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

TIKKUN

Current Debate: Circumcision
Lisa Braver Moss vs. Rabbi Daniel Landes & Sheryl Robbin
Fiction: *Jonathan Wilson*
New Columnists: *Cornel West & Gad Horowitz*

A BIMONTHLY JEWISH CRITIQUE OF POLITICS, CULTURE & SOCIETY SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1990 $5.00



SHOULD SOVIET JEWS LEAVE?

Sam Kassow

Anna Freud & I
Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson

The Book of J
Harold Bloom & David Rosenberg

Homelessness
Peter Dreier & Richard Appelbaum

Jewish Romantic Relationships
Estelle Frankel

Mother Tongues
Adrienne Rich

Israel's Problems
A. B. Yehoshua

Goyim Bashing & Jewish Pessimism
Michael Lerner

European Prospects
Arthur Hertzberg

Baseball Best-Sellers
Elliott J. Gorn

PLUS

Arthur Waskow on A Land Promised Twice; David Antin on Writing and Exile; Mitchell Stephens on Heidegger & Derrida; Fred Siegel on the Deadlock in American Politics; Deborah E. Lipstadt on Diaspora Fund-raisers; and Arnold Eisen on the High Holidays.

Gedale's Song

Primo Levi
Translated by Ruth Feldman

Do you recognize us? We are the ghetto sheep,
Shorn for a thousand years, resigned to injury.
We are the tailors, the copyists, and the cantors
Withered in the shadow of the Cross.
Now we have learned the forest paths,
Learned to shoot and we're right on target.
  If I am not for myself, who will be for me?
  If not like this, how? And if not now, when?
Our brothers have risen to the sky
Through the ovens of Sobibór and Treblinka,
They have dug themselves a grave in the air.
Only we few have survived
For the honor of our submerged people,
For revenge and witnessing.
  If I am not for myself, who will be for me?
  If not like this, how? And if not now, when?
We are the sons of David, and the stubborn ones of Masada.
Each of us carries in his pocket the stone
That shattered Goliath's forehead.
Brothers, away from the Europe of death:
We will climb together toward the land
Where we shall be men among other men.
  If I am not for myself, who will be for me?
  If not like this, how? And if not now, when?

Gedale, a partisan leader, attributes the words of his song (he says the tune keeps changing) to a Martin Fontasch, who was with him in the Kossovo ghetto. The German who killed him was a music lover and granted his prisoner a last wish, provided that it was reasonable, whereupon Fontasch asked to be allowed to compose one last song. Gedale says the words came into his hands via a Russian who was in the cell next to that of Fontasch.

Primo Levi, who died in 1986, was one of the foremost Holocaust writers. His collected poems, translated by Ruth Feldman, will be published by Faber & Faber.

TIKKUN

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

2 Letters
7 Editorials: Iraqi Aggression; Goyim-Bashing and Jewish Pessimism
11 Free Associations

Articles

15 Nobody Home: The Housing Crisis Meets the Nineties — *Peter Dreier and Richard Appelbaum*
19 The Promises and Pitfalls of Jewish Relationships — *Estelle Frankel*
23 Anna Freud and I — *Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson*
27 Should Soviet Jews Leave? — *Samuel D. Kassow*
31 A Conversation With A. B. Yehoshua
35 Stepmother Tongues — *Adrienne Rich*
39 J in the Wilderness — *Harold Bloom and David Rosenberg*
44 United States of Europe — *Arthur Hertzberg*
47 Writing and Exile — *David Antin*
54 Remember Us for Life — *Arnold Eisen*
56 Twice-Promised Land — *Arthur Waskow*

Columns

59 Why I Write for *Tikkun* — *Cornel West*
61 Twelve-Stepping It — *Gad Horowitz*

Fiction

63 Charcoal on Paper — *Jonathan Wilson*

Poetry

52 Two Poems — *Alicia Ostriker*
62 Bible Lesson — *Harvey Shapiro*
69 Zipporah — *Shirley Kaufman*

Current Debate: Circumcision Decision

70 A Painful Case — *Lisa Braver Moss*
72 Gainful Pain — *Rabbi Daniel Landes and Sheryl Robbin*

Reviews

75 *The Politics of Rich and Poor* by Kevin Phillips and *Politics by Other Means* by Benjamin Ginsberg and Martin Shefter — *Fred Siegel*
77 *Winning Is the Only Thing* by Randy Roberts and James S. Olson and *Men at Work: The Craft of Baseball* by George F. Will — *Elliott J. Gorn*
80 *Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question* by Jacques Derrida and *Heidegger and Nazism* by Victor Farias — *Mitchell Stephens*
84 *The Smoke Screen: Israel, Philanthropy and American Jews* by Charles Hoffman — *Deborah E. Lipstadt*
86 *The False Prophet: Rabbi Meir Kahane* by Robert I. Friedman — *Milton Viorst*
88 Reel Companions: Contemporary Gay Cinema — *Warren Sonbert*

Cover art: Interior with Hot Seat by Todd McKie. Watercolor, 1982, 44×52 inches. Collection Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University, Waltham, MA; Rose Purchase Fund.

The drawings on page 46 (*Flaubert*) and page 65 (*Paintbrush*) are by Jim Dine. Courtesy of Erika Meyerovich Gallery, San Francisco. The illustration on page 17 is by Jack Lefcourt. The drawing on page 9 is by Lenny Silverberg. The drawings on pages 42, 52, 67, and 91 are by Saul Steinberg. Courtesy of Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles. The photographs are by Anne Marie Oliver and Paul Steinberg, 1990.

TIKKUN

Editor and Publisher:
Michael Lerner
Associate Editor:
Peter Gabel
Assistant Editor:
Peter Cole
Book Editor:
Michael Kazin
Poetry Editor:
Marge Piercy
Literary Editors:
Phillip Lopate, Leonard Michaels, Francine Prose
Contributing Editors:
Paul Berman, E. M. Broner, Todd Gitlin, Josh Henkin, Mikhail Iossel, Christopher Lasch, Ruth Messinger, Ilene Philipson, Anne Roiphe, Lisa Rubens, Gina Morantz-Sanchez, Milton Viorst, Steve Wasserman, Eli Zaretsky
Production Manager:
Valerie Sacks
Assistant to the Editor:
Adina Hoffman
Editorial Assistant:
Rebecca Lemov

Assistant Publisher:
Craig Sumberg
Administrative Assistant/ Advertising Manager:
Lorraine Zimmerman
Controller:
Valerie Bach Vaz

Israel Office:
Aaron Back, Beth Sandweiss
Editorial Consultants:
Christina Büchmann, David Gewanter, Josh Weiner
Interns:
Daniel Baer, Carolyn Cohen, Ora Gelley, Fia Lehmann, John Plotz, Monica Rico, Carolyn Sedway, Laura Tulchinsky, Rachel Yassky

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, Nan Fink, Gordon Freeman, Saul Friedlander, Maurice Friedman, Amos Funkenstein, Laura Geller, Herbert Gold, David Gordis, Arthur Green, Joshua Greene, Colin Greer, Morton Halperin, David Hartman, Richard Healey, Robert Heilbroner, Hal Jacobs, Burt Jacobson, Marc Kaminsky, 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, Shana Penn, 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.*

A Palestinian State?

To the Editor:

Your "Current Debate: How Dangerous Would a Palestinian State Be?" (*Tikkun*, Jul./Aug. 1990) presented both sides of an issue that rarely receives fair treatment in the American press.

The view that "We Can Live With It" (Ephraim Sneh's contribution) has received extensive media coverage; the report published last year by the Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, for example, made headlines across the United States and its editor was even invited to testify before a congressional committee.

But Michael Widlanski's point of view ("Very Dangerous") has been almost universally ignored by the American media. The report that Widlanski edited for the Institute for Advanced Strategic and Political Studies, "Can Israel Survive a Palestinian State?" was shunned by the same newspapers that accorded the Jaffee report so much attention.

At a time when freedom of speech is frequently sacrificed on the altar of narrow political considerations, *Tikkun* is to be commended for airing both sides of this vital debate.

Bertram Korn, Jr.
Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Environmentalism & Unions

To the Editor:

Eric Mann is on to something in "Environmentalism in the Corporate State" (*Tikkun*, Mar./Apr. 1990)—the use of workers' collective power to bring constructive pressure on corporate America on behalf of a healthy and safe environment. But then he blows it. His ideology prevents him from sanctioning an approach to collective bargaining that could lead to the sharing of decision-making power over those aspects of a company's production process that affect the health of the workers and of the surrounding community. Mann says that this is his goal, but he seems less

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*, and *Academic Index*, 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; (800) 221-3148.

interested in it than in *demanding* power, in preserving or revitalizing an adversarial style of unionism, and in avoiding labor–management cooperation at all costs.

This approach can only cause management to insist vehemently on its "rights" and create an impasse. What many consider to be the more *progressive* approach to negotiations is to deal with the *interests* of the parties rather than stressing exclusively the assertion of "rights." That, however, could lead to the dreaded "labor–management cooperation." Mann's rejection of the cooperative—he deems it the co-opted—approach forfeits a promising opportunity for marshaling union power to change corporate indifference toward pollution.

There is nothing weak or suspect about a union offering cooperation in return for a package of trade-offs that includes diminishing the environmental hazards that the company creates in the course of producing its product. Do union members want that? This is something they have to tell their leaders.

Meanwhile, from the point of view of environmental protection, it is the responsibility of union leaders and would-be leaders to lead—to continue the education of the rank-and-file on the importance of corporate environmental policies to their own health and the health of their families and communities. Union leaders having the farsightedness and imagination necessary to push such a program should also be well equipped to convince management that a work force proud to work for the company is a more creative, efficient, and productive work force.

This approach is a vital element in keeping the spirit of Earth Day alive and should not be diverted by anyone's pleasure in bashing capitalism. As a recent article in the *Union Democracy Review* noted in a different context, opposition to the steps that need to be taken may serve a need for doctrinal purity but not the interest of union members.

Jesse Etelson
Rockville, Maryland

Eric Mann responds:

I appreciate Etelson's letter for framing the debate so clearly. To begin, I argued that labor has no function as an independent and left political force with interests separate from the capitalists by taking the debate *into the society as a whole*. Thus, his focus about "collective bargaining" frames the problem far too narrowly. Of course unions should raise health, safety, and environmental issues in negotiations, but fifty-five years of NLRB-sponsored labor relations have allowed management to use the contractual straitjacket to thwart environmental concerns; for example the UAW/GM national agreement gives management the "right" to determine "the products manufactured and the processes employed"—the very arenas that require popular, democratic control by workers and *communities*.

This offers unions, as they did during the 1930s, an opportunity to help lead a revitalized Left, in this case with a major emphasis on challenging the production practices of their "own" auto, oil, chemical, and electronics companies. But too often in practice, frightened and pro-corporate union officials (who are already parroting Etelson's talk of "cooperation") oppose even the mildest environmental demands with the claim that they are protecting their members' jobs. They "cooperate" with management to confine the debate within the factory walls—while the toxins spill out into the community. My argument is that a creative adversarial unionism must challenge those management rights.

Second, it is argued that we should analyze the situation in terms of "interests" and not abstract "rights." I agree. My analysis of how corporate elites have dominated significant wings of both the labor and environmental movement is rooted in an analysis of their *class* interest. When Chevron and Unocal, two major polluters, initiate misleading environmental ad campaigns, when corporations like DuPont and Monsanto continue to produce lethal toxins knowing full well the lethal impact, and when George Bush tells world meetings on the environment that he wants to "study" the destruction of the ozone layer further before he interferes with corporate decision making, they are all doing so based on a perceived need to maintain profitability and competitiveness in a ruthless world economy. Conversely, when progressive environmentalists propose the immediate closing down of certain lethal toxic polluters, or the use of corporate and tax revenues to retrain and pay workers who are laid off because toxic

"Remarkable, rich, witty, wise..."
—ALFRED UHRY, author of *Driving Miss Daisy*

The author of *The Endless Steppe* explores the challenge and solace of being Jewish, in haunting stories set in World War II Vilna and today's New York and Israel.

"Esther Hautzig's REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE is a memoir from the heart that deeply touches the heart."
—CHAIM POTOK

Remember who you are



Stories about being Jewish
Esther Hautzig
$16.95
The CROWN PUBLISHING GROUP
Now at your bookstore.

plants are closed, or government regulations to test all new chemicals *before* their introduction into the market—they are fiercely opposed by corporate interests. Thus, the irony of all this cooperative and classless talk is that one group of Americans who understand best that the class struggle still exists are the corporate rich—because they are conscious, organized, and winning the struggle.

I have worked side by side with thousands of working people as my coworkers for fourteen years, as a college-educated shop floor union activist—as a nurse's aide, operating room orderly, shipyard mechanic, and electronic and automobile assembler for some of America's industrial giants, IBM, Ford, and General Motors. My view that labor-management cooperation is both ideologically and strategically poison is based upon watching frightened workers laboring harder and harder to make their companies more "competitive," and turning against each other as pregnant or injured workers are seen as obstacles to the world fight against "foreign competition," only to have their unions broken and their plants closed as capital uses them until they are spent and discarded. I have seen workers ingesting asbestos and paint fumes and solvents, knowing the chemicals are slowly killing them but afraid to fight back out of fear of losing their jobs. And I live in Los Angeles where the air is lethal (as it is in New York, Detroit, Baton Rouge, and most urban centers) and watch the obscene polarization of wealth as celebrities compete as to who can build a bigger Taj Mahal while immigrant workers labor in sweatshops for $25 a day and sleep five to a room. I didn't invent the class struggle, I just refuse to close my eyes to it.

Holocaust Museum

To the Editor:

Howard Husock, in "Red, White, and Jew: Holocaust Museum on the Mall" (*Tikkun*, Jul./Aug. 1990), completely fails to understand the mission and the reality of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Husock is harshly critical of the fact that the museum is being built on the National Mall. He seems almost embarrassed that the Museum is being given such prominence. He seems unable to understand that the Holocaust, the deliberate, state-sponsored, bureaucratically organized mass murder of millions because of their race, religion, nationality, politics, or handicap, is an event which haunts humankind, an event of overwhelming and universal significance, an event which we and our children and their children cannot afford to ignore.

The Museum's presence on the National Mall will stand as a warning of the dire consequences when the ideals proclaimed on the Mall are perverted.

The Museum will not be exclusive but inclusive. Certainly, the overwhelming Jewish tragedy and the hideous and unprecedented Nazi decision to wipe out an entire people will be central to the story the museum will tell, as it must be. But the Museum will also portray the fates of all the targets of Nazi racism and fanaticism—the physically and mentally handicapped and the Gypsies, the Jehovah's Witnesses and the homosexuals, the Polish intelligentsia, the political and religious dissidents, and the Soviet POWs. Ultimately and significantly, the Museum's story is not simply the story of what the Nazis did to the Jews and others but what people did to people.

Indeed, Husock goes so far as to say the Museum "risks ... bringing out an anti-Semitism latent in American culture." This argument would appear to reflect that tired, timid mentality that dictates a low profile for the minority group. Husock does not seem to understand that to hide hatred is to nourish hatred.

In contradiction to Husock's complaint that the Museum's statement will be "overwhelmingly dark," the Museum's permanent exhibition, the core of the institution, will illustrate the power of the human spirit against unbelievable odds. It will represent the targeted populations not as anonymous, hapless victims but as individual people with distinct and rich cultures and a will to live. It will tell of spiritual resistance as well as physical resistance in the ghettos, among the partisans, and even in the camps. It will tell of the willingness of individuals and even of an entire people—the Danes—to risk all to shelter and to save their fellow creatures. By demonstrating the choices made by the perpetrators and the bystanders and the "choiceless 'choices" imposed on the innocent victims, the exhibition will shed light on the very essence of human nature.

Husock agrees reluctantly that U.S. failure to "take in more refugees" or to bomb Auschwitz demonstrates a relationship between American history and the Holocaust, but he asks whether the Council's leaders really believe such actions—more accurately, inactions—among the events of American history "most illustrated a capacity for evil." The question has no real validity. But it is beyond dispute that those decisions not to act, not to save, must be remembered because they resulted directly in extreme suffering and death and because they displayed a selfishness, a thoughtlessness, and a callousness inexcusable for our democracy. Indifference, the great accomplice of evil, always benefits the murderer, never the murdered, a lesson which policymakers need constantly to remember.

Husock is also far behind the times. "No other institutions on the Mall," he says, "focus on a single ethnic or religious group." Aside from the fact that the Holocaust Memorial Museum will not focus exclusively on one ethnic or religious group, Husock ignores the fact that the Smithsonian museums include museums dedicated to Asia and Africa. He has not bothered to learn that last November President Bush signed legislation authorizing the Smithsonian to build a National Museum of the American Indian specifically on the very National Mall whose symbolism he properly cherishes. He has not bothered to find out that last May, with the blessings of Congressional and public opinion and with appropriate publicity, the selfsame Smithsonian announced the appointment of a high-level advisory board to "assist with ... (an) examination of the form and content of an African-American presence on the National Mall."

Fearing, belatedly, such a possibility, Husock asks, "What will become of the sense that a common Americanness unites—and protects—disparate groups?" He is out of step with basic American thinking and values. America cherishes the cultures which its scores of immigrant populations have brought—and are continuing to bring—to this country. America is united amid diversity. That is its glory.

Perhaps Husock's most serious error is that he not only equates an institu-

tion telling of a Jewish tragedy with a Jewish museum but also confuses the American present with the European past—and to a degree, the European present. He speaks glowingly, as well he should, of the "American civil religion, the historically non-denominational set of ideals represented by the other monuments on the Mall." But the Jews of Europe, and the freed slaves in this country, were persecuted not because they did not share a "civil religion" but because of the hatred spawned by racism. The Jews of prewar Europe were considered at best to be tolerated guests, not wholly part of the host population; the Gypsies were viewed as total outsiders. In destroying the Jews, the Nazis aimed to "purify the German race," not to strengthen a "civil religion." His fears are misplaced.

Sara J. Bloomfield
Executive Director
United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Howard Husock responds:

Director Bloomfield is correct in inferring that I would prefer that there not be any museums on the Mall devoted to specific ethnic or cultural groups. I'd rather see exhibits, perhaps permanent ones, in the Museum of American History serve the purposes of such institutions. I disagree, however, that museums about Native Americans and African-Americans can be seen as analogues to the Holocaust Museum. Were that to be the case, these museums would be devoted solely to the horrors of slavery or solely to Indian massacres and their larger arguably genocidal context. I doubt that such will be the case. I'd have reservations about a Jewish museum on the Mall, but such a museum would not be the same as a museum about the Holocaust—except in view of those who would today define the Holocaust as the essence of Jewish experience.

Finally, I agree completely that European Jewry was victimized by a kind of racism. And indeed, whether or not they wished there to be one or not, there was no civil religion in prewar Europe (or, I daresay, in contemporary Europe) which could allow them to be more than cultural outsiders. It's certainly not my assertion that such a civil religion existed in Europe. (I haven't the slightest idea on what basis Ms. Bloomfield feels I ascribe a civil religion to the Nazis!) It is a key aspect of American unusualness that we have

THE MOST REVOLUTIONARY Ms. EVER.

No advertising! Editorially free!

Announcing a totally transformed *Ms.*—reader supported, reader responsive, and international in scope. With 100 pages of fresh, frank editorial in every bimonthly issue, it's more like a "magabook" than a magazine. It's *Ms.* as you always wished it could be. Join us as a Founding Subscriber—and see.

INTRODUCTORY OFFER
SIX BIG ISSUES

Ms.

1 YEAR $30
(Regular subscription price $40)

Name _____ (please print)
Address _____
City _____ State/Zip _____
☐ Payment enclosed. ☐ Bill me.
Charge my ☐ VISA ☐ MASTERCARD
Card # _____ Exp. Date _____
Signature _____

Canadian rate: $44. Foreign rates: ☐ Surface mail $46 ☐ Airmail $66
Payment must be in U.S. currency.

Mail to *Ms.*, P.O. Box 57132, Boulder, CO 80322-7132

5MS54

such a value system of tolerance and it is that which I fear special-interest museums among our national institutions may undermine.

Women of the Wall

To the Editor:

Misogynist rabbis have attacked us, the International Committee for Women at the *Kotel,* as "feminist heretics," out to destroy Judaism. We are now saddened that Judith Plaskow has accused us of not being radically feminist *enough*.

We are attempting to bridge the boundaries of our differences: Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, Reconstructionist, unaffiliated, Israeli, and Diaspora. What unites us is our claim that the Torah, literally and figuratively, is ours, as is the *kotel,* Judaism's most sacred public space. This, and not some limited campaign for "rights," is what we are about.

It is puzzling that Plaskow, who calls for a total transformation of Judaism, and who rejects traditional prayers as being too male-oriented, is so attached to the concept of minyan, and of the Barchu. Those of us who wish to pray as a minyan understand that diversity in women's prayer at the *kotel* can only flourish when we have won the right to pray.

Plaskow accuses us of "playing it safe" and of being "good girls" by adhering to Halakha and for not constituting ourselves as a minyan. Those of us who have been bitten, cursed, spat at, slapped, or beaten at the kotel can attest that this is not the case. We remain halakhic for a number of reasons. By doing so we can make it possible for all Jewish women, including those who choose to abide by Halakha, to participate.

The fact that we are halakhic exposes the hypocrisy of those Israeli rabbinic authorities who condemn the Women of the Wall by claiming that they violate Halakha. Their actual problem is fear and rage at women's religious autonomy.

In their legal briefs, our opponents do not focus on where we pray but attack us for reading from the Torah and praying without male leaders. To quote one authority cited in that brief: "When women pray together, the Shekhinah is not present and God does not hear their prayers." This is not, as Plaskow charges, an Israel versus the Diaspora issue. The essence of this struggle is about women's religious role in Judaism.

Plaskow accuses us of having too limited an agenda. A simple phone call would have told her that our formal goals include most of what she charges us with omitting: creating women's liturgy, rituals, and midrash; making Jewish education at all levels available to women. Plaskow also accuses us of neglecting important feminist causes. It is not a question of "either/or," of choosing one feminist cause to the neglect of others. All are allied. As individuals, we are involved in virtually all the issues Plaskow mentions, including wife and child abuse and the feminist relationship to militarism and the Palestinian question.

Plaskow insults Israeli feminists when she asserts that feminism has "flourished in the United States with a variety, depth, and vitality that have no parallel in Israel." Those of us who live in the Diaspora and benefit from the greater safety and freedom to create religiously have much to offer our Israeli sisters but also much to learn from their insights and experience. It is unacceptable to rate our respective feminist experiences, dismissing those of our Israeli sisters with condescension. As for Plaskow's diaspora isolationism, the Wall belongs to us all. It is too important a place and too important a symbol to relinquish to one set of Jews, or to Israelis, as opposed to *am Yisrael.*

Susan Alter, Susan Aranoff, Miriam Benson, Phyllis Chesler, Helene Ferris, Rivka Haut, Norma Joseph, Shulamit Magnus,
for the International Committee for Women at the Kotel.
Jerusalem, Israel

After writing the above letter, the writers conferred with Judith Plaskow and agreed to continue a dialogue on the issues raised. They then issued the following letter:

To the Editor:

Obviously, there are important differences between us that need to be addressed. Given the time constraints, it was impossible to do so for this issue. We will do so in the near future. While this exchange has caused pain, we recognize this as an opportunity to discuss crucial differences between us without cutting ourselves off from each other.

We do not want to fight with each other. I, Judith Plaskow, affirm that the struggle at the Wall is important for all Jewish women. It may have a ripple effect on other areas of Jewish life. I encourage the entire Jewish community to support the women's action at the Kotel.

We, the International Committee for the Women at the Kotel (ICWK) agree that the struggle at the Wall is one of many struggles to make Judaism fully inclusive of women. While we, Judith Plaskow and ICWK, may choose different paths or envision our ultimate goals differently, we support each other's struggles to claim the Torah, sacred space, and religious autonomy for all Jewish Women.

Susan Alter, Susan Aranoff, Miriam Benson, Phyllis Chesler, Helene Ferris, Rifka Haut, Norma Joseph, Shulamit Magnus, Judith Plaskow

(Continued on p. 104)

לְשָׁנָה טוֹבָה תִּכָּתֵבוּ

May you be inscribed for a year of peace, joy, and fulfillment
—the *Tikkun* Staff

Photos, Drawings, and Cartoons Needed

We are seeking high-quality black and white drawings, original photographs (on everything from American culture and politics to Eastern Europe to Israel), and cartoons (on contemporary cultural and political themes). Good quality photocopies of the drawings and cartoons and glossies of the photographs are acceptable for a first review. Photo essays will also be reviewed. Send to: *Tikkun* Art, 5100 Leona Street, Oakland, CA 94619.

EDITORIALS BY MICHAEL LERNER

Iraqi Aggression

Iraq's naked aggression against Kuwait required decisive political, economic, and military action. We are no fans of the racist, reactionary, and anti-Semitic regimes in Saudi Arabia and other gulf states, but the criminals in Iraq had to be stopped—and we are proud that the U.S. took the necessary steps.

While the U.S. rightly took the lead in the early stages of the struggle, and while troops from Egypt and other Arab states are symbolically important, this is a perfect moment to reaffirm the United Nations as the agency for international peace keeping. Allowing the UN to play the role of international policeman will give it an opportunity to regain credibility, now that cold war rivalries can no longer be blamed for undermining the possibility of unified action.

The post-cold war order requires new kinds of international institutions, with both economic and military power. An internationally constituted police force—with real teeth to intervene in situations like the invasion of Kuwait—would be an important step toward building practical internationalism. It is time to move toward a new kind of world order that transcends nineteenth century concepts of national sovereignty that have led to so much trouble in the twentieth century. If the UN flubs this opportunity, then we need to build new international institutions that *can* do what needs to be done.

Israeli doves are now faced with an extraordinarily difficult task: to help explain why the PLO and Palestinians have responded so enthusiastically to Saddam Hussein. The Israeli Right would like to pretend that this enthusiasm "shows the true colors" of the Palestinian people, by which they mean that Palestinians care for nothing but the opportunity to knife Israelis in the back.

It's easy for us to share some of the outrage felt by many Israelis at those Palestinians who have been holding mass demonstrations in support of Saddam Hussein. They are certainly making it harder for Israeli centrists to believe that Palestinians would ever live in peace. Yet the perverted logic of "the enemy of my enemy is my friend" that is popular among some Palestinians (not all—Edward Said in the U.S. and other factions of the PLO have criticized Arafat's embrace of Iraq) has its analogue in Zionist history: in the 1930s some sectors of Shamir's and Jabotinsky's Zionist Revisionists attempted to build an alliance with Mussolini and the fascists against British colonialism, even though they shared very different aims from the Nazis. Those right-wing Zionists were wrong then, and the Palestinians who embrace Iraq are wrong now.

But it makes sense to listen to the explanation proffered by Palestinians: "For years," they tell us, "you in America and you in the Israeli peace movement told us that if we accepted UN resolutions 242 and 338 recognizing Israel's existence, and if we suspended terrorist attacks against Israeli civilians, then this would provide Israelis with the reassurances that they needed to begin to move toward peace. But we did all that and in the intervening two years Shamir has grown even more intransigent, openly rejecting any negotiations aimed at trading land for peace, and even torpedoing his own peace process once it became clear that we would cooperate with it and help to make it work. Meanwhile, our militants have accused us of 'selling out' and we can't even maintain discipline among them (to wit, the recent attempted attack on the Tel Aviv beaches). It's unlikely that Saddam Hussein can deliver much either, but at least if we identify with his efforts to stand up to American power we no longer feel we are groveling. Saddam Hussein's support for our cause and for Arab nationalism helps us regain the sense of dignity that we had to abandon while begging Israel to negotiate with us."

We'd sympathize more with this argument if the PLO and the Palestinian people had been less equivocal in its recognition of Israel, more vocal in condemning terrorist acts by various Palestinian groups, and if they had paid more attention to winning the hearts and minds of Israeli moderates. Nevertheless, we think that the explanation given above *is* sufficient to show that current Palestinian sympathies with Iraq do *not,* as the Israeli Right claims, prove that a demilitarized Palestinian state would be a threat to Israel.

In fact, Palestinians incensed by Israeli occupation—and Palestinians in Jordan who resent their enforced exile—are a far greater military threat to Israel now than they would be if Israel were to help create a carefully supervised demilitarized Palestinian state that had something to lose from Iraqi expansionism. Israeli generals, writing in *Tikkun,* have outlined a demilitarization scheme that would give Israeli a security zone on the border with Jordan to base sufficient troops to rebut any military incursions or threats from an increasingly unreliable Jordan.

Iraq's feeble attempt to equate its invasion of Kuwait with Israel's presence on the West Bank should be rejected, and Iraq should be unequivocally condemned. But Israel's self-interest dictates a new seriousness about negotiations with the Palestinians.

Israelis live in a neighborhood of thugs. Hussein in Iraq competes with Syria's Assad, Libya's Qaddafi, the polite gangsters who run Saudi Arabia, and the fanatics who govern Iran. For this reason we've always supported a strong military for Israel at the same time that we've opposed arms sales to the Arab states. Yet Israel's greatest strength continues to be its reputation as a democratic country which respects human rights. For that reason, the most important step it can take to defend itself against Iraq is to begin to treat the seven hundred thousand Israeli Palestinians and the one-and-a-half million Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza with the respect they deserve.

Goyim-Bashing and Jewish Pessimism

Hostility toward non-Jews has a long history in the Jewish world, and it may be as prevalent amongst American Jewish liberals as amongst Israeli right-wingers. But whether it expresses itself as racism in Israel or suspicion of gentiles here in the United States, goyim-bashing is a powerful sign of our inability to remain true to the revolutionary optimism that was the central meaning of the covenant that Jews received at Sinai.

To the extent that we become overwhelmed by pessimism and despair, we grant a posthumous victory to those who hoped to destroy the Jewish people. Our enemies may not have destroyed the Jewish body, but to the extent that they have created a new kind of Jew who uses the behavior of the world as the criterion for how Jews should behave, to the extent that they have made Jews "realistic," the enemies of the Jewish people may have succeeded in destroying one of the most important aspects of the Jewish soul—our ability to envision and fight for a different and better world. Nowhere does this loss show up more dramatically than in our relationship to non-Jews.

★ ★ ★

It's no secret that Jews disparage non-Jews behind their backs. Some Jews brag about tricking them in business, others shun them socially. The Yiddish phrase *goyishe kup* (a non-Jewish head) indicates someone stupid or foolish. In Jewish literature, the non-Jew is often portrayed as someone who is untrustworthy, dangerous, or hateful.

Many younger Jews growing up in the post–World War II era were scandalized by parents or relatives who talked about *shvartses* or who made disparaging references to the civil rights movement. Yet even these younger generations have sometimes imbibed anti-goy sentiments, have been insensitive to converts to Judaism, and have participated in the subtle critique of the gentiles that makes one feel "in" as a Jew. Goyim-bashing may be most intense amongst Jews who have little in the way of an active daily religious life and who consequently hold on to their ethnic identity all the more fiercely. All that they have to substantiate their Jewishness, apart from some food preferences, is the degree to which they see themselves as different from the non-Jew.

★ ★ ★

Given the tremendous oppression the Jewish people have endured at the hands of non-Jews, suspicion and anti-goy sentiment are understandable. The anger that many Jews feel is often legitimate. Our relative powerlessness to defend ourselves made it necessary for us to repress our outrage and anger at what was done to us, and to develop instead a quiet anger that evolved into a distinct culture of anti-goyism. Unable to express anger in direct and healthy ways, we Jews sometimes expressed it instead through humor, religious triumphalism, and ultimately a Zionist ideology whose fundamental assumption was that the goyim could never be trusted.

There is no blame implied here. The trauma of the Holocaust may have so deeply scarred us that our current attitude is understandable. There are moments when I become so overwhelmed by the feelings of anger at what was done to my family and my people that I become sympathetic to the most extreme fantasies of Israeli right-wingers. It takes an act of conscious determination to prevent the past from shaping our perceptions of the present. Yet precisely because I do love my people, I feel the need to consciously overcome the pain of the past, so that I can look more honestly at the present.

Today, Jewish anger has been transformed into a deep pessimism about "the other," a pessimism that led many post-Holocaust Jews into a worship of power and now allows them to dismiss all moral criticism of Israel as idealistic baloney. The only thing that Israelis need to worry about, these pessimists believe, is the size of our army and the strength of our state. In the final analysis, they assert, nothing else counts besides strength—and since the goyim will inevitably try to destroy us, the only issue worth worrying about is how strong we can make the State of Israel.

By acting on the assumption that the rest of the world is implacably hostile, Israel helps create a set of responses that then fulfill its worst fantasies. For example, many Israelis are so deeply filled with pessimism that they repeat, almost trance-like, the notion that they would love to find peace, but that no one from the other side is willing to talk. If one mentions the PLO's call for direct talks, or Arafat's announcement that he would go to Jerusalem to talk with Israel (to which Shamir responded

by saying that he would arrest Arafat as soon as he arrived at Ben Gurion Airport), then they reply, "We will not negotiate with terrorists." As though one could make peace with one's friends and not have to deal with one's enemies! (As though the U.S. could ever have gotten out of Vietnam if it had refused to deal with the terrorist Vietcong.) All this deflects attention from the fact that it is the Israelis who are refusing to sit down and talk.

Many Jews simply cannot register the fact that the enemy is ready to negotiate peace. They cannot take "yes" for an answer. Not that they *should* blindly trust their enemies. When the negotiations start, many of us believe Israel should insist that any Palestinian state be completely and carefully demilitarized, and that continued demilitarization be enforced by both an international force and the Israeli Army. But the difference between asking for reasonable terms when negotiating with your enemy and not being able to recognize that the enemy is ready to negotiate is the difference between rational self-interest and paranoid self-destructiveness. Having been deeply shaped by a consciousness that tells them they will always be alone against the world, many Jews are unable to act in ways that could make their world safer, if in so doing they had to violate their internalized injunction to "distrust the other."

This also shows up in the way we have failed to explain Israel's case to the rest of the world. Israeli public relations efforts are usually self-defeating because they assume that everyone is always going to be against us. There is real anti-Semitism in the world today, but much of it is rooted not in the destructive legacies of two thousand years of religious oppression, but in the reaction of many people around the world to Israel's current policies. Many of the peoples of the world who have developed antagonism or suspicion about the Jewish people have no historical legacy of antagonism toward us. In the years since the Second World War they have come to know us primarily through the activities of the state which calls itself the state of the Jewish people. Set up to provide a refuge for the victims of Nazi oppression and the extermination camps, that state is now seen as the cause of the suffering of the Palestinian people.

We know that the historical record is more complex. We could explain to many third-world countries that Palestinian rejectionism in the pre-1948 period was at least as responsible for the current suffering of the Palestinian people as any Jewish intransigence. Had the Jewish people, both in Diaspora and in Israel, taken the goal of explaining Israel's case to the rest of the world seriously, we would have seen a massive effort made to reach third-world communities and third-world opinion makers. Jewish communities in the U.S. would have invited foreign students at local universities to participate in discussions of these issues, Jewish teenagers would have been asked to serve as ambassadors of goodwill when they went abroad, and Jews would have reached out to third-world minorities living in their own communities to explain our case. No such effort was made because Jews assumed from the start that no one would ever listen to us. Our only hope for success, Jewish leaders insisted, was to whisper into the ears of local elites, show them that Jews or Israel would serve their interests, and thereby gain official support for Israel even when the local populace could not be trusted to be anything but anti-Jewish.

This same strategy dominated the Israeli government's strategy toward third-world countries. Israeli economic aid to third-world dictators was based on this same realpolitik assumption: since people would always be against us, or would be too stupid to understand our position, our only hope to win friends would be to give military or economic assistance to ruling elites. No wonder, then, that when military elites toppled, citizens of these nations were angry at Israel for supplying the dictators with military weaponry and advice. Jews could then interpret this hostility as further proof that no matter what we did to help them, the non-Jews of the world would turn on us.

This same sense that the world is implacably hostile also leads to the view that the very raising of these



questions is a betrayal. Any talk about mistakes being made by Israel or the Jewish people will, it is feared, inevitably lead to a renewed upsurge of the anti-Semitism that is always lurking around the corner. Criticism of Israeli policy, even criticism in the name of saving the Jewish people from self-destruction, is dismissed as a product of self-hatred: Why else would anyone "endanger" the Jewish people by potentially giving ammunition to our enemies? So the self-correcting mechanisms of loving self-criticism are themselves silenced.

Time and time again we are faced with Jews who present themselves as victims who have "learned the lessons of history" and become cynical about every idealistic notion of what could happen in the world. The Jewish neocons, the Henry Kissingers and Norman Podhoretzes and Charles Krauthammers, present the Jews to the world as a group whose history proved that force and cynical manipulation are keys to survival, and that the U.S. ought to learn these lessons. We have allowed ourselves to be represented by people whose cynical detachment and ironic turns of phrase are calculated to produce in others a reconnection to their own deepest despair and pessimism—now represented to them as high culture and deep wisdom. In Israel, this despair is called common sense. Nothing is more devastating for an Israeli than to be told *"al tihyeh friar,"* don't be a naive idealist, a crime far worse in the Israeli political lexicon than being a bonebreaking oppressor of a colonized minority population.

* * *

The pessimism I have been describing fundamentally rejects Judaism's healing and revolutionary message. Early Judaism proclaimed that the world could be turned on its head, that the powerful could be defeated by the powerless, that a whole new world could be constructed. The Torah never doubted the strong pull of the past and the tendency of people to visit on others the oppression to which they had been subjected—what Freud labeled the "repetition compulsion." Yet its message was truly revolutionary: The repetition compulsion that governs daily life is not the most powerful force in the universe. Human life is governed by a much more powerful force—a God who is the source of transcendence and possibility.

It is this God that Moses encounters at the Burning Bush. When Moses presses God for His/Her name, God responds, *"ehyeh asher ehyeh,"* "I shall be who I shall be." "Tell them," God continues, "that 'I shall be' sent you." The fundamental force ruling the universe makes possible transcendence and freedom, the overcoming of the hold of the past over the present. The force governing the universe is a force of freedom that gives the world the possibility of movement toward a transcendent moral order.

This conception of possibility stood in opposition to the various religious systems that provided the metaphysical foundations for existing systems of oppression in the ancient world. The Egyptian empire that Moses confronted was the world's greatest imperialist power. The Egyptians saw history as a repetition of patterns that were built into the structure of necessity. This sense that the social world could be understood as fundamentally similar to the natural world and its endless repetitions led to a political quietism, an acceptance of systems of oppression as ontologically given and unchangeable. Existing systems of oppression were not the product of human choice, but were part of the fabric of the universe.

No wonder the Jewish worldview was perceived as threatening and no wonder every ruling class had to find some way to marginalize and deal with this troublesome people, to set their subjects against the Jews. For if the Jewish message were to be heard by others, they too might begin to wonder if their world could be radically altered. As the Torah made clear, many other peoples had benefited from the Exodus. It had been a "mixed multitude" that had left Egypt in the great slave rebellion led by the Jews. It was not the intrinsic hatred of Jews that moved ruling elites throughout history to try to stir up anti-Jewish sentiments amongst their subjects, but rather the fear that the revolutionary consciousness implicit in Jewish thought and Jewish history would spread and undermine the existing social order.

* * *

The implications of the claim that YHVH governs the universe, that its fundamental force is not some scientific regularity but moral possibility, are breathtaking. Human beings, according to Torah, are made in the image of God: that is, they too can participate in shaping the world and participate in making it a moral order. Although Torah recognizes the tendency of human beings to act out on others the pain to which they themselves have been subjected, it makes a revolutionary claim: "You do not have to do that." As though it could have anticipated the condition of the Jews thousands of years later, the Torah spells out the implications most forcefully in its injunctions concerning the stranger, the person who is the oppressed minority within any given system. In one form or another, there is no commandment more frequently repeated in Torah than variations on the following theme: When you come into your land, do not oppress the stranger. Remember that you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

(Continued on p. 92)

Free Associations Free Associations Free Associations Free

Nothing to worry about. That's what a press report attributed to national Jewish organizations as the official response to the Supreme Court nomination of David Souter. After all, one such report went on to say, Souter was a protégé of Warren Rudman, one of the Senate's Jewish members. Little attention was given to Souter's defense in court of the New Hampshire plan to lower state flags to half-mast on Good Friday. If this doesn't count as playing fast and loose with the First Amendment's attempt to prevent any particular religion from receiving state sanction, what does? The absence of a "smoking gun" on abortion issues has befuddled Senate liberals. They can't imagine opposing Souter simply because his ultraconservative politics are likely to help solidify the Reagan legacy. With Souter on the bench, the Supreme Court will no doubt further erode civil liberties, while strengthening the hands of large corporations and the state.

John Mack, M.D., Professor of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School and founding director of the Center for Psychological Studies in the Nuclear Age, recently returned from a conference of mental health professionals who work with children in war zones around the world. Reports on the starvation, torture, beating, abandonment, and killing of children from all parts of the globe were a central focus of the conference, organized by the Sigmund Freud Center at Hebrew University. The most disturbing in the litany of horrors, according to Mack, was the forced recruitment of children by the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia and RENAMO in Mozambique to participate in political murder, sometimes of their own loved ones.

Mack was impressed with the difficulties that participants had in facing stories of suffering closer to home:

> For most of us, Mozambique, South Africa, Cambodia, Argentina, and Guatemala are far away and we look at the reports from those zones of violence with compassion and even reverence. But when the conflict was nearer to home, or the larger reality more threatening, as in the case of the Israeli–Palestinian struggle, it was sometimes hard for us as Jews to hear the stories of pain and interrupted childhoods. Our political lenses filtered the information, and before a narrative was complete, or could reach our hearts, we would say or hear, "yes, but . . ." to be followed by an historical or contextual justification.

Mack reports listening to Jonathan, a young officer in the Israeli army, who suggested that every time a Jewish or Palestinian youth is killed in the conflict, his or her picture and life story should be posted on the walls of every city in Israel and the occupied territories. "Impractical, perhaps," says Mack, "but his idea affected us deeply."

Mack believes that if those who work with children, adolescents, and their families in the war zones of the world can bring the voices of these children to the policymakers, it may have a powerful influence on stopping the wars.



Free Associations Free Associations Free Associations Free

President Bush's veto of family-leave legislation creates an unprecedented opportunity for liberals to create a progressive profamily coalition. The vetoed legislation would allow parents to take an unpaid leave to attend to family medical emergencies and postnatal care.

For years, conservatives have represented themselves as the "profamily" force, getting away with it largely because liberals had ceded the turf. "Profamily," the liberals feared, implied support for the father-knows-best model of family life. Yet most Americans respond to the allure of profamily rhetoric *not* because they want to enshrine sexist or repressive practices of the past, nor because their own family experiences were necessarily fulfilling and wonderful, but because the logic of "family" conjures up a set of associations of love, commitment, and people taking care of each other—precisely the kinds of concerns that are vitiated by the competitive marketplace.

Contrast those associations with the "rights" and "equal opportunity" rhetoric that the liberals typically adopt as the centerpiece of their platform. Equal opportunity for what? To compete in the competitive marketplace, of course. But most Americans do not feel particularly good about how they've done in that marketplace, nor about the experiences they've had in the world of work. When liberals focus on equal opportunity, it is usually on behalf of some disadvantaged group, with the implication that the rest of us have really had a fair deal and that what we've ended up with is just a reflection of what we're entitled to. The meritocratic fantasies of the capitalist market thus seem to be underscored and endorsed when liberals focus on the exceptions where rights and equal opportunities have been denied.

At least one advantage that the family has over the marketplace is that its alleged ideals are not those of naked self-interest at the expense of everyone else. However little our family lives meet our expectations, at least the logic of family dictates care and acceptance, no matter what we fail to achieve in the outside world. No wonder, then, that the Right garners support for its ideas about what could make family life stronger and better.

A Democratic party with an ounce of sense would make this their central issue. It would attempt to build a new kind of profamily politics that would go far beyond "family leave" and begin to talk about the role of the competitive marketplace in undermining family life.

George Bush's reversal on the tax issue, the collapse of the Savings and Loans, and other economic problems will all work to reinforce the pattern that has dominated American politics for the past two decades: the Democrats are seen as the champions of economic repair, the Republicans as champions of ethical and spiritual issues. By now, the patterns are predictable and boring. Things will change only if liberals and progressives challenge the Right on the turf of family, ethical, and spiritual values—and on the entire cultural front.

In classic fashion, the Jewish establishment bungled Nelson Mandela's visit to the U.S. Mandela's stand on Qaddafi, Castro, and Arafat was obnoxious. It would have been fine had Jews organized a coalition to criticize Mandela on that particular position. But to make this a Jewish-Black issue, and to make it the central Jewish response to Mandela's visit, was deeply misguided.

It was misguided because Mandela symbolizes the aspirations for freedom of peoples around the world. Instead of celebrating the important advances that are being made, Jews seemed to be insisting that our own issues take primacy. Even if we are right about the issues, we need not insist that they be at the center of everyone else's agenda at every moment. If Israel were in imminent danger of destruction, or if this were between 1933 and 1945, it would make sense to interrupt other people's celebrations and call attention to our fears. Today, however, it's not us but the Palestinians who are living in refugee camps—and the threat to our survival from the Palestinians is remote at best.

What makes the behavior of the Jewish leadership all the more obnoxious is that it was so out of step with what so many American Jews feel. First of all, many American Jews realize that eventually the Israelis are going to have to talk to the PLO—so it seems ridiculous to insist that anyone we deal with today toe the anti-PLO line that Israeli Prime Minister Shamir and his U.S. henchmen insist upon. One can deplore the PLO's terrorism without making a formal denunciation of Arafat the litmus test for anyone who wants to be an ally of the Jews. Second, most American Jews have been unequivocally supportive of the anti-apartheid struggle; it was unfair to have "American Jews" represented in the media as somehow more concerned about getting Mandela to condemn Arafat than about calling attention to the painful and ongoing struggle of millions of South African Blacks to overcome the racist and dehumanizing political system that has tyrannized them these many decades.

As always at moments like this, some Jewish leaders (such as Rabbi Marshall Meyer in New York) stood up and insisted that most Jews identified with, and wished to participate in, the celebration of Mandela's freedom. But as long as the Jewish establishment maintains its stranglehold on the media, these voices will be given only marginal attention. No wonder, then, if many American Blacks got the impression that their most dignified and respected international leader was being treated shabbily by the Jews.

Free Associations Free Associations Free Associations Free

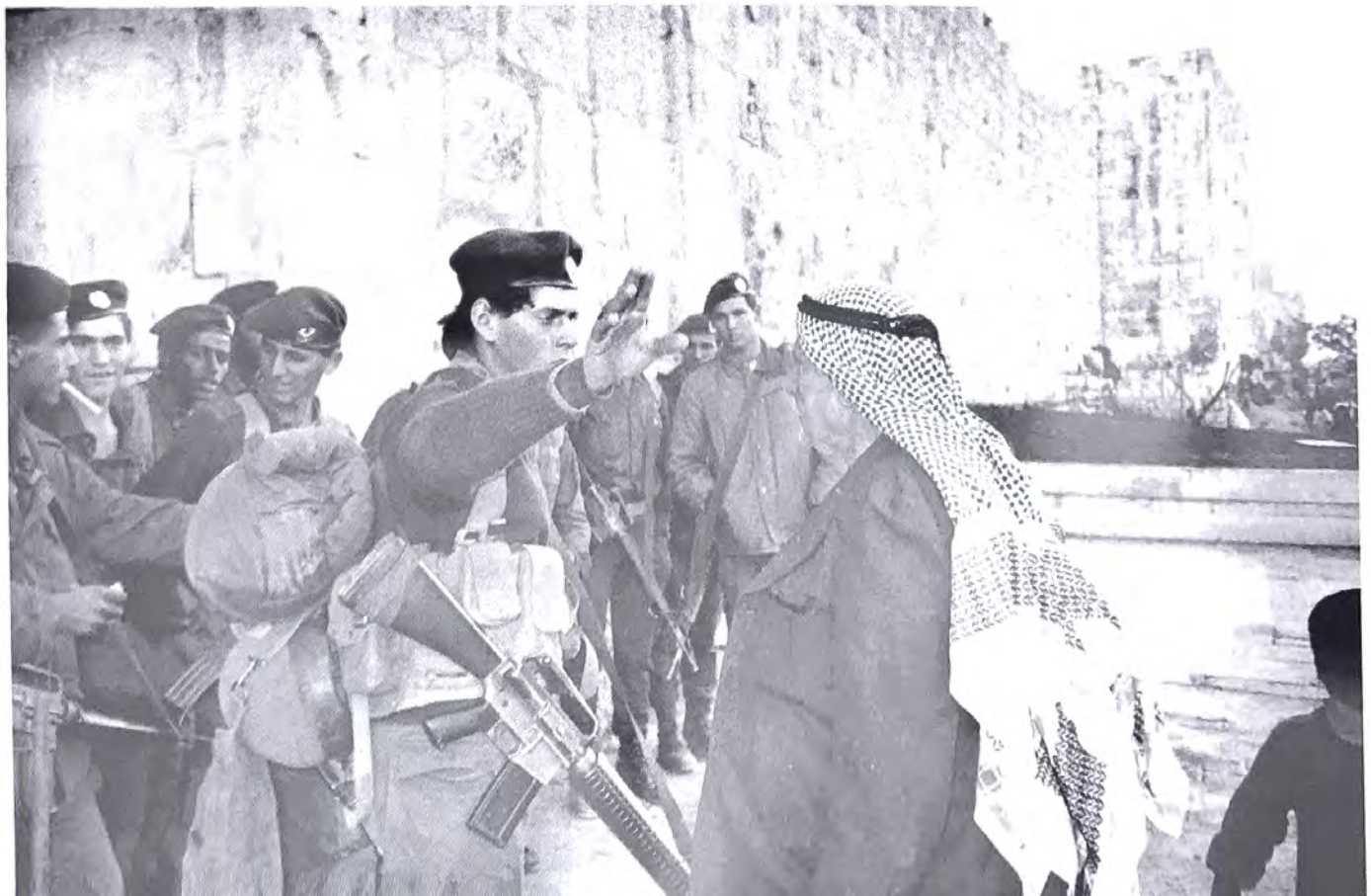
American Jewish Congress's Executive Director Henry Siegman recently learned a valuable lesson. While in Jerusalem, Siegman repeated an analysis that has gotten *Tikkun* into lots of trouble every time we've offered it: American Jewish leaders are misleading the Israeli public by creating the impression that American Jews are willing to go along with the West Bank Occupation. As a result, he was viciously attacked by the now-conservative *Jerusalem Post* (it was recently taken over by right-wingers) and by a variety of American Jewish leaders.

While those leaders *do* represent a large sector of the *organized* Jewish community, most American Jews have long been turned off by the organized community, in part because of the way in which it has stifled dissenting views on Israel. As a result, we have two often nonoverlapping worlds. On the one hand, there is the world of Jews who work within the existing institutions, feel comfortable with that lifestyle and culture, read the weekly American Jewish newspapers, and form the backbone of financial support for the conservative organizations of American Jewish life. On the other hand, we have the American Jewish majority, which—while uncomfortable with the values, lifestyle, politics, and religious assumptions that dominate the organized Jewish world—may connect with the organized community by going to synagogue on High Holidays; by sending their children for pre-bar or -bat mitzvah religious training; by joining a temple or Jewish community center for the sports and social activities available; or by giving money to a local federation or UJA because they want to see the old-age home supported or want there to be funds available to help resettle Soviet Jewish refugees.

This majority is joined by several million more who are so angry at what they've experienced in the Jewish world (its lack of democracy, crass materialism, lack of spiritual sensitivity, intolerance of dissent, to name the most frequently cited complaints) that they want no connection with it, though they often proudly claim their Jewishness and resent the way in which the official Jewish leaders profess to speak in the name of American Jews when in fact they don't.

Siegman may have learned from his experience what Rita Hauser and other "insider" Jewish establishment types have learned: that no matter how well you play the game, the second you start talking the truth as you see it on Israel, you get portrayed as a radical—"beyond the pale." Others wonder if they should associate with you, and you become a liability in coalitions. It is this extreme pressure that makes most people in the organized community exercise intense self-constraint; they internalize the norms and keep their mouths shut. Siegman and the American Jewish Congress are to be congratulated for speaking out.

Chances of political realignment in Israel, rumored through much of the summer, collapsed with the defeat of Rabin's bid for Labor party leadership. Had Rabin won and then sought entrée into a new hard-line national unity government, Labor doves might have split to form a strong, propeace alliance with Mapam, Ratz, and Shinui. Instead, the Israeli Left remains divided, unfocused, and confused. The most frequent refrain American visitors hear remains: "You in America must put pressure on the Israeli government—that is the only thing that will change things here."



Free Associations Free Associations Free Associations Free

Allan Bloom's attack on intellectual relativism, most recently restated in a speech printed in *Commentary* (August 1990), is partly right: the great ideas and literature of Western civilization are no less great or deserving of respect and intellectual attention solely because they are the products of white males. But he's also partly wrong, to the extent that he thinks he has answered the criticism from Third Worlders, feminists, and others who have called for an expansion of the curriculum. Their contentions need not rest on the shallow relativism with which such calls have frequently been associated. Instead, while recognizing that the search for truth, both moral and intellectual, is a valid pursuit, they can justifiably contend that the pursuit of truth has been narrowly circumscribed by the racism, sexism, and narrow prejudices of those who have had the power to define the intellectual canon of Western civilization.

Bloom suggests in *Commentary* that what emerged in the universities has simply been a product of objective intellectual pursuit of ideas, a pursuit now suddenly being tainted by the moral cretins who dare challenge the established canon. But we as Jews know that our own literature—most importantly the Talmud, but also the works of Maimonides and many other Jewish philosophers and theorists—never made it into the Western tradition. This wasn't because our literature was inferior intellectually but because it was Jewish. One need not be a moral or intellectual relativist to argue that the literatures of women, Jews, Muslims, and non-European societies should be included in the sphere of material to be considered when determining what ideas need to be taught in the universities. It's very doubtful that most of the people who currently discount this literature know very much about it. Few of those who have shaped the Western canon were well-acquainted with Talmud, for example; yet its way of approaching reality might have as much to teach about the world as that of Aquinas or Chaucer or Voltaire or Tolstoy. There are grounds for widely expanding the sphere of intellectual inquiry that do not depend on the relativism that Bloom correctly attacks.

The Jewish community lost one of its most humane and decent leaders with the passing this summer of Wolfe Kelman, former executive director of the Rabbinical Assembly. His warmth and wisdom will be dearly missed at *Tikkun*, on whose editorial board he served from the start of the magazine four years ago.

Congratulations to the Reform movement for having officially sanctioned the ordination of lesbian and gay rabbis. Whatever the reservations of those bound by Halakha, there were never any grounds for an avowedly non-halakhic movement to discriminate against homosexuals.

The perception that the Soviet Union is on the verge of economic collapse may have released stored-up anti-Semitism, but it has also created a huge flood of Russians suddenly discovering that they are Jewish and hence can take advantage of Israel's "Law of Return." According to Michael Kleiner, head of the Knesset's Immigration and Absorption Committee and the sponsor of recent legislation to limit the number of non-Jews eligible for automatic citizenship, there are millions of Soviets without any previous connection to their Jewishness who may be eligible for Israeli citizenship as long as the only criterion is having a Jewish grandfather. Since the Nazis—under the Nuremberg Laws—persecuted and eventually attempted to murder anyone with a Jewish grandfather, Israel adopted this same criterion for citizenship. But with estimates of eligible Soviets and their dependents ranging from three to twelve million, and with more Russians every day claiming Jewish ancestry, some Israelis are now worried that there will be no end to Russian immigration (a worry shared also by many Palestinians).

At the same time, many Ashkenazim—convinced that the drift toward violence and right-wing politics in Israel is solely the fault of Jews from Arab lands—have been making openly racist statements suggesting that this infusion of European blood will somehow save Israel from becoming too much like the Middle East (in which, they apparently have failed to notice, Israel sits).

International Conference of Progressive Jews: Update. Tikkun's conference—in solidarity with the Israeli peace movement and focused also on the problems facing progressive social change movements around the world in the post-cold war era—is scheduled for the last week of June, 1991 in Jerusalem.

A central part of the conference will be morning study sessions and afternoon strategy discussions.

Among those who have agreed to speak: Abba Eban, Amos Oz, M.K. Avram Burg, M.K. Dede Zucker, Israel's most preeminent philospher Yishayahu Leibowitz, Yaron Ezrahi, Zeev Sternhell, Asma Bishari, Judith Plaskow, Alice Shalvi, and Peace Now leaders Janet Aviad, Tzali Reshef, and Roni Kaufman.

Classes will be taught by Michael Walzer, Michael Sandel, Peter Gabel, Moshe Halbertal, Leah Shakdiel, Moshe Idel, Arthur Waskow, Benny Morris, Hillel Levine, Adi Ophir, Hannan Hever, Yossi Yonah, Judith Plaskow, Yehezkel Landau, and others.

Besides the many sessions focused on solidarity with the Israeli peace movement, conference discussions will also include focus on: (a) International cooperation between progressive Jewish activists; (b) What's left on the Left after the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe—and what will be left of the world after the triumph of the market? (c) Nationalism vs. tribal values: What's left of the enlightenment and rationalism? (d) What are the prospects for progressive forces in Europe? and (e) Coping with Jewish fears, rational and irrational (with special emphasis on the new anti-Semitism developing in Europe).

If you are *ever* going to visit Israel, make it this coming June—don't miss what is likely to be one of the most exciting events of the decade. More info: Israel Conference, 5100 Leona, Oakland, Ca. 94619.

Nobody Home: The Housing Crisis Meets the Nineties

Peter Dreier and Richard Appelbaum

During the 1980s, a striking new ingredient was added to the landscape of America's cities—millions of people sleeping in alleyways and subways, on park benches and in cars. The contrast of homeless Americans living in the shadow of luxury condos and yuppie boutiques epitomized the decade: it was a period of both outrageous greed and outrageous suffering. The media brought us "Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous," but it also offered cover stories about homeless families. And while the 1980s were justifiably referred to as the "me decade," more Americans in that period volunteered to work with the poor (in shelters and soup kitchens) than at any time in recent memory. What will the 1990s bring?

Everyone from President Bush to the late homeless advocate Mitch Snyder has agreed that homelessness is a national tragedy and an embarrassment to the United States in the court of world opinion. And public opinion polls show that a vast majority of Americans now put solving the homeless problem at the top of the national agenda. According to these polls, Americans are even willing to pay higher taxes, *if* the funds would go to assist those in need. It is entirely clear to almost everyone but the president that volunteerism alone—"a thousand points of light"—cannot stem the rising tide of homelessness.

But there the consensus ends. Politicians, housing activists, and academic experts disagree about how many people are homeless, who they are, and why, during the 1980s, America suddenly found itself with an epidemic of people living on the streets.

The Crisis

The growing epidemic of homelessness is only the tip of the iceberg. The United States now faces its worst housing crisis since the Great Depression. The underlying problem is a widening gap between what Americans can afford to pay and what it costs to build and maintain housing. This has always been a problem for the poor; now it is a growing problem for the middle class. The "American Dream" of home ownership is fading fast for many middle-income Americans.

Thanks to postwar federal housing programs, the rate of home ownership rose steadily for three decades, from 43.4 percent in the late 1940s to 65.6 percent in 1980. Since then, however, the home ownership rate has steadily declined, particularly for young families. Among twenty-five- to thirty-four-year-olds, for example, the rate dropped from 52.3 percent in 1980 to 45.1 percent in 1987. The median price of a new single-family home has climbed from $69,300 in 1982 to about $120,000 today. While in 1973 it took roughly one-quarter of the median income of a young family with children to carry a new mortgage on an average-priced home, today it takes over half of a young family's income.

Skyrocketing rents make it impossible for most young families to save money for a down payment. As a result, about the only people who can afford to purchase a home are those who already own one or those whose parents help them out. Among those who do manage to buy a home, a growing number are in danger of losing it to foreclosure by banks.

At the same time, rents have reached a two-decade peak, according to a recent Harvard University study. This is especially a problem for the poor, who are now competing with the middle class for scarce apartments. Some 85 percent of low-income renters—5,800,000 households—pay at least 30 percent of their incomes for housing. The typical young single mother pays over 70 percent of her meager income just to keep a roof over her kids' heads.

Perhaps the most shocking statistic is this: only one-quarter of poor households receive any kind of housing subsidy, the lowest level of any industrial nation in the world. The long waiting lists for even the most deteriorated subsidized housing projects attest to the desperation of the poor.

Is it any wonder that the ranks of the homeless are growing?

Peter Dreier is director of housing at the Boston Redevelopment Authority and a board member of the National Low-Income Housing Coalition and the National Housing Institute. Richard Appelbaum is chairman of the Sociology Department at the University of California at Santa Barbara and coauthor of Rethinking Rental Housing *(Temple University Press, 1988).*

Mitch Snyder 1943–1990

The death of Mitch Snyder occurred while Congress was debating a housing bill that, by any standard, is inadequate to solve the problem Snyder spent over a decade challenging. On the day Mitch died, the Bush administration decided against waging a major antipoverty effort, despite glaring evidence of the need for such action. Our nation's leading homeless advocate, Mitch Snyder, will be sorely missed at the front lines of these battles.

Snyder abandoned a life as a Madison Avenue advertising man to live and work with the poor. He lived simply in the thousand-bed shelter he helped establish, but also knew how to raise money for his cause among the Hollywood elite. He risked his own life with lengthy hunger strikes and weeks-long sleep-ins on the cold grates of the nation's capital. In doing so, he became a media celebrity, attracting sufficient publicity to mobilize citizens and lawmakers to respond to the needs of the homeless.

Mitch knew that the housing crisis was not a problem for the poor alone, and he worked hard to build alliances between church groups, labor unions, mayors, and others with mainstream constituencies. He also realized that you can't fight a war on homelessness and poverty with an all-volunteer army. Mitch frequently said that more and better soup kitchens and shelters were not the real solution to homelessness; what was needed was a renewed commitment by the federal government to build more affordable housing and help fill the gap between what the poor can afford and what housing costs to build and operate.

Let Mitch's legacy be our renewed dedication to reordering our nation's priorities, solving the problems of economic and social injustice, and waging peace.

—Peter Dreier

The Origins of the Crisis

The initial stereotype of the homeless was of an alcoholic or mentally ill middle-aged man or "bag lady," many of them victims of deinstitutionalization resulting from the Community Mental Health Act of 1963. But when more low-rent housing was available—including many rooming houses that have since been lost to gentrification—people on the margins of society could afford a shelter. Clearly, and despite what Presidents Reagan and Bush might tell us, the homelessness crisis is a symptom of some fundamental shifts in the nation's economy.

The most important shift involves the deindustrialization and gentrification of our urban areas. The past fifteen years has been characterized by a tremendous flight of previously high-wage industries to low-wage countries. Since the early 1970s, the electronics revolution has hastened the development of a global economy. Footloose firms have moved their manufacturing operations to more favorable locations, whether these be in suburbs, rural areas, or Third World countries.

As a result of this geographic realignment, it is unlikely that American industry will soon again enjoy the privileged postwar position that enabled our standard of living to rise steadily for almost three decades; many American cities still have not recovered from the loss of blue-collar industry and jobs. As factories closed down, tax bases declined, waterfronts were left vacant, downtown department stores went out of business, and some cities began to resemble ghost towns.

During the past decade, a number of observers hailed the "services revolution" as the savior of cities. It is true that many cities have now shifted from what University of North Carolina sociologist John Kasarda calls "centers of production and distribution of goods to centers of administration, finance and information exchange." Cities sought to revitalize their downtowns with new office buildings, medical and educational complexes, hotels, urban shopping malls, convention centers, and even sports complexes. But such efforts—even when successful—do not stem the growing tide of poverty only blocks away from the glittering glass and steel. In the shadow of its downtown skyscrapers, Los Angeles resembles a Third World city, its streets teeming with economically precarious low-wage workers and homeless men, women, and children.

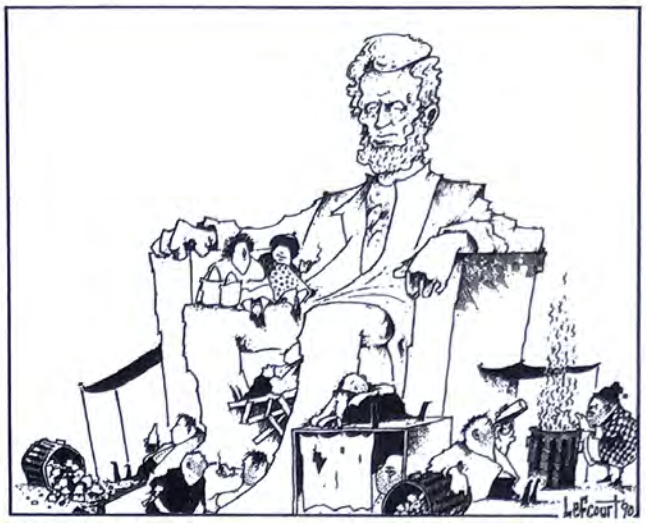
Why? The services economy is predominantly a low-wage market, and most of its jobs offer no career ladder or upward mobility. According to economists Ben Harrison and Barry Bluestone, in *The Great U-Turn* (1988), the majority of jobs created since the 1970s have provided poverty-level wages. Working full time is no longer a guarantee of escaping poverty.

Even relatively low levels of unemployment—4 percent in Boston, for example—mask the deepening crisis. As Harvard economist Robert Reich has noted, the American economy has two escalators—a small one moving upward and a much larger one moving downward. More than thirty million Americans—one out of seven—now live below the poverty line. The figure for children is even more alarming: one out of four (and one-half of all Black children). Today's poor people are poorer and likely to be poor for longer periods of time, for *more and more of the homeless are families with kids and people with jobs.* A recent survey by the U.S. Con-

ference of Mayors found that almost one-quarter of the homeless *work* but have wages too low to afford permanent housing. Apart from those who live on the streets or in shelters, there are millions more who live doubled-up or tripled-up in overcrowded apartments and millions of others who pay more than they can reasonably afford for substandard housing. As a result of this situation, tens of millions of low-income Americans are only one rent increase, one hospital stay, one layoff away from becoming homeless.

Things are getting worse for the middle class as well. In recent years, the average middle-class American has seen family income stagnate. In 1960 the typical thirty-year-old head of a household could expect family income to increase by 50 percent during the next decade. Today, he or she can expect family income (real buying power) to decline. According to a recent Children's Defense Fund report, families headed by someone under thirty have seen their incomes erode by one-quarter over the past fifteen years; among Hispanics, the decline has been one-third; among Blacks, one-half.

For a small but very visible segment of the population, however, these new economic forces have led to the up-escalator. The services economy has created a stratum of highly educated, well-paid management- and professional-level workers. They, along with top-level executives and holders of capital, did well during the decade of corporate takeovers and leveraged buyouts, and the share of national income now going to the wealthiest 20 percent of the population is the highest it has been since World War II. The share going to the poorest 40 percent is the lowest since that time. By dramatically lowering tax rates of the affluent and big business, the Reagan administration exacerbated these trends and redistributed income from the working class to the wealthy.



All this pertains directly to housing. While we were increasingly becoming a nation of haves and have-nots, the affluent began viewing housing less as a home than as an investment, equally valuable for its tax benefits as for its Victorian details. As yuppies and the poor competed for scarce inner-city housing, prices skyrocketed, and low-rent apartments were converted to high-priced condos. The situation was made worse when the Reagan administration removed the two props that once served to entice some private investors into providing low-rent housing—subsidies that bring housing costs and poor people's income into line, and tax shelters that indirectly produce the same result.

The Role of Government

Under the Reagan budget ax annual housing assistance was slashed from about $33 billion in 1981 to less than $8 billion in 1989; the number of new federally subsidized apartments built each year dwindled from over 200,000 in the 1970s to less than 20,000 last year. To put this in perspective, in 1981 the federal government was spending seven dollars for defense for every dollar it spent on housing. In 1989 it spent over forty dollars on defense for every housing dollar.

The increase in homelessness parallels these federal housing cuts. And although President Bush and Department of Housing and Urband Development (HUD) Secretary Jack Kemp have promised to address the nation's homelessness scandal, the Bush administration

The following are some of the major housing advocacy organizations that work at both the national and the grass-roots levels for more progressive housing solutions:

The National Low Income Housing Coalition
1012 14th Street N.W.
Washington, DC 20005

The National Housing Institute
(Shelterforce Magazine Publishers)
439 Main Street
Orange, NJ 07050

ACORN
522 8th Street S.E.
Washington, DC 20003

The Right to Housing:
A Blueprint for Housing the Nation (a booklet)
Community Economics
1904 Franklin Street
Oakland, CA 94612
$5.00

actually proposed *further* housing cutbacks in its 1991 budget proposal.

Not surprisingly, the one housing subsidy that did *not* fall to the Reagan budget ax is the one that goes to the very rich. The federal tax code allows home owners to deduct all property tax and mortgage interest from their taxable income. In 1990 alone, this cost the federal government $34 billion—*more than four times* the HUD budget for low-income housing. Over three-quarters of the forgone tax revenue goes to the 15.1 percent of taxpayers who earn over $50,000 annually; one-third of this subsidy goes to the 3.1 percent of taxpayers with incomes over $100,000. Over half of all home owners do not claim deductions at all. Tenants, of course, don't even qualify. In other words, our nation's housing subsidies disproportionately benefit home owners with high incomes, often those with two homes.

In addition to addressing the gap between incomes and housing costs, the federal (and state) government can regulate lenders to guarantee a supply of credit for builders and home owners. The government can control interest rates, require banks to meet community credit needs, and regulate Savings and Loans to guarantee credit for the average homeowner. The Reagan administration, however, dismantled most of the federal policies designed to regulate lenders. Reagan's policies resulted in a frenzy of speculative lending, mismanagement, and corruption by the nation's Savings and Loan industry during the past decade. President Bush has proposed a taxpayer bail-out of failing Savings and Loans that now looks like it will swell to over $500 billion!

State and local governments can also regulate land use to promote affordable housing development. Instead, most localities, particularly suburbs, use so-called snob zoning regulations to keep out the poor. Enforcement of health and safety codes and enactment of rent control also get low political priority from most politicians unwilling to challenge the powerful real-estate industry.

The Politics of Housing

In the past, the major force for housing programs was the real-estate industry—developers, mortgage bankers, landlords, and brokers. They, of course, wanted Congress to enact policies to help build more housing for the middle class or to provide subsidies that make it lucrative for them to house the poor. Developers and Realtors have been the most generous contributors to congressional and presidential candidates, and their national associations have strong political action committees, deep pockets, and effective local networks. In turn, many members of Congress have ties to developers and have lobbied the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) on their behalf.

But even the housing industry's clout couldn't offset the Reagan offensive to slash federal housing funds. Americans were rightly skeptical of programs that offered big profits to politically connected developers in the name of housing the poor. The corruption scandal at HUD has only confirmed this view. As one wag observed, the Reagan administration cut the HUD budget by 75 percent and gave the remaining 25 percent to its Republican friends.

Working full time is no longer a guarantee of escaping poverty.

Recently, some conservative politicians and editorial writers have begun using the HUD scandal as an excuse to further dismantle federal housing programs. House of Representatives minority whip Newt Gingrich (R-Georgia), the *Wall Street Journal,* and the *New Republic* have called for folding up HUD's tent and replacing it with a voucher program—an approach long advocated by HUD secretary Jack Kemp. But rent vouchers on their own won't solve the problem. Already some one million low-income households receive such vouchers, which are intended to help them pay rent for apartments in the private market. But in cities with low rental vacancy rates, handing out vouchers is like providing food stamps when the grocery shelves are empty. About half of the low-income tenants who now receive vouchers return them unused because apartments are so scarce. Clearly, we must increase the overall *supply* of low-income housing.

But the Bush administration has not acknowledged that more affordable housing is the only workable solution to homelessness. The proposed federal budget significantly reduces funding for new housing while providing minimal increases for emergency shelters and vouchers.

Ironically, one hopeful sign is that Jack Kemp's political ambitions have made him the most vocal and visible HUD secretary in memory. In sharp contrast to his predecessor, "Silent Sam" Pierce, Kemp has been a high-profile cabinet member—he visits shelters, meets with advocates and builders, and testifies before Congress. Although his approach to urban housing problems (vouchers, selling off public housing, creating "enterprise zones" in inner cities) and his budget proposals are woefully inadequate, history suggests that social movements and social reform are best sown in the soil of "rising expectations." Kemp's rhetoric is setting the stage for a revolt against broken promises.

(Continued on p. 94)

The Promises and Pitfalls of Jewish Relationships

Estelle Frankel

"Mating," the Talmud tell us, "is as difficult as the splitting of the Red Sea." What once was rabbinic hyperbole, however, now understates the problem. In my work as a counselor, I hear Jewish men complain that Jewish women make them feel less manly. By the same token, Jewish women assert that their femininity is not appreciated by Jewish men as it is by non-Jewish men. Behind these gripes lies more than the standard war between the sexes. For when it comes to mating practices between Jewish men and Jewish women today, the struggle is compounded by a hornet's nest of psychohistorical and cultural factors.

Why is it so hard for Jews to love each other? Because, say Jewish men, Jewish women are too complicated, controlling, materialistic, and demanding; Jewish women counter that Jewish men are self-centered, "in their heads," needy, and "nebbishy." Some young Jews are put off by a feeling of incestuousness or a lack of mystery with a Jewish partner. Others simply don't find Jewish partners to be attractive or sexy and prefer classically non-Jewish-looking mates. Even those who would rather be with a Jewish partner express frustration over their difficulty in finding the "right" Jewish partner and often end up in relationships with non-Jews.

Given all these complaints, it's surprising to find that remarkably little has been written on the subject of Jewish romantic relationships. Discussion of the topic is virtually taboo, perhaps because it arouses sensitive feelings and extreme defensiveness. Ironically, most of what has been written can be found in the literature on intermarriage. In the U.S., intermarriage has doubled during the last two decades, and current estimates suggest that it stands somewhere between 40 and 50 percent. The antipathy that exists between Jewish men and women is cited as a significant factor in that rate.

Needless to say, many Jewish women and men consider Jewish identity an advantage rather than a disadvantage in intimate relationships. They seem to have little or no ambivalence about being attracted to or committing to a Jewish partner. Likewise, not all Jews who intermarry do so for the reasons described below. But it's safe to say that, on the whole, "the relationship thing" is a serious problem in the American Jewish community. Inasmuch as we want to solve that problem, we'll have to address its history.

Estelle Frankel is a psychotherapist in private practice in Berkeley. She teaches courses and leads workshops on the relationship between Judaism and psychology.

The Role of Jewish Self-Hatred

Internalized anti-Semitism, or Jewish self-hatred, is responsible for much of the trouble. Kurt Lewin's studies on different minority groups found that aggression increases as members of lower-status minority groups are frustrated in their attempts to become part of the higher-status majority group. Instead of directing the aggression toward the "idealized" and more powerful higher-status group, minority-group members tend to direct their aggression against themselves and other members of their group. One way that minority group members do this is by taking on the projections and the negative stereotypes that the majority culture has about its minority members. Theodore Herzl aptly described this tendency among Jews of his time. "There are more misconceptions in circulation about the Jews than about any other people," he said. "And our age-old sufferings have made us so depressed and so discouraged that we ourselves parrot and believe these canards." Even many Zionist leaders exhibited this aspect of Jewish self-hatred in their use of classic anti-Semitic images, such as the "Jew as parasite," in order to motivate Jews in the Diaspora to make aliya. Like the classic anti-Semite, they blamed the Jewish victims for their own misfortune.

The phenomenon of Jewish self-hatred was almost unknown prior to the Emancipation. Only as Jews rapidly stopped identifying with Jewish values and attempted to assimilate into their host culture did they become subject to the dynamics of internalized

anti-Semitism. As Raphael Patai points out in *The Jewish Mind* (Scribners, 1977), so long as Jews were strongly identified with the Jewish community, they were for the most part immune to the damaging effects of anti-Semitism. Though economically and politically a disempowered minority group, they were happy to remain a separate, "chosen" people, and so Lewin's rule did not apply to them. The oppression that Jews experienced throughout their history in exile was interpreted by the rabbis as the unfortunate by-product of Israel's "chosenness." The Talmud goes so far as to interpret Jewish suffering as a sign of God's love for the children of Israel. These religious beliefs, along with feelings of superiority, provided a form of psychological protection for pious Jews, which shielded them from fully internalizing the hatred they encountered, though of course the persecution left profound scars.

Men and women who feel ambivalent about their Jewishness often find it impossible to see love in the mirror of a Jewish relationship.

With the advent of the Jewish Enlightenment and Emancipation in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, however, European Jews began to leave the religious fold en masse. As they disowned their Jewishness in order to succeed in non-Jewish society, they lost their immunity to the psychologically damaging effects of anti-Semitism. No longer seen as a privilege or blessing, Jewishness came to be viewed as a stigma—a barrier to full acceptance into the mainstream society. Jewish youth abandoned the yeshiva or Talmud Torah in order to pursue secular education, and knowledge of what it means to be a Jew was gradually lost. Lacking in Jewish self-definition, these highly assimilated Jews became even more vulnerable to the negative definitions of others. The assimilated Jew has no protection from anti-Semitic rhetoric, except to move further away from his or her Jewishness. Such a move, however, can cause considerable damage to one's self-esteem, because it involves a turning against part of oneself.

Ethnic self-hatred also affects the image of one's romantic partner. In order to fall in love, one must be able to form an idealized image of one's partner, though in time this idealized image must be replaced by a more integrated and realistic view of the beloved. Jewish men and women who feel ambivalent about their Jewishness often find it impossible to see love in the mirror of a Jewish relationship, because a disliked and disowned part of the self—one's Jewishness—will be reflected in a Jewish partner. Moreover, Jews who suffer from unconscious self-hatred often find themselves as well as members of the opposite sex unattractive, because their "Jewish" looks don't fit the mainstream cultural ideal of beauty. Since we live in a culture where women, more so than men, are objectified and valued according to their looks, Jewish women seem to have been more adversely affected by this. Lately, women of varied color and ethnicity have been considered as models of beauty, but for most Jewish women growing up prior to the seventies, classic "Jewish" looks were a handicap. Hence the fact that Jewish men tend to look for non-Jewish partners more often than Jewish women do. Complicated psychological dynamics, which I'll describe in a moment, make matters even worse for Jewish women.

Extreme ambivalence about Jewish identification is also found in the people who avoid Jewish partners as a way to remain in "hiding" Jewishly. Underlying this dynamic is a deep unconscious fear of the potential danger to one's life if one is easily identifiable as a Jew. As one woman at a recent workshop on Jewish relationships said: "To be with a Jewish partner makes me feel very vulnerable—I actually fear for my life, though I don't really know why." Another participant quoted her parents as saying, "You're lucky you don't look Jewish." The implication was that she could easily pass as a non-Jew if the need arose. For the Jew in hiding, having a non-Jewish mate is tantamount to having a safe refuge when the Nazis or Cossacks return for the rest of us.

Many such "Jews in hiding" had parents who were victims or refugees of the Holocaust. Others grew up with parents who, in response to anti-Semitism and discrimination, chose to go into psychological hiding by detaching themselves from the Jewish community and its religious and cultural traditions. Remaining distant from the Jewish "victims," they hoped to avoid a similar fate; in fact, they are simply avoiding the need to deal consciously with their own fears of anti-Semitism as well as their cultural ignorance. Children growing up in such families often know extremely little about what it means to be a Jew apart from inherited notions of suffering and victimization. As a result of rootlessness, they belong to neither the mainstream culture nor the Jewish community. Denied a Jewish education, such children are often limited in their Jewish identity to the feeling of shame over belonging to a historically despised minority group. Not surprisingly, intermarriage appeals to them.

Jews in America have historically been subject to varied forms of direct and indirect discrimination, including exclusion from many professional and social groups. We learned that by "passing" we were more likely to be accepted, more likely to succeed in our pursuit of the American dream. Marrying a non-Jew in order to

disguise one's Jewishness, or changing one's obviously Jewish name (or nose) are just a few of the ways in which Jewish self-hatred is masked in contemporary American culture. This pressure to conform or assimilate not only influences our physical or social image of ourselves, but deeply affects how we value each other as men and women.

The Impact of Internalized Anti-Semitism on Masculinity and Femininity

The aversion that many Jewish men and women feel toward one another also derives from the fact that traditional Jewish ideals of masculinity and femininity are very different from those of mainstream American culture. When not appreciated for their uniqueness, these differences become another source of mutual devaluation. For instance, unlike the American macho ideal of masculinity, Judaism teaches an inner form of strength based on restraint of impulse. In *Pirkay Avot,* one of the earliest compilations of Jewish ethical teachings, we find such dicta as "Who is strong? He who uses restraint with his impulses." This attitude developed in response to historical circumstances, as Jewish men generally had little power to control their own destinies. Barred from tilling the soil and many other respectable "male" professions, Jewish men learned to live by their wits. Wisdom and piety were valued above physical prowess and material success. In the Bible, Jacob, the thoughtful introvert, is chosen over Esau, the hairy (masculine) hunter; young David, the poet and musician, overpowers Goliath, the giant Philistine warrior. Clearly, the traditional Jewish ideal of masculinity is unlike any of the anti-intellectual, masculine role models offered by American culture.

It's interesting to note that many anti-Semitic thinkers described Jewish men as being both inferior and feminine. Otto Weininger (1880–1903), a German-Jewish convert to Christianity, and one of the most venomous authors of anti-Semitic literature of his time, wrote: "The Aryan, like Man, knows extremes of good and evil, of brilliance and stupidity. The Jew, like Woman, is utterly devoid of genius, and hence always mediocre and imitative." Weininger's extreme Jewish self-hatred culminated in his committing suicide just months after publication of his book.

Weininger's pathology aside, Jewish men and women are faced with real issues of gender. If Jewish men were "feminized" by the conditions of exile, one might say that Jewish women were "masculinized." The struggle to survive under extremely difficult conditions placed an additional burden on Jewish women to be strong and stand by their men. It was also considered a virtue for the Jewish woman to work in order to support her husband's Torah study. So Jewish women traditionally exercised power not just in the home, but also in the family business. In the post–World War I era, as American families were able to be supported by a single income, many wives stopped working outside the home. The energy that these women once divided between family and work became focused solely on the family. Barred from creative spiritual expression in the synagogue, and unable to exert power in the world of work, stifled Jewish women began stifling their husbands and children. Or so the standard explanation goes. In any event, Jewish men and women alike are now faced with the stereotypes of the overly controlling Jewish woman who lives vicariously through her children, and of the Jewish man as inadequate, weak, or "nebbishy." These stereotypes reinforce Jewish self-hatred, further undermining romantic attraction.

Yet we must face not only the distortion but also the relative truths of these stereotypes. I have repeatedly seen Jewish men and women enlist one another in the playing out of these roles. The nebbish's problems with self-assertion and the expression of anger, for instance, result in his chronically seeing himself as "the victim" in relationships. Instead of expressing his own anger, he may induce it in his mate by means of the psycho-

"**Brilliant**....It is **indispensable** to anyone who wants to understand the nature of American and/or Israeli Judaism."—Charles Silberman

Two Worlds of Judaism

The Israeli and American Experiences

Charles S. Liebman and Steven M. Cohen

In this provocative book, a political scientist living in Israel and a sociologist living in America explore how Israeli and American Jews differ in the way they conceive of their Judaism. $25.00



Yale University Press
Dept. 392, 92A Yale Station, New Haven, CT 06520

logical mechanism of projective identification. Enlisting his mate to enact his own internal conflicts, he will treat her in such a manner that she begins to actually feel angry toward him. He feels more and more like a hapless victim, while she slowly and unwittingly becomes a bigger "bitch" than she knew she could be. In "Lifting Up the Shadow of Anti-Semitism: Jewish Masculinity in a New Light," Barbara Breitman suggests that when Jewish women take on the projected aggression of Jewish men, together they re-enact the dynamics of anti-Semitism by acting out the roles of victim and oppressor. The net effect of these destructive dynamics is that Jewish men may feel and act less masculine, and Jewish women feel and act less feminine.

In the stereotype of the "Jewish American Princess" we find a particularly destructive image of Jewish women. Undoubtedly, there are some Jewish women who may fit aspects of the JAP stereotype, but they are a small minority. The daughter of wealthy, overly indulgent parents, the classic JAP feels that the world owes her a great deal. In fact, many Jewish women have difficulty feeling even a healthy sense of entitlement. They focus on caring for others, more than nurturing themselves. Those Jewish women who actually do fit the description of the JAP often use the characteristic attitude of entitlement as a defense against deep feelings of emptiness and unworthiness. They turn to an indulgent consumerism hoping to cover up these painful feelings. Like the narcissistic individual who constantly seeks attention but never feels seen, these Jewish women vainly attempt to fill an emotional-spiritual void with external representations of love. Often they had parents who were unable to express love to their children, except through money and objects.

But the JAP dynamic isn't that simple. Beneath the vicious use of the label lurks a more hidden projection of Jewish men's painful feelings of inadequacy onto Jewish women. Again and again I hear Jewish men using the JAP stereotype as an excuse for why they choose not to go out with Jewish women. Instead of really confronting the sources of their feelings of inadequacy (namely, historic oppression, the current trend of downward mobility, and growing up with critical Jewish parents who had unrealistically high expectations of their children), Jewish men have blamed Jewish women.

In a dating situation the projection might occur as it did with Jonathan, a thirty-three-year-old Jewish high school teacher.

> I drove up to Judith's apartment expectantly, to pick her up for our first dinner date, thinking to myself, it's been awhile since I've gone out with a Jewish woman. When I arrived I noticed the 1989 Toyota Celica convertible parked in her driveway, and suddenly I got a racy, anxious feeling in my stomach. What will she think when she gets into my 1987 Toyota Tercel? We went to dinner and had a pleasant enough evening, but when it came time to pay the bill there was a moment of awkwardness. I sensed she was disappointed when I suggested we split the bill. Immediately I felt upset, and thought to myself that if she was just another Jewish Princess waiting to be taken care of, she could wait for someone else. At that moment I wasn't sure I'd ask her out again.

Jonathan's instant judgments of Judith were based in his family experience. Throughout his childhood, his mother denigrated his father for not being financially successful, while she turned her aspirations for security and social mobility to Jonathan, her eldest son. Attempting to live up to his mother's expectations of him, but unconsciously identifying with his father, Jonathan grew up feeling pressed to be a high achiever yet never feeling he was good enough. For years, he had avoided dating Jewish women, in part out of fear that they would treat him as his mother treated his father. It's possible that Jonathan's preconceived notion about Jewish women being materialistic and dependent distorted his perception of Judith and prevented him from really getting to know what she might actually be like as a partner with whom to share the burden of financial responsibility. By projecting the JAP stereotype onto Judith, Jonathan avoids dealing directly with his own feelings of inadequacy and insecurity.

This same encounter could be interpreted from a different perspective as well. Let's say Jonathan accurately picked up on a subtle attitude of devaluation on the part of Judith. Perhaps she, like many Jewish women, grew up in a family that emphasized the importance of marrying a man who is financially successful, above and beyond all other considerations. In this case, if Judith hasn't adequately separated herself from her parents' materialistic values, she may have trouble being open to or feeling satisfied with a man who earns less than what her parents would approve. In either scenario, frustration, disappointment, and anger aren't far off.

Displaced Jewish Anger

The name-calling that goes on between Jewish men and women seems to have provided a new outlet for stifled Jewish aggression. Jews appear to have a strong tendency to internalize rather than externalize anger because of the unique interplay between Jewish history and theology. Judaism reinforced the internalization of

(Continued on p. 95)

Anna Freud and I

Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson

Soon after I arrived in Munich, I talked to a number of German analysts about my interest in the Hungarian psychoanalyst Sandor Ferenczi, and the Munich Psychoanalytic Society asked me to address them on the subject of Ferenczi's last days. Ferenczi was Freud's favorite disciple and a man of exceptional clinical skills and great human warmth. I was, like many analysts, drawn to him. The more I looked into his life and career, the more reasons I found to admire him. Toward the end of his life he had come to believe that Freud was wrong to discount his patients' accounts of sexual assault in childhood. He was hearing these same accounts from his patients, but even more important, from a purely evidentiary point of view, they were confirmed by other patients who confessed to having done them. Ferenczi was considered paranoid for believing his women patients; the men's confessions were not even discussed. Ernest Jones, the powerful English analyst who had been Ferenczi's analysand, now took up the cudgel against him in deadly seriousness. Jones let it be known after Ferenczi's death in 1933 (he died a few months after the quarrel with Freud) that he was really a homicidal maniac. While I was in London working in the Jones archives I discovered what this really meant: Jones believed that to disagree with Freud (the father) was tantamount to patricide (father murder). And so, because Ferenczi believed that children were sexually abused and Freud did not, Ferenczi was branded by Jones as a homicidal maniac, and this piece of scurrilous interpretation stuck. The burden of my paper was to show how these kinds of rumors, these pieces of malicious gossip, became encoded as scientific gospel by credulous and intellectually lazy analysts. It was not a bad paper.

I had made friends with a child psychiatrist who was head of a university clinic. He was urbane, a gourmet and a bon vivant. He was also in analytic training. I went skiing with his family in the Italian alps, and we got on fine as long as we did not talk about psychiatry. By the time I had finished addressing the Munich Psychoanalytic Society, we were no longer on speaking terms. He got up at the end of my paper and said in a voice filled with emotion, "Your paper shows that you are as paranoid as Ferenczi. I am, as you know, a child psychiatrist and I know that children do, in fact, invent tales of sexual abuse. Freud was right. Ferenczi was wrong. So Jones was correct too, even if for the wrong reasons. The fact that you, Jeff, can take up Ferenczi's views after all these years of clinical wisdom has demonstrated there was no truth in them shows—well, I don't know how to say this, but I feel forced to say that you are dangerously mentally ill. In fact, Jeff, I believe you should spend some time in a psychiatric hospital. I have to go even further: I am prepared to commit you tonight if one of the gentlemen in the room will second my opinion." I laughed appreciatively. It was a good performance. Quite convincing. He made a point far more dramatically than I could have with my sober words. When I finished laughing I noticed he was not smiling. "Jeff, I'm serious."

So here it was. Fifty years after Ferenczi, to go against conventional "wisdom" was still dangerous. I was being told that a man could get himself locked up that way. The few people who remained loyal to Ferenczi maintain that he died of a broken heart, abandoned by Freud and all the people who had apparently so loved him. I was more fortunate: none of my critic's colleagues was willing to go sign a committal form. Displaying a strain of endemic naiveté, I decided that my friend's problems were again intellectual provincialism. He was peculiar, he was different, he had completely misunderstood psychoanalysis. He was not a product of the system, he was a mistake. So I merely had to avoid such people. He was the proverbial bad apple in the otherwise healthy barrel. I could not tolerate the idea that it might be the barrel that was rotten. Of course I could see that the world was full of "bad apples," but I had to believe that the barrel was fine, otherwise my entire training and everything I had believed until now could be in question.

Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson is the author of The Assault on Truth: Freud's Suppression of the Seduction Theory *(Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1984) and* Against Therapy: Emotional Tyranny and the Myth of Psychological Healing *(Atheneum, 1988). He is a former Projects Director of the Sigmund Freud Archives. "Anna Freud and I" is excerpted from* Final Analysis: The Making and Unmaking of a Psychoanalyst, *forthcoming from Addison-Wesley in October 1990.*

★ ★ ★

One day, while continuing my research in London, Anna Freud and I were going through Freud's desk, and I found a large envelope that contained passports, photos, and other documents from Freud's earliest childhood that she had evidently not seen before. She took a keen interest in going through them with me and seemed so happy to answer my questions about minor matters that I decided to ask something I had always been curious about.

"Miss Freud, your father wrote, in one of his early papers, that he thought it a pity that children were rarely enlightened about sexual matters. I take it then, that he talked to you and his other children about masturbation, is that correct?"

She stared at me aghast and in silence. I tried to redeem myself. "Your father did write that such matters should be discussed."

Shaking her head, she replied, "That was not for the family."

Paula Fichtl, the housekeeper who had been with the Freud family for many decades, often came into the library when Anna Freud left me there to work. She was a far more engaging conversationalist, especially about Anna Freud, whom she seemed to dislike intensely (their dislike was mutual). She spoke to me in a mixture of Austrian German and broken English. "Things have never been the same since the professor died. He was a good man. A very good man. He liked me. He teased me. He told me I was a better judge of character than most psychiatrists. I always told him who of his patients I liked and who I didn't. He told me I was always right. He was fun. Not *her* though. She's no fun. And she's very cheap. Don't let her see me giving you all these cakes. She tells me not to. She wants to eat the same thing all the time, at the same time, too. And no eggs in anything. How can you cook without eggs? I slip them in anyway, but she sometimes guesses and won't eat it. Have you seen her room? I'll take you up there later. It's like a little girl's room. Animals—how you say, *Plüschtiere* [stuffed animals] everywhere. You know, Fräulein Anna has never once touched me—not even my hand, like this, see? Maybe his fault though. I never saw him hug or kiss any of the children."

Anna Freud certainly gave off an aura of physical coldness. Rumors abounded concerning her sexual life. Nearly everybody close to Freud (e.g., Ferenczi) or not so close (e.g., Siegfried Bernfeld, a fiery left-wing analyst, later the founder of the San Francisco Psychoanalytic Institute) was said to have been considered a matrimonial match for her. In fact she never married and spent the last years of her life with Dorothy Burlingham. Nobody knew if they were lovers. Anna Freud struck me, and many other people as well, as completely asexual, and I would not be surprised to learn she and Dorothy Burlingham were lovers without engaging in any sexual intimacy. I asked Paula about it once, and she said they did, sometimes, share a room. She smiled as if she knew something, but I doubt that even she knew.

★ ★ ★

There was an abundance of rumors about Freud and Anna. It was known that Freud had analyzed his own daughter, because he wrote a letter to the Italian analyst, Edoardo Weiss, warning against attempting the same with his son, even though he wrote him that with Anna "it had turned out well"; and that her hand had been sought by many analysts close to Freud, even Ernest Jones, but she never married. Moreover, her personality was so severe that few dared to ask her personal questions. Had she ever loved a man? Did she love women? Specifically, did she have an affair with Lou Andreas Salomé, a lover of both Nietzsche and Rilke, and later a disciple of Freud? Did she live with Dorothy Burlingham (of the Tiffany family, and a woman who was analyzed by Freud in 1925) because she was in love with her? What did she think of her analysis with her father? These and many other questions could never be answered by asking Anna Freud. The hope was that Freud's letters to her and her letters to him would answer such questions. The letters, I later discovered, are singularly devoid of personal material and bland; they are astonishing for a reason I had not counted on: they are completely vacuous. In the letters to Fliess, and even in the letters to Jung, Freud is engaged and personal, whereas the founder of psychoanalysis seems to have had nothing of importance to say to his own daughter. I really don't know why.

★ ★ ★

I now began to see Anna Freud more frequently. At the door I was generally greeted by Paula, who was always happy to see me, because it gave her the chance to talk and gossip and tell me all the news since my last visit—who had been there, what had been going on. I mentioned earlier the distaste that seemed to exist between Paula and Anna Freud. They inhabited a kind of war zone. Paula insisted on speaking to Anna Freud in English, which, many years after arriving in England, Paula still barely knew. The first time I heard Paula say anything to Anna Freud, Anna Freud turned to me and said, loudly, "I can't understand a word she is saying." Truthfully, neither could I. Paula returned the dislike. When Anna Freud was not present, she would come into the room where I was working in the house, bring me tea, and sit down. I told Eissler what

Paula had once said to me about Anna Freud never hugging her. He explained that it would be unheard of, in the Austria of Freud's day, for a "master" to embrace a "servant." Anna Freud was a product of that era. But that meant that analysis had never freed her from this false position. (How many of us are ever freed from anything, by analysis or any other method short of falling in love?)

Paula told me that she never had a day off, never went anywhere, never had any fun. That I can believe. The house was not a joyous place. (But then it could not have been much fun for Anna Freud to be an icon either.) The only lively creature there was Anna Freud's chow, a young and frisky purple-tongued delight. I often took him into the large garden for a run. Anna Freud loved it when I did that. She would lie on the deckchair and watch us, and afterward we had our best talks together. We both liked dogs, and for some reason this allowed her to open up to me a bit. On this occasion (1980) I reminded her of our first meeting, seven years earlier, and how I had not understood her warning about the corruption rampant in psychoanalysis. I told her something about my own analysis, and my experience with my supervisors and teachers in psychoanalysis in Toronto. "I am not at all surprised," she said. "Yes, it is really quite terrible." "Has it always been like that?" I wanted to know. "I don't think it was like that in the early years," she answered, "but I know that if my father were alive now, he would not want to be an analyst." Of course we both had our own reasons for believing that corruption was rampant and all-pervasive in analytic circles; on the other hand, we were probably both right.

Once Anna Freud trusted me, there was no end to her generosity in letting me take whatever I wanted out of the house for copying or studying. She did not seem the least bit attached to the volumes in her father's personal library, and I certainly could never have done the research I wanted to do without her full and unstinting cooperation. She was also always prepared to answer my many questions, as long as they were not personal. The very first time we talked about the seduction theory, I told her that Freud had once claimed that he gave it up because he read, in Havelock Ellis, that people could be sexually assaulted, and yet escape neurosis. "Could we look for Ellis's book in your father's library, and see what he wrote in the margin?" Anna Freud's eyes shone with pleasure. "Yes, that would be interesting. You know, Dr. Masson, sometimes I do understand your research zeal, even if it does border on the fanatic." We spent the next couple of hours going through Freud's books and reprints by Ellis, but could find nothing about sexual seduction. "Miss Freud, this is really odd. I wonder what your father had in mind." "Maybe you should look at other books by Ellis, besides the one my father cites. Maybe he made a mistake." I did, and could find nothing about seduction or its effects in all the seven volumes of Ellis's *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*. This was one of the first clues I had that Freud's own account of his abandonment of the seduction hypothesis was not entirely reliable, and that the full version would have to be dug for.

"If my father were alive now," Anna Freud answered, "he would not want to be an analyst."

During the summer of 1980, Eissler told me that the Sigmund Freud Archives, with funds from Muriel Gardiner and the Newland Foundation, had recently purchased the Freud home. The idea, he said, was to eventually turn it into a research center (at that early date there were no plans to make it a museum as it now has become). Part of my job, as his successor at the Archives, would be to live in the house and to oversee the conversion. I was to move there upon Anna Freud's death, and to make certain that the hundreds of letters there were catalogued and eventually made their way to the Library of Congress. The house was unchanged since Freud moved into it in 1938, and I made plans to convert it into a brighter place by putting in skylights and to make the magnificent library available to researchers. My responsibilities were to conduct research, but I would be fully independent.

While the general atmosphere in the institute and the house was bleak, I loved, and I could not get enough of, the discoveries I was making there. For example, Anna Freud showed me a case history dated December 22, 1897, never published, in which Freud wrote to Wilhelm Fliess about an early childhood sexual assault. It was one of Freud's most direct and detailed descriptions of child sexual abuse, an altogether remarkable case history about a small girl who nearly died because of an assault by her father. Freud ends the letter by proposing to Fliess that from now on the motto of his new science of psychoanalysis should be the moving words from a poem by Goethe: "What have they done to you, poor child?" Nowhere else in the published Freud is there such direct evidence of Freud's exquisite sensitivity to the suffering of children. As I now reread my letters and reports from this time, I can see it clearly: I was intoxicated with the possibility of finding Fliess's letters to Freud, which had been lost since 1904. I was convinced I would find the missing dream from the *Interpretation of Dreams*, the one dream that Freud said he had completely analyzed, but which

was removed at Fliess's insistence, because it was too sexually indiscreet. Most important of all, I would find the clues to what really happened with the seduction theory. There was only one catch: nobody wanted me to find out.

Anna Freud listened in stony silence while I painted a marvelous mural of all the hidden truths coming to light; doors being unlocked, things falling into place.

I asked her one day, "Miss Freud, what do you think your father meant when he said that he heard things in the Paris morgue of which medical science preferred not to know? Isn't it a strange reference?"

"I don't know," she conceded.

I was pleased. "I have some news. I think I've found the answer to the puzzle. I was in Paris recently, and found the records for the day your father was present in the morgue. That day Paul Brouardel, the forensic psychiatrist, 'demonstrated' the corpse of a child who had been raped and murdered by her father. So it seems clear that this is what Freud meant. Medical science didn't want to believe this was possible. They refused to admit it. Wouldn't you agree?" Silence. But I was too dense and too caught up in my discoveries to notice her resistance. I would often knock on her door (her bedroom was on the third floor), give another breathless display of my historical quest and dash away to find new pieces to the jigsaw puzzle. The house was like a gigantic treasure chest. Although Anna Freud did not know that I was someday to live in the house, she did know that I would be in charge of research projects for the Archives, and she had given me permission to see anything I needed and to look around for material more or less throughout the house. I do not believe that Anna Freud ever consciously concealed material. She was generous and self-effacing to a fault. But I think she assumed or hoped I had the same priorities she had, in which family loyalty played a central role. There was certainly never a plot on the part of the keepers of the flame to maintain the image of a Freud that was clean, even sanitized, but it was clearly intolerable to many close to Freud to think that he was anything less than morally irreproachable.

It is hard for me to convey the excitement of the discoveries I was making then. I would open a drawer, and Freud's unpublished letters about Ferenczi's apostasy would fall out. Letters between Breuer and Freud, letters to and from Jean-Martin Charcot, a few letters from Fliess to Freud, letters to Minna (Freud's sister-in-law), hundreds of family letters, all of these were to be found somewhere in the house. Anna Freud herself had only the vaguest memory of where things were, or what there was. My joy was so pure, so obvious, that it began to act on her, and she too got caught up in the search for new documents. There were puzzles everywhere, and not unimportant ones. Why did Freud keep a whole packet of Ferenczi material, all connected with Ferenczi's views about childhood seduction, in the top middle drawer of his desk? Why was it so important to him? Or had somebody else put it there? Who? Anna Freud herself? Dorothy Burlingham? Paula was functionally illiterate, so she could not have collected them. Kurt Eissler, the eminent New York analyst and Anna Freud's adviser, paid frequent visits to London, but he was so deferential he would never have wandered about looking for things as I was doing.

★ ★ ★

In 1895 and 1896 Freud was not yet a figure of any authority, and he had no reason to conform to the majority opinion. He could listen to his patients. This was by no means the norm. What he heard, and believed, had revolutionary potential. Here was a man, possibly the first in recorded history, who heard about the sexual abuse of children and recognized what it really meant. Women who came to his analytic office told him, with his encouragement, about the sexual abuse they had suffered as children. Freud was struck—later he was to say he felt he had discovered the *caput Nili* of human suffering, the source of the Nile. This was, indeed, and Freud knew it then, a truth about what men did to girls, ignored or denied or lied about since history began. What happens in the minds and bodies of the girls to whom it is done? What happens to their psyches? What are the consequences of such immense, silent suffering? What happens when they cannot tell, because they would not be believed, or even if they were, they would be censored or censured? What does this do to some essential trust in the very solidity of the world? Such women live alone in the world. They are alone because they know something they cannot share, and they cannot share it through no fault of their own. Since it is not possible to survive in a universe that is heartless, eventually the denial on the part of so many people in the external world must be internalized as doubt. It is easier to believe oneself crazy, or paranoid, or delusional, or bad, than to believe that the whole world could turn a blind eye to one's real history. It is intolerable to exist in such a world, far easier to accept the blame. It is a situation calculated to drive anybody insane. It is possible to survive as the lone nut in a sane world, but not as the lone seer in an insane world. And yet Freud believed these women—not only in the privacy of his office; he said so publicly in his 1896 paper "The Aetiology of Hysteria":

(Continued on p. 98)

Should Soviet Jews Leave?

Samuel D. Kassow

True or false: the recent mass exodus of Soviet Jewry is a reaction to exaggerated fears of anti-Semitism and pogroms. True, say both Alan Snitow ("Soviet Prospects, Jewish Fears," *Tikkun,* Jul./Aug. 1990) and Vitaly Korotich, editor of *Ogonek,* the most important "liberal" weekly in the Soviet Union. Korotich has urged Soviet Jews to join the battle for political reform at home. But the tepid response of Soviet Jewish leaders leaves him highly dissatisfied. Korotich registered his complaints in a July interview with Walter Ruby of the *Jerusalem Post:*

> I have met with many Jewish leaders and offered to work with them in order to convince Jews to stay here, but then I never hear from them again. The trend in the Jewish community is to support the idea that it is safest for Jews to emigrate. This impulse is certainly understandable, but it gives credence to spokesmen for Pamyat and other anti-Semitic groups who say, "Now the country is facing difficult times, and all the Jews are running away."

Indeed, the pace of the exodus is picking up. Perhaps 200,000 Jews will leave the Soviet Union in 1990. This is certainly no emigration of committed Zionists or long-time "refuseniks." These are ordinary Jews educated in Russian culture, Jews who doubtless have felt some discrimination but who made their peace with the Soviet system. From the death of Stalin until the late 1960s, the Soviet government had a kind of unwritten social contract with its Jewish population. Jews would forfeit all hopes of cultural freedom, and of certain careers—the party elite, the diplomatic corps—but they could gain social mobility and professional satisfaction through the educational system. This contract eroded, then broke down in the 1970s. Lately things have improved, at least outwardly. A major revival of Soviet Jewry is leading to the formation of hundreds of cultural organizations, theater groups, circles for the study of Hebrew and Yiddish, and major efforts to establish Jewish culture in the Russian language. In December 1989, representatives from about two hundred Jewish organizations met in Moscow to found the Congress of Jewish Organizations and Communities (the Va'ad) in the USSR.

In addition to this body, the official Yiddishists grouped around the journal *Sovetish Heimland* have organized the All-Union Society of Soviet Jewish Culture. In keeping with the spirit of glasnost, even *Sovetish Heimland* has undergone remarkable changes. Fine young Yiddish writers such as Gennadi Estraikh have joined the journal, and Aron Vergelis, the editor, has loaded the magazine with real Jewish content—a serialization, for example, of Simon Dubnov's *History of the Jewish People.*

So why the stampede? Recent developments should serve to reassure jittery Soviet Jews. The dreaded May 5 pogrom failed to materialize. To be sure, hundreds of Soviet citizens have died in ethnic violence—Armenians, Azeris, Abkazians, Georgians, Kirghiz—but very few Jews. In the 1990 elections to local soviets, anti-Semitic candidates suffered crushing defeats, especially in Moscow and Leningrad. More to the point, winning groups such as the Democratic Union in Leningrad have pulled no punches in fighting the anti-Semitic Right. The "April Group," which includes some of the most respected writers in the Soviet Union, has also weighed in to defend Jewish rights. Then on July 22, *Pravda* published its strongest condemnation of anti-Semitism yet (even while admitting that "the fear of the ghost of pogroms is starting to acquire a dimension of panic"). And according to recent public-opinion polls published in the June 10 issue of *Moscow News,* anti-Semitism among Russians—while a cause for concern—hardly enjoys mass support: 85 percent of those interviewed supported Jews' right to equal treatment in education and employment, and agreed that the government had to protect these rights.

At the same time the poll, in the "half empty, half full" tradition, shows a substantial minority that might be mobilized for anti-Semitic politics. On the question of whether the respondent "would be happy if a Jew were to become a member of my family," 32 percent

Samuel D. Kassow is a professor of history at Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut. His latest book is Students, Professors and the State in Tsarist Russia *(University of California Press, 1989).*

agreed, 26.6 percent disagreed, and 41.4 percent held an intermediate position. Some 28 percent believed that a Jew would choose money over people. Another 8.8 percent believed that "Jews deserved punishment because they crucified Christ." In other indexes of anti-Semitic feeling, 7.6 percent blamed Jews for the problems of postrevolutionary Russia and 7.7 percent condemned Jews wishing to emigrate.

Other arguments could buttress Korotich's case. Perestroika, which has certainly opened up a new era for Soviet Jewry, is beleaguered but far from moribund. While no one can deny the enormity of the economic and political problems facing Gorbachev, the fact remains that he has held onto power. His triumph over party hardliners at the July Party Congress only confirmed the real source of his strength—the inability of his opponents to offer a credible alternative. As Eduard Shevardnadze and Alexander Yakovlev asked at the recent Party congress, were the heckling delegates really prepared to send tanks into Berlin to defend communism? Could the resurrection of the Gulag bridge the widening technological gap between the Soviet Union and the rest of the world? The delegates may have cheered Igor Ligachev, but when it came to a test of strength, Gorbachev humiliated his rival.

In a memorable debate at the 1988 Party Conference with the noted economist Leonid Abalkin, Gorbachev stressed that his only chance was to put political reforms in place before overhauling the economy. Otherwise the apparat would strike at will. These political reforms stressed that perestroika had to go beyond the sporadic Russian syndrome of "change from above." Gorbachev and key advisers such as Yakovlev stressed the importance of galvanizing the Soviet people, breaking down the psychological paralysis induced by generations of repression, and creating the beginnings of a "civil society." In the process, the ideology of class struggle would give way to the primacy of "universal, humanistic" values. That in turn would serve to legitimize a new approach to Soviet foreign policy and open the way for a more pluralistic political system at home.

The pitfalls have been enormous, but Gorbachev can point to some breathtaking achievements. On both the local and national levels he has created new structures of power to counter the party apparatus. He has gutted the Politburo, and his decision to continue on as General Secretary—a decision many liberals oppose—provides some added measure of insurance against bureaucratic obstructionism. Equally significant is the enormous transformation of Soviet political life in the last few years. Two years ago, after Nina Andreeva published her celebrated neo-Stalinist manifesto in March 1988, only one newspaper—*Moscow News*—bucked the tide of fear and counterattacked. Gorbachev supporters cowered for three weeks until a *Pravda* article written by Yakovlev signaled that perestroika was still on track. Today, 1988 seems like a thousand years ago. Election campaigns, new voluntary associations, and a vocal press have transformed all levels of Soviet society.

To be sure, glasnost is a double-edged sword. The future of the Soviet Union is in real question, as is Gorbachev's ability to wheedle enough support for his dauntingly unpopular economic reforms. In the middle of 1990, the economy does seem to be spinning out of control. Premier Nikolai Ryzhkov has warned that foreign currency shortages may soon curtail vital imports of grain. Key production rates continue to fall, and in many areas, food shopping has come to resemble finding an available beach on the Connecticut shore: Local residents only! Wages have escalated faster than available goods and market equilibrium has all but collapsed.

Here too, however, an "optimistic" reading at least deserves a hearing. Couldn't one argue that "controlled chaos" (with the emphasis on "controlled") is, on balance, a source of strength for Gorbachev? The worse things get, so this reasoning would go, the more indispensable Gorbachev seems.

All this leads to the "optimistic" assumption that a civil society of responsible citizens will read, argue, discuss issues, and then elect delegates who will share responsibility for solving national problems. In short, a new political order will acquire the *legitimacy* to take unpopular but necessary stands. No matter that Boris Yeltsin has quit the Party and become a powerful figure in his own right. He might well become the partner Gorbachev needs. Skillful coalition politics, this view argues, could be the next step in the building and institutionalizing of Soviet democracy. In the meantime, the end of the cold war may provide the critical margin to buy some time. Shevardnadze mentioned a "peace dividend" of 250 billion rubles, and Gorbachev obviously hopes that Kohl's three-billion-dollar loan is only the beginning. And the new instability in the Persian Gulf increases the value of Soviet energy reserves. That political and economic bargaining chip bolsters the case for massive Western investment in the Soviet economy. It also ensures that the Russian Republic will maintain its economic leverage within the USSR, and may even induce other republics to stop short of outright secession.

In light of these seemingly reassuring signs, why isn't Korotich having better luck with Soviet Jewish leaders, or with the people they are supposed to be leading? To begin with, many fear economic calamity, and most doubt Gorbachev will succeed. Pamyat, of course, will

hardly start loving Soviet Jews if they change their minds and decide to stay. But behind these doubts lies the perception that the position of the Jews in Soviet society is undergoing a basic change—for the worse.

Consider, for example, the case of Gregory Kanovich, a well-known Russian writer on Jewish themes. No refusenik or dissident, Kanovich has enjoyed a successful literary career in the Soviet Union and recently won election from Vilnius to the Congress of People's Deputies. His position has given him some access to the highest levels of the Soviet leadership. If anyone can make the case for staying to build a self-respecting Jewish existence in a new Soviet Union, it is a writer such as Kanovich. Furthermore, his writing represents one aspect of the Russian-language Jewish creativity that many observers see as crucial to the future of Jewish identity in the country.

In a poignant article published in the October 5, 1989, issue of the *Vilnius Komsomolskaia Pravda,* Kanovich suggested that instead of asking, "Must I leave?" one should ask, "Is it possible to stay?" For Kanovich the answer was clear: no. He admitted that some readers might find such gloom misplaced in the hopeful era of perestroika. There were indeed hopeful changes, but they paled beside the storm clouds gathering above Soviet Jewry. "You can't empty the ocean with a thimble," Kanovich noted.

Kanovich's worries centered on three counts: real fear that the government would lack the strength to protect Jews if trouble came, concern over growing anti-Semitism in the Russian intelligentsia, and profound skepticism about chances for building a new Jewish community in the Soviet Union. His stint in the Congress of People's Deputies has only strengthened his fears. In May 1989, at the First Congress of People's Deputies, Kanovich presented Gorbachev with an appeal against anti-Semitism signed by two hundred deputies; all but five were non-Jews and signers included Boris Yeltsin, Yevgeny Yevtushenko, Yuri Afanasayev, and Tatiana Tolstaia. Gorbachev did not respond. Nor did the recently concluded September 1989 Party Plenum mention anti-Semitism, even though it adopted a platform on nationality problems.

Since Kanovich's article appeared, Gorbachev has maintained his lukewarm attitude. On April 10, 1990, at the Congress of the Young Communist League, he was asked a direct question about how he proposed to fight rising anti-Semitism. He went out of his way to bury the issue in the general problem of ethnic strife. "I believe," Gorbachev replied, "that we must prevent outbursts of nationalism, chauvinism, anti-Semitism, and all other 'isms.'" But in March he appointed to the newly created Presidential Council Valentin Rasputin, the noted Russophile writer, and Veniamin Yarin, the leader of the right-wing National Workers Front. This may all be good politics, as Gorbachev reaches out to disparate elements in Russian society. There appears to be a division of labor, since other members of the Presidential Council such as Alexander Yakovlev and Stanislav Shatalin have been far tougher in attacking anti-Semitism. Little of this reassures Soviet Jews.

Jewish fear, or even the desire for economic security, will lead many to emigrate. We should respect that choice.

Why, Kanovich asks, is the government so afraid to take a tougher stand against anti-Semitism? He hardly accuses Gorbachev of collusion, and no one doubts that Gorbachev is personally opposed to anti-Semitism. But Kanovich articulates what many Soviet Jews suspect —that the regime is too embattled to risk an overt embrace of Soviet Jewry. In other words, the regime is weak (and getting weaker). Polls show that a growing number of Soviet citizens fear general collapse. During the recent debates in the People's Congress on the question of whether the Congress or the people should elect the President, Dimitri Likhachev, one of the most respected cultural leaders in the country, stated flatly that a mass election would "result in civil war."

If the regime collapses and chaos ensues, will the comforting opinion polls and the encouraging election results protect Soviet Jewry from mob violence?

Is the glass half empty or half full? In a civil society with functioning institutions and accepted laws, anti-Semitic sentiments of 5, 20, or 25 percent have a much different significance than they do in a society gripped by uncertainty and apprehension. Even electoral victories by "progressive" forces lose their meaning if the voters are volatile, angry, and afraid. A populist, anti-establishment vote for a democrat like Leningrad's new mayor, A. A. Sobchak, could soon turn into a vote for a populist with far less appetizing credentials.

Alan Snitow's optimistic assessment of the chances for democratic reform in the USSR and his call to support the Jewish self-renewal movement are well taken. I have made the same arguments myself. The problem is that Snitow may be misreading the latest political developments in the Soviet Union. In a recent article on the situation in Eastern Europe (*New York Review of Books,* July 19, 1990), Adam Michnik worried that xenophobic chauvinism rather than liberal democracy could well fill the vacuum created by the collapse of communism. That may be true in the Soviet Union as well.

As uncertainty grows, Soviet citizens are "heading home" to the shelter of ethnic identity and local politics. Power is drifting downward, toward new structures and personalities closer to the people. At the same time, the Russians are now joining other ethnic groups in asserting their sense of ethnic identity and pride. As the game of political and psychological musical chairs goes on, Soviet Jews ask themselves whether there will be room for them at the end. For all its faults, the old Soviet system developed a concept of nationhood that transcended ethnicity, at least in theory. In the emerging political culture, many Jews fear that they will be outsiders again—forced to choose between Russians and non-Russians in the other republics, unable to find a secure place in a Russia grimly looking for its own soul. Jews have traditionally preferred political cultures that are broadly inclusive to those that use "ethnic" and "organic" criteria to restrict membership. Is such inclusiveness likely in Russia and in the non-Russian republics?

Snitow is right that nationalist movements such as the Ukrainian Ruch and the Lithuanian Sajudis have condemned anti-Semitism and have supported Jewish aspirations. But he may be underestimating the pitfalls ahead. Naturally, the Ukrainians and Lithuanians will reexamine their history and try to construct a "usable past." But Jews may come up with slightly different versions of Lithuanian or Ukrainian history. Even with the best intentions in the world, problems will arise. Recently, for example, a Sajudis activist proposed a "deal." The Lithuanians would apologize for their role in the 1941 massacre of Lithuanian Jewry, if the Jews would apologize for their collaboration with the Communists! One should not doubt the sincerity of many of these national leaders. But as these peoples confront their history, the Jewish question will loom large.

In many respects the Russians face more difficulties than other nationalities in defining their nationhood. Dominant in the Soviet empire, Russians increasingly see themselves as its most pathetic victims. The price of military and political glory has been polluted rivers, impoverished villages, ravaged forests, depleted resources, growing infant mortality and poverty, and an alarmingly high incidence of alcoholism.

There is pain and shame and anger. One sees it all across the political spectrum—from the speeches of Yakovlev, Gorbachev's super-liberal left-hand man, all the way to Igor Shafarevich and Pamyat on the Right. It is precisely in this painful search for a new sense of Russianness that anti-Semitism achieves central significance. For proponents of perestroika, anti-Semitism looms as a powerful danger. The July 22 *Pravda* article stressed how powerful a weapon anti-Semitism could be in the hands of antireform forces. A specific cause for concern, *Pravda* warned, was that the anti-Semitic campaign had spread beyond Pamyat and had found support in important literary journals:

> Perhaps for the first time in our history, Judeophobia has become popular in certain circles of our intelligentsia. And this *unprecedented "respectability"* [emphasis added] of anti-Semitism arouses the worst fears. Because here we see an attempt to derail the consolidation process of our society on the platform of perestroika.

One important reason for anti-Semitism's potential political force is that it serves as the "glue" (to borrow Yitzhak Brudny's phrase) which binds disparate anti-Gorbachev forces—"village writers," Slavophile intellectuals, neo-Stalinists, angry bureaucrats, and disgruntled workers.

For the Left, as for Westernizers during the reign of Czar Nicholas I, Russia's only choice is to "join the West." That means a new ideology that will stress universal values rather than class- (or nation-) based values, and the virtues of cooperation rather than rivalry and competition. To do this means overcoming a perceived negative legacy in Russian history: the "strong hand" of Peter the Great, Ivan the Terrible, and Stalin; moral and social passivity; a paranoid tradition that based nationhood on the constant struggle against the "other"—spies, Jews, intellectuals, bourgeois, kulaks, and so on. Gorbachev has put perestroika firmly in this camp and has constantly referred to Russia as a part of Europe. Along with "democrats" such as Yeltsin and People's Deputy Nikolai Travkin, he has shown more ambivalence with regard to embracing the principles of the market economy.

Among the political elite, Yakovlev has been one of the most prominent articulators of this "Western" orientation. In "The Enemy Syndrome: The Anatomy of a Social Pathology," a remarkable interview published in the February 14, 1990, issue of *Literaturnaia Gazeta,* Yakovlev took dead aim at the new Right and anti-Semitism. The "syndrome," according to Yakovlev, posed an extraordinary danger to perestroika and united an unsavory coalition of "losers," ideologues, and ordinary people desperately seeking simple explanations for economic hardship, cultural change, and social displacement. The "losers" included bureaucrats, managers, and workers who feared the consequences of economic reform. And without naming names, Yakovlev drew a sharp line between the anti-Semitic Right and the nineteenth-century Slavophile thinkers. The latter, he stressed, were cultured, decent people whose sincere examination of the roots of Russian culture still merited serious study and respect. They had nothing in common with

(Continued on p. 99)

Jewish Neurosis in Israel and the Diaspora: A Conversation With A. B. Yehoshua

A. B. Yehoshua, one of Israel's leading novelists, has been a prominent critic of Jews who choose to live in the Diaspora. The following conversation took place recently in Jerusalem.

Michael Lerner: Apart from your novels, you are best known for your thesis that Jewish life in the Diaspora is neurotic. Yet looking at the character of Israeli life, many American Jews today think that neurosis seems central to life in Israel—because Israelis seem to be acting so irrationally toward the Palestinians. Moreover, the way Israelis ignore the rest of the world seems to reflect a fundamental irrationality. Some people have analyzed Israeli behavior as a manifestation of a death wish, perhaps rooted in survivor guilt from the Holocaust, a feeling that since the rest of the Jewish people went down in flames while the people of Israel did not, maybe there is a need to join their brothers and sisters by willing their own destruction. While I do not personally share this characterization, I wonder how you respond to those who say that American Jewish life is today less neurotic than life in Israel. What's so neurotic about choosing to live in Galut [in exile]?

A. B. Yehoshua: When I speak about the Diaspora and its neurotic solutions I'm not referring specifically to Israeli policy today or twenty years ago. Very few of the idealistic American Jews who today use Israeli behavior as their excuse for not making aliya showed much interest in coming to Israel twenty-five years ago either, when Israeli politics were saner and Israeli morality less challenged—just as today very few of the right-wing American Jews who insist on how wonderful and moral Israel is are coming either. So the matter of whether to come or not to come has nothing to do with morality; it has nothing to do with any sort of ideological conception. In the 2,500 years of Jewish Diaspora very few came to Israel. The very few who came to Israel came from all sorts of ideologies and had the same diversity of approaches as the majority that remained in the Diaspora.

What those who stayed in Galut had in common was one thing: not coming to live in the Land of Israel. This is precisely what the *Tikkun* people have in common with the Jewish Defense League. So let's take out all this moral stuff. I can say that the moral level is low in Brazil or Cambodia or Iraq, that there are countries where there are far more crazy people than Israel, countries whose future is far darker (Egypt with its current birthrate is far more suicidal than Israel with its current policies). When the United States was not at all moral in its behavior in Vietnam, very few Americans left the U.S.

What I was saying about the Diaspora was this: Jews throughout their history have been saying, "We want to return; our last redemption will be in Eretz Yisrael [the Land of Israel]," and they meant it. They never legitimized the Diaspora; Diaspora was a place to wander until they would reach their final home—Eretz Yisrael. On the other hand most Jews did everything possible not to come to Eretz Yisrael, even acting against their own interests. If I were a Gypsy I'd have no argument with my people, because the Gypsies don't say, "I have a home to which I hope to return."

The Jews in America today are acting exactly the way the Jews in France five hundred years ago or the Jews in Poland a thousand years ago or the Jews in Alexandria two thousand years ago did. They all share a fear of Eretz Yisrael: they fear an insoluble conflict between two parts of their consciousness—the Jewish national code and the religious, cultural, civilizational code.

The Jewish people defines itself according to Jewish law as just that—a people. Halakha defines Jewish belonging only in terms of being a child of a Jewish mother, that is, belonging to a national group. Being a Jew, according to this definition, has no content—it is not based on any particular faith, belief, or behavioral criteria. Being a Jew always meant belonging to a people. So you don't have to live in a certain territory or speak a certain language or be in a certain obligatory relationship to other Jews to be a Jew; this is the most minimal definition of being part of a people that any people could possibly create. Imagine if the British were to say that you are British if you are born of a British mother, even if you are living in Argentina and you don't have any relationship to British culture. No other people could work with such a definition.

Among most peoples the national element takes precedence over the religious element in defining national identity. There are people who completely change

their religion. In most countries the element of being a part of the nation is primarily defined by language and territory and shared government, while the value element plays a relatively small part in defining the national identity. But because the national element is so weak for Jews, the religious element becomes so strong in defining our Jewishness that it is virtually equal to the national code in determining Jewish identity. And this allows for the perpetual possibility of a clash between these two codes; because they are of equal strength, there is always the possibility of explosion and struggle between these two elements. As a mechanism of defense, many Jews choose to live in Diaspora, because there—where they don't have to live in a Jewish totality but in the non-Jewish totality—the two elements can coexist. The two codes may argue with each other, but they are not in a reality where one code can impose itself on the other as it does when they are in a Jewish land.

Lerner: Well, the way you describe it, it doesn't sound at all neurotic for Jews to live in the Diaspora. In fact, the clash between national elements and value elements is precisely what we're witnessing in the State of Israel today, so Jews are correct to anticipate this clash.

Yehoshua: You may think that it is the nationalistic code that is triumphing in Israel today; but, quite the contrary, from the standpoint of our national interests we should be giving back the territories. Those who hold on to the territories do so precisely for religious and cultural reasons, because they say that the territories are part of our historical tradition and were given to us by God. Similarly, the rebellion against the Romans during the Second Temple period was done from the standpoint of the Jewish religion; from the standpoint of national self-interest it was pure nonsense to try to take on Rome.

Lerner: Well, there's another possible interpretation, that nationalism tends toward expansionism of power; whereas historically the religious and cultural values of the Jewish people have dictated against the imposition of oneself on others.

Yehoshua: It's not a matter of chance that the majority of the religious are in the extremist camp.

Lerner: The preeminent nationalist force in Israel was Herut, the party that became Likud. It was not a religious party, and it was and is the major force pushing for expansionism and retention of the territories.

Yehoshua: Yes, but they have religious elements in their nationalism. There are far more religious people in Likud than in Labor or Ratz [the Citizens' Rights Movement].

So we have a severe conflict between what is in our national self-interest and what is dictated by our value system. And this is a severe conflict because unlike most other peoples we are not a people for whom national self-interest predominates over cultural or value-centered interests. Now the reason I call life in the Diaspora a neurotic solution is this: a neurotic solution is when you have a conflict between two parts of yourself and, rather than settling the conflict, you find a solution in which the two elements will not come into conflict.

Lerner: But that is a reasonable solution.

Yehoshua: Until you reach Auschwitz. You pay so much for this solution.

Lerner: American Jews are not paying so much living in the U.S. On the other hand, coming to Israel and fighting out this conflict may lead to the destruction of the Jewish people. The Israeli solution might render the image of Judaism so morally unacceptable that no one would want to identify with it. Current government policies risk making it appear that the moment Jews reemerge into history they emerge as oppressors. So after two thousand years of living in the Diaspora and saying we want to return to our own land to create a society according to our wonderful values, what do we create? A society that is at least as morally problematic as many of the other societies that already existed in the world. Too many Jews, I fear, will wonder if all the suffering was worth it if *this* is what we became in the process.

Yehoshua: It's better to kill less than a thousand Palestinians in two years of struggle than to let one million of your children be killed in gas chambers as we allowed them to be by choosing to live in our situation in the Diaspora.

Moreover, every Jew in the Diaspora is an oppressor in his or her own way within the framework of his or her own country. As an American you are an oppressor, because American imperialism is responsible for a world-wide system of oppression that causes poverty and oppression around the world. And French Jews were responsible as French people for killing a million Algerians. And the Soviet Jew is responsible for the carnage that the Soviet Union brought to Afghanistan and for Stalinist oppression in Eastern Europe. So you are responsible for the evils that exist in your society. You are responsible for the situation of Blacks in America. You cannot say that you are morally clean. If you say, "As a Jew, I am clean," well, that's because you have chosen a situation in which you can't act politically as a Jew, so this is like saying that because you are in

We invite you to use this as a supplement (not replacement) for the traditional High Holiday prayer, "Al Cheyt," in your own personal and communal observances.

On the Jewish High Holidays we take collective responsibility for our lives and for the activities of the community of which we are a part.

Although we realize that we did not create the world we were born into, we nevertheless have a responsibility for what it is like as long as we participate in it. Despite the declining plausibility of any external threat to America's military security, we live in a society that pours huge sums of money into military expenditures while ignoring the plight of the hungry, the homeless, and the poor. We participate in an economy that squanders the world's scarce resources and destroys the life support systems of the planet, all in the name of the "freedom" of individual corporations to amass endless profits without concern for the well-being of the rest of the human race. Though we personally may not have created these policies and this social system, as members of this society our Jewish heritage teaches us to take collective responsibility for these sins.

This year we are grieved particularly by the situation of our people in the State of Israel. It is almost three full years since the Palestinian people began their uprising demanding their freedom, so it is particularly upsetting to see how little has been done to accommodate their legitimate desires for national self-determination. We understand that the Jewish people did not create the circumstances which now place Israel in the role of governing over one-and-a-half million Palestinians who wish to be self-governing. Jews needed a haven from the oppression they faced in Europe and in Arab lands—but in order to create that refuge, Jews' own needs for national self-determination were set in opposition to the Palestinian people's need for their own homeland. It was reasonable for us to rebuild our original homeland. And the continuing arrogance of many Arab states, most recently demonstrated by the behavior of Iraq, reminds us of how important it is for us that we have a safe and strong Israel. But we take responsibility as a people for not having done all that we could to resolve the conflict with the Palestinian people in these past years, and for allowing the government of Israel to speak in an insensitive way and act in an arrogant manner towards those Palestinians who for decades have languished in refugee camps and exile from their homeland. It is precisely because we are strong supporters and lovers of Israel that we must also atone for actions that violate the best moral norms of the Jewish people.

Similarly, we did not choose the particular families, class backgrounds, and circumstances that shaped our personalities in the past, but neither are we passive victims of our childhoods or external realities. It's up to us to engage in the process of self-transformation.

While the struggle to change ourselves and our world may be long and painful, it is *our* struggle. No one else can do it for us. To the extent that we have failed to do all that we could on either the personal or social fronts in the past year, we ask God and each other for collective forgiveness.

על חטא FOR OUR SINS

וְעַל כּוּלָּם אֱלוֹהַּ סְלִיחוֹת, סְלַח לָנוּ, מְחַל לָנוּ, כַּפֶּר לָנוּ.

Ve-all kulam Eloha selikhot, selakh lanu, mekhal lanu, kaper lanu.

For all our sins, may the force that makes forgiveness possible forgive us, pardon us, and make atonement possible.

For the sins we have committed before you and in our communities by being so preoccupied with ourselves that we ignored the social world in which we live;

And for the sins we have committed by being so directed toward the political and social world that we ignored our own spiritual development;

For the sins of accepting the current distribution of wealth and power as unchangeable;

And for the sins of giving up on social change and focusing exclusively on personal advancement and success;

For the sins of feeling so worn out when we hear about oppression that we finally close our ears;

And for the sins of dulling our outrage at the continuation of poverty and oppression and violence in this world;

For the sins of participating in a racist society and not dedicating more energy to fighting racism;

And for the sins we have committed by allowing our food and our air to be poisoned;

For the sins of allowing our government to continue the arms race;

And for the sins of squandering the resources of the planet in order to produce frivolous goods;

For the sins of not challenging sexist institutions and practices;

And for the sins of turning our back on—or participating in—the oppression of gays and lesbians;

For the sins of allowing our society to give low pri-

Please detach and bring to synagogue with you.

ority to the fight against AIDS, cancer, Alzheimer's and other diseases;

And for the sins of allowing homelessness, poverty, and world hunger to continue;

For all these sins we ask God and each other to give us the strength to forgive ourselves and each other.

For the sins we have committed by not forgiving our parents for what they did to us when we were children;

And for the sins of having too little compassion or too little respect for our parents or for our children;

For the sins of not seeing the spark of divinity within each person we encounter and within ourselves;

And for the sins of not learning from and giving adequate respect to our elders;

For the sins of being jealous and trying to possess and control those whom we love;

And for the sins of being judgmental of others and ourselves;

For the sins of withholding love and support;

And for the sins of doubting our ability to love or to get love from others;

For the sins of not trusting others or ourselves;

And for the sins of thinking that we didn't really need to rely on others and could do everything ourselves;

For the sins of fearing to lose ourselves in a commitment to another person or to a cause;

And for the sins of insisting that everything we do have a payoff;

For sins of not allowing ourselves to play;

And for the sins of being manipulative or hurting others to protect our own egos;

And for the sins of not recognizing the humanity and pain of the Israeli people or for blaming the conflict with the Palestinians entirely on the Jewish people or Israelis or Zionism;

For the sins of not fostering a dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians;

And for the sins of ignoring the racism of Jews towards Arabs;

For the sins of beating, gassing, shooting, and killing Palestinians;

And for the sins of denying Palestinians in the territories fundamental human rights;

For the sins of focusing only on Israel's sins without also acknowledging the intransigence and insensitivity of the PLO and the violence against suspected collaborators;

And for the sins of ignoring the victims of Palestinian terrorism;

For the sins of allowing conservative or insensitive leaders to speak on behalf of all American Jews;

And for the sins of being critical of Jewish life from a distance rather than from personal involvement and commitment;

For the sins of not learning more of our Jewish heritage and tradition;

And for the sins of not giving enough time and energy to building the kind of Jewish community we desire but instead expecting things to happen without contributing to make them happen;

For the sins of thinking we are more conscious or more intelligent or more ethical or more politically correct than everyone else;

And for the sins we have committed by being insensitive or insulting to non-Jews;

For the sins of not sharing responsibility for child-rearing;

על חטא FOR OUR SINS

וְעַל כּוּלָּם אֱלוֹהַּ סְלִיחוֹת, סְלַח לָנוּ, מְחַל לָנוּ, כַּפֶּר לָנוּ.

Ve-all kulam Eloha selikhot, selakh lanu, mekhal lanu, kaper lanu.

For the sins we have committed by not publicly supporting the Jewish people and Israel when they are being treated or criticized unfairly;

And for the sins we have committed by not publicly criticizing Israel or the Jewish people when they are acting as oppressors;

For the sins of not doing enough for Soviet Jews or other Jews fleeing anti-Semitism;

And for the sins of only caring about the oppression of Jews and not giving energy and attention to helping others who are fleeing oppression;

For the sins of not recognizing the humanity and pain of the Palestinian people;

And for the sins of not taking care of each other;

For the sins of not having compassion for each other;

And for the sins of always having to be right;

For the sins of focusing only on our sins and not on our strengths and beauties;

And for the sins of not adequately rejoicing and celebrating the beauty and grandeur of God's creation;

For all these, Lord of Forgiveness, forgive us, pardon us, grant us atonement.

וְעַל כּוּלָּם אֱלוֹהַּ סְלִיחוֹת, סְלַח לָנוּ, מְחַל לָנוּ, כַּפֶּר לָנוּ.

Ve-all kulam Eloha selikhot, selakh lanu, mekhal lanu, kaper lanu.

Composed by Michael Lerner, editor, Tikkun magazine. For Yom Kippur, 5751; September, 1990.

Please detach and bring to synagogue with you.

prison and can't act therefore you are morally better.

I am responsible for what is happening in Israel, for better and worse. I'm responsible for the hundreds of Palestinians who are dead; but I'm also responsible for the fact that the number of dead is not even one thousand. And you American Jews are responsible for the fact that you are using me. American Jews are using Israel as part of their identity but without taking responsibility.

Lerner: You may be correct about a segment of the organized Jewish community, but many people in the constituency *Tikkun* speaks to simply shrug their shoulders at Israel and feel very little connection to it at all (something we are trying to change through the magazine itself). They are very far from using Israel to gain an identity—they don't get any *nachas* from Israel.

Yehoshua: But I have met many *Tikkun* readers in the U.S. and they don't have the position that it would make no difference to them if Israel were to stop existing tomorrow.

Lerner: Some American Jews, including some subset of *Tikkun* readers who are neither walking away from Judaism nor willing to reduce their Judaism to simply being a matter of worshiping the State of Israel and getting their Jewish meaning from association with Israel, are attempting to create a Judaism that is specifically appropriate to the reality of Jews in the Diaspora. Some of us are attempting to make the Diaspora an alternative center of Jewish creativity and Jewish possibility; and in this we are saying that although Israel is one legitimate choice for Jews, another legitimate choice for Jews may be life in the U.S.—not only legitimate in terms of physical survival but also from the standpoint of moral and spiritual survival.

Yehoshua: Legitimate, sure. But I ask you one thing: when you people go to synagogue or do your religious ceremonies, please don't say, "Next year in Jerusalem."

Lerner: People may mean a heavenly version of Jerusalem in that prayer; because here in Jerusalem where we are holding this conversation people also say, "Next year in Jerusalem." So they don't mean the physical Jerusalem, but Jerusalem as the embodiment of a certain kind of ideal that doesn't exist either in the Diaspora or in Jerusalem.

Yehoshua: I don't worry about the centrality of Israel. But what is your responsibility to America? Why do you American Jews send your money to Israel? Don't send your money to Israel! If you have extra money, please give it to alleviate the conditions of deprived groups in America—this is where your responsibility lies as American Jews. If you are taking seriously the alternative of building an American Judaism, then do take it seriously. And actually maybe you'd be better off living as Americans fully, and becoming part of that reality. Bush and Dukakis are working for the totality, working on behalf not of ethnic groups but for the American people as a whole. In wartime, Italian Americans do not hesitate to fight against Italy. I don't see any Jews in Brooklyn killing Jews in Israel for the benefit of America.

Lerner: In America many people are recognizing the need to hold on to their specific ethnic identities. The dominant culture in America may be a totalizing and oppressive culture that wipes out individual differences, but there are many subcultures that are the cultures of oppressed peoples; and precisely because they embody that experience of oppression they develop a consciousness, a history, a culture, and a way of looking at the world that is unique and valuable to sustain.

Yehoshua: But this works only if you take something from these traditions and try to integrate it into the larger whole. But you can't keep your own specific identity in that reality. It would make little sense, for example, if you argued that because of your Jewish values you support the U.S. in cutting its ties with Chile. If you said that there were American values that led you in this direction, fine—but that America should lose whatever economic advantages it gets from a relationship with Chile specifically because you hold Jewish values and want to impose them on your society, that makes no sense. If you want a society to conduct itself according to Jewish values, you must come to Israel, because this is the one society where Jewish values have a legitimate claim.

Lerner: Unfortunately, those values are often tied to nationalist aspirations. In the Diaspora, precisely by virtue of our relative powerlessness, Jews have learned how to be sensitive to other people, how to respond to the fact that we could not impose our will on others. We had to develop character traits, some of which made us too subservient, but some of which were extremely important—a sensitivity to others, a sense of tolerance, a willingness to moderate our views and recognize that others might have part of the truth also. Precisely these diaspora-rooted values are the ones Israel so badly needs. These are the values that would make it possible for Israel to engage in compromise with the Palestinians and would make it possible for different groups in Israel (religious or secular, Ashkenazic or Sephardic) to give up their fantasies of having a total victory in which they smash the other and begin to allow

for the existence and needs of the other. It is this kind of consciousness that Israel needs, and that the whole world needs—a consciousness of sensitivity to others that develops from the experience of the oppressed of the world. The resolution of Jewish oppression by coming to Israel and suddenly becoming powerful, in a world that has not been changed, a world in which there are still oppressor groups, may yield a reality in which Israel becomes just one more oppressor state—no worse than most other states, but not much better either. We would have done better had we built a state that did not reject but built upon the wisdom that emerged from being an oppressed people. With that consciousness we might have found a better way to relate to the Palestinian peasants who were themselves trapped in an oppressive feudal order.

Yehoshua: You can't say to the Cambodian people or the Vietnamese: "OK, you will be oppressed in order for the world to understand the consciousness of oppression." You can't ask the Jewish people to continue in a state of powerlessness and oppression in order to embody this alleged higher consciousness. The Jews did not choose to be oppressed; they were not oppressed because this fit better their authentic Jewish values.

Lerner: I'm not saying that Zionism wasn't necessary, given the oppression Jews were facing. I think it was necessary, and for that reason I consider myself a Zionist. But what I am saying is that there is something that comes out of Galut experience which has been lost in the reality of the State of Israel, something that makes me think there may be some value in maintaining a Galut existence in the United States—where we are not oppressed in the way we were in Europe, but where we do have a community that is more sensitive to the pain and suffering of others. On the other hand, Israel today is a society where insensitivity is almost proclaimed as a value, almost glorified.

Yehoshua: My greatest disappointment in the past few years was watching the ethical *insensitivity* of American Jews. If the sensitivity you allege had actually developed, American Jews would have spoken out more clearly in criticizing Israel's policies toward the Palestinians. I watched with amazement how the world honored Elie Wiesel as somehow a prophet of morality, and how simultaneously Wiesel managed to fail to criticize Israeli policy in the territories. Elie Wiesel, after winning the Nobel Prize, had a moral responsibility to speak out against the policies of the State of Israel while Israel is trying to impose on 1,700,000 Palestinians a permanent position of noncitizenship.

Lerner: He resigned from the *Tikkun* board several years ago because he said it was wrong for us to criticize other Jews in public.

Yehoshua: I cannot accept this! This is honesty? It makes no sense. I'm a friend of Wiesel's and I like him, and I know the important work he once did to promote an awareness of the Holocaust two decades ago; but I cannot accept his silence. He speaks about "The Jews of Silence." But *he* is now a Jew of silence. He cannot ask others to speak up about other situations of oppression and then remain silent when he can clearly see what is happening on the West Bank. If he were a right-winger who thought that Israel should hold onto the West Bank, at least I could understand his position. But he is a dove at heart, so he should be speaking clearly. You cannot be ambiguous in this kind of situation at this kind of historical moment. He knows how many friends of his are speaking out without any fear. He must know the risks *Tikkun* is taking, the fact that because *Tikkun* speaks in the way it does, it has failed to win the support of the Jewish establishment for the funding it needs, and hence the financial vulnerability of *Tikkun* comes from precisely its willingness to speak out. Sometimes the statements we get from right-wing American Jews simply astonish me. Even the hawks in Israel usually don't speak with the same kind of insensitivity that I hear from American Jews.

Nobody in Israel would dare to say that some Hebrew writers created the intifada in the way that Ruth Wisse suggested at a conference of Jewish writers. Right-wingers here in Israel disagree with our conclusions and attack us for our solutions—but they don't dare question our patriotism and our commitment. You will hear people in America saying far more hawkish and terrible things because they are far away; you will find more people in America willing to give credence to the idea of "transfer" than you will here, because we know the reality of the Arabs.

The values that you talk about are created in relationship to the situations people face. Jews were greatly sensitive only because it was in their interest to advocate sensitivity. It is the existential situation that creates the values, and when the situation changes, the values change.

Lerner: We at *Tikkun* recognize the way that many people in the organized Jewish community have actually adopted specifically capitalist values of materialism and individualism, and have abandoned the prophetic values of the Jewish tradition. Ironically, many of those who are *not* affiliated have rejected the organized Jewish world because what they found there was simply a

(Continued on p. 101)

Stepmother Tongues

Adrienne Rich

To inherit an uninterrupted and recognized culture is a privilege. At the very least, it shows you what you have to struggle with, as person and as artist—like a strong parent who both teaches and browbeats, can be learned from, stormed away from, and forgiven, but whose influence can never be denied. Like a family from which, even in separation, you bring away certain gestures, tones, ways of looking: something taken for granted, perhaps felt as constriction, nonetheless a source, a point of departure.

Until recently North American poetry has largely been written by people who have possessed—or assumed—that privilege. More and more in the late twentieth century, it is being written by those who do not. This does not mean that such writers—men and women of color, gay and lesbian poets, poets born to a language other than English, poets writing in the upsurge of the women's poetry movement of the past twenty years—have started in cultural poverty, or that a privileged culture confers unlimited advantages. But the relationship to more than one culture, nonassimilating in spirit and therefore living amid contradictions, is a constant act of self-creation. North American poetry at the end of the century is a pulsing, racing convergence of tributaries—regional, ethnic, racial, sexual—which, rising from lost or long-blocked springs, intersect and infuse each other while keeping the strengths of their origins. (A metaphor, perhaps, for a future society of which poetry, in its present underground and marginalized condition, is the precursor.) All this, as the official culture and institutions decline, sapped by extremes of profit, dishonesty, and fear.

The poetry of Irena Klepfisz is a case in point. It begins with a devastating exterior event, the destruction of European Jewry in the Nazi period through the technologically organized genocide known as the Holocaust, or, in Yiddish, *der khurbn.* Klepfisz has written: "The Yiddish word was important, for, unlike the term Holocaust, it resonated with *yidishe geshikte,* Jewish history, linking the events of World War II with *der erste und tsveyster khurbn,* the First and Second Destruction [of the Temple]." Born in 1941 in the Warsaw Ghetto, Klepfisz is unequivocally rooted in the matrix of history. Beginning with almost total loss—of family, community, culture, country, and language—she has taken up the task of recreating herself as Jew, woman, and writer, by facing and learning to articulate that loss. If she had become the author only of her early poems and of "*Bashert,*" she would be recognizably one of the most powerful poets to address those events.

But Klepfisz's poetry goes further—not by leaving behind *der khurbn*—an impossibility for any Jew, or any non-Jew who wants to understand living in the twentieth century—but by searching for what is possible in a world where *this* was possible. For most poets, existence is a given; not for Klepfisz:

during the war
germans were known
to pick up infants
by their feet
swing them through the air
and smash their heads
against plaster walls

somehow
i managed
to escape that fate.

—from *Periods of Stress,* 1975

What it means to be a Holocaust survivor or the child of survivors haunts Jewish life: through denial and silence, through amnesia and mythologizing, through a search for resonance. Certainly in the United States it has had its own reverberations and failures of resonance. For Klepfisz this is not just a question of present meaning, but of lost, irreplaceable resources, cultural and emotional riches that were destroyed or scattered before she could know them. The issue for her, then, is what it means to grow up as a Jew in the United States after *der khurbn*; and what it means to grow into a Jewish woman—single, childless, a lesbian, an artist—in a community of survivors who see their great hope for meaning in a new generation of Jewish children. What is allowed, what is available, to the poet thus located?

Adrienne Rich's most recent book of poems is Time's Power *(W. W. Norton, 1989). She helps edit* BRIDGES: A Journal for Jewish Feminists and Our Friends.

Before *der khurbn,* Yiddish poetry—the tradition Klepfisz might "under other circumstances" have possessed as a continuing heritage—was largely written by men, yet written in the language called *mameloshen* or "mother tongue": vivid, emotionally vibrant, vernacular. Yiddish was a people's language, women's language, the language of the Ashkenazi diaspora. The women poets of this tradition (many of whom are still untranslated, so that we have but a few names: Celia Dropkin, Anna Margolin, Kadia Molodowsky, Fradel Schtok, Malka Tussman, among them) were reputedly more sexually frank than the men. But trying to imagine what, in a different history, might have become of Yiddish poetry, or of Klepfisz as a poet, leads to a dead end. The only history is the one we know, however imperfectly: that a great Western culture was exterminated by the Nazis and Stalin. That history uprooted Irena Klepfisz and deposited her in a community of survivors in New York.

Today, biographies of poets fetch a far higher price than their poetry, and speculative biography often replaces serious writing about poets and poetry. I touch on this poet's personal history with some reluctance, then, and only because it seems to me inseparable from a serious reading of her work. We have seen an obsession with intimate details, scandals, clinical or trivializing reduction of artists' lives. And when a poet who is not male (or white) writes from direct experience, this poetry is subsumed as mere documentary, or polemicizing. I speak here of experiences from which Klepfisz's poetry has been precipitated because historical necessity has made her the kind of poet she is; she did not have the luxury of either a "universal" or a "private" stance.

The poet's father, Michal Klepfisz, was killed during the Warsaw Ghetto uprising in April 1943. Klepfisz's mother had blue eyes and spoke fluent Polish; she and her infant daughter were able to pass as Poles, and Polish became Klepfisz's first language. After the war, they emigrated to Sweden and then to the United States when Klepfisz was eight years old. Here she learned English in school while living in a world of spoken Yiddish: a world of people who had carried the remains of their culture to another continent—in their memories, in old snapshots and documents, in archives rescued from conflagration, in reconstituted institutions. Klepfisz's mother, as a presence in her poems, embodies continuity, endurance, and access to the lost world.

Shattering a culture means shattering not only artistic and political webs, but also the webs of family and community within which these are first nurtured and transmitted. In two long poems, "Searching for My Father's Body" and "The Widow and the Daughter," Klepfisz explores what has most intimately been lost—the father-hero-martyr whose absence becomes enormous presence:

These two:
widow and half-orphan
survived and now resided
in a three-room apartment
with an ivy-covered fire escape
which at night clutched like a skeleton
at the child's bedroom wall . . .

The missing one
was surely
the most
  important
link. . . .

And when the two crowded
into the kitchen at night
he would press himself between them
pushing, thrusting, forcing them to remember
even though he had made his decision,
had chosen his own way . . .
he would press himself between them
hero and betrayer
legend and deserter—
so when they sat down to eat
they could taste his ashes.

—"The Widow and the Daughter"

But the search is also for all "those whom I would have known / had circumstances been different." *Had circumstances been different:* a terse phrase behind which lies the unprovable: history reversed, or unwinding differently, the possibility of having lived "an ordinary life," the life of "common things, gestures and events" that Klepfisz invokes in an essay on the Holocaust, Israel, and the Palestinians, "*Yom Hashoah, Yom Yerushalayim:* A Meditation," in which she imagines herself becoming not the child survivor lighting candles "for all the children / who have perished" but a child playing with other children, in Jewish Warsaw, in the *yidishe svive,* in a home peopled with parents, extended family, worker-intellectuals.

There is extraordinary vitality in Klepfisz's early poems on the Holocaust. Images and voices rush, floodlighting a neglected dimension of the genocide—the survival strategies and visceral responses of women. They burn and bristle with urgency, within a disciplined and crafted poetics. Klepfisz takes the risks of trying to bear witness to this part of her history without compromise, and without melodrama. She succeeds because she is a poet, not only a witness.

The long poem "*Bashert*" (1982) (Yiddish for preordained or inevitable) is unlike any other American or Jewish-American poem in its recreation not only of survivor experience (in the skin of the mother "passing"

as gentile with her infant daughter) but of what happens afterwards—the life that does go on, as Klepfisz struggles with the alienation of "equidistance from two continents," trying to fathom herself as a Jew in the larger American gentile world, first as a student alone at midnight on the campus:

> The university seems an island ungrounded. Most of its surrounding streets have been emptied. On some, all evidence of previous life removed except for occasional fringes of rubbish that reveal vague outlines that hint at things that were. On others, old buildings still stand, though these are hollow like caves, once of use and then abandoned.... Everything is waiting for the emptiness to close in on itself, for the emptiness to be filled in, for the emptiness to be swallowed and forgotten.

Bashert

These words are dedicated to those who died

These words are dedicated to those who died
because they had no love and felt alone in the world
because they were afraid to be alone and tried to stick it out
because they could not ask
because they were shunned
because they were sick and their bodies could not resist the disease
because they played it safe
because they had no connections
because they had no faith
because they felt they did not belong and wanted to die

These words are dedicated to those who died
because they were loners and liked it
because they acquired friends and drew others to them
because they took risks
because they were stubborn and refused to give up
because they asked for too much

These words are dedicated to those who died
because a card was lost and a number was skipped
because a bed was denied
because a place was filled and no other place was left

These words are dedicated to those who died
because someone did not follow through
because someone was overworked and forgot
because someone left everything to God
because someone was late
because someone did not arrive at all
because someone told them to wait and they just couldn't any longer

These words are dedicated to those who died
because death is a punishment
because death is a reward

because death is the final rest
because death is eternal rage

These words are dedicated to those who died

Bashert

These words are dedicated to those who survived

These words are dedicated to those who survived
because their second grade teacher gave them books
because they did not draw attention to themselves and got lost in the shuffle
because they knew someone who knew someone else who could help them and bumped into them on a corner on a Thursday afternoon
because they played it safe
because they were lucky

These words are dedicated to those who survived
because they knew how to cut corners
because they drew attention to themselves and always got picked
because they took risks
because they had no principles and were hard

These words are dedicated to those who survived
because they refused to give up and defied statistics
because they had faith and trusted in God
because they expected the worst and were always prepared
because they were angry
because they could ask
because they mooched off others and saved their strength
because they endured humiliation
because they turned the other cheek
because they looked the other way

These words are dedicated to those who survived
because life is a wilderness and they were savage
because life is an awakening and they were alert
because life is a flowering and they blossomed
because life is a struggle and they struggled
because life is a gift and they were free to accept it

These words are dedicated to those who survived

Bashert

—From Irena Klepfisz, *A Few Words in the Mother Tongue: Poems Selected and New.* Portland, OR: Eight Mountain Press, 1990.

The blasted landscape resembles a postwar Jewish ghetto but is actually the edge of a Black ghetto surrounding an elite American university:

> I see the rubble of this unbombed landscape, see that the city, like the rest of this alien country, is not simply a geographic place, but a time zone, an era in which I, by my very presence in it, am rooted. No one simply passes through. History keeps unfolding and demanding a response. A life obliterated around me, of those I barely noticed. A life unmarked, unrecorded. A silent mass migration. Relocation. Common rubble in the streets.

This is not the stereotypical, mass-marketed immigrant experience. The poem is not about finding safety, freedom, a better life in America. It stares down the American myth that if only you are hardworking, virtuous, motivated, and tenacious enough, the dream of freedom, security, and happiness can be realized. In its rhythmic, relentless, almost choral double dedication, the poet invokes the random and various shapes of death and survival.

Klepfisz's poems explore the painful world of a writer located not only between landscapes, but also between languages.

"*Bashert*" mourns the dead and the survivor alike, defying the ideas that the fittest survive or that victims "choose" their destiny. Moving between poetry and blocks of prose, in a poem where everything is made concrete and there are no cloudy generalities or abstract pronouncements, Klepfisz has written one of the great "borderland" poems—poems that emerge from the consciousness of being at home in no one geography, time zone, or culture; of moving inwardly as well as outwardly between continents, landmasses, eras of history, or, as Chicana poet Gloria Anzaldúa expresses it, in "a constant state of mental *nepantilism,* an Aztec word meaning torn between ways." A consciousness which cannot be, and refuses to be, assimilated.

And yet, as the poetry of this continent becomes increasingly a poetry written by the displaced, by American Indians torn between the cities and the reservations, by African-Americans, Caribbean-Americans, by the children of the U.S. internment camps for Japanese-Americans in World War II, by the children of Angel Island, by Mexican-Americans and Chicanos with roots on both sides of the border, by political exiles from Latin America and the Soviet Union, "*Bashert*" takes its place (as does Klepfisz's poetry as a whole) in a multicultural literature of discontinuity, migration, and difference. Much of this new literary flowering is, of course, also lesbian and feminist. This new literature invents its poetics out of a mixture of traditions and styles, out of the struggle to name what has been unnameable in the dominant European traditions. It is often bilingual, incorporating languages other than English, and patois—not in allusion to Western high culture, as in modernist poetics, but because bilingualism is created by the experience of being migrant, immigrant, displaced, and because it expresses the divisions as well as the resources of difference.

Klepfisz's bilingual poems do not—and this is significant—drop Yiddish phrases in a cozy evocation of an idealized past, embodied in *bubbe* and *zayde,* or as a kind of Jewish seasoning on an American tongue. Poems such as "*Di rayze aheym* / The journey home," "*Etlękhe verter oyf mame-loshen* / A few words in the mother tongue," or "Fradel Schtok" explore the painful world of a writer located not only between landscapes, but also between languages: the words of the mother tongue are handled and savored with extreme delicacy, as a precious but tenuous legacy. There is a paradox here: Klepfisz uses the Anglo-American language with enormous artistic sensitivity, not by assuming a triumphant linguistic posture, but precisely because she refuses to pretend that it is her language of choice, or the supremely expressive language. As if "to the manner born"; as if it *were* a matter of choice.

Klepfisz's poetry reminds us again and again that survivorhood is not a stasis; the survivor is not an artifact, despite efforts to reify or contain her, give her the lines we think she ought to speak. Klepfisz feels, acts, and creates in living time: she is a feminist, a lesbian, a longtime activist in the women's movement, an essayist and editor as well as a poet. (She is the author of *Dreams of an Insomniac: Jewish Feminist Essays, Speeches, and Diatribes,* Eight Mountain Press, and, with Rita Falbel and Donna Nevel, she coedited *Jewish Women's Call for Peace: A Handbook for Jewish Women on the Israeli/Palestinian Conflict,* Firebrand Books, both 1990.) From the urban plant that sensualizes the apartment where two women make love, or the fiercely generative tangle of narcissus roots in a glass jar, to a garden of wildflowers transplanted with uneven success to the "inhospitable soil" of a former garage, the sudden wildness of a city cat transplanted to the country, living things are charged in these poems by a fresh and totally unsentimental consciousness, with tough and searching empathy. The poet is not outside of nature looking in; she is observant in both senses, a participant, a different yet kindred being who instinctively responds to growth, deprivation, persistence, wildness, tameness.

(Continued on p. 103)

J in the Wilderness

Translation by David Rosenberg and Commentary by Harold Bloom

Religious tradition ascribes authorship of the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Hebrew Bible) to Moses, but scholars agree that it is in fact a composite work consisting of texts by several different authors, woven together around 400 B.C.E. by a master editor known as the Redactor, or R. The oldest of these texts, running through Genesis, Exodus, and Numbers, was written by the author whom scholars call J—the Jahwist (from the divine name, Yahweh)—probably in the tenth century B.C.E. Among the other authors are E (the Elohist), D (the Deuteronomist), and P (the writer of the Priestly Document).

In The Book of J, *Harold Bloom and David Rosenberg lift the J text out of the surrounding material so that we can consider it on its own terms. "What emerges," says Bloom in his introduction to the book, "is an author not so much lost as barricaded from us by normative moralists and theologians, who had and have designs upon us that are altogether incompatible with J's vision." In his comments to Rosenberg's translation, Bloom argues, on aesthetic grounds, that J is a writer of the stature of Homer, Shakespeare, and Tolstoy; and on literary and psychological grounds, that J was a woman, very likely a woman of the royal house living at King Solomon's court. The following excerpts cover material from Numbers.*

Translation

172

"Go up through the Negev," Moses instructed the scouts sent into Canaan, "and into the mountains. Look around, scout the land and the people settled on it—their power, their weaknesses; how thick, or how thinly spread they are.

"And the land that holds them—worthy or bad. And the cities in which they collect—unwalled or strongholds?

"And the shape of earth itself—fat or sparse, dressed in forests or not. Gather your wits, collect some fruits of the land."

Now it was the time the grapes first ripen, and when they reached the Eshkol valley they cut a section of vine packed with grapes; loaded onto a stretcher, it took two of them to carry it back. They carried off as well pomegranates and figs.

They called that valley Eshkol: the section of vine cut by Israel's sons was packed as a *school* of *fish*.

173

After forty days of scouting the land they returned, presented themselves before Moses, Aaron, and the whole congregation of Israel. There in the desert of Paran, at Kadesh, they presented the fruit and word of the land.

Now this is what they said: "We found the land to which you sent us full with earth's milk and honey—an overflow of grain, flowing wine. Look, this is its fruit.

"But it must be said the inhabitants are strong, the huge cities walled; we even saw the breed of giants there. Amalekites live in the Negev desert, Hittites in the mountains—the Jebusites and the Amorites there too—and by the sea, Canaanites, as well as by the Jordan.

"All the people we saw were stunning in their power. The giants are the children of Anak. We felt like grasshoppers, and in their eyes we were."

A loud sigh heaved from the congregation; the whole people wept that night.

They complained and murmured about Moses and Aaron. "We were better off dying in Egypt," the congregation moaned, "or dying in this desert, than finding out Yahweh delivers us to that land. Are we here just to fall under swords, our wives and children delivered up? We would be better off descending to Egypt.

"Let's make a leader," they were whispering among themselves, "to deliver us back to Egypt."

Harold Bloom is Sterling Professor of Humanities at Yale University and Berg Professor of English at New York University. David Rosenberg, editor of Congregation *(Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1987) and* Testimony *(Times Books/Random House, 1989), is currently completing a reconstruction and literary translation of the core of the Kabbala, also in collaboration with Harold Bloom. The excerpts presented here are from* The Book of J *and will be published this fall by Grove Weidenfeld.*

Now Yahweh spoke to Moses: "How long will this people affront me? How long until they attend me, and see the signs I put in front of them? I will put disease in front of them, erase their inheritance. I will make a nation out of you alone, grander than they, enormous."

But Moses said to Yahweh: "Egypt will hear what you have done to the very people your power brought out from them. And then it will reach the inhabitants of the other land."

Speaking to Moses and Aaron, Yahweh said, "To this people you will say, 'So says Yahweh: "Surely as I exist, what you have said for my ears I will be sure you hear spoken of you. The little children you said will be delivered up—those I will deliver to the land, to conquer it, just as you have belittled it. Yet your carcasses will fall in the desert. Your children will wander the desert forty years, conquering your giant words, until your bodies have wasted away in this wasteland."'"

174
After these things passed, now look: Yahweh had become inflamed that Balaam would go with contemptuous men. Yahweh's angel put himself in Balaam's path, like an adversary. Balaam was riding on his ass, two servant-boys in attendance.

As the ass saw Yahweh's angel standing in her path, sword unsheathed in his hand, she stepped off the road into a field. Yet Balaam whipped the ass, to get her back on the road.

At a certain point, describing my work to a poet-colleague, I was asked how old I thought the J writer at the time of writing. I was stunned by the question—or rather, by my not having faced it. I had focused on the major taboo nonreligious readers would have to overcome: to imagine the writer as a human being in the first place. So I confronted her age, found her with enough experience of life and history to be just over forty, with a still vital appetite for life. I realized I was only identifying myself, yet the imaginative health in restoring authorship can nourish a tradition limping with taboos.

For myself as a Jew, the discovery of a unified sensibility and imagination in the J writer reveals hidden strength in our heritage, as does aggada and kabbala. For a reader unwilling to accept the superhuman author Moses, the humanity of J, her art, offers a fresh midrash.

—David Rosenberg

Then Yahweh's angel put himself in a narrow path ahead, through vineyards fenced in on either side. As the ass saw Yahweh's angel she swerved into the wall, pinching Balaam's foot against it; he whipped her again.

Once more Yahweh's angel put himself ahead, in a narrow spot with no room for turning either right or left.

The ass saw Yahweh's angel again and sat down under Balaam; he was furious, whipping the ass with his stick.

Now Yahweh opened the ass's mouth. "What did I do to you," she said, "to make you lash out at me on three occasions?" "Because *you* have been riding *me*," Balaam said to the ass. "If I had a sword in my hand, it would whip you dead this time."

"No! Aren't I your own ass? I'm the ass you've been riding on as long as you've owned me," said the ass to Balaam. "Have I been trying—to this day—to make an ass of you?" And he: "No."

175
Now Yahweh opens Balaam's eyes; he sees Yahweh's angel standing in the road, the sword unsheathed in his hand—and falls prostrate, flat on his face.

"Why did you strike your ass these three times?" says Yahweh's angel. "Look: at the sight of your wayward path, I came as your adversary.

"The ass sees me and shies away three times—if she had not swerved, I would have killed you by now and spared her."

"I was contemptuous," Balaam said to Yahweh's angel. "I couldn't imagine that you would cross my path. Seeing I have crossed you, I will turn back at once."

But Yahweh's angel said to Balaam: "Continue on your way. But not a word to those men—except what I will tell you to say."

176
Now Israel was staying at Shittim when the people entered the arms of Moabite daughters.

They were beckoned to sacrifices for their gods. Soon the people ate, then lay prostrate with them, before their gods.

As Israel is yoked there, embracing Baal-peor, Yahweh is inflamed. "Round up the heads of the people," said Yahweh to Moses. "Hang them before Yahweh, in broad

daylight, until Yahweh's fury is burnt away, away from Israel."

To Israel's leaders Moses then said: "Each of you must kill those of your men who yoked themselves nakedly to Baal-peor."

177
"Look: your deathday arrives," Yahweh said to Moses. "Summon Joshua, and direct yourselves to the tent for encounter, so I may appoint him." Moses and Joshua go to the tent for encounter, as directed.

Yahweh came down to the tent through the pillar of cloud. The pillar of cloud covered the tent entrance.

Now he appointed Joshua, son of Nun: "Summon strength and audacity, as you will direct the children of Israel to the land I vowed—for I will attend you."

178
Moses ascends from the Moab valley to Mount Nebo in the direction facing Jericho. There Yahweh reveals all the land, from Gilead to Dan; then all Naphtali, the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, and now all the land of Judah to the Western Sea; then the Negev, past the oasis of palms that is Jericho, and out through the valley to Zoar.

"This is the land I vowed to Abram, Isaac, and Jacob," Yahweh said to him. "'To your seed I will give it,' were my words. It is revealed to your eyes, though your body cannot follow."

Moses, servant of Yahweh, died there, in Moab's land, following Yahweh's word.

Now he buries him there, in the clay of Moab's land, in a gorge facing Beth-peor: no man has ever seen his grave, to this day.

Commentary

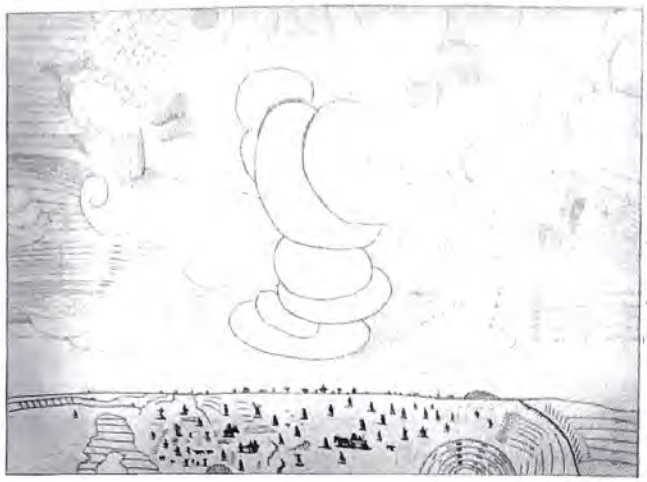
In an essay on Numbers, the literary critic Geoffrey Hartman remarks:

> In the Hebrew Bible, human life does not own itself: like every other kind of life, it is God's property, and if the privilege of ownership passes from the Lord, it does not thereby pass into the hands of feudal kings but, rather, of Israel as a people striving to become a nation.

That "human life does not own itself" is a conviction of every writer in the Hebrew Bible with two exceptions, in my judgment, and they are J and the author of 2 Samuel. These great contemporaries, flowers of the Solomonic Enlightenment, survived Solomon's time and wrote under Rehoboam, in an era of falling away. I return to this notion here at the outset of considering J's share in what we now call Numbers. Genesis and Exodus are frequently harsh, but Numbers is harsher, as befits a work whose Hebrew title, "In the Wilderness," emphasizes the difficulties endured by the Israelites as they wandered a purgatorial forty years in the wastelands of the Sinai.

The God of Numbers is appropriately harsh in all the strands of authorship, which are even more difficult to pick apart than they are in Exodus. But in the portions and episodes that are J's, Yahweh's possessiveness is somewhat countered by the human freedom to strive for more life that is J's obsessive concern, as it was the quest of the marvelously human David of 2 Samuel. Perhaps J would have agreed that human life is not its own possession, but she and her protagonists struggle against the limit. Normative revisionism diluted the freedom of personality that J exalted, with a consequent diminishment not only in the personality of men and women, but a great loss in the personality of Yahweh as well.

Until we reach 10:29–36, everything in Numbers belongs either to the Priestly Author or to the Redactor. It is with the departure from Sinai that J's voice is heard again, in the very human request Moses makes to his reluctant brother-in-law as he desperately seeks a guide through the Wilderness. In returning to J's Moses, we are back with a prophet who knows his limitations all too well, and who moves us not by sublime grandeur but by a sense that he never will overcome altogether his reluctance to lead. Perhaps the life of J's Moses remains his own, apart from Yahweh's fierce possessiveness, only insofar as he never quite forgets his conviction of his own incommensurateness, not just with Yahweh, but with Abram, Jacob, and Joseph, through his failure to achieve their theomorphic status. Most darkly, we sense again in the diffidence of Moses the différence from the heroic David, beloved of Yahweh as Moses is not.



©1990 Gemini G.E.L., L.A., CA

North Dakota *Saul Steinberg*

J's voice is unmistakable in Numbers 13, when Moses sends forth spies into Canaan, telling them to bring back the fruit of the land together with the military intelligence that is required. We receive the nice detail that the spies cut down so large a branch of grapes that two of them had to bear it back on a carrying frame, nicely bordered by pomegranates and figs. But with the fruit, the frightened spies bring back a vision of the Nephilim of Genesis 6:4, the giants in the earth, or men whose name will not be scattered, fruit of uncanny union between Elohim and mortal women. Only J would have the dark wit to have the spies say, gazing at the Nephilim, that the Israelites looked like grasshoppers to themselves, and that such they must have appeared to the giants.

That night, the entire host weeps in fear, and wishes to choose them "a captain back for Egypt," a great phrase powerfully turned against the English by John Milton when he opposed the Stuart Restoration. Caleb, a solitary hero, stands with Moses against this cowardice, and only he is promised by Yahweh that he will enter Canaan. Moses indeed has to cajole Yahweh once again for the lives of the people, and then fails to persuade a large contrite group of them from going up into the hill country to be slaughtered by the Amalekites. A rabblement of grasshoppers is stamped on, to no purpose, presumably for having forgotten that their lives are not their own and that their acceptance of the Blessing obliges them to behave more courageously.

That J was deeply disillusioned with her nation in the day of Rehoboam and Jeroboam could hardly be clearer, and the implied contrast is between the wanderers in the Wilderness and their descendants in David and his warriors. Since the Calebites, a branch of Judah, held the rich hill country around Hebron in J's day, there may be contemporary force in the allusion that is now lost to us. Something contemporary also seems lost when J enters again in Numbers 16, which is a bitter compendium of revolts against Moses, though the bitterness is not J's. What is J's is a wild story of a Reubenite defiance of Moses, punished by a dreadful swallowing up of the rebels by the earth, so that they go alive down into Sheol, the Hades-like underworld. What Moses calls for, and receives, is an unheard-of negative creation on Yahweh's part, with the ghastly result that the terrified Israelites run screaming away, lest they too be swallowed up by the earth. Nothing in the passage's tone demands that we read this superbly outrageous incident with high seriousness. It is a fabulous tale, and J clearly does not intend that either Moses or Yahweh will look the better for it. You can characterize Numbers, as Hartman does, by way of the dilemma of standing "always in precarious proximity to God," a nearness scarcely to be borne. But J, unlike P and R, does not invariably take God's side in brooding upon human danger. An ironic distancing is always at work, even if we cannot be precisely certain of the limits of that irony.

A beautifully controlled irony is at the center of the Balaam and Balak story, J's finest achievement in the Numbers narrative. The Redactor has so sewn J and E together in this tale (Numbers 22–24) that disentanglement is dreadfully difficult, but the great passage of Balaam and his sensible ass is certainly J at her most intensely droll. The story itself, despite its comic colorings in J, has been taken very seriously by subsequent Jewish legend, in which Balaam appears as a Gentile prophet equal to Moses in magical power but wholly malign, the very type of the wicked philosopher. But in J, Balaam is not evil, only a prophet-for-hire who nevertheless fears Yahweh and will not curse those whom Yahweh has blessed.

Balaam's ass, like the serpent in Eden, is a talking animal, but J's smooth serpent began as a talker, whereas the ass is transformed by Yahweh himself. Doubtless Balaam deserves the bad name he has to this day, since Dryden and Pope established him as the eternal type of the political timeserver or public figure available for the highest price. Still, J would have been surprised at the proverbial destiny of her comic interlude. How to read the story without dissolving in laughter ought to baffle anyone's sensibility, yet biblical exegetes sometimes manage to preserve their sobriety. Here is the comment of the distinguished Martin Noth in his study of Numbers.

> At the heart of it lies the idea that an unprejudiced animal can see things to which a man in his wilfulness is blind; there is certainly also in this respect the presupposition that Yahweh's messenger was in himself "visible" in the usual way.

The mighty Balaam, who seeks to be as dignified as Moses, infuriates Yahweh as he rides off pompously on his she-ass, presumably to at least consider collecting a high honorarium for cursing the Israelites. Balaam is full of Balaam, and can only see Balaam; his sensible ass sees that Yahweh's angel stands in the way with a drawn sword. The ass therefore judiciously swerves from the road into the fields and receives a first beating from Balaam. Next confronting the angel in a fenced lane between vineyards, the ass understandably presses herself against the wall, thus squeezing Balaam's foot against same, provoking a second beating. When the angel then stations himself in so narrow a place that swerving is impossible, the ass does what is best and lies down, carrying the furious Balaam with her. As he beats her with his stick, Yahweh opens her mouth, and she asks Balaam what her offense against him is, that he should beat her three times. The reply emphasizes the prophet's hurt dignity, and so the ass's rejoinder is not less than sublime.

J's Moses is a prophet who knows his limitations all too well.

> Now Yahweh opened the ass's mouth. "What did I do to you," she said, "to make you lash out at me on three occasions?" "Because *you* have been riding *me*," Balaam said to the ass. "If I had a sword in my hand, it would whip you dead this time."
>
> "No! Aren't I your own ass? I'm the ass you've been riding on as long as you've owned me," said the ass to Balaam. "Have I been trying—to this day—to make an ass of you?" And he: "No." (174)

Rosenberg marvelously catches J's tone here, and her scandalous agility in leaping from wordplay to a more hard-edged irony. If the high humor of this passage is to be fully appreciated, we need to remember its appalling context. We are stumbling out of the Wilderness toward Canaan, and we have been immersed in a nightmare of sensory deprivation, dangerous proximity to an uneasy and irascible Yahweh, and all the unruly rebellions, backslidings, murmurings, and laments of a wretched host that can scarcely be blamed for its outrage at learning that the Blessing pragmatically has bestowed the better part of their lives as a wandering in the wastelands. A denunciatory prophet leads this unhappy mob, and though he has his greatness, he is by now half-mad himself, reduced to calling for earth-swallowing-up interventions, impalings, and similar modes of horrible punishment. Confronted by this tormented mass moving toward him, Balak of Moab attempts to hire the celebrated Balaam as counter-prophet against Moses. Who but J, against *that* context, would give us this delicious dialogue of the grand magician and his she-ass? I would not say that comic relief is at all involved here, but as always with J, the irony of clashing incommensurates achieves a wicked triumph. The she-ass is more human and more likable not only than her master, Balaam, but clearly than anyone else, divine or mortal, in Numbers! It is J's Yahweh who has a fondness for talking animals, until they cross him (as the serpent did), and J goes her Yahweh one better by celebrating the she-ass's protest at being beaten for accurate perceptions. There is an implicit contrast between her protest at Balaam's violence and the grumblings of the Israelites at their hardships, and also their inability to protest the vengeful violence of Moses and Yahweh. In some sense the host is also being punished for accurate perceptions, except that the she-ass, after all, has not received the Blessing. She can say, "What did I do to you to make you lash out at me?" The Israelites cannot say that, because they have accepted the awful burden of the Covenant. I do not believe it is my own stance against the normative revisionists of J that makes me prefer Balaam's she-ass to any other speaker in Numbers. She speaks a universal protest against violence and blindness, and her presence reminds us that J does not believe that Yahweh owns us. Balaam owns his she-ass; Yahweh does not own J.

Noth interestingly points out that the Balaam story really has nothing to do with the Conquest of Canaan tradition. Its setting is to the east of the northern end of the Dead Sea, on the border of Israel and Moab, not in the times of David and Solomon,

(Continued on p. 102)

GRADUATE THEOLOGICAL UNION

Jewish Studies Graduate Programs
in a unique
multi-cultural environment.

Study with award-winning
TIKKUN authors
DAVID BIALE and **DANIEL MATT**
plus other distinguished scholars.

CENTER FOR JEWISH STUDIES
2400 Ridge Road
Berkeley, CA 94709
(415)649-2482

United States of Europe

Arthur Hertzberg

Amidst pogroms in the "enlightened" city of Odessa in 1881, the political journalist Moshe Leib Lilienblum still agreed with Karl Marx that anti-Semitism would end when the proletariat rose up against its oppressors and created a classless society. Lilienblum remained a believer in the socialist revolution—but as he trembled in hiding, he realized that the revolution might not be as good for the Jews as it was for the gentiles. Sentiment against the czarist movement, so Lilienblum saw, could be ignited most easily by arousing the poor against the Jews. Some of the *narodniki* (intellectuals who identified with the peasants) actually hailed the pogrom-makers, who they thought were expressing the revolutionary will of the people.

More fundamentally, Lilienblum foresaw that a classless society would not necessarily prove hospitable to everyone: in the wake of a successful revolution, the "right" of the majority to the most important jobs and roles in society would no doubt be asserted, and Jews would be declared "outsiders." Lilienblum became a Zionist. According to his new thinking, the only cure for anti-Semitism was the creation by Jews of a country of their own where they would no longer be a minority.

Writing at the same time, and in response to the same events, a young historian named Simon Dubnov came to a radically different conclusion. He agreed with the Zionists that some Jews ought to create a center of Jewish ethnic and cultural life in Palestine, but he doubted that the whole Jewish people would be willing to converge on a land it had last seen so many centuries ago. Jews would continue to live among the nations. Only by divorcing political structures from ethnicity and culture could peace be maintained. Separate national traditions should be cultivated, and they should express themselves through their particular languages, but each of these communities would have to live in some accommodation with other groups. None could have a monopoly on political power; no group could declare another illegitimate.

These reflections by Lilienblum and Dubnov often come to mind these days. Nationalism is rampant in all of Europe, east and west, and the Jews are often the immediate target. After the Holocaust, most Jews believed that serious anti-Semitism—not social distance, but the kind of active hatred that leads to pogroms or worse—was no longer possible. At the sight of Auschwitz, the world, especially the Western world, was too revolted and ashamed. Some anti-Semites might appear again, but the conscience of the West would render them impotent and marginal.

Israel, too, contributed to this new sense of security. The first thirty years of its existence, marked by glory in peace and war, gave the Jews of the Diaspora a new sense of dignity. In the years of euphoria after 1967, even anti-Semites admired the Israelis—and so life seemed more secure for Jews everywhere. This was all the more believable because the American Jewish community, the largest in the world, became richer and more powerful in the last generation than any Jewish community had ever been in the long history of the Diaspora. Those American Jews who did leave for Israel were not fleeing threats to their safety or their careers. Most left because they worried about the evaporation of their Jewishness in America's open society.

The comfortable thoughts of the last forty years are now thrown into startling question. From France to Russia, from the words of Jean-Marie Le Pen to the rhetoric of Pamyat, the memory of the Holocaust has been revised. Some historians now deny that the Holocaust ever happened, and gutter anti-Semites scream that Hitler did not do his job thoroughly enough. Europe is now being led mostly by men and women in their fifties and sixties who were too young to have served under Hitler or to have collaborated with him. The Holocaust is not the personal problem for Helmut Kohl—who was barely in his teens in 1945—that it was for Conrad Adenauer, who was mayor of Köln under Hitler.

So, too, the State of Israel no longer protects the reputation of Jews in the Western world. On the contrary, its continuing war with the Palestinians has been sharply criticized by many who previously admired and supported Israel. When the president of the United States can chide Israel for its policies on the West Bank, it becomes increasingly possible for enemies of Israel, and of the Jews, to paint with a broader and still nastier brush. If Israel might add to the dignity of world Jewry,

Arthur Hertzberg is the author of The Jews in America *(Simon and Schuster, 1989).*

its actions could undermine it as well.

But the renewal of anti-Semitism is related only marginally to fading memories of the Holocaust or Israel's newfound unpopularity. Until recently, Poland, Rumania, Hungary, and East Germany had not ever accepted responsibility for the murder of Jews during the war. A case can also be made for the proposition that West Germany, which did repent for the Holocaust, was acting more to bolster its reputation abroad than to cleanse itself thoroughly of nazism.

The renewal of anti-Semitism is really a depraved response to the declining power of white Europeans everywhere, particularly in Europe itself.

The new regimes in Europe are different. Anti-Semitic rhetoric and propaganda do not really express present fears. Anti-Semitism appeals to peoples who believe that their kind—French, Polish, Hungarian, Rumanian, or Russian—is the rightful majority in their own country. In the countries that are freeing themselves of Communist domination, Jews are being attacked for the prominence of a few Jewish individuals in the regimes that were just overthrown. And questions have been raised about the Jewish origins of a few politicians in the transitional regimes of Hungary and Rumania. In the Soviet Union, the anti-Semites are blaming the Jews for the very existence of the Communist regime, beginning with the Bolshevik revolution, which they claim was a "Jewish plot."

But this renewed European anti-Semitism is essentially rhetoric, and antiquated rhetoric at that—a kind of museum piece. In Central and Eastern Europe, including the Soviet Union, the Jews control nothing of any consequence, and the anti-Semites know it. Their position in France—where Jews number some 700,000 in a country of sixty million—is essentially modest. The renewal of anti-Semitism is really a depraved response to the central issue of our time: not the alleged power of a few rich Jews, but the declining power of white Europeans everywhere, particularly in Europe itself.

The major target of Le Pen is the several million North African Muslims who live in France. He uses anti-Semitism to ignite hatred of everyone who is not of old, gentile, French stock. In England, anti-Semitism is quite incidental to the hostility leveled at South Asians, Blacks, and Chinese, who have come to this traditionally all-white island from countries that were once part of the empire. West Germany's "guest workers" from Turkey,



INTERPRETING MAIMONIDES
Studies in Methodology, Metaphysics, and Moral Philosophy
Marvin Fox
In this comprehensive study, Fox offers a general approach to reading Maimonides' philosophy and more specific reconsiderations of his ethical, metaphysical, and religious thought.
"This volume will certainly become a standard reference for specialists as well as people with a general interest in medieval philosophy or Jewish studies."— Isadore Twersky
Cloth $27.00 370 pages
Chicago Studies in the History of Judaism

COMMUNICATING THE INFINITE
The Emergence of the Habad School
Naftali Loewenthal
In this detailed study of the early history of Hasidism, Loewenthal traces the Habad School from its conception by R. Shneur Zalman to its significance in the modern world.
"A sensitive, authoritative analysis of the evolution of the most important form of the modern Jewish mystical movement."—Moshe Idel
Cloth $39.95 368 pages

JEWISH LIFE IN MUSLIM LIBYA
Rivals and Relatives
Harvey E. Goldberg
Combining history and anthropology, Goldberg depicts the daily interactions of Muslims and Jews in Libya from the early nineteenth century to the pogrom of 1945, which precipitated the mass emigration of Libyan Jews from their homeland.
Paper $15.95 192 pages
Library cloth edition $39.95

THE ECONOMICS OF THE MISHNAH
Jacob Neusner
Only in Aristotle, Neusner contends, do we find an equal to the Mishnah's accomplishment in engaging economics in the service of a larger systemic statement.
Paper $14.95 200 pages
Library cloth edition $45.00
Chicago Studies in the History of Judaism

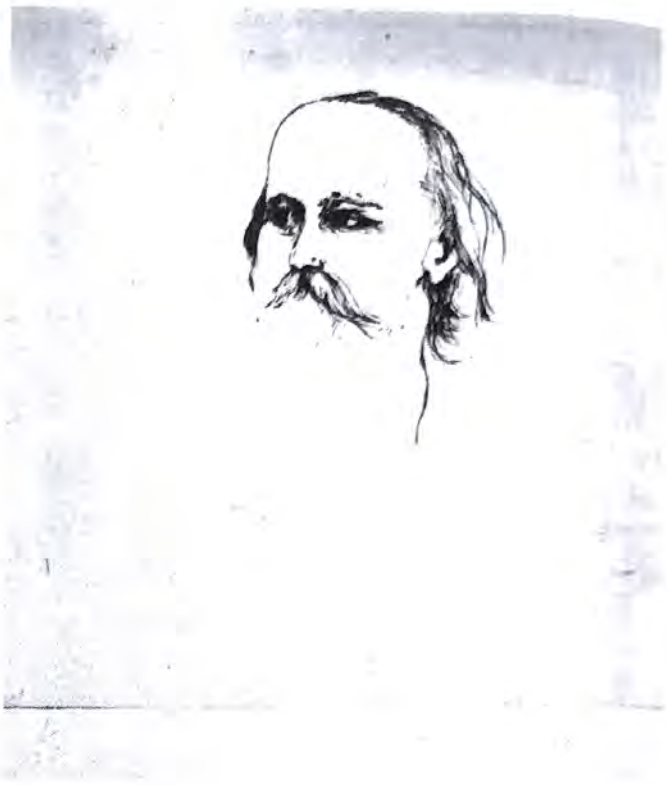
UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS
5801 South Ellis Avenue Chicago, IL 60637
At bookstores, or call: 1-800-621-2736.
In Illinois: 312-568-1550

Yugoslavia, and Italy are far more threatening to those who yearn for an entirely German Germany than are anti-Semitic fantasies about the overwhelming power of world Jewry. The European anti-Semites are all, without exception, imagining a return to a nation-state containing only their own kind. Never mind that such a state never really existed anywhere. It is yet again the dream of the various ultranationalists.

These parties of the Right are dangerous. Throughout Europe they are already fighting each other. The best advice, in the short run, is for the Jews of the Soviet Union to do exactly what they are doing now—fleeing before there is any immediate threat to their physical safety. The small communities in the rest of Eastern and Central Europe (except for Czechoslovakia) are likely to be as dangerous. One national group's domination over all others will not prevail anywhere in Europe. It is not the wave of the future. The problem for the ultranationalists is that the minorities they want to destroy and expel are too many and too pervasive. It is not possible to expel those who have long been resident in their regions. And those who have moved in recent decades can't go home again, for their old homes will not take them back, even if they are sent by force.

Despite the present turbulence, or perhaps because of it, the future of Europe can be fashioned only by moving beyond nationalism to a new European society composed of many minorities. When the "United States of Europe" emerges, it will resemble America today: a political structure housing so many disparate forces that accommodation will be their only option. This process has already begun with the effort to unite Europe into one economic market and in the move to devalue national sovereignties. Ultranationalism and anti-Semitism will, of course, create some turbulence, but mosques will remain and increase in France; Chinese and Hindus will abound in Great Britain; and Russians will gradually lose control of the Soviet empire.

Dubnov, writing in czarist Russia in the very midst of pogroms, imagined that the hope for humanity's future was the survival of, and interaction between, groups that did not possess political sovereignty. The state would house all kinds of minorities, and in such a context, the Jews would finally be safe. While Dubnov agreed with the Zionists that a Jewish national community needed to be reconstituted in Palestine, he thought that even there Jews would have to learn to live in political arrangements that included other groups as equals. At this moment of change and danger, it seems clear that Europe can live in peace only if it follows Dubnov's prescription.



The future of Europe can be fashioned only by moving beyond nationalism.

In the Middle East, the future of Israel itself requires that it enter into regional arrangements with its Arab neighbors and adversaries. A nation-state that insists on being free of minorities cannot, ultimately, exist anywhere in the modern world. So Israel, too, must save itself by joining a federation—at the very least with Jordan and Palestine, which will surely arise some day on the West Bank and Gaza.

Throughout the centuries simple people have used anti-Semitism—and the hatred of all aliens—to express their yearning for a simpler time. But they cannot succeed in fighting their way back. Le Pen, the members of Pamyat, and the believers in an Israel free of all Arabs are barking loudly, and even biting. They will yet make more trouble, but theirs are the growls of the past. There is no escape from living together. □

Writing and Exile

David Antin

When i was invited to talk at a tikkun conference i was a little surprised because unlike most people who identify strongly with their jewishness i dont think about it much and when peter cole called i hadnt been thinking about it at all though there are claims i could make ive been anthologized as a jewish poet a couple of times not only in jerome rothenbergs *big jewish book* but also in a french *anthologie de la poésie juive du monde entier* along with king solomon max jacob bobby dylan and jerome rothenberg so i supposed it was reasonable enough to try to think about it and what i thought i shared in a way that i hadnt really thought about enough with a lot of people who took their jewishness more for granted was a sense of exile though my experience of growing up in the united states might not be what most people would think of as exile because i grew up at home and in exile at the same time or maybe at home in two worlds one inside the house and one outside the house

i was brought up in a house where people spoke four other languages besides english which they didnt speak much in the house and in the street i was a native american if i can borrow the american indian term i spoke the brooklyn language or dialect whatever that was at the time and that was my native language and i spoke english the way anyone born in my neighborhood spoke it and inside the house i spoke a variety of other languages as well as a child can who learns them from trying to eavesdrop the conversations that people are trying to keep from you by shifting to another language and you learn them so well that after a while the people inside the house expect you to speak them correctly and are somewhat offended when you dont address them with the correct polite form and think it shows a lack of respect when the only forms youve overheard are the intimate ones used by adult friends and relatives to each other but after a while you'd pick these up too and the point was i was at home in both worlds which didnt often come together so that i wasnt aware that i was in exile and i had no problem in either world though there was a clear separation between the two worlds and even then i must have been aware that there would have been a certain difficulty in bringing the two of them together

the world of the new york streets of the 1930s was almost rural in our part of brooklyn those tree lined streets of boro park were not urban or suburban the way we know them now they were sleepy maple and sycamore shaded streets lined with two story wood and brick houses sheltered under gabled rooves and set back behind small gardens and windowed porches with little stoops filled with lots of little kids and small animals and we lived around the corner from the local police station where one of my great childhood joys was watching the policemen come out to start their shift marching out two by two in their bright blue uniforms with shiny brass buttons and i used to go around every afternoon it didnt rain and watch them come marching out it was like watching a peaceful little parade at about two in the afternoon just before the older kids came home from school

but inside the house things were different and not so peaceful it was like we lived in europe and everybody was worried about the way things were going franco was moving on madrid the nazis had control in germany and were taking over austria mussolini's fascists were invading abyssinia and everybody had heated opinions about what was happening and what roosevelt should do and most of this was brought home to me by pictures in the newspapers and most weirdly by a photograph i remember seeing in the sunday supplement that must have made an even greater impression on me because i couldnt really read the

David Antin is a professor in the Department of Visual Arts at UC San Diego. His most recent book of talk-poems is Tuning *(New Directions, 1984). His* Selected Poems 1963–73 *is forthcoming from Sun & Moon Press.*

newspapers i'd just learned how to read well enough to stare at the photographs and figure out the captions and this one image i had to struggle very hard to understand was a picture of these elderly italian ladies in black dresses crowding around an army truck and weeping and throwing their gold wedding rings into a common basket so they could be melted down to buy bombs and tanks for their heroic war against the ethiopians who as far as i knew had no tanks or planes and rode with spears and horses against italian armor so this image of italian heroics made no sense to me and i remember struggling long and hard to understand it and thinking then that my trouble in understanding came from my just learning how to read and i didnt know then that this kind of not understanding was the beginning of my exile

now there were lots of things i didnt understand then but i thought that was because i was a kid and i would understand them later when i grew up one thing i didnt understand was the cheerfulness of the house i lived in with my grandmother and my three aunts because everybody was poor in the 1930s way and everybody was worried about the fate of the jews in austria poland russia where we had relatives but living in boro park with my grandmother and my three aunts was like living in the middle of one long ongoing party where uncles and cousins dropped in continually to eat and talk and sing and play chess and cards and argue all night long and in the house i felt like i was in europe but i was happy there and in the street where i played tag with my friends or marbles or hide and seek or went shopping with my grandmother or watched the big kids playing punchball or even when i walked with my aunt betty on the days she was out of work all the way to the open air market on 13th avenue where the smells of hanging cheeses salt cod and barrels of sour pickles were so sharp they brought tears to my eyes i didnt think i was in europe and there was no collision between my worlds

till one sunday afternoon in early december when i was sitting on an ottoman in the living room of my aunt sarah's comfortable overstuffed house listening to the radio with my aunt and my cousins when we heard the news of the japanese attack on pearl harbor and my two worlds seemed to come together because everybody got very inspired my cousin started jumping on and off chairs to strengthen his arches so he could be a flier another cousin volunteered for the army engineers and my downstairs neighbor the pianist from *music and art* joined the marines

apparently jumping on and off chairs and eating lots of carrots got my cousin into the air force because he wound up in italy bombing the ploesti oil fields and german factories and managed to survive some twenty-four missions no one knows how while losing two crews along the way so that he could come home to a partnership in his father's dress business at the end of the war

the japanese attack on pearl harbor was the inspiration for all of this and i was excited by it like everyone else was you can hardly imagine the degree of excitement and inside the house we all knew how dreadful the nazis were and the italian fascists but now everybody else knew and now we knew how treacherous the japanese were the way everyone else did how they were treacherous little yellow people with funny eyes and buck teeth who made loud shrill noises when they were shot or bayonetted while americans died with stoic barely audible grunts they would say "ugh" and die heroically while the japanese would scream with lots of vowels before they died which i understood was not so heroic because this was a time when i wasnt in exile this was the moment of union between the two parts of my life my home and the street

we practiced bayonetting people in the street we imagined we were all going to be drafted eventually i was merely waiting my turn all of my cousins were in the war one was an engineer putting a bridge across the rhine at remagen the other was the flier and my downstairs neighbor was at okinawa everyone was doing heroic things and back at home we collected scrap paper and tin and frozen animal fat for explosives and waited to be called up i had a map of the war with pins and i knew all the cities that fell and the islands i knew how we were slaughtered on wake island and trapped in the kasserine pass and i followed it all as though i was on the general staff

but at a certain point at a certain point in the war after italy and germany had surrendered and the japanese air force had been destroyed and the regular bombings had started over japan

something odd happened i used to listen to the news on the radio every day it was the beginning of summer in 1945 it was before the atomic bomb it was the time of the incendiary raids and i can still hear that radio report today "the rain of fire continues over japan for the

thirteenth day" "the rain of fire continues over japan for the fifteenth day" because we were dropping the bombs over japan and i was a smart little kid like all jewish kids and i knew that the cities of tokyo and yokohama had many wood and paper houses and i knew that these flotillas of planes were dropping fire bombs and i had an image of kids being incinerated and i was beginning to have trouble sleeping

now it was a hot summer and we all knew that the japanese tortured their prisoners and disemboweled them but we were incinerating pet dogs i didnt know then that the japanese didnt go in for dogs i figured they had little dogs and cats and old ladies and the radio said cheerfully every day "the rain of fire continues over japan for the twenty-third day the rain of fire continues over japan for the twenty-fourth day" and theyd give you the number of planes the only thing they didnt tell you was how many little old ladies and cats

one day i had a nightmare i imagined an american bomber flying over new york and colliding with the empire state building and then it happened the next day an american bomber flew into the empire state building and was stuck there or part of it was stuck there for several days and when it was removed it left a gaping hole and there were pictures of it in the newspapers and now i'm not sure it happened that way but the way i remember first i dreamed that an american bomber like my cousin's b-24 smashed into the empire state building and got stuck there and then i woke up and it turned out to be true

So this seems to mark the beginning of my exile and my sense of exile was then beginning with an examination of what i was exiled from i was exiled from a certain kind of enthusiasm i remember there was a children's costume contest in coney island where the costumes were supposed to be based on a theme and the first prize went to a six year old in commando clothing with a blackened face and twigs on his helmet with a rifle and bayonet called "dawn raid"

and this was a figure of a national allegory that celebrated innocent american violence which was part of what i regard as the native experience a construction of images for which we have an unqualified enthusiasm because they project a deeply satisfying sense of an "us" corresponding to a deeply threatening "them" whoever they may happen to be and in both of which we thoroughly believe

now people are often threatened by circumstances by the uncertainty of the future by unemployment or war but for the native experience wars are the most convenient because they provide us with a "them" against whose threat we become more of an "us" as they become more and more of a "them" which becomes very other as i remember from a wartime *new yorker* cartoon now the *new yorker* is a sophisticated urban magazine thats celebrated for its elegant and witty cartoons but this was the time of an intense national experience in which wit plays a very small part and this cartoon depicted a scene from the pacific jungle war a platoon of american soldiers were scattered along the ground firing into the trees that were filled with monkeys and japanese soldiers and the platoon leader was shouting to his men "shoot only the ones without tails!"

now the humor in this seems to depend upon the very exaggerated sense of community and is the consequence of what ive been calling the national experience and it was this hyperbole of community from which you always exile the other and from which i seem to have been departing as the war wore on

i didnt lose my american accent i didnt lose my understanding of american pop i could still eat hot dogs drink coca cola and go to the movies i liked everything american kids liked but i just wasnt as enthusiastic any more and there were doubts that came up after the war

suddenly the russians werent our friends any more all through the war they were our great friends and now they were dangerous potential enemies for four or five years we sang "meadowland" in movies we watched as "over tall fields smiling came the youthful heroes filing" and maybe they werent our great friends after all they were going to need veto powers in the u.n. and they were going to need poland and czechoslovakia and hungary it all became very dubious

judaism always seemed dubious the religion i mean in my experience it was a drunken hebrew school teacher drilling kids to pronounce hebrew in a hebrew school nobody wanted to go to so you could take part in a dreadful ceremony called a bar mitzvah to which people came to give you idiot

presents that you wanted to retreat from out of sheer embarrassment because you considered them offensive

you know i'm a dedicated atheist when i hear jews say god i dont know who theyre talking about i should say "what theyre talking about" when you say "who" its even more shocking the idea that jews can address an omnipotent an omniscient figure an all powerful all knowing being localized with intention and do this with reverence strikes me as preposterous but also offensive so my experience of that sort of judaism raunchy old men with earlocks who drank too much and read from books of prayer that when translated into english became more offensive than they sounded when you only had a vague notion of what they meant this was my experience from a few distant elderly relatives and there were not too many of them

my family comes from a kind of left wing of the jewish tradition the haskalah background my grandfather was a hebrew scholar turned spinozan and there was a family of marxists chessplayers hustlers the part of the family i liked so to me jewishness was the sense of refusal all these refusals but i didnt put it together with what i was losing in the street

the great enthusiasm i was losing an enthusiasm and i tried to cultivate a new enthusiasm but i wasnt so good at enthusiasm any more i tried to become a marxist i figured marx might explain some of the social and political issues i was having doubts about but i made the mistake of reading the texts and while they illuminated some things they sometimes seemed dubious themselves but mostly they made me lose my enthusiasm for marxists who were mostly stalinists then whose discourse was dominated by the national interests of russia as understood by stalin and the party and i couldnt find any sensible way of connecting stalin or russia to what i understood of marx and i didnt have any enthusiasm for the american right which was mobilizing then and all through the fifties for a while i tried to be a trotskyite because i thought i had found a hero of opposition at least he'd been killed but i wasnt too good at heroes and trotsky was almost as lethal as stalin but just didnt get a chance so in a certain sense i was a failure at joining and i thought this is like being anarchic and isolated but somehow i felt comfortable in my violent disapproval of all the things that became meaningless and went away from me and i thought that maybe as writer which i was becoming that there was a different way of looking at this a different way of looking at experience even at religious experience

now i'm not interested in god but at one time my friend jerome rothenberg and i were talking about starting a press with the aim of opening up a kind of counter conversation in poetry a kind of counter writing that would stand in opposition to the placid suburban affirmative of the 1950s when i hear the word affirmative action i know it means something different now but i still think it means moving to the suburbs and having a lawn at the end of the fifties the idea of affirmation was something that gave me the creeps and it seemed to me that the idea of a counter version a counter poetics and a counter consciousness was what we had in mind jerome and diane and myself as we sat around in their apartment on 163rd street in upper manhattan and one of the first books we thought to publish was *tales of angels spirits and demons* an early book by martin buber because we thought it offered a serious suggestion for a move away from the banal naturalism of our time

we had a kind of affection for buber he was a jewish philosopher with a kind of existential strength and a way of addressing religious experience that made it if not persuasive at least serious in a way my own sense of jewish religious experience was not only not serious but plainly offensive so we translated the stories in the book and jerome published it and it happened since jerome was in correspondence with buber that we learned he was coming to the united states and we had a chance to meet with him at the union theological seminary and since the stories we had translated were in german we thought the interview would also be in german which was all right but as it turned out buber's english was faintly accented and extraordinarily good he was an intensely energetic little man who seemed to have learned english a few years before around the age of 70 and all through our conversation which had the gentle banality of an old man speaking to two very young poet admirers of a work he had done when he was also in his twenties there was one question i wanted to ask him about his hasidic tales for an oddly personal reason

in terms that normally dont mean a great deal to me i come from a highly distinguished hasidic lineage an ancestor of mine of my mother's father bearing the rather marvelous name of wolf kitzes was one of the closest associates of the baal shem and in writing the tales of the hasidic masters buber had included two stories concerning my ancestor who seemed as i read the stories to be mainly distinguished by his absent mindedness so referring to one of the tales i asked buber what distinguished my ancestor and the tale went like this

the baal shem for some mysterious reason sent my ancestor off on an expedition that required him to travel from bialostock or wherever he was in the indeterminate space between poland and russia to the shore of some sea across which he had to travel for some time on board a ship that was caught in a storm and wrecked and clinging to a spar he drifted ashore on what looked like a deserted island exhausted and dripping wet he crawled up the beach creeping along in his soggy clothing perhaps having lost his stremmel looking for some sign of human habitation which appeared on a distant peak or crag to be a lone castle or manor and he painfully made his way up the mountain to the manor and rang at the gate hoping to be admitted with the servants but nobody came the gate simply swung open as did the great door of the principal building that opened into a grand central hallway where wolf found himself at the end of a huge table that seemed to stretch an immense distance into the interior of the castle which appeared so dark and far away that he couldnt make out the head of the table and this table was set with a heavy tablecloth shot through with gold and silver silken threads on which were set wax candles in golden candlesticks and goblets of venetian glass among dishes of chinese porcelain and knives and spoons of beaten gold and there was food on the table in such measure it seemed as if spilled from some great horn of plenty nuts and fruits grapes and peaches and persimmons and melons he had never seen and great trenchers loaded down with roasted birds amid decanters of ruby wine

but there was no one at the table all the places were empty and he was afraid to begin to eat so he looked around the room and up toward the other end of the table but the head of the table that was dark before now seemed to be enveloped in a sort of luminous fog out of which a powerful voice spoke

"wolf how is it with my people"

and wolf who was at first terrified to hear the voice reflected and then answered as any true jew would

"so how should it be?"

"so be it" answered the voice and the light dissipated from the head of the table wolf lost his fear took up the decanter of wine nearest him poured out a goblet full and pronounced the blessing over it and proceeded to eat and drink till he fell asleep at the table when he woke up he was out at sea again clinging to a spar in the water from which he was picked up by a fishing boat that carried him to the port from which he eventually made his way back to bialostock or wherever he had started from on the polish lithuanian russian border and he went to his beloved master the baal shem and reported what had happened

when he got to the part about the voice the baal shem couldnt contain himself and demanded "so wolf what did you say?" and wolf told him and the baal shem got very depressed "so what should i have said?" my ancestor asked "if you had told him the truth he would have made it better"

now realizing that my distinguished ancestor could be regarded as responsible for the troubled fate of all the exilic jews and not imagining any other distinction he might have had i asked martin buber how do you understand this and buber said

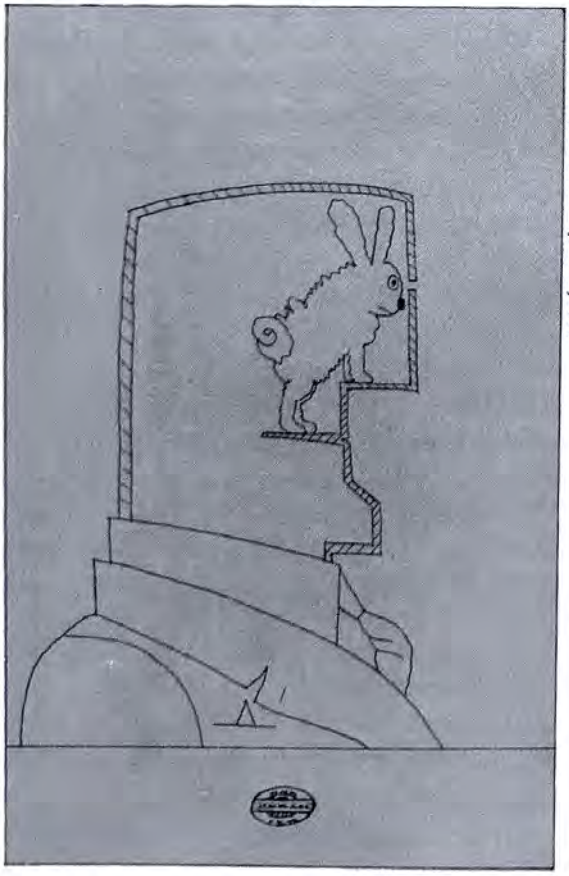
"he had fire"

and i had accepted this answer i was talking with a seventy-seven year old man a jewish philosopher about an area of experience in which i am to say the least not expert but i know my relatives and i've been thinking about this a lot since then and now i beg to differ with you martin you were wrong the story says something else and martin buber didnt understand the story well enough because he didnt understand my family well enough what happened was this my ancestor wolf in the spirit i know well from my family heard a voice coming to him from the distance and asking what he would have had to consider if he considered it critically as a serious religious thinker an obscene question because any omnipotent omniscient boss knows how his people are and it is a stupid and offensive question asked by an obscene power

if you
believe thats what youre confronting wolf
knowing that he wasnt confronting this obscenity
realized he was confronting his own delusionary
system his terrible fear and pain and hunger
and thirst had gotten the better of him and produced
the delusion that he could ask for his situation to
change and that there was some addressable
being with the will and the power to change it who
somehow never had the will or the power to change
any of all the other terrible situations of the jews
throughout history my ancestor realized the
ludicrousness of this situation and turned on himself
the mockery that has become the true mark of the
jewish tradition by answering in response to the
question

"how is it with my people?"
"so how should it be?"

and when he got back home and went to visit his
beloved master of the holy name and the baal shem
tov asked him "what did you say?" he realized
with a feeling of pity as deep as his love that his
master had so profound and excessive a love for the
numinous that listening to the story he could
momentarily believe in the absolute status of this
event and taking pity on his great teacher he
answered once again in the jewish tradition "so
what should i have said" and left it at that
because there was nothing he should have said
because there is nothing you should say when
youre addressed in this way it is not an address
fitting for an exiled human being at all
essentially you must refuse this question because
it is imbecilic and my ancestor was distinguished
by rejecting this degrading delusion even in the
optimistic power of his love for the baal shem
because he must have realized that exile is
inherently written into the humanness of the jewish
tradition which is the human tradition and
my ancestor must have known this and martin buber
would probably have known this too if he had thought
about it enough if he had connected it with all
those situations that buber had to have thought
about in his reading of jewish history in his
immigration to israel where jews have become a
nation and there is no exile only a national
experience and a community that creates an exile for
everybody who is not part of that national
experience and happens to be there like the
arabs or the jews who are not part of that
national experience because they havent yet learned
how to hate the arabs and dont want to behave like a
nation which will behave like any nation
or writers who as writers cannot afford to be part
of any nation □



©1990 Gemini G.E.L., L.A., CA

Rabbit *Saul Steinberg*

The Passion of Sarah

Alicia Ostriker

As always when he leaves I am gripped by anxiety, and now they both go, father and son. Their figures grow small along the stony road, into the white-wine colored haze of the rising morning. Birds shoot from the rocks, the sun clears the amber cliffs, it will be a hot dry one. I sniff the stirred-up dust. I crack my knuckles, I imagine robbers, bandits, strangers, hooded beings who appear from nowhere. A mountain lion asleep on a ridge. From a shadowless thistle at noon a snake suddenly striking. The old man uselessly beating his breast. The child would be defenseless. I picture my son's slender thigh swollen from snakebite, thin body in seizures, glazed rosy with fever. The man says to expect him home in a week, approximately. Expect him, *him?* Whoever lays a hand on my child, I think, I'll kill him. I am still thinking such thoughts when the sun drops toward the town of Beersheba and again as it rises from the rocks, coating the mountaintops in a bloody paint. I imagine the congregation of vultures flapping down from some broad limb, walking confidently across the path. Ugly, black as burnt wood, they would begin to circle around their little find like merchants at the butcher's.

Of course I pray to the man's God to protect my husband and son. Imagine my thoughts when I discover the truth.

The Opinion of Hagar

And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the
Egyptian, which she had borne unto
Abraham, mocking. Wherefore she said
unto Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and
her son: for the son of this
bondwoman shall not be heir with my
son, even Isaac.
—Genesis 21:9-10

And the living nations wait,
Each sequestered in its hate.
—W. H. Auden

I have no opinion
I am an Egyptian woman
They sold me and made me her slave
Like everyone else I was in love
With her beauty
She pretended to care for me
Forget about our nationalities, forget
About social rank, she would say
We are women together
That is what matters, Hagar

She used me
When she couldn't have a child herself
She made me sleep with her husband
—That old, creepy man—
When my son was born
She was yellow with jealousy
Of my round breasts, of my strong healthy boy
Finally she too had a son
What a laugh, a thin stick of a baby
Who whined and spit up his food all day
Just what you would expect
From those threadbare sacks of parents
But that was the end of me
She threw me away
Like garbage
You see how humble I am
My son is another story
Not like me, he is free and courageous
A wild ass of a man
He can read and write
He can run a printing press
He can shoot an AK-47
I call him Ishmael, I whisper to him:
Fight to your dying breath

But I still wonder
Why could she not love me
We were women together

Alicia Ostriker's recent books include The Mother–Child Papers *(Beacon Press, 1986), and* Stealing the Language: The Emergence of Women's Poetry in America *(Beacon Press, 1987).*

Remember Us for Life

Arnold Eisen

With this column, Tikkun *inaugurates a series of* divrei Torah *aimed at presenting fresh perspectives on classical Jewish texts and on the cycle of the Jewish year. The writers, as diverse a group as we can assemble, will comment on texts and holidays from every point along the continuum of contemporary Jewish life. The column's readership, we hope, will be just as diverse. This is not an effort "by believers for believers," nor is it trying to persuade the unaffiliated. Rather, it is a forum in which* Tikkun *readers engage heart-and-soul with Torah, and thereby enrich our common discourse.*

As Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur approach each year, I find myself focusing on a single melody, a waltz. Its cadence gently invites one to step inside, to dance. Dance, it says: leave aside your theological problems with the upcoming season of repentance, your doubts with regard to a God who hears prayer, let alone answers it. There will be time for the doubts. But not now. For the moment, dance.

> Remember your mercies, O Lord, and Your lovingkindnesses. Remember Your mercies, and Your lovingkindnesses, for they are forever.

The theme of memory is pronounced throughout the High Holidays, never more so than in the climactic liturgy of Yom Kippur. The Amida prayer, most obviously, is distinguished from Rosh Hashana onward by an insert in which we ask God to "Remember us for life, O King who desires life, for Your sake, O God of Life." We then remind God, and ourselves, that God "remembers His creatures in mercy." In the Yizkor prayer for the dead, which always seems to have special meaning on Yom Kippur, we remember those who gave us life and made us the people we are, and then we ask God to do the same. Just before the dramatic Unetane Tokef prayer we implore God to forget—for once—that our sins may not be eternally remembered. But then we move immediately to a plea that God remember all forgotten things, open the book of memories, and read aloud the mark that each of us has left behind. In the Avoda service we recall and even act out the prayer of the high priest of old, thereby invoking the merits of those whose remembrance of their obligations exceeded our own. In the martyrology that follows soon after, we remind God of God's own failures of memory, as if to say: we have remembered our loved ones, we have reminded You of those who served You with full devotion—now let us remind You of those in every age whom You should have remembered but did not, those who perished as martyrs to Your name and Your law.

It is precisely at this point in the service, in the brief space between Avoda and martyrology, that we utter the refrain I mentioned at the outset. The words pulse with new import now. "Remember Your mercies, O Lord, and Your lovingkindnesses." Remember—because much of the time You don't. Your mercies may be "forever," but they are far from ubiquitous. That they are forever gives us grounds for hope that we may see more of them. That they are so often absent leads us to despair. Help us, instead, to remember You—by remembering us, thereby remembering Your own mercies.

I'm always somewhat bothered by the tone of utter abasement in which this plea is couched. Traditional Jews actually go down on the ground—an act performed at no other time of year—to beg forgiveness from a King upon whom, the liturgy emphasizes, we have no other leverage.

I've come to understand the liturgy in strategic terms. Its hyperbole is an attempt to open us up, powerfully and directly, to the ultimates of our existence. Precisely because of our human dignity and worth, because what we do is of ultimate value, we have to be deprived of normal raiment, normal nourishment, normal pride for a day—and be reminded that we are not granted an infinite amount of time in which to grab hold of what really matters in life. All is a gift. Life is meant for good. We can do that good, if God remembers us to life for another year. But the magic ends at midnight—and after that we are thrown back on God's mercy. Our life beyond this one, if such there be, rests entirely in God's hands. Our only claim on God, therefore, is God's claim to love life as much as we do. The message of abasement both reminds us of our mortality and reassures us that there is eternal meaning to be had in this world. God's

Arnold Eisen is an associate professor of Religious Studies at Stanford University.

mercy and lovingkindness are eternal, even if we are not. Accept both truths, dance to the rhythms of the waltz, and despair is banished.

A friend of mine, to whom the notion of divine memory has always been of life-and-death significance, wrote me a few years back that he had lost faith in a God who remembers, and so had lost the ability to pray on Yom Kippur or any other day. His doubts were even more profound than my own; the Yom Kippur waltz was of little use to him. Except, I think, for one point. "I remembered just now," my friend continued, "one of the things that appealed to me in Rilke's *Duino Elegies*: that our purpose on earth was to do the praising for those beautiful, passing things that cannot do the praising for themselves, so that having been once, they never can be canceled. For something is needed to tie down passing things."

We are all aware of late that humankind's responsibility to remember this earth to life is both immense and urgent. But the "passing things" that most need our remembrance, now as always, are the human beings who share our time on earth. They, we, are like "fragile potsherds, the grass that withers, the fleeting shadow, the passing cloud, the wind that blows, the floating dust." We are anchored by the weightiness bestowed on us by the Creator. Far more immediately, however, we are anchored by those who love us. This is a basic thrust of the Yom Kippur liturgy. It is we who clothe each other in respect, wrap each other in good memories of a life well spent, enable or preclude lives of dignity. Even if God does remember this world and its inhabitants, as I dearly pray, nine-tenths of that work is still our own. The task of remembering our dead at Yizkor, and asking God to do likewise, can proceed only if we remember those we love when they are alive. Ditto for all the divine remembering we request on Yom Kippur. We are God's most relevant mercies in this world (the Hebrew root for mercy is cognate with the word for womb), and we are the most relevant agents or withholders of mercy. The prayer for God's lovingkindness is, as always in Jewish tradition, first of all a summons to the pray-er.

Call down God's mercies by enacting them. Be remembered to life by remembering it.

That, I think, is why the Avoda service recalling the high priest's sacrifice in the Temple is so crucial to the Yom Kippur liturgy—why, indeed, invocation of the pious ancestors is so predominant throughout the High Holidays. The ancestors were not perfect. They are not so much recalled as idealized—to inspire us to walk farther on their road. And what we remember of the high priest is not ethical achievement—which, no doubt, eluded him as it eluded us—but performance of a ritual, the one area in which we, like him, can taste the satisfaction of having done something entirely right.

Get Yom Kippur right, the liturgy advises, and then remember that the symbol is meant to recall you to the real work which you will never manage to complete.

If we want to avert "the evil decree," the prayerbook intones time and again, prayer and repentance alone will not do it. Only justice will suffice. Call down God's mercies by enacting them. Be remembered to life by remembering it. And should you forget for a moment what that means, read the Haftorah's uncompromising reminder from the prophet Isaiah.

> Is this the fast that I desire [asks the Lord], a day for people to starve their bodies, bow the head like a bulrush and lie in sackcloth and ashes.... No, this is the fast I desire: to unlock fetters of wickedness, untie the cords of lawlessness, let the oppressed go free, break off every yoke, share your bread with the hungry, and take the wretched poor into your home; when you see the naked, to clothe him; and not to ignore your own kin.

"And when must we do all these things?" asks Rabbi Akiba in the Talmud. His answer is simple: "Now." □

TIKKUN FINANCES

Tikkun is a reader-supported magazine that depends on the generosity of thousands of people to keep it alive. In the 1989–90 fiscal year, our readers donated over $100,000. As the New Year 5751 begins, we need to raise $125,000. While we strongly urge our readers to become *Tikkun* Associates by donating $100 or more per year, we welcome and are deeply appreciative of any donation that you can afford to make. You can send us a check or your credit card number and expiration date. Donations are tax deductible. Since a large proportion of our readers buy the magazine on the newsstands, this notice is our only way to reach you and urge you to share with our regular subscribers in helping maintain the magazine.

Twice-Promised Land

Arthur Waskow

For two generations, the Jewish people has faced what to many has seemed an historical and religious anomaly: the Jews have returned to govern their ancient homeland, only to find that another people—the Palestinians—lives in that *same* land. Indeed, Palestinian nationalism has renewed and strengthened itself almost step by step in response to the renewal of the Jewish presence in the Land of Israel.

No version of Jewish thought—neither secular Zionism nor Jewish religious observance—has yet worked out a way of thinking that satisfactorily accounts for this "anomaly." Nor has any version established a way of acting that has made possible a satisfactory modus vivendi between the two peoples.

I propose therefore to pursue the path by which the Jewish people has for most of its history learned to deal with the unexpected—the midrashic path, the spiral path of returning to ancient texts to wrestle with them, reinterpret them, and learn from them how to go forward in a new way. When I ask myself what texts of Torah might offer new insight into the struggle between the national movements of the Jewish and Palestinian peoples, the story of the two families of Abraham comes at once to mind.

According to the traditions of both peoples, the Jews are descendants of Abraham and Sarah through Isaac, and the Arabs are the descendants of Abraham and Hagar through Ishmael. The story of the struggles between Abraham's two wives and their two sons can be read as the prototype of the struggle between Jews and Arabs.

In that story, Sarah insists that for Isaac's good Ishmael and Hagar must leave the family. Abraham is troubled, but God upholds Sarah's wishes. (We will come back to why the separation between the two brothers is necessary.) God promises to continue the covenant of Abraham through Isaac; but God also promises to make of Ishmael a great nation, and prophesies of Ishmael: he will be "a wild jackass of a man" (that is, a nomad); he will lift his fists against everyone, and all will lift their fists against him; and "he will dwell face to face with all his brothers" (Genesis 16:12).

Somehow, eventually, Isaac and Ishmael must learn to live in each other's presence after having been separated. Does this mean they will live in the same land? The verse is not clear. Yet it is clear that the two are reconciled when Abraham dies (Genesis 25). They meet again at their father's grave in Hebron—the grave that in our own time has become the scene of bitter contention between their descendants—and Isaac goes to live at the well that God had revealed for his brother, the "Well of the Living God Who Sees."

Why were the brothers separated? And how can they be reconciled? To understand, we need to remember that Isaac was the younger son, and that over and over in the Book of Genesis there can be peace between brothers only when the younger, the weaker, has prevailed over the older, the more powerful. Only *then* can reconciliation come.

We also need to remember that Isaac's name (in Hebrew YiTzChaK) means "laughing boy." And we have to remember that when Sarah accuses Ishmael of "making sport with" or "mocking" Isaac (Genesis 21:9), the word she uses is MiTzaCheyK, from the same root as "laughing." *The same root.* The problem, from the scriptural point of view, is not that the two brothers are so different; it is that they are so similar. Neither son can grow up to be his own person unless they grow up separately. The danger is that their similarity will drive both of them crazy.

And that is what we see before us now if we look at history as well as at the words of Torah. For the voice of God speaks not only in the letters on the scroll, but also in the thundering facts of history.

Israelis and Palestinians are similar in two crucial ways. First, they love the same land and feel themselves loved by it. Second, neither of them can bear to recognize that the other feels that way. Neither can cope with the notion that the other *also* has a claim to the land, that the other is more like them than different. Each of them seems to feel that "if the other does, I don't." Neither seems able to grasp the possibility that the land has—somehow, for some reason—been promised twice.

There are other similarities as well, mostly rooted in the irony that for both peoples exile and diaspora have been as central to their histories as attachment to the land for which they yearn. The Palestinians have suffered in their comparatively short exile a (milder) version of the torments that the Jews have endured in their age-long

Arthur Waskow, author of These Holy Sparks *(Harper & Row, 1983), is a fellow of the Institute for Jewish Renewal (IJR).*

exile. The Palestinians have even become the alternately upwardly mobile and downwardly victimized "Jews of the Middle East" (as many Arabs call them, with mixed respect, envy, and hatred). And the two peoples are alike in the complex emotional and political relationships between those of their people who remain rooted in the land itself, and those who live in diaspora.

But the most essential similarity remains: each people aches with the certainty that God, or history, tied its destiny to this land between the Jordan and the sea.

Why on earth, why in Heaven, would God promise the same land twice, to two different peoples? Is this some kind of cruel joke, or is there meaning and instruction to be gained here?

Up to this point I have drawn upon the midrashic method of going back to ancient texts in order to discover new wisdom in them. But it is not enough to do this. We must also examine our own lives, our own history, if we wish to understand God's intentions and history's demands.

The history of Zionism is built on a heartfelt conviction that between *this* people and *this* land there is a connection. Why would God, or history, make it so? Forget for a moment about two promises. Why would even a single people be connected to a particular plot of earth? Is not the earth unboundaried, open to all the human race?

Here we come to the heart of the covenant. God wanted, wants, the Jews to be a holy people, a kingdom of priests—a "vanguard" people, you might say. A holy people that teaches by example all the peoples how to be holy peoples. (By "vanguard" I mean a body of people that is special only because it is first in the line of march and takes the brunt of trouble. To be in the vanguard means precisely that you expect the rest of the march will get there too.) Such a people needs a holy land precisely because all human beings need to learn to live in a holy way upon the earth. From this perspective, Zionism is a kind of microcosmic demonstration of the fact that the human race does not have the luxury of wandering off to another planet if it makes a mess of this one.

This kind of Zionism—the Zionism of Ahad Ha'Am and Martin Buber—treats the relationship of the Jewish people to the Land of Israel the way serious environmentalists wish the whole human race would treat its relationship to the earth: as a crucial responsibility to be lived out in practical terms. It was the kind of Zionism that urged the Jews not to remain forever *luftmenschen,* "air people," floating above reality, full of hot air, "spiritual" without attending to material life. For the Jewish vision has always held that the most soulful holiness did not matter unless it was applied to "matter"—to body. For example, the biblical commandment to share all the wealth and let the land rest in the year of Jubilee should not remain forever a lot of hot air blown across the lips of Torah scholars. Someday it must be *done,* and we need a land to do it with. Or if indeed we fail, we must fail because we had the chance and blew it. If the Jews live in an unholy way upon the land, the land rejects us and forces us into exile. Yet we have always kept the conviction that ultimately we must return.

From this perspective, the promise of the land is mostly a promise not to the Jews, but instead a promise to the land itself, that this ornery people will again and again be brought back to tend it, to reach toward treating it in a holy way. Why? Because every land deserves a promise that no people will simply use it and throw it away.

To love and be committed to a land that God has promised twice is no easy task.

This applies not only to the earth as a whole, but to every land in its particularity. For the second way in which the Jewish people is a "vanguard" people is that, as God gave the Land of Israel to the vanguard People of Israel, God taught that *every* people has a right and an obligation to a particular land on which it can live out its particular pattern of holiness.

In its quest for self-determination in a land of its own, the Jewish people is a vanguard for all the peoples. So all the peoples must, and may, seek self-determination in lands of their own.

Palestinians too.

Aha! Of course, Palestinians too—but surely each people to its *own* land! Palestinians to some land other than the Land of Israel!

But the vanguard people has a special fate. A land for every people, a people for every land—yes. But precisely because the earth has no rigid "natural" boundaries between the lands and peoples, every people must learn to share the earth with other peoples. So the vanguard people must learn to share *its* land with another people. And that is why God seems to have promised the land twice.

From this perspective, we can imagine that it was hardly an accident, but rather an ineluctable historical process that brought the Jewish people into its land again at precisely the same historical moment when the human race faced the ultimate truth of its relationship with the earth. Either humankind learns to share the unboundaried earth so that each people acts as if there

are limits to its own power, or the human race destroys itself and much of the earth along with it.

Although recent changes worldwide have shifted attention somewhat from the Middle East, Jews and Palestinians still face the question of what to do, if indeed we conclude that God promised this particular land to both peoples. To love and be committed to a land that God has promised twice is no easy task. God's double promise was perhaps indeed a harsh and bitter joke. Perhaps the laughter that was Isaac and the laughter that came from Ishmael was laughter because they got the joke. Got the joke—and still could laugh, and therefore at last make peace.

Which leaves us facing the question: What can *we* do to get the joke and learn to laugh about it?

First of all, we can remember that the promise both peoples inherited exists at least as much for the sake of the land and of the earth as for ourselves; both peoples should address not only political security, but also protection of the earth and air and water of the Land.

In seeking the ground for such a reconciliation, we can see it as "the death of Abraham," that is, the death of the patriarchal assumption that there are only two choices, only yes or no, only black or white, only Isaac or Ishmael as heir. (Not only males carry this patriarchal assumption, as the Torah reminds us. Sarah held it too.)

We can, each of us, see our claim to self-determination in the land as intrinsically rooted in the other's similar claim, rather than feeling challenged or overshadowed by it. We can create a politics that affirmatively seeks ways to strengthen the ability of our brother/sister people to exercise its nonviolent self-determination in culture, economics, and politics, rather than grudgingly allowing it only the barest degree of selfhood. And in the Jewish context we can use the resources of Jewish culture and of Torah to teach ourselves and others that it is *Jewish* to affirm nonviolent expressions of Palestinian selfhood.

- We can remember Palestinians killed in struggling nonviolently for their peoplehood along with analogous Jewish martyrs, through the Kaddish that Jews use to remember those who die for *kiddush hashem,* the hallowing of the Name.
- On holidays we can invite Palestinians to study with us the stories of Avraham/Ibrahim/Abraham, of Yitzchak/Ishaq/Isaac, of Ishmael/Ismail, of Hagar/Hajar as they appear in the Jewish, Muslim, and Christian traditions.
- We can introduce into our liturgies prayers for peace and prosperity between us and within each of us—so that the prayer that begins *"oseh shalom"* might end not only with *"al kol Yisrael"* (on all Israel) but also *"v'al kol Yishmael"* (on all Ishmael), and the prayer Eyn keylohenu, which affirms the unity of God, could have woven into it the Muslim proclamation of God's unity, in Arabic.
- We can make clear that when the second paragraph of the Sh'ma warns us not to "serve other gods," among those false gods is our belief that we alone, and no others, received God's promise of the land.
- We can insist that our rabbis and other leaders and as many other Jews as possible understand important aspects of Islam.

Do such changes matter, compared to "political" decisions? I think they matter because they go to the heart of what it means to be Jewish, and therefore what it means to act politically as Jews. Today many Jews who support self-determination for the Palestinians do so abashedly, worried that, although they see this as their human obligation, it runs contrary to their sense of themselves as Jews. These changes would say just the opposite: that we can only be fully Jewish, fully responsive to God's will and to Torah, fully caring about the earth and air and water of our Land of Promise, if we affirm our sisters, brothers, cousins from Abraham's family.

As we have for thousands of years placed at the heart of our culture our desire and obligation to restore the Jewish connection to the Land of Israel, so in all these endeavors we would make central today the assertion that this is only part of the task we have been assigned by God.

This task entails the fulfillment of the prophecies regarding Ishmael, so that *p'nai kol echav yishkon,* so that Ishmael can dwell face to face with all his brothers. It also requires that both we and the Palestinians fulfill the commandment to love Hagar—the stranger (*ha-ger*) who lives in the land and is a stranger only because both our peoples have willed ourselves to forget that in our earliest family, Hagar as well as Sarah was beloved of our Father Abraham. □

Are you a Jewish educator who is distressed over the invisibility of the intifada in your classroom? Are you concerned about the attitudes in your Jewish educational circle about Arab-Israeli relations? Or have you been successful in communicating to your students about these issues and in stimulating classroom dialogue?

I am a Judaica teacher in the process of gathering material for a possible *Tikkun* educator's column relating to the above issues. I seek material that focuses on the problems faced by Jewish educators who wish to provide students of all ages with a balanced view of these subjects. Equally important are your comments and ideas about curriculum and in-services for teaching about the intifada in Jewish afternoon schools, day schools, and adult education classes. All submissions will be given careful attention. Manuscripts will not be returned.

Send material to:

Carmela Ingwer
5050 S. East End-2B
Chicago, IL 60615

Why I Write for *Tikkun*

Cornel West

This will be the first in a series of columns I shall be writing for *Tikkun*. Some people have asked why an African-American theorist and activist has chosen to write a column for *Tikkun*. Let me explain.

Those of us willing to live and die for the precious values of individuality and democracy face a dilemma. On the one hand, the great secular traditions of the modern West that promoted these values in varying degrees—liberalism, socialism, feminism—are either culturally impoverished, spiritually sterile, or politically on the defensive. On the other hand, the major alternatives of the present—tribalistic religion, chauvinistic nationalism, and complacent professionalism—are morally bankrupt. How do we remain true to our universal moral convictions, our *rooted* personal and collective identities, and our international progressive political allegiances in the face of present-day realities?

Tikkun has grappled with the question in a serious manner. It is one of the few forums in our culture which has linked cultural and spiritual identity, moral integrity, and progressive politics. I have chosen to write for *Tikkun* because I am convinced that a vital and principled Left in our time has no future unless it confronts the complex interplay of tradition, morality, and emancipatory politics. If such a Left has no future, then unnecessary and undesirable human suffering will remain unacknowledged and unabated.

The national response to the recent visit of Nelson Mandela reveals a deep hunger for progressive leadership of dignity and humility. Whatever differences one may have with Mandela's statements or strategies, there is no doubt that he is a genuine statesman who leads a liberation movement that transcends tribalism, chauvinism, and egotism. In this sense, he dwarfs every national leader on the American scene today. Acknowledging the legitimacy of some criticisms of Mandela, we can nevertheless marvel at the degree to which he has merged tradition, spirituality, integrity, intelligence, and emancipatory energy.

Some of what excites me about Mandela also excites me about *Tikkun*. Both Mandela and *Tikkun* search for the empowering sources for struggle within a conception of tradition that accents critique and resistance to evil and oppression. Mandela finds this within the rich heritage of the Xhosa people (itself a hybrid of traditional and Christian elements), the leftist vision and analyses of the African National Congress (ANC), and the flexible outlooks of principled South African freedom fighters. *Tikkun* looks to the prophetic traditions of Judaism (especially that of the great Abraham Joshua Heschel), the secular inquiries of socialist, feminist, and antixenophobic streams, and the antidogmatic viewpoints of principled Jewish freedom fighters. Second, both Mandela and *Tikkun* are committed to collective quests for self-determination of oppressed peoples in the modern world—in particular, Black South Africans and Jews.

Let me briefly consider the difference between these two important movements for freedom and their situations at the present moment.

The national response to the recent visit of Nelson Mandela reveals a deep hunger for progressive leadership of dignity and humility.

First, consider the Jewish struggle. Despite the incredible pain and destructiveness of the Holocaust and the tolls of lingering anti-Semitism around the world, the Jewish quest for positive self-identity and national self-determination has yielded some significant advances for the Jewish people in the past forty-two years. Since May 1948, it has built a new and thriving culture, and a nation-state—a remarkable achievement in its own right, but all the more so considering that one-third of the Jewish people had just been murdered. On the American domestic front, the Jewish struggle has yielded similarly powerful results—a speedy upward mobility from relative poverty at the beginning of the century to middle-class security and prosperity in the past forty years.

Needless to say, the advances in both Israel and the United States came at a high cost. In Israel, national self-determination was achieved only at the expense of some brutal and at times barbaric treatment of the Palestinian people—and this has left a legacy of hatred that

Cornel West, a professor of religion and Afro-American studies at Princeton University, is the author of Prophetic Fragments *(Eerdmans, 1988) and* The American Evasion of Philosophy *(Wisconsin, 1989).*

continues to eat at the core of Israeli society. Similarly, in the U.S., while large sectors of American Jews have remained faithful to a liberal political perspective, Jewish leadership and organizations have moved in a conservative direction, creating the impression on the part of many other Americans that some Jews are insensitive to their concerns.

Now, let's consider the struggle for Black South Africa. That struggle has not yet achieved a nation-state. Indeed, despite recent advances since Mandela was released from prison, millions of South Africans still live in poverty, are brutalized by the South African state, and are denied the fundamental right to political self-determination in their own country. In the U.S., while African-Americans have achieved important political advances, the economic system has not presented them with opportunities similar to those allowed other ethnic groups.

Yet despite the differences in the situations facing our two peoples, there are still some crucial grounds for common visions and actions. Mandela and *Tikkun* embody some of these common ideals. I can understand why some Jews might be upset with Mandela: his refusal to condemn the dictatorial rules of Fidel Castro and Moammar Qaddafi, the ugly anti-Semitism of the PLO, or racism in the U.S. is regrettable. Mandela is a prophet bound by the discipline of the ANC. Every prophet deserves criticism. And in this case, it is appropriate. But in offering that criticism, we need not detract from the obvious wisdom and witness of a man who, in the midst of a fierce struggle for national self-determination, nevertheless insists on a nonracist vision of a society to be fought for.

As an African-American freedom fighter, anchored in the prophetic Christian tradition and linked to the democratic-socialist heritage, I believe it is imperative that Black and Jewish progressives reflect seriously on the Mandela example and the project of *Tikkun* in order to keep alive the precious values of individuality and democracy while strengthening the possibilities of principled coalition across racial lines in the U.S. I am neither a Zionist nor a South African Nationalist. In fact, I am deeply suspicious of any nationalism, but I recognize that nationalism is an inescapable and brutal fact of our world. Therefore, progressive nationalists such as Michael Lerner, Nelson Mandela, Edward Said, and post-Mecca Malcolm X are comrades for me in that they uphold universal moral outlooks and international perspectives, though all, of course, have human flaws and, at times, selective focuses. Needless to say, I relate to Nelson Mandela and Malcolm X on a visceral and existential level because they speak to and embody my daily experience of coping with assaults on Black humanity—on Black intelligence, beauty, and character. Yet my moral and political link to them is no more and no less than that to other progressive nationalists.

I'm drawn to *Tikkun* because it strives toward this kind of highly principled integration of nationalist and universalist concerns. Its critique of chauvinism makes it a distinctive voice in the Jewish world. A progressive Zionist group wedded to prophetic Judaism and emancipatory politics, *Tikkun* has supported progressive elements in Israeli society and culture, endorsed Palestinian national self-determination, and tried to offset conservative sentiments amongst American Jewry. I'm aware that it has taken considerable courage to do this and that *Tikkun* has lost financial and political support because it is willing to take unequivocal moral stands while others in the Jewish world are not. Yet *Tikkun* has also been one of the best vehicles for building bridges for the Jewish people, precisely because it has effectively helped explain to the Left and to communities of color in the U.S. and around the world that the Jewish experience of relative economic success and social acceptance in the U.S. is *not* paradigmatic for most Jews in the modern or premodern world. *Tikkun* has helped educate us to view the Jewish people with compassion based on a deeper understanding of the historical experience that shaped its current realities. In fact, *Tikkun* is one of the most effective instruments the Jewish people has for fighting the potential growth of anti-Semitism, precisely because it can serve as a bridge and speak to people with other cultural and historical assumptions, people who are too often ignored or misunderstood by other voices in the Jewish world.

Yet it is not solely because of what *Tikkun* stands for in the Jewish world that I am attracted to it. *Tikkun* is creating the kind of dialogue in the U.S. that addresses the important questions that any progressive intellectual must confront—the issues of how to raise and integrate a moral vision and spiritual sensitivity into the political arena. So I write for *Tikkun* in order to sharpen the dialogue between those of us who still have the audacity in this ghastly century to believe in the possibility of social change in light of the precious values of individuality and democracy, values some of us link to prophetic elements in our respective religious traditions. □

Twelve-Stepping It

Gad Horowitz

My companion and I have been together for ten years. We get along very well but we fight regularly, once every few weeks, about nothing, ferociously, no hitting but a lot of verbal pyrotechnics. Every time this happens we forgive each other and get on with life, but we are often depressed about our fighting and what it could mean about our compatibility. Some friends have been trying to persuade us to get involved, as they are, with the Adult Children of Alcoholics movement (ACA). They say that although there has never been any alcoholism in either of our families of origin, our fathers were probably workaholics and our families were probably therefore dysfunctional. They say ACA is the solution for the adult children not only of alcoholics but of all dysfunctional families. What do you suggest?

I see the possibility of a serious error in the way you and your companion have been thinking about your fighting: you seem to be on the point of accepting the assumption that you are fighting *because* your families of origin were "addictive" or "dysfunctional," and that ACA is therefore "the solution"—the only solution. You should know that you have a very large number of options.

First of all, the problem might not be that you have a fight once every few weeks but that you assume that this "means" something about your "compatibility." Lovers will fight, though perhaps less often than many of us do, even in the most gentle and least stressful of societies. I once heard a family therapist define "intimacy" as the need and the ability to seek comfort from the very same people who can hurt you precisely because they are so close to you. Her recommendation would be that you accept compassionately your fighting nature and promise one another never to allow your fighting, or any stupid verbal pyrotechnics you may emit while fighting, to come between you.

The fact that you can forgive one another after each fight is much more important than the fact of your fighting: it shows you are already very close to the remedy I am suggesting. Once you accept your fighting, and stop blaming one another (or yourself) for the outbursts, you may very well find that you do not fight as often or as ferociously. You may find it much easier to recognize the first signs of a fight and to utilize them as signals to back off, cool down, and inquire more calmly into the possibility that there *are* some issues between you, or some sources of stress in your lives, that are calling for recognition and remedial action.

The fact that you can forgive one another after each fight is much more important than the fact of your fighting.

If this doesn't work for you, there are many sources of therapeutic knowledge other than ACA: You could study the self-help literature on couple relations (I would recommend *After the Honeymoon: How Conflict Can Improve Your Relationship,* by Daniel B. Wile). You could take a class on negotiation skills. You could get help from any one of the two hundred or so varieties of professional psychotherapy. You could join a democratic peer-counseling movement like Reevaluation Counseling or Eugene Gendlin's Focusing movement. Of course you could also follow your friends into ACA; I have no doubt that it's helping large numbers of people.

ACA and the broader movement of twelve-step groups represent one of the most significant phenomena of the past decade. Twenty-eight million adult Americans—one in eight—are children of alcoholics. And, as you point out, the potential scope of the movement is even broader. The literature of the movement claims that 70 to 100 percent of North American families are rendered to some degree "dysfunctional" by "addiction"—defined very broadly to include any intense preoccupation with particular forms of escape from emptiness and pain. That pain is understood to be the result of the absence of love, intimacy, compassion, and community in our lives, and it results in toxic shame—a sense of our essential worthlessness and defectiveness as persons.

Many politically progressive psychotherapists are astonished, delighted, and dismayed by the growth of this movement: astonished and delighted that masses of people, for the first time in human history, are under-

Gad Horowitz teaches political science at the University of Toronto.

standing how the emotional atmosphere of childhood plays a decisive role in shaping a lifetime of emotional suffering; astonished and delighted also that this movement has shown that millions of "ordinary people" can learn to help themselves and one another by appropriating a set of psychotherapeutic tools—empathic listening, exploration of personal history, problem solving—that have previously been confined to a narrow group of professionals; dismayed, but not at all astonished, at the capture of this movement by a certain kind of conservative, overly "spiritual," totally apolitical religiosity. There is very little appreciation in this movement for the manner in which oppressive economic and political structures—including the structure of the system of gender—require "dysfunctional" family life. There is no recognition of the way in which our society requires domination, submission, and competition—and how these very qualities, useful for the social order, then interfere with our capacities for empathy, friendship, creativity, solidarity, and spiritual experience.

The twelve-step movement *does* condemn American "culture" for its encouragement of workaholism and materialism, for its propagation of the illusion that the pursuit of worldly "success," material objects, and pleasurable sensations is the way to happiness—but it calls for spiritual revival as if this were possible without fundamental social change. We are called simply to surrender to the "Higher Power" of AA, with not even a hint of the necessity to transform the structures of class, race, and gender power which require workaholism and materialism.

Like the vast majority of psychotherapeutic schools, the twelve-step movement is simultaneously liberatory and repressive. It *does* empower us to deal with our problems more effectively as individuals, as members of families, or as participants in large organizations; but it simultaneously disempowers us by reinforcing our assumption that our suffering is caused primarily by a flaw in the "depth" of the psyche. We are taught that if only we could get ourselves and our "family systems" working right, everything would be basically OK.

When we find, as we commonly do, that our lives are still not working, that our lives may feel empty and unfulfilled even after we have resolved or ameliorated the specific problem we sought help for in the twelve-step program or psychotherapy process, we feel confirmed even more powerfully in blaming ourselves ("I'm such a failure even this technique that seems to be working for everyone else couldn't work for me") or blaming others ("People are inherently evil and that's why they are still making my life miserable"). We are thrown back onto the assumptions of the society: that nothing can really be changed, that we should look out for ourselves since that's reality—in short, we are confirmed in our surplus powerlessness.

Many observers of the twelve-step movement have noted that its adherents—like other "patients" and "clients" of psychotherapy—tend to take on a new identity as "sick," "abnormal" people "in recovery." The "adult child" compares herself to an unattainable ideal of the healthy, normal, fully grown-up person, and is ever alert for further evidence of her character flaws and the need to make "amends." Millions label themselves "pathological," supplementing or replacing their addictions with a new addiction to the rituals of the adult child in recovery. So while the twelve-step programs give people some important tools and insights, they may simultaneously reinforce a tragic sense of life which makes us believe that fundamental change is impossible and that, at best, one can try to keep constant guard against one's own tendencies to fall back into the destructive patterns of childhood. And this turns out to involve a new kind of self-blaming that is every bit as damaging to one's ability to engage in social change as are the older forms of toxic shame.

It may be true that human beings can never escape the inevitable pain of existence, and they can never eliminate the dark side, the evil aspect of human nature, but they can bring about fundamental improvements in their lives, in part by making fundamental changes in the larger social and economic order. Hierarchy and competition and the suffering they require are not inescapable features of the human condition. That is the message of *tikkun olam,* a message that is absent from so many of the contemporary therapies and self-help movements that populate the current cultural scene. □

Bible Lesson

Harvey Shapiro

When it's time for the Sacrifice
Abraham pays for his stardom
with terror and sweat.
The risk of talking with God.
At some point He could say to you:
Listen, this is what I want you to do
for me next, take your son, your only
son whom you love . . .

Harvey Shapiro is the author of seven books of poetry, most recently National Cold Storage Company: New and Selected Poems *(Wesleyan University Press, 1988).*

FICTION

Charcoal on Paper

Jonathan Wilson

My old girlfriend Hermine David once said, "You can do anything you like with me." We were in the heat of passion on a rooftop mattress on New York's Upper West Side. I don't know why, but I took a plum from a bowl that we'd brought up with us and ate it from between her thighs. What a confusion of mouths and juices! I remembered this moment last spring—not that I'd ever really forgotten it—when I was standing in front of three erotic drawings by Pascin, one of which showed a couple naked and embracing in a bare room with only a bowl of fruit for extra company.

I was in a small gallery in the village of Ein Kerem, near Jerusalem. I had been traveling on museum business and a friend had tipped me off to the Pascins. They were for sale at a high price, but reasonably high, and I thought it would be a coup for the little museum that I run in New York if I could bring them back.

To tell the truth I wanted to impress the trustees. I'd been in trouble ever since the sheep and I needed to reestablish myself. I should have known that a conceptual artist herding twenty sheep, each stenciled with stars of David and the Palestinian flag, into three rooms on the Upper East Side wouldn't go down well, but I'd figured that what was good enough for the Venice Biennale should have been good enough for the Little Museum of Jewish Art. "Let's get back to taste," Ross and Krentzman said to me at our Monday morning meeting (the philistines), "charcoal on paper, something like that." They packed me off to Israel to buy anything I could find that was art but inoffensive.

Anyway, there I was in this low-ceilinged white room checking out the Pascins and thinking about Hermine when who should come in but Hermine! "Julius!" she said. "My God, what are you doing here?" She looked as pleased to see me as I was shocked to see her, doubly shocked because as soon as she spoke I saw that it wasn't Hermine but her little sister Erith who had been fourteen, furtive, and angry the last time I had seen her, more than ten years ago.

We went and sat in a nearby garden café and held hands in silence for a while as if the two of us really had been the lovers. Butterflies fluttered around our heads and a waiter with an old-fashioned stomach (the kind that hangs over the trouser belt—you simply don't see them in New York anymore) brought our coffee. Erith told me her story. She had been borne over to Israel on the tiny, crestless wave of emigration from Upper Manhattan that followed the Yom Kippur War. She had met a painter and married him. With money borrowed from her father (did I remember that corrupt individual and his fraudulent business practices?), she had opened this gallery. She didn't show her husband's work—he was for other markets—but they both made money and she lived well. I asked about Hermine. Erith told me that she taught EFL at the College of the Desert in California. She lived alone.

All the time that Erith was talking, I was stoking up twin lusts. The first was for Hermine. I had visions of the old mattress and then, better still, the water bed where she and I had sunk and squelched through three years of Columbia grad school. Every time Erith bent forward to pick up her coffee cup her loose white blouse would expose her cleavage and I'd have this rush of memory, Hermine sitting astride me, her breasts hanging pendulously over my face. But I was also after the Pascins and, in my mind, I had already begun wheeler-dealing, wondering how I could use the "old friends" angle to lower the price. "Come and meet Albert," said Erith, "he's working in his studio." "Love to," I said. I was thinking, "Redemption." "Salvation."

Albert was standing, brush in hand, at the far end of a large shed which we entered through a door at the back of the gallery. When he saw us he ran to grab a tarpaulin and draped it over the canvas he was working on. Looking around I couldn't fathom what he was being so sensitive about. His studio was full of the worst kitsch: sunsets in Jerusalem, sunsets in Safed, the Hebrew alphabet in bright colors, Wailing Wall scenes, bearded *tzaddiks,* all done with a thick palette knife. Albert waved his hand. "For the Americans," he said. He moved around in a small circle covering various other works in progress. All artists, no matter how bad, have their pride I guess. Albert was entitled to his creative privacy if he wanted it.

Albert walked over to us and I noticed that one leg dragged slightly. Erith introduced us. We did the coin-

Jonathan Wilson teaches at Tufts University.

cidence and mistaken identity stuff. Albert gave me a long stare, shook my hand, then slapped me hard on the back, kibbutz-style. Erith said, "Stay for lunch," and I said, no, I had to be getting back to the hotel. Then, as I was going out the front door, I turned into Mr. Nonchalance and said, "Oh, I see you have Pascins." "Yes, aren't they wonderful?" said Erith. I thought for a moment. "He's a great draftsman but there's a soft-porn aspect to his work, sometimes he's almost, you know, kitsch." I didn't want to leave her with the impression that I wasn't at all interested, so I added, "But I'd like to take another look at them." "Come tomorrow night, for dinner, some people are coming over." "I will," I said. "It's good to see you Erith." "You too Julius, you were kind to me when I was a teen." I was glad to hear this information about myself. Kindness wasn't a virtue that I had practiced much in adult life, and now that I knew that I'd been kind in the past it made it easier to be cruel in the present. I was going to rip Erith off—it would balance the relationship.

I yelled, "It was erotic! Erotic!" And do you know what she said? "Eros wasn't a Jewish god."

I went back to the La Romme and searched for my wife—Lucy Krogh—(haven't I mentioned her?) down by the pool. I've been married a long time, Lucy was even around in the time of Hermine. In fact, for a while I was torn between them. Hermine was passionate and loving and super-smart but she had an overbearing mother always dragging the good daughter off to cater to her needs. During one of these absences I took up with Lucy, whom I'd describe as "foreshortened"—in all areas: emotional range, intelligence, height. At first I thought of these attributes as pleasing little-girl qualities and it was a turn-on. But I soon knew that I'd sabotaged myself for the sake of some companionship and extra sex. So why did I marry her? These things aren't easy. Hermine dumped me soon after the sixties kicked in. Her parting words were, "Deep down you're a shallow man, Julius." I was left with an ABD in Art History and a Lucy who was willing to type my thesis. Up in her room Lucy had a collection of MOMA reproduction fertility gods. She'd type, I'd flick through art books and watch TV, then the statues would start to go to work.

"Mr. Pincas," the doorman said when I came up from the pool. "Your wife left a message for you. She's gone to the Islamic Clock Museum, she'll be back later tonight."

I went up to our room, lay on the bed, and stared at the painting (probably done by Albert) of a half-dressed Bathsheba washing at the well. What was currently erotic in my life? Nothing! Those pre-Columbian figures weren't doing it for me anymore. I looked at Bathsheba. Nothing. Suddenly the figure in the painting spoke to me. She used the voice of my Uncle Leon who had once said to me, "Your mother thinks your hair is made of mink." "What do you want from me?" said Bathsheba. "Jews don't do erotics, they do Torah plates and matza covers. If you want slits and members and servants tittering in the corner, you'll have to look somewhere else." "OK," I said to Bathsheba/Leon, what about Pascin? The heaviness of the women's bodies, the unconventional perspective so it feels as if you're standing over one woman or sitting very close to another who has her legs casually parted. What about that? The phone rang. It was Krentzman from New York. "Any luck?" he said. "I'm close to something." "Is it on canvas or livestock?" "I can't hear you," I yelled. "The line, there's interference . . ." and I put the phone down.

The following night we took a cab to Ein Kerem. Lucy brought along her collection of postcards from the clock museum to show me on the way—I'd been too tired to look the night before. As soon as we began the winding descent to the village Lucy said, "This reminds me of parts of Italy." She was always being reminded of somewhere we weren't. The cypresses and pines stood straight up against the darkening sky, terraced olives swirled in gnarled contours, and the open windows of the cab let in the lightest of honeysuckle—or was it jasmine?—scents. It was the kind of night I thought I deserved for being such a mild-mannered guy who did no harm to the world.

The party was on the roof, which itself had a kind of trellised roof draped with vines and hung with dried herbs. The guests were art collectors, other gallery owners, a couple of poets. Next to me sat Mildred Teppish, a woman now in her seventies who had spent most of her life driving around the south of France, visiting studios and buying art. Everyone had heard of the Teppish collection: museum curators humbled themselves when she came into town. On my other side was curly-haired, handsome Albert, who, as the evening progressed, turned out to be the last of the old-style raconteurs. Albert's subject was family: his three fat lipsticked sisters and his parents, all crowded in the Tunisian moonlight of memory on their waterfront home. What a long-suffering woman Bertha Ben Simon had been! After the children had grown up and left, Albert's father, seizing the opportunity, had packed his bags too. Bertha took to her kitchen, boiled water in pots and, for the benefit of the neighbors, carried on loud conversations with an imaginary husband. At this point of the story Albert cried.

I wanted to steer the conversation to the Pascins but

Mrs. Teppish took the wheel. "How on earth did you get those sexy drawings, Erith?" "Ask Albert," Erith said laconically. Mrs. Teppish turned eagerly toward him. I realized that I had a big money rival on the auction floor. Albert began, not with the history of his acquisition, but with the story of Pascin. He told us of the artist's long, boring childhood after the family had moved from Bulgaria to Bucharest, and the even longer hours in his father's grain business. He told us of Pascin's dream of a free life completely devoted to art and how it was achieved in Paris in the years after 1905 when the painter behaved like an oriental prince and trailed a party of fifty in ten taxis from Montmartre to Montparnasse. He described the years in America, Pascin's fascination with the South, his watercolors of Negro jazz musicians in New Orleans, his trips to Cuba, the house that he bought in Charleston, South Carolina. He told of the return to Paris, the exhaustion, the suicidal depressions, and, tragically, the suicide itself, the slit wrists, the note to his lover written in blood on the walls of his studio. "Forgive me."

Albert stopped, as if he were waiting for a chill to creep into the night air. I felt a movement behind my back and turned around. A fig tree pressed its leaves on the roof's side trellis like a child pressing hands on a windowpane. Only Mrs. Teppish remained unabsorbed into the world of the artist; not for her the painter hanging from a peg on his door, the floor strewn with cigarette butts, works piled up all over. "But where did you get the drawings?" she insisted, and her voice was the tinny ring of a till opening and closing. "Ah, that's another story," said Albert, and he dipped his pita into a bowl of babaganoush.

On the way home Lucy stretched out her legs and just failed to touch the back of the driver's seat. "That Albert was such a phoney," she said. "I think he was putting on an accent to go with those dark handsome looks." "Don't be ridiculous," I replied, and I thought how typical of her to be unable to respond when someone was talking about things that mattered—passion, commitment, wildness, and death.

Sunday morning, first thing, I went back to the gallery which had been closed for the Sabbath. Erith was alone, sponging the tiled floor of the two white rooms. I stood in the doorway and looked across to the Pascins. One of them had a square of paper stuck on the wall next to it. I strained my eyes but couldn't make out what was written. I would have to wait for the floor to dry to get close. Erith backed out of the second room and said, "I'll go and make coffee, come up when you're ready Julius." I took off my shoes and stepped across the wet tiles, warm water soaking through the bottom of my socks. The sign,



handwritten in elegant script, said, "On Loan from the Collection of Mrs. Mildred Teppish." I couldn't believe it. I stood holding my shoes in my hands staring back and forth from the label to the drawing, where a woman lay on her side on a bed, her nightdress pushed up to her waist, a dark inviting charcoal smear exposed to the man who crouched on all fours over her. "Something the matter Julius?" said a voice behind me. I kept my silence. "You let out a little cry." "I did? Well, I'm surprised. Mrs. Teppish. How could she? When? I mean . . ." Erith beckoned from the doorway. "Come up and I'll tell you about it." I followed her upstairs to the roof and saw clearly for the first time that in the body anyway, she was not like her sister at all.

Mrs. Teppish, it turned out, had driven away from their house on Friday night only to return in the early hours of Saturday morning—she had tried to get to sleep but couldn't, she had to buy a Pascin, probably all of them, but one would do for now. She offered an enormous amount of money—eighty thousand dollars—more than twice what they were hoping to get for the drawing. They accepted with delight. And why was the drawing still in the gallery? Mrs. Teppish wanted a different frame and Albert was going to change it for her.

I wanted to say, "I'll take the others," but Mrs. T. had raised the stakes considerably and I was in danger of breaking the Little Museum's budget. Ross and Krentzman wouldn't be pleased. To give myself some breathing space I changed the subject. We chatted and took in the pleasant early summer air and stared down off the roof into a neighboring garden where an old woman was feeding a couple of scrawny chickens. It

sounded as if she had the radio on, for some exquisite music was drifting around her and up to us. "What's that music?" I said. "It's the choir practicing," Erith replied, and she waved across the village to a building high up in the hills. "There's a convent there, a few old Russian nuns, they're all in their seventies and eighties, they can't sing the liturgy anymore so they've taken local girls from the village and trained them. They've got Arab girls singing in Old Slavonic—haunting, isn't it?" We listened intently for a while, the chickens scrabbled around in the old woman's yard while on another, lower rooftop, a mother and small son had appeared. They'd made a line of pots out of abandoned sinks and now they were filling them with soil. "Look Erith," I said, "I'll be straight with you. I'm in trouble at home. I've had a disaster. I met this crazy Israeli at a party, Zalman Kevesh, he does this conceptual stuff with sheep. He snowed me, talked with amazing confidence, very intense. Big guy with a beard. You know the way it can be. I gave him a show. No need to go into details but it all backfired. I need the Pascins and I'll give you eighty thousand for the two that are left. I can't go any higher." I didn't want to mention the kindnesses that I'd performed toward her in her lonely teen years—she'd told me that I'd bought her her first camera—but I was hoping that the pulls and tugs of the past would jerk things in my favor. Erith thought a while then said, "Julius, I want to do it, but you'll have to talk to Albert."

Albert was driving to Safed to take his works to a gallery that catered to the tourist trade in kitsch. He invited me to come along with him and although it was close to a three-hour drive, I figured that I had to accept. Between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv he repeated the Friday night stories about growing up in Tunis. Between Tel Aviv and Haifa (we dropped off three rabbis blowing ram's horns and two Jerusalem sunsets at a Tel Aviv gallery), Albert described his life in Paris. He had arrived penniless in 1959. After a series of menial jobs he had met Vidil Moses. This woman, Pascin's last mistress, was close to sixty. Albert became her driver and shopper, then personal assistant, and finally he had become her lover, yes, her lover! It was Vidil who had encouraged him to paint and, timidly at first, but then with increasing confidence and skill he had become Albert the artist, filling their apartment off the Avenue Foche with colorful works that Vidil's friends wickedly described as belonging to the "Infantile" school of art. But Albert knew the paintings were true as his heart.

From Haifa to Safed I learned that after Vidil's death, Albert, friendless in Paris and short on cash, had come to Israel and remade himself as an Israeli artist specializing in biblical scenes (Jacob and the mess of pottage was his favorite). Again people scoffed, but Albert had confidence in himself and expected to make money. He didn't. Two wars came and went, Albert got a bullet in the ankle. Times were hard. Then, like magic, on his fiftieth birthday good luck came Albert's way. A French official called him from Paris; a codicil to Vidil's will had been discovered. She had bequeathed him the three Pascins!

Hermine dumped me soon after the sixties kicked in. Her parting words were, "Deep down you're a shallow man, Julius."

By now we were in Safed and walking up the last steps of a narrow stone stairway. We had come around to the back of the gallery. Albert pushed open a door into a room crowded with canvases. I put down the two paintings that he had given me to carry. "The Pascins," I said. "Will you sell them to me?" "You want all three," he said. "I can't do it." "I know," I said. "I understand that Mrs. Teppish has already bought one." "That's right." Albert looked at me with his beautiful open face and began to smile. "But I like you Julius," he said. "And in a way we are like brothers—you and Erith's sister, Erith and me." He made a small circle with his thumb and forefinger and slowly pushed a finger of his other hand back and forth through the hole. It was a vulgarity that I somehow hadn't expected from him. He asked me if I'd buy all three drawings if I could and I said, "Yes, but I can't match Mrs. Teppish's prices and anyway . . ." Albert interrupted me. "She hasn't paid anything yet, nothing is signed. But tell me, Julius, why should I lose forty thousand dollars, even if you are my brother-in-love."

Well, he had me there, but on the other hand I sensed that he *wanted* to sell the drawings to me and this I understood perfectly well. We all have these impulses and sometimes we'll take a financial loss for the unqualified good feeling that the other transaction gives us. Mrs. Teppish was horrible. I'd seen her in action. And who would see the drawings? Only Mrs. Teppish and her rich friends. At the Little Museum thousands would wander by and be thrilled. "OK, Albert," I thought. "Good man. You want to go where your feelings are taking you, and it's not a mistake. You'll still wind up over six figures." Albert must have been reading my thoughts. "I'll sell you the Teppish drawing for sixty thousand and the others at your original offer." "Done," I said. "Ross and Krentzman can come up with

another twenty grand. Let them take it out of their JNF contributions to Israel." "Tell them my name is Israel," said Albert and we shook hands.

On the way back to Jerusalem Albert was surprisingly silent. We came down the fast way, through Tiberias, and stopped there for a late lunch. We sat in a restaurant overlooking the Kinneret and ate St. Peter's fish. Albert was almost glum. "What's the matter?" I said, "You've just made a lot of money." "Yes," he said, "but it's still hard to part with them." "I understand this," I replied, my heart beating fast. "It's a sort of post-coital *tristesse* undergone by artists and owners alike. I imagine you know it from both sides. Writers don't have the same problem; they write something and they can reproduce it as many times as they want. Words are easily translatable, into books, onto photocopying paper, down fax machines. But for a painter it's *einmal* only. You know Kundera? *Einmal ist keinmal.* You sell your work you never see it again. Same for a collector, you sell it, it's gone. It's the pain of the potty, that first recognition that something you've made is flushing away. Nasty." Albert had been looking at me with increasing skepticism and I supposed that there was something about my babble that he found incompatible with the setting—tranquil lake, fishermen fixing nets. But then the expression on his face changed and he yelled. "But what if what you have created stinks? My work stinks! You think I don't know that? I can part with that crap without shedding a tear. But the Pascins are special! The drawings are alive! Sometimes I imagine that I have slept with his women. They are my heart's darlings and my centerfolds. I never saw such. Hair! Breasts! Half dressed! Undressed! Rear views! Front views!"

I felt sorry for the guy. When we were back in the car I said, "Are you sure you want to go ahead with this Albert?" He looked straight ahead for a while but then slowly nodded his head in assent.

The next day I sent two cables to Ross and Krentzman. The first said, "Dear Mel and Chet. Go suck on shankbone." This was a mental cable. The second, which I actually sent, said, "Little Museum Makes Big Purchase: Pascins at Bargain Price." Albert and I had set an official exchange time for late that night. I had to get a bank check and he had to draw up the documents of authenticity. So I found myself with a celebratory day off and as I was feeling good I acquiesced when Lucy said that she wanted to spend a day at the beach.

We took a *sherut* down to Tel Aviv. The seven passengers were five Hasidim and ourselves. None of them were allowed to touch Lucy so she got squeezed up between me and the door. All five chain-smoked and averted their eyes from my wife whose skirt slid up her thighs every time I shifted on the bench seat. Or did they avert? I thought I caught a few sneaks and even started to get the feeling that Lucy was enjoying herself.


©1990 Gemini G.E.L., L.A., CA

Provincetown *Saul Steinberg*

Out near the Sheraton hotel we found a nice deserted beach but it turned out to be divided for religious purposes into male and female precincts. A hundred yards down the sand it was all bronzed flesh and brazen swimsuits. Lucy said she'd rather swim where it was quiet and I said, "That's OK, but you'll have to stay without me." I wandered over to the crowded beach and found a spot to dump my stuff. It was noisy: radios were blaring, kids were playing paddleball. I walked down to the water, it was a sour, uninviting, urinous green, but I swam nevertheless, bobbing the warm waves with a bunch of screaming ten-year-olds. I showered off the salt, then went and lay face down on my towel. The sounds of the beach and the crashing waves rolled over me.

A procession was coming toward me across the sand. It looked like a group of whores from some Jazz Age Paris bordello. They were all in frilly nightdresses with garishly painted faces. Tel Aviv's red light district was nearby on Hayarkon Street, but this looked like beach theater. Two girls came and stood over me; from my supine perspective they loomed enormously large. One was squeezing her breasts and rolling her eyes in some horrible parody of a whore, the other looked distraught. In heavily accented English the sad one said, "But how are we going to cut them back on?" I saw that the buttons of her nightdress were hanging by their threads. "No, no," I said. "You mean *sew* them back on." She raised up her palms to me as if to say, "What can I do?" Her hands were two bloody stumps severed at the wrists.

I must have slept for a while, long enough for the sun to have burned the back of my neck. I wrapped my shirt into a scarf, wetted it under a nearby fountain and wrapped it around my neck. I walked over to the empty religious beach (what a waste of seafront sand!) and found Lucy. While she was changing I told her my dream.

We went to eat at Zelig's on Ibn Gavirol street. While

we were waiting for our salads I said, "That dream has got something to do with the Pascins." Lucy was ready for me. "Brilliant," she said. "You really picked something up in therapy." Then she started in about my narcissism and vanity. "You don't think of anyone except yourself," that kind of thing. For good measure she added, "And you think you're such a stud." I took umbrage. "I have to get my pleasures elsewhere because I don't get them from you." "Look, Julius," she said. "Don't get nasty just because I don't want to play fruit salad with you." "How do you know about that?" "You told me, of course, right after we met, practically on the first date. You were stoned and trying to get me into bed. I think you thought the story would turn me on." "And did it?" "Unlike Hermine I don't find plums stimulating accessories. I'd rather have something that's still attached to the bough, that blooms while it fades, know what I mean?" "Not exactly," I said, but I did know that she was on a roll and things were going badly for me. I tried catching the waiter's eye. (Bring that food!) "It's you Julius," I heard Lucy continue. "You're the one who's 'not there.' You look at paintings and drawings all day, and all night you look at pictures in your head." "Everybody does that." "You don't see my body." "That's because you don't like to expose it." And we were off sniping and wounding. She wouldn't let up about that plum, so finally I yelled, "It was erotic! Erotic!" And do you know what she said? "Eros wasn't a Jewish god."

We got back to Jerusalem about six-thirty and I went off to meet Albert. I waited at the Cafe Rondo for half an hour. No one came. I had the bank check in my pocket and I kept touching it to make sure that it hadn't disappeared. It was a warm evening and the place was almost empty, most people were out strolling. The few of us who were there sat outside on the terrace overlooking a small park. In front of us, in a fenced-off garden area, two municipal workers were struggling with a heavy sculpture, trying to set it in place on a plinth. They looked exhausted and had clearly been working for some time on what was more than a two-man job. The sculpture looked like an Arp, some kind of anthropomorphic female form. The workers tried to get a grip, they spread their arms around the stone curves, pressed their bodies to it and heaved. Nothing moved. They tried turning their backs, then one turned and put his arm through a lacuna and lifted, then they pushed and rocked and hugged. Finally, the sculpture shifted, but as it did so it momentarily trapped one of the workers' feet. He let out a yell that stopped the evening walkers in their tracks. Crushed by Art! *That's* why the Jews were suspicious of graven images: the Egyptians had crushed them with Art! Sculpture brought tribal nightmares to us all.

While all this was going on Erith had come onto the terrace and pulled up a chair next to mine. She was smiling. "The drawings are in the car," she said, "but let me get some coffee." "Are you crazy?" I said. "Let's get the art *now* and put it in security at the hotel. And where's Albert?" I asked. "Didn't he want to come to collect the big prize?" Erith shook her head. "He's depressed. He went for a walk, said he was going up to the convent." "Not to join, I hope." I was full of laughs, triumphant, benevolent, home free. I handed over the check.

Kindness wasn't a virtue that I had practiced much in adult life, and now that I knew that I'd been kind in the past it made it easier to be cruel in the present.

Before going down to security I decided to take a quick look at my purchases. I went up to the room and laid the drawings out on the bed. There they were, the heavy women and the skimpy men, the bowl of fruit (apples). The lines were a little thicker than I had remembered them, the draftsmanship less exquisite than I had first thought—but they were masterpieces nonetheless. More than that, they were masterpieces of Modern Jewish Art. Ross and Krentzman would be delighted. "You're a genius," I said to myself, and then, with a nod at the drawings, I added, "You too Pascin."

But what about poor old Albert? I couldn't leave the man down and out when he had turned out to be my redeemer in Zion. I decided to pay him a visit and cheer him up. I'd tell him some of the things that he could buy with his money. Or, better still, I'd tell him what a fine person he was for elevating himself above the material.

Down in the lobby I spotted Mrs. Teppish. "Hey, Milly," I shouted as she was crossing the floor. "What's up in the World of Art?" I closed on her remembering only at the last minute that I had better not gloat over my victory. She didn't know it was the sweetness of my personality that had lured Albert out of her clutches. "Mr. Pincas," she said, fishing my name out of a dank pond. "The Pascins, did you buy them?" I was taken aback and I wasn't quite sure what to say. Well, what did it matter now? "Yes," I said. "I bought them all." "I *knew* you would," she said. "You had that look in your eyes, you know. You must be very interested in the erotic." I let this pass. "Nowadays," she went on, "I prefer work that's a little less exciting, if you get my point." The point? The point was that she was a bad

loser pretending that she hadn't given a damn anyway. Or was that the point? In the taxi on the way to Ein Kerem I started to think a little. By the time we stopped at Albert's place I was in a fury of anticipation. I ran around the back of the house to Albert's studio. It was locked. I picked up an iron rod from a nearby heap of rubble—there are dumps like this all over Jerusalem—and forced the door of Albert's studio. The place was as before: a few paintings leaned on the walls, a work in progress (rabbi with ram's horn at sunset) was on the easel. But now I saw another door that I hadn't noticed on my first visit. It too was locked, and I had to go to work again. This time the door swung open onto an immaculate space—the studio of an architect or an illustrator, or a forger! I ran to the clean white work desk: pinned to a bulletin board above it were a line of black and white photographs. They were small and half were out of focus; they looked as if they had been taken with a kid's first camera; and they showed Hermine and me on her water bed rolling, grappling, panting, and, in the last one, screaming open mouthed.

I sped down through the terraced olive groves then up through a copse of fig trees. I could see the convent in the distance but I had no idea how to get to it. At the top of the hill, out of breath, I paused to rest by a tree. Some strange, globular, semi-translucent fruit hung from its branches. I put my hand out to touch one of them; it was sticky, not altogether pleasant. Suddenly a voice, Albert's, but slurred and loud, came out of nowhere. "Do you know what you are touching?" he said. "The testicles of the leaders of the American Jewish community." He laughed drunkenly. I crested the hill and saw him on a pinnacle thirty feet above me, from which vantage point he had spied me under the tree. He was sitting on a large rock to one side of the convent gate, a two-liter wine bottle cradled on his knees. I wanted to grab him by the throat but we were separated by a ravine twenty feet wide. Below us was a dizzying drop into what looked like a well on the outskirts of the village. For a moment it was silent, then the voices of the convent choir began to rise in praise and lament. I started to speak but Albert was ahead of me. "I put my heart into them," he yelled. "The rest doesn't matter." He stood up from the rock and arched the wine bottle down into the ravine; it spun and curved a long time before hitting the ground. No sound reached us, but a group of small figures scattered and gesticulated. I took a step forward and almost lost my footing. The sun was sinking in a great flame behind Albert's back, the sky looked like one of his paintings come alive. "Ross and Krentzman will kill you," I shouted. It was pathetic. □

Zipporah

Shirley Kaufman

... the Lord met him, and sought to kill him. Then Zipporah took a sharp stone and cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast it at his feet ...

—Exodus 4:24, 25

Something went wrong
when he told her
to pack their bags
and went on listening
to voices she couldn't hear.

It wasn't her job,
this blood on her fingers,
this cut flesh red as a love-bite
in the sand.

The desert widens between them
like an endless argument.
His mouth's too soft
for God's omnivorous rage.
The fish will die and the river
stink and lice and flies
and boils and the rest.
Slice of the covenant: blood
on the doors.

He's off to his mountain.
She'll lose
what she saves,
fall out of the future
thankless, nothing to lean on
but her own arms,
holding the small face
unfathered anyway, crying
between her hands.

Shirley Kaufman's most recent book of poems is Claims *(Sheep Meadow Press, 1984).*

Current Debate: Circumcision Decision

A Painful Case

Lisa Braver Moss

Ask ten Jews a simple question, the saying goes, and you'll get at least eleven answers. But ask the same ten what they think about circumcision and the choral response will be loud and clear: Jewish baby boys should be circumcised—period.

Indeed, Genesis 17 unequivocally states that we must circumcise our sons in order to fulfill Abraham's covenant with God. The uncircumcised Jew shall suffer the penalty of *karet,* which the rabbis understood to mean "excision at the hand of heaven from the community." *Karet* is also the punishment for such transgressions as idolatry, incest, adultery, and the desecration of the Sabbath. According to the Talmud (*Shabbat* 137b) the very existence of heaven and earth depends on *brit milah* (the covenant of circumcision).

But most of us these days don't follow Halakha to the letter. Why do we strictly observe this one commandment while ignoring so many others? Probably because medicine, tradition, aesthetics, and psychology influence our decision to circumcise our sons. Very few of us practice *brit milah* solely to obey God's commandment.

Judaism requires that commandments be fulfilled with genuine spiritual intent, and *brit milah* is no exception. In his *Guide for the Perplexed,* Moses Maimonides says that one's decision to circumcise the male child should be based on faith alone. Yet one *mohel* estimates that only 10 percent of his clients request his services for *purely* religious reasons. (This doesn't take into account the large number of Jewish circumcisions done by physicians.) Given the gravity of the circumcision commandment and the overwhelming lack of commitment to the commandments on the part of most contemporary Jews, it makes sense to counter the pro-circumcision chorus and question our attitudes toward *brit milah* as Jews have practiced it through the ages.

The issue at hand is pain—pain, and what it means to be Jewish. I think it's safe to say that, deep into their eighth-day ritual festivities, most Jewish parents have their pride and sense of solidarity with tradition interrupted by the nagging question: "Why are we doing this?" Our tradition strictly forbids us from causing *tza-ar ba'alei khayyim,* pain to living things. The *Encyclopedia Judaica* points out that "even the necessary inflicting of pain is frowned upon as 'cruel'" in both halakhic and ethical rabbinic literature. Many of us have resolved the conflict between this Jewish principle and *brit milah* by believing that infants don't feel pain when they are circumcised.

The notion that infants don't feel pain has been an accepted medical view for hundreds of years. In the thirteenth century, Maimonides, a physician as well as a rabbi, wrote in regard to circumcision that "a child does not suffer as much pain as a grown-up man because his membrane is still soft and his imagination weak." As recently as the 1980s, premature infants were still undergoing major surgery with *no* anesthesia at some well-known U.S. hospitals.

But in September 1987, largely in response to lawsuits filed by parents whose infants had undergone surgery without anesthesia, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) published a formal statement challenging the assumption that infants differ from adults in their ability to feel pain. The statement recommends that anesthesia be used on every infant undergoing surgery, unless the infant is high-risk or "potentially unstable." According to Nance Cunningham Butler, an ethicist with Yale University's Program for Humanities in Medicine, safe anesthetic agents *are* available for use on infants in most situations; infants demonstrate the same responses to injury that adults do; and even premature infants have the physical capacity for memory and may suffer both short-term and long-term negative effects of early painful experiences. The AAP statement concludes:

> The decision to withhold [anesthesia] should be based on the same medical criteria used for older patients. The decision should not be based solely on the infant's age or perceived degree of cortical maturity.

Local anesthesia has been available for infant circumcisions since the 1970s. The dorsal penile nerve block, consisting of an injection of lidocaine at each side of the root of the penis, has been shown in medical studies to be a relatively safe and effective anesthetic agent for newborn circumcision. Although research about this procedure is still limited, the nerve block has been shown to reduce crying as well as changes in heart rate and blood pressure for most infants during circumcision. Infants who are given the nerve block also exhibit less behavioral distress during the twenty-four hours following the surgery.

One would think that the availability of the nerve block would be of great interest to the Jewish community. On the contrary, despite the fact that local anesthesia for circumcision is halakhically permissible, almost all Jewish circumcisions are still being done without it.

I have found it nearly as hard to generate a dialogue about anesthesia in the Jewish community as to question the practice of *brit milah* itself. And

---

Lisa Braver Moss is a freelance writer living in San Francisco. She has two young sons.

while I have managed to stir some interest in the subject among Jewish peers and leaders, pain relief is still seen largely as a nonissue. Bringing up the topic usually elicits responses ranging from the lighthearted and dismissive ("The anesthesia might go to better use on me than on the infant") to the defensive ("I was circumcised without anesthesia and it certainly didn't do *me* any harm"). I sense an underlying anxiety that, if we acknowledge infants' pain and discuss anesthesia, we may call the entire ritual into question. And that's taboo.

But suppose we found, after an evaluation of the pain that the ritual entails, that a Jewish argument *against* circumcision could be made. Judaism would not fall apart. The beauty of Halakha is that it has the capacity to recognize and integrate advances in empirical knowledge. Beyond this, the fact remains that most Jews feel themselves bound less by Halakha than by a vaguely defined commitment to be "ethical." But if my own experience is any indication, re-evaluating the ritual may actually strengthen Judaism; I am a far more committed Jew now than I was before I began to question *brit milah*.

Let's look at some common Jewish misconceptions about circumcision and pain:

• *Lack of crying indicates lack of pain.* It is often said that many infants don't even cry during circumcision. The medical explanation for this phenomenon is that these babies are experiencing neurogenic shock, that is, withdrawing into a state of diminished responsiveness in reaction to sudden, massive pain. It is ironic that the absence of crying is used as evidence that circumcision doesn't hurt.

• *History makes right.* It is also said that since circumcision has been practiced without anesthesia for thousands of years, it must be OK. Few of us today would use this reasoning to condone slavery, child abuse, or even the subordinate role of women throughout most of Jewish history.

• *It's the restraint, not the surgery.* Some say that infants are upset because they are held down, not because of the surgery itself. This is pure conjecture, but even if it could be proved, I fail to see how such a distinction justifies the withholding of anesthesia.

• *"I didn't undergo any great trauma."* Jewish men often point out that they were circumcised without anesthesia and they turned out fine. I suggest we cannot establish whether or not they turned out fine. We do not have a control group (an identical uncircumcised group to use for comparison).

• *Pain is part of life.* Some concede that the infant feels pain, but maintain that pain is part of life. Unfortunately, the infant will discover this soon enough even without circumcision. In any case, though pain is undeniably part of life, Halakha does *not* mandate pain as part of the circumcision.

• *Anesthesia is risky.* Some people confuse the risks of general anesthesia with the much smaller risks of local anesthesia. Though research on the subject is limited, complications due to the nerve block appear to be extremely rare.

• *Circumcision is over so quickly, it would be silly to give an anesthetic.* Many are unaware of the painful procedure the baby must undergo in addition to the cutting off of the foreskin. The *mohel* or physician must sever the membrane between the baby's foreskin and his glans, either by inserting a blade or probe all around the glans or by retracting the foreskin very hard. This procedure may well be as painful as the actual cutting. Some *mohels* do this manipulation before the ceremony begins, creating the impression that the procedure involves only the cutting of the foreskin. Circumcision involves more than this.

• Mohels *are so fast, anesthesia is unnecessary.* It is sometimes said that if a doctor does the operation, it may be "worth" using anesthesia, but if a *mohel* does it, it probably isn't (*mohels* are usually faster than doctors). I would argue that surgery is surgery, and that unless one is an accomplished yogi, surgery hurts. And unlike adults, infants do not understand that pain is temporary.

• *But they're given wine.* The ceremonial wine given to infants is sometimes mistaken for an anesthetic agent. It would be dangerous to give an infant enough alcohol to make him unaware of the surgery.

• *It's harder on the parents than on the baby.* While it is certainly important to examine the pressures on parents regarding *brit milah,* discussions of who suffers more at a bris only take the focus away from the obvious: the baby is suffering.

If we are circumcising our sons for reasons that are not purely religious, then circumcision is a medical procedure, and we ought to consider using anesthesia as an appropriate way to do surgery. If, on the other hand, we *are* circumcising our sons for purely religious reasons, we ought to consider using anesthesia as a logical way to protect living creatures from undue pain, as mandated by Jewish law.

Childbirth lore promotes the notion that parent-child bonding occurs just moments after birth. Such was not my experience with either of my sons. Especially the first time, it took me weeks to develop what I would consider a maternal instinct, and months to feel that I truly knew my child.

When my first son was circumcised, I cried not for the suffering of my infant, but because *I* felt bullied by this part of being Jewish. I felt my husband and I were failing our son, despite the fact that we were doing the "right" thing by Jewish standards and despite the fact that I wanted my son to be accepted as a Jew. I blamed myself for letting cultural and social factors affect a decision that I felt should be purely religious. My bond with my son was not yet strong enough for me to experience his suffering as primary and my own as secondary.

When my first son was circumcised, I felt bullied by this part of being Jewish.

I'm sure some people do experience strong instant bonding with their newborns. But no matter how powerful the initial connection, it cannot be as powerful as the connection that develops over time; even the most loved and welcomed and "bonded-to" newborn is a stranger in the family compared to an older infant or child. Maimonides was well aware of this when he advocated circumcision on the eighth day:

> The parents of a child that is just born take lightly matters concerning it, for up to that time the imaginative form that compels the parents to love it is not yet consolidated. For this imaginative

> form increases through habitual contact and grows with the growth of the child.... The love of the father and of the mother for the child when it has just been born is not like their love for it when it is one year old, and their love for it when it is one year old is not like their love when it is six years old.

Maimonides encourages us to take advantage of our natural indifference to our infants, for without this indifference, we might not be able to do what tradition demands.

But is it right from a Jewish point of view to do something to a "stranger" just because one would not feel comfortable doing it to a person one knows well? What about the commandment to love the stranger? According to Rabbi Herbert S. Goldstein, Professor of Homiletics at Yeshiva University, the rabbis interpreted this commandment as a warning "first of all not to pain or annoy him at all." Goldstein continues:

> The Talmud mentions that the precept to love, or not to oppress, the strangers occurs thirty-six times in the Torah. The reason for this constantly repeated exhortation is ... that those who have been downtrodden frequently prove to be the worst oppressors when they acquire power over anyone.

Again, *brit milah* without anesthesia conflicts with Jewish principle.

The nerve block does not completely resolve the conflict between *brit milah* and the halakhic ban on the causing of pain. Circumcision is traumatic for an infant whether he is anesthetized or not. Until the wound heals over a few days after the surgery, the skin will be raw, nerve block or no. The injections themselves are painful. And anesthesia does not address the fact that, if nothing else, it is surely unpleasant and frightening for the baby to be held down against his will for the operation.

Why do I think the nerve block is so important? It is the best we have at present to lessen the pain of infant circumcision. But aside from this obvious reason, I believe using anesthesia will help us see *brit milah* for what it is—elective surgery on sentient beings. Only with this perspective can we enter into a fresh discussion not only of how, but of whether we should continue with this ancient ritual. □

Gainful Pain

Rabbi Daniel Landes and Sheryl Robbin

Opposition to *brit milah* has a history. Greco-Roman culture and Christianity, for differing reasons, were revulsed by it.

For the classical world, *brit milah* marred the perfect body and signaled an intense sexual identity that misanthropically excluded non-Jewish partners. Says Tacitus, in the *Histories:*

> The Jews are extremely loyal toward one another, and always ready to show compassion, but toward every other people they feel only hate and enmity. They sit apart at meals and they sleep apart, and although as a race, they are prone to lust, they abstain from intercourse with foreign women, yet among themselves nothing is unlawful. They adopted circumcision to distinguish themselves from other peoples by this difference. Those who are converted to their ways follow the same practice ...

Both as an affront to nature and as a manifestation of the separateness of Jewish sexuality, *brit milah* was looked upon with horror. Some Jews accepted these claims. Hellenistic Jewish men, embarrassed to be truly naked in the gymnasiums, had painful operations to reverse the "blemish" of their circumcision and their consequently unnatural bodies.

Paul rejected the corporeal sign of *brit milah* and insisted that "real circumcision is that of the heart" (Romans 2:29). He saw the flesh as the enemy of the spirit—so that inner circumcision is properly "the complete stripping of your body of flesh" (Colossians 2:11), that is, a rejection of sexuality. In short, for the classical world, *brit milah* shows the Jew in opposition to nature and humanity; for Christianity, bodily circumcision reveals the Jew's profound alienation from God.

The contemporary attack upon circumcision, as reflected in Lisa Braver Moss's article, unites both the classical and the Christian claims in a particularly nasty mixture. *Brit milah* is accused of being an unnatural act whose distinguishing mark is the infliction of pain upon a terrified infant, and at the same time it is depicted as an event which lacks transcendent meaning. The force of this attack derives from a barely hidden supposition: Jewish men have been deeply damaged by the inherent abuse of *brit milah*. And this hurt is inflicted from father to son, generation to generation, as with any abusive familial syndrome. The only way out, we are "sympathetically" told, is to stop the abuse. First we must transform *brit milah* into an anesthetized surgical procedure. This, however, is only a temporary measure; the community is to initiate a "dialogue" on circumcision with the clear purpose of junking the whole process.

Braver Moss is surprised at the depth

Rabbi Daniel Landes holds the University Chair in Jewish Ethics and Values at Yeshiva University of Los Angeles. Sheryl Robbin, a writer, has graduate degrees in social work and in human development.

of attachment to circumcision felt by Jews of all persuasions. But *brit milah* has compelling meaning for the spiritual, ethical, communal, and sexual dimensions of life. And Maimonides is, in fact, relevant for our contemporary situation.

"Circumcision is the symbol of the covenant which Abraham made in connection with the belief in God's unity," Maimonides explains in *Guide for the Perplexed* (III: 49). Circumcision is thus not an esoteric practice with a remote symbolism; rather, it reflects the central stance of Judaism, which is the belief in the oneness of a God whose sacred image the human bears, and who mandates morality. *Brit milah* is the physical manifestation of Abraham's universal message of ethical monotheism. As Maimonides writes in the *Laws Concerning Idolatry* (I:3): "[*Brit milah* is] the smashing of idols . . . and the proclamation in a loud voice to the whole world of the message that there is One God for the entire world."

The covenant of circumcision also operates socially between Jews who thereby form community. Again, in the *Guide*: "It gives all Jewish people a common bodily sign. There is much love and assistance among people who are so united." *Brit milah* represents Jewish solidarity and commitment. Further, this identity is determined positively. It rejects Sartre's notion that Jewish identity is determined from the outside by a world that labels one as Jewish. Instead, *brit milah* is based on identity that we proudly confer upon ourselves and our sons. Finally, *brit milah*'s sheer physicality determines full equality of identity for all Jewish men.

Maimonides' third reason for circumcision—"it counteracts excessive lust"—relates to the gender specificity of circumcision. The question of proper initiation ceremonies for infant females apart, *brit milah* in itself is an assertion of the Torah that a specific sacrifice needs to be demanded from the male in order to insure the Jewishness and the humanity of his sexuality.

Every culture constructs its vision of the body in the image it has of society. As Mary Douglas demonstrates in *Purity and Danger*:

> Societies, like other bounded groups, are vulnerable at their intersection with other groups. Thus much attention is paid in many societies to the orifices of the human body, for here matter passes from the outside to the inside, and vice versa. Societies which deem it important to maintain their separateness will also guard . . . against intrusion and pollution . . . and this may be symbolized through taboos on food and sex.

Some have assumed that in a Jewish context this has meant solely the "guarding" of Jewish women from sexual contact with foreign men. *Brit milah* balances this restriction upon women with an absolute requirement that all male sexual relations be likewise in-group and covenantal. Jewish men are not allowed to "experiment" on the outside, much less to marry non-Jewish women. To do so is to reject the very mark of the covenant that defines them from birth. The search for non-Jewish women constitutes a betrayal of the community and oneself.

The institution of *brit milah* is also meant to overcome and harness the natural. The male is not considered perfect at birth. His sexual drive is understood as a blessing and a potential engine for *mitzvah*, but unchecked it is the *yetzer hara*, the evil inclination. The concern is not only for the obsessive hold that sexuality can have upon men, but more for the violence it has meant for millennia to women. Jewish life has always striven to free women from sexual, physical, and economic enslavement to men. Halakha would agree with Susan Brownmiller that male genitalia serve "as a weapon to generate fear" and that "his forcible entry into her body, despite her physical protestations and struggle, becomes the vehicle of his victorious conquest over her being, the ultimate test of his superior strength, the triumph of his manhood." *Brit milah* is a protest against this natural propensity of men. It attempts a *tikkun*, a repair of nature, and affirms the value of sexuality through restraint. Circumcision is a sign of the Law that seeks to set both women and men free from all bondage.

Brit milah does not of itself magically render Jewish males sexually humane, romantically selective, socially aware, and ethically monotheistic. For observant and nonobservant Jews alike, however, this practice resonates within the deepest structures of the Jewish collective unconscious and leads toward Jewish and human refinement. *Orlah*, the foreskin, represents the coarseness of unredeemed existence. Thus the Bible speaks of those whose ears cannot hear the truth (Jeremiah 6:10), whose mouth cannot speak (Exodus 6:12), and whose heart cannot feel (Leviticus 26:41 and Ezekiel 44:9), as *'arelim*, uncircumcised. They need circumcision, the redemptive transformation of these faculties.

The concern is not only for the obsessive hold that sexuality can have upon men, but more for the violence it has meant for millennia to women.

The *brit milah* ceremony begins with the mother bringing the child into the room where the circumcision is to be performed. The assembled group welcomes her and the baby, and the child is then handed to the *kvater* and *kvaterin* (male and female godparents), sometimes a childless couple as a hope for their own fertility. They hold the infant until he is placed on the *kesei shel eliyahu*, the chair of Elijah. Then he is taken by the *sondek* (advocate), often a grandfather or older family member, who gently but firmly holds the baby for the ceremony. In this manner both the contemporary community and family become active participants in the event, which is hardly, as Braver Moss describes it, "distancing." The *kesei shel eliyahu* refers at once to a prophetic past and a future messianic time of reconciliation: "Lo, I will send the prophet Elijah to you. . . . He shall turn the heart of the parents to the children, and the heart of the children to their parents" (Malachi 3:23–24). Following the circumcision, the infant receives his name. Thus, through an act whose essence is four thousand years old and whose particular liturgy has existed for two thousand years, the infant is welcomed into the historical *and* contemporary community.

So much for the defense of tradition. Braver Moss's argument that circumcision is antithetical to the Jewish principle of not causing distress to any living creature still needs to be addressed.

Within their discussion of anesthesia, the halakhic experts understand that *brit milah* is considered the first step on the path of raising Jewish children into a life of active and conscious good acts. The first one to deal with the question was Meir Arik of Galacia (1855–1926) in his *Imre Yosher* (II:140). He points out that the rabbis of the Talmud were well aware of anesthetic medicines. They did not suggest them for circumcision, he deduces, because they did not want the baby anesthetized. Indeed, he implies, we value the pain, for this is like the pain that Abraham endured at his late circumcision and for which he was rewarded. Rabbi Arik's ruling, however, was contradicted by subsequent authorities, including the Kishinev Rabbi and martyr Yehudah Lev Czirelsohn (1860–1941) (*Ma'arche Lev* 53). The latter decisively points out that pain is not a necessary element of *brit milah*. Anesthesia thus could be used.

But is it wise to do so? While permitting those who wish to use a local anesthetic, the twentieth-century luminary Rabbi J. J. Weinberg of Montreux disapproves of changing custom. His argument against general anesthesia has relevance for the use of a local:

> Nonetheless it appears that one should not induce a general anesthetic to the infant, even though he has no intent [regarding the commandment]. In all cases we treat the infant the same way we treat an adult [convert], that in initiating him into the Covenant of Abraham our Father through circumcision, we circumcise his flesh. And if we induce a general anesthetic then he will be as an inanimate stone and we do not establish a covenant with a stone; and such a cutting of the foreskin would be in human eyes as an act of violence and not an initiation into the covenant of Abraham our Father [*Sredai Aish* 3:6].

The point is to have the infant *there* as a participant in the event, without being numbed by anesthesia, either general or local. In the words of the liturgy subsequent to the act: "This infant will be an adult. And just as he has entered into the covenant so shall he enter into the Torah, the nuptial canopy, and into good acts."

Braver Moss assumes that pain is a noxious condition always to be avoided. But parents frequently make decisions for their children that involve temporary pain. For example, no child enjoys receiving immunizations. Yet the benefit to being protected from diseases that often leave children disabled is seen to outweigh momentary pain. Similarly, when our daughter was two and a half she suffered a greenstick fracture to her arm. In the emergency room the orthopedist discussed our options for treating her. We chose to have him cast the arm and rebreak it without anesthesia in the emergency room; although the pain was intense it was less complicated than using general anesthesia to rebreak the arm. Thus we were able to remain with her throughout the procedure and to bring her home that evening, avoiding a more prolonged hospital stay.

But even as a medical procedure Braver Moss's suggestion makes no sense. The American Academy of Pediatrics recently revised their recommendation on circumcision. The most recent paper ("PedCom AAP Member Alert," March 10, 1989) states that there is a slight advantage to having an infant boy circumcised and that physicians should discuss this topic with the parents. At the same time, when circumcision is carried out in the hospital no local anesthesia is recommended. In a newborn infant, neural connections are not well developed. The amount of pain and the bodily perception of pain is therefore minimal and is not worth even the slight risk of complications that could result from the dorsal penile block. These risks include the possibility of seizures, blood clots, or irritating an artery and causing the blood supply to clamp down. (In the case of a delayed *brit milah* for an older infant of three months or more, both physicians and rabbis generally recommend that a general anesthesia be used.) Braver Moss is therefore advocating a procedure with known risks for an infant who usually falls asleep a short time after the circumcision.

The gaining of freedom, the establishment of community, the initiation of true selfhood, and the evoking of the covenant are not achieved without a cost. Many secular Jews have shown themselves equally committed to these ends, even as they have debated the substantive meaning of their content. Persecution and martyrdom has been the lot of many who have adhered to *brit milah*. For us the cost is measured by a wince of (empathetic) momentary pain and by a few drops of blood. Both are real enough but they are not of ultimate significance:

> Tinneius Rufus the wicked asked Rabbi Akiba: "Why does not God have male children born circumcised since he prefers that Jews be circumcised?" Rabbi Akiba answered: "The commandments were given to the Jewish people in order to cleanse and to purify them, as it is said: 'The words of God mean to purify'" (Proverbs 30:5) [*Yalkut Shimoni,* Tazria 12]. □

Book Review

The Politics of Deadlock

Fred Siegel

The Politics of Rich and Poor: Wealth and the American Electorate in the Reagan Aftermath by Kevin Phillips. Random House, 1990, 256 pp.

Politics by Other Means: The Declining Importance of Elections in America by Benjamin Ginsberg and Martin Shefter. Basic Books, 1990, 226 pp.

"The Democrats are history's second most capitalist party," Kevin Phillips tells us in his new book, *The Politics of Rich and Poor.* This is an echo of Louis Hartz's famous insight that in America, a land without a feudal past, there were neither antibourgeois Tories nor Laborites. As Hartz wrote in 1955, "The two great political parties in America represent only one English party, the middle-class (laissez-faire) Liberal party." Phillips has, without quite realizing it, written a book about "American exceptionalism," the unique promise of American life and its betrayal during the Reagan years.

In the 1950s, the American consensus about capitalism, which had been dubbed "exceptionalism" by Alexis de Toqueville, was credited with creating a uniquely nonideological American politics. Both cold-war liberals and conservatives celebrated self-seeking individualism and the separation of powers as antidotes to totalitarianism. Submerged by the sea change of the sixties, the concept largely faded from intellectual discussion. But with Phillips's *The Politics of Rich and Poor* and Benjamin Ginsberg and Martin Shefter's *Politics by Other Means,* "exceptionalism" returns to the center of debate, albeit in a negative light.

Over the last fifteen years, elements of this exceptionalism—its individualism, egalitarianism, and antistatism—have come crashing into each other. Consider the impact of antistatism on equality during the Reagan years. In 1979, Phillips notes, CEOs made twenty-nine times the income of the average factory worker. By 1985, after the Reagan tax cuts, the multiple was forty. By 1988, CEOs were making an astounding ninety-three times more than the average industrial worker, whose salary had been shrinking during this same period.

Reagan's policies aside, the escalating inequality may be explained in part by the radically individualist ethos of American business, according to which valued executives have in effect to be bribed so they will not jump ship and take company secrets to a competitor. Naturally, the more important the executive, the bigger the bribe.

Compared to our European and Asian counterparts, our society is now exceptionally *unequal.* "No other democratic country," notes Senator Daniel Moynihan, "takes as large a proportion of its revenue from working people at the lower ends of the spectrum and as little from people who have property or high incomes." These disparities have now grown so grotesque that even conservative business publications like *Fortune, Business Week,* and the *Wall Street Journal* run anguished articles on the impact of runaway corporate salaries and perks, not to mention the golden parachutes that accompany failure.

Kevin Phillips is no ordinary conservative, if indeed he's still a conservative at all. Phillips—who served as a 1968 Nixon campaign strategist and came to public attention in 1969 with *The Emerging Republican Majority,* which became the bible of Republican hopes for realignment—is something of a Jacobin nationalist, enthralled with the politics of resentment. The Republicans, he argued in the earlier book, could create a new majority by abandoning the comforts of their country-club politics for a new, culturally conservative populism. American politics had always consisted of conflict between the populist masses and established elites. Since liberals had (much as the New Left was suggesting) become the new establishment, it was possible to recruit an oppositional alignment composed of big-business go-getters from the rising Sunbelt, northern ethnic defectors from the Democrats' racial reformation, and "redneck" Republicans, the southern supporters of George Wallace. It was to be an alliance of economic and cultural conservatives forged by a common hatred for, in Phillips's words, the "amorality activists and social-change merchants" of the eastern elite.

When Nixon swept the 1972 election with this coalition, Phillips became a certified soothsayer. But Watergate helped derail the Republican realignment, and by the time it arrived (at least presidentially) in the form of Ronald Reagan, Phillips was already disillusioned. He saw the Reaganites as a new establishment of fat cats and free-market ideologues who had won with an elaborate game of bait and switch. They had, he argued in *Post-Conservative America* (1982), campaigned as critics of America's cultural elites only to govern on behalf of country-club conservatives who lived off high interest rates while small businesses suffered. Dismayed by the decadence of the Reaganites, who swilled at the government trough while much of middle America suffered, Phillips spoke in apocalyptic terms of an American Weimar. Recklessly extending the analogy, he predicted a right-wing populist rebellion and the establishment of "apple pie authoritarianism."

Always something of an odd man out in rightist circles, Phillips took another step away from the Republicans with his 1985 book *Staying on Top: The Business Case for a National Industrial Strategy.* American national interests,

Fred Siegel teaches Humanities at Cooper Union.

he claimed, were being systematically sold down the river by free traders/traitors who refused to recognize that the Japanese were using a neomercantilist trade strategy as a pathway to power. By the 1988 elections, Phillips was an influence on Missouri congressman Richard Gephardt's attempt to parlay protectionism and populism into a bid for the Democratic presidential nomination. Still predicting a populist uprising, Phillips was baffled by the Democrats' loss in 1988.

We are now in the third decade of "me-ism" with no end in sight.

Since Bush's victory, Phillips's standing as a political prophet has plummeted. But his reservations about Reaganomics, foreshadowed in *Post-Conservative America* and now fully developed in *The Politics of Rich and Poor,* have proved tragically accurate. Phillips shows that, under Reagan, the share of income that went to the top 1 percent of taxpayers climbed by more than a fifth, while after-tax income declined in real terms for most working families. And although there has been a vast growth of upper-middle-class wealth for those in paper-pushing professions, midwestern and industrial-heartland Americans who produce primary products, agricultural or mineral, have endured a decade-long decline in their standard of living. Proliferating yacht sales produced special new area codes for hand-held cellular phones on the Atlantic and Pacific, but deregulation eliminated the inexpensive local service so important to the elderly and the isolated.

Near the end of *The Politics of Rich and Poor,* Phillips tries to sound the clarion call to revenge by way of an "emerging populist majority"—but this is unconvincing. Having abandoned the Republicans, he still has no faith in the Democrats. "Moynihan," Phillips writes, regarding the senator's proposal to roll back regressive social-security taxes, "has fingered the vehicle that was made to make middle Americans pay for the fiscal problems of the 1980s." But the Democrats' "inability to wrap around this one suggests that these people have run out of spiritual gas." Stranded by a politics of competing elites, Phillips is for the moment a man without a party.

Why is the landscape so bleak? In part because the logic of exceptionalism has worked its way to completion. When the ethos of the "me generation" was mocked twenty years ago, it was assumed to be a passing phenomenon. But we are now in the third decade of "me-ism" with no end in sight. America may never have been able to establish full-fledged Tory or Labor parties, but Tory and Labor tendencies placed, in their own way, limitations on unrestrained individualism.

Those restraints have eroded dramatically since World War II. Establishment conservatism was buried with the Goldwater campaign of 1964, while the remnants of New Deal social democracy have been shredded by the combined impact of deregulation and leveraged buyouts, which have helped to reduce the ranks of organized labor.

Electoral politics no longer provides a counterweight to organized wealth. If Phillips has written a book about the social and economic price of exceptionalism, Ginsberg and Shefter have provided a look at its current political and institutional cost—a divided and ineffectual government.

Exceptionalism in politics means that since its founding, the U.S. alone has elected its chief executive independent of the legislature, has had two coequal branches of the legislature, and has had a coequal judiciary. For the first 150 years of the Republic, exceptionalism was held in check by strong political parties that served as the connecting tissue between the different branches. But undercut by the decline of partisanship, American government first stagnated and then reached a stalemate.

Divided government produces a kind of dual sovereignty. Each party uses its branch to service its own constituencies while leaving the country as a whole adrift. The Democrats have entrenched themselves in Congress, the federal civil service, labor and regulatory agencies, and nonprofit organizations that administer national social programs. As a result, the Democratic party has lost touch with local machines and is now grounded in Congress and the interest groups and agencies it funds.

The biggest share of the Republican pork barrel goes to the military, though not always for warlike purposes. Military expenditures serve both as a vehicle for subsidized research-and-development that doesn't infringe on the prerogatives of "private" enterprise and as a Republican version of welfare spending. Shefter and Ginsberg point out that the Veterans Administration, which was given cabinet status by Reagan, is useful to channel social spending through conservative veterans' organizations rather than liberal big-city mayors.

The long-term effect of Republican dominance over one branch of government and Democratic dominance over another has been to exacerbate conflicts between Congress and the presidency, as each party defines its interests in terms of the constitutional powers of the branch it controls. "Competitive entrenchment," according to Ginsberg and Shefter, "... has to a considerable extent replaced mass electoral mobilization as a means of securing power." This "helps explain how high levels of partisan conflict can coexist with low rates of voting participation in contemporary American politics."

The balance of power in this struggle between liberals who rule Congress and Republicans who occupy the White House rests in the courts. The new clout of the courts has produced, though Ginsberg and Shefter fail to see it, an unprecedented politicization of the judiciary and a corresponding judicial cast to politics.

The power of the courts has always depended on their ability to create working alliances with other powerful interests and institutions. Prior to the New Deal, the Supreme Court was allied with the rising power of big business. By 1937, it had become a quarrelsome junior partner to the Roosevelt administration. But the connections between the Supreme Court and the White House broke down after the fall of Lyndon Johnson, our last New Deal president. In its place, an alliance took shape between rights-based reform groups, congressional committees, and the judiciary.

With the alliance between congressional liberals and judicial liberals, litigation became the intended outcome of legislation. At the instigation of lobbyists, say for civil rights groups, congressional staffers wrote vaguely worded bills that gave sympathetic judges the latitude of broad interpre-

tations. The net effect was that the Democrats were able to service their key constituencies without paying the price of having to defend unpopular positions explicitly, for instance, on racial and gender quotas. As Attorney General Ed Meese understood, liberals could be beaten only by short-circuiting rights generated by the courts.

Shortly into Reagan's second term Meese announced an aggressive policy to perpetuate the Reagan "revolution" through the courts. Inspired by Franklin Roosevelt's success in intimidating a hostile judiciary, Meese wanted to use the courts "to institutionalize the Reagan revolution so it can't be set aside no matter what happens in future presidential elections." In short order, Meese, who as county prosecutor once personally directed the arrest of Berkeley protestors, made a series of speeches and statements challenging the liberal version of judicial activism.

Racial politics lay at the heart of his controversial speech in October 1986 at Tulane University. Meese, raised in a family of biblical literalists, argued that the Constitution itself, and not the Supreme Court's interpretation of the document, was the "Supreme Law of the Land." Meese's words left civil rights supporters angry and a bit frightened. And reactions to the speech brought judicial politics to a boil—where it remains.

Robert Bork was the learned embodiment of Meese's gut-wrenching politics. Committee hearings on Supreme Court nominees are of relatively recent vintage, and, until Bork, it was considered improper to question nominees on matters of doctrine. Questions that required prejudgment of potential cases were considered a threat to the independence and integrity of the judiciary. But important as it had been to maintain the fiction of a politically impartial judiciary, that hypocrisy was stripped away by the fear that a Justice Bork would tip the balance of power.

Bork's defeat in what was, in effect, our first national judicial election didn't end the struggle. After Bork was rejected, President Reagan turned to issues the conservatives hadn't been able to get on the table at the Bork hearings, issues that would define the 1988 presidential race. Taking the offensive, Reagan trumpeted Bork's belief "that it's time the courts showed less compassion for criminals and more for victims of crime." Bork's opponents, he asserted (this was before Willie Horton became a household name), wanted to "thwart the desire of the American people for judges ... who will enforce the law and bring criminals to justice—not turn them loose to make our streets unsafe."

George Bush picked up Reagan's polarizing themes and ran with them to the presidency. But neither Bork's defeat nor Bush's victory has proved decisive. With the growth of parallel congressional and presidential governments, elections mean less than they used to. Despite Republican control of the presidency, the Democrats have gained ten Senate seats since 1982. Bush was the first Republican president to take office while his party lost ground in both houses of Congress. On crucial issues like the trade and budget deficits, taxation and international competitiveness, and the Savings and Loan scandal (current cost $500 billion and counting), the federal government has achieved a politician's utopia: a blissful state of institutionalized nonresponsibility.

Thus, in the celebrations surrounding the fall of communism, the weaknesses of *our* system have been obscured. Our exceptionalism has produced what Phillips calls "brain dead politics," a politics of perpetual evasion. In the 1990 congressional races resentment over growing inequality and a well-deserved contempt for Washington may arouse support for nonincumbents. But with neither the social nor institutional mechanisms to mobilize popular outrage, an anti-incumbent push is likely to result in little more than a fleeting personal satisfaction at having "voted the bums out." While civil society is being revived in Eastern Europe, ours is slowly dissolving into a winner-take-all economy and a politics where less and less of substance is decided by elections.

John Adams, whose ideas were informed by a Calvinist sense of sin, anticipated this situation. Adams, the dour Founder, dissented from the exceptionalist optimism of the Declaration of Independence. "There is," he insisted, "no special providence for Americans." America, Adams argued, was as subject to decay and decadence as any other nation. The Reagan years amply proved his point. □

BOOK REVIEW

Dodgers of Dreams

Elliott J. Gorn

Winning Is the Only Thing: Sports in America Since 1945 by Randy Roberts and James S. Olson. Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989, 208 pp.

Men at Work: The Craft of Baseball by George F. Will. Macmillan, 1990, 352 pp.

My mind keeps replaying Kirk Gibson's dramatic ninth-inning home run in the 1988 World Series. Last season I watched games and read box scores in the afterglow of that event, and its memory continued to warm me through this past winter.

Why was Gibson's homer so important to me? By any measure, it was a great baseball event: it drained the fight out of the Oakland A's and allowed the Dodgers to clinch the championship

Elliott J. Gorn is Associate Professor of History and Director of American Studies at Miami University (Ohio).

four games later. But there was more to it than a championship, more, even, than sport.

Certainly baseball's appeal to me grows as I approach middle age. It was the game of my youth, so it lends my life some continuity. More than other popular sports, baseball dwells in its own past and invites its fans to do the same. I am an historian, after all, and those endless debates over picking the greatest center-fielder of the century fascinate me. Such arguments suggest that baseball mythology is more about embracing the past than transcending it.

Sports provide a stage on which powerful emotions and values are displayed, contested, and momentarily resolved.

But maybe this is all romantic claptrap. Baseball is no more immune to hype than are other sports. It's a multimillion-dollar business, with lockouts, drug problems, and owners who exploit communities. In other words, it's big business as usual and I know that, as a fan, I'm simply a potential customer for marketing strategists, the real shapers of modern American culture. The events of last spring should disabuse all of us of any remaining romanticism. Once again owners (and, dare I say it, players) proved that their effusions over "the good of the game" mask from the fans and themselves their own greed for power and money.

Like the lockouts, Randy Roberts and James Olson's *Winning Is the Only Thing* is a fine corrective to lapses in clear thinking. In two hundred pages, the authors discuss the hottest sporting controversies of the post-World War II era. They cover an impressive range of subjects, tell their stories well, and give us a work from which both fans and nonfans can profit. Olson and Roberts compile a thick catalogue of sins, including drug abuse, recruitment scandals, fiscal malfeasance, and academic fraud, and show they have a history. Personalities such as Avery Brundage, Muhammad Ali, and Pete Rozelle make short but memorable appearances; issues such as racism, drug abuse, and unionization receive intelligent treatment; and landmarks such as the 1968 Black boycott of the Olympics, the Munich Games, and the rise of "trash sports" are acutely discussed.

Since World War II, the authors declare, sports have grown into an American "obsession," with all the pathology that word implies. "There was a time in United States history," they write, "when sports knew its place in American culture. It was a pastime, diversion, leisure, recreation, play—fun." Sports were a healthy escape where "people found relief from the real things of the world and their own lives—wars, unemployment, social conflict, politics, religion, work, prices, and family." Today, however, we take sports with deadly seriousness; some even see in athletics the essence of nation, community, and self. In *Winning Is the Only Thing* Roberts and Olson imply that we fell because we lost our sense of—not purpose, but humor.

Perhaps, though, the problem isn't that we take games too seriously, but that the sporting establishment does not allow us to take them seriously enough—on their *own* terms. In *The Culture of Narcissism* Christopher Lasch argued that our games have the capacity to transport us momentarily outside daily experience into a realm of superhuman deeds. Couch-potatoes aside, sports *are* sometimes a religious experience, because they can reveal to us a sphere of perfection in which we transcend our own frailties and weaknesses. Or to shift the metaphor to drama, sports provide a stage on which powerful emotions and values are displayed, contested, and momentarily resolved.

To the extent that athletics are overtaken by all that surrounds them—entertainment, national chauvinism, local boosterism, the cult of celebrity, and the need to make a profit—they lose their capacity to dramatize alternatives to everyday existence. We can be most serious about sports, can live fleetingly in the utopian world they create, can learn their lessons of human frailty and magnificence, when we are not diverted by medal counts, scoreboard shows, sexual scandals, and Bud Bowls.

All, however, is not lost. Athletic competitions still move us, though often we must hunt for this through all the clutter and chatter. And sports, like religion, can uphold values and ideals that are part of our moral life, as they dramatize beauty and grace, courage and honor.

The idea that sports can help us glimpse a better world underlies George Will's surprise best-seller, *Men at Work: The Craft of Baseball*, in which he rejects the "fallen world" premise of Roberts and Olson. Will declares that the quality of play-work that we see on today's ballfields is the best ever. And contemporary baseball's success, he assures us, reflects capitalist values; intense competition leads to hard work, and hard work leads to an ever-improving product.

Will concentrates on four men, each in some way emblematic of his craft. Tony La Russa exemplifies managing, Orel Hershiser pitching, Tony Gwynn hitting, and Cal Ripken, Jr. defense. Each of these men is enormously gifted, yet each makes the most of his talents with prodigious work and attention to detail. Hershiser, for example, often asks the home-plate umpire for a new ball when he finds his team in a tight situation, because to throw his best curve he needs a slightly imperfect sphere, one with the seams raised just a bit more than usual.

If we accept Will's point that the game keeps improving and that this is due to a competitive system that brings out the best in players, then there is good reason to reject Cassandras such as Roberts and Olson. Quit complaining and enjoy the game, Will would say. And he does precisely that, all but ignoring the business structure of baseball, the influence of the media, labor disputes, and similar problems. His is a sunny view, a Reaganesque story:

> Human beings seem to take morose pleasure from believing that once there was a Golden Age, some lost Eden or Camelot or superior ancient civilization, peopled by heroes and demigods, an age of greatness long lost and irrecoverable. Piffle.

Piffle? It's hard to imagine a word further from the language of the ballpark. I think of a scene in Roger Kahn's autobiographical *The Boys of Summer*, in which the young journalist covering the Dodgers tried to explain the rough culture of the players to his starry-eyed father. Responding to his son's gentle suggestion that Jackie Robinson did not use phrases like "heavens to Betsy,"

the elder Kahn stated, "Profanity is superfluous to English." Young Kahn choked down what he really wanted to say: *"But you have inverted reality, Father. English is superfluous to baseball reality."* The rookie journalist was discovering a whole new world, a world in which his father's experience, his very language, scarcely made sense. I am not suggesting that Will's vocabulary should replicate the players', only that he seems not to have looked for *any* language, *any* voice, *any* frame of reference other than that of his usual persona, the media commentator posing as an intellectual.

That is the problem with Will's book. He does tell some good stories and has some interesting insights. For example, we learn that Johnny Sain threw Babe Ruth the last pitch of his career and threw Jackie Robinson his first; that the average nine innings requires about forty more pitches today than during the "dead ball" era before the 1920s; that Tim Flannery once happily ended a fourteen-game hitting streak because he suspected that his postgame ritual of eating Chinese food and drinking tequila would kill him. But somehow *Men at Work* seems distant from the game itself. Statistics are here, as well as historical comparisons, descriptions of player preparations—but there is very little baseball itself. Worse, the book too often shoehorns the game into a narrow political and economic agenda.

Will, then, does exactly what he castigates others for: rather than take the game on its own terms, he tries to draw from it reductive lessons. True, baseball can be used as an exemplum of the work ethic; assiduousness often *is* rewarded. But the sport means so much more than that. The four players Will has chosen are hardly representative. Others work as hard; some succeed, some don't. But Will's heroes, not surprisingly, are straight arrows, sons of Frank Merriwell. Where is the volatility of Will Clark, the intensity of Kevin Mitchell, the sadness of Dwight Gooden, the vulgarity of Whitey Herzog, the egotism of Jose Canseco? For in addition to hard work, baseball is about emotion; we go to the ballpark not just to watch craftsmen, but to be infused with passions, to love and hate, to be moved by all we see.

But Will emphasizes only certain carefully chosen parts of the story. His hidden agenda for Americans is this: if we all work hard at our jobs, as these players do, then we can restore our economy, beat the Japanese, and revalidate the American dream. It's not so much that Will is wrong as that he is, well, myopic.

In part, baseball *is* about work, discipline, and dedication; training is analogous to the mind-deadening exercises that pianists must repeat and repeat in hopes they might someday soar on the concert stage. But Will's notion that such devotion to craft is a lesson for us all is absurd. What does the dedication of an Orel Hershiser have to do with a woman who stitches the "perfect" seam in a garment factory all day? With the kid flipping burgers at McDonalds? With the woman who processes someone else's words for minimum wage? Will's decision to ignore the social and cultural context in which baseball exists flies in the face of such realities.

Baseball players—and they are *players* as well as workers, men whose work still allows a sense of play—are not, as Will would have it, models of how we all should behave. Rather, they are emblematic of a world most of us have lost, a work world that requires a special combination of intellect, craft, tradition, and intensity. Will points out how challenging the game is, yet he never draws the obvious conclusion: baseball cannot be a model for most of us, whose work lives are reduced to dull routine. Rather, we must view baseball as a realm of passion and possibility that Will's god of capitalist rationality threatens to destroy. Sports keep our dreams alive because, despite the problems enumerated by Roberts and Olson, games remain microcosms of human aspiration.

And so, Kirk Gibson, two Octobers ago. The fire in the Dodgers' belly all season, he tottered on legs so hurt he could scarcely walk, let alone drive the ball. Bottom of the ninth, Dodgers down by one, two outs, one on (Mike Davis, God bless him, worked the count for a walk), the best relief pitcher in the American League (Dennis Eckersley) on the mound for Oakland, and Gibson—it *had* to be Gibson—hobbling to the plate.

When Gibson muscled the ball with his shoulders, watched it fly out of the park, double-clutched his right arm in victory as he staggered around the base paths, the apartment building I lived in that year in the San Francisco Bay Area went silent, except for Vin Scully's astonished voice on every television, and my own, strained with delirium.

A *home* run for homeless times. Not the homelessness of a growing army of street people, but the metaphorical homelessness of the middle class. Homeless in that fewer and fewer among us will ever own a home; homeless because so many of us are strangers to the communities in which we live; homeless, too, since many of us have been separated from our families by divorces, job transfers, company relocations, and a hundred other assaults on rootedness.

I mean by this more, of course, than just a play on the word home. For sports, especially in their greatest moments, can give us a crucial if fleeting sense of connectedness to other fans, to communities, and to our intimate pasts. This was the special importance of that World Series for me: a Dodger fan, keeping alive a bit of boyhood memory from Los Angeles, a city I have not lived in for twenty years and would not really care to live in again. Yet L.A. is still home to people I love, people who are living parts of my past and my future. For a moment last October, Kirk and I went home.

It may take another half a lifetime for an athletic event to move me the way Gibson's homer did. But sports, especially baseball, teach us patience. So long as I remember that moment in October 1988, I have hope. I can wait. □

BOOK REVIEW

Deconstruction Crew

Mitchell Stephens

Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question by Jacques Derrida, translated by Geoffrey Bennington and Rachel Bowlby. University of Chicago Press, 1989, 139 pp.

Heidegger and Nazism by Victor Farias, edited by Joseph Margolis and Tom Rockmore. French materials translated by Paul Burrell, with the advice of Dominic Di Bernardi. German materials translated by Gabriel R. Ricci. Temple University Press, 1989, 349 pp.

Politics, to rework a line of Jacques Derrida's, always returns. Of late, it has returned in a most monstrous form—nazism—to haunt the relationship between two philosophers whose work must at least be acknowledged in any attempt to understand twentieth-century thought: Derrida and Martin Heidegger. It has returned to challenge thought systems based on uncertainty and doubt with the specter of a terror that was all too certain and a barbarity about which there could be no doubt. Politics has returned, in other words, to raise—this time in late-twentieth-century terms—the large and venerable question of the consequences of philosophy.

Heidegger was probably the most influential "Continental philosopher" of the century. His work has received relatively little attention in American philosophy departments, almost all of which subscribe to the methods of analytical philosophy—the other of the two camps into which Western philosophy has been divided for most of this century. But Heidegger's thought had a profound impact upon those French philosophers who came of age after the war, especially Derrida, whose work, in turn, has had such a profound impact upon the study of literature in the United States.

"Deconstruction," the name that has settled upon Derrida's influential approach, is a translation of Heidegger's *destruktion,* and echoes of Derrida's ongoing dialogue with Heidegger can be heard in most of the French philosopher's writings. Indeed Heidegger's ghost rarely strays from Derrida's side. But lately that ghost has become a significantly less respectable companion in a way that is particularly meaningful for someone of Derrida's background.

Heidegger's ghost rarely strays from Derrida's side.

In 1942, Derrida, then a twelve-year-old schoolboy in Algeria, was expelled from school because he was Jewish. We now know that in 1942 Heidegger, then a fifty-three-year-old distinguished professor at the University of Freiburg in Germany, was a member in good standing of the National Socialist Party.

Some of the evidence against Heidegger was available soon after the war. Following the Nazi takeover in 1933, Heidegger not only failed to leave Germany or register an audible protest; he accepted the politically important position of rector at the University of Freiburg. We also have the text of the speech Heidegger delivered on assuming the rectorship—a speech that includes an attack on "that much-talked-about 'academic freedom'" and many calls for German students, who "are already marching," to fulfill "the spiritual mission of the German nation."

But after the war, Heidegger insisted that his involvement with National Socialism had been naive and short-lived. That this explanation is no longer believable is due in large part to the work of Victor Farias, a Chilean Jew now teaching in Germany, whose book, *Heidegger and Nazism,* was recently translated into English. Though one could argue with some of his analyses of Heidegger's writings and motivation, the weight of evidence Farias has accumulated seems overwhelming.

From youth to old age, Heidegger's politics appear to have been consistently reactionary and jingoistic: In the early 1930s he associated himself politically with Nazis and anti-Semites; he was the Nazi candidate for rector in Freiburg; and his correspondence during the Nazi years is filled with "Heil Hitler!"s, "Sieg Heil!"s, and "fighting 'Sieg Heil!'"s. During Heidegger's rectorship, according to Farias, measures were promulgated calling for the expulsion of all Jews on the university's teaching staff. Farias does not connect Heidegger with the sponsorship of such measures, but there is certainly no evidence that he opposed them.

In the eyes of the Nazi regime, Heidegger's star dimmed rather quickly, and in 1934 he resigned as rector. But Heidegger's worsening relations with the authorities, Farias explains, resulted not from any sudden upsurge of conscience on his part but rather from the philosopher's belief that these politicians were insufficiently revolutionary, insufficiently rigorous and demanding in their implementation of National Socialism. Farias demonstrates that Heidegger had been a partisan of the more populist, antibourgeois nazism of Ernst Röhm, who was assassinated in 1934.

Still, Heidegger kept his chair, his works were published and discussed, and he remained a party member until Hitler's defeat. Heidegger's only known comment on the Holocaust came in a letter written in 1948 in response to a stern demand for an apology from Herbert Marcuse, a former student. Heidegger accepted Marcuse's "reproach ... 'over a regime that has exterminated millions of Jews'," but then suggested that "instead of the 'Jews' one should put the 'East Germans,'

Mitchell Stephens, associate professor of journalism at New York University and the author of A History of News *(Penguin, 1989), is now working on a book about contemporary thinkers.*

and that is even more the case for one of the Allied Powers [presumably the Soviet Union]."

It would take a particularly energetic application of the principle of guilt by association to tar Derrida with the sins of Martin Heidegger, whom he never met. Indeed, it took an energetic application of that principle to blame Derrida for the fact that his most influential adherent in America, Paul De Man, turned out to have had a hidden past. (In 1942, De Man was writing literary criticism, some of which was anti-Semitic, for a collaborationist newspaper in Belgium.) If Derrida's background is not sufficient to protect him from such charges, his political record should be: Derrida has been a member of the French Left and an active participant in struggles against racism and totalitarianism, most visibly in South Africa and Czechoslovakia.

Nevertheless, we can ask that Heidegger's work at least be read with a certain suspicion. We do have a right (as we did after learning of De Man's youthful writings) to evaluate how Derrida thinks his way around his mentor's noxious history. And we can use Derrida's response as an opportunity to consider the political consequences of deconstruction.

To read Heidegger's work suspiciously is to be alert for signs of the implications of his philosophy. Heidegger himself sketched in the outline of such a reading during his years as a Nazi partisan, when he put to the service of his party the technical terms he had employed in his "masterwork" *Being and Time* (*Sein und Zeit*): "The Führer ... is giving the people the most immediate possibility of a free decision, the noblest one," Heidegger argued in a widely publicized statement of support for Adolf Hitler just before the plebiscite of 1933, "that is, to know if the entire people want their own existence [*Sein*] or if they do not want it." Farias and others have sternly, if somewhat clumsily, attempted to fill in the outline of this damning reading of Heidegger's philosophy.

Derrida has approached this issue, obliquely, many times before, for instance in his recent seminars on the question of nationality and nationalism. Now it reappears as a major, if not always explicit, theme of Derrida's latest book, *Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question*. Derrida's titles characteristically harbor more than one meaning, but one of the primary questions in question here is the relationship of Heidegger's thought to nazism.

This may not be immediately apparent. The words "nazism" and "National Socialism" appear only four times in this book. Derrida is obviously well aware of the latest charges against Heidegger. (At one point he comments, with some exasperation, on "this interminable trial, constantly being extended with new evidence.") But the only direct reference here to Heidegger's behavior comes when that behavior wanders into range of Derrida's half-reading glasses —when the dedication to Heidegger's Jewish mentor, Edmund Husserl, disappears from a new edition of *Being and Time* published during the Nazi years. Derrida, in a rare display of emotion, calls this erasure "unerasable, mediocre, and hideous."

As usual, Derrida's focus in *Of Spirit* is on texts and not historical or political events. The book is concerned with tracking the use of the word "spirit" (*Geist*) through Heidegger's writings. Nevertheless, near its conclusion Derrida announces that his subject has been "nothing but" the relationship of Heidegger's thought to "what are commonly called the 'events' of 'history' and of 'politics.'"

Derrida reads sentences like Freud reads dreams—expansively. Here he bases an analysis of much of Heidegger's thought upon uses of the word "spirit." Derrida notes that in *Being and Time,* first published in 1927, Heidegger seems embarrassed or afraid of "spirit." He uses it only when protected by quotation marks and proclaims the term dangerously subjective. (Subjectivity, in Heidegger's view, is what diverted philosophy from its true purpose: the questioning of Being.)

Yet from 1933 on, the word "spirit" and its relatives—*geistig* (spiritual: immaterial), *geistlich* (spiritual: religious) —were freed from quotation marks, welcomed into Heidegger's most impassioned sentences, and treated with the respect accorded only his most privileged terms. Heidegger's notorious speech on assuming the rectorship is built around his conception of Germany's "spiritual mission" and its role as "a spiritual nation."

It is crucial, Derrida explains, for

WORDS *on* FIRE

VANESSA L. OCHS



"A deeply felt spiritual journey."
– *Publishers Weekly*

◆ ◆ ◆

"A powerful and important book."
– *Library Journal*

◆ ◆ ◆

A selection of the Jewish Book Club

HBJ
Harcourt Brace Jovanovich

Available at bookstores everywhere

Heidegger the Nazi and Heidegger the scourge of subjective humanism to insist that his "spirit" be distinguished from the traditional Platonic-Christian uses of the word. He is not talking culture; he is not talking God; he is certainly not talking brotherhood. In fact Heidegger would object to our translation of *Geist* as "spirit"—a descendent of the Latin word *spiritus*. Even the Greek *pneuma* won't do. Heidegger states that his message, conveniently, can only be understood in German. *Geist* is an original, fiery force; it contains the possibility of evil. "The *spiritual* [*geistige*] world of a people," Heidegger insisted in the rectorship address, "... is the deepest power of conservation of its forces of earth and blood." Dangerous words, these: a call to defend not just a nation but a race.

"One could say," Derrida writes in one of his more direct statements on Heidegger's politics, "that he spiritualizes National Socialism." One could say that through this crack, this opening in Heidegger's vocabulary, the vermin have entered his philosophy—that in "spirit" Heidegger found an answer: he stopped questioning and began to march.

An interesting politics lurks behind Derrida's analysis. It would view nazism, and probably also Stalinism, as a fall into an unquestioning, dogmatic acceptance of a spiritual mission, as a fall into certainty. Was it not such dumb certainties that led to Derrida's expulsion from school in 1942? Democracy, or pluralism, might then be seen as a rejection of the idea that there exist simple answers—whether to be found in earth, blood, or the proletariat. Democracy, in this view, is a form of institutionalized uncertainty. And the twentieth century gains some meaning: as a struggle to exorcise spirits, to progress beyond certainty. This is perhaps the most satisfying way to view the politics of deconstruction—as a challenge to the totalitarianism of ideas.

But Derrida is unwilling to let us rest there. He insists that we feel the full force of this uncertainty, that, in raising this banner, we also surrender some of our certainty about, for example, Martin Heidegger.

As usual, Derrida is out to complicate the case. He remains skeptical of the supposedly dramatic "turns" in Heidegger's thought. He is not convinced that the quotation marks succeeded in protecting Heidegger's thought against the dangerous certainties of "spirit" before 1933, just as he is not convinced that Heidegger abandoned his romance with "earth and blood" after 1934 or 1945, when he began emphasizing *Geist* as flame. (Farias, too, discounts these "turns.")

Nor does Derrida accept Heidegger's claim to have escaped from the Platonic-Christian conception of "spirit." In Heidegger's attempts to consecrate National Socialism, to affirm it, to inflate it, to breathe new significance into it, Derrida sees Heidegger falling back on an old metaphysical, humanistic distinction between the spiritual and material. Whatever seemed to have separated a spiritual world of "earth and blood" from those old categories disappears once an attempt is made to lift the "earth and blood" off the ground, to exalt them, to spiritualize them. Furthermore, Derrida argues, Heidegger's view of spirit as originary flame is not foreign to Christianity, or Judaism for that matter. (The Hebrew *ruakh*, which Heidegger somehow overlooked, seems a fairly good translation of what he meant by *Geist*.)

So Derrida has proved what he always proves: that distinctions, even the most carefully constructed philosophical distinctions, don't quite hold; that we contradict ourselves, subvert ourselves. Catching Heidegger in such a tangle is a matter of some satisfaction for a French philosopher of Derrida's generation: even Heidegger is guilty of metaphysics; even he was unable to escape the assumptions and strategies of humanism. But if the issue here is transgressions not against logic but against morality, then the equation needs to be reversed. If Heidegger's Nazi-tainted spirit cannot ultimately be distinguished from the Platonic-Christian conception of spirit, what does that say about our own intellectual culture, based as it is on such metaphysical assumptions?

Here Derrida, the twelve-year-old victim of anti-Semitism, finally takes the floor and points some fingers: "Nazism was not born in a desert," he writes.

> And even if, far from any desert, it had grown like a mushroom in the silence of a European forest, it would have done so in the shadow of big trees, in the shelter of their silence or their indifference but in the same soil.... [These trees] would bear the names of religions, philosophies, political regimes, economic structures, religious or academic institutions. In short, what is just as confusedly called culture, or the world of spirit.

Finger-pointing is an activity with political consequences. Derrida is asking us to view nazism in a larger context. He is implicating an entire culture in its crimes. Even a victim like Husserl, Derrida notes, was capable of speaking, in 1935 in Vienna, of the "spiritual life" of Europe and then of carefully noting that the Gypsies, for example, did not participate in it. Is this not a racist statement? Can it be compared with Heidegger's seemingly much more terrible utterances? "Where is the worse?" Derrida asks. "That perhaps is the question of *spirit*."

Are these dangerous words? Remember again that nothing in them is meant to excuse any aspect of Nazi behavior. But Derrida's words *are* dangerous if, in order to call attention to the magnitude of their sins, we still need to portray Nazis as monsters, as the embodiment of a qualitatively different form of evil. For, without doubt, Derrida *is* challenging that view. He would deny that distinctions can be drawn between the Nazis and their neighbors, between a Heidegger and a Husserl—deconstruction professes to "disturb" distinctions, not eliminate them. But Derrida is arguing that nazism and other more benign European political theories grew out of a similar culture and have significant areas of overlap.

And he does not allow us to rest even here. Derrida takes us beyond this black forest of silent and indifferent trees—and whatever politics might be based on such an ambitious attempt to trace the roots of evil through European culture—and leads us into the nearby swamp of moral relativism. Derrida ends up pointing too many fingers. The metaphysical "spirit," it seems, was not just raging in Europe in the 1930s; Derrida discovers it percolating behind most political behaviors, including those that struggle in the name of "freedom of spirit" *against*

racism and tyranny, *against* nazism and Stalinism.

By this logic, all political beliefs—including humanism—are complicit in the metaphysics of spirit since they call, no matter how gently, upon higher, originary, unifying forces. "Even if all forms of complicity are not equivalent," Derrida argues, "they are *irreducible*. The question of knowing which is the least grave of these forms of complicity is always there—its urgency and its seriousness could not be over-stressed—but it will never dissolve the irreducibility of this fact."

Derrida reads sentences like Freud reads dreams—expansively.

So where does this leave Heidegger? Still tied to National Socialism—Derrida has said nothing that might loosen those ties—but simultaneously entangled in all the delusions of Western culture. Heidegger can no more be pulled out of this tangle as uniquely malevolent, Derrida argues, than he can pull himself out as uniquely resistant to its contradictions.

And where does this leave Derrida—which is to say, the relationship between the deconstruction he practices and politics? *Of Spirit* does not provide any guidance on what Derrida himself admits is the urgent and serious "question of knowing which is the least grave of these forms of complicity." He never says where "the worse" might be found, and this is a question that must be answered if we are to have any sort of politics at all. Indeed, Derrida implies that these questions, and politics itself, would disappear if, in a clear-eyed moment, everyone could think without recourse to spirit or metaphysics. But, as Derrida knows, and as his life at least from the age of twelve has shown, such moments if they exist cannot last.

On those many occasions when Derrida as intellectual engagé has accepted the demands of politics, his actions have demonstrated that he has some strong beliefs on what errors are most "grave," on what behavior is "worse," and that these beliefs are, if not diametrically opposed, at least at the other end of a large scale from Heidegger's. Still it is not clear that Derrida has been able to justify his beliefs with his method. Instead, he would probably admit that his own efforts to find his footing in this swamp have also involved some recourse to a form of "spirit." "Metaphysics," Derrida writes, "always returns."

We live in a slippery time, this late twentieth century. The outrages we are committed to keeping alive are almost incomprehensibly grave; our responsibilities in opposing racism and totalitarianism are therefore unavoidable. Yet we grow less able—with one of the last great attempts at constructing a grand simplification crumbling in Eastern Europe—to situate those responsibilities in a coherent philosophy, less able to draw firm lines between good and evil. Politics always returns, but if we stare at it long enough it appears always to be muddled by an illusive metaphysics.

We can rail against contemporary philosophy for bringing us this unpleasant news; purge Heidegger from the curriculum for his very real moral failings; dismiss deconstruction because the doubt it unleashes is too difficult to turn off, too disturbing, because it challenges politically important distinctions and complicates issues that we want to think of as simple.

Or we can, without suspending our moral responsibilities, explore where this contemporary philosophy might lead. We can pursue the consequences of a runaway uncertainty, consider the extent of our reliance on metaphysics, study that cycle of returning and fading, reread Heidegger with suspicion, reread them all with suspicion. We can, in other words, try to better understand the paradoxes that arise at the intersection of politics and philosophy. That seems to be what Derrida, however imperfectly, is trying to do. □

We'd like to apologize to A.M. Rosenthal of the *New York Times* for printing a charge that suggested he consciously intended to prevent the publication of information about the AIDS crisis. We have no independent confirmation that this was his conscious intention, so we apologize.

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



Book Review

Who Pays the Piper

Deborah E. Lipstadt

The Smoke Screen: Israel, Philanthropy and American Jews by Charles Hoffman. Eshel Books, 1989, 360 pp.

This is an important book. Though it focuses primarily on the relationship between the American Jewish community and the Jewish Agency/World Zionist Organization, a far more fundamental issue rests at its core: the nature of the tripartite relationship between American Jews, philanthropy, and Israel.

About four years ago Charles Hoffman, an American-born journalist who has lived in Israel for close to twenty years, wrote a series of articles on how the Jewish Agency spent the funds it received from American contributors. Many American philanthropists had been aware that a portion of the decision governing how funds were spent was based on political considerations, and that often too little supervision was exercised on those entrusted with the monies, but Hoffman's articles considerably increased diaspora awareness of the problem. They learned, for example, that much of the money which had been raised to bring Ethiopian Jews to Israel had been squandered on a poorly run and inefficiently organized absorption program. The newcomers, who had left their homes under the most difficult of circumstances, suffered mightily as a result and the human impact of Agency inefficiency became increasingly and painfully clear to them.

According to Hoffman, much of the problem is rooted in the way the system is structured. Those who raise the funds have had too little direct involvement in how they are spent. American Jewry raises significant funds through UJA/Federation campaigns. Each Federation decides how much of the total amount raised by the campaign will go to cover local needs—aid to the elderly, Jewish education, community relations, resettlement of immigrants—and what amount will go to needy Jewish communities abroad, including Israel, the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, North Africa, Ethiopia, and Iran. The funds sent overseas are channeled through the UJA; those for Israel are passed to the Jewish Agency; and those earmarked for other Jewish communities are transmitted to the Joint Distribution Committee.

The Jewish Agency was created in 1929 by World Zionist Organization president Chaim Weizmann as a means of building broad support for Israel among diaspora Jews. The Agency was composed both of Zionist leaders and prominent non-Zionist Jewish leaders who did not then accept the notion of Jewish statehood but who were willing to support the goal of rescuing Jews and resettling them in Palestine. In the 1930s and 1940s the Jewish Agency served as a humanitarian service organization and as the internationally recognized representative of the Palestinian Jewish community. From its ranks came the future prime ministers and presidents of the state, including Weizmann, David Ben-Gurion, Moshe Sharett, and Golda Meir. Until 1948 the Agency had a dual persona: it was both the political entity of the Jewish national movement and a philanthropic body devoted to rescue and resettlement.

After the establishment of the state, the Agency continued to function as a humanitarian service organization. It helped, for example, in the resettlement of Jews from other countries, a task the government itself could not carry out because of limited resources. During this time the Agency became the chief recipient of diaspora contributions.

Given that so much of the American–Israeli relationship is rooted in philanthropy, how can a healthy relationship be built between diaspora Jewry and the State of Israel? Does diaspora philanthropic support ultimately help or hinder? Hoffman, a competent observer of diaspora Jewish life, correctly recognizes that the role of fund-raising transcends just writing checks. While the link may be a far cry from the Zionism envisioned by an Ahad Ha'am and may lack traditional cultural and religious aspects of Judaism, the process carries a nearly spiritual component for those legitimately engaged in fund-raising. Anyone who has witnessed a caucus at which participants discuss their reasons for giving will immediately discern this part of the process. Many of those involved in fund-raising will unashamedly say that they are engaged in the sacred task of raising Jews as well as funds. Hoffman does not advocate an end to diaspora financial support of Israel or the dismantling of the Agency, but he does urge significant changes in the raising and allocation of funds. For too long Jewish "suffering," the Holocaust, and anti-Semitism have been emotional tools used to convince Jews to contribute. That has changed in recent years as the American Jewish community has moved to a more positive approach marked by an increased emphasis on the study of Jewish texts and the celebration of Jewish rituals. But Hoffman, along with this reviewer, would like to see that change go further.

Though these funds have had a significant impact on Israel's development, they have not done as much good as they might have because the distribution of this money is linked inextricably to the Israeli political system. This problem has been compounded by the fact that even when diaspora leaders, who have constituted the major contributors, sensed that something was wrong, they tended to shy away from

Deborah E. Lipstadt, an adjunct professor of religion at Occidental College, is the author of Beyond Belief: The American Press and the Coming of the Holocaust, 1933–1945 *(Free Press, 1986), and is currently conducting a study of Holocaust Revisionism.*

asking tough questions because they feared the impact this would have on their ability to raise additional funds.

The answer is not to eliminate the Agency but to depoliticize it.

Neither Hoffman nor the system's severest critics has suggested that anyone has become personally wealthy from this system. There are no Swiss bank accounts or sumptuous villas involved. Rather, the problem is that political interests have allowed jobs to go to unqualified people. In addition, the lines of responsibility have blurred, the administration has become highly politicized, and the Agency has been plagued by a problematic division of labor between its departments and other public bodies.

The Smoke Screen also has its weaknesses. Hoffman acknowledges the Agency's real accomplishments, but his journalistic hyperbole obscures those very successes. Though he specifically denies any conspiracy of silence, his repeated use of the term "smoke screen" makes it seem otherwise and is bound to confuse readers. Moreover, he seems naively unaware that in any complex bureaucracy—particularly of a social service nature—there will always be waste and inefficiency, and especially so when the bureaucracy is partially funded through philanthropy. Hoffman's book would have been helped here, perhaps, by comparing the agency to other similar bureaucracies, or by putting it more persuasively in context.

This study concludes on a hopeful note, far more hopeful than was the case when Hoffman began to explore the issue. Changes are occurring that originated with the creation of the Project Renewal program under Menachem Begin. This program twinned diaspora communities with neighborhoods in Israel that needed massive urban renewal. To the great surprise of virtually everyone, this became far more than a fund-raising gimmick. Personal bonds were forged and diaspora leaders found themselves involved with a segment of Israeli society with which they had had no previous personal contact. Wealthy diaspora Jews found themselves sitting around the table with Sephardim, many of whom had little formal education and who occupied the "lower" end of the employment ladder. Together they forged plans for community centers, mikvahs, athletic facilities, medical programs, housing rehabilitation, and a myriad of other projects. The Israelis developed a new respect for the dedication and commitment of those they had previously dismissed as fund-raisers or "schnorrers," while diaspora leaders began to understand the intricacies of "doing business" in Israel. A relationship was built that was not just founded on money but on advice, joint efforts, and community building. Diaspora leaders were far less willing to tolerate Agency excuses for delays and bureaucratic snafus than they had been when the recipients were relatively anonymous. Together with members of the local communities they began to haunt Agency offices and buttonhole political leaders. This hands-on, face-to-face connection with the "second" Israel led to a growing recognition that change was necessary in the delivery of social services.

Another important step was the organization of a dialogue between some members of the United Jewish Appeal Young Leadership Cabinets and a broad array of men and women from many sectors of Israeli society. Known as "The Forum," this context has allowed the next generation of Israeli leaders to meet their American counterparts on a more personal level. The Israelis have begun to understand diaspora life and to recognize that the relationship between Jews in Israel and the Diaspora needs significant overhauling. During the recent debate over Who-Is-a-Jew, these Israelis played an important role in transmitting diaspora concerns to government leaders.

The Americans have learned a great deal also, as is evidenced by a changed attitude toward the Agency and its relationship with local Federations. Federations have opened offices in Israel to monitor the Agency's operations and the use of funds collected in the United States; "missions" to Israel frequently include dialogues with Israelis who are neither government appointees nor agency bureaucrats; and diaspora leaders are far more inclined to ask tough questions and expect complete answers. In contrast to previous

"One of the most important works of Jewish thought of this generation."*

"Ellis helps us to imagine a new moral struggle of Jews, Palestinians, and Western Christians together against the inhumanity which lurks in all our hearts."
—*Rosemary Radford Ruether, author of *The Wrath of Jonah*

"A searching, haunting, and disturbing book that raises theological and human issues which must be confronted."
—Rabbi Marshall T. Meyer, Congregation B'nai Jeshurun, New York



Hardcover, 224 pages, $21.95

Available at your local bookstore.
Also available from HarperCollins Canada Ltd.

HarperSanFrancisco
A Division of HarperCollins*Publishers*

diaspora leaders, the current head of the Board of Governors is a fluent Hebrew speaker who lives in Israel a portion of every year and whose children have made aliya. Important evaluations of Agency activities have been prepared which do not seem destined to be swallowed up into a bureaucratic morass. Many American communities have established committees to engage in overseeing the Agency. They try to orient their lay leaders to the Agency's modus operandi so that they can more effectively make their voices heard at Agency meetings.

There is still a long road ahead, but the pace and strength of change is promising. Ultimately Hoffman's prescription reflects the desires of most American Jewish leaders, who believe that the answer is not to eliminate the Agency but to depoliticize it. There will always be social welfare activities that the Israeli government is not prepared to handle, so that a real need remains for a central philanthropic social-welfare entity, capable of channeling contributions from abroad. The alternative is a return to the nineteenth century and the inefficient and corrupting *haluka* system, whereby every institution had its own fund-raising apparatus and recipients were given funds based not on need but on their loyalty to the institution. There was neither regulation nor a centralized system to insure that the truly needy were helped.

One way to insure depoliticization of the Agency and its programs entails the replacement of permanent departments with units created to deal with specific problems, such as Ethiopian resettlement or the expected Soviet aliya; once that issue had been resolved the unit would cease to exist. Hoffman believes that the Agency must stop operating as a pseudo-governmental body and begin to function as a traditional nonprofit organization. No longer should politicians be appointed to head departments. (It is interesting to note that Project Renewal, which is increasingly becoming the model for Agency activities, was administered by a professional and not a politician.) In addition, those individuals, groups, and institutions in Israel which function outside of the political system—new immigrants' organizations, development towns, universities, and agricultural, business, and voluntary associations such as the Israeli Forum—must be given access to Agency decision making.

The initial steps have begun. There is a long road ahead and those who are entrusted with monitoring the Agency's activities must remain resolute about ensuring that the commitment to change remains strong. The stakes are high, and far more than the future of the Jewish Agency is in question. As Hoffman correctly observes, these changes may "help move Israel–Diaspora relations to a healthier and more productive plane, where Israeli and American Jews can sustain each other with their strengths instead of their weaknesses." □

BOOK REVIEW

Kach and Bull

Milton Viorst

The False Prophet: Rabbi Meir Kahane, from FBI Informant to Knesset Member by Robert I. Friedman (Lawrence Hill, 1990), 280 pp.

In the weeks before Israel's election of 1988, Israeli pollsters predicted that Rabbi Meir Kahane's Kach party would win as many as six seats in the Knesset. Such a vote would have made Kach the Knesset's third largest party and enhanced enormously the political standing of its leader, who was already a Knesset member. Never self-effacing, Kahane boasted publicly that he would become minister of defense, a prospect that suddenly seemed plausible.

Then, on the eve of the election, the Knesset barred Kach from the ballot on the grounds that the party was antidemocratic and racist. One might expect the disbarment to have been initiated by politicians who favor racial tolerance and democracy. Unquestionably, Kahane frightened them. But, in fact, the initiation came from the Likud's Yitzhak Shamir, the current prime minister, and Tehiya's Geula Cohen, a veteran parliamentarian of the far Right. They feared Kahane because any votes he won would come from their own party lists.

Ironically, it was Shamir and Cohen who invented the political Kahane. As founder and head of the Jewish Defense League, Kahane was transformed by them from a small-time American rabble-rouser who stirred up Jews against New York Blacks, to the leader of a band of thugs identified with the noble cause of aiding the emigration of Soviet Jews. Some evidence even suggests that Shamir, chief of operations of the Mossad at the time, was Kahane's control officer. It bothered neither Shamir nor Cohen that Kahane was reputed to be—as the record shows—a demagogue, a terrorist, a collaborator with the mob, a philanderer, an FBI snitch, a money-grabber and, in all likelihood, an embezzler. When he finally got into trouble with the law in the U.S., they invited him to take refuge in Israel, where they looked forward to his buttressing their right-wing cause—but they fell out with him after he refused to play by the restrictive rules of Israeli politics. Once in Israel, Kahane spurned

Milton Viorst, who lives in Washington, D.C., is the author of Sands of Sorrow: Israel's Journey from Independence *(Harper & Row, 1987).*

the existing parties and founded Kach to serve his own ambitions. When Shamir and Cohen mobilized the Knesset to bar him from office, it was not at all because he was antidemocratic or racist, but because they regarded him as out of their control.

All of this is revealed to us in *The False Prophet: Rabbi Meir Kahane, from FBI Informant to Knesset Member.* Presenting a thoroughly researched work in a soft voice, Robert I. Friedman makes a persuasive case that Kahane, though less frequently in the headlines these days, remains emblematic of contemporary Israel, a society that has turned from its earlier commitment to humane values and embraced, instead, a harsh, self-righteous, territorial nationalism. Despite the book's fine qualities, Friedman encountered much difficulty in finding a publisher—an index of the intimidation still exercised over the communications media by right-wing friends of Israel. Witness the review published in the *New York Times Book Review,* which accused Friedman of being anti-Israel. If being critical of Kahane and the milieu in which he works is equivalent to being anti-Israel, then I fear there is little hope for that troubled Jewish state.

Friedman makes it painfully clear that Kahane is not an aberration, a demagogue sprung full-blown on an innocent society; his roots are as deep in Jewish culture as were, say, Hitler's in Germany or Joe McCarthy's in middle America. If he is the creation of Shamir and Geula Cohen, it is certainly because they saw in him a kindred spirit, a bit eccentric perhaps, but a child (like them) of Jabotinsky's militant, right-wing Zionism.

"I say what you think," was among Kahane's proclamations to Israelis. And he is no doubt correct. What we Jews have discovered—to the dismay of those of us who thought that "Jewish values" taught a special caring for others—is that within our collective psyche lies a patch of ground on which the sun does not shine. If for some Jews the vision of ourselves as the Chosen People imposes a certain responsibility to others, for Kahane this same vision is justification for holding all outsiders—the goyim—in contempt, and for treating Arabs as chaff that we have the right to sweep away in any manner we choose. What happened to our obligation to hold others in respect, to visit on them our compassion, to serve as a light unto the nations? It seems in Israel today to have been overwhelmed by the Kahanist weeds growing in that dark corner of our psyche, promoting tribalism and glorifying *force majeure.*

Within our collective psyche lies a patch of ground on which the sun does not shine.

Kahane is the product not only of Jabotinsky's secular Zionism but, as Friedman points out, of religious Judaism as well. The offspring of a rabbinical family, he must be recognized as a conscientious student of the Torah, whatever the disdain in which one may hold him. A hypocrite he may be, particularly given his scandalous sex life—but he also may sincerely believe, as he has said, that if Israel had expelled the Arabs, destroyed the Islamic shrines on the Temple Mount, and annexed the West Bank and Gaza in 1967, "the Messiah would have come right through the open door and brought us redemption." More recently he declared, in an attempt to whip up anger at the intifada, that "our God is a god of vengeance. It's nonsense to assume that vengeance is not a Jewish concept." Obviously, Kahane's Torah is a tract without mercy, but it is surely the source of his political inspiration.

Were the problem for the Jews that of a single religious fanatic, it would hardly matter what Kahane believed; the problem, however, is that many Orthodox Jews share his beliefs. Consider the director of a yeshiva who, a year ago, demanded acquittal for the Jewish murderer of a thirteen-year-old Palestinian girl on the grounds that "Jewish blood and a goy's blood are not the same.... Any trial that assumes that Jews and goyim are equal is a travesty of justice." Or at Bar Ilan, an Orthodox university, the rabbinical scholar who recently published an article inviting the genocide of the Palestinians, citing the mandate of the Torah to exterminate the Amalekites. Recent research by a respected Israeli sociologist reveals that 32 percent of the boys and 28 percent of the girls enrolled in secular schools profess a

KIBBUTZ

Socialist? Jewish? Zionist?

Are the old definitions relevant?

The Center for Kibbutz Studies, Efal Seminar Center of the United Kibbutz Movement, recommends the following publications to Tikkun readers interested in how kibbutzim are still trying to make social values liveable:

✿ **KIBBUTZ CURRENTS**
literary-cultural-sociological journal emphasizing the changing kibbutz, kibbutz Judaism, reactions to the intifada, the economic crisis, the future.
Subscriptions: (Payable to KIBBUTZ CURRENTS)
1 yr. intro (3 issues) $21
2 yr. intro (6 issues) $35
Please add $6 per year for airmail
The two-year intro. includes a free copy of KIBBUTZ JIGSAW

✿ **KIBBUTZ JIGSAW** by Dr. Joel Magid, 1990, $8.50
An honest & original insider's view of kibbutz problems, for creative and imaginative readers.

✿ **Publications of Yad Tabenkin, Research Center of the United Kibbutz Movement:**

1. Y. Tabenkin, **The Kibbutz, A Non-Utopian Commune,** 1985 $4.50.
2. S. Maron, **Kibbutz as Communal Household,** 1987 $5.00.
3. Y. Harell, **Tabenkin's View of Socialism,** 1988 $5.00.
4. E. Avrahami, **Tabenkin on Constructive Labor Zionism,** 1989 $5.00.
5. J. Lanir, **The Kibbutz Movement, Survey & Data,** 1989 $4.00.
6. R. Porat, **The History of the Kibbutz: Communal Education 1904-1929,** 1986 $22.50.
7. Aviva Zamir, **Mothers & Daughters, Interviews with Kibbutz Women,** 1986 $22.50.
8. **Communal Life: An International Perspective** (lectures delivered at the International Conference on Kibbutz & Communes),1985 $22.50.

All prices include handling and regular postage; add $1.50 per item for air mail. For all items except KIBBUTZ CURRENTS, make checks payable to Efal Center for Kibbutz Studies and send to Kibbutz Currents, 10 Dubnov St., Tel Aviv 64732, Israel.

hatred of Arabs, a shocking statistic—until it is compared with the percentage in religious schools, which rises to 51 percent of the boys and 63 percent of the girls. Orthodox rabbis in the United States as well as Israel, says Friedman, have consistently backed Kahane's bid for public office; some have even belonged to terrorist groups committed to killing Arabs with bombs and guns. However offensive many Orthodox Jews may find Kahane, the truth is that the Orthodox community in America and Europe (having forgiven him for the part he has diverted to his own pleasures) has supplied the millions of dollars that Kahane has spent to propagate his fanatical doctrines.

Kahane still insists that his goal is to become prime minister; but even if he never again runs for public office, he will still have had a huge impact on Israeli political life. He has helped to brutalize political intercourse in Israel. I remember seeing him march up Dizengoff Street in Tel Aviv during the election campaign of 1981, surrounded by a dozen young toughs, shouting slogans, pushing bystanders out of the way. This exemplified a campaign in which the Right proudly showed its muscles by attacking the offices and breaking up the rallies of the Left.

At the same time, Kahane has articulated ideas, once unmentionable, that are now part of public discourse. He has helped popularize the routinely proclaimed right-wing tenet that the pro-peace forces are traitors to Israel. Most notably, Kahane has been successful in promoting the idea of "transfer" of the Arab population out of Greater Israel. Not only is the idea widely discussed, but it could, in some form, be enacted into law by the current Knesset. True, some of his ideas have not quite caught on, like criminalizing sex between a Jewish woman and an Arab man, a proposal taken directly from the Nuremberg Laws. But Kahane struck a responsive nerve when he declared that Judaism and democracy are incompatible.

Meanwhile, within Kahane's entourage in Israel are JDL hoodlums who are wanted by American law enforcement authorities. (Some, having begun their careers of violence in the 1960s, are not so young anymore.) They are suspected of having committed acts of terror, ranging from the bombing of Arab Americans to several murders, including the 1985 assassination in California of Alex Odeh, Western Regional Director of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee. In his research, Friedman has followed leads tenaciously, interviewing police officials and extracting FBI documents. Many trails of criminality lead to Kahane's circle and in some instances to Kahane himself. But, according to Friedman, investigations have been frustrated repeatedly by Israel's refusal to cooperate. One FBI document, written in August 1987, charges that Israeli responses to requests for the records of phone calls, arrests, travel, and residencies of JDL murder suspects "have been untimely [and] incomplete and in certain cases no response was rendered." The explanation for this conduct lies in the admonition of Rabbi Eliezer Waldman, a Kahane ally and a right-wing Knesset member, who said, "Jews should never be handed over to gentiles under any circumstances."

It is ironic that President Bush bowed recently to Israel's demand that the United States break off contact with the PLO, which had failed to condemn an act of Palestinian terrorism emanating from Libya. At the same time, henchmen of Kahane who are suspected of murder in America roam the West Bank with the Israeli government's complicity. The asylum received by these terrorists is a measure of the power that Kahane, and the value-system he promotes, exercises today in the State of Israel. □

FILM REVIEW

Reel Companions: Contemporary Gay Cinema

Warren Sonbert

For modern cinema, gays barely exist. Totally "out" gay filmmakers Pedro Almodóvar and Gus Van Sant, whose early works *Law of Desire, Dark Habits, What Did I Do to Deserve This?* and *Mala Noche* were all premiered by the San Francisco International Lesbian and Gay Film Festival (SFIL&GFF)—while being ignored by the other international San Francisco festival—now make mainstream films. Their latest respective efforts, *Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down!* and *Drugstore Cowboy,* don't even contain any gay characters, much less the gay worlds or points of view previously explored.

If gay directors aren't focusing on gay situations, why should anyone be surprised that Steven Spielberg, Woody Allen, Oliver Stone, Francis Ford Coppola, Ridley Scott et al. ignore gays as subjects or concerns? Hollywood producer Harvey Marks says that the marketing experts assume mall audiences think they'll catch AIDS just being in a theater while gay characters are up on the screen.

So forget about the tender, loving ways of *Maurice* or *Another Country,* of *Making Love* or *The Rainbow*; they are the dinosaurs of the eighties. Nowadays the straight macho hero doesn't even have a gay sidekick or delivery boy or anyone who might project a positive

Warren Sonbert's films have appeared in major festivals and retrospectives in New York, London, Berlin, Vienna, Paris, and San Francisco.

homosexual image. You won't find gays in the big blockbusters *Batman* or *Total Recall* or *Die Hard* or *Black Rain,* though gay people go to the movies just like the more and more amply represented Asian Americans, Blacks, and Hispanics do. Gays are the last invisible people, the last frontier for the popular film culture to acknowledge.

Television almost seems more aware, what with two nice guys in bed together ("thirtysomething"), teenagers discovering their sexuality (on an "Afternoon Schoolbreak Special" called "What If I'm Gay?"), and even People With AIDS dealing with their disease in a schlock, glossy miniseries ("People Like Us"). Of course David Lynch doesn't think we exist or could possibly be of any interest. Even before "Twin Peaks," which has thirty-five major characters—count 'em, thirty-five!—none of them gay (and don't tell me it's a small town), Lynch had the opportunity in *Blue Velvet* and swept it aside. Yet gays will have "Twin Peaks" parties and gush at its labored red herrings with fanzie devotion.

The gay aesthetic centers on choice, on maintaining one's options.

It shouldn't be hard to understand, then, that every year when the SFIL& GFF comes down the pike, salivating audiences strain at the gills for the sheer, rare pleasure of experiencing some concrete gay images. Who can blame them? For ten blessed days and nights we get movies—good, bad, and indifferent—that address the gay psyche with social, erotic, and aesthetic slants and act on our self-esteem like a deservedly welcome balm.

A casual perusal of the descriptions of the films in such a festival would imply that most were of a determinedly sexual (if not downright pornographic) nature, perhaps even representative of a call-to-arms reaction to the Helms forces of First Amendment suppression. Rather than be cowed into submission, gay artists will, if anything, spill over into messy sexual excess and shock-troops assault tactics. The exhilaration of witnessing the representation of explicit sexual behavior in a shared cultural context—rather than a privatized pornographic situation—becomes an overwhelming validation of the audience's sense of self and place in society.

In a festival of this nature, apparently, "gay" tends to refer to the subject matter, and the obvious issues for gay identity are sex and the tools of oppression. For me, however, gay really has to do more with an approach, an outlook, a sensibility. One of the liberating aspects of being gay is that it gives one a unique, delirious, and broad perspective on the world. The gay aesthetic centers on choice, on maintaining one's options. Cinematically this leads to an embrace of the mise-en-scène and an eschewal of didactic presentation. Rather than hit one over the head with propagandistic editing, the aesthetic I have in mind leaves the viewer with the enviable task of putting the pieces together, as the camera tracks, glides, pans, and cranes its way through the narrative.

Given this looser definition, let's examine two important films from the festival, as well as one recent mainstream film where gays *do* exist, and see how successfully gay they are.

Jennie Livingston's *Paris Is Burning* is an inside documentary look at the vogueing balls that were all the rage in New York a few years back. Young gay men and women of color, economically disenfranchised, would gather for endless evening hours in clubs and discos to strut their stuff.

Yearning toward the glamour of glossy TV soaps and the haute couture of Parisian salons, the would-be models parade before a panel of judges in an orgy of exhibitionism. The categories in which the contestants compete are as varied and wild as their attitudes: Schoolboy Realness, Butch Queen, or Military Drag. As anyone who's been lucky enough to attend one of these fetes in their heyday can tell you, the film is faithful to their theatrical grandeur.

Livingston cannily interviews a wide variety of drag queens (not the most reticent or close-mouthed of folk) and you come to love them all. Not since Andy Warhol's *The Chelsea Girls* (1965) have I been so taken and fascinated by such a gallery of real-life, stunningly etched characters. They exude at once a focused defiance and a vulnerable



MIDDLE EAST PEACE PLAN

Education. Safety. Health care. Employment opportunities. Dignity.

For 22 years ANERA has helped Palestinian and Lebanese families in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Lebanon provide for the future of their children through:

- **aid to schools**
- **medical clinics**
- **self-help projects**

BUILDING A PRODUCTIVE SOCIETY TODAY MEANS PLANNING FOR PEACE TOMORROW

ANERA
American Near East Refugee Aid
Attn: Dr. Peter Gubser
1522 K St. NW #202-B
Washington, DC 20005

Scholarship:
$_____ $100 per child per year
___ East Jerusalem
___ Gaza ___ Beirut

General Support:
___ $25 ___ $50 ___ $100 ___ other
_____ Send me information

Name _____
Address _____
City _____
State, Zip, Country _____

Scholarship donors receive a report from the school and a photo of the child during the year.

Your donation is tax-deductible. Founded 1968. Registered with the Advisory Committee on Voluntary Foreign Aid, the NCIB, and InterAction. Member International Service Agencies.

need for communal interaction that combine to draw the viewer into their magnetic tension of opposites.

We're given lessons in the lexicon and pragmatic use of such au courant terms as Reading (as in one's beads), Shade (one-upmanship), Mopping (shoplifting). Condescension is never demonstrated as a journalistic tool—something not to be taken for granted—nor exploitation used as a cheap, titillating platform.

There's a devastating treatment of one Venus Xtravaganza, a fragile yet resilient queen who is bemused and even objective about her "self-delusions." Her buoyancy and heartbreaking dreams are a testament to human tenacity against all odds. Livingston's treatment of Venus is the epitome of effective cinematic technique: no overbearing closeups that delimit space and choices; nothing forced or contrived or hammered home. Yet everything registers, has its place or tone in an accumulated pattern of thought and visuals. The very airiness again emphasizes potential and easy passage.

I urge you all to see this wonderful film whenever it comes your way; it was the most accessible, hilarious, and moving film of the festival. It throws water on cynicism while maintaining a detached, ironic tone and establishing itself as a glowing ode to a kind of antispirit that refuses to sacrifice fantasy to political edicts or trends.

Farther out is Eric de Kuyper's *Pink Ulysses,* a crazy, inventive film that manages to be cinematic, sexy, and daring—everything a film in this kind of festival should be. Starting off with a fifties physique-magazine approach to the Ulysses legend, the film then veers off in several fascinating directions. We are back in the spear-and-sandal splendor of *Demetrius and the Gladiators* (1954) as if directed underwater. Then the purely filmic, avant-garde spectre of New American Cinema in its expressionistic phase (circa 1960) rears its head in full camp flower. A debt to its namesake, the pansy classic *Pink Narcissus,* isn't too far behind. The film abuses just enough of the Ulysses legend to skirt the heroics and pounce on the emotional contradictions.

As, scenically, arms come out of walls (Jean Cocteau) or support tables (Josef Von Sternberg), de Kuyper's true vocation might seem to be as a set designer for opera. But then to Stravinsky's *The Rites of Spring* on the sound track; both a parody of ballet and a cinematic extension of its possibilities are suggested in one of the more brilliant sequences of the film—expectations are cheated or reversed, placed or foiled, in classic camp fashion.

A solo bare-chested figure taps impatiently to the rhythmic intensity of the score, and as the music spins to another cadence, the camera follows suit with disjointed, rapid-fire single frames. Then it returns for a repeat—both visually and aurally. The film continually takes on other media in unpredictable ways. It strikes me as one of the most accomplished experimental narratives I've ever experienced—fully on a par with Hans-Jurgen Syberberg's visual mischief in *Parsifal, Ludwig,* and *Our Hitler.*

Voluptuous color sequences alternate with black-and-white material from "found" sources which are used as a constant to reveal the recycled images' hitherto hidden homoerotic content. So a simple TV video of Tchaikovsky's *Sleeping Beauty* or clips from Eisenstein's *Strike* or *Potemkin* are clued, by their visual emphasis on the male physique in emblematic stances of submission or dominance, to stress the gay presence of their creators beneath the surface.

Humor is never far from center stage—often of a self-mocking nature. When Ulysses returns to Penelope, he rather chastely embraces her. But when his son enters the frame, the two men jump to erotic wrestling of a decidedly satirical bent.

A hardcore masturbation sequence is arty, precious, and yet, in this haywire context, totally acceptable as just another stimulating diversion. An intertitle mentions "roaming the seas," and then there's a cut to a close-up of a flexing torso: the written words that suggest the rippling waves find their visual metaphor.

The film climaxes with a perfectly handled crucifixion accompanied by Rossini's *Petite Messe Solemnelle,* which in turn becomes an *hommage* to Manet and Giorgione with a kind of Picnic on the Mass. The Ulysses saga by this stage takes on reference to include Orpheus, Christ, Saint Sebastian—always the solitary artist, visionary, and adventurer.

Any cavils? Unfortunately, almost every scene and take go on a minute or a few beats too long and begin to work against the power of the individual sequences and images. One might defend De Kuyper's leisurely pace and one might then, too, grow restless at material wearing out its welcome. Still, *Pink Ulysses* is a breathtaking work for its playful, unmalicious subversion of the conventional heroic narrative. It operates from a position of equipoise and power, contradicting the enslaving saga and rocking Ulysses' boat in its passage to the confinements of home and conformity.

With the much talked about *Longtime Companion,* director Norman Rene and screenwriter Craig Lucas have scored a considerable achievement. Originally slated for the PBS *American Playhouse* series (it contains enough jumping-off points for a dozen Movies of the Week), it was given a commendable lease on theatrical life by the courageous Goldwyn Company. Early reviews generated a good deal of excitement in gay and straight communities alike.

The work turns out to be an up-to-date, illustrated primer on AIDS etiquette for heterosexual patrons' delectation. (Gays need not apply, we've been through it all.) Every stage of the epidemic of the last ten years is trotted out and portrayed by a dozen major and minor characters.

The film is nothing if not determinedly earnest and sober: lots of hospital wards on view. Also foregrounded are *beaucoup de brie,* chardonnay, and tasteful decor—as if the populace were shallow and therefore had brought the plague on themselves, like the Bodega Bay bourgeoisie of Hitchcock's *The Birds.* Every point is ticked off and every eventuality covered in the narrative: diagnosis, side effects, therapy, death throes, wake, memorial service, activism (invigorating), and windup (life affirming).

None of the population is less than admirable or stalwart. This is indeed a gift to bereaved friends and relations of gay sufferers of the disease, as it depicts everything one superficially wanted to know about *their* lifestyle.

The film's construction owes something to Howard Hawks's *Air Force* and John Ford's *The Lost Patrol* in setting up moderately differentiated personae and then systematically killing off the stereotypes in normative ways.

It says something about the state of things that this breakthrough-to-the-mainstream gay enterprise should be touted and OK'd precisely because the gays in it are *dying*. They are being punished for snatching the forbidden.

Now, Almodóvar's *Law of Desire* unleashed charismatic, powerful gay men, happy and at home with themselves and bristling with sexuality. "Sorry, no thanks," say Hollywood, PBS, mall-and-mainstream-America. And Terence Davies's *Distant Voices, Still Lives* surged with innovative bravura and the subtle charge of childhood seeds blossoming into a gay sensibility; it managed to be universal, challenging, devastating, and unique. "We'll pass," say apologists, liberals, literalists. No wonder the gay and straight press both are jumping on the bandwagon for *Longtime Companion*.

One is grateful for the straight audience's exposure to scenes of affection and even passion among the film's gay characters. And yet since punishment and destruction always loom just around the corner, the portrayal remains obstinately ambivalent. The logistics of the disaster film, or even the slasher film—be complacent/then die, or have sex/then die—aren't too distant here.

Whereas the script is constantly striving toward outrageousness in setting up scenes such as one actor's appearance in a TV soap opera and how that spills over into the actual narrative, or the suggestion that another character be buried in drag by two near-hysterical friends, the film visually resists not only any delirium, but even momentum.

One keeps wanting *Longtime Companion* to be better than it is. It's not all that bad, just doggedly predictable. OK, every work doesn't have to be *Rules of the Game*, but would even a *little* creative flair be so amiss? Isn't that what gays are known for anyway?

To laud the admittedly flawless "acting" is again to buy into the narrative lifelessness of the whole. It's the aesthetic equivalent of being grateful to President Bush for now belatedly supplying condoms.

David, probably the major identity figure of the film (in that he's the group's fulcrum), is tirelessly depicted as hero and saint; he never gets mad, flustered, or anxious *despite* the Job's trials we see him go through. We *hear* from another character about his constantly blowing up at his broker over the phone, but we never see David actually losing his cool. Why not? Wouldn't this have made him more human?

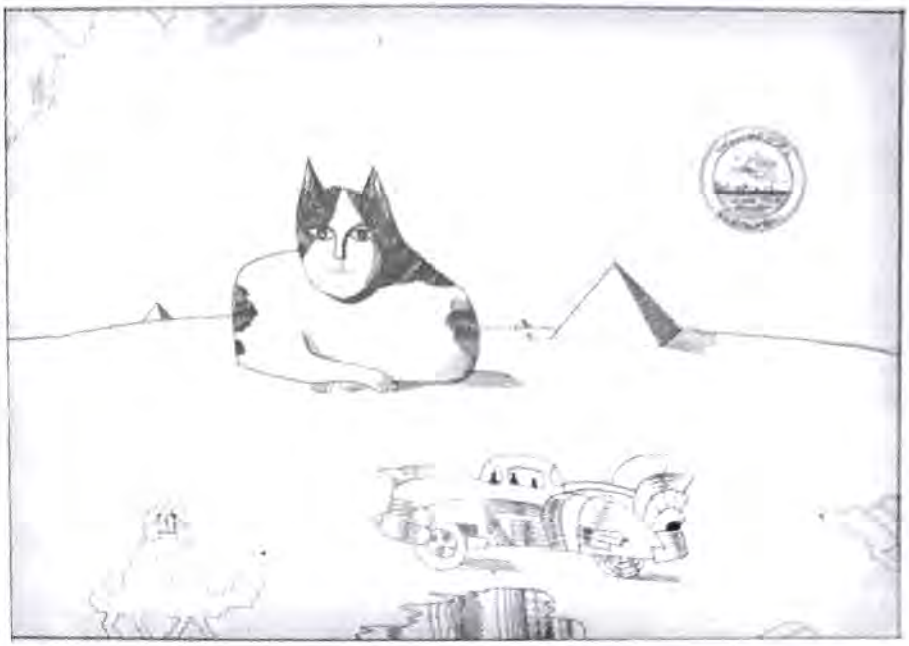
In fact the gays here are generic with all the clichéd attributes that middle America loves to heap on them: they listen to Callas croaking *"Casta diva,"* or mime disco classics with fey abandon, and never seem concerned with any issues beyond their own comfort and high disposable income. Women and people of color with AIDS are nonexistent. At the same time there are no acutely bad or despicable people in the film. So therefore no one bad or despicable ever seems to get AIDS (though five of the major characters we've been following do). How much more daring and Hitchcockian to have the first to succumb be a total louse. Wouldn't that taint and lade with guilt our initial smug reaction when the people we *liked* started dropping off? Which, lest we forget, is how it is with the actual epidemic.

A woman friend of the film's main set remarks on the gay soap opera character they're all watching, "Isn't it important for people to see it?" That's the Catch-22 of this movie. The totality is so pat and the sweeties are so fundamentally unthreatening that the work undermines any substantial connection viewers might feel with the subjects' plights.

Lots of the press objected to the silliness of having many of the film's dead come back at the end to embrace the still-living (another Fordian *hommage*). But I was grateful at long last for a little nuttiness or something outré.

So here's the paradox: *Pink Ulysses* and *Paris Is Burning* are unlikely to reach large, centrist, groundswell audiences, though they are sharp, chancy, invigorating explorations of a gay provocative propulsion: they move and seduce on jagged edges. *Longtime Companion* is a toothless paean to artistic conventionality that, by virtue of its untouchably correct subject matter and stance, claims respectful attention if not unquestioning devotion. Of course compared to *Total Recall* or *Die Hard 2* it's a beacon of intelligence and poetic spirit.

What's disturbing is that *Longtime Companion* loses its chance to upset, move, or provoke heterosexual audiences on any kind of *kinetic* level—that the homogenizing flow of images remains stolid. Indeed the PBS germination is all too evident, as the TV emphasis on issues snuffs out the impulse toward art. That said, the film's acceptance of subject matter is an important first step on the way to a more invigorating vision of the possible. □



Sphynx *Saul Steinberg*

EDITORIALS

(Continued from p. 10)

Living with the injunction to transcend the pain and oppression of the past is hard to do. The revelation of God's presence was overwhelming to the Israelites at Sinai, and its implications may even be hard for us today. The tendency to let the patterns of the past shape our sense of the possibilities of tomorrow is virtually overwhelming, and so the voice of God that Moses heard at Sinai can easily be lost among the other voices that are more consonant with previous understandings of the world. This process begins within Torah itself, so that even within the Torah we see moments in which the children of Israel begin to hear a very different kind of god, a god of revenge and anger, a god who resembles the tribal gods of other peoples, a god who gives sanction to act out on others the pain that has been visited on the children of Israel. This is the god whose voice is heard in Deuteronomy, when the Israelites are given the instructions to wipe out the people of the land they are about to conquer, and to show no mercy. Because of this voice, religious extremists today can use Torah to justify the passions and hatreds they feel.

So even in Torah the Jewish people's understanding of God is in dispute. Indeed, we may see the entire Bible and the subsequent history of the Jewish people as a struggle between two different conceptions of God. What happens, I believe, is a struggle between the moments in which we can truly hear the voice of God as the force that will allow us to break the patterns of the past and believe in the possibility of creating a world governed by mutual caring, love, peace, and justice; and the moments in which that voice is drowned out and all we hear is the legacy of inherited pain and oppression which presents itself as the voice of common sense and reality (just as everyone else is cruel and ruthless toward "the other," the stranger, so must we be, because that's the way of the world).

This struggle between the voice of God and the voices of the past shapes Jewish history. The Jews do *not* become the embodiments of Torah; they are conflicted, torn between the revolutionary demands of a new way of being and the crippling psychological legacy of the past. As the revolutionary zeal of the Exodus recedes, a new ruling class emerges in ancient Judea and Israel. Judaism becomes a Temple-based system that sometimes turns a deaf ear to the unfair treatment of the poor and the powerless. Yet the older revolutionary legacy is strong enough to produce a powerful response: the Prophets. In the name of Torah, the Prophetic tradition acknowledges that Judaism itself could quickly be distorted by those who follow the letter of the ritual law while ignoring its moral obligation to defend the powerless.

While Prophets were often ignored or persecuted, the message stirred the hearts of the people. Eventually it was included in the Bible and the Sabbath prayer service. Even so, the revolutionary consciousness continued to be subverted as Jews faced a world increasingly dominated by cruel systems of imperial rule. The talmudic tradition is a monument to the variety of clever ways in which the most revolutionary demands of Torah were subverted or made "more realistic" by scholars and sages who had lost their zeal for confronting the powers that be. Particularly after Rabbi Akiba and his disciples perished at the hands of a Rome whose power they had tried to resist, a quietism and deepening cynicism began to emerge in the Jewish religious tradition. The more that the Jews felt the need to accommodate to the status quo, the less they believed in the possibility of transformation. Their pessimism, defeatism, and cynicism about human nature inevitably led to goyim-bashing. Anyone who reads the talmudic tractate *Avoda Zara* cannot escape the impression that the Jews have come to believe that all non-Jews are so dangerous that they should be avoided. Instead of imagining that the non-Jews would, as in Egypt, become fellow travelers on the road to world transformation, Jews saw non-Jews as obstacles, threats, people who would be manipulated by their rulers into becoming anti-Semites and enemies.

This is what *did* happen—and not because *we* did anything wrong. My contention is not that we should have acted differently in the past, but rather that we can now act on different assumptions about the present. The historical conditions we face are very different from those that faced us through much of our history, yet we continue to see our possibilities as limited by an inevitable repetition compulsion that will always make the non-Jew act in destructive and hateful ways.

★ ★ ★

A word now on behalf of legitimate anger. One source of the generalized anti-goy pessimism has been our inability to express the legitimate anger we feel at those who have oppressed us. Jews have an absolute right to feel outraged at the oppression we have experienced, and to demand that there be serious recompense. For example, we have every right to ask of those who identify themselves as having historical continuity with the Christian churches, churches which spread blood libels about the Jewish people, that they involve themselves actively in the contemporary struggle against anti-Semitism. It is not enough, for example, for the Catholic Church or various Protestant denominations to eliminate from their teachings the notion that the Jewish people bears historical responsibility for the killing of Jesus. Those religious communities need to educate their own

communities to the role that these churches played in fostering anti-Semitism throughout the ages. The most minimal compensation they owe us is this: educating a youth corps among their members whose task it would be to educate the community against the various anti-Semitic notions that still remain popular, though sub rosa, in many Christian communities.

On similar grounds, *Tikkun* has opposed German reunification until the German people go much farther in acknowledging their responsibility for the anti-Semitic devastations of the twentieth century and in combatting the legacies of that hatred that are reappearing throughout Europe.

It's not goyim-bashing to be angry at what was done to us and to demand that those involved, or those who belong to the communities that claim an historical legacy with those who were involved, take responsibility for what they did and do more to rectify the historical consequences of their actions.

When anger is focused and specific it is often salutary and to be encouraged. Some people have argued that Israel or Jewish life is too focused on anger at the Holocaust. I strongly disagree. In fact, the various commemorations and museums are a substitute for legitimate anger. They function to repress the real emotions Jews have every right to feel. The role of the American ruling elite in closing off immigration of Jews, the role of the American Jewish establishment in caring more about their own position in the eyes of that American elite than in saving the Jewish people, the role of various Zionist leaders in giving higher priority to the enterprise of nation-building than saving Jewish lives in Israel—all these would become central targets if Jews were actually to allow themselves to get angry at the Holocaust.

Goyim-bashing, cynicism, and pessimism prevent us from feeling justified anger at our real enemies: they are depressive substitutes. Because as a people we still don't feel entitled to our focused anger, because we still follow the neurotic pattern of every oppressed group in unconsciously blaming ourselves for our suffering, we allow ourselves to succumb to a self-fulfilling pessimism about the world. As a result, we blur vital distinctions. As it is, we are no longer able to tell the difference between the anger of a Palestinian teenager who has grown up in a refugee camp and wants some dignity and self-respect, and the maniacal hatred and ruthlessness of a Saddam Hussein or a Hafez Assad. Indeed, unable to really tell our friends from our enemies, we revert to the one strategy that has always failed—tying our fate to that of ruling elites. In so doing we reject the possibility of making friends with those who have also been victims in other societies. And we go on believing that we will always remain a people alone, misunderstood, abandoned, and betrayed.

* * *

This theology of pessimism is the ultimate abandonment of Judaism for idolatry. Idolatry is the worship of That Which Is and the abandonment of the consciousness of That Which Could And Should Be. In practice, idolatry is the belief that the way things are in the world is all that can be, the reduction of the ought to the is, the abandonment of the belief that the world is governed by a force that makes possible the triumph of good over evil. Reflecting a deep pessimism about the "Other," goyim-bashing is one of the many varieties of idolatry that dominate contemporary Jewish life.

Israeli politics reflects this same cynicism, which explains in part why some of the most ethically sensitive Israelis avoid political involvement (in the process, ironically, ensuring that the opportunists and pessimists will continue to dominate the public arena). In my view, a religious Zionism still makes sense—but only if it stands as a radical critique of the existing policies of the State of Israel and as a vocal challenge to the chauvinism, pessimism, and cynicism in contemporary Israeli life.

The alternative to realpolitik, of course, is not a Pollyannish idealizing of the Palestinians or of other non-Jews around us. Those of us who watched the New Left attempt to make oppressed groups into the embodiments of revolutionary virtue understand that this, too, was a manifestation of idolatry. We can expect that just as Jews and other oppressed groups have been partly deformed by that oppression, so the Palestinians are likely to reflect their own kinds of deformations—and it will be appropriate for Israel to protect itself from the likely hostility that the occupation of the West Bank helped engender. But their hostility, too, is not necessarily permanent or built into the ontology of the universe. Just as the French and Germans, bitter enemies for centuries, today cooperate as allies, so too a day can come in which Israelis and Palestinians can be allies. But only if we act in ways that make that possibility more likely. We human beings can become partners with God in remaking the world, in healing, repairing, and transforming it. And that means seeing "the others" not as enemies but as potential allies even when they are not acting as such. If we approached the world as though we thought it might be possible for us to win, to be liked, to overcome others' suspicions and irrationalities, we might have considerably more success.

I don't mean that the Jewish people needs to end its struggle with anti-Semitism or to disarm the Israeli army. On the contrary, it is precisely because we have real enemies that we need a strong army that has not been undermined by the insane and hopeless task of repressing the national aspirations of the Palestinian

people. Israeli policymakers have acted as if they could not tell the difference between the threat from Iraq or Syria, which are real and venal, and the threat from what could be a totally demilitarized Palestinian state. Here our fear and distrust of the "Other" blinds us and works against our self-interest. Vigilance against real enemies is different from assuming that everyone is our enemy or assuming that those who were once our enemies need always remain such. As Israel's peace treaty with Egypt has shown, even those who were fighting against us in the past need not always remain our deepest enemies. Even some anti-Semites can be changed (though not most). But more importantly, those who are not yet against us need not be written off in advance.

Even as we need to live in the world with peoples who are unfairly or irrationally against us, and even as we need to protect ourselves accordingly, we also need to search continually for openings and possibilities for transformation. It is the dulling of our sensitivity to the possible that makes us see the world in rigid terms, and this in turn turns us against those who might potentially be our partners in remaking the world. □

HOMELESSNESS MEETS THE NINETIES

(Continued from p. 18)

Long before President Bush called for "a thousand points of light," millions of Americans participated in grass-roots activism on the housing front. These forces gained momentum in the 1980s, in part as a result of the growing visibility of the homeless. The fledgling grass-roots movement is composed of tenant groups, homeless advocacy organizations, shelters and soup kitchens, church-based institutions, community-based nonprofit developers, neighborhood associations, senior citizen groups, women's organizations, and civil rights groups.

These groups have spent much of the past decade working—primarily on the local level—to plug some of the gaps left by the federal government's withdrawal from housing programs. They renovate abandoned buildings and construct new homes for the poor; they put pressure on local governments to protect tenants against unfair evictions; they lobby for stricter enforcement of health and safety codes, for "linked deposit" and "linked development" policies; they persuade banks to open up branches in minority neighborhoods and increase available mortgage loans for low-income consumers; they publish reports to dramatize the plight of the homeless, the widening gap between incomes and housing prices, and the continuing practice of bank redlining (discriminating against minority neighborhoods); they pressure and work with city and state housing agencies to expand available funds for affordable housing and to target more assistance to community-based groups.

But these have been primarily defensive efforts—brushfire battles to keep things from getting worse. Only the federal government has the resources needed to significantly address the housing and homelessness problem. And for the housing issue to move to the top of Congress's agenda, advocates must organize more effectively and broaden their constituency. The history of this century has shown that the housing agenda made the most headway when the concerns of the poor and the middle class were joined. At the turn of the century, and during the Depression and postwar years, such a coalition saw to the improvement of health standards in teeming slums, subsidized housing for the working class, and better housing opportunities for the middle class. The labor movement, once a formidable advocate for federal housing policy, is only starting to recognize that a renewed federal housing agenda would provide jobs, as well as homes, for its members and for those it seeks to recruit. Some sectors of the business community are also beginning to recognize the importance of the housing problem for their own bottom lines. Like health care and child care, high housing costs are increasingly becoming a barrier to business profits.

The key to a successful housing policy is to increasingly remove housing from the speculative market and transform it into resident-controlled housing, funded through direct capital grants rather than long-term mortgages that increase each time a home is sold. A significant segment of the housing industry in Canada, Sweden, and other social democratic countries is organized in this fashion. In the U.S., the nonprofit (or "social") sector is relatively small.

Congressman Ron Dellums (D-California) has already sponsored legislation tailored to this goal. The National Comprehensive Housing Act, drafted by an Institute for Policy Studies task force, calls for an annual housing expenditure of $50 billion. The federal government would make direct capital grants to nonprofit groups that would build and rehabilitate affordable housing. These groups would also purchase existing, privately owned housing for transfer to nonprofit organizations. The homes would remain in the "social" sector, never again to be burdened with debt. Occupants would pay only the maintenance costs—which would dramatically lower what poor and working-class families currently pay for housing.

The Dellums bill is clearly a visionary program—a standard for judging our progress—but it is not yet a winnable bill in the current political climate. In fact, the major housing bills now pending in Congress call only for minor additions to current spending levels. Each of

them provides some funding to assist first-time home buyers, preserve the existing inventory of public and subsidized housing, expand housing vouchers for the poor, and develop the capacity of nonprofit builders. But none of the bills matches the level of housing assistance of the pre-Reagan years, much less moves it forward.

In the short term, therefore, housing advocates need to focus on four main issues for federal policy:

- increasing the supply of low- and moderate-income housing, particularly through nonprofit builders;
- preserving the existing inventory of public housing and subsidized private housing;
- providing adequate income subsidies to low-income families who cannot afford market rents;
- providing working-class and lower-middle-class families with opportunities for home ownership.

Recent changes in world geopolitics—the end of the cold war, the collapse of communism—make possible the shifting of national spending priorities (the "peace dividend") that can help address our domestic social and economic problems, including housing. Whether the nation's leaders seize this historic moment is a question of political will, not resources. And whether they summon the political will depends on the ability of concerned Americans to mobilize effectively around this complex and troubling issue. The "American Dream" of decent housing hangs in the balance. □

CALL FOR ARTICLES

The New York Jewish Review is a forum for exchanging views on traditional Jewish religion, philosophy, life and culture. The editors invite submissions of articles, essays, first person accounts, short fiction, artwork and reviews which broadly reflect the encounter of traditional religious Judaism with contemporary life. "Op-Ed" pieces intended to further the dialogue among Orthodox and non-Orthodox Jews are also invited.

THE NEW YORK JEWISH REVIEW

In Volume 3 (5740):

Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz - *The Mystic as Philosopher;* Rabbi Mayer Schiller - *Judaism, Culture and the Gentile World;* Rabbi Basil Herring - *Communism: The God That Failed;* Dr. Norman Lamm - *Torah and Secular Knowledge;* M. Weidhorn - *Is Literature Kosher?;* S. Drob - *Freud and the Chasidim;* J. Udelson – *The Tragic Lesson of Israel Zangwill;* and more.

The Jewish Review is published six times yearly. By subscription: $10 (institutions $20). Outside US add $5.00.

The Jewish Review
P.O. Box 172, Brooklyn, NY 11215
718-499-0899

Published by Jewish Review, Inc., a not-for-profit corporation.

JEWISH RELATIONSHIPS

(Continued from p. 22)

aggression both by its moral aversion to the expression of anger ("One who gets angry is like an idol worshipper"—Zohar: Genesis 2 and Maimonides, De'ot: 2) and by its doctrine of guilt and self-reflection. This theology of guilt comes directly from Deuteronomy, which blames Israel's sinfulness for the prophesied exile. The notion that we are responsible for our own suffering was further developed in Rabbinic Judaism and is reflected in such sayings as the following, from the Talmud (*Berachot* 5a):

> If you find yourself suffering, search your ways. If you search and do not find any sin, maybe you haven't studied enough Torah.... If you search and find that also not to be true, assume your suffering is from God's love.

Moreover, for centuries Jews were hardly in a social or political position to express anger and outrage over their plight. So instead they learned to direct aggression at themselves.

Freud described another psychological aspect of this dynamic—the need to preserve the image of God as a benevolent and involved parental figure. In order to let God off the hook, we blamed ourselves for our repeated misfortunes. The unexpressed aggression, according to Freud, became channeled into the Jewish superego, which grew in size and stature to its currently enormous dimensions. The more Jews were oppressed, the more stringent were the laws and forms of holiness they created in order to atone for their sense of guilt. In *Civilization and Its Discontents* Freud says:

> For the more virtuous a man is, the more severe and distrustful is his behavior, so that ultimately it is precisely those people who have carried saintliness furthest who reproach themselves with the worst sinfulness.... The people of Israel had believed themselves to be the favorite child of God, and when the great Father caused misfortune after misfortune to rain down upon this people of his, they were never shaken in their belief in his relationship to them or questioned his power or righteousness. Instead, they produced the prophets, who held up their sinfulness before them; and out of their sense of guilt they created the over-strict commandments.

The psychological mechanisms employed in the dynamic described above bear great resemblance to those employed by abused children and other victimized individuals: in both we see the interplay of "painful experience"

and an attempt at control and mastery of trauma through self-blame.

These coping strategies have had adaptive as well as neurotic results. They enabled Jews to elaborate a unique capacity for introspection and a highly developed ethics. They also enabled Jews to find meaning in their painful fate and to develop the messianic vision of a time in which the forces of good would overcome the forces of evil—if people did their part to bring that time near. In secular Jewish society this same tendency toward high expectations and perfectionism has empowered Jews to achieve high levels of excellence in a variety of pursuits. The down side of this same tendency is that as a people we are more prone to self-blame and neurotic guilt than many other minority groups. Since neurotic guilt is the result of internalized aggression, a more healthy attitude toward the expression of anger would be tremendously healing for this Jewish neurosis.

Familiarity as a Challenge to Sexual Attraction

Because of the pronounced enmeshment commonly found in Jewish families, intimacy with a Jewish partner can easily remind us of the "smothering" or overprotectiveness we may have experienced growing up. This "closeness" seems to pose a more difficult challenge for men than for women. Gender identification for boys involves a more radical separation and disidentification with mother. For the grown man, intimacy with a woman threatens to stir up not only fears of childlike dependency but also fears of losing his sense of maleness. For a Jewish man, these fears can be exacerbated with a Jewish partner who is more likely to remind him of his earliest dependent bond with mother than a non-Jewish partner might. The physical and cultural difference experienced with a non-Jewish partner, at least initially, may serve to reassure him of his otherness or masculinity, whereas with a Jewish woman he may find himself feeling more like mommy's little boy and less like a grown man. Feelings of familiarity seem to pose less of a problem for most women; in fact, the very experience that can be a turn-off for Jewish men is often a turn-on for Jewish women. This basic gender difference may be another one of the reasons that more Jewish women seem to want Jewish men than vice versa.

Positive and Negative Aspects of Refinding

What we are touching on here is connected to the way "refinding" is experienced in Jewish romantic relationships. Refinding—the desire that propels us to rediscover in a contemporary love qualities and dynamics that were present in our early love relationships—is intensified with a Jewish partner. (See "Mapping the Terrain of the Heart," *Tikkun* Mar./Apr. 1990.) Both positive and negative aspects of refinding are intensified in Jewish romantic relationships because partners are more likely to remind one another of the painful as well as the nurturing aspects of early familial dynamics.

On the positive side, with a Jewish partner one is likely to refind "heimishness," a warmth or emotional expressiveness, and a familiar sense of humor. Jewish partners are also likely to share common values and ethics, including a strong valuation of family. And they are likely to find their child-rearing attitudes to be similar—a quality not to be underestimated in its importance for long-term compatibility. Beyond these psychological and emotional commonalities, Jewish partners can potentially partake in shared cultural traditions and rituals, which root them in a common history. Jewish holidays and rites of passage provide the couple with access to archetypal healing symbols and connect them deeply to the cycles of nature and the stages of the life cycle. The shared experience of these rites can be deeply bonding for the couple.

Also of tremendous significance to the life of the couple is the importance of a shared community. Couples in social isolation have greater difficulty surviving the internal stresses of emotional intimacy. Regular contact with community offers the couple a place to release hostilities, and it reinfuses the couple with new vital energies. The community also provides the couple with a larger context of meaning, thus reducing the overload on the relationship that occurs when one expects a relationship to provide for all of one's needs.

The negative aspects of refinding affect both falling and remaining in love. The initial sense of "mystery" that fosters romance is diminished by the instant replay of old emotional conflicts. Once in an intimate relationship, Jews tend to be haunted by the voice of their critical parents. Unresolved anger due to excessive parental criticism tends to find an easy outlet with a Jewish partner. Inevitably, as one partner finds fault or is critical of the other, intense anger and hurt begin to surface. Specific criticisms are experienced as complete character assassinations because they are amplified and exaggerated by one's internal critical voice. Thus, superego conflicts of the individual are acted out interpersonally. The following encounter illustrates this hair-trigger sensitivity to criticism:

Jacob came home from work Tuesday night to find his wife, Sarah, warming up a variety of leftovers for the family dinner. Secretly hoping to come home to a nurturing, home-cooked meal after a difficult day, he comments: "Leftovers?" Sensing the disappointment in her husband's voice, Sarah breaks into tears and launches

into a tirade against her husband, saying: "How dare you complain. You are so sexist. You know I work, too, and yet you expect me to do all the woman's work, shlep the kids around to all their activities, and still cook you gourmet dinners every night. Well, if you haven't noticed, I'm not your mother."

In this brief interaction, Sarah displaces her internal conflict about perfectionism onto the relationship. Growing up, Sarah tried hard to meet her parents' high expectations of her, but never quite felt she measured up. Now as an adult trying to juggle her multiple roles as a professional, a mother, and a wife, there's no way she can do it all perfectly. Instead of being angry at her parents for teaching her to expect too much of herself, Sarah's anger gets unleashed at her husband, onto whom she projects the critical parental voices. At the slightest suggestion of criticism or disappointment (real or imagined) on the part of her husband, Sarah's anger surfaces to protect her from the painful realization that she may never perform well enough to please everyone. Oversensitivity to criticism, as exhibited in this vignette, is a common experience in Jewish relationships.

The reenactment of childhood conflicts with one's mate occurs in all intimate relationships; however, for Jewish couples these dynamics tend to unfold both more rapidly and with a unique intensity because of the added pressure of excess "refinding."

It's no wonder that Jewish couples complain that their relationships require "higher maintenance." Other factors contribute to this perception as well. Because Jews tend to be verbally expressive of their feelings, there's more out in the open to deal with. While this high level of emotional expressiveness may facilitate a deeper experience of intimacy, it brings with it an increase in openly expressed conflict. Furthermore, as the result of overly gratifying Jewish parents, one or both partners may have unrealistic expectations of what to expect from a mate. Partners may find themselves competing with each other for unconditional nurturance, inevitably disappointed with what they actually can receive.

If this weren't enough, subtle forms of jealousy and competitiveness between Jewish men and women are sown in the Jewish family by the different ways in which boys and girls are treated. In addition to the sexism present in the culture at large, Jewish women growing up in more traditional families have to contend with the religious attitudinal preference for the boy child. The absence, until quite recently, of a ceremonial ritual to mark the birth of a baby girl is a clear example of Judaism's "second-best" attitude toward women. Unequal celebration of bar and bat mitzvah rites is another. Many Jewish women feel angry that their educational and professional aspirations were taken less seriously by their parents than were their brothers'; remaining "marriageable" was seen as more important than being successful in one's own right. Though these sexist trends have already begun to change in most American Jewish communities, I've encountered many Jewish women who still harbor resentment toward their brothers over their envied position. These feelings of resentment easily get transferred onto and acted out with a Jewish mate.

How can we enhance the *promise* of Jewish romance? Bleak as the picture I've painted might seem, Jewish romantic relationships do hold considerable promise. But in order to enhance that potential, Jewish men and women must heal their mistrust of one another with mutual understanding and compassion. We need to come to terms with our own internalized anti-Semitism and face the way in which negative stereotypes have distorted our view of ourselves and each other. In order to get beyond destructive relationship dynamics, we must resolve the internal conflicts that drive our perfectionism. This involves sorting out healthy and realistic expectations from those that are excessive. We need to differentiate between the authentic Jewish vision of *tikkun olam*—which may motivate one to actualize one's highest potential—and neurotic perfectionism, which compensates for feelings of inferiority or guilt and is a derivative of internalized oppression.

Where in all this is the promise of Jewish romantic relationships? Couples who draw upon the richness of Jewish culture and spirituality find that the opportunity for fulfillment in love is immeasurably enhanced. Beyond the positive aspects of "refinding" that are inherent in Jewish relationships, there are aspects of the Jewish tradition that offer the couple a wellspring of meaning and creative spiritual expression.

Consider, for example, the Jewish Sabbath ritual—twenty-five hours of special time removed from the world of work, mastery of the physical world, and other outer-directed activity. Shabbos, an oasis in time, offers the couple freedom from the overwhelming details of mundane reality, and a chance to re-center emotionally and spiritually. It's a sacred time in which couples can reconnect with their yearning for the experience of unity and transcendence. In the Jewish mystical tradition, sexual union on Shabbos is celebrated as a mirror of the divine union, and is also the gateway to apprehending this greater unity. We live in a world of division and dualism, and sharing one's life with another person at times entails painful conflict and struggle. The spiritual experience of unity that can be attained through observing Shabbos offers couples an opportunity for healing these splits.

Jewish myths and rituals open doors to the transcendent or sacred dimension of life. They offer the couple the deep bond of a shared spiritual experience

and root the couple in a historic legacy. As part of the movement for Jewish spiritual renewal, both Jewish women and men today are creating innovative rituals. They are rediscovering the healing power of our ancient rites while imbuing them with new and psychologically relevant meaning. This renewal can strengthen the bonds of the couple by providing families with a larger, richer context of meaning and identity. □

ANNA FREUD AND I

(Continued from p. 26)

> All the strange conditions under which the incongruous pair continue their love relations—on the one hand the adult, who cannot escape his share in the mutual dependence necessarily entailed by a sexual relationship, and who is at the same time armed with complete authority and the right to punish, and can exchange the one role for the other to the uninhibited satisfaction of his whims, and on the other hand the child, who in his helplessness is at the mercy of this arbitrary use of power, who is prematurely aroused to every kind of sensibility and exposed to every sort of disappointment, and whose exercise of the sexual performances assigned to him is often interrupted by his imperfect control of his natural needs—all these grotesque and yet tragic disparities distinctly mark the later development of the individual and of his neurosis, with countless permanent effects which deserve to be traced in the greatest detail.

It was a moment of great personal courage. It was not to last.

Freud's courage was not rewarded by his colleagues. While working at Anna Freud's house, I found an unpublished letter in which he told Fliess, less than two weeks after he gave the paper, "I am as isolated as you could wish me to be: the word has been given out to abandon me, and a void is forming around me." Both the immediate response to the paper, and the subsequent response were ones that Freud had not anticipated: his colleagues thought he was crazy to believe his women patients. This was bound to have had a disastrous impact on a young physician with a growing family, eager to open a neurological/psychiatric clinical practice. Where were his referrals to come from, if his colleagues thought he was completely daft? I made this point to Anna Freud. "Do you believe," I said, "that this could have had anything to do with his later abandonment of the theory?"

"No." She was adamant.

"But tell me, Miss Freud, why did you omit this passage from your published edition of the letters?"

"Because it makes my father sound so paranoid," was her response.

"But if it was the truth, then he was *not* paranoid, he was simply perceptive."

I was slowly learning that Anna Freud could not get caught up in the excitement of this historic moment to the extent that I did. It was personally deeply charged for her. Of course this was her father and his reputation that were at stake. The matter could hardly have been of insignificance for her, and she could not be expected to feel disinterest. Nevertheless, the enterprise of looking back, via the documents she and I were now amassing, to Freud's decision that his patients were telling the truth, was not without its exhilaration. There exists, as far as I know (I looked without success), not a single published account of the devastating effects of incest or childhood sexual abuse before Freud's time. And yet if this was happening to anything like the extent that is true today—and why should it be any different?—then at least one in three women, possibly more, in the general population had been exposed to a forced and unwanted sexual advance during childhood. In other words, sexual abuse of one form or another was the core trauma of many women's lives, yet there was total silence about it. There was no taboo on the commission of incest, only a taboo on speaking about incest. For Freud to have broken that taboo of silence was, to my mind, one of the great moments in history.

Later, in one of the most famous retractions in the history of ideas, Freud was to recant. As he put it in 1925 in *An Autobiographical Study*: "I was at last obliged to recognize that these scenes of seduction had never taken place, and that they were only fantasies which my patients had made up." But he had recognized his "error" long before that, in perhaps the single most famous letter Freud ever wrote, one to Wilhelm Fliess, dated September 21, 1897: "I want to confide in you immediately the great secret of something that in the past few months has gradually dawned on me. I no longer believe in my *neurotica* [theory of the neuroses, i.e., seduction]." It was this letter, one that Anna Freud herself published in 1950, to which she continually drew my attention. "Is that not plain enough for you, Dr. Masson?"

It might have been, until I found a letter from Freud to Fliess that Anna Freud had *not* published. It was dated December 12, 1897, almost three months *after* Freud supposedly abandoned his theory that his women patients were telling him the truth. In this letter he writes:

> My confidence in the father-etiology has risen greatly. Eckstein treated her patient deliberately in such a manner as not to give her the slightest hint of what will emerge from the unconscious, and in the process obtained, among other things, the identical scenes with the father.

The import of this letter is clear: Freud still believed, at the end of 1897, that the women had been telling him the truth all along. They *had been* abused. "Why," I asked Anna Freud, "did you omit this letter?" Her answer astonished me: "Because it was wrong. My father later came to believe that the women had been fantasizing, and this letter would only confuse the general public." When she saw my look of astonishment she added: "Just as it has confused you." I have to admit that Anna Freud was far more astute, in many ways, than I was. There was a clarity to her intellect that I could admire without reservation. Nor was she in any way a devious person. She was honest, and straightforward, but there were also things she could not absorb.

I wanted to absent myself, in some personal way, from the significance of what we were finding. I wanted Anna Freud to look at the evidence entirely on its own merits, with no reference to me, to her, or even to the fact that Freud was her father. This was impossible. From her response to me, I began to get the first inkling of what was later to become much more explicit and personally virulent.

"Why, Dr. Masson, are you so fascinated by this episode?" Anna Freud asked me. I did not know, but whatever the answer, it was irrelevant to the importance of this momentous historical event. I didn't want to plead with Anna Freud to be empathic with victims of child abuse, it seemed so crude. I wanted her to see that this whole "episode," as she insisted on calling it (as if it were an unfortunate episode, one best forgotten, which is probably what she thought), was central to her father's development of psychoanalysis. However one judged it, its importance could not be denied. One could not pay too much attention to it. Here was one of the central moments in the birth of modern psychotherapy. Freud was confronted with a deep challenge: either he believed the women and turned his considerable intellectual powers onto the issues these hidden truths raised, thereby becoming an ally to women, or he did not believe them, and instead spent his time trying to discover the reasons for their "hysterical mendacity," as he later came to call it, becoming their psychical prosecutor. It was important to decide who was "denying"—society, or the women.

We were at one of our frequent intellectual impasses. "Dr. Masson, my father based his rejection of these women's memories on clinical material. He recanted because he was wrong the first time." (Whenever she used that phrase "my father" I would shudder a bit at its historic magic—knowing, too, that in just a few years, nobody else would ever be able to say that again, but I also learned that it usually prefaced a final opinion and one with which I would not agree.)

I had no choice but to be direct.

"How do you know that, Miss Freud? After all, we have no clinical records demonstrating this to be true. Did he tell you that? Did he ever give you any information on this point? We saw that his reliance on Ellis was unfounded." Silence. Too prolonged for my comfort.

"He told me that he changed his mind based on his clinical work with patients."

"But there is no proof that that is true. There are no case histories. There is no evidence for it in his own clinical notes. In fact, Miss Freud, you must recognize that the very passages from his letters to Fliess that you omitted contain clinical material of the opposite nature to the one you suggest: proof that he was seeing the reality of sexual abuse in his own private practice, *after* he supposedly abandoned the theory. And you omitted those very case histories from the published record yourself. So, in fact, the history of the whole episode has been more obscure than necessary." I took a breath.

"Please, believe me," I continued, "I am not trying to be rude to you, or to impugn the character of your father. How can we know that anybody else would have behaved any differently? But I am trying to remove this whole question from the personal, from you, from me, from your father. I want to find out what happened then. Please don't analyze my motivations, because I really don't count in this at all; just focus your attention on the material. It is so important. Please."

I saw her look at me with a mixture of admiration and distaste. She was not accustomed to being spoken to in this manner. I knew that. She was looking at me and possibly wondering who I was, what I really wanted, what I intended to do with his new information. She was wondering, even though I begged her not to, about my motivation. She was making a clinical judgment about me. It was her profession to do so. I didn't want that. I wanted to get away from the world of analysis for the time being. I knew that I was taking a risk. She could revoke her permission to publish the letters at any time. But I was not interested in getting into a power struggle with her. I wanted to say something to her that was more direct, more human, less theoretical. It had to do with something essential to the way people grew up in the world, and how they became unbearably sad. □

SOVIET JEWRY

(Continued from p. 30)

the self-styled Russophiles who fostered national hatred, "exposed" Jewish surnames, and fed on "paranoid" anti-Semitism.

The Right is in fact a coalition, divided by its interpretation of 1917 and the Stalinist state, but united by the common bond of anti-Semitism. There are the neo-Slavophiles, Russophiles, and "village writers" who see

the source of Russia's troubles in the assault of "foreign" ideologies and their destruction of a morally superior and unique Russian civilization—agrarian, organic, and communal. The neo-Slavophiles and the village writers cannot forgive Stalin for the collectivization campaign. The neo-Stalinists, on the other hand, accept 1917, hanker for their dead hero, and ascribe any crimes to the schemes of his Jewish advisers. And finally, in addition to the Slavophiles and the neo-Stalinists, one finds, at the margins, Pamyat and similar organizations. Vocal as they are, these latter groups are only the tip of the iceberg of Russian anti-Semitism. To be sure, Soviet Jews worry about black-shirted thugs yelling anti-Semitic slogans and barging in with seeming impunity at meetings of liberal writers (as happened in Moscow in January). But ultimately they are far more worried when world-class mathematicians such as Shafarevich and influential writers such as Rasputin and Vasily Belov make an "intellectual" case for the harmful role of Jews in Russian culture.

"Intellectual" anti-Semitism has found some powerful forums: the journal *Nash Sovremennik, Literaturnaia Rossiia,* and the Writers Union of the Russian Republic. Anyone doubting the importance of anti-Semitism in the Writers Union of the Russian Republic should look at the transcript of its November 13–14 board meeting, published in part by *Ogonek* (1989, No. 48). On the agenda was the discomfort felt by "truly Russian writers" in the Leningrad branch of the Union. These "true Russians" wanted their own newspaper and got the sympathetic support of Iurii Bondarev, who chaired the meeting, and Valentin Rasputin. At one point Bondarev even referred to the "viruses and microbes" that were undermining the Writers' Union.

The operative word at the meeting was "Russophobia." Writers complained that Jews were slandering Russian culture and were grossly overrepresented in Russian literature. Sergei Voronin drew "continuous applause" when he shouted

> There is nothing worse than the destruction of one people by another. What I have in mind is the extraordinarily serious situation which has arisen in our Leningrad writers' organization. The only way to explain the fact that we Russian writers are only 20 percent of the members is by looking at the elementary lack of respect accorded us, Russian writers, by a group of *Russian-language* [emphasis added] writers, the majority of whom are of Jewish nationality.

Anatoly Builov, who also raised the question of "viruses," complained that the "Jews were the only group interested in sowing discord in our ranks." No, he admitted, he was not a member of Pamyat, but "there's a lot in its literature that I like."

The journal *Nash Sovremennik* has become a major mouthpiece of the neo-Slavophiles. In 1989 it printed an abridged version of Shafarevich's notorious *Russophobia.* Shafarevich is a famous mathematician and a founding member of the Committee to Defend Human Rights in the USSR. Many of the arguments of the book bear striking resemblances to the turn-of-the-century *Action Française. Russophobia* maintains that Jews have played a major role in slandering Russia, have destroyed her self-confidence, and imposed mechanical foreign values in place of healthy native ones.

Soviet Jewry has reacted to such attacks in several ways. One, obviously, is emigration. *But even at the present rate of emigration a sizable number of Soviet Jews will remain.* What will happen to Soviet Jews who stay? What future is there for Jewish existence in the Soviet Union? It's crucial to grasp that both emigration and renewed Jewish cultural activity in the Soviet Union will change the nature of the Jewish community and the choices available to Soviet Jews in the future.

For many Jews, fear or the desire for economic security will be enough reason to emigrate. We should respect that choice. It may be morally sublime to tell Soviet Jews to fight for nascent democracy at home, but that is up to those who may have to live with the physical consequences of that decision. And sometimes simple truths should be restated. The safety and security of Israel should still be the number-one Jewish concern. In this regard, heavy Soviet Jewish immigration will not only bolster the Jewish population but may also increase the chances for peace. These Jews want peace, quiet, jobs, and homes. Few are rabid nationalists. They may well come to support more pragmatic policies, ready to trade territories for peace. Furthermore, the daunting financial challenge posed by the immigration, along with the strain on housing and social services, may finally force the Likud to abandon heavy investments in West Bank settlements.

The noted ethnographer Mikhail Chlenov, in his keynote address at the December meeting of the Va'ad, recognized the strength of the emigration movement. "It is possible," he told the delegates, "that Soviet Jewry has really entered the final phase of its existence, but this phase is a long process and we must be concerned to do something for those who stay as well as those who leave." The lesson Jews really had to learn from the wave of anti-Semitism was the futility of assimilation:

> How do Jews usually defend themselves against anti-Semitism? First of all by a strong and full national life, by national organization. The assimilated Jew who lacks ties with his fellows, is detached from his culture, his heritage, his people, is absolutely

helpless in the face of anti-Semitism. The only thing left for him to do is to repeat after the famous French philosopher [Sartre] that he is a Jew only when confronted by an anti-Semite. Therefore panic first of all seizes assimilated Jews. The most trustworthy, although not the quickest form of defense is via the development of national self-awareness, self-organization, reunion with the Jewish people.

To my mind, it is precisely this last point—reunion with the Jewish people—that is the most significant result of the burgeoning movement for Jewish self-renewal in the USSR. From the presence of foreign Jewish observers and teachers in Moscow, to the serialization of Dubnov in *Sovetish Heimland,* to Adin Steinsaltz's yeshiva in Moscow, Soviet Jewry can now show that it once again feels itself to be a part of the Jewish people, not only in Israel but also in the Diaspora. Jews are organizing, they are seeking each other out, and the old arguments are returning: Yiddish vs. Hebrew, the role of Russian in Jewish culture, and so on. As one participant in the December meeting remarked, it was like 1917 all over again, with the whole cast of characters back, except for the Bund.

But rigid ideological approaches have never really sufficed to explain the situation of Russian Jews. In the years before World War I, Russian Jewry produced key ideologies such as Bundism and Zionism. Its greatest mass movement, however—one that was to have enormous consequences for Jewish history—was the spontaneous mass emigration of two million Jews. (Then too, there were Bundists who called on the Jews to stay behind and fight for Russian democracy.) Another trend cut short by the Revolution was the rise of a rich Russian-language Jewish culture, represented by such journals as *Rassvet* and *Voskhod.* Well-intentioned outsiders can urge their own solutions on Soviet Jews, but Soviet Jewry will also have to provide new, indigenous models of Jewishness. Indeed, the July 22 *Pravda* article signaled official willingness to tolerate a variety of approaches to Jewish culture: it advocated equal freedom for Zionists and for those preaching Jewish renewal in the USSR be it in Yiddish, Hebrew, or Russian.

Just like other nationalities in the country, Soviet Jews have to come to terms with all the unique features of their identity—as Jews, as products of Russian culture, as members of the Soviet middle and professional classes to which they might belong. In this respect, American Jewry may provide a useful model.

The February 1990 issue of *Sovetish Heimland* contains a fascinating debate between Boris Viner and ethnographer Igor Krupnik. Using census, emigration, and intermarriage figures, Viner predicts the demise of Soviet Jewry within two generations. But Krupnik's answer reads like a throwback to the debate on Charles Silberman's debunking of pessimistic readings of American Jewry's future. Soviet Jews, Krupnik emphasizes, are on the threshold of a new era. Gone are the circumstances which once impelled children of mixed marriages to opt for non-Jewish nationality. Constant contact with Jews abroad, both former emigrants and others, will leave its stamp on Soviet Jewry. New options allow Soviet Jews to emulate their cousins in the United States and find ways of combining various forms of "Jewish" and "general" allegiance. Furthermore, Krupnik hopes, in the future many emigrants may return, or at least go back and forth. Krupnik's position makes a lot of sense—if the Soviet Union can avoid imminent chaos.

In the July 18 issue of *Literaturnaia Gazeta,* the noted economist and writer Nikolai Shmelev wrote that

> everybody agrees on the long-term goals. We have to become a civilized country, a normal society. But achieving that goal will take decades.... So the question is, will we be able to take that path without a prior period of catastrophes, bloodshed, chaos, and millions of victims. That's the main thing. And I'm worried that might all come about in the next few years.

Shmelev hopes he is wrong. So do we. But meanwhile, we must help Soviet Jews with money, empathy, and respect for the different choices they make—whether to leave or stay. Alan Snitow's optimism is still premature. □

A CONVERSATION WITH A. B. YEHOSHUA

(Continued from p. 34)

repetition of the materialism, anti-intellectualism, anti-spirituality, and anti-democratic realities that they could just as easily find in the larger society. And in the larger society they didn't have to learn Hebrew or study esoteric texts. So, many reasoned, why go through all the struggle to be Jewish if at bottom Jewish values merely repeat those of the larger American society? The "*she-erit yisrael,*" the saving remnant of Israel, may be those who reject the organized Jewish community for these kinds of reasons. Unfortunately, in the process some of these people end up rejecting Judaism itself, not understanding that the very values that lead them to reject what parades as Judaism in the public arena are in fact the major values of the prophetic tradition of Judaism!

Yehoshua: But why hold on to Judaism? The French don't need to hold on to French feudalism to be authentically French—they can take their own values

that make sense today and say that these are the values around which they want to build a contemporary French life. What is an authentic Russian? A person who supports the Czar? What is an authentic southern Black American? A person who supports the slavery of his forefathers? "X" may be an authentic Jew and still be a bad person or follow an awful policy. Who needs this kind of Jewish authenticity? We don't need it to be moral Israelis!

Lerner: Israel was created on the basis of *shlilat hagola*—the negation of life in the Diaspora, a total negation of the Jewish past, of our powerlessness, our oversensitivity to others' needs, our reliance on morality rather than strength. Yet wasn't it the Zionist negation of this diaspora Jewishness that led to Israel's current willingness to rule over a million and a half Palestinians? Why reject a Jewish past that articulated values so much better than those being articulated by either the Jews of the current era or the secularists of this era? Why should we be attracted to an Israel that rejects that kind of Jewish morality as exilic and obsolete—to come fight the Palestinians?

Yehoshua: I don't ask you to come to fight a war of conquest. I ask you to come to fight the struggle for peace. The readers of *Tikkun* should come to be part of the peace movement and the civil rights movement. We need you here not when Israel appears to be endangered externally, but now that Israel is endangered internally. We need you to fight the war for peace. The fact is that some of you Americans who did come were very important for peace. This is the real battle facing the Jewish people—come to Israel and help us make peace. Create a *Tikkun* center in Israel, because I agree with you that some of your ideas would be very valuable and necessary here. Create a Hebrew-language version of *Tikkun*—it would be a great help in building the kind of society we want here. I know that you have had incredibly powerful and intellectually deep and moving *Tikkun* conferences in New York, San Francisco, and Los Angeles. Make your next *Tikkun* conference in Israel. This is where the battle is being fought.

Lerner: Many others in the Israeli peace movement have a different position. Some of them think that what *Tikkun* is doing in the U.S. is far more important than what it could accomplish in Israel. They say that if the idealists came to Israel the American government would hear only the voice of those who are left—the reactionaries; whereas what *Tikkun* is doing right now by being an American voice unequivocally supportive of the peace movement is of direct assistance to Israeli doves. I myself want to live in Israel, yet many Israelis tell me it's more important for me to stay in America and create a propeace voice in the American Jewish world.

Yehoshua: Well, I'm delighted about what you are doing in the U.S. But if I had to choose, I'd tell you to come here.

Moreover, here you could make Jewishness something real, something that went beyond one or another particular value. Your Jewishness in America is a Jewishness that is on the bookshelves; you don't have a land, a language, a daily reality that is in any way Jewish. No wonder you fight so hard to insist on the "right line" about what Jewish values are—because you think that if one book is missing from the bookshelf maybe you won't have a Jewish library anymore. Whereas here there is a fully textured Jewish life; and that allows me to be more free. So if on some point Moses is wrong, I can reject that part of Moses. If the biblical Joshua was wrong, I am free to reject him, without worrying whether I am really still Jewish or if I have lost my Jewish identity.

Lerner: But the reality is that in America that kind of creative thinking is more evident than it is in Israel. In America, we have allowed Reform Judaism, Conservative Judaism, Reconstructionist Judaism, a Havurah Judaism, a feminist Judaism; whereas in Israel there is a rigidity in the personality structure that makes it much harder to create alternatives. The secular Israeli Jews say, "The only real Judaism is Orthodox Judaism"—the very Judaism they hate! And they won't allow or take seriously any alternative form of Judaism.

Yehoshua: Yes, this aspect of Israeli life is crazy. Nevertheless, there is a way that we can deal with these issues in a much less charged way, because our entire Jewish identity does not hinge on the outcome of any given specific issue, because our entire lives are Jewish. That enables us to live with some of the craziness, because our identities are not constantly hanging in the balance. □

J IN THE WILDERNESS

(Continued from p. 43)

but presumably earlier, perhaps in the days of Samuel and Saul. The story therefore is a surprising departure from J's usual praxis of clearly pointing out a contemporary irony or allegory, unless indeed the subtle J is warning Jeroboam, to the north, that he may fall back into the situation of the pre-Davidic age, when even Moab was a menace. But the setting has a peculiar meaning for J: we are near the region in which Moses will die, granted the Pisgah vision but not the actuality of Canaan. When Balak gives his supposed counter Moses, Balaam, a Pisgah sight of the Israelites, wha

Balaam sees is glory (Numbers 23:14–24). It is another of J's complex ironies that the two prophets hover near one another in the fateful region where Moses tragically ends, still unfulfilled in his quest.

Perhaps it is another irony that the surviving traces of J in Numbers should give us a grim transition to the death of Moses, by way of the orgies shared by some of the Israelites and the daughters of Moab in Numbers 25:1–5. These depravities yoke Israel to the Baal of Peor, and Peor is close by where Yahweh himself will bury Moses in an unmarked grave. The Deuteronomist absorbed J (or JE, as some would prefer) in two crucial passages, 31:14–15 and 23, where Moses hands over command to Joshua, and 34:1b–5a, 6, and 10, where Moses and Yahweh have their final confrontation, face to face in the mode of Abram. Where Balaam stood to view the separateness of Israel, its singularity among nations, Moses stands at the end to see the dimensions of an Israel he himself is not permitted to enter. Any man's life, as Kafka ironically remarked, is not long enough to enter Canaan, even if one has been on the track of Canaan all one's life. What J thought of Yahweh's punishment for Moses we do not know, as that is part of J's text forever torn away by the holy alliance of the Deuteronomist, the Priestly Author, and the Redactor. But J's ironic judgment is implied when we hear Yahweh tell his prophet that he has allowed him to see the land (from afar) with his own eyes but not to cross over. The rhetorical pattern deliberately recalls the promise made to Adam, first giving and then taking away. You are free to eat of every tree in the garden, but not the fruit of the two trees, Knowledge and Life. This is the land I swore to Abram, Isaac, Jacob, and their offspring, but you will not cross there. The same pattern is manifested in the creation of Adam and the death of Moses. Yahweh makes the first man with his own hands, and then he buries his chief prophet, again with his own hands. Our cycle is from clay to clay; everything is given to us, and then what matters most is taken away from us.

Some scholars have traced J into the Book of Joshua, but I do not hear her voice anywhere in that bloody chronicle. Her scrolls, I am convinced, went from Adam to the death of Moses, and then ceased, on principle. Her self-denial was her decision not to write about David, precisely because 2 Samuel's author had done (or was doing) that work so superbly. The Book of J, by a final irony, is buried forever in Torah, a masterpiece of the Redactor's. J would have shrugged off the ambiguity of her writings' fate. If one does not wish to choose forms of worship from poetic tales but wishes to read the tales, one still receives J's authentic blessing, whether one knows it or not. □

STEPMOTHER TONGUES

(Continued from p. 38)

Klepfisz is one of those rare North American artists who explores the material conditions by which the creative impulse, which belongs to no gender, race, or class, can be realized or obstructed. "Contexts" juxtaposes the child's passion for words with the seamstress mother's recognition of how bread must be put on the table; elsewhere she creates a poet-proofreader with the aging blind scholar for whom she works; the worker going home wearily by subway with the beggar working the car. The "Work Sonnets" depict the crushing of dreamlife and imagination in those who, because of class, race, and gender, are written off by capitalism and its need for robots. But the woman clerical worker who finally speaks in the poem is not a robot; she has a dreamlife albeit a buried one; and she has evolved her own strategies for survival, calculating closely her participation in the system, and even, ironically, in the poem. These poems are political to the core without a single hortatory line. Like their author, they do not take their existence for granted.

The trajectory of Klepfisz's work arches from the Warsaw Ghetto to the intifada. Her most recent poems examine the pain and necessity of identifying as a Jew with the Palestinians under Israeli occupation:

> All of us part. You move off in a separate
> direction. The rest of us return
> to the other Jerusalem. It is night.
> I still hear your voice. It is in the air
> now with everything else except sharper
> clearer. I think of your relatives
> your uncles and aunts I see the familiar
> battered suitcases cartons with strings
> stuffed pillowcases
> children sitting on people's shoulders
> children running to keep up ...
>
> If I forget thee
> Oh Jerusalem Jerusalem Hebron
> Ramallah Nablus Qattana
> may I forget
> my own past my pain
> the depth of my sorrows.

From a rootedness in Jewish history and an unassimilated, uncharted location, Klepfisz continues to labor with Jewish meaning. Her poems contain a voice, sometimes voices, that can often best be heard by reading aloud. Her sense of phrase, of line, of the shift of tone, is almost flawless.

But perfection is not what Irena Klepfisz is after. In

poems whose texture may appear transparent, she expresses complex tensions of language, speechlessness, memory, politics, irony, compassion, hunger for what is lost, hunger for a justice still to be made. This is what makes her poetry crucial to the unfoldings of history that we begin, in 1990, to imagine. □

LETTERS

(Continued from p. 6)

Christian Feminist Anti-Semitism

To the Editor:

I am a Jew, a feminist, a refugee from Hitler and the Holocaust, and all my adult life I have been an active fighter against anti-Semitism, racism, and sexism. Imagine my dismay to find myself castigated as a Christian feminist anti-Semite by Susannah Heschel in her article "Anti-Judaism in Christian Feminist Theology" (*Tikkun,* May/June 1990).

Two sentences from my work are quoted to show its affinity and coherence with the work of a clutch of Christian feminist-theologians whose viewpoint Heschel has reduced to that of old-fashioned Christian anti-Semitism, pure and simple. Never mind that I have specifically disagreed in my work with the viewpoints of several of those she cited, although I certainly would not disagree with all of them nor reduce their work to insignificance or viciousness the way she does. Never mind that I carefully, in two long chapters of my book *The Creation of Patriarchy,* traced the enormous positive contributions of Judaism in the ancient world and attempted to reconstruct the specific social setting out of which it grew, while also pointing out the patriarchal nature of the definition of the divine and of the community of believers which it developed. I stressed that patriarchy was developed in various states of the ancient Near East over a period of fifteen hundred years and that the development of Judaism was one of many similar developments occurring under similar historical circumstances. I also showed that everywhere the patriarchal oppression of women was fully compatible with the existence of goddess worship. In this respect my work departs sharply from the methodology and the conclusions of Elizabeth Gould Davies and Merlin Stone. But Heschel cannot be bothered with fine points of distinction and with an analysis that can encompass both positive and negative aspects of an historical phenomenon.

The rage and fury which Heschel admits she experienced after discovering that in feminism "there were no more easy answers" has led her to her own kind of scapegoating and distortion. She has created a new category of persons for us to hate—Christian feminist anti-Semites. Their views are reduced to one statement, their complex arguments are oversimplified, they are lumped together regardless of whether they agree or disagree with one another and, as this case shows, regardless of their own religion. This is the mental attitude which creates racial and religious hatred. Let us have no more of it, especially as we fight anti-Semitism wherever it appears, even among feminists. As Heschel herself says, "If there is any single most important point promoted by feminism, it is to cease the projection of evils onto others."

Gerda Lerner
Madison, Wisconsin

Susannah Heschel responds:

Gerda Lerner makes two points in her letter. First, she claims that I falsely characterized her as a Christian anti-Semite. Yet I did not write, nor would I ever write, that she is either Christian or anti-Semitic. Perhaps I should clarify the terms I used in my article. There is a distinction between anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism. The former term first appeared in Germany during the 1870s and refers to arguments against Jews based on social, economic, or racial factors, while anti-Judaism, the term I used in my article, refers to negative or false characterizations of the religion of Judaism.

Second, Lerner claims that I have "created a new category of persons for us to hate—Christian feminist anti-Semites." I regret that she interprets my treatment of the intellectual problem of anti-Judaism as a personal attack; it was not intended as such. Rather, I have traced problematic characterizations of Judaism within both feminist theory and Christian feminist theology. As an early leader of feminist historiography, Lerner can make an important contribution toward changing the depictions of Judaism that often appear in feminist writings.

I am disturbed by Lerner's surprise at my criticisms of her work, since I am not the first to criticize her book, *The Creation of Patriarchy,* for its depiction of ancient Israelite religion, nor was my article the first time I have discussed those points with her; we had a long face-to-face discussion two years ago at a meeting of the American Academy of Religion. In no way do I intend my criticisms to be *ad hominem;* I have great respect for Lerner's scholarship in American women's history and feminist historiography.

What is the right way for one feminist to criticize the work of another? I have frequently been told, in the United States and in West Germany, that by pointing out anti-Judaism in feminist writings I am undermining feminism, and that criticisms of feminism should be voiced privately, not in print. That is a powerful and frightening way to silence dissent. There is absolutely no justification for feminist thought to remain above criticism. Now that feminist theory exists as a published, public body of literature, it has forfeited the privilege of being above discussion.

PHOTOS, DRAWINGS, AND CARTOONS NEEDED

We are seeking high-quality black and white drawings, original photographs (on everything from American culture and politics to Eastern Europe to Israel), and cartoons (on contemporary cultural and political themes). Good quality photocopies of the drawings and cartoons and glossies of the photographs are acceptable for a first review. Photo essays will also be reviewed. Send to: *Tikkun* Art, 5100 Leona Street, Oakland, CA 94619.

Classifieds

Relationships

SJM, 29, San Francisco. Physician. Tall, attractive, likes backpacking, farming, Jewish hyperintellectualism, music (Dylan, Van, hardcore, opera). Would like to meet slim, attractive, warm woman, twentysomething, who likes to dance. *Tikkun* Box 20.

SJW An independent self-directed dynamic bright articulate lady with a sense of humor who is tall, slim, and very pretty with dark hair and brown eyes would like to share her interests in fitness and exercise, movies, theatre, music, and literature with a tall, good-looking, intelligent, financially stable academic, professional, or executive, mid-40s to mid-60s who likes travel, has good values and who has a desire to share a friendship with a warm, caring sensitive woman. I would like to explore new places, meet new people, and share new ideas with a partner who has a love of life. Bio-photo please. Pittsburgh, PA. *Tikkun* Box 19.

MAKE ALIYAH WITH ME. Let's build the Israeli peace movement, have children together, observe Shabbat, discuss ideas, celebrate and play. JM, mid-forties, successful writer, Jewishly observant (traditional but egalitarian) seeks woman mid- to late thirties to have children together and build a life based on love and mutual respect, progressive politics, high energy, humor, love of ideas, idealism, and willingness to take risks. Seeking woman with strong sense of her own worth, humor, compassion, psychologically and intellectually sophisticated, non-overweight, who is not likely to be overwhelmed by a strong man who is passionate about people, ideas, Judaism, and social change, and who would be willing to spend most of each year in Jerusalem. *Tikkun* Box 21.

Services

Creative Jewish and interfaith weddings, gay and lesbian commitment ceremonies, contemporary ritual; Design and officiating by Mindy Ruth Novick, Ph.D. (206) 789-4868.

Celebrate High Holydays with Kehilla Community Synagogue in Berkeley; politically progressive, spiritually oriented shul with Rabbi Burt Jacobson, Linda Hirschhorn as Cantor. Call (415) 654-5452.

LORRAINE ZIMMERMAN FINDS out-of-print or otherwise out of the ordinary BOOKS FOR YOU with uncanny success. Send name/address with title/author and mention *Tikkun*. P.O. Box 5854. Berkeley, CA 94705. Or call (415) 601-1868.

Condo

"COMMUNISH" CHICAGO CONDO:
2½ bedrooms, diverse lakefront neighborhood, 6-flat; progressive politics, self-management, flowthru kids; $63,500. (312) 274-7569.

IT'S NOT ENOUGH TO SUPPORT OUR PRINCIPLES

Of course, we are glad that so many people are enthusiastic about *Tikkun*'s role as the voice for liberal American Jews.

But to take the stands that we have, to challenge Shamir and his policies, to show that American Jewish leaders have not represented the overwhelmingly dovish sentiments of American Jews, to consistently publish feminist and gay perspectives, to challenge the selfishness and me-firstism that has increasingly become a societal norm—all this has cost us in financial support. We can't go to Jewish organizations or wealthy Jews—who are upset with us for challenging them. And our insistence on taking our Jewishness seriously, our challenging the anti-Semitism that has sometimes flourished in left and liberal circles, and our critique of the failures of the Left, has made it impossible to turn to "radical chic" circles for support either.

So we need *your* help. You, our readers, understand how important it is that the voices published in *Tikkun* continue to be heard. Sometimes you've probably been offended by or disliked a specific article. We publish some articles that offend *us* (or sometimes even outrage us) because we don't want the magazine's articles narrowly to mirror our own editorial perspectives. But this ensures that the magazine is lively, unpredictable, and provocative. And we've avoided being cutesy and superficial—you, our readers, have been proud to know that Jewish liberals could present a magazine that was every bit as sophisticated and intellectually serious as anything the Right or the shallow middle has ever produced (plus: what we say makes more sense).

Tikkun is a reader-supported magazine, much like public television or radio. There are no big sugar daddies ready to come to our aid. There's only you.

Unfortunately, sometimes people who grew up in liberal and progressive movements came to think that they had made their contribution if they marched or went to political meetings. But building alternative institutions takes much more than that. And one key thing it takes is substantial financial support.

Tikkun Associates give $100 or more per year to help sustain the magazine. Many of our readers can't quite afford that much, and we appreciate whatever they can afford. But there are some for whom giving this much money is more of a psychological barrier than anything else—they don't think of themselves as the kinds of people giving that kind of money to a cause; they imagine that there's someone else out there who will make the big gift to keep things going. That's why we want to tell you—it's not enough to support our principles ... we need your financial help at levels that go beyond what you would normally give.

It's traditional in the Jewish calendar for the High Holidays to be a time in which Jews consider their deeds for the past year and make decisions about the kind of life they wish to lead during the coming year. Not surprisingly, in the rush of events many people realize that they haven't really given much energy to tzedaka—the mitzvah of supporting causes and charitable institutions. Your tax-deductible contributions will be deeply appreciated.

Through the last Jewish year, our readers donated over $100,000 to *Tikkun*. This year we need you to increase your donations, and if you didn't donate last year, please do so now.

Happy as we are that you support our principles, we need you to support the magazine more directly.

Wishing you a happy, healthy and peaceful New Year,

לְשָׁנָה טוֹבָה תִּכָּתֵבוּ

Michael Lerner
Editor

Tikkun (tē•kün) . . .
to heal, repair and transform the world.
All the rest is commentary.



A READER-SUPPORTED MAGAZINE

Like National Public Radio and television, TIKKUN depends
on its readers' generosity to help keep its voice alive.
TIKKUN ASSOCIATES donate $100 a year or more to sustain the magazine,
but smaller contributions are also welcome and deeply appreciated.