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

TIKKUN

Current Debate: *Oppression of Jews in Arab Lands. Mark R. Cohen vs. Norman Stillman*
Personal Essay: *S.L. Wisenberg*
Fiction: *Linda Bamber, Lorraine Lachs*

A BIMONTHLY JEWISH CRITIQUE OF POLITICS, CULTURE & SOCIETY MAY/JUNE 1991 $5.00

AFTER IRAQ

Senator Paul Wellstone, Cornel West, Todd Gitlin, Letty Cottin Pogrebin, Sheila Tobias, Michael Lerner

PLUS:

John Judis *on the Role of the Jews*
Danny Rubenstein *on the Palestinians*
Jay Rosen *on the Media*
Gad Horowitz *on the Psychology of War*



Enforcing Surrogacy
Nancy Ehrenreich

Jerusalem
Sari Nusseibeh

Breaking Boundaries
Rachel Adler

Russian Pogroms
Steve Zipperstein

Rorty's Sins
Michael Quirk

Revelation
Arthur Green

PLUS

Ruth Milkman on Working with the Japanese; Laurence Simon on Foreign Aid; Paul Buhle on Postmodernism; Raymond Scheindlin on Medieval Jewish Poetry; Menachem Lorberbaum on Political Authority in Judaism; Benjamin Harshav on Abraham Sutzkever; and Edward Feld Observes a West Bank Trial

Three Poems

Amir Gilboa

In Darkness

If they show me a stone
And I say stone, they say stone.

If they show me wood
And I say wood, they say wood.

But if they show me blood
And I say blood, they say paint.

IF THEY SHOW ME BLOOD
AND I SAY BLOOD
THEY SAY PAINT.

I Opened the Door

I opened my door
and many, many crowded to come in.
I therefore pushed back
the walls of my room
to welcome all my guests.
And my room became the home
of my friends
and my room became the world.

Who Did Everything on Time?

Who did everything on time?
Neither did I. Not even after time.
And all the present time melted
In flashes of liquid moments.

With me
Even the highest mountains
liquefy.

Amir Gilboa, born in the Ukraine in 1917, came to Palestine in 1937 and became one of Israel's most important modernist poets. His works in English include The Light of Lost Sons *(Persea, 1979), translated by Shirley Kaufman and S. Rimmon. This poem was translated by Ada Aharoni.*

TIKKUN

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Letters

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

ANTI-SEMITISM AND THE ANTIWAR MOVEMENT

To The Editor:

I left the New Left many years ago because of the anti-Semitism you describe so well ("Jews Question the War and the Anti-War Movement," March/April 1991). Although I still share with the Left an opposition to U.S. imperialism, racism, sexism, although I still support a redistribution of wealth and power, I am not willing to be active politically in a Left that covertly disdains my Jewishness. You are right to focus on the way that anti-Zionism, while not necessarily anti-Semitic, is used in anti-Semitic ways on the Left. But you might also point out that the Left has never taken seriously the reality of the Holocaust and has never understood why it would be appropriate to teach its own participants about the history of anti-Semitism or how it functions. It never even occurs to people in the various social change movements that it might be appropriate to have a speaker at rallies talking from the standpoint of Jewish oppression or liberation.

The worst, in my experience, are the Jews on the Left. They are terrified of being seen as Jews, so they do everything they can to emphasize how reactionary Jews, Judaism, and Jewish liberation are. Yet very few of these people know a thing about Jewish history or Jewish literature or culture, much less about Judaism. And, in case you don't know this, many of them are very anti-*Tikkun,* feeling the need to publicly criticize your magazine for fear that others will think that they are "too Jewish" if they don't prove that they have no positive associations with their Jewishness. In some Left circles, it's

Errata: The photographs on pages 7, 14, 21, 24, 29, and 28 in the March/April issue of *Tikkun* should have been credited to Impact Visuals.

In the same issue the first name of Aloma Halter, who translated Hamutal Bar-Yosef's poem, "Commerce," was misspelled. *Tikkun* regrets the errors.

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almost mandatory for Jews to say, "Well, I'm not a *Tikkun*-type Jew" as though *Tikkun* itself didn't hold anti-imperialist, antiracist, and antisexist politics!

When you first started I was very skeptical about your magazine. I imagined that it would be another predictable lefty magazine, differing only in calling itself Jewish. I was wrong. I think it took tremendous courage to raise the issue of anti-Semitism on the Left, and I think *Tikkun* has been unique in creating an identity that is not knee-jerk lefty, but rather intellectually independent, creative, and fresh. I know many non-Jews who read the magazine because it has a kind of unpredictable excitement to it. Yet I read it because I can feel that here, at least, is one place where I can be both proudly Jewish and proudly progressive. Nevertheless, my experience with lefties makes me think that you are going to have a hard road. I know enough about the organized Jewish community to know that no one there is feeling good about *Tikkun* just because you've defended Zionism and criticized left-wing anti-Semitism, as long as you continue to be so critical of Israel's current government.

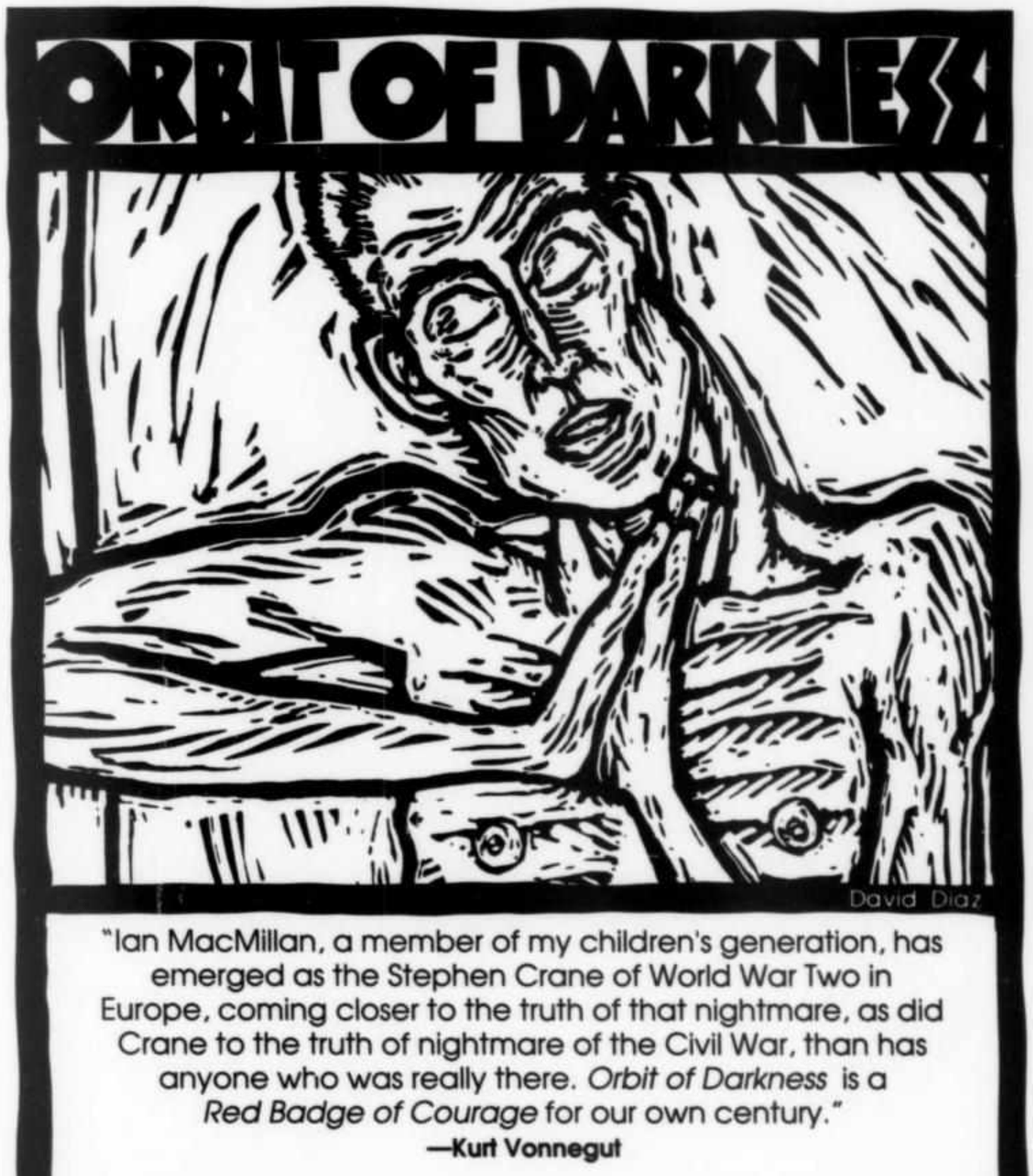
And I know enough about the Left to know that you are losing supporters there whenever you dare to challenge the accepted orthodoxies.

Yehudit Kaplan
Queens, New York

To the Editor:

Watching CNN News on February 6, I heard Michael Lerner assert that liberal Jews feel ambivalent about the Gulf War and the war protestors because "Israel is being made the problem." That assertion fits in with the position he has expressed in *Tikkun*. But is it accurate? According to the Washington Post, a random sample of antiwar demonstrators at the march on Washington on January 26 found that liberal Jews composed 20 percent of the demonstrators. The march itself numbered upward of two-hundred thousand. Far from being ambivalent, liberal Jews were present in disproportionately great numbers.

Nor did the marchers treat Israel as "the problem," as far as I could tell. While I cannot claim to have heard every speech or have seen every bit of the march, I observed most of it for





Iraq: Republican Guard casualties, Kuwait.

the better part of four hours. Neither in the many signs I saw nor in the chants and speeches I heard was Israel targeted. There was much linkage to other issues: domestic problems, ecology, military spending, poverty, abortion rights, and El Salvador. There were attacks on George Bush, militarism, and war. There were signs that read, "This Lesbian Jew Does Not Hate Arabs" and "Arabs Are Humans Too." But Israel was not targeted by the protestors as far as I could see. Lerner should be happy to hear this.

Finally, while Lerner was speaking only for himself and a few others, it is disheartening that he should be ambivalent about a massive murderous war out of concern that Israel might be drawn into the controversy—as if Israel were not already an object of controversy in the Middle East. If Lerner is troubled by Saddam Hussein's senseless Scud bombings of Israel then he should join the ranks of the protestors. Hussein did not feel free to start bombing Israel until Bush started bombing Iraq. The best way to safeguard the interests of Israel and the interests of the American people and the people of the entire Middle East is to oppose an American war in that region.

Michael Parenti
Washington, D.C.

Have You Experienced Anti-Semitism on the Left?

We are putting together a pamphlet to help people in liberal and progressive social change movements learn how to identify and struggle against anti-Semitism in their own ranks. Unlike groups who raise these issues in order to discredit the Left, we are supportive of the social change movements; we want to help them deal more effectively with a problem that many on the Left do not even know they have. Tell us about specific incidents of anti-Semitism, what made it different from, for example, simply legitimate criticism of Israel's policies, and what you felt or did in response. Please give as much detail as possible, including place and date of the incidents. And if you know anyone or any foundation who could help fund the printing or circulation of such a pamphlet, please let us know or encourage them to send a tax-deductible donation to *Tikkun* earmarked for this purpose. Send info to: Karen Abrams, *Tikkun,* 5100 Leona Street, Oakland, CA 94619.

Rethinking the Gulf War

To the Editor:

I never understood your opposition to the war until seeing the war's aftermath. In editorial ("My Inner Conflict About Iraq" *Tikkun* November/December 1990) you argue that you could envision some circumstances under which a war against Saddam would be justified, but that the war Bush was planning was not that war. I thought you were naive to think the U.S. should wait for sanctions to work—and since I was concerned to protect Israel, I thought we should encourage the momentum that Bush had started toward a struggle with Israel's most powerful military adversary. I imagined that once the war started, Bush's limited aims would be forgotten, and that instead the U.S. would overthrow Saddam, destroy the Iraqi military, and establish a democratic and human-rights-respecting regime in Baghdad. Well, I was wrong and you were right. You pointed out that Bush was fighting for the wrong reasons, and that that fact would ensure that the war would not accomplish any reasonable goals. As I watch the U.S. betraying the Kurds and in essence propping up the dictatorial Baathist regime in Baghdad, I'm truly sickened by the massive destruction of human life that I supported. Your skepticism about Bush turned out to be justified; my own hopes that somehow this would be a "just war" (as Michael Walzer and some of the Peace Now people seemed to say it would be) have been proven full of illusion.

Joseph Zukofsky
Chicago, Illinois

To the Editor:

I can't believe how Amos Oz, Shulamith Aloni, and Peace Now

(Continued on p. 96)

Tikkun Interns

Volunteer Interns do the full range of *Tikkun* activities, from editing, proofreading, and reading incoming manuscripts to phone solicitations, leafleting, mailing, and other office chores. A perfect opportunity to enter the world of publishing.

- Sept. 1991 to June 1991. Minimum 24 hours/week.

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

AFTER THE GULF WAR

The 90 percent approval ratings that President Bush received after the speedy conclusion of the Gulf War bespoke an almost universal euphoria over the fact that the war had concluded so quickly and with so few deaths. So few deaths? Only if U.S. deaths were all that counted! So quickly? Only if the continuing struggles the war engendered are ignored.

And what were the consequences? The brutal suppression of the Kurds by a still-powerful Baathist party in Baghdad must give pause to even the most enthusiastic supporters of the war. Iraq's offensive military capacity may have been weakened, but apparently not enough to prevent it from continuing its brutally repressive policies. In our March/April roundtable, various Israeli peace movement leaders suggested that the Gulf War might bring a quicker peace with the Palestinians and the Arab states. So far, though, there is little to indicate that the U.S. intends to use the power it gained by its quick victory to convince Israel and the Arab states to make the concessions necessary for any real change.

In this section, we analyze the aftermath of the war—not only for the Middle East but also for domestic politics. We are particularly concerned with how Bush's apparent victory has caused a general despair among all progressive movements.

Editorial: After Iraq

Michael Lerner

Bad Consequences

So was it worth it? With tens of thousands of Iraqis dead and the country left in shambles, did we accomplish something worth all this slaughter?

Remember all the op-ed writers and supporters of military intervention who told us that once Saddam had been defeated, all kinds of wonderfulness would follow?

Well, let's consider the current scorecard:

Human Rights and Democratic Values. Worth fighting for, to be sure—but this goal has been abandoned by the U.S. Instead, the Emir has been restored in Kuwait and the opposition has won only token change in the Kuwaiti political system. In Iraq itself, the U.S. has turned its back on the reform forces, leaving them in the brutal hands of Saddam's regime.

We are also witnessing an outrageous massacre of the Kurdish people. As hundreds of thousands of Kurds flee their homes, desperately seeking refuge in Iran or Turkey, we are witnessing the creation of a new refugee population whose problems are every bit as pressing as the Palestinians. The U.S. intervention created an incredible mess—and now the U.S. pretends that it has no responsibility to the Kurds and others whose current rebellions were stirred by the implied message the U.S. gave that it might protect those who stood up to Saddam. The tragedy of the Kurds—their abandonment and betrayal by the U.S.—should be on the conscience of everyone who advocated an immediate U.S. intervention in January. The massive violation of the human rights of the Kurds, one of the great tragedies of the post–cold war era, is one central legacy of the Gulf War. Instead of providing for Kurdish security and autonomy as part of the cease-fire agreement it pushed through the UN, instead of forbidding Iraqi helicopter flights and the use of heavy artillery, the U.S. did nothing but offer food aid to Kurdish refugees fleeing Saddam's continuing brutality.

Destruction of Saddam's Dangerous Military. Tell it to the Kurds or to the Southern Iraqi Shiites. A crippled military would have been unable to respond so quickly and effectively to suppress these struggles for autonomy. A dismantling of Iraq's offensive military capacity would have been a valuable outcome to a war that we did not support—but we are not convinced that the Iraqi military really has been crippled for any significant length of time.

Regional Stability. The U.S.'s cynical abandonment of the Kurds is now justified as necessary in order to ensure stability. *New York Times* columnist Leslie Gelb presented the White House line in a column on Easter Sunday: it will take too long to build up democratic forces in the region, and besides, Southern Iraqis might democratically choose to construct a Shiite state aligned with Iran and against the U.S. So what we were fighting for, after all, was a return to the balance of power among repressive regimes. The President has not yet learned that repressive regimes are inherently more unstable than democratic regimes—and that the best hope for long-term peace and stability is to give the people of the region an opportunity to democratically determine their own fate.

New World Order. Funny—it looks a lot like the old world order, except instead of having contending superpowers, we now have a Pax Americana imposed to shore

up American interests. We see no new openness to using the UN to settle world disputes (how about going to the UN to deal with the struggle in El Salvador or in India or China?). Nor do we see any deeper commitment to democratic values. In fact, the U.S. itself seems unwilling to try to take some steps that might actually aid the democratic forces. The cynical balance-of-power thinking that justifies U.S. support for repressive regimes around the world is alive and well in the Gulf—and our current excuse for (get this one, if you know anything about U.S. history, and our recent role in Panama, Grenada, El Salvador, and Nicaragua!) "not getting involved in the internal affairs of Iraq."

Israeli–Palestinian peace. By the time you read this, U.S. efforts to get negotiation started may have produced a dramatic breakthrough.But the euphoria about negotiations will be short-lived. Shamir's government repeatedly reassures its constituency that there will be no agreement to trade land for peace—and he is speaking honestly. As a result, the negotiations are unlikely to lead anywhere unless the U.S. itself presents a substantive picture of what a peace agreement could look like (hopefully, one that is close to the position of *Tikkun* and the Israeli peace movement—calling for a demilitarized Palestinian state with an Israeli military security zone separating that state from the surrounding Arab nations). Most Israeli peace activists believe that only strong pressure from the U.S. could lead Israel to consider this kind of solution—and that without such pressure, the negotiations are likely to drag on for years and yield few results. The *Tikkun* conference in Israel June 23–28 is an opportunity for progressive Jews to discuss how we can best assist in this process—and what kinds of pressure on Israel can reasonably be considered at this juncture. But the very fact that we need to be assembling in Jerusalem to make a public statement of solidarity with the Israeli peace movement this June is an indication that the war did not create, as some predicted it would, an unstoppable dynamic toward Arab–Palestinian peace negotiations. Meanwhile, Kuwait's restored Emir has yet to recognize Israel, let alone to begin negotiating a peace treaty.

Demilitarization or Stopping Arms Proliferation. Remember all the pious talk about the U.S. recognizing that it should not have encouraged Saddam's military buildup? Now that the war is over, the U.S. is eager to sell everyone new weapons systems. The arms race will continue to proliferate. As General Schwarzkopf indicated in his remarks just after the war's conclusion (remarks he later retracted in face of pressure from Bush) the first such proliferation was to allow Saddam to retain all kinds of military hardware that could have been destroyed before the first cease-fire. Don't be surprised if Saddam or his successors receive new advanced weaponry in the next few years—either from China or from some European country. The U.S. has already reaffirmed its commitment to selling billions of dollars of arms to Gulf countries.

So in almost every arena, the Gulf War has not produced the results its champions promised.

The Closing of American Politics

What was the war supposed to achieve, if not merely the restoration of the Emir of Kuwait? If none of the goals articulated by the war's supporters were actually realized, why do they feel that they won such a dramatic victory?

Bush himself supplied the answer in a speech a few days after the war ended. We have decisively destroyed the Vietnam syndrome, Bush jubilantly proclaimed to an audience of right-wing militarists. Why should destruction of the Vietnam syndrome be so important, so central to the thinking of the president of the United States?

At one level, the Vietnam syndrome was merely the American public's inclination to avoid military engagements with Third World countries. Yet in a deeper sense, what Bush and his policy advisors had in mind when they targeted the Vietnam syndrome was actually the entire political legacy of the 1960s. Those who discredited American policy in Vietnam successfully called into question the fundamental assumptions of America's ruling elites. The critique of American imperialism was threatening not just because it made it more difficult for the U.S. to intervene in Nicaragua or other Central American countries, but also—and more importantly—because it questioned whether there ought to be ruling elites running the show in the U.S. itself. Had the antiwar movement of the 1960s been neatly contained to narrow concerns of "foreign policy," it might have been a temporary annoyance. But in reality the antiwar movement encouraged its supporters to challenge constituted authority—and this challenge threatened every hierarchical arrangement, every antidemocratic aspect of the society, every form of oppression, every arbitrary limit to human dignity and social responsibility. No wonder, then, that by the time the antiwar movement was at its height, a renewed feminist activism had sprung into being, an ecological movement challenged the destruction of the world's resources, a gay movement questioned the heterosexist assumptions of contemporary culture, an educational reform movement challenged the schools, and in every profession and union young people were questioning the received wisdom.

The American ruling class recognized the seriousness of this challenge to its legitimacy. Particularly after President Nixon further complicated its problems by his Watergate fiasco, the ruling elite in America saw its central task as relegitimating "the system" (accomplished in part by forcing Nixon's resignation) and discrediting the so-

cial change movements.

The crisis in legitimacy had a severe impact on the CIA, whose powers were diminished and mandate was limited as a result of the political climate of the post-Watergate era. The CIA sensed that its deepest mission—defending America's role in the world—required a full-scale assualt on those forces calling for social change. George Bush was made director of the CIA in its moment of crisis in the 1970s, and his sense of political mission was shaped in this moment. On the one hand, Bush had to "moderate" the extremist "new right" voices in the Republican party who were threatening to replace the commitment to traditional oil and capital interests with a weird and unpredictable blend of populism, religious fundamentalism, and right-wing profamily rhetoric. Much of his time in the Reagan White House concentrated on this goal. On the other hand, the deeper mission (and one for which he could sometimes get help even from right-wing nuts who on other issues he had to restrain) was to discredit the progressive ideas that were threatening to undermine the entire system of power that Bush believed to be central to America's greatness.

Discrediting the social change movements of the 1960s became a central focus of American culture and politics of the 1970s and 1980s. Bush hailed the demise of the Vietnam syndrome as a major accomplishment of his Gulf strategy.Small wonder, since America's ruling elites had long felt the Vietnam syndrome as a major constraint on their power and domestic political legitimacy. Republicans continually ran successful campaigns against the sixties; and since their liberal Democratic opponents did not understand or support the radical thrust of sixties politics, Democrats were incapable of defending themselves in any way other than to portray themselves as just as "responsible" or just as conservative as the Republican opposition. Movies and television programs systematically worked on the consciousness of young people who did not remember the sixties, portraying it as an era of excesses, self-destructive drug-manias, and politics that were either violent or irrelevant (because the major demands—such as the struggles for equality for women and Blacks—had supposedly already been achieved).

Historical memory was transformed into caricature. And those who had been active were now portrayed as having given up on politics. Activists who were now in their thirties were portrayed as "selling out" and becoming "yuppies" because they had, in a perfectly age-appropriate manner, dedicated some of their energies to making a living, building families, having healthy bodies, and eating well. Though some former activists were indeed "yuppified," there were many hundreds of thousands more who retained a strong commitment to their values—even though they could not see a credible Left to which they could give their current allegiance.

The Left's self-marginalization made Bush's task more feasible. The social change movements in the late sixties and early seventies had managed to undermine themselves by creating a brutal atmosphere of self-blaming and mutual recrimination that scared away many sensitive and

The Welcome

L. S. Asekoff

(for M. A., 1906–72)

Leaving Hellsgate behind you,
the violet dusk, black pagodas,
you fell into fitful sleep
broken only by the hiss of steam
& the weeping of a woman
in the dark station. At New Haven
the diesel throbbed into life,
light flickered, windows
blazed to mirrors where you faced
the familiar stranger
who had brought you to this place.

The engine's old heart hammered North,
past fields of fireweed, broken machinery,
trestles & spires of factory towns,
all the signs of the failure
of America's fathers,
her crazy metaphysics, junked lives.
Once you looked below where a power station
beetled over a black river
laden with stars
& saw the S-shaped ironmonger's curve—
a flock of white swans,
then neat rows of widowswalk houses, clipped lawns.

Soon you would re-enter that world,
"unnoticed as a midday moon,"
& stand among your brothers as he once stood
by the waters of Sharon,
book in hand,
dividing the light of darkness
from the darkness of light.

L. S. Asekoff teaches at Brooklyn College and has recently completed his first book of poems, Dreams of a Work.

ethically caring people. Though they were committed to an ethos of self-transformation, progressives still tended to internalize the instant-gratification ethos of the larger society, and to expect that all remnants of our negative social-conditioning could be overcome in one quick leap of commitment. So when they found that sexism, racism, selfishness, and elitism still persisted, they turned on themselves and each other with a destructive fury; they had not yet embodied their own highest ideals. No one was antisexist or antiracist or antihierarchical enough. And this same attitude got projected outward at the larger society—all Americans were seen as bad or aesthetically uncool because they had not yet accepted the movement's ideas and ideals. So it became a characteristic of liberal or progressive consciousness to condescend to others. No one was morally pure enough, and anyone coming into contact with this Left was automatically put on the defensive about how politically correct their lives were.

Ironically, as the Democratic party became increasingly influenced by the antisexist and antiracist and anti-imperialist consciousness of the sixties, it also took on the liability of being identified with the elitist attitudes projected by the social change movements. Conversely, the Republicans successfully portrayed themselves as "anti-elitist" and sympathetic to ordinary people, even though their actual policies represented the interests of the American ruling elite. Most Americans tended to agree with the liberals on specific policy matters—but they didn't trust liberals, and didn't feel that the Left and its various associates had any understanding or sympathy for their lives or their struggles. And they were probably right.

Bush's task in resurrecting the old world order and its hopes of American dominance was not easy. Though conservative theorists had swon by the proposition that Soviet totalitarians could not possibly reform communism from within, a KGB protégé, Mikhail Gorbachev, was permitting democratic transformations in Eastern Europe and advocated a democratization of Soviet society that was more revolutiionary in its way than anything since the October 1917 revolution. This was no easy time to keep the cold war going—and though George Bush did everything he could to delay acknowleging the significance of the revolutionary transformations occurring in Eastern Europe, even he was forced to recognize that the cold war had ended. Could the demands for a "peace dividend" and a dismantling of the military-industrial complex be far behind? The Left may have made itself irrelevant–yet its program and perspective still seemed alive and well.

It was only with Saddam Hussein, a true godsend from the perspective of Bush's long-term goals, that a serious reconstruction of American politics could take place.

On the one hand, Bush played his role brillinatly. He had a Black as head of the Joint Chiefs, a Pentagon determined to pay as much attention to explaining its side of the war as it possibly could, a media ready to comply with administration guidelines on reporting the news, a willingness to use the United Nations, and a readiness to confer with the Congress. In short, the conscious attempt to avoid every mistake of the Vietnam War was carried through with finessse and political brilliance. The CIA mentality had pulled it off—showing that such a war in the Third World could be fought successfully, and thus reviving the U.S. as a world power and relegitimating the military-industrial complex.

On the other hand, the antiwar people played a brilliant supporting role in Bush's plans, talking about "immediate withdrawal" (seeming to indicate that there was no real need to contain Saddam), and allowing anti-Israel sloganeering and anti-Semitic attitudes to pollute their movement (thus isolating them from many Jewish activists in the antiwar movement).

Yet the actual outcome of the war could be solid ground for progressive forces to renew their credibility. American foreign policy makers have again shown themselves to be more committed to "balance of power" cynicism than to self-determination and human rights after prevailing against Saddam Hussein on the battlefield. The U.S. allowed the brutal leaders of the Baathist party to remain in power in Baghdad, another form of authoritarianism to be restored in Kuwait, and Middle Eastern dictatorships to replenish their military arsenals. But if liberal forces are to make the war's aftermath a basis for a renewed progressive politics, they need to overcome their knee-jerk contempt for the American people.

To accomplish this goal, liberals and progressives would have to acknowledge that many American supported this war for very different reasons than those of George Bush. The Left would have to allow itself to imagine that not all the yellow ribbons, or the euphoria over the war's quick conclusion can be reduced to narrow chauvinism or militarism; some of it at least was inspired by the deeper and more legitimate need to transcend the ethos of self-interest and participate in a life of higher moral purpose. For many Americans, the prospect of defeating Saddam Hussein uplifed them precisely because they had suspected that some of America's past military adventures were misguided; Now at last they could be part of a community of real purpose, thereby satisfying a need every bit as real and as deep as the need for economic security or political rights.

If the Left could acknowledge this, then it could begin to appeal to those very same instincts, and talk to the American public about why the war turned out not to be the vehicle for achieving these ends. If the Left could

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Jews and the Gulf: Fallout from the Six-Week War

John B. Judis

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The Six Day War in 1967 not only changed borders in the Middle East, it also permanently altered the contours of American Jewish politics. By creating new respect and enthusiasm for Israel, it laid the basis for what would become known as the "pro-Israel lobby." Marginal before 1967, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) would become a major player in American politics after the war.

The Left's radical hostility to Israel's gains in the war alienated Jewish intellectuals such as *Commentary* editor Norman Podhoretz and Harvard professor Martin Peretz and contributed, among other things, to their eventually cutting their ties with the Left. In 1972, many of these Jewish intellectuals would oppose Democratic presidential candidate George McGovern. By 1980, some of them, such as Podhoretz, would support Ronald Reagan against Jimmy Carter and help Reagan win legitimacy as a middle-of-the-road rather than a far-right candidate.

The six-week war to dislodge Iraq from Kuwait may have had an equally profound impact on the politics of American Jews and Jewish organizations. In the war's aftermath, American Jewish organizations found their own power and prestige enhanced. They benefited from their support for the war and from Israel's newfound status as an innocent victim of Saddam's missiles. The war not only nurtured the alliance between major Jewish organizations and the Bush administration; it also gave birth to growing ties with the leaders of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

The new thrust of mainstream Jewish politics was symbolized by the Committee for Peace and Security in the Gulf, the main group that promoted the use of force in the Gulf. The committee was organized by an unlikely trio: left-wing Democrat and Jesse Jackson-backer Ann Lewis, former Reagan administration official Richard Perle, and moderate Democrat Representative Stephen Solarz (D-N.Y.). It relied for its funds on the blessing of the Saudi ambassador to the U.S., Prince Bandar bin Sultan Al-Saud, and the largesse of American defense contractors. And for its efforts it won the praise and gratitude of the Bush administration.

Over the next year, this new thrust in Jewish politics could prove successful if the Bush administration is able to create a rapprochement between Israel and the Gulf states. In that case, the alliances formed during the war will be seen as foreshadowing the future realignment in the Middle East. But if the administration fails—either because of its own ineptitude or because of Saudi or Israeli intransigence—then the Jewish organizations could find themselves isolated, with the fundamental premises of their political strategy compromised. The euphoria of victory could give way to the disillusionment of stalemate.

For Jews active in the peace movement and in Jewish organizations, the war led to sharp differences with the opponents of U.S. intervention. The rift was very similar to that created two decades ago by the radical response to the Six Day War. Jews on the Left—who had identified anti-Semitism largely with ultraconservatism and with black nationalism—now found it within the antiwar movement. Moreover, they discovered that they disagreed with their erstwhile comrades not only about Israel, but about how to understand America's role in the world.

This process of change and recognition—on the part of both the Jewish Left and mainstream Jewish organizations—unfolded over seven months: from Iraq's invasion of Kuwait on August 2 to the cease-fire declared at the end of February. It took place fitfully and painfully. In the first phase, lasting from the Iraqi invasion to November 29, when the U.S. secured United Nations agreement for the use of force against Iraq, Jews were virtually paralyzed by decades-old charges of "dual loyalty." Only in the second phase of debate, from November 29 to January 16, when the U.S. went to war, did Jewish organizations, prodded by Solarz's committee, close ranks behind the administration's threat to go to war.

I. BUCHANANIZING THE JEWS

In the first three months after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, an eerie silence emanated from America's major Jewish organizations, such as AIPAC and the American Jewish Congress. Leading Jewish Democrats in

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Congress such as Los Angeles Congressmen Howard Berman and Mel Levine also scrupulously kept their own counsel. Like cautious bathers, prominent Jewish leaders were willing to wade in the shallows of agreement with the most general objectives of the Bush administration, but they wanted no part of the stormy debate over means and ends that was taking place in deeper water. Those organizations whose members identified with the peace movement—such as the Organization of American Hebrew Congregations and the American Jewish Congress—couldn't agree on what position to take. The leaders of the largest and most powerful of the Jewish organizations—such as AIPAC and the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations—knew that they wanted the U.S. to take military action against Saddam Hussein, but were reluctant to say so aloud. They were afraid that their advocacy of military action against Iraq would be construed as an attempt to get America into a war on Israel's behalf.

The defense companies contributed because they were led to believe that the Saudis and the Kuwaitis, prime customers for their weapons, would look kindly on their doing so.

Unfortunately, such fears were well founded. In this first phase of debate, both right-wing and left-wing opponents of administration policy accused Jewish columnists and foreign policy experts who openly favored force of placing Israel's interests above America's. On an August 24 appearance on the television talk show "The McLaughlin Group," former Reagan and Nixon aide Pat Buchanan charged that the only people who supported a war in the Middle East were "the Israeli Defense Ministry and its amen corner in the United States." In a widely syndicated column opposing military intervention, Buchanan singled out for criticism *New York Times* columnist A. M. Rosenthal, former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, columnist Charles Krauthammer, and Richard Perle, all of whom are Jewish—ignoring such prominent non-Jewish advocates of force as William F. Buckley, Jr. and Senator Richard Lugar (R-Ind.). On television, Buchanan also referred to the "Israeli-occupied Congress."

Buchanan's attacks were double-edged: he was exploiting popular anti-Semitism, identifying as exclusively Jewish a political position that Christians and Muslims shared with Jews; and he was attempting to discredit the opinions of Jewish intellectuals such as Kissinger—who was clearly more concerned about Gulf oil than about Israel—by claiming that they wanted the interests of Israel to dictate the terms of U.S. foreign policy. Whether or not Buchanan himself is an anti-Semite, this way of attacking opposing views is rooted in the history of American anti-Semitism. Before World War II, for instance, right-wing isolationists such as Charles Lindbergh and Albert Jay Nock had tried to discredit American support for intervention in Europe by identifying it with Jews.

When Rosenthal, the *New York Post* editorial page, and the *New Republic* counterattacked against Buchanan, some conservative pundits leapt to his defense. *National Review* editor Joseph Sobran, who had in the past tried to dismiss the *New York Times* as a Jewish newspaper, accused Jews of attempting to "repress candor." Jews, Sobran wrote in a September 24 syndicated column, "have become in a way psychically segregated from other Americans, separated by the nervousness that also gave them status and power. And when that separateness is broken down, as by Buchanan's mockery, some of them ... can only understand it as a threat."

Buchanan's charges of dual loyalty were also echoed on the Left. The *Nation* magazine, edited by prominent Jewish writer Victor Navasky, had skirted the shores of anti-Semitism before, publishing a bitter screed by Gore Vidal that painted *Commentary*'s Podhoretz as an Israeli agent. Now the magazine made similar charges against Jewish proponents of war. In a September 17 editorial, the editors rejected what they called "the Israeli scenario" of "preemptive air strikes on Iraqi targets ... recommended by Henry Kissinger in the *Washington Post* and tummeled by Israel's personal messengers to the *New York Times* op-ed page, William Safire and A. M. Rosenthal." Neither the editor's religion nor the idiomatic use of Yiddish could disguise the editorial's anti-Semitic thrust.

In the wake of the furor over Buchanan's remarks, a new expression was born: Jewish politicians and organizations who favored military intervention had been "Buchananized"—that is, intimidated into silence. AIPAC, whose top officers favored the strategy put forth by Kissinger and Safire, did not participate in the debate over the war until January 10, when Congress began debating whether to authorize the use of force. Likewise, the Conference of Presidents did not take a position until January 8. The reason, as one Washington Jewish official acknowledged, was a "perverse fear that a resolution might be viewed as coming from Israel rather than the United States."

Jews and Jewish organizations who identified with the peace movement were no less stymied and confused during the first phase of debate over the war, but for different reasons. As might be expected, Jews were active on

all sides of the peace movement: as editors of the three major left-wing publications, the *Progressive, In These Times,* and the *Nation*; and as sponsors and organizers of the two major anti-intervention coalitions, the National Coalition to Stop U.S. Intervention and the National Campaign for Peace in the Middle East. Nonetheless, important differences began to emerge between the leaders of the anti-intervention movement and Jews who had been active as Jews *and* as members of the peace movement.

The leaders of the anti-intervention coalitions and the editors of *In These Times,* the *Progressive, Mother Jones,* and the *Nation* focused on opposing the Bush administration's strategy in the Gulf—regardless of whether that would entail the loss of Kuwait. They viewed American intervention through the prism of the 1960s—"Not Again!" Daniel Ellsberg's anti-intervention essay in *Mother Jones* was headlined. Invoking the "anti-imperialist" politics of the New Left, they described the administration's actions, in the words of the *Progressive,* as "the war of the affluent and industrial North against the South." Neither antiwar coalition backed sanctions against the Iraqis. One coalition, led by Ramsey Clark and the neo-Stalinist Workers' World Party, tilted toward the Iraqis; hard-line Workers' World ideologues portrayed Saddam as a crusader against Western imperialism. The other coalition, led by survivors of the various anti-intervention movements of the 1980s, nominally condemned Saddam, but was not prepared to support any measures against him for fear of identifying itself with administration efforts.

Some of these leftists were actively hostile to Israel. Jack O'Dell, director of Jesse Jackson's Rainbow Coalition, applauded Saddam's attempt to link Israel's Occupation of the West Bank with Iraq's occupation of Kuwait. The Ramsey Clark–Workers' World coalition called for ending all U.S. aid to Israel and endorsed Saddam's proposal for an international conference. For them, the crisis created by Saddam's invasion created a useful pretext to roll back what they, with Saddam, branded American and Israeli imperialism.

In contrast, most Jewish intellectuals who were active as Jews and in the peace movement believed that Saddam Hussein was a genuine menace who sought hegemony over the Middle East and had to be stopped. While continuing to criticize the Israeli government, they rejected Saddam's call for linkage as sheer opportunism intended to obscure his brutal annexation of a smaller, militarily weaker, but wealthy country. The question was whether he could be stopped without war; and if not, whether he was a sufficient menace to justify the extensive loss of life that such a war might demand.

Mitchell Cohen, an expert on the Middle East, expressed the view of many of these intellectuals in an editorial he wrote for *Dissent* that fall. Cohen rejected the anti-interventionist view of Iraq as part of the embattled "South":

> Cold warriors reduced every regional conflict to an apocalypse of Communists versus anti-Communists, regardless of local realities. The Left should not think like neoconservatives, only substituting "imperialism versus anti-imperialism" for "communism versus anticommunism." In any event, Saddam's anti-imperialist rhetoric is simply a cover for his own regional imperialism.

However, Cohen also brushed aside Bush's stated objectives in the region:

> George Bush says he is protecting the American way of life in the Gulf. I don't believe that. Neither, I suspect, does he. But I don't care. I care about the long range impact of an expansionist Iraqi regime pursuing mastery in a volatile region; and, yes, I fear its dominion over a resource vital to the world.

Cohen favored the use of force to expel Iraq from Kuwait and to destroy Saddam's "lethal resources." Other Jewish intellectuals—for instance, the leadership of American Friends of Peace Now—opted for using sanctions. Jerome Segal, the president of the Jewish Peace Lobby, argued for this position in *Tikkun* (November/December 1990), endorsing a "long-term embargo of Iraqi and Kuwaiti oil as the primary vehicle for putting pressure on Iraq."

During the fall, these differences among left-wing Jewish intellectuals loomed large and led to confusion and stalemate within organizations such as American Friends of Peace Now and the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC). The UAHC was typical. In September, it produced a tepid analysis that focused on the "implications" of policy without recommending any, complaining that the "rationale for American intervention remains ambiguous." In November, the UAHC board produced a resolution that, in staff member Rabbi David Saperstein's words, "said nothing. We said to avoid force as much as possible but leave force as an option." As a result, these organizations had as little influence on the public and congressional debates as the mainstream organizations did over U.S. policy in the Gulf.

But the differences within the Jewish Left were really over means rather than ends and would largely disappear once war began, while the difference between these Jewish intellectuals and the leaders of the antiwar coalitions would endure and grow far more serious. These two groups were looking at the same conflict from entirely different perspectives. If the Jewish Left tended to focus more on the specifics of the Middle East, the antiwar activists continued to view the region through the prism of

1960s antiwar rhetoric. "I think so many of these people have invested in a sense of America as a center of evil," historian Fred Siegel, a member of the *Dissent* editorial board, explained. "To give up that separate reality is to give up part of their identity."

II. FIELD MARSHALL SOLARZ

After the November election, the Bush administration transformed the debate—first by announcing on November 8 that it would double the number of troops in Saudi Arabia, and second by winning UN endorsement of the use of force if Iraq were not to leave Kuwait by January 15. The question now became whether to go to war after January 15—and the very urgency of this question forced both Jewish organizations and Congress to enter the debate.

By the time Congress began deliberating about whether to authorize force, the major mainstream organizations had all approved its use. Nine-term Brooklyn Congressman Stephen J. Solarz played the key role in shaping this public consensus. Solarz was to be attacked later by Congressmen Pete Stark (D-Cal.) for fronting for Israel—Stark referred to Solarz derisively as "Field Marshall Solarz"—but in fact Solarz was acting on his own. Unlike Levine, Berman, or Congressman Larry Smith (D-Fla.), Solarz had never been a dependable ally of AIPAC or the Israeli government—for instance, he had rejected their demands to move the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. While his district is predominantly Jewish, he has not had to rely on funds from pro-Israel political action committees. As a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee's East Asian Subcommittee, Solarz has developed a solid financial basis among Asian Americans. If Solarz had been known for anything prior to the debate over the Gulf, it was his longstanding opposition to Philippine dictator Ferdinand Marcos. Like other Jews who advocated the use of force against Saddam Hussein, Solarz was undoubtedly moved by Saddam's threat to incinerate Israel and by the danger that Saddam would pose to Israel if he acquired nuclear weapons and hegemony over Arab oil. Chiefly, however, Solarz responded to the analogy between Saddam's brutal drive for expansion in the Middle East and Hitler's conquest of Central Europe in the 1930s. Hitler, of course, had been in a position to do considerably more damage than Saddam—but as Solarz wrote in the *New Republic,* Saddam, like Hitler, showed "an unappeasable will to power combined with a ruthless willingness to employ whatever means are necessary to achieve it." Solarz's friends and congressional colleagues confirm that this was his principal concern. As one close friend put it, "To Steve, Israel was part of the calculation, but the most important thing was that this was a rerun of World War II."

Solarz first began trying to win support for a military response to Iraq in September. At a breakfast meeting in Washington attended by Jewish congressional leaders, Saudi ambassador Prince Bandar, and several other interested parties, Solarz broached the idea of forming a committee to win support for the use of force against Iraq. Bandar gave his blessing to the idea—and Solarz recruited Perle, now a fellow at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) in Washington, and Lewis, former political director of the Democratic National Committee, as the committee's codirectors. Perle had credibility with conservative Republicans; Lewis, with liberal Democrats. Solarz called the group the Committee for Peace and Security in the Gulf.

According to a source present at early planning meetings, Perle was responsible for most of the fundraising. He raised most of the committee's money from defense contractors and from the conservative Bradley Foundation. Joel Johnson, the international vice president of the Aerospace Industries Association of America, a key industry lobby and link to the Saudis, confirmed that Perle solicited and won contributions from defense companies. Johnson claims that the companies did not contribute out of hope of future sales in the Middle East, but rather "to encourage general support for the president." But other sources familiar with the committee and the defense companies say that the companies contributed because they were led to believe that the Saudis and the Kuwaitis, prime customers for their weapons, would look kindly on their doing so. "There were personal calls from Perle and guarded messages that this was what the Saudis and Kuwaitis wanted," said one knowledgeable source.

The committee itself would not reveal who its funders were. "One potential corporate donor did not want their name publicized, and we made a general decision not to publicize our donors' names," Lewis explained later. But the committee's decision undoubtedly reflected more than a desire to spare one company embarrassment. Public knowledge that it was funded by defense contractors would have substantially undermined its credibility. As it is, the committee's defense-heavy funding raises serious doubt about the ethical and political judgment of Solarz, Perle, and Lewis, quite apart from their position on the Gulf War.

Solarz announced the committee's formation in a press conference on December 8—but he and Perle had already begun airing their views the month before. Solarz wrote a long article for the *New Republic* that had been solicited by its literary editor Leon Wieseltier, who, along with editor-in-chief Martin Peretz, later joined the committee. Perle testified before the House Armed Services Committee on November 29. On December 20, Lewis took the field with an op-ed piece in the *New York Times.* The three also became staple guests on television and

radio talk shows.

Solarz, Perle, and Lewis gathered names for an ad campaign that would eventually appear the week of the congressional debate. They failed to get such heavy hitters as former Middle East troubleshooter Robert Strauss and former vice president Walter Mondale, but they were able to recruit former UN ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick (who had initially equivocated about the use of force) and former White House chief of staff Howard Baker.

While the three were forthright in arguing that force would be necessary, their arguments still reflected fear of Buchanan's charges. Both Solarz and Lewis went so far out of their way to avoid mention of Israel that their arguments seemed disingenuous. Lewis rested her entire case for military intervention on the threat to Saddam's Arab neighbors, while Solarz did not mention Israel once in his sixty-two-hundred-word *New Republic* manifesto. In their ad, Solarz, Perle, and Lewis, all of whom are Jewish, were careful to balance Jewish signatories with gentiles, but they also went considerably beyond this, identifying retired American Jewish Committee lobbyist Hyman Bookbinder as "Former Staffer, Office of Economic Opportunity," a position he had held twenty-five years ago in the Johnson administration. Bookbinder says he was "astonished" when he saw how he was listed. "They were fearful of giving our adversaries something to point to so they could say it was a Jewish war," Bookbinder says.

Solarz and Lewis were very effective in winning support within the liberal Jewish community. On December 2, Solarz attended a meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations in New York to debate a resolution on the Gulf crisis. "He gave a strong speech that swept up our board," David Saperstein recalled. In its resolution, the board declared that the "use of military force to accomplish the restoration of Kuwaiti independence, the freeing of all hostages, and an effective deterrent, or end, to Iraq's capacity to threaten other nations" was "an acceptable response by the United States and other nations." Solarz had carried the day.

Lewis and Solarz also played an important part in winning the American Jewish Congress's support for the use of force. Through December and early January, the Congress members debated whether to support the use of force, with a significant minority of local members favoring the continuation of sanctions. At the climactic meeting of the Congress's Governing Council in early January, Lewis, an active Council member, spoke persuasively for the Council's final resolution—approving "whatever steps necessary" to oust Iraq from Kuwait.

Solarz and his committee certainly didn't have to convince AIPAC and the Conference of Presidents to back the use of force, but at a December meeting with their



Rep. Stephen Solarz (D-NY).

representatives, he did try to get the groups to take a more public role in the debate. Where Solarz failed, the Bush administration's pleas—delivered in White House meetings with both groups—finally succeeded, winning their endorsement of the president's position on the eve of the congressional debate. As Congress met, the only significant Washington Jewish organization not on record in favor of the administration's position was American Friends of Peace Now, which favored the continuation of sanctions.

Neither the Jewish organizations nor Solarz's committee had significant influence over the congressional debate that took place in January. With Buchanan's specter still hovering over its operations, AIPAC kept a low profile. The organization's Washington staff was in Israel as the debate began, and its president and regional leaders were left to lobby still-undecided senators such as Richard Shelby (D-Ala.) and Charles Grassley (R-Iowa). In the House, neither AIPAC nor Solarz significantly swayed the debate. Solarz's main contribution was in winning Bush administration support for a resolution that acknowledged Congress's war-making powers. But according to sources in the House, the two most effective supporters of the Solarz-Michel resolution authorizing force were Les Aspin (D-Wis.), the chair of the Armed Services Committee, and Representative Robert Torricelli (D-N.J.). Aspin provided the military rationale for backing force—arguing (correctly, as it turned out) that the war could be won without a large number of American casualties. Torricelli, meanwhile, provided the diplomatic rationale, framing an argument

for war in terms of collective security.

Jewish Democrats were split during the debate, but their divisions—like those between Jewish-oriented leftists—were tactical rather than strategic. Everyone acknowledged that Saddam had to be stopped; the question was whether sanctions should be given more of a chance. Moreover, the final votes did not clearly reflect constituency pressure. Mel Levine backed the Solarz resolution in spite of widespread and very vocal opposition in his district, dramatized by a sit-in at his district offices. Congressman Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) voted for sanctions in spite of considerable support in his heavily Jewish district for the use of force. In the end, Jewish House members of what Buchanan had called the "Israeli-occupied Congress" voted seventeen to sixteen against the use of force, while Jewish Senators voted five to three against the administration. And despite AIPAC's lobbying, several senators heavily dependent on Jewish PACs, including Grassley, Tom Harkin (D-Iowa), and Daniel Inouye (D-Hawaii), voted against the use of force.

III. BREAKING RANKS

When the war began, Congress, including those Democrats who had voted against authorizing force, closed ranks behind the administration. As the Scud missiles hit Israel on January 18, those Jewish intellectuals and members of Jewish organizations who had backed sanctions also came around to backing war rather than unilateral withdrawal. For some, the Scud attack had brought home Israel's stake in the conflict. But for most, it had simply dramatized what *Dissent* editor Irving Howe called Saddam's "active evil."

Typical was Jo-Ann Mort, communications director of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union and a board member of Americans for Peace Now. Mort had favored sanctions, but once the war began, she reasoned that withdrawal would only strengthen Saddam. She described her new position as "critical support of the air war." Gail Pressberg, the codirector of the Center for Israeli Peace and Security, also decided to back the war effort. "I decided one had to support the war and hope that it was over as soon as possible," Pressberg explained.

As these Jewish intellectuals abandoned the movement against intervention, they found themselves "Buchananized" as well. Jewish leftists critical of Saddam Hussein were quickly reduced to crude caricatures of their Jewishness, and their support for Israel was translated into endorsement of the Israeli status quo. When Paul Berman, Paul Starr, and Irving Howe came out in favor of the war, left-wing columnists and peace movement activists issued snide ad hominem attacks. In a *Newsday* column, John Leonard identified "pro-warriors" as "Jewish males" and cited with approval the remark of a friend, "for the Irving Howes and Paul Starrs, there is a new definition of a just war—a war with Israel in it." *Village Voice* columnist Douglas Ireland repeated the quip. Indeed, I experienced the same anti-Semitic calumny in the letters column of *In These Times* after I expressed qualified support for a "limited war with limited aims." I had mentioned Israel only once in the article, had not written about Israel for seven years, and even then, had harshly criticized the Occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. Nevertheless, readers who responded to the piece reduced my views to kneejerk Zionism. One letter called me a "Jaundiced Jew" and "covert Zionist." Another described me as a "Jewish neoliberal."

At the same time, Jewish intellectuals who favored continuation of the war encountered within the anti-intervention movement a deep hostility toward Israel that verged on anti-Semitism. Peace activists did not merely criticize Israel's government or policies; they blamed the Jewish state (as a previous generation had blamed Jewish bankers) for the ills of the world, including millennial conflicts between Arab peoples. Jewel Bellush, a political scientist at Barnard, had led the fight in the American Jewish Congress against the use of force, but once the war began, she argued, like others, that it was better to see it to its conclusion. Now she found herself assailed for supporting Israel. "I am a friend of Israel, but I also believe in a Palestinian state," Bellush explained. "But the peaceniks I met—I am not sure whether they cared what happened to Israel."

Fred Siegel was more emphatic about the anti-Semitism he encountered in the anti-intervention movement. "It's essentially the notion that the Arabs are peace-loving people, and if Israel hadn't roiled the waters, the region would be a land of milk and honey," Siegel explained. "It's a kind of demonology. When you ask people about Scuds, they write them off as Western media hype."

Surprisingly, the Scud attacks further widened the distance between many Jewish intellectuals and the anti-intervention movement, heightening both Jewish concerns about Israel and radical left-wing hostility toward the Jewish state. When the movement leaders who organized the first major antiwar demonstrations in Washington were asked to comment on the possibility that if the U.S. withdrew, Israel would get into a bloody war with Iraq, they displayed their enmity for Israel. Their response, explained *In These Times* correspondent John Canham-Clyne, who covered the demonstrations, was "Fuck Israel."

Yet the conflict between the Jewish intellectuals who now supported the war and the anti-intervention movement was not just about Israel. Like the conflict between the radical Left of the late sixties and the Jewish liberals

who would later form the cold-war liberal anti-McGovern wing of the Democratic party, it was about competing visions of America's role and place in the world. Jewish intellectuals like Mort, Pressberg, and Siegel held to a complex view of American intentions and world conflict, which allowed for the possibility that the U.S. could be on the side of God as well as the devil. The remnants of the 1960s Left still adhered to a bipolar view of the world divided between imperialism and the anti-imperialist forces, in which Israel's only significant role was to serve as an ally of American imperialism.

Meanwhile, mainstream Jewish organizations were also closing ranks with the advent of war. Almost every one of the major organizations sent groups to Israel who offered moral support by donning gas masks. These groups also abandoned their Buchananized silence to cheer the Bush administration's prosecution of the war. After the war was over, participants at a Conference of Presidents meeting in Washington on March 5 and at AIPAC's annual policy conference March 17–20 were euphoric in contemplating U.S. success. Shoshona Cardin, the new president of the Conference of Presidents, captured the new mood by describing President Bush as "our brave, bold, and fearless leader."

There was also a feeling of newfound unity within the liberal and conservative, Democratic and Republican branches of organized Jewry. If liberal David Saperstein had risen a year ago to ask a question of Richard Perle, he would have been expected to be highly critical of the hawkish Perle, but when Saperstein addressed Perle and policy expert Martin Indyk at the Conference of Presidents meeting, he said, "I want to give my expression of appreciation to the two speakers. I don't think anyone has done more than the two of you to understand the threats that Israel faces."

Yet behind the postwar euphoria and bonhomie lurked dangers for organized Jewry. The war had transformed the terrain on which mainstream Jewish organizations worked, reinforcing certain trends over others, and introducing a new alliance linking the mainstream Jewish organizations with the Bush administration and the Arab emirates. Such an alliance could lead to a new stage in the Middle East peace process, in which Saudi Arabia and Kuwait would join Egypt in recognizing Israel, but it could also lead to profound disillusionment and isolation for American Jewish organizations and for Israel.

The administration's success in the war—and the congressional Democrats' initial opposition—reinforced a growing tilt in both the Conference of Presidents and AIPAC away from the Democrats and Congress and toward Republicans and the executive branch. AIPAC had begun to shift its focus in 1985, when Steve Rosen, the lobby's research director, wrote a memorandum calling for AIPAC to concentrate on lobbying the executive branch. Such a strategy required AIPAC to elevate in its leadership Jewish Republicans with ties to the Reagan and Bush administrations. After the 1988 election, AIPAC's chief congressional lobbyist, stalwart Democrat Douglas Bloomfield, quit over AIPAC's new strategy, leaving the organization's political direction largely to Rosen.

Critics of the new strategy charged that it reduced the organization's clout, since executive branch officials did not have to fear punishment from pro-Israel PACs if they failed to heed AIPAC's advice; worse still, lobbying the executive branch would necessarily require trade-offs and deals that would undermine the organization's message and defeat the aim of forthrightly defending Israel in Washington. In the first two years of the Bush administration, the critics appeared to have been proven right. AIPAC was unable to prevent the administration from developing an acrimonious relationship with the Shamir government, while pro-Israel Democrats on Capitol Hill no longer trusted it to act in Israel's behalf.

Nothing better illustrated the pitfalls of AIPAC's new approach than the battle over the $21 billion Saudi arms deal that was announced last September. Ten years before, under Bloomfield's leadership, AIPAC had fought a no-holds-barred struggle against the sale of AWACS reconnaissance planes to the Saudis; but when this new larger sale was announced, the organization confined itself to a tepid declaration that it would "oppose" rather than "fight" it—a crucial terminological difference in the world of lobbying. Believing that AIPAC's lack of opposition reflected its attempt to win favor with the Bush administration, congressional opponents of the arms deal deliberately kept AIPAC out of its strategy sessions for fear that it would leak their plans to the administration. After pro-Israel Democrats had forced the administration to postpone $14 billion of the $21 billion sale, one congressional staff member involved in the fight described AIPAC's lobbying as "minimal."

The results of the war seemed, however, to vindicate Rosen and AIPAC's Republicans. Not only did the administration succeed in destroying Israel's most dangerous enemy; Bush's success, combined with initial Democratic opposition to the use of force, virtually assured the president's reelection in 1992 and perhaps laid the groundwork for the Republicans to capture the Senate. At AIPAC's policy conference on March 17–20, the organization's representatives once again paraded their close ties to the administration.

But AIPAC and organized Jewry could eventually suffer from their dependence on administration good will. As Iraq disintegrates after the war, pro-Israel organizations are already under pressure to acquiesce in the survival of Iraq's Baathist party, and perhaps of Saddam himself—a possibility that deeply concerns war support-

ers like Ann Lewis, who now says she is "disappointed, but not surprised" by the administration's tilt toward the Iraqi leadership.

The real crunch will come, however, in negotiations with the Israelis. If the Bush administration and Israel once again find themselves with swords drawn—as seems very possible, given the Shamir government's determination to avoid any territorial concessions—then AIPAC and other Jewish organizations will once again be caught in the middle.

The ties between the Jewish leadership and Saudi and Kuwaiti representatives in Washington that were created during the war could also prove as perilous as they now appear promising. These ties were largely initiated by Saudi Prince Bandar. From August to the war's end, Bandar held meetings with representatives from the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles, the American Jewish Congress, and AIPAC. He consulted regularly with Jewish Democrats on Capitol Hill, including Solarz and Levine.

In January, he invited three well-known Jewish policy experts—Indyk from the AIPAC-linked Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Michael Mandelbaum from the Council on Foreign Relations, and Elliot Cohen from the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies—to inspect the Saudi military. "It was a remarkable departure," Cohen said. "The Saudis had never looked favorably on Jewish intellectuals."

The Saudis wanted something from these overtures; and the Jewish organizations and policy experts expected something in return. The Saudis were immediately interested in Jewish backing for war against Iraq but, according to Arab sources, they also wanted to neutralize opposition to future arms sales from the U.S. The Jews who met with the Saudis expected that after the war, the Saudis and Kuwaitis would make significant gestures toward normalizing relations with Israel—dropping the secondary boycott of firms that do business with Israel and perhaps also exchanging military information. "What we were told by Prince Bandar was that as long as Saddam Hussein effected hegemony over the Middle East, no movement on the Palestinian issue was possible," American Jewish Congress Director Henry Siegman explained. By Siegman's account, Prince Bandar implied that "if Saddam Hussein is no longer, most countries would then approach the issue on pragmatic terms."

In the first weeks after the war, Jewish activists and intellectuals waxed eloquent on Bandar's role and on the prospects of peace between Israel and the Gulf states. Indyk told the Presidents Conference meeting in Washington that the Saudis "are now in a position to lend support to an American-led [peace] process, and I believe they are prepared to do so. They talk in realistic terms about Israel." Perle praised the "wise" and "remarkable" Bandar as one of the four people most responsible for the war's success.

But Jewish intellectuals and organizations could come out on the short end of this Saudi relationship. The Saudis got major Jewish backing for the war effort, but when Secretary of State James Baker met with the Saudis after the war, he was not able to extract any concessions from them on improved relations with Israel. Afterwards, the American Jewish Congress took out a full-page ad in the *New York Times* urging the Arab members of the coalition to "seize the moment," but implicitly, as Siegman admitted, expressing its disappointment with the Saudi response to Baker. Afterwards, Doug Bloomfield, now a columnist for *Washington Jewish Week,* was skeptical about the Saudi relationship. "If there is a sea change, it is still low tide," he said.

In the months to come, pro-Israeli organizations will be watching for signs of a public thaw in the Saudi attitude toward Israel. The Saudis will be looking to see whether the pro-Israel organizations will merely "oppose" or will "fight" the remaining $14 billion Saudi arms deal that the administration is putting before Congress. Such a sale could once again accelerate the arms race in the region, making it necessary for Israel, already weighted down by enormous arms expenditures, to increase its spending. And of course a new infusion of arms into the region could make possible the rise of a new Saddam. Yet pro-Israel organizations that now depend on their links to the Bush administration and hope for a breakthrough from the Saudis will be sorely tempted to give the Saudis what they want.

In the wake of Operation Desert Storm's success, Jewish Democrats who backed the use of force were vindicated, while those legislators who had opted for sanctions rather than force felt threatened by reprisals both from voters and from political action committees. In the weeks following the vote, two House members from New York, Chuck Schumer and Nita Lowey, faced serious revolts in their district from Jewish constituents. And there were hints of retribution from pro-Israel PACs. In March, the largest pro-Israel PAC, NATPAC (National Political Action Committee), run by former AIPAC director Morris Amitay, sent out a newsletter to contributors listing those House and Senate members who had voted for the use of force.

In response to these political threats, some legislators have recanted. Schumer—whose tenth district in Brooklyn may be redistricted into Solarz's thirteenth in the next election—held a meeting in his district with Jewish activists who were threatening to demonstrate at a March awards dinner where Schumer was going to be honored. Schumer told them that he had made a mistake in voting against the Solarz–Michel resolution.

Jewish Democrats who voted against the use of force also have rushed to sponsor legislation that would endear them to the PACs. Lowey cosponsored a nonbinding "sense of Congress" resolution opposing U.S. pressure to get Israel to give up ground on the Palestinian issue. Schumer sent a letter to Bush urging him to "place official recognition of Israel by the members of the Arab League at the top of your agenda for peace in the Middle East." Such efforts could undermine the Bush administration's attempt to create "two-track" negotiations between Arabs and Israelis and between Palestinians and Israelis, by giving priority, as the Shamir government does, to the Arab–Israeli negotiating track.

Out of these conflicting efforts could come three very different kinds of results. The most unlikely is that the administration's two-track effort could bear fruit in agreements between both the Arab coalition states and Israel and the Palestinians and Israel. In that case, AIPAC, Bush, and Bandar will have earned the world's gratitude, and Jewish Democrats can stop looking over their shoulder at the PACs. But more likely are two messier scenarios.

In the first, Israel would gain recognition from the Gulf states without making any significant concessions to the Palestinians. In that case, Israel would become another emirate, albeit one with an unusually large ruling class, presiding over an alien majority. Such a result would deeply trouble mainstream Jewish organizations, most of whose members bear little affection for Likud's revanchist aims. In addition, this scenario would probably unravel within a few years as the Palestinians regroup and leadership changes occur in the Gulf.

Most likely, perhaps, is that this administration initiative will prove no more successful in gaining peace than the 1989 Baker plan. If that happens, whatever sense of triumph Jewish organizations felt after the war will become a dim memory. With Congress pushing solidly in one direction, the Bush administration in another, and AIPAC torn between the two, Washington's Jewish community will be as anguished and disarrayed as it was prior to the war.

Jews who were active in both the Left and in Jewish organizations have even more reason to fear for the future. In the war's aftermath, they find themselves as alienated from the American Left as they are from Israel's right-wing government. They don't suffer from dual loyalty but dual alienation. At the Friends of Peace Now conference in Washington on February 28, these left-wing Jews consoled themselves with the argument that the Shamir government is out of touch with the real inclinations of the Israeli people—an argument that American leftists, with equal lack of merit, used to make about the Reagan administration's relationship to the American people.

But besides worrying about the revitalization and growth of the Israeli Left, these Jewish intellectuals and activists also have to fret about the American Left. Indeed, they have to decide whether they are still part of it. Will they, like the neoconservative refugees of the Six Day War, abandon the Left entirely to the avatars of 1960s-style anti-imperialism, or will they seek to rebuild it into a movement that can speak to the promise as well as perfidy that Americans see in their country? □

A Faith Betrayed

Danny Rubenstein

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On August 1, 1990, one day before the invasion of Kuwait, the Baghdad official daily *a-Thawra* ("The Revolution") ran, with much fanfare, an item on Israel's plan to destroy the al-Aqsa Mosque and build the Third Temple in its place. Alongside the piece the editors published an allegedly supporting document, which was endorsed by several of Israel's ultranationalist religious groups. Though such groups do in fact publicize plans of this sort from time to time, they fall decidedly on the fringe of Israeli political debate—and in some cases on the lunatic fringe. But *a-Thawra*'s presentation led readers to understand that the plan was an official provocation of the Israeli government. In retrospect, it was yet another hint that Saddam Hussein intended to link together two issues: the Palestinian problem and the invasion of Kuwait, which took place on the following morning.

Long steeped in frustration and despair, the Palestinians responded with enthusiasm to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait within a few hours. The official reaction of the

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Palestinian leadership (the PLO) took a bit longer. But less than forty-eight hours after the conquest of Kuwait, Yassir Arafat was already in Baghdad meeting with Saddam Hussein. From there Arafat moved on quickly to Egypt (August 5) and announced that he was promoting a compromise in the Gulf to forestall the intervention of Western forces. The next day Arafat was on his way back to Baghdad, but immediately returned to Cairo to participate in the emergency session of the Arab League Council, which, by an overwhelming majority, passed a resolution demanding Iraq's immediate withdrawal from Kuwait. Only three Arab countries (other than Iraq) did not support the resolution: Sudan, Jordan, and Yemen—plus the PLO.

Support for Saddam Hussein seemed to have become something of a mass nationalist and religious ecstasy among the Palestinians.

On the same day Arafat announced his initiative to resolve the Gulf crisis, with the support of Libyan President Mu'ammar Qaddafi. The initiative's provisions included a multinational Arab force to replace the Iraqi army in Kuwait; free elections in Kuwait; certain changes to be made in Iraq's border with Kuwait (to Iraq's advantage) in exchange for Iraq's withdrawal of troops; the extension of financial aid to solve the grave economic problems resulting from the long Iran–Iraq war. "The most important thing," Arafat declared, "is to prevent foreign armies from coming to the area."

The Palestinians regarded the image of Arafat and the PLO as mediators in inter-Arab disputes as a matter of vital importance. The power of mediation is essentially the only power they have to forge the inter-Arab cooperation needed to aid them in their struggles against Israel. The entire Arab world shares guilt about the Palestinians: they are the only one of the Arab peoples that have not obtained a state of their own. It often seems as though in 1948 they took it upon themselves to be the eternal Arab victims—and presumably to enjoy moral superiority because of their suffering. They are often called "the conscience of the Arab nations," and the PLO goes out of its way to exploit that image. Arafat always seems to be turning up as a mediator and peacemaker between feuding Arab states and factions (within Lebanon, for example). But this time his initiative failed before it ever got off the ground. On August 8, less than a week after the fall of Kuwait, Saudi Arabia announced that it was ready to accept American troops on its soil, and two days later an Arab summit in Cairo approved the entry of American and other forces into the Gulf.

At this point, in light of these earlier efforts to resist "foreign intervention," the official Palestinian position of unequivocal support for Iraq finally took shape. Once Arafat's initiative was rejected, the Arab world was clearly divided into two camps: Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Syria—with the United States and Europe providing active backing and Israel as a supportive observer—on one side; Iraq and Jordan—with a degree of support from Yemen and Sudan—on the other. The Palestinian position in this alignment was equally definitive: "No one expects us to be in the same camp with the United States and the State of Israel against an Arab state," said the spokesmen of the PLO. One of them, Yassir Abed Rabbo, denounced Saudi Arabia as an imperialist puppet, while the Palestinian papers in East Jerusalem launched a strident campaign against Egypt and Syria. One Palestinian clergyman in Amman declared that jihad should be fought against any infidel Christian army that dared to attack a Muslim state, and the preacher in Jerusalem's al-Aqsa mosque pronounced that the presence of a foreign army in the Gulf was a mark of disgrace on the Muslim nation. Against this background, a spokesman for Saddam announced on Iraqi television (August 13) that any settlement between Kuwait and Iraq would first require Israel's withdrawal from the Occupied Territories—and of course the prompt withdrawal of American forces from Saudi Arabia. The PLO was only too happy to support the linkage between the Gulf problem and the Palestinian issue, and in East Jerusalem the daily *a-Nahar* ("The Day") published the exuberant headline: "Iraq brandishes the olive branch of peace and security for the entire region."

From then on, the Palestinians abandoned themselves to transports of ardor for Saddam Hussein. Loving the Iraqi leader and loathing his enemies ceased to be a matter of hard-nosed political calculation and became a profoundly emotional, even mystical affair. "Official sources" among the Palestinians from east of the Jordan told the East Jerusalem papers *al-Fajr* ("The Dawn") and *a-Sh'ab* ("The People") that the American Marines were guzzling whisky and beer in the plaza surrounding the sacred Kaaba in Mecca, carousing in the company of loose women, and brandishing copies of *Playboy* and other pornographic magazines. Someone reported that all the white doves that habitually fly around the walls of the Kaaba had disappeared and been replaced by black ravens. At least three times between August and December, riots broke out at the Damascus Gate, near the bustling center of East Jerusalem, when rumors spread about the murder of Egyptian President Mubarak and a coup to overthrow his regime. Young men burst into song, merchants handed out candies. This wishful thinking was



Israeli soldiers rounding up Palestinians after the stabbing of a Jewish resident of the West Bank.

even reported as news on the front page of *a-Sha'ab*. Indeed an old man from Hebron, revered as a holy man and a seer, told one of the paper's reporters that he had dreamed about a man wrapped in a white sheet walking the deserted streets of Cairo. He reported that the white figure was Khaled Islambouli, the Muslim fanatic who had assassinated President Sadat (and been executed for the crime). And when the old sheikh asked him where he was going, he answered: "To Mubarak's palace."

Occasional reports in the American media about soldiers being killed in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf—usually during maneuvers or in road accidents—were featured prominently in all the Palestinian papers and repeated incessantly, until accidents had descended upon the Americans and their allies nearly to the point of wiping them out. Each time Palestinian and Jordanian spokesmen referred to the Americans on the radio, on Jordanian television, or in the press, they tacked on derisive epithets such as "invaders," "crusaders," "barbarians," and "infidels." Correspondents mimicked the overheated rhetoric of Saddam Hussein by calling the American president "the criminal Bush" or "the devil Bush"; the allies, meanwhile, were "crooks."

In contrast, Saddam Hussein was showered with every conceivable adoring adjective: Saladin, the savior, the defender of the Arabs and Islam. The mufti of Jerusalem, Sheikh Sa'ad a-Din al-Alami, who attended the Muslim Conference in Baghdad, and brought Saddam a model of al-Aqsa made out of shells, subsequently reported that the Iraqi leader had been flooded with requests to declare himself "caliph of the Muslims"—a title that had gone out of use seventy years earlier with the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. For close to half a year, not a day passed without Saddam Hussein's picture appearing on page one of the Palestinian papers, often to illustrate mysterious, politically charged tales. All the residents of one village east of Jerusalem came out one night and saw the face of Saddam Hussein in the moon. A woman in another village heard her rooster crow oddly one morning and, upon listening more closely, distinctly heard him cry: "Saddam! Saddam!" The sheep of a Bedouin from the Bethlehem area was also attacked by a fit of madness and began jumping around and bleating "Saddam Hussein." The Palestinian press reported such wonders and miracles with the same enthusiasm that it displayed in handling the news of accidental American casualties. Support for Saddam Hussein seemed to have become something of a mass nationalist and religious ecstasy.

And it was not only the Muslims—the great majority of the Palestinians—who were caught up in this intoxication: Christian members of the community also harbored a fondness for Saddam due to his long war against the fundamentalism of the Khomeini regime. One of them, the lawyer Jonathan Koutab of East Jerusalem, ex-

plained that Saddam Hussein had shown him a new Islam: not the fanatic Islam of Saudi Arabia that amputates the hands of thieves, forbids the sale of alcohol, and forces people to fast on Ramadan. Koutab had now encountered a "theologically liberated" Islam, an Islam that stands up to the arrogant superiority of the West declaring "Allahu akbar," God is Great—greater than advanced technology, destructive weaponry, and even a coalition of twenty-eight states fighting a single country armed with faith and determination. "This is the first time I have felt, as a Christian, that Islam is close to me," Koutab confessed.

So perhaps for the first time in their history, the Palestinians were firmly united around a single cause. Fanatic Muslims and faithful Christians, fundamentalists and atheist intellectuals, leftists, Communists, and conservative supporters of the royal court in Jordan all rallied around Saddam. The differences between the various Palestinian factions—the Fatah and the Marxist fronts, the Muslim movement and the Communists—vanished as though they had never existed. Everyone spoke the same language and chanted the same slogans, expressing their hope for liberation from the West's hypocrisy and exploitation: the same liberation that would lift the yoke of Israeli occupation off the Palestinian people.

Palestinians took an active part in the Iraqi effort to turn the military defeat into a political victory.

This united front of adulation for Saddam Hussein overwhelmed any thought of the great harm that Palestinians might be doing to themselves. Occasionally their spokesmen made oblique reference to such damage—but only to portray it as the sacrifice they were prepared to make on the altar of their faith that their cause was just. As early as August, tens of thousands of Palestinians (out of a total of some three hundred fifty thousand) were already pouring out of Kuwait. The PLO's finance people reported that its income from Palestinian families and institutions in Kuwait—which amounted to some $250 million a year—had been cut off, as had the funds from Saudi Arabia and the Gulf emirates. Gradually the West Bank and Gaza began to feel the financial setback as did Jordan and the institutions of the PLO. The Technological College in Abu Dis (outside Jerusalem) closed; the construction of a new hospital in Hebron was halted; clinics in Nablus and Tulkarem announced that they had no budgets to continue their work; welfare institutions throughout the Territories stopped distributing aid. East Jerusalem newspapers laid off staff, and the PLO announced a 30 percent cutback in its budget. But the financial blow was dwarfed by the political damage dealt to the image of the PLO and Palestinians. All the support they had acquired during the three years of the intifada disappeared into thin air. Palestinians grew estranged from the Israeli Left, which had supported their struggle for self-determination and Palestinian statehood. One Palestinian, when asked how he, his colleagues, and all the rest of his people could support a move that was causing them such harm, replied: "We have no choice. This is the only response we have left, given the seemingly endless deadlock in solving the problem of the Palestinian future."

Here and there different voices were heard, though sometimes barely in a whisper. Arafat's own deputy, Salah Khalaf (better known as Abu Iyyad), who was murdered in Tunis just before the outbreak of the Gulf War, was one such voice. In an interview published in the weekly *al-Nadwa* in mid-August, he argued that the PLO should speak out against any attempt to conquer territory by force. The PLO finance chief, Jawid Ghosen, announced (in Abu Dhabi on August 20) that the conquest of Kuwait was illegal. At about the same time, an unidentified Palestinian source apologetically told the Agence France Presse that the PLO pursued its policy of full support for Iraq because Saddam Hussein had threatened to move against the Palestinian institutions under his aegis—and against the hundreds of thousands of Palestinians living in Kuwait and Iraq. Other Palestinian spokesmen may have expressed similar reservations about the takeover of Kuwait, but their words were drowned out by the chorus of acclaim for Iraq. In any event, the mild voices of dissent commanded less and less attention as Palestinian leaders arrived in Baghdad one after another to express their unqualified endorsement of Saddam Hussein.

At the beginning of September, after Arafat had already been to the Iraqi capital several times, George Habash, the leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, made his pilgrimage to Iraq. For Habash, who had spent decades under the tutelage of the Baath regime in Damascus—Saddam's worst enemy—this was a much more difficult step. He continued on to Amman to meet with Naif Hawatmeh, head of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine. On September 18, both of them met with King Hussein for the first time since 1970, and afterward held a kind of Palestinian summit with Yassir Arafat. Their support for Iraq not only united the various Palestinian factions but also helped bring about an alliance with the regime of Jordan. At the end of September, as King Hussein was pursuing his mediation efforts in Europe, the PLO sent representatives to Moscow in a bid to engage the Soviet Union in an attempt to break up the anti-Iraqi coalition. PLO activists also tried to stir up

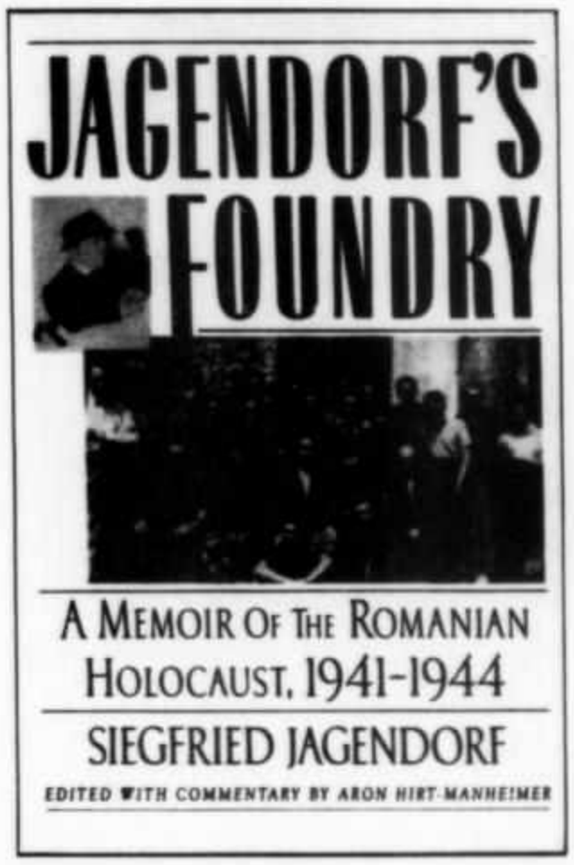
opposition to the war in Egypt, Syria, and Morocco. "I don't believe any Muslim-Arab soldier would dare to take part in a war against his Iraqi brothers," said Mohammed Jihad, one of the commanders of the Fatah.

The bloody incident on the esplanade of the al-Aqsa Mosque, in which nineteen Palestinians were killed, helped lend credence to Saddam Hussein's demand for linkage. Iraqi television announced that a new missile was going into production: "the Missile of Stones" —named in honor of the stones that the children of the intifada were throwing at the Zionist soldiers. The fanatic Palestinian-Muslim leader Sheikh Assad Tamimi, who heads a radical religious movement in Jordan and is known as the "prince of the jihad to liberate Jerusalem," declared that the annexation of Kuwait was legal because Kuwait had always been an integral part of Iraq. "Saddam Hussein is the builder of the Muslim Arab nation," the sheikh proclaimed, adding that Arabs and Islam were charged with the task of eradicating the Jewish presence from the Holy Land.

The more that the signs pointed to the approach of war, the more the Palestinians tried to ignore them. All their actions seemed to be fully coordinated with Iraq. When, for the "sake of peace," Saddam Hussein began releasing the hostages, Yassir Arafat announced that Iraq would bring peace to the area; Saddam had said much the same thing to the families of the hostages when he announced the advent of "peace to all and especially to those who need it most in their own independent state, the Palestinian people." To avert the looming war, the PLO joined the Iraqi regime in a campaign of scare tactics, warning of an unspeakable catastrophe—the destruction of the Middle East and perhaps the entire world—if the coalition's armies were to attack Iraq. The Iraqis and the Palestinians leaked word of chemical warheads and made veiled references to terrible weapons—perhaps even nuclear bombs—in a consistently apocalyptic light throughout the last weeks of December and the early days of January. This mood found expression in the West Bank and Gaza in a series of strange and sometimes outlandish pieces in the Palestinian press. The East Jerusalem paper *a-Nahar,* for example, published a series of items about messianic and mystical calculations of the End of Days—similar, in a way, to the numerology in the Israeli press. Readers eagerly greeted quotes from ancient Muslim sources on the terrible Day of Judgment, Qur'anic references to a huge conflagration coming out of the Arabian desert to consume the world.

These dark forebodings could be interpreted as a response to the efforts of Saddam Hussein, together with Arafat, to stir up popular fears in order to prevent a war whose logical outcome was clear. On January 3, Arafat *(Continued on p. 92)*

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From Slogan to Spectacle: How the Media and the Left Lost the War

Jay Rosen

Journalists like to indulge in this sort of labeling themselves, so they won't mind if we count them among the losers in the Gulf War. Assailed by the Right for reporting from Baghdad, outmaneuvered by the Pentagon in the struggle for access, made to look ridiculous in numerous televised briefings—the media did not have a lovely war. Of course, neither did the Left. "No blood for oil" may have caught the sentiment of the antiwar movement, but it did nothing to convince the rest of the country that the Left had something to say about the threat Saddam Hussein posed. More committed to display than discussion, those who were against the war proved that they could still organize demonstrations. As for reorganizing their thinking in the post–cold-war world, that is a difficult thing to do while marching.

The media and the Left did manage to trade hostilities with each other. The Left charged the media with "war boosterism" and with silencing voices of dissent. The media responded in traditional fashion: *Time,* for example, called the criticism "the usual partisan carping," and noted that "attacks from both sides" show the press "where it usually is: in the evenhanded middle ground." This fruitless exchange was quite predictable, given the Left's increasingly strident critique of the media, and the media's habit of interpreting all criticism as partisan lament. My task in this essay will be to suggest the need for a different—and, I hope, more civil—conversation about journalism and its public duties. My emphasis will be on the experience of the Gulf War that the media offered. It is the degradation of that experience—and not the "bias" of the media—that I think needs to be criticized, by journalists as well as progressives on the Left.

At present the Left's media theory is essentially a victimology, which the Left has used to depict itself as a proud and dissenting minority, poorly treated by the powers that be. Influenced by the works of Noam Chomsky and typified by the publications of the watchdog group Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR), the refrain goes something like this: The media are under the control of wealthy corporations that benefit from—and, in some cases, constitute—the present structure of power. As a result, journalists cannot say or do anything that conflicts too sharply with the interests of capital. On top of this, journalists are themselves part of an elite class, inclined to see the world from the perspective of the officials, managers, and experts who inhabit the major centers of power. The result is a media system that propagandizes for the status quo and represses alternative points of view, especially those that challenge the hegemony of the white, male, technocratic elite.

While there is a good deal of truth in this argument, we are ill-served by the kinds of critical activity it has spawned. Press criticism on the Left is now the sport of spotting favored treatment for the Right and those in power, and of cataloguing the ways in which the media marginalize the Left and its concerns (as if the Left played no part in marginalizing itself). The pleasures of this sport are considerable: one finds endless examples to confirm the theory, while subjecting members of the press to a demand the theory itself predicts they cannot meet. Thus, the message to journalists is: "We on the Left want our voices to be heard and our agenda to be considered when you in the media decide whom to interview or what to write about. Of course, we know you can't meet this demand in a consistent way and still keep your jobs because the corporate interests that control your fate won't permit it. Still, we find it worthwhile to press you on the point, and to condemn you when you ultimately do what our theory says you must do: serve the powers that be."

This is not an approach that wins many friends in the media—which should be, but isn't, a concern to those who style themselves cultural radicals. But even as an attempt at a radical critique, the Left's media doctrine falters badly, for it accepts the key tenet in the journalist's own media theory—that by avoiding "bias" in the name of "balance," "fairness," and "accuracy," journalism can meet its obligations to the political community. A truly radical philosophy for the media would demand that journalists be, in certain ways, *more* biased—more aggressive in serving the needs of a democratic polis, more enterprising in creating the conditions in politics that favor public debate and rational discussion, more willing to join in the fight for a vital public sphere. Compared to imperatives like these, the demand that Chomsky appear more often on "Nightline" is meek and unimaginative—

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and no threat to ruling assumptions in the media.

According to FAIR and many others on the Left, the problem with coverage of the war was the media's excessive "boosterism," which unfairly assisted Bush in his effort to mobilize national support. As Jeff Cohen of FAIR wrote in January, "The first casualty of war has been even the pretense of journalistic balance on TV." In the interests of better balance, FAIR sought more coverage of the antiwar movement, more time on television for Bush's opponents outside the government, and more reporting on the suffering in the Arab world (and, not coincidentally, less of a slant toward Israel). There are two problems with this sort of criticism. The first is that it fails to distinguish the Left from the Right in the minds of many journalists. "Fairness," "accuracy," "balance," and "independent reporting" are values journalists already accept. What they refuse to accept is that the Left (or the Right) is a better judge of what's "fair," "balanced," or "independent" than journalists themselves.

FAIR tries to counter this resistance by counting things. It compiles statistics (some quite startling) that show how rarely alternative perspectives make it into the news; it also compiled quotes and excerpts that documented the media's "war boosterism." Other watchdog groups employ the same means to confirm an opposite thesis: the liberal bias among journalists. Thus, both FAIR and the Media Research Center, a right-leaning group, issued bulletins during the Gulf crisis that collected examples of what they considered to be outrageously biased remarks by various journals and correspondents.

Regardless of the evidence either side collects, the implied remedy for "imbalance" and "bias" is always the same—even more "balance," even more "objectivity" from a profession that already employs these notions to dismiss criticism and avoid debate over its epistemological and moral framework. Thus, *Time* is able to declare (in response to criticism of Gulf War coverage) that the media's job "is not necessarily to please either side—only to look for the truth." Through this sort of bland assertion, journalists can remain all but silent on a host of difficult questions: What kind of truth can we hope to find in politics? What different notions of truth may be relevant (or dangerous) in a democracy? What conditions might bring public discourse closer, in some sense, to the truth (and what is the media's role in creating such conditions)? Journalists do not see the need to join in a public conversation where such questions might be posed.

But this simple-mindedness and complacency only draw encouragement from the political symmetry of complaints about media bias. Interest groups concerned about their own image in the news media fall into the same trap. They are not gadflies, as they often assume, but godsends: the self-interested quality of their complaints reinforces the media's view of itself as disinterested but besieged, a natural mediator among rival parties, each striving to influence the news.

Thus the charge of media bias tends to confirm the cynical worldview of the seasoned reporter who regards politics as a war of private agendas, where everyone is not only an interested party, but interested in obtaining a specific outcome: to shade the truth (or manipulate the media) for tactical advantage. In this harsh and reductive view of politics, there are no public goods the journalist must defend—except, of course, the free flow of information through the press and the journalist's own independence. Here, then, is the second problem with demanding "fairness" and "balance" as a way of seeking more coverage of the Left. These are paltry demands to make on the media, for they say nothing about the journalist's positive duty to defend democratic politics against the attitudes and practices that can undo it. Far from upholding this duty, the media too often assisted in the undoing of democratic debate during the Gulf War.

The Left's media theory is essentially a victimology.

A case in point: As the January 15 UN deadline approached, the media did engage in a kind of "boosterism." What was boosted, however, were not the political fortunes of the White House but the dramatic value of a particular narrative device—the "showdown" theme, pitting the evil Saddam against the righteous Bush. "Showdown in the Gulf" was the title CBS gave to its special coverage as the deadline approached. (NBC chose "America on the Brink," while at CNN it was "Deadline in the Desert.") The very act of giving war coverage a title has a subtle but antipolitical effect. It lifts the news out of the realm of the real onto the plane of theater, where events are driven toward their inevitable conclusion through plot requirements and genre conventions. Human agency or political choice does not figure into the logic of theater. Thus the showdown, as a dramatic device, ends in a shootout because that is the way showdowns "must" end.

This feeling of inevitability, borne of the conventions of drama, is dangerous in a democracy. Of course, Bush also made the war seem inevitable by taking decisive actions and only later supplying the arguments for them. Television and the White House thus cooperated in undermining an important premise of democratic politics—that policy should follow from debate and discussion in the public sphere, not from the inner momentum of an irresistible narrative. Such a premise—which is equally important to serious journalism—had difficulty surviving the "showdown" theme and the theatrical approach gen-

erally. To be sure, the Pentagon assisted by giving its Gulf operation the dramatic title "Desert Shield," later to become "Desert Storm" (both ready-made movie titles). But the networks outdid the government in spurious theatricality. The gratuitous use of music to set a dramatic mood, often accompanied by the montage techniques of MTV, became routine as TV packaged its coverage for easy consumption.

It is by now a cliché, of course, that commercial television turns everything into entertainment. Few critics, however, have noted the message that entertainment implies about political responsibility. When war is packaged as an exciting viewing experience—when, for example, it is given a soundtrack—it gains the feeling of something produced, not *by* us, but *for* us. It loses its connection to the political community that decided to initiate it. Once the production values of TV news had positioned us as spectators, we were able to "watch the war" and enjoy a kind of moral luxury more familiar to us from the movies. At the movies, we're not responsible for the events we witness, although we may feel deeply involved in the action as it unfolds. It was this sort of involvement—intense on one level, antipolitical on another—that the networks cultivated.

TV's purpose in all this was not to lead the cheers for Bush, but to promote the crisis as an exciting viewing event, something we could thrill to repeatedly. ("As the showdown in the Gulf heats up," said one announcer, "stay tuned to NBC News for regular reports!") Had the battle gone badly for the U.S., we could have thrilled to that instead—a desert quagmire with its potent images of humiliation. This is another problem with the "cheerleading" charge. The evidence for it would have evaporated had events turned sour for the administration—as they did, for example, during the Iranian hostage crisis in 1979, when TV's dramatization of the "humiliation" theme virtually undid the Carter White House. The real bias of television, then, is not prowar, but protheatricality—a bias that poses a more difficult challenge for critics. Those responsible for packaging a world crisis as an exciting home spectacle certainly deserve to be criticized, but not on the grounds that they are unfairly assisting the Right or the military. For the real problem with TV's packaging of the war is that it fails to assist *us* in experiencing a national crisis as citizens, rather than as spectators. Calling for more "balance" or "fairness" in the news does not address this problem. Nor would more coverage of the Left necessarily reduce the excessive theatricality of TV's approach. Indeed, antiwar demonstrations fit nicely within the regime of spectatorship. As the spectacle of the war took shape, antiwar demonstrations made for tidy little viewing packages that were as dramatic in their own way as the "Showdown in the Gulf" was.

This is hardly an argument against marching for one's beliefs, but it does suggest the need for an approach to media criticism that can say more than: "In the interests of balance, let's hear more of the Left." Criticism needs to proceed in the interests of something larger than "balance." What is larger? Democratic participation, public discourse, reasoned debate, the formation of a healthy public sphere—values on which the practice of journalism has always been premised, but values that journalists too rarely defend.

During the Gulf War, then, what we should have demanded from the media was more assistance in experiencing the crisis as a mature and responsible public. For all of us—the war's supporters as well as its critics—needed to remain fully aware of what we were doing. Regardless of our convictions about the justness of the war, we needed to arrive at those convictions through a principled capacity for doubt. We needed to be mindful of the difficulty of apprehending a war that was apparently "there" on our TV screens, and yet not there at all. In paying close attention to events, we needed to become practiced in particular habits of attention that would keep in sight the variety of dangers a war can pose. "War is the health of the state," wrote Randolph Bourne in 1917. Commenting on Bourne's remark, Michael Walzer has observed that war can also be "the moral death of the people." Preventing the state from getting too "healthy" is one part of the media's job; ensuring that war does not result in "the moral death of the people" is another. But these are duties that we, as citizens (and citizens of the Left), share with journalists. What we can demand from the media, then, is assistance in meeting a demand we must also place on ourselves; to experience the war as thinking, feeling creatures, aware of the need to listen well, watch carefully, speak with our full humanity, and engage others in serious talk.

From this perspective, one of the important criticisms to be made of the television coverage was the excessive reliance on technical experts, especially ex-military men, whose discourse of weapons and tactics dominated TV's discussion of the war. The networks went to great lengths to create a kind of teaching space for these experts, complete with three-dimensional maps, classroom pointers, and video blackboards. The trouble with these teachers was not that they were all administration flaks. Some, like the ubiquitous Edward Luttwak, were frequently critical of U.S. policy. But in the teaching space they were granted, there was room for only one kind of lesson—a lesson in military hardware, battle strategy, and, if we were lucky, realpolitik. Over time this sort of teaching tended to infantilize the audience, reducing us to hopeless amateurs in the complicated science of war. Even when we listened well and understood what the experts

were saying, we were forced to recognize that only they could say it. The technical discourse of weapons and tactics thus excluded us from the discussion of the war. Other ways of talking and thinking might have drawn us in as partners in the conversation.

Even weapons, after all, have meaning beyond their tactical uses. On January 22, the *New York Times* ran a short feature on the B-52 bomber, calling it "still potent" despite more than 30 years of service. The *Times* correspondent extolled the technological virtues of the B-52's bombing range: "Miles above the targets and barely able to distinguish the flash of their exploding bombs, the crews have no sensation of the havoc erupting on the ground." To have "no sensation" of the destruction they are causing is an advantage to the pilots, who can fly safer missions at lofty heights. But it is also a kind of moral hazard: that in losing the "sensation" of destruction, one might lose, as well, the moral sense that weighs the damage caused against the aim achieved. This hazard exists not only for the pilots of B-52s but for a high-tech military generally. In a larger sense, the remoteness of the air war (and the TV war) was a hazard for all Americans, one of the many ways in which the Gulf crisis could bring with it "the moral death of the people."

In a special column in *Newsday* that ran thrice-weekly during the war, Jonathan Schell kept consistently on guard against this sort of danger. On February 28, in a column about the heavy Iraqi casualities, he wrote:

> The chief cost of war is measured in lives lost. Usually, a nation is asked to weigh the meaning of the loss mainly of its own people. In the Gulf War these losses were mercifully few, and we are left with the stranger question of what the cost is to us of a war whose chief price has been paid with the lives of others.

By posing the question in this way—how do we as a political community come to terms with the massive Iraqi causalities we caused?—Schell sought to illuminate a discussion that should have been taking place *at the time* in the American public sphere. This discussion needed to involve the war's supporters as well as its critics in a genuine effort to examine the full meaning of the air war as a strategy. It is this sort of "should" question, with the journalist alerting us to what we should be discussing, that can give the media an important moral function in public life, beyond the mere provision of information, and apart from the overtly political stance of the activist.

The tone Schell achieved in his columns is instructive here. He was not a specialist pronouncing upon events, or an ideologue running the latest headlines through his opinion-making machine. Nor did he address readers as an insider offering the latest dope on the war's political fallout or military prosecution. He spoke instead as an articulate citizen—a writer—who was determined to remain alert to the variety of hazards posed by daily developments in the Gulf. By reading him, we could remain alert also. This is how a democracy should go to war: with its eyes open, its moral sense intact, its public sphere alive with discussion. And these are the grounds on which the media's performance should be criticized.

The networks, for example, did a particularly poor job in encouraging a civil discussion of the military campaign in the Gulf. Instead, they saw the subject as exclusively technical—fit for a war-college seminar. Missing, then, were not only the voices for the Left that FAIR promoted (such as Daniel Ellsberg and Chomsky), but nontechnical voices generally: the voices of parents, teachers, writers, editors, artists, clergy, historians, and, yes, peace activists—anyone, in fact, willing as a thinking and feeling citizen to wrestle with the meaning of the war. Journalists themselves should have been part of this conversation, speaking neither the breathless slogans of hype nor the state's discourse of weapons and tactics, but the language of a morally engaged citizen.

Those who are constantly demanding from the media a "tougher" stance toward the authorities would do well to consider that it is precisely the cult of toughness—very much in evidence in newsrooms—that discourages a more civil discourse in journalism. Thus, part of the reason the ex-generals and Pentagon analysts were so attractive to TV producers is that their talk had the hardness and precision of the technocratic mindset—a way of knowing about war that journalists respect almost by default. If they had more confidence in their own way of knowing and talking about war, if they felt emboldened (as Schell did) to encourage public talk—rather than merely to provide information—then journalists would perhaps be less inclined to rely on military experts and government officials and the mindset those two groups bring to war.

Here again, nothing in the call for "balance" or "fairness" can help journalists see their way to a different moral framework, or a better language in which to address us as citizens. What we need, as progressive critics, is a set of public expectations for the press that neither reduces journalists to partisans in the political battles we alone must fight, nor encourages the illusion that their only function is to provide the neutral facts that others convert into opinions. Neither "join the Left" nor "just the facts, ma'am" is the proper message to send. What we ought to say instead is "join the political community by taking reponsibility for public talk, both by practicing it yourself and encouraging others to engage in it."

Of course, this is a problem the Left needs to solve in its own precincts, where a contempt for the public and the refusal to employ a public language are widespread. For proof of the latter, read any journal associated with

the academic Left (*Social Text,* for example). As an example of the former, consider this observation from Jim Naureckas of FAIR, who, in a critique of the media's coverage of the August troop deployment, wrote: "Given the one-sided information provided by the elite media, it was no wonder that consumers of news would endorse the Bush administration's policy." In other words, those who disagree with the Left are not fellow citizens coming to different conclusions but passive consumers who became the hapless victims of thought control.

Ultimately the media and the Left share the same difficulty: an insufficient commitment to public dialogue, to the sort of discourse that makes it possible for others to join in the conversation. "The public" is the name we give to the wider community when we elect to bring it within our conversational field. But note: no one can be a member of a public who is not addressed as such—by the media, by government, by the Left, by the Right, by *us.* From this premise may follow the media criticism we truly need. □

PERSONAL/POLITICAL

No Blood Sacrifice

Gad Horowitz

When the bombing of Iraq began my heart sank. I was sad. Would there never be an end to war? When the first missiles hit Tel Aviv the sadness faded. Terror and rage overwhelmed me. I saw Saddam Hussein as a monster of evil. I wanted to see his bones crushed. I didn't eat and I didn't sleep. I shook with rage. Now that it's over I'm worried about my excessive reaction.

For some reason you were less well defended against the emotions of war than most other people. It might be helpful to explore the matter with a psychotherapist. As you do so, you may well find that this is less a question of understanding yourself than of understanding the human institution of war. Progressive people on the whole have a shallow understanding of war. We would like to explain it away as an epiphenomenon of outmoded social arrangements such as capitalism, national sovereignty, or poverty. If we move beyond this easy environmentalism, we make use of psychological concepts that refer to conscious motives such as "self-interest" and "greed." The slogan "no blood for oil" captured this view of war as an instrument of conscious geopolitical designs.

In an effort to understand the war from a different perspective, I struggled with some ideas about war derived from Freudian and Jungian depth psychology. I can't quite accept these ideas but I can't dismiss them either. I go on eating and sleeping, but I am robbed of my peace.

What if there are quasi-instinctual primal forces in the unconscious depth of the human psyche—terror and murderous rage, which must be acknowledged, confronted, and worked through by human beings? As infants and young children we have been able, with the help of loving parents and companions, to get some control over these emotional forces so that we can give expression to our capacities for empathy, love, and sadness, capacities that inhere just as powerfully in our primal unconscious. So far in human history, however, the love that flows from one generation to the next has not been strong enough to heal the primal wounds of terror and rage. Murderousness is originally intergenerational. Parents unconsciously divert the unresolved rage of their early childhood toward the next generation of children: war is unconscious infanticide.

The history of religion corroborates this bizarre hypothesis: at the dawn of Judaic-Christian-Islamic civilization is the figure of Abraham, son of Terah, of Ur, in ancient Iraq. God commands Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac and just as Abraham prepares to carry out the sacrifice, God tells him to refrain. Human sacrifice accompanied the origin of civilization everywhere in the world, from China to Mesopotamia, from Africa to Hawaii. Eli Sagan, in his astounding work *The Dawn of Tyranny,* proposes that as tightly knit hunter-gatherer societies gave way to more complex forms of social order, human beings were deprived of the kinship bonds that had assuaged their impulses of terror and aggression. They were then unable to survive without inventing omnipotent gods and god-kings simultaneously to embody their rage and protect them from it. Liberated from the

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soothing bonds of kin-based societies, human rage burst forth to be imaginatively projected onto the indifferent cosmos as a quality of divine omnipotence.

Such powerful rage could only be appeased by the ritual sacrifice of human beings. The ancient Aztecs believed that if it were not for human sacrifice, the gods would destroy the world. At the dawn of tyranny, all peoples believed that if a human king's power to kill at will was in any way limited, he would be powerless to protect them. The trembling vulnerable human thus finds a way of identifying with Power. The king must be as godlike, as omnipotent, as it is possible for a human being to be. By a corresponding turn in logic, the sacrifice is the scapegoat: human beings rid themselves of their own evil impulses by projecting them into the sacrifice, which they then offer up to the gods to mollify divine rage. The scapegoat can be an alien people (the Amalekites, the Sodomites) and it can be one's own child: Isaac, "your only son, whom you love." The child thereby becomes at once an idealized precious possession given up to God; a substitute for one's own murderous parent; and a repository for one's own evil and murderous impulses, which allows them to be discharged in a controlled way through a righteous ritual murder, a cathartic purgation of evil.

The Moabites sacrificed their first-born male babies to the god Moloch—which means King—by placing them in the hands of great bronze idols that symbolized the god. These hands were red hot, for the holy men built a fire in the hollow belly of the idol. They blew trumpets and beat drums to drown out the cries of the burning children. On Mount Moriah, the site of the *Akeda* of our father Isaac, God abolished human sacrifice and introduced animal sacrifice as the substitute. On that mountain, according to our tradition, Solomon built God's temple.

According to Sagan, the generations of humanity as they have succeeded one another have become more empathic in their child-rearing practices. Primal terror and rage have been better healed; human sacrifice, castration, and various infanticidal practices have been progressively repudiated. The King has been replaced by the power of the state, limited by law. But war has persisted, immune to all moral critique until very recently. In our century, citizens and generals alike proclaim that "nobody likes war," "nobody wants war," "no one can rejoice in any loss of life." Human consciousness has progressed to a point where the moral repudiation of war is now conceivable. Unconsciously, however, we continue to project our rage and all the evil in us onto an enemy. The enemy becomes the totally evil one—Bush the Satan, Saddam the monster of evil—a creature to be castrated, mutilated, and destroyed. Depth psychology tells us that such is the unconscious meaning of General Colin Powell's statement about the Iraqi army in Kuwait: "First we're going to cut it off and then we're going to kill it." As scapegoat, the enemy becomes the insectoid repository of all our disowned ugliness—as one allied soldier put it: "The cockroaches start scurrying ... and as they come out of their holes we kill them."

This lurid symbolism should not cause us to forget, however, that in war the primary sacrifice is *not* the enemy but the child, our own children. We send them to war with genuine conscious love, bravery, nobility, devotion to duty, and stern realism ("no one can rejoice in any loss of life, but ... "). These were also the genuine conscious motives of the Moloch-worshipping child-killers. They would have indignantly denied any murderous motivation. It is the god, Reality Itself, that demands the sacrifice. The killer's heart is guilt free, duty bound. Human sacrifice was at work in Operation Desert Storm. That is the depth-psychological meaning of President Bush's decision, upon Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, to call for a "sacrifice ... to stand up to evil." We are no longer capable of consciously sacrificing our own children. Unconsciously, however, we continue to sacrifice our children in war, using the fact that it is the enemy's hand that actually carries out the sacrifice to protect us from the shocking awareness of what we are doing. Rage becomes all the more righteous, and more primal. Wild with grief, a Jordanian witness of the slaughter in Iraq proclaims: "If I caught one of the enemies who did this, I would eat him."

In war the primary sacrifice is not the enemy but the child.

Who will see that the enemy is our own delegate? The conscious mind no longer thinks "we need an omnipotent child-consuming divine King to protect us." It genuinely thinks "nobody wants a war, but this monster must be stopped." The unconscious mind continues to identify with the invulnerable, the omnipotent all-destroying rage of the false god who requires sacrifice. Norman O. Brown, in *Love's Body,* zeroes in on the problem: "Idols require human sacrifice, literally; Moloch." And on the solution: "Abstain from things offered to idols, and from blood. The problem of war is the problem of idolatry."

This way of thinking about war is commonly disowned as surreal, grotesque; I too resist it. It's a nightmare. Yet what would happen if we saw this way of thinking, as not just true in some poetic sense but simply true? The slogan "no blood for oil" wouldn't do. Our slogan would be "no blood sacrifice." We would receive the word of the living God beyond all Power from our prophets Amos and Isaiah: the smoke of our sacrifices stinks in God's nostrils. □

Roundtable: The Political Aftermath of the Gulf War

Todd Gitlin, a contributing editor at Tikkun, *is author of* The Sixties *(Bantam, 1989). Sheila Tobias is a feminist educator, whose most recent work appears in* Women, Militarism and War *(Barnes and Noble, 1990). Letty Cottin Pogrebin is a founding editor of* Ms., *a peace activist, and author of* Deborah, Golda, and Me: Being Jewish and Female in America, *to be published by Crown Books this fall. Cornel West, a* Tikkun *columnist, is an honorary chair of the Democratic Socialists of America and teaches in the Afro-American studies program at Princeton. Paul Wellstone is a U.S. Senator from Minnesota. This conversation took place in the beginning of April 1991.*

TIKKUN: How do you assess the outcome of the Gulf War and its meaning for American foreign and domestic policy? It appears to many of us at *Tikkun* that Bush effectively silenced critics of his policies by his lightning win, but now in early April it seems that the outcome of the war is much more ambiguous than it appeared in the first weeks.

Letty Cottin Pogrebin: It's futile to argue against the war at this point, because it will sound like sour grapes. Someday people who don't have historical amnesia will recognize that much of what we predicted would happen as a result of this war is in fact happening, but that may take some time. But it's too soon to try to do anything retrospective now. I do think that it would be very harmful if the Democrats faced an ignominious defeat in the presidential election of 1992—it would solidify a sense of hopelessness that people feel on the Left.

Cornel West: We have to acknowledge the extent to which the Bush Administration rightly went to the UN even though in the past it failed to do so. We have to acknowledge some of the positive elements of a negative policy. And one step in that is to talk about the importance of the UN as part of strengthening a notion of "collective security." True, he may have gone to manipulate the UN—but he went there, whereas Reagan did not when he mined the harbor in Nicaragua, and Bush did not in Panama. So one role of intellectuals and moralists is to discuss some of the hypocrisy in U.S. policy—and to push for new fundamental principles.

Sheila Tobias: Americans have a very short memory—so the victory may not be such a factor in the next election, particularly if the situation in Iraq is even more violent and ambiguous than it is now while the Iraqis are suppressing the Kurdish rebellion.

Another issue that may emerge is the way we were manipulated by the media. We saw the smart bombs—but we were not told about the percentage of smart bombs versus ordinary bombs, nor were we given an accurate picture of the amount of "collateral damage." As more information comes out, as the consequences of the war appear more ambiguous, I think time will be on the side of those who criticized this war.

Paul Wellstone: To talk about the carnage in Iraq today, or the lack of democracy in Kuwait, is a message that may not be very effective in the short run. But these issues must be addressed in the long run. People need more time to sort this out. As the media eventually tells more of the story, Americans will continue to be proud of our troops and continue to feel good about our country, but more and more questions will be raised.

I also find a real concern about whether the war has produced a new world order, or whether things are going to be more peaceful or more stable in the Gulf.

I think we also should focus on arms sales—do we really want to re-arm the region? I would also focus on what happened to people in Iraq. And I would also question whether the war has helped advance the Israel–Palestinian peace process.

Todd Gitlin: We have an obligation to say things that are uncomfortable, including things that are uncomfortable to ourselves. The war was the rotten fruit of decades of a botched foreign policy, going back at least as far as America's commitment to the Shah, which begat the revolution against the Shah, which begat our decision to arm Iraq, which begat, which begat ... till we get to the result of one-hundred-fifty thousand fewer Iraqis in the world. The reason why it's important to tell that story is that Americans are prone to prettying up a fairytale of what we are about. I read a poll that said that something like 70 percent of the population believed that Bush had supported sanctions against Iraq on August 1, 1990, whereas we know that the administration was feverishly lobbying against the sanctions bill.

Wellstone: I think it important for us to insist that those countries receiving U.S. support respect the human rights of their people. We should make it clear that we don't support torturers, we don't support brutal dictators—and this is a message that I think Americans are ready for.

Gitlin: There are different tendencies within the peace movement and I think it's important to clarify the differences among them. There is a collective-security tendency that leads us to criticize Bush not because he invoked the UN but because he did it in a disingenuous way, and twisted arms to make the Security Council resolutions happen, and afterward lost all interest in other Security Council resolutions. The collective-security position is that the U.S. has a role in the world, that the U.S. is a powerhouse in the world, that power shoul be used extremely carefully, but it should be a force for human rights, for development, for democracy, not for the support of torturers. The other tendency was a more strictly isolationist stance—and it has a long history, particularly in the Midwest. I think it's ethically questionable. I think that Americans know that the U.S. is inextricably bound to the rest of the world—whether it be through Toyota plants, or dependence on oil, or living in the global greenhouse.

Pogrebin: The war shows what the U.S. can do when it wants to push for something. If that determination could be harnessed in a different direction, we might imagine what the half-billion dollars a day that we spent on this war could have accomplished on the home front. It would take two-and-a-half days to close the New York City deficit—not to mention what that money could do to help provide child care, health care, and so on. We might also remind people that 21 percent of the casualties were people of color—but we have yet to deliver to that population at home some of their basic needs.

TIKKUN: Given that we are a world power with a great deal of influence, shouldn't the U.S. be intervening on the side of the Kurds? Here is a people whose rights have been systematically and brutally denied, who are suffering at least as much as the Palestinians—so why shouldn't we be organizing demonstrations and other public protests insisting that the U.S. protect the Kurdish people and support their right to national self-determination? Why should U.S. troops stand by as the Kurds are being wiped out?

Tobias: The dominant thrust of U.S. policy is realpolitik even though it is then couched in a moral vocabulary. So if we take the moral position, we will be perceived as being "unrealistic."

West: There are persuasive moral arguments that we can make about protecting the Kurds. The problem is how far this principle should go in terms of other situations where groups are being suppressed around the world. In this case we should provide protection for the Kurds given the mess we helped create—as opposed to a whole host of other peoples who on moral grounds deserve our intervention but in whose situation we are not as directly implicated.

Pogrebin: Intervene militarily?

West: There are other steps short of military intervention.

TIKKUN: Why not militarily?

Gitlin: Bush is in a wholly untenable position morally. But if there is any cover for American intervention in Iraq from a collective-security standpoint it has to do strictly with the expulsion of Iraq from Kuwait. There is no global security sanction for support of the Kurds. I'm not saying that that position is necessarily decisive....

TIKKUN: That may be an important challenge to the notion of collective security requiring international sanction for support of international action. The countries of the world may not be willing to stand up for the rights of minorities. We see this when the UN votes a resolution saying that "Zionism is racism"—ignoring the actual situation that led Jews to be unintentional victimizers of the Palestinians—and it may be reflected in their willingness to turn their backs on the Kurds.

Gitlin: These choices are made in fear and trembling. I see no way that all the arguments will line up in one direction.

West: But the best way to go would be through international action filtered through the UN. I'd like to see the leaders of the U.S. as upset and as outraged at the massacre of Kurds as we saw them outraged at the massacre of Kuwait.

Pogrebin: Or at the invasion of Kuwait. It almost appears that we are more outraged at damage to property than at damage to human beings. The U.S. feels morally justified in going into action as the police force of the world when borders are violated, but not when human rights are violated.

Tobias: But our policy in Kuwait never was a moral issue.

West: But it was for many Americans who supported the policy, and who really were outraged at Saddam's expan-

sionist attack on Kuwait. Bush was primarily concerned about realpolitik and about oil, but many Americans cared about the moral issue.

Pogrebin: I'm not sure that the resistance to the war wasn't based on fear of a Vietnam-style quagmire, rather than on moral considerations. I think had Americans been guaranteed a quick victory they would have had nowhere near the same moral problem.

As to the Kurds, we should use the leverage of the cease-fire agreement to protect the Kurds—and this would tend to advance the Left's argument that there are alternative ways to resolve conflict besides shooting down helicopters.

Wellstone: I'm uncomfortable with the U.S. sitting on the sidelines. We should be playing a much more central role, working with other members of the coalition, either through the cease-fire resolution or through some military action, though done collectively, to protect the Kurds. There is an absolute carnage right now. At the present moment, we are just abdicating our responsibility.

Pogrebin: The UN was able to act when force was involved, but now in the situation of the Kurds it seems unable to play a constructive role in finding a way other than force to resolve this problem. Twenty-three nations got together to wage a war under the banner of George Bush, but not to think through difficult situations like this.

Gitlin: The U.S. has the responsibility to go before the UN Security Council and propose that the UN has the obligation to make sure that the Kurds are not massacred.

West: One first step is to help clarify the issues—to which this dialogue in *Tikkun* will certainly contribute.

Wellstone: I doubt if many of my colleagues will be willing to continue putting a lot of energy into issues concerning Iraq—my guess is that many of them will be wanting to shift energies more into the domestic sphere.

TIKKUN: But the consequence of leaving Bush with the appearance of having won the moral high ground on foreign policy may actually be to leave liberals with very little political clout to get their domestic policies passed in Congress. As long as there is the perception that Bush is politically unbeatable and enjoys huge popularity, the domestic liberal agenda may go down to defeat.

Wellstone: I suspect that some of my colleagues will be saying, "Let's stop talking about that war—let's just move on." That's not *my* position, but I suspect it will be the position of some others in the Senate. If I feel there are questions that I need to raise in the aftermath of the war, I will raise those questions—I will insist on a strong human-rights underpinning to our foreign policy. But I don't think we have to contest the view that the war was a great success in order to make headway on our domestic agenda. I don't think the war will have a lot of impact on political developments in the next two years. The Middle East will be an important issue, but I also think that the domestic economy is going to be a central concern. I'm hearing economic concerns being expressed by many people in Minnesota, particularly farmers. It would be one thing if the economy becomes robust, if financial institutions that are tottering become secure, if job opportunities start to expand. But if that does not happen—and I don't believe it will happen—the economic concerns that lie right below the surface will emerge.

TIKKUN: One might conceive of the situation differently ... that Bush has won his current popularity not because he won the war quickly, but because he helped create a way for Americans to feel good about themselves and their country on moral grounds, thus satisfying a deep hunger for moral meaning that is every bit as powerful as the need for economic security. It is that frame of meaning that may be Bush's contribution and may ensure his continued success. The New Deal did not solve the crisis of the Depression, but nevertheless became the source of Democratic Party legitimacy for a long time thereafter precisely because it helped give people a sense of community based on the notion that "we" are in it together. In the same way, if Bush can continue to make people feel that they are part of a community with moral meaning, he may be able to ride out any economic failures.

West: But Bush will not be able to do that. You can't sustain that level of national transcendence when you exercise no degree of leadership whatsoever on the domestic front. The American people feel the country drifting more and more toward social inertia. Bush seems unable to exercise, and maybe even incapable of exercising, leadership in domestic affairs.

Pogrebin: And the massacre of the Kurds could dissipate that sense of moral rightness.

Gitlin: What Republicans have been good at is defining a majority and defining a way in which a majority can recognize itself. We have been unable to do that. We need a way to understand a very large "us" that recognizes its commonality over all the fissures that divide us. Democrats and liberals will become plausible to the extent that they can define that larger "us." The fact that we live in one global greenhouse may be one way of un-

derstanding our situation that helps constitute such a majority. Health care may be another understanding that could help constitute such a majority.

Tikkun: The notion of defining this larger community is certainly a *Tikkun* theme. But isn't defining that community around issues of economic entitlements part of the traditional Democratic Party approach—and one that has not caught the imaginations of people?

Gitlin: Dukakis's campaign came to life when he started sounding this way again. But this isn't really just a question of economic entitlements ... what I want to suggest is that there's a right people have to be treated with dignity—and it is the denial of that right that can be central to what we talk about. In a way I'm talking about economic citizenship.

West: I don't think that economic populism can be sufficient. There's the question of culture, which in America often becomes the question of race. Populism is a necessary condition, but not sufficient for a progressive politics. The sufficient condition is that we develop a moral language that speaks to the cultural issues, especially race, patriotism, and religion, which have served as the three pillars that constitute American identity. We need to accent the progressive possibilities in race-based, patriotism-based, and religious-based movements.

Wellstone: Patriotism can be a good thing if it means that people start to feel good about themselves and their country. People may be moving toward a public-interest type of politics, emphasizing concerns that we have not seen for a long time—about the environment, about what we are doing or not doing for young people in this country, about how we can do better in our communities. Many people have a sense that selfishness and greed have gone too far and gotten out of hand. There is indignation at people feeling ripped off economically or ripped off politically. I think that people feel that we can do a lot better in terms of who we are and what we believe in—and some of that was expressed by supporting the war. I think the war provided a moral release—a feeling that as a nation we had accomplished something moral, something right—and it was quite collective. To me it shows that there is a real yearning.

Pogrebin: But what about when the bodies came out of the bomb shelter?

Wellstone: Many people didn't know much about that. I always talk about the loss of life in Iraq. But I think that the idealism and moral yearning can be harnessed on the domestic front.

West: We also have to be careful about the Manichean way that the war was portrayed by the media—as the forces of good versus the forces of evil. I think that if the American people saw the Iraqi bodies, they would have a very different perspective on the war. The censorship in the media made the war look so clean ... but when you shift to the domestic front you can't make the struggles look so clean. But if they can keep the Manichaean perspective on the domestic front, the right wing wins, because the dominant versions of race, patriotism, and religion are conservative, though they all have progressive possibilities.

Wellstone: It all depends on who gets to define that about what our best traditions are and what it means to be patriotic.

Gitlin: Americans discovered that the government can do one thing for them—kick Saddam's ass. But they don't believe that the government can do anything else for them. How can they be persuaded that the government can do something for them when for twelve years they've been persuaded that it can't? How can people be persuaded that the government can be the agent of the common good?

West: Well, there are some residues of the Great Society. Social Security, Medicare, and other programs exist and the American people do believe the government has an obligation to concern itself with some of these needs. But we do have some things to work with.

Gitlin: Let me go back, Cornel, to another point you were making before. You were distinguishing between economic populism and something that was religious and cultural also.

West: That's right.

Gitlin: I think one reason why Mario Cuomo got some blood flowing a few years ago was that he found a language to talk about that cultural underpinning, the larger community, the family—leave aside that it's in some ways misleading, and leave aside whether he could ever deliver on any of that—the language was compelling. I think many people wanted to believe that the nation was a family. Now, let's go back to the 1988 campaign. Bush wrapped himself in two images that year: one was the flag and the other was the defender of the woman who was raped by Willie Horton. Race is obviously the central divide—it's the central divide in the Democratic party, it's the central divide in the nation. How do we put forward some vision of America which isn't a sum of armed

racial camps? It's a real burning problem. We've committed special attention to the situation of racial minorities but we keep foundering on this reef, which has led William Julius Wilson, among others, to call explicitly for race-neutral programs. What do we think of that? Is that a necessary condition?

West: The moral language that I'm talking about is one that highlights common good and public interest in such a way that the old ideals of democracy and freedom are articulated such that persons of good will as well as concrete victims can be brought together. But that's only one level. The second level has to do with issues of sheer survival, especially in the cities, and issues of survival do cut across race as well as gender and religion. When we talk about race it has to be directed on a moral level to common good and public interest, and on a practical level in terms of sheer survival—of the urban centers especially—but in some ways, our very survival as a country. I mean the country's on the road to self-destruction and cultural chaos, there's no doubt about that in terms of levels of criminality, in terms of cold-hearted, mean-spirited dispositions. And I think most American people have a sense of living lives in which they feel haunted and afraid and in some ways even terrorized, especially working poor people, who tend to be people of color. At the policy level, I think, William Julius Wilson is absolutely right. The race-neutral policy is the only way we're going to get through. But I think we also have to have a discourse that speaks to issues of identity, cultural self-perception, because policies don't ever do that.

TIKKUN: Let me ask us to switch for a second to another nonconsequence of the war, which is the failure of the war to produce a groundswell of support in United States politics for Israeli–Palestinian peace. This was one of the things that was much predicted, both before and during the war: that after the war this would be the central political issue.

Tobias: Maybe the patriotism that has been mentioned before is feel-goodism, not necessarily a moral commitment to the country's best interests and the world's best interests. The technique for undermining Bush and feel good-ism is to help people realize to what extent he gave us a false sense of being in control, and that a lot of these issues are not really in the control of the United States or the United Nations, that it's a complicated world. As an example, the Israeli–Palestinian relationship—where we were unrealistically promised that the war would bring us power and control. I think the president was trying to give the country a feeling not only of moral correctness but also of being in charge and in control. But he is not in control; things are not in control. War gives a false sense of being in control while actually unleashing consequences that render us very much out of control.

Pogrebin: I think this is really a defining moment for Bush. With a 92 percent approval rating you could squander thirty points and still be one of the most popular presidents in history. He could have risked those thirty points on a Camp David–type effort, "Arafat and Mubarak Invited to Jerusalem," God knows what sort of dramatic gesture, or even just saying to Kuwait, "I want only one thing in return for giving you back your nation, and that is I want you to recognize the state of Israel." There were moments when he could have risked such a move, whatever form it might have taken, and I think there's every indication that there's just going to be a lot of talk and a lot of pussyfooting, and naming progress when there is none (the Baker trip for example). At the same time, I'm really encouraged by Bush's words about land for peace. This is one of those instances when I find myself in support of Bush's position and I'm made uncomfortable by that.

Tobias: Why doesn't he take advantage of this situation? He lacks, in his own words, "the vision thing." He simply doesn't have a vision. He merely responds to things that he's partly responsible for setting up in Iraq and he responds with a lot of energy, but then doesn't quite know what to do with the winning hand.

West: I think the major issue in relation to the Palestinian situation has to do with how do we sustain a moral concern with the Palestinians' plight and predicament given their image as thoroughly pro-Saddam in the war, because their pro-Saddam stance can easily become a justification for moral indifference to their plight. I think there have always been two aspects to the Palestinian problem: both the moral concern, and the various strategies for going about their own struggle for national self-determination, especially given the leadership that puts forth these strategies. Those two are not the same thing. One of the major setbacks of the Palestinians has been precisely the degree to which the pro-Saddam stance tends to promote and encourage a moral indifference. The question becomes for us how do we fight against that kind of moral indifference as well as, of course, condemn the pro-Saddam stance. We can see that stance in part as a stance of severe desperation, which does not in any way excuse it, but tries to understand it.

Pogrebin: But it was never communicated to the American people as an act of desperation and in fact it was predictable given the end of the Tunis dialogues. The minute the U.S. pulled out of the Tunis talks it was inevitable that

(Continued on p. 94)

TIKKUN ISRAEL CONFERENCE

AFTER IRAQ:

An international conference of Progressive Jews— in solidarity with the Israeli peace movement

Jerusalem ■ June 23–28, 1991 ■ at Hebrew Union College

The world looks very different after the Iraq war and the dramatic changes in Europe during the past two years. **This will be an international symposium and conference of progressive Jewish intellectuals, writers, artists, community leaders, and social change activists—all coming together in solidarity with the Israeli peace movement.** The week-long event will be aimed at thinking through the issues connected with building progressive social change in Israel and the rest of the world in light of the situations created by:

- The aftermath of the Iraq war—including the ways that negotiations between Israel and the Arab states may be undermined by Israeli hard-liners' rejection of any exchange of land for peace
- The ending of the Cold War and the emergence of a new post-Cold War order in Europe
- The struggle against anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and the mass influx of Soviet Jews to Israel
- The aftermath of the alliance between the Palestinians and Saddam Hussein, and its consequences for Israeli politics
- The decline of any coherent theory for progressive social change and the ascendancy of market economies
- Renewed ethnic and religious tensions and struggles around the world and the renewed problems for the Jewish people as a result
- The new recognition that anti-Semitism and Israel-bashing on the left must be struggled against by progressive Jews

WHY NOW?

Humanistic and progressive social change forces are in deep trouble all around the world. The fallout from Iraq has been used to validate the entire political agenda of conservative forces everywhere. At the same time, the aftermath of the war has placed Israel and various other aspects of "the Jewish question" back onto the international agenda.

In Israel, the willingness of many Palestinians to publicly support Saddam Hussein caused many pro-peace Israelis to wonder if any plausible path to peace remains. Bush may use the leverage he gained by his military victory to push ahead a negotiating process—but those negotiations are likely to lead nowhere as long as Israeli right-wingers think it more important to hold onto the West Bank than to work out a peace arrangement with the surrounding Arab states. Meanwhile, Israeli peace activists have let us know that they would appreciate supporters in the Diaspora attending this public display of solidarity with the Peace Movement. We will discuss strategies to reinvigorate the peace process and the peace forces within Israel, as well as to explore appropriate strategies for supporters of the peace movement outside of Israel. At the same time, we will try to focus attention on the social justice needs of the poor (often Sephardim) in light of the recent transformations in Israel (the massive influx of Soviet Jews, the psychological traumas generated by the struggle with Iraq, etc.).

Jews in Diaspora often hear pleas from friends in the Israeli peace movement to pressure our own governments so that they, in turn, will put pressure on Israel to take serious steps toward peace. Some Israelis have talked of conditioning U.S aid to Israel, or at least any increases in aid to Israel, on progress in the peace process. While talking about conditions or limits on aid is very hard in the Diaspora, the conference in Jerusalem will give us an opportunity to seriously discuss this and other possible means of applying pressure on Israel. We are concerned that pressure on Israel not be used to legitimate anti-Zionism, anti-Semitism or anything that would end up being against the long-term interests of Israel or the Jewish people. Yet Israeli activists warn us that pressure on Israel must be strong enough to be effective—otherwise it will amount to pious statements that have no serious impact in changing the conditions. So an important part of the conference will concern itself with how to be effective assisters to the Israeli peace forces—and this requires some very careful and sophisticated thinking.

In the rest of the world, the collapse of East European totalitarianism has created opportunities for social change, but it has also released long buried ethnic, religious and national antagonism which threaten to erupt in large scale violence and to fragment existing countries. Anti-Semitism and other forms of racism are reemerging throughout Europe and may eventually spread to the United States. The non-communist democratic Left has not developed a new theory or vision with which to understand the circumstances it now faces. So another focus of this conference is to help develop a new analysis and new strategies for progressive social change forces around the world.

While these questions are formulated in political terms, they have a specifically Jewish dimension as well. The new role of Jews in the world, of having some degree of power and yet remaining stuck in a self-image of powerlessness, requires a rethinking of strategy for Jews as well. Conference participants will attempt to understand what a New Jewish Left might accomplish in Israel or in the rest of the

world—and in what sense that Left would be Jewish. Yet this conference is not geared only to Jews who are primarily interested in Jewish issues—it is also addressed to Jewish intellectuals, writers and social change activists whose primary focus is on global political and cultural issues. The conference will be a unique opportunity for those Jewish intellectuals who are not "house pets" of the Jewish establishment to meet together and have some serious discussions with some of the most dedicated and serious Israeli thinkers, activists, and others working to build a better Israeli society.

For the past century it has been next to impossible to have an international gathering of Jewish intellectuals and activists that did not break down into ideological disputes. On one side were those who thought that the problems facing the Jewish people could be solved if everyone became Zionists, and on the other were those convinced that the problems facing the Jews (and the world) could be solved if only everyone adopted some variant of socialism. The transformations in Eastern Europe and the changes in Jewish self-understanding brought about by the Intifada have weakened this kind of ideological certainty, so that for the first time in this century it now becomes possible to have in-depth conversations amongst Jews around the world.

This is not a rally—but an occasion for rethinking of complicated issues, not just by intellectuals but also by practical people and community activists. Many of the attendees will be Israelis—people who work as social workers, teachers, media workers, writers, kibbutzniks, Russian Jews, Sephardim—who have had little opportunity to meet each other or to share an understanding that they are part of a united effort for social change. So the conference will help foster a consciousness of the larger picture, while attempting to develop a strategy to make that picture more coherent. For those in the Diaspora, it will be a unique opportunity to come into contact with some of the most innovative thinkers and writers of the Jewish people. And while the conference will help to develop a strategy for peace, it is not a narrowly "political" conference—a central part of its focus will be addressing the intellectual and cultural questions that ultimately underlie any fundamental social transformations. We hope you will come!

Tentative Schedule

(Optional pre-conference tour sponsored by Givat Haviva: See Registration form below)

— Conference Overview —

	Sunday	Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday	Friday
8:30–12:00	Registration and Pre-Conference Sessions	THEORY CLASSES AND CLASS DISCUSSIONS	TIKKUN in ISRAEL
1:00–2:30		SMALL GROUP STRATEGY SESSIONS	
3:00–5:30		AFTERNOON PLENARY SESSIONS	
5:30–6:30		POETRY READINGS AND OTHER CULTURAL EVENTS	
7:30–10:00		EVENING PLENARY SESSIONS	SHABBAT
10:00–11:30		SOCIALIZING AND SHMOOZING	

Plenary Sessions

JUNE 23: **Series of Pre-conference Lectures on Relevant Topics in Jewish Thought**

SUNDAY EVENING, JUNE 23RD **The Background**: Analyzing the current military situation in the Middle East and the possibilities for peace with the Palestinians and with the surrounding Arab states. A debate between alternative perspectives.

MONDAY AFTERNOON, JUNE 24TH **Israel After Iraq: Political and Military Realities** Avram Burg, Yossi Sarid, Yair Tzabam, Janet Aviad, and others

MONDAY EVENING, JUNE 24TH **Solidarity Session with the Israeli Peace Movement**
Keynote Addresses: Michael Lerner, Abba Eban, Amos Oz, Leah Shakdiel, Yossi Beilin, U.S. Senator Paul Wellstone. Followed by PRESENTATIONS OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE PEACE MOVEMENT from delegations of the U.S., U.K., France, Soviet Union, Spain, South Africa, Brazil, Germany, Czechoslovakia, Chile, Mexico, Hungary, Canada, Italy, Australia, Netherlands, Sweden, and other countries

TUESDAY AFTERNOON JUNE 25TH **Power and Ethical Responsibility**
How to build a Judaism and Zionism appropriate to the needs of the 21st century; creating an ethical consciousness that draws on Jewish roots, is sensitive to the complexities of power, and which rejects the cynicism and ultra-realism of conservative politics. Menachem Brinker, Adi Ophir, Arthur Waskow, Yaron Ezrahi, Shulamith Aloni.

TUESDAY EVENING, JUNE 25TH **What remains of the Left**—its theory and its practice? And what will remain of the rest of the world once the market is truly free to work its way? The cultural and political impoverishment of the 1990s.

- Speakers from Germany, France, Soviet Union
- Peter Gabel: Possibilities for an American Left
- Zeev Sternhell: Nationalism vs. Tribal Values: What's Left of the Enlightenment and Rationalism?

WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON, JUNE 26TH **The Palestinians and the Possibilities for Peace after the Iraq Conflict**

WEDNESDAY EVENING, JUNE 26TH **Analysis and a Report from the Progressive Movements of Europe: What Are the Prospects for Progressive Forces in Europe?**
Reports from the Social Democratic Parties of Western Europe, the Greens, Feminist Movements, and the Democratic Struggles in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union

THURSDAY AFTERNOON, JUNE 27TH **Coping with Jewish Fears: Rational and Irrational**
Includes: Mass Psychology of Israel in Light of the Struggle with Iraq and Palestinian Identification with Saddam • Sephardic Oppression in Arab Lands and Sephardic Fears of Ashkenazic Oppression • Analyzing Anti-Semitism in Light of Current Developments in Europe and the Soviet Union • Taking the Holocaust from the Metaphysics of Amalek to History • Strategies for Mass Psychology to Overcome Fear • How Jewish Historiography Feeds Jewish Fears • The Fears of Israeli-Arabs

THURSDAY EVENING: CLOSING SESSION **What kind of TIKKUN for Israel?** Michael Lerner, Peter Gabel, David Grossman, Einat Ramon, Dedi Zucker

Morning Study Sessions (Each class meets for four sessions)

1. Now that the old conceptions of a "left" and "socialism" have become politically irrelevant, how do we develop a liberatory way of thinking that understands how contemporary societies disempower, dehumanize, and alienate human beings, without seeming to lead to the dead ends of the past? What liberatory possibilities exist for social change movements in the West? *Peter Gabel and Gary Peller*
2. Jewish Political Philosophy *Michael Walzer*
3. Analyzing the current geo-political alignments after the struggle with Iraq
4. What's alive in Talmud and Talmudic method that commands the respect of serious intellectuals today? *Moshe Halbertal*
5. The history and contemporary reality of Sephardic culture and Sephardic oppression in Israeli life *Yossi Yonah*
6. Zionism and Palestinian Nationalism: The historical background *Beni Morris and a Palestinian historian.*
7. Human rights: the theory and practice of Israeli reality
8. Jewish religious sources for peace and justice: textual explorations and philosophical reflections. *Yehezkel Landau, Debbie Weisman, Avi Ravitsky, and Zvi Mazeh.*
9. Feminism and Judaism *Leah Shakdiel.*
10. Jewish Renewal Movements: Politics, spirituality, and community for tikkun olam. *Arthur Waskow*
11. Soviet Jewry: the situation of Jews in the Soviet Union, and the situation of those who have moved to Israel or the U.S. The relationship of the peace movement to the problems and issues facing Soviet Jews.
12. Jew and Non-Jew: The Fateful Relationship *Hillel Levine.*
13. Critical Theory for Israel Today *Adi Ophir, Shlomo Fisher, Gidon Kunda*
14. Jewish Spirituality: content and meaning. Insights in Jewish mysticism including Kabbalah and Hasidism. Major mystical concepts and their relevance to the modern world. *Moshe Idel.*
15. The meaning of Israeli literature: What is Israeli writing and how does it differ from "Jewish" writing? *Hanan Hever*
16. The Crisis of Kibbutzim: The lessons of the kibbutz movement in building an alternative model for socialism and social change

Small Group Strategy Sessions

A. Joint cooperation between Israeli and Diaspora peace activists: coordinating strategies. The problems of pressuring the Israeli government from abroad. What strategies will help the Israeli peace movement most? And which are actually possible given the pressures on Diaspora peace activists? (Organized in cooperation with Peace Now) *Gail Pressberg*

B. Strategies for peace activists in Israel: What has been tried, and what have been the results so far? What can be done to relegitimate the peace issue in light of the struggle with Iraq? *(In Hebrew)*

C. Options for people in the Army: refusal and other strategies for handling the problems. *(In Hebrew)*

D. Palestinians and Israelis: Imagining and building the future. What kind of dialogue, if any, is possible after the Palestinian tilt towards Saddam?

E. Psychological Tools for Social Change
F. Using the Legal Arena in Struggles for Social Change
G. Political Parties and Electoral Options in the Next Election
H. Options and Constraints on the Media *Brad Burstyn*
I. Developing Feminist Consciousness within Israeli society and within Judaism: strategies and constraints.
J. Social Justice in Israeli Society: Building the movement for peace and justice.
K. For Israeli teenagers: Facing the Army
L. For Israelis Age 20-30: What Jewish and Israeli identity means after the Army
M. Coping with Milu'im and maintaining one's political and moral sanity
N. International cooperation between progressive Jewish activists: Europe, Israel, the U.S.; building an international Jewish left.
O. Reproductive Rights *Carmel Shalev*
P. Coping With Religious Fundamentalism
Q. Professionals for Peace: Monday: Teachers; Tuesday: Social Workers & Psychotherapists; Wednesday: Health Workers & Doctors; Thursday: Film and T.V. Workers

Post-Conference TIKKUN in Israel

FRIDAY, JUNE 28

9 AM Meeting of people who wish to work on the TIKKUN Israel Center, and on a Hebrew Language version of TIKKUN to be published in Jerusalem.

1:00 PM Support to Women in Black

Shabbat: Americans to visit at homes of Israelis (both secular and religious).

TIKKUN Israel Conference Registration Form

Yes, I want to come to the TIKKUN Israel Conference!

_____
Name

_____
Address

_____
City, State, Zip Code (Country)

_____ _____
Home phone Work phone

I understand that registration costs are based on a sliding fee scale:

❒ $450 (for incomes greater than $50,000/yr.)
❒ $300 (for incomes of $31,000-$50,000/yr.)
❒ $250 (for incomes of $17,000-$31,000/yr.)
❒ $175 (for incomes less than $17,000/yr.)
❒ $140 (for students with no current income)

Payment Enclosed ❒

Charge my: ❒ Visa ❒ Mastercard Account No._____Exp. Date_____

Some partial scholarships are available on the basis of need (and in exchange for work done previous to and at the conference). Air fare, accommodations, and pre-conference tours are not included—call Ayelet Travel for help with these at 1-800-237-1517.

Send your check and/or Visa/Mastercard Info to TIKKUN, Attn. TIC, 5100 Leona Street, Oakland, CA 94619. Or register by phone (with a credit card): (415) 482-0805.

Morning Study Sessions: Please indicate your choices by listing the number of the session or name of the teacher.

_____ _____ _____
First Choice Second Choice Third choices

Strategy Sessions: Please indicate your choices by listing the letter of the session.

_____ _____ _____
First Choice Second Choice Third choices

D'VAR TORAH

Speaking in Thunder

Arthur Green

Among Jews in North America, Shavuot is surely one of the least-known and least-observed Jewish holidays. Another irony of Jewish history: the holiday of the book, forgotten by the people of the book.

Shavuot, which commemorates the giving of Torah at Mount Sinai, should by rights be the apex of the Jewish festival cycle. Passover, the time of liberation, leads up to it. We count the days from Exodus to Sinai, as though liberation itself were just a prelude. In order to be wedded to our God at the Mountain, we have to be free from bondage to all our inner and outer pharaohs. Sukkot, the third partner in the pilgrimage cycle, basks in the afterglow of Sinai. In it we celebrate our wandering through the wilderness and eternal preparation to enter the promised land. Neither of these makes any sense without the Main Event, the revelation of God at the Holy Mountain.

Sinai takes us to the heart of Jewish faith: it claims that God communicates to humans; that such communication took place between Y-H-W-H (the unutterable Hebrew name for "God," understood here as an impossible form of the verb "to be" best translated "Is-Was-Will Be") and Moses and Israel at the mountain in the wilderness; and that this revelation makes known the divine will. In one form or another, this set of claims pervades all of classical Judaism. I believe it is necessary both to deny and to affirm the claims of Sinai.

My denial of literal faith in Sinai will undoubtedly seem to some too distant from the simple notion of revelation they had in childhood. For many more contemporary Jews, my affirmation will doubtless sound too strong. My theological tone may sound to them too much like a "real" belief in revelation after all. I seek a mature and believable Jewish faith based on an ultimate commitment to a *nondualistic* vision of the universe, one that denies the radical separation of "God" and "self." Modern Judaism has conveniently buried the truth the Jewish mystics knew centuries ago: All God "reveals" at Sinai is God's own self, the self of the universe. The entire Torah is nought but this, God's own name. All the rest is commentary.

If the revelation and commandment at Sinai are the heart of Jewish faith, they are also the most difficult and "scandalous" claims made by the religious traditions of Israel. Taken at face value, they form the very essence of Jewish "supernaturalism" and seeming theological arbitrariness: Y-H-W-H, the Creator of the universe chooses at a particular moment to reveal "Himself" uniquely to the Jewish people, addressing them in words and pledging eternal loyalty in covenant with them if they will accept "His" specific will as manifest in the practice of Judaism. Both mind and conscience reel at such a thought! What does it mean to say that God speaks? Does God speak to Israel in a language that Israel understands, commanding a Torah made up of laws, ethics, rites, and traditions that seem remarkably related to those of the pagan nations in whose midst Israel lives? Can we imagine a God so arbitrary as to choose one nation, one place, and one moment in human history in which the eternal divine will was to be manifest for all time? How can we attribute to Y-H-W-H, who becomes "person" only through our encounter, this sort of arbitrary willfulness? For these reasons and others, thinking Jews in our time, including many who seek a serious approach to questions of the spirit, balk at accepting the "yoke" of Sinai.

But hear another voice from within the tradition. "Moses spoke and God responded in a voice" (Exod. 19:19). The rabbis comment: God responded "in the voice of Moses." This seems to say that the *only* voice heard at Sinai was that of Moses, sometimes speaking on his own and sometimes possessed by the divine spirit, God responding from *within* Moses' own voice. Rather than a "voice from heaven," there was the voice of a prophet transformed by an inner encounter that can only be characterized as "heaven." Jews over the centuries have debated how to refine the naive biblical depiction of Sinai and the experience of revelation. The phrase "Shekhina [divine presence] speaks from within his throat" was often applied to prophets.

The fact is that any sophisticated theory of revelation recognizes a moment in which the Divine and human minds flow together. Indeed, we speak of the "mind" of the Divine only by analogy with the human mind. If Y-H-W-H is the incorporeal essence of the universe, and mind or soul is the incorporeal essence of the person, we

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Arthur Green is president of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College. This article is excerpted from his forthcoming Seek My Face, Speak My Name: A Contemporary Jewish Theology, *to be published this year by Jason Aaronson.*

call God the mind or soul of the universe. God as Y-H-W-H knows no distinction between "matter" and "spirit." In seeking to comprehend revelation we may, however, speak of Y-H-W-H as a cosmic mind, present in the depths of each human mind, and impressing itself in a unique way upon consciousness. The universal One seeks to be known by the human, this manifestation of its own self that is also, paradoxically, its "other." Its "seeking" or "calling out" to its "other" (the human) is not of language. It is only humans who can make the divine articulate in words, since words themselves are a human invention. In fact, the most recent translations of Exodus 19:19 render it, "Moses spoke and God responded in *thunder.*" *Y-H-W-H speaks in thunderclaps; it takes a Moses to translate God's thunder into words.*

If the Jewish imagination regards the divine and human as separate, God living in "heaven" and humans on earth, revelation is the act that comes closest to bridging this separation. Moses goes up to the top of Sinai, according to the Torah, and God comes down upon the mountain (Exod. 19:3, 20). But at that moment the entire top of Sinai is covered by thick cloud—as though to say that the border between the "upper" and "lower" realms is lost. Later accounts of the revelation are more fanciful; they actually depict Moses as riding on the clouds, entering the heavenly realms, and holding on to God's Throne of Glory. Moses returns from the revelation still human, but his face glows with the light of that encounter in which the upper limits on human spiritual attainment had been momentarily cast aside. He returns to the "world of separation" from an experience of transcendent unity, the Torah now "translated" within him. God's thunder and Moses' words are now one.

The God I know is a Divinity that cannot act or be realized in the human world at all except through human actions.

But the God who speaks in thunder is still the sky god, still the one who dwells in heaven and atop the highest peak. We are seeking a more fully *internalized* version of that foot-of-the-mountain experience. Remembering that our earliest ancestors were diggers of wells in the desert, suppose we allow ourselves to turn the high mountain into a deep well. Abraham observed Torah, say the rabbis, before it was given at the mountain. Let us try to imagine Torah as it was seen by that digger of wells. Instead of coming "down" from the top of the mountain, his wisdom or Torah flowed forth like water from deep within the earth. We thus try to understand revelation as the most profound of inner experiences. Seen this way, Moses' experience has much in common with the creative act, the inner mental activity of the artist, the musical composer, the mathematician, and others along with the religious figure. The core experience of creativity reaches a depth that necessarily contains an element of mystery, something "other."

We are talking here about an inner straining of the human mind to the breaking point—but rather than a break*down* that leads to madness or confusion, we envision a break*through* to new creative achievements. This may come in the form of a novel insight, a flash of intuition instantaneously translated into the medium in which the creator works: into music, into mathematical formulae, into words. The creative energy, like the divine light, is undifferentiated. Only the tools and mindset that lead one to that flash of intuition draw on that mysterious inner reserve and direct each to be creative in a specific way. (The rabbis say that at Sinai the very senses were confused, and Israel "saw the audible and heard the visible." We can only imagine a state of creative elation from which Einstein would return with a symphony and Beethoven with a mathematical formula!) *At this level of inner experience, lines between "creativity," "discovery," "inspiration," and "revelation" are impossible to draw.* The language we have for drawing such fine distinctions belongs to a level of consciousness other than that at which these inner events occur. The free flow of inner energies that characterizes such moments does not admit clear borders between "I" and "Thou" or between "mine" and "thine."

When the soul (the human capacity to love and tremble in awe) as well as the mind (the human capacity to understand) participates in the creative, inspirational, or revelatory event, that event takes on a religious character. The human striving for revelation involves joining the emotional and the intellectual life fully. We Jews assert that *Moshe Rabbenu*—Moses our Teacher—had such an experience. The religion of ancient Israel, as embodied symbolically in that moment at Sinai, continues to represent for us the result of one of the great human encounters with Divinity. For us as Jews, it is, in existential terms, the greatest such encounter of all time. *It is the only encounter we know.* Others that may exist are not existentially open to us; they are not *ours.* True participation in a spiritual language requires the whole of the human heart. Each heart can speak only one such language. Our heart is given wholly to this one. While we recognize that there may be others, we cannot know them, cannot "set them upon our heart."

The Jewish people throughout its history has accepted

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Jerusalem: Divided We Stand

Sari Nusseibeh

Jerusalem seems, and may well turn out to be, a problem that defies political solution. Israel has declared that it considers the entire city its sovereign, undivided, and eternal capital. Palestinians, for their part, have declared the eastern side of the city their own capital. Israelis as well as Palestinians will, on the whole, say that while they may be prepared to compromise on any other issue, they will never countenance a compromise on Jerusalem. Yet this being the case, the prospect for reaching a compromise on any other issue becomes impossible: because if it is true that no compromise over Jerusalem is likely, it is even more true that no compromise on any other issue is likely that fails to include a definitive solution to the Jerusalem problem. Israel seeks to exclude Jerusalem from negotiations, but Palestinians will not countenance negotiations, let alone a settlement, that excludes Jerusalem.

Thus the problem of Jerusalem comes to seem intractable. Paradoxically, but with the positions reversed, this is how the Palestine problem also seemed at one time to many people. Palestinians would not countenance any negotiations that implied waiving their claim to sovereignty in any part of Palestine. Jews, on the other hand, were satisfied with declaring their sovereignty in only one part of the country. Inevitably, war broke out. Forty years later, partition of the country begins to make sense to sizable sectors of the two communities. Partition still has not been achieved, but it no longer appears totally unnatural, illogical, or inconceivable. If it has not been implemented, then this is not because it defies logic, but because one party perceives its implementation as being in conflict with that party's interests.

Perhaps the partition of Jerusalem should be viewed in the same light: just as possible as the partition of Palestine itself. Indeed, Jerusalem was a divided city between 1948 and 1967, and while the situation was far from ideal, the total sum of human suffering on both sides then (if indeed such things can be quantified) falls far below the total sum of human suffering endured since 1967.

Arguments that Jerusalem is not as important or as vital to Palestinians as it is to Israelis, and that Israel should therefore maintain exclusive control of it—allowing, at best, for a measure of cultural self-rule among its Arab inhabitants and neighborhoods—are totally false, and simply inconsequential from a practical point of view. Palestinians regard Jerusalem as the natural and historical capital of Palestine, quite apart from any Jewish history affiliated with it. Throughout history, whenever Palestinians as Palestinians (in their various historical names—Philistines, Jebusites, Canaanites, etc.) could achieve a measure of independence, Jerusalem was named capital of the country. Indeed, the city was a religious capital prior to the advent of monotheism. At a time when the descendants of the country's original inhabitants are living amid a renewed surge of nationalist sentiments and are seeking to exercise their sovereignty and their freedom as a nation on their own soil, it is only natural that they will not accept any argument that will exclude them from their historical capital. From a practical point of view, therefore, it is far more useful to exercise one's imagination in trying to formulate a partition that might be acceptable, and that could serve as the springboard for constructive unity between the two sides.

Such a partition is possible to the extent that it is symbolic. Here, one must recognize that the relative intransigence of either party on the question of where a borderline may be drawn, is itself a function of the relative porousness of that border. If this is true in general, it becomes even more true when the envisioned partition of the city must nevertheless leave the city physically united. The question is, how can we set up a formula whereby Jerusalem can remain physically united while being a capital city to two peoples?

In some respects, the question can be readily answered. For example, one can imagine two municipal councils cooperating very closely, even to the point of sharing vital civic functions. One can imagine that such a joint authority would be responsible for major "neutral" services, such as firefighting or sewage. Indeed, given the scattered nature of Jewish and Arab neighborhoods in the city, it is impossible not to imagine close cooperation among various municipal services, and it is impossible also not to imagine totally free movement across the imaginary lines of sovereignty, to and from the various neighborhoods.

Some problems may seem more difficult than others. Among the more difficult problems may be the degree to

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which each municipality will be able to exercise unfettered authority in matters such as building or demographic expansion. Yet another difficulty would be how to assign ultimate juridical authority in financial affairs or questions of litigation. How can two legal systems, one Palestinian and one Israeli, coexist in a fused metropolis? Further still, a system must be worked out to achieve the economic fusion of two otherwise separate economic systems. Because if Palestine and Israel are to be economically separate units, with different taxation systems, different income levels, and a customs barrier adjusting the flow of trade between them, then how can the fusion be sorted out in an undivided city?

In trying to answer these and similar questions something else becomes clear: Palestine and Israel must cooperate very closely, and the border between them must be highly porous. Indeed it is already clear that a porous border between the two states will render the problems of a united joint capital city of Jerusalem more manageable. From Israel's point of view, this porousness should mean the naturalization of a state of peace with its neighbors, a peace that should be consistent with Israel's declared policy. □

Making Foreign Aid Work

Laurence R. Simon

Today, the United States' multi-billion-dollar foreign aid program is, and will remain, part of the problem and not part of the solution, unless we dramatically rethink the nature and administration of aid programs. The three new program initiatives just announced by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)—the Family and Development Initiative, the Democracy Initiative, and the Partnership for Business and Development—do not begin to solve the basic problems of our foreign aid. A better solution is to retire USAID, and replace it with a new and depoliticized U.S. conduit for real development assistance to the world's poor.

Our aid programs will be fatally flawed as long as they are internally divided. Since the end of the Second World War, U.S. government aid to Africa, Asia, and Latin America has had two objectives: first and foremost, it has aimed to thwart Soviet hegemony and integrate national economies into a global free-market system; second and subordinate, it seeks to alleviate poverty. These objectives amounted to an extension of the Marshall Plan, enacted in 1948 to ensure that the postwar reconstruction of Europe would preserve the U.S. sphere of influence in the emerging cold war. This bias reached its apex in the Reagan years with the Carlucci Commission's recommendation to create a single agency within the State Department to administer both economic and military aid. The association of these two disparate parts of the foreign aid budget more often than not meant that any substantial effort to solve problems of poverty suffered.

The foreign aid budget remains dominated by national security expenditures. Out of a total foreign-operations appropriation for fiscal year 1991 of $15.4 billion, military and security assistance alone totals $9.2 billion. Development assistance funds available to fight hunger and poverty in the poor nations total $3.4 billion. This limited sum should be separated out from the larger foreign-assistance allocation and placed under the jurisdiction of a new United States foundation for international development, insulated from the State Department. To understand why this is necessary, we must consider the lessons of the past. Foreign aid's conscription into the cold war has meant that the U.S. has sought to export American influence and American ideology along with the material support we so confidently assumed would improve our reputation among developing nations. We can briefly summarize and critique the underlying assumptions of our foreign aid initiatives as follows.

First, U.S. development-assistance programs assume that what is good for the American economy is good for the Third World. As a major industrial and agricultural producer, the U.S. saw itself as the free world's engine for development. With its huge appetite for industrial raw materials and its need to export finished goods and agricultural surpluses, America devel-

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oped a foreign aid program that, not unlike those of most developed nations, was to serve as an incentive for the poor nations to agree to terms of trade and investment policies favorable to the U.S. The model was first developed in the 1950s through Operation Bootstrap in Puerto Rico. Puerto Rico was to be transformed from an island of farmers—whom the U.S. Department of Agriculture said could make Puerto Rico self-sufficient in food production within twenty years—into a society of cheap and underemployed labor available to the numerous U.S. corporations that took advantage of tax exemptions to set up manufacturing or assembling operations. Forty years later, Puerto Rico is held up by many Third World economists as a model of "misdevelopment": rich nations moving capital in and out of the Third World through investment and aid schemes that do not allow any appreciable accumulation of working capital within the poor nations themselves. As a result, raw materials from the poor nations, with the exception of oil, continue to erode in value relative to manufactured goods from the developed nations. Multinational bauxite mines in Africa and in Jamaica play one country against the other, thus keeping production costs low while maximizing the price of aluminum, which returns to the poor countries in the form of cans and cars. Flowers for U.S. and European markets are flown daily from poor nations like Colombia, which neither produce enough food for their own people nor earn enough foreign exchange be able to purchase food on the international market. This transfer of wealth to the First World industrialized countries continues to impoverish the poor nations, many already ravaged by colonialism.

U.S. foreign aid ought to help reconstruct impoverished societies by building local institutions responsive to the needs of the poor. Instead, U.S. objectives have largely been limited to supporting the private-sector elites, who generally oppose social or economic reforms—such as land redistribution—that may erode their privileges.

Even our generosity has had a catch: the legislation establishing Public Law 480, the Food for Peace program, stipulates that the building of foreign markets for U.S. agricultural commodities is as important as providing humanitarian assistance. Even with last year's reforms in PL 480 to secure the supply of food to recipient nations, the needs of the poor are essentially unmet by the provision of U.S. commodities in situations other than emergencies. The National Science Foundation, among others, has studied the way in which indiscriminate use of U.S. food aid has depressed local food prices and discouraged local small farmers. I asked a USAID officer in the West African nation of Togo three years ago why an American church-related relief organization was distributing PL 480 food in a country both without emergency needs and perfectly capable of self-sufficiency.

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"They [the relief agency officials] have a powerful lobby in Washington," he replied. The need of Togo farmers for a fair market price, on the other hand, is rarely heard in Washington.

It's true that U.S. emergency famine relief has rarely been blocked even to countries at odds with our foreign-policy objectives. But the belief that nonemergency food aid—most PL 480 transactions—can spark or support economic development has never been justified. Vast quantities of American food assistance have gone to governments that use it to subsidize their militaries, or to keep the peace with their middle classes and civil servants. Controversy has swirled around the effect of food aid in discouraging production and reducing farm income by depressing local market prices. Food aid, like any agricultural export, is good for American farmers but may actually hurt the smaller and more vulnerable producers in the poor nation.

Second, U.S. aid programs now push "structural adjustment" as a cure for crippled economies. Unlike the United States, where many immigrant peoples have moved upward through commerce and education, often beginning as street peddlers and small shopkeepers, many of the eight hundred million absolute poor in the developing nations are excluded by caste or by class from access to even minimal assets and training needed to improve their lot—an economic apartheid no less jealous of its privileges than the racial kind.

Currently, we hear much about linking aid programs to policy reforms within developing nations. These include reforms that aim to balance imports and exports through exchange rate devaluation; reducing domestic inflation and budget deficits through decreases in government expenditures; reforming the tax system; liberalizing domestic and international trade; eliminating subsidies and raising producer prices. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, institutions largely dominated by the United States and other developed nations, offer strong financial incentives to governments that adopt these and other macroeconomic changes—though riots over escalating food prices, unemployment, and cuts in services are often the result. While many economic reforms are surely overdue, they will be worthless unless social reforms are also enacted to enable the poor to be more than a huge cheap labor reserve for the emerging free-market economy. Without structural reforms that permit upward mobility and eradicate poverty, the standard prescription for structural adjustments will merely isolate and degrade the eight hundred million who live at the margins of survival.

It is often said that in the Third World there is socialism for the rich and capitalism for the poor. The poor need access to the same things that the rich take for granted: secure access to land, to irrigation water, to affordable credit, to competent training, to more efficient and labor-saving technologies, to the right to work together in cooperatives or associations for their own economic benefit, to the right not to work for exploitative wages, to the right to participate in a body politic answerable to the majority good. These freedoms are fundamental to our own democratic society and formed the basis of the major U.S. policy reform of our century—the New Deal. In my own experience, Third World peoples generally look with admiration and some envy at our freedoms and the responsibilities we exercise in our own society, and they ask no less than a New Deal within their own societies and in their dealings with the powerful envoys of multinational capital.

An interesting experiment is unfolding in Sri Lanka, where the new Janasaviya Trust Fund will receive $84 million through a World Bank program to encourage partnerships between governmental and nongovernmental organizations for grassroots development. This bold step on the part of the World Bank is tacit recognition that many of the old ways of fueling development have not worked to eradicate poverty.

Third, U.S. aid programs treat market economies and democracy as synonymous. In societies without strong constitutional safeguards and political freedoms, free enterprise is a license for ruthless exploitation of the poor and of the environment. Merely to advocate policies that encourage capitalism in societies characterized by extreme concentrations of land and power ultimately blocks the emergence of genuinely democratic institutions. Democracy and free enterprise can and should be symbiotic. But can it be denied that the vast majority of the poor of the Philippines, alienated from the productive assets beneath their feet and living in a semifeudal relationship to powerful landlords, are unable to share in or influence the major programs of government—despite all the trappings of a democratic process? Free enterprise and democracy, to be synonymous, must begin by eliminating the legal, political, and social obstacles to the very poor's participation in the process of national development.

Absent that, the pressures of poverty have bred social rebellions that the United States all too often has hastily condemned as communist subversion and a threat to democracy. Under the present arrangement, the State Department holds sway over USAID. Economic aid to the Philippines and El Salvador, for instance, is really military aid in camouflage. In both countries over the past ten years, I have heard State Department and USAID personnel justify USAID programs as "counterinsurgency." The much-touted land reform of El Salvador, paid for by

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Indulging the Liberal Self: Richard Rorty's Public Vices

Michael J. Quirk

Twenty-five years ago, it would not have been shocking to claim that philosophy had virtually nothing to say about the nature of justice or the content of morality. Most of those trained in the dominant analytic tradition were neither ethically nor politically apathetic. They were certain, however, that their substantive moral and political convictions were quite independent of their philosophical skills and interests. The job of philosophy, in their view, was to ask logical questions of language and meaning: to analyze what was meant by terms such as "good," "right," "just," and so forth. But they took it to be beyond philosophy's ken to provide concrete examples of morally right conduct, or blueprints for just political institutions: these were to be left to personal preference or to intuition. It was considered "unprofessional" to engage in such speculation under the banner of philosophy.

Two books of the early 1970s, however, revolutionized analytic philosophy. John Rawls's *A Theory of Justice* (1971) and Robert Nozick's *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (1974) look like the yin and yang of contemporary political theory. Rawls maintained that the impartial stance justice demands mandates redistributive policies like those of the welfare state. Nozick, on the other hand, insisted that respect for human rights, including the right to free acts of exchange and acquisition, prohibits all but the most minimal interference by the state in the lives of its citizens. But it is misleading to view Rawls and Nozick simply as rivals—the "welfare liberal" vs. the "free-market conservative." *Both* of them can be said to defend versions of liberalism, if by that we mean the doctrine that "Justice is independent of any prior conception of the Good Life." For both Rawls and Nozick, the purpose of the state is not to advance or promote a specific way of life as the best, but to enable individuals to formulate and pursue their own various ideas of the good without violating the rights or enfeebling the capacities of others to do likewise. (In this light, the contemporary political battle between "liberals" and "conservatives" is perhaps better understood as a clash between older and newer variants of the same core liberal doctrine.) Both Nozick and Rawls, moreover, draw on the work of past philosophers—Nozick on John Locke and Rawls on Immanuel Kant—who believed that philosophy could aspire to and perhaps attain impartial universality.

Nowadays though, precisely these shared principles—liberal neutrality and the universality of reason—are under fierce attack. Marxists and "classical" conservatives (such as Leo Strauss and Allan Bloom) have long characterized liberal neutrality as either a sham or a cultural catastrophe. But in the past two decades communitarian political thinkers such as Roberto Unger, Christopher Lasch, Michael Sandel, and Robert Bellah—neither Marxist nor conservative—have railed against the poverty of moral discourse in liberal society and the inability of libertarians to sustain strong bonds of commitment to shared values. The dogma that pure reason can discover truths available to any and all human inquirers has been savaged from all quarters: renegade analytic philosophers such as Paul Feyerabend, Hilary Putnam, and Nelson Goodman, hermeneutic and critical theorists such as Hans-Georg Gadamer and Jurgen Habermas, poststructuralists such as Jacques Derrida, Gilles Deleuze, and Jean-Francois Lyotard all agree (if on nothing else) that the portrayal of philosophical reason as an innocent, impersonal spectator on timeless, manifest truths is as dead as a dogma can possibly be.

This raises two troubling questions. Is liberalism as morally bankrupt as its communitarian critics affirm? And since liberals (including Locke, Kant, Rawls, and Nozick) have characteristically relied upon "universal reason" to justify their political creed, are they left resourceless if the many critics of "universal reason" are substantially correct?

Few philosophers have addressed these issues as directly as Richard Rorty, a key figure in the deprofessionalization of philosophy that began in the 1970s. Rorty addresses both philosophers and the general public, and argues that philosophy can be fruitfully pursued only when one acknowledges its place in the ebb and flow of history. Rorty aims to deflate philosophy's estimate of itself: he follows Dewey, Heidegger, and Wittgenstein in undermining philosophy's discourse from within. But

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Rorty also maintains that the collapse of traditional philosophy, with its pretentions to universality, need not affect the fortunes of liberal democracy. Liberalism needs no elaborate intellectual legitimation, since it continues to satisfy the needs and aspirations of the only people to whom it would need to legitimate itself: citizens of liberal democracies. Rorty's work thus stands as an ironic counterpoint to that of Rawls and Nozick, who sought to enliven philosophy by making it the guarantor of liberal justice. In contrast, Rorty wishes to defend liberalism by showing it to be as empty of philosophical import as one can imagine.

Rorty's unusual defense of liberal democracy rests on the strength of his case against traditional philosophy. His masterwork, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (1979), holds that ever since Plato, and especially since Descartes, philosophers have tried to inspect the contemplating mind (the "mirror of nature"), in order to determine which of its "mirrorings" of the world-in-itself are accurate representations of reality and which distortions. In order to do this, philosophy needs a vantage point above the forum of everyday debate, from which it can legislate over human discourse and assign to each discipline its necessary boundaries and rules of conduct. Philosophers thus habitually crow that they "know something about knowledge that no one else knows so well." This crow's nest, Rorty insists, has already fallen. Wittgenstein, Heidegger, Dewey, and Quine among others have shown that there is no pure, transcendent standpoint for the philosopher (or anyone else) to occupy: all human inquiry rests and draws upon presuppositions, historical contingencies, shared social practices and shifting intellectual paradigms. We humans have no "privileged access" to reality. Our discourse does *not* mirror an antecedently given reality: we talk as we do because it "helps us cope" with the challenges of living in the world.

There is no way to achieve the sort of detachment from reality that might make the notion of "essential structures of nature" meaningful: thus philosophy can't be expected to lay bare the essence either of nature or of the self. Rorty claims that the self is simply a "network of contingent beliefs and desires": it has no essential nature. The idea that there is some one thing uniquely and specifically human in each of us, some one thing which makes it necessary to treat each other with moral respect and dignity, is, for Rorty, one more manifestation of philosophy's vain boast that it can explain and describe things from a "God's-eye view." And as Wittgenstein, Heidegger, and Dewey debunked this conception of philosophy, Freud and Nietzsche have discredited the idea of an unchanging rational core of our personality, distinct from our idiosyncratic desires and fears, independent of our own personal histories and the narratives our own family structure engenders.

Rorty's critique of traditional philosophy immediately creates a difficulty for liberals. Liberalism has thrived upon the idea of prepolitical, inalienable rights, which limit the power of the state and tie it to the consent of the governed. But defenses of human rights have almost always looked to the sort of *philosophical* grounding lampooned by *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature:* Jefferson, for instance, draws upon a metaphysical theory of human nature to ground his notion of inalienable right, while Kant secures the liberal political order by maintaining that all selves must acknowledge the moral imperative that reason discloses. This, Rorty insists, will no longer wash. But can liberalism be justified without this "standard philosophical backup"—that is, without relying upon "universal reason"?

In answering this question, Rorty alludes to Jefferson's convictions on religious tolerance. Jefferson affirmed that "it does me no injury for my neighbor to say that there are twenty Gods or no God." Rorty understands Jefferson to be saying that "politics can be separated from beliefs about matters of ultimate importance—that shared beliefs among citizens on such matters are not essential to a democratic society." Following Jefferson, liberals do not wish to dismiss large moral, theological, or metaphysical views as "mumbo jumbo": they merely wish to *privatize* them. One can cling to as conventional or eccentric a worldview as one wishes, providing one is not "fanatical" about it: that is, as long as one's convictions don't mandate "public actions that cannot be justified to most of [one's] fellow citizens." Liberalism is founded upon tolerance, but it is not tolerant without qualification. From a Rortyan perspective, the moral "fanaticism" of a Nietzsche or a St. Ignatius Loyola, for example, who would subordinate his life and those of his fellows to a single end (the will to power, or the love of God) cannot and should not be assimilated to a liberal political order. Such fanatics must, in Rorty's words, sacrifice their consciences "on the altar of public expediency." Note that Rorty does not condemn "fanaticism" on universalist grounds—he doesn't say it is contrary to "human nature" or "human rights." Rather, as Jefferson suggests, fanaticism is wrong because it is an unwarranted intrusion of *private* concerns into *public* space. My neighbor's religious beliefs do me "no injury" unless he or she tries to commandeer the state to force them on me, to make them matters of civic duty.

Rorty claims that what Jefferson thought of religious beliefs—that they had a place in the private but not the public sphere—can be extended to cover *all* philosophical speculation, including the highly refined analyses of liberal foundationalists. How one thinks one ought to live one's life need not be involved in the attempt

to understand how one can dwell together with others. Worldviews and visions of the good are relevant to the search for private perfection, but *not* to the search for workable public policy. No philosophical justification of rights need enter into our deliberations about the public realm; nothing that philosophy could provide would be *more* clear and evident to liberal democrats than the values embodied by a genuine liberal polity and treasured by genuine liberals.

Political theory for Rorty, even staunchly liberal political theory, is marginal to the real world of liberal politics. One might read Locke, Rousseau, and Kant, and be privately edified by their musings on rights and justice: but what one contemplates in the serenity of one's study has no necessary bearing on one's conduct as a citizen of a liberal republic. (Rorty would downplay any direct role that classical liberal texts might play in forming the liberal temperament.) Our public actions do not require our holding certain beliefs that trace their ancestry to Locke, Rousseau, or Kant: they do not require *any* philosophical beliefs. As liberal citizens we need to be tolerant, fair, mindful of the dignity of others, and sensitive toward their suffering—that is, we should exhibit all the standard liberal virtues. But these character traits are *all* that a good liberal needs to possess.

One might reply that Rorty's unphilosophical defense of liberal democracy is circular: since liberal democrats are already convinced that liberal democracy is a good thing, any philosophical vindication is mere window dressing. But it is not intuitively evident—for example, to devotees of Marx, Nietzsche, or Loyola—that liberalism is worth supporting. To this Rorty quite consistently responds that liberals, like everybody else, have no choice other than to be "ethnocentric" about their most heartfelt convictions. There is no reason to suppose that liberals must or even can evaluate their critics on some presumably neutral ground that does not acknowledge all those values that liberals hold dear: "Accommodation and tolerance must stop short of a willingness to work within any vocabulary that one's interlocutor wishes to use." Liberals must not fall into the trap of letting their opponents tacitly set the terms of the debate—by demanding, for instance, that liberals provide "adequate philosophical foundations" for their devotion to liberty, equality, neutrality, or tolerance before these values can be taken seriously. Rorty's entire project is a sustained attempt to discredit the very idea of "adequate philosophical foundations," an idea that is as useless to liberals as it is to their antiliberal rivals. Freed from the crutch of foundations, liberals can trust their liberal sentiments and intuitions without guilt or embarrassment, and argue their case on their own terms.

In this way, Rorty is able to brush off the objections raised by many communitarian critics of liberalism. Michael Sandel, for example, charges that liberals (particularly Rawls) endorse an incoherent conception of the self as prior to, and unencumbered by, its particular aims, desires, and social roles. Rorty questions Sandel's wisdom in labeling Rawls a foundationalist, and points to Rawls's later work, in which he rejects the notion that the idea of justice as fairness rests on metaphysical premises, resting it instead on the de facto consensus of citizens of liberal democracies. Rorty also wonders whether liberal democracies need be hostile toward communal values and shared identities, as Sandel maintains.

Rorty's kinship to Nietzsche in this regard has led many of his critics on both the Right and Left to quip that he is merely concerned with "the leisure of the theory class."

In any case, Rorty considers such tussling over essentialism beside the point: liberals are committed to making any theory of the self, whatever its philosophical pedigree, irrelevant to politics. Since Rortyan liberals have no theory of the self, or at least refuse to accord political significance to any theory of the self, they believe that the fact that some liberals have relied upon "philosophically incoherent" theories to ground their politics does nothing to discredit liberalism as such. The notion that liberal politics needs an epistemology—an unshakable, universalist basis for its premises—can only make liberalism seem less secure than it actually is. Indeed, the secret virtue of liberalism lies in its capacity to *evade* philosophy by privatizing all worldviews and theories of the self, and limiting public debate to those contingent problems and prospects that happen to confront the community at any given moment.

Calling theories of the self politically marginal, though, doesn't make Rorty's own theories apolitical. In fact, he manages to smuggle in a hidden political agenda—a quite substantive theory of the good life—under the cover of preaching tolerance and neutrality.

To consign "theories of the self" to the pale outside politics is, in effect, to say that their truth or falsity makes no difference to public discourse. The logical positivists of the 1930s and 1940s denied truth or falsity to evaluations of morality and politics; they left such matters to private individuals. Rorty's main inspiration though, especially in his most recent book, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (1989), is not such positivism, but rather the sort

of romanticism typified by Emerson: the quest for perfection is intensely and irrevocably *individual,* and those who strive after it seek their own private "truths," guidelines for forging their own, unique selves. Rorty credits romanticism with discovering the importance of self-creation and self-expression, a view utterly alien to positivism.

But does it make sense to speak of "private" truths, when they are validated only by subjective experience? Nietzsche, though he admired Emerson, nonetheless rejected his muddy, romantic thinking on this notion, and instead directed his philosophical energies against "truth" itself. Nietzsche *aestheticizes* discourse: he prefers self-affirmation, self-mastery, and self-expression to pursuing inquiry guided by the norm of impersonal truth. He idealizes the strong, disciplined individual—the *übermensch,* the man who transcends—who sees the quest for "objective truth" as a sham, and harnesses his energies to a joyous, groundless affirmation of life and will. For Nietzsche, once the hard labors of "the genealogy of morals" have been completed, the life of the mind is *jeu d'esprit*—play, not work.

Rorty's kinship to Nietzsche in this regard has led many of his critics on both the Right and Left to quip that he is merely concerned with "the leisure of the theory class"—the foppery of clever professors engaged in witty repartee over drinks—and shamefully blasé about the sober and serious nature of rational inquiry and its place in life. Rorty does not exactly deny these charges of "light-minded aestheticism." Rather, he turns the accusation against the accusers:

> [There] is a moral purpose behind this light-mindedness. The encouragement of light-mindedness about traditional philosophical topics serves the same purpose as does the encouragement of light-mindedness about traditional theological topics. Like the rise of large market economies, the increase in literacy, the proliferation of artistic genres and the insouciant pluralism of contemporary culture, such philosophical superficiality and light-mindedness helps along the disenchantment of the world. It helps make the world's inhabitants more pragmatic, more tolerant, more liberal, more receptive to the appeal of instrumental rationality.

But if it is paramount for postmodern liberals to champion and encourage this morally earnest aestheticism, even to institutionalize it, how "neutral" can such liberalism be? "Light-mindedness" embodies a substantive worldview, one where ideas, like commodities, are consumer goods. If one's vision of the good is simply a private obsession, there is very little reason to affirm and cherish it as something *true,* and every reason to value it as something that may be personally *satisfying.* To raise the question of whether one ought to find a certain worldview "satisfying" is to relinquish the "light-minded aestheticism" basic to Rortyan liberalism—it is to take "traditional philosophical topics" seriously, and to continue to question liberalism as communitarians such as Sandel have. Whether one endorses or rejects a vision of the good life can only be a matter of preference for Rorty: there is no way he can uncouple liberal "privacy" from a pared-down emotivism (or existentialist "decisionism") about the good without reintroducing some very philosophical and hence very public issues about the value of our valuations.

A society where such issues are systematically excluded from the public sphere is a consumer society: the function of the social and political orders is to allow the individual the material means and leisure essential to his or her "self-making." A "good life" is one of successful production and consumption, both of things and self-images—that is, of trying on alternate identities and lifestyles, taking them off, and tailoring them to suit one's idiosyncratic needs. Rorty's liberal polity thus cannot be neutral, since no society can be deemed successful that does not advance these goods, and no such success is possible without fostering a climate of "light-minded aestheticism" to keep the "fanatics" at bay. In fact, it is precisely because his aestheticism is "light-minded" that Rorty ultimately parts company from Nietzsche, despite his great debt to the latter. From Nietzsche's perspective, Rorty's "consumerism" would appear as a great "sellout" to the baser instincts of the bourgeois herd. Rorty might counter by claiming that Nietzsche's illiberal elitism is an unfortunate result of his making the *übermensch* a public hero rather than a private fantasy.

Rorty has labored to show that a consumer society need not be slavishly mercenary, acquisitive, or insensitive. Much of *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* is devoted to rehabilitating the public role of literature: at its best, as in Nabokov and Orwell, literature sensitizes us to the ways in which we can be cruel to others and thus deprive them of the chance to express their own unique dreams and to build their own unique selves. Rorty is a Kantian consumerist: he believes that, since one ought to be willing to make the possibility of self-creation universally available, the redistributive policies of the welfare state are necessary. But the end of such policies is clear: to enable the poor, sick, and disenfranchised to participate more fully in the life of aesthetic consumption. Aestheticism is no vice "as long as *everybody* who wants to gets to be an aesthete (and, if not rich, as comfortably well-off as most)."

I confess that I find these sentiments alarming. If they are not meant hyperbolically, they suggest that *all* of us ought to aspire to the condition of A, the archetypal aesthete in Kierkegaard's *Either/Or.* A's capacity for

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A Question of Boundaries: Toward a Jewish Feminist Theology of Self and Others

Rachel Adler

K'nai l'kha chaver: *This teaches that a person should set himself a companion, to eat with him, drink with him, study Bible with him, study Mishna with him, sleep with him, and reveal to him all his secrets, secrets of Torah and secrets of worldly things*—Avot d'Rabbi Natan 8.

This rabbinic text describes a distinctively Jewish kind of intimacy: the study-companion relationship. The *chaverim* do not simply study Bible and Mishna; the very structure of their relationship and the nature of its boundaries present a Jewish model for the relation between the self and the other. In this relationship, people experience each other as whole, rather than as fragmented, beings. Companionship is simultaneously physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual.

Self and other are not sharply separate here. To be *chaverim* is to be neither fused nor counterposed, but to be juxtaposed. The root CH-B-R means to join together at the boundaries. The curtains of the tabernacle, for instance, are *chevrot isha el achotah,* "joined one to another" (Exod. 26: 3).

Boundaries define the shape and extent of an entity, and distinguish between what is inside and what is out. They maintain the integrity of the entity and keep it from dribbling out into everything else. Setting the boundaries of entities and formulating categories for them is the way we make sense of a vast and diverse world.

Some boundaries are barricades—chainlink fences guarded by Dobermans. Others are not primarily barriers but loci of interaction. A cell membrane, for example, is part of the living substance of the cell. It is the perimeter at which the cell conducts its interchanges with other cells—the contacts, the flowings in and out, which maintain its life within its environment. The boundary between self and other in our passage from *Avot d'Rabbi Natan* resembles this living, permeable boundary.

The boundary of *chaverim* requires two entities sufficiently alike to be capable of bonding; it presupposes an other who is experienced as akin to the self. In *From A Broken Web: Separation, Sexism, and Self,* feminist philosopher Catherine Keller contends that the notion of an other experienced as analogous and contiguous to the self is alien to Western philosophy. She asserts that since the time of Hegel, Western thinkers have understood boundaries as barriers that entities erect to protect their integrity in an invasive war of all against all. According to this formulation, opposition and subjugation are the means by which we make the world make sense. In other words, I can only be an I—a subject—by objectifying you and making you less significant than myself.

Keller and other feminist theorists argue that opposition and subjugation particularly characterize patriarchal modes of making boundaries and making sense. Consequently, in patriarchal societies the structure of thought itself predisposes us to split and separate rather than to perceive interconnections and interdependencies. Susan Griffin describes how patriarchal category-making carves the universe into dualisms. At the heart of this dichotomous system is a definition of normative humanity as maleness and irreducible otherness as femaleness. And that is how woman comes to be the first stranger.

By exclusively claiming normative humanity, patriarchal man denies that there exists among all the members of his species a human similarity in whose context human difference takes on meaning. He splits himself off, alienating himself from the females of his kind, and an infinite series of dualisms proceeds from this splitting. In each dualism, the superior term is associated with patriarchal man while the inferior and dependent term is identified with woman. Heaven and earth, light and darkness, cleanliness and filth, good and evil, freedom and slavery, sufficiency and lack, all are made to mirror the estrangement of patriarchal man from the woman he has cast out. These dichotomies are then used to justify the subordination and exclusion of all who are consigned to the feminized category of the other.

Keller charges that monotheism is a product of this patriarchal splitting. Pained by the fragmentation of self and world that he has engineered, patriarchal man longs for unity. But he conceives of it not as the reunion of all he has driven apart, but as the conquest and incorporation of the realms of the other. The god of the patriarchal philosophers, omnipotent, passionless, and utterly alone, is simply a projection of the patriarch's own desire for absolute self-sufficiency and self-control. This god serves both as a model and as a justification for all patriarchy's tyrannies and exclusions. The charges in Keller's critique

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can be substantiated, to varying degrees, by texts and events within all three monotheistic faiths. However, Judaism cannot be reduced to the misconceived monotheism Keller describes. Instead, I would like to argue that as Jews we have available to us a different way to define the relation between self and other: to reconstitute the objectified other as a subject; and to understand a subject as a self with permeable boundaries contiguous with the boundaries of neighbor-selves. This Torah of self and other, which we saw reflected in our text about the study-companions, grounds not only our capacity to be *chaverim* but our capacity to create *tzedek,* justice-as-righteousness. *Tzedek* is a justice far richer and more particularized than the abstracted, objective fairness of Western liberalism. Its goal is to embody the Torah of self and other in a social matrix that allows all human beings to flourish.

The central narrative of Judaism embodies an implicit challenge to the polarized thought structures of patriarchies.

However, the one relationship that Jewish tradition has consistently refused to incorporate into this Torah of self and other is the relationship between women and men. Instead, Jewish tradition permits men to define themselves by objectifying women. In Halacha, in narrative, and in liturgical praxis, tradition has sought to construct impermeable boundaries to wall women out. Our text about the study-companions is a case in point. For the man who wrote the text and for the generations of men who learned it and transmitted it, such a relationship between women and men was inconceivable. This refusal to acknowledge the Jewish woman as subject has perpetuated a brokenness, an institutionalized estrangement of women from men in Judaism. We confront this estrangement as soon as we reach out to one another to be *chaverim.*

It is now essential that we claim and integrate the portion of Torah that has remained unfulfilled in the walling-out of Jewish women. As women have begun to describe and critique the social and linguistic structures that have objectified and marginalized them, they have recovered the vantage point of the subject. To be aware of oneself as objectified subject is to be conscious of oppression. Because there is a Torah of self and other, Judaism possesses within itself the means of relieving the oppression of women. To refuse to integrate this Torah into our man-woman relationships is to claim that there is one kind of human relationship which need not be just, and one kind of human being who cannot be a subject or a *chaver.*

Where did we learn this Torah of self and other, and what do we know? We learned it from being the people other peoples knew as the *ivrim,* the ones from the other side of the river, the boundary-crossers. As boundary-crossers, *ivrim* are bridgers of worlds, makers of transition. The name *ivri* is not resonant of self-perception. It reflects the perspective of those native to this side of the river, those who are at home. Those who do not cross the boundaries may view the relocations of the *ivri* as transgressions against a fixed cosmic order, trespasses into the anomalous and the chaotic.

In our narratives, however, it is God who demands that Abraham and Sarah become *ivrim.* A people rooted in one place experience a God rooted in a particular place. A people that has known transience can experience the translocal nature of God. It is the revelation of a God who is present in every place that makes possible the moral universe of the covenant, where relatedness rather than location becomes the ground of ethics.

If our story about our beginnings as God's *ivrim* were not enough to give value to the project of boundary-crossing, our master-narrative about crossing the boundary from slavery into freedom, and about bridging the boundary between creature and creature in the transaction of covenant has done so. We have valorized these boundary-crossings in our tradition; they shape not only our memories of the past but also our actions in the present and our visions for the future. We are obligated to regard our liberation and our covenant not simply as legacies from our unique history as crossers-over, strangers and slaves, but as events that radically transform the meaning of boundaries in the world; they demonstrate the potential for all objectified others to be reconstituted as subjects similar to ourselves. There is nothing inevitable about this moral understanding of our communal identity. Our special liberation and covenant make equally powerful justifications for subjugation of the other. The admonition in Exodus 23: 9 warns us not to adopt this second interpretation. "You shall not oppress a stranger, for you know the feelings of the stranger, having yourselves been strangers in the land of Egypt." By itself, this commandment could be read as a directive to merge with strangers and to idolize in them the image of our own history as stranger. Instead, Torah demands that we extrapolate from our bond with the stranger to include familiar deviants within our own communities, with whom we may be more reluctant to identify:

> You shall not subvert the rights of the stranger or the fatherless; you shall not take a widow's garment in pawn. Remember that you were a slave in Egypt and

that the Lord your God redeemed you from there;
therefore do I enjoin you to observe this
commandment.

(Deut. 24: 17-18)

I mean to argue that the central narrative of Judaism thus embodies an implicit challenge to the polarized thought structures of patriarchies—even though patriarchal thinking is embedded in Judaism as it is in the rest of Western culture. This is not to claim that either ancient Israelites or rabbinic Jews had modern sensibilities for dealing with those defined as other. Such a contention would be both anachronistic and demonstrably false. I do claim, however, that the unfolding of the *ivri* identity and its experience of covenant locates at the core of Judaism an implicit challenge to an ethics of alienation and dualism that perceives the world outside its borders as threatening and chaotic. The Torah of self and other that we first encountered as *ivrim,* and later internalized through liberation, covenant, and prophetic admonition erodes and must eventually obliterate the fixed, impermeable boundaries that define the world of patriarchal dualism. By recognizing a self in all others with a potential like our own for transformation, this Torah transforms the boundaries between self and other and deconstructs the justification for patriarchal boundaries. Contrast, for example, Aristotle's notion that slaves and barbarians had fixed natures suitable to their condition, and that these natures made them qualitatively different from Athenian gentlemen. The subjugation of these inferior beings is justified by their nature as objects—a moral dissimilarity from human beings with value that could not be changed or mitigated by more fortunate circumstances.

But having ourselves crossed the boundaries from slavery to freedom, from dependency to responsibility, from homelessness to home, from powerlessness to power, we know that people have a capacity for transformation. We cannot justify either our privilege or our virtue, such as it is, by arguing that some people are, by nature, flawed in character and intended for subjugation. Having crossed the boundaries Aristotle thought impassable, we are no longer adept at maintaining the impermeability required to keep the alien alien. Biblical narratives illustrate how, even when estrangement is most to our advantage, we are propelled across the boundary where the other lifts to us a human face.

That is why, with our legitimacy as inheritors hanging in the balance, the narrative compels us to follow Hagar and Ishmael through their painful wanderings in the wilderness and then requires us to witness their redemption. We are not spared Esau's anguished cry, "Have you but one blessing, Father? Bless me too, Father!" (Gen. 27: 38). At Nineveh, with the reluctant Jonah, we are forced to watch the moral renewal of an enemy nation and to understand that it too is precious in God's sight. We cannot even kill the archenemy Agag, King of Amalek, without hearing in his last utterance, not the demonic defiance that makes executions easy, but a human cry of fear and regret, "Ah, bitter death is at hand" (1 Sam. 15: 32).

It is not that the meanings liberation and covenant hold for Jews have rendered us incapable of injustices or atrocities. Rather, because liberation and covenant entail such flexible boundaries between self and other, it is more difficult for us to separate from the other sufficiently to inflict hurt without feeling reciprocal pain. Inability to wall out the other explains why the intifada has distressed Jews across the political and religious spectrum. It accounts for a common motif in both Israeli and diaspora novels: the depiction of Palestinians as mirrors or doubles of Jews.

It is important not to mistake this discomfort for an ethical response. It is a symptom of ethical dysfunction just as pain is a symptom of disease. Anguished handwringing over the terrible things we are doing is nothing more than a self-indulgent display of symptoms. The flexible boundary that enables us to sense our commonality with the other is the *ground* of justice in Judaism, but it is not justice. Justice is the reshaping of our actions and institutions to express this sense of commonality in our everyday life.

I have been saying that the obligation to do justice is derived relationally, and rests upon a prerequisite obligation to perceive a likeness to self in the other. Taken together, these obligations comprise a fundamental normative principle in Judaism. If this is so, however, why has Judaism consistently estranged and excluded its most intimate others—Jewish women? How shall we understand sacred texts that polarize and subordinate? How shall we determine what authority any text may claim to form our attitudes and to inform our actions?

What perpetuates this intimate injustice in Judaism is that in its deconstruction of dualistic, other-rejecting, patriarchal thought-structures, Judaism stops short and leaves in place the foundational construction—the otherness of woman. This constructed rift is embedded so deeply in our language, in our psyches, and in some of our texts that we reinforce the objectification and estrangement of women without even being conscious of it.

Man names himself *zakhar* in Hebrew, the creature with the male member. And it is perhaps more than coincidence or homophony that the *zakhar* is also the *zokher* and the *zakhur,* the rememberer and the remembered. In a patriarchy, the only memory is the male memory, because the only members are male members. They are the rememberers and the remembered, the recipients and transmitters of tradition, law, ritual, story, and experience. They are the righteous whose memory will be for a blessing and the teachers whose lips will move in the grave.

Zakhar names as his antithesis *negeva,* the pierced one, the one whose boundaries are penetrated by the invading male. Even her name is held hostage to male memory. How she described herself to herself has been forgotten. *Negeva* represents not only an objectification but a projection. In this naming, patriarchal man points at the other as the permeable one. He portrays himself as sealed and impenetrable.

We cannot be too surprised to discover that our texts have been marked by male memory and by the alienated, hierarchical relations of the patriarchal self with the other. The rabbis' dictum, *dibra Torah beleshon bnai adam,* "The Torah speaks in human language," implicitly acknowledges the limitations of context-dependent human language and human texts for conveying transcendent truths. There is, however, a very special kind of truth that is captured only in texts.

A text is a mirror. Once you have told a story about your experience, you have an image of it external to yourself into which you and others can look. This makes possible the process of critical reflection. I would like to reflect upon two texts about the origins of women and men that mirror two kinds of self–other relations and teach two different lessons.

The first is the Genesis 1 account commonly ascribed to the P (Priestly) author. In it God speaks in the plural as if out of a diverse and many faceted wholeness: *vayyomer Elohim na'aseh adam betzalmenu kadmutenu.* "Let us make the human in our image, after our likeness." The gendered humanity thus created represent two varieties of a single species, collectively called *adam: U'vara et ha-adam betzalmo, betzelem elohim bara oto, zakhar u'negeva bara otam.* "And God created the human in His image, in the image of God, He created it, male and female He created them."

This creation proceeds not by polarization but by differentiation within wholeness. A modern analogy would be the biological process of human development in which a zygote, a diverse wholeness which a sperm and an ovum have merged to create, differentiates into the various cells of a particular human being. Emphasis is placed upon similarities and kinships. The *tzelem,* the image, is a source of connection and continuity between creator and creation. The two varieties of *adam* embody diversity within similarity. Equally human, they share equally in the responsibilities and benefits of the natural world.

In contrast, the Genesis 2 account, generally assigned to the J (Jahwist) narrator, depicts creation as a process of opposition and partialization. Adam in this story is a male individual, and bears a curious resemblance to the motherless asocial resident of the state of nature posited by liberal political theory. He is a competent male adult, endowed with language and reason, engaged from the moment of his creation in the business of mastering nature.

Human sociality is recognized as a necessity: *lo tov heyot ha-adam levado,* "It is not good for man to be alone," but the remedy for man's isolation is the creation of an oppositional other: *e'eseh lo ezer kenegdo,* "I will make him a helper who is his counter/part." (The word *kenegdo* carries dual senses of likeness and opposition which I have tried to convey with the translation counter/part.)

Woman in this story has no independent being. She is neither created (b-r-a) nor formed (y-tz-r) but constructed (b-n-h): *vaviven Adonai Elohim et ha tzela aher lakach min ha-adam vavavei el ha-adam.* "The Lord God built the rib into a woman and brought her to the man." A part of the man is separated off, constructed into woman, and handed back to him. He recognizes her neither as similar to himself nor as a different entity with its own boundary. Instead he claims her as a part of himself that he can reincorporate through fusion:

> This time bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh ...
> Hence a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his woman and they become one flesh. (Gen. 2: 23-24)

Adam, in this narrative, is both gendered male and generic human. His maleness represents the original human condition, rather than one variety of it. Hence, there is no mention of the creation of maleness, as there is in Genesis 1. The text only alludes to Adam's gender identity as *ish,* man, in the wordplay that establishes *isha,* woman, as a derivative gender. Together they are *Ha-adam ve-ishto,* the human and his woman, for the text never recognizes her as *adam.* It designates her only as *isha,* a creature derived from *adam,* contrasted to him and possessed by him; a construction designed to meet his specifications.

How are we to characterize these two accounts, and what Torah may we learn from them? Genesis 1 may be taken as a description of the creation of humanity. It teaches about kinships, about the continuity of boundaries between God and humanity, and between the two varieties of humankind. Genesis 2 is best understood as an account of the creation of patriarchy. Its depiction of the patriarchs' inner experience—loneliness, and a sense of mutilation—and its account of the attempt to recover the banished other through fusion and incorporation are as perfectly convincing as its disastrous aftermath. An Eden founded upon a fantasy of obliterating the other is bound to be unstable.

Yet nothing in this text speaks to us with normative authority. There is no reason to conclude on the basis of the narrative that relations between men and women in subsequent Jewish societies must adhere to the patriarchal model. In fact Genesis 2 has never been an independent source of normative authority for Jews. The prescriptive language of legal obligation ("be fruitful and multiply") occurs not in Genesis 2 but in Genesis 1. Jewish tradition

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The Trial

Edward Feld

Driving from Jerusalem to Nablus (Shechem) you can feel as if you're at the place where heaven and earth meet. The clouds hang low over the rolling brown hills, which form the spine of the land of Israel. Today the sky is pure blue and the road up the hill seems like the central stairwell up to the heavenly chamber.

Nablus itself is nestled between two mountains: Gerizim and Ebal. The Bible enjoins that the blessings and curses attendant, respectively, on conformity with or violation of the law be shouted from these peaks. Driving into Nablus today, my eyes turn from the tree-lined mountains to the sandy brown civil administration building where the meeting of the earthly court is to transpire. By law all sessions of the court are open to the public. But it is located on an army base and so, although all may enter the court without special permission, no one can enter the yard in which it is located. This is part of the game that is played.

Six of us who've come today are members of the Beita committee; "people of peace," the Arabs call us. The others are the defendant's family members and fellow villagers. The lawyer approaches the judge, who orders the army to let us in.

The soldiers let the father of the defendant through, but not the mother. They say there is not a female soldier around who can conduct a proper inspection of the mother to satisfy security arrangements. We hunt up a female officer and the woman is let into the courtroom without being inspected. Of such stuff is the war between the army and the civilians made.

Najah Jahuba is on trial. What has brought her to this courtroom at the age of nineteen is almost an afterthought to a long and complicated chain of events. Eighteen months ago some young West Bank settlers were out on a Passover hike, accompanied by two armed guards. They passed the village of Beita (where Najah lived) and some village youngsters threw stones at them. One of their guards fired his rifle and killed a villager. The Jewish youths were brought into the village, where some villagers threatened them and others protected and hid them. More shots, an Israeli girl lay dead. Later it turned out that she had been shot by one of her own guards, but before the report was published a number of the village's young men, including Najah's brother, were arrested and held responsible for the incident. The houses of those said to be most involved with what had happened were blown up, including that of Najah's family.

Since the family was living in tents, Najah's father began to rebuild a ramshackle dwelling nearby. But the army does not allow the rebuilding of houses which have been destroyed and so they returned to blow up the bungalow. Najah's father was not at home at the time, and Najah was clearly upset at having her home destroyed twice in one year. The officer who blew up the house accuses her of having thrown a rock at him—which missed—and of having held his arm (at first he charged that she had scratched him, but he later took back that accusation).

Although all may enter the court, no one can enter the yard in which it is located without special permission. This is part of the game that is played.

Najah has been in jail for three-and-a-half months. She has gotten thinner but has also taken on a certain dignity. She sits upright and silent through all of the proceedings. To me she looks fifty years old. Her father is expressionless, counting his worry beads; his wife and mother-in-law sit next to him. I can only see Najah's back while the court is in session. The lace in her white kerchief is more decorative than that worn by her mother and grandmother. I'm surprised she can keep it so white and uncrumpled in prison.

The lawyers argue over whether the testimony of the soldier is to be believed. Najah has denied that she did anything. This is her third hearing. Last time the judge ordered a new hearing since he thought that the offense was so great that the prosecution had been mistaken in only asking for a six-month sentence.

The judge finds Najah guilty of having thrown a stone but innocent of having struck the soldier. The prosecution asks for a twenty-month sentence, arguing that stone throwing has now become a grave offense and that re-

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PERSONAL ESSAY

Hands Over Eyes

Dorien Ross

The West Bank is not what you think. You thought it was a line. A bank. As in a river. But no, it is a semi-circle that surrounds two major cities: Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. It is a curve, not a line. It is the horizon. Do you understand what I am saying? You cannot see the Palestinians. They appear only as a sandy plain meeting the sky. But on TV every night they can be seen in their misery. Children in dusty squalid scenes with weeping parents and grandparents. But they are far from daily life, never seen, yet felt always, as the presence on the edge.

As we feel the calm of the ocean, which affects the spirit of Californians, making us believe in a world without tragedy, so here the horizon is Palestinian and beyond that, Arab.

Almost everyone here is a refugee from pain. The country is an asylum. You cannot imagine.

This morning I woke up with my hands over my eyes.

What I thought I knew has been shaken. The argument for a hierarchy of brutality is convincing. The breaking of hands and feet, the blowing up of homes, a few dozen people a month wounded or killed is not wholesale slaughter. I thought I knew where I stood, that I opposed this measuring of violence against violence.

Hands over ears.

There is rioting in Gaza and the West Bank. The arguments begin again. The editorials. The endless discussions. You do not know the Arabs. You cannot. They will kill their own. This is the Middle East. The horizon is our enemy. It wants to drive us into the sea.

Where does one stand? Where do you put your feet down? I realize, as if for the first time, that the privilege of Americans, besides our obvious economic security, is to have the illusion of being without history.

If we forget the Indians....

We have only just landed and what history we have, what blood is on our hands, vanishes, evaporates almost before it lands in print on the pages of our books. We all know the plot against remembrance. The thrust toward the future. The seductive idea of progress.

Hands over eyes. You cannot imagine. You cannot. Imagine this man.

Moshe Golinsky. Eighty-two years old. Dying of heart disease. "Excuse me," he says. "I have these black holes in my memory. But let me continue. Where was I?

"Oh yes. Prague 1939. I was the leader of the Zionist youth group. I was twenty-six. I had moved to Prague from a small town to attend the university. Where I grew up there was no water. No electricity. It seemed already that hundreds of years had passed by the time I was twenty-six. I am responsible for getting Jews out of Prague. I had meetings with Eichmann. Yes, Eichmann. This same person. He was polite. He was cooperative. He told me:

"'We don't want to kill the Jews, Mendle.' In those days I was called Mendle. 'Only to export them somewhere else. They are a problem here. Do you understand? Now, what do you need to help export your people?'

"'First and foremost I need money and then ships,' I told him.

"'I will help expedite this,' said Eichmann. 'Call me, Mendle, if there is anything I can do to help.'

"Of course the rich Jews put up the money, but Eichmann was helpful. There was an incident. A beating. And I called him. I called to him directly. He said, 'It's a disgrace, Mendle. Unnecessary. I will take care of it.'"

Moshe is now weeping and breathing with difficulty. "In a moment," he says to me. "In a moment. I have told them, my people, I have told them, Eichmann developed into a murderer. He was not a madman like Hitler. I tell them

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Old Ghosts: Pogroms in the Jewish Mind

Steven J. Zipperstein

With pogroms weighing heavily on his mind, the Russian Jewish historian Simon Dubnow submitted an article on the eighteenth-century catastrophe in Uman to the first volume of the Yiddish language *Historishe Shriftn* in 1920. Dubnow wrote the piece, an essay accompanying annotated versions of Jewish folk chronicles of the massacre, in the immediate wake of the Ukranian pogroms that left as many as one hundred thousand Jews dead. The tone of Dubnow's essay was pained, passionate, and uncompromising. He used his scholarly platform to minimize the importance of social, economic, or political considerations in understanding the causes of any of the three major Ukrainian massacres of Jews. He argued instead that the Khmelnitsky pogroms of 1648, the Uman massacre, and the more recent devastations in the Ukraine at the end of the First World War were part of a continuous and seamless saga: "When we look at these catastrophes, which have erupted one after the other every 120–150 years, one sees in them the same exact picture." The tools of historical analysis, he seemed to be saying, are impotent before such unremitting horror—though he was European Jewry's leading advocate of interpreting Jewish experience with the social scientific tools of historicism. One is left merely to chronicle, mourn, and rage.

Pogroms—the word is drawn from the Russian verb *progromit,* which means to break, attack, or conquer—came to represent for Dubnow, and for many of his contemporaries, the worst of *galut,* or exile: brutal and, above all, humiliating reminders that Jews were regarded as pariahs, as feared and despised outsiders in Russia. By the turn of the twentieth century no Russian word, save czar or perhaps vodka, was better known in the West. And what better proof was there of the intolerable nature of conditions in Russia than the fact that periodically, and for reasons that Jews could not control or the authorities apparently wished not to, one's house could be broken into by a mob intent upon pillage and bedlam? The reality or, in the minds of many Russian Jews, the very inevitability of pogroms rendered calls for universalism ludicrously tepid, even delusionary. What was essential was a radical separation, be it emigration to the United States and elsewhere in the New World, or national autonomy within Russia (as Dunow proposed), or Zionism. When, for instance, the quick-witted Nachman Syrkin debated the Jewish future of world Jewry in the 1890s with the Social Democrat Parvus, who argued that nationalism was obsolete in a world where the wool in his coat was taken from sheep pastured in Angora, spun in Lodz, with German buttons and thread from Austria, Syrkin jumped in just as Parvus ripped his elbow during a rhetorical flourish and yelled, "And the rip in your sleeve comes from the pogrom in Kiev." Whether for the liberal, autonomist Dubnow or the socialist Zionist Syrkin, pogroms constituted the most vivid indication that Russian Jewish life was wretched, corrupt, and, under the czarist regime, irreversibly so.

Since the turn of the twentieth century, pogroms have served as the outstanding metaphor for Russian Jewish life; despite the fall of the Romanovs, the half century and more of Soviet rule, and the turbulent liberalization of recent years, this remains true to the present day. Ever since the 1903 Kishinev massacre and the pogroms of 1905–1906, such violence has come to be viewed as a fundamental feature, arguably the foremost feature, of Russian Jewish experience. Both the mass migration from Russia that brought millions of Jews to the West, and the rise of the Russian-based Zionist movement that helped create the most important institutions of pre-1948 Israel came to be seen as a response to the pogroms—that brutal, hateful, fundamentally Russian tradition which, as Dubnow and others suggested, would persist as long as Russia was unfree, unenlightened, and unhappy.

What I hope to chart here is the origin of what might be called the metaphor of the pogrom. This metaphor cannot, I think, be understood simply as the product of the real or anticipated violence of the region. Rather, with an eye toward understanding the origins and character of present-day Jewish perceptions, the belief that pogroms might well erupt again has served to explain, for some Russian Jews as well as their Western supporters, the mass migration of the last few years: not merely, then, the jarring prospect of civil unrest, hunger, social dislocation, and uncertainty—the sort of fears that dominate much of Soviet life today—but some-

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thing specific to Jews. This fear is the prospect of being singled out for special attack (by Pamyat and other groups on the radical Right), the prospect of being once again the scapegoat for forces that are, or so it is sometimes believed, dormant, mysteriously obdurate, and uncannily influential.

Operation Exodus continues in its publicity campaigns to draw upon the pogrom metaphor: fearful mothers huddle with their infants beside trains, none too subtly evoking the murderous legacy of the Russian past.

Look at the madmen of Pamyat, one hears in Jewish circles, and come face to face with an extreme but fundamental feature of Russian life, something that predates the (cumbersome and uncertain) Jewish social mobility of the Soviet years and their (grossly imperfect) official philosemitism. To be sure, the 1903 Kishinev pogrom rarely comes up in today's discussions in America and Soviet Russia (though allusions to the Holocaust remain stark and explicit). Nonetheless, what emerges in such discussions is a set of images of Eastern European Jewish life that dates back to the turn of the twentieth century, images that for many Jews represent the essential character of imperial Russian life and, as some fear, the shape of things to come: mass attacks, random beatings, shootings, pillage and rape, senseless, uncontrollable violence—the stuff, in other words, of pogroms.

But, then, aren't such images all but inevitable? Wasn't the progressively mounting violence of Russian Jewish life a fact of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries? A few dozen Jews were killed in Kishinev, several hundred killed in the pillage of 1905–1906, and perhaps one hundred thousand murdered about a decade later in the postrevolutionary turbulence of the Russian Civil War. Nearly all these horrors occurred in the same region, the historic Ukraine; and nearly all were (or seemed to be) tolerated, even encouraged by government authorities (whether imperial or Ukranian nationalist). And the pogroms are usually credited with spawning the mass migration westward, undoubtedly the single most important "movement" in Jewish Eastern Europe at the time. Given the widespread belief that pogroms arose out of government machinations to scapegoat Jews, is there much surprise that, as Natan Sharansky recalls in his memoirs, whenever his father, a Communist party member, sensed the prospect of social unrest he immediately spoke with genuine fear of pogroms? Indeed since pogroms came to dominate Russian Jewish history, isn't it to be expected that they have come to dominate the consciousness of Russian Jews—as well as the reflections and fears of their cousins in the New World and Israel?

The power of the pogrom metaphor, however, distorts the nexus between historical image and reality. First, the pogroms were not responsible for much of what is attributed to them. For example, pogroms were not the major cause of the mass migration westward. The vast majority of those who left Russia fled areas that were the poorest (such as Lithuania, where railway transportation via Prussia was also the most readily available), rather than the Ukraine, the site of nearly all the pogroms. The Ukraine remained one of the more prosperous regions of the Pale of Settlement, and the site of considerable internal migration from the northern provinces during the very years when the pogroms erupted. Nor did pogroms stem subsequent movements of this internal migration. And proportionally just as many Jews left late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Galicia (despite the near-absence of pogroms there and, indeed, even despite the political emancipation enjoyed by the region's Jews) as left Russia. They left for essentially the same reasons that Russian Jews did, abandoning the wretched margins of the Austrian empire—which many of the empire's non-Jews were evacuating—because of their poverty, because of economic dislocation specific to the region, because of their lack of faith in the future of Eastern Europe, because of better economic prospects in the New World, and because of the availability of cheap transport to get there. (They left because relatives, friends, and other ambitious or desperate people they knew had left, though it was rarely the very poorest who emigrated but typically those who might be called a lower-middle class—among Eastern European Jewry an artisanry and petty merchantry—fearful of falling even further into the sphere of the truly impoverished.)

The motivations of emigrants, in short, were complex: a wide range of personal, social, political, regional, and economic factors very difficult to sum up neatly. Anti-Semitism, of course, was a major factor insofar as its pervasiveness in the life of imperial Russia, Romania, and Galicia (albeit in a more muted form in the latter) was an obstacle to Jewish well-being—at the very least an irritant and sometimes an explosive, menacing, and even dangerous presence. But pogroms were not the prime reason for the exodus, despite what immigrants themselves may sometimes have said and what subsequent generations of Jews may have come to believe.

The role that pogroms played was as a vivid reminder that there was no future for Jews in Russia, and indeed the entire region of Eastern Europe. Those who fled pogroms did so less out of fear than out of despair, believing that

things could never improve in a land that spawned such horrors. By and large the mass migration was motivated by rather mundane considerations. What the West offered Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe was the promise of some semblance of dignity, of freedom from the petty annoyances and bigotries of life in the Old World, and of a steady and reliable livelihood.

The evidence of a systematic, government-sponsored terror unleashed against the Jews is similarly weak. Hatred in the region was much more poorly organized than was (or still is) typically assumed. For some time, scholars have persuasively argued that the central authorities in the capitals did not organize the pogroms of the 1880s, despite widespread suspicions to the contrary. Later pogroms—Kishinev and Gomel in 1903 and the rash of attacks in 1905 and 1906—did enlist the cooperation or malign neglect of local authorities, but the direct influence of the radical Right (the so-called Black Hundreds) was minimal. Indeed, most of the motley groups typically lumped together as the Black Hundreds only organized their local chapters after the worst attacks were already over.

The czar and his entourage hated the victims and sympathized with those who attacked them, but the imperial inner circle clearly preferred to quash disorder rather than to stir it up. Sentiment, the student of Russian Jewish history learns very quickly, is not the same as policy: even if most of the members of the czar's entourage despised Jews they were not about to foment unrest that could threaten their authority at the center. According to the government, Jewish economic exploitation of the provinces provoked the pogroms of the 1880s; and authorities of the next generation claimed that Jewish revolutionary activity caused the pogroms that erupted twenty-five years later. These explanations, of course, were a singularly myopic regime's attempts to explain away the complex set of social and economic grievances, suspicions, religious animus, greed, and envy that actually gave rise to the pogroms. Such pathetic and self-serving efforts were as inaccurate as the explanatory attempt of the government's opponents, Jews and non-Jews alike. One was intended to defend the regime, the other to attack it. Neither side sought—or, for reasons of its own, was terribly interested in—a more coherent or nuanced explanation to account for the causes of the pogroms.

The belief that the government planned the pogroms to deflect attention from the pervasive social ills of the regime has served to fuel fears that this could well occur again. Many still fear that a post-Communist regime inspired in one way or another by its Romanov predecessors—nurtured by the memory of the now widely revered conservative premier Piotr Stolypin, by hatred of his Jewish assassin, or by the nationalist xenophobia implicit in the statements of the region's old and new Slavophiles—might wreak vengeance on the people who

The Doctor's Plot of 1953

Yakov Rapoport



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Translated by Joseph Singer

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produced Trotsky, Kaganovich, and, according to some, the Bolshevik Revolution itself. That such sentiment exists in certain Russian circles is beyond doubt. That it may influence policy in the future is not altogether impossible. However, the notion that such scapegoating is part and parcel of the tradition of Russian governmental politics grows out of a fundamentally mistaken interpretation of the imperial regime's politics.

The apparent connivance of the Romanov authorities was precisely what most shocked Jews and others abroad—and, quite understandably, most unsettled the Jews of Russia. That popular Judeophobia could be virulent was no revelation, but going back to the European Middle Ages the Jews regarded the state as a shield to protect them against such excesses. So the apparent collaboration of the czarist regime meant that the Romanovs had violated a pact that long antedated Jewish residence in imperial Russia. This set of perceptions—or rather, misperceptions—had more impact on the decisions of Jewish would-be emigrants than the violence of the pogromists themselves.

This is not to suggest that even the politicized Russian Jewish circles of the East or West in the last decades of Romanov rule shared a unanimous understanding of Russia or the fate of its Jews. On the contrary, debate long raged in the Jewish community over a host of factors that affected the plight of Russian Jews: the institution of czarism, the bureaucracy, the class system on which czarism was built, the essential tragedy of *galut,* the overpopulation and impoverishment of Russian Jewry, and the lack of national autonomy and political emancipation in the empire. These debates were fierce, bitter, and prolonged. They inspired scores of competing parties, subparties, and ideological oracles that attempted to speak for a hugely variegated community, united by little, animated by a multitude of contradictory concerns, with different visions of politics, religion, and the future.

The pogroms, especially those of the first decade of the twentieth century and beginning with Kishinev, with their shocking violence ostensibly condoned and controlled by the Russian government, provided these widely disparate sectors of Jewry with a key—for some, perhaps the only key—to understanding and speaking about the complicated realities of Jewish life. As the shrewd and blunt Abraham Cahan of the Yiddish daily *Forward* said in 1903, recalling the awful but also heady days of 1881,

> Jews debated endlessly, but nonetheless the word pogrom united everybody. One person was heading for Palestine the other for America; one wanted Jewish communes that would serve as an example for the whole world; another wanted nothing of that. But we were united. All shared the same feeling, the same idea: "The Jews in Russia go daily in danger of their lives. We must help the Jews of Russia find a home." And as far as possible we worked for our bloodied people together.

"Our bloodied people." The claim that in 1881 the word pogrom united everybody was rather exaggerated, arguably more than a little colored by nostalgia; only one of the movements produced by these pogroms managed to sustain itself—the Palestinophile Hovevei Zion—and even then, just barely. To be sure, the pogroms of the 1880s set in motion social and political changes that would eventually help transform Jewish life (as Jonathan Frankel shows in his masterful study, *Prophecy and Politics*). But this would not be widely apparent for some time. Russian Jews did not possess the kind of strong communal institutions that could sustain a sense of the importance of the pogroms of the 1880s. And the Eastern European Jewish communities in the West were still quite small, raw and disorganized. As a result, these early pogroms receded into the background rather quickly, instead of becoming part and parcel of the larger consciousness of the Jewish people.

This was not the case in 1903. "Since Kishinev everything has changed," a Bundist newspaper announced, and this claim was no longer sectarian or idiosyncratic. The social and cultural complexion of Russian Jewry had changed dramatically between 1881 and 1903, so that once this new explosion of anti-Jewish violence occurred, it met with a worldwide community of Jews now highly politicized and organized, deeply distrustful of the state, and mindful of what it believed to be the government's willingness to unleash the passions of the mob against its Jews. In New York alone, already half a million Jews (most of them of Russian origin) produced their own institutions, newspapers, and leaders: armed with news of the Kishinev pogrom these leaders now managed to work in tandem with the city's more acculturated, German-born Jews to galvanize their community as never before. They organized mass demonstrations, where New York City's mayor and other leading dignitaries expressed their concern. (Theodore Roosevelt was moved to exclaim that "never in my experience in this country have I known of a more immediate or deeper expression of sympathy.") Two years later, following the pogroms of 1905, the same leadership would give birth to the American Jewish Committee and would also propel the daily *Forward* into the front rank of American political life. Immigration to America soared in these years: some thirty-seven thousand Jews came from Russia in 1900; over one hundred twenty-five thousand came in 1906. Those Jews already in America viewed the new arrivals as many of them portrayed themselves: refugees from pogroms. Eventually, many came to see the mass migration as a whole in the same light. Yet in 1906, as earlier, the reasons for migration—which continued to come largely from the relatively pogrom-free northern provinces of the Jewish Pale of Settlement—were far more complex. The pogroms served for some as a watershed, as the final,

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FICTION

Public Transportation

Linda Bamber

I was hoping for a new bus with immense tinted windows and powerful shock absorbers, but the one that came along was a real pig. It squealed and shook and jostled the base of the spine. As I got on, I saw that everyone on the bus was utterly distracted by bitter thoughts, helplessly imagining the happiness of others. Out of the window they could each see someone just as the bus went by. The outside world seemed productive and careless to the people on the bus, purposeful and insouciant as it rushed across streets and picked vegetables from the sidewalk markets. Many of the riders were in a state of free-floating rage. Their moment came when the bus reached the East Side.

It happened like this. At Madison Avenue, 66th Street was blocked on account of an accident right where we should have turned. From high over the street I could see both the accident on 66th Street and the heartless activity in the stores along Madison. There were cop cars galore, an ambulance, city personnel of all descriptions. I thought I saw the stretcher going into the ambulance, the body lying on it like a fleshly rag. In the immediate vicinity people were aware of what had happened: wealthy shoppers and overgroomed clerks stopped what they were doing to watch. By the middle of the block, however, weekday activities were proceeding as usual, and in the gallery on the corner of 65th an exhibit of porcelain seashells was clearly unaffected.

The bus sat there for a minute or so absorbing the surprise. Then it lumbered about four blocks uptown and swung east, its rear end screaming and rattling after it. That's when the angry people piped up. They thought the bus driver could have chosen an alternate route more advantageous to themselves. They carried on all at once like barnyard animals. One big fat guy (white) stood over the bus driver (black) as he drove, ranking him out. The driver didn't answer back. We all knew it was because recently a bus driver had been shot dead by a passenger for answering back. But when the fat man wanted to get off, the driver made him stand in the well and wouldn't open the door. The driver couldn't help himself. He wanted so much to beat his fists on the fat guy's face that he couldn't let him get away.

Suddenly the man next to me bellowed, "Stop this foolishness!" My seatmate had been reading the newspaper, peacefully, I had thought, and whistling constantly under his breath. In comparison with everyone else he had seemed reasonable, and although his whistling had bothered me a little, I had decided to let well enough alone. Now suddenly he was bellowing at the bus driver, taking up where the fat man left off. From two-thirds of the way back he kept up the bellowing. You open that door, you could be reported for this, you people are all incompetent, this city is falling apart. The driver couldn't stand it any more. Every few sentences he would half turn in his seat and holler back. When the bus came to the end of the line my seatmate and I both went forward. I wanted to pump the driver's hand and say, Hard Lines. Good Going. So sorry for the behavior of my fellow passengers. Yeah, I wanted to say to him. It takes all kinds. But my seatmate wanted to yell at the bus driver some more, and the bus driver had business with yellers, not with handpumpers and phrasemakers. I couldn't get his attention, so I got off the bus.

Well! By that time I had forgotten what, if anything, I had come to the East Side to do. I was lost, like a writer whose opening moves run out on her. What kind of plot develops on York Avenue in broad daylight? I was afraid, and tried to console myself with expensive bits of wisdom. Vamp till ready, I repeated to myself as I walked up York. Eventually—but imagine for yourself, if you will, how much downtime there can be between the period after "York" and the capital "E" of "Eventually"; remember what it's like to leave home with a purpose and find you've forgotten what it was—eventually I came upon a plant store between York Avenue and the East River at 72nd Street. I had been there once before, and I knew it was huge and moist, with aisles and aisles of labeled plants. I thought it would be better to wander somewhere green than among the frightening deadness of the city buildings.

"It's my own fault," I told myself, distressed at my emotional condition. I like myself better when I'm really into New York, when it seems jazzy and postmodern

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and I don't take it seriously. But on York Avenue this afternoon the buildings sat on their sites like waste, like sin, like accumulated, heavy, unbudgeable failure. Between the buildings the air was dead; inside the plant store it was at least involved in an oxygen-carbon dioxide dialogue with the plants.

"These look like office plants," I commented to an attendant. He was helping me move an overgrown dracaena out into an aisle, where I could examine it.

"Unh," he grunted, lifting. Black puddles lay on the concrete floor. Alone, I contemplated the dracaena, but there was no way for me to know if buying it would be the right thing or not.

"Well," I said to myself, "do you want the dracaena or not? I wouldn't call it a matter of right or wrong!" But all my inner guidance systems were on the fritz, and there was nothing to tell me whether the dracaena would even begin to repay me for the effort of taking it unto myself. It is unusual for an American to have difficulties with consumer decisions, even under stress. Most Americans find that the power of making consumer decisions is the one thing left to them when all else is taken away. When we can't enjoy our hobbies, when we can't even lie on our beds and read magazines about our hobbies, we can still lie on our beds and mark catalogues selling clothing and accessories related to our hobbies. A department store might be having a white sale, or a woman might need a teakettle. Someone without enough strength to go out and see art might order notepaper with a wildflower design from the museum gift shop. These decisions are generally so fortifying to us that we go on to make others, and before you know it we're functional again.

In an aisle of azaleas I came to myself.

"You don't really think that," I remembered. And I don't. Why should I speak up for shopping just because I have difficulty doing it? I was dragging the dracaena in a small red wagon, making my uncertain way to the front of the store.

"It needs to be pruned," I told the owner when I found him at the checkout counter. A small knife appeared, and the West Indian second-in-command neatly removed a branch. I still didn't know whether or not I wanted the plant, but after making them prune it for me I thought I should at least go through the motions of buying it.

Is that what I thought?

I don't know.

What I *did* was I gave them my bad credit card and watched while it got rejected by phone. Maybe I thought they would charge it to the card without checking. Maybe I thought the dracaena would be okay to own if I could get it for free. Honestly, reader, I don't know what I thought. I was hopelessly preoccupied. Some gear had slipped, and the internal world could not engage with what was outside it. I felt invisible, unaccountable for my actions, anonymous, not there. I told them I didn't have any cash or checks, which wasn't true. I hadn't *meant* to harass the plant store personnel. I hadn't meant to get the owner involved in selling me a plant I didn't want. I experimented with wanting the dracaena, let's put it that way. I went through the motions not of *buying* but of *wanting:* but when the inner world of desire failed to kick in, I couldn't wait to forget the whole thing.

The owner was angry.

"You made us prune the plant and now you can't pay for it?" he asked, pointing his furious eyebrows at me.

"I'm sorry," I said, looking him in the eye. Somehow I felt safe. I could sense that although he was pissed, he was under control. Later I learned that his angina had been acting up lately, and he had promised himself never again to blow up in the store.

"Not at the help, not at the customers," he had vowed, and stuck to it. When I got out on the street I felt better.

On the bus coming home everyone was calm. They looked as if they had all gotten full measure out of the day, cleaning women, office clerks and members of the upper-middle-class in down-filled parkas. Not in a daze, but mildly interested in their surroundings and thinking creatively about making dinner or doing homework or calling a relative long-distance. Almost no one was buried in fringe religious literature or battered self-help books. Such riders as were reading would look up from time to time—from important newspapers or articles Xeroxed from *Scientific American*—and if someone caught their eye, they would smile. A couple of kids on the seat in front of me made friends. They started to talk about rock today, how it has degenerated from rock of the past. They were disgusted by the latest albums of at least three contemporary groups. The boy sang something to the girl to illustrate a point. He moved his body and head in pseudo-Egyptian jerks. The girl offered him a banana, and he played it for her like a guitar.

I couldn't figure out why the bus going east was so full of unhappiness and the bus going west so nice and calm. When I got home I called up the plant store and left a message on their answering machine. I told them that the plant really did look better pruned, but if they were still upset about it tomorrow I would come and get it. And I gave them the number of my American Express card, which, unlike my MasterCard, actually works. □

The Neo-Lachrymose Conception of Jewish–Arab History

Mark R. Cohen

The late Salo W. Baron invented the term "lachrymose conception of Jewish history" to describe, disapprovingly, the view of the Jewish past that had dominated modern Jewish historiography from its beginnings in the nineteenth century. This theme was originally anticipated by sixteenth-century Jewish historians who wrote in the wake of the traumatic expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492. It was then revived by the founders of modern Jewish historiography, who characterized Jewish life in the past, particularly during the European Middle Ages, as a long chain of persecution and suffering. These historians wrote with a clear political agenda in view: they yearned for an end to anti-Semitism and for the fulfillment of the promise of emancipation in Europe. Most Jewish historians today would look upon this heavy emphasis on suffering as a strategy designed, in part, to blame the debased state of pre-Emancipation Jewry (often cited by Christians as a reason to hold back full emancipation) on the Christian oppressors.

The "lachrymose conception" had one exception, which was also politically significant. It portrayed Jewish life under Arab-Islamic rule in the Middle Ages, particularly in Muslim Spain, as a "golden age"—a period of remarkable toleration, cultural integration, and political achievement. Often inflated into a myth of an interfaith utopia, this interpretation also mirrored the disillusionment of Jewish historians with their own age. The founding fathers of modern Jewish history (the eminent Heinrich Graetz, for example) looked back admiringly at Muslim Spain and Ottoman Turkey as lands where Jews benefitted from "liberal" treatment and benefited society in return: the very condition that "emancipated" European Jews in the nineteenth century so ardently desired for themselves.

Today, in many parts of the Jewish world, we hear a radically different view of Jewish life in the medieval Arab-Islamic world, which I call the "neo-lachrymose conception of Jewish–Arab history." We are told that medieval Islam was characterized, not by toleration, but by oppression and persecution, beginning with the time of Muhammad, in the seventh century, and continuing even into the "golden age," which was severely tarnished by Arab hatred of the Jews, and outbreaks of anti-Jewish violence. The keynote publication of the World Organization of Jews from Arab Countries (WOJAC) is a classic study in this reinterpretation. The pamphlet, published in 1975 under the title *The Case of the Jews from Arab Countries: A Neglected Issue,* lays out the key principles of WOJAC's philosophy: that these Jews are authentic refugees from persecution; that they represent the other side of an "exchange of populations" with Arabs who left Palestine for Arab countries in 1948; and that they deserve equal sympathy in all matters. In a historical chapter, "The Persecution of the Jews in Arab Lands," the authors assert:

> Arab oppression of Jews is *not* . . . a post-1948 phenomenon. It is rooted in Islam and has been an inescapable characteristic of the relations between Muslims and Jews since Muhammed's time. Twentieth-century Arab persecution of Jews is only a continuation and intensification of this centuries-long tradition, in which the socially and religiously inferior Jew bore the brunt of the Muslim masses' contempt and the Muslim governments' arbitrary policies and financial troubles [italics in original].

This pessimistic interpretation of life under Islam—a counterpoint to the myth of the interfaith utopia that exaggerates the oppression of medieval Jewry no less than the "lachrymose conception" did—has also spread to the mass media. In "How Right-Wing Are the Sephardim?" (*Tikkun,* May/June 1990), Yossi Yonah provides an example of the politicized use of what I call the "neo-lachrymose" conception. He describes a recent Israeli television documentary about the twentieth-century history of Iraqi Jews up to their mass immigration to Israel in 1951 and 1952. Suffering, the central theme of the film, was implicitly equated with the "history of pogroms and persecution" of European Jewry. Yonah argues, however, the "Oriental Jews' reinterpretation of past experience in the Arab world is partially fictitious." He challenges the popular belief that "repeated persecutions throughout the Arab world over the centuries instilled in the Oriental Jews a deep resentment and distrust of Arabs" and led them to prefer bellicosity to peace with Israel's Arab neighbors.

Yonah claims, further, what I have believed for a long time—that the support for hard-line policies among the Sephardim is rooted, not in accurate historical memory, but in the socioeconomic gap separating Sephardim from Ashkenazim. In their struggle for social and economic jus-

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tice in a society dominated until recently by Ashkenazic founders and sons, the Oriental Jews need to demonstrate that they, too, suffered at the hands of gentiles in the Diaspora and hence are entitled to a larger share of the fruits of Jewish independence.

The harsh depiction of Jewish life in the Arab-Muslim world, the polar opposite of the myth of the interfaith utopia, arose under very particular political circumstances. It cropped up in response to the Arab propaganda campaign against Israel, which exploited the myth of the interfaith utopia. It gained further prominence as evidence of anti-Semitism in the Arab world mounted.

The earliest example I have found of Arab historiographical exploitation of the Jewish myth of the interfaith utopia occurs in *The Arab Awakening* (1939), a pioneering study of Arab nationalism by the Christian Arab writer George Antonius. "Thanks mainly to the civilizing influence of Islam," Antonius wrote,

> Arab history remained remarkably free from instances of deliberate persecution and shows that some of the greatest achievements of the Jewish race were accomplished in the days of Arab power, under the aegis of Arab rulers, and with the help of their enlightened patronage. Even today, in spite of the animosity aroused by the conflict in Palestine, the treatment of Jewish minorities settled in the surrounding Arab countries continues to be no less friendly and humane than in England or the United States, and is in some ways a good deal more tolerant.

Antonius's book anticipated an account of Jewish–Arab relations that would become a dominant theme of Arab historiography. Especially since the Six Day War, Arab writers have increasingly seized upon the myth of the interfaith utopia as a polemic vindication of contemporary Arab politics.

Said Abdel Fattah Ashour, professor of medieval history at Cairo University, spoke at the notoriously anti-Semitic Fourth Conference of the Academy of Islamic Research at Al-Azhar University in 1968, and announced the Arab revisionism in no uncertain terms.

> [I]t may be sufficiently evident that Jews throughout history received no better or kinder treatment than that of Muslims. The egoism and greed of Jews subjected them to persecution by the Romans in early times and by various peoples of Christian Europe in the Middle Ages. They found in Muslims—*as Jewish writers themselves admit*—merciful brothers who regarded them as fellow believers and did not allow religious differences affect [sic] their treatment or attitude toward them. Spain provides a clear example of the big difference in the treatment of Jews by Muslims and Christians [italics added].

In *Islam and the Protected People* (1969), 'Ali Husni al-Kharbutli, one of the propagandists of secular pan-Arabism, following an undisguised polemical agenda, traced the story of Islamic tolerance of non-Muslims (*ahl al-dhimma,* "protected people," for short: *dhimmis*) to the early period of Islam. The chapters devoted to the Jews (there are no separate chapters on the Christian *dhimmis*) teem with anti-Semitic stereotypes. One chapter pointedly contrasts the political, religious, economic, and social freedoms Jews enjoyed under Muslim toleration through the ages with the gloomy plight of Arab refugees displaced by the Jewish Zionist occupation of Palestine in 1948.

In 1970, Merlin Swartz described "The Position of Jews in Arab Lands Following the Rise of Islam" in the journal *Muslim World.* Drawing on Jewish scholars, notably S. D. Goitein and Salo W. Baron, the author surveys the "new era" of tolerance for the Jews ushered in by the conquering Arabs, which led to the "eventual integration [of the Jews] into the mainstream of life in Arab-Islamic society." The twentieth century, Swartz argued, is an anomaly in Jewish–Arab relations, with anti-Jewish sentiment arising only in reaction to Zionism and its policy of usurpation—a dialectic which is "*strictly* a modern phenomenon, and one that runs counter to the time-honored Islamic tradition of fraternity and tolerance [italics in original]."

Qasim Abduh Qasim, a professor at Zagazig University in Egypt, in his 1980 study, *The Jews of Egypt from the Islamic Conquest to the Ottoman Invasion,* credited Islamic "tolerance" (*samaha* or *tasamuh*) as the source of the freedom and prosperity enjoyed by Egyptian Jewry in the Middle Ages. Such celebrations of Arab tolerance have enjoyed a growing vogue in Arab historiography since the late 1960s; they have also catalyzed what I call the "neo-lachrymose" Jewish reevaluation of the Jewish–Arab relationship. Curiously, the revisionist trend began not in Israel—where until recently the extent and nature of Arab anti-Semitism were frequently ignored or even denied—but in the Diaspora. And it began not in scholarly works but in popular forums, where the canons of historical scholarship can be largely ignored. Again, a few examples from among many will suffice.

AIPAC's widely circulated *Near East Report* began a "Myths and Facts" supplement shortly after the end of the Six Day War (August 1967) featuring a reprint of a 1946 essay by Jewish historian Cecil Roth entitled "Jews in the Arab World," which foreshadowed most of the prominent themes of later neo-lachrymose works. Roth decried the propaganda efforts of "Arabs and Christian anti-Zionists" that appropriated the nineteenth-century Jewish theme of "halcyon days under the pallid light of the Crescent [and] of purgatory in the shadow of the Cross." He countered with "a few overlooked facts" about Islamic persecution, from medieval to modern times. The Muslim regime of oppression, he said, even during the "golden age" in Spain, "often attained what might be termed occidental virulence." Commenting on the supposed "friendliness of the

Palestinian Arabs toward Jews before the arrival of the new generation of Zionists," Roth quoted a passage from a letter of a Jewish visitor to Palestine from Italy in the early sixteenth century describing the oppression and humiliation of the local Jews as well as their general belief that life under Islam was worse than under Christendom.

In 1970, Saul S. Friedman, professor of history at Youngstown State University, sounded a renewed distress signal in "The Myth of Arab Toleration," an essay published in the American Zionist monthly *Midstream.* "Current Arab propaganda," Friedman reported, "insists that the basic cause of antagonism between Jews and Arabs is political Zionism, which is depicted as a fanaticism born of European persecution that has destroyed a Middle Eastern harmony hitherto existing for a thousand years." Friedman then proceeded to catalog the "less widely known" hatred and persecution that befell Jews in Muslim lands from the very advent of Islam. In another piece published in the Labor-Zionist alliance monthly, *Jewish Frontier,* Friedman proclaimed that "Arab hostility to Jews, which has been endemic to the Middle East since the time of Muhammad," confirmed that Arabs and Jews could never live in peace in a binational state. Writing two years later in the same journal, he explained how pro-Arab apologists invoked the "fabled Semitic fraternity which existed in the Middle East till recently" in order to cover up their intense anti-Semitism.

Freelance writer Rose Lewis echoed Friedman's analysis in another piece in *Jewish Frontier* (January 1974), which excoriated Zionist propagandists for dwelling on the suffering of the Jews in Europe while ignoring Arab persecution of Jews throughout history. Making her first appearance in *Commentary* a year later, Lewis urged Israel's advocates to remember that "in the Middle East...[the Jews] have endured thirteen centuries of discrimination and persecution" and to exploit this history to argue their "right" to (as opposed to the pragmatic need for) self-determination in Israel.

Lewis debunked the "golden age" in Spain in her "Muslim Glamour and the Spanish Jews," (*Midstream,* February 1977). Taking her cues from a recent study by historian Bernard Lewis (no relation) which had noted recent Arab appropriations of the golden-age myth, she resolved to "take a harder look at the 'golden age' ... with 20th century rather than 19th century eyes." Seeking to set the record straight about Jewish florescence in Muslim Spain, Lewis complained that Jewish historians had fueled the Arab case against Israel by romanticizing the years of Arab rule. Her own version of the era featured the little-known "bloody pogrom" against the Jews of Granada, Spain in 1066, and a contemporary Arabic poem filled with nasty invective about the Jews that is thought to have triggered the massacre. "This is Muslim anti-Semitism with deep native roots and a long historical tradition," she wrote.

Martin Gilbert, the eminent biographer of Winston Churchill and chronicler of the Holocaust, took up the cause of debunking the interfaith utopia in a magazine article, "The Jews of Islam: Golden Age or Ghetto?" (*Jewish Chronicle Colour Magazine,* November 23, 1979). Interestingly, he also published a pamphlet entitled *The Jews of Arab Lands: Their History in Maps* (1975), which could only pinpoint a handful of sites for Islamic persecution of Jews in the classical period—compared to the more turbulent recent centuries. The story of Gilbert's maps thus seemed to belie the message of his writing.

An exile from Nasser's Egypt, writing under the nom de plume Bat Ye'or, published a book in French in 1980 entitled *The Oppressed in the Orient and in North Africa Since the Arab Conquest,* which draws upon primary sources to document the author's argument that Islam had visited upon Jews and Christians "thirteen centuries of sufferings and humiliations." In the preface to the book's 1988 English edition (*The Dhimmi: Jews and Christians Under Islam*), French intellectual Jacques Ellul praised what I would call the book's neo-lachrymose message—that "in many ways the dhimmi was comparable to the European serf of the Middle Ages."

Jews of Islam did not experience violence on a scale remotely approaching Jewish suffering in Western Christendom.

Journalist Joan Peters in her influential 1984 book *From Time Immemorial: The Origins of the Arab–Jewish Conflict over Palestine,* launched a provocative assault upon the demographic argument for Arab claims to the land of Palestine. In her introductory chapters, Peters presented a litany of persecutions in Jewish–Arab history and challenged Arab rhetoric of the interfaith utopia as well as the widespread view "that the Jews were, during certain periods in the Arab lands, 'better off' than they were in Christian lands of Europe."

The other major factor contributing to the rise of the neo-lachrymose conception of Jewish–Arab history—of the allegedly congenital and unrelenting Muslim persecution of the Jews of Islam—has been the progressive disclosure, especially since the late 1960s, of widespread and vehement anti-Semitism in the Arab world. Yehoshafat Harkabi was the first to reveal this hitherto ignored phenomenon to the public in newspaper articles (the first in 1965) and then in a chapter in his *Arab Attitudes to Israel,* which was completed before the Six Day War and published shortly afterward. Harkabi conceded, "It is true that the position of the Jews was much

better in the Arab countries [than in Europe]," but he also stressed that the "position of the Jews ... was not so idyllic as it is portrayed today by Arab spokesmen."

Disturbing firsthand evidence of Arab anti-Semitism was found in Arabic schoolbooks and teaching materials discovered by Israeli soldiers in Arab territories occupied in June, 1967. Pamphlets and scholarly studies helped spread the unsettling news in Israel and abroad. Not long after the war, *Jewish Frontier* presented these ominous revelations to its readership—without comment—in a page of "Quotations from Arab Schoolbooks." Mentioned again and again inside and outside Israel was the wide dissemination of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* in Arabic translation. (Like the Protocols, a good deal of modern Arab anti-Semitism has been imported from the storehouse of Western anti-Semitic literature, though it has been "Islamized" in Arab hands.) Similarly disquieting was the now-infamous speech by Egyptian President Sadat in 1972 on the occasion of the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad. Sadat condemned the Jews of Medina for acting treacherously toward the Prophet, citing this as reason to refuse to negotiate with the present-day "nation of liars and traitors, a people of plotters, a folk created for treacherous deeds," and a reason to fight the Israelis until they submitted. Rivka Yadlin has recently documented the alarming revival of anti-Semitism in publications in Egypt during the post–Peace Treaty decade in her 1988 study, *An Arrogant Oppressive Spirit: Anti-Zionism as Anti-Judaism in Egypt*.

Readers of Jewish–Arab history thus encounter two antithetical, biased, and highly charged interpretations. The Arab interpretation, describing a historical harmony that was destroyed by modern Zionism, is a distortion of history, as was its model, the idealized nineteenth-century version of Jewish–Arab relations in the Middle Ages.

The neo-lachrymose version however, is no more historically accurate than is the myth of the interfaith utopia. Indeed, it is a countermyth. It has merit in one important respect, however; it correctly challenges the premise that anachronistically ascribes to Islam in the Middle Age a modern-day conception and practice of tolerance.

Neither Christianity nor Islam exhibited tolerance toward other religions in the modern sense. Thus, the only sensible way to study the history of Jewish–Arab relations is through a comparative approach. How does the situation of the Jews of Islam compare with the European model of Jew-hatred and persecution? The historical record shows that the Jews of Islam did not experience physical violence on a scale remotely approaching Jewish suffering in Western Christendom. Nor were they victims of the kind of "irrational thinking about Jews" that Gavin I. Langmuir, the distinguished historian of Christian–Jewish relations in the Middle Ages, isolates as the essential feature of Christian anti-Semitism, exemplified in the notorious beliefs that Jews ritually crucify Christian children, use human blood and flesh in their rituals, "torture" the wafers of the Eucharist, and seek to destroy Christendom by poisoning wells.

But if greater tolerance on the part of Islam cannot explain the better lot of the Jews living under Islamic rule, what does? I can only mention, briefly and cursorily, what I think are the main reasons.

First, Islam and Christianity arose under different circumstances. Christianity sprang from Judaism and shared many of its most fundamental characteristics, including the belief in the divine message of the Hebrew Bible. Divergent interpretations of Jewish Scripture fostered continuous tension between Judaism and Christianity as Christians pored through the Hebrew Bible for testimony about Christ as Messiah and son of God, and about other Christian doctrines. In Christian belief, God had rejected the Jews in favor of the "New Israel," the community of Christian believers.

Islam considers the Hebrew Bible (as well as the New Testament) to be a massive and willful corruption of the original scripture, which had been a gift from God. Though Islam reveres many of the prophets of Israel who appear in the Qur'an, it does not base itself on the prophetic message of the Jewish Bible. Muhammad was the "seal of the prophets"—whose mission was even annunciated in the few passages in Jewish and Christian holy writ that had escaped alteration—but he was neither a Messiah, nor a deity, nor the founder of a "New Israel." Unlike Christianity, Islam did not need to establish its identity at the expense of its Jewish parent. Thus, for instance, Islamic anti-Jewish polemics pale in comparison with their Christian counterparts and even in comparison with Islamic polemics against Christianity; Christianity was more threatening on account of its trinitarian challenge to Islam's absolute monotheism and because of the proximity of Christian enemy states just beyond Islam's frontiers.

The economic role of Jews in Arab and Western societies affords another important point of contrast. In Europe and particularly in Northern Europe, the Jews occupied marginal professions in disproportionate numbers: long-distance trade in the early Middle Ages when Northern Europe was essentially rural and agrarian; money-lending later on when the new urban Christian population seized commerce for itself. This occupational marginality accentuated the alien image that already stigmatized the Jews by virtue of their religion. The Jews of Islam, in contrast, participated in a "commercial revolution" that began with the Arab conquests in the seventh century and had plenty of room for all participants. The Jews pursued a diversified mix of economic endeavors that largely integrated them into the Arab marketplace.

The Islamic economy for the most part did not impose confessional boundaries restricting members of the minority religions to certain economic activities. Nor did it have commercial and craft guilds like the ones in Europe that monopolized professions and excluded the Jews. Many Jews in the Middle East had begun to immerse themselves in commercial pursuits before the Islamic conquests. The growing Jewish mercantile elite of the medieval Arab world profited from the new Islamic expansion and attendant economic freedom to prosper in relative peace.

The Jews of Islam were subject to a host of discriminatory regulations (instituted in the so-called Pact of 'Umar), including an annual poll tax, restrictions on the building and repair of synagogues, and the requirement to wear distinctive clothing—the ancestor of the infamous "Jewish badge" introduced into Europe in the thirteenth century. But the legal status of Jews and Christians in Arab lands was quite stable. It was enshrined in religious law, which rendered it fairly immutable and subject to due process of adjudication by Muslim authorities wishing to enforce the law's stipulations—which, at least before the late Middle Ages, were largely observed in the breach, as is evidenced by their constant renewal by Islamic rulers. Indeed, for most of the period and in most places, intergroup relations were governed by certain communal social rules with movable—often permeable—boundaries that separated and distinguished rather than simply discriminated. The well known regulations in the pact of 'Umar regarding form of dress and hairstyle (for example) were intended to facilitate the proper functioning of an interethnic etiquette. These conventions, while clearly marking Jews and Christians as inferior subjects of the realm, did not arise from a drive to segregate them physically, let alone to single them out for acts of oppression and persecution, as many "neo-lachrymists" would claim.

The stability of the law concerning non-Muslims contrasts with the legal position of the Jews of Christendom. Both the canon law of the church and the "secular" law of the state dealt with the "Jewish question." The Church, led by the papacy, adhered rather tenaciously to the principle in ancient Roman law that Jews were to be protected against unwarranted violence. At the same time, the high medieval Church harshly criticized usurious Jewish exploitation of Christians and advocated segregating the much-feared Jews from their Christian neighbors. It also sanctioned interference in Jewish religious life—most notably by burning or censoring the Talmud—on the grounds that some Jewish religious literature maligned Christ or Christianity. On the other hand, the medieval Christian state protected the Jews when they were useful—especially, for example, when they filled royal treasuries with tax revenues that originated as interest payments of Christian borrowers. Ultimately, the Jews were relegated to a special and degraded legal status, totally dependent on the good graces of the secular ruler (king, emperor, baron, or municipality) who could harden or soften enforcement of "Jewry law" at will or even expel the Jews when that draconian step became desirable.

Already holding a tenuous position in the economic and legal structure of Latin Christendom, Jews were further marginalized within the social order. In the early Middle Ages, especially during the Carolingian period, barbarian rule fostered ethnic diversity—we may use the term "pluralism"—as well as the concept that law depended upon the group to which a person belonged, rather than upon the territory in which he dwelled. Pluralism and the "personality" status of law benefited the Jews as well as the host of Germanic peoples who possessed their own diverse systems of customary law that the Carolingian system was meant to accommodate. This heterogeneity evaporated after the barbarian centuries, and the notion of a universalist Catholicism replaced the more tolerant pluralism of the earlier age. The Jews, with their separate religion and separate ethnic identity, thus were considered an even more alien, nonconforming, infidel assemblage within society—quintessentially "outside," strange, and also threatening. The escalation of Christian hostility toward the Jews kindled violent persecution in the era beginning with the First Crusade in 1096 and culminating, by the middle of the twelfth century, in the emergence of an irrational antipathy, which served to reinforce and justify unrelenting, violent persecution.

The society of medieval Islam did not create an "interfaith utopia." But judged in the light of the experience of Jews in Latin Christendom, especially northern Europe, Jewish life among Muslims (before the late Middle Ages, when conditions in the Islamic world in general deteriorated) was comparatively more tolerable. Yes, a policy of discrimination and humiliation prevailed, and there were instances of violent persecution, as the partisans of the neo-lachrymose conception of Jewish–Arab history never cease to remind us. But on the whole, Jews fared better under Islam than under Christendom, and this relatively more indulgent atmosphere contributed to the thoroughgoing Jewish immersion in high Arab culture that at times truly merited the description "golden."

Each of the competing interpretations of the Jewish–Arab past serves the needs of its present-day champions. The Arab (formerly Jewish) utopian interpretation justifies Arab hostility toward Israel and, by extension, Arab anti-Semitism. The Jewish neo-lachrymose interpretation seeks to anchor Arab hatred of Israel and Jews in medieval Islam, to belie the assertion that Arabs and Jews can live side-by-side peacefully and, for many, to justify the political hard line of resisting negotiations with the Palestinians while continuing to build Greater Israel. The historical experience of Israeli Sephardim is, in this reading of history, called upon to bear witness to an eternal truth:

that the age-old Arab persecution has continued into the twentieth century, and thus makes rapprochement with the Arab world impossible.

Regrettable though it is, the bias that informs most writing today on Jewish–Arab history is, perhaps, unavoidable. Opposing parties in a conflict naturally blame each other for starting it. Arabs blame Zionism of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; Israelis and other Jews blame Islam of the seventh. True, most of the apologists for the Israeli side are not professional historians; they have assembled their knowledge of the Jewish–Arab past selectively from scholarly literature or from popular assumptions. But they reach a wide and general audience that is receptive to the contemporary political message behind their neo-lachrymose presentation of the past. By the same token, Arabs and their non-Arab sympathizers—popularizers and scholars alike—base their conception of Jewish–Arab relations in history on a myth that appeals to the political sentiments of their own readership.

Lamentably, the neo-lachrymose trend has also appeared of late in writings of professional Jewish scholars. For instance, the 1980 volume *Antisemitism Through the Ages* contains two essays by respected Israeli scholars, Haggai Ben-Shammai and Avraham Grossman, that highlight the neo-lachrymose theme of early Islam's hatred of Jews. Such scholarship may be more scientific than the output of the nonprofessionals, but its goal—to prove that Islam (like Christianity) is congenitally and inherently anti-Semitic—bespeaks the same polemical tendentiousness.

On both sides, then, historiography is being molded today by contemporary political needs rather than by careful attention to evidence. This abuse of history can only perpetuate the hostility between Jews and Israel's Arab neighbors, and should give way to more balanced and reasoned studies of the Jewish–Arab past. (Bernard Lewis's 1984 study, *The Jews of Islam,* is a welcome start.) History normally has little to say about the future. But I believe that the objective story of Jewish–Arab relations in the past suggests that partisans of both the interfaith utopia and the neo-lachrymose school will, like the political constituencies they seek to represent or at least convince, have to come to terms with a history whose facts do not neatly correspond with ideological preference. □

Myth, Countermyth, and Distortion

Norman A. Stillman

In his account of recent trends in Jewish–Arab historiography, Mark Cohen examines two exaggerated views of Jewish history under Arab rule. The older of these myths concerns the well-known "golden age," a myth first propagated by the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* school in Germany and Central Europe by men such as Heinrich Graetz, Moritz Steinschneider, and Leopold Zunz. Following the distinguished Middle Eastern historian Bernard Lewis, Cohen rightly points out that this myth has been taken up by Arab polemicists who have developed it into a vision of an interfaith utopia (and—it should also be noted—by Westerners sympathetic to the Arab side of the Middle East conflict) that serves as a "vindication of contemporary Arab politics." I would add that for the polemicist the golden-age myth highlights the irony of the injustice done to the Palestinians and the ingratitude of Jews toward their former protectors and appears to prove coexistence possible in a future state under the aegis of Islam. This myth is all the more powerful because it stems from respected Jewish scholarship.

The other myth Cohen examines is the very antithesis of the first, a countermyth that views Jewish history under Arab Islam as fourteen centuries of intolerance and persecution. Cohen dubs this view the "neo-lachrymose" myth. It clearly seems to disturb him far more than its opposite. According to Cohen the revisionist neo-lachrymose perspective "began not in Israel ... but in the Diaspora, and in popular forums, rather than in scholarly studies." Oddly, he finds this state of affairs curious. I say because almost no serious professional scholar of Jewish history under Islam, whether in Israel or the Diaspora, holds to either of these opposing myths. Most of the examples Cohen cites are the works of relatively unknown, unprofessional, or undistinguished individuals (even Martin Gilbert, the sole exception, is not a professional historian of the Middle East by any stretch of the imagination). This body of work is certainly not taken seriously by the aca-

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demic community nor, I suspect, by the educated reading public. Studies such as S. D. Goitein's *Jews and Arabs: Their Contacts Through the Ages* and my own *The Jews of Arab Lands: A History and Source Book* offer together with Lewis's *The Jews of Islam* (cited by Cohen), a powerful antidote to the misleading impressions that a few polemical articles and tracts may give.

Cohen's surprise at the nonscholarly nature of most of these neo-lachrymose writings seems rather naive. Is it really that curious that one group of propagandists should be answered by another? Hardly, but Cohen has other concerns. The neo-lachrymose trend, he asserts, has spread beyond the relatively confined atmosphere of lobbying groups such as the World Organization of Jews from Arab Countries (WOJAC)—which was established as a counter to Palestinian groups—and of polemical pamphleteers like Bat Ye'or. This woeful countermyth has been adopted by the Sephardim in Israel "to demonstrate that they, too, suffered at the hands of gentiles in the Diaspora and hence are entitled to a larger share of the fruits of Jewish independence." He cites Yossi Yonah, a young Sephardic activist, to support his view, as though Yonah were some sort of historical authority on the Judeo-Arab past. There is considerable irony here. Cohen reproaches the neo-lachrymose school's lack of academic professionalism. Yet he himself cites a nonprofessional like Yonah to corroborate his point of view.

Even more regrettable, in Cohen's view, is the way that the neo-lachrymose trend has infiltrated some scholarly works. Here Cohen makes passing reference to essays by Haggai Ben-Shammai and Avraham Grossman in a volume entitled *Antisemitism Through the Ages* and published by the Shazar Center for the Study of Jewish History (Jerusalem, 1980). I would agree that these articles concentrate on negative aspects of the history of Jews in Arab and Islamic lands, but after all, the theme of the volume is anti-Judaism in different historical periods and settings. Indeed, Grossman at the outset of his essay points out that the Jews of the Islamic world fared much better than their coreligionists in medieval Christian Europe did. This is the very same point that Cohen himself makes, albeit with a different emphasis.

Cohen is badly mistaken in thinking that hardline attitudes of many Sephardic Jews in Israel vis-à-vis their government's policies concerning the Palestinians are not rooted "in accurate historical memory." On the contrary, it is very much a consequence of their *memoire collective.* In order to understand this fact, we must review a few of the main lines of the fourteen-hundred-year-long Jewish history in the Arab world.

The years between 800 and 1250 were the heyday of Jewish life in the Arab world. Jewish culture developed and flourished at the very time that medieval Islamic civilization was at its apogee. During this time Islamic civilization was an amalgam of diverse forces that included Islamic religion, Arab culture (strongly rooted in pre-Islamic tradition), Hellenistic humanism, and subtle remnants of the ancient heritage of the Near East. For these four centuries, Greek humanism and Islam's own universalist tendencies combined with a dynamic mercantile economy to produce a relatively open society. More often than not, Muslims and non-Muslims could participate in the life of this society, if not on an entirely equal footing, at least with near equality in those spheres of activity that were not specifically religious: in the marketplace, in certain scientific and intellectual circles and, to an extent, in the civil service. During these years, the harshest and most humiliating discriminatory Islamic laws for the *dhimmis*—that is, the tolerated non-Muslims—could often be ignored. Outright persecution of Jews or other non-Muslims was in general rare at this time, but there was always the possibility that it would be revived. At the whim of a ruler, the strictest interpretations of the sumptuary laws, which required *dhimmis* to wear identifying dress, ride sideways on pack saddles, have different hairstyles, and otherwise be distinguished from Muslims, could be—and at times were—rigorously enforced. Fanatic sectarian regimes sometimes instituted genuine persecutions, as under the Fatimid Caliph al-Hakim in early eleventh-century Egypt and the Levant; under the Almohads in twelfth-century North Africa and Spain; or under the Shiite Imam of Yemen, Abd al-Nabi ibn Mahdi in the 1160s. Preachers and religious reformers were always on hand to whip up popular sentiment against what were perceived to be serious violations of the code prescribed by Islamic law for *dhimmis,* such as dressing too well, building homes higher than Muslim homes, building new houses of worship, or, in the case of some individuals, rising too high in the bureaucracy. Islamic tolerance was a two-sided coin—and to the credit of the medieval Arabic-speaking world, the brighter, more humane side was turned up for more than four hundred years.

These are the years Cohen, a medieval historian of Jewish–Arab relations, knows best, and they are clearly his point of reference. Jewish history in the Arabic-speaking world, however, continued for another seven hundred years. Things changed.

The spiritual, social, and economic climate of the Muslim world was profoundly transformed during the thirteenth century. Military disasters, economic decline, and disease increased as the secular and humanistic tendencies of the Hellenistic component of Islamic civilization waned. These developments, along with the growth of religious obscurantism and domination by non-Arab military elites such as Turks and Mongols, created a far less tolerant environment for non-Muslim peoples. With the notable exception of the Ottoman revival of the sixteenth century, the later Middle Ages and early modern times were far more difficult years for the Jews of the Islamic

world. The laws of *ghiyar* (differentiation) were enforced with greater consistency and vigor than they had been in earlier times. In Mamluk Egypt, non-Muslims wore specially colored outer garments to identify them with their confessional community. *Dhimmis* had to wear a distinctive metal neck ring when visiting the public baths so that even undressed they could not be mistaken for Muslims. Jews were required to take humiliating oaths in courts reminiscent of the Europe's notorious *More Judaico* oath. In Morocco, Jews were compelled to walk barefoot when passing a mosque or when in the streets of imperial cities. They also had to wear garments of black, the symbolic antithesis of the believers' white. Outbursts of popular violence against non-Muslims became far more common during this period. Over the centuries, Jews throughout the Muslim world found themselves increasingly confined by law or custom to overcrowded ghetto-like quarters, called by various names—the *Mellah* in Morocco, the *Qa'at al-Yahud* in Yemen, and the *Harat al-Yahud* in most other places. European travelers of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries unanimously reported an overall debasement of the Jews living in much of the Muslim world. The Italian Jewish poet and traveler Samuel Romanelli, who spent four years among his coreligionists in Morocco in the late eighteenth century, describes them as "oppressed, miserable creatures, having neither the mouth to answer an Arab, nor the cheek to raise their head." The Englishman Edward William Lane, who lived in Cairo during the 1820s and 1830s and was a keen and sympathetic observer of native life, depicted the Jews of Egypt as being "held in the utmost contempt and abhorrence by Muslims in general."

In Morocco, Jews were compelled to walk barefoot when passing a mosque or when in the streets of imperial cities.

By the dawn of the nineteenth century, the vast majority of Middle Eastern and North African Jewry—like the vast majority of the Muslim populace—was poor, and this remained true well into the twentieth century. For example, in 1910, a report from the British Consulate in Baghdad described 60 percent of the Jews there as poor and another 5 percent as "beggars." In addition to their poverty, moreover, Jews had to bear the burden of social isolation, inferiority, and general opprobrium.

It is little wonder, then, that in the early modern period many *dhimmis,* both Jews and Christians, were only too eager to link their destinies to the forces of European mercantilism and imperialism then beginning to penetrate the Muslim world. Well into the twentieth century, Jews and most native Christians viewed the growing economic, political, and cultural intrusion of the West as an opportunity to be liberated from their traditional humble and subordinate status as *dhimmis,* so rigorously imposed upon them for the past half a millennium. Increased European penetration into Arab affairs meant that the traditional Islamic norms would be weakened—a change that could only benefit the *dhimmis.* They had little reason to be loyal to their traditional masters.

For many centuries non-Muslims in the Islamic world had already served as intermediaries between Muslims and European commercial interests in the Middle East and North Africa. (This relationship was perfectly in keeping with Islamic sentiment that *dhimmis* were eminently suited to the disagreeable but vital task of maintaining prolonged contact with foreign infidels.) In the nineteenth century, Jews and Christians in the Islamic world began to take advantage of the protection these ties might afford them under trade agreements with the West that granted foreigners extraterritorial rights that included special tax exemptions, the right to their own law courts, freedom from the vagaries of the native legal system.

Also during the nineteenth century, Jews and Christians eagerly began to avail themselves of the benefits of a modern European education as various cultural and religious missionaries flocked into the Middle East and North Africa. At first, native non-Muslims were primarily interested in learning foreign languages that were useful for commercial dealings with Europeans. Before long, however, they came to accept the outer trappings of westernization with greater ease and far less hesitation than did most Muslims, who harbored a deeply ingrained suspicion and even hostility toward the ever-intrusive "Franks" (as Europeans were called) and the modernizing efforts of the *Mutafarnajun* ("those who act like Franks"), the small westernized Muslim elite.

From the 1860s onward, the Paris-based Alliance Israélite Universelle served as the main propagator of the French language and European-style education among Middle Eastern and North African Jewry from Morocco to Iraq. The Alliance gave Jews a new self-image, new expectations, and a new sense of international Jewish solidarity. It produced cadres of westernized native Jews who possessed a distinct advantage of opportunity over the largely uneducated Muslim masses as the Islamic world was being drawn ineluctably into the modern world economic system. Though not an official agent of French imperialism, the Alliance fostered Jewish identification with France and French culture; the native Jewish population thus grew steadily more receptive to French colonialism in the Maghreb and Syria—and to a strong European presence generally.

It cannot be overemphasized that the Jewish population of the Arab world was strongly receptive to colonial-

ism prior to the advent of the Alliance. The Jews of Algeria on the whole welcomed the French invasion in 1830, and by the time that the Crémieux Decree granted French citizenship to the region's Jews in 1870, they had already assimilated considerably to Western culture even without the Alliance's assistance.

In virtually every Arab country, the local Jews—except for a few well-placed individuals—had no vested interest in the old social and political order, and welcomed European occupation as preferable to indigenous rule. This hardly seems to be the sort of behavior of people who are happy with their lot. In 1918, only a week after Armistice Day, the Jewish community of Baghdad presented a petition on behalf of Iraqi Jewry to the Civil Commissioner of Baghdad. The signatories requested to become British subjects and opposed the promotion of any "native" (that is, Arab) government which, as the document diplomatically put it, though "excellent in principle," would in reality be "hardly recommendable." The petition stated unequivocally that

> A local government in accord with the desire of the local majority cannot but bear a very strong theocratical character due to the dominance of religious feelings which are unconciliable with the idea of giving to alien confessions any sort of privilege or rights.

The Jewish community of Baghdad presented similar appeals over the next two years, as did the native Christians, all to no avail. Even before Zionism had become a factor in Arab–Jewish relations, the historical memory of the non-Islamic Arab communities was quite different from what some might have expected. The Jews needed no coaching from Zionists: like the native Christians, they recognized that they were defined as legal and social inferiors. They did not compare their lot with that of the Jews of the Rhineland at the time of the Crusader massacres, or with that of Spanish Jewry at the time of the Inquisition, or with Eastern European Jewry during the Cossack pogroms. They saw it as it was and as it had been for several centuries, and they acted accordingly.

The choices they made were to prove their undoing. The Muslim Arab majority deeply resented their foreign ties, Western acculturation, and economic prosperity. While most Jews and Christians greeted the advent of Western hegemony as a sign of benevolent progress and liberation, most Muslims saw it as quite the opposite. Arab Muslims saw the colonial incursions of the West as an attack upon their traditions, their social order, and indeed their very independence, and they too reacted accordingly.

Tensions between the *dhimmi* communities and the Arab majority ran high in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Numerous outbreaks of violence against non-Muslims bore witness to these mounting tensions. In Baghdad, Mosul, and many other parts of Iraq, anti-Christian and anti-Jewish riots occurred on both a small and large scale. The mere rumor of one was enough to throw local non-Muslims into a state of panic. In Syria, interreligious tensions reached a peak with the massacre of some five thousand Christians in Damascus in 1860. Throughout this period, letters from all over the Middle East and North Africa detailing injustices and abuses streamed into the headquarters of Alliance Israélite Universelle and the Board of Deputies of British Jews. The "pogroms" described in these appeals were not solely anti-Jewish, but part of a general lawlessness of the period in which weak groups—and in particular non-Muslims—were especially vulnerable targets. This does not mean, however, that contemporary events were causing Jews to falsely revise their historical memories; rather, their generally accurate collective memory sometimes caused them to misinterpret contemporary events.

Of course, Zionism and Arab nationalism did eventually enter into the picture. Zionism made modest, but not insignificant, inroads in most of the Arab world's major urban Jewish communities in the decade and a half before World War I. And in the wake of the Balfour Declaration, the Allied victory, and the San Remo Conference, Zionism aroused considerable popular enthusiasm. However, this initial ardor soon died down. Francophile assimilationism in North Africa, the opposition of colonial authorities in many places, and the growth of a region-wide Arab nationalist opposition by the mid-1930s all contributed to Zionism's waning appeal. Despite such obstacles, Ze'ev Jabotinsky's militant brand of Zionism enjoyed widespread popularity among the Jewish Zionists of the Arab world even before he officially founded the Revisionist movement in 1925. In fact the Iraqi Zionists requested that he represent them in 1921 at the twelfth Zionist Congress. In Tunisia, which had the largest and most active Zionist federation in any Arab country, Revisionists won an overwhelming vote in communal elections in 1927 and represented Tunisia at every Zionist Congress until 1935. It thus appears that hard-line attitudes of the Sephardim in Israel go back much further than Cohen imagines.

Cohen completely fails to understand the historical evolution of the mind-set of so many of Israel'sOriental Jews, and he gives a mistaken account of both their recent and long-term historical memory. In fact, Sephardic activists such as Yossi Yonah more characteristically espouse the golden-age myth as an apologetic response to both real and imagined discrimination by Ashkenazim in Israel. Oriental Jews had not voiced the hard-line position earlier primarily because they were still in a state of combined shock and euphoria and were struggling like everyone else to adapt and make a place for themselves in their environment. In no small measure, they also refrained from advancing more conservative views be-

cause all of Israeli life was so thoroughly dominated by the Labor Party. Once they became more self-confident and assertive, they became a natural constituency for the right-wing Likud.

Cohen also fails to consider the tremendous impact of Arab nationalism upon the thinking of Oriental Jewry. Nowhere, with the notable exception of liberal Egypt, were Jewish groups, or even individuals, a strong presence in the nationalist movements that mushroomed in the Arab world at the end of World War I. This was not because of Zionism—although in North Africa it certainly had much to do with colonialism—but because the strong pan-Arab or pan-Islamic coloring of these movements held little attraction for those who had traditionally been the humblest of the *dhimmis*. (Some Christian Arabs, by contrast, who were more assimilated into Arab literary culture, did identify with a secular pan-Arabism for reasons that parallel the identification of many Jews with Communism in Eastern Europe: namely, that secular universalist movements offered their best chance of integration into the society at large.) Nationalist promises of equality and justice were never given any real credence by the Jews in Arab countries: their collective memory gave them serious pause. In a great historical irony, it was the militancy of Arab nationalism combined with the broken promises of their colonial masters that finally pushed the majority of Oriental Jews toward a Zionist solution.

On one point, Cohen is correct. The vehement anti-Semitism in the Arab world does not go back in its present form to the medieval period. It is a modern European import, spread at first among Syrian and Egyptian Christians by their European (mainly French) mentors in the nineteenth century. The local Christians in turn disseminated anti-Semitism more widely through books and the Arab press. Anti-Semitism only began to make headway in Muslim circles when nationalists adopted it in the 1920s and 1930s as a polemic weapon against Zionism and against the conspicuous overachievement of the Jews under colonialism. It gained still more currency as Arabs turned in increasing numbers to German national socialism and Italian fascism as powerful alternative models to the democratic liberalism of British and French colonial powers.

One is finally led to ask the inescapable question: what was Cohen's purpose in writing this piece? The obvious answer is that he wished to strike a balance between a myth and its countermyth. In another article, "Islam and the Jews: Myth, Counter-Myth, History," (*The Jerusalem Quarterly*, 1986) he does so somewhat more successfully. Here, however, he fails. He fails because, as I have attempted to outline above, he does not take account of the region's history in the later Middle Ages, early modern, and modern times. But there is a more serious problem here. In countering the countermyth—which is the real object of his discontent—he offers a subtle form of the original myth. He contrasts the best aspects of one history with the worst aspects of another. He insists that "the only sensible way to study the history of Jewish–Arab relations is through a comparative approach." He then compares Islamic tolerance to Christian tolerance. Here the observations of Bernard Lewis in *The Jews of Islam* are particularly instructive and germane:

> What indeed do we mean by tolerance? In dealing with such subjects there is an inevitable tendency to assess and evaluate by comparison. If we speak of tolerance in Islam, we shall soon find ourselves measuring tolerance in Islam against tolerance in other societies—in Christendom, in India, in the Far East, or perhaps in the modern West. This is a form of comparison much cultivated by polemicists of various factions.

I would add that Cohen has failed to deal with the history of the Jews in the Arab world on its own terms. In so doing he has distorted and oversimplified it. He has set up a straw man by contrasting the best aspects of Jewish life under Arab Islam with the worst under European Christendom, granting only as a barely audible aside: "Yes, a policy of discrimination and humiliation prevailed, and there were instances of violent persecution, as the partisans of the neo-lachrymose conception of Jewish–Arab history never cease to remind us." Furthermore, he simply ignores more than seven hundred years of history.

Perhaps worst of all, Cohen leaves the reader totally unaware of a rich, balanced, and deeply textured literature in Jewish–Arab history that is aimed at both the scholarly and the educated reading public. General publishers as well as university presses and houses specializing in Judaica publish a wide range of balanced responsible studies of the history and culture of the Jews of the Arab world. Cohen does a disservice by focusing upon a few propagandists who have little credibility. Although he alludes in passing to the existence of a scholarly literature on the subject, he gives the impression that it is perhaps unavailable or unreadable for most people but also implies that some of it, too, is being infected with the neo-lachrymose virus.

Whether or not one holds with the hard-line views of many of the Sephardim in Israel—and I for one do not—one has to understand that it is their generally accurate historical memory that has informed their politics. Myths and countermyths hinder any sober assessment of the past and so do distortions—even well-meaning ones. It is only through a dispassionate look at "what really happened," to use the phrase of Leopold von Ranke, the founder of modern history, that we can come to terms with history, face the present, and move on to the future. □

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Secular Longing, Sacred Lyric: Medieval Poetry of the Synagogue

Raymond P. Scheindlin

It has long been known that the Hebrew poets of tenth- to thirteenth-century Spain acquired from the Arabs a taste for both poetry and the good life, and that the new secular Hebrew poetry of love and pleasure they created was based on Arabic models. What is not so well known is that Hebrew poets borrowed elements from Arabic poetry for use in the synagogue as well.

Arabic love poetry was actually quite easy to adapt to religious themes, because it could give voice to Israel's discomfort as a nation of exiles. Arabic love poetry is primarily a poetry not of fulfillment but of frustration; the poet nearly always represents himself as separated from his beloved, longing to be reunited with her. His companions mock him for his devotion. But his beloved is perfect; she bestows life and death with the glances of her eye. He gladly subjugates himself to her, to the point that he is even prepared to accept death at her hands if she decrees it.

All of these motifs were easily allegorized. The precedent for such allegory was well established in the synagogue; the Song of Songs, originally a love poem, had for centuries been understood as dealing with the history of God's romance with Israel and Israel's with God. Nothing was more natural for the synagogue poets of Arabic-speaking Spain than to extend the allegory to the secular love poetry of their contemporaries. Accordingly, the frustrated lover became Israel, separated from God through the exile and longing to be reunited with Him. Though mocked by the nations of the world for her steadfastness, Israel remains loyal to her love, and gladly submits to His will, for He is the perfect one, who bestows life and death. And of course, if He demands martyrdom of her, she is prepared for that too.

In the following poem, Judah Halevi adopts the extreme submissiveness of the lover in order to express the attitude of his people to their exile.

From time's beginning, You were love's abode.
My love encamped wherever it was You tented.
The taunts of foes for Your name's sake are sweet.
So let them torture one whom You tormented.
I love my foes, for they learned wrath from You,
For they pursue a corpse whom You have slain.
The day You hated me I loathed myself,
For I will honor none whom You disdain.
Until Your anger pass, and You restore
This people whom You rescued once before.

The poem opens with allusions to a number of conventions of Arabic love poetry: like the Bedouin lovers in ancient poems the lover is encamped in the desert; and the taunts of the foes are a routine convention of courtly Arabic love poetry. True lovers in Arabic poetry enjoy being berated for their infatuation; this gives them the opportunity to display their defiance and, as in line three above, to hear the name of the beloved repeatedly mentioned.

Israel remains loyal to her love, and gladly submits to His will, for He is the perfect one, who bestows life and death.

Into this conventional framework Halevi has introduced a radical statement of Israel's attitude toward herself. Israel understands her subjugation as a punishment for her earlier sins. She accepts God's judgment. She so identifies her own will with His that she has ceased actively even to long for redemption. She embraces her suffering, embraces even the hatred of herself that constitutes her punishment. She loves the enemy who does God's will by punishing her.

In his theological treatise known as the Kuzari, Halevi declared that the Jews ought to accept exile so they could, as God willed, expiate their past sins. But in this poem, Israel goes beyond merely accepting subjugation; she internalizes the very attitude of the oppressor toward herself. The implication is that the appropriate mood for hated and rejected Israel is self-hatred and self-rejection. Nowhere else in medieval Hebrew literature on the national problem do we encounter this extreme, paradoxical self-denial and identification with God to such degree.

Raymond Scheindlin is professor of medieval Hebrew literature and former provost of the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York. This article is adapted from his forthcoming The Gazelle: Medieval Hebrew Poems on God, Israel, and the Soul *(Jewish Publications Society, 1991).*

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The lover who identifies so strongly with his beloved that he adopts her rejection of himself is a theme that made its way from Arabic into Hebrew secular love poetry. Ibn Tsadiq's

> Since he hates me, I also hate myself;
> False wisdom it is to love what the fawn despises

resembles the work of Ibn Zaidun, one of the greatest Hispano-Arabic poets of this period, who said of his beloved, Wallada, "I love my enemies because you are one of them" and, "If you were to say to me 'die' I would not say 'no'."

In fact, the debts run deeper than mere imitation. Astonishingly, the Halevi poem above is largely a translation. Its first eight lines were originally written by an eighth-century Arabic poet, abu al-Shis, as a secular love poem. Thus Halevi did not actually compose the poem but rather translated it from Arabic into Hebrew, adding lines nine and ten to adapt it for religious purposes. It is thus not merely a translation from Arabic into Hebrew, but a translation from the secular to the religious.

But Halevi was not the first to see the religious potential of this poem. Sufi masters had long made use of secular Arabic love poetry to express religious ideas. A Sufi master named al-Murta'ish (tenth century), when asked how to achieve love of God, replied, "By loving His friends and hating His enemies." He then had the poem of abu al-Shis recited as a kind of poetic proof text. The poem is quoted also by the Spanish Sufi writer Ibn al-'Arif, a contemporary of Halevi's. Thus a secular Arabic poem has worked its way, probably via Sufism, into the most intimate religious institution of Judaism, the synagogue liturgy.

Had Halevi's poem employed the hyperbolic, violent language of some of the poetry of frustrated secular love, it might have been too grotesque to be convincing; but its uncomfortable message is pitched in a low-key, even tone. Poetic imagery is not prominent, and there are no outcries or high-flown language. Instead of mimetic evocations of mood there are plain statements of emotional facts: the speaker loves God, and therefore he loves his own enemies. In the craft of medieval Hebrew poetry, with its penchant for imagery and rhetorical decoration, these unadorned statements might have come across as understated, almost unpoetic. Even the logically climactic statement, "The day you hated me I loathed myself," is rhetorically undermined by the negative reasoning of the complementary clause, "For I will honor none whom You disdain." The words are words of self-loathing, but the tone is the tone of passive acceptance of God's will. Such cultivated passivity is Halevi's characteristic religious posture; the apparent discrepancy between tone and content makes its expression here especially effective.

Halevi's depiction of the love of one's oppressor and the hatred of one's self has a cultural, as well as a religious, significance. This poem—in its form, its themes, its content, its very origin—is a product of the Arabic culture that even many pillars of the Jewish community adopted in golden age Spain. Thus Israel in Halevi's poem loves her enemies not merely by embracing the enemy's attitude toward herself but by embracing the enemy's culture as well. This secondary thought runs in the opposite direction from Israel's declaration of loyalty to God, which gives the poem its forward motion. It presages the criticism that Halevi would level later in his career against the syncretic culture of the golden age. Thus the speaker's boast of his religious self-renunciation is couched in language that hints at cultural self-criticism. The speaker's religious self-assurance is undermined by his cultural ambivalence.

Unexpected as Halevi's idea of Israel's self-denial and self-contempt is, in a way it's true to the emotions of a tolerated minority. Even minorities who enjoy sufficient toleration to be able to create a "golden age" for themselves may, like those minorities who suffer economic misery and cultural deprivation, lose their sense of self-worth. Once we become accustomed to the thought, it may even seem surprising that there are so few works in Hebrew literature that internalize and adopt the oppressive attitudes of the dominant culture. □

Mirrors of Memory: The Poetry of Abraham Sutzkever

Benjamin Harshav

Abraham Sutzkever, one of the great Yiddish poets, was born near Vilna in 1913 and spent his early childhood in Siberia before returning to Vilna in 1920. He grew up in the atmosphere of this bustling Jewish "Jerusalem of Lithuania" between the two World Wars. He lived through the Holocaust years, was active as a writer in the Vilna ghetto (1941–1943), and helped save Jewish cultural treasures from the Germans. With a group of partisans, he went out to the forests and, in March 1944, was flown out of German-occupied territory to Moscow. In 1947, he immigrated illegally to Israel, and became Israel's foremost Yiddish poet.

In 1948, Sutzkever founded in Tel Aviv the Yiddish literary quarterly Di goldene keyt *(The Golden Chain), which, one hundred thirty issues later, he still edits. The major periodical of worldwide Yiddish literature, it published the surviving writers scattered throughout Europe, the Americas, the Soviet Union, and Israel. Sutzkever has received many awards, including the literary prize of the Vilna Ghetto Writers' Union and the prestigious Israel Prize.*

Abraham Sutzkever is one of the great poets of the twentieth century. The language of his poetry—the profound sound orchestration and the metaphorical and mythopoeic imagery—is as dense, unmediated, and suggestive as that in the poetry of Mandelstam or Rilke. And his responses to historical reality are as sharp as any in the verse of Brecht. The paradoxical amalgam of these two extremes of twentieth-century poetry—self-focused poetic language and ideological *engagement*—is successful in Sutzkever's work because both are presented through the events of the poet's own biography. As he himself observed dryly, in a retrospective poem written at the age of seventy-five:

> Inside me, a twig of sounds sways toward me, as before.
> Inside me, rivers of blood are not a metaphor.

The twig of sounds is as tangible as the rivers of blood, both are swaying inside him as a budding branch in the spring; there is no ambivalence, but one, entwined, double source of poetic energy.

Three magic circles enclose Sutzkever's poetry, making it difficult for the contemporary reader to see his greatness: the all-but-obscured, rich, literary Yiddish language; the misleadingly private Jewish Holocaust; and his terrifying and exhilarating biography.

Sutzkever came to Yiddish literature at a moment of populist excitement with the earthy, idiomatic, folksy, often coarse, spoken Yiddish language. Yiddish was idealized in literature at the turn of the century by the satirical realist Mendele and the tragicomic imitator Sholem Aleichem, and later was reborn in the Expressionist poetry and fiction of the 1920s and the social realism of the thirties. In this context, Sutzkever strove to create in Yiddish exquisite aesthetic objects, as refined as music, as colorful and unreal as Expressionist nature painting, as rich and precise as the language of the Vilna Yiddish Scientific Institute. Sutzkever is an incomparable virtuoso of meter, rhyme, strophic forms, and ever-changing dynamic rhythmical patterns. These forms may seem obsolete to the contemporary English ear, but are nevertheless essential to much of Russian or German modern poetry. His is a "neoclassical modernism," which combines well-crafted strophes with a modernist metaphorical poetic language and "unreal," mythopoeic fictional worlds.

Mallarmé said that a poet is not one who invents new words but one who invents new places for words. Sutzkever did both. But the unmistakable precision and freshness of Sutzkever's Yiddish verse require a reader who can appreciate the rich, multilingual, and multilayered context of "literary" Yiddish and, at the same time, savor the effects of modernist poetry.

Sutzkever is the great poet of the Holocaust. In his poetry, the Holocaust becomes a parable of the unbelievable times of this century, of human nature and dignity, of the puzzles of existence and the palpable reality of extinction, and—through all this—of the beauty of observation, consciousness, and language. The Holocaust dyes all

(Continued on p. 91)

This article is adapted from Benjamin Harshav's introduction to A. Sutzkever: Selected Poetry and Prose, *translated by Barbara and Benjamin Harshav, from which the poems that appear below are also taken (© University of California , 1991). Benjamin Harshav (Hrushovski) is Blaustein Professor of Hebrew and Comparative Literature at Yale University. He was the founder and editor of* Ha-Sifrut *and* Poetics Today. *His recent publications include* The Meaning of Yiddish *(University of California, 1990) and (with Barbara Harshav) a translation of Yehuda Amichai's poetry,* Even a Fist Was Once an Open Palm with Fingers *(Harper Collins, 1991). Barbara Harshav's most recent translation is* Jewish Memories, *by L. Valensi and N. Wachtel (University of California, 1991).*

FICTION

Hot Peppers

Lorraine Lachs

I am embarrassed by my parents. Past sixty, both of them, they still come on very sexy in public—to each other and everyone else—no matter how humiliating it is to me. With a married son and two grandchildren, not to mention me, a daughter on the far side of forty, you would think they would know how to behave themselves. I don't know if it's the surgery or the health food or the hormones or the hair dyes and skin creams, but they seem to tap dance up and down staircases like Fred and Ginger when other people their age grab the railing so that they don't trip and wind up with hip replacements. If you ask me, it's inappropriate and unseemly, positively unnatural. But nobody is asking me. They never have, least of all my mother and father, inconsiderate of my feelings always.

So I just grin—my best friend, Joan, says I grimace—and bear it when my father rests his hand on my mother's ass in full view of a dozen people, or when one of my own friends looks into my father's eyes like he's Gorbachev or Paul Newman or the reincarnation of Buddha—whom he in no way resembles I can assure you—if he pays the least bit of attention to her. I try not to think about it, but I wouldn't be altogether shocked to drop by their house on a Tuesday afternoon—not that they invite me all that much—and find one of my friends in the sack with my father while my mother was away at her tennis lesson.

When I complain about my absurd parents to Joan, she tells me that I should be grateful that they're so lively and attractive. She's always one up on me because her mother has Alzheimer's and is in a nursing home. In her most sanctimonious tone, which irritates me so much I can almost hear my teeth grinding, she says things like:

"Harriet, you should see my mother, sitting there slack-jawed in front of the TV, except on Wednesday. That's when the recreational therapist comes to help her make pot holders though it's plain to see the poor woman would scald herself to death if she ever got near a stove again. Then you'd be grateful for what you've got. You just don't know how lucky you are."

She's right, but you might as well compare vinegar and champagne as compare our parents. Well, maybe not quite. Her father's got a few aches and pains, pretty healthy though, gets around, goes to work. Still has all his marbles, no doubt about it, but does that stop Joan from complaining about him too? I should say not.

"My poor dad is so lonely and unhappy," she says, as if I don't know that it's no fun to have your wife tucked up in a nursing home, loony half the time, not recognizing you even though you slept in the same bed for forty-two years, mad as hell the other half of the time, coming at you like a wild shot when she does know who you are, heaving right into your face the battery-operated radio that you bought to make her happy. I have tried to be patient with Joan because I appreciate the way she stuck by me when I was going through the divorce with Jerry ... even going so far as to sleep over when I was in the throwing-up stage. You'd have thought I was having a baby instead of losing a husband. Of course, Joan understood because she'd been through it all with Carl ... and no kids to show for it either. So I always listen to her complaints, more often I might add than she listens to mine, but at least she doesn't have to deal with what's abnormal. Her parents are getting old and sick like they're supposed to. What are mine doing? Jazz exercise and low-fat gourmet cooking classes, as if being a few pounds overweight was some kind of crime. Why don't they just relax and be normal? A few extra pounds never killed anyone. Look at me.

The last time we talked about our parents, day before yesterday it was, on the telephone Saturday after breakfast, Joan was washing and blocking her cotton sweaters in the morning and going to her weekly visit to her mother in the afternoon. I don't know what came over me, but I asked her right out why she bothered to go if her mother didn't recognize her most of the time. She sounded huffy and mean when she answered, like Roseanne on television, but not funny. "Because she's my mother and I love her."

I could tell she was angry with me—most people can't take it when you tell them the truth—so I said I was just being realistic, she shouldn't be offended. To change the

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subject, I started talking about my parents, about how they made such fools of themselves trying to be different all the time, younger than they really are, flying off to Costa Rica at the drop of a hat when everyone else their age took winter vacations in Florida or Arizona, not even taking care of my brother's kids when he and Ilene wanted to spend three weeks in Europe by themselves. Any sensible grandparents would have leapt at the chance. Nobody knows better than I do how selfish Ralph can be, but he is their son and right is right.

"Joanie," I said, "I am bewildered. I don't understand how people's attitudes can have changed so much since we were kids. Why can't people get old gracefully any more, get sick without causing anyone too much trouble, and then just die?"

I could tell Joan didn't really know what to say to that, but she managed to sputter, "Harriet, sometimes you say things I know you can't possibly mean." I knew that was her way of giving me her all too frequent disapproval without telling me right out, but I meant exactly what I said and I don't care who's offended. Before I could answer back, she did one of her quick subject switches. As if she were talking about getting her hair color changed, she said, "I'm getting married again."

Well that shut me up. I literally could not speak ... racking my brain as I was to figure out who she could possibly be marrying. After all, we tell each other everything ... at least I thought we did right up to that particular moment. I could tell she was waiting for me to say something. Finally I recovered my breath enough to say, "Who's the lucky man?" When she said, "Stanley," I must have blown her ear off shouting, "No, I don't believe you."

As if she were teaching a first-grader a lesson in arithmetic, Joan spoke to me slowly, but in a voice so low I had trouble hearing her. "Frankly, I'm tired of being alone. A movie star Stanley is not, but I can count on him. He will be my best friend."

What did she think I was? We used to joke about how he was the most boring man alive, how he could put you to sleep standing up when he wasn't regaling you with the revelation that he couldn't eat in Mexican restaurants because the beans gave him gas. Joan was only hanging on to him so she could go out once in a while after Carl ditched her for a twenty-eight-year-old computer programmer who wore short skirts and had legs that made you want to peek. Anyway, that was what she'd always said.

It seldom happens, but I was truly at a loss for words. What was I supposed to say? "Congratulations, you can wake up next to a lump like Stanley Weissbrod for the rest of your life." But I couldn't just hang up after she'd laid such a heavy trip on me. Finally, I said, "I truly hope the two of you will be very happy."

Instead of being gracious and accepting my good wishes, she blurted out, "Got to go now. Stan's driving me to see Mom in a couple of hours and I haven't had breakfast yet." Then she hung up as if nobody was listening at the other end. I said to myself, but out loud, "Well, that's that."

I knew I was kind of rattled by Joan's news—not disappointed, mind you, I am never disappointed in anyone, not expecting much in the first place—because I found myself dialing my home telephone number. I don't know why I call it home when it's really just the house I grew up in. I've had my own apartment for years, even before I was married to Jerry and then after we were divorced, when I finally got fed up with the two of us living on my paycheck and him having a vasectomy without telling me when we always talked about having a family once he got connected to something steady, and calling me a fat cow in front of Joan, me, a college graduate with a good job, and him, Johnny Tomorrow.

I hate to admit it, he had me fooled. My father said he was a deadbeat, but my parents never gave me credit for knowing anything, so how should I have known about men? Let's face it, I was never the cheerleader type and Jerry knew how to put it over, especially when he still had all his hair. Of course a guy like Jerry always comes out on top, if you get my meaning, a new wife with two kids of her own almost grown, a house, and a good settlement. Sitting pretty. Joan always said he was a snake and not to be trusted, but I defended him. Finally, I told him he had to face up to his responsibilities or get out. He moved right in with that woman and her kids, he who had never even wanted kids. Good riddance to bad rubbish, I suppose.

I was relieved when my mother answered the telephone. I wasn't in the mood for one of my father's jokes that had no point except to get on my nerves. I must have caught her off balance because when I kind of suggested that we should get together more—just to be polite—she agreed, and before I could go on to something else she said, "Harriet, let's have lunch together today. Your father will be playing golf. How about Mario's at one o'clock?" She knew perfectly well that Italian food was fattening as sin and that it was my favorite. She could at least have thought of a place that served salads or seafood. But I didn't want to be disagreeable, so I said okay. I'd try to eat light.

By the time I was a block from Mario's, I was very hungry but sorry I'd come. On such short notice I didn't have time to worry about clothes, so I just threw on my usual tent, blue corduroy, and didn't notice till the last minute that it had a spot on the left breast, a greasy nipple if you looked at it that way. My mother liked

things neat and clean. She was really galled by things like that, but I couldn't go back and change, so she would just have to deal with it. I can never understand why in her mind a small round spot turns into a planet. She'd probably be ashamed to be seen with me. Well, that was nothing new.

My mother, as usual, looked great—if you're the type that admires perfection. Not a spot or loose thread or missing button anywhere on her silk and wool coordinates in colors that reminded me of vanilla ice cream and butterscotch syrup. The pearls on her ears were the same size as those that hung on a single strand around her neck. I think perfection is boring, but I had to admit she was smart. She didn't go in for hard blonde or red hair, the kind that deepens every line around the eyes. No, not her—she chose a soft ash brown with a few streaks of grey and blonde that made it look as if the sun had painted it. Must have cost her plenty.

Not that she had to worry about her eyes either. Those she had taken care of a few years ago and they are still holding tight—literally—if you know what I mean. She gave me quite a scare, I can tell you, when she told me she was going in for surgery, leaving out the part about its being for her own insatiable vanity. "Small tumors around the eyes," she said, "nothing to worry about, zero danger of cancer." I'll say. She had been complaining for years about these little cysts just under her eyelids that run in our family, the kind that itch a little and pop when they reach pinhead size. For the past couple of years I've started getting a few myself every so often. My mother used them like she does everything else—to get what she wanted. She always does.

I should have smelled a rat when she said she was going to a doctor in Boston. Everyone knows that New York has some of the best specialists in the entire world. Going to Boston was just her foxy way to hide from prying eyes until the swelling went down. Anyone would think she'd want her family with her when she was going under the knife. She knew perfectly well my father had to attend to his affairs and that I couldn't leave my job to visit her in the hospital in Boston. Sometimes I think that woman has a conspiracy going to keep me away when she needs help, not that that happens very often. But I am her daughter, am I not? I know my responsibilities even if other people do not.

Eyes my eye. Her neck gave her away, smooth, minus the little sack under her chin and the beginner jowls that hung there B.S. (before surgery in plain shorthand) no matter how hard she dieted and danced up and down. Now I am not one of those slaves to youth and beauty who spend all their time on their appearance when they could be enriching their minds and doing some good in the world, but I am forced to admit that when I saw my restored and renovated and re*juve*nated mother—*juve* as in juvenile, from the Latin—my first thought was that now everyone would take us for sisters, me the older one. She should have been embarrassed, but I know how sensitive she is to criticism, so I said nothing about the uncomfortable position she was putting me in and just told her that now that she had done all that could possibly be done with her face, she should concentrate on improving the beauty of her mind. She just smiled and thanked me in that snide way she sometimes has.

Anyway, I couldn't help thinking about all this when we were sitting across from each other at the table looking at menus. She hadn't even commented about the spot on my dress, just left me to sit there waiting for the ax to fall; she was pretending she hadn't noticed, probably trying to get on my good side now that Ralphie was on the outs with her.

The thing I liked about Mario's was that as soon as you sat down the waiter brought over a basket of bread and a plate of ripe olives and hot peppers and little wedges of salami and cheese. Before we even had a chance to order, just as I was chomping down on a hot pepper, my mother said, "I'm glad you called this morning, Harriet." I must have blinked, surprised as I was to hear her say that. Before I could say anything, she went on in a voice as calm as if she were reading a timetable. "I have something important to tell you. Your father and I are getting a divorce."

She may as well have been trying to choke me to death with her bare hands, giving me a shock like that without warning, because my throat seized up. No wonder I started to cough and choke and turn so red that the waiter came running over with a glass of cold water and the diners at the other tables turned to look at me. I was embarrassed at all the fuss I was making, especially since tears were running down my cheeks. Nobody would believe I wasn't crying, but I wasn't. It was just the coughing fit and the hot pepper, either of which could bring tears to the eyes.

My mother reached over with her perfect, clean, white cotton handkerchief, the kind you iron, naturally, not permanent press. She dabbed my eyes dry and wiped my nose, which had started to run to add to my embarrassment. You would think I was still a child instead of a forty-two-year-old woman with a career and a divorce.

I am very proud of what I did next. I put my own needs aside completely and concentrated on what my mother was going through. I didn't ask about the other woman because I didn't want to hurt her any more than she had already been hurt. Without even knowing in advance what I was going to say, I heard myself blurt out, "Mom, don't worry. You won't be lonely. I'll move

(Continued on p. 86)

BOOK REVIEW

Wombs for Hire

Nancy Ehrenreich

Birth Power: The Case for Surrogacy by Carmel Shalev. Yale University Press, 1989, 201 pp.

Choice is the dominant trope through which liberal legal thought conceptualizes individual action and the relation of the state to society. Liberal theorists limit the role of government to the facilitation of private interactions between freely consenting individuals. Within this framework, governmental intervention into the "private" sphere of such personal transactions is justified only when necessary to protect one person's will from being wrongly subordinated to another's. Thus, sex without consent is rape, contracts produced by misrepresentation or duress are invalid agreements, "unwelcome" flirtation with an employee is sexual harassment—and government can interfere with "private" relations only when such coercive acts justify regulation.

The modern women's movement, of course, has sought to throw into doubt the liberal assumption that there really exists a separate private sphere of personal freedom. The slogan "the personal is political" captures much of the feminist challenge to liberal orthodoxy. Feminists contend that focusing on the private lives of individuals obscures the cultural dimensions of social problems, encouraging women to believe that their dissatisfactions are due to personal, psychological frailties. That focus, in turn, prevents women from seeing their grievances as arising from attitudinal and systemic barriers to their survival and fulfillment, such as their relegation to devalued and undercompensated work roles. A similar insight has informed radical critiques of law, which draw upon a similar slogan, "law is politics," to convey the idea that legal rules, like culture, are deeply implicated in the constitution of the private sphere of individual freedom that law is thought merely to regulate.

Despite the affinities between these two critiques of the ideology of private choice, feminist legal theory does not always connect up with the "law is politics" critique. Indeed, many feminist analyses of gender and the law implicitly accept the traditional liberal notions of individual choice and the public/private dichotomy. In doing so, they serve to reinforce and legitimate law's role in the subordination of women, rather than to challenge it.

In her book, *Birth Power: The Case for Surrogacy,* Carmel Shalev addresses the issue of choice in the context of contract parenthood, concluding that a refusal to enforce agreements to conceive and gestate children "denies the notion of female reproductive agency and reinforces the traditional perception of women as imprisoned in the subjectivity of their wombs." Although Shalev's analysis stands as a thorough and original treatment of the issue from a liberal perspective, it also reveals the limitations of that perspective as a vehicle for accomplishing fundamental social change.

In the basic structure of its argument, the book evokes the familiar debate in feminist legal theory—sometimes called the equal treatment/special treatment debate—about what kind of rules are the best route to equality. Most of the major issues that have split feminist ranks over the last decade have devolved into debates over questions of choice versus coercion, equality of opportunity versus equality of results, sex-blind versus sex-specific treatment. Shalev's argument is consistent with the "equal treatment" prong of liberal feminist analysis, which asserts that equality for women can best be attained by attacking the negative stereotypes used to justify limiting their participation in political and economic life. Under this view, sex-blind legal rules are essential, not only because they directly increase women's autonomy, but also because they undercut the notion that women are different from men.

The "special treatment" position focuses instead on the extent to which existing inequalities constrain women's exercise of choice. Rather than seeking merely to remove formal barriers to equal opportunity, its proponents advocate affirmative governmental intervention into the private sphere—if only temporarily—to assure equality of results for women. The "special treatment" view underlies the position on surrogacy that Shalev explicitly rejects—that women's decisions to sign surrogacy agreements are sufficiently different from most other contractual promises to justify not enforcing such agreements.

What makes Shalev's book particularly interesting—despite the fact that it revisits some familiar terrain—is the way in which she constructs her argument that treating parenthood contracts as chosen rather than coerced will eradicate harmful stereotypes of women. Shalev sees contract parenthood as the last step in a progressive change in the definition of parenthood, from a "biological" one based on blood connection to a "social" or "legal" one based on individual intent. She argues that this change to a social definition of kinship will free women of the "double standard of sexual-reproductive conduct" that the biological definition produced. By rejecting the genetic element of fatherhood, she says, we can eliminate the male need to control female sexuality in order to assure the paternity of offspring. And by rejecting the genetic and gestational elements of motherhood, we can undermine the biology-is-destiny view that has justified relegating women to a child-rearing role for which they were thought to be instinctively suited.

While Shalev's analysis is provocative and original, it ultimately fails to account for the many ways in which contract parenthood arrangements reinforce, rather than undermine, tra-

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ditional patriarchal categories of thought. For example, the "problem" supposedly addressed by surrogacy—infertility—is only a problem in a culture that values biological reproduction (and that devalues minority, disabled, and other "imperfect" babies). The primary reason that William Stern, the biological father in the Baby M case, preferred contract parenthood over adoption was to perpetuate his genetic heritage. Of course, the fact that Stern's parents were the only members of his family to survive the Holocaust—leaving him the sole person capable of continuing his line—makes such a desire particularly understandable. However, such special cases aside, it seems quite likely that the impulse to use surrogacy rather than adoption will usually reflect simply a more straightforward interest in biological connection. In surrogacy, the biological definition of motherhood is rejected, but the biological definition of fatherhood is left very much intact.

Moreover, as Barbara Katz Rothman has pointed out, what Shalev calls the "social" definition of parenthood results in a legal scheme in which it is the woman's relationship to the father of the child that determines whether she is the mother. Thus, if the ovum donor is a stranger to the father and the gestator is his wife—in whom the embryo has been implanted—then the gestator is the mother. But if the ovum donor is the wife and the gestator a stranger, as in a recent California case involving a white couple and a black "surrogate," then the ovum donor is the mother. To the extent, then, that the intent-based or "social" view does undermine the biological definition of motherhood, it replaces that definition with an alternative that reduces women to their marital status: whether a woman is a mother becomes a function of whom she is married to.

Focusing on intent also does not necessarily undercut the vision of a maternal instinct that Shalev seeks to eradicate. Rather, an insistence that contract parenthood arrangements be allowed, especially if accompanied by a sympathetic concern for the frustrated intent of the infertile couple, suggests not only that biological fatherhood is every man's right, but also that motherhood, biological or otherwise, is so important to women that some will go to any lengths to accomplish it, including getting someone else to provide the baby.

Besides, as Shalev perceptively points out, not all women are seen as instinctive mothers to begin with. She describes how, for example, the unmarried birth mother is not seen as having any maternal instinct at all, but instead is criticized as "selfish" if she decides to keep her child, rather than put it up for adoption. The unmarried woman who wants to obtain artificial insemination is likewise seen as selfish, rather than as acting out her instinctive drives. Thus, it should not be surprising that in the context of surrogacy there is also a "good girl" and a "bad girl": the "selfish" surrogate (even the term "surrogate" implies the illegitimacy of her claims) and the sympathetic wife of the biological father—the "true" mother whose dreams of a child have been shattered. Nor should it be surprising that here, too, the implicit scheme of female virtue should break down along class lines, with the poor or lower-middle-class woman given the bad girl role, and the upper-middle- or upper-class one the good.

It will take more than redefining motherhood to dislodge patriarchy.

Yet Shalev fails to recognize the repetition of these patterns in the contract-parenthood context. Instead, she erroneously concludes that enforcing parenthood contracts will undermine the biological definition of kinship upon which the notion of a maternal instinct is based, and thus will dismantle, rather than perpetuate, the dichotomy between "good" instinctive mothers and "bad" selfish mothers. Attributing women's oppressed status solely to their biologically defined role, she fails to appreciate the complex interrelation between class and gender. It will take more than redefining motherhood to dislodge patriarchy.

Shalev's complex (if ultimately unconvincing) argument that invalidating parenthood contracts will reinforce negative images of women does more justice to the "sex-blind" side of the liberal debate than does her less persuasive claim that invalidation also undermines women's autonomy. She begins this latter argument by distinguishing contract parenthood situations from adoptions, where a waiting period is usually required before the birth mother's promise will be enforced. Surrogacy is different, she asserts, "in view of the deliberate nature of [contractual] conception." Starting from the premise that "[i]n modern society . . . a person may generally acquire social, economic, or political position as an independent agent by means of free agreement or contract with others," Shalev views any suggestion that women could be coerced by their circumstances as decidedly paternalistic. But in her efforts to avoid paternalism, she cleaves to a rigidly individualistic vision of the actual social setting of surrogacy arrangements, a vision that fails to capture the complex motivations—conscious or otherwise—that surely affect a woman's decision to bear a child for money.

As a consequence, Shalev's analysis ignores both the ideological and the material contexts in which such decisions get made. Rightly concerned with eliminating the ideological equation of womanhood with motherhood, she nevertheless overlooks the fact that many women themselves have internalized that conception of their role, and thus are particularly susceptible to sales pitches like the sort given to Mary Beth Whitehead, who became convinced that she wanted to "give the gift of life" to the Sterns. Shalev's vision of surrogacy relies on a model of the rational weighing of personal preferences that seems sorely inadequate, for example, when it comes to explaining why Whitehead would have signed a contract that paid her the equivalent of $1.57 per hour for nine months of life- and health-endangering, emotionally difficult work.

Nor does Shalev adequately address the material inequalities that constrain women's choices. Sex-based wage differentials, for example, make it inevitable that a married woman will be the one to stay home with the children, and thus be limited to piecework, fudge-making, or pregnancy-for-pay as about the only ways to add to the family's income. Worse still, the single mother struggling to support her children and faced with the opportunity to, in a sense, hold two jobs at the same time, might find that an offer to enter a parenthood contract is one that she virtually cannot refuse. Yet Shalev's response to such concerns about the potential for exploitation is disturbingly dismissive:

> [T]here is concern that a free market scheme would relegate underprivileged women to a new oppressed and undignified occupation, like prostitutes and wet nurses. But it should be obvious that the idea of a free market in reproduction does not attempt as such to rectify existing social inequities.

Yet, even though this rejection of the "coercion" position seems out of touch (if not unconcerned) with the lived reality of many women in our society, it also has some appeal. Shalev correctly emphasizes, for example, that it is paternalistic to suggest that women who sign these contracts really have no idea of what is good for them, but merely sign because they overidentify with the traditional image of selfless motherhood. To view them this way surely also reinforces the notion that all women are indecisive, irresponsible, and need protection in the competitive, "male" world of the marketplace. Moreover, the concern with economic coercion is equally paternalistic: Even if these women are faced with a choice between two evils (exploitative contracts versus material deprivation), why shouldn't they themselves be allowed to make it?

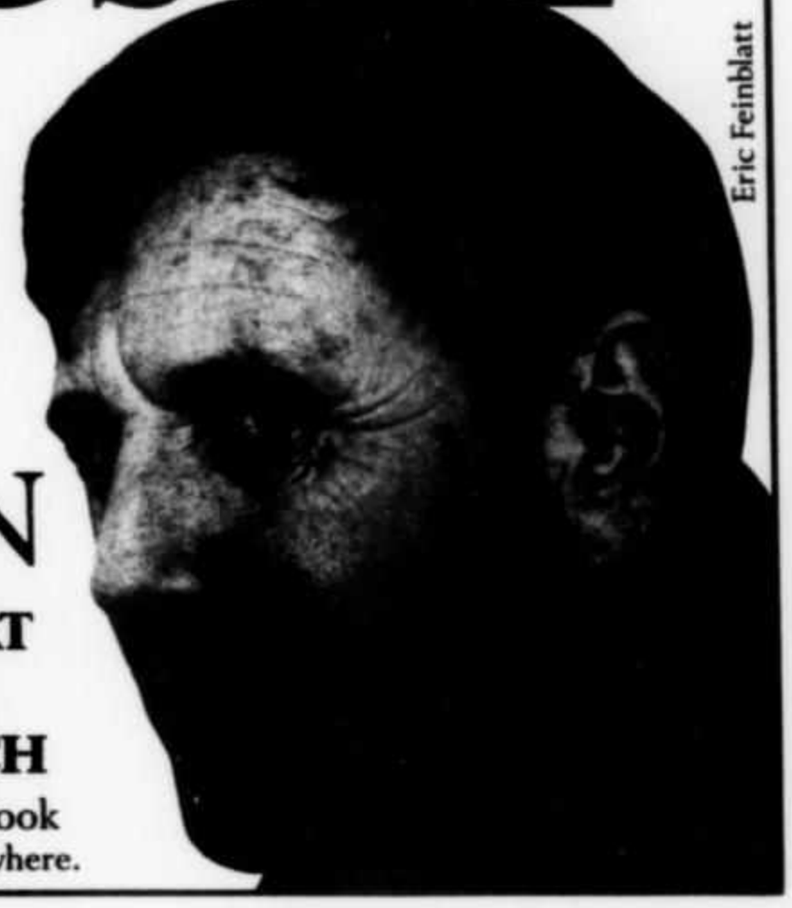
In addition, it is difficult to distinguish the economic pressures that might affect a decision to enter a contract-parenthood arrangement from those that affect a plethora of decisions that Americans make every day—such as the decision to work in a hazardous workplace, remain in a demeaning job, or join the military. In short, the argument that the coercion in these contracts stems from unequal bargaining power is either a utopian attack on the entire capitalist system or a troubling elevation of reproductive labor over other sorts. Moreover, the economic coercion argument is easily perceived as an illegitimate demand for more than one's fair share of social benefits. Why should women be allowed to escape contracts that their circumstances forced them to sign, when men cannot?

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AMOS OZ

TO KNOW A WOMAN



Eric Feinblatt

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By now, the cat-chasing-its-tail quality of the debate between the two liberal positions should be apparent. While the equal treatment approach validates women's decision-making ability, it also perpetuates systemic inequalities and fails to address women's immediate needs. And while the special treatment approach addresses existing social and material inequities, it also essentializes women, denies their agency, and risks creating resentment against them among other groups. Indeed, the conflict between the two can seem to be quite intractable, a product of the complex, contradictory situation of women in American society.

Shalev frames the issue nicely, as the problem of how to "transcend socially defined sex-based constraints and to acknowledge the individual woman's right to self-definition, without denying the social parameters of women's oppression as a class." Unfortunately, however, she doesn't provide a satisfactory answer, and merely retreats into the terms of the liberal debate by concluding that "we women, as human beings, are capable of exercising reason with respect to reproduction and of sharing our birth power with those less fortunate than we." For Shalev, as for most liberal feminists, to demand that society change a woman's situation, we must be willing to characterize her as lacking either the capacity or the power to have created it herself, something Shalev is unwilling to do.

One could discuss, of course, whether she thereby strikes the right balance between the sets of pros and cons posed by the choice/coercion tension. But my point here is, rather, to suggest that the liberal formulation that she applies is itself the problem and will never provide a satisfactory way out of the dilemma. In addition, it is an ultimately apologetic position, legitimating the system that it seeks to reform. By assuming that the only way to justify not enforcing these contracts is to label them involuntary and/or irrational, both liberal positions

accept the notion that there is a sphere of private decision-making unaffected by governmental power. Correspondingly, agreements that do not fall into the deviant category must be seen as the products of freely exercised individual autonomy. The liberal frame for the issue thus implicitly legitimates the choice/coercion dichotomy itself, and reaffirms the idea that it is an accurate description of reality to say that some choices are "free" and others are "coerced."

And what is wrong with that? one might ask. Certainly some decisions are the product of individual will, and others are not. But my point here is that although all of us surely perceive the world in such categories, the terms themselves have no inherent meaning. Rather, individuals—and perhaps groups—infuse the concept of choice with their own content, content that will be intimately tied to their own perceptions of the particular social contexts in which the term is raised. To some, silently pushing away a sexual overture suggests consent; to others it constitutes refusal. To some, remaining with a battering spouse is a freely made decision; to others it is not.

Thus, choice is not a determinant of results so much as a vehicle for justifying them. Moreover, contract doctrine, in drawing the line between "free" and regulable market transactions, will inevitably institutionalize a particular vision of what constitutes choice. In deciding when the protection of individual freedom requires enforcing a contract and when it requires instead refusing to do so, courts are defining, rather than merely facilitating, individual choice.

My point here is not that courts can avoid defining choice, or that refraining from doing so would purge contract law of its problems, returning it to a neutral facilitative role. Rather, my point is simply that government is inevitably implicated in contractual arrangements. A certain agreement is enforced not because it reflects the will of the parties but rather because it comports with the law's current vision of just and fair interpersonal or commercial relations and thus is *seen* as reflecting contractual choices. This means that when people agree to enter contracts as a result of emotional manipulation, or despite being inadequately paid, or without complete knowledge of flaws in the product being sold, we need not accept as a given that such agreements were the product of free and autonomous choice. Just as, under existing doctrine, courts will imply a promise of good-faith dealing into a contract, so they could also imply a promise of a fair wage, or full disclosure of information, or meaningful participation in the governing of the workplace. Since we already use contract law to structure interpersonal relations, nothing should prevent us from doing so in a progressive and humane way.

Finally, to the extent that liberal legal theorists treat choice as something that exists outside of and prior to law—as something that courts merely enforce after it occurs—they ignore the constitutive role that law plays in the production of choice. Shalev's book itself provides much data to support this point. For example, she convincingly documents how legal regulation of both adoption and artificial insemination has traditionally enforced a rigid role definition for women, for it emphasizes the importance of childbearing (and rearing) for married women while simultaneously refusing to recognize or protect any maternal interests or rights of unmarried women. While applauding the trend toward open adoption on the grounds that it undermines this image, she neglects to consider the impact that the traditional adoption and artificial insemination rules must have had on how women themselves conceptualize their roles and thus, on the current choices they make.

But if there is no separate and distinct private realm of social relations unaffected by governmental power—if law both defines and constructs choice—then the role of contract rules is not to facilitate the making of private agreements but rather to establish a particular regulatory regime controlling such agreements. Because law decides what will be called freely chosen contract relations, and affects the choices people make to begin with, no realm of private contracting exists separate and apart from governmental influence. Thus, if there is no private sphere of interpersonal relations—if law is politics—then we should not be talking about preserving private freedom at all, but rather about how to structure humane and fulfilling contractual and reproductive relations in our society.

As far as contract parenthood agreements go, that question can be answered in a number of different ways. For example, in Great Britain, formal, compensated surrogacy arrangements are forbidden, as is the use of brokers or advertisements to procure them. In a similar vein, law professor Margaret Radin has suggested that the closeness of contract parenthood to baby selling and the harmful effect of commodifying women's reproductive capacity justify allowing only unpaid surrogacy arrangements. Reproductive capacity, like children and bodily organs, may just be something we don't think people should be allowed to sell. Moreover, by focusing on the nature of the thing being sold instead of the contractual capacity of the participants in the exchange, removing surrogacy from the market might actually elevate women's status, treating reproduction as an important social activity.

In contrast, merely regulating parenthood contracts might reinforce the negative stereotypes about women's decision-making capacities that worry Shalev. Even very stringent regulation—including, for example, generous minimum payment to "surrogates," visitation rights, independent review of the contracts, etc.—risks having this effect. A regulatory approach also replaces the woman's decision about her own interest with the state's. Better, it seems to me, to recognize the limitations on choice inherent in market exchanges in current society than to attempt to use existing patriarchal institutions to police such exchanges.

Anyone who wonders why the issue of surrogacy has "suddenly" arisen cannot help but be skeptical about the prospects for change. The problem of surrogacy is not, as Shalev sometimes suggests, a product of society's inability to keep up with technology: turkey basters have been around nearly as long as turkeys. Nor, as I have argued, does it stem from a wholesale rejection of the biological definition of kinship. Rather, it is the product of an increased willingness to see women's reproductive capacity in instrumental terms, as a means to the ends that individual men, and society as a whole, define for it. Unfortunately, however, this instrumental view of women is merely obscured and legitimated, not undermined, by a legal analysis that fails to challenge the dichotomies between choice and coercion, private and public, good girls and bad. □

BOOK REVIEW

Postmodernism for the Masses

Paul Buhle

Another Tale to Tell: Politics and Narrative in Postmodern Culture by Fred Pfeil. Verso, 1990, 278 pp.

Late Marxism: Adorno, Or, the Persistence of the Dialectic by Fredric Jameson. Verso, 1990, 270 pp.

"We were of the present," memoirist Floyd Dell wrote about his Greenwich Village days in the heady 1910s in the forgotten classic, *LiteraryVagabondage: An Apology for the Intelligentsia.* "And, though we did not realize it, what we wanted was an interpretation of our own time—an interpretation which would make us feel its significance, and the significance of our own part in it." Rebellious youngsters all, it wasn't their fault if they could not grasp, could not even properly imagine, "the tempestuous hatred and weary doubt with which our fathers and their fathers before them had seen the emergence and development of this modern world." Ruskin, Dickens, Carlyle, Emerson, Thoreau, Keats, Byron—all these together meant less than Jules Verne, who at least touched the childhood of Dell's generation with science fiction hopes.

How thoroughly Dell's generation reminds us of our own: baby boomers on a quest for revolution and for selfhood in the sixties and seventies. By the time Dell wrote *LiteraryVagabondage* in 1926, the naiveté and frothy optimism had passed. *The Masses* magazine, which had established a new level for artistic excellence on the Left, had been suppressed; Free Love had succumbed to sexual athleticism; and low rents for decent bohemian accommodations could be found nowhere near the centers of cultural activity. What remained were memories, quickly turned into myth. For the rest of their lives, Dell and his compatriots dragged this myth around like faded flower children caught in some wrinkle in time. It warmed them, and it traumatized them—pretty much in the same way the sixties still warm and traumatize a whole lot of us.

The cultural revolution of modernism, of course, had just got going. When the politics disappeared in the 1920s, leaving behind aesthetics, a sense of the "modern" seemed destined to be fulfilled, even if no one could say how. Art, literature, criticism, even political argument became part alternative to, part anodyne against the absence of the splendid possibilities once imagined.

The emerging intellectuals of the late 1960s had a Dellish tone in several important respects. Modernism, historic-literary backdrop to our insurgency, was evidently played out, and we consulted intellectuals associated with the *Partisan Review* far less than Dell and his friends consulted the nineteenth-century litterateurs.

And another crack-up had succeeded the intellectual wreckage of Victorian society that Dell attributed to the conflict between "utopian ideals and machine-made facts." Modernism, aided jointly by prestige backers and by communist aesthetic stupidity, had long since won its titanic battle against socialist realism. But this was largely a pyrrhic victory. The modernist constituency had badly aged and could claim only academic devotee-successors, the critical corps of the *New York Times,* and most of the doctor's-office intellectual magazines. The inspiration as well as the inescapable reality of the next rebellious generation, our generation, was mass culture.

Floyd Dell, if he'd lived long enough to see all this, might have perfectly understood the dilemmas of the cultural critics to come. They could seek to redefine the avant-garde in popular culture terms. They could strive to interpret and cheer on the hopeful moments in the very midst of mass cultural production, such as the feminist-minded "women's films" made for television during the 1970s, or "Roots"—the most popular TV series in history when it first aired in 1976. They could about-face from their activist years and embrace the text as their world, however that text might be defined. Or they could seek all these things on some new, still-undefined terrain.

It is critic and English professor Fred Pfeil's chosen task to define that ground and propose radical possibilities for it. First, he has to explain what postmodernism is not—"the disaster that has already occurred, leaving us utterly resourceless and without hope, walking zombies under perpetual erasure wandering aimlessly through an endless mall," or alternatively, "an explosion of new culture and political practices, from 'subversive readings' to the 'new social movements,' which together constitute a new carnival of freedom, somewhere out beyond the old orthodoxies, including Marxism itself." These oft-stated views, Pfeil says, have in common "their universalist starting point, in which postmodernism, like Pascal's God, is everywhere and nowhere at once, and their fatalistic conclusion, in which, for better or for worse, there is nothing to be done but more of the same."

Pfeil seeks to unravel the confusion by explaining that "postmodernism" both is and is not a universal condition of our age. He associates a particular "structure of feeling," a sense of rootlessness and universality, with a very particular group: what New Left critics used to call the "Professional

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Managerial Class"—PMC for short—a class that emerged in th 1970s–1980s universities. Distanced from pre-suburban working-class networks of kin and collectivity and safe from decline into the industrial workforce, they live perhaps the most private lives in American history—and certainly with the best communications equipment. Postmodernism is in a special sense, theirs. But it is simultaneously universal, in an age when old-fashioned capitalist production has been swamped by information technologies and multinational corporations. Writing as cogently as the subject allows, Pfeil insists that "postmodernism thus bears the same relation to 'post-Fordism' ... that modernism bore to Fordist mass production."

Seen this way, postmodernism is the completion of the tendencies inherent in mass society and mass culture. Unfortunately, the essays that follow cannot sustain this relative clarity of purpose, in part because Pfeil ranges too widely over the postmodern cultural terrain, from *The Milagro Beanfield War* to *The Death of Che Guevara* and *Einstein at the Beach,* the film *River's Edge,* and the audio comedy ensemble, Firesign Theatre.

But the book's digressive scope doesn't overshadow its main theoretical contribution: Pfeil's attempt to "reterritorialize" the social struggle by moving it out of the narrowing ranks of the blue-shirted proletarians to the heterogeneous enemies of existing authority—enemies of sexism, racism, ecological devastation. That strategic position—even when held in the realm of culture criticism—demands for Pfeil an attack upon a foe hardly glimpsed in previous eras of Left thought and action, i.e., the Oedipal Plot.

Now that radical critics have revalorized (some would insist, revitalized) Freudian theory, Pfeil wishes to confront the social consequences of the Oedipus complex. Following Jacques Lacan's disciples, he argues that the ruling or oppressing group in our society can be seen as males who differentiated themselves, that is, made themselves into subjects, by learning to dominate people, to treat them as objects, i.e., "Others."

The argument has grown familiar. Freud had insisted that such subjectivity brought unhappiness, but unhappiness was synonymous with civilization itself. For some American intellectuals, tracing the emergence of the subject was Freudianism's greatest contribution. In recent years, Christopher Lasch, among others, has been hard at work seeking to recuperate Oedipal discipline for the morally mangy descendants of the 1960s. As a precondition for social change, he insists upon restoring the patriarch (or at least the phallus) to its proper place of dignity. Pfeil believes on the contrary that the most hopeful aspect of those who belong to the professional managerial class is precisely their escape from Oedipality, from the psychic domination of the strong father. The PMCs remain bound up by their class prejudices, but they find in their postmodern culture some glimmerings of the pre-Oedipal fantasy—an undifferentiated, nurturing paradise. This animating myth serves to draw the believer closer to a more modest but still vital goal of a relatively untyrannical, less self-destructive social order.

The mystery of the commodity, unresolved by earlier class conflicts, had at last been exposed in the full light of realized consumerism.

The terms of the argument belong very much to the 1980s, but students of earlier radical Freudian texts will glimpse how close this interpretation runs to Herbert Marcuse's *Eros and Civilization,* one of the key works of the New Left and counterculture canon. Even amidst the postmodern we return, inevitably, to that incomparable fount of cultural criticism, the Frankfurt School.

One of the most surprising intellectual developments of the 1980s was to encounter the primo Frankfurter as bumper-sticker icon of the campus library parking lots: not Marcuse, but the unlikely object of the unforgettable phrase, "I ❤ Adorno."

Two decades ago, little groups of cerebral campus activists found in Theodor Adorno—German-Jewish exile from Nazism, intimate of Walter Benjamin, and the dean of mass-culture studies—something available nowhere else. He was unflinching in his insistence that Western society had doomed itself (perhaps thousands of years ago, but certainly by the twentieth century) by trading psychic repression for the construction of the state and of official culture. Ecstatic moments of utopian vision could be achieved within this doomed framework, and some of the best of Adorno's efforts went into lovingly describing his favorite siren songs. (Jameson says that Adorno characterized composer Arnold Schoenberg's music as something which, though "unheard, [even so] carried in it the secrets of the twentieth century on to some unimaginable future.") But the steady process of commodification had turned even mind-liberating dreams into commercials, while the various forms of repression had produced a mass society ready, almost eager, to destroy itself and everything else on earth.

Seen against the failing bourgeois confidence of the later 1960s, this vision inspired a sort of cultural counterpart to the old Marxist insistence upon the permanent decline of capitalist economics. Just as the thirties Left believed that profits could never make a complete comeback, we concluded that modern bourgeois culture had gone into permanent decline: challenge after challenge to propriety from the twin insurgencies of politics and popular culture seemed to draw blood from the aging beast and to impel new constituencies toward radicalism. Like the critics of the 1930s, we weren't entirely wrong, for recovery could not have been made on the old economic and cultural bases; but recoveries of a different sort—absorbing resistance into consumer fashion and reformulating the excitement of Empire in a postmodern ambience—worked just as well to demoralize the insurgents and to fill the corporate coffers.

Not that Adorno himself shared this radical reading of events. American popular culture, which for him emphatically included the rebellious themes of black jazz and animated cartoons of wisecracking animals battling authority, filled him with loathing. Student radicals, especially feminists, drove him crazy: one apocryphal tale has him suffering a heart attack after a group of militant coeds took off their blouses in his class. If we worshipped Adorno anyway, it was

because at least a handful of us thought that we could turn his cultural paradigms bottom-side up. Passing through a world-historic commodification—we imagined—the masses could locate their collective subjectivity in mass culture as Marx had imagined they might do by drawing the lessons of the factory floor. The mystery of the commodity, unresolved by earlier class conflicts, had at last been exposed in the full light of realized consumerism. Could liberation be far away?

Twenty years later, reading Fredric Jameson's *Late Marxism: Adorno, Or, the Persistence of the Dialectic* provokes a sense of cultural déja vu. By 1991, Jameson has become almost an historic object himself, despite his continuing intellectual productivity and sometimes not-so-subtle shifts. He has been followed so long by so many graduate students that he has acquired, as far as possible for an American cultural critic, an Adornoesque aura. His writing is just as hard to read, too.

Jameson's accomplishment, apart from interpreting the European theoretical canon, has been to sketch out a version of postmodernism as the culture of contemporary capitalism, the most unrestrained, fully realized capitalism in history. At a stroke, Jameson seemed to restore the old category of totality and to update Marxism as the one perspective adequate to it. His models of contemporary society fail to convince critics, who find his categories too abstract to explain much of anything. Jameson's conception of a radical postmodernist aesthetic appropriate for these conditions, a sort of updated avant-garde, seems hopelessly distant from a culture that can reach the masses. Then again, as he says in response, where are the models that are more convincing?

This Adorno book is another exploration of the European Left canon, an inspired "reading" of a favorite radical author. But it seeks to be more. Jameson urgently wishes to convince us that Adorno's modernism was commentary on the "passing of the modern itself," a preparation for the transcendence of the critical theory that Adorno spent his life propounding. It's an interesting thought, to say the least. Adorno the radical, asserts Jameson, used nineteenth-century bourgeois culture as his standard, but focused upon the aspects of that culture that illustrated the real or symbolic linking of artistic and political vanguards. More than a little like Ezra Pound in this regard (although Jameson does not say so), Adorno sought to reveal the conditions of production of an artistic form. His best work was able to analyze the "broken promise" of authenticity of feeling through that promise's occasional fulfillment in a work of art: Adorno could, for example, separate the commercialized "ideology of happiness" in an average sappy Hollywood comedy from the inspired nihilist hilarity of the Marx Brothers films he so enjoyed.

Jameson argues that postmodernism represents "the fulfillment and abolition of liberalism" for the same reason that it represents the completion and eradication of old-fashioned high culture (i.e., modernism). The arguments and illusions of that bourgeois culture are no longer necessary or even meaningful. Now, Jameson seems to suggest, the way has somehow been cleared for an Adornoesque restatement of totality, perhaps even for a restatement of utopian possibilities.

Adorno, who saw the perfection of the mass media in Hitlerian Germany and bourgeois America as two parts of a single paradigm, would not likely be convinced. Still, as Jameson says, that's not the real point. Adorno's writing as a "dialectical model"—its form arguably more important than its particular content—will continue to inspire serious and creative thinking. The fragmentation of narrative themes and the accelerating uncertainty of creative approaches have not altered the ruthless logic of profit one iota, of course, or turned civilization away from the path to catastrophe that Adorno pointed to ahead. Reading him and his most interesting interpreters nevertheless continues, perhaps more than ever, to encourage a search for an answer to the crisis as total as the crisis itself. Now that the false utopia of Soviet-style, compulsory collectivism has been thoroughly discredited, we can begin to rebuild. "The almost insoluble task is to let neither the power of others, nor our own powerlessness, stupefy us," as Adorno wrote in *Minima Moralia*. This is surely the viewpoint of redemption, which—as Adorno also once wrote—must now be the only viewpoint worth serious consideration. □

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BOOK REVIEW

Altered States

Menachem Lorberbaum

The Three Crowns, by Stuart A. Cohen. Cambridge University Press, 1989, 287 pp.

Jewish Theocracy by Gershon Weiler. E. J. Brill, Inc., 1988, 332 pp.

The nature of the modifier "Jewish" in "The Jewish State"has been the subject of passionate political debate ever since Israel's birth. (See Michael Walzer, "What Kind of Jewish State?" *Tikkun,* July/August 1989.) The ideological roots of the debate are deeper still, going back—at least—to the Emancipation. However, the creation of the state provided a comprehensive framework for the debate over the uncertain political meaning of Jewishness.

The religious parties in Israel have recast this debate so as to give themselves a pair of powerful trump cards: first, they speak in the name of historical Judaism; second—and politically more important—they speak in the name of Halacha, Jewish religious law. Their voice, they would have us believe, is therefore not only more authentic, it is also the voice of the only true authority that exists, namely, divine authority mediated by rabbinic tradition.

In other words, Halacha—in certain hands—has become the most powerful ongoing source of political delegitimation in Israel today. Study and mastery of the texts of the rabbinic tradition have thus become an indispensable weapon in Israeli political debate.

Of course, legitimacy is not the only serious problem Israel faces. The ongoing possession of the Occupied Territories, for example, threatens the moral fiber of the state, and has gradually become less an external than an internal threat to the Israeli body politic. But whereas the Palestinian problem may perhaps be solved by a partition of land, the secular Zionist attempt at radically partitioning Jewish historical consciousness has proved disastrous. It has fostered cultural ignorance among the secular, and bred a clerically oriented religiosity.

The current crisis of legitimation calls for reflective Jewish political thought that not only responds to the Israeli polity's perception of its present needs, but also draws upon the depth dimension of Israel's religious and cultural heritage. Failure to meet this dual need will endanger the democratic character of the state, and deprive it of any living, indigenous moral tradition and language that can adequately challenge the course of present Israeli policies.

Stuart Cohen's new book takes us to the political roots of rabbinic Judaism, from the waning of the Second Commonwealth to the first four centuries after the destruction of both the Second Temple and the Judean state (c. 135 B.C.E.–400 C.E.). Cohen views the hegemony the rabbis exercised over Jewish life in the postdestruction period as a political victory that was not inevitable and should not be taken for granted. It arose out of centuries of struggle with other civil and religious contenders for leadership within the Jewish community. It is in this sense that the story of their success should be understood as "an essentially political campaign."

Cohen, a political anthropologist, argues that in order to analyze rabbinic political behavior, we must frame our inquiries within what the rabbis themselves took to be the ordained constitutional boundaries of Jewish political society. Thus Cohen identifies "three ordained clusters"of political life within Jewish society, designated as "crowns"(*ketarim*). This explanatory model found classic expression in the following mishna:

> Rabbi Simeon said: There are three crowns: the crown of *torah* (the Law), the crown of *kehunah* (priesthood), and the crown of *malchut* (kingship) (Avot 4:13).

The symbol of the crown carries a clear sense of the independent authority of the respective domains. Cohen understands the crown paradigm to imply a quasi-federal ideal of government. Through the covenant, God recognizes a partnership with human beings in perfecting creation. And Cohen argues that the constitutional corollary of the religious covenant is a principle of power-sharing and power diffusion. This principle, Cohen argues, is not the basis for a system of formal participatory democracy, "but a distinct notion of power-sharing at its highest levels ... the prevention of unauthorized intrusions into a sphere of public activity constitutionally considered out of bounds to any but an ordained circle." Under this separation of public spheres, kings, priests, and rabbis have their respective, inviolable spheres of authority. However, Cohen seems to confuse a diffusion of authority with a diffusion of the power to rule. Such a diffusion of authority does not imply that the sources of power would be broken up, as they would be under a covenantal democracy. Nor does it effectively curtail the exercise of power. In other words, not every public activity or national institution is necessarily political.

Cohen follows the history of rabbinic hegemony through an analysis of assorted texts, persons, and institutions. In contrast to the priesthood and monarchy, both of which had deep biblical roots, the rabbis emerging out of the Pharisee party of the second century B.C.E. were in desperate need of a claim to biblical lineage. Cohen, therefore, begins his discussion

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with an illuminating reading of tractate Avot (The Sayings of the Fathers) of the mishna, showing it to be an audacious work of propaganda that created a heritage of the rabbinate. He then continues to assess Hillel, Yohanan ben Zakkai, and Judah the Prince, treating them as crucial figures in the story of the consolidation of rabbinic power. From these dramatis personae, he moves to the institutions they created in order to anchor and transmit their authority, most notably the yeshiva.

The major purpose of this story was to transform the Torah (and its attendant rabbinic interpretations canonized in the Mishna and Talmud) into the focal texts governing Jewish society and expressing that society's identity as a religious community. By mastering the Torah and monopolizing the right to interpret it, and by piously committing themselves to adequately comprehending and practicing it, the rabbis came to assume the legitimacy that allowed them to dictate policy and behavior to all other recognized public functionaries. And through the sagacity of their leadership, they learned to exercise this communal power. Cohen tells the story with a unique blend of personal and critical engagement with the subject.

But what was this effort all for? What was it that made the rabbinic vision of Judaism so unique as to justify its claim to legitimacy? Cohen's understanding of the goals of this "revolution" remains vague. But in light of the divine authorization of the monarchy and priesthood, the rabbinic moves seem designed merely to usurp competing political prerogatives, unless we can appreciate the religious urgency of their ascent to power. More has to be said about the content of the rabbinic religious agenda; otherwise the story becomes just another study of an interest group pushing its way into power for its own sake. And only this clarification enables us to understand why the rabbis stopped short of completely undermining the priesthood and the monarchy.

Part of the problem is that Cohen's paradigm of the crowns invites us to downplay the degree to which rabbinic ascent marked a substantial change in Jewish religious life. For example, the tripartite paradigm is too quick to incorporate prophecy into the crown of Torah. It veils the new meaning of religious knowledge at the center of rabbinic culture as against the earlier prophetic tradition.

The canonization of scripture means that it is no longer in heaven. Thus, in contrast to the biblical world, in which the prophet directly conveyed God's message, now the open-ended text does the job. The prophet becomes unnecessary and the priest no longer possesses any prerogative in understanding: "The true understanding of Torah depended not upon irrational inspiration, but upon man's exercise of his critical faculties." Rabbinic Judaism is centered on the Torah's text and the tradition of interpretations evolving from it. Kings, priests, and prophets all make sense without the text—rabbis do not. A theory of rabbinic politics must say more about how this change in understanding religious knowledge informed the rabbis' political perceptions.

Did political life hold independent moral value for the rabbis?

For Plato and Aristotle politics is intimately connected with the good life. The virtues are political in nature. The polis is the arena in which man exercises and achieves his moral excellence. Consider also the religious role of the king in ancient Israel. The king is the focal point of national identity and, according to monarchic theology, the covenant of God with the people passes through the king. Did political life hold independent moral value for the rabbis?

In order to deal with this question we must move beyond the analysis of the rabbis' political behavior to an analysis of their normative political vision. Only then can we appreciate their understanding of what a just society would look like and how it would intersect with their vision of a full religious life.

Gershon Weiler analyzes the rabbinic understanding of politics by reference to a bold and provocative theory of what he calls Jewish theocracy. Originally published in Hebrew in 1976, *Jewish Theocracy* remains to date the only attempt at presenting the rabbinic attitude to politics within a systematic assessment of Jewish polit-

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ical theory.

Weiler intends to stress the unbridgeable gap between the traditional conception of politics and the conception that underlies modern Israel as a liberal-democratic state.

> Modern political doctrine begins with the justification of political obligation, and of political institutions, by reference to human needs ... and expressed as political will.... [It therefore] rests on a rejection of that notion of theological-political knowledge which claims to be divine in origin.

The idea of perfect knowledge and will does not allow for the possibility of public debate about ends; at most, it leaves open the question of the best means to achieve these ends. The theocratic idea that Weiler explicates is antipolitical in that it does not allow for human autonomy in politics. It is Weiler's central thesis "that the Jewish religion and the existence of this state are antithetical to each other by their very essence."

The rabbis do not use the term theocracy. It was probably coined by Josephus, who distinguished it from all other forms of government:

> Some legislators have permitted their governments to be under monarchies, others put them under oligarchies, and others under a republican form; but our legislator has no regard to any of these forms, but he ordained our government to be what by a strained expression, may be termed a theocracy, by ascribing the power and authority to God.

Weiler argues that in the context of Halacha, theocracy implies a basic disinterest in government and statehood as such. Government is important only as an agency enforcing compliance with the dictates of the recognized conveyers of God's will. It is not, however, a necessary condition of Halacha that a Jewish political entity be established to achieve this end. Any source of power will do, Jewish or gentile; preferably the internal fear of God.

Thus, strictly speaking, there is no such thing as rabbinic political theory. At the very least, Halacha does not presuppose political institutions, and is in this sense nonpolitical. The "halachic state" is an empty category (as Weiler continually stresses, it is telling that the rabbis flourished in exilic post-political Judaism). But upon closer scrutiny, Weiler argues, we find that Halacha is antipolitical. Considering "the political unreality of the mishnaic conception of state and power," he concludes that its true import is "that political authority must always be limited by a superior authority, i.e. by the agencies of Halacha. Such rulings could not have grown out of real political experience. It is but an articulation of ... antipolitics."According to this argument, a "halachic state" would be a contradiction in terms because the Halacha rejects statehood. And the theocratic ideal is rendered impractical under the rigors of Halacha. Jewish law therefore poses a doubly dangerous threat to a Jewish political entity.

However, by viewing all traditional Jewish discussions of politics through the one concept of theocracy, Weiler indulges in far too many unqualified and, at times, unfounded assertions. The monolithic quality of his narrative finds Weiler, himself a secular Jew, ironically accepting and reinforcing the ultra-Orthodox interpretation of Jewish thought. Weiler's concept of theocracy describes a sort of access to divine knowledge that many of the rabbis did not claim to possess. His thesis cannot allow for the various ways in which assertions concerning the epistemological status of religious knowledge have always been the subject of debate within the rabbinic tradition. One prophet is sufficient for conveying God's words, but seventy rabbis in the Sanhedrin are needed in order to decide how these words are to be interpreted.

God recognizes a partnership with human beings in perfecting creation.

The role of politics is a matter of considerable controversy among the rabbis too. For example, the Mishna states that "the king can neither judge nor be judged," a ruling that can certainly reflect Judah the Prince's understanding of the importance of what we would consider executive privilege. Weiler, following the Talmud, interprets it as a forced concession to royal power—in spite of the fact that royal power no longer existed. This interpretation is not only unnecessary, it misses the polemic exchange within rabbinic tradition between the Mishna and the Babylonian Talmud concerning the role of politics. The Mishna presents an understanding of, rather than a concession to, political reality that suggests a division between the judiciary function and the monarchy.

Weiler's argument also runs aground on the question of restrictions on the monarch's authority to declare war. The Mishna's decree that the king receive the prior consent of the Sanhedrin before he wages war is, in Weiler's view, politically unrealistic: "The absurdity of such a suggestion could have escaped only the notice of those who never considered seriously what is involved in making a decision in the real world, about war or peace." Weiler fails to notice—or perhaps conveniently omits—the proviso that this is in the case of a "permissive" war waged for expanding territory, and is to be contrasted with a "commanded" war waged for self-defense, which requires no such prior approval. Consequently Weiler misses the Mishna's attempts to sketch the lines between what we would recognize as executive freedom, the rule of law, and the safeguarding of public interest. He erroneously interprets this distinction as evidence of rabbinic neglect of political reality. Rabbinic thought has many facets, and it would better serve the discussion to point to difference and ambivalence where they exist rather than obscure them through overgeneralization.

Weiler's book reflects, albeit unintentionally, the cultural reality that has given rise to the legitimation crisis in Israeli political culture. For although the book is an uncompromising attempt to face the crisis and deal with it, Weiler's brand of secular Zionism needs the Haredi self-understanding of Judaism as an ideological foil—he makes sense of his own position by rejecting the latter. And, in fact, this dynamic works both ways: the rejection of secularism is central to Haredi self-perception. The poles of the political map have a mutual, if antagonistic, interest in each other's continued existence.

The task of Jewish political thought in Israel today is to break the stranglehold of this polarity. It is a culturally destructive hold that has created a moral vacuum—and filling that vacuum now is a crude nationalism, the lowest common denominator of the Jewish population in Israel today. □

BOOK REVIEW

The Glare of the Rising Sun

Ruth Milkman

The Machine That Changed the World by James P. Womack, Daniel T. Jones, and Daniel Roos. Rawson Associates, 1990, 323 pp.

Working for the Japanese by Joseph J. Fucini and Suzy Fucini. The Free Press, 1990, 258 pp.

For most of this century, automobile manufacturing was the engine of America's unrivaled prosperity and manufacturing might. Auto workers were the aristocrats of the twentieth-century working class; their proud union, the UAW, the core of the modern labor movement; and the cars they built the preeminent status symbols of consumer culture. As the car culture burgeoned and giant U.S. auto firms prospered, almost everyone came to agree that what was good for General Motors was good for the country.

Today, the auto industry no longer symbolizes America's prosperity, but its economic decline—and Japan's spectacular rise as a global economic power. The troubles began in the 1970s, with the oil-price explosion and the massive imports of Japanese cars it helped stimulate. Profitability crises and waves of layoffs and plant closings shook the domestic auto industry, while the Japanese share of the market surged. In the 1980s, faced with "voluntary" import restraints and the specter of rising protectionism, Japanese auto firms vigorously pursued a strategy of "export substitution": starting in 1982, when the domestic industry was still reeling from the "Reagan recession," eleven new Japanese auto factories opened in North America, most of them nonunion. Thanks to these "transplants," which already account for 25 percent of the nation's annual vehicle production, the Japanese have captured an ever larger share of the U.S. market without increasing imports. Indeed, the "Japanese" car you buy today may well be "made in the U.S.A."

What these developments mean for the 1990s and beyond is the subject of these two books. Although they focus on different aspects of the story, each offers rich insights into the trans-Pacific shift in the center of gravity of the world auto industry and its implications for the U.S. James Womack, Daniel Jones, and Daniel Roos's *The Machine That Changed the World* is the more ambitious volume. It attempts to explain the Japanese auto industry's spectacular success and advises the domestic industry on how it can meet the challenge. Its authors, based at MIT, directed a five-year, $5 million study of the international auto industry that was financed by a variety of auto firms and governments from around the globe. Project team members visited over ninety plants in seventeen countries and interviewed managers, engineers, and industry analysts. In contrast, Joseph Fucini and Suzy Fucini's *Working for the Japanese* is an in-depth study of a single plant, the Japanese-owned Mazda transplant in Flat Rock, Michigan, that opened in 1985. Unlike the MIT study team, which concentrated on discovering the secret of Japanese auto firms' success, the Fucinis focused on the social implications of the Japanese management system for American workers and their communities. They interviewed not only managers but also blue-collar workers, as well as union and government officials and people living near the plant.

The two approaches produce sharply opposing conclusions. Womack, Jones, and Roos are unrestrained in their enthusiasm for the management system perfected by the Japanese (and since then widely imitated), which they call "lean production." Unlike conventional mass production, the Japanese system is lean because it uses less of everything. Lean production uses less space, because parts are delivered "just in time" for their incorporation into the final product, dramatically reducing inventories. It uses less machinery, replacing the "dedicated," task-specific tools and equipment that are staples of mass production with new forms of flexible automation, which can be adapted to produce a variety of products. It uses less labor, replacing the narrowly specialized mass-production workers who do the same job every day with teams of "multiskilled" workers who rotate among a variety of tasks. And it even uses less management, partly because blue-collar workers themselves are actively mobilized, through quality circles and other forms of worker "participation," to help improve the efficiency of the production process. Womack, Jones, and Roos have nothing but praise for this new industrial order:

> Lean production is a superior way for humans to make things. It provides better products in wider variety at lower cost. Equally important, it provides more challenging and fulfilling work for employees at every level, from the factory to headquarters. It follows that the whole world should adopt lean production, and as quickly as possible.

But the Fucinis are not so sanguine. They emphasize the troubling implications of lean production for workers on the shop floor, who must work at a frantic pace (unprecedented even by the standards of long-suffering auto workers in this country) and who have sustained above-average injury and ac-

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cident rates in the Mazda plant. They also show how the Japanese system has undercut organized labor. Although, unlike most of the transplants, the Mazda plant is unionized, the UAW is portrayed as largely ineffective when it comes to challenging Japanese management. Finally, the Fucinis highlight the neocolonial aspects of the Japanese presence in America's industrial heartland, especially the exclusion of U.S.-born managers from positions of power.

Womack, Jones, and Roos do acknowledge, in passing, that "the Japanese lean producers are offering two classes of citizenship in their organizations—one for Japanese workers [they mean managers], a second for foreigners," and they urge the Japanese to change this practice. But they are entirely uncritical of the impact of the lean production regime on blue-collar workers. There's a three-page section entitled, "Is Lean Production Humanly Fulfilling?" which briefly acknowledges that this question has been the subject of much recent debate, and then simply asserts, with no evidence whatsoever, that the answer is yes. Since the project relied so heavily on funding from the very companies that are currently rushing to institutionalize the lean production regime, this stance may seem unsurprising. Still, it's a pity that the MIT team didn't use some of its $5 million to find out what workers themselves think about this critical issue, rather than taking management's claims at face value. Workers and their unions rarely appear in the pages of this book, and when they do show up, it is as obstacles to progress, never as social actors whose interests merit consideration in their own right.

Womack, Jones, and Roos emphasize that becoming a "lean enterprise" involves more than simply running a factory Japanese-style. They do discuss the importance, by now well known, of just-in-time inventory systems, as well as quality circles and other participation schemes that capitalize on workers' detailed knowledge of the labor process to eliminate wasted effort and improve efficiency. They also compare the traditional system of product development and supplier relations with those used by the lean producers. There is a fascinating analysis, excerpted in the *New York Times* last fall, of how cars are marketed in Japan, where auto firms carefully cultivate their customers, whom they call "owners." Cars are actually sold door-to-door and dealers seek to establish a long-term, high-trust relationship with the owners while manufacturers actively solicit customer input about product design.

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Even though almost all of their examples of successful lean production are Japanese, Womack, Jones, and Roos insist that there's nothing inherently Japanese about the system. They stress that Ford has moved much further in this direction than GM, and that some auto firms in Japan are far leaner than others. The fact that the Japanese transplants in the U.S., with American workforces, have matched the productivity levels of their counterparts in Japan supports the transportability of the lean system. This is a welcome obituary for the old argument that the distinctive features of Japanese "culture" are the key to Japan's economic efficiency.

The bottom-line argument of the MIT book is that the lean enterprise—from design and production to finance and marketing—is superior because it's so much more efficient than the old-fashioned "Fordist" firm (so-called because it relies on the mass production and management techniques pioneered early in this century by Henry Ford). Given the logic of global capitalist competition, it follows that the new system will ultimately triumph, unless political forces intervene. This is hardly a new argument, but the authors support it with impressive comparative data on auto plants around the world, which show that not only U.S. auto firms but also European ones lag far behind the Japanese in productivity and quality.

For Womack, Jones, and Roos, the lesson is clear: every auto company should jump on the lean bandwagon to avoid being crushed by it. They never ask whether lean production should triumph; that is simply a given. And its victory in the global auto marketplace is virtually assured, unless governments choose to protect the world's more backward auto firms in their home markets—a course the authors vigorously oppose.

In the U.S., where unions are weak and the ideology of the free market remains dominant, the triumph of the lean production system indeed seems almost inevitable. (In Europe, where the protectionist impulse is stronger and unions are more powerful, there's some prospect of a different outcome.) This will mean continued expansion for the Japanese transplants in the U.S., the advances of Ford toward lean production notwithstanding. Domestic firms, especially GM, will continue to shrink: last November, a few weeks after the publication of *The Machine That Changed the World,* GM announced plans to close at least seven more of its thirty-eight remaining U.S. plants, while Toyota is planning to double the capacity of its nonunion auto assembly complex in Kentucky. In view of these recent events, it's worth taking a closer look at the social implications of the lean production system.

Given the current state of the U.S. economy, we ignore at our peril the MIT team's evidence that the lean system is more efficient than the Fordist mass production system that helped the U.S. achieve global economic hegemony earlier in the century. And nostalgia for that era shouldn't delude us into imagining that the old order was a workers' paradise. Ford's auto assembly line has long been the classic paradigm of blue-collar alienation. Even after industrial unions in the 1930s and 1940s restored some dignity to workers and secured them a measure of protection from managerial abuses, the actual experience of work on the line remained an endless source of frustration. Although claims that the lean production regime humanizes work may be overblown, could it really be much worse than what it's replacing, from a blue-collar perspective? The Fucinis' book suggests that it could be.

Working for the Japanese, although limited to a single transplant, reveals the dark underside of lean production. The authors (a wife-husband team) spent three years observing events at Mazda's Michigan plant, conducting over one-hundred-fifty interviews. Mazda cooperated in the early stages of the research but then withdrew its participation. The result is a refreshing contrast to the MIT study: the book relies heavily on the view from below, especially on the perspective of Mazda's blue-collar workers as they confronted the realities of lean production on the shop floor.

The Fucinis tell a dramatic story of workers' seduction and betrayal. The people they interviewed started out thinking that Mazda would be a wonderful employer. Certainly all of them were eager to work there—the thirty-five hundred workers Mazda hired were carefully selected from a pool of more than ninety-six thousand applicants and went through an arduous, five-step screening process. Most of those chosen were young people with limited work experience. (The average age was thirty-one, and over 70 percent had never worked in a factory before.) They found the Mazda jobs highly attractive. Not only were the pay levels high—only slightly below the Big Three, and much higher than in the service jobs many of these workers had held before—but the promise of participating in improving the production process through teamwork was highly appealing. The workers' "excitement was heightened," the Fucinis report, "when they were issued business cards, which, they were told, were of the exact same design and quality as the cards carried by the plant's top managers." The minority of Mazda workers who had previously worked in the domestic auto industry were especially impressed by the egalitarianism of the plant. Aside from the business cards, workers and managers wore the same uniforms, shared the same parking lot, and ate the same food in the same cafeteria—a dramatic contrast to the Big Three, where status differences are deeply entrenched.

After a three-week training and orientation program, workers went into the plant. The first shock for the majority was simply the experience of factory work itself. "Nothing that they can say or do in orientation can get you prepared for what it's like out there," a disillusioned worker named Judy Wilson told the Fucinis. (Over a fourth of the Mazda workers are women, well above the proportion in Big Three plants, but not unusual for the transplants; in contrast, only 14 percent are black, much lower than in most Big Three plants. The nonunion transplants have even fewer black workers, and some analysts accuse them of locating in the heartland to avoid hiring blacks.)

As the plant geared up for full production, things went from bad to worse. Workers discovered that almost all their time would be spent on the assembly line, not in group discussions about how to run the plant better. And under lean production (the Fucinis call it JIT, "just-in-time"), workers were kept busy for fifty-seven seconds out of every minute—a much more intense pace than in the Big Three, where it was more like forty-five seconds. Even the Big Three veterans in the plant, who "had been skeptical about Mazda's orientation pledge to involve workers in the consensus decision-making process," were completely unprepared for the "relentless grind" of the work. "What you did at Chrysler, you do here, plus they give you four more things to take care of," Sam Hill, who works in Mazda's tire subassembly operation, told the Fucinis. "We never had to run at Chrysler, but we have to run at Mazda, because there's so much pressure to keep up." As production pressures intensified, mandatory overtime became routine, and injury rates shot up. As supervisors ("unit leaders" in Mazdaspeak) struggled to meet production quotas, they eventually abandoned even the pretense of consensus decision making, and relied increasingly on cronyism and favoritism. Conditions continued to worsen, and morale deteriorated as more and more workers concluded that Mazda "didn't walk like it talks."

Lean production also has troubling implications for American unionism. The Fucinis were well positioned to explore this issue, since Mazda is the only wholly Japanese-owned transplant in the U.S. that is unionized. (The other unionized transplants are joint ventures: NUMMI, the northern California plant run by GM and Toyota; and the Illinois Diamond-Star plant, jointly owned by Chrysler and Mitsubishi.) But at Mazda, the union didn't arrive in the usual fashion. Ford

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owns 25 percent of Mazda, and agreed to purchase a large share of the cars made at Flat Rock (now sold as Ford Probes), apparently with the tacit understanding that the plant would be unionized. Workers voted to be represented by the UAW at Flat Rock shortly after the plant opened. But in contrast to the other transplants, Mazda management offered no opposition to the union. The first president of the new UAW local was appointed by the regional office of the union, not elected, and he had never worked at Mazda.

The Fucinis suggest that the UAW was unusually cautious in making demands on Mazda management, because labor officials feared alienating Japanese managers at the other, nonunion transplants which they still hoped to organize. The UAW signed an extraordinarily weak contract with Mazda, giving the local union only limited leverage in handling workers' grievances. As a result, workers came to see the union as an ally of the company rather than as a representative of their interests. Eventually a rank-and-file opposition group emerged within the local, and when an election was finally held for local union officers in 1989, the dissidents easily swept into power. Meanwhile, it was becoming clear that despite the UAW's nonconfrontational posture, the nonunion transplants were determined to resist its organizing efforts. Two months after the Mazda workers voted the dissidents into office, the union suffered a stunning two-to-one defeat in a fiercely contested election at Nissan's Smyrna, Tennessee plant on whether the UAW should be the workers' bargaining representative. Together with the earlier failure to organize Honda's giant Ohio facility, this suggests that the transplants' ascendancy augurs badly for the UAW, which before 1982 (when Honda opened the first transplant) represented every American auto assembly worker.

Mazda may not be typical of the Japanese investment in the U.S., which is by no means limited to the auto industry. In fact, auto manufacturing may turn out to be a special case. My own research on Japanese-owned factories suggests that Fordism is alive and well in transplants in other industries. Lean production was not in evidence at the twenty plants I have visited in southern California, which rely heavily on low-wage immigrant labor. At these plants, worker participation is rare, and just-in-time inventory systems are almost nonexistent. And the managers I interviewed were fiercely committed to resisting any unionization efforts. The wider implications of the U.S.'s growing economic dependence on Japan may be even more troubling than those associated with lean production itself.

There's little doubt about the appeal of the participatory, democratic rhetoric of teamwork and consensus-based decision making to American workers. But whether the reality of work in Japanese-style plants can live up to the rhetoric remains in doubt. *Working for the Japanese* certainly offers ample grounds for skepticism about the assumption on the part of commentators such as Wo-mack, Jones, and Roos, that lean production opens up a wonderful new world of humanized work. That the lean system seems to be associated with weak unionism or none at all is only one dismaying prospect for American workers. American managers, for their part, may have equal cause for concern, if positions of real power in the transplants continue to be the exclusive province of Japanese expatriates. In the new age of Japanese dominance, as the Fucinis conclude, "the American dream may end here." □

THE TRIAL

(Continued from p. 47)

cently the military appeals court has said that women ought not be treated more leniently than men. Najah is given a six-month sentence and a fine of 500 shekels. She is led out of court and turns to wave at her family. Her father smiles at her; now he knows she will be home again in a few more months.

Outside Najah is held in the paddy wagon. Her father approaches the window to talk to her. He begins to cry. It seems Najah is soothing him.

In the courtyard there is an ambulance standing in the noonday heat. A Palestinian girl, twenty-five years old, has been killed as a collaborator. Her head, arms, and legs have been cut off. "See," says the soldier guarding the ambulance, "Arabs don't care about their children the way we do. This body has been waiting here all morning, but her parents won't come to claim her."

Najah's wagon starts up. We wave to her, and she waves back. A friend of hers tells us that she has become a kind of hero for her village: they know that if she had pled guilty she would have been released.

The Israeli soldiers nearby mock us. "She shouldn't have gotten six months, she should have gotten six years." "Look at this crazy country, an Arab throws a rock at a soldier and Jews come to defend the Arab." "My sorrow is your happiness, and your sorrow is my happiness." "Leave them alone, this is a democratic country."

Outside the army compound dozens of Arabs linger. They are probably waiting to get into this or that office of the civil administration and obtain a necessary stamp for some document, or they are waiting for their lawyer to show up. I go behind the kiosk to urinate—no one would direct me to a bathroom on the base—and make my contribution to this land, so beautiful and so harsh, a land where no tree ever grows without irrigation.

We are invited back to Beita for a feast of celebration. Two villagers have just finished serving their eighteen months for throwing stones on that fatal day. I am taken aback at the grace and patience of these villagers, who would still want to befriend Jews, invite Jews into their homes. May the blessing of the land be upon them. □

HANDS OVER EYES

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that to defend the breaking of hands and feet with a rational analysis of comparisons is the first step."

He hands me with shaking hands a document of human-rights abuses from the Territories. The pages go on and on. They are hot to the touch.

Later that night his wife tells me with disdain that her husband is arrogant. With great bitterness, she says:

"He thought that Israel would be a light unto other nations. That the Jews are better than other people. What arrogance! They are no better than anyone else." Now she is shouting at me. "That has been the problem from the start. The idea of exalted morality. He is arrogant and now he is broken."

Hands over ears.

I do not know the origin of this panic. It is the day after the shootings and I have heard one too many arguments. What is causing the racing of my heart, the shortness of breath, the inability to think? I crash into a nap in the midday heat like a suicide dive bomber. In the ninety-degree heat I pull a wool blanket over my head. I am out almost immediately.

I dream that I am paddling alone in a canoe on a serene mountain lake. It is night. The stars are awake. A sudden wind, and the canoe tips. I cannot swim. Before I go under, a voice from I know not where says: "Don't forget to open your eyes!"

I sink head first in the darkness and I open my eyes. In the dark water the stars are closer and more numerous than on a moonless night in the Sinai.

I wake up gasping for breath. Sweat-soaked blanket.

In the Middle East people don't cast shadows. They cast stories. It is always high noon. The time of reckoning. □

POGROMS

(Continued from p. 52)

brutal indication that the future had to be made elsewhere. But even after the brutalities of 1905, emigrants continued to pour out of the mostly pogrom-free Lithuania rather than the pogrom-ridden Ukraine. The ongoing tendency to label pogroms the cause of emigration thus is something of a distortion, an exercise in historical shorthand, a code rather than the product of sound historical judgment.

The pogroms, in short, helped an embattled leadership impose some semblance of coherence onto the turn-of-the-century Russian Jewish scene on both sides of the Atlantic, a community that was otherwise sundered by conflicting, fiercely debated interpretations of its experience and future. At times, the way in which the pogroms were perceived was quite obviously different from what had transpired: the distinguished poet Hayyin Nachman Bialik, sent to Kishinev soon after the pogrom to record what had happened, took notes—never organized nor published—recording the sporadic attempts by Jews to defend themselves against this wholly unexpected disaster. Nonetheless, when he composed his poem, widely known as "The City of Slaughter"—the single most famous document to come out of the pogrom and probably one of the most influential pieces of Russian Jewish writing of the period— he decried the absence of self-defense and made it clear that the worst horror of Kishinev was not the violence of the pogromists but rather the passivity of the Jews. The charge was undeniably powerful and searing, informed by Bialik's nationalist commitment, which was predicated, in turn, upon a belief that Jewry had to be rebuilt in preparation for its eventual redemption in Zion. But the charge was also based on assumptions belied by the events of the pogrom as recorded by Bialik himself. His literary reconstruction, however, meshed better with his nationalist ideology than with the immeasurably less coherent events that he recorded—and, in one way or another, ignored.

Kishinev, then, came to represent for Bialik, and many others in his Zionist entourage and well beyond it, proof that their sense of the painful vulnerability of the exile and the mounting tragedy of the Diaspora—which Zionists had charted years before the eruption of the early-twentieth-century pogroms—was, sadly, true. In a sense, modern Jewish politics, at least in its crucial Eastern European sector, was shaped by pogroms, which powerfully evoked the Zionist message of despair in the Diaspora and also pointed to the nationalist remedy. In other words, the specifics of the pogroms—how they related to mass migration, who planned and executed them, how unique or characteristic they were of modernity—were all, and perhaps quite inevitably, sacrificed for the sake of other, higher truths.

Of course, to reconstruct such an emotionally charged subject from the standpoint of the professional historian might still seem today rather cool, excessively evenhanded, insufficiently condemnatory; wrong-headed in spirit even if perhaps accurate on other, lesser, grounds. But asserting that pogroms did not play the role that is frequently attributed to them does not mean that Russian Jewish life

was in reality less brutish, insecure, or even less turbulent than it is otherwise believed to be. Neither do I mean to diminish the fears of Jews in the past, nor the mounting apprehensions of those of the present. But current apprehensions regarding pogroms and Russian anti-Semitism in general are so frequently couched in historical terms that it seems particularly important to define as best we can the differences between myth and history, poetry and reportage. We need, as it were, to rediscover those notes that Bialik discarded as factual on one level but irrelevant to the real story of Kishinev on another. These historical shards are a crucial part of the story and well deserve to be integrated into Jewish collective memory, and to influence the way in which Jewish politics are organized, its priorities set, and its obsessions cast.

Meanwhile, many continue to believe that the murderous turbulence of 1905 could occur once again on the metropolitan and immeasurably more anonymous Russian streets of the 1990s, devoid of the coherent Jewish enclaves of the past which made the pogroms feasible. Such beliefs indicate that overpowering fears continue to displace sensible, informed discourse. To take just one example, the recent Operation Exodus, the unquestionably important campaign to finance the mass migration of Soviet Jews, continues in its publicity campaigns to draw upon the pogrom metaphor: fearful mothers huddle with their infants beside trains, none too subtly evoking the murderous legacy of the Russian past, and, by further implication, the Holocaust. We must brush these images against the grain of the historical record, and set collective memory against a more realistic appraisal of the Russian Jewish past. We may thereby know something more about our otherwise strangely murky familial backgrounds and also shape a more coherent self-understanding and a communal agenda with greater internal credibility.

In the end, conditions for Jews in imperial Russia were both somewhat worse and somewhat better than is typically assumed. Now that we have come to utilize this history to shape contemporary Jewish opinion, to raise funds, and to test our understanding of the current state of Eastern European Jewish life, we must finally confront the longstanding disjuncture between memory and history. Otherwise, we will continue to relive dimly remembered turn-of-the-century fears of generations of Jews in the Pale as well as those who escaped it—and their ghosts will preside over our political present, much as they have dominated our images of the past. □

HOT PEPPERS

(Continued from p. 70)

into the house with you for as long as you like." I didn't even mention my father. What was there to say?

I didn't see what there was to smile about, but there she sat looking at me across the table with that sly smile. Finally, she said, "Harriet, I appreciate your gesture, I really do, but you won't have to return home to keep me company." Then she dropped another hydrogen bomb on my head. "Your father is moving out shortly, but I'm going to marry soon and remain in my home, live there with my new husband."

That shut me up, not even a cough or a sneeze. So she went on. She sounded like smooth, blonde Carol Swift on my favorite soap, "Look Toward Tomorrow," always in control and correct. She looked almost as good too, no tears dripping on her cheeks. She wouldn't allow them to ruin her makeup job, no sir, no black mascara streaks running like train tracks down those perfectly stitched cheeks.

"Your father is not unhappy. He has many interests and friends including a special lady, perhaps more for all I know. We have come to an agreement and we want you to know that your interests and Ralph's will be fully protected. I think we're both relieved. Thankfully, we're healthy and can look forward to some happy years . . . not that we didn't have quite a few together. We are still friends."

Trying to keep my voice calm, despite having been bushwhacked for the second time on the same day, I managed to say, "Who's the lucky man?"

"Someone you don't know, but I hope you'll meet him soon. Simon's a charming person, a retired archaeologist your father and I met on our trip to Costa Rica last year when we were exploring the ruins. Your father likes him too."

What I thought to myself was: Well, that's cozy, she found herself an old ruin to keep her company while my father—the old fraud who was always so lovey-dovey with her where everyone could see—tomcats around, probably with one of my so-called friends for all I know. Sure my father likes him. But what I said was, "I hope the two of you will be very happy. In fact, I hope the three, four, or five of you will be very happy."

I could tell I had gotten to her because she reached across the table and kissed my cheek and patted my hand before she said, "You always had a sore mouth, Harriet, even when you were little, but try to be happy for me." I suppose she expected me to slobber a little, but I wouldn't, so we dropped it and ordered lunch. It tasted good. You can always rely on Mario's.

That night I got a call from my father. He gave me a dose of his sweet talk, which was unusual because I so seldom heard that kind of thing from him. I told him I hoped he knew what he was doing. He said, "Trust me." Imagine him saying a thing like that. He sounded like some boy in high school, not a grown man in his sixties with a thatch of white hair and dirty thoughts on his

mind. But I let it drop. I was tired, and I had so much to do at home before Monday rolled around. I needed my sleep.

I have learned something from all of this. Just let any man rest his hand on my ass in public and I will let him have it right between the eyes ... or elsewhere, if you understand my meaning. If people like my parents, or Joan for that matter, want to behave like childish fools, that's their business. I, at least, am an adult. □

A QUESTION OF BOUNDARIES

(Continued from p. 46)

does not understand the curses that follow the eating of the forbidden fruit as literal prescriptions, although some antimodernist Christian sects read them this way. Hence, it has never been claimed that because the text says "by the sweat of your brow shall you get bread to eat," Jews ought not to use modern farm machinery or labor-saving devices. Similarly, while some Victorian clergymen cited "in pain shall you bear children" as a reason to forbid anesthesia in childbirth, no Jewish authority ever did so. By analogy then, there can be no prescriptive force in the admonition to Eve; "Your desire shall be for your husband and he shall rule over you." Consistency requires us to read the entire narrative as a description of how things came to be the way they are—in other words, as an etiology of the construction of patriarchy and its attendant hardships.

The two creation stories with their divergent accounts of object relations return us to the general question: How shall we determine what authority any text may have to form our attitudes and to inform our actions? Halacha, classical Jewish law, addresses this question by making certain texts repositories for generalized obligations, mitzvot *kollelot.* These are not meta-halachic principles; that is, they are not discourse about the project of Jewish law. They are, rather, intra-halachic discourse. We might call them orienting mitzvot, because they point out the direction in which our normative perceptions and decisions ought to know. Orienting mitzvot are the most generally phrased, and hence the most dependent upon the particularities of context, of any Jewish obligations. What then orients the orienting mitvot? To determine what is right action or holy behavior for a Jew, we are obligated to begin by recollecting the story that tells us who we are: "Remember that you were a slave in Egypt and the Lord your God redeemed you from there" (Deut. 24:18). Deuteronomy appends this admonition to all its commandments about the welfare of vulnerable others, and to general exhortations to observe the laws of the covenant. A particular ethical orientation must characterize the behavior of a liberated and transformed people. This orientation forbids the oppression of others and urges us to recognize in them a capacity for liberation and transformation akin to our own. This is the principle that orients the content of the generalized mitzvot, and in the context of its flexible boundary with the other we must assess the ethical claims that other texts make upon us.

What implications follow for the boundary with the first Jewish other? Dorothy Sayers once asked, "If women are the opposite sex, then what is the neighboring sex?" By defining woman oppositionally as derivative *isha* or invaded *negeva,* patriarchal texts refuse to acknowledge a shared reality. We could call this the reality of mutual interpenetration. Interpenetration, interconnectedness, and interdependency attest that not only do we inhabit a single context, but within that context we live deeply within one another's boundaries. The only way to in/habit, one must conclude, is to co/habit. The patriarchal fantasy of the impermeable self is a snare and a delusion. Human beings are profoundly interdependent. We begin life tiny and helpless, utterly dependent on others. We come to perceive ourselves as distinct and particular beings only through experiencing our impact upon others and their impact upon us. Intimacy is a survival need for our species. Babies who lack a caring other to bond with, even if they are fed and cleaned, die in alarming numbers from a syndrome known simply as "failure to thrive." From birth to death we coexist in a great network of others, bound to them by speech, by touch, by labors, quests, exchanges, and stories.

We are in truth no more separate from God than we are from one another. What makes us Jews is not that we subscribe to a dogma which holds that the world is controlled by a deity without needs or desires, upon whom no one and nothing has impact, or that this deity has revealed to us a fixed and objective law. What makes us Jews is that we frame our identities and our commitments by telling and retelling how we came to be *ivrim,* how God freed us from slavery and made a covenant with us. What makes us Jews is that we center our selfhood, both individual and collective, both male and female, around these memories, that we learn from them the living, permeable boundaries that make the other a neighbor and a partner rather than an opposite. When we apply this orientation to our man–woman relationships, then all Israel will indeed be *chaverim.* □

FOREIGN AID

(Continued from p. 38)

USAID with over $500 million, was to "breed capitalists like rabbits," one USAID official said. USAID itself experienced a virtual rebellion within its ranks when numerous leaders of the peasants and farm workers were

assassinated by the Salvadoran death squads because of their participation in the land reform. USAID in the Philippines in 1986 proudly announced that they were working on "counterinsurgency" (i.e. pacification) projects through American multinational corporations on the southernmost island of Mindinao. While the projects were rather benign—one was sinking tube wells for village water supplies—the fact that USAID felt obliged to use the combative rhetoric of the U.S. Embassy was striking.

USAID professionals find it difficult to tolerate this pressure. Many of them feel that while there may be legitimate national security issues at stake, a United States development-assistance program should be established to help eradicate the causes of poverty and hunger, not to build markets for American business, channel surplus production, or prop up friendly governments. It is no coincidence that the better USAID programs are generally found in countries considered of low interest to the State Department—tightly targeted undertakings such as the one against infant dehydration.

There's a need, it is safe to conclude, to insulate development assistance from the changing nature of foreign policy and from national security preoccupations, which drain resources and personnel away from programs to eradicate poverty and disease. Fortunately, there are a few models already operating within the federal establishment that may provide some lessons for a new development-assistance foundation.

One such model is the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). While only a fraction of the CDC's budget is devoted to international health programs, it is a fiercely independent agency that prefers to work under United Nations auspices in the developing world than with the State Department. The CDC has been known to resist State Department pressure to become involved in programs that appear to the CDC to be primarily political. Only for Vietnam, Cuba, and Laos was the CDC required to ask case-by-case permission from the State Department to accept requests for assistance. The CDC is so concerned about its professional independence that it may, for example, actually decide to work in Vietnam on a polio eradication program on the condition that no U.S. government funds are involved. Surely the CDC would like expanded budgets, but its administrators are wise to guard jealously their separation from the political objectives of other branches of the U.S. government. To work under the aegis of the State Department risks compromising, or appearing to compromise, the ability of scientists to focus independently on purely humanitarian service.

Why should problems of poor people throughout Africa, Asia, and Latin America be treated any differently than polio in Vietnam? Like epidemiologists, we in the development community need to understand the causes of underdevelopment and need to work with local people on "social health" programs that reverse and eradicate poverty's many symptoms: malnutrition, illiteracy, and environmental degradation. To do this, we must be free to work directly with the people and not be limited to distributing aid through government bureaucracies. Just as the CDC has its counterpart professionals within the governments of host countries, a new U.S. foundation for international development could identify and augment the professional capacity within Third World governments to undertake direct action programs. Janasaviya Trust Fund may prove to be one example of how international donors can influence policy within developing nations.

Yes, it is true that social-health programs will lead into the thicket of political and economic policy reform. But needed structural changes such as land redistribution may succeed when understood and built from the ground up rather than from the top down. The USAID program of land reform in El Salvador in the 1980s was a product of top-down planning, but it did demonstrate a willingness on the part of the United States to recognize the genesis of social problems in the inequitable structure of the Salvadoran rural economy.

Inter-American Foundation (IAF) and the African Development Foundation (ADF) are also promising governmental models. According to Douglas and Stephen Hellinger, the two brothers who run the Washington-based Development Group for Alternative Policies, the legislation authorizing the creation of these bodies was approved because Congress was "frustrated by its inability to make AID responsive to the poor." IAF was allocated $25 million in fiscal year 1991, while ADF received only $13 million (about the size of the private development agency Oxfam America); the Peace Corps, by contrast, received $186 million and USAID's basic budget was $3.3 billion. The Hellinger's book *Aid for Just Development* argues that the foundation's successes in bypassing central governments and making small grants directly to nongovernmental organizations in developing countries "represent to the people of Latin America and Africa a respectful recognition, on the part of the U.S. government of their right, need, and capacity to define their own development and forge the future of their societies." A current IAF member says that the foundation resisted a Reagan administration assault by remaining focused on alleviating poverty, by retaining its mandate to bypass governments, by working through respected nongovernmental organizations, and by relying on the buffer of a congressional committee between the IAF and the administration. All U.S. development assistance could be channeled through publicly funded regional foundations

like these. But for the project really to succeed it will need an articulate and involved committee chair—someone like the late Mickey Leland of the House Select Committee on Hunger—to nurture and protect it.

The IAF and ADF might serve as prototypes for a U.S. Foundation for International Development, or they might be greatly expanded and supplemented by the creation of an Asian Development Foundation. The publicly supported foundations would only fund nongovernmental organizations in the developing world, rather than subsidizing the scores of First World consulting firms and manufacturers that live off USAID today. This point was brought home to me last year when I was asked to work in Haiti by the Inter-American Foundation, which could not even pay my airfare without a Haitian nongovernmental organization approving the expenditure. Competent nongovernmental organizations are found in most developing nations, and they are generally far more experienced in the difficult process of community organizing and community learning than are governments. Most serious development efforts through such American organizations as Oxfam America, World Neighbors, or Hesed International are conducted in full partnership with community-level nongovernmental organizations in the poor nations.

Economic development to eliminate poverty has everything to do with local entrepreneurial spirit. It cannot be explained simply by pointing to macrocapital formation in the form of large industrial projects, nor by citing the sort of income growth that fails to raise the household income of poor families. The freedom of the marketplace now on the ascendancy in much of the world can still frustrate rather than complement the entrepreneurial potential of the poor—unless our resources and skills are directed to the sorts of grassroots initiatives that have proven the only real hope of change.

These initiatives can spring up in even the most troubled nations. In Carice, Haiti in 1980 a group of struggling small farmers formed a cooperative to dry and transport their coffee beans, thus avoiding the middlemen whose prices kept them in perpetual debt. Right now in Sri Lanka, through a nongovernmental organization called Sarvodaya (Awakening of All), I am involved in a grain-storage program with twenty villages whose farmers will realize a similar bonanza from higher prices for their rice, green chickpeas, and other produce. We are introducing Israeli technologies that eliminate pesticides and protect grain through airtight storage. The same technology could work against the interest of the poor if there were not affordable credit programs through which small farmers could reinforce their position vis-à-vis the market.

There are many paths to development, and we have only begun to walk them. But they all begin in the village, in the household, at the community meeting, in the acceptance of change and of a degree of risk in taking charge of one's destiny. Development assistance, even bilateral and multilateral aid, does not need to subvert the process of self-determination or increase dependency on outside experts, capital, or food aid. We have enough experience in development to know how to channel even government funds to reinforce self-reliant strategies that protect people's dignity and increase the ability of poor societies to raise their standard of living. The amount of U.S. development assistance pales in comparison to the needs and the resources of millions of communities in the underdeveloped world that could participate in programs of grassroots development. The USAID could easily and productively spend its entire budget on guaranteeing small loans to enable commercial banks to lend to nongovernmental organizations with a proven record of accomplishment. A nonpoliticized U.S. development-assistance program might finally offer the real benefits of free enterprise to those historically alienated from its promise. □

SPEAKING IN THUNDER

(Continued from p. 34)

the task of forming a communal religious existence and creating a civilization that stands in response to the event at Sinai. This is what I mean by "accepting the Torah." What we accept is the reality that Divinity is present in humans, manifest in human language and human institutions. We accept the challenge to create a society, with all its institutional trappings, that embodies this presence. We are no less charged with that task today than we were thousands of years ago. Part of our charge is to maintain and keep trust with the traditions of the past. We are here to be faithful bearers of our heritage. But every generation will have to create some new forms and reinterpret many old ones in order to keep the fire of Sinai alive, to keep it from becoming mere ash. Maintaining a sense of balance between these two, and not losing our awareness of Y-H-W-H while we are engaged in that balancing act, is no small task.

Generations of believers have invested boundless emotional and spiritual energy (*kavvana*) in the forms of Jewish devotional life, including the words of prayer, the cycle of the calendar, its sacred music, and tales and commentaries. I believe that the power of this *kavvana* is never lost. The intensity with which a form is used as a vessel of spiritual life grows and builds through each generation of devotion to it. The spiritual riches borne by the words of prayer or the form of offering increases in richness over time. A latter-day Jew, especially one coming from outside the tradition, who opens him or her self to that form

may discover the tremendous riches of *kavvana* that lie waiting within it. The Jewish people has both created and accepted these forms in love. That love is never lost or diminished, but is only hidden until we discover it again. The forms may not have been *given* by God from Sinai. But they are *what we bring to the mountain;* we invest them and forever associate them with the holiness we encounter there.

The relationship between the memory of Sinai and our ever-evolving religious lives as Jews is not a simple one. There *is* divinity to be discovered within the mitzvot (commandments), but this is not the divinity of a commanding God who insists on their proper performance. Judaism *is* a way of reaching inward and outward toward the One, a way sanctified not by divine fiat but by generations of those who have walked along the path. *The light that lies hidden within our Torah, made up of the countless points of love and devotion placed there by our ancestors, is also the hidden light of Y-H-W-H.*

Is it then *imperative* that Jews seek out this light? Does the God who has dwelt within the hearts of so many generations, and who has been given expression through these forms, become an immanent *metsaveh,* a "commanding one," who will stand behind the mitzvot as the indwelling embodiment of religious authority? I find myself to be rather close to this position, but I am not ready to assert it in any but the most personal and subjective ways.

In my own religious life, I have come to recognize the need for *submission* to Y-H-W-H (remember to say "Is-Was-Will Be," and not just "God"!) as a part of religious devotion. I fought long and hard against this aspect of religious life, but I now, perhaps with long-delayed maturity, have come to accept it. I believe there is no room for God—however defined—in our lives until we can overcome our own willfulness. To thus submit, to "negate your will before the divine will," is essential to accepting our covenant as I understand it, to be ready to serve as a channel for divine presence in the world.

In Judaism, this submission, usually described as *kabbalat 'ol malkhut shamayim* "accepting the yoke of divine rule," is joined to *kabbalat 'ol mitzvot,* "accepting the yoke of commandments." For myself, I recognize the necessity of this link, the sense that religious awareness only becomes constant in life through the regularity of religious discipline. But I also remain constantly aware of the pitfalls of submission as a religious value. It can lead to the cultivation of an overly submissive personality. Some expressions of submission, in our tradition as well as elsewhere, border on self-hatred. Most seriously, from a devotional point of view, the emphasis on submission may be at the expense of the true joy and exultation that are the heart of religious awareness. I turn to religious language to express the fullness of my heart. Let me be wary that religion itself not serve to diminish that fullness and joy.

Here the non-Orthodoxy of my theology is critical to my religious life. Because I know of the human role in the origin of the commandments, and because I know that all human creations are fallible, I never hand myself over entirely to the commandments. I know that they are but a means, and an often arbitrary one, to a greater end. Out of my love for our ancestors and the divine spirit who dwells within these traditions and who asks that Jews not abandon them, I choose to be faithful to the religious discipline they represent. I will do so wherever this discipline does not bring me into conflict with religious principles I hold even more deeply: I recognize all humans as embodying the divine image and I follow the seven Noahide commandments as I have chosen to understand them. (The rabbinic list of basic universal norms for human behavior, the Noahide commandments are Judaism's closest parallel to "natural law." They are prohibitions against murder, theft, idolatry, incest and adultery, blasphemy or denial of god, dismemberment of living animals even for food, and an admonition to establish a society ruled by law.) I seek to affirm this commitment anew each day, to keep it an act of faith ever chosen in freedom. I need to cross the Sea each day, a reminder of my freedom, before I can renew the covenant. I am helped in this struggle with authority in religion by the very *helplessness* of God. The One who is present in these mitzvot is really no longer the frightening commander on the moutaintop. I thank the ever self-revealing Y-H-W-H for the gifts of biblical scholarship and historical study of religion, which have helped to break the excessive yoke of religious authority, making our generation a post- rather than a premodern one. The Presence that remains within the forms is the still, small voice of our people's deepest inner self. The God I know is a Divinity that cannot act or be realized in the human world at all except through human actions. Knowing full well that I live in an age of choice and freedom, one in which I can opt to leave the domain of this religion at any moment, I choose to remain "at home" with the life rhythms of the Jewish people. In doing so, I let myself hear that pleading voice of the One who has so long inhabited these traditions, and who asks not to be abandoned by yet another one of Israel's children.

Such an "imperative" is, of course, an entirely personal one. I share it with the reader without advocacy. I have seen too much of the dark and dangerous side of religion to dare prescribe submission for anyone but myself. Though I take delight in others who join us on this path, I will not permit myself to become anyone else's surrogate "commander." You who seek to stand before that mountain, to hear the voice, to be commanded—you must

get there by your own path. There is no better time to start than the night of Shavuot, a time when the heavens of your heart can open, and Torah can be given all over again. □

SUTZKEVER'S POETRY

(Continued from p. 67)

Sutzkever's writings, but by no means permeates them entirely. From his very beginnings, the poet possessed a curiosity about nature, a wish to merge with the vis-à-vis. His eye and ear remain attuned to the colors and sounds of the icy blue roads of his childhood Siberia, the forests and swamps carved out by glaciers in the Lithuanian north, and the sand dunes and craters of the Israeli Negev.

Sutzkever is, at the same time, one of the great poets of Israel. Writing in Yiddish rather than Hebrew, he comes to the Israeli landscape as an intimate outsider, through the biblical scenes from his childhood imagination. A similar historical perspective marks his perception of the Holocaust, indeed of the totality of annihilation of a millennium-old European Jewry, as symbolized in the demise of its northern capital, Vilna. In his world, the Holocaust is of personal memory, steeped in those two years of hell that he witnessed, but it is never cut off from the larger view of Jewish past and future, as it is with some assimilated writers. The omnipresent coexistence in his poetry of the alternative domains of Jewish history—Vilna, the Bible, Israel, the Destruction, and the Rebirth—places each theme in a multiple perspective. They seem to be mirrored in one another. And then, all are reflected again in the other, intimate mirroring between his imaginary "Twin Brother" and his lyrical "I," his slaughtered self over there and his writing self, which has unbelievably survived.□

Selected poems from *A. Sutzkever: Selected Poetry and Prose*

from *The Smile of Maidanek*

IV

On a crematorium chimney in the Land of Poland,
Barefoot,
Feet dangling,
As in childhood
Fishing in lulav reedy water—
My neighbor sits.
He's dreaming:
The hook of his own pole
Trapped him
With a glimmering worm.
He is his own catcher
On the long
Thin pole.
He is himself his own legend.

V

What do you think he's doing on the chimney,
When someone long ago dredged up from the red belly
My neighbor's parchment city of Jews?
He holds a little mirror in his hand
And casts,
As in childhood
Spots of sun on grandpa's face—
A green smile, raining panic on old and young:

It won't let you dream, be silent, talk—
He casts out, casts into you
The smile of Maidanek.

VI

The smile of Maidanek falls
On wedding and bris.
In opera.
Theater.
In the wings.
In creases of your bread and salt,
Salty conscience.

The green smile falls
On your elegy, your ballad.
On every tremor
Of a sound.

The smile falls
With hissing fire
Into the best wine,
Burgundy
Or Tokay.
It falls on squat depots,
Barely mapped, like mushrooms.
On the tall building of the United
Nations,
And higher—on the silver wanderer
To the abysses.

VII

And nobody knows that on anointed,
High-domed
Summer nights,
In snowy or rainy spaces,
Barefoot,
Feet dangling, as in childhood—

My neighbor sits in Poland on a chimney,
Ponders the beautiful reality that is not real.
And what my neighbor does is ever the same:
He holds in his hand a little mirror. Nothing more.

—1966

A Prayer

For years, a prayer sails in my veins,
And its waves my strophes bend:
Dear God, let us exchange our memories—
I will recall the beginning, you will remember the end.

—1978

The chopped-off hand belongs to me, my catch
Of years ago in a tomato patch.
A human hand, no owner anywhere, I made it mine.
My third hand. Without it, I can write no line.
To a dozen curious readers, confess I must:
Not I who feeds them magic words, not I entrust
The ear of paper with memories that match:
It is my third hand that I found in a tomato patch.

No Jewish knowledge will decipher what it writes.
I teach myself its tongue. I stray at nights
In its dark paths, stumble on thorns, till a stretch
Of dawn unravels it in a tomato patch.

To me belongs the chopped-off hand that used to stroke
Perhaps a woman's hair, before its owner broke.
I found it where he lost it. It was without a scratch—
September nineteen forty-one, in a tomato patch.

—1981

Ever since my pious mother ate earth on Yom Kippur,
Ate on Yom Kippur black earth mixed up with fire,
I, alive, must eat black earth on Yom Kippur,
I am myself a yortsayt candle kindled from her fire.

The masts of sunset mercilessly sink, mast after mast,
Like little birds, one star hops over to another.
But ever since my mother eats earth and doesn't fast,
I eat black earth on every Yom Kippur, like my mother.

A locust has left nothing on my lips
But two thin stalks of syllables: Ma–ma.
Separate from life-and-body, they swim, my lips,
To the kingdom where she used to fast, my pious Mama.

The silence between us grows deeper. To the dregs.
And she, who eats Yom Kippur earth, she sees her son's
thoughts sprout:
Oh, that her prayer should guard his steps, she begs,
When her one yortsayt candle flickers out.

—1983

Zeykher Le-Ghetto

It's not for you to finish. Not a time for wholeness.
Tatters of texts more eternal than marble.
Close the window. Let shadows put on sackcloth
When ghosts play Carmen, Rigoletto.
Leave an empty line, a blot
A memory of the ghetto.

—1965

FAITH BETRAYED

(Continued from p. 21)

told the French paper *Le Figaro*: "No one will dare start a war that will destroy the area. Even after the ultimatum runs out [on January 15], life will go on as usual and the crisis will be solved peacefully, by political means." Indeed, Arafat spent most of the last days before the war in Baghdad, and even after the failure of Perez de Cuellar's eleventh-hour effort to achieve a diplomatic solution, the PLO chief appeared before journalists insisting: "There won't be a war. There won't be a war!" The Palestinian papers from January 10 through 15 were rife with headlines assuring their readers that "There's a chance for peace."

Once the war began, the Palestinians took an active part in the Iraqi effort to turn the military defeat into a political victory. They refused to acknowledge the debacle, desperately clinging to the reports out of Baghdad of allied defeat until the war's bitter end. They also cheered the missiles falling on Israel, as though they were proof that Iraq was acquitting itself honorably in a contest with practically the entire world. After Iraq's defeat, Arafat was still defending the Palestinian embrace of Saddam—but only reversing the terms of the question. In March he told the press that "It's not a matter of our support for Saddam Hussein but of Saddam Hussein's support for us Palestinians!"

According to Secretary of State Baker, the PLO "bet on the wrong horse." But no such gamble was involved; the Palestinians had no other choice but to support Saddam once the Allies moved in. Ultimately, the PLO as an organization suffered a setback, and many Palestinians suffered personally, but the Palestinian issue moved forward. As long as the crisis continued, Israel, the U.S., and European allies were able to block Saddam's attempts to

link the events in the Gulf with the Palestinian cause. But as a matter of political reality, circumstantial linkage occurred nonetheless.

Many players in the region would like to exploit this de facto linkage. Secretary of State Baker, in his postwar visit to Israel, met with a Palestinian delegation headed by Faisal El-Husseini, who had received official sanction from Arafat for the meeting. Shortly afterward, one of Arafat's senior aides, Bassem Abu-Sharif, announced in London that a new Palestinian initiative, including significant political concessions, was underway.

The initiative was soon retracted, but there is no doubt that this was a trial balloon sent out from the higher echelons of the PLO. The Palestinian "street," in the wake of its enthusiasm for Saddam Hussein, responded with critical graffiti, leaflets, and threats against Abu-Sharif and El-Husseini. But the leaders of the PLO recognize that to be included in Bush's "new order" in the Middle East they will have to reclaim their position in the political arena—and the time to do so is short. □

RICHARD RORTY

(Continued from p. 42)

sheer boredom is forestalled only systematically "rotating" from one to another object of his pleasure, so that he never lingers long enough on a momentary passion to tire of it. And if A is not the model Rorty had in mind, who then? Whether he admits it or not, most of those whom Rorty admires as "strong poets"—resolute builders of unique, integral sélves—had the sort of reservoir of will and conviction that aestheticism invariably saps. Most admirable folks are not light-minded aesthetes (Martin Luther King, Jr., Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Raoul Wallenberg, Jacobo Timmerman), and most aesthetes are not particularly admirable (Donald Trump, Boss Tweed, Rameau's nephew). The former set bear a closer resemblance to the ethical Judge in the latter half of *Either/Or,* who is something quite other than "light-minded" about "the standard theological issues."

Furthermore, the events of the last twenty years have done much to undermine the distinction between "public" and "private" upon which Rorty insists. Consider one very timely issue: the First World's tremendous consumption of resources. To sustain a society of "liberal ironists" (those who "see through" the pretentions of philosophical objectivity and are eager to "make" themselves), the economic order must not only be geared toward providing an ample degree of leisured comfort, but must shy away from making unduly rigorous demands upon the public to shoulder the burden of sacrifice when times get rough. This is equivalent to saying that times had better not get rough: the pivotal role of the experts is to ensure that the economy remains perpetually fine-tuned, so that the private search for aesthetic and expressive fulfillment can continue unabated. But as the recent events in Iraq have so frighteningly demonstrated, the faith in expert, technical control of politics or the economy is a chimera: so many variables are out of *anyone's* ability to control or even predict. And if we can expect the world to veer "out of control" from time to time, we logically cannot expect times to be uniformly and persistently "good," whatever degree of expertise the state and corporate mandarins may claim for themselves. The consequences are not too hard to discern. Not everyone can get to be a "comfortably well-off" aesthete, and as soon as one faces this reality, proposals to limit the quest for ironic self-perfection for the sake of the community's well-being and justice—for example, by introducing an energy policy designed to alter America's high-consumption standard of living—make a great deal of sense. Private questions about selves and their aspirations cannot be neatly severed from public questions about justice and cruelty, since they will, given enough time, impinge upon each other. At best, our private and public goals may need to be weighed against each other, in hopes of a stable compromise; at worst, we may have to ponder whether the leisure of the few is not being underwritten by the poor, the powerless, and by future generations.

Rorty's liberalism is deeply optimistic: he assumes that the split between public and private spheres is neat and unproblematic, a fait accompli of liberal democracy. He's infected with the naivete that afflicts most liberal, indeed most modern, political ideologies. Present-day "liberals" and "conservatives" both exhibit this naivete, although in radically different forms. The post–New Deal liberal believes that the redistributive powers of government need to direct the dynamism of industry and commerce downward through the strata of society, so that with increasing prosperity all groups can fulfill their desires. The conservative insists that the market, left to its own devices, can do the job far more efficiently, without the unpleasant side effect of sprawling bureaucracy (note, however, the stunning rise of bureaucracy in government during Reagan's tenure, and the conservative's studied indifference to bureaucracy in business). But what both liberals and conservatives take for granted is the possibility and the desirability of unlimited economic growth. Both are utopian about growth and its capacity to effortlessly bring about social and cultural harmony and well-being.

Were this a reasonable expectation, both the liberal and conservative wing of liberal capitalist democracy would be in far better shape than they currently are. Liberals could rely upon the benign hand of government to glue society together; conserva-

tives could rely upon the bracing invisible hand of the market; and most of the rest of the populace could continue their untrammeled self-construction. Such a utopia would exempt society from finding a basis for social solidarity that rested on shared values and a willingness to practice restraint in order to realize and preserve them. The only thing necessary to secure social tranquility would be a collective willingness not to step on others' toes, and to forswear "cruelty."

But reality intrudes on these reveries. The system that serves as the vehicle of progress for the liberal may be the state, while for the conservative it may be the market: but both the liberal and the conservative cherish their *systems,* "systems so perfect that no one will need to be good," as T.S. Eliot once put it. The problem with the search for the perfect political or economic "system" is that it tends to deflect people from addressing a more basic issue: what kind of people ought we to try to be? Without serious, engaged public debate on such questions of individual and collective character, no "system" can hope to endure for long. If anything can be learned by the collapse of "systems" in the twentieth century, it is that people need to be good, and systems cannot hope to survive without people committed to virtues like justice, generosity, moderation, honesty, and loyalty in their private and public lives. It is ironic that the terminal illness of Marxism—its flat rejection of appeals to morality and its deification of a "system" on the side of history—may also infect its chief political rival: liberal, late-capitalist democracy has its own brand of utopianism, a utopianism all the more naive for disguising itself as pragmatic realism.

The philosopher Daniel Callahan has reprimanded those who advocate a "minimalist ethics"—the thesis that anything between "consenting adults" is morally beyond reproach—because he maintains that the substance of an open agreement can nevertheless be foul and degrading. We had better, he says, address these matters of substance openly and publicly, since hard economic times will almost certainly make it painfully clear that our preferences and choices *do* have an impact on others.

Rorty comes as close as any philosopher has to making ethical minimalism attractive and humane. But I do not think Rorty's ironic, easygoing aestheticism is made for hard times, and I fear hard times may already be upon us. When a conservative such as Kevin Phillips amasses compelling evidence that the only solid achievement of Reaganomics has been the concentration of wealth and income in the hands of fewer and fewer individuals; when social critics such as Benjamin DeMott, Lewis Lapham, Michael Harrington, and Loren Baritz note how class-bound American society is, yet no class acknowledges that fact; when all classes are equally enamored of the holy trinity of money, power, and status—then, I submit, we not only face hard times, but lack the resources to understand and overcome them.

If our public selves are to become as Rorty desires them to be—open, generous, hating cruelty of any kind—then in our present circumstances our private selves may well have to be disciplined by stronger forces than aesthetic delight and playful irony. We need to admit, with Rorty, that our deepest moral beliefs and ethical ideals are timebound contingencies rather than eternal verities, yet refuse to draw his conclusion that this somehow drains them of public significance. We need to realize that the public–private split marks a vague pragmatic distinction rather than a sharp, necessary dichotomy, and that it is to be understood, reinterpreted, and revised in sound pragmatic fashion: in open, public debate. And to accomplish this task, we need to rediscover a form of philosophic wisdom purged of all the universalizing arrogance that had plagued it in times past, a form that can fallibly yet confidently guide us in the task of seriously determining how our lives ought to be lived. □

ROUNDTABLE

(Continued from p. 32)

Saddam was going to be perceived as the liberator of last resort. What else did Arafat have to show for his concessions in 1988?

Gitlin: I agree very much with what Cornel and Letty have been saying. I'm very, very apprehensive about the propensity of Americans to forget anything that's more than twelve seconds old or twelve miles away. In this situation there are certain obligations that befall us, and as boring as they may be, they're necessary. We have to be very stubborn about Israeli violation of human rights in the Occupation. Some things are now public that wouldn't have been had the Israelis not tortured a *New York Times* stringer, so that now one can actually read about Israeli torture in the *New York Times,* at least this week. One has to be extremely clear and forthright about that. Secondly, one has to be extremely clear about the moral and political untenability of the Occupation, as boring as that is. Thirdly, one has to be willing to congratulate the Bush administration for striking the right note at a certain moment, but at the same time to be boringly insistent that they have an obligation, especially having worsened some of the tensions in the area, to make the Israelis deal from the strength they have.

Pogrebin: But now we really have a problem. I don't know if the sight of Palestinians on the rooftops cheering on

Scuds has really hardened hearts and is going to alter the dialogue, the open lines of communication, the feeling that they really are human beings on the other side of this issue. Fear alters politics in a way that I don't think any of us really understand. Something happened in Israel when those Scuds fell on apartment houses. I'm not sure that we aren't, in political terms, going to be picking up the pieces for a long time to come.

TIKKUN: Part of the point of the *Tikkun* conference in Israel this June 23–28 is to help start picking up those pieces. On the one hand, many Israeli activists think it will be a real boost for the Israeli peace movement if many people from the Diaspora are willing to come, to show their support for the peace movement by actually physically being there at this event. On the other hand, we are structuring a series of discussions on strategy—strategy for how we in the Diaspora can best coordinate our activities with people in Israel. For example, there has been a lot of talk about aid. Some people say that mentioning aid would be a disaster for the Israeli peace movement, others say that while current aid should be maintained, any future escalations in aid (such as may be necessary to help resettle Soviet Jews) should be linked to progress in the peace process. We at *Tikkun* don't have a position on this—what we do want is an honest and deep exploration of this and other possible strategies so that diaspora Jews and Israelis can think this through together and develop a long-term plan. The Israeli peace movement and its supporters in the Diaspora have been severely weakened by not having taken the time to develop a long-term strategy. Moreover, this particular occasion will make it possible to have a set of conversations—not just about Israel but about the whole range of issues facing progressive Jews, both as progressives and as Jews. There hasn't been an international gathering like this for decades—because in the past these kinds of discussions almost always broke down into predictable ideological categories, with one group saying that all issues for the Jews would be resolved if the Jews would create socialism, and the other group saying that all problems would be solved if the Jews would just become Zionists. Developments in the past few years have broken down that kind of ideological certainty, so now, for the first time in many decades, it becomes possible to have a serious discussion about the problems facing us as Jews and as progressives. □

EDITORIAL

(Continued from p. 8)

mate in their perspective, it might be in a position to drive a wedge between Bush's postwar policies and the American people, who supported the war for far better reasons than those that motivated Bush.

Many liberal Democrats in Congress want to avoid this whole discussion, hoping that the war will be forgotten and they can focus all attention on domestic politics. Some fear that their failure to support the war before it started could backfire and threaten their political futures. But they don't realize that they are facing a far greater threat—the abandonment of politics by the entire generation of people who have been the backbone of liberal politics for the past twenty years. If Bush is allowed to triumph and discredit the Vietnam syndrome, many of these people will become too deeply disspirited to continue in any kind of politics—and all liberal and progressive causes will suffer.

So what is at stake is a battle for the minds and hearts of a generation who thought that things could be different. If they are convinced that they have been *wrong* to oppose U.S. militarism and U.S. imperialism, or if they come to believe that nothing can be changed and that the militarists will always remain in power, they are likely to withdraw their energies into personal life—and this will have disastrous consequences for the environment, for feminism, for all the social change movements. It is this cultural and intellectual battle that has been the central drama of the past decades—and unless liberal and progressive forces understand this battle, the recent victories of the Right engineered by George Bush threaten to be decisive.

All the more reason to worry, then, about phenomena like Oliver Stone's movie *The Doors* and about the reaction to an excessive political correctness (PC) on campuses around the country. *The Doors* offers us images of the counterculture of the sixties that remind us of the transcendent promise of the period, but simultaneously enmesh us in a violent and disgusting sexism and a glorification of irrationality that borders on fascism. What Stone leaves out of his account is the powerful New Left critique of these destructive elements of the counterculture—so that one is left to believe that the social movements of the sixties somehow identified with or supported this vision of what a transformed society would be. While the Doors called on us to "break on through to the other side," the struggle over the nature of that "other side" was severely contested. The movie manages to make it appear that the most sexist and vicious visions that dominated one sector of the counterculture were in fact what most of us were about—thereby reenforcing the desire of many to put that period behind them, and to deny the validity of its challenges to American society. For people who may be questioning their political commitments in light of the seeming triumph of Bush's Gulf policies, *The Doors* offers a further incentive to dismiss their generation's feelings that things could be very different, to think that those feelings were merely the momentary flashes of a drug-

soaked youthful fantasy that now appears oncreen in a single, ungly aspect. To counter this, we need to insist that the transcendent possibilities of the sixties remain real—and cannot be reduced to the Dionysiac and self-destructive instincts of those whom the mainstream culture continues to insist are the true representatives of our transformative aspirations.

Similarly, George Bush would be delighted if he knew how many young people are being turned off to progressive ideas by the totalitarian style adopted by leftists on campus trying to enforce their "political correctness" (PC) rather than convince people of its validity. Often unable to defend their political positions (which, in our view, are often quite sensible), many campus liberals have created an atmosphere of intimidation in which serious debate is often stifled. We shouldn't overestimate this phenomenon—as the Right does, when it talks about the campuses being dominated by PC fanatics. The truth is that most universities remain completely dominated intellectually by the conservative forces that own and control them. At least some of the outcry about PC is a product of the hysteria these forces feel over the prospect of anyone with a different perspective gaining a foothold. Yet when we hear young liberals and progressives privately complaining that they are afraid to challenge some of the "correct lines" being put forward by Third World or feminist forces on campus, we suspect that they face a revival of some of the destructive dynamics that helped undermine the movements of the sixties. We support the basic attitudes and worldview of many of those who are propounding an antisexist and antiracist politics on campus. But we also know that it's not enough to be "correct": we also need to be respectful and compassionate toward those with whom we disagree.

Far from the issue of the war with Iraq? Not at all. As I've indicated, a primary goal of that war was to defeat our ability to continue to hope for and fight for a new world. What will make it possible for us ultimately to defeat Bush is a vision of social change that is radically transformative yet profoundly compassionate—and it is that kind of vision that we at *Tikkun* have been attempting to articulate.□

LETTERS

(Continued from p. 4)

activists and leaders could have supported the Gulf War. Their fantasy that a U.S. victory would lead to new progress on the Israeli–Palestinian peace process has now been shown to be nothing but wishful thinking. But that was clear before the war—Shamir was going to be just as intransigent with as without a hundred thousand Iraqi dead. What kind of moral credibility can Peace Now have if it supports wars? To imagine that this will convince Israelis that the Israeli peace forces are really "tough" and "realistic" and share "the national interest" is a delusion—those Israelis who oppose Peace Now will be just as opposed now as they ever were. For them, the key is their fear of Palestinians—and no number of peaceniks strutting around as tough guys about Iraq will undermine that fear..

Sandra Cohen
Miami, Florida

How to afford the Tikkun Conference

To the Editor:

I want to go to your conference in Jerusalem, but I can't afford it. Do you have any price reductions?

David Katz
Dallas, Texas

The Editor responds:

Yes, we will reduce your registration fee in exchange for work before and during the conference—if you really need a reduction. We have no funding for this event, so we have to cover our expenses with the registration fees. We really don't want to reduce fees for people for whom the cost is just an inconvenience and a bother. But if it really makes the difference between coming and not coming, we will work something out with you. We have no control over airplane and hotel fees, but we can do something about registration—but only in exchange for conference help. Call Craig Sumberg at (415) 482-0805 to work out details. And if you or anyone you know has any friends in Jerusalem who would be willing to put up an individual or couple in their apartment during the conference, please let us know—because though we'd like to offer some free accommodations for people who really can't afford to stay in hotels, so far we don't have many such places to offer.

Relationships

My cousin: she laughs, sings, lives in her body, reads books, makes shabbat dinner warm and thought-provoking. She's 35, ready for another bear in her den, and some cubs. Write to her. *Tikkun* Box 27.

Communication and honesty turn me on! SNRJF, 38, slim + attractive professional seeks NRSJM; intelligent, ethical + with concern for others for a warm caring intimate relationship. Progressive politics, travel, theater, nature and ballroom dancing are my pleasures. What are yours? NYC area. Note/phone/photo appreciated. *Tikkun* Box 26.Oakland, CA 94619.

Notices

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You are invited to

An International Conference Of Liberal and Progressive Jews

SOLIDARITY WITH THE ISRAELI PEACE MOVEMENT

Jerusalem June 23-28, 1991

Sponsored by TIKKUN *Magazine*

If you've ever thought of helping the Israeli peace-forces, now is the time. Though one might have hoped that the aftermath of the Gulf War would create conditions for Israeli-Palestinian reconciliation, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir has made it clear that he will reject any negotiations based on the principle of exchanging land for peace. Many Israeli doves, believing that only US pressure could impact on Shamir's intransigence, hope that we in the Diaspora will support moves for peace. But what kind of pressure should be applied, how to coordinate it with the needs of the Israeli peace movement, and how to avoid unintentionally aiding the anti-Semitism and Israel-bashing that have recently surfaced in some sectors of the Left—these questions need the kind of serious reflection that will take place at this conference.

THE CONFERENCE IS NOT ONLY ABOUT ISRAEL, AND NOT ONLY ABOUT NARROWLY POLITICAL QUESTIONS. It will be an an international gathering of liberal and progressive Jews—the first in many decades—to address the deepest questions facing us both as progressives and as Jews. After the Gulf war, after the collapse of self described "socialist" regimes of Eastern Europe, and in light of the isolation of liberal forces in the U.S., progressive Jews must confront a series of difficult problems: • Now that the old conceptions of a "left" and "socialism" have become politically irrelevant, what liberatory possibilities exist for social thought and for social-change movements in the West? • Internationalism vs. Tribal Values: What's left of the Enlightenment and rationalism? • How do we build a Judaism and a Zionism that are morally sensitive and politically realistic, but that reject the cynicism and ultra-realism of conservative politics? • How do we navigate between a reductive moral relativism and an oppressive moral authoritarianism—in the Jewish world and in the larger society? • What does Judaism have to teach serious contemporary intellectuals? • How do we most effectively fight against the resumption of anti-Semitism, not only in Eastern Europe but also in some part of the American Left • What strategies make most sense for the Israeli and Diaspora peace movements? (This session organized by Peace Now) • How do we reconcile the tensions between national or religious solidarity and individual freedom? • How do we best support the struggles against sexism and heterosexism in Israel and in Jewish communities around the world?

THIS WILL BE A UNIQUE GATHERING OF SOME OF THE MOST CREATIVE JEWISH THINKERS IN ISRAEL AND THE DIASPORA. Each morning there will be a set of classes with leading scholars, followed by afternoon and evening plenary sessions and small group discussions. If you think you may go to Israel sometime in the next few years, make it now so you don't miss this historic event.

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to heal, repair and transform the world.
All the rest is commentary.

תיקון

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