the first part of the Reagan era, now presents a realistic, if uncertain, prospect. Not since 1848, the "springtime of nations," have so many European countries been caught up in a wave of revolution, a wave characterized then, as now, by democracy *and* nationalism. If we are lucky, the resurgence of self-determination by Poles, Hungarians, Germans, Bulgarians, Czechs, Latvians, Lithuanians, and Estonians will resurrect the nineteenth-century ideal of liberal nationalism, rather than recreate the fascist, anti-Semitic nationalisms that existed between the wars.

Whereas the 1848 revolutions collapsed when the armies of Czar Nicholas I imposed a "Chinese solution" in Eastern Europe, Russia today plays the opposite role as the *instigator* of the revolution. In sharp contrast to Soviet ideology of the past, however, Moscow is now exporting liberal, not Communist, revolution. This extraordinary turn of events renews the dream of 1848 a century and a half later.

The revolutions in Eastern Europe can also be understood in twentieth-century terms as movements of decolonization. The first phase of decolonization started in the 1940s, with the British withdrawal from India and Palestine, and culminated in the 1950s and 1960s with the dismantling of the nineteenth-century empires in Asia and Africa. (The Vietnam War was perhaps the last convulsion of this process.) But if World War II sparked this first movement of decolonization, it also created the new Soviet colonial empire in Eastern Europe. The economic relationship between the Soviet Union and these Eastern bloc countries resembles that of an imperial motherland to its Third World colonies—even if in some respects the Soviet economy is more backward than those of Eastern Europe. As the Soviet Union sheds its colonies, the colonies themselves are rising up in a classic movement for self-determination. This must be a unique case in which the colonial motherland encourages the revolt of the colonies.

The decolonization of Eastern Europe will have profound economic consequences for the entire continent. The Berlin Wall was built not only to keep East Germans in East Germany, but also to protect the East German currency. By removing the economic barriers, Gorbachev forces the Western economies to assume responsibility for the East. The Communist economies will undoubtedly suffer, as Third World societies typically do when forced into the world market. But decolonization will profoundly affect the economies of the capitalist world as well. Just at the moment when Western Europe was about to become, in effect, a single supranational entity, Gorbachev forces us to consider the possibility of the economic unification of Europe as a whole.

The Eastern European revolution also strengthens Gorbachev's hand at home, where it has created a virtually unstoppable chain reaction. Perestroika within the Soviet Union can, of course, be reversed, but if reactionary elements in the Communist Party try to overthrow Gorbachev, they will inherit democratic and nationalist revolutions along their borders. To turn back the clock in Russia by recreating the cold war would put the Soviet Union in an infinitely worse strategic position: the Red Army would have to conquer Eastern Europe all over again. The revolution in Eastern Europe, then, constitutes Gorbachev's "impeachment insurance."

Gorbachev's revolutionary policy also has implications far beyond the borders of Europe. In the Middle East, for example, there are urgent lessons to be learned from the tumultuous events in the Eastern bloc. Surprisingly little has been reported in the media about Soviet policy in the Middle East, and there appears to be an assumption that the Soviet Union will play no role there until Israel and the U.S. decide to allow it one. In fact Gorbachev has been pushing in some very interesting directions. It is generally known that a process leading toward the reestablishment of relations between Israel and the Soviet Union is underway. Much more impor-

David Biale is Koret Professor of Jewish History at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley and is the author, most recently, of Power and Powerlessness in Jewish History *(Schocken Books, 1986).*

tantly, Gorbachev has given the same kind of clear messages to the Palestinians and the Syrians that he gave to the East Germans and Czechs: perestroika must be worldwide.

While there were many factors behind the PLO's recent recognition of Israel and acceptance of UN Resolution 242, one of the major turning points was Arafat's visit to Moscow in April 1988. At their meetings in Moscow, Gorbachev evidently told Arafat that the Soviet Union supported a genuine two-state solution and that the PLO had better accept the existence of Israel. More recently, the Soviets are reported to have made it clear to Syria that they would not support a military confrontation with Israel. For example, there are indications that the Syrian army is no longer getting the most up-to-date Soviet military equipment. If this dramatic shift in Soviet policy holds, the notion of an Arab threat to Israel's existence will suffer a considerable loss of credibility.

Just as the Bush administration has been slow to fully grasp what has happened in Eastern Europe, so the Israeli government has failed to come to terms with the political earthquake whose epicenter lies in Moscow. To the contrary, Yitzhak Shamir remains dedicated to a policy of avoidance and delay, determined as he is to leave the walls standing in the Middle East at a time when they are coming down all over Europe.

What Shamir and many other Israelis have not grasped is that the territories occupied in 1967 are, like Eastern Europe, undergoing the convulsions of late twentieth-century decolonization. The intifada, as Immanuel Sivan has argued in a recent issue of the Israeli journal *Politika,* is as surely an anticolonial revolt as were the Algerian rebellion against the French and the Indian struggle against the British earlier in the century, and as is the Black South African movement against apartheid now. Despite the important differences between them, these revolts have one thing in common: in each case a ruling foreign group has denied the national and political rights of the indigenous population.

The process of decolonization becomes particularly complex when the ruling group does not even perceive itself to be foreign, as in the otherwise very different cases of the Afrikaaners in South Africa and the Jews in Israel. As Albert Memmi has argued, the creation of Israel was itself an anticolonial act against the British empire and a movement of national liberation by a people who had been, in effect, the victims of colonialism in Eastern Europe and North Africa. Small wonder that Israelis should find it so hard to see themselves as a colonial power in the territories, particularly since the conquest of the territories in 1967 is seen as an act of self-defense.

In this context, one must distinguish between pre-1967 and post-1967 Israel. The state created in 1948 gave full citizenship to its Arab residents, even though significant discrimination remained. In no sense could this state be called colonial. But despite the "defensive" nature of the occupation, Israel since 1967 has evolved into a state in which the inhabitants of the occupied territories possess no political rights and largely serve the economy of the mother country. (Meron Benvenisti has called this the "Second Israeli Republic.")

The revolutions in Eastern Europe can also be understood as movements of decolonization.

In the Israeli setting, decolonization will be particularly difficult since most Israelis do not define the problem in these terms. As demonstrated by the history of other conflicts, a country's assumption that its colony serves vital national interests makes it hard even to conceive of decolonizing. (If the U.S. was prepared to sacrifice lives and wealth for the domino theory in Southeast Asia, how much less likely is Israel to give up territories which are literally next door?) It is only when the perceived economic, political, or moral price of continued occupation becomes greater than the perceived risk of withdrawing that a colonial power will suddenly pack its bags and go home. In most cases of decolonization, the imagined vital national interests that make withdrawal seem impossible vanish from sight within a few years.

The process of decolonization does not follow an inevitable course, but the dynamic between the colonizer and the colonized, including the predictable cycle of violence and repression, is virtually universal. Despite the feeling of some Jews that Israel is unique, both the occupation of the territories and the intifada follow well-known patterns. Although the process leading ultimately to Palestinian statehood may be prolonged, a colonial power can collapse unexpectedly and with great rapidity, as the revolutions in Eastern Europe remind us.

The failure of most Jews to recognize this process is undoubtedly a consequence of the sclerosis of contemporary Jewish politics. The notions that Israel will remain permanently at war with the Arabs and that a Palestinian state will pose a permanent, mortal threat are very much like the belief that the cold war is eternal. Indeed, these beliefs are all linked, for much of Israeli policy is predicated on the permanence of the cold war. But the argument that Israel is a strategic partner of the

(Continued on p. 71)

Between the Lines: To Beit Sahur and Back

Sidra DeKoven Ezrahi

Jerusalem in August 1989 was bathed in the stagnant heat of the season and darkened by clouds of smoke from burning tires. Saratoga Springs, New York in September was brilliant with the maples' turning. The Adirondack mountains no longer echoed with war cries over contested boundaries. I wondered, among maples, when the faded landscapes of the Judean Hills would regain their primary colors, when the Israeli poet would be able to recapture metaphors that have been mobilized too long as camouflage. ("If they show me blood and I say 'blood' they say 'paint,'" says the embattled Hebrew poet as strict nominalist.)

But the distancing that provides perspective on events also tests the moral and emotional price of disengagement. After three months away, I have come to Jerusalem recognizing the temptation of disengagement in myself and in those here in Israel whose pride in Israel has been exchanged—overnight, it seems—for shame. (Of all the words I collected on my sojourn abroad, it is this word—whispered to me on the pavements of New York City by a Jewish writer who had never before resorted to *sotto voce* when pronouncing a Jewish cavil—that I have brought back to examine under the Jerusalem sun.)

There is active disengagement born of shame and there is passive engagement defended by ignorance—the kind of selective blindness that comes of wearing lenses distributed by agencies specializing in optical illusions. Corrective procedures do risk violating social decorum. Casual conversation at a cocktail party in July with an actor from California on a sentimental family pilgrimage to Israel: "What places will you be visiting?" "Masada. And Yad Vashem and the Diaspora Museum." "Will your guide also be taking you to the Intifada?" "The *what*?!" "You know—the Palestinian uprising on the West Bank and Gaza." "Oh. I thought that was over." (Quick, talk about the cholera epidemic in Odessa. Or the War of the Roses. Or Dustin Hoffman. Don't be impolite. Israel is a monument. A symbol. A museum. Martyrs and heroes. Simple, neat, well-packaged.)

Shall we dare to ruffle our brothers' and sisters' feathers by arranging alternative tours of the Land of Israel—featuring Nahalin, where townspeople were taunted for days last year by border policemen who then shot four of them dead outside a mosque early one Ramadan morning; or Beita, where a resident who broke the gun of one settler during a bloody skirmish was given an eight-year sentence; or the refugee camp where a woman died after being deprived of medical treatment during a curfew? Day trips can be arranged to the detention centers at Dahariya and Ketziot. The road to Dahariya passes Dehaisha, a town behind barbed wire. A few kilometers further, the road passes Elazer, a town behind barbed wire. The first, a Palestinian refugee camp, and the second, a Jewish settlement, are the landmarks of a warped Zionist territorialism. "Welcome to the Dahariya Installation," reads the cheerfully painted sign in front of the prison....

But I would like to offer yet another sort of tour—a walking tour through the streets of Beit Sahur, visiting the homes of Ghassan Andoni and Jamal Hilal, where on numerous occasions over the past year we would sketch our visions of the future over cardamom-spiced coffee. Beit Sahur is one place where the efforts of a small but determined group of Israelis and Palestinians committed to ending the occupation and accepting a Palestinian state alongside Israel seem to have made a difference.

Today, Ghassan and Jamal won't be there to greet us; they are in administrative detention at Ketziot, along with more than a thousand other Palestinians. In between prison stints this summer, Jamal managed to taste the first ten days of matrimony. Most probably, since in these cases there are no such amenities as charges or trials or verdicts, we can only speculate that Ghassan and Jamal have suffered for the crime of talking peace with Israelis. We might be hosted by Eleas Rashmawi who, today at least, is outside prison. It is a short walk from his pharmacy, with its empty shelves, to his home, where the scuff marks on the floor signify the place where the sofa should be.

When I returned to Jerusalem at the end of October, I discovered that, like a Greek tragedy whose second act I had missed, the general situation in the occupied territories had followed an inevitable course, and hostilities were escalating along a predictable curve. The

Sidra DeKoven Ezrahi is a member of Tikkun's *editorial board and the author of* By Words Alone. *She teaches comparative Jewish literature and is writing a book on exile and the modern Jewish imagination.*

"masked youths" now roaming the streets of the West Bank and Gaza are a sure harbinger of the unbridled violence that will, sooner or later, erupt if the present impasse is not broken. But the one place that had been singled out for irregular treatment was the town of Beit Sahur. Primarily known until a few months ago as the site of Shepherds' Field, where the Star of Bethlehem appeared to the three wise men, this predominantly Christian, middle-class town of twelve thousand people who have lived for generations just a stone's throw from Bethlehem has become the focus and the symbol of a hitherto invisible aspect of the intifada: the tax revolt and the government's concerted effort to crush it.

The dialogue between residents of Jerusalem and Beit Sahur, which celebrated its first anniversary this past September, originated out of resistance to the forces of depersonalization and mutual demonization that had begun to grip the Israeli and the Palestinian communities. Soon after the onset of the intifada—a seismic tremor that exposed deep layers of self-delusion—dialogue groups initiated by a few Palestinians and Israelis proliferated in the occupied territories. Most of these groups were meant to be convened only once or twice—just enough to begin to dislodge grossly stereotyped notions of the other. Those groups that have persisted are an anomalous presence in a place still largely immured within hermetic codes. Behind their mufflers, the masked Palestinian youths afoot in the streets echo (or parody) the menacing anonymity of Israeli soldiers behind their visors and helmets. The clothes of your neighbors are as varied as their personal tastes; the clothes of your enemy are uniform.

Within the semiotics of segregation in this region some of us appear, then, as cross-dressers. Often mistaken for settlers heading for the town of Tekoa, our people, many with head coverings, are waved through Beit Sahur (the most direct route to the Jewish settlement) by Israeli soldiers on the alert for the seditious appearance of "the peace forces." On one of our visits to Beit Sahur, the young son of our Palestinian host looked around the crowded room impatiently and asked his father what had happened to the Jews who were supposed to arrive. His father pointed to the people sitting on the couch. "No," the boy insisted. "They're not Jewish; they don't have guns." The *kaffiyeh* on the dashboard of a car driven by an unarmed Jew with a beard and skullcap can be as much a sign of the permeability of his lines of defense as of camouflaged or forfeited identity.

Dialogue that began in curiosity and mutual suspicion became, over time, an exercise in redrawing geopolitical borders while safeguarding the boundaries of human dignity. At the heart of this enterprise is a "theory of remainders" which defines the struggle in terms of its limits—limits that could leave both sides enough dignity to begin, somewhere down the road, the long task of reconstruction. No one who has watched Israeli society slip back into the grip of an ancient rhetoric of martyrdom and fear of demonic others should minimize the long-term pathological effects of persecution on all the participants and (in communities stricken with long memories) their descendants. Each time the Israeli army crosses another "red line" in the humiliation of the occupied population, the remainder shrinks.

There are, then, lines to be crossed and lines to be held fast. Red lines, green lines. A riot of color. In their quiet rerouting of the main arteries of transportation around the city, many Jerusalemites have effectively reinstated the old Green Line—some, admittedly, out of fear for their own safety, but some as a gesture of respect for the divided territorial claims of two peoples. When such individuals cross the border into what will someday be the state of Palestine, they do so only as invited guests.

The distance from the outskirts of Jerusalem to Beit Sahur is about five kilometers. But just beyond the invisible border, the scenery changes dramatically—armored cars and troops are the semaphores of a novel traffic control system, stopping random vehicles with variegated Palestinian license plates; stone-throwing Palestinian youths are the shadowy presences behind every tree, targeting cars with yellow Israeli license plates; trigger-happy Jewish settlers patrol the roads in their own vigilante groups—so that the fifteen-minute journey, though often uneventful, is negotiated on roads exposed to the ballistics of Palestinians, soldiers, and settlers. We pass Rachel's Tomb (Rachel, Rachel, we need your tears, your sons have returned to their borders and forgotten so quickly the pain of homelessness) and turn left down the hill leading to Beit Sahur.

As we drive, those who understand Arabic strain their eyes to decipher the writing on the walls. Their walls, like ours, are scarred with signs and portents; they stand firm and ominous while elsewhere in the world the walls between the east and west banks of enmity are crumbling. Traveling through the occupied territories one learns, with time, to *read* the landscape. The graffiti on every wall, door, and shutter in Beit Sahur and other towns is a palimpsest of messages inscribed under the cover of night, painted over at gunpoint in the morning ("We use white paint; it provides a good backdrop for the next layer"), and reinscribed that night. The intifada even has its local Tom Sawyer, the Palestinian shopkeeper whose slow-motion swipes at the inscription on his lintel displeased the commanding officer. "Here, let me show you how it's

done," the officer said, taking the brush and, with efficient strokes, whitewashing his little corner of Palestine.

Many of the Israeli soldiers on graffiti detail cannot read the Arabic inscriptions. "Do you know what it is you are forcing me to strike out?" one resident of Beit Sahur asked the soldier in charge. "No," the soldier admitted. "It says, 'We Want Peace.'" The soldier blushed. "Who could object to that?" he asked. "Shamir, I guess," answered the man. "To hell with Shamir. I want peace too," said the man in khaki, and walked away.

Of course not all the texts are innocuous. Youths whose white hoods glow in the nighttime streets paint slogans and distribute leaflets sponsored by the various factions, including extremist nationalist and fundamentalist groups (Hamas, Islamic Jihad), calling for violence and holy war.

(This war is being fought over texts almost as much as over territory. An Arab student from Beersheba was discovered to have removed the parchment from a mezuza and replaced it with passages from the Koran....)

In a land so saturated with the authority of scriptures, one learns both the power and the intractability of conflicting narratives. Stereotypes of the other prove easier to relinquish than the incompatible chronicles of the history of this land. Eventually we found a way, as the long winter of the intifada gave way to spring, to direct our dialogue away from the vast and exclusive dreamlands of our youth to the possible territory of an inclusive future.

Given the private, often clandestine nature of our meetings and the absence in the early stages of any media coverage, the initial posturing could yield over time to less ritualized gestures. Within the rhetoric of the conflict, the incredulous, then grudging acknowledgment by the Palestinians of "Jewish fear," along with the equally hard-won Jewish acknowledgment of a Palestinian claim to the vocabulary of exile and homecoming, transformed the formulas of coherent competing narratives into fragments of discourse making their way into new domains. Fully invested in our role as neighbors engaged in dialogue, rather than politicians engaged in negotiations, we also allowed ourselves the luxury of exploring but not attempting to resolve some of the more stubborn points.

Significant distinctions can be drawn between these local discussions in Beit Sahur and elsewhere in the occupied territories, and parallel encounters between Israelis and Palestinians abroad. There is a palpability to claims to homeland that we make—or forfeit—in each others' homes, especially when the houses of some of the Israeli hosts have dubious biographies. (And the lemon tree in the yard, whose fruit nobody refuses—who planted it several generations ago?)

Because of the private, often clandestine, nature of our meetings and the absence in the early stages of any media coverage, the initial posturing could give way within a relatively short time to real communication. As neighbors engaged in dialogue rather than politicians engaged in negotiations, we also allowed ourselves the luxury of acknowledging but not attempting to resolve some of the more stubborn points of contention between us, such as the Right of Return and the status of Jerusalem.

Dialogue led to a series of exchange visits between the two communities—one in a church in Beit Sahur in December 1988 (at which the mayor declared a day of peace—and not a stone was thrown) and another, several weeks later, at a synagogue in Jerusalem (where the teenage *shebab* of Beit Sahur and the soldiers-to-be from Jerusalem squared off on the basketball court). Even the landscape took on softer contours; coming for a visit, we could be touched again, after so many years, by the magic of the setting sun over the terraced hills.

Of course the horizon never remained clear for very long. Intimidation took the form of repeated arrests and, it appears, physical harassment as well. Between jail terms, Palestinian members of the dialogue group reported being warned by the military authorities not to resume their contacts with Israelis.

And yet, life in Beit Sahur began to assume a kind of normalcy, if punctuated by harassment and occasional tragedy. An "intifada economy" had evolved when the people began boycotting Israeli products and raising their own crops. (Granted, the authorities did not look favorably on such enterprises. Jad Is'hak, professor of biology at Bethlehem University, was imprisoned in Ketziot for assisting the townspeople in planting backyard gardens.) It began to seem, though, that the real hero of the intifada was a cow. Declared illegal by the military authorities, she was "deported" to an unknown destination. After her departure, the continued appearance of local milk and freshly churned butter in the homes of the residents of Beit Sahur was that much more of a miracle, even in a corner of the world so practiced in miracles.

Suddenly, in September, the miracles ceased. A crackdown began that has added another mark of shame to the visage of modern Israel. The refusal to pay taxes to the occupier for services never rendered may be the most natural and at the same time the most remarkable strategy in the Palestinian uprising. It had reached the point where there was almost no civil activity in the West Bank and Gaza that was not contingent upon the payment of a special surcharge. There were even "stone taxes" and "broken glass taxes." It became clear to the residents of Beit Sahur that they were, in effect, helping

to defray the costs of the occupation. Their economic boycott met with massive retaliation. Under siege, their telephone lines cut and supply trucks turned back from the heavily patrolled entrances to the town—even as moving trucks bearing their goods and means of livelihood rolled out of town daily—the people of Beit Sahur managed to send a communiqué to their Israeli friends:

> Today we are meeting you under circumstances which differ from those under which we met throughout the year of our dialogue.... You have told your own people of our protest against occupation and our commitment to a national Palestinian identity. You have seen how Beit Sahur is a safe and welcoming place where any Israeli who comes as a visitor and not an occupier can sleep and pray and break bread. Today we must meet you halfway between your homes and ours, for your army will not let you into our town while its tax raids continue.

In their manifesto entitled "Taxation Without Representation," the citizens of Beit Sahur declared their resolve to continue their civil disobedience at whatever personal costs to themselves:

> Taxes are paid by people to their legitimate [elected] political bodies to cover the cost of services provided.... The services provided to the Palestinian people by the occupying authorities include: opening new jails and detention centers to humiliate and terrorize us and our children; purchasing and developing weapons and equipment to kill and maim us; the deliberate retardation of development of our economic, health, and social institutions.... The Israeli tax authorities are robbing the Palestinian people and depleting their economic resources in the name of tax collection.

The response of the Israeli authorities demonstrated the propensity of misdirected power to disengage from the most elementary restraints of human compassion—a failing reflected in the faces of the children for whom even a confiscated teacup can leave permanent symbolic wounds. One family that had recently acquired a used piano for their young daughter reported pleading futilely with the soldiers to take their new dining room set, of far greater value, in its place. The child watched helplessly as Jews carried her instrument into the waiting truck. The chattel of Beit Sahur—the sofas and refrigerators, the televisions and pharmaceutical drugs and carpenter's bench—sitting at Lod airport waiting to be auctioned to the highest bidders, are the randomly dispersed icons of disrupted lives.

As of this writing, both the six-week tax siege and nightly curfews in Beit Sahur have been lifted. Still, the interdenominational "Prayer for Peace" on November 5 was conducted in a Catholic church totally surrounded by Israeli troops who denied access to their own compatriots, including rabbis, who had come to pray along with the Palestinians, and to those journalists from around the world who had come to bear witness. The town's priest, addressing the handful of Israelis who had managed to cross the barricades, spoke in Hebrew and referred to the Israeli peace camp as "the conscience of the Jewish people." When Hillel Bardin, an Israeli of American origin, rose to speak, he was greeted by deafening applause. Why, he asked, were journalists barred from attending this event, at which three thousand Palestinians who had been subjected to the most relentless humiliation were demonstrating *peaceably* for their rights? Why is it that messages of peace are consistently intercepted by the military authorities to prevent them from reaching the Israeli and the international public? (Why, indeed? Can it be that the gospel that goes forth from Jerusalem these days is that *good* news is *no* news?)

I think we can say that the people of Beit Sahur, denuded of nearly all their worldly possessions, have won this battle—for both sides. The massive response of the Israeli authorities that was so disproportionate to the provocation underscored the struggle for *control* which is the very essence of the intifada. As Beit Sahur began to take its fate into its own hands, the government, in turn, attempted to reassert its control through force. If peaceful resistance ultimately fails and violence comes to rule the streets, both our peoples will be the losers. At least let the record show, then, that on both sides of this Green Line, our *fault line,* there were people who dared to explore alternatives to carnage and xenophobic visions of indivisible space.

Today the newspapers are right.... After the months of summer drought, the rains have finally come. Rain is general all over the Middle East. It is falling on Jerusalem and Beit Sahur, on every part of the dark central plain, on the treeless, rocky hills, on the vineyards and olive orchards, on the lonely graveyards, on the villages and settlements, on the prisons and detention camps, on the army bases and the storehouses of confiscated goods. It is falling upon all the living and the dead, on those who are alive today and will be dead tomorrow, and on all the unborn. □

Random Reflections of a Second-Rate Mind

Woody Allen

Dining at a fashionable restaurant on New York's chic Upper East Side, I noticed a Holocaust survivor at the next table. A man of sixty or so was showing his companions a number tattooed on his arm while I overheard him say he had gotten it at Auschwitz. He was graying and distinguished-looking with a sad, handsome face, and behind his eyes there was the predictable haunted look. Clearly he had suffered and gleaned deep lessons from his anguish. I heard him describe how he had been beaten and had watched his fellow inmates being hanged and gassed, and how he had scrounged around in the camp garbage for anything—a discarded potato peel—to keep his corpse-thin body from giving in to disease. As I eavesdropped I wondered: If an angel had come to him then, when he was scheming desperately not to be among those chosen for annihilation, and told him that one day he'd be sitting on Second Avenue in Manhattan in a trendy Italian restaurant amongst lovely young women in designer jeans, and that he'd be wearing a fine suit and ordering lobster salad and baked salmon, would he have grabbed the angel around the throat and throttled him in a sudden fit of insanity?

Talk about cognitive dissonance! All I could see as I hunched over my pasta were truncheons raining blows on his head as second after second dragged on in unrelieved agony and terror. I saw him weak and freezing—sick, bewildered, thirsty, and in tears, an emaciated zombie in stripes. Yet now here he was, portly and jocular, sending back the wine and telling the waiter it seemed to him slightly too tannic. I knew without a doubt then and there that no philosopher ever to come along, no matter how profound, could even begin to understand the world.

Later that night I recalled that at the end of Elie Wiesel's fine book, *Night,* he said that when his concentration camp was liberated he and others thought first and foremost of food. Then of their families and next of sleeping with women, but not of revenge. He made the point several times that the inmates didn't think of revenge. I find it odd that I, who was a small boy during World War II and who lived in America, unmindful of any of the horror Nazi victims were undergoing, and who never missed a good meal with meat and potatoes and sweet desserts, and who had a soft, safe, warm bed to sleep in at night, and whose memories of those years are only blissful and full of good times and good music—that I think of nothing but revenge.

• • •

Confessions of a hustler. At ten I hustled dreidel. I practiced endlessly spinning the little lead top and could make the letters come up in my favor more often than not. After that I mercilessly contrived to play dreidel with kids and took their money.

"Let's play for two cents," I'd say, my eyes waxing wide and innocent like a big-time pool shark's. Then I'd lose the first game deliberately. After, I'd move the stakes up. Four cents, maybe six, maybe a dime. Soon the other kid would find himself en route home, gutted and muttering. Dreidel hustling got me through the fifth grade. I often had visions of myself turning pro. I wondered if when I got older I could play my generation's equivalent of Legs Diamond or Dutch Schultz for a hundred thousand a game. I saw myself bathed in won money, sitting around a green felt table or getting off great trains, my best dreidel in a smart carrying case as I went from city to city looking for action, always cleaning up, always drinking bourbon, always taking care of my precious manicured spinning hand.

• • •

On the cover of this magazine, under the title, is printed the line: A Bimonthly Jewish Critique of Politics, Culture & Society. But why a Jewish critique? Or a gentile critique? Or any limiting perspective? Why not simply a magazine with articles written by human beings for other humans to read? Aren't there enough real demarcations without creating artificial ones? After all, there's no biological difference between a Jew and a gentile despite what my Uncle Max says. We're talking here about exclusive clubs that serve no good purpose; they exist only to form barriers, trade commercially on human misery, and provide additional differences amongst people so they can further rationalize their natural distrust and aggression.

After all, you know by ten years old there's nothing bloodier or more phony than the world's religious history. What could be more awful than, say, Protestant versus Catholic in Northern Ireland? Or the late Ayatollah? Or the expensive cost of tickets to my local synagogue so my parents can pray on the high holidays? (In the

Woody Allen is a writer, actor, and film director.

end they could only afford to be seated downstairs, not in the main room, and the service was piped in to them. The smart money sat ringside, of course.) Is there anything uglier than families that don't want their children to marry loved ones because they're of the wrong religion? Or professional clergy whose pitch is as follows: "There is a God. Take my word for it. And I pretty much know what He wants and how to get on with Him and I'll try to help you to get and remain in His good graces, because that way your life won't be so fraught with terror. Of course, it's going to cost you a little for my time and stationery. . . ."

Now, I have frequently been accused of being a self-hating Jew, and while it's true I am Jewish and I don't like myself very much, it's not because of my persuasion.

Incidentally, I'm well aware that one day I may have to fight because I'm a Jew, or even die because of it, and no amount of professed apathy to religion will save me. On the other hand, those who say they want to kill me because I'm Jewish would find other reasons if I were not Jewish. I mean, think if there were no Jews or Catholics, or if everyone were white or German or American, if the earth was one country, one color; then endless new, creative rationalizations would emerge to kill "other people"—the left-handed, those who prefer vanilla to strawberry, all baritones, any person who wears saddle shoes.

So what was my point before I digressed? Oh—do I really want to contribute to a magazine that subtly helps promulgate phony and harmful differences? (Here I must say that *Tikkun* appears to me as a generally wonderful journal—politically astute, insightful, and courageously correct on the Israeli–Palestinian issue.)

I experienced this type of ambivalence before when a group wanted me to front and raise money for the establishment of a strong pro-Israel political action committee. I don't approve of PACs, but I've always been a big rooter for Israel. I agonized over the decision and in the end I did front the PAC and helped them raise money and get going. Then, after they were off and running, I quietly slipped out. This was the compromise I made which I've never regretted. Still, I'd be happier contributing to *Tikkun* if it had a different line, or no line, under the title. After all, what if other magazines felt the need to employ their own religious perspectives? You might have: *Field and Stream: A Catholic Critique of Fishing and Hunting.* This month: "Angling for Salmon as You Baptize."

• • •

I have always preferred women to men. This goes back to the Old Testament where the ladies have it all over their cowering, pious counterparts. Eve knew the consequences when she ate the apple. Adam would have been content to just follow orders and live on like a mindless sybarite. But Eve knew it was better to acquire knowledge even if it meant grasping her mortality with all its accompanying anxiety. I'm personally glad men and women run to cover up their nakedness. It makes undressing someone much more exciting. And with the necessity of people having to earn their livings by the sweat of their brows we have a much more interesting and creative world. Much more fascinating than the sterile Garden of Eden which I always picture existing in the soft-focus glow of a beer commercial.

I also had a crush on Lot's wife. When she looked back at the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah she knew she was disobeying God. But she did it anyway. And she knew what a cruel, vindictive character He was. So it must have been very important to her to look back. But why? To see what? Well, I think to see her lover. The man she was having an extramarital affair with. And wouldn't you if you were married to Lot? This self-righteous bore, this paragon of virtue in a corrupt, swinging city. Can you imagine life with this dullard? Living only to please God. Resisting all the temptations that made Sodom and Gomorrah pulsate with vitality. The one good man in the city. Indeed. Of course she was making it with someone else. But who? Some used-idol salesman? Who knows? But I like to think she felt passion for a human being while Lot felt it only for the deep, pontificating voice of the creator of the universe. So naturally she was crushed when they had to leave town in a hurry. And as God destroyed all the bars and broke up all the poker games and the sinners went up in smoke, and as Lot tiptoed for the border, holding the skirts of his robes high to avoid tripping, Mrs. Lot turned to see her beloved *cinque à sept* one more time and that's when unfortunately the Almighty, in his infinite forgiveness, turned her into a seasoning.

So that leaves Job's wife. My favorite woman in all of literature. Because when her cringing, put-upon husband asked the Lord "Why me?" and the Lord told him to shut up and mind his own business and that he shouldn't even dare ask, Job accepted it, but the Missus, already in the earth at that point, had previously scored with a quotable line of unusual dignity and one that Job would have been far too obsequious to come up with: "Curse God and die" was the way she put it. And I loved her for it because she was too much of her own person to let herself be shamelessly abused by some vain and sadistic Holy Spirit.

• • •

I was amazed at how many intellectuals took issue with me over a piece I wrote a while back for the *New York Times* saying I was against the practice of Israeli soldiers going door-to-door and randomly breaking the hands of Palestinians as a method of combating the intifada. I said also I was against the too-quick use of real bullets before other riot control methods were tried. I was for a more flexible attitude on negotiating land for peace. All things I felt to be not only more in keeping with Israel's high moral stature but also in its own best interest. I never doubted the correctness of my feelings and I expected all who read it to agree. Visions of a Nobel danced in my head and, in truth, I had even formulated the first part of my acceptance speech. Now, I have frequently been accused of being a self-hating Jew, and while it's true I am Jewish and I don't like myself very much, it's not because of my persuasion. The reasons lie in totally other areas—like the way I look when I get up in the morning, or that I can never read a road map. In retrospect, the fact that I did not win a peace prize but became an object of some derision was what I should have expected.

"How can you criticize a place you've never been to?" a cabbie asked me. I pointed out I'd never been many places whose politics I took issue with, like Cuba for instance. But this line of reasoning cut no ice.

"Who are you to speak up?" was a frequent question in my hate mail. I replied I was an American citizen and a human being, but neither of these affiliations carried enough weight with the outraged.

The most outlandish cut of all was from the Jewish Defense League, which voted me Pig of the Month. How they misunderstood me! If only they knew how close some of my inner rages have been to theirs. (In my movie *Manhattan,* for example, I suggested breaking up a Nazi rally not with anything the ACLU would approve, but with baseball bats.)

But it was the intellectuals, some of them close friends, who hated most of all that I had made my opinions public on such a touchy subject. And yet, despite all their evasions and circumlocutions, the central point seemed to me inescapable: Israel was not responding correctly to this new problem.

"The Arabs are guilty for the Middle East mess, the bloodshed, the terrorism, with no leader to even try to negotiate with," reasoned the typical thinker.

"True," I agreed, with Socratic simplicity.

"Victims of the Holocaust deserve a homeland, a place to be free and safe."

"Absolutely." I was totally in accord.

"We can't afford disunity. Israel is in a precarious situation." Here I began to feel uneasy, because we can afford disunity.

"Do you want the soldiers going door-to-door and breaking hands?" I asked, cutting to the kernel of my complaint.

"Of course not."

"So?"

"I'd still rather you hadn't written that piece." Now I'd be fidgeting in my chair, waiting for a cogent rebuttal to the breaking-of-hands issue. "Besides," my opponent argued, "the *Times* prints only one side."

"But even the Israeli press—"

"You shouldn't have spoken out," he interrupted.

"Many Israelis agree," I said, "and moral issues apart, why hand the Arabs a needless propaganda victory?"

"Yes, yes, but still you shouldn't have said anything. I was disappointed in you." Much talk followed by both of us about the origins of Israel, the culpability of Arab terrorists, the fact there's no one in charge of the enemy to negotiate with, but in the end it always came down to them saying, "You shouldn't have spoken up," and me saying, "But do you think they should randomly break hands?" and them adding, "Certainly not—but I'd still feel better if you had just not written that piece."

My mother was the final straw. She cut me out of her will and then tried to kill herself just to hasten my realization that I was getting no inheritance.

• • •

At fifteen I received as a gift a pair of cuff links with a William Steig cartoon on them. A man with a spear through his body was pictured and the accompanying caption read, "People are no damn good." A generalization, an oversimplification, and yet it was the only way I ever could get my mind around the Holocaust. Even at fifteen I used to read Anne Frank's line about people being basically good and place it on a par with Will Rogers's pandering nonsense, "I never met a man I didn't like."

The questions for me were not: How could a civilized

(Continued on p. 71)

You don't have to be Jewish . . . to read and to love TIKKUN magazine.

TIKKUN won the Utne Reader award for the best essays on politics and culture of any U.S. magazine.

Subscribe Now. $25/year. Send check or Visa/Mastercard info to:
TIKKUN
5100 Leona Street
Oakland, CA 94619

The collapse of Eastern European dictatorships and the delegitimation of cold-war ideology open up spectacular possibilities for liberal and progressive social change movements. The demands for social transformation that emerged in the West in the 1930s have long been kept on a back burner—first because of World War II and then because of the need to divert resources and energies to counter what was supposed to be a major threat from Communist expansionism. As that threat recedes, fundamental questions about our own society reappear on the nation's agenda.

A perfect moment for radical transformation? Not if liberals and the Left remain stuck in a self-defeating ideological framework. Reviewing the failures of leftists in the past, Michael Lerner argues that their hostility to religion, their insensitivity to psychological needs, and their failure to attend to the ethical crises of daily life may continue to thwart human liberation in the twenty-first century. The necessary struggles against coercive forms of community, religion, and the family, as well as the important struggles for individual autonomy, human rights, and freedom of choice may have contributed to the development of a culture of liberalism that is unprepared to meet the challenge of a society where the greatest oppression may no longer be economic or political.

The destruction of the moral and spiritual environment, the undermining of our ability to form or sustain loving relationships and families, the creation of an ethos of "me-firstism," the elimination of communities with a shared ethical vision—these may be the central issues of the coming period. Only a fundamental rethinking of liberal cultural assumptions might save the progressive forces from being irrelevant to the politics of the twenty-first century.

After the Cold War: Possibilities for Human Liberation

Michael Lerner

For the past twenty years I've been studying how the liberal and progressive forces in the United States have defeated themselves. At first I thought the problem was merely a matter of not being clever enough at addressing the realities of working-class life. In the early 1970s I tried to convince activists in the social change movements that we should take the tax issue and make it our own—by placing on the ballot in several states an initiative that would relieve the tax burden on middle-income people and shift it onto the rich. We could, I thought, build an alliance between the interests of poor people and middle-income people against the interests of those who actually ran things and who were benefitting most from the then current tax situation. Most lefties dismissed this kind of thinking as irrelevant. Why should we care about the interests of middle-income people, they argued, when the problems of poverty, racism, and imperialism are so much more pressing? Only a few years later the Right developed its own tax initiative, first in California and then later with the Reagan administration. The Right's tax plan managed to build precisely the kind of alliance I had feared—an alliance that paired middle-income people and the rich (both groups benefitting from the tax reduction) against poor people (whose social service benefits were dramatically reduced).

Though I still think we might have been wise to take up a progressive tax program, I now think that my underlying thinking was misguided. It shared the fundamental assumption that has made the liberal and left forces increasingly irrelevant in the politics of the last part of the twentieth century: the notion that human beings are primarily motivated by economic and material considerations, and that once you address their economic needs you have spoken to their deepest problems and will win their allegiance. This materialist assumption is shared not only by Marxists but by the bureaucrats who run the AFL-CIO, by the "realists" who shape the Democratic party, and even by the leftists who rallied to Jesse Jackson and the party reformers who now believe that a "new populism" is all that is necessary to revive the Left. This same kind of consciousness is reflected in liberal policy journals, in various attempts to create a coherent liberal voice inside the Democratic party, and in an array of left-leaning policy institutes in Washington and money-granting foundations sponsored by liberal donors.

I don't blame anyone who has fallen into this eco-

Michael Lerner is the editor of Tikkun.

nomic trap—it allows those of us who have been motivated by moral sensitivity and outrage at injustice to think of ourselves as more than softheaded idealists. By using the seemingly "hard" language of economics and political rights, focusing on "the economy" or "the law," we seem to be just as realistic as any conservative industrialist or banker, hence equally legitimate. The hitch is that this way of thinking produces a politics that leads liberal and progressive forces to misunderstand the people whom they have to organize.

I discovered how wrong my own political approach had been once I began to work as a psychotherapist for the Labor movement in the mid-1970s. Having created the Institute for Labor and Mental Health to explore the psychodynamics of American society, a group of us who were psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, and community activists began to discover a peculiar phenomenon: Americans *agreed* with the liberals, the progressives, and the social change activists on many of the domestic issues they addressed but still did not *trust* the Left because of what it ignored or misunderstood. And what the Left ignored or misunderstood was the ethical, spiritual, and psychological crises facing most people in their daily lives.

When, in the late 1970s, people turned to religious communities to help address these questions, the jeers from the Left about the reactionary quality of all religion only further reinforced the general consensus of Americans that these liberals and lefties had no real understanding or sympathy for their lives or their concerns. Of course, I shared with most lefties a distaste for religious movements that allied themselves with racist, sexist, and nationalistic tendencies in the society, and that seemed indifferent to the fate of the poor and the oppressed. Yet we found in talking to people who were attracted by the religious revival that they were attracted to religious communities because these communities addressed their hunger for meaning and purpose—despite the reactionary elements in some of the religious traditions involved. Why couldn't the Left see this?

At first I thought this was a mere oversight. But as we began to raise these issues with the Democrats and with liberal and progressive social change activists, we encountered massive resistance. The issues that seemed to be at the heart of Americans' estrangement from the Left were dismissed as "merely psychological." (And from hard-nosed East Coast realists there were overtones of suspicion that since we were based in Northern California—though our research had included interviews with workers from all parts of the U.S.—perhaps we had fallen victim to the psychological trendiness that had produced various "flaky" California visions.) The needs that were being addressed by religious communities were nothing but illusory, we were told, the product of reactionary desires for patriarchal stability or for fantasies of idealized communities that had never existed and which could not be reconstructed today.

Yet our own research showed us that the people who were being dismissed by the Left were often much more complex—that their concerns about the disintegration of families and ethical values, their yearning for deeper meaning and spiritual truth, were *not* covers for reactionary desires or a primitive "fear of the inevitable complexity of the modern world." On the contrary, we discovered that there was a basic longing for meaningful lives embedded in communities with a shared ethical framework and a deep hunger for loving families, relationships, and friendships. While these desires were being expressed in a conservative framework (because the political Right seemed to be the only force that bothered to address these issues), there was nothing fundamentally reactionary in the desires being expressed. In fact, they were quite often articulated by people who made absolutely clear to us their abiding commitment to social justice, sexual and racial equality, and a basic openness to experimentation, change, playfulness, and respect for others.

Somehow the intellectual framework for understanding politics maintained by liberals and progressives could not accommodate the realities of contemporary life. Liberatory theories seemed to lead in the wrong direction. Liberal and progressive activists seemed remarkably obtuse—insensitive to the inner life of most Americans. Those in the liberal world who *did* address these issues tended to do so through the language of psychoanalysis, framing issues primarily in terms of individual pathologies, rarely addressing the social realities that impinge on the development of a healthy inner life or that make loving relationships difficult. Moreover, in their different ways, both those who derived their liberatory zeal from Marxist approaches and those who were nourished by the Freudian tradition shared a reductionist account of human life that had little room for ethical or spiritual concerns.

This was not just a momentary aberration, but a central flaw in the entire schema of liberal and leftist thought. It is deeply rooted in the entire way that progressive thought emerged and found expression in the Enlightenment and in the emancipatory movements of the past several centuries. No wonder, then, that the heathens rage—that is, that the forces of reaction are celebrating a triumph at the current moment. They can sense that the Left has managed to render itself obsolete with regard to the great issues that will dominate politics in the next decades. Democrats may be able to dress themselves up as born-again Republicans and win an election or two, but they are not part of a social movement with a compelling vision that might win the

lasting allegiance of most Americans.

Getting out of this mess requires more than a new slogan or a new program. It requires a fundamental rethinking of the basic assumptions that have dominated the liberatory movements since the Enlightenment. We can only understand our current predicament if we can situate ourselves historically in relationship to the distortions that have gradually determined the course of liberatory movements.

The Historical Framework

As we enter the last decade of the current millennium the celebration of the status quo in the Western world has reached a new level of delirious self-deception. The self-satisfaction of the well-to-do burgher may indeed be shared by enough middle- and upper-middle-income people in the Western world to allow court intellectuals to declare that they have reached the best of all possible worlds, but anyone with a sense of history recognizes that this delusion has recurred often enough in the past two hundred years to require more than a little skepticism. A State Department operative writes an article about the recent advances for democratic regimes and hails the period as "the end of history." Nathan Gardels's *New Perspective Quarterly* dedicates an entire issue to celebrating "the triumph of capitalism." The illusions nurtured on a well-stuffed stomach are endless and frighteningly naive.

The celebration of the status quo may turn to mourning quickly enough if the freedom of the marketplace, currently being toasted in the corporate and media boardrooms, continues to prevent the development of a worldwide system of rational allocation of the world's resources and productive capacities. I'm not talking, for the moment, about the fact that every year thirty million children die of hunger as a consequence of our current system of resource allocation. Such "merely" moral outrage is not likely to divert the ideologues from their festivities. Rather, I make reference to the fact that the much touted marketplace has encouraged, some would say required, a pillaging of the world's resources and a wildly irresponsible destruction of the physical environment. Just as people in a twentieth century dominated by world wars and unparalleled human destructiveness looked back on the "gay nineties" with a sense of incredulity that nineteenth-century intellectuals could have been so unaware of the tragedy they were helping to set up in the last decade of that century, so in the next century our half-hearted belief that we might save the environment without interfering with the freedom of the marketplace will be looked back on as the ultimate in stupidity. Indeed, one might write a history of the human race and its relationship to the planet that would point to an escalating destructiveness which reached its apex in the past several decades. Framing history in terms of threats to the survival of the human race might find us defining this period as one of history's worst.

There is a danger, however, in relying on this kind of formulation—the danger of falling back into an external account of reality that misses what we learned from the experience of the thousands of normally functioning Americans whom we at the Institute for Labor and Mental Health interviewed in the 1970s and 1980s. "Ecological catastrophe" may simply take the place of "economic collapse" in the lexicon of the Left, while the more subjective and experiential issues may once again be ignored. If people are able to hear over and over again the "facts" about the way we are destroying our natural environment, and find themselves *still unable to respond,* that may well be because they are in so much pain in other parts of their lives that they don't have the emotional energy to give to this larger problem.

In this sense, solving the ecological crisis may require solving another crisis first: the sense of powerlessness and alienation that make people so despairing of themselves that they are unable to engage in politics. This crisis in personal life may be the distinctive feature of the contemporary historical period, brought into even sharper relief when contrasted with the collective action of millions of people in Eastern Europe. Given how powerless we feel to join together with others to change our situation, we may recognize the beginning of the 1990s as a particularly sad moment in the collective history of the West.

Even these preliminary remarks force us to understand that there is no way to take an "objective" look at our historical situation because there is no such thing as "objective" history: How we situate ourselves historically depends on what our values and goals are as we approach the task. From a *Tikkun* perspective, the goal is "to heal, repair, and transform the world." Articulating the goal in that particular way immediately distinguishes us from those whose primary energy focuses on salvation in some other world or realm of existence, or those who think that the primary focus must be on transformation or transcendence of self. It equally distinguishes us from those who use the religious traditions of the West to justify or "flow with" the current social order ("God's in His heaven, all's right with the world").

A *Tikkun* perspective is rooted both in the moral outrage that characterized the Prophets of the ancient Hebrews and in those Prophets' urgent call to change

(Continued on p. 72)

It was inevitable that the intifada should renew interest in the origins of the Palestinian problem. For decades most Americans and Israelis accepted the claim of the official or Old Israeli Historiography that the Palestinians had voluntarily left their homes in Palestine/Israel in 1948 at the urging of their own and other Arab leaders. Subsequently, Israel—viewing the refugees as a potential Fifth Column—refused to allow them to return. According to the Old Historiography, Israel entered the 1948 war enthusiastically accepting the 1947 UN partition plan while the Arab states all bluntly rejected it and embarked on a concerted campaign to drive the Jews into the sea; young Israel was a pacific, barely armed "David" opposed by a giant, malevolent Arab "Goliath," but nonetheless (almost inexplicably) prevailed; Israel vigorously strove during 1948 and in the immediate postwar years to attain peace with its neighbors, but these neighbors were uniformly hell-bent on Israel's destruction and with equal vigor rejected all peace overtures; and so a state of war has reigned between Israel and most of its neighbors ever since.

A quite different viewpoint emerges from the work of a new generation of Israeli historians who have researched 1948 using material from recently opened archives. Benny Morris, the most respected of these New Historians, summarized his findings in the Nov./Dec. 1988 issue of Tikkun *("The New Historiography"). The New Historians, the* Tikkun *article, and Morris's book,* The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1947–1949, *generated vigorous debate in Israel. The most vociferous critic, Ben-Gurion's biographer Shabtai Teveth, published a series of articles in the Israeli daily* Ha'aretz, *and then republished his attack in* Commentary *in September 1989.* Commentary *refused to print a rebuttal, and so Benny Morris responds here to the Teveth attack.*

The Eel and History: A Reply to Shabtai Teveth

Benny Morris

Beaten in debate in Israel but undeterred, Shabtai Teveth has taken his shop-soiled and worn wares to America, where he has dusted them off and put them out for the unwary readers of *Commentary* in an article entitled "Charging Israel with Original Sin" (*Commentary,* Sept. 1989). Teveth attempts to respond to the *Tikkun* article and the wider debate around the New Historiography. His outpouring in *Commentary* and the Israeli daily *Ha'aretz,* some thirty thousand words all told, represents a rearguard defense of the Old Historiography which, as we will see, in major points is indistinguishable from propaganda. Teveth's is an impassioned attempt to assail the effort by a younger generation of Israeli historians to describe fairly and accurately what happened in Palestine/Israel during 1947–1949.

The Old Historiography, whose essence and guidelines were early laid down by Ben-Gurion's own voluminous "histories" and memoirs, is embodied in such works as *Sefer Toldot Ha'Haganah* (The History of the Haganah), the Haganah's multivolume in-house history; the Palmah's two-volume anthology of reminiscences and chronicles, *Sefer Ha'Palmah* (The Book of the Palmah); the successive "histories" of the 1948 war Israel Defense Forces (IDF) brigades, published by the Israel Defense Ministry Press; and the memoirs of many former IDF officers and Israeli officials. These works, almost without exception, were written by people who participated in the tumultuous, heroic epic of 1948. Indeed, for these chroniclers, who include Netanel Lorch (author of *The Edge of the Sword*), 1948 was the golden moment of their lives. Their publications presented an official Israeli history, a tale devoid of error or malice or baseness, a tale of (Jewish) good guys and (Arab and, usually, British) bad guys, a tale of white and black, with never a shade in between.

Forty years have now passed. A new generation of historians, born around 1948, has grown up in Israel—an Israel that has passed through the 1973 war, the Lebanese adventure of 1982–1985 and, most recently, the intifada. This generation is able to look back at 1948 and, perhaps, at the whole Zionist enterprise, more objectively than the generation of 1948 fighters and state-builders. By and large, the New Historians feel untrammeled by considerations of propaganda and image, considerations that so clearly figure in the writing of the Old Historians. Israel in the Old History could do no wrong, and any facts or episodes that cast Israel in a less than warm, white glow were summarily swept under the carpet and into historical oblivion. For

Benny Morris, currently a visiting fellow at the Brookings Institute, is the author of The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1947–1949 *(Cambridge University Press, 1988).*

example, Elhannan Orren, a former director of the IDF's History Department, was able to write a whole book—*Ba'Derekh El Ha'ir* (On the Road to the City, Israel Defense Ministry Press-Ma'arachot, 1976)—on the IDF's July 1948 conquest of the Arab towns of Lydda and Ramle without once mentioning that tens of thousands of the towns' inhabitants were expelled by the conquering troops.

But even more important to the emergence of the New Historiography has been the opening of the archives. The early and mid-1980s saw an unprecedented, massive declassification and release of millions of letters, memoranda, reports, and minutes from the late 1940s. These documents were stored in the Israel State Archives, The Public Record Office (that is, the British state archive), and the U.S. National Archive. Many thousands of documents deposited in semipublic and private Israeli archives (municipal and kibbutz archives, political party archives, and so on) were also released during this period. For the first time historians have been able to write about 1948 on the basis of massive, contemporary documentation. These generational and archival developments underlie the emergence of the New Historiography.

In his *Commentary* article Teveth charges that the New Historians exhibit "a sympathy somewhat inclined to the side of the Palestinians," and that these histories seek to "delegitimize Zionism." He "demonstrates" this by quoting from a favorable review of my book by the PLO propagandist and Palestine National Council member, Professor Edward Said. Said, says Teveth, claims that my book shows that it was "a sequence of Zionist terror and Israeli expulsion that were behind the birth of the Palestinian refugee problem." Said, of course, is incorrect, and he misrepresents my conclusions. But quoting Said serves Teveth's demagogic purpose, which is to show that my book can be and, indeed, is being used by PLO propagandists—thus blackening me by association. I am held responsible for what others write about me or for what others claim to be the conclusions of my book.

Perhaps it is worth noting at this point that many Palestinians of my acquaintance are unhappy with my book—in large measure, I fear, because it fails to prove or support the traditional Palestinian thesis that what occurred in 1948 was one big, systematic, preplanned expulsion. It should also be pointed out that Israel's New Historians are far from being politically of a piece; indeed, the species includes such right-wing anti-Palestinians as the military historian Dr. Uri Milstein.

Israeli historians, Teveth seems to imply, must beware of writing anything that could be utilized by the Palestinian enemy; they must "trim their sails," that is, their findings and conclusions, to suit the current needs of the ongoing Israeli-Arab propaganda battle.

I would submit that Israeli historians, the Old Historians, have been doing just that for close to thirty-five years, and that the time has come for researchers to cleave to the facts and try to disregard such extraneous considerations as Israel's national interests and image when composing their books. Israel is now strong and established enough to take the truth about the circumstances of its conception, a truth, incidentally, by no means more bloody, dastardly, or base than that of most nations in times of great upheaval and revolution (and such was 1948). The moment the historian looks over his shoulder, begins to calculate how others might utilize his work, and allows this to influence his findings and conclusions, he is well on his way down that slippery slope leading to official history and propaganda.

Contrary to popular myth, the Haganah/IDF also outnumbered the combined manpower of the five invading Arab armies of May 15.

My objective in writing about 1948 was to ascertain and explain what happened. I did not judge or apportion blame. I don't see it as the historian's task to hand out marks for morality. His or her task is to set out what happened and why things happened as they did, taking account of and explaining the protagonists' motivations. If the reader is so inclined, he may then judge the protagonists and their actions according to his or her own individual moral yardstick (though my advice would be to embark on such judgment with extreme diffidence and hesitancy, given the morally murky and complex circumstances of 1947-1948, the difficulties of mentally reconstructing historical situations with any accuracy, and the inability of mortals to enter the shoes of other mortals).

In *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1947-1949* I did not judge; I described and analyzed. But were I pressed, not as a historian but as another mortal or reader, to morally evaluate the Yishuv's policies and behavior in 1948, I would be loath to condemn. Israel, as conceived in the UN partition resolution of November 30, 1947, was to have had unnatural, indefensible borders and a 40-45 percent Arab minority. Given the Arabs' nonacceptance of the resolution, would any sane, pragmatic leader have acted other than Ben-Gurion did? Would any leader, recognizing the prospective large Arab minority's potential for destabilization of the new Jewish state, *not* have striven to reduce that minority's weight and numbers, and been happy, nay

overjoyed, at the spectacle of the mass Arab evacuation? Would any sane, pragmatic leader *not* have striven, given the Arabs' initiation of hostilities, to exploit the war to enlarge Israel's territory and to create somewhat more rational, viable borders?

The Palestinian Arabs' rejection in November–December 1947 of the partition resolution, and their immediate commencement of hostilities against the Yishuv, provided the backdrop and opportunity for the eventual Jewish offensives that resulted in the Palestinian Arab exodus. Ben-Gurion and the other political and military leaders on the national and local levels exploited the situation and did what they could to encourage the Arab flight, which had begun "naturally" because of the hostilities and then was sustained and expanded as they continued.

Moreover, there was an inevitability in the unfolding of the events of 1947–1948 that itself renders somewhat incongruous any attempt at moral judgment against Jew or Arab. No group of Palestinian leaders in 1947 could have accepted the UN resolution which granted the Jews some 60 percent of the country. The Palestinian attempt by force of arms to stymie the birth of the Jewish state was similarly inexorable; so too was the eventual Jewish response, in April–May 1948, of offensives and conquests that secured the fledgling Jewish state. Given the decades-long animosities, and their exacerbation in the bitter fighting between December 1947 and April 1948, there was also an inevitability in the Arab flight from their overrun towns and villages. Likewise the pan-Arab invasion of the country on May 15, which was designed to "save" the Palestinians, nip the Jewish state in the bud, and perhaps carve up the area to the benefit of the invading countries, could hardly have come as a surprise. What Arab leader, faced with the Palestinian demise and the temptations to act, could have resisted the call of the blood and stayed out of the conflict? None could and none did, including Transjordan's King Abdullah, who certainly preferred to have a Jewish rather than a Palestinian Arab state as neighbor.

All this does not mean that Israel had no part in fomenting the Palestinian Arab exodus of 1948. It had—a large part. And it is this assertion, and my detailed, stark anatomy of why and how Israeli officials and officers contributed to the exodus, that has so enraged Teveth and his fellow Old Historians. For they believe that this description and explanation blacken Israel's name and image, tainting her, at conception,

Exploring Jewish Diversity

Twice Blessed
On Being Lesbian, Gay *and* Jewish
Edited by Christie Balka
and Andy Rose
"The 27 contributors to this land mark anthology seek ways to combine gay pride with active participation in Judaism. In one essay, a rabbi describes her life as a lesbian mother; several pieces are about growing up Jewish and gay. Others discuss...responses to the challenge of AIDS, a 'theology of sexuality' that embraces the erotic, and the ways homosexuality forces a reevaluation of traditional Jewish notions of family life."
–Publishers Weekly
$24.95 cloth

The Tribe of Dina
A Jewish Women's Anthology
Revised and Expanded
Edited by Melanie Kaye/
Kantrowitz and Irena Klepfisz

"This moving collection of essays, memoirs, interviews, poetry, fiction, and artwork...traverses national boundaries to present the diversity of Jewish women's experiences and beliefs..... Highly recommended."
–Library Journal
$12.95 paper

Nice Jewish Girls
A Lesbian Anthology
Revised and Updated
Edited by Evelyn Torton Beck

"Who would not be moved by the articulate and powerful voices in this book, who speak to the part of us that rejoices in people reclaiming their heritage, that shouts in anger at injustice, and that is struggling to free ourselves from other people's hatred."
–Gay Community News
$12.95 paper

Beacon Press books are available at bookstores or directly from Beacon Press.
617-742-2110 ext. 596
Visa and MasterCard accepted.

Beacon PRESS

25 Beacon Street
Boston MA 02108

with "original sin."

In my book, of course, the phrase "original sin" nowhere appears. I used it in the *Tikkun* essay in connection with the two prevalent views of what occurred in 1948. Neither view is my own, and Teveth's assertion to the contrary indicates that he simply failed to understand *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem* or the essay in *Tikkun*. What I wrote in the essay was that two basic versions have emerged over the decades of what happened in 1948, leading to the creation of the Palestinian Arab refugee problem—an Israeli version and an Arab version. Both are propaganda. The official Israeli version says that the bulk or all of the refugees fled Palestine because of an order or orders by their own (Palestinian or outside Arab) leaders, that they fled voluntarily (that is, not under Israeli duress), and that the Yishuv/Israel is completely or almost completely blameless in the mass flight. This version usually asserts that there was a concerted Arab campaign of radio broadcasts calling upon the Palestinians to leave their homes and country. The standard Arab version has it that the Yishuv had long planned the expulsion of Palestine's Arabs and that, come 1948, this plan was systematically implemented by the Zionist armed forces; what had occurred, therefore, was one giant preplanned expulsion.

My book shows, if anything, that both standard versions are incorrect and distort the reality of 1948. What occurred was an incremental, cumulative, multicausal, multistaged process in which Palestine's Arabs and external Arab forces, along with the Zionist politicians and armed forces, played roles.

Much of Palestine's elite and middle class fled the country during the months of December 1947 through March 1948 because of the outbreak of fighting in their area, or out of fear that the ever-expanding hostilities would shortly engulf them; because of the general breakdown of law, order, and administration resulting from the devolution of British rule; because of economic problems (unemployment, the closure of businesses and offices, sharp price rises) engendered by the hostilities and the British withdrawal; and because of depredation, or fears of depredation, by unruly Arab militia bands. The flight of the middle class and elite was followed, in April–June, by the mass exodus from the main Arab and mixed Arab-Jewish towns.

The major precipitant of this mass flight from the towns was Jewish assault and conquest of each successive site (Tiberias, Haifa, Arab West Jerusalem, Jaffa, Safad, Beisan, Acre). The groundwork for the exodus, though, had been laid in the previous months by the exemplary flight of the elite and middle class, by the ineffectuality of Arab arms and vital lack of self-confidence, by the deteriorating economic conditions in the big towns, and by Jewish atrocities or fear of such atrocities should the Arab communities be attacked and overrun. There was a consistent domino pattern as the flight from one urban neighborhood engendered flight from neighboring areas; as flight from one village led to panic and flight from neighboring sites; as the flight from big towns led to panic and flight from the neighboring satellite villages.

Perhaps on the macro, historiosophic plane, one may ask whether Zionism itself is a just movement—whether it did not always contain within it the seeds of displacement of the Palestinians insofar as it strove to settle and take over politically the whole Land of Israel. In this sense, no doubt, the Arabs and their sympathizers will regard the Zionist enterprise, in toto, as "sinful." Israelis and Israel's supporters, for their part, will argue that the Jews' need for a homeland was more pressing and morally more cogent than the Palestinians' (who had and still have "somewhere else to go"). Along this line of reasoning the Zionist enterprise is "just." Likewise supporters of Israel will argue that compromise between the two peoples and their national movements was possible, that the Arabs' displacement was not inexorable, and that it became so only as a result of Arab intransigence and resistance. But these are not questions dealt with in my book or in the essay in *Tikkun*.

Propaganda abhors complexity, and Teveth cannot countenance my description and analysis of what brought about that complex, multicausal, multistaged phenomenon, the Palestinian exodus of 1948. Teveth prefers a simplistic, single-cause explanation: "Arab orders."

In his initial article in *Ha'aretz,* on April 14, 1989, Teveth had written that the Arab flight "had, all of it, taken place as a result of orders (*hora'ot*), be it through personal example, or by word of mouth, in writing or by that quickest of Arab telegraphs: the rumor." Interestingly, after I had taken him to task for this rather obscure formulation (which enabled Teveth to avow the "Arab orders" explanation without saying so clearly) and had demonstrated that there had been no Arab blanket order or orders to the Palestinian Arabs to relinquish their homes, Teveth on May 19 asserted that the Arab flight, before May 15, 1948, had been precipitated by "an order by personal example"—meaning, apparently, that the flight of the elite had served as an example to the masses (which is true) and that this was tantamount to an "order" (which is not really true, unless one is bent on reforming the language). Now, in *Commentary,* Teveth has reverted to an amended version of his original, obscure formulation: that the Arab exodus was "all the work of instruction, whether by

(Continued on p. 79)

At the Margins: Jewish Identity and Politics in the Thought of Hannah Arendt

Jeffrey C. Isaac

When Hannah Arendt died in 1975 at the age of sixty-nine she was probably the most famous political philosopher in America. Widely known and profoundly influential for her books on totalitarianism (*The Origins of Totalitarianism*), the history of political philosophy (*The Human Condition*), and modern revolution (*On Revolution*), she was a pivotal figure in the central postwar intellectual-cum-political controversies that raged both inside and outside of the American academy. Arendt is associated with several key ideas: the need to reconstruct an authentically public world; the importance of the Greek, Roman, and early American political experience as exemplars of such a world; the hubris of modern political theory and practice; and the dangers of a totalitarian temptation that modern social life makes possible. She is probably most famous for her analysis of Eichmann's "banality of evil," originally published in the *New Yorker* in 1963. Arendt's analysis, in turn, was itself trivialized beyond banality as it became incorporated into the common currency of American discourse.

Insofar as Arendt is known for these important contributions she is most often identified with the tradition of German philosophical idealism. This is not accidental. Arendt was a native-born German. She studied with the triumvirate of twentieth-century German phenomenology—Husserl, Heidegger, and Jaspers—and she maintained a lifelong identification with what she called her *Muttersprache* ("mother tongue"). It has long been a matter of course for readers to be engaged with the corpus of Arendt's scholarship, to be familiar with its central notions, and yet be oblivious to the fact of Arendt's Jewishness.

Arendt, however, casts her work in a different light:

> I have always regarded my Jewishness as one of the indisputable factual data of my life, and I have never had the wish to change or disclaim facts of this kind. There is such a thing as basic gratitude for everything that is as it is; for what has been *given* and was not, could not, be *made*; for things that are *physei* and not *nomo*. To be sure, such an attitude is pre-political, but in exceptional circumstances—such as the circumstances of Jewish politics—it is bound to have also political consequences though, as it were, in a negative way. This attitude makes certain types of behavior impossible.

The oversight, or marginalization, of such "indisputable factual data" is both ironic and paradoxical, given the centrality of Nazi totalitarianism to her work and the importance she attached to "natality" and origins in her philosophy. The marginalization of Arendt's Jewishness can be traced in part to the undeniable postwar academicization of intellectual life that writers like Russell Jacoby have explored, a development which detached thinkers such as Arendt from their historical and political context and turned them into little more than stock figures in a timeless dialogue about the character of Western, "Judeo-Christian" civilization. It is quite obviously connected with the decidedly Germanic cast of much of her philosophical work.

But the displacement of Arendt's Jewishness also has a great deal to do with the organization of postwar Jewish intellectual and political life, both in the United States and in the new homeland of the Jewish people, Israel. As Arendt observes in an early essay about Jewish history: "Those who really did most for the spiritual dignity of their people, who were great enough to transcend the bonds of nationality and to weave the strands of their Jewish genius into the general texture of European life, have been given short shrift and perfunctory recognition." This proved to be an ominously prophetic foreshadowing of her own exclusion from the Jewish community, a complicated and partly self-induced exile powerfully exacerbated by the furor that accompanied the publication of the *Eichmann in Jerusalem* essays in the early 1960s.

We, however, can no longer ignore Arendt's Jewishness. As readers of *Tikkun* well know, the question of what it means to be a Jew in the contemporary world is once again on the table for discussion. The parameters of discourse have broadened, and there is both the occasion and an audience for the reappropriation of our recent history. Indeed, current events in both the

Jeffrey C. Isaac is an associate professor of political science at Indiana University, Bloomington. He is the author of Power and Marxist Theory *(Cornell University Press, 1987) and is currently at work on a book about Arendt and Camus.*

U.S. and Israel make such a reappropriation necessary. We need to ask what iconoclastic Jewish thinkers such as Arendt have to teach us and how it is that Arendt's Jewishness could have been marginalized for so long. For it is impossible to read her today and not be struck both by her profoundly Jewish sensibility and by the central place of the Jewish historical experience in her political understanding.

It's important to note that such a reading of Arendt does not come from an unmediated encounter with her texts, nor does it simply derive from the fresh air of our current Jewish reawakening. Credit here is due to two remarkable books which prefigure many of the concerns of *Tikkun,* and which drive home the point of Arendt's Jewishness with unmistakable force. Ron H. Feldman's *The Jew as Pariah: Jewish Identity and Politics in the Modern Age* (1978) brings together in one place many of Arendt's most important writings on the question of Jewishness. Elisabeth Young-Bruehl's *Hannah Arendt: For Love of the World* (1982) is a beautifully rendered biography which centers around the inextricable connection between Arendt's philosophy and her Jewish identity.

A cursory reading of these two books reveals information that might surprise even close readers of the literature on Arendt's political philosophy. Arendt was born into a family of middle-class German Jews. She experienced anti-Semitism as a child and proudly recalled being instructed by her mother to always "defend oneself." Raised and educated as a secular German Jew, she became increasingly involved with Zionism in the late 1920s through her association with Kurt Blumenfeld, the most influential German Zionist. (This led her to write a biography of the Jewish salon hostess Rachel Varnhagen in the early 1930s.)

Upon Hitler's rise to power, Arendt emigrated to France, where she worked as an active Zionist. She served as chairperson of the French branch of Youth Aliyah, in which capacity she personally brought a group of Jewish children to Palestine in 1935, and as special delegate of the Jewish Agency. She emigrated to the U.S. in 1941 and was politically active in the effort to establish a Jewish army to fight Hitler. From there she went on to serve as research director of the Conference on Jewish Relations, chief editor of Schocken Books, and executive director of Jewish Cultural Reconstruction. During the 1940s Arendt contributed frequently to such Jewish journals as *Jewish Social Studies, Contemporary Jewish Record, Menorah Journal, Jewish Frontier,* the early *Commentary,* and the German-language *Aufbau.*

Young-Bruehl observes that Arendt's experience of homelessness and statelessness during this period profoundly shaped her political philosophy. She reports Arendt's recollection that learning of the Holocaust "was really as though the abyss had opened"—an experience responsible in no small part for all of her subsequent work on totalitarianism and its roots in modernity. But the publication of her analysis of Eichmann and the subsequent controversy in the pages of such journals of the Jewish intelligentsia as *Commentary, Dissent, Partisan Review,* and *Jewish Currents* led to Arendt's alienation from the Jewish community. In subsequent years she published rarely on distinctly Jewish themes. The "indisputable fact" of Jewishness, however, remained with her until the end. Thus, though she had become, as we shall see, a vigorous critic of Zionism, Arendt supported Israel in both the Six Day War in 1967 and the Yom Kippur War of 1973, writing that "any real catastrophe in Israel would affect me more deeply than anything else."

A strong case can be made that Arendt's early experiences with Zionism and her continued concern with modern Jewish history were formative influences on her general political philosophy. But here I wish to present Arendt's insights into the contemporary Jewish condition, and to suggest that in their entirety they provide an indispensable resource in the current renaissance of Jewish thought and culture.

Whether one agrees with them or not, Arendt's writings on Jewishness and the modern world are profoundly insightful and disturbingly prescient. Arendt early on saw the direction in which mainstream Jewish intellectual and political life was moving. She discerned and feared the closure of inquiry and debate, and she also feared a certain retreat from political responsibility connected with the form that Zionism had taken in the postwar world. Likewise she was critical of the relationship to Zionism that diaspora Jews had assumed.

Jewish History, Revised

As Benny Morris (*Tikkun,* Nov./Dec. 1988) and others have observed, Jewish scholars both inside and outside of Israel have begun to construct a revisionist account of their own history in light of the current crisis in Israeli politics. Arendt, along with such associates as the Jewish historian Salo Baron, participated in a similarly revisionist process more than four decades ago. In a fascinating review of Gershom Scholem's *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism,* Arendt observes that

> Jewish historians of the last century, consciously or not, used to ignore all those trends of the Jewish past which did not point to their own major thesis of diaspora history, according to which the Jewish people did not have a political history of their own

> but were invariably the innocent victims of a hostile and sometimes brutal environment.... In sharp contrast to all other nations, the Jews were not history-makers but history-sufferers, preserving a kind of eternal identity of goodness whose monotony was disturbed only by the equally monotonous chronicle of persecutions and pogroms.

Arendt devoted a great deal of energy to the criticism of this myth of the Jew as eternal victim. She also questioned its corollary, the myth of the "goyim" as eternal victimizers. Such mythologizing, she believed, sustained a massively distorted sense of history. Indeed, it virtually removed the problems of Jewish identity and persecution-experience from history altogether. Mythologizing, she argues,

> denies the Jewish part of responsibility for existing conditions. Thereby it not only cuts off Jewish history from European history and even from the rest of mankind; it ignores the role that European Jewry played in the construction and functioning of the national state.

Such an attitude produces political cynicism and undermines the possibility of envisioning historical solutions. In short, it encourages political irresponsibility. It thus underwrites the two most common strategies for Jewish survival in the modern world—religious orthodoxy and withdrawal, and assimilationism. The mythologizing attitude is also, Arendt thought, the basis for the opportunistic politics pursued by the Zionist movement.

Assimilationism, for Arendt, was both morally and politically abhorrent. It was morally abhorrent because it rested upon what Bernard Lazare referred to as "that 'spurious doctrine' ... which would have the Jews 'abandon all their characteristics, individual and moral alike, and give up distinguishing themselves only by an outward mark of the flesh which served but to expose them to the hatred of other faiths.'" Assimilationism served at once both to essentialize the subordination of the Jews as a diaspora people and to recommend a program of cultural liquidation. It was politically reprehensible because it recommended a praxeology of cynicism in dealings with the gentile world, an indifference to questions of both communal and human justice, and a complicity with the powers-that-be of European class society. This complicity saw an "official Jewry" made up of Jewish "plutocrats" such as the Rothschilds collaborating with the rulers of the emerging nation-states of Europe. Such collaboration, Arendt argues, quite naturally provoked the animosity of the oppressed classes and nations of Europe, as "Jews became the symbols of Society as such and the objects of hatred for all those whom society did not accept." Equally important, it produced and reproduced glaring inequalities within the Jewish community, deflecting the possibility of real historical solutions to the problems afflicting the vast majority of Jews of Europe.

In a remarkable essay, "The Moral of History" (1946), Arendt addresses the historical naiveté of this collaboration explicitly, stressing that the reappropriation of the past is incumbent upon us as a people. What follows in the essay is an impassioned plea for historical consciousness, articulated in terms of what *we* Jews must do to wrest control of *our* destiny. The sharpness of Arendt's prose is conjoined with an unabashed identification with her people. "Behind us lies a century of opportunist politics, a century in which ... to forget has become a holy duty, inexperience a privilege and ignorance a guarantee of success."

Arendt set her sights upon the world of plutocrats, diehard Zionists, and advisers to princes and presidents.

We are confronted, she states, paraphrasing Marx, with two choices. On the one hand, we can allow the dead weight of the past, and our ill-considered decisions, to play havoc with us, so much "does unreason begin to function automatically when reason has abdicated to it." This is in fact one way of explaining the history that culminated in the destruction of European Jewry and the decimation of European civilization, a history wherein the "automatism of events" and the absence of any historical perspective deprived its agents of responsibility. On the other hand, we can turn to reason. We might begin to understand our past critically and use such an understanding to reconstruct our present and our future. Such a path requires a sense of historical responsibility and political engagement, for "the moral of the history of the nineteenth century is ... that men who were not ready to assume a responsible role in public affairs ... were turned into mere beasts who could be used for anything before being led to the slaughter."

In order, then, to preserve both our own community and European civilization, it is necessary for Jews to cast off the fetters of their historical myths, to repudiate the embourgeoisement of assimilation, and to become political creatures. This responsibility, insists Arendt, is not unique to the Jewish people; nor is it absolved by the undeniable fact that Jews have historically been subjected to persecution. Rather Jews, simply by virtue

of their existence, are "one group of people among other groups, all of which are involved in the business of this world."

The Critique of Zionism

The tragedy of Zionism is that it was unable to deliver on its promise to represent precisely such a historical engagement with the world. As Arendt writes in a critical retrospective, Herzl's "lasting greatness lay in his very desire to do something about the Jewish question, his desire to act and to solve the problem in political terms." And yet, she argues, at a deeper level Zionism was fatally flawed from its inception. Crystallizing at the outset of the twentieth century as a response to such anti-Semitic traumas as the pogroms in Russia and Eastern Europe and the Dreyfus Affair in France, Zionism was at once deeply political and sublimely antipolitical. It was political in that it actively sought a solution to the problems of anti-Semitism in the establishment of a Jewish state and pursued this end through diplomatic, economic, organizational, and ultimately military means. But Zionism was also a fatefully problematic ideology, particularly in the case of Herzl's influential variant.

First, Zionism was premised upon the kind of historical naiveté discussed above, a vision of history according to which anti-Semitism is the eternal and unchanging reality confronting the Jewish people, to be alleviated only by a *flight* from the gentile world and by the creation of a "new Zionist man" on virgin soil. This view, Arendt argues, is derived from one of the worst features of German nationalism, the conception of the nation as an unchanging biological organism in a hostile world. It is also disturbingly escapist. "The simple truth is that Jews will have to fight anti-semitism everywhere or else be exterminated everywhere."

Second, Zionism underwrote a strategy of "crackpot" realism. It constituted a "classic example of a policy hard-boiled enough to seem 'realistic', but in fact completely utopian because it failed to take into account either one's own or the other party's relative strength." In Herzl's *weltanschauung* "any segment of reality that could not be defined by anti-semitism was not taken into account and any group that could not be definitely classed as anti-semitic was not taken seriously as a political force." Such an outlook quite naturally justifies a strategy of political opportunism, manifest in Herzl's own negotiations with the Ottoman and British empires, in later right-wing Zionist dealings with the Nazis during the mid-1930s (facilitating the "transfer" and "emigration" of Jews to Palestine), and in the more recent diplomatic enterprises of the State of Israel revolving around the protection of the United States. In short, Arendt argues, instead of locating the problems of the Jews in the problems of imperialism, racism, and the crisis of European civilization as a whole, Zionism *cynically identifies with imperialism* as the agency through which Jewish problems can be solved.

Third, political Zionism tends to make the establishment of a *sovereign state* the be-all and end-all of Jewish politics. Arendt argues that at the turn of the century "there was nothing absurd or wrong in a demand made by Jews for the same kind of emancipation and freedom" that had been attained by other oppressed European nationalities. But, she continues,

> that the whole structure of sovereign national states, great and small, would crumble within another fifty years under imperialist expansion and in the face of the new power situation, was more than Herzl could have foreseen. His demand for a state has been made utopian only by more recent Zionist policy—which did not ask for a state at a time when it might have been granted by everybody, but asked for one only when the whole concept of national sovereignty had become a mockery.

The Jewish quest for national statehood in the Middle East could, then, have no other consequence than the intrication of the Jewish people in the deepest entanglements of imperialist power politics, the identification of the Jews with the Big Powers, and at best, a balkanization of the region quite like that which caused the first two world wars.

Finally, the Zionist outlook was antipolitical in its blithe refusal, indeed its congenital incapacity, to recognize the reality of the Arab population in Palestine. The vision of uniting "a land without a people with a people without a land" was, Arendt saw, a potent but dangerous myth fated to engender and exacerbate hostilities between Jews and Arabs, two peoples who had suffered at the hands of imperialism.

The criticism of Zionism is quite unremitting, but it is not without appreciation for both the historical context of Zionism and the general aspirations to which it gave expression. Thus, Arendt writes, critics who call Zionism to account both for selling out to the powers-that-be and for demonstrating such a lack of solidarity with other oppressed people "... should in fairness consider how exceptionally difficult the conditions were for the Jews who, in contrast to other peoples, did not even possess the territory from which to start their fight for freedom." Arendt never failed to note the challenging circumstances under which the Jews have operated. But she also, in a number of essays, indicated an alternative strategy to that outlined by Herzlian

(Continued on p. 86)

Pluralism at the Wailing Wall

Miriam Campanini

It was Chanukah 1988, the beginning of the Hebrew month of Tevet. A group of women, most of whom lived in or near Jerusalem, had been studying Torah for months and quite naturally felt that a decision to pray together publicly would be a natural expression of their "sisterhood." They decided to celebrate this stage of their spiritual journey at the Wailing Wall, where they would read the Torah and sing the *Hallel,* a prayer of thanksgiving, in celebration of Rosh Hodesh (the new month). This decision was a revolutionary act, for women wearing *tallitim* and carrying the Torah do not pray together at the Wall. The women knew that the ultra-Orthodox would object and perhaps react violently. Conscious of the meaning of their collective gesture, they decided to take the risk, for they felt that the Wailing Wall should be a place where all Jews can pray according to their own custom.

To Jews both in Israel and in the Diaspora, the Wailing Wall is a symbol of national identity. It is no accident that Jews who are rescued from authoritarian political regimes are brought immediately to the Wailing Wall upon their arrival in Israel, where they mark their deliverance from oppression, a central moment in the confirmation of their Jewish selves. In the same vein, last July when Israel celebrated the bar mitzvah of the Maccabiah games, an international sports event, officials chose the Wailing Wall as the site of the festivities, complete with laser displays and fireworks. One could argue that such secular celebrations are not appropriate at the Wailing Wall, which is, after all, a holy place. Yet such practices are nevertheless a tribute to pluralism, a palpable reminder that the Wailing Wall is a simulacrum for *all* Jews, regardless of how they choose to express their Jewishness. A "Wailing Wall for all" would seem to be the slogan: a place where no one is entitled to determine whose blood is redder, or to fashion criteria for limited membership.

No narrative can evoke a sense of the violent confrontation on Rosh Hodesh Tevet 1988 better than images. Three still trouble my mind, from photographs taken at the time: a Hasid snarling as he hurled a chair over the *mekhitza*; a man lifting a grenade with one hand while holding a *siddur* (prayer book) with the other, his head framed by his *tallit, tefillin* solidly positioned on forehead and wrist; and an ultra-Orthodox woman shouting, her fingers braided in a spell-casting gesture.

Shortly after the Wailing Wall incident of Rosh Hodesh Tevet 1988, the women's group lodged a complaint with the police, who had failed to shield the women from the violence. The group also decided to initiate legal proceedings—on behalf, symbolically, of all Jewish women in the world—against the government authorities who have jurisdiction over activities at the Wall.

The police's response to the complaint was emblematic of the official attitude toward the problem. They stated that "there is no public interest involved in the matter," and therefore they had no duty to intervene and protect the complainants. In its answer to the women's pleadings, the court used the grammar of law to express the same idea: the women were accused of violating the *minhag ha-makom,* the custom of the place, and of causing a breach of peace. Yet. the ultra-Orthodox breached the peace through their violent disruption of orderly worship.

In May 1989 the Israeli Supreme Court issued an interim order, recognizing that the women should receive police protection, provided they worship "in the manner customary for the women of the place." The court then enumerated the specific acts whose performance would entail forfeiture of protection: donning *tefillin* and *tallitim,* and carrying the Torah within the boundaries of the Wailing Wall area. The court did not, however, specifically bar the women from singing while praying in the Wall area.

It was during this tense time, in June 1989, that I decided to join the group of women to celebrate Rosh Hodesh Tammuz.

At 6:00 in the morning, I left my apartment in an Orthodox section of Jerusalem. Men already swarmed the streets, their prayer cases firmly placed under their arms. They walked quickly and erectly, as people do who have no doubts about their station in life.

The night before I had prayed that there would be no disturbance, no violence. The fear of being spit upon, of the possibility of a scuffle or brawl in which I would have to defend myself and perhaps help others, no doubt influenced my choice of what to wear and

Miriam Campanini is an assistant professor of law at Tulane Law School and is working on a book, Wounds That Never Heal: The Emotion of Vengeance.

what to carry. I opted for nondescript attire; my little Sephardic *siddur* was my only weapon. As I walked resolutely among the ghostly, dilapidated buildings of Mamilla Street toward Jaffa Gate, I thought about the student barricades of the late sixties. I had a few moments of vacillation: Was I doing the right thing? Was I being a rebel for no purpose? But I believed in the rightness of the gesture, and so I continued unrelentingly on my way.

As I crossed Jaffa Gate and walked toward the Armenian section of the Old City, three of my "sisters" approached me in a big van. We would meet the others at the Dung Gate. "*Yesh gvul* (There is a limit)," says one. "I will need prayer therapy afterwards." In the previous days I had heard many of the women tell of deep emotional disturbance. I could not fail to notice that one of the women was trembling. Another woman had slept for two days trying to recover from the violent incident on Shavuot. These women's prayers had become an act of will and, ultimately, a sign of deep faith in God. From the casual pace of the negotiations, it was clear that the government was counting on the power of fear and disgust to generate divisions within our group, causing us to remove the case from the docket or, at least, to ridicule ourselves for being self-defeating.

When we reached the Dung Gate of the Old City, the group had swelled to about a hundred women. We decided to split into two groups. A few among us, those who were fluent in Hebrew, would patrol the groups and try to speak with those ultra-Orthodox women who might try to disrupt our prayer. "The situation may present some challenge," our coordinator remarked. "We should continue with our prayer despite curses and shouts."

As we crossed the gate, a man was serving handouts to all passersby. The writing was in both Hebrew and English, with the seal and signature of Rabbi Mayer Yehuda Getz, who has police powers over the Wailing Wall. Some of the rabbi's language, no doubt unintentionally, reflected the pluralistic symbolism of the Wall, a mirror of the polycentric structure of Jewish history and tradition. In the handout, Rabbi Getz referred to the sacredness of the area for "the nation of Israel," and an embracing "we" emphasized the inclusive nature of the Wall. As Jewish women, we should be included in the compass of the word "we." But in the binary conceptual universe of our self-appointed judges, we are characterized as "traitors" and "heretics." Hence, the ultra-Orthodox can both deny us and reaffirm the "we," and by doing so they prevent any public criticism of their position. But any tendency toward tolerance was brushed away in the rabbi's final paragraph: "With all my heart, I ask you to help me in the difficult task of guarding the sanctity of this place." This exhortation did not exclude the use of force. Force, not persuasion, was at the heart of the rabbi's message to the women of Israel.

As we approached the prayer area, I saw a number of women in uniform—at first I thought their presence was a gesture of respect for us. A haughty man crossed the *mekhitza* to fetch a chair from the women's side. It is hard to understand why men may cross boundaries without a word of reproach, whereas women are told they defile and desecrate. He shouted and gesticulated at two patrolmen as he left the women's section. The atmosphere was hardly one of peaceful cooperation. We started to pray, and soon our singing marked us as a group. A few ultra-Orthodox women screamed, calling us dogs, blasphemous non-Jews, apostates. They pushed. One brandished a creased piece of paper: I imagined the curse, scribbled down in wholehearted heat, which would rest forever amidst the mail of sorrow stuffed in the cracks of the Wailing Wall, the millennial Shrine of Desire.

A man threw a bucket of water from the roof of the yeshiva nearby. A few splashes found their way onto my blouse: I wore them like tears, tokens of the pain I felt.

It seemed as if a prearranged signal had been broadcast. The policewomen who allegedly had come to protect us were now upon us, shouting that we had breached one of the terms in the court order. Avraham Burg, a Labor Knesset member who supports our cause, conferred with both the police and Rabbi Getz. In vain Burg tried to persuade them that their action constituted an excessive use of power. The situation was clearly out of control. It became impossible for us to pray as a group, even if we refrained from singing.

We left the area, moving nearby to the ruins of the Hurva Synagogue, as we had planned earlier. I was both bitter and elated—I could not withhold a joyous "*hodesh tov* (good month)" to my sisters. We continued with the *Hallel.*

This was our mini-intifada. The security men we had hired held back a group of men and children who were blowing whistles and horns. We continued to pray. I thought of the time when women were prophets and leaders. We prayed with their memory, as it were. Our prayer was for the rebuilding of our Temple. A real breakthrough occurred when an ultra-Orthodox woman,

clearly disturbed by the men's boisterous shouts, yelled back: "They are Jews, too."

As our group was about to break up, a man threw a bucket of water from the roof of the yeshiva nearby. A few splashes found their way onto my blouse: I wore them like tears, tokens of the pain I felt.

When the media reported on the incident, they claimed our intentions were not honest, that we came to the Wailing Wall only for publicity and provocation. Yet the psychological context of prayer, unlike that of an ordinary political demonstration, requires the worshiper's extreme vulnerability: the "I" divests itself of all claims to domination and surrenders to the higher cosmic power of the divinity. The violence we suffered occurred at a delicate moment in our religious experience—its impact was devastating because it transformed an experience of bonding into a ceremony of disgust. Its effect endures as shame and guilt corrode our senses of self-worth. It is hard to imagine that a reasonable, not to mention a rational, person would choose to expose herself repeatedly to such a bitter experience. There are other, less painful ways to seek publicity than to deliberately pursue the doubtful pleasures of provocation.

When the Jew thinks of prayer, two complementary paradigms come to mind. First is the collective experience of elation and release which characterizes Miriam's and Deborah's invitations to praise the Almighty (Exodus 15:20-21; Judges Ch. V). In this model, prayer involves a state of heightened consciousness, often felt after great danger has been averted, as when the Israelites crossed the Red Sea and escaped the Egyptians. The mood is joyous, unbound by rules, suitable for poetry—hymns of thanksgiving, sung publicly by men and women together. In particular, there are no normative requirements to predetermine the poems' ritual value. The weight of tradition teaches us to recognize these poems as prayer.

The second paradigm of prayer is seen in Hannah's desperate, yet hopeful, invocation for the gift of motherhood. Grief-stricken, her heart humbled by fasting, Hannah makes her request gently. Moving her lips silently, she "pour[s] out [her] soul before the Lord" [I Samuel 1:15].

It is the "Hannah tradition," as I will call it, that provides the proof text for the rabbis' formalization of prayer. In the Talmud, Rabbi Hamnuna remarks, "How many most important laws can be learnt from these verses relating to Hannah" [*Talmud Bavli Berakhot* 31a-b]. A rule is derived that states "it is forbidden to raise one's voice in the prayer."

I have nowhere found a reference in the Talmud to what I call the "Miriam tradition" as a source for rules concerning prayer. One important question concerns the very notion of praying according to rules. It is reasonable to assume that neither Miriam nor Hannah behaved according to a codebook conception of prayer. A glance at the historical experience of the Jews may provide some answers. Conceivably, the Jews' grief-stricken lives and their powerlessness in the Diaspora encouraged a type of disposition that accounts both for the desirability of rules and the priority of the "Hannah tradition." Rules, after all, are instrumental in binding a community together, helping to distinguish insiders from outsiders. They foster a model of community marked by internal cohesion, providing the normative standards both to recognize religious dissension and to target it for delegitimation and excommunication. At the same time, the political predicament itself, in which survival is contingent on messianic hope, a yearning for a reunited Zion transcending the concerns of daily life, makes the "Miriam tradition"—with its triumphant outbursts and Dionysian élan—marginal if not redundant. The downtrodden, deprived men and women in the Diaspora could pray only in a spirit of hope.

Yet one does not need to search far to find contemporary examples of the "Miriam tradition." Orthodox customs, which go unchallenged, are visible reminders that two conceptions exist side by side, as different moments during prayer: the "Miriam tradition," characterized by thanks and praise, is manifested in the men's

Are you a supporter of Israel

but find its government's occupation policy reprehensible? You are not alone. Let us tell you about Yesh Gvul.

Yesh Gvul ("There is a Limit") is an organization of Israeli soldiers who refuse to serve in the occupied territories.

They are not conscientious objectors. All are soldiers who have served and will continue to serve in the Israeli army reserves. Many have seen active combat.

They simply refuse to take part in repressing the Palestinian uprising and are willing to pay the price. They are sent to jail again and again and again.

David Palma, 39, married, 3 children: three jail terms for refusing to serve in the occupied territories. Rami Hasson, 32: five (consecutive) terms. Angelo Aiden, 40, married, 4 children: four jail terms. And the list goes on.

Yesh Gvul very much needs your help. The movement took upon itself financial respsonsibility for the families of those soldiers who are in jail for their moral stand.

Please send your tax-deductible contribution to **Friends of Yesh Gvul**, 1678 Shattuck Ave., Box #6, Berkeley, CA 94709 (checks payable to **FOYG/NJA**).

For more information call (415)848-9391.

Support the Israel you really believe in!

rhythmic chanting and joyous songs. The "Hannah tradition," involving the conveyance of personal requests, is embodied in the silent prayer of the *Amidah*. It strikes, therefore, as an anomaly that women have been arbitrarily confined to the "Hannah tradition" alone, ordered to pray in whispers, to the exclusion of the still-valid "Miriam tradition." The Talmudic justification for such restrictions—that the voice of a woman is "indecent"—is simply too glib to satisfy a searching mind. (In the Talmud, the "harsh voice" of a woman is cited as a valid cause to invalidate a marriage.) As I was wrestling with this thought, the explanation suddenly became clear.

Singing, characteristically, is a group activity. The individual voice is like a filament that holds together the beads on a necklace: each bead is a voice which is united in a collective experience of empowerment barred to the individual. The refusal to recognize a group of women singing together in prayer reaffirms the systemic practice of refusing women the symbols of group religious affirmation. "Excusing" women from the positive rituals of religious membership means excluding them from the public culture of the community: here as elsewhere, separate is not equal. Silencing a woman's voice in prayer mirrors her silence in the realm of government and, most crucially, her powerlessness in fashioning the rules that shape the ecology of her life.

Significantly, we have no record of collective public worship by women. Even the Exodus story, which includes Miriam and the women as protagonists, is later reinterpreted by rabbinical authorities to mean that "Miriam went out from the sight of men." The denial has a bitter flavor, especially if one considers that a woman is epistemologically more likely to appreciate the creation, since she is closer to the activity of life-giving. Even the rabbis had to admit that Deborah and Hannah were unrivaled in writing songs of praise to God. But whereas the tradition has chronicled the descendants of Aaron, the descendants of Miriam have been lost in silence.

God's imperative *lekh lekha* (go to yourself) might seem at first to provide women with a direction for the discovery of patterns of spirituality that are geared to the variety of women's ways of flourishing. The phrase, it bears remembering, underscores both Abraham's journey away from the familiar toward the unknown [Genesis 12:1] and God's command that Abraham offer Isaac and go "to the land that I will show you" [Genesis 22:2]. In both situations, the agent is undergoing an ordeal, and a breakthrough can occur only when one goes off alone, or with someone with whom one shares a special relationship, searching for a different discipline on a journey without known destination. Here *lekh lekha* may denote severance, an inward journey, as well as sensitive questioning of tradition. One obeys God while challenging God, typically through a committed, hermeneutic reappropriation of the sources.

A journey through tradition reveals a broad, unevenly textured picture with alternative mythopoetic legends. There are sparks of a forgotten pluralism of methods and practices, bearing witness to the complexity of women's spirituality throughout Jewish history. And so, for example, Rabbi Yossi in the Talmud allowed women to hold their hands over the sin offering, so that they might enjoy peace of mind, even if they were not allowed to perform the sacrificial act in the Temple. The wife of Jonah the prophet is said to have gone regularly to Jerusalem on pilgrimage; Michal the daughter of King Saul donned *tefillin*; Bruna, the wife of a rabbi in sixteenth-century Naples, used to wear the *tallit katan,* the sacred undergarment usually worn only by men. Even the Rambam, hardly a model of liberality about women, conceded that women could read from the Torah "because words are not blemished by impurity," though others had argued that women should not be allowed to approach the Torah, since one could not trust their own declarations as to their ritual purity [Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Sefer Torah* 10:8].

The crucial element in assessing apparent deviations from the regularity of social custom would appear to be the righteous intention of the agent—a matter of delicate inquiry, not to be determined by attaching facile labels and dismissing the issue. I was especially disturbed by the media's approach to the issue of intention and motivation. Here as elsewhere, the self-appointed custodians of Orthodoxy should remember the deep rabbinical comment on Eli's harsh reproach of Hannah's apparently drunken approach to prayer: "[T]he *Shekhina* is not with you, in that you take the harsher and not the more lenient view of my conduct" [*Talmud Bavli Berakhot* 31b]. I had discovered that, in fact, *halakha* does not prohibit the very practice over which I was being forced to experience guilt and anguish, that of praying out loud with other women. My own journey unequivocally suggested that the sociology of prayer, the reality of women's actual devotional practices, is distinguished from the normative background of the rules that are often brought to bear in evaluating the experience of prayer.

Lo mekubal (it is not accepted, not desirable) is the ultimate argument against the practice of women praying at the Wailing Wall. This response confirms that the issue is ultimately sociological, not normative, and that

(Continued on p. 93)

The Problem That Won't Go Away: Anti-Semitism in Poland (Again)

Abraham Brumberg

About half a year ago, I wrote what I had hoped would be the last article I would ever write on Jews and anti-Semitism in Poland. The subject, never exactly pleasant, was getting tedious to boot. I have shot my bolt, I thought, said what could be said, and I was free to turn my attention elsewhere.

Several months later came the Auschwitz controversy, the decision by Cracow's Franciszek Cardinal Macharski to break the Geneva agreement on moving the convent, Jozef Cardinal Glemp's putrid anti-Semitic homily, and then two articles by Dawid Warszawski, one in the Polish communist weekly *Polityka* and one in the last issue of *Tikkun*. It seemed that the subject just wouldn't go away.

Truth be told, I had never given much thought to the problem of the Carmelite convent, which I considered to be of little concern to secular Jews like myself. When I read of Rabbi Avi Weiss and his seven disciples being assaulted and booted off the convent premises, I was revolted by the assailants' behavior, but felt little sympathy for the rabbi, whose confrontational tactics I had always found offensive, in Bitburg and elsewhere.

Well, I was wrong—not only wrong to think that I was through with this subject, but also wrong to assume that only the religious need worry about the location of the convent, and partially wrong about Rabbi Weiss, too. I had failed to take sufficient notice of the fact that, as Warszawski puts it, "Rabbi Weiss and his students appeared on the scene" only after the "second deadline [for removing the convent] had expired and nothing had been done."

For my opening text, I have selected a somewhat unusual item—an essay by a prominent Polish cleric, Reverend Jozef Tischner, titled "The Dispute About the Presence of the Cross," which appeared in the liberal Catholic weekly *Tygodnik Powszechny*. Unusual, because theological exegesis is not exactly my strongest suit. But not so unusual after all, for even though the essay, in the words of its author, focuses exclusively on the "religious aspect of the Auschwitz controversy," it is in effect central to the problems of Polish-Jewish relations and anti-Semitism in Poland.

Tischner's aim is to examine some of the stubborn barriers to an understanding between Polish Catholics and Jews. According to the prelate, these barriers lie in the failure of both groups to comprehend and respect each other's fundamental beliefs—specifically, those pertaining to the symbolism of the cross. Once the barriers fall, it will be seen how much (theologically speaking, of course) Judaism and Christianity have in common.

First, then, it is imperative for Jews to be "fully aware" that for a Polish Catholic the cross is "a symbol of absolute values." Absolute values, Tischner goes on (still addressing himself to the Jews, or as he refers to them later, the "Hebrews" [*Hebrajczycy*]), "cannot be disputed, only defended." In the name of the cross, a Polish Catholic "will pardon his enemies, expect the salvation of the world, and see in [it] the embodiment of supreme love." Jews must "not take the defense of the cross in Auschwitz as an expression of anti-Semitism, for Polish Catholics would protest just as vigorously if anyone else tried to remove it."

Next the author turns to his fellow Christians and asks them to be equally sympathetic toward Jewish feelings. Orthodox Jews have regarded Christianity as a "heresy," indeed "even a betrayal of Judaism," and see the cross as "a palpable reminder" of that betrayal. This is why for Jews "the emblem of treason on a Jewish cemetery is not a source of solace but of even greater pain."

In fact, he goes on, to a Jew the cross in Auschwitz is no less an offense than "unclean" (that is to say, non-kosher) food was to the early Christian converts from Judaism. Thus, just as the Christians must avoid giving offense to the Jews—as St. Paul bade them—so the latter must avoid offending the Christians for whom the cross is the "very essence of Christ's teachings."

The cross (meaning the Carmelite convent), then, must be removed from its present location. But that alone will not suffice: it must be erected at a different place, one that would "open the eyes of the Jews to the fact that the cross—the site of sacrifice—grows out of their own traditions." This, if I understand Tischner correctly, is dictated at one and the same time by Chris-

---

Abraham Brumberg is the editor of the forthcoming book Chronicle of a Revolution—a Western-Soviet Inquiry. *He has written extensively on Eastern Europe and on Jewish issues.*

tian "love" and by the Christian's "duty" (as he notes earlier in his article) "to convert peoples and nations to the Christian faith."

I don't know what a theological mind would make of these and other divagations—for example, whether Auschwitz is "truly the site of the emanation of absolute evil." To a secular mind like mine, they bespeak a monumental ignorance of and insensitivity to the Jewish psyche.

For some Orthodox Jews the cross may be only the "palpable reminder" of Christ's "betrayal of Judaism," but for most Jews, including atheists like myself and, I suspect, the Orthodox as well (and for Tischner, apparently, the only true Hebrews are the latter), the cross is not necessarily or merely a symbol of apostasy. It is a "palpable reminder" of the suffering inflicted upon Jews over the past two thousand years. The cross hovered over Jews burned at the stake and over the thousands of Jews (and, to be sure, other "heretics") slaughtered by the Crusaders. In the *shtetlach* and towns of Eastern Europe it was often a priest carrying a wooden cross who led drunken mobs bent on setting fire to Jewish homes and maiming or killing their inhabitants.

For millions of Jews, of course, these associations are evoked only under special circumstances and in specific settings. When Jews tour old churches, or when Christian friends invite them to attend religious services, or when they listen to Bach's B Minor Mass either in a concert hall or in a house of worship, such associations are absent. But they are bound to be roused whenever the cross is used as a symbol—in Tischner's own words—of the Christian's "duty ... to convert peoples and nations to the Christian faith."

This is precisely where the problem of the Auschwitz convent comes in. For Tischner "martyrdom," as he notes in another part of his article, may represent the "height of humanity," but it is scarcely a height Jews are willing to scale in order to attain, as he suggests, the "ideal common to both faiths"—that is, the ultimate unity of Christians and Jews. Jews have never asked Christians to die for their faith. But for many Jews martyrdom was the price they had to pay for resisting Christian attempts to convert them—or, as Tischner himself puts it, without perhaps realizing what he is saying, for refusing to "open their eyes to the fact that the cross ... grows out of their own traditions." And in Auschwitz millions of Jews perished simply because they were Jews—or were so regarded by their executioners.

This has precious little to do with theology and everything to do with historical memory and elementary sensitivity. Not to understand it is to understand nothing. And if Tischner, widely considered "the outstanding Church spokesman in linking theology to the quest for social justice" and "the major philosopher of the Solidarity Movement" (the words of Zbigniew Brzezinski), fails to grasp it and resorts, instead, to lofty verbiage and bizarre comparisons between pork and the cross, is it surprising that a handful of unworldly nuns cannot comprehend it? Or that numerous Poles, including many without anti-Semitic prejudices, are either indignant about the Jewish protests or wonder aloud what the whole fuss is all about?

When asked what they considered to be characteristic "Jewish traits," most Polish students responded with adjectives such as radical, nationalist, cunning, unreliable, craven, vindictive, cruel, treasonous.

I haven't the slightest idea whether *most* Poles are anti-Semitic or not, and I certainly reject Yitzhak Shamir's racist statement that Poles have imbibed anti-Semitism "with their mothers' milk." But I have no doubt, to quote Warszawski, that "anti-Semitism is alive and well in Poland," which is to say that a huge number of Poles are steeped in anti-Jewish stereotypes and animosities. This is borne out not merely by some of my own experiences and observations, but by public opinion polls and studies conducted by Polish sociologists and by the occasional forthright article in the Polish press.

For instance, the pathbreaking study by the young Polish scholar Alina Cala, "The Image of the Jew in Polish Peasant Culture," demonstrates beyond a shadow of a doubt that the mass of the Polish peasantry still believes in the medieval "blood libel"—the notion that Jews use Christian blood for the baking of *matzos*—and in the equally pernicious doctrine (renounced by Vatican II) of Jewish deicide.

Even more dismaying are the results of a 1983 sociological survey examining the attitudes of Polish university students. When asked, for instance, what they considered to be characteristic "Jewish traits," most of the students responded with adjectives such as "radical, nationalist, cunning, unreliable, craven, vindictive, cruel, treasonous, quarrelsome, ambitious, loud," and nouns such as "banker" and "storekeeper." True, the poll was conducted between 1975 and 1982, and what with the growth of an enlightened interest in Jewish subjects, similar questions today would no doubt elicit more positive responses. Still, few if any of the young people polled a decade ago had ever seen a "real Jew"—and

certainly not a single Jewish banker or storekeeper. (Neither had the Warsaw taxi driver who told me a few months ago that "the Jewry"—*zydowstwo*—had managed to survive and is now attempting to "seize power in Poland.") Whence, then, the stubborn persistence of such odious stereotypes?

Warszawski comes close to it, yet oddly enough shrinks from putting his finger unequivocally on the major culprit—the Polish Catholic church. No social phenomenon is subject to a unitary explanation, and anti-Semitism in Poland (as elsewhere) has been shaped by various factors—economic, political, and cultural. But if there is one overriding reason why bigotry is alive and kicking in Poland today, it is the church—or, more accurately, the church's failure to cleanse its historical record and to instruct the faithful in its present teachings on Judaism, as promulgated by the Second Vatican Council a quarter of a century ago.

At one or another stage of Polish history, anti-Semitism was exacerbated by economic competition, by cultural and linguistic barriers, or by attempts to exploit it for political purposes. But one factor has remained constant through the ages—religious bigotry. Many clergymen and lay Catholics have tried valiantly to counteract it. Many are appalled by the tenacity of ancient hatreds, as they were appalled by Glemp's homily. But the church as an institution, and the church as represented by its head, Jozef Cardinal Glemp, remains firmly mired in the past.

But, some might say, what of the frequent Christian-Jewish "fraternal dialogues" urged by the Vatican Council's historic declaration on Judaism, *Nostra Aetate,* issued in 1965? The flavor of these "dialogues"—including seminars, conferences, and common prayers, as well as articles in the Polish Catholic press (though almost exclusively in the *Tygodnik Powszechny*)—is accurately conveyed by Tischner's essay. (In fact, the overall dialogue, according to a Polish Catholic friend of mine, is "meretricious" even as a theological exercise, for it seeks to find "common ground" with Judaism, instead of simply affirming that the religions are different and that pluralism requires tolerance of other faiths, whether or not they have anything in common. This observation certainly applies to Tischner's essay.) They are, almost without exception, cast in the same mold: that is, they consist largely of abstruse doctrinal disputations of interest to no one except sundry rabbis, seminarians, teachers of moral philosophy, and the like. Many of them are no doubt well-intentioned. But they are seldom related to current social reality. And they generally steer clear of any embarrassing inquiries into the role played by the Polish church in fostering anti-Semitism in the past—and to this day.

A New Look at *Fin-De-Siècle* Vienna

VIENNA AND THE JEWS 1867-1938

A Cultural History

Steven Beller

Author Steven Beller studies the role played by the Jews in the explosion of cultural innovation in Vienna at the turn of the century. Using a fresh approach he explains how the culture of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna was born out of the encounter between the intelligentsia's Jewish background and the Viennese context.

$34.50

At bookstores or from

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

40 West 20th Street, NY, NY
1-800-872-7423. MasterCard/Visa accepted.

The Catholic press, as I noted, occasionally carries valuable articles. It also carries pieces that smack of extraordinary ignorance and moral myopia. It was only a few years ago, for instance, that *Tygodnik Powszechny* ran a piece on *Maly Dziennik,* a prewar newspaper edited by Maksymilian Kolbe, the Catholic priest who voluntarily went to his death in Auschwitz to save the life of another human being. The article heaped praise on the paper and its editor, forgetting to mention one minor detail—that this hugely popular daily was one of the major purveyors of anti-Jewish invective. (To be fair to Tischner, his essay refers to *Maly Dziennik* as "a publication with a strong anti-Semitic profile.")

The "dialogue," then, is not designed to have much—if any—impact on most Catholic believers. It is not brought down to the level of the parish pulpit, either in the villages (where the church enjoys its greatest following) or in the cities. I am not aware of a single sermon or homily on the subject of anti-Semitism ever preached in any of the large city churches, including two in Warsaw known popularly as the "church of the students" and the "church of the intellectuals." Moreover, the spirit of the ongoing "dialogue," such as it is, is time and again belied by statements and incidents, often involving the primate, such as the latest controversy over the convent.

For an assessment of this dialogue, let me quote none other than Warszawski. This is what he has to say, not in *Tikkun,* but in *Polityka*:

> When the dispute about the Carmelite convent in Auschwitz broke out, I was not in Poland—luckily for me. Had I been here, I would certainly have written something of which I would now be ashamed. I would have written that, although the outrage among Jews is understandable, there is no reason to doubt the good will and sincerity of the Church.... I would have written an article reflecting sentiments born of my participation in various Jewish–Christian meetings organized in Poland by the Catholic church during the last few years. On these occasions I came to know many fine priests with a sincere desire for dialogue and understanding. Our conversations and joint prayers, our openness toward each other, our respect for the differences between us—in fact, our conviction that these differences were not an obstacle, but a priceless value—were for me meaningful experiences, both intellectually and spiritually.

All these sentiments, Warszawski goes on, turned out to be but a species of "naiveté." In the past, he tended to dismiss every episode of religion-inspired anti-Semitism (including the times his ten-year-old son came home from school "beaten up by his classmates because he is a Jew, and 'the Jews killed Christ'") as a "lapsus," as an "isolated incident" that could be offset by "another of opposite significance."

No longer. After Cardinal Macharski's threat to break the Geneva agreement and after the primate's homily in Czestochowa (which Warszawski subjects to withering analysis), he came to realize that "we are now faced with the conscious adoption of a position—and a political, not religious, position at that." There can no longer be "any doubt," he writes, "that [Glemp's homily] expressed attitudes and sentiments that are common to many Poles." And he concludes his somber assessment by remarking that after all these events, he feels "a little less comfortable, a little less at home in Poland."

A few weeks later, I asked Warszawski over the phone whether he wouldn't agree that in the light of the latest incident (on top of all the others), the "dialogue" seems more than ever a meaningless exercise. "Yes," he replied, "it is just a game—a game for the elite."

The lack of any concerted action by the church is matched by the failure of many Polish intellectuals, including those from Solidarity circles, to confront the problem head-on. The Poles' refusal to act may reflect their own ambivalence, an unconscious internalization of certain stereotypes—such as the notion of the "massive participation of Jews in the Communist takeover of Poland," voiced by the new government press spokeswoman, Elzbieta Niezabitowska, a piece of noxious rubbish that only *Polityka* saw fit to denounce. Or it may be dictated by political considerations ("We must go slowly," "We can't afford to antagonize the church, you know," or "We must be careful not to alienate our readers"—the explanation given by Solidarity's weekly newspaper *Tygodnik Solidarnosc* for not accepting Warszawski's article). Whatever the reasons, the result is the same—either silence or tepid euphemisms that can no longer be blamed on the Communists.

No shock, apparently, is strong enough to warrant a strong reaction. Two years ago, select audiences in Poland saw an underground film called *Witnesses,* in which a number of Kielce residents related what they had seen, heard, and felt during the infamous pogrom in their town in July 1946. ("There was this Jewish woman, standing in the stream up to her waist, covered with blood. And people kept throwing stones at her, one after another, almost mechanically, until she finally went under." Or this observation offered by a priest: "Well, of course, the accusation of ritual murder was nonsense. Mind you, it was another thing during the Middle Ages, when Jews had to improve their own inferior blood with that of the Christians.")

"When it was over," a Polish woman viewer said to me, "we all sat in numb silence. We couldn't say anything, we couldn't even move." Has this film, no longer subject to censorship, been reviewed in any major newspapers? Has the priest perhaps been called in by the local bishop and given a simple lesson in biology, let alone some relevant Vatican II teachings? Not to my knowledge.

And what about the Glemp homily? I don't want to exaggerate. It occasioned some splendid reactions.* But the record of the Solidarity press on this subject has not been exactly salutary. Warszawski tells of his dealings with *Tygodnik Solidarnosc* (edited at that time by the present prime minister, Tadeusz Mazowiecki). He

(Continued on p. 93)

*One of the most illuminating and fair-minded articles is "A Request for Silence," by Stanislaw Kania (not to be confused with the former Polish party secretary of the same name), chief specialist of the Main Commission for the Study of Nazi Crimes in Poland (*Polityka,* September 30, 1989). He writes scathingly of the common Polish practice of listing the nationalities of Auschwitz victims in a "pseudo-objective alphabetical order" from "Americans, Austrians, Belgians, Bulgarians" all the way to "Swiss, Turks, Jews and others," omitting the fact that "by far the largest number of these were Jews." Since Kania is writing neither for a Catholic nor for a Solidarity publication, both of which must take care not to "alienate" their readers, he feels free to condemn the description of the "demonstration by seven Jews ... as an 'attack on the convent'" (first voiced by Glemp and then repeated *ad nauseam* by his minions), and concludes with the following words: "One can remember and one can pray in any home and in any sacred place. The victims of Auschwitz have deserved silence in the place of their annihilation."

The Black Swan of Israel

Evan Zimroth

Really, Joy was a poet. He lied so beautifully.
—Else Lasker-Schüler

Solitary and eccentric, a tarted-up bohemian given to weird costume, Else Lasker-Schüler (1869–1945) is one of our most powerful modernist poets of estrangement. A German-Jewish poet and refugee, she escaped Nazi Germany only to isolate herself in Palestine, a Palestine she experienced as diaspora, not home. No single poem in her literary canon expresses attachment to a place, and connections to people in Lasker-Schüler's poetry most often find expression in elegy. Loss of family, friends, lovers, and finally of homeland and language itself marks her work almost from the start.

Abetted both by her own idiosyncrasy and the perils of the Holocaust, Lasker-Schüler was a quick-change artist, adept at making the most of diminished circumstance. Lying, for example, was for Lasker-Schüler a poetic gift and the prerogative of the true poet; promiscuous abandon was something she cherished not only as a way of life, but also as an approach to language. A lie or a unique Germanic compound invented by the poet were like the colored buttons she played with as a child: out of them she made art.

While she is often overlooked today, Lasker-Schüler's strong lyric voice depicting the upheavals of the Holocaust and the forced migrations of destitute people was greatly prized by her contemporaries. Perhaps her contemporaries also would have understood the complex set of reasons that draw me to read and translate Lasker-Schüler: because she lied and elevated lying to Higher Truth; because she was vain and magnetic; because she craved sex and the companionship (however unsatisfactory) of men; because what she feared, happened; because she wrote one of our century's most moving elegies, to her son, fifteen years after his death.

As I worked with Lasker-Schüler's poems, an image from the recent Armenian earthquake came to mind—that of the child who survived the collapse of a building by sucking her mother's blood. The child's survival is a miracle, yet behind it is the image of an innocent vampire. Just so with Lasker-Schüler. That she survived such loss to flourish as a poet is miraculous, yet behind her survival is insatiable hunger.

Lasker-Schüler herself was flamboyantly egotistical. She both captivated and repelled those who knew her with many of the same qualities found in her strong and sometimes unpardonable lyrics. During the last five years of her life, when she was resettled in Jerusalem, she developed something of a cult around herself. She organized lengthy poetry readings and advocated a "peace plan" that involved inviting Arabs and Jews to enjoy an amusement park where they would eat German cakes and share rides on a carousel. Commenting on Lasker-Schüler's appearance in Jerusalem, the poet Yehuda Amichai calls her "the first hippie I ever saw" and recalls laughing at her among his boyhood friends. Another acquaintance from her Jerusalem period describes her as "a broken old woman who looked like a solitary, exotic night bird." Even in her youth she had dressed eccentrically. She jingled with bangles and bracelets, and wore a fur hat no matter the weather. I suspect, too, that Lasker-Schüler was not shy about her star-spangled magnetism: an early photo of the poet reveals an androgynous figure who would have appealed to a Hemingway or Virginia Woolf, a girl-boy with cropped hair wearing tunic, pants, and stiletto heels, a phallic flute hanging from her waist and another held at her lips. The poet who catalogued so many varieties of solitude and loss, whose personae are so utterly alone, looked rather like the Pied Piper, expecting all the rats in town to dance after her, over the hills and far away.

Her personal magnetism aside, Lasker-Schüler was a poet of immense productivity and considerable reputation within the German literary world. From 1902, when she published her first volume of poetry, until 1933, when she became a refugee, Lasker-Schüler's bibliography registers more than twenty books of poetry, essays, letters, and plays. Nor was her writing unrewarded. In 1932, the year before her exile, she received the Kleist Prize despite her distinctly Jewish material. But even from the beginning of her literary career, her writing had garnered much praise. With the 1902 pub-

---

Evan Zimroth, a poet living in New York City, is at work on a book about women Holocaust poets. *Translations of the poetry here are by her and were undertaken with the help of a PSC-BHE Research Award from the City University of New York. All other quotations are from* Hebrew Ballads and Other Poems, *translated and edited by Audri Durchslag and Jeanette Litman-Demeestère (The Jewish Publication Society, 1980).*

lication of *Styx,* she was heralded (sentimentally, to be sure) by her fellow writer Peter Hille as "the Black Swan of Israel." Her later work was championed by such writers as Georg Trakl and Gottfried Benn; the usually satiric Karl Kraus acclaimed her as "the greatest lyric poet of modern Germany."

In English, however, this allegedly great lyric poet of modern Germany remains largely untranslated and, therefore, unknown. Apart from the tantalizingly brief and incomplete collection published in 1980 by the Jewish Publication Society, only a few other English versions have appeared in anthologies. Granted that the encomiums heaped upon Lasker-Schüler were sometimes from former lovers, but other literary figures held her in high esteem as well. Why, then, so little Lasker-Schüler in English?

Part of the reason for Lasker-Schüler's relative obscurity is that literary taste has changed. Insofar as poetry compatible to the modern temperament is ironic, self-aware, and tightly understated, Lasker-Schüler's poetry must give pause. More lyrical than the German Expressionists with whom she is often linked, Lasker-Schüler in her poetry can also be violent, abrasive, discordant, and fraught with death wishes. In any handful of her poems, the reader can count on finding her private vocabulary for alienation, a lexicon for every kind of exile: *Kindesweh,* or child-woe; *die Verscheuchte,* the banished woman; *Todverlassenheit,* death-estrangement, or a seductive death-sleep; and, pervasively, *Urangst,* ancient dread and panic. Her artistic coin is hyperbole and emotional abandonment. In the love poems especially, the speaker experiences overwhelming states of bliss or anguish. Blood is a recurrent image—tasting it, hungering for it; wild birds shriek with nightmare, flowers burst into flame, stars flee the sky. Her world falls apart so often, and with such rushes and gusts of imagery, that the particular images sometimes seem to cancel each other out. But then one discerns the modulations of sound, the wordplay, and the pressure put upon language to double up on itself and strain for intensity. The pathos of love and loss—her unremitting subject—is dramatized entirely without self-mockery; instead, the poetry catapults from cliff to cliff, the avalanche rumbling in the background restrained not by temperament, but by wordplay and rhyme.

The fact, of course, is that Lasker-Schüler's world *did* fall apart. While her earlier poems obsessively describe personal abandonment, her later work reflects the vast loss of culture and homeland dealt her by the Holocaust. As a refugee, homeless and stateless from 1933 to 1940, Lasker-Schüler almost stopped writing. Two books are all we have from the latter part of her life. *The Land of the Hebrews (Das Hebräerland),* published in 1937, is a romanticized prose description of a fantasy Palestine rather than the one in which Lasker-Schüler shopped for groceries and paid rent. Her final, melancholy volume of poetry, *My Blue Piano (Mein blaues Klavier),* was published in 1943, shortly before her death at the age of seventy-five.

Finding a permanent home did not lessen Lasker-Schüler's estrangement. As a diaspora Jew holding on to her native German in *Eretz Yisrael,* where Palestinian poets were stretching the limits of idiomatic Hebrew, Lasker-Schüler had little influence on other poets in exile. On the other hand, the German audience she implicitly addressed no longer existed. Experiencing a shaft between two cultures and finding a home in neither presented a dilemma Lasker-Schüler knew only too well, as is evident even in her earliest work. This condition gives rise to what she calls *Urangst.* In "Chaos," an early poem, she shows the pervasiveness of such dread by using the ungrammatical phrase "*Zwischen grauer Nacht der Urangst.*" The phrase literally means "between the gray night of ancient dread," but the preposition "between," instead of suggesting two things, refers to only one—the gray night. In the distortion of ordinary usage, Lasker-Schüler sees herself "between" the night-panic, its grayness enveloping everything.

Another intriguing difficulty confronting the reader of Else Lasker-Schüler is that she was a chronic liar, a constant fabricator of myth. Beyond her occasional lies (she sheared seven years off her age, for example, a fact only recently discovered), she was someone for whom falsehood was such an integral part of her temperament that she elevated it to an art form. She adopted for herself a series of fanciful names by which she preferred to be known: "Tino of Baghdad," "Prince Jussuf," and "Prince of Thebes"; and she liberally bestowed new names on friends, fellow writers, editors, lovers, and husbands (overlapping categories, these). Thus the artist Franz Marc became The Blue Rider, Gottfried Benn became King Giselheer, and her second husband, George Levin, became Hervarth Walden, the name by which he is known as the influential editor of the Expressionist journal *Der Sturm.* A more intimate and extreme example of Lasker-Schüler's need for fabrication involves her son Paul, who died at twenty-one from tuberculosis, and whose death inspired some of Lasker-Schüler's most poignant elegies. Paul was fathered by one "Alcibiades de Rouan"—that is, illegitimately. The poet never disclosed the identity of this man, who remains a lacuna in her biography to this day.

Lasker-Schüler was fascinated not only by the drama of naming but also by portraiture and dramatic monologue. *My Wonder (Meine Wunder),* published in 1911,

contains the poetic portraits of Lasker-Schüler's friends —Gottfried Benn, Franz Werfel, Georg Trakl, George Grosz, Hans Jacob, Leopold Krakauer, and Franz Marc. Two years later, *Hebrew Ballads (Hebräische Balladen)* adds more interesting portraits of characters from the Hebrew Bible—Cain and Abel, Abraham and Isaac, Jacob and Esau, Joseph and Moses, Joshua and Saul. Included in this collection are some unusual portraits of women—Abigail, Esther, Ruth, and Shulamite—who, when in love, sound much like Lasker-Schüler herself. All these portraits are richly rendered with the poet weaving background and context, conversation, and even clothing and jewelry for each character. Her portrait of Eve, for instance, is a tender dramatic monologue in which an older woman with a past like a "thousand-branched ancestry" soothes and makes love to a younger Adam. Eden is not so much a place as it is the tenderness between older woman and younger man as Adam begins to comprehend the power and delicacy of sex. Because it is Eden, because Lasker-Schüler is the poet, we know that this love affair will not endure.

Lasker-Schüler's midrashic interpretations of biblical scenes and her constant revision of biography (her own and others') were performances meant to free the poet from constraint. The lie about her age is a case in point: a disinclination to admit to seven years would confound any biographer, but in a late prose-poem, "To Me" (*"An Mich"*), written after Lasker-Schüler had already emigrated to Jerusalem, she declares herself ageless and mythic:

> My poems, declaimed, jar out of tune the keyboard of my heart. If only they were still my children ... I still sit left behind on the last bench in the schoolroom as then ... But with mellowed heart: both 1000 and 2 years old—fairy tales grow up over my head.

Thus Lasker-Schüler was able to "roam all around," to incline herself where the spirit led, and to draw into her poems precisely those subjects, voices, and stances one might otherwise censor out.

The bleakness and violence in some of these poems come not from falsifying but rather from a radical loyalty to psychological truth, no matter how embarrassing or taboo that truth might be. In a short love poem called "Dream" (*"Traum"*), she tells of the flat emptiness after love has ended:

> Between us lay a wide, stiff
> Toneless plain ...
> Yearning, estranged,
> I kissed your mouth, your pale streaks of lips.

With unsettling accuracy, the poet describes the anaesthesia after failed love, yet confesses to continued vulnerability. Though the beloved's "look was hard," still the woman yearns for a kiss, even an unrequited death-kiss. Or, again in "Chaos," also an anguished cry of solitude, the poet wishes for lacerating pain, any pain greater than that which she experiences without a beloved. "I want pain to rage / To overthrow me / Wrenching me suddenly to myself." In a sudden turn within the same stanza, the poet links the longed-for violence with a "home / Under the mother-breast," a return to infancy. The poems abound in these sudden twists, these oddly linked confessions about pain, rage, and mother-love, and this almost unendurable candor about love.

Lasker-Schüler's is the voice at the bottom of the well.

The theme of banishment, however, although made literally true by the Holocaust, means more in Lasker-Schüler's chronicle of loss than exile from one's land. As in the poem "Eve," the poet constantly suggests banishment from the edenic companionship of the other, whether that be mother, son, or beloved man. The grief of such loss pervades even the earliest poems, long before the Holocaust, particularly those in which Lasker-Schüler mourns the death of her mother. If we can believe the poet's nostalgic and sentimental accounts of her childhood, the beloved mother protected the child from the rigors of German schooling by keeping her at home doing arts-and-crafts projects and spinning out rhyming webs of verse. Her mother's death, when Lasker-Schüler was twenty-one, became for her the root emblem of loss: as social structures around Lasker-Schüler disintegrated, at first by her own doing and then in conjunction with the rise of Nazi power, her mother's death came to represent the loss of mother tongue and homeland as well. Lasker-Schüler treats this subject obsessively, in several poems repeating lines and stanzas with almost no variation. The images are all of banishment and exile; the poet is alone, naked, pushed off from the mother, left in timeless anguish "between the wide nights." Fifty years later, with exile a reality, the angelic presence of her mother pervades the last lovely elegies of *My Blue Piano,* which mourns all "the blue dead," friends forever lost in Germany.

After the loss of her mother, Lasker-Schüler endured two marriages and a series of love affairs, all of which proved ephemeral and were a source of great anguish for the poet. Her first marriage, to a Dr. Lasker, served to move Lasker-Schüler from the provincial town of her childhood to the urbanities of Berlin, the city that determined the poet's intellectual and professional life.

By the time her brief marriage to Lasker ended, the poet had entered into the bohemianism and liberal ways of Weimar Berlin. She maintained this lifestyle until the very end. Even in Palestine, she worried her friends with her deliberate poverty and chaotic habits, as if to prolong the freedom enjoyed years earlier at the Cafe Westen in her beloved Berlin. In 1933, when she hastily fled Berlin after being beaten on the streets by Nazi thugs, she left behind the city that was her primary source of nourishment as a writer, the place that entwined her artistic interests and erotic bonds. That she yearned passionately for her lost Berlin and its prewar pleasures is seen in the plangent dedication to *My Blue Piano:* "To my unforgettable friends in the cities of Germany and to those, like me, exiled and dispersed throughout the world, in good faith!" Knowing full well the fate of Berlin's Jews, Lasker-Schüler in 1943 still considered Berlin her primary city. Palestine was never more to her than a place of exile from friends and homeland.

By 1933, Lasker-Schüler had lost mother, son, husbands, and lovers; she lived precariously, with financial support from friends, as part of Berlin's artistic subculture. Although a prolific and honored writer, she apparently had no personal ties or loyalties, no enduring relationships that might have slowed her steps from the city she loved. Because she held on to nothing, she was able to save her own life by leaving Germany early—panic-stricken, but without hesitation. In this way, Lasker-Schüler is an extreme example of the refugee. Her seeming ability to divest herself of everything, to flee a dangerous country on a moment's impulse, guaranteed her personal safety during the Holocaust and, probably, her lasting stature as a writer. Her homeland and her language were the only elements Lasker-Schüler fervently desired to hold onto, but her homeland after 1933 was forever denied her, and her mother tongue became, against her will, a purely literary language.

Fortunately for Lasker-Schüler, her language was always an artificial construct, something a poet could fabricate at will, like the whimsical names she bestowed on herself and the men in her life. She claimed that her earliest poems were written in "mystical asiatic," her ur-language, and that, as a teenager, "I rediscovered my original language, which goes back to the time of Saul, the wild-jew of royal blood. I can still speak that language today, breathe it in my dreams.... " When she published *The Land of the Hebrews,* in Switzerland, Lasker-Schüler included "a nursery rhyme in ancient Aramaic," a language coincidentally having the same structure and vocabulary as her mystical asiatic.

Despite the tragedy this poet endured and commemorated in her lyrics, Lasker-Schüler's poetry is most often acclaimed for its wordplay and wit, for those elements of language that make a poem virtually untranslatable. It is true, of course, that these contortions of language challenge the translator, and that Lasker-Schüler's German is often so idiosyncratic that a literal rendering into English would seem bizarre. In the highly compacted poem "Chill" ("*Kühle*"), for example, the poet packs each short line with a play of contrasts:

In den weißen Gluten
Der hellen Rosen
Möchte ich verbluten.

Doch auf den Teichen
Warten die starren, seelenlosen Wasserrosen,
Um meiner Sehnsucht Kühle zu reichen.

In the white glow
Of bright roses
I would taste death's blood

But on the pools,
Without soul, lie stiff waterlilies
To give my longing a chill.

The poem's first line is a microcosm of the whole. What I have translated as "white glow" for its off-rhyme with "roses," "blood," "pools," and "chill," could also be rendered as "white ash" or "whitened embers." The poem's six short lines are full of oppositions. The red of blood, fire, and roses highlights the whiteness of ash; glowing embers are doused by the chill of lilies (the "water-roses" of the original); stiffness and chill are deployed against the banked fires of longing. The images are violent but taut, held in control by the forceful, end-stopped rhymes. Within each line, also, the rhythm echoes internal rhymes, as, for example, in the rhyming syllables of "*Warten die starren*" and "*seelenlosen Wasserrosen.*" The poem is a fervent death wish, held coldly under control.

I suspect, however, that it is not the wordplay that makes the poems seem inaccessible to translation, but something more elusive and hidden, something that to a reader might seem almost repellent. What gives the poems resonance beyond wit and wordplay is the utter, intense, unremitting solitude they suggest. Lasker-Schüler's is the voice at the bottom of the well. Her tightly organized forms, rhymed stanzas, cross-rhymes within lines, and long-lined couplets which she favors for elegies are each belied by the wild, violent desolation of her lyric voice.

Like the artist Anselm Kiefer, whose impact on the art world comes from his audacity in appropriating German history and German mythology (including German-Jewish literary models) to examine the Holocaust,

Lasker-Schüler will use anything in a poem to wrench it into strangeness. Kiefer takes up straw, human hair, burlap, glue, photographic negatives, thick pegs of paint, and steel plates, as well as literary mottoes and folkloric tag-lines, and he "writes" with these in Holocaust paintings that nevertheless often evoke austere, highly organized, modernist forms. Unlike Kiefer and other postmodern German artists, however, Lasker-Schüler is not at all interested in the monumental. Her poems are small breathings, not sonic booms. Her language, despite the deep terror of her themes, always remains confiding and intimate. As her contemporaries recognized, Lasker-Schüler's value beyond extremism and Expressionism is that she invigorates the twentieth-century lyric, bringing individual and social tragedy into the spheres of elegy and love poems.

To read Lasker-Schüler today, then, is to realize one way that a lyric poet confronts the major events of her era as well as the individual tragedies of loss and exile. Starved for connections that have been severed, Lasker-Schüler mourns with the only sensuousness she could hold onto—the extravagance of words arranged into a poem. □

Four Poems by Else Lasker-Schüler

Translated by Evan Zimroth

Mother

A white star sings a death-song
In the July night,
Rings in death in the July night
And on the roof, the cloud, the shadow-
Hand, damp and stroking,
Searches for my mother.
I feel my naked life
Push off from the motherland.
Never was I so naked
So given over to time
As if I, having ripened
Beyond day's end,
Were caught all alone
Between the wide nights.
O god! my wild child-woe!
My mother is gone home.

Eve

You bend your head deep over me
With its gold spring crown,
And your lips are soft, silken,
As were the flowers on Eden's trees.

Love buds in my soul.
But, O, my desire withers
While you spook yourself with love-jitters;
You do not know what your dreams forebode.

I lie on your life, heavily,
A thousand-branched ancestry,
While you, so blood young, so adam young,
You bend your head deep over me.

Chaos

Pale and shrieking the stars flee
From the sky of my loneliness
And midnight's black eye
Stares nearer and nearer.

Far from myself, I am lost
In a deathly lassitude.
I lie removed from the world
Within the gray night of ancient dread.

I want pain to rage
To overthrow me
Wrenching me suddenly to myself.
And a poet's lust
Return me home
Under the mother-breast.

But home is desolate
The roses no longer bloom there
In warm breath—
With all my heart I wish for a beloved
That in his flesh I might lie buried.

Nervus Erotis

That after all the hot days' glow
Not one night belongs to us . . .
The tuberoses take on the color of my blood
Flickering flame-like from their calyxes.

Tell me at night if your soul also cries
Leaping frightened from sleep
Like the night-shriek of birds in the wild.

The whole world shines red
As though life bled soul-wide;
My heart hungers, starved.
Death stares out from its red ghost-eye.

Tell me at night if your soul also mourns
Flooded by the strong tuberoses' odor
As it gnaws on the nerve of the florid dream.

Spinoza, the First Secular Jew?

Yirmiyahu Yovel

Seldom, if ever, was a philosopher so lonely as was Baruch Spinoza. Romantic legend notwithstanding, his solitude was not of a social nature. On the contrary, Spinoza had a gift for friendship and was surrounded by loyal friends as well as by inquisitive intellectuals. Some of his friends even saw to his livelihood, thus refuting yet another legend: that the lonely and ostracized Spinoza, on the brink of starvation, was forced to grind lenses for a living, an occupation which hastened his death. Spinoza did earn a supplementary income through the practice of this highly demanding art, but he engaged in it primarily because of his interest in optics, a science that was then undergoing vigorous development.

"How goes it with our Jew from Voorburg?" Christian Huygens, the great Dutch scientist, asks his brother in a letter from France, referring to the latest advances of their competitor in lens-grinding. By posing this question, Huygens not only throws light on Spinoza's preoccupation with avant-garde technological research but, indirectly, on Spinoza's existential situation as a Jew. Banned from the Jewish community by official decree in 1656, indifferent to Jewish law, and abjuring the God of Israel—along with the gods of every other historical religion—Spinoza nonetheless is regarded as "our Jew from Voorburg," even after he had joined the international community of scholars.

Spinoza thus exemplifies the situation of the modern Jew—secular, assimilationist, or national—without himself falling neatly into any of these categories. Countless Jews in the coming centuries were to find themselves in a similar predicament. The secular Jews tried to define their Jewishness in terms of the Jewish people (or nation); and the assimilationists tried to leave the people and merge into gentile society. Most often, however, they were thrust by the attitudes of the gentiles (or by what Sartre calls their "look") back into the existential Jewish situation they tried to escape. Spinoza himself perceived the Jew's inability to escape his condition, but was unable to offer an alternative.

That the world regarded him as a Jew was one of the hallmarks of Spinoza's loneliness. He refused to identify with any of the cultural or religious associations of his day. Intellectually he was a loner, the individual par excellence who demands to be defined solely in terms of his private being and beliefs, not in terms of any social or historical framework supposed to provide him with the essential ingredients of his identity. The only affiliation Spinoza accepted, at least theoretically, was political. He regarded himself as a citizen of the Netherlands Republic, which he even referred to as his "homeland." Nevertheless, in several respects (ethnic, linguistic, and partly also political), he lived as an alien in that country. He was the son of recent immigrants—his family had its origins in Spain and Portugal, the archenemies of the Netherlands. In terms of religion, his family had been Jewish, then for several generations officially Catholic (Marrano), and subsequently became Jewish again; both poles of this religious duality were at variance with the dominant Calvinist culture of the young Netherlands Republic.

That the world regarded him as a Jew was one of the hallmarks of Spinoza's loneliness.

Nor did Spinoza enjoy the full civil status that was accorded to Christians from birth. Born into the relatively foreign milieu of the Jewish-Portuguese quarter of Amsterdam, he was probably not entirely fluent in the language of the country. In fact, it is unclear which, if any, of the languages he knew was predominantly his own. As a child, he evidently spoke Portuguese at home; at the same time he learned Spanish, which as an adult he liked to use for his casual reading (travels, drama, history, and so on). He later learned Latin, which he adopted for his philosophical studies. He knew Hebrew from an early age, but as the scholarly language of the classroom and the yeshiva, not as a living tongue; and he seems to have picked up Dutch "by osmosis," learning enough for all practical purposes without making it his truly active language. Only one of his essays—*The Short Treatise,* discovered some two hundred years after his death—is in Dutch; but some scholars believe that it is actually someone else's translation of Spinoza's Latin.

Yirmiyahu Yovel is a professor of philosophy at the Hebrew University and founder of the Jerusalem Spinoza Institute. This text is adapted from his two-volume Spinoza and Other Heretics, *which will be published by Princeton University Press in February.*

What, then, was Spinoza's language? He had none. Like many Jews, he was a polyglot, lacking a single language in which he was exclusively and genuinely at home and which dominated his life and semantic universe. Nor was there a single society to which he belonged. Having left the Jewish congregation, he was never fully integrated within the Dutch republic. His belonging to it was more an abstract political stance than a living experience. Spinoza regarded the state as the individual's direct frame of reference without the mediation of religion, church, corporation, or any other body which claims to be "a kingdom within a kingdom." Yet such an intellectual position is importantly different from an existential sense of belonging.

The difference evolved into a real breach with the overthrow of the government in 1672 and the murder of Johan de Witt, leader of the republic and its ruling oligarchy, whom Spinoza had supported and perhaps befriended. "*Ultima barbarorum!*" ("The height of barbarism!") Spinoza cried out when de Witt and his brother were butchered by a mob in the center of the Hague—just a few blocks from where Spinoza lived—while the guardians of law and order looked on. Spinoza's reaction was not just a momentary one. The knife that dissected the murdered republican ruler also lacerated Spinoza's body politic. The return of the monarchy was accompanied by an increase in mob rule, as the House of Orange owed its strength to the popular masses which supported it against the liberal bourgeoisie. Monarchy and mob—these were two loosely related political forces of which Spinoza had been apprehensive all his life. With the liquidation of the republican regime, Spinoza's attachment to his homeland was presumably attenuated not only (or not necessarily) because of his origins or his nonconformist thinking, but also because of his inability to rediscover himself and acquiesce in the country's prevailing political practices and values.

In an era when it was virtually impossible for anyone to exist and find his identity other than from within a recognized religious framework, Spinoza, the typical individual, left the Jewish synagogue but did not enter any church. He refused to be baptized, nor did he join any of the radical sects that flourished in the Netherlands: neither the Mennonites nor the Remonstrants, though he agreed with some of their political positions; neither the Quakers, in whose service he might have earned his living for a time following his excommunication, nor the Collegiants, among whom he resided for a period in Rijnsburg, finding among them friends and disciples.

Even among rationalist philosophers, Spinoza was unique to the point of solitariness. He transcended the conceptual universe of Descartes and of Leibniz, and also of skeptical deism, no less than the world of traditional faith. These other thinkers postulated a "God of the philosophers" as part of their rational systems, but preserved his extraworldly role as Creator and First Cause. Spinoza alone refused to assign God such a role. Rather, he identified God with the totality of the universe itself. His conception, indeed, remained *sui generis* in the annals of philosophy. As a result, Spinoza was rejected and despised not only by the traditional philosophical establishment but also by the Cartesian innovators and revolutionaries.

The identification of God with the world implies a more profound rejection of Judaism and Christianity than ordinary atheism. Spinoza does not contend that there is no God, or that only the inferior natural world exists. Such a contention is itself steeped in a Christian worldview. Spinoza contends, on the contrary, that by virtue of identifying the world with God, immanent reality itself acquires divine status. Only Christianity considers the world of the here and now so base and so insignificant that denial of the transcendent divinity which gives it meaning robs the world of any significance whatsoever. The problem and anxiety of modern skeptics and atheists is usually Christian at root and subject to the categories of Christianity. Spinoza is far more radical in rejecting Christian (and Judaic) categories than the ordinary atheists—and as such is exceptional even among them.

Indeed, Spinoza's espousal of secularity makes him a true harbinger of modernity. Yet the new principle he enunciated could not change his own life as an individual, because that principle was as yet untenable in the social reality. A single individual exemplifying it was fated, in a crucial sense, to suffer an alienated existence. Religious affiliation was the individual's passport to social acceptance. It was possible to abandon Catholicism, but only by taking up Protestantism (Lutheranism, Calvinism, and so forth), or, in exceptional instances, Islam or Judaism. But to renounce all historical religions was tantamount to opting for social and existential isolation. Membership in the secular body politic alone was not yet a viable form of social identity, as Spinoza was bound to discover. Nevertheless, he articulated and exemplified in his person what was to emerge in time as the overriding principle of modern life.

The same may be said with regard to Spinoza's relation to his own people and what we may term the secularization of Jewish life. Alone and alienated, he prefigured what later generations would call "Jewish secularism."

Judaism and the Survival of the Jews

Spinoza's image of Judaism is anchored in a thesis which proved useful to later Jewish reformers and anti-Semites alike. For Spinoza, Judaism is fundamentally a political religion that was designed specifically for the ancient Hebrews as the basis for a theological regime. When the Temple was destroyed and the Jews were deprived of their political existence, their religion also lost its meaning. Judaism became historically obsolete and self-contradictory because the political nature of the Jewish religion no longer corresponded to the nonpolitical existence of the Jews in the Diaspora. In the absence of a Jewish body politic, Jewish religion is superfluous. To sustain this view Spinoza must turn to a sociohistorical analysis, showing that the essence of the ancient Jewish religion was theocratic, that is, a political regime where the laws of God are also the supreme civil authority.

Of course, Spinoza's main interest is in the present—with his analysis of Jewish existence in exile, from which he also projects back into the Jewish past. The Jews in Palestine never lived under an absolute theocracy. The almost full coalescence of law and religion emerges only in the phantom state Spinoza criticizes—and with which, we may add, he had an existential clash. Only in exile is it possible to say as Spinoza says in painful reproach that "everyone who fell away from religion ceased to be a citizen, and was, on that ground alone, accounted an enemy." In this type of reality, a critic of religion like Spinoza was forced to relinquish his membership in the Jewish community. In the ancient Jewish states, however, both in the First and the Second Temple periods, there were many Jews who disavowed religious authority or transgressed against its laws without being considered enemies; or who took issue (like the Sadducees) with the Oral Law and with the very principle of theocracy, and yet were legitimate, even influential, citizens of the polity. A person like Spinoza would conceivably have been better off, certainly less alienated, in ancient Israel. And it is quite probable that in depicting the idealized and somewhat imaginary theocracy of the ancient Israelites, Spinoza is projecting a negative print of what he considers the distorted life of the Jewish exile.

But even if Judaism as a religion has lost its raison d'être with the destruction of the Temple, the Jewish people continue to survive. For centuries they zealously preserve their phantom "homeland," rooted, as it is, in religious superstition. Moreover, like Spinoza's own parents and fellow Marranos, they prevail even in the face of forced conversion and cruel persecution, returning openly to Judaism after generations of secret practice. From a logical point of view, there is something incomprehensible in all this, a kind of theoretical scandal; and empirically, at least prima facie, this poses a riddle.

Thus Spinoza, in his own way, faces the same problem that has perplexed Jews and Christians alike: that amazing survival of the Jewish people. The Jews maintain that they are God's chosen people who, even though sinners, yearn for redemption. Christians, on the other hand, maintain that the Jews *were* God's chosen people who, because they rejected Jesus as the Messiah, are themselves rejected by God.

In abandoning the observant Judaism of his day but refusing to convert to Christianity, Spinoza unwittingly embodied the alternatives which lay in wait for Jews of later generations.

Spinoza, not surprisingly, must dismiss both explanations as transcendent. What is demanded is a purely natural explanation, based upon social and psychological causes. Significantly, the twofold explanation Spinoza offers is drawn in part from his Marrano background. What preserved the Jews, he says, was gentile hatred of the Jews from without and the power of their religious faith ("superstition") from within.

Gentile hatred of the Jews, in Spinoza's view, enhances their survival. So intensely do the Jews differentiate themselves from other peoples that they cannot help but arouse animosity and revulsion. As a result, even if many individuals are ostracized and lost to their people, the external pressure reinforces the Jews' survival as a group. This is a modern, essentially secular, explanation which has by now become banal (the last important writer to use it was Sartre). Spinoza, however, was among the first, if not actually the first, to express it so succinctly.

As Spinoza knew from his own experience and from Marrano history, the external factor may remain effective long after the internal factor has lost its validity. For this reason, apparently, Spinoza believed that even if the Jews became wholly secularized individually, they would still exist as Jews (and be called by that name) collectively; from that point of view, gentile hatred would preserve them *in perpetuo*.

It was, therefore, particularly ingenious of Spinoza to choose the Marranos, rather than ordinary Jews, to illustrate his theses. The Marranos suffered from a

(Continued on p. 94)

Black–White Relations: From Bensonhurst to Ballot Box

Bob Blauner

Consider this paradox. Last summer, both New York City and Virginia witnessed two of the most dramatic signs of racial polarization this country has seen in years. A short time later, the same city and the same state celebrated equally dramatic signs of racial healing. I refer to the murder of Yusef Hawkins in the Bensonhurst section of Brooklyn and the confrontation between young Black college students and the police in Virginia City, Virginia. Yet only weeks later, New York City elected David Dinkins its first Black mayor, and Virginia's Douglas Wilder became the first African-American senator of a southern state since Reconstruction.

Such a paradox points up the duality of race in this country today: things are getting worse and getting better at the same time.

David Dinkins would not have been elected last November without a sizable segment of the white vote. And though it's fashionable today to trash the sixties, it was "the sixties generation" of European-Americans that put Dinkins over the top. I infer this from the vote breakdown in the June primaries. (Unfortunately the *New York Times* didn't publish exit polls from the November voting.) Dinkins ran almost even with Koch among voters between thirty and forty-four years old, the age group that grew up, or came of age politically, in the 1960s. Among New York white Democrats overall, Koch swamped Dinkins 61 to 29 percent. But the Black candidate got 44 percent of the sixties-generation votes compared to Koch's 46 percent, by far his best showing in any age group.

During the 1960s young whites were known for their idealism, their commitment to social change, and particularly their support of the civil rights movement. But the young generation of the 1980s, despite some recent signs of social concern, has been known for its perpetrations of racial violence. I think a clue to this paradox is the 1960s. Today's white youth includes skinheads who have attacked Blacks, Asians, and new immigrants in many cities; the bat wielders in ethnic enclaves such as Howard Beach and Bensonhurst; and the students involved in harassing African-Americans and Jewish Americans on elite campuses across the nation—all of whom grew up after the 1960s and early 1970s. They therefore have no direct experience with civil rights movements, no understanding of this nation's legacy of racial oppression, and therefore no reason but to view affirmative action as reverse discrimination. They have also been hit hardest by the slow-growth economy, which casts a pall of insecurity over their futures.

Perhaps I can shed some historical perspective on contemporary race relations by taking us back twenty years to the late sixties when I began my research in this field.

Through the entire decade of the sixties, racial conflict between Blacks and whites intensified. After the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., in 1968, many people feared that a race war would break out. There was an enormous gap in consciousness between the two races. Typical views of the police and its role, of civil rights leaders and organizations, were poles apart.

In the late sixties, the actions of Blacks were impinging directly on the everyday lives of whites. With Blacks emphasizing their blackness, whites had to examine what it meant to be white. But despite the polarization, Blacks and whites were profoundly involved with one another (conflict itself is a kind of involvement). And there was paradoxically more serious communication in the era of Black nationalism than there is today. On the job, whites talked with Black fellow workers about the meaning of Black Power. They learned that it signified much more than violence or the threat of violence.

What is striking about the sixties is how seriously white people then were thinking about racial issues. Despite much defensiveness and resistance, they were examining their own prejudices and trying to be fair and empathetic. In forming their explanations of racial inequality many took into account such sociological factors as slavery, discrimination, and poverty.

When I talked to the same people again in the late seventies, they knew more about Black people, their culture, and their history than they had ten years earlier. They had unlearned some stereotypes. The overall discourse on race, particularly among blue-collar workers, was more sophisticated. And for a few individuals, the

---

Bob Blauner is a professor of sociology at the University of California at Berkeley and author of an oral history entitled Black Lives, White Lives: Three Decades of Race Relations in America *(University of California Press, 1989).*

attitudinal change was quite dramatic.

But whites had also become tired of "the Black problem." They wanted to put the sixties behind them. So they exaggerated the extent of racial progress. And if Blacks still had some problems, they argued, it was nobody's fault but their own. Hadn't civil rights laws eliminated past disadvantages? And because of affirmative action, the scale of which they also exaggerated (in contrast to traditional discrimination, whose continuing importance they minimized), many whites felt that Blacks had a better chance than they did of getting ahead. The economic problems of the seventies—recessions, inflation, energy shortages—also contributed to this retreat from race.

As the dominant media image of African-Americans shifted from heroic civil rights demonstrators to the feared and disparaged "underclass," Blacks as a *group* lost "the moral advantage." But at the same time *individual* Blacks who met middle-class standards were more welcomed into formerly white worlds. An (oversimplified) two-class view of African-Americans was replacing the more monolithic racial view of the past.

Blacks on the other hand were feeling disillusioned, especially by integration, which they felt had benefitted only a minority. To them, racism had changed more in form than in substance. One could now get into certain institutions, but racism had become more subtle, harder to fight. Still, they were pleased that racial contacts across the color line were more relaxed and less conflictual than they had been in the late sixties and certain reforms, especially the institution of Black history courses, were especially appreciated.

By 1986, when I talked to people for the third time, even race relations were worsening. Harold Sampson spoke of the hardening of white attitudes:

> There isn't a need for people to be courteous any more. It can be blatant. There's no fairness, nothing to appeal to now. [Whites are saying] "We're on an equal footing, baby; if you don't cut it, don't come crying to me about slavery or any of those things."

Integration is the paradox of the 1980s. On the one hand there are more Black faces in schools, jobs, and neighborhoods. But at the same time, integration has contributed to a new separation between the races. I'm not talking about the growing separation between the Black poor and the larger society. I'm referring to the fact that whites and Blacks no longer talk to each other as openly as we did twenty years ago. When there were only a few African-Americans in a school or on a job, they were almost forced to develop relationships with a few trusted whites. But now, when the University of California at Berkeley has sizable numbers of Black students, most associate primarily with others of their group.

Whites often assume that middle-class Blacks "have it made." They are taken aback when they learn about the cool receptions African-Americans experience in mainstream institutions, the racial misunderstanding or insults—not always intended—that they so often experience. From the media we are led to believe that it is "the underclass" which is the seething cauldron of potential violence. The truth, however, may be the opposite. It is the middle-class Blacks who have the most daily contact with whites; but it is not contact that overcomes barriers of alienation and separateness.

Today's white youth have no direct experience with civil rights movements, no understanding of this nation's legacy of racial oppression, and therefore no reason but to view affirmative action as reverse discrimination.

My fear is that the separation of the late 1980s will lead to full-fledged polarization in the 1990s. The policies of the Reagan years and the passing of the 1960s from historical memory have had regressive effects on Black-white relations. If the economic problems that underlie racial tensions are not addressed, the dangers will be even greater than they were in the sixties when prosperity at least provided some cushion for reforms.

We therefore need a national policy that reverses the eighties trend of income transfer from the poor and working classes to the rich. We need a jobs policy for inner-city ghetto youth, and full employment for working-class and middle-class men and women. Secondly, we must seriously educate young people for life in an ethnically diverse society. Schools at all levels need classes on the history of racism and prejudice, and on the histories of all the racial and ethnic groups that comprise American society. (This would include the history of the many European-American constituencies we now refer to as "white.") Finally, we need a national leadership that views racial justice as a priority, a leadership that is committed to finishing the unfinished business of the sixties. The election of Dinkins and Wilder suggests that there is a new willingness to heal the wounds of race. If we are to build a society that is not riven destructively by differences of race and class, the opportunity must be seized. □

The Golem

Jorge Luís Borges

Translated by Robert Mezey

If (as the Greek asserts in his *Cratylus*)
The name is the very essence of the thing,
Then, from the letters of *rose* the rose keeps flowering
And from the word *Nile* the length of the Nile arises.

And, made entirely of consonants and vowels,
There must be a dread, unspeakable Name, which essence
Encodes as God and which Omnipotence
Guards in its perfect letters and syllables.

Adam knew it, and so did the stars over Eden,
But afterwards (or so the cabalists say)
The corrosion of sin wiped it utterly away
And from the generations it was therefore hidden.

Of the ingenuity and innocence of men
There is no end. We know there was a time
When the people chosen of God sought for the Name;
Long were the night-watches in the ghettos then.

Unlike those who manage to worm their vague
Shadow into an equally vague history,
Still green and living is the memory
Of Judah the Lion, who was a rabbi in Prague.

Thirsting to know for himself what is known to God,
Judah the Lion got lost in the permutations
Of letters, their endless intricate variations,
And at last pronounced the Name, which is the Code,

Which is the Portal, the Echo, the Host, the Palace,
Over an inert clay figure which he kneaded
With stiff hands, trying to teach it the secrets
Of Letters, the secrets of Time and Space.

This earthen semblance raised its drowsy eyelids
And saw, for the first time, forms and colors,
Which made no sense, drowned as they were in murmurs,
And tried to move a little, clumsy and timid.

Gradually he saw that he was (like us, his brothers,)
A prisoner in this vast and sonorous net
Of Earlier, Later, Yesterday, Now, Not Yet,
Right and Left, You and I, those Others.

(The cabalist who played creating deity
Dubbed this enormous creature of his the Golem;
This is one of the facts that Gershom Scholem
Relates to us somewhere in his learned study.)

The rabbi expounded to him the universe—
"This is my foot; this is yours; this is string"—
Until, after many years, the grotesque thing
Was able to sweep out the synagogue, more or less.

Perhaps in the tracing of letters there was some mistake,
Or in the pronouncing of the Sacred Name;
For all the sorcery and the lofty aim,
The apprentice man could not even learn how to speak.

His eyes, less those of a man than of a dog,
And even less of a dog than of a thing,
Followed the rabbi through the unresolving
Shadows of their prison synagogue.

There must have been something unearthly in the Golem,
Seeing that at his footsteps the rabbi's cat
Ran and hid. (This cat is not in Scholem,
But across the centuries, I intuit it.)

Raising to God his creaturely hands, all thumbs,
He aped the rabbi at his rapt devotions,
Or smiling stupidly, he took a notion
To bow down low in ludicrous salaams.

The rabbi gazed on him with strange affection
And not a little horror. *How* (he wondered)
Could I this pitiful child have engendered,
Leaving behind the wisdom of inaction?

Why did I think to add one symbol more
To the infinite series? Why did I give to the skein
That winds and unwinds eternally and in vain
Another cause and effect, another care?

It was in the midst of this anguished monologue,
The hour of hazy light, that he looked at his son.
Who will tell us what God felt, looking down
At *His* son, Judah the Lion, rabbi of Prague?

Jorge Luís Borges is known for his poetry, essays, and fiction.

Current Debate: The Nature of Mental Illness

On Schizophrenia, Reductionism, and Family Responsibility

Reginald E. Zelnik

Everyone has a field day explaining schizophrenia. It's your parents, your childhood, your love life, your religion, your life style, and on and on. Usually each theory will contain just enough truth to make it irritating....

—Mark Vonnegut
The Eden Express

Michael Bader has written a provocative essay which challenges the biomedical model of severe mental illness, especially schizophrenia, and questions the thinking and the motives of those who resist social or psychoanalytic explanations of mental illness. ("Is Psychiatry Going Out of Its Mind?" *Tikkun,* July/Aug. 1989). He accuses the psychiatric profession of "reductionism," one of the key words in his lexicon, and he indicts families, meaning parents, for refusing to accept "responsibility," another key word, for the children's condition.

The accusation against families, which concerns me the most, is extended to the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI), the most active grassroots organization representing the views of families afflicted by severe mental illness. Since Bader makes a few sympathetic rhetorical gestures toward such families, and even praises NAMI for its work to reduce the stigma of mental illness, it is important to state at the outset that his view of "responsibility" is extreme and accusatory. Bader isn't simply arguing that families should take responsibility for aiding their ill members (precisely NAMI's central purpose); rather, he means responsibility in the specific sense of guilt. Though Bader tries to soften the blow, he reveals his intent very clearly by announcing "as fact" that parents "can and regularly do *pathologically* affect the emotional development of children and are more than capable of *making their children schizophrenic or depressed* [emphasis added]."

To be sure, this assertion of self-evident "fact," which Bader neither elaborates upon nor defends with evidence, is quickly qualified by the assurance that it doesn't follow that parents are "evil"; psychoanalysis, we are told, "debunks the prevailing morality that sees people as good or evil." This is hardly reassuring, for it turns out that the reason that parents need not be viewed as evil is that they too may be "victims of their families," an explanation which merely moves the reproach back a generation. Moreover, Bader tells us that the medical model is troublesome because it "blames genes and neurotransmitters" and thereby "exonerates everyone." If moral condemnation is not at stake here, why be disturbed about "exoneration"? And whom are we afraid to exonerate? In a "blame the victim" age, when players of the "blame game" condemn people for their cancer, AIDS, and other illnesses, it is alarming that someone with Bader's background sees the specter of exculpation in the scientific theory that understands schizophrenia (like Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, or AIDS-induced dementia) as an organic disease of the brain.

Although Bader laments the demise of psychoanalytic and family-systems approaches to schizophrenia, these theories are actually very much alive, even among psychiatrists, as anyone who has had to cope with this problem would be quick to tell him. Bader is right, however, when he suggests that the psychoanalytic model no longer holds the privileged position it once did within the professional community—a good thing given its poor therapeutic performance. Nevertheless, there are still therapists who have been so influenced by this model that they continue to seek the source of their patients' illness in the psychodynamics of early family life (often invoking Gregory Bateson's dubious theory of the "double bind" in which children are placed by their schizophrenic parents).

Happily, many mental health professionals—hard-core brain researchers and clinicians alike—have been challenging the psychoanalytic model, and for very good reasons: its condescension toward the patient; its hostile stereotyping of the "victim's" already beleaguered family ("domineering," "schizophrenic" mothers, "weak" fathers); its pathetic clinical track record (after decades of costly practice), whether in arresting the course of the illness or even in giving minimal comfort to the patient. (Bader admits that pharmaceutical treatments sometimes do offer relief.) Psychoanalytic and family-systems theories fail to account for the illness of the many patients whose family histories do not exhibit key elements of the model, nor can they explain the good mental health of the countless adults whose families *do* fit the model. As Mona Wasow has said: "If the double bind caused schizophrenia, we would all be schizophrenic" (*Coping with Schizophrenia,* 1982).

Similarly, to the extent that an explanation of schizophrenia puts the burden for producing the illness on "society," it fails to account for the appearance of its symptoms, with similar rates of occurrence, in virtually all known cultures, nations, and social systems (including "premodern" societies, presumably less burdened by

Reginald E. Zelnik is an active member of the Family Alliance for the Mentally Ill (Alameda County, CA) and is a history professor at the University of California at Berkeley. Elaine Zelnik collaborated in the preparation of his commentary.

the stresses of modern civilization). Conversely, socially oriented theories fail to explain why our "sick" society does not produce many more schizophrenics than it does. As Vonnegut put it in *The Eden Express,* "The mystery was why everyone else wasn't nuts too."

Let us turn now to the case for the "medical model," or, more precisely, for an eclectic approach that highlights biochemical factors as a major component of schizophrenia and questions the effectiveness of psychoanalysis. Curiously, while attacking the medical model as an "ideology of biological reductionism," Bader acknowledges that antipsychotic medication "can be of great therapeutic value" in working with schizophrenics—another way of saying patients *can* be treated biochemically. Here Bader has indirectly conceded a good part of the argument, since the biomedical model is grounded in the notion that schizophrenia is a disease of the brain and therefore often responds positively to biochemical treatment. The part Bader does *not* concede is that the biochemical dysfunction may help us to understand the *origins* of severe mental illness; in particular, Bader thoroughly rejects all theories that propose genetic impairment as a major causal factor.

Certainly the genetic origin theory, which is not always an element of the biomedical model, is still subject to debate. Nevertheless, evidence is mounting, convincing a growing number of medical researchers that major psychotic disorders such as schizophrenia and manic depression are rooted in a genetically inherited *predisposition* (this key term is missing from the Bader essay), and tend to run in biological families *irrespective* of whether family members live together or even know one another. (Studies have shown that major psychoses are highly correlated among identical twins, even those separated at birth.) Indeed, the pattern of psychoses in a given biological family resembles that of other genetically linked brain diseases. (Huntington's Chorea, which appears in *half* the children of patients, provides the strongest correlations.)

Moreover, recent major breakthroughs (unreported by Bader) have marked the location of genes which seem to pass on a strong predisposition to manic depression. This research, some of it conducted in Pennsylvania's Amish community (a closed population with a limited gene pool) has important implications for the study of schizophrenia. (See *Nature,* Feb. 26, 1987.) Since that time, comparable research in Israel and elsewhere has yielded similar if inconclusive results. Belittling such research efforts on the grounds that there still are gaps in the model being tested is as illogical as saying that creationism is valid because nobody has proven all the elements of evolutionary theory. To call these research efforts "reductionist" makes as much sense as calling Robert Koch reductionist for isolating the cholera bacillus.

Does all this mean that societal problems and familial stresses are irrelevant to the understanding and treatment of mental illness? Not at all. Since those with a predisposition to schizophrenia, just like those with a predisposition to cancer, don't always contract the illness, environment may make a difference. In any case, just like a cancer, AIDS, or TB patient, a mentally ill person will surely benefit from a calm family atmosphere, a peaceful social milieu, decent food and housing, and, when necessary, institutional care. Indeed these are areas—ignored in Bader's essay—in which NAMI, an organization with a broad and caring agenda, is extremely active. (One need only attend a NAMI convention or read one of its newsletters to learn what the organization is really about.)

But if the onset of schizophrenia or manic depression is sometimes triggered by stressful experience (which need not come from the family), especially during late adolescence, it also appears in many youths whose lives are not particularly stressful (just as childhood diabetes will overcome a youngster regardless of diet or lifestyle). Many mentally ill people experience their first psychotic episodes in the most benign of environments and after happy, promising childhoods. Almost every adult can remember a distressing childhood situation or experience that serves as an explanation *after the fact,* but thus far nobody has been able to use such analysis to

The Intifada...two years of struggle and repression.



A MERIP Book, edited by Zachary Lockman and Joel Beinin (423 pages, $15)

The first book on the uprising published in North America, *INTIFADA: The Palestinian Uprising Against Israeli Occupation* provides an eyewitness account of the intifada as well as in-depth analysis of its character and impact, and key documents (including the communiques of the underground leadership). Contributors include Edward Said, Azmy Beshara, Ellen Cantarow, Noam Chomsky, Beshara Doumani, Rita Giacaman, Reuven Kaminer, Rashid Khalidi, and Lisa Taraki.

...this timely compendium should help transform popular thinking in our country about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the struggle for a just peace.
—Deena Hurwitz, Resource Center for Nonviolence

Order by phone! Call toll free 1-800-533-8478, 10 am- 5 pm, EST. In MA, call (617) 266-6154. VISA and Mastercard phone orders only, please. To order by mail, include $1.75 for the first book and $.50 for each additional. Allow 4-6 weeks for delivery. Send check to: South End Press, 300 Raritan Center Parkway, Edison, NJ 08818. Ask for our free catalog!

SOUTH END PRESS

predict the probable onset of severe mental illness.

Bader and I agree that we're no closer now than we were ten years ago to having a *cure* for schizophrenia. But we do finally have medicinal means for bringing some relief to large numbers of people; we can calm suicidal patients without resorting to straitjackets; we can help many patients live more agreeable lives outside the hospital. To lessen someone's suffering is no small achievement.

Bader claims that the biological model devalues attempts to grasp the "psychological and social meanings of patients' suffering." Yet clinicians have found that patients who are under a cautious, consistent medicinal regimen are often better able to communicate about their feelings and problems, about the way they experience those "meanings."

It is no more logical to believe that medical models of schizophrenia—even if they're "boring as mud" (*Eden Express*)—preclude empathy or communication than to believe this of medical models of diabetes or Huntington's Chorea. If interpreting schizophrenia is always difficult, this challenge is hardly peculiar to the medical model.

Though he inveighs against reductionism, Bader seems determined to find his own magic key to schizophrenia in the behavior of families. Apparently he is using the disease as a way to explore what is wrong with the family in America. Today's family certainly has plenty of problems, and I applaud Bader's determination to confront them. It is wrong, however, to force a terrible illness to bear the burden of this quest, investing such misfortune with sweeping social and moral significance. The historical tendency to approach disease in this metaphorical and moralizing manner, as the expression of a larger, nonmedical condition, has been criticized brilliantly by Susan Sontag in her discussion of the "master illnesses," cancer and TB (*Illness as Metaphor*, 1979). Recently, ideological conservatives, harshly echoing that approach, have attempted to invest AIDS with allegorical significance as the newest "evil of our times," a function of something *else* instead of simply a medical and human tragedy. When we burden an illness with heavy nonmedical significance, Sontag argues, we are also burdening and demoralizing the patients, who badly need to see their illness "demythicized." Fortunately, to paraphrase her prediction about cancer, it seems very likely that the more we begin to understand the disease called schizophrenia, the less we will invest it with social "meaning."

A final word on the status-seeking of psychiatrists. When astronomers discovered that we lived in a solar system, not a geocentric universe, they upgraded themselves professionally at the expense of astrologers; when Darwin developed his theory of evolution and Mendel discovered genetics, they raised the status of biologists at the expense of creationist theologians. What could be more absurd, particularly in a journal of enlightened criticism, than to slight a scientific theory on the grounds that someone may be benefitting from it? □

A Response to Reginald E. Zelnik

Michael J. Bader

According to Reginald Zelnik, the controversy over the cause of schizophrenia has been settled. If one challenges this "fact," one might as well be questioning the germ theory of illness. In spite of Zelnik's attempt to discredit my critique of biological reductionism by likening it to an attack on modern science, I will say again that while a vast array of biological *correlates* to schizophrenia have been discovered, not a single replicable study has been published that proves that these biological states *precede* and therefore *cause* the schizophrenic mental state. And yet psychiatrists promoting biological models of mental illness argue that the neurobiological level is prior to and more important than the psychological or social level. Despite the lack of definitive evidence, this assumption has grabbed hold of organized psychiatry and popular consciousness with such force in the last decade that to question it seems to take issue with scientific explanation itself.

In my article, I tried to analyze some of the reasons why real but modest advances in neurobiology and psychopharmacology have been exaggerated by the psychiatric profession and embraced with such fervor by modern culture. Unfortunately for Zelnik, repeatedly listing schizophrenia in the same sentence with Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, AIDS-induced dementia, diabetes, Huntington's Chorea, TB, and cholera doesn't make it the same kind of illness. The temptation to think—with Zelnik—that we are simply witnessing the same kind of "march" of science that dethroned creationism in favor of the theory of evolution is exactly the kind of self-congratulatory stance that biological reductionism promotes. When Melvin Sabshin, medical director of the American Psychiatric Association, recently testified in front of Congress about the "medical" nature of mental illness, arguing that psychologists should be excluded from Medicare reimbursement, no one in the hearing room thought that Charles Darwin had reappeared. Instead it was clear that Sabshin was using a claim to scientific "truth" to protect the economic privileges of his psychiatric constituency.

I'm aware, of course, that to leave the argument at this point gives the impression that I think there is some conspiracy among psychiatrists to hood-

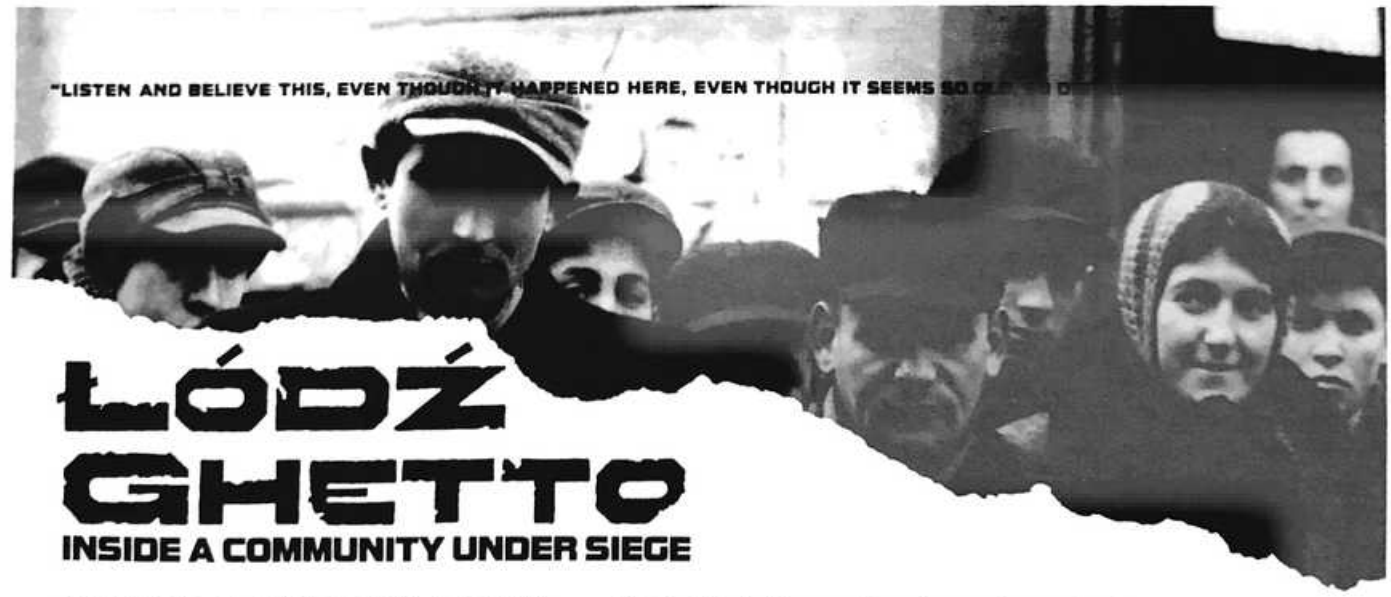
Michael J. Bader is the director of the graduate psychology program at New College of California and is a psychotherapist in private practice. He is a member of Tikkun's *editorial board.*

wink the public with trumped-up research. This is clearly not the case. Ideologues such as Sabshin may well believe what they are saying. Most psychiatrists who have what I might label a reductionist perspective believe in what they do and think they act in the best interests of their patients. The pressures to exaggerate research claims, however, are enormous—both on workers in the field and on media pundits who are hungry for stories about the latest medical "breakthrough."

We can assume that such pressure to exaggerate scientific claims was behind the *New York Times* article of November 10, 1988, which heralded a study as a breakthrough in schizophrenia research. The prominent headline states: "Schizophrenia Study Finds Strong Signs of Hereditary Cause." The lazy person might simply register this claim as a "fact" and not read the article. Those who are curious and do read the article would learn that researchers in England had discovered an abnormal gene on the fifth chromosome of a group of schizophrenics, something that researchers call a genetic "marker," that appeared to predict the illness. This is reported as if it were a discovery of a genetic cause of schizophrenia, which it is not. In the very next paragraph, the story continues: "In the same issue of the journal another international research team said that it had found no link to chromosome 5." To the educated lay reader, this second finding appears to contradict the first and at least raises a question about whether the first study is valid or can be generalized. But the article goes on to quote scientists as saying that this disparity doesn't mean the two studies are in conflict but instead underscores what "specialists in mental illness have long believed: that schizophrenia is really a catch-all term for a biologically heterogeneous group of diseases that produce much the same symptoms." The reader is then expected to accept that these studies provide "solid evidence of a biological cause of some forms of schizophrenia that cannot be explained away as a feature of destructive upbringing or other bad social experience." Common sense is subverted by ideology; the desired conclusion is assumed and read back into the evidence so that it is justified.

The popular media, of course, is always more interested in the discovery of something rather than the failure of research to confirm the existence of that something. In July 1989, a short article in the back pages of the *San Francisco Chronicle* reported that a scientific team at the National Institutes of Health had found no evidence of the "chromosome 5" defect in a study of schizophrenics. And yet, in some sense, the effect of that "chromosome 5" discovery had already been achieved. We have the feeling that something has been "proven," and, despite the controversy, that we at least know something new and important about the cause of schizophrenia, even if the objective basis for this feeling is missing. I think that this rather small example can be multiplied many times.

Zelnik and many psychiatrists reject the label of reductionism by arguing that genes and biology simply account for a "predisposition" to mental illness. But I believe this is a somewhat slippery concept that smuggles in biological causation under a token pluralism. What exactly is a predisposition, and what are the roles of the family and the social and psychological environment? Zelnik's phrasing tips his hand, I think. He believes that a constructive and positive family and social milieu is "as vital to the mentally ill as



ŁÓDŹ GHETTO
INSIDE A COMMUNITY UNDER SIEGE

COMPILED AND EDITED BY
ALAN ADELSON
AND
ROBERT LAPIDES

"Lodz Ghetto is a profoundly moving collection of first-hand Holocaust documents. The task of documenting the Holocaust can never end, it is an absolute obligation, and this book contributes a great deal toward that end." —Irving Howe

THE SOURCE BOOK FOR THE DOCUMENTARY FILM

At bookstores now.

VIKING
PENGUIN USA

[it is] to cancer, AIDS, or TB patients." This implies, however, that the family and external world can help someone who *already* is mentally ill but that the illness, like AIDS or TB, is caused exclusively by biology. The "onset of schizophrenia or manic depression is sometimes triggered by stressful experience," he says, suggesting that the disease is an inherently biological process, just waiting for an outside event to set it in motion. According to Zelnik, however, the environment frequently doesn't even act as a trigger for mental illness since "many patients experience their first psychotic episodes *despite* [my emphasis] the most benign surroundings and after happy, promising childhoods." This is the typical rhetoric of those who appear to concede the importance of the environment by using words such as predisposition. They usually mean that the mentally ill have innate and progressive disease processes that can sometimes be affected by outside influences; these outside influences (such as parents) rarely shape the "disease" in any fundamental way.

Even if one were to replace the concept of predisposition with "interaction" and argue that the relationship between parent and child is a two-way street and therefore that parents shouldn't always have to foot the bill for their children's problems, it would miss the point. Interaction doesn't mean equality. The child's absolute dependence on the family means that she or he has a powerful motive for shaping her or his character in accord with the family environment—such pressure is truly a life-or-death issue for the child. Talking about the potential problem of a "mismatch," for instance, between a difficult child and a well-intentioned parent may help us understand one way that development can go wrong, but it also implies that a better match might solve the problem. If the environment could be altered such that a predisposition would never be "expressed," then in what meaningful sense are we talking about genetic or biological causation? Zelnik and his fellow reductionists, while appearing to talk only about predispositions, actually assume that no matter how good the family environment is, most schizophrenics and depressives are vessels of a festering biological disorder which leads inexorably toward mental illness.

Zelnik claims that I am suggesting that parents should bear the *guilt* of causing their children's mental illness and, further, that I am following the "blame the victim" trend exhibited by our culture. He also takes issue with the impression I gave of groups representing the families of the mentally ill (such as the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill [NAMI]), saying that I portrayed these groups as advocates of a one-dimensional biological model when, in fact, they also speak out on behalf of a range of social issues that impact on the care and social treatment of the mentally ill. If I gave this impression, I was wrong and apologize to these groups. The real issue here, however, is the problem of parental guilt. I do *not* believe that parents should browbeat themselves with guilt over their children's problems. I also do not think that children are empty containers into which parents pour their own problems.

Children actively construct their personalities, but they do so within the constraints of extreme dependence upon their families. This simple but overwhelming reality forms the basis of the psychoanalytic theory of personality development. For children, the maintenance of conditions of safety, familiarity, love, and attachment in their families is a life-or-death issue—a fact that, as noted above, means that parents and families are of overwhelming importance in the child's construction of an inner world. In this specific sense, parents are indeed responsible for their children's psychological development. Note that I say "responsible." If by guilt one means self-hatred and condemnation, then I do *not* propose that parents feel guilty about the mental illness of their children. If by guilt, however, one means recognition of one's power to affect the mental well-being of a weak and dependent child, along with a corresponding assumption of responsibility, then I think that parents are indeed guilty and, given the amount of emotional suffering in our society, should feel even more so.

It is certainly true that many parents needlessly punish themselves for their children's problems and suffer in isolation with terrible guilt. In my experience, this kind of suffering, sometimes exacerbated in our finger-pointing society, is often a distortion of responsibility. Self-hatred in any context is a psychological symptom, whether it be exhibited by the parent *or* the child. Just as the self-hatred in the depressed patient should be understood as having psychological meaning, so should the self-hatred of a parent who tortures him- or herself with recriminations over a troubled child. In my opinion, then, telling the parent, "It's not your fault; your child just has a medical illness," or telling the depressed patient, "You have a deficiency of brain chemicals," can make them feel better in that they gain relief from their punitive and pathological consciences. But such treatment also can help the person deny the *real* levels of responsibility that underlie pathological guilt. The two things are not at all the same. In fact, I believe that depressed adult patients are responsible for their depression—they have constructed a view of themselves and the world that they actively maintain, even if the origins of this view are based on experiences in their families. Similarly, parents are responsible for the environment within which their children constructed a disturbed sense of self. Accepting this fact, even feeling some general guilt about it, is *not the same* as the kind of self-hatred that Zelnik implies that I advocate.

Our culture has grossly distorted views of responsibility. One cause of the "blame the victim" trend is the desire to absolve others of responsibility, to take the focus off those social relations which *do* share responsibility for victimizing people, including the social relations within the troubled modern family. But the alternative to blaming the victim and the "blame game" won't be found by searching for biological and medical explanations of the problem of mental illness. We can all feel a bit better if we're told that our biology made us do it or that our kids' biology made them do it. But besides being without solid scientific grounding, this stance interferes with our ability to look more deeply into ourselves, our families, and our social institutions. It is here that we will ultimately find the answers that can explain the cause and suggest the cure of the vast amount of emotional suffering we see around us today. □

FICTION

Simple English Usage

Zvi Jagendorf

English is the necessary language for us and our neighbor-friends who are also, in a way, our enemies. It is the *lingua bianca,* a language no longer involved in the quarrels and grievances which entwine us in their net. English is the language of the British Empire, the one which gave Uncle Nouri his sword and UmWalid her polite, suburban pursing of the mouth as she says "Well, why not *reelly,*" meaning "No, I cannot possibly accept your offer of a ride to the beach at Tel Aviv." English is the language of the perfidious conqueror whose name we may conveniently use to prop up the myth of a once-shared paradise here in Jerusalem, peopled, in the thirties, by solid Arab merchants in large houses like UmWalid's and Nouri's parents and less solid, marginal Jews from Berlin with good European manners and suits. According to the myth they could all have lived together in harmony had it not been for "the British." The word was pronounced with an Arabic emphasis, putting all the disdain and haughty contempt in the last syllable, making it sound like a province in France—"*Bretèche.*"

Uncle Nouri never joined in when his wife, UmWalid, told stories about the bad behavior which had brought things to this pass. He would suck on his empty pipe and sit Buddha-like with polished skull and startling, empty blue eyes beneath the ticking clock in the large parlor of the house we shared. Nouri had been a servant to an English officer during the war and the Colonel had given him his ceremonial sword when he left. Nouri almost never spoke and when he did could not be understood because the air hissed through the vent in the tracheotomy tube in his throat with sucking noises, wheezes, gargles, and whistles, making him sound like an early-model espresso machine. But Nouri *would* defend the British. He would defend Colonel Barton whose shoes he had polished and leather belts he had faithfully shined, probably in return for very little. "Gurgle ... hiss ... rattle ... aaad" meant "They were not so bad." His red cheeks would make the point like inverted commas accompanying the emphatic pipe in his right hand. "Hiss ... wheeze ... whistle ... men" meant "They were gentlemen."

Nouri, whose creature comforts were taken care of by UmWalid and Arfan, his unmarried daughter and fierce guardian of the hearth, was a bit of a gentleman himself, if gentility was the capacity for sitting still in a comfortable chair most of every day except for time spent eating and sleeping. Nouri's empty pipe in its habitual moorings performed looping motions when he dismissed as trivial all the violence and bellicosity going on around us. He saw our daily Middle Eastern disasters as so many tantrums of filthy, excitable brats pulling each other's hair in the nursery playground. He had been robbed or cheated out of his Arabic character and loyalties by the German priests who had taught him to read and repair car engines, then by a succession of British soldiers who had employed him, and finally by the fortunes of war which had cast him on the Jewish side of Jerusalem when all the immense Khalidi clan was with Hussein over the wall. He was a perfect colonial subject, careless and even contemptuous of his own traditions (he joked about the fasts and restrictions of Islam and kept a bottle of red Latroun wine by his chair), respectful and uncritical of the manhood of the powerful. He had mastered English enough to be a courteous servant, though in his own house his right to be served hand and foot by wife and daughter seemed so unquestioned that it could only be derived from the Prophet himself.

Negotiations between us upstairs and the Khalidis downstairs were of course conducted in our *lingua bianca,* the trusted language of a nation of cheaters, and as our business covered certain well-defined areas, each produced a lexicon and phraseology of its own accompanied by a body language of great eloquence and subtlety.

TERRITORY

Some excess water runs off our plant pots on the balcony and drips down onto the Khalidis' fragrant, jasmine-covered front porch.

ARFAN: *[sitting on the porch, knees spread in a manly, cocky way under her ample skirt, speaking to no one in particular in a loud, twangy voice, all nose and head]* Oh who made a wee wee? I think it's the

Zvi Jagendorf teaches English and Theater at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. His stories and translations of Hebrew poetry have appeared in many journals.

angels made a wee wee in the sky.
UmWalid: *[Eruptions of strangled laughter which sound like giggles forcing their way out of a balloon.]*
Arfan: *[louder]* Hey angels, what did you drink today? I'll tell your Daddy about what you did.
UmWalid: Your Daddy smack you. *[loud laughter]*

We are paralyzed for a few moments by the sight of the muddy water trickling along our balcony tiles from under our pots of basil and geranium. We know the Khalidis' porch is holy ground. It has to be, as Arfan spends hours bent over, head between her muscular legs, scrubbing away at the handsome pink stones, shooing off the sand, pollen, bird droppings, and debris from the huge pines that frame the facade of the old house. That porch is her stainless, unforced virginity but it is also Nouri's fiefdom, his fragrant enclosure or *hortus conclusus* as the Franciscans down the Bethlehem Road would have said. God himself is a trespasser when he lets the muddy, fat rains of spring slap insolently on the smooth stones. And if God can sin in Arfan's eyes, how enormous is our crime.

We have a hurried discussion about the best way to make amends.

Possibilities:

1. Blame the baby.
2. Admit carelessness and apologize from above.
3. Ditto but go downstairs and do it.
4. Apologize below with mop in hand and start cleaning up the holy ground unasked.
5. Offer to clean up, accept refusal being prepared to stand by foolishly, mop in hand, while Arfan wields the rag, head down, rump up, both hands swinging in the age-old semicircle of the female reaper.

We choose number five and I go down while Molly listens from the balcony. They are all there, Nouri in the rear, UmWalid and Arfan whispering in Arabic. A huge iron pail stands insolently under the feeble trickle, amplifying each drop into a loud "gotcha." I stand there grasping my mop like a spear-bearer in Shakespeare. With my free hand I gesture at our balcony:

Me: I'm sorry about the water. I gave too much to the plants.
UmWalid: No *trubbel,* it is nothing. *[She is not looking at me.]*
Arfan: I thought the angels made a wee wee. *[laughs alone]*

There is a pause while I try to work out what to do with the mop and with my whole body for that matter. Could I advance and join the seated group? Would that mean my absolution? Could I change the subject? Was there any work of penance I could undertake?

How holy the ground of the porch was I knew from the Wars of Mrs. Krekorian's Hair. Mrs. Krekorian, who lived alone in the attic above us, was an eccentric old Armenian lady. She had a head of thick gray hair which she kept tightly coiled on her skull like a neat ball of yellowing wool. The debris of her daily combing, spidery twirls of gray hair, she used to launch out of her window ever so delicately like a damsel blowing kisses to her knight in armor. Some of the hair was blown away but whatever landed on the porch or stuck in the trailing vine became hairs of desolation and affliction. The Khalidi water would slosh, the brushes would scrape, and the voices of Arfan and UmWalid would unite in a throaty chorus of denunciation. Mrs. Krekorian never apologized. Her hair was her own to dispose of as she pleased and she had lived in the house since her Uncle Krekorian had built it when the Turks were the masters. She was therefore anathema to the Khalidis and could not set foot in their territory, not even to rescue a kitten from an unfriendly branch.

But I was a friend; only my muddy water had offended the chastity of the pink paving stones. Could I sit down and laugh it off with UmWalid? Was the pail to be taken as a sign and a reproach unto the third generation? I played the "innocent abroad" card which was demeaning but useful:

Me: I am so stupid. I always pour too much water on the flowers. I think they're thirsty but they don't need so much water.

I was speaking simple English or the English of a simpleton, a Jew from a big concrete city who is at a loss when it comes to the needs of plants on a Jerusalem balcony. It was also the English of a native speaker making himself clear to the local tribesmen in short uniform sentences employing a functional vocabulary of repeated words. This English signaled benevolence, a desire to understand and be understood, and, above all, a lack of arrogance.

Arfan: I'll tell you when to water them. I'll shout and then you do it [*finger raised in admonition*] but no more. Why waste so much water? *[palms together in a gesture of completion]*

I jettison the mop and sit down next to Nouri who is listening to the little radio he always keeps by his side. His eyes have taken in the drama but it has not disturbed their glassy equilibrium. He gestures with his pipe: "Hiss ... whistle ... ite." *Alright* is a good word, a forgiving one. It must have been spoken often by his English masters when they overlooked some failure of their young servant. Now it is his to use in the fiefdom of his spotless home. Nouri Rex, an absolute monarch

with no power, fed, clothed, and imprisoned by women who measure their orbits by his chair.

Trash

Our garbage cans were right by the front gate at the end of the path which led from our steps alongside the trellis and chicken wire which fenced off the shady expanse of the Khalidis' front garden. As they were near the street, passersby—mostly Moroccan immigrants from up the Bethlehem Road—would take potluck and rummage around just in case we had thrown away anything worth taking. It took us a while to learn that in poor societies you do not simply throw out torn clothes and broken toys. You may dump them, if you are foolish enough, but wiser and poorer people are going to benefit from your laziness and put your jetsam to use, after suitable treatment.

In order to throw anything away, even the most humble vegetable parings, we had to run the gauntlet of the path along the fence under the sharp gaze of the Khalidi women. We soon found out that, although ordinary pails of garbage were allowed to pass without challenge, any package or bulky object would be inspected. It would be taken note of, miraculously, even if you groped your way to the gate barefoot in the dark. The next day a broken plastic bowl turns up on the deep ledge of UmWalid's kitchen window. It houses red peppers left to dry in the sun. UmWalid's walk from her kitchen door to the washing line with a pail of laundry is defiant. Her small head of iron gray curls bobs purposefully up and down among the waves of white linen. Molly is on the stairs right above the kitchen window where the red cracked plastic bowl rests:

> Molly: Good morning UmWalid, how are you?
> UmWalid: I am fine. Very well *reelly.*
> Molly: You are drying peppers I see. You must show me how you do the pickling. *[Why steer the conversation so close to trouble?]*
> UmWalid: *Paddon. [Pardon, I don't understand.]*
> Molly: How you make the sharp *pilpel*? *[She has lost control and lapsed into pidgin and a mixture of languages.]*
> UmWalid: It is nothing, you can buy it in the *shook*. *[She pronounces the Hebrew word for market with an exaggerated, comical stress. All Hebrew words are comical to her. She hears them as Arabic spoken by idiots, caricatures of real words.]* Why you throw away the *blate*? It is no good for you?
> Molly: The baby pushed it off the table. *[Poor kid, always the scapegoat. But how could she say she abhorred chipped plastic if UmWalid tolerated it?]* They crack so easily.

No one wanted to contemplate the image of Arfan rummaging among the orange peel and chicken bones to salvage the wrongfully rejected bowl.

> UmWalid: Is it a *blate* from America? *[apparently a question, more likely a dismissive remark about cheap American plastic]* Why your sister not send you the strong *blastic*? When she comes she will bring you the good *blates*.... *[pause]* What is it called? *[hand to temple]* Yes, the Wedgwood.

Having settled that, she enveloped herself in sheets and banished plates from the conversation.

After a while we learned to hint to the Khalidi women that we had something to discard:

> Me: Oh, our deckchair is falling to pieces, we have to get a new one.
> Arfan: Bring it down. Maybe Ali Ali can repair it.
> UmWalid: Poor Ali Ali, he is *majnun [one finger directed at her right temple]* and his wife brings many babies. She will sit in it.

Throwing away broken objects, however, was child's play compared with the dangers of getting rid of unwanted food. This happened rarely, for UmWalid was an impeccable cook. But after 1967 we would have pressed upon us sweetmeats, baked by Nouri's sisters from Ramallah, which looked and tasted like boiled glue.

> Arfan: Hashem's mother baked this. It is a delicacy. You must have some. *[bossy]* Eat it right away.
> Molly: We still have some of your mother's wonderful *mahmoul*. How can we take this? It will turn us into elephants.
> Arfan: *[wrapping up the glueballs in brown paper]* Tell me how you like it and I'll bring some more.

They lay on our kitchen table for days attracting only the flies. Whenever we heard a Khalidi step on the stair, we rushed to hide the miserable dish. How long could this go on? There came a time when the dangerous expedition to the garbage had to be undertaken.

The problem was that any well-wrapped object in the garbage would arouse suspicion and be inspected, while to jettison the glueballs with the daily dust and orange peel risked the disaster of betrayal by stray cats or other foragers. The blood would rush to my head as I imagined the look of UmWalid's back turned away from me after she had discovered her sister-in-law's glueballs stuck to the pavement outside the gate. No amount of basic English in simple constructions would be able to unbend the stiffness of those insulted shoulders and relax the taut muscles of that offended neck. It was therefore worth my while to stow the offensive concoction in my briefcase, well wrapped in aluminum

foil, and make a foray up the Bethlehem Road at night in order to place the cursed sweetmeat in someone *else's* garbage. When I came back from such an expedition Nouri was often still on the porch in the dark, his white shirt absorbing the glow of the street lamp beyond the wall. "Hiss ... gurgle ... ite." The fist with its pipe swung up and down by his ear. "Night," I answered softly across the fence. The shiny pate rested impassively on the old man's delicate shoulders. The eyes, ever uncurious, didn't turn their calm blue gaze on me.

Excuse Me, What You Say?

UmWalid was too gentle to force her language on anyone unfortunate enough to be ignorant of Arabic, but she delighted in bringing up the neighborhood toddlers, whom she minded, in the language. So the front garden would, of a morning, echo with repeated commands and admonitions in Arabic as the infants in the sand went about their tasks under her watchful eyes. It was a source of much satisfaction to UmWalid when little Shmulik or Anat would not only show comprehension but begin to babble in Arabic. Sometimes when Arfan had not gone to work the language front became a scene of more intensive action. Ever the martinet, she would drill the kids in rhymes and verses of popular songs. Their shrill parroting would draw squeals of laughter and approval when they got it right and sharp parade-ground shouts when they didn't.

As good as she was at teaching infants Arabic, UmWalid turned a stubbornly deaf ear to *our* attempts at making conversation in the language. Molly had been attending a course and, afflicted with terror and shyness in the classroom, was steeling herself for a less daunting encounter with one of the Khalidis by the garden gate. She had set herself the goal of starting a normal, everyday conversation, hoping that a small success to begin with would give her a store of courage to meet the challenges of grammar and tense in the classroom. UmWalid was inspecting plant pots under the grapevine. She was coiffed and rather smartly dressed in a blue skirt, shiny shoes, and a crisply formal white blouse so that she looked like the doctor's wife in some English village before the war. Someone was probably coming to pick her up for a drive:

> Molly: *[from our side of the fence, one nervous hand resting on a tree trunk far away enough from UmWalid to disengage abruptly should things go badly wrong, yet close enough to be heard clearly]* Sabakh el kheir UmWalid, biddek ajeeblek shi min al dukan?
> *[This means: "Good morning, UmWalid, can I bring you something from the shop?" It was a sentence much pondered and checked with the book of rules.]*
>
> UmWalid: *[looking a bit past Molly's ear, an expression of pain or discomfort on her face, eyes narrowed, troubled lips, traces of her mustache betraying the start of a quiver]* Excuse me, what you say?
> Molly: *[in total disarray, fleeing the encounter after the first exchange]* Nothing, nothing at all. *[through the gate and out of sight, fighting back tears]*

We often discussed this apparent inability of UmWalid to countenance Molly's Arabic. We were sure she heard and understood the sentence. We were equally sure that its pronunciation, if not a model of colloquial ease, was normal and not abhorrent to the native ear. So why the refusal to play the language game? Arfan was different. If she was accosted by us with a fumbling Arabic sentence she would laugh quite brazenly, the way children laugh at chimpanzees in a zoo, and overwhelm us with a torrent of Arabic so overpowering we had to give up.

We came to the conclusion that they were protecting their language from us with the same cunning and application with which they guarded their space from intrusion; they preferred to deal with us in the neutral language of the absconded masters, a language they had acquired with the minimum of formal study. To deal with us in Arabic would entail a refashioning of an elaborately structured relationship in which we were given the status of warmly welcome guests who perched on the balcony above their porch like colorful migrating birds. The use of English enabled them to lock us out of the disturbing and bewildering present full of threat which might transform us, as in a nightmare, into rivals for their space. As English speakers we belonged, in their way of thinking, to faraway places which might claim us back when the time came. If we also spoke Hebrew that was our problem as far as they were concerned, and it did not enter into the closed world we had made in the old house on the Bethlehem Road. So our attempts at Arabic aroused a palpable wariness as if we were trying to steal the food out of their mouths. If we mastered the language what private space would be left them? We would have ears to overhear the gossip and grievances which filled the air over the porch in the evenings. If we added Arabic to our possessions we could no longer be taken for guests who could be offered everything without fear and would instead turn into neighbors, the kind who live too close for comfort.

Excuse me, what you say? became our private joke. Molly used it to stop me when I became long-winded. We often used it on the phone to each other. Although we could mimic UmWalid's accent, we didn't even try to imitate the mixture of cunning and innocence in her look. That would have been impossible.

Hooray We've Beaten Them

Our youngest son coined the phrase one December in London. He was in the Winter Festival Show at school and played a major role in the Chanukah scene which was given along with a Hindu legend, a pagan rite, and a Nativity play. As Judah the Maccabee he wrote himself a resounding paean of victory over Antiochus's hordes:

> Hooray we've beaten them
> Let's go back to Jerusalem
> And clean up the Temple.

Proud as I was at the virile beauty of these lines, they reminded me, strangely, of a dark, windowless room in Jerusalem in which five adults and a baby sat through a war listening to the gunfire and the shells until a final silence settled. Then a neighbor rattled the heavy iron door which swayed open to let in the crisp, cruel light:

"Hey, we've won," she shouted, "we've captured the Old City."

The five people in the dark stared at the woman in the light with some astonishment. They had been together in the windowless room since the shells started falling close to the house. UmWalid had insisted we come down. "You have big windows. And the baby. There is no place for you to sit with him. Come with us."

And we had. We sat through the critical nights of the war in UmWalid's back room among the sacks of rice and the bags of flour, smelling the fragrance of the potent herbs she had dried for years on the back porch as well as the acrid fumes of war which the thickest walls and heaviest doors were too thin to keep out.

How did we do it? How did we overcome in one dark room the combat which locked Arab and Jew in a death's duel only a few hundred yards away? Did we ignore it? How could we when the bullets whistled through the branches of the old trees and the tanks rattled past in the night like a column of convicts dragging their chains? Did we discuss the war? We never *discussed* anything with the Khalidis, not even the weather. Discussion was foreign to the forms of conversation we had practiced and tested by trial and error over the years. In the past when some bloody incident had brought death to either side, we would sit on the sofa in the big, formal room under the faded embroidery of the Dome of the Rock and share silence like mourners. UmWalid would put her hand on Molly's lap and shake her head in disbelief.

"*Wai, wai, wai,*" a lamentation this, but gentle, more like cooing than keening. "There is so much *trubbel. Reelly* it never stop, why?"

The five people, then, who sat in the spicy dark

THE BOOK OF SHARES

EDMOND JABÈS

Translated by Rosmarie Waldrop

The Book of Shares is a brief but powerful statement of many of Jabès' lifelong preoccupations: the possibilities of writing and dialogue after the Holocaust, the repressed meaning of God, the limits of language, the status of the Book, and the exile of the Jew.

"Jabès is one of the world's outstanding thinkers and writers."
—Mary Ann Caws

Cloth $14.95 112 pages
Religion and Postmodernism series



COSMOPOLITANS AND PAROCHIALS

Modern Orthodox Jews in America

SAMUEL C. HEILMAN
and STEVEN M. COHEN

A provocative and fascinating portrait of what Jewish Orthodoxy has become and how it survives and flourishes in America today, shedding light on the larger picture of the persistence of religion in the modern world.

"This book is vital for an understanding of how most traditional Jews cope with American modernity and how Orthodox Judaism relates to other contemporary movements of religious revival in America."—Jack Wertheimer, The Jewish Theological Seminary of America

Paper $12.95 264 pages
Library cloth edition $32.00

Chicago

University of Chicago Press
5801 South Ellis Avenue Chicago, IL 60637

room, prisoners of the war, were practiced in the art of sharing the pathos of victims just as they were specialists in the techniques of not apportioning blame. But this time, in this war, our commonwealth of victims was under siege. The house which sheltered us all was in the line of fire and so far our fate was shared. But the equality of victims would become something quite different should there be a victory. Victory for one side meant defeat for the other and the end of our commonwealth.

Much of our time in the windowless room was spent preparing food and eating it; Nouri and the baby both ate by an imperious clock. But we also listened to the radio. Arfan and I each had a small receiver which we held discreetly to our ears at opposite ends of the room. She picked up Cairo, Amman, Damascus, and even Algiers while I hovered between Jerusalem and the BBC. Those radios could have undone us. They were our link to the world of victory and defeat and, consequently, bore the seeds of division. Arfan, listening to the boasts of destruction and vengeance, tried to translate what she heard into at least partially acceptable terms.

"Cairo says Egyptian planes have bombed Haifa port," she said flatly as if reporting a decline in coffee production in Brazil. Did I hear suppressed excitement in her voice or was I hearing *my* desire for *our* victory? Initially I had little to say as Jerusalem was keeping quiet. But Nouri's reaction to Arfan's occasional bulletins was odd:

> ARFAN: The Iraqi army is advancing toward the Jordan.
> NOURI: *[pate red and flushed, eyes almost screwed tight, a grimace of disgust on his face, his right hand waving a gesture of dismissal]* Gurgle ... hiss ... squeak ... bubble ... eyes.

I couldn't understand. Arfan ignored him. Molly whispered, "He says it's all lies." Nouri's instinctive refusal to believe the rhetoric of his own language may have been the reaction of a colonized soul, or it may have been the ordinary man's authentic suspicion of big words and great claims. But it showed me how to deal with the threat to our small circle from those divisive words that flew through the air like gnats. When the BBC gave news of an impending Israeli victory I communicated this to the others but dulled its impact. I called it a rumor. Following Nouri's lead I threw doubt on the veracity of *any* news broadcast. I even lapsed into basic English structure, hoping Arfan would join in to preserve our illusion:

> ME: It's all the same. One radio says this, another one says the opposite. What can you believe? They're all liars.
> ARFAN: *[without conviction]* What do they know in the radio, they just say what the bosses tell them.

We looked at each other, liars for peace, tamed by the imperatives of our closeness. When two fighter planes flew low over the house, Arfan rushed out into the garden. "It's the Algerians," she said, her face pale with the collapse of her self-restraint. I didn't say anything. It was irrelevant by now as the sounds of battle faded away and the loudspeakers from over the valley in the Old City called on people like us, huddled in smaller rooms and dank cellars, to remain calm and await the new dispensation.

For some reason we did not go up to our apartment right away. Something palpable kept us together in the room, some reluctance to break with the familiar and face the new state of affairs. So we busied ourselves with meaningless tasks until the door rattled and the neighbor's shout "Hey, we've won" drew its sharp line between "us" and "them." We kissed goodbye and went upstairs. In my heart I doubted whether simple English syntax would be subtle enough to take us through the next stage together. □

BOOK REVIEW

Everything's Up to Date in North Dakota

Katha Pollitt

Contested Lives: The Abortion Debate in an American Community, by Faye D. Ginsburg. University of California Press, 1989, 315 pp.

Why would a woman oppose legal abortion? Some popular, easy answers to this question are: because she's a religious fanatic, crazy, or reactionary; because she believes sexual pleasure is a sin, to be expiated by childbirth; because she has never suffered and "doesn't understand" the desperate straits in which millions of women live; because she *has* suffered and misery loves company; because she has been brainwashed and manipulated by men, who really run the pro-life show.

The national leadership of the pro-life movement seems to confirm all these stereotypes at once. Turn on the TV and whom do you see? Roman Catholic cardinals, fundamentalist ministers, New Right politicians, Operation Rescue's Randall Terry, Dr. John Willke of the National Right to Life Committee (NRLC), and abortion-provider-turned-pro-lifer Dr. Bernard Nathanson—all men. Not only are women much less in evidence, but what few there are seem distinctly, well, *peculiar* (and not just because most of them are devoutly religious, childless celibates). There's Nellie Gray of March for Life, who fervently opposes birth control, and who, on the talking-head shows, always seems to be interrupting Faye Wattleton, executive director of Planned Parenthood, to assert, falsely, that Hitler was pro-choice. Then there's Judie Brown, head of the American Life League, another anti-birth-controller, who believes that sex education leads to "fornication"; and scary Olivia Gans, leader of the NRLC's American Victims of Abortion, her eyes shining with tears—but smiling—as she repents her abortion on camera for the hundredth time.

In her eloquent and influential 1984 study of California activists on both sides of the abortion issue, *Abortion and the Politics of Motherhood,* Kristin Luker argues that the picture is very different at the grass-roots level. Like pro-choicers, Luker theorizes, pro-life women believe they are defending women's best interests. Their antifeminism is actually a kind of feminism, deriving from a class-based perception that marriage is a woman's best hope for economic security and that social respect for wife-and-motherhood and the values associated with it (altruism, nurturance, sexual restraint) is her best hope for self-esteem.

Luker found that the California pro-lifers and pro-choicers were worlds apart in every conceivable way. Pro-lifers were less affluent, less educated, more conservative, and much more religious (usually Catholic or fundamentalist, and, interestingly, never Jewish); pro-choicers were less likely to be married, had fewer children, saw sex as having many possible meanings other than the single, transcendent one of procreation, and had, or hoped for, good jobs. Although Luker strove to be evenhanded, I'm not the only reader who felt she gave the pro-lifers more of her heart. Here, after all, were these ordinary, decent, plain-speaking household-budgeting women who embraced difficult lives with energy and warmth. Her pro-choicers, by contrast, sounded tight-lipped, shallow, and narrowly rationalistic. In subordinating motherhood to a decision to compete with men in the professions, it was they, if anyone, who seemed to have accepted male authority and male values.

Now comes Faye Ginsburg with some rather different findings, drawn from her anthropological fieldwork in Fargo, North Dakota, during the early 1980s. In Fargo, at least, pro-lifers and pro-choicers shared a great deal. Most of the women in both groups were married, had children, and were struggling to accommodate the demands of motherhood and jobs; all were deeply involved in church and community life—the PTA, the Elkettes—and took great pleasure in the homey, slow-paced way of life of a city (population 62,000) where everyone was a neighbor and where, as one woman said, "we still have potlucks."

We hear an awful lot about fresh-baked bread, sunny kitchens, adorable children, and big floppy dogs.

An even bigger surprise, though, is that both pro-lifers and pro-choicers subscribed to what they called "midwestern feminism," which prizes the "female values" of caring, nurturance, and community, and seeks their adoption by society at large. One pro-choicer came to her stand after years of volunteering with the La Leche League; one pro-lifer had brought a comparable-worth suit against her employer. None of the pro-choicers had a kind word for nonmarital sex; some of the pro-lifers were willing to live with sex education and birth control. With so much in common, it's not surprising that, in the 1970s, women who later found themselves bitterly divided over abortion were able to work together on a variety of projects, including a women's center whose statement of purpose perhaps best conveys the flavor of feminism, Fargo-style: "We are feminists, but we are not rabble-rousing bra-burners. We named the group the Baker's Center for Women because we are also feminine and the idea of baking bread is very woman-oriented. It

Katha Pollitt is working on a book of essays about women and feminism. She is the author of Antarctic Traveller *(Knopf, 1982), a collection of poems.*

also has a spiritual meaning in the sense of breaking bread together, a communion of people with similar needs."

To a certain extent, though, sisterhood in Fargo depended on letting sleeping dogs lie. Abortion was legal, but (as in most of rural America) unavailable; to get one, women had to travel three hundred miles to the nearest clinic or find, through word of mouth, one of the state's two physicians willing to perform the operation (and hope the doctor they got was the competent one). Since no abortions were performed in Fargo, townspeople could pretend that Fargo didn't need abortion. With no visible target, pro-life activity was low-key: lobbying, letter-writing, and volunteering in "problem pregnancy clinics" which seek to dissuade women from choosing abortion.

This hypocritical status quo was shattered in 1981, when a local activist invited an abortion clinic chain to open a branch in Fargo, setting off an increasingly fierce pro-life campaign to close the new clinic down. By the time the efforts failed three years later, friendships had been broken, old political alliances among women ruptured, and civil discourse sorely tried. The pro-choicers were called every name in the book; Ginsburg's moderate pro-lifers were upstaged by grandstanding Falwellite carpetbaggers, and Fargo was labeled "The Town Torn Apart by Abortion" on ABC's "20/20." Yet, for Ginsburg, sisterhood remained powerful in Fargo: in an epilogue, she describes the birth of Pro-Dialogue, a group composed of women on both sides who are committed to lessening the need for abortion. In view of the almost immediate demise of this coalition, however, the reader may draw less hopeful conclusions about the ability of midwestern feminism to bridge real ideological differences among women.

With so much in common, why were Fargo women so polarized by abortion? This is the question Ginsburg sets out to answer. Fundamentalist Christianity was definitely a factor, although not in a simple way. The stereotype is of born-again women submissively obeying male pastors. Yet at least one of her subjects went "church-hopping" in search of a minister who shared her ardent anti-abortion commitment. More crucial, Ginsburg thinks, was generation: pro-choicers tended to have come of age in the 1960s, while most pro-lifers were younger.

Each side, in other words, defined itself against the abortion status quo. Pro-choicers came to womanhood when abortion was illegal and often cited women's health as an argument for their side. They had been radicalized by 1960s activism in general, but specifically by the women's health movement and by their own experiences, especially in childbirth, at the hands of the male-dominated medical establishment. No pro-lifers mentioned women's health as a concern. While pro-choicers saw abortion as enabling women to extend their nurturing capacities outside the home, pro-lifers saw abortion as the final assault on nurturing itself. Abortion would open women up to sexual exploitation by men (as opposed to limiting the suffering such exploitation caused), and take men and society off the hook where women and children were concerned.

Though she sometimes relies too heavily on academic jargon, Ginsburg has nevertheless written a fascinating study. It has a great deal to say about the ways in which the abortion debate works itself out in local politics, which is where the Supreme Court seems to have thrown the whole issue.

Yet I came away unsatisfied. Ginsburg does a good job of explaining why the women in her very small sample lined up on one side or the other (although its relevance to the nonactivist population is doubtful—opinion polls invariably show that the younger women are, the more likely they are to be pro-choice, and, if post-*Webster* Fargo is like the rest of the country, those pro-choice 1960s veterans have recently won a lot of young recruits). In the best anthropological manner, she tries hard to understand the inner logic and coherence of her subjects' vision, and what purpose it serves in their lives—how, for instance, a belief in the sanctity of the fetus and the centrality of motherhood allows pro-life women to see their own not-always-welcome pregnancies as occasions for growth and heroism.

What I most wanted to learn, however, was how these kindly, decent, reasonable pro-lifers—women who see themselves as *feminists*—would answer the objections to their stand that tumbled through my mind as I read. Here, Ginsburg offers little help. At one point, she wonders if her fondness for her pro-life subjects and the pleasure she felt at immersing herself in Fargo life had compromised her objectivity. It's a question worth asking. As in Luker's book, I did notice a special warmth infusing Ginsburg's rather dry style of discourse when she depicts the pro-lifer at home: we hear an awful lot about fresh-baked bread, sunny kitchens, adorable children, and big floppy dogs. (Could there be a story here about the romantic nostalgia of sophisticated urban academics for small-town folkways and moms who bake from scratch?)

Like the good anthropologist she is, Ginsburg takes her subjects pretty much as she finds them and then places their self-explanations into an abstract framework. But why take what people say about themselves as the final word? One reads along, marveling at the rationality and niceness of her pro-lifers, only to be brought up short by the occasional sharp and incongruous detail: "She likes to speak in tongues while driving on her motorized lawn mower."

I kept waiting for Ginsburg to take a hard look at what her pro-lifers actually *do*: when pro-life Sally "explained the life of the unborn" at a shopping-mall health fair, what did she say? (Ginsburg's language is important here, since "explains" is a loaded word, implying that what is said is true; "life of the unborn" is, of course, pure pro-lifese.) Did the "problem pregnancy clinics" at which her subjects volunteered engage in the deceptive advertising and scare tactics that, as Ginsburg notes, have brought legal action in several states? Her willingness to believe that pro-lifers have made a serious commitment to creating a more caring society for mothers and children is another place where she seems to take the wish (or the lip service) for the deed. Reactionary Representative Henry Hyde (R-IL) may "promote" (her word) national health insurance for poor women and children. But how many nanoseconds a year does he devote to this worthy cause, compared to his hard legislative slogging to bar rape and incest victims from obtaining Medicaid-funded abortions?

Ginsburg's reluctance to pose uncomfortable questions means that she misses a chance to tell us how her

pro-lifers combine their views on abortion with feminism, other than as a sentimental muddle. How do they account for the fact that their own modestly liberal views carry so little weight with the national right-to-life movement? Faced with a pro-choice candidate who supports increased social-welfare spending and a pro-life candidate who wants to cut it back (Mondale versus Reagan, for instance), how do they vote? On a more theoretical level, if legal abortion licenses sexual irresponsibility, doesn't contraception do the same? If abortion lets men walk away from their "mistakes," why is the solution to make women pay for them, rather than to go after men directly? Ginsburg's pro-lifers could, after all, have chosen to lobby for draconian child-support laws: if a fifteen-year-old girl can be legally compelled to complete a pregnancy, a fifteen-year-old boy could be legally compelled to support her, even if it meant dropping out of school to take a dead-end job as a gas-station attendant. And (I was really curious about this one) if abortion frees society from a rightful obligation to mothers and children, how do pro-lifers account for the fact that abortion is legal in the countries with the most generous social-welfare programs (Sweden, Cuba) and illegal in the ones with the least (the Philippines, Brazil)? Why, in other words, do they feel that in order to make a social claim women must present themselves as helpless dependents rather than as citizens endowed with rights?

Ginsburg herself comes close to answering these questions when she remarks that the existence of legal abortion transforms women into "active sexual subjects." Although pro-life women talk about the ways in which abortion empowers men, it does much more to empower women. Sexually, and in every other way, it makes women "too powerful." This fear is reflected in pro-life stereotypes about who has abortions: teenagers taking "the easy way out" instead of "paying for their mistakes" and yuppies who have abortions rather than (the invariable example) give up a trip to Europe. But it also explains why the pro-life movement insists, despite a great deal of evidence to the contrary, that women who have abortions are "really" victims of deception and coercion—by abortion clinics, by parents, by their male partners. Because their whole concept of women is wrapped up in essentialist ideas of chastity, nurturance, and domestic virtue, they cannot accept the reality, which is that the secretary who has an abortion at twenty and the wife who has a baby at twenty-five are *the same person*. That the woman who "kills" one baby can be and often is a loving mother to another is just mind-boggling.

In order to make its case in a discourse defined by this puritanical mindset, the pro-choice movement has also cast its arguments in terms of victimization and female powerlessness. That's one reason we hear much more about rape and incest victims than about, say, pregnant graduate students, and why pro-choice public-relations campaigns stress the difficulty of the abortion decision (primary meaning: women who terminate a pregnancy are making a seriously considered ethical choice; secondary meaning: since abortion is "difficult," having one fulfills the pay-for-your-mistakes requirement).

Here, I would say, is the real reason why pro-life feminism, as currently formulated, is a contradiction in terms. At bottom, pro-life feminists want to maximize female weakness and vulnerability to make an appeal to men's "better nature." If women risk pregnancy, men will "have to be" chaste; if women get pregnant, men will "have to" marry and support them; but if women can choose when and how often to become pregnant, men will use them and leave them. The deep cynicism about men is less strange than the naive faith in the power of female helplessness to affect male behavior. The truth is, of course, that men were not continent before the advent of modern birth control (although they were more likely to use prostitutes); and they did, and do, abandon pregnant girlfriends and even the virtuous wives of large broods of children whether or not abortion is a legal (or illegal) option.

A more humane and practical strategy, as some pro-life feminists recognize, is to appeal to the larger community: let society underwrite motherhood, as in the socialist and social-democratic states. But that path lets men off the hook, too: now they can avoid supporting a family because the government will do it for them. It is on the horns of this dilemma that pro-life feminism finds itself painfully speared: when it relies on men to "do the right thing" it makes women too vulnerable; when it appeals to the state it kisses marriage goodbye.

If it followed a consistent pro-life feminist ethic, the United States would resemble something halfway between a Charlotte Perkins Gilman fantasy utopia and a pride of lions. At the center would be mothers and their children, living comfortably on some combination of paid labor and collective support. Men, no longer economic necessities, would skulk on the periphery, invited to share the warmth of family life on the basis of their personal qualities, as women are now invited to share men's incomes, and turned out when their charms no longer appealed—again, rather like women today. Instead of *Want a baby? Marry or starve* it would be *Want to be a mother's mate? Shape up or ship out.*

Pro-life feminism, in other words, would be a matriarchy in which marriage, if it continued to exist, would be of no economic or social importance. Such a society has a great deal—well, some things—to recommend it. But it would resemble life in Fargo, North Dakota, not at all. □

ERRATA

In "An Eye Grows in Brooklyn" by Marcie Hershman (Vol. 4, No. 5) on page 67, middle of the third column, Hershman erroneously mentions that the old men in *Leaving Brooklyn* by Lynne Sharon Schwartz play pinochle while the women play bridge in a separate room. The women play mahjongg in Schwartz's book: a culturally significant distinction!

In "Divine Conversations" by Judith Plaskow (Vol. 4, No. 6) on page 20, second column, the last sentence of the last full paragraph should read: "This Otherness, which is not incompatible with the intimacy of feminist metaphors, becomes the difficult counterpart and companion to feminist God-language."

Book Review

For the Love of George

Sven Birkerts

The Politics of Literary Reputation: The Making and Claiming of "St. George" Orwell, by John Rodden. Oxford University Press, 1989, 478 pp.

Working with an archivist's patient rigor and the tenacity customarily ascribed to powerful burrowing creatures, John Rodden has put together an astonishingly thorough study showing how personal, political, institutional, and media-related factors combined to create the public phenomenon of George Orwell. I don't know that any writer's career has been scrutinized through such an array of lenses. Exhaustive approaches, naturally, have their hazards: Rodden's assiduous handling of detail quite often leads him into repetitiveness and argumentative overkill. But the book's achievement transcends its flaws. *The Politics of Literary Reputation: The Making and Claiming of "St. George" Orwell* is a necessary contribution both to Orwell studies and to an assessment of the interdependence of culture and communications.

Though he cuts his path through an ideological minefield, Rodden remains effectively nonpartisan. He tells us in his preface that he is a "left of center white male of working-class origins, a post-Vatican Catholic liberal." He does not, however, get livid about the neoconservatives' effort to set Orwell up as one of their founding fathers; neither is he soft on the methods and motives of liberals of the Lionel Trilling stripe. He is firm and tactful—the scholar in him always tempers the would-be polemicist.

The core argument of the book is fairly simple: that George Orwell, universally admired as a literary figure and a moral and political authority, did not come to be canonized on the strength of his achievements alone. No one, argues Rodden, wins cultural eminence where there is not some engine of Rube Goldberg complexity clattering in the background. The popular image of Orwell—the virtuous, ascetic, engaged, iconoclastic, totalitarian-scourging, windowpane stylist—is very much the product of sustained and selective media presentations. From the very start of his career, Orwell's literary and political persona was refracted to the public through reviews, articles, books, radio and television presentations, and mass-circulation magazines—until, at some point, the name became its associations in the free air of the public domain. Orwell today is the Abraham Lincoln of the written word.

Rodden, let me hasten to say, is not out to undercut Orwell's real contributions. Rather, he wants to discover why and how his accomplishment could be packaged for sale in so many different cultural supermarkets, while the comparable attainments of a Koestler, Silone, or Malraux could not. The making and "claiming" of Orwell, then, is very much about specific webs of circumstance in midcentury England and America. It is as much the story of individual desires and projections as it is an anatomical exploration of our diverse institutional bodies. Rodden is alert to the significance of power and power vacuums: if Orwell had not come along, the collective force of our need might well have spontaneously generated someone else for the post.

But Orwell did come along. Eric Blair emerged from St. Cyprian's and Eton in the early 1920s determined to make himself into a writer of consequence. He dreamed of the embossed spines of his eventual collected works; he suffered through a lonely exile in the civil service in Burma; and he returned to become George Orwell.

Rodden tracks the progress of Orwell's public reception by breaking apart his eventual image into what he sees as its four principal components and discussing each in turn. These "faces"—the Rebel, the Common Man, the Prophet, and the Saint—are seen as sequential developments, with certain inevitable overlaps. Thus, the Orwell that first captured the imagination of a small sector of the British intelligentsia was the public school boy who had, as one memorable epithet had it, "gone native" in his own country. This first Orwell—author of a slim documentary memoir called *Down and Out in Paris and London* (1933)—was the tramp-outsider who scorned the chase for the glittering prizes and cast his lot with the laboring poor. The image would soon enough bleed over into that of the writer as Common Man. Orwell's *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1937) and *Homage to Catalonia* (1938) confirmed that his dissent was something more than a romantic pose; his engagement in social and political causes appeared entirely selfless. The prophetic Orwell only appeared in later years, after publication of the satirical allegory *Animal Farm* (1945) and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949). And his secular sainthood has been largely a posthumous honor, representing a peculiar magnification of perceived and invented virtues.

Orwell was fortunate from the first in winning the adoration of a great many of the leading intellectuals of his time—figures from all parts of the political spectrum. Rodden's sampling is startling:

> Characterizations of Orwell by Anglo-American intellectuals of the Left and Right—to Lionel Trilling the figure of "the man who tells the truth," to Irving Howe an "intellectual hero," to T. R. Fyvel a "literary hero," to Angus Wilson "one of my great heroes," to John Atkins a "social

Sven Birkerts is the author of The Electric Life: Essays on Modern Poetry *(Morrow, 1989).*

> saint," to Stephen Spender "an example of the 'lived truth'," to George Woodcock a "conscience," to Alfred Kazin "a hero whom I shall always love," to Joseph Epstein and Malcolm Muggeridge a "hero of our time," to Richard Rees a "spiritual hero," to John Wain a "moral hero"—indicate that for many intellectuals, regardless of their politics or even generation, Orwell has stood for nothing less than an heroic model and ethical guide.

Rodden later adds the names of Edmund Wilson, Raymond Williams, Norman Podhoretz, Christopher Hitchens, V. S. Pritchett, and a dozen others. The mystery, of course, is how—and why—one mere man could come to be all things to all people.

The Orwell phenomenon is, as Rodden shows, an exceedingly complex business. There is no disputing that Orwell's particular combination of virtues—his devotion to the downtrodden, his polemical fervor, his easily worn man-in-the-street persona, his lean, angular physiognomy (would we cherish an Orwell who looked like Alfred Hitchcock?), his readiness to plunge into action, his apparent modesty in the face of growing influence and popularity—proved attractive to intellectuals of every political coloration. But the surprising thing is that these men (women, other than Mary McCarthy and Sonia Orwell, play almost no part in this account) were not boosting Orwell *in spite* of their politics—it was always *because* of, and by way of. They claimed him as their spokesman-hero because they saw their own ambitions and political ideals incarnated in his image. How can this be?

In the thirties, there was no great conflict or contradiction of values. Orwell was, like every other self-respecting intellectual, a man of the Left. It was only with the stirrings of the European war and the clashes over Stalinism that the fracturing of leftist allegiances began. Orwell's fierce anti-Stalinism dates from the early months of 1937 when he witnessed the Communist Party's attempted suppression of revolutionary parties in Spain. But on June 8 of that same year, he wrote to Cyril Connolly: "I ... at last really believe in Socialism, which I never did before." Orwell never made any clear repudiation of that assertion before his death in 1950.

This fact has not prevented innumerable attempts to hie the man into every conceivable political corral. Indeed, the circumstances of Orwell's later years—and of his death—made such wrangling all but inevitable. Orwell himself did not help matters. Throughout the postwar years, he scrupulously avoided all overt political affiliation. He stayed within the perimeters of the Left, but he kept his declarations artfully unbinding. He was, as Rodden shows, a master of compartmentalization, keeping his various friends and associates from meeting one another. After his death it came out that he had moved like a wraith through half a dozen seemingly exclusive political and social factions. There is no consensus among his surviving friends as to what his true persuasions might have been. Nor does any reading of Orwell's last major testament, *Nineteen Eighty-Four,* supply clear answers. The work has been read in different ways by different constituencies: as a straight-on anti-Communist tract; as a satire of the same; and as a warning about emerging strains in the Western political system. Orwell died before he could hang out a placard confirming or denying any particular intent—not that he would ever have done so.

The timing of Orwell's death put the seal on the mystery. As Rodden writes: "[H]e died at precisely the 'right' historical moment."

> Indeed, if Orwell had lived until 1955 or certainly into the 1960s, he would not have been spared the agony of taking sides on numerous political issues: the Cold War, McCarthyism, de-Stalinization, Hungary, Suez, Algeria, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, the New Left, Vietnam, the student movement. Inevitably, as happened with Bertrand Russell, Koestler, Sartre, Camus and others in the 1950s and 1960s, his positions (or lack thereof) on such issues would have compromised him in the eyes of some groups which today claim him as a patron saint.... Never could he have won or maintained his current stature on so many fronts.

Orwell remains, then, a blank screen for others to scribble their wishes on. Some members of the Left, such as Christopher Hitchens, would bear him aloft over the divisive conflicts of recent decades; they would resurrect the committed Socialist in the present. Others, like Podhoretz and Kristol, engage in active projective identification: they assume that Orwell would have turned when they did, following the same branching paths into the stony redoubt of the neoconservatives. "If Orwell were alive today ..." is the customary polemical gambit. Well, if Orwell were alive today he wouldn't be Orwell—and where would that leave us?

Would we cherish an Orwell who looked like Alfred Hitchcock?

So long as he lived, Orwell won and held the esteem of most of the leading intellectuals of the West. This esteem, ramified through thousands of appreciative-to-adulatory reviews, citations, and studies, paved the way toward his eventual assumption into the general stratosphere of renown. Rodden gives fascinating accounts of how such influential figures as Trilling, Woodcock, Podhoretz, and Raymond Williams advanced Orwell's standing while using him to buttress their own positions. He finds a close connection, for instance, between Trilling's presentation of Orwell in his well-known introduction to *Homage to Catalonia* and his own efforts to define himself as an engaged intellectual, an image that cut sharply against the grain of his detached, contemplative character. To identify himself with Orwell's authority, Trilling had in part to create it.

Ultimately, though, it was not until the mass media caught hold of him that Orwell pushed past the localized celebrity of intellectual circles and became public property. This might never have happened as it did—or happened at all—had not the rippling anxieties of the cold war come when they did. The dark fantasy of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was camera-ready—the perfect propaganda tool. And Henry Luce's publications lost no time in trumpeting Orwell as the prophet of the totalitarian menace. Television and radio

coverage followed. For a period in the 1950s, there was a new TV adaptation of the novel every year. The long countdown to 1984 was underway.

At some point the inevitable happened: the image and the truth about the man-behind-the-image parted company. The posthumous career of George Orwell has had very little to do with anything that Orwell really wrote, said, or did. The simplified contents of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* have floated free of their covers and now move like decorative dirigibles through the public arena, the sad consequence of the packaging of ideologies for mass consumption. Orwell, as author, shares very nearly the same fate. To the man in the street and to the writer of the late-night term paper he is some mustachioed road-warrior, anti-Communist avatar supreme.

Rodden's book, for all its density of documentation, will provoke the attentive reader. There is much in these pages about infighting within political cenacles, about hype and packaging, about the contrast between the intellectual's "reception" of ideas and the public's ravenous consumption of simplified images, and about our professed fears and longings.

As for me, I was less perplexed by the way our media machines have made Orwell into a household cartoon—nothing surprises me on that front—than by his investiture by the intellectual establishment. Let's face it: Orwell, and only Orwell, bears this near-ecclesiastical authority in our culture. And the sense of the man as the very *fons et origo* of righteous enlightenment deepens daily, even now. It pushes into every crevice: Orwell is presented as the father of the virtuous prose style, of documentary reportage, of media criticism. Very soon it will be Orwell as the father of environmental awareness. I'm not joking. Recently, in a single afternoon's reading, I found Wendell Berry (in *Harper's*) citing Orwell in an essay on global thinking and Bill McKibben doing the very same thing in his *New Yorker* essay "The Death of Nature." In both instances the use of the Orwell quotation was a rhetorical ploy; it was a way of injecting authority at a critical point in the presentation. It was the appeal to scripture all over again.

My question isn't "Why Orwell?" but "Why *still* Orwell, and why *only* Orwell?" Are we that hero-starved? Can it be that our intellectual culture has produced no one of comparable worth in four decades? It seems not. Whom could we name? Titans of the intellect we may have, but they don't look like titans. For we expect something more. And that something more is not just political engagement: it is a moral sureness, a natural distribution of attributes leading to a naturalness of response, a heart and mind unbothered by the temptations of the main chance. That in our age Orwell alone is seen to possess such characteristics says something devastating about our situation. The degree to which we venerate the man as a figure for our times, and our future, is the degree to which we are failing ourselves. □

Book Review

A Class for Itself

Ruth Rosen

The Good Life: The Meaning of Success for the American Middle Class by Loren Baritz. Knopf, 1989, 361 pp.

Fear of Falling: The Inner Life of the Middle Class by Barbara Ehrenreich. Pantheon, 1989, 292 pp.

Judging from the newsstands and bookstores, middle-class Americans are obsessed with cholesterol, flab, spiritual angst, and ways to find, keep, or separate from their partners. Occasionally some members of the middle class even become fascinated by their own fascination. Then they search for books that diagnose the mentalities of their peers. When serious intellectuals begin to write such books, it often forecasts a deepening crisis in the cultural life of the middle class.

The last surge of interest in the middle class came during the 1950s. It reflected intellectuals' alarm at an emerging affluent, suburban mass culture. Then the tone was critical; the vantage point, with some exceptions, was a cool sociological distance. Tracking the emergence of a consumer culture, critics such as David Riesman, Lewis Mumford, C. Wright Mills, and William H. Whyte pilloried the bad taste, boring architecture, sartorial conformity, and stultifying intellectual life of a new class of organization men whose "outer directedness" and insecure position in corporate, media-saturated life kept them finely attuned to the expectations of others.

Decades later, Loren Baritz and Barbara Ehrenreich, two keen observers of American culture, can take for granted the middle class's ascendancy to power in the postwar period. Both want to know what makes their class tick: Baritz tries to get under its "collective skin" and "sneak up" on its private life; Ehrenreich seeks to understand the "inner life" that drives the middle class. What they discover is provocative and more than a little disturbing.

Loren Baritz, a distinguished cultural historian, has long been excavat-

Ruth Rosen, a professor of history at the University of California at Davis, is the editor of The Maimie Papers *(Indiana University Press, 1985) and author of* The Lost Sisterhood: Prostitution in America *(Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982).*

ing the assumptions and myths by which Americans explain themselves to each other and the rest of the world. A previous book, *Backfire,* was a brilliant analysis of the values and ideas that not only drove America into Vietnam, but also shaped the way in which the United States fought and ultimately lost the war. *The Good Life* also seeks to understand those myths that, as Baritz explained in his last book, live more in the gut than in the mind.

"Searching for the American middle class," he writes, "is a little like looking for air. It is everywhere, invisible, and taken for granted." The economic opportunity that attracted streams of immigrants to the U.S. has provided the American middle class with a distinctive set of myths and values. Most Americans, Baritz argues, have wanted to belong to the middle class. That class is a state of mind, one that willfully ignores economic circumstances in order to claim or maintain membership in the great imperial middle. In fact, the "class *un*consciousness" of America, so striking to those across the Atlantic, results from a majority psychology. Those who *imagine* they are part of the middle class, whatever their economic position, are the subject of this book.

To describe the middle-class state of mind, Baritz draws upon the tradition of Gustave Flaubert, seeking the perfect vignette, the right detail to convey the everydayness of middle-class existence. Members of the American middle class, he argues, never wished to remake the world but simply their lives and those of their children. The Good Life of the middle class, then, was always private and personal.

Moreover, the Good Life has meant a variety of things because the middle class was and is constantly changing. The late historian Herbert Gutman astutely noted that, unlike its European counterparts, the American working class was continually being reinvented as new generations of immigrants replaced those who moved into the middle class. But Gutman never examined the cultural life of the middle class into which those workers were moving or thought they were entering.

Baritz, however, describes how various immigrant groups constantly recreated a middle class whose common values included the quest for individual freedom, personal wealth, and a better life for its children. And while *The Good Life* is more a series of dazzling riffs and insights than a sustained argument, Baritz continually circles back to several important themes. One is the perpetual cultural war between the "custodians of culture," those who defend tradition, and Americans who seek new personal liberties. Another is that each generation's definition of the Good Life requires newly constructed gender roles.

For example, with the "triumph of the middle class" in the postwar period came the aberrant domesticity of the 1950s, with its peculiar definition of femininity and masculinity, and then the 1960s assault on that particular American dream by the New Left and other movements it helped spawn. What intrigues Baritz is the "deformation" (his word) of American males—their loss of authority, their connection to the world, and, in Baritz's words, the "moral knowledge" of their fathers. As he tracks the slippage of men's authority—at home, in bureaucratic organizations, in the androgynous counterculture—he simultaneously traces the gradual rise in the independence of American women.

Like many of us, Baritz is torn between his commitment to struggles for freedom and his criticism of the protean self who has cut loose from family and community and seeks "freedom from love." He is also torn between a commitment to women's freedom and dismay over the fact that 1960s feminism "further challenged male authority, not merely the oppressive, privileged authority, but the legitimate authority of adults, including men." Baritz does not, however, seek a return to patriarchal structures. He is too good a historian and too concerned with social justice to imagine such retrogression. He knows that in the past families and communities often survived, indeed thrived, because they successfully subordinated women, enslaved Blacks, and exploited the cheap labor of immigrants. But the current narcissistic definition of the Good Life worries him, as it should. The search for freedom makes for loneliness and psychic emptiness; we no longer know how to balance personal liberty with a connection to family and community.

For men, according to Baritz, this has meant a kind of fatherlessness, a detachment from past and place, from

CIIS

A graduate school where intellect, intuition and the ageless wisdom of diverse cultures converge.

Integrating Eastern and Western knowledge, the California Institute of Integral Studies is an accredited graduate school with innovative programs leading to M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in:

Clinical Psychology
Integral Counseling Psychology
East-West Psychology
Organizational Development & Transformation
Philosophy & Religion
Social & Cultural Anthropology
Drama Therapy

Certificates in:

Integral Health Studies
Organizational Development & Transformation

V.A. approved. Federal loans, work/study and scholarships available to qualified students. A limited number of foreign and minority scholarships are available annually. Auditors welcome.

For more information write

California Institute of Integral Studies
Box TK
765 Ashbury Street
San Francisco CA 94117
(415) 753-6100



history, authority, and moral knowledge. He is far less clear about what these changes mean for women. In fact, his vivid account of fatherlessness seems indifferent to the fact that it is women, not men, whose lives have changed most profoundly in the postwar period. They, not men, changed their sexual behavior, left home, and entered the labor market in unprecedented numbers. Women's experience of motherlessness—their historic rupture from the female tradition—is a neglected aspect of Baritz's story.

Nevertheless, Baritz does remind us that past journeys for personal liberty were undertaken within a context of ethnic or religious constraint. He ends not with nostalgia but with profound sadness for a new middle class whose Good Life now assumes the absence of restraint as a God-given right and judges all human relations by market standards.

Baritz's bleak assessment of the middle class's obsession with private life and the quest for personal freedom is both the strength and weakness of his book. Flaubert would have liked his elegantly drawn vignettes of middle-class solipsism. But how does this portrait of private dreams for personal wealth and well-being take into account the more visible tradition of middle-class reform movements? Baritz's answer is: "If the world was remade in the process, and the middle class hoped it would be in its own image, that would be a fine if peripheral consequence."

Fair enough. But such a dark view ignores the efforts of millions of middle-class Americans who have attempted to help the poor, save the wayward, abolish drinking, win suffrage, end child labor, improve labor conditions, legalize birth control, end racial segregation, stop the Vietnam War, advance the rights of women and gays, legalize abortion, save the whales and the dolphins, feed and shelter the homeless, save the forests, prevent nuclear destruction, and avert ecological devastation. True, most middle-class reformers tried to remake the world in their own image, and often, as with prohibition and the attempt to abolish prostitution, they did more harm than good. But some reforms—the abolition of slavery, for example, or the ecological efforts to preserve the integrity of the environment—challenged the individualism and selfishness of the middle class itself.

We should remember that even the Puritans, who were deeply individualistic, worried about the salvation of their communities. *The Good Life* offers a polished portrait of the dark side of the middle class and its state of mind. But it misses those whose public engagement and meddling have also shaped middle-class culture and consciousness.

These are some of the people Barbara Ehrenreich scrutinizes in *Fear of Falling*. Her subject is the narrower *professional* middle class—journalists, professors, critics, writers, doctors, lawyers, social welfare workers, experts of all kinds, "all those people whose economic and social status is based on education, rather than the ownership of capital or property." Their ascendancy to power in the postwar era, Ehrenreich argues, has permitted them to define everyone as deviant who fails to conform to *their* standard of living and *their* ideas of good behavior. Her political critique is clear: by the 1980s, these professionals had retreated from a responsible leadership role, rejected liberalism, and adopted "a meaner, more selfish outlook hostile toward the aspirations of those less fortunate." What accounts for this retreat and how does it relate to their class consciousness?

Ehrenreich's provocative thesis is that the inner life of the middle class is dominated by dual fears, either of falling into the working class or of becoming too affluent. Anxious and insecure, the middle class is terrified of growing soft, of being out of control—in other words, of losing the very self-denial and deferred gratification that created the class in the first place. As a result, the middle class constantly projects its own insecurities about falling or growing soft onto others. In the 1950s, for example, critics worried about the growing affluence of the middle class. By the early 1960s, with the rediscovery of poverty, writers projected the hedonism and self-indulgence of their own expanding consumer culture onto the poor. Later in that decade, critics grew obsessed with "permissiveness" as the young began to extol spontaneity and to forgo the self-denial and lengthy apprenticeship that had once been necessary for membership in the professional middle class. The young were betraying their own class. Ehrenreich writes, "Such is the ingenuity of capitalism: It had taken the anger and yearning of the poor and sold them to the restless youth of the middle class."

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, "backlash theorists" began to project their anxieties onto yet another social group, the white working class. This was the "silent majority," the "real" America. Soon, the image of the blue-collar working class became a Rorschach test for all kinds of middle-class discontents. To the sectarian Left, the working class became the hope of the future. To the growing New Right, it became a way to translate traditional values into political power. But the middle class saw only one side of the blue-collar worker—the Archie Bunkers. Ignoring the widespread strikes of the early 1970s and the fact that many young factory workers were adopting hippie dress and hairstyles, middle-class liberals turned the working-class male into "a psychic dumping ground for such unstylish sentiments as racism, male chauvinism, and crude materialism: a rearguard population that loved white bread and hated black people." Ehrenreich ironically observes that the middle-class critics who condemned the lifestyle of the working class were maintaining the delusion that they had forsworn consumerism and still believed in hard work, self-denial, and delayed gratification.

During the 1970s, neoconservatives and the New Right discovered yet another class, the "New Class," a cabal of intellectuals, professors, journalists, and social-welfare workers whose crimes lay in their political alliance with the poor. In this new scheme, big business and the hard-working little guy were productive while the New Class and their allies, the poor, led soft, parasitic lives. The New Class's hedonism and "permissive" attitudes had eroded the meaning of hard work. The discovery of the New Class proved to be a successful ideological move. By endowing the New Class with the power of a "liberal elite," the New Right helped to eviscerate liberalism. As Ehrenreich notes, "There is something schizophrenic about the character of the New Class as seen by the New Right: How could any group of people be so recklessly self-indulgent

TIKKUN MAGAZINE

sponsors

The Southern California Conference of

LIBERAL AND PROGRESSIVE JEWISH INTELLECTUALS

Jan. 20–21, 1990

TIKKUN magazine is creating a network of progressive Jewish intellectuals, teachers, therapists, writers, poets, lawyers, media workers, health workers, scientists, social change activists and all those committed to developing the intellectual foundation for progressive politics in the United States.

Because many West Coasters missed our 1988 national conference in New York, we decided to sponsor two West Coast regional conferences this winter. On the heels of an extremely successful conference in S.F., TIKKUN announces its second regional conference on the West Coast at U.C.L.A. Jan. 20–21.

Tentative Program:

Saturday, January 20, 10 AM

(Because we do not violate Shabat, there will be no registration at the door until Saturday night. You must pre-register to come to the conference.)

Pre-conference Shabat Service: Based on the work of the P'nai Or community in Philadelphia, an alternative Shabat service led by Arthur Waskow and Phyllis Berman.

1:00 **Opening Session** Music and address by Rabbi Chaim Seidler-Feller.

1:30 **Keynote Addresses** Rabbi Laura Geller, Michael Lerner, Todd Gitlin

3:00 Concurrent Sessions

1. **The Post-Cold War World** Tony Judt, Steven Zipperstein, Todd Gitlin
2. **Secularism and Jewish Renewal** Chaim Seidler-Feller, Kees Bolle
3. **Women and Judaism** Rachel Adler, Gina Morantz Sanchez, Rachel Biale
4. **Writing and Exile** David Antin, Jerome Rothenberg, Marjorie Perloff, Robert Mezey
5. **AIDS and the Jewish World** David Schulman
6. **The Role of Hollywood in Undermining Jewish Identity** Neal Gabler, Jeremy Kagan, Leo Braudy
7. **Interfaith Relationships**
8. **Judaism for Adults** Arthur Waskow
9. **Spiritual Issues of Daily Life** Jonathan Omerman
10. **Strategies for a Pro-Choice Agenda** Robin Schneider, Donna Bojarsky

5:00 **Major Issues in Jewish Life** Saul Friedlander, Rachel Adler, Arthur Waskow

6:30 **Havdalah and Dinner**

8:00 **Israel and the Palestinians**

10:00 **Entertainment** by Emily Levine; plus music and singing

Sunday, January 21

8:30 Late Registration

9:00 Concurrent Sessions

1. **Why Have Left Movements Failed?** Richard Flacks, Joan Anderson, Jackie Goldberg
2. **Being a Jewish Intellectual in America** Steve Zipperstein, Russell Jacoby
3. **Gays in the Jewish World**—a participant discussion
4. **Jewish Politics on Campus**
5. **Creating a New Environmentalism and the Problems with Earth Day, 1990** Robert Gottlieb, Margaret FitsSimmons
6. **How the Media Deals with Israel** Yehuda Lev
7. **Writing and Remembrance: Reconstructing Memory** Miriam Glazer, Shana Penn, Gloria Orenstein, Lynn Sukenik
8. **Raising and Educating a Family with Jewish and Progressive Values** Isa Aron, Ruth Kupers
9. **Blacks, Jews, and Ethnicity in the 90s** George Sanchez, Chaim Seidler-Feller
10. **A Debate on Jewish Renewal** Arthur Waskow, Danny Landes

10:30 **Abortion, the Flag, and the Psychodynamics of American Politics** Betty Friedan, Peter Gabel, Gary Peller

12:00 **Lunch**

1:00 **Music**

1:30 **Israel: Strategies for American Jews** David Biale, Michael Lerner

2:30 **Small Group Discussions on Israel**

3:30 Concurrent Sessions

1. **Writing and Memory** William Cutter, Clancy Sigal
2. **What Makes Relationships Between Jewish Men and Jewish Women Difficult?** Janet Hadda
3. **Power and Greed in American Jewish Life** Chaim Seidler-Feller
4. **Judaism and the Arts** Fredie Rembaum, Peter Hay, Susan Merson
5. **Why are Good Films and Good TV Hard to Make?** Todd Gitlin, Ella Taylor
6. **Can the Democratic Party Be Saved?** Patrick Caddell, Danny Goldstein, Harold Meyerson
7. **The Effects of Current Israeli Politics on the American Jewish Scene** Leonard Beerman, Dick Gunther
8. **Feminist Perspectives on Jewish Renewal** Sue Levi Elwell, Shoshana Gershenzon, Phyllis Berman
9. **Creating a chapter of the Committee for Judaism and Social Justice**

5:30–6:45 **Closing Celebration**

8:00 **Party to be announced**

Registration. Sliding Fee scale. Incomes over $50,000: $85. Incomes under $50,000: $65. One day only: $45. Income under $12,000: $35 plus 3 hr. work at conference. Students: $25. Send check or Visa/Mastercard info. to: TIKKUN, 5100 Leona St., Oakland, Ca. 94619. Or call: 415-482-0805. Registration after Jan. 14: add $15 to the above rates. Space may be limited; register immediately.

Attend the TIKKUN Regional Conference

Los Angeles
Jan. 20–21, 1990
(Information on the other side)

And participate in building a network of progressive Jewish intellectuals working with TIKKUN's Committee for Judaism and Social Justice (CJSJ)

Here's How:

- Create a TIKKUN discussion group. Meet once a month to socialize and to discuss an article in TIKKUN. Send us feedback on articles and suggest ideas for articles and people to write for the magazine.

- Create a local chapter of CJSJ. Monitor media on who they quote as "official spokespeople for the Jews," what they say about the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, and how they represent Jewish issues. Monitor the degree to which they assume that progressive alternatives no longer exist in political life. Then call or write media that do not present alternative perspectives. Organize speakers, fundraise for progressive causes, and make your presence felt by policymakers and opinion shapers.

and yet so successful at imposing their will on everyone else?"

But the contradictions didn't matter. Liberalism became discredited as an elite, self-indulgent political impulse. For the time being, the New Right had won the middle class's cultural civil war. Yet what is missing in Ehrenreich's clever debunking of the neoconservatives and the New Right are other reasons for the decline of liberalism: the aging of the New Deal coalition, the liberals' role in the Vietnam War, race divisions within the Democratic party, the stagflation of the Carter years, and the inability to articulate an alternative social vision commensurate with Americans' need for civic pride, strong families, and coherent communities.

What had really grown too permissive, argues Ehrenreich, was mainstream consumer culture. In the 1950s, for example, advertising had addressed the family, teaching an entire generation to crave a house full of appliances and to pursue a variety of leisure activities. By the 1970s, taking its cue from rising divorce rates and the expanding human potential movement, business began to appeal to the ideal of self-improvement with ever more sexual advertisements. The Reaganite Right, in an intellectual maneuver that requires further exploration, managed to blame this individualism on liberals —ignoring the role of producers and advertisers in promoting cultural narcissism and an economic mentality based on spending rather than saving. Ehrenreich is particularly adept at demonstrating how one part of the middle class discovered and "invented" an "other" class onto which it could project its fears of moral collapse, family disintegration, and the loss of community.

The discovery in the 1980s of the American yuppie gives Ehrenreich an opportunity to be deliciously wicked. How could the term yuppie, which, Ehrenreich claims, applied to only 5 percent of the relevant age group, slide so quickly into a negative household slur? Like the earlier hippie, the true yuppie rejected the self-denial and long apprenticeship required of middle-class youth. The yuppie, however, tried to make an end run around deferred gratification by getting rich instantly.

The rapid discovery and then condemnation of the yuppie, argues Ehrenreich, once again revealed a middle class projecting its own fear of too much affluence. For, like yuppies, some of the less affluent members of the middle class had also moved upward in the 1980s. Their binge on consumer goods countered the traditional values of saving and self-denial. The moral antidote to rampant consumerism was, of course, to work like the yuppies, seventy hours a week. Workaholism justified self-indulgent consumption. To expiate its extravagance and indulgence, the upscale middle class embarked on a frantic cycle of workaholism punctuated by self-indulgent binges then followed by redemptive exercise. The diet and fitness mania, experienced as redemptive work, countered the obsession with new cuisines and expensive cars. Eating, as Ehrenreich wittily points out, "was what one got *in shape for.* The fit could eat more without the usual depressing, frumpy, and of course downscale result. And, in a society that associates obesity with gluttony, the fit are also *permitted* to eat more without exciting disgust."

Having deftly dissected the middle-class psyche, Ehrenreich ends on a strangely optimistic, even romantic note. If only the middle class would stop projecting its anxieties onto the poor and other segments of its own class, it would discover society's true enemy, the corporate elite. Through the magic of some vague redistributive plan, the middle class would embrace the poor and renounce the hedonism and self-indulgence inherent in education and the professions. This is an odd, upbeat, tacked-on ending that hardly follows from the author's revelations of psychic dread.

Both Baritz and Ehrenreich implicitly recognize that the American political and cultural future lies not with the shrinking industrial working class but somewhere in the great middle. Every four years, both Democrats and Republicans campaign to the middle class's perceived needs and desires. These are the people whose lives, as Robert Bellah and his coauthors in *Habits of the Heart* revealed, are unplugged from community and tradition. This is where the gender war has been fought during the last twenty years. These are the senior citizens who can turn around Congress with their complaints about surtaxes on health benefits.

But if the great imperial middle will determine our future, what should we know about this vague category of people? The assumption of middle-class self-interest requires refinement. Do the deeply devout and religious among us support or challenge some of the cherished generalizations about middle-class selfishness? Why and when do members of the middle class act against their own strict economic interests? How does middle-class meddling affect other groups? The women's movement, for example, emerged from the middle class. Yet by the 1980s, women of color and from working-class backgrounds had redefined feminism to fit their specific cultural and working lives. Opinion polls showed that poor women and Black women favored feminist goals more than did their sisters in the white middle class.

The search for freedom makes for loneliness and psychic emptiness; we no longer know how to balance personal liberty with a connection to family and community.

Is there really an "inner life" of the middle class? Don't gender, race, and ethnicity, for starters, create different inner lives, indeed, different ideas of the Good Life? The reinvention of the middle class can also suggest a variety of different scenarios. Will the new middle class of the twenty-first century, filled with the children of dark-skinned immigrants, usher in a new view of civil society or will they capitulate to Americans' historic rupture with their past?

Questions such as these only set the stage for future inquiries. During the 1980s the New Right was astonishingly successful at assuaging Americans' sense of loss of tradition, patriarchal authority, and imperial status with patriotic shibboleths and familial pieties. If, as it appears, the nation is moving wherever politicians imagine the middle class will go, then there is an urgent need to transcend self-absorption and fully explore the meaning of these losses. □

Novels With a Moral Conscience

Arthur I. Blaustein

The instruction we find in books is like fire. We fetch it from our neighbors, kindle it at home, communicate it to others, and it becomes the property of all.

—Voltaire

Socially conscious novels are those that speak out against social, economic, and political injustice; that expose the many faces of racism, sexism, militarism, and elitism; and that extend our capacity for compassion.

When we read these novels, we learn about who we are as individuals and as a nation. They inform us, as no other medium does, about the state of our national soul and character—of the difference between what we say we are and how we actually behave. We need such exploration today more than ever, for the recent Iran-Contra-gate fiasco and Wall Street scandals show that America's moral compass is out of whack. Our public and personal values often seem as shallow and as exploitable as advertising slogans, and we seem to have lost our ability to recognize and agree on a set of positive and shared values. Without a doubt, the last decade will be remembered as one of moral decline marked by cynicism, deceit, greed, passivity, and a trend toward privatism.

It was no accident that our president and national hero during this era of moral demise was a man who had an evangelical contempt for the truth. His successor has proven himself as adept at distorting reality through the use of mass-media advertising techniques. The consequences for society are downright scary. Czech novelist Milan Kundera has described the resulting state of the contemporary mind: "[a] lack of interest that stems from a form of spiritual decay that causes normal curiosity toward the outside world to atrophy." Geraldo Rivera has another way of looking at it: "Because it is so hard to change the world, I have to settle for ... money, fan mail, and awards." This regressive and infantile behavior is alarming, particularly since the ethos of democracy depends on individual responsibility. Without a capacity to value, there can be neither a shared sense of national goals nor a belief in national purpose.

Socially conscious novels force us to confront our society's inability to distinguish between authentic moral behavior and abstract moralizing. The former is a sensibility, a moral conviction informed by reflection; the latter is a conscious effort to manipulate our emotions for self-serving goals. This distinction is especially critical during a period in which politics has become entertainment, public lying has been elevated to an art form, and legal debates focus attention on technicalities while running roughshod over the spirit of the law. Moral evasiveness has become a supply-side sport for conservatives who know how to manipulate the symbols and images of the mass media. There is a powerful difference between the glow that illumines and the glare that obscures, between the freedom of imagination and the slavery of image.

Three years ago, I saw a bumper sticker that said "Fight Prime-Time TV—Read a Good Book." The more I thought about it, the more sense the slogan made. Faced with politicians and celebrity news stars manipulating each other to entertain audiences, I decided to pull the plug on the tube. When processed truth becomes the norm, it is essential to turn to literature for a healthy perspective on real life.

Literature in general, and the novel in particular, has functioned historically as our most dependable source of human awareness and self-consciousness. Good literature can function as a conscience, a moral brake; it unmasks what ideology conceals. It serves as an indispensable corrective for false consciousness. Through the pleasure and power of stories, which are reinforced by identifying with characters, we learn values.

Serious novelists remind us that we have cultural choices other than conformity, greed, terminal consumerism, and escape. Socially conscious novels can be crucial in the struggle to activate people: they are a powerful antidote to negativism, passivity, and acquiescence to yuppiedom, privatism, Reaganism, and media mania.

Now that we have entered the nineties, the following contemporary novels can help us confront the difficult problems we face. They can help us to transcend the moral vacuity of the eighties since they deal with the real-world conflicts of ordinary people who must struggle with freedom and justice, equality and opportunity, individuality and community, sanity and madness. It is absolutely essential that we examine the complexities and ambiguities of these aspects of the contemporary human predicament if we are to survive as a sane and civilized nation.

Twenty-four Socially Conscious Books

The House of the Spirits by Isabel Allende (Bantam, 1986). Most Americans have only the shallowest notion about what life is like in Latin America; this book can help deepen their knowledge. It's a tale of magic realism, chronicling a Chilean family's experience over three generations, an allegory for the history of an entire continent.

Tent of Miracles by Jorge Amado (Avon, 1978). A masterpiece by Brazil's foremost novelist, this tale of Pedro Archango—*mestizo*, laborer, and self-educated

Arthur I. Blaustein was chairman of the President's National Advisory Council on Economic Opportunity and now teaches at the University of California, Berkeley. His most recent book is The American Promise *(Transaction Books, 1982).*

ethnologist—leads us through the lives of ordinary folks. Amado uses the richness of his humor and humanism to offer profound insights into the plight of the underdog.

Norma Jean the Termite Queen by Sheila Ballantyne (Penguin, 1983). A women's version of *Catch-22,* this book takes on family life in the suburbs. It's about Norma Jean, an imaginative housewife, who wants to explore her artistic talent and achieve selfhood without ruining her marriage.

Continental Drift by Russell Banks (Ballantine, 1986). A frost-belt family moves to Florida in search of "economic opportunity," but instead finds a nightmare. The themes of good and evil, fate and freedom, and racism and poverty are explored through alternating chapters focusing on the two protagonists, a thirty-year-old furnace repairman from New Hampshire and a young, illiterate Haitian mother, a recent refugee.

The Memory of Old Jack by Wendell Berry (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975). Set in Kentucky, this remarkable novel offers keen insights into character and changing American values through an inspiring portrait of the life of a ninety-two-year-old retired farmer.

The Secret of Santa Vittoria by Robert Crichton (Simon & Schuster, 1966). A ragtag bunch of villagers challenge the Nazi machine in World War II Italy. Their decision to stand alone against a powerful occupying army is testimony to the dignity of the human race.

The Book of Daniel by E. L. Doctorow (Random House, 1971). A fictional account of the Rosenberg trial as remembered by a grown-up son, Daniel, this book is more memorable than fifty history books on American foreign policy. *The Book of Daniel* sensitively explores the cold war, Red-baiting, and the effect of the atom bomb on the American psyche.

Love Medicine by Louise Erdrich (Bantam, 1984). Winner of the 1984 National Book Critics Circle Award for fiction, this saga, set in North Dakota, follows two Native American families through many generations, exploring the lives of those who must deal with the legacy of America's original sin.

July's People by Nadine Gordimer (Viking, 1981). In this intensely personal novel, Gordimer explores the system of South African apartheid by imagining what might happen to one family when the imposed roles of master and slave dissolve.

The Voices of Glory by Davis Grubb (Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1962). A portrait of a small town—Glory, West Virginia—and its response to a tuberculosis epidemic, this story of a dedicated public health nurse pitted against the self-interested medical establishment raises fundamental issues about the nature and practice of medicine in America and will prompt the reader to reconsider the nation's response to AIDS.

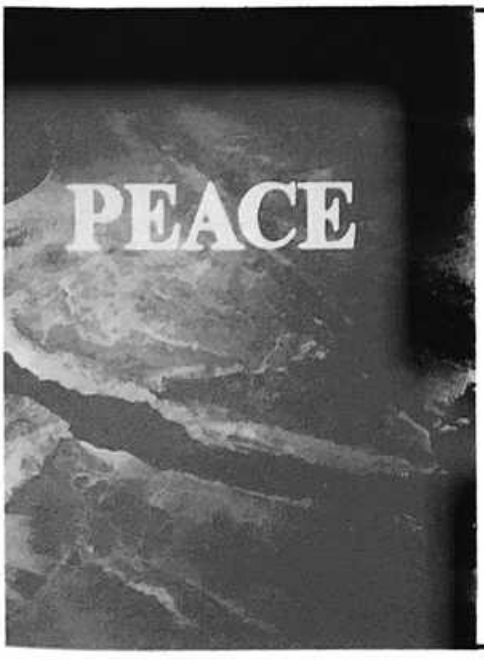
The Dogs of March by Ernest Hebert (Penguin, 1980). What was it like to be unemployed or underemployed in the eighties? This novel tells the story of a blue-collar worker caught in a squeeze between a plant closing and a greedy speculator who wants his house.

The Cider House Rules by John Irving (Bantam, 1986). Irving brings his storytelling gift to this tale of a generational conflict of values between an old country doctor who performs abortions and his adopted son, who becomes a doctor but refuses to do the same.

Travelers by Ruth Prawer Jhabvala (Harper & Row, 1973). This is a complex psychological study of Western students who search for spiritual fulfillment in contemporary India. The author exposes the folly of those who place their egos in the hands of gurus who might as well be selling used cars.

Ironweed by William Kennedy (Penguin, 1984). An idealistic, first-generation Irishman, a baseball star, hits skid row during the Depression. Kennedy's novel, winner of the 1984 Pulizer Prize, explores the diceyness of fate and makes the reader think about today's homeless.

The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts by Maxine



Give a Gift of Peace

My heart yearns for Peace on Earth. To me, the key to that objective lies in the Middle East. I hope that by distributing this image, people's hearts and minds will be impressed with the message it brings. And by carrying that impression with them, they will participate in manifesting the fact.

A minimum of twenty-five percent of the profits from the sale of these posters will be distributed to various organizations working toward the goal of Peace in the Middle East. You may also wish to use them as a fund-raising project to support your own group.

It is my fervent desire that by evoking Peace within individuals, we will establish Peace in our world.

I invite you to join me in this endeavor.

Mega Emerson

full color
26x33 matte finish/heavyweight artprint paper
$12.00+$2.00 shipping & handling

O/mega
PUBLISHING
Dedicated to Peace on Earth

POB 704 AGOURA, CA 91376 (818) 991 8501

Hong Kingston (Knopf, 1976). An account of the Chinese-American experience as seen through the eyes of a young girl, this tale, set in a laundry in California, traces one family's struggle for freedom and opportunity.

Rumors of Peace by Ella Leffland (Harper & Row, 1979). A young California girl observes the rise of nazism, the internment of Japanese-Americans, and the bombings of Pearl Harbor and Hiroshima, providing a home-front view of the Second World War.

At Play in the Fields of the Lord by Peter Matthiessen (Random House, 1965). This novel, set in Latin America, reveals America's moral posturing for what it is. The author, a naturalist-explorer, explodes stereotypes of four midwestern missionaries who are "helping" the natives.

Beloved by Toni Morrison (Knopf, 1988). Winner of the 1988 Pulitzer Prize, this book, set in post-Civil War Ohio, tells the story of an escaped slave who struggles to transcend the painful legacy of her past.

The Magic Journey by John Nichols (Ballantine, 1983). Part of the author's New Mexico trilogy (along with *Milagro Beanfield War*), this novel provides insights into how "the game is being run" on ordinary Americans, as it shows the transformation of a sleepy village into a boom town. Forty years of "progress" boil down to greed, power, money, and cultural genocide.

Machine Dreams by Jayne Anne Phillips (Pocket, 1985). A chronicle of mid-American family life from the Depression to Vietnam, this novel provides clear and compassionate insights on identity and change. It's about recent history, the passage of time, and how the Hampson family copes with the ironies of a rapidly changing America.

Kinds of Love by May Sarton (Norton, 1980). This book is about truth, honesty, integrity, and all those other traditional virtues that have become unfashionable. Three generations celebrate the American bicentennial in a small town in New Hampshire.

A Flag for Sunrise by Robert Stone (Knopf, 1981). How are your tax dollars being spent in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras? This novel will show you. It's a true-to-life depiction of a low-level, amoral CIA operative and his nemesis, a high-minded Catholic priest who is struggling for reform.

Jailbird by Kurt Vonnegut (Dell, 1980). This is the story of Walter Starbuck, a Nixon adviser in the seventies; more specifically, it is about one man's shameless climb up the greasy pole to power, money, and domination as well as the perversion of ends and means.

Meridian by Alice Walker (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976). A coming-of-age novel about a young Black woman who is a college student in Georgia when the civil rights movement grips and transforms the South and the nation. □

LETTERS

(Continued from p. 4)

misunderstanding of the logic and role of theoretical analysis," he (1) concedes that his model can't accommodate relevant evidence, and (2) suggests that my presumed "criterion" of a good media theory couldn't be met by *any* media theory or scientific theory (for example, the theory of gravitation).

Herman doesn't say what he thinks my criterion is, so let me adopt one. How about the criterion that a theory's claims and explanations must be right in particular cases?

In fact, I'm not sure we need a *theory* about the media to understand media behavior any more than we need a *theory* about science in order to do good science. Here, to prod Herman toward my own "profound misunderstanding" of theoretical analysis, I'd urge him to read philosophers like Richard Rorty or Paul Feyerabend or W. V. Quine on theory formation before getting indignant about proper criteria for theories in either the natural sciences or the chop suey known as the "social sciences." But if we must have a theory, I'll go with my adopted criterion. And—sorry—the theory of gravitation meets it. His propaganda model of the media doesn't.

In regard to who bears responsibility for particular notions in *Manufacturing Consent,* I'm grateful to Herman for making the matter clearer. He and Chomsky might have done that in the book. Instead, as he knows, the entire preface is written in "we" language ("we sketch out a 'propaganda model' ... this reflects our belief ... ") and ends with that familiar phrase, "The authors alone remain responsible for its contents." I assumed that meant responsible jointly and severally. If Herman and Chomsky now want to split their community property, that's fine with me. I simply found tracery to Chomsky's linguistic theory more provocative than tracery to Herman's corporate theory (about which I know much less).

As for Herman's claim that motivations of individuals are "quite irrelevant" to whether his "general hypothesis" (the structural model) is true or false when applied to media behavior, I can't agree. Herman writes now that "it is simply false that we ascribe journalist behavior to evil intentions."

But as I pointed out in my article, while the authors "insist on the irrelevance of individual intentions behind the stories they cite, they repeatedly and numbingly employ psychological vocabulary to fault their targets." So *Time* is guilty of "amazing dishonesty and hypocrisy," and the media are variously "deceitful," "cynical," or "loyal agents of terrorism."

Maybe evil is too strong a word here. Indeed, maybe that's why Herman tries to fight the issue around that word. I'd agree that the authors' general tendency is more to condescend to journalists and their potential for self-awareness than to castigate them as devils. But the imputation here of disingenuous motives, judged by any ordinary standard of proper journalism, is plain.

That may be why Herman fudges in his letter and concedes that although bad intentions may exist, they simply lack "substantial explanatory value" in his model. A model that repeatedly invokes psychological states as part of a causal history of reportage but then *denies* their role in an explanatory model, is a foolish model.

In short, I consider the application of such models to the media both wrong on the facts and a methodological error *philosophically* in regard to theory-construction. I cannot argue for the

latter belief here. I can only name-call. So I do.

Finally, it is true that I don't recognize "that exclusion from mainstream debate is the inevitable fate of critics who attack the media and system on fundamental premises and call for radical structural change." I believe that critics open-minded enough to question their own fundamental premises as well as those of the media, and to attend to data that might threaten their theories, can find themselves included in the debate and exert influence. Herman, in contrast, flatly states in regard to reaching minds beyond the already converted that he and Chomsky "are only interested in doing this with our central message intact." One could hardly ask for a more straightforward declaration of intellectual dogmatism.

Blacks and Jews

To the Editor:

Cherie Brown misrepresents what I told CBS about Black–Jewish relations at Harvard (*Tikkun,* July/Aug. 1989). The real story is an interesting one, deserving some elaboration.

Tensions between Black and Jewish students came to a head several years ago when a coalition of Black and Third World students convened a weekend conference on "Third World Communities and Human Rights." There was, of course, much to discuss on the subject of human rights in the Third World at that time, such as the massacres by Idi Amin and his asylum in Saudi Arabia, the massacres of schoolchildren in two central African countries, and the virtual lack of press freedom and due process in many Third World countries. None of these subjects was permitted on the agenda. The sole human rights discussion at this conference consisted of a tribunal convened to judge the "so-called nation of Israel, for its 'terrorism and genocide.'"

The main panelist and guest of honor at this tribunal, subsidized in part by the Harvard Law School, was the third secretary to the Libyan Mission of the United Nations. He wasn't invited by name; the Libyan Mission was simply asked to send its emissary, and whoever showed up would be given guest of honor status by this Third World conference of Harvard Law students. The sole purpose of this obvious provocation was to "stick it to the Jews," as one of the student sponsors told me.

No Israeli, no Jew, no defender or supporter of Israel was permitted to participate in the panel. When the Harvard Jewish Law Students' Association peacefully protested the honoring of the Libyan, comparing the selection to a white law-school group honoring a representative of the South African government, members were threatened with violence by some Third World students and, more importantly, were made to feel guilty by some members of the law school and university administrations.

The Jewish Law Students' Association behaved with dignity. They distributed papers about the Libyan record on human rights; they wrote a moderate statement, not blaming the situation on the Harvard students, but suggesting that they had been victimized by others who had tried to manipulate this event.

When Jews complain about anti-Semitism or anti-Zionism, they are often made to feel that they are oversensitive. Blacks are expected to speak and react very strongly about any manifestation of anti-Black attitudes, as well they should.

The end result was a psychological sense of defensiveness on the part of many Jews for defending what they ought to be defending. Indeed, no Jew should have *had* to speak out on this issue at all. We should have been defended by advocates of human rights who were not Jewish.

Mayor A. J. Cooper of Pritchard, Alabama, another honored guest, denounced the Jewish Law Students' Association and me, as its faculty advisor; then he turned to the Libyan and said, "I believe that *what you have to say* represents the best for which this nation stands." He was cheered loudly by the audience, as were other speakers who made overtly anti-Jewish statements.

Over the next several years—as if it were almost on a schedule—Third World organizations at Harvard staged an annual spring event calculated to exacerbate tensions with the Jewish community. The culmination was when the Black Law Students Association, then under the domination of a radical provocateur named Mohammed Kenyatta, invited a PLO speaker and announced that the organization was "officially" recognizing the PLO and embracing its program, which included the destruction of Israel. As if to demonstrate this support, Kenyatta physically embraced the PLO representative and praised his organization. During the question-and-answer period, Kenyatta explicitly refused to recognize any Jewish questioners—an act for which he was ultimately chastised by the president of the university.

Jewish students were frightened to speak out publicly, though private resentments were obvious. Finally, after half a dozen provocations, I gave an interview to CBS Television, which ran it on the "Evening News." In the interview I said that

> Every spring at Harvard there is an event, which has become a substitute for the traditional panty raid, where Third World communities and Black communities say this is "Stick it to the Jews week."
>
> They bring a PLO speaker or they bring some other opponent of Jewish values and they conduct an event in which they have very little inherent interest except that it really riles up the Jewish community. And we never see it in reverse.

Despite the criticism over my blunt remarks, they apparently had an effect. The annual cycle of anti-Jewish events has now ended, and relationships between Jewish and Black students at Harvard have improved considerably. There is much room for improvement.

Alan Dershowitz
Professor of Law
Harvard Law School
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Cherie Brown responds:

I appreciated learning from Alan a history of the events between Blacks and Jews at Harvard Law School over the past number of years. There is currently a renewed desire amongst Jewish and Black law students there to learn coalition-building skills, and our institute has been asked to lead a training program this fall at Harvard for Black and Jewish law students. Alan's letter reminded me of a number of coalition-building principles that are relevant for Black–Jewish unity work.

Use of the Media:

I was glad to have corrected any misrepresentation of Alan's remarks to CBS. What I focused on in my

original article was the extent to which the CBS producers had tried to coerce me and Susan Wohl (the filmmaker who was editing our videotape entitled *Working it Out: Blacks and Jews on the College Campus,* produced in 1986 by the American Jewish Committee). The producers were going to completely distort our material to fit their impression that Black–Jewish relations were in such disarray. I have worked with wonderful, sensitive journalists who clearly understood the power of their medium. But I have also learned to be particularly careful about how I describe an issue as complex as Black–Jewish relations when a reporter calls for further information. Last week, for example, our institute received phone calls from reporters at *Time, Christian Science Monitor, New Republic,* and *Washington Times* wanting details about the rise in racial incidents on college campuses. We could have justifiably outlined a litany of racial incidents on campuses across the U.S., and those incidents are taking place and need to be reported. But that is only half the story. There is equally a rise in student activism on college campuses and a renewed commitment by college administrators to design multicultural awareness programs. Reporters will not always seek a balanced picture, and it is our role as coalition builders to provide one.

Advocacy Skills Do Not Always Increase Intergroup Cooperation:

The skills of an advocate—an interviewer or initiator of programs and policies on behalf of a particular group—are essential skills to have. It's critical for Jews to be able to advocate for our concerns. However, the skills of strong advocacy can be counterproductive in coalition-building efforts. Every community leader needs to determine when a situation requires advocacy and when it requires coalition building—and they are *not* the same. When a tense situation would best be served by the formation of a strong Black–Jewish coalition, the tactics of picketing controversial speakers and debates or writing strong critical pieces in the press may in fact reduce the options for further insight and intergroup cooperation. Our institute has followed in the wake of Louis Farrakhan's visit on at least twelve campuses. On those campuses where Jewish students picketed and distributed leaflets and Black and Jewish students used student newspapers to exchange angry letters back and forth, very little was learned on either side. Black–Jewish relations remained tense and hostile. Other campuses used Farrakhan's visit as an opportunity to sensitize Black and Jewish students beforehand to the key issues, and on some of those campuses, strong Black–Jewish coalitions are still in place.

Finding a Jewish Voice of Power:

I agree wholeheartedly with Alan that Jews should never remain silent in the face of provocative attacks or mistreatment and that we need to train Jews on and off campus to stop being ashamed, to find our voices and to speak out with strength and conviction. But to fully end anti-Semitism, we also need strong alliances with other ethnic, religious groups. Speaking out of painful emotion or writing articles that "set the record straight" are understandable and sometimes necessary responses. But they will not always be the most powerful responses. For Jews, reclaiming our power involves forming alliances with people who will take the lead in speaking out against anti-Semitism. And the very strategies that initially appear to assert Jewish self-interest may in the long run defeat our self-interest by increasing defensiveness and rigidity amongst potential allies.

Psychological Barriers to Intergroup Cooperation:

Our institute has developed an exercise that trains groups in how to take a highly polarized, emotional issue with rigidly demarcated positions and to reframe the issue in a way that builds bridges. We have used the exercise hundreds of times, including with groups of Black and Jewish leaders and Arab and Jewish leaders. On *every* occasion, we have discovered that when a person is asked to repeat a position just articulated by someone who holds an opposite position, that person will blank out and fail to report those phrases that were spoken by the "opponent" with strong emotion. Positions that are stated with strong emotion apparently decrease the likelihood of their being heard or adopted by people who hold contrary positions.

For all the above reasons, Jewish community leaders need to be well versed not only in advocacy skills but also in the art of coalition-building and intergroup relations.

Cherie Brown
Director, National Coalition
Building Institute
Arlington, Virginia

Highbrow

To the Editor:

I agree with Jackson Lears (*Tikkun,* Jan./Feb. 1989, "Who Killed High Culture?") that Lawrence Levine's *Highbrow/Lowbrow* is an important book documenting and humanely decrying the bifurcation of American culture into high and low. As Levine shows, the raucous vitality of diversified nineteenth-century audiences for theater, concerts, and opera was vitiated after the turn of the century, when Shakespeare and Verdi were transformed into difficult, unpopular "culture," distinct from popular entertainment. I also agree with Lears that this bifurcation is more powerful, less readily reversible, than Levine suggests—that Levine's closing vision of a liberating eclecticism is too pat a response to Allan Bloom's historically uninformed vision of turning back the cultural clock. Lears correctly insists that the elevation of canonized masters, transcending the rabble, was not just the work of the upper-class snobs blamed by Levine. May I share another perspective on this critique?

Bifurcation meant "sacralization"—propped up on a pedestal, frozen in time; *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* were revered as sacred artifacts only initiates could worship. All this Levine says, and says well. What he doesn't say is that the sacralization dynamic metastasized in the twentieth century into an insidiously popular movement: the groundlings who once had thrown tomatoes became well-behaved acolytes in the temple of culture.

As Levine himself states, Arturo Toscanini "became the very symbol of a perfectly sacralized culture" in twentieth-century America. More than any conductor before or since, Toscanini—a fundamentalist who, rejecting "interpretation," reconsecrated the sacred texts he preached—was cloaked in religious metaphor: "priest of culture," "vicar of the immortals." But the Toscanini cult was part of a larger popularization movement, which also included H. G. Wells's *Short History of the World,* Will Durant's *The Story of Philosophy,* and other celebrations of higher learn-

ing and art aimed at the man on the street.

Lawrence Levine censures the prominent New York critic W. J. Henderson for deploring "delirious bravi" from Italian standees at the turn-of-the-century Metropolitan Opera. But Henderson was less an agent of sacralization than would be the music appreciators to come. At the Met, he inveighed against the Caruso cult. And when Toscanini first led the New York Philharmonic in 1926, Henderson wrote anti-religiously: "It was not a concert at all; it was the return of the hero, a Roman triumph staged in New York and in modern dress."

Besides, Henderson had reason to deplore "delirious bravi." New York's operatic culture, circa 1900, needed reforming, and so did its noisy, inattentive audiences. I completely share Levine's admiration for the New World's spunky first response to European plays, symphonies, and operas. But this response was, at the same time, undeniably naive. In music, the Gilded Age was a period of competing popular and elitist strains, each of which promised bad and good. Gustav Mahler, who conducted at the Met in 1907 and 1908 (and who, because he also composed, was no sacralizer), was one of many outsiders who appreciated both the energy and vulgarity of American ballyhoo, who both enjoyed the benefits of Henderson-like purveyors of culture and suffered from their dogmas. The United States, he told his friends back home, was a place to make money, not music. Then, in the same breath, he urged them to seek positions in New York and Boston: "The people here are tremendously unspoilt . . ."

To a surprising degree, this New World confusion of cultural drawbacks and possibilities confronts us to this day. But there is the additional burden, unglimpsed by Mahler, of the Toscanini cult and its legacy of popular sacralization—a legacy renewed every time public television congratulates us for being discriminating customers, then propounds high-cultural fare "Live from Lincoln Center" as moribund as it is pedigreed.

Joseph Horowitz
New York, New York

EARTHQUAKE AND AFTERSHOCK

(Continued from p. 8)

United States against Soviet communism will lose credibility if the cold war does come to an end. Gorbachev will undoubtedly demand that the United States respond to his pressure on the Arab countries by putting similar pressure on Israel. With the mantle of the cold war lifted, the repression necessary to sustain the occupation will prove harder to justify, and American support for Israel will weaken.

If a strong Israel is to emerge from the present wave of revolution, it must begin to envision the future in entirely new terms. Perhaps a bold Israeli overture to involve the Soviet Union directly in the peace process should be given serious thought. Abba Eban has suggested that the European Economic Community could be a model for future relationships between Israel, the Palestinians, and other Arab states. Certainly Gorbachev's vision of a "Common European Home" bridging East and West could inspire a new vision of the Middle East.

All this is particularly unsettling for Jews, who view the post-Holocaust world through the prism of a permanent cold war. They imagine the Berlin Wall to be a kind of eternal punishment for the Holocaust, and many regard its demise with great unease, as though it indicates that Germans have escaped their state of purgatory. But does German reunification really mean the resurrection of an anti-Semitic, fascist state in Central Europe? Will the Holocaust now be forgotten?

For many Jews as well, an oppressive anti-Semitic Soviet Union fits nicely with historical Jewish antipathy to czarist Russia. Although glasnost has released some very ugly anti-Semitic and chauvinist forces in the Soviet Union, it is still possible that Gorbachev's revolution will produce a genuine liberal state in which Jewish life can be revitalized in an atmosphere of tolerance. Will the worldwide Jewish community support the struggle for a Soviet Jewish revival, or will it continue to see immigration as the only option? Will Jews rethink their relationship to Russia if the great "prison house of nations" becomes truly free? Will they remain wedded to historical dogma?

The specter of democracy that haunts Eastern Europe, and implies so much for the rest of the world, is not only a problem for Jews. With the radical upheaval in Eastern Europe still incomplete and very much in danger of counterrevolution, it is premature to draw any hasty conclusions. But as we watch this revolution in awe, almost two hundred years to the day since the French Revolution, we need to begin to imagine a world beyond the cold war. □

RANDOM REFLECTIONS

(Continued from p. 15)

people, and especially the people of Goethe and Mozart, do what they did to another people? And how could the world remain silent? Remain silent and indeed close their doors to millions who could have, with relative simplicity, been plucked from the jaws of agonizing death? At fifteen I felt I knew the answers. If you went with the Anne Frank idea or the Will Rogers line, I reasoned as an adolescent, of course the Nazi horrors became unfathomable. But if you paid more attention to the line on the cuff links, no matter how unpleasant that caption was to swallow, things were not so mysterious.

After all, I had read about all those supposedly wonderful neighbors throughout Europe who lived beside

Jews lovingly and amiably. They shared laughter and fun and the same experiences I shared with my community and friends. And I read, also, how they turned their backs on the Jews instantly when it became the fashion and even looted their homes when they were left empty by sudden departure to the camps. This mystery that had confounded all my relatives since World War II was not such a puzzle if I understood that inside every heart lived the worm of self-preservation, of fear, greed, and an animal will to power. And the way I saw it, it was nondiscriminating. It abided in gentile or Jew, Black, white, Arab, European, or American. It was part of who we all were, and that the Holocaust could occur was not at all so strange. History had been filled with unending examples of equal bestiality, differing only cosmetically.

The real mystery that got me through my teen years was that every once in a while one found an act of astonishing decency and sacrifice. One heard of people who risked their lives and their family's lives to save lives of people they didn't even know. But these were the rare exceptions and in the end there were not enough humane acts to keep six million from being murdered.

I still own those cuff links. They're in a shoe box along with a lot of memorabilia from my teens. Recently I took them out and looked at them and all these thoughts returned to me. Perhaps I'm not quite as sure of all I was sure of at fifteen, but the waffling may come from just being middle-aged and not as virile. Certainly little has occurred since then to show me much different. □

AFTER THE COLD WAR

(Continued from p. 18)

social reality. To be a liberal or part of "the Left" in the modern world is to derive one's moral roots from that prophetic tradition of outrage at injustice. Looking at the world from that perspective, we are far indeed from any "end to history." And the triumph of capitalism, whatever else it may be, is not a triumph of healing and repair. So where are we from the perspective of those who have "tikkun" as their goal?

First, the good news: the disintegration of Eastern European totalitarianism. Certainly one of the great tragedies of the twentieth century was the defeat of the liberatory forces within the Communist movement and their replacement by antidemocratic and inhumane elites whose primary goals were the perpetuation of their own power. The willful murder of millions of the most dedicated socialists and Communists by Stalin, in the name of socialism and communism, was for decades alternately denied or justified by many decent and idealistic people in the industrialized West as "necessary costs for the building of socialism." But it was not socialism that was being built so much as a totalitarian system of state control serving the interests of a well-entrenched bureaucratic elite that manipulated the language of Marxism to serve its own narrow interests. Eventually the truth seeped out, and there ensued throughout the West for most of the second half of the twentieth century a profound cynicism about the possibility of any humane reconstruction of society. The cynical misuse of the liberatory thrust of socialist and communist ideology by East European totalitarians fit perfectly into the needs of Western apologists for capitalism's excesses. "Yes," insisted the Western ideologues, "what you see in the Soviet Union, China, Poland, Rumania *is* communism. This is what happens when you try to overthrow a capitalist system in the name of humane ideals. So aren't you better off with capitalism?"

Never mind that Marx himself would never have described the Soviet Union as socialist or communist; for him the character of any society was determined by who actually controlled the means of production, and it would be impossible to argue that the working class actually had control in the Soviet Union or China or Eastern Europe. Never mind that New Leftists around the world for the past thirty years had rejected the apologists for these regimes and articulated a vision of liberation that was as critical of the East as it was of the West. Sufficient numbers of leftists in this country *were* willing to talk about the Soviet Union, China, and Eastern Europe as "actually existing socialism" to give credence to Western ideologues' charge that "You have seen communism and it does not work."

Don't misunderstand the intention of my argument. Although I *am* arguing that communism or socialism in the sense articulated by the classic communist and socialist thinkers has never been tried, and therefore cannot reasonably be said to have failed, I am *not* arguing that what we really need now is to push for a return to that classic conception. On the contrary, the fundamental conception of virtually all the liberatory forces, including those who were never seduced by the vision of Eastern European communism, is badly misguided at a much deeper level. What I am saying is this: one of the major obstacles to any advance for a liberatory Left—the role played in the twentieth century by the international communist movement—is beginning to disappear, and this is good news. It will be harder in the twenty-first century to use fear of this kind of totalitarianism as a club against the liberatory desires of the world's peoples.

The bad news, however, is that the social change movements "waiting in the wings" have lost their way, have little following, and demonstrate little self-understanding

as to what has gone wrong or how they might change their own directions. Yet the world is as badly in need of repair and transformation as ever.

One might have thought that the serious economic and environmental problems facing us would be sufficient to generate large-scale social movements in the West capable of reaching power and transforming social reality. Far from this being the case, the movements for social change, whether of the center (the Democratic party) or what might loosely be called the Left (the various social change movements), are deeply isolated and confused. The reason for this isolation is that life in capitalist society has generated a form of oppression that is not primarily a matter of economic or physical survival: namely, the destruction of the moral and spiritual environment within which human life must flourish.

This form of oppression appears and is experienced in our lives as merely "personal problems" which are supposedly rooted in our own individual failures as human beings. If we have work that is fundamentally alienating, this is supposedly because we have personally failed to advance ourselves adequately in a world that provides equal opportunity; hence we can only blame ourselves. If it is hard to maintain loving and committed relationships, if families feel unstable and explosive, if friendships are hard to sustain and people seem to use each other more than nourish each other, this must be because we are individually inadequate and need some form of individual repair work (exercise, diet, psychotherapy, twelve-step programs, and the like are currently most in vogue). If drugs or crime flourish, this must reflect individual pathologies that can be dealt with through escalated forms of repression against the criminals.

Once the problems are understood to be personal, the solutions are necessarily privatized. The social change movements of the earlier part of the twentieth century, including the labor movement, socialist movement, and civil rights movement, often embodied and articulated a moral vision of community even while their explicit focus was more narrowly aimed at the level of "rights" or "economic goodies." It was not atypical for these movements to build strong internal communities by paying attention to the daily problems of its participants. They attended to the needs of family life; they celebrated births and marriages; they visited the sick; they helped bury the dead; and they created ritual and music for communal celebrations.

Yet these movements never understood the importance of this dimension of their own activity and never had an intellectual framework that emphasized the centrality of these psychological and spiritual needs. Attention to the needs of individuals, support for families, building communities—these were dismissed as expendable side concerns, not the economic heart of the matter. The movements could focus on the more "bottom-line" concerns of rights and money and leave all these "softer" concerns to personal life—exactly where the larger society said they belonged. No wonder, then, that these movements could provide no bulwark against the increasingly self-interested ethos generated by the capitalist marketplace. And the more nonideological and businesslike the Democrats and the unions became, the less they could inspire any deep devotion or sense of purpose. People might feel happy that unions or the Democrats could deliver some useful economic goodies—much as a good insurance company could provide good "coverage." But if the real locus of fulfillment or pain was in personal life, and liberal politics had nothing to do with that, then understandably people's energy would be withdrawn from politics.

So this very privatization of life becomes part of the problem. Families and friendships have traditionally been embedded in larger communities of meaning. The absence of those larger frameworks put an impossible burden on every particular relationship to provide "the meaning of life," which was supposedly developed out of the "fun" or "satisfaction" that each individual family or relationship or friendship could provide. Is it any wonder that relationships feel more fragile when they are constantly being scrutinized in terms of their adequacy in providing these kinds of satisfactions? When private life fails to provide the necessary satisfactions, most people blame themselves or their partners or their friends—incorrectly assuming that everyone else has managed to create these personal satisfactions, and simultaneously feeling that their own failure to do so is a direct reflection of their own lack of worth as a human being.

Ideally, the Left would help people understand the social determinants of these problems. By helping people see the ways in which capitalism as a system undermines ethically and spiritually grounded communities, the Left would help generate a sense of compassion for ourselves and each other that would uproot self-blaming and ultimately empower.

The Left is unable to make this move because it has directly contributed to the problem by championing the removal of ethical and spiritual concerns from the public arena and moving them into private life. Fearful that ethical and spiritual concerns might legitimate a new imposition of a particular religion on the entire society, and used to seeing religion itself as counterposed to the needs of human liberation, the Left is in no position to generate the politics of compassion that is key to a liberatory politics in the current period.

How Did the Liberal Left Get into Its Conceptual Muddle?

Whatever the liberatory potential inherent in the Exodus and prophetic traditions of the Bible, the actually existing religious communities of late antiquity were severely flawed, often so completely enmeshed with existing systems of class domination as to be indistinguishable from them. While some may argue today that Christianity checked the excesses of what might have otherwise been an even more brutal dark age, most of those who lived through it experienced Christianity as the essential element of feudalism. This element provided the fundamental justification for class hierarchy and oppression. Not only was the church the largest landowner, it was the sanctifier of an entire social order in which the language of "community" and "morality" was manipulated to justify a hierarchical and oppressive community based on inequality of power. The church also fostered a morality that taught people to stay in their place, learn their "station and its duties," and subordinate their own needs and desires to those of the wealthy and powerful. I am willing to imagine that the feudal order had its moments of sublime beauty, enriching human community, spiritual depth, and moral sensitivity, and that there were wondrous dimensions of human experience realized then that might be harder to realize today. Yet I give deeper credence to the collective memory of the human race which saw the medieval period as one so dominated by pain and oppression that any force that could deliver humanity from it would be hailed as a liberator, and that ideas used by the feudal order would be permanently tainted by association.

It is no wonder, then, that the struggle for human liberation that emerged in Western Europe took the form of a struggle against the imposed communities with which religion had been identified, and against an objective ethics that had been used to restrict human freedoms. The newly emerging class of shopkeepers, merchants, and bankers were particularly hemmed in by the church's economic restrictions limiting their ability to charge however much they wished for the goods they produced, or to lend money for interest, or to engage in commerce on the large number of religious holidays that covered almost one-third of the medieval calendar.

Although at first the challenge to this order was very limited, the bourgeoisie over the next several hundred years increasingly began to formulate its own self-justification in ways that opposed the spiritual foundation of feudalism. If the church was the guarantor of salvation in another world, the bourgeoisie could provide concrete results in this world. It could provide material goods that were verifiable by one's own immediate experience. If the church claimed as its domain all that was unique, all that was "beyond" the scientific method, the bourgeoisie would not compete on spiritual terrain with the feudal order. What it could do was to deny the importance of the spiritual altogether. While the old feudal order talked of the realm of the spirit, of good and evil, of the higher responsibilities and refinements, the bourgeoisie talked of the material needs of the body, of immediate gratification, of making the evidence for its success visible where it could be seen, rather than in the sky or in some future life that the church promised to the oppressed.

It was this insistence on material gratification of the body in the "here and now" that spurred the growth of the bourgeoisie and won for it growing support from other sectors of the population. The church had a lofty set of ideas about community and morality—but the actual experience most people had in feudal "communities" involved oppression and injustice that the church appeared to justify and from which it benefitted. Had there actually been a spiritually centered and moral community, the appeal of the bourgeoisie's materialism and the call for individual rights as a counter to the claims of community responsibility might have fallen on deaf ears. But since the actual experience tied to the church's rhetoric was an experience of oppression, since all the church could really offer was a promise of salvation in some future world (given that the actual world it had helped to create and sustain was so painful and unjust), its appeal increasingly declined when faced with the challenge of a bourgeoisie who could promise rewards in this world. If, as the bourgeoisie contended, those who sang the praises of the spiritual were really only concerned with their own material well-being anyway, then why not give power to the emerging class of traders, manufacturers, and bankers who could make the material realm flourish for greater numbers of people once they were allowed to follow their own unbridled self-interests?

The ideas that became central to the struggle for human liberation, then, were themselves a product of the particular distortions of feudalism and the specific way that the bourgeoisie framed its alternative to the old order. If the old order touted community and responsibility, the new class would proclaim the centrality of the individual and (usually *his*) freedom of choice. If the old order talked of spiritual reality, the new class promoted a conception of reality in which all that was real could be subject to empirical verification through the senses. Other forms of experience—aesthetic, ethical, and religious—were increasingly seen as problematic because they were nonverifiable in terms of the new criterion of reality. While many bourgeois theorists tried

to maintain a place for these other ways of experiencing the world—postulating a fundamentally "private" or "noumenal" world in which these other realities might be allowed—our collective and communal realities were to be emptied of these concerns and focus exclusively on that which we could intersubjectively verify as real through public observation under controlled and repeatable conditions. A form of science emerged that based itself on these narrowly empiricist assumptions. And as that science developed immense prestige through its ability to provide increasing mastery over some aspects of nature, its paradigm of reality increasingly came to be viewed as "common sense." Those who thought that human reality demanded something "more" increasingly seemed to be metaphysicians hanging on to an outdated conceptual framework, or well-intentioned religious nut cases who did best to keep their schemes to themselves.

Let me hasten to add that the struggle for human rights and individual freedom, emerging in the context of feudal oppression, was a necessary and important struggle—and not one that has yet been fully won. Once the bourgeoisie was able to overthrow the feudal aristocrats and build a new capitalist economic and social order, new problems emerged which seemed to indicate the limits of bourgeois ideology. The bourgeoisie had promised liberty, equality, and fraternity. But the liberty was only the freedom of each person to pursue his or her own individual interests—and in a context in which previous inequalities could be passed on to the next generations through inherited property, thereby generating a class system as thoroughly unequal as any that had supposedly been overthrown. Equality meant only equality before the law—and the laws were written in the interests of the industrialists and bankers. Fraternity seemed to be little more than the camaraderie of men who could rejoice in being still allowed to perpetuate a personal feudalism in their own families by reigning over wives and children whose rights were severely curtailed in law and in fact.

From this standpoint, the basic struggle of liberals and progressives in the past two centuries became the struggle to give more substantive meaning to the original struggle fought by the bourgeoisie. The Left, as we came to be known (because of where we sat in the original Assembly formed after the French Revolution), insisted that the bourgeoisie take its original promise seriously. The promise of equality and freedom must be realized—and this meant pushing up against the new economic and political order established by the capitalist elites.

The division in the twentieth century between radical or revolutionary elements and those that became known as "liberals" was a division about how best to achieve that freedom. Liberals argued that the capitalist order itself was reformable in ways that could increase freedom and equality. The socialists and communists argued that concentration of power and wealth in the hands of the few substantially undermined the possibilities for freedom. As the media intensified its ability to manipulate mass consciousness in accordance with the needs of the ruling elites, individual freedom would increasingly be an illusion of choice within a reality of compulsion. This illusion of choice was only an extension of the dynamics people already experienced in the economic marketplace, where they got to sell their labor power to any owner of capital they chose but meanwhile had no choice regarding the necessity of selling that labor power. Moreover, socialists pointed out, inequalities based on a history of racism and sexism severely limited the choices available to many, and made it easier for the ruling elites to set one sector of the population against another. Real freedom could only be achieved in a system that eliminated inequalities based on race, sex, or class.

For us at *Tikkun* to say that we are "progressive" means that we are part of the Left in this struggle to eliminate sexual, racial, and class inequalities and to promote the fullest flowering of human freedom and satisfaction. To call ourselves "liberal" is to identify with those in the liberal tradition who have demanded that in the course of building a more egalitarian society we must simultaneously insist on fundamental human freedoms of speech, assembly, dissent, and the right to resist attempts by the state or other coercive bodies (including the movement for social change itself) to interfere with our personal lives and require that we conform to some externally imposed standard of joint activity or thought. Nothing I am going to say about the limits of the liberal and progressive cause should be misunderstood to endorse those who use criticisms of the Left as a cover for hoping to reestablish a society in which the progressive and liberal programs are undermined or eliminated. The struggle for economic and political "rights" is, I believe, a righteous struggle. So we stand *with* the struggles of all those who resist the coercive power of communities that impose their values on the individual; *with* the struggle of workers against oppressive bosses or the manipulative and undemocratic structures of corporate and government bureaucracies; *with* the struggles of women against sexist practices; *with* women and children against oppressive family structures that require subordination of intellect, emotion, and will to a family power structure; and most generally *with* the struggle against any unjustly constituted authority that uses power in unfair and oppressive ways.

And yet all these struggles have not gathered the

support they should have over the more than two hundred years since the American and French revolutions put these concerns on our common agenda. And the reason is that these struggles—fundamental and critical as they are—have been framed within a conceptual context that ignores other dimensions of human reality and have thus been unable to address the fullest levels of human need and dissatisfaction with the contemporary world.

The solution, we must stress, is not to adopt some tired form of communitarianism that glorifies past communities as an alternative to present individualism and alienation. People want community, but they also quite legitimately want freedom from coercive norms and are rightly wary of any attempts to lead them back into social forms that are externally manipulative. We do not need a resurrection of superego-based communities which tell people they must follow precepts X and Y, and that create a new load of externally defined "shoulds" to govern their lives.

The moral vision of the communities we hope for, then, cannot be embodied in a set of authoritative rules imposed on a mass of people conceptualized as "difficult human beings" who need external guidance. Rather, we have to imagine a democratic community in which the nature of the social practice of daily life is inherently ethical, since ethical concerns permeate the way people conceptualize their individual and collective situation. When ethical concerns become central to daily life, the medium of relationship becomes ethically shared commitments, commitments not imposed but freely embraced and continually re-embraced within the recognition of our human freedom. An ethical attitude toward existence becomes the medium of solidarity with other people, as we share a forward-looking perspective rather than suffering our individual existence as alienated beings who are powerless and resigned.

To have this attitude toward each other and toward our possibilities is not to submit to some authoritative order, but rather both to overcome the debilitating depression that shapes the consciousness of daily life in a privatized society and to recognize our common interest in playfully and lovingly shaping a world together. This common goal can be called "becoming a partner with God in creating the world," if one wishes a religious language, but one need not adopt any specific religious tradition in order to engage in this kind of thinking. Or, to the extent that I am talking about a religious perception of the world, it need not be based on Judaism or any other particular historical religious tradition, though there is much to be learned from such traditions.

In short, the vision of an ethically shaped community of meaning is a vision that can emerge from our own activity together as people committed to healing and repairing the world. Without this kind of vision, I'm afraid, social change movements quickly devolve into the logic of the established order wherein we remain condemned to a frantic search for our own personal solutions. The understandable discomfort so many of us feel when someone starts to talk in terms of ethics or religious vision, the sense that somebody is about to trick us back into a world without freedom and choice, can become an obstacle which prevents us from acknowledging the kind of ethical community that is democratically created and that generates freedom, spontaneity, and playfulness rather than a repressive order.

With all its problems, the liberatory movement of the 1960s gave some of us a taste of this possibility—precisely at the moments when it was most utopian and most willing to transcend not only the logic of capitalist society but also the logic of its own more narrowly framed political demands.

Prospects for the Twenty-first Century

Given this analysis, I find it hard to be optimistic about the chances for human liberation in the foreseeable future. As long as liberal and progressive forces remain tied to a conception of human reality derived from a metaphysics that has little place in it for love, ethics, and spirituality, they will continue to foster a politics that leaves fundamental aspects of reality unaddressed. Hence they will fail to ignite our passions in a sustainable way.

What *is* accomplishable within this framework is the transition from feudalism to capitalism—a repeat on a global scale of what has already happened to a significant extent in the U.S. Wherever we have overt forms of authoritarian control or extremes of economic and political domination, the already existing framework of liberal and progressive politics will be relevant and useful. Missing will be the ability to transform capitalist societies to what needs to come next: societies in which our human capacities are actualized and in which loving relationships and meaningful work are sustained rather than undermined by the social structure.

Of course, the transition from feudalism, broadly understood, is nothing to be sniffed at! The potential of a triumph of civil liberties and human rights in the twenty-first century is a wonderful prospect, and one that will take the best efforts of many of us. I imagine that such a transition will involve at least the following: a worldwide struggle to equalize the economic differences between the Northern and Southern hemispheres of the planet, or roughly what we call the differences

between the Third World and advanced industrial societies; a struggle to undermine racist practices in the advanced industrial societies; a struggle to eliminate the inequalities of power and respect between men and women; a struggle to replace authoritarian and totalitarian regimes with Western-style democratic regimes, replicating worldwide what is currently being achieved in Eastern Europe.

Won't this be a wonderful advance if this kind of defeudalization of the world is achieved in the twenty-first century? Yes. I enthusiastically embrace it and will happily join the relevant struggles. Yet I can also envision a world emerging from these developments that resembles in its totality the current reality of the United States. And while that will be a welcome advance, a march away from worldwide poverty and overt political oppression, it will be far from the kind of human liberation that we seek. For those who think in terms of historical stages, it may be absolutely necessary to go through that stage on a global level in order to be ready to put the question of human liberation on our collective agenda. But if so, then the levels of pain and unhappiness that currently drive so many people in the U.S. to alcohol, drugs, television, violence, and irrational acting out may become the common lot of humanity until we are ready to address a restructuring of our society in different terms from those that are put forward by the struggle against feudalism.

Moreover, to the extent that the model of progressive politics continues to ignore or downplay the psychological, spiritual, and ethical issues I've raised, we on the Left will continue to flounder. Consider how this might play in some critical areas of concern:

1. The Awakening in Eastern Europe. Framed as a liberation from Communist totalitarianism, this awakening will perceive its central task as providing political freedom and economic growth to a population long starved for both. The Left will warn against the capitalist marketplace and score points by showing how the freedoms of the West may lead to unemployment and a new class system as oppressive in its way as the oppression of the older Communist system. Yet, if the Left is arguing about the best way to achieve economic strength and political freedom, it would not be irrational for many Eastern Europeans to believe that the capitalist road is the quickest way to such strength and freedom—after all, they can see for themselves the successes of Western Europe and the U.S. If these are the primary terms of the debate, if the Left is unable to speak to the spiritual and psychological needs of the people, confining these needs to the realm of religion and ceding that realm to the Catholic church, then there will be little chance of moving the discussion beyond a level on which the economic successes of the West may well trump every other argument.

2. South Versus North. One of the major developments in the next hundred years will be the industrialization of the Third World and the concomitant weakening of the power of the Northern Hemisphere's imperialist powers (likely to be Japan, a Germany-dominated Europe, the U.S., and possibly a reindustrialized Soviet Union). Because this struggle will most probably be fought out in terms of equality and fairness, and because the liberal and progressive forces within the advanced industrial societies will quite rightly dedicate some of their energies to supporting attempts to redistribute wealth and power to those who have been historical victims of imperialism, the dominant paradigms of the Left are likely to be reinforced. Those who talk in terms of spiritual, ethical, psychological, and aesthetic concerns will continue to be marginalized within the Left or dismissed as self-indulgent in the face of these larger issues.

3. The Ecological Crisis. We need a fundamental reconsideration of our relationship to nature. This should include a sense of awe and wonder at the universe that would preclude us from seeing our environment simply as a resource to be disposed of in more or less rational ways. Yet to think in these terms would require precisely the paradigm shift that the Left will not allow itself as long as it remains committed to the worldview it developed to fight feudalism. So, instead, the struggle will be fought out in more narrowly technocratic and scientific language that will make it extremely difficult for most people to understand or participate. In addition, because the Left will be unable to address the spiritual, psychological, and ethical crisis facing people in the advanced industrial societies, most of these people will continue to feel only a peripheral interest in politics—watching it more as a spectator sport and hoping that the good guys will win, but totally unable to mobilize themselves into political action.

4. The Women's Movement. Potentially the most fundamental of all the political struggles when it is conceived of as the struggle for "women's liberation" and not simply for "women's rights," the women's movement could be a vehicle for bridging the gap between the politics of rights and the politics that incorporate a deeper understanding of the spiritual, psychological, and ethical dimensions of human experience. Much of the strategic focus that we've developed at *Tikkun* in terms of articulating a politics based on the actual subjective experience and needs of human beings is learned from the liberatory tendency within the women's movement and is an attempt to extend its lessons to the population as a whole.

Yet the sad reality is that the liberatory moment in women's struggles has often been subordinated to a more

narrowly conceived struggle for rights. While backing those struggles as absolutely necessary and justified, we can also see how a women's movement that focuses merely on equal rights for women can lose sight of a transformative vision that would challenge the entire picture of what it means to be human in the contemporary world. I do not advocate giving up the struggle for rights, but I also see how that struggle may subvert the transformative potential of the women's movement just as it has already done for the larger liberal and progressive forces over the past hundreds of years.

5. The Struggle Against Interimperial Rivalries and Domination by the Multinationals. On the one hand, the multinationals may appear to be a restraining force against the reemergence of the kind of virulent nationalism that led to World War I and which might be on the international agenda once again in the aftermath of the breakdown of the cold war. On the other hand, the multinationals may themselves become more powerful than many countries and dictate conditions of life that are as oppressive in their way as any dictatorial system of the past might have been. In this situation, nations may stand in the same relation to the multinationals that cities today stand in relationship to national capital—the more the people in cities gain local democratic power, the more they feel themselves powerless to influence corporate power that is able to shift resources and investment at will, shutting down plants and disabling local economies.

Given this kind of development, the Left will quite reasonably press for international democracy and international institutions capable of placing some constraints on the multinationals; internationalism will be on the agenda not just as a pretty moral ideal but as a practical necessity for those who wish to have any power over their own lives. And yet the Left will once again find itself unable to mobilize as much support as it should get on the issue—facing the same surplus powerlessness in the population as a whole that we have already discussed. The most frequently repeated comment about politics I heard in my interviews with American workers was some variant of the following: "Who am I to try to change the big picture when I've made such a mess of my own personal life? I need to spend my energy getting my own life together, and leave politics to someone else!" To the extent that people feel alone and overwhelmed by their personal lives, and blame themselves for the ways that their lives are not working, and to the extent that they feel that the ethical and spiritual void in their lives is not addressed by progressive politics, they are unlikely to feel that they have the time or energy to become involved in the huge efforts it would take to democratize a world economy. By failing to adequately concern itself with the inner life of their potential constituents, liberal and progressive movements will be unable to adequately mobilize people for the external struggles.

I've told this story in a relatively pessimistic way. Of course, there is hope that all of these struggles can go in a very different direction. We have developed *Tikkun* in the hope that a new politics may emerge in the next century that would begin to shake off the assumptions and constraints that have governed the forces of human liberation over the past several hundreds of years. That new politics would be based not primarily on human rights but on human needs. It would start from the assumption that we have a need to actualize our capacities to be intellectually and aesthetically creative human beings enmeshed in work and families and communities that provide a framework of ethical meaning and spiritual sensitivity—and it would then critique existing social relationships to the extent that they block our ability to actualize these capacities. It would demand the transformation of our society in ways that would encourage loving relationships and fulfilling work—but it would understand that our ability to be creative or loving is not a product of one narrow aspect of our world—not, for example, just a function of whether we have adequate pay or adequate child care—but rather a product of the entire way our lives are organized. Hence it would seek to transform those aspects of contemporary arrangements that encourage narcissism, cynicism, materialism, and me-firstism, and that encourage us to accept a less creative and loving life than we need and want.

Fundamental to that new way of doing politics would be the recognition of our need for loving relationships embedded in communities of meaning and purpose guided by a shared ethical vision. I have proposed that the Left form a "progressive profamily movement" to articulate the ways that loving relationships are stifled or undermined by the dynamics of a competitive marketplace and by the materialist and self-centered ethos of the capitalist system. Such a progressive profamily approach would champion not just the traditional family form, but all the other forms in which we are attempting to build long-term committed loving relationships, including gay families and single-parent families. It would insist on the importance of equality between the sexes and the rights of children within families, just as it would require restructuring the world of work to provide meaningful and nonalienating labor and opportunities for democratic participation.

That new way of politics would include the development of a political sphere that allows for and promotes a sense of awe and wonder at the ways of the universe and the grandeur of all that is, and a reverence for life in all its forms. This does not mean institutional-

izing any particular form of religion or adopting a secularized and empty civic religiosity, but rather encouraging all of us to approach the world through a broadened conception of the real, a conception that reclaims much that was abandoned in the metaphysics of liberation adopted by progressive forces since the Enlightenment. A public sphere, free of its fear of religious violence, governed by a deep commitment to tolerance and mutuality of respect, could promote a new and significant discussion about alternative religious and spiritual conceptions. Encouraging this kind of discussion would give the liberatory movements a dimension of wisdom that cannot be found in narrowly framed debates about economic systems.

A new way of politics would involve the creation of a mass psychology of compassion based on a deep self-understanding of how we have been shaped by social and familial forces not in our control, and on the assumption that we can, in stages and successive approximations, begin to master our own selves and, together with those around us, reform ourselves into the kinds of human beings we wish to be. Undermining the dynamics of self-blaming that have been central to the meritocratic fantasies of the capitalist marketplace, a new politics could begin to help us understand ourselves as part of a long chain of human relationships that have bound the generations throughout human history. By helping us to understand the inevitable ways that we and all who surround us will be less than we could and should be, by helping us to develop compassion for ourselves, our families, our nations, and even for those people whom we don't much like, a politics of compassion can help us overcome the crippling self- and other-blaming that makes human relationships so difficult.

In my own view that liberatory politics would have much to learn from the Jewish tradition, providing the Jewish tradition were viewed as a practice of human liberation that has sought to combine the struggle for political and economic rights with a spiritual and ethical perspective embedded in a religious tradition. But such a politics would also have to learn from Judaism's mistakes. The inevitable distortions that every liberatory tradition necessarily embodies, reflections of the historical moments in which its ideas have been shaped, are as evident in Judaism as they are in different ways in the Marxist and psychoanalytic tradition. There are, of course, many in the *Tikkun* community who do not believe that Judaism offers any special avenue of information or insight into how to bring about real social change. Not only are there committed Christians, Buddhists, and Moslems who are turned on by the fundamental vision articulated by *Tikkun* and who think that their own traditions are equally valuable as sources of insight for this task, there are also many *Tikkun* readers who are skeptical about the ability of any and all flawed religious traditions to serve as a basis for a liberatory movement. That is one of the discussions that will remain a creative tension within our community. Yet what we all share, I believe, is a deep sense that there is something fundamentally wrong with the liberatory project as it has been defined by the current liberal and progressive movements, and that we need not only to fight the Right but also to reshape the Left. □

THE EEL AND HISTORY

(Continued from p. 22)

personal example, by word of mouth or in writing, or even better, by the quickest telegraph of all, rumor." Interestingly, he no longer refers to an "Arab" telegraph. Perhaps he thought the original formulation would have been viewed as racist by a non-Israeli audience.

According to Teveth, it was Arab orders that precipitated the exodus, at least until May 15. After that date, says Teveth, "one may properly speak ... of expulsion by Israel." The Arabs had misbehaved: they invaded the fledgling Jewish state. Ben-Gurion's heart hardened, and so the Haganah/IDF expelled the rebellious, ungrateful Arabs. Here, too, Teveth offers us a simplistic, one-cause explanation—and again he is wrong. It is undoubtedly true that there was a greater readiness among IDF units to expel Arab communities during the offensives of July and October–November than there had been at the start of hostilities. And, without a doubt, IDF assault and, on occasion, expulsion orders were normally the major and final precipitant to flight. But even in July–November, the exodus was a complex phenomenon, in which IDF assault or fear of IDF assault was only the final albeit major precipitant to flight, but not the only one. For example, in Ramle and Lydda, a variety of events and circumstances combined to sap the inhabitants' morale. These included occasional Haganah/IDF raids, economic privations—including rocketing unemployment and prices; an influx of panic-instilling refugees from Jaffa in late April and early May; fear of Jewish atrocities; conquest by Jewish forces; and, finally, a massacre (in Lydda on July 12). Only then came IDF expulsion orders and their implementation.

It is of course Teveth's single-cause explanation of the Arab exodus up to May 15, 1948, that must concern us here—his "Arab orders" explanation. What is wrong with the explanation? Two things: First, there is no evidence for it. And second, it flies in the face of the evidence—especially the timing—of what did happen.

Teveth cites (as evidence?) Ben-Gurion's statement of October 11, 1961, to the Knesset:

> The Arabs' exodus from Palestine ... began immediately after the UN [partition] resolution.... And we have explicit documents testifying that they left Palestine following instructions by the Arab leaders, with the Mufti at their head, under the assumption that the invasion of the Arab armies at the expiration of Mandate would destroy the Jewish state and push all the Jews into the sea, dead or alive.

It seems straightforward enough: Ben-Gurion asserted that the Palestinian Arabs fled as a result of orders by the Arab leaders, and that Israel had "explicit documents" proving this. Teveth then treats us to a selection of these documents. Most of his citations are in fact quotes from my book, in which I carefully detailed the various orders by local Arab commanders and politicians to various Arab villages to flee their villages and neighbors. Altogether, according to the IDF's own intelligence summary of June 30, 1948, some two dozen Arab villages (of a total of close to two hundred abandoned up to the start of June) had been evacuated as a result of orders by Arab leaders and commanders. Moreover, women and children and old men were ordered by various Arab commanders and politicians at various times before May 15 to evacuate combat zones or potential combat zones in the towns and villages. Lastly, in one or two towns—notably in Haifa, on April 22—a decision or the announcement of a decision by the local Arab leadership contributed to local flight.

All of this, to be sure, contributed to the Arab exodus. But this is far from constituting evidence of an Arab order or Arab orders to Palestine's Arabs to quit their homeland. Had such a blanket order (or series of orders) been given, it would have found an echo in the thousands of documents produced by the Haganah's Intelligence Service, the IDF Intelligence Service, the Jewish Agency Political Department's Arab Division, the Foreign Ministry Middle East Affairs Department, and the Foreign Ministry's Research Department; or in the memoranda and dispatches of the various British and American diplomatic posts in the area (in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, Haifa, Amman, Beirut, Damascus, and Cairo); or in the various radio monitoring services (such as the BBC's). Any or all of these would have produced reports, memoranda, or correspondence referring to the Arab order and quoting from it. But no such reference to or quotation from such an order or series of orders exists in the contemporary documentation. This documentation, it should be noted, includes daily, almost hourly, monitoring of Arab radio broadcasts, the Arab press inside and outside Palestine, and statements by Arab and Palestinian Arab leaders.

Precisely at the point when, according to Teveth and his fellow propagandists, the Arab leaders and radio stations were supposed to be broadcasting orders to the Arab population of Palestine to flee their homes on the eve of the pan-Arab invasion of May 15, we find references to and quotations from Arab leaders' statements calling on the Palestinians to stay put in their homes and villages, on pain of dire punishment. Other references document a call for those who had already fled the country to return. Haganah intelligence reports and British diplomatic reports from May 5–6, 1948, repeatedly refer to a concerted campaign by Transjordan's King Abdullah, Damascus and Ramallah radios, and Kaukji's Arab Liberation Army calling on the Palestinians to stay put or, if already in exile, to return home. Long quotations from Abdullah's and Kaukji's appeals or orders to this effect are quoted in the documentation. "Arab orders"—but to stay, not to leave.

And what does Teveth offer us in support of his single-cause "Arab orders" explanation of the flight? A single document, the Haganah intelligence daily report from April 24, which Teveth calls "one [document] in particular," implying that there are other similar documents where that one came from (something that Teveth obviously knows is a fiction). And what does this document say?

> Rumors have it that the Arab Higher Committee in Jerusalem ordered the evacuation of Arabs from several localities in Palestine.... Arab residents are advised to flee Palestine as soon as possible, and after its fall into the hands of the Arab governments, they will be returned as victors.

An interesting report, but hardly the stuff on which to base a definitive historical interpretation. First, the Haganah report quoted by Teveth refers to "rumors," not hard intelligence. Second, it refers to Arab Higher Committee (AHC) orders to "several localities"—not exactly a blanket order to the Arabs of Palestine. Moreover, the orders, says the report, emanate from the "AHC in Jerusalem"—whereas, at this date, the AHC no longer existed in Jerusalem and no longer operated from that town. The heads of the AHC all lived and worked by late April in Cairo, Beirut, or Damascus. All of which renders these "rumors" highly suspect.

What makes this Haganah intelligence report so interesting is its singularity, its uniqueness. None of the rumors mentioned there are referred to in the Haganah Intelligence Service daily reports of say April 22 or 23, or of April 25 or 27, or of May 1, 3, or 5. Indeed, there is no prior mention of these "rumors" and no follow-up reference to them whatsoever in any subsequent Haganah intelligence. Nor is there any such reference in any other contemporary report. Had further rumors, let alone confirmation of these rumors, been referred to or

picked up, they would have undoubtedly been cited in subsequent reports and communications.

An order or series of orders by the AHC or the Arab leaders to Palestine's Arabs to quit their homes would have been a dramatic, major event. And it would have been an event picked up and utilized in subsequent weeks by Israeli officials and politicians, who were hard put to prove that, indeed, the Jews had not expelled the Palestinian Arabs. Such an order or series of orders would not have been so universally, completely ignored. Yet there is a reverberating silence in all the Israeli (and Western) archives when it comes to this "order" or series of orders; there is a vast blank.

Then there is the problem of timing. Let us say that Teveth and his fellow propagandists are right: the AHC and/or the Arab leaders issued an ord. or a series of orders to Palestine's Arabs to quit their homes in advance of the Arab invasion. But when was this order or series of orders issued? Was it on or around April 10, 15, or 25? Or was it in May, on the 5th, or the 10th, or the 13th of that month? Teveth is confronted by a dual problem. He cannot offer us a date because there was none, and so none appears in any contemporary document. (Nor does he tell us who, specifically, issued the order—the AHC, Abdullah, Kaukji, the Syrian government.) And he is necessarily flummoxed by the contradiction between any date he might offer and what was happening on the ground in Palestine at that time.

The matter is simple: If the AHC/Arab leadership issued the order on April 10, why did the inhabitants of Tiberias quit their homes only on April 18; the inhabitants of Haifa between April 22 and May 1; the inhabitants of Jaffa between April 25 and May 13; the inhabitants of eastern Galilee between May 2 and 26; the inhabitants of western Galilee between May 13 and 23; the inhabitants of Safad on May 9–10; the inhabitants of Acre on May 17–18; the inhabitants of Lydda-Ramle on July 11–13? And so on.

And the same applies to any other date chosen. If the Arab order to quit Palestine was issued on April 25, then why did the inhabitants of Tiberias leave the country a week earlier; why did the inhabitants of Haifa begin to leave three or four days before; and why did the inhabitants of Safad or eastern and western Galilee wait more than a fortnight before themselves decamping? If the date of the order was May 5, why did the Arabs leave Tiberias and Haifa and parts of Jaffa and parts of eastern Galilee before, or wait until much later to leave other parts of Palestine? And so on. (If of course Teveth decides to argue that the order was issued at a certain date but the Arabs of Palestine preferred to ignore it—then the order can hardly be cited as the "cause" of the exodus.)

Any date chosen poses a problem for Teveth, which is of course why he cannot and does not offer his reader any likely date or set of dates for the order or series of orders. Indeed, Teveth knows that the Arab evacuation of each area was precipitated and triggered in a one-to-one correspondence by Haganah/IDF attack or fear of imminent attack. Thus, the inhabitants of Tiberias quit their city on April 18 following the Golani Brigade's assault on the Arab quarter of the town on April 17; the Arab inhabitants of Haifa fled between April 22 and May 1 following the Carmeli Brigade's assault on the Arab neighborhoods on April 21–22; the Arabs of Safad streamed out of their town on May 10 hard upon the heels of the Palmah assault on the town on May 9–10; the Arabs of Sammu'i, Dhahiriya at Tahta and Meirunn evacuated their villages on May 12 after hearing of the fall of neighboring Safad; and so on down the line.

The dates of evacuation from each area and town show that conquest of that area or town (or feared imminent conquest) by Jewish forces was the final and major precipitant to flight, and this alone is sufficient to thoroughly undermine the "Arab orders" explanation of the exodus.

Teveth at one point writes that nowhere in my book do I offer an "explanation" for my "periodization" of the exodus (into four stages); nor, he charges, did I discover "patterns" in the mass flight. This is, of course, nonsense. I devote some 150 pages of my book to describing and analyzing the successive stages of the exodus and the patterns that distinguished each stage (the "domino" effect, the "atrocity factor," the flight of the leadership, and so on). There is no point in reviewing these; any reader who wishes to can look at my book.

Teveth seems unhappy with the way the Yishuv/Israel emerges from my treatment of the Palestinian exodus. I think I understand why. Teveth shares with all the Old Historians a concern for Israel's image that is greater than their concern for historical truth. But beyond that, Teveth is something of a hero-worshiper.

One of Teveth's first books, *The Tanks of Tammuz* (1968), was a long paean of praise to the IDF's Seventh (armored) Brigade and its commanding officer in the Six Day War, Shmuel Gorodish (Gonen). Gonen was a capable if much hated field commander who used to throw soldiers in jail for a week if they had buckled their belt the wrong way. In 1967 his troops crashed through the Egyptian defenses at Rafah and made a decisive dash to the Suez Canal. But Gonen's philosophy of invincible armored thrusts met a quick, awful demise on the banks of that canal in the early days of October 1973. The Agranat Commission in 1974 ruled that Gonen, then operating commander of the Southern

Command, was largely to blame for the IDF's costly initial failures in the Yom Kippur War, and it unceremoniously threw him out of the army. One may fairly say that the post-1967 self-congratulatory "literature of praise," exemplified by Teveth's *Tanks of Tammuz,* contributed to the creation of that atmosphere of arrogance and mindless self-confidence that resulted in the disasters of 1973.

Soon after 1967, Teveth switched his hero-worshiping focus to Moshe Dayan, producing a biography with which Dayan, reportedly, was none too pleased. For the past fifteen years or so Teveth has been working on a multivolume biography of Ben-Gurion.

In my book, Ben-Gurion emerges as a consummate statesman and practitioner of Realpolitik, a man, like Lenin (whom Ben-Gurion, incidentally, greatly admired), who knows what must be done and how to get it done. Teveth would have us believe that Ben-Gurion was some sort of anemic, pussyfooting liberal. Far from it. He was a ruthless, single-minded nation-builder. He knew that there was no making an omelette without breaking eggs—Arab eggs. He wanted the Jewish state to emerge from the wreckage of the 1948 war with as much territory and as small an Arab population as possible. But he did not want his name, or that of the newborn state, tainted by an overt policy of expulsion. (Indeed, he went so far as to repeatedly declare in 1948 and 1949: "Israel has never expelled a single Arab"—a lie that even the most gullible journalists and UN officials found hard to swallow.)

Soon after the start—in December 1947—of the Palestinian Arab exodus, Ben-Gurion realized that the civil-cum-guerrilla war raging around the country was gradually solving the nascent Jewish state's major problem: the existence within its prospective boundaries of a large, hostile Arab minority. With a little nudging, with a limited expulsion here and the razing of a village there, and with a policy of military conquest usually preceded by mortar barrages, this trickle of an exodus, he realized, could be turned into a massive outflow. But Ben-Gurion also knew what was required of statesmen, and he had heard all about historians. So he adopted a two-pronged stance. Outwardly, he continued until very late in the day to pay the requisite lip service to the grand humanist-socialist ideals: as late as December 3, 1947, with the war already raging, he told his fellow Mapai (Workers of Israel party) members that "a constitution that would debar an Arab from becoming President is unthinkable. . . ." On the ground, however, he made sure that what he wanted done got done, and he carefully avoided leaving tracks; his name rarely adorns an actual expulsion directive.

But so active, decisive, and voluble a man could not fail to leave some sort of spoor. In later years, former colonels and generals were to remember Ben-Gurion's nods and winks. Former chief of operations of Operation Dani (and Israel's current defense minister) Yitzhak Rabin recalled Ben-Gurion's wave of his hand eastward (or, in another version, wave of the hand and spoken order: "Kick them out") when asked by General Yigal Allon on July 12 what to do with Lydda and Ramle's fifty to sixty thousand Arab inhabitants, thus setting in motion the biggest single expulsion of the 1948 war. Another colonel, Mordechai Makleff, then Northern Front chief of operations (and later, like Rabin, an IDF chief of general staff), recalled how, while visiting the newly conquered town of Nazareth in July 1948, Ben-Gurion had turned to him and said: "Why so many Arabs? Why did you not expel them?"

Inevitably, there are also traces of Ben-Gurion's approach in the documents. For example, in September 1948 Ben-Gurion sent a letter to his fellow ministers asking them to approve the destruction of eleven abandoned Arab villages. But he carefully described it as a request from Deputy Chief of Staff Zvi Ayalon. A few weeks later, Ben-Gurion told one of his Arab affairs advisers, Ezra Danin: "The Arabs of the Land of Israel have only one duty—to flee." (Danin, a founding figure in the Haganah Intelligence Service, recorded this conversation in a letter, sent on October 25, 1948, to Elias Sasson, the director of the Foreign Ministry's Middle East Affairs Department, who was then in Paris.)

Teveth would have the Arab flight from Palestine roughly and simply divided in two: before and after May 15, the date of the pan-Arab invasion. Before May 15, Teveth tells us, the Arabs were "seen, for the most part, as citizens of a future Jewish state," and afterward they were seen "as declared enemies" worthy of "expulsion by Israel." Before May 15, Ben-Gurion wanted the Arabs to stay in place; afterward, he sought their departure.

But this wasn't how things happened. Already in November 1947, a few days before the UN partition resolution, Ben-Gurion was thinking in terms of a "transfer" solution to the prospective Jewish state's Arab problem. At a meeting of the Jewish Agency Executive, he spoke in favor of giving as many as possible of the state's future Arab inhabitants citizenship in the prospective neighboring Palestinian Arab state. His reasoning was clear: in the event of war between the two states, the Arabs in the Jewish state would represent a Fifth Column. If they were citizens of the Palestinian Arab State, Israel could expel them to that state, whereas if they were citizens of the Jewish state "it would only be possible to imprison them, and it would be better to expel them than to imprison them." Shortly

after the outbreak of Palestinian-Jewish hostilities, on February 6-7, 1948, Ben-Gurion spoke approvingly of the Arab migration from West Jerusalem:

> Since the days of the Roman destruction of Jerusalem—[the city] was not so completely Jewish as today. In many Arab neighborhoods in the West—one sees not one Arab. I don't suppose that this will change.... What has happened in Jerusalem ... may happen in large parts of the country.... It is very possible that in the next six or eight or ten months of the struggle there will be great changes.... There will certainly be great changes in the composition of the population.

Are these the words of a man who wishes to see the Arabs remain "citizens of a future Jewish State"? Or are these, rather, the words of a leader who has long entertained, at least in the back of his mind, a concept of "transfer" as the solution to the prospective Jewish state's Arab problem? Nor are these quotations unique; despite Ben-Gurion's continuous efforts to camouflage his trail, the main contours of that trail are still discernible.

Teveth writes: "Very early on in his book [Morris] is already hard at work to implant the mistaken notion that a transfer of Arabs from Palestine to neighboring countries 'had a basis in mainstream Jewish thinking, if not actual planning, from the late 1930s and 1940s.'" Where could I have gotten the "mistaken" idea that the notion of transfer was deeply embedded in the collective mind of the Zionist leadership from the late 1930s? Why, from Teveth's own works on Ben-Gurion, as well as from minutes of the meetings of the Jewish Agency Executive in 1937-1938 (and from the diaries of executives like Yosef Weitz, to whom I shall turn in a moment).

It is true that Ben-Gurion had written, back in World War I, that "we do not intend to push the Arabs aside, to take their land or to disinherit them." But Ben-Gurion's thinking changed over the years and was given a major boost in the direction of a transfer solution by the Peel Commission recommendations. At the Jewish Agency Executive meeting of June 7, 1938, Ben-Gurion forthrightly supported the transfer of the prospective Jewish state's Arab inhabitants to the neighboring Arab states, albeit as part of a comprehensive Arab-Jewish agreement. In his diary, Ben-Gurion jotted down on July 12, 1937 (quoted in Teveth's *Ben-Gurion and the Palestinian Arabs*): "The compulsory transfer of the Arabs from the valleys of the proposed Jewish state could give us something which we never had, even when we stood on our own during the days of the First and Second Temples [that is to say, a Galilee without Arabs].... We are being given an opportunity which we never dared dream of in our wildest imaginings...." And as he wrote to his son, Amos, a few weeks later:

> We must expel Arabs and take their places ... and if we have to use force—not to dispossess the Arabs of the Negev and Transjordan, but to guarantee our own right to settle in those places—then we have force at our disposal.

Ben-Gurion was not alone among the Zionist leadership in preaching the virtues of transfer. At the joint meeting of the Jewish Agency Executive and the Political Committee of the Zionist Actions Committee on June 12, 1938, Avraham Menahem Ussishkin, the chairman of the Jewish National Fund, said that there was nothing immoral about transferring sixty thousand Arab families: "It is the most moral [thing to do]. We will not be able to begin our political life in a state in which the Arabs will constitute 45 percent [of the population]."

It wasn't clear whether the British would implement the transfer or whether the Jews, in the last resort, might have to do it themselves. "But the principle should be that there must be a large agreed transfer," said Labor leader Berl Katznelson. Werner David Senator, another executive member, called for a "maximal transfer." Shmuel Zuchovitzky (Zakif), a veteran agricultural sector leader, called upon the British to implement the transfer. Eliahu Berlin, a religious party leader, suggested that "taxes should be increased so that the Arabs will flee because of the taxes." Ben-Gurion said that "with compulsory transfer, we [would] have a vast area.... I support compulsory transfer. I don't see in it anything immoral."

The idea of a transfer as a solution to the prospective Jewish state's major problem never left the Zionist leaders' minds. But for the most part, after the White Paper and the start of World War II, the leadership found it politic not to dwell on the subject, and certainly not in public. The British had clearly moved far away from anything to do with implementing the Peel Commission recommendations. And, come the postwar era, expatiating on the virtues of transfer could hardly be expected to win hearts and minds for the Jewish state in the UN or in Washington. So the idea simmered until 1948 when war, without a Jewish master plan or, indeed, without any preplanning whatsoever, brought a Palestinian exodus of itself. With a little nudging in the right direction, the low-key exodus could be turned into a mass flood and a fait accompli.

A key figure in this prospective shift was Yosef Weitz. Weitz was a powerful bureaucrat who held several important posts. He was the director of the Jewish National Fund's key Lands Department, a member of the Committee of Directorates of the National Institutions, a member of the Arab Affairs Committee of the

National Institutions, chairman of the Negev Committee (meaning the de facto civilian governor of the Negev during the 1948 war), and chairman of the Transfer Committee. Teveth would have us believe that Weitz—the man who for decades supervised the purchase and allocation of land for old and new settlements—was a nobody, a self-aggrandizing minor official. This is nonsense, a projection of Weitz's post-1948 status (when the JNF gradually lost its importance) onto the prestate years. In 1948 Weitz was one of the emergent state's major executives in everything that concerned the key questions of Arabs: the apportioning of Arab lands, the destruction of Arab villages, and the establishment of new settlements (both kibbutzim and moshavim). The year 1948 saw war, the establishment of a state, and the flight of a people. All three processes in fact were part of or were intertwined in a vast territorial-demographic revolution—and Weitz was at that revolution's center.

In my essay, "Yosef Weitz and the Transfer Committees, 1948–1949" (*Middle Eastern Studies,* Oct. 1986), I traced in minute detail Weitz's manifold activities during the year of Israel's emergence. From his diaries and other sources we see Weitz present and active in a succession of consultative and executive roles. He dispenses advice, helps shape policy, and implements that policy in the field. In February–March 1948 Weitz is one of the first to note the vast potential in terms of land acquisition of the unfolding war. He travels to the north and advises local officials and Haganah officers to kick Arab tenant farmers off Jewish-owned lands or lands long coveted by the JNF. In the case of Qiri wa Qamun, near Yokne'am, we can trace Weitz telling the local Haganah Intelligence officer to order the Qiri tenants to evacuate—which they do. Weitz's hand is apparent also in the Arab abandonment of Daliyat ar Ruha and Qumiya in March.

At the same time, Weitz is busy lobbying the national leaders, Ben-Gurion and the head of the Haganah's National Command, Israel Galili, to adopt a full-fledged policy of expulsion vis-à-vis various Arab rural communities. Teveth, in his usual eel-like way, quotes me as saying that the two "either rejected, or were unwilling to commit themselves to, a general policy or strategy of expulsion." But Teveth fails to tell his readers that the quotation and conclusion refer only to Weitz's efforts in March. The reader is left believing that Ben-Gurion and Galili opposed a strategy of expulsion throughout the war.

In May, with the Arab exodus in full swing, Weitz understands that the moment must be exploited, that the flight must be expanded where possible and turned everywhere into a fait accompli. In other words, he understands that the refugees must on no account be allowed or enabled to return. At the end of May he sets up a committee consisting of himself, Danin, and Elias Sasson. The committee, without official (government) authorization, begins functioning. Weitz dispenses JNF funds and mobilizes the JNF's regional offices and field-workers in a vast enterprise of destruction, razing abandoned Arab villages around the country. In the south, Yoav Zuckerman plows under the large village of Al Mughar; near Tel Aviv, Fajja is plowed under; in the north, Ghawarina and Daliyat ar Ruha are leveled.

Some of the destruction is recorded in Ben-Gurion's diary on June 16; the Old Man had just received a progress report from Weitz. Ten days earlier, he had met with Weitz and approved his plan of destruction. In the June 16 entry, Ben-Gurion lists some thirteen villages destroyed to date. Throughout the May–June period, Weitz presses Ben-Gurion and Moshe Sharett to accord his committee official sanction. Ben-Gurion refuses. He is eager for Weitz to keep up the good work; but he does not want to accord it official, public recognition. Eventually, running low on funds and annoyed at Ben-Gurion's game, Weitz at the start of July suspends operations.

Despite Teveth's claim to the contrary, I did not write that the Weitz Committee sent "Arabs away from Palestine by the truckload"; nor did I write that "the committee was set up by the Jewish Agency Executive." I did write that the Weitz Committee oversaw and set in motion the destruction of Arab villages, began allocating Arab sites for Jewish settlement, and dispensed advice around the country to local Jewish authorities and military units regarding what to do with abandoned (and not yet abandoned) Arab sites. The activities of Weitz before the establishment of the First Transfer Committee; the activities of the First Transfer Committee (May–June); the activities of Weitz, Danin, and Zalman Liff (Sasson's replacement on the committee) after the disbanding of the First Transfer Committee; the establishment and activities of the Second, or official, Transfer Committee in August–September 1948; and the continued activities of Weitz and Danin afterward are all recorded, in minute detail, in my essay in *Middle Eastern Studies* and are occasionally referred to in my book (with the appropriate referencing, for those who care to trace my research). The reader will have no great difficulty discerning whether Teveth is right in saying that Weitz was an unimportant, uninfluential nobody; that the First Transfer Committee never existed; and that the members of the Second Transfer Committee did nothing except compile statistics about the Greek–Turkish population exchanges of 1922—or whether this is a singularly brazen, shabby, and transparent exercise by Teveth of the Big Lie technique.

Brazenness is also the hallmark of the final passages

of Teveth's *Commentary* article, which deal with my treatment of the "David and Goliath" myth in the Old Historiography. Israel has traditionally been depicted as the virtually unarmed David that, in some near-miraculous manner, overcame the Goliath-like Palestinian and Arab armies. This depiction rests on the relative dimensions of population and territory: 650,000 Jews versus, initially, 1.3 million Palestinian Arabs and, subsequently, the tens of millions of Arabs "from the Atlantic to the Persian Gulf"; and the minuscule five- to eight-thousand-square-mile Yishuv versus the hundreds of thousands of square miles of Araby. The depiction is misleading.

Wars are almost invariably won by the stronger side; and the crucial components of strength are command, control, and concentration. The side that manages to efficiently control and deploy its forces and to concentrate its troops and firepower in each engagement is the side that will win. In 1948 the Yishuv, surrounded and potentially outnumbered, managed to maximize its strength by relatively efficient mobilization, command, control, and concentration of forces. Almost all the prestate Yishuv's power was concentrated in one organization, the Haganah; and from the beginning of June that concentration was further increased with the integration of the Irgun Zva'i Leumi in the newborn Israel Defense Forces. The Haganah/IDF had an efficient general staff, competent and occasionally brilliant field commanders, and a pool of reasonably well-trained manpower (including many veterans of the British Army from World War II). The Yishuv's short lines of communication facilitated this maximization of power.

The war unfolded in stages, which were matched by the Haganah/IDF's successive levels of mobilization. In December 1947 the Haganah fielded some five to seven thousand fulltime troops; by May 1948 it had thirty-five thousand men under arms; by July, some sixty thousand men; and by war's end, in December, some ninety thousand.

It is impossible to properly estimate the numbers involved in the various Palestinian militias operating in the country down to the Palestinian collapse of April–May 1948; nor is it worthwhile to try to rate their effectiveness or efficiency. Clearly the mobilized or mobilizable formations of the Palestinians between December 1947 and April–May 1948 were negligible, numbering no more than a few thousand usually ill-trained men of the Najjada and Futuwwah. These units were bolstered by at most some six to seven thousand foreign volunteers, who entered Palestine months or weeks before the end of the Mandate. The vast bulk of Palestinians under arms during the conflict were local militiamen, twenty or fifty or eighty per village—who only rarely were concentrated for an engagement in any effective way.

NEW! **Jewish Life Center** NEW!

for adults seeking to explore Jewish possibilities

- Live in a progressive community
- Learn with leaders of the Jewish Renewal movement
- Engage in a program of Spiritual Activism

Year-long program starting October 1990

For more information contact:
Rabbi Julie Greenberg
6445 Greene Street, B202
Philadelphia, PA 19119
(215) 843-4345

What all this means is that as long as the Haganah's units, curbed by the threat of British intervention, fought in mostly defensive, unconcentrated platoon- and company-sized formations (December 1947–March 1948), the Palestinians in their various localities managed to hold their own. Indeed, in the February–March battle for the roads, conducted on both sides by small-scale units, the Arab militiamen gained the upper hand. But when the Haganah organized and deployed its forces for the offensive in battalions and brigades, from early April 1948, a David-and-Goliath type of engagement ensued: a Jewish Goliath versus a Palestinian David. Each battle and Jewish conquest was short and swift. The war was a rout.

Mighty Arab Haifa fell in a day—Tiberias, Safad, Beisan, and Acre in a night. The Palestinians lacked the manpower to withstand the concentrated Haganah forces deployed against them in each engagement, and they never possessed anything that could match the firepower of the Yishuv's mortars. Nor was the Arab population, largely rural and primitive, physically or psychologically prepared for bombardment and main assault. In Jaffa, three days (April 25–27) of bombardment by two Irgun mortars propelled into terrified flight the bulk of the city's population of seventy thousand. In Safad, on May 9, a brace of Palmah mortars—including a primitive, but noisy, homemade "Davidka"—in one night of sporadic shelling almost singlehandedly demoralized the local militia and the unarmed population, virtually clearing the town of its ten thousand Arabs in a few hours. In general, there can be no doubt that the Yishuv's forces

were larger and better armed than the Palestinian forces against whom they fought in the first half of the 1948 war.

More surprisingly, and contrary to popular myth, the Haganah/IDF also outnumbered the combined manpower of the five invading Arab armies of May 15. At that time the Haganah forces numbered thirty-five thousand. Most estimates of the Arab armies give them a total strength of twenty-five thousand men, and certainly no more than thirty thousand (as compared with the Haganah's thirty-five thousand on May 15). In addition to being smaller, the Arab armies suffered from diffuse command and long lines of communication. The gap in manpower in the Arabs' disfavor steadily grew. By war's end, the combined Arab armies deployed were at a disadvantage of something like two to one in manpower—and this was reflected in the outcome of the battles.

The Haganah/IDF also had the advantage in command, control, and trained manpower. The only formidable Arab force it faced was the Transjordanian army, the Arab Legion. But the Legion fielded only forty-five hundred troops (their number by war's end rising to some six thousand). And the Legion had no air force and no tanks. It was also extremely short on ammunition through most of the war (as a result of an unofficial British boycott), especially for its highly effective 25-pounders.

It is true that for three weeks, from May 15 until the start of the First Truce, on June 11, the invading Arab armies enjoyed the advantage of the initiative and a substantial edge in weaponry over the Haganah/IDF, especially in artillery. But this edge, as Teveth well knows, was quickly whittled down and reversed during the month-long First Truce, as arms poured into Israel. From July 8 until the end of the war, the IDF enjoyed a vast superiority in manpower and an edge, or more than an edge, in most weapons categories over the combined Arab armies it faced. The Israel Air Force's command of the skies, along with the conquests of Nazareth, Lydda, and Ramle (July), of the northern Negev and the upper Galilee pocket (October–early November), and of the Sinai approaches (December–January) attest to this.

Teveth may harp all he likes on the Yishuv's disadvantage in artillery in mid-1948. Strangely, though, he omits any mention of the Yishuv's artillery, and I doubt if his numbers are correct or take any account of the Arabs' lack of ammunition. But this was more than made up for by the Yishuv's advantage throughout in command and control, trained personnel, concentration and quality of firepower, superiority in manpower, and organization for war (which included an ammunition and light arms production capacity not enjoyed by any of the Arab states). None of this is to gainsay the courage and sacrifice of the Yishuv's elite military formations, which bore the brunt of the battle. The Yishuv suffered six thousand dead, or one person in every hundred in 1948. Morale and a vast, almost superhuman readiness for self-sacrifice were at the core of the Yishuv's military prowess. But the simple fact is that the stronger side won the battles and won the war—and it wasn't the Arabs.

One final point concerning Teveth's critique of my *Tikkun* article. As far as I can see, there is nothing wrong with the conjecture that writing about the past more truthfully than has hitherto been the practice in the Middle East may, in some obscure way, "serve the purposes of peace and reconciliation." Perhaps I was thinking in terms of the ability of Israelis and Palestinians to get out of their own skins and to attempt to view their past, and the region's continuing problems, from a fresh perspective, one not obscured by demonized enemies. Of course, an equally good case could probably be made for the contrary argument—that illumination of the darker crannies of the past may well spark new animosities and revitalize old ones. Be that as it may, it is a sad sign of the times that the mere mention of the word "peace" immediately prompts right-wing Israelis like Teveth to reach frantically for their pistols. □

HANNAH ARENDT

(Continued from p. 26)

Zionism, one that would "negotiate on the basis of a great revolutionary movement."

This strategy was embodied for Arendt in the life and career of Bernard Lazare, the radical French Zionist, contemporary of Herzl, who sought to combat anti-Semitism, and injustice more generally, through a democratic alliance of oppressed nationalities and classes. Arendt does not devote much attention to the question of how plausible such a strategy might have been, nor does she discuss in this context the tradition of socialist Zionism, which at least sought to accomplish some of what she advocates. Lazare's example serves mainly as an alternative tradition from which to draw inspiration. It indicates how responsible agents might have put an end to the "automatism of events" and arrested the movement toward world war through radical political activity sweeping through central Europe.

Arendt was well aware, however, of the "break in tradition" caused by World War II and the Holocaust, a break which forced the Jewish people to confront unprecedented horrors and which dramatically transformed Jewish consciousness. It was an awareness of this new reality which motivated her

trenchant essay, "Zionism Reconsidered." Writing in the wake of the 1942 Biltmore Program (which definitively called for a unified Jewish state in Palestine) and the 1944 Congress of the World Zionist Organization, Arendt observes that "the Revisionist program, so long bitterly repudiated, has proved finally victorious." She views with foreboding both the convention's demand for a "free and democratic Jewish commonwealth ... [which] shall embrace the whole of Palestine, undivided and undiminished," and its complete silence on the question of Arab rights. But she understands these developments in relation to the extenuating circumstances of Jewish history and refers to the Holocaust as "the earthquake that has shaken the world in our time."

"The significant development," Arendt observes, "lies in the unanimous adherence of all Zionist parties to the ultimate aim, the very discussion of which was still tabooed during the 1930s." Such unanimity Arendt refers to as

> an ominous phenomenon ... [tending] to eliminate bodily those who differ, for mass uniformity is not the result of agreement, but an expression of fanaticism and hysteria. In contrast to agreement, unanimity does not stop at certain well-defined objects, but spreads like an infection into every related issue.

In the case of Zionism, this phenomenon suppressed dissent and loyal opposition within the Jewish community and placed Zionism on a collision course with political reality.

A Jewish homeland, she continues, can be established only "on the basis of a broad understanding that takes into account the whole region and the needs of all its people." She warns that if Zionists ignore this they will come to be perceived as the tools and agents of foreign and hostile interests. "Jews who know their own history," she cautions, "should be aware that such a state of affairs will inevitably lead to a new wave of Jew-hatred."

This analysis is remarkable for its foresight. Arendt argues that the Biltmore Program will engender Arab hostility and turn the prospective Jewish homeland into a beggar state, dependent for its survival upon foreign arms and the charity of diaspora Jews. It will produce an elitist politics based upon the privileged position of fund-raising organizations, and a military mind-set incompatible with democratic politics. Her critique strikes an unmistakably Machiavellian note: "Only folly could dictate a policy which trusts a distant imperial power for protection, while alienating the good will of neighbors." She argues that the Big Powers can play a constructive role by encouraging "a broad understanding that takes into account the whole region and the needs of all of its peoples." But ultimately it is the Jewish and Arab peoples themselves that must work out an accommodation. Whatever *modus vivendi* is worked out between the parties, she maintains that the only feasible political form of existence would be some form of federation. Such a federation would avoid the dangers of extreme centralization, tolerate national and religious differences, and provide a unifying framework for coexistence in place of the system of competitive nation-states characteristic of the age of imperialism.

Events only confirmed Arendt's sense of foreboding. "To Save the Jewish Homeland: There Is Still Time," written for the American Jewish Committee in May 1948, on the eve of the Israeli Declaration of Statehood, documents the tumultuous turn of events that eventuated in war. Arendt notes the material and political destructiveness brought on by Arab–Jewish guerrilla warfare. The Arab decision to evacuate whole cities and towns demonstrated "more effectively than all proclamations the Arab refusal of any compromise." The Jewish communities in Palestine and the increasingly pivotal U.S. were equally intransigent. The consensus in both places was, as Arendt put it, that

> the moment has now come to get everything or nothing, victory or death; Arab and Jewish claims are irreconcilable and only a military decision can settle the issue; the Arabs—all Arabs—are our enemies and we accept this fact; only philistines believe in justice, and only *schlemiels* prefer truth and negotiation to propaganda and machine guns; Jewish experience in the last decade ... has finally awakened us and taught us to look out for ourselves ... in sum—we are ready to go down fighting, and we will consider anybody who stands in our way a traitor and anything done to hinder us a stab in the back.

And what, Arendt asks, if Israel should win the inevitable war? What would be the cost of such victory? Again Arendt is remarkably on target:

> [T]he unique possibilities and the unique achievements of Zionism in Palestine [would be] destroyed. ... The "victorious" Jews would live surrounded by an entirely Arab population, secluded inside ever-threatened borders, absorbed with physical self-defense to a degree that would submerge all other interests and activities. The growth of Jewish culture would cease to be the concern of the whole people; social experiments would have to be discarded as impractical luxuries; political thought would center around military strategy; economic development would be determined exclusively by the needs of war.

Thus, she concludes, "under present circumstances, a

Jewish state can only be erected at the price of the Jewish homeland."

Arendt therefore endorses the plan for a UN trusteeship of Palestine, a plan that was briefly supported by President Truman, and endorsed by Judah Magnes of Hebrew University and his associates in the *Ihud* Zionist group. Such a plan, she recognizes, would require farsighted and decisive politico-military action on the part of the UN under the leadership of the U.S. It would necessitate concessions on both sides. Along these lines she proposes the following: the immediate admission of Jewish refugees into the U.S. and, with restrictions, into Palestine; Jewish–Arab social and economic cooperation, along the lines of the Jordan Valley Authority project, designed to promote economic development for both communities; the elimination of all terrorist groups and the swift punishment of terrorist deeds; and, finally, local self-government based upon numerous "mixed Jewish–Arab municipal and rural councils." Such measures "would postpone and possibly prevent partition of the country."

Arendt's own view was that partition was a piece of "wishful thinking." Both the political and geographical realities of the area rendered it unrealistic. She preferred Judah Magnes's proposal of a "federated state" based upon a common government and grounded in binational community councils. In this way "the Jewish–Arab conflict would be resolved on the lowest and most promising level of proximity and neighborliness." But, as Arendt recognized, both solutions were outside of the realm of political possibility. Trusteeship, therefore, "whose chief aim is pacification and nothing more," was imperative. "Politics," she avers, "seldom offers ideal or eternal solutions."

This line of thinking is extended in Arendt's last major essay on Zionism, "Peace or Armistice in the Near East," written in 1950 at the suggestion of Judah Magnes, with whom she had developed a close personal and political collaboration. Arendt begins by asserting that peace, unlike armistice, cannot be imposed by outside powers, and can only be achieved by mutual recognition and compromise on the part of the antagonists. She then proceeds to subject the "mutual refusal to take each other seriously" to a trenchant critique. The Zionists, she insists, have never really recognized the existence of the Arabs in Palestine, and in fact their greatest achievements, the kibbutzim and the Histadrut, have been founded upon an ideology of Jewish labor that excludes the Arabs both economically and politically. The Arabs, for their part, have tended to be "inspired by the thought of *revanche*" and the myth of common hostility against Israel. In this light they have interpreted Zionism as a colonial enterprise, and construed their own national self-determination in direct antagonism to the presence of Zionists in Palestine.

Arendt is highly critical of the Arab position, arguing that "the building of a Jewish National Home was not a colonial enterprise in which Europeans came to exploit foreign riches with the help and at the expense of native labor." Such a view misidentifies the true character of the exclusivism implicit within Zionist ideology in that it ignores the fact that Zionism emphasized *Jewish* labor in the construction of the homeland. But it also fatefully dismisses the genuinely noble aspiration of Zionists who wished to flee oppression and build their own communal homeland, especially under the traumatic exigencies of the European genocide and displacement of the Jewish people. Both sides, Arab and Jew, confront each other with claims to absolute justice that exclude the other, claims "which are nationalistic because they make sense only in the closed framework of one's own people and history, and legalistic because they discount the concrete factors of the situation."

Having exposed this senseless and dangerous policy of intransigence, Arendt seeks to identify the hidden "non-nationalist" tradition in Jewish–Arab relations. She points to a number of historical moments in which negotiation and mutual accommodation rather than hostility were the rule, fixing upon the activities of Charles Malik, an Arab UN representative from Lebanon, and Judah Magnes. What follows is a brief but penetrating discussion of the two basic values of this tradition—"the universality and predominance of learning and the passion for justice." Accommodation with the Arab world, she insists, is the only alternative to the balkanization of the Middle East, the degeneration of Zionism into a chauvinistic and tribalistic mentality, and a legacy of insecurity and war for future generations of Israelis, should there be future generations.

The Eichmann Controversy

After 1950 Arendt did not write again about Zionism until her 1963 reports for the *New Yorker* on the Eichmann trial, later published in book form as *Eichmann in Jerusalem*. This book sparked an extraordinary and bitter controversy pitched largely around the question of Arendt's sensitivity to the problems and sufferings of the Jewish people.

The book contains four major arguments, each of which was bound to ruffle feathers in the Jewish community. The first is that the trial had been treated as a theatrical event by the prime minister, Ben-Gurion, and his agent, prosecutor Gideon Hausner. Arendt notes the Jewish chauvinism in much of their official rhetoric.

She points out the "breathtaking naiveté" of a prosecution's denouncing the Nuremberg Laws of 1935 (which prohibited German–Jewish intermarriage and intercourse) in a state that itself prohibits Jewish–Arab intermarriage and cedes jurisdiction in these matters to rabbinical law. She acerbically reports on Ben-Gurion's effort to instruct the world with the "lessons" of the trial. According to Ben-Gurion, the lesson for Jews was that "only in Israel could a Jew be safe and live an honorable life"; the lesson for gentiles, Arabs in particular, was in the Israeli state's pledge that "never again" will Jews be persecuted.

The second argument is the famous thesis regarding the "banality" of Eichmann's evil. In addition to criticizing Israeli officialdom's use of the trial to serve the purposes of Zionist ideology, Arendt repudiates the demonology of Eichmann, which portrays him as an insane, vicious, and fanatical anti-Semite. Rather, she argues, on the basis of a psychological profile that relied heavily upon Eichmann's own testimony, he was a "normal," law-abiding citizen of a totalitarian state organized upon the basis of criminality. In failing to recognize this, the judges, whose integrity was above reproach, "missed the greatest moral and even legal challenge of the whole case," as Arendt put it. This thesis is entirely consistent with Arendt's analysis of the horrifying novelty of totalitarian rule. But its clear implication, made also in *The Origins of Totalitarianism,* is that the Holocaust cannot be understood as simply another, more extreme, episode in the long history of anti-Semitism. Rather, it requires new explanatory concepts and new political strategies.

Her third point follows from this. Not only does the official Zionist demonology of Eichmann overstate his importance vis-à-vis the system of totalitarianism, it also underestimates the complicity of his victims in their own victimization. This was Arendt's most controversial claim.

> True it was that the Jewish people as a whole had not been organized, that they had possessed no territory, no government and no army, that, in the hour of their greatest need, they had no government-in-exile to represent them among the Allies ... no caches of weapons, no youth with military training. But the whole truth was that there existed Jewish community organizations and welfare organizations on both the local and the international level. Wherever Jews lived there were recognized Jewish leaders, and this leadership, almost without exception, cooperated in one way or another, for one reason or another, with the Nazis. The whole truth was that if the Jewish people had really been unorganized and leaderless, there would have been chaos and plenty of misery but the total number of victims would hardly have been between four-and-a-half and six million people.

In this context Arendt implicated the despised Rudolph Kastner, the revered Leo Baeck, and the Zionist leadership itself.

Finally, Arendt criticizes the trial itself, arguing that Eichmann should have been charged with "crimes against humanity" by an international tribunal based upon the United Nations Genocide Convention of 1948, rather than with "crimes against the Jewish people" by an Israeli tribunal in Jerusalem.

These arguments set off a firestorm in the Jewish community. Campaigns against the book were initiated by the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith and the World Jewish Congress. Arendt was accused of virtual treason against her people, for effacing the line between the guilt of the Nazis and the innocence of the Jews, for having more sympathy with Eichmann than with the six million he had helped to murder.

Even the most sympathetic defenders of Arendt's analysis have noted that her tone is harsh and insensitive. Her statement that Jews "found themselves confronted with two enemies—the Nazi authorities and the Jewish authorities" was bound to invite the equation of these two parties. Similarly, she notes that the "cooperation" of these authorities took place "in many ways, for many reasons." Such a comment begs for a discussion of these reasons, and for a sympathetic analysis of the exigencies which motivated these difficult decisions. While Arendt notes such exigencies, her discussion gives them short shrift, rhetorically suggesting their subsidiary importance.

Arendt might have, and maybe should have, written this book differently. But I would like to consider the way she did write it, for many of the charges against her were unfair, and her own motivations misunderstood.

Arendt is unambiguous about Eichmann's guilt. This is a point she returns to again and again in the final sections of her book. In her own imaginary sentencing of the criminal she addresses Eichmann directly: "you have carried out, and therefore actively supported, a policy of mass murder ... this is the reason, and the only reason, you must hang." The complicity of some victims with their victimizers is not the same thing as the effacement of the difference between them, a point implicit in this conclusion and consistently upheld by Arendt in her analysis of totalitarianism.

In fact, Arendt's criticism of the trial and its legal grounds is extraordinarily nuanced. She takes to task the hypocrites who have criticized the trial. Thus she supports the kidnapping of Eichmann from Argentina ("the realm of legality offered no alternative to kid-

napping"). She argues that the only other alternative would have been for Israeli agents to "have killed him right then and there in the streets of Buenos Aires," a measure neither unprecedented nor unjustifiable. Further, she challenges those who have questioned the justice of having Jews sit in judgment of Eichmann in Jerusalem for crimes committed against them.

> Once the Jews had a territory of their own, the State in Israel, they obviously had as much right to sit in judgement on the crimes committed against their people as the Poles had to judge the crimes committed in Poland.... The Eichmann Trial, then, was in actual fact no more, but also no less, than the last of the numerous successor trials which followed the Nuremberg Trials.

Arendt asserts with unmistakable pride that many of the people who favored an international tribunal did not understand how important for Israel it was that, "for the first time (since the year 70, when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans), Jews were able to sit in judgement on crimes committed against their own people"—that Jews no longer needed to rely on the protection of others.

These remarks recall Arendt's most favorable observations about Zionism in the 1940s. Why then was she so critical of the trial, and why did she support an international tribunal? The answer is that she believed that Eichmann's crime had been unprecedented. Nazi totalitarianism, she argues, was a product of the crisis of imperialism and militarism in the twentieth century. It was no historical mistake that the Jews suffered first and foremost (though not exclusively). But, she continues, "only the choice of victims, not the nature of the crime, could be derived from the long history of Jew-hatred and anti-Semitism." While the Jewish community in Israel and abroad tended, with reason, to view the Holocaust as "not much more than the most horrible pogrom in Jewish history," Arendt argues that the totalitarian state incorporated a new and terrifyingly dangerous principle—the *annihilation of peoples*. This development was the product of a crisis of the nation-state and could only be remedied through novel, international means. The real argument of her analysis of totalitarianism, then, points to this need for new international legal and political institutions to mitigate and regulate violence and enforce civility among peoples.

Here Arendt's *Eichmann,* which resulted in her virtual exile from the Jewish community, is most connected with her earlier writings on Jewish history and Zionism. Arendt's criticism of Ben-Gurion, Zionism, and mid-century official Jewish leadership, along with her novel analysis of totalitarianism's "banality of evil," constitutes a lesson to her people about the dangers of hypocrisy, historical myopia, and interstate relations in the age of imperialism. Her criticisms of the Eichmann trial (the legal machinery of which presumes the viability of sovereign nation-states in the international realm) and her arguments about the desirability of an international tribunal of justice are perfectly consistent with her understanding of both the causes of totalitarianism and the dangers confronting the Jewish homeland in Israel.

Eichmann in Jerusalem thus articulates the same criticisms of Zionism that Arendt made in her earlier writings. In *Eichmann,* however, the tone is both more bitter and more removed. Zionism and Jewishness, after all, form the subtext rather than the text of her discussion of the trial. In this respect the book reflects Arendt's deepened theoretical understanding of totalitarianism and modern politics, the earlier essays having been written before the completion of *The Origins of Totalitarianism.* But the removed and embittered tone also no doubt reflects what would seem to be her deepened alienation from Zionism and from the Jewish community that in her view supinely supported the Zionist movement.

Jewish Identity in the Contemporary World

What then are we to make of the undeniable harshness of some of Arendt's judgments in *Eichmann*? And in what way is her approach in *Eichmann* reflective of her position within the Jewish community? In other words, what does Arendt's work tell us about her sense of Jewish identity?

Arendt provides a revealing answer to these questions in a response to a critical letter from Gershom Scholem, who had accused her of callousness and flippancy toward the sufferings of the Jews, and of a lack of love for her people. Insisting that her Jewishness is "one of the indisputable factual data of my life," she goes on to concede that she does *not* love the Jewish people, and for two reasons. The first is that "I have never in my life 'loved' any people or collective.... I indeed love 'only' my friends and the only kind of love I know of and believe in is the love of persons." The second is that

> this "love of the Jews" would appear to me, since I am myself Jewish, as something rather suspect. I cannot love myself or anything which I know is part and parcel of my own person ... in this sense I do not "love" the Jews, nor do I "believe" in them; I merely belong to them as a matter of course, beyond

dispute or argument.

Arendt takes great pains to repudiate the sentimentalization of national identity; and yet she affirms her Jewish identity.

Indeed, she continues, "there can be no patriotism without permanent opposition and criticism." She considers herself, like Herzl, a true patriot, one who is not afraid to criticize her people, to upset its established orders and customs, *precisely because she identifies with that people.* She goes one step further: "wrong done by my own people naturally grieves me more than wrong done by other peoples." But, she immediately adds, such grief is not for public display; she refuses to play the game of emotional one-upmanship. "Generally speaking, the role of the 'heart' in politics seems to me altogether questionable.... We both know ... how often these emotions are used in order to conceal factual truth." Arendt thus repudiates any political thinking based purely upon attributions of motives or intentions. Just as she had refused to judge Eichmann simply on the basis of motive, similarly she refuses to base her judgments of her fellow Jews upon their noble intentions, or to frame her own political judgments around some disingenuous notion of "love of one's people."

Arendt's point is *not* that her affiliation with her people, and her inheritance of its historical legacy of suffering and accomplishment, is irrelevant. She in no way seeks to detach herself from these links. In this sense she exemplifies what Michael Walzer has called the "connected critic," whose criticisms draw nourishment from attachment to the needs and concerns of her people. But this connection is, at least for her, beyond question. It is an unspoken premise. As such, she concedes, it "makes certain types of behavior impossible," behavior such as indifference to the plight of her people or alliance with its enemies. It can do no more. It is impossible, indeed dangerous, to derive any political conclusions from this identification alone, as it is abhorrent to demand obeisance to certain conclusions as a condition of this identification being recognized and affirmed by one's community. However important, then, neither actual nor perceived affiliation with one's community can be the arbiter of the *truth* of one's criticisms.

This critical attitude is borne out by the clearest statement of Arendt's Jewish self-understanding, "The Jew as Pariah: A Hidden Tradition." Here she seeks to reappropriate the "hidden tradition" of the "conscious pariah," those post-Enlightenment Jews who acknowledged their social status as members of an outcast people, but who sought to make the most of that status, to "weave the strands of their Jewish genius into the general texture of European life," thereby revolutionizing both the larger gentile world and their own Jewish culture and community.

The exemplary bearers of this tradition, according to Arendt, were Heinrich Heine, Bernard Lazare, and Franz Kafka. Each of these individuals refused to make his peace with existing society. But none of them repudiated their Jewish identity, which found expression in both their lives and their work. As conscious pariahs they sought to bring the critical spirit to bear upon everything, *including* this identity. This placed them at the margins not simply of European society at large but of their own Jewish community as well. And yet, even at the margins, they remained on the near side of the divide that demarcated their own people.

Heine, Arendt observes approvingly, in spite of his conversion, saw the limits of Enlightenment universalism even as he epitomized its accomplishments. Thus he disbelieved

> that Jews could exist as "pure human beings" outside the range of peoples and nations. Heine was not deceived by this nonsense of "world citizenship." He knew that separate peoples are needed to focus the genius of poets and artists; and he had no time for academic pipe-dreams. Just because he refused to give up his allegiance to a people of pariahs and schlemiels, just because he remained consistently attached to them, he takes his place among the most uncompromising of Europe's fighters for freedom.

This sense of identity is what marks the pariah. It provides an example for all humans in the alienating and dangerous world of the twentieth century.

> The man of goodwill is driven today into isolation like the Jew-stranger in the castle. He gets lost—or dies from exhaustion. For only within the framework of a people can a man live as a man among men, without exhausting himself. And only when a people lives and functions in consort with other peoples can it contribute to the establishment upon earth of a commonly conditioned and commonly controlled humanity.

This idea is one of the guiding threads of Arendt's work. The world that she inhabited and so painstakingly analyzed was a world in which a people, her people, had been excluded, displaced, and destroyed. In her writing on Jewishness and Zionism Arendt tried to help save and reconstruct her people in their physical, cultural, and political existence. She sought to provide a usable past for such an undertaking, just as she sought to criticize historical mythologies. Her work urged upon Jews a conscious pariahdom—an awareness of their sufferings and their achievements, their powerlessness and their power—so that they could assume the re-

sponsibilities of existing as a people in the contemporary world. It also urged a corresponding awareness of the peoplehood of others, including the Palestinian Arabs with whom any Jewish homeland in the Middle East must learn to coexist.

The political arrangements she consistently supported—international law, the United Nations, visions of regional and global federalism—all sought to provide a framework within which human beings could live their lives peacefully in possession of basic rights and dignities as members of their national communities. Arendt never believed that the fact of her Jewishness privileged any of these ideas. But she unabashedly articulated them as a Jew.

Having said this, however, it is important to remind ourselves that for Arendt, the modern Jew necessarily traffics in the broader cultural and political world. As regards that traffic, Arendt's Jewish identity was complicated by her powerful identification with German culture. In fact, in the letter to Scholem discussed above, she dismisses Scholem's identification of her as a "German leftist" by stating at the outset that she comes out of "the tradition of German philosophy." The particular mixture of German and Jew in Arendt's case required an identification with both the Jewish people and at least some elements of the people that annihilated them. This must have been difficult, and navigating this difficulty with good faith put her at the margins of her already marginal social world. Arendt's early friendship and love affair with the Germanic Heidegger, a friendship resumed after the war, epitomizes these complexities of her identity, especially in light of what we now know (and what Arendt also must have known) about the nastiness of Heidegger's Nazi involvements.

As regards her Jewishness, it is clear that while Arendt retained her Jewish identity, something she never repudiated, it most definitely underwent changes over the course of her life. The change from Zionist to critic of Zionism in the mid-forties was one such shift. The tone of the Eichmann essays as well as their audience suggest another such shift. These essays exhibit a deep alienation from Israel and the Jewish community, and it seems clear that by the time of their composition Arendt had experienced something of a crisis of confidence in the course of contemporary Jewish history. This put her at odds with many of her former friends and associates within the Jewish community, which led to still further alienation.

Should she be faulted for her own alienation? It is true that her tone and some of her arguments ruffled feathers. And sober assessment always risks being both misunderstood and ineffective among one's people. But all criticism risks being misunderstood, and if effectiveness means compromising one's convictions, or downplaying uncomfortable truths, then I would aver that at times criticism must risk the sacrifice of efficiency in the interest of principle. Isn't this, after all, the gamble any conscious pariah must make?

There is more than a little irony in all this. In a fascinating article written in 1947, "Creating a Cultural Atmosphere," Arendt argued that it was necessary to reconstruct a "culture for Jews." Such a culture, she urged, should be Jewish and ecumenical, institutionalized yet free and open, nurturant of growth but devoid of any blueprint. It would, she suggested, reappropriate at least three elements of Jewish history. The first element was "that great religious and metaphysical postbiblical tradition which we will have to win back from the theologians and scholars"; the second was Jewish folklore and "the Yiddish writers of Eastern Europe," whose "rescue ... is of great importance"; the third involved

> all those who either came, and come, into conflicts with Jewish orthodoxy, or turned their backs on Judaism ... these figures will be of special significance ... because they, in their individual efforts towards secularization, offer the first models for that new amalgamation of older traditions with new impulses and awareness without which a specifically Jewish cultural atmosphere is hardly conceivable.

Arendt then asks whether such a renaissance is likely, noting that "*Commentary* looks to me like a good beginning and it is certainly a novum in Jewish cultural life." As we well know, that shining star burned out long ago.

But it is striking how similar Arendt's vision is to the project of *Tikkun*. The official Jewish world that *Tikkun* seeks to supplant—the world of plutocrats, diehard Zionists, and advisers to princes and presidents—is the world that Arendt set her sights upon more than four decades ago. Her aim was not to abandon Jewish heritage. It was to make the Jewish world a world more free, more critical, and, ultimately, more secure—and in doing so to make the world at large a place where peoples and traditions can coexist in peace and justice rather than gravitate perilously between indifference and hostility.

In a world where Elliot Abrams mans the watchtower of freedom in the West, Yitzhak Shamir and Benjamin Netanyahu constitute the world's Jewish voice "against" terrorism, and Jeane Kirkpatrick avails herself of the pages of Jewish journals to twist Arendt's writings on totalitarianism to her own cold-war purposes, it is time that the progressive Jewish community reclaim Hannah Arendt as its own. □

PLURALISM AT THE WAILING WALL

(Continued from p. 30)

it cannot be resolved by scientific engineering alone. The process of rational persuasion cannot diminish the power of the images we live by, and people are not used to women praying together at the Wall as we did. The most compelling argument against the women's actions at the Wailing Wall is rooted in the notion of *kavod tzibur* (respect for the public) and, ultimately, in custom. Such an argument also fuels the refusal to give *aliyot* (ritual honors) to women, to allow them to read the Torah, and keeps women behind the *mekhitza*. *Lo mekubal* is an open-ended modifier, a safety valve, nowhere defined with precision. It can be appealing, since on the surface it presents itself as the democratic outcome of multiple decisions and not an authoritarian imposition. But every legal system must devise metacriteria to sift through the variety of practices that can claim the dignity of binding, enforceable custom. An analogy may be made, for example, to *Brown v. Board of Education*: segregation may have been a socially acceptable practice, yet the U.S. Supreme Court determined it unconstitutional. One cannot appeal to custom when defending a custom—instead, one must use higher standards to determine validity. It is precisely this essential cluster of publicly defined standards that I could not find in the conceptual framework of the watchmen of the Wailing Wall.

The Israeli Supreme Court will soon decide the case of the Women of the Wall. A story that started as a nitty-gritty tort dispute has been transformed into an opportunity for Israel to reassess its stance on the relationship between church and state. At a fundamental level, this case illustrates the perils of delegating government power to religious authorities who are inherently opposed to the very idea of public deliberation about the limits of their jurisdiction. The basic guarantees of a constitutional state, such as the "freedom of conscience" envisaged in Israel's Declaration of Independence, are emptied of meaning if handed over to agents who are not committed to the distinction between "religion" and individual "conscience" and consequently cannot tolerate a Jew's choosing a self-description at odds with the dominant tradition.

In short, there is a paradox. Religious authorities demand recognition by pursuing a kind of clerical politics. At the same time, they deny a basic rule of the political game—reciprocity—by claiming universal supremacy and by refusing to recognize the legitimacy of their political partners. The Supreme Court is caught between two contrasting styles of reasoning—the rights-based model of the women, which strives for spiritual growth and togetherness, and the custom-based arguments of the government and a bundle of ultra-Orthodox organizations.

Yet, amidst hostility and discomfirmation, the Women of the Wall blew the shofar on Rosh Hodesh Elul, the month preceding the new year, the first time women did so publicly in the history of Israel. It is the tune of hope, nurtured in the certainty of solidarity. □

ANTI-SEMITISM IN POLAND

(Continued from p. 34)

applauds the article by Krzysztof Sliwinski in the Solidarity daily newspaper *Gazeta Wyborcza*. Unhappily, he doesn't mention the fact that *Gazeta Wyborcza*'s editor in chief, the much touted Adam Michnik, was moved to pen only one piece related to the Auschwitz controversy—a vigorous attack on Shamir for engaging in "lies" and for "offending Polish democracy" and the "Polish nation as a whole." His justifiable indignation, however, did not extend to Glemp's homily, which he dismissed with the words "awkward and tactless." *Polityka*'s columnist, Daniel Passent, inquired whether Michnik would approve of Glemp's sentiments had he only expressed them less "awkwardly and tactlessly."

The persistence of anti-Semitism in Poland, ignored or abetted by many Catholic clergy, cannot be divorced from right-wing and semifascist political ideologies openly clamoring for public support. Warszawski touches upon this subject in his *Tikkun* article; let me just add a few words.

The recrudescence of right-wing ideology follows ineluctably upon the demise of communism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. It is neither an unusual nor necessarily a dangerous phenomenon. It feeds on old phobias and long-time political traditions, as well as on the indiscriminate—if understandable—reaction against anything even remotely connected, in the public mind, with either "communism" or "socialism." It can become a serious danger, however, in times of crisis, especially during economic collapse, which inevitably generates a frantic search for scapegoats.

In the Soviet Union, we have seen the rise of foul xenophobic groups such as Pamyat (Memory), which openly agitate against "aliens" and every sort of "degenerate" Western influence, all of which are held responsible for the ills that communism has inflicted on the country. The principal scapegoats, of course, are the

Jews. It is not surprising that many of the two million Jews remaining in the Soviet Union have begun to fear for their lives. Their fear may be—and I believe it is—exaggerated. But it is understandable.

There are virtually no Jews in Poland. The resurgence of xenophobia-cum-authoritarianism does not, therefore, present a real threat to the few survivors. Rather, such ideologies pose a potential danger to the existence of a stable and decent democratic order. Some of this movement's slogans are remarkably similar to those propagated by the "Russophiles" in the Soviet Union. Others are homespun. In particular, advocacy of unbridled laissez-faire and contempt for the institutions of social welfare states such as Sweden (or, for that matter, virtually all other industrial societies in the West) often go hand in glove with a rejection of democratic processes as a whole, with praise for "strong arm" rule—and with anti-Semitism.

Thus, the prolific writer and head of the right-wing Union for a Realistic Policy, Janusz Korwin-Mikke, in an appearance on state-supported Polish television, denounced democracy and called for a "general to bring some order into the country" if it continues to drift into "anarchy and chaos." In the democratic weekly *Tygodnik Demokratyczny* he said that "the left Jewish intelligentsia had led Poland into the war with Hitler," and that in 1939 Hitler "still had relatively clean hands." When the prominent journalist Robert Nowak, writing in the same newspaper, reminded Korwin-Mikke of such events as Kristallnacht, he replied that there "was no evidence that Hitler had any hand in it."

Nowak expressed outrage that such "trash" should appear in a "respectable journal." Nevertheless, Korwin-Mikke continues to be published in "respectable journals." Nor is he unique. Maciej Giertych, the close adviser of Cardinal Glemp, specializes in articles on the "Judeo-Masonic conspiracy." His friends, now active in various "National Democratic" groups, issue leaflets, organize meetings, and regularly denounce "Jews" such as Bronislaw Geremek, the floor leader of Solidarity in the *Sejm* (parliament), Adam Michnik (whose father was a Jew but who considers himself a Christian), and Jacek Kuron (a 100-percent Pole). Adam Michnik may consider all these writings "awkward and tactless." Myself, I consider them potentially more dangerous and certainly much more offensive to Polish democracy than Shamir's mean-spirited epithets.

A few more remarks: In his *Tikkun* article, Warszawski suggests that the Polish church should "educate the faithful about the Shoah," and that "perhaps the Sunday which falls every year before or after Holocaust Remembrance Day should be set aside for this purpose." Yet surely a single remembrance mass once a year is hardly enough to "educate the faithful" not only about the Shoah, but about the evils of anti-Semitism.

I agree that Jews, as Warszawski suggests, should contribute to the "creation of the new interfaith center" near Auschwitz. They should also support all scholarly efforts in the area of Polish-Jewish relations—publications, conferences, courses for Polish students, and the like. But it seems to me that they would be well advised not to participate in "elitist" dialogues until the church initiates an honest and systematic dialogue with its own flock, including priests who feel that in the past Jews killed Christian children in order to improve the quality of Jewish blood.

Finally, Solidarity: As this article was going to press, I read of Lech Walesa's statements about Polish-Jewish relations, made during his November visit to the United States. The Polish leader still equates the Holocaust with Nazi crimes against the Polish nation and refuses to criticize the primate. But in urging his fellow Poles to reexamine their history—or as the Solidarity spokesman, Janusz Onyszkiewicz, puts it, "to deal with the past in order to better deal with the future"—Solidarity is taking an important step in the right direction. It will be interesting to see whether this—and more—will soon be reflected in Solidarity's *Tygodnik Solidarnosc* and *Gazeta Wyborcza*. □

SPINOZA, THE FIRST SECULAR JEW

(Continued from p. 42)

unique brand of anti-Semitism several hundred years before the onset of modern anti-Semitism. For the first time in Jewish history, anti-Semitism stemmed not from opposition to the Jewish religion but from a hostility to Jewish existence itself: it was existential anti-Semitism. The *converso* who disavowed the Jewish religion and sincerely sought to assimilate into Christian society found that he was still discriminated against because of his ancestry and his blood. This existential anti-Semitism reemerged in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and was given its most inexorable expression in the crematoria of Auschwitz; but the earlier version is to be found in Iberia in the waning days of the Renaissance. The concept of "racial purity" adduced by modern anti-Semites, and that of "blood purity" propounded by their Iberian predecessors, are two sides of the same coin: hatred of the Jew no longer depended on his religion but was anchored in his very being. There is something tainted, contemptible, and abhorrent in the mere existence of the Jew per se. The Jew can convert to Christianity or (like Spinoza) disavow all religion; yet, willy-nilly, he will continue to be subsumed under that "universal name of the class or nation" and remain, thereby, an object of loathing.

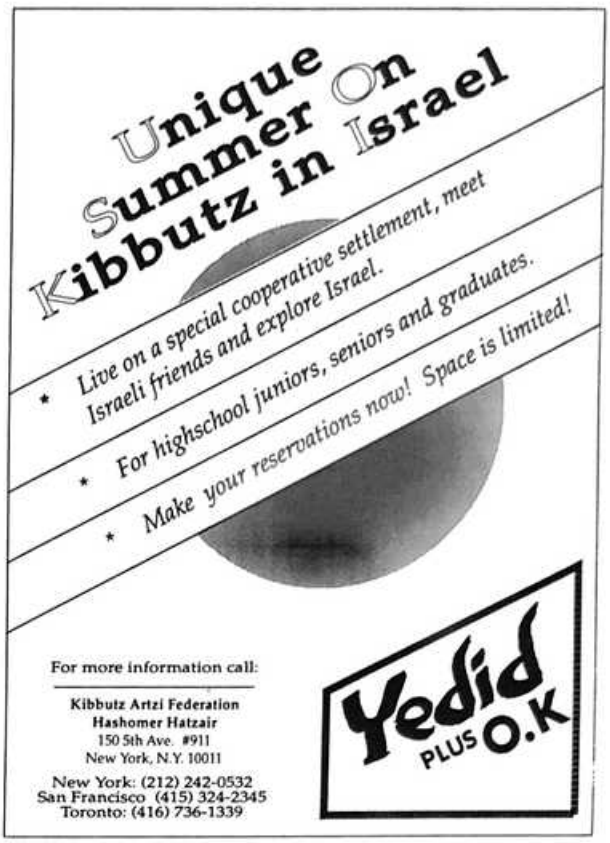
Auschwitz is the logical conclusion of this type of anti-Semitism; for if the stigma inheres in the Jew's very existence, it can only be expunged by physical extermination. But the Iberian Inquisition never dreamed of going as far as that. During the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, exile was the common practice for getting rid of the Jews. Only the "enlightened" modern era made physical extermination possible. Yet through Marrano history Spinoza could have peered into a deep structure of Jewish existence: he made the discovery—to which he was still unable to give conceptual articulation—that Jewish existence was broader in scope than Jewish religion, and the two could not be simply identified.

Secularization and the New Jewish "Citizenship"

Was Spinoza then the first secular Jew? What can be said confidently is that Spinoza took the first step in the eventual secularization of Jewish life by examining it empirically as a natural phenomenon subject solely to the forces of secular history. In doing so he opened a breach between the Jewish religion and traditional community, on the one hand, and the broader totality of Jewish life on the other. Yet the question remains of how to interpret this new Judaism. A multiplicity of alternatives, some (but not all) of them contradictory, present themselves, all contained as logical possibilities in Spinoza's position though he himself was historically unable to choose from among them.

1. *Assimilation,* which would place the individual directly within the universal dimension of society; his link to the state, as the political sovereign, would then be his only binding affiliative relationship.
2. *Religious reform,* which would sever Jewish attachment to an autonomous political authority and make of its believers, say, German, French, or U.S. citizens "of the Mosaic faith."
3. *Secular nationalism,* stressing the concept of the Jewish people (independently of religion and of political citizenship), as the basic existential and collective dimension of Jewish identity.
4. *Zionism,* entailing the renewal of Jewish political existence within an independent state, a possibility that Spinoza actually foresaw (in a famous and often-quoted passage of his *Theologico-political Treatise,* which fired the imagination of many modern Zionists from Moses Hess to David Ben-Gurion).

These alternatives are neither exhaustive nor mutually exclusive, and each entails several nuances. Nor are they equally inferable from Spinoza's position. Assimi-



lation, in Spinoza's theory, may solve the problem for individuals but not for the entire people, since gentile hostility alone will preserve the Jewish people forever. Religious reform within Judaism, though not incompatible with his views, was not on Spinoza's agenda; the only reform he envisaged went in the direction of a popular universal religion. As for the renewal of the Jewish state, Spinoza could not recommend its theocratic form, and its secular variety was still devoid of meaning for him. Although he knew that Jews, Marranos, and a nonbeliever such as himself were referred to as belonging to the same nation (and suffered similar conditions), the notion of Jewish national existence, as separate from religion, did not yet exist for him as a defined theoretical concept. Had Spinoza claimed for himself the right to disavow religion yet remain within the congregation, we might have been able to view him as, consciously, the "first secular Jew."

But he did not. That title belongs, if to anyone, to Spinoza's older and less gifted (if more complex) friend, Dr. Daniel de Prado, a former Marrano and secret Judaizer in Spain. Shortly after emigrating to Amsterdam and openly returning to Judaism, Prado expressed his doubts about all historical religions, became friendly with Spinoza, recanted, relapsed, and was excommunicated about a year after Spinoza; yet unlike Spinoza he insisted on his right to remain within the community while rejecting the commandments of *halakha.*

Imbued with broader intellectual interests, Spinoza's message of secularity was meant for the world as a

whole. He evidently assumed (correctly, at the time) that within Judaism this struggle was hopeless. What trapped him tragically at the personal level was this lack of perspective for change within Judaism. On the one hand, he knew he could not escape his Jewish condition, nor did he seek to do so; yet neither did he attempt to rehabilitate himself as a Jew (not even in the explicit direction of secular Judaism). Thus he was caught up in a double negation, rejected by the gentiles as a Jew and by the Jews as a heretic.

Because the concept of secular Judaism is a modern one, and has an inevitable social dimension, it cannot be realized by the traditional congregation. The Jewish body to which the secular Jew wishes to go on belonging as a "citizen" is no longer the autonomous medieval congregation but the Jewish people. In Spinoza's time, however, only the medieval community structure could offer an expression of Jewish affiliation. The very concept of secularity was not yet established, let alone the more complex idea of Jewish secularism. People were identified above all by their religion—and this applied especially to the Jews. To belong to a particular society one had to belong to the religion it confessed. True, Spinoza used his critique of Judaism to fight against this linkage of "citizenship" and religion. Yet whereas he offered a clear secular message to society at large, he had no solution for Judaism as such. Spinoza fought for the secularization of *individuals* and of *states,* but he lacked the modern concept of a nonpolitical secular Jewish nation.

Marrano history and his own fate as a "Marrano of reason" provided him with an optic fiber, penetrating into the depth of the Jewish situation and distinguishing between the religion of the Jews and their actual, more fundamental existence. But Spinoza did not develop this insight beyond the theory that gentile hostility preserves the Jews and will do so forever. While offering Western society a clear, positive doctrine of secularity, for his own people Spinoza had only a cry of protest. He could neither accept nor find a way to sever the link in Judaism between "citizenship" and religious observance.

Lifting the Ban

From time to time, petitions are made to have Spinoza's ban revoked. In 1925, the late Israeli historian, Joseph Klausner, stood on Mount Scopus in Jerusalem and proclaimed: "Baruch Spinoza, you are our brother." In the early 1950s, Israel's prime minister, David Ben-Gurion, conducted a campaign to have the ban lifted. And in 1953, the then Chief Rabbi of Israel, Yizhak Halevi Herzog, replied to an application from the late G. Herz Shikmoni, director of the "Spinozaeum" in Haifa, asking him if the excommunication was still in force from the point of view of *halakha.* In reply to the question of whether the excommunication was intended to apply only to Spinoza's lifetime or also to future generations, Rabbi Herzog did not rule, leaving the matter open to further consideration. But with regard to the ban on Spinoza's works, the rabbinical ruling was clear:

> I have examined the text of the proclamation [the writ of excommunication] and I have found ... that the intention is not specified for future generations, but only for the period of Spinoza's lifetime.... It seems that the ban on the reading of Spinoza's books and compositions no longer stands.

Yet all these attempts to have the ban revoked are really beside the point. Spinoza does not need certification by any authorities, whoever they may be, and one cannot but be struck by the astonishing discrepancy between his actual impact on intellectual history and the attempts to grant him belated institutional legitimization. The ban was significant because it isolated Spinoza from the actual Jewish community of his day, and whoever wishes to revoke it today is three hundred years late. The demand to revoke the ban would escape its anachronistic quality only if it were to have some symbolic meaning—national, perhaps, or ideological—rather than purely religious. Such a case, however, would entail the contradiction of both adopting the religious concept of the ban (as implied in the demand to revoke Spinoza's) and at the same time rejecting it (by changing its meaning).

Lastly, and this is perhaps the crux of the matter, who in the Jewish world today might be authorized to accept Spinoza back into the Jewish fold? The Lubavitcher Rebbe? The prime minister of Israel? The board of the Jewish Theological Seminary? The B'nai B'rith? There is no longer a single normative Judaism today—a development of which Spinoza himself was a harbinger.

In abandoning the observant Judaism of his day but refusing to convert to Christianity, Spinoza unwittingly embodied the alternatives which lay in wait for Jews of later generations following the encounter of Judaism with the modern world. As a result of this encounter, there is no longer one norm of Jewish existence today. There are Orthodox and secular Jews, Conservative and Reform Jews, Zionist and anti-Zionist Jews, and nuances and subcategories within all of these; in fact, Judaism today is determined by the way actual Jews live it, and not by any one compulsory model. In his life, if not his work, Spinoza himself foretold this development, and so he remains central to contemporary thinking about Judaism and the complexities of its existence and survival. □

Don't feel guilty . . .

if you don't read every article in *Tikkun.*

Our readers are people who lead very busy lives. So naturally they pick and choose amongst the articles in the magazine. We don't want you to feel guilty if you don't have time to read all of the articles you'd like to read.

Many of our readers tell us that when they read one or two articles per issue they find them more exciting than dozens of articles in other magazines. It's not the quantity that counts. And there are many articles that you can get back to later—they deal with timeless questions.

Subscribing to *Tikkun* is an act of solidarity. There is no other voice like ours in the Jewish world or the world of American politics. Our willingness to critique Shamir's policies while remaining proud Zionists and supporters of Israel has made us the most controversial and exciting voice in the Jewish world. Our insistence that the Democrats and liberals must change their focus, moving beyond an exclusive focus on "rights" to a concern with deeper psychological and ethical issues, provides the only truly fresh perspective you are likely to hear in American politics. So even when you don't read every article in the magazine, your subscription makes it possible for these kinds of ideas to be heard.

It makes a difference if you subscribe. *Tikkun* is one of the largest-selling intellectual magazines on newsstands—but it helps us more if you subscribe directly. Moreover, many newsstands and bookstores sell out very quickly. Then our subscribers complain—because friends are always borrowing their copies of the magazine. It helps everyone if you subscribe. And if you already subscribe, please buy a gift subscription for some friends.

TIKKUN recently won the *Utne Reader Award* for best essays on politics & culture of any U.S. magazine.

There are six things you can do to help build the *TIKKUN* Community: 1. Create a local *TIKKUN* discussion group or a monthly *TIKKUN* salon. 2. Ask local bookstores to sell the magazine and local libraries to subscribe. 3. Photocopy articles and send them to friends. Ask your friends to subscribe. 4. Become involved in CJSJ, *TIKKUN*'s education arm (the Committee for Judaism and Social Justice) 5. Come volunteer with *TIKKUN* or *TIKKUN*'s projects—at the Oakland office! 6. Set up speaking engagements for *TIKKUN* speakers or fundraising events. For more information, contact Craig Sumberg, 415-482-0805 or write CJSJ, 5100 Leona St., Oakland, CA 94619.

Subscriptions: $25. Gift subscriptions $22 (if you already subscribe).

Tikkun (tē•kün) . . .
to heal, repair and transform the world.
All the rest is commentary.

תיקון

TIKKUN CONFERENCE OF LIBERAL & PROGRESSIVE JEWS

Los Angeles • Jan. 20–21, 1990

Details inside

64858
01
0 306775 8