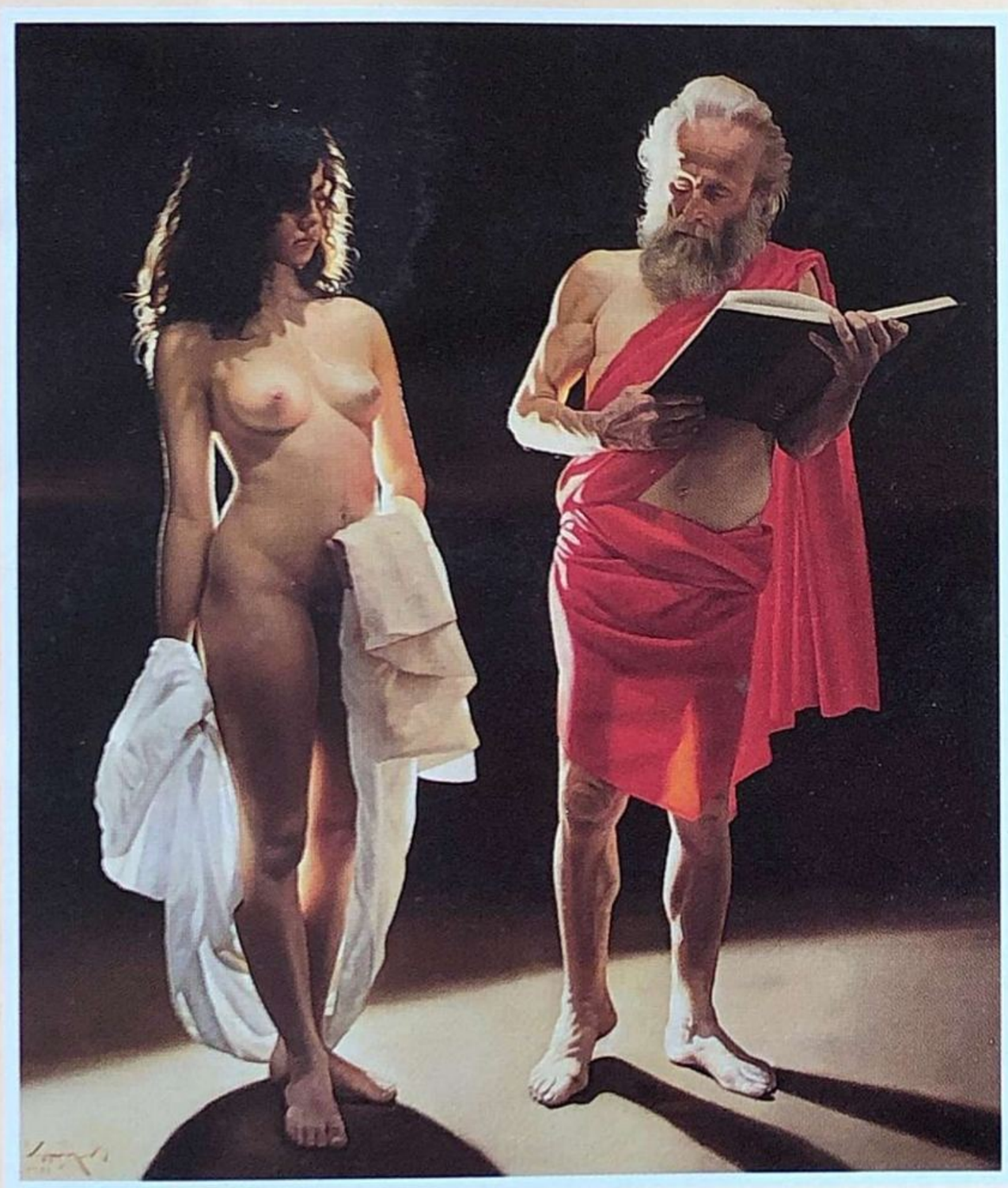
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Ads The Democrats Should Use

TIKKUN

Reviews: *David Biale, Paul Boyer, Laurie Mylroie, Norman Weinstein, Casey Blake, Nelson Lichtenstein*

A BIMONTHLY JEWISH CRITIQUE OF POLITICS, CULTURE & SOCIETY JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1992 $6.00



SEXUALITY AFTER THOMAS/HILL

Peter Breggin, Ruth Rosen, R.W. Connell, Kim Crenshaw, Orlando Patterson, Peter Gabel, Linda Williams, Michele Wallace, Gary Peller, Kendall Thomas, and Ellen Willis

Blacks and Jews
Jeffrey C. Alexander & Chaim Seidler-Feller
Cornel West

Lebanon Lost
Benny Morris

Hollywood's Kids
Kay Sunstein Hymowitz

PC's History
Paul Berman

Jesus
Harvey Cox

FASCIST WINDS RETURN

In America: Countering David Duke – Lessons from the Last Rise of Fascism by Michael Lerner; In Europe: German Neo-Nazis by Hajo Funke and Elliot Neaman; Whitewashing the Holocaust by Efraim Zuroff; Toby Sonneman on Gypsies

Treatise: Berakhot

There's a blessing he yawns through, come home from sleep,
And a second he blinks when he opens his eyes.
He sits up in bed, scratching the blessing for that.
When he sets his feet on the ground—again.
And when he stands up. And when he takes
The day's first step. When he tugs up his pants
He pulls on a blessing; he ties one on
With his shoelaces; covers his head with a blessed,
Half-heavenly hat. (I should cover my head.)
When he washes his hands, his face. And all

Before breakfast, this strobe-lit time-motion-
Eternity study? It goes on: blessings
When you go to the bathroom, set foot in new clothes,
Though not, as they're cobbled from death, leather shoes;
A blessing on viewing a giant or dwarf; ditto
Lightning, high mountains, a sunrise, the sea;
One hundred a day, says R. Meir, bless him:
That's one every 14.4 minutes
If you stay up all night, which taketh away
(Or does it?) your chance to kick off with the one

Upon waking up. A blessing on sitting
Down to read and write that list? Was there?
A meta-blessing! That could take care
Of a few of those hundred: O, blessed art Thou,
O Lord, etc., who giveth this chance
To write down the blessing over the blessing
Over the blessing over and so on.
Would that count? Who's counting? And what could it mean
To tell over, morning on morning, how God
Is "blessèd," anyway? Who blessed Him? Us?

Fat lot of good that does Him, then.
"Be one of those on whom nothing is lost":
Not tugging my beard? Not scratching the wax
From my desk while I study and write this? Not
The boom of the game show upstairs, where my
"Not so good hearing, you understand?" neighbor
Plays out her last years? The letters, the words
Yammering backstage behind these? All's
Tohu-bohu: tug, scratch, write, "Come on down!"
Too much light over too much surface, unmoving—

Enough. You doodle a circle, pick up
That curve down the page, scuff the chair back, quit
Damning the day with faint psalms, qualms of praise.
You think of him thinking of Him, flirt observance,
Wonder—would wondering blossom or fade?—
And yawn, stand up, walk into the kitchen.
Tart permitted fruit ripens, dripping with sun:
Red onion, tomato, relish, tuna, dark rye.
Fumble a pickle, crunchy and wet, sit
Grinning. That's God's own sandwich. Ah.

Eric Selinger

TIKKUN

A BIMONTHLY JEWISH CRITIQUE OF POLITICS, CULTURE & SOCIETY — VOLUME 7 NUMBER 1

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Letters

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

LINKAGE

Editor's Note: We received the following letter in response to our discussions on aid, loan guarantees, and their linkage to settlement policy (September/October and November/December 1991). Though we normally do not print letters to a third party, this particular letter addressed the issues we have been discussing, and suggests an interesting possibility: If something like this happened in a temple or synagogue you *attended over the High Holidays, you might consider following the example of this* Tikkun *reader by writing a letter of protest to your rabbi or the board of your synagogue. It's not too late.*

Dear Rabbi:

Much as I enjoyed the High Holiday services, I was troubled by something that happened. Folded into the program for the Rosh Hashanah services was a flyer urging political action on our part in support of Israel's immediate request for a $10 billion loan guarantee from the U.S. government.

In addition to the flyer, the Rabbi preached a sermon in support of this request, and exhorted us to call our congressman to press the issue.

As you know, the loan guarantee is not for the purpose of enabling Israel to obtain the loan. Rather it is for the purpose of obtaining the loan at a somewhat lower interest rate than what they would be charged without the guarantee. In other words, the incremental difference in interest costs is what the Israeli request is about. This is a purely secular, commercial matter.

I am troubled that no one seems to have questioned the appropriateness, or propriety, of politicizing the High Holiday services over a secular, commercial transaction. It is disturbing to me that secular matters involving Israel and money take precedence over the holiness of these solemn occasions.

However, there is more to be disturbed about than the religious transgression. It is no secret that the U.S., in accordance with a resolution passed by the United Nations, opposes the increase in Israeli settlements on the West Bank. The U.S. opposition to the loan guarantee is

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based upon its unwillingness to fund a program, directly or indirectly, that it officially finds repugnant. The U.S. position is that the settlements are a) illegal, and b) an obstacle to the peace process. This is a position held by the last four presidential administrations, including presidents of both parties. By asking us to call our congressman on this issue, we are being urged to support an effort that is against the official policy of the U.S. We are being told, in effect, that our loyalty is first to the Israeli government's foreign policy, and only secondarily to that of our own government.

I am disturbed that the leadership of the temple is making this bold assertion without any discussion with the membership or attempt to poll us about what we think. Are members of the temple's administration aware that Yitzak Moda'i, the Israeli finance minister, described the accelerated pace of settlement as "extreme foolishness," or that Israeli Knesset Member Haim Ramon (Labor Party) stated that "to invest more money in the settlements is close to insanity" (*New York Times,* September 21, 1991)?

It seems to me that if our temple wants to plunge into American–Middle Eastern politics, then some mechanism should be established for debating the issues and for determining the representative views of its membership. That's the American way. With kindest personal regards and best wishes. Sincereley yours,

Abe Schestopol
Tallahassee, Florida

To the Editor:

I disagree with David Saperstein's contention that "George Bush has created an image-change for Israel among the American people that is going to have long-term implications" ("Linkage: Loans, Aid, and Land for Peace," November/December, 1991). The images of Israel putting down the intifada did more to change the way Americans look at Israel than President Bush's actions.

Saperstein would have us believe that before the settlement freeze, "when Americans thought of Israel, they thought of Paul Newman and *Exodus,* of an Israel whose cause was just and right." Most people get their information from the TV news, not from watching old movies. Even the courage of the Israeli people under attack by Iraqi Scuds has not fully erased from people's minds the pictures of Israeli soldiers breaking bones and destroying houses. I'd like to believe that when the average American thinks about Israel he conjures up an image of Paul Newman. But I'm afraid he is more likely to think of Ariel Sharon.

David Saperstein, Representative Solarz, and thousands of liberals like them oppose the Occupation. In refusing to link aid to a settlement freeze they are in fact freeing up money to continue building settlements. This puts them in the same position as a parent who lends money to his son to pay for a mortgage and finds out he is using the money to buy heroin. The parent then goes to the son with this plea: "Heroin is bad for you, and by the way, here's the money for your second mortgage payment." On the way home the parent tells himself that he did the right thing, as only the addict himself can face his heroin problem.

Like that of the parent, many Jews' unconditional support of Israel comes from a feeling of love and solidarity. Occupation is a poison in the bloodstream of the Israeli body politic. We have every right to ask that Ariel Sharon not take our money to inject more poison into the system.

My grandfather came to Montreal from Vilnius, "the Jerusalem of Lithuania." He fled the kind of persecution Jews are now facing in the remnants of the Soviet Empire. When somebody comes to my door asking for money for the Russian aliya, I would love to greet them with open arms. I wish I could do so without feeling that I'm helping to perpetuate the Occupation. The time has come for our community to negotiate a social contract with Israel. The price of our solidarity should be the end of the Occupation. We will all sleep more easily at night when we know that we aren't financing Sharon's dream of a Greater Israel.

Stephen Albert
Montreal, Quebec

Doubting Thomas

To the Editor:

As Louis Hartz argued in *The Liberal Tradition in America* (1955), the efforts of the most radical American intellectuals to transcend liberal individualism have been hopelessly mired in the very same presuppositions they seek to challenge. Hartz showed that

Abraham Walowitz, "Untitled", 1904-05. Courtesy The Jewish Museum, New York



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self-styled radical conservatives such as George Fitzhugh (the great apologist for Southern slavery) and socialists such as Edward Bellamy (the author of the collectivist utopian novel *Looking Backward*) were unconsciously liberals at heart, unable to penetrate the illusion of the ontological primacy of the individual. Alas, the current ideological tempest about populism, communitarianism, affirmative action, and cultural pluralism, of which your "Roundtable: Doubting Thomas" (September/October 1991) is an excellent sample, demonstrates that the Hartzian diagnosis is still right on.

Most of the panelists challenge the ideology of meritocracy on the basis of its failure to recognize that most Americans have *not* enjoyed equal opportunity. As Kimberlé Crenshaw argues, "dominant measures of merit and worth fail to ... value and confirm the various cultural identities that ... give us our human character." The consensus of the panel is that all Americans ought to enjoy equal opportunity, encouragement, empowerment, and support in making something of themselves, with full recognition of the validity of different cultural standards of merit and worth, especially those of women and blacks—and including, perhaps, even those of white working-class men.

There is scarcely any indication that anyone questions the assumption that there really is or ought to be such a thing as the comparative "worth" or "merit" of an individual human being. The panelists fail to transcend the Hobbesian axiom at the very heart of individualism, that "the value of a man is his price," that is, the extent to which he is valued by others for his achievements and contributions. (We now include women.)

The consensus baked by your panel is decorated with an icing consisting of mushy statements by Peter Gabel and Cornel West challenging "male rationality, detachment, and competitiveness," calling for "a new communitarian vision of human value that opposes the ... feelings of personal unworthiness generated within our culture" and "appealing to people's deep commonality." These are incredibly vague formulations, but I get from them an image of a future America in which individuals are much more loving and supportive of one another's efforts to achieve personal "worth" by making something of themselves in the eyes of others. In this America, those who *still* end up as failures in spite of all the equal opportunity, love, support, affirmative action, and respect for cultural difference they have received will know that they really are inferior. But they will be consoled, in the time-honored manner of Western religious hypocrisy (in both its medieval and liberal forms) with the knowledge that all are equally "worthy" in the eyes of God, and that the successful ones have a duty to care for them maternally, protect them paternally, and help their children become better persons than they were. You Americans just don't get it. And why should you, when the rest of the world is lining up to buy your way of experiencing reality?

If my "worth" as a human being is tied *in any way* to success in this world, by whatever pluralistic criteria of success, it really doesn't do much good to append a footnote citing a "higher" or "ultimate" truth relating to our equal status as children of God, bearers of some "spark of divinity." You cannot trump up a genuine solidarity or "deep commonality" in a culture that assumes the existence of measurable comparative human "worth."

I believe that it will not be possible to realize the vision of a culturally pluralistic society of equality, opportunity, and solidarity unless the very idea of comparative human "merit"—as distinguished from the comparative importance to society of specific human *performances* under certain definite historical conditions—is seriously disputed at the *beginning* of our efforts. Any society suffering from the neurotic belief that making something of the self is a prerequisite for feelings of personal validity is doomed to perpetuate unnecessary human misery, tolerable though this misery may become due to the administration of false consolations of every kind. To measure human "worth" is the essence of psychological slavery.

Gad Horowitz
Toronto, Ontario

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Interested in being a *Tikkun* intern this spring or summer? Minimum 25 hours per week. Send a resume and self-revealing letter to Interns/Tikkun, 5100 Leona Street, Oakland, CA 94619.

Editorials

Michael Lerner

Jews Feed the Hungry

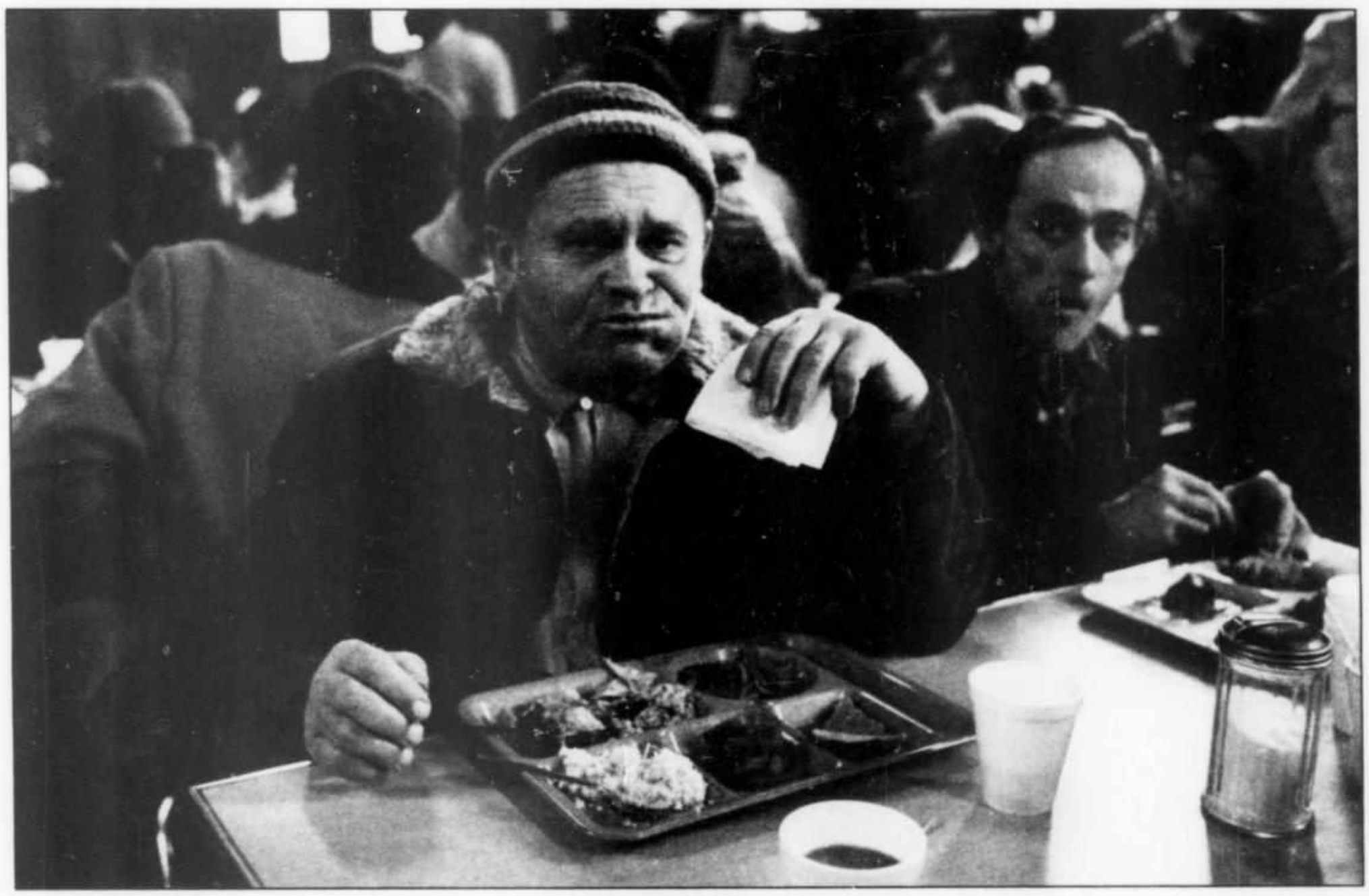
The winters of our disgrace continue in the U.S. In one of the richest countries in the world, millions of people remain homeless. Some will die of the cold and others of hunger, many more of diseases that devastate bodies long weakened by the harsh conditions of homelessness.

No individual or small group can rectify these conditions. Entering the fourth winter of George Bush's attempt to deal with public problems by mobilizing private action, we can see the limited returns of consigning public crises to an imaginary "thousand points of light."

We must pressure Congress to enact a serious program to build housing, provide jobs, and redistribute food. The resources are there, if we are willing to stop building useless weapons systems and stop patrolling a Germany no longer threatened by Communist expansionism.

But in the short run this will not happen. So while we must continue to pressure for congressional action, it still is a moral imperative to take some action on our own to deal with the pain that surrounds us. Hence, *Tikkun*'s education arm, the Committee for Judaism and Social Justice (CJSJ), is encouraging its local chapters and local *Tikkun* discussion groups to join a project, which we are calling "Jews Feed the Hungry."

The idea is simple enough. Jews collect food from their neighbors, approach supermarkets and restaurants that discard leftover food, or donate food themselves. They then volunteer to prepare and serve it in local kitchens and homeless shelters. If there's no local CJSJ in your town, or if your local CJSJ chapter is not interested in this particular project, you can create your own "Jews Feed the Hungry" project.



Soup kitchen, Detroit, Michigan.

There already is a splendid and useful Jewish program for the hungry called Mazon. Mazon asks people who are planning an elaborate bar or bat mitzvah or wedding to donate a percentage of the money that would have been spent on the festivities, and then Mazon distributes that money to hunger projects. "Jews Feed The Hungry" is somewhat different—it is addressed to those of us with slightly less money who are not planning elaborate festivities and who just want to *do* something to help. Moreover, it is hands-on involvement—not just giving money (which is also very important), but also actually spending an hour or more per week collecting, cooking, and distributing the food to be used to feed the hungry. Everyone can contribute—and you don't have to wait for someone else to act. You can call some of your friends and ask them to join with you in this project, or you can do it on your own.

The first step, of course, is to contact your local social services, city hall, and community churches and synagogues to find out what programs already exist. Find out who is already providing food and what their needs are. The second step is to develop a plan for what you personally would be interested in doing on a regular basis to help, and what you might do working together with a group of Jews. The third step is to put a notice in a local newspaper announcing the formation of such a group, while independently recruiting other Jews from your community to participate. We at CJSJ can provide you with information about how to plan and structure such meetings.

It's particularly significant for Jews to be extending this aid *as Jews*. Doing so provides an important basis for forging alliances with communities that are facing poverty—alliances that are increasingly important as various demagogues seek to introduce new currents of racism and anti-Semitism into our national life. And a strongly Jewish-identified response to the problems of hunger and homelessness provides our own communities with a different model of what it is to be a Jew taking seriously the ethical commands of our tradition. An hour per week of activity in "Jews Feed the Hungry" might make a lasting impact on Hebrew School students—and might provide them with an important incentive to remain attached to their Jewishness after their bar and bat mitzvahs. Similarly, an active "Jews Feed the Hungry" project might provide an important route back to the Jewish community for many who see Jewish life as more preoccupied with conspicuous consumption than conspicuous acts of giving and caring. Moreover, "Jews Feed the Hungry" is *not* aimed exclusively at feeding *the Jewish hungry,* so it breaks a recent trend in Jewish giving to concentrate only on the needs of Jews and to let others worry about themselves.

Ultimately, the bottom line is this: It's morally disgraceful to live in whatever comfort we have achieved without taking some action to alleviate the pain of others. In a democracy, our obligation is to act through the electoral system to ensure change. But that cannot be enough. We urge people to read the insert in this issue, which describes the general orientation of the Committee for Judaism and Social Justice. If you are interested in working with us, either on CJSJ as a whole or on this particular "Jews Feed the Hungry" project, contact CJSJ coordinator Erika Henik at 5100 Leona Street, Oakland, CA 94619.

Loan Guarantees for a Settlement Freeze

Linkage is absolutely necessary. It's tragic that Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir decided to use the humanitarian needs of Soviet immigrants to further his settlement policies in the Occupied Territories. But he has been pursuing this strategy consistently, ever since he announced in 1990 that the new immigrants would answer the "demographic problem" of a growing Arab population in the Territories that would soon outstrip the number of Jews living in Israel. And Housing Minister Ariel Sharon has made Shamir's pronouncements into social policy with an aggressive campaign to increase the settlement of *olim* in the Territories.

Of course, many Soviet Jews show little inclination to move to the West Bank, and the Israeli government will not force them to do so. Rather, it relies on "market conditions" to push both new immigrants and young Israelis to make this "choice," a choice that it has helped predetermine by extending low-interest mortgages and pouring tens of millions of dollars into building roads and other infrastructures in the Occupied Territories. Shamir's goal, as he and his cabinet members have explicitly avowed, is to fill up the Territories with more Israelis than Arabs, and thereby "create facts" that will guarantee that an exchange of land for peace with Palestinians can never occur. The ten-billion-dollar loan guarantees will enable this settlement activity to accelerate.

Given this strategy, Shamir can participate in the international negotiations without fear, following the framework set down in the Camp David accords. He will eventually agree to an interim "limited autonomy" plan that will allow Palestinians to run their own municipal services. The Camp David plan says that this interim agreement will run for five years, and that after the third

year there will be negotiations to determine the long-term status of the Territories. At that point, Shamir will say the same thing he says unambiguously now: that he is perfectly happy to talk, but that he will never agree to an exchange of land for peace; all he will agree to is to institute an interim "autonomy" agreement on a permanent basis. And meanwhile, he will point to the hundreds of thousands of Jews on the West Bank as proof that any exchange of land for peace would create a new population of refugees.

In the November/December 1991 issue of *Tikkun,* Knesset members Shulamith Aloni and Yair Tzaban challenged the notion that Shamir could offer any effective "guarantees" to ensure that the money be restricted from aiding the settlement of the Occupied Territories. They pointed out that even the Knesset cannot get access to budget information to determine exactly what monies are being used in the West Bank. And it would be naive to believe that U.S. restrictions on how the money could be used would have any greater impact: The Israeli government could use U.S. money in Israel, but it could then free up other monies to be used on the West Bank and Gaza. Aloni pointedly challenged Steven Solarz (D-N.Y.) to explain why he was allowing U.S. funds to be used to deny the human rights of Palestinians. She contended that Shamir is currently wasting over $1 billion a year on the Occupation and settlement of the Territories—money that could be used instead to build housing and provide jobs for Soviet *olim.*

To those who claim that this is *not* a political issue but merely a "humanitarian" concern, Israeli peace movement activists have raised an interesting challenge: Why not worry about the humanitarian needs of the Palestinians—and hence prevent any further expropriation of their lands? Why should the needs of Soviet Jews for a homeland override the need of many Palestinians, dispersed around the world, for *their* own homeland? This argument becomes more compelling when we recall that it is not as though the Soviet *olim* had nowhere else to turn. They could have been allowed into the U.S. had not American Jewish leaders agreed to a quota guaranteeing that most of them would be forced to emigrate to Israel. If it's simply a humanitarian issue, why not campaign to let more Soviet Jews enter the U.S.?

Some say that Israel can get the money elsewhere, though at slightly higher interest rates. Fine, say peace movement activists. After all, if the monies are available, why put American Jews in the difficult position of trying to convince President Bush to lend money to Shamir, who is determined to implement policies in Israel that are repugnant to most Americans and to most American Jews? Particularly when Americans are feeling a difficult financial pinch, why should American Jews be asking to get a bigger cut of the pie when Israel already receives more foreign aid than any other country? True, Israel has honored previous debts, and the guarantees thus may never cost the taxpayer anything. But Israel has been able to avoid defaults in part through the massive infusions of American aid it receives, and that aid package might have to be *increased* in the future in order to give

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Of course we wish that we could be in close touch with all our readers—but we don't have adequate staff. Our solution: to work closely with Tikkun Associates, who help us financially, and the Committee for Judaism and Social Justice (CJSJ), who will help us get our message out. Would you like to be part of the core of CJSJ? Please read the "Insert" in this issue of the magazine for details and let us know if you want to be part of it.

Israel enough money to avoid defaulting on the much greater debts it will incur under the loan-guarantee program. Why should *we* be pushing these indirect costs onto our fellow Americans if loans could be obtained in some other way—especially when the goal of the loans is to support policies that undermine the plan to exchange land for peace that many Americans and American Jews strongly support?

But if Israel insists on asking for the loans, two conditions are critical. First, instead of giving a full ten billion to begin with, the U.S. should commit itself to two billion a year, providing that Israel makes significant progress on the peace process. The reason Shamir wants the full guarantee from the start is in order to have the money in hand, so that he can once again have the freedom to snub American requests for flexibility in the negotiations process. Second, the guarantees should be given only on the condition that Shamir announces an immediate freeze on new settlements and on the expansion of existing settlements in the West Bank and Gaza. Such a freeze would ensure that Shamir was not using the negotiations process as a fig leaf to cover up an expansionist policy, and would be the only real way to ensure that U.S. money was not being used to undermine U.S. policy.

There is one important caveat here: We who support the Israeli peace movement make a strong distinction between the immoral policies of Shamir on the West Bank and Gaza, and the very different issue of the Golan Heights and Syria. Accommodations with Syria should be sought including returning the right of sovereignty on the Golan to Syria in exchange for a ninety-nine year lease allowing Israel to station troops and found settlements there. But we should be clear that Israel has no moral responsibility to make concessions to Assad's vicious dictatorship until Syria has given unequivocal proof that it is willing to live in real peace with Israel. Nothing that has happened in the negotiations so far gives any indication that Syria contemplates a real change in its history of antagonism toward a Jewish state in the Middle East or in its domestic oppression of its tiny Jewish minority. Israel should hang tough and make no concessions that weaken its military security in its relations with Syria.

But the West Bank is a very different story. A demilitarized Palestinian state can be founded, with a strip of land on the Jordan set aside for Israel separating it from surrounding Arab states in exchange for a strip of land across the Negev that would allow the new Palestinian state to unite the Gaza and the West Bank. A state with these borders would pose no serious military threat to Israel—and it would give Israel a peaceful frontier that it badly needs.

Yet Shamir and his fellow rightists, driven more by ideological than by security concerns, are doing their best to make such a compromise impossible. It would be a terrible mistake if the U.S. were to collaborate in this process by providing loan guarantees without a total and widely publicized settlement freeze. Quiet assurances through behind-the-scenes diplomatic channels would not be sufficient; they would be quickly violated by Israeli rightists. Only a public proclamation of a settlement freeze, enforced by orders to the Israel Defense Forces to restrain anyone who sought to create new settlements or expand existing ones, will effectively ensure Israel's compliance.

Does this linkage hurt Soviet Jews? Not at all. Anyone who cares about Soviet Jews should be working to pressure Shamir into a settlement freeze. If Soviet Jewish immigrants made clear to Shamir that his failure to institute such a freeze would lead to a massive defeat in the upcoming Israeli elections, he would certainly accede to that pressure, and the loan guarantees would be forthcoming. Friends of Israel in the West must make clear to Shamir that they are unable to deliver continued help unless Israel makes this definitive move.

The worst-case scenario is this: Israel wins the guarantees, continues the settlements, and laughs in the face of the U.S. when it calls for an exchange of land for peace. Eventually—whether in the 1992 election or somewhere further down the line—those who voted for these guarantees would be taken to task by an American electorate less and less willing to have its money spent abroad even for legitimate purposes when there is so much economic suffering at home. American Jews would then have to explain why they used their influence to pressure the government to approve unconditional loan guarantees. For those of us who are deeply committed to Israel's military security, this seems a stupid waste of Israeli credibility and popular support—valuable moral resources that should be saved for moments when Israel *really* needs them. If Americans are reluctant in the future to come forward with military aid when Israel is in real

need, that reluctance might stem partly from Israel's intransigence on the question of a settlement freeze—and from the enlistment of Israel's American supporters into a struggle that is unnecessary and counterproductive in the long run.

Congratulations to Project Nishma

A few years ago, a small group of liberals in the organized Jewish community banded together and formed Project Nishma—to let the world know that not all American Jews were willing to give a blank check to the Israeli Occupation. Nishma was open only to a self-selected elite of fund-raisers who had become national leaders of the Council of Jewish Federations. Under the guidance of their staff professional Tom Smerling, Project Nishma quietly began to make itself known as an alternative voice in the inner circles of the Jewish establishment.

In November 1991, Project Nishma leadership helped design and publicize a poll conducted by the Los Angeles–based Wilstein Institute of Jewish Policy Studies (headed by *Tikkun* board member David Gordis). The questionnaire targeted the top leadership of the Council of Jewish Federations and the 153 largest local Jewish federations. Most of those polled contribute $20,000 or more per year to the annual United Jewish Appeal/Federation fund-raising campaign. The fund-raisers were interviewed between November 7 and November 17, 1991 (beginning six days after the conclusion of the Middle East peace conference in Madrid), and the results of the poll were as follows:

•The fund-raisers polled are ready to freeze settlements in return for Arab concessions and U.S. loan guarantees.

•They disagree with Shamir's "not-one-inch" stance, favor territorial compromise in exchange for a credible peace, and are open to the establishment of a Palestinian state that does not threaten Israel's security.

•They are open to returning some of the Golan Heights in exchange for real peace with Syria.

•They are ready for Israel to talk to the PLO if the PLO conducts itself peacefully.

•They prefer the Israeli Left over the Israeli Right.

•They insist that Israel retain control of Jerusalem as its capital city as part of any peace settlement.

•They believe that continued Israeli rule over 1.8 million Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza threatens to make Israel less democratic, less Jewish, or both.

•They believe that Israel should spend less on West Bank settlements and more on housing and jobs for Soviet Jews within the Green Line (Israel's pre-1967 borders).

The poll results were released the day before the annual meeting of the General Assembly of the Council of Jewish Federations in Baltimore. Together with a *Tikkun*-sponsored op-ed piece that appeared in the *Baltimore Sun* the day Shamir addressed the General Assembly (GA) and a letter circulated by Peace Now and signed by 250 rabbis, the poll data created a climate that ensured that the press were unable to treat the annual charade of Shamir's predictable standing ovation from conference delegates as evidence of overwhelming support for his policies. Tom Smerling aggressively buttonholed TV cameramen and reporters to get his organization's report noticed—and even the assembled delegates were not so easily persuaded to take the conference's carefully orchestrated public show of total solidarity at face value. Most of them had deep disagreements with Shamir. Frequent appeals from the podium for "unity" raised by Shamir and other speakers received only tepid applause.

Not to exaggerate the importance of what happened—the GA and the institutions of Jewish life remain officially committed to supporting Shamir and will not publicly oppose his policies. These institutions are *not* organized democratically, so it was no surprise that the conference did not produce any open debate about the loan guarantees or Israeli policy in the Occupied Territories. Many of those whose dovish views were revealed by the poll lack the courage to say publicly what they believe privately and are angry at *Tikkun* because we press them to act with greater *public* integrity.

The release of the poll, however, will undoubtedly have a positive effect, allowing many in mainstream Jewish organizations to acknowledge to themselves and to each other that they are not quite as alone as they had previously believed. They then may claim greater legitimacy to talk publicly. It remains to be seen if even this opportunity means that future delegates will have the courage to demand a change in the GA or in an American Jewish press that is largely owned and controlled by the Federations, so that the peace voices can be heard. But even if most of them remain unwilling to demand changes in the public life of the institutions they fund, the dovish sentiments of some federation leaders, publicized through the work of Project Nishma, stand in stark contrast to the public image of an organized Jewish community, unified in its support of Shamir and represented by organizations such as AIPAC or the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations. □

ADVERTISEMENTS

THE DEMOCRATS SHOULD USE

EXAMPLES FOR A POLITICS OF MEANING

We are not partisans of the Democratic party, or any other political party, but since the Democrats are the only liberal party likely to have sufficient cash to buy television ads in 1992, we thought one practical way to illustrate the "politics of meaning" discussed in Michael Lerner's "Stopping David Duke" [p. 37] and the CJSJ insert to this issue would be to imagine the kinds of TV ads that the Democrats might run if they were to move beyond their current narrow focus on economic entitlements and political rights.

1. WORK

Seconds 1–15
Shots of secretaries in a large typing pool, a bus driver in heavy traffic, a worker on an assembly line, a telephone operator, a hospital orderly pushing a gurney, and a government worker looking with an exasperated expression at a large wall poster that says "REGULATIONS."

Voice-over: Work can be very stressful and frustrating—particularly if you don't have much power over what you do or what you produce. Most American workers are a lot smarter than their jobs allow them to show. And many workplaces would run better if the people who actually did the work had the power to make real decisions.

Seconds 16–25
Shot of a corporate board room with old-fogie-type males sitting around.

Voice-over: Unfortunately, most decisions are not made by the workers, but by others who are interested only in maximizing profits, regardless of what effect their goals have on those who work for them.

Seconds 26–40:
Shots of a worker at a bar, another lighting up a cigarette that looks possibly like a joint, another staring at a television set, another jogging, another attending a football game.

Voice-over: Too often, people blame themselves, feel bad about themselves, and then do everything they can to forget about work and retreat into private life.

Seconds 41–52:
Cut to a doctor sitting in her office, in a white lab coat, with a stethoscope hanging from her neck, addressing the camera.

Doctor: Medical research has shown that stress at work can't be escaped. It often causes health problems—and it's a central cause of tension in family life. If you want a healthier life, you need to have more power and respect in your workplace.

Seconds 53–60:
Scene of workers sharing a plan, looking it over together.

Voice-over: That's why we've introduced a Worker's Bill of Rights: to give you more power at the workplace, including the power to replace oppressive supervisors. You deserve the respect—and America will be stronger when it can tap more fully into your smarts and your strengths.

Contest Announcement: In future issues of the magazine, we will print other ad ideas submitted by our readers. Anyone who submits an ad that we publish (for sixty seconds of prime-time TV) will receive a free lifetime subscription to *Tikkun,* a copy of the new *Tikkun Anthology,* and an offer to introduce you and your ad to the campaign staff of any presidential candidate of your choice. Our central goal is to develop ideas for ads that embody a meaning-centered politics and that demonstrate the difference between that politics and the liberal politics of the past, in a style that would work for television and capture the attention of a mass audience.

ADVERTISEMENTS

THE DEMOCRATS SHOULD USE

2. VALUES

Seconds 1–20
Breakfast scene in suburban kitchen/dinette.

Woman in mid-forties to her husband: Are you going to visit your mother at the nursing home today? It's been so long.
Man: I just don't see how I can. I've got appointments almost every moment today—and for the rest of the week. I know you're working too, but maybe you could call her for me?
Woman: I don't know—I'm really busy too! I want to go shopping after work. And look at this [*holds up piece of mail*]. Can you imagine that our church keeps asking for money for charity—don't they know we all have to make choices?

Seconds 21–30
Their teenage child walks in.

Father to son: Jeff, would you please take out the garbage, and when you get home from school could you please help me out by mowing the lawn and fixing that leak I showed you in the garden hose?
Jeff: Come on, Dad—why don't you hire someone? I've got my own things to do. And *please* don't give me your rap on family responsibility. I'm taking care of number one!

Seconds 31–40
Cut to nursing home and old woman sitting alone, staring at the wall. Cut to father now walking into a waiting room crowded with people anxious to see him. Cut to crowds of people in busy, fashionable shopping mall.

Voice-over: There's a breakdown of values in America: People are thinking only of themselves. Yet selfishness wasn't always king. The years of Reagan and Bush taught us these values.

Seconds 41–50
Homeless people sleeping in the street; shots of a flashy Hollywood party in a swank setting; shot of ghetto poverty; shot of children in a school lunchroom, shot of hungry children.

Voice-over: We can't live in a society where people are made homeless, where government ignores the poor and worries only about how to make the rich richer, and expect that this won't affect our own values. If we don't teach caring in our collective life, we can't expect it to show up in our private lives either.

Seconds 51–55:
Wall Street traders on the trading floor yelling and jumping for recognition.

Voice-over: Of course, it's not fair to blame everything on Bush and Reagan. They are only symptoms of a deeper problem.

Seconds 56–60
White teenager and a black teenager walking arm in arm; shot of a group of workers with arms around each other.

Voice-over: Politics isn't just about gaining power—it's about creating social values. We are for solidarity, mutual caring, and community. Sometimes we've made mistakes in the past—and like everyone else, we'll make mistakes in the future. But we can't forget that when push comes to shove, we're all in this together—and a happy life for each of us depends on a happy life for all of us.

Final voice-over
Democrats. For the values you cherish.

False Distinctions and Double Standards: The Anatomy of Antisemitism at UCLA

Jeffrey C. Alexander and Chaim Seidler-Feller

Well, if we calculate correctly, semitic should be another word meaning African because semites are a group of Africans who speak semitic languages that originated in Northern Africa.... Well, if our calculations are accurate then there is no way that The Protocols of Zion [sic] *and* The International Jew *could be antisemitic. These books don't talk about African people at all. Rather, they discuss a small group of European people who have proclaimed themselves God's "chosen" by using an indigenous African religion, Judaism, to justify their place in the world....* The Protocols of Zion *and* The International Jew *present information which some believe confirms the theory that so-called Jews have plotted to control the world economically.*

—from "Antisemitic? Ridiculous—Chill," *NOMMO,* February 1991

Early last year, UCLA's African-American newspaper, *NOMMO,* published an article demeaning to Judaism as a religion and to the status of the Jews as a people. Replete with disparaging remarks about "so-called Jews," the article tried to define antisemitism out of existence, while at the same time circulating one of its most notorious libels by defending the authenticity of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion,* the vicious diatribe that Hitler used to justify his genocidal campaign against the Jews.

The *NOMMO* article outraged an important segment of the UCLA community and set off a storm of controversy. There was a series of confrontations between black and Jewish students, a massive faculty petition, not one but two chancellor's statements, and, finally, a public apology by the student communications board and the reform of its publication guidelines.

This situation was extraordinary not because of the expression of antisemitism that triggered the affair, but because of the distorted response to it. Coverage in the official student newspaper, the *Daily Bruin,* referred repeatedly to the "allegedly antisemitic article"—as if there could be any doubt about the piece's aggressively antisemitic content. Chancellor Charles Young was similarly evasive in his initial public statement on the matter, objecting to the "tone" of the original piece rather than to its outrageous claims, suggesting, once again, that the factual assertions in the *NOMMO* piece may have been open to interpretive dispute. Indeed, for weeks after the article appeared, only Jewish undergraduates publicly criticized the piece in the truthful, uncompromising terms it clearly deserved. Eventually, Jewish faculty issued a petition that denounced the article's hatred and bigotry. But they were virtually alone: Few non-Jewish faculty joined in the condemnation. And black faculty were absolutely silent.

Would this kind of silence and timidity have been the response to a widely publicized expression of prejudice against a racial or sexual community on campus? Who could possibly think so? Such expressions are routinely, emphatically, and quite properly censured as grave dangers to the civic life of the community. For example, when a recent cartoon lampooning affirmative action appeared in the *Daily Bruin,* the university's communications board—the administrative body controlling all student publications—summarily dismissed the editor and cartoonist (they were later reinstated).

What was extraordinary about the *NOMMO* affair, then, was the double standard it revealed. If derogatory stereotypes are directed against the Jewish community, they apparently mean one thing. If they are directed against a racial or sexual minority, they seem to mean another. One student leader, the student-body president, was even heard in a public forum making the nefarious distinction between bigotry and racism—bigotry being prejudice expressed against those in power, racism against the oppressed—suggesting that bigotry, because of its target, was a less serious form of hatred.

In a university community that prides itself on its opposition to every expression of prejudice and stereotype, this double standard seems doubly bankrupt. How could this remarkable state of affairs have come about? To

Jeffrey C. Alexander serves as chair of the sociology department at UCLA and Chaim Seidler-Feller as rabbi of the Hillel Student Center at UCLA. *This piece deliberately refrains from capitalizing the term "semitic"; the authors feel that this practice perpetuates the notion of a distinct "semitic" race.*

provide an answer, we must trace the effects of two recent historical developments. By themselves, neither would have produced this double standard. But taken together, both developments have had the unintended effect of doing just that.

The first development begins with what is surely a very positive social change: the breaking down of institutional barriers that had impeded the social progress of Jews. Because of the limitations and simplifications of American ideology, however, this advance has bred a deeper set of paradoxes. According to the rationalistic and progressive ideology of the United States, racism and prejudice are the results of institutional discrimination and social inequality. When poverty-stricken Jews faced clear barriers to their participation in mainstream institutions, it was relatively easy for Americans to see antisemitism at work. Conversely, as these institutional barriers have disappeared, it has been increasingly difficult for Americans to identify the Jews as a vulnerable minority. How can they be vulnerable if they have become relatively privileged in socioeconomic terms?

The result is unfortunate. When educational and civic institutions establish policies that seek to achieve ethnic pluralism and social diversity, Jews are told, in effect, not to apply. In course reading lists, in campus-wide discussions of oppressed minorities, even among "ethnic" or otherwise targeted academic-studies centers, the Jewish experience is not to be found. When UCLA recently administered a campus-wide study on diversity and prejudice, questions about antisemitism were not included, even after they had been explicitly proposed. From the official university perspective, Jews apparently are, or at least should be, invisible as an ethnic group. Accordingly, the campus hierarchy expects that, in the face of provocations such as the *NOMMO* article, Jews should not react with the passionate hurt of outraged ethnics, but with the cool disinterest of the powerful and the privileged, of those who have "made it."

Further complicating matters is the fact that such civil inattention sits well with Jewish Americans from earlier generations, many of whom can be found in the professional class. Often the children or grandchildren of shtetl Jews, they grew up with the desire to separate themselves from any suggestion of foreignness and particularity. They believed that by shedding the behaviors and traditions that distinguished them from other Americans, they could become thoroughly assimilated into the majority culture. This generation was only too happy to accept the notion that prejudice was a product of rational economic interest: As Jews gained objective equality, they believed, stereotypes would break down. These Jewish Americans often fought valiantly to gain economic equality for others, as they hoped that they, too, could be freed from stereotypes. But their activism often only extended the terms of their assimilation: They fought for themselves only insofar as they identified with nonreligious groups such as workers, radicals, women, or gays. They never fought for themselves as Jews.

In fact, however, prejudice cannot be understood as a narrowly rationalistic proposition. It is sustained in traditions and symbols that persist even after the "objective" reasons for their existence have disappeared. This is certainly the case with antisemitism. In American society today, it is in nobody's "interest" to stereotype and distort Jewish identity; yet significant prejudices about Jews remain, often among segments of the population, like African-Americans, who find their economic status severely diminished—a condition for which Jews certainly deserve no distinctive blame.

A campus policy that recognizes the special status of historically oppressed racial minorities and women casts Jews in the unfamiliar role of the white oppressor.

The second factor at work in the recent resurgence of antisemitism has also been, on the face of it, a salubrious development. The most recent generation of American Jews has begun to challenge the uneasiness that earlier generations of assimilated Jews have felt toward the expression of religious particularity.

But expressing Jewish identity remains, albeit for different reasons, a troubled proposition. The relatively high socioeconomic status of younger American Jews, combined with the decline of blatant antisemitism and the virtual end of institutional discrimination, has produced what at first glance seems a highly unlikely result: Young people often feel more vulnerable than their parents to anti-Jewish sentiment and are much more willing to speak out.

How can this paradox be explained? For one thing, this generation of Jews has grown up in a world indelibly marked by the Holocaust—a genocidal campaign waged initially against the German Jews, a group that was among the most assimilated Jewish populations in the world. The mass murder of German Jews effectively undermined the facile association between antisemitism and divergence of economic interest. More generally,

United Front Against Fascism

With David Duke and Patrick Buchanan running for the presidency, racist and fascist ideas are certain to gain greater currency in the period ahead. If you agree with the strategy for fighting Duke outlined in Michael Lerner's article on pages 37–42 of this issue of TIKKUN, perhaps you'd like to work with CJSJ (the Committee for Judaism and Social Justice, TIKKUN's education and outreach arm) to create a national coalition of Blacks, Jews, and other people committed to that kind of approach. Please read the insert in this issue describing CJSJ. If you would like to work with CJSJ on this project, please contact Erika Henik, 5100 Leona St., Oakland, CA 94619.

the Nazis' sadistic and barbaric cruelty made it difficult to see anti-Jewish stereotyping as rational in any way, which suggested that nonrational, psychological, and symbolic causes were more important causes of antisemitism than many had once believed.

Another component of the paradox facing young Jewish Americans is the signal importance for contemporary Jews of the Israeli state, itself an unintended product of the Nazi genocide. Even in its earlier socialist and radically democratic phase, Israel defined itself in terms of Jewish particularity. In doing so, it legitimized Jewish assertions of unique national identity much as decolonization and African independence movements legitimized assertions of a distinctive identity among Americans of African descent. In more recent times, unfortunately, identification with Israel has often circumscribed American Jewish particularity in a more negative vein. An increasingly conservative Israeli state attributes legitimate Palestinian grievances to antisemitic prejudice, thereby allowing the state to employ repression under the guise of self-defense. Conservative Israelis, in turn, see Israel's isolation from the world community as the result of increasing antisemitism. This reactionary dynamic has prompted progressive Americans to dismiss the threat of antisemitism—even as it makes an important segment of the American Jewish community oversensitive to the threat.

Finally, it must be said that the very institutional security of younger Jews has made it possible for them to confront antisemitism and to publicize expressions of Jewish particularity without fear of reprisal. It sometimes seems, indeed, that we are entering a postmodern phase of history in which confident assertions of particularity and prickly vulnerability to particularism go hand in hand. In the modernist phase, universalism was the only way for progressives to defend the status of minority groups who would never have dreamed of invoking particularist claims to defend themselves against the prejudice of majority groups. Only in postmodern societies, in which universalism is more strongly institutionalized, do themes of particularity and difference become legitimate discourses of progressive defense.

The end of institutional discrimination, however, has not ended Jewish perceptions of the exclusion of Jews. Anti-Jewish barriers have been dismantled for less than a generation, scarcely enough time for real confidence to take hold. As a result, many of today's Jewish students find it difficult to accept their historical redefinition as a secure, majority group. Indeed, for the most ethnically identified Jewish students, this redefinition engenders general feelings of abandonment and isolation, as well as the belief that they are profoundly misunderstood.

This sense of continuing vulnerability only escalates under a campus policy that recognizes the special status of historically oppressed racial minorities and women, while casting Jews in the unfamiliar role of the white oppressor. Anti-Jewish attitudes, moreover, are still openly expressed, often by highly visible representatives of minority groups. It is scarcely surprising that under such circumstances some Jewish students feel compelled to assert their legacy of victimhood, invoking the specter of antisemitism and thereby reclaiming their legitimate standing as a minority.

We do not agree with those Jewish students who warn that "antisemitism is on the rise" in America, although in other nations it may well be. We are not, at this point at least, moving back to an earlier, more anti-Jewish age, although there are disturbing trends in the Afro-American community, where some observers suggest there is a correlation between increasing education and antisemitic feelings.

Still, we are grateful to these students for crying foul and raising their voices. They have thrown a strong and unflattering light on a double standard that cannot be allowed to stand. Prejudice is not reserved for particular socioeconomic positions, nor do the members of any group, no matter how oppressed they are, have the "sociological privilege" to advance stereotyped criticisms of members of another group who have had a more fortunate lot. In a democratic society it is the individual who is privileged, not the members of a particular group. To suggest otherwise is to promote a dangerous self-delusion, one that could have dangerous repercussions for American life. □

Black Anti-Semitism and the Rhetoric of Resentment

Cornel West

The vicious murder of Yankel Rosenbaum in Crown Heights this past summer bore chilling testimony to a growing black anti-Semitism in this country. Although this particular form of xenophobia from below does not have the same institutional power of those racisms that afflict their victims from above, it certainly deserves the same moral condemnation. Furthermore, the very *ethical* character of the Black Freedom struggle largely depends on its spokespersons to condemn openly *any* racist attitude or action.

In our present moment, when a neo-Nazi like David Duke can win 55 percent of the white vote (and 69 percent of the white "born-again" Protestant vote) in Louisiana, it may seem misguided to highlight anti-Semitic behavior of black people—the exemplary targets of racial hatred in America. Yet I suggest that this focus is crucial precisely because we black folk have been in the forefront of the struggle against American racism. If these efforts fall prey to anti-Semitism, then the principled attempt to combat racism forfeits much of its moral credibility—and we all lose. To put it bluntly, if the Black Freedom struggle becomes simply a power-driven war of all against all that pits xenophobia from below against racism from above, then David Duke's project is the wave of the future—and a racial apocalypse awaits us. Despite Duke's resounding defeat, we witness increasing racial and sexual violence, coupled with growing economic deprivation that together provide the raw ingredients for such a frightening future.

Black people have searched desperately for allies in the struggle against racism—and have found Jews to be disproportionately represented in the ranks of that struggle. The desperation that sometimes informs the antiracist struggle arises out of two conflicting historical forces: America's historic weak will to racial justice; *and* an all-inclusive moral vision of freedom and justice for all. Escalating black anti-Semitism is a symptom of this desperation gone sour; it is the bitter fruit of a profound self-destructive impulse, nurtured on the vines of hopelessness and concealed by empty gestures of black unity. The images of black activists yelling "Where is Hitler when we need him?" and "Heil Hitler," juxtaposed with those of David Duke celebrating Hitler's birthday, seem to feed a single fire of intolerance, burning on both ends of the American candle, that threatens to consume us all.

Black anti-Semitism rests on three basic pillars. First, it is a species of anti-whitism. Jewish complicity in American racism—even though it is less extensive than the complicity of other white Americans—reinforces black perceptions that Jews are identical to any other group benefitting from white-skin privileges in racist America. This view denies the actual history and treatment of Jews, wrongly assuming that Jews are always top dogs in a world in which black folk are underdogs. And the particular interactions of Jews and black people in the hierarchies of business and education cast Jews as the public face of oppression for the black community, and thus lend evidence to this mistaken view of Jews as any other white folk.

Second, black anti-Semitism is a result of higher expectations some black folk have of Jews. This perspective holds Jews to a moral standard different from that extended to other white ethnic groups, principally owing to the ugly history of anti-Semitism in the world, especially in Europe. Such double standards assume that Jews and blacks are "natural" allies, since both groups have suffered chronic degradation and oppression at the hands of racial and ethnic majorities. So when Jewish neoconservatism gains a high public profile at a time when black people are more and more vulnerable, the charge of "betrayal" surfaces among black folk who feel let down. Such utterances resonate strongly in a black Protestant culture that has inherited many stock Christian anti-Semitic narratives of Jews as Christ-killers. These infamous narratives historically have had less weight in the black community, in stark contrast to the more obdurate white Christian varieties of anti-Semitism. Yet in moments of desperation in the black community, they tend to reemerge, charged with the rhetoric of Jewish betrayal.

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Third, black anti-Semitism is a form of underdog resentment and envy, directed at another underdog who has "made it" in American society. The remarkable upward mobility of American Jews—rooted chiefly in a history and culture that places a premium on higher education and self-organization—easily lends itself to myths of Jewish unity and homogeneity that have gained currency among other groups, especially among relatively unorganized groups like black Americans. The high visibility of Jews in the upper reaches of the academy, journalism, the entertainment industry, and the professions—though less so percentage-wise in corporate America and national political office—is viewed less as a result of hard work and success fairly won, and more as a matter of favoritism and nepotism among Jews. Ironically, calls for black solidarity and achievement are often modeled on myths of Jewish unity—as both groups respond to American xenophobia and racism. But in times such as these, some blacks view Jews as obstacles rather than allies in the struggle for racial justice.

These three elements of black anti-Semitism—which also characterize the outlooks of some other ethnic groups in America—have a long history among black people. Yet the recent upsurge of black anti-Semitism exploits two other prominent features of the political landscape identified with the American Jewish establishment: the top dog military status of Israel in the Middle East (especially in its enforcement of the Occupation of the West Bank and Gaza); and the visible *conservative* Jewish opposition to what is perceived to be a major means of black progress, namely, affirmative action. Of course, principled critiques of U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East, of Israeli denigration of Palestinians, or attacks on affirmative action *transcend* anti-Semitic sensibilities. Yet vulgar critiques do not—and often are shot through with such sensibilities, in white and black America alike. These vulgar critiques—usually based on sheer ignorance and a misinformed thirst for vengeance—add an aggressive edge to black anti-Semitism. And in the rhetoric of a Louis Farrakhan or a Leonard Jeffries, whose audiences rightly hunger for black self-respect and oppose black degradation, these critiques misdirect progressive black energies arrayed against unaccountable corporate power and anti-black racism, steering them instead *toward* Jewish elites and anti-black racism in Jewish America. This displacement is disturbing not only because it is analytically and morally wrong; it also discourages any effective alliances across races.

The rhetoric of Farrakhan and Jeffries feeds on an undeniable history of black denigration at the hands of Americans of every ethnic and religious group. The delicate issues of black self-love and black self-contempt are then viewed in terms of white put-down and Jewish conspiracy. The precious quest for black self-esteem is reduced to immature and cathartic gestures that bespeak an excessive obsession with whites and Jews. There can be no healthy conception of black humanity based on such obsessions. The best of black culture, as manifested, for example, in jazz or the prophetic black church, refuses to put whites or Jews on a pedestal or in the gutter. Rather, black humanity is affirmed alongside that of others, even when those others have at times dehumanized blacks. To put it bluntly, when black humanity is taken for granted and not made to prove itself in white culture, whites, Jews, and others are not that important; they are simply human beings, just like black people. If the best of black culture wanes in the face of black anti-Semitism, black people will become even more isolated as a community and tarred with the brush of immorality.

For example, most Americans wrongly believe that the black community has been silent in the face of Yankel Rosenbaum's murder. This perception exists because the moral voices in black America have been either ignored or drowned out by the more sensationalist and xenophobic ones. The major New York City newspapers and periodicals have little interest in making known to the public the moral condemnations voiced by Reverend Gary Simpson of Concord Baptist Church in Brooklyn (with 10,000 black members), Reverend James Forbes of Riverside Church (with 3,000 members), Reverend Carolyn Knight of Philadelphia Baptist Church in Harlem, Reverend Susan Johnson of Mariners Baptist Church in Manhattan, Reverend Mark Taylor of the Church of the Open Door in Brooklyn, Reverend Victor Hall of Calvary Baptist Church in Queens, and many more. Black anti-Semitism is not caused by media hype—yet it does sell more newspapers and turn our attention away from those black prophetic energies that give us some hope.

My fundamental premise is that the Black Freedom struggle is the major buffer between the David Dukes of America and the hope for a future in which we can begin to take justice and freedom for all seriously. Black anti-Semitism—along with its concomitant xenophobias, such as patriarchal and homophobic prejudices—weakens this buffer. In the process, it plays into the hands of the old-style racists, who appeal to the worst of our fellow citizens amid the silent depression that plagues the majority of Americans. Without some redistribution of wealth and power, downward mobility and debilitating poverty will continue to drive people into desperate channels. And without principled opposition to xenophobias from above *and* below, these desperate channels will produce a cold-hearted and mean-spirited America no longer worth fighting for or living in. □

SEXUALITY AFTER THOMAS/HILL

As our cover painting indicates, women are still very much the object of men's gaze and male power—and the confrontation between Clarence Thomas and Anita Hill dramatized but did not change that reality. The Thomas hearings brought to the center of American politics a set of issues that have been brewing since the advent of the second wave of feminism in the 1960s. Feminists have helped unravel the way in which sexuality often masks domination and subtle or overt power relations. Anita Hill's act in challenging Clarence Thomas forced America to see that the dynamics of sexual oppression and sexual harassment were at the heart of contemporary life.

In focusing on sexuality, in insisting that this supposedly private realm is really deeply enmeshed in public issues of power and control, feminists have forced us to rethink many aspects of sexuality. After the Thomas/Hill confrontation, our relationship to sexuality is more conscious. Yet consciousness here has its own problems—on the one hand, sensitizing us to unfair power relationships, on the other hand, potentially blocking some of the spontaneity and playfulness that sexuality often requires. In this special focus we treat the Thomas/Hill confrontation as a prism, through which we consider a variety of contemporary approaches to sexuality that have been deeply affected by the advances feminists have achieved over the past twenty years.

Abuses of Privilege

Peter R. Breggin, M. D.

He is the hard-driving, professional, compulsively responsible man who holds others to a high standard. Few know him intimately, but all recognize his accomplishments. He has a kind of aloofness or superiority that may put some people off, but it impresses most. If anything, people are flattered when he *doesn't* look down on them. Then people are shocked when he is accused of taking sexual advantage.

Here in Washington, he is the stuff of daily headlines: John Tower, Edward Kennedy, Gary Hart. Or we may recall him less notoriously, as John Fedders, the high-ranking government bureaucrat exposed for beating his wife. He had the gall to go to court for a percentage of her royalties when she wrote a book about his abuses.

She is almost always younger than the man, less secure, perhaps equally ambitious, but with a long way to go before people stop saying, "She has a lot of *potential.*" Her dignity makes her a sexual challenge to him. And in addition to her other attractions, there is a youthful vulnerability about her that is attractive to some men, a kind of obvious neediness, even a desire to look up to a man. Especially important, she is not intimate with anyone else at work; he can risk exposing his other side to her. She is a secretary, a student, a rising young professional. In the Senate, *he* may be a young page.

As a psychiatrist and as a professor teaching graduate seminars at George Mason University on the male abuse of women and children, I watched with special interest as the explosive question of sexual harassment took center stage at Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas's recent confirmation hearings. There was so much psychological talk that was so far off the mark. Much of it came down to this: It's inconceivable that a seemingly honorable man could do something so outrageous and self-destructive as talk obscenely to one of his employees; and when he is addressed "Your Honor," the contradiction seems unbearable. It was also inconceivable that a seemingly rational woman could accept such abuse, follow the man to another job, and then maintain any kind of relationship with him over the years.

Notice that both players are uncommon enough to be considered worthy of note: the honorable man and the rational woman. But which identity is more suspect? To judge from the Senate vote and public opinion polls, honorable man outlasts rational woman. Anita Hill, we are reassured to learn, is not so sane after all. She is so

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self-deluded that she can even fool herself into passing a lie detector test with flying colors.

Consider a similar scenario in a society where honorable men were thought to be the norm: Vienna at the turn of the twentieth century. As former psychoanalyst Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson disclosed in *Freud: The Assault on Truth,* Freud quickly discovered that his female patients, who came from some of Europe's finest families, had been sexually abused as children, usually by their fathers or other trusted older men. Freud enthusiastically reported this to his colleagues at the Society for Psychiatry and Neurology in Vienna in 1891, but his fellow physicians shunned him, and warned that such ideas would ruin him professionally. Those men of medical authority came to the defense of the generic honorable man, the Victorian father, and were unwilling to admit his abuses. We can only surmise how many of them were indulging in the same practices.

In a society in which more than a third of women have been sexually exploited as children and one in four women will be raped, sexual abuse is the province not of madmen but of Everyman.

Under this concerted professional pressure, Freud altered his theory. Young girls weren't being sexually abused by their fathers, he concluded. They suffered from unrequited love for their fathers and fantasized the sexual relationships with them. And so the Oedipus complex was born, and generations of young girls bore the onus of allegedly harboring illicit desires for their fathers when they themselves were victims of sexual abuse. And so the method was established for dismissing the charges of Anita Hill against the Honorable Clarence Thomas.

Of course, many intermediate refinements of psychoanalytic and psychiatric practice have also set the stage for Anita Hill's degradation. In modern textbooks, women who suffer the daily outrages of male domination are pathologized as "self-defeating personalities." As I describe in my book *Toxic Psychiatry,* modern and seemingly gender-neutral explanations of women's psychological maladies offered by biochemical psychiatry are more insidious. The high rate of depression among women has nothing to do with their experiences in a male-dominated social order; it's a physiological condition, to be treated with drugs and electroshock therapy.

Modern biopsychiatry remains the prototype of hierarchical power. The psychiatrist is whole and above it all, the patient defective; the psychiatrist diagnoses and treats, and the patient accepts and submits to control. And, of course, the psychiatrist "means well," even as he degrades and coerces. The righteous-male-turned-diagnostician came out in full force at the hearings, as even "lay" observers took it upon themselves to pin psychiatric labels on Anita Hill. Sometimes they did not veil their rage; but at other times, they forgave her in the tradition of psychiatry for not knowing what she was doing. And in the tradition of the insanity defense, they helpfully suggested that Hill didn't know that she was making it all up.

Anita Hill fared no better than Freud's first female patients. Unlike Freud, she found the courage to step forth as both messenger and victim to tell the august body of men that one of their peers was an abuser of women. Once again in the U.S. Senate, the generic honorable man, now in the person of Clarence Thomas, was exonerated by his peers, while the victim was accused of lustful fantasy. The woman's accusation was reinterpreted to make it appear her own lustful wish, and the older, dominant male was found pure. That no one suggested a biochemical imbalance in Anita Hill's brain merely meant that the Senate was not up on the latest diagnostic fads.

It makes no difference that the woman in this case is in her own right an enormously respectable person, a lawyer and professor. That, perhaps, is the most vicious lesson these singularly vicious hearings sought to drive home: No matter how much a woman accomplishes in the man's world, she remains only *seemingly* rational. When she identifies sexual abuse from an honorable man, she is still doomed to be declared mentally ill.

I am in no position to say with certainty who has lied, Judge Thomas or Professor Hill. But drawing on the research and insights provided by the field of victimology, I can observe that the pattern of behavior we have witnessed fits the standard pattern of sexual abuse in nearly every way. As we shall see, Judge Thomas and his supporters acted like typical perpetrators and Professor Hill like a typical victim—at least until she finally grew mature and powerful enough in her own right to rise above the role. And most of the Senate and the American people responded as the majority has always done, by identifying with the angry, outraged, honorable man.

But weren't the Judge's supporters right? As Senator Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) suggested, wouldn't a man like him have to be a "psychopathic sex fiend or pervert" before he'd risk his reputation by so outrageously abusing an employee? According to Hatch, men like that could only be found in the loony bin. How easily Washington

(Continued on p. 20)

Photos

by

Barbara Kruger







Untitled (Who is beyond the law?), 1990, black-and-white photograph, 99 by 40 1/2 inches. *Untitled (Who is free to choose?),* 1990, black-and-white photograph, 99 by 40 1/2 inches. *Untitled (Who does the crime? Who does the time?),* 1990, photographic silkscreen on vinyl, 63 1/2 by 164 inches. All photos courtesy of Mary Boone Gallery, New York.

has forgotten its own history of abuse, peopled with embarrassing figures such as Richard Berendzen, the president of American University, who made shocking, sexually sadistic phone calls to women, describing the torture of small children in a basement. Berendzen wasn't in a loony bin; he was in the seat of power. In a society in which more than a third of women have been sexually exploited as children and one in four women will be raped, sexual abuse is the province not of madmen but of Everyman. Woman after woman at the hearings admitted to having been sexually humiliated by men in authority.

How does "the man" feel and act when he is finally exposed? Or when he sees that another man he values is exposed? The hearings disclosed the narrow spectrum of responses, from professed sensitivity to unbridled resentment and accusation aimed at Hill. Unhappily, patriarchal man—and perhaps the perpetrator himself—triumphed. The Judge was outraged, accused the world of conspiring against him, denied even lusting in his heart, redefined the issue as racial prejudice against him, rather than gender persecution of a woman, and refused to listen to the accusations.

None of this is new to men, especially the refusal to listen. We now have a Supreme Court justice who wouldn't even deign to *hear* his accuser. As attorney John Doggett III, one of the Judge's most vociferous male supporters, declared under oath, "She isn't worth it."

Indeed, Doggett went on to offer his own psychoanalytic diagnosis: Hill was obsessed with men, and deluded about their interest in her. On the flimsiest of evidence, a brief encounter at a party, Doggett fancied that Hill lusted after him despite his rejection of her. The exemplary patriarch, the white-haired, retired law-school dean Charles Kothe (who was also a close friend to the Judge), said it was inconceivable that she wouldn't have confided in him about it if it were true. Several men patronized her by conceding that she might *think* she'd been abused. Thus they congratulated themselves on their sensitivity while remaining obtuse to the realities of male abuse.

If many of the men behaved as perpetrators typically do, most of the victims also conformed to their psychological profiles, including Professor Hill. As a young woman in her twenties, she had been too frightened, ashamed, and proud to reveal the details, even to her friends. She took no notes, because victims want to forget rather than to remember, and almost never have the foresight or determination to make a record for the future. I have said it to innumerable patients and friends: "Write it down, write it down." But the act of writing it down lends the trauma too much reality and approaches too closely that next dangerous step of public disclosure. She only wants to go on as best she can, to be as self-reliant and as self-possessed as she was taught to be, and to avoid flaunting her grievances.

Then, years later, the victim tries to come to grips with the experience. At first the details come slowly. She tells the story once, twice, three times, each time recalling more detail. She is not making it up. On the contrary, it takes courage to continue dredging it all up. Besides, she knows no one will believe the more outrageous details, not when they indict her father, her minister, her doctor, her esteemed boss.

Nor does she rebel against her abuser. In nearly every case of sexual abuse in families, schools, and the workplace, the victim is, in reality, dependent upon her abuser. Her relative powerlessness indeed forms much of her appeal to him. She wants his approval; she needs his help. Of necessity and through her upbringing, she learns to live in dread of his anger and rejection. And why should she have to quit? She wants this job. Women like her have won the legal right to keep their jobs without having to submit to harassment.

As a rational person, she doesn't want to threaten her career by alienating a powerful boss, or to settle for an inferior position elsewhere simply to escape from something that could reemerge in her workplace at any time. Rationally, it makes sense for her to bite the bullet. Historically, men have used their connections to get ahead. Should she do anything less? And having endured all that abuse, why shouldn't she stay casually in touch in order to forward her career?

Thinking in a way men find difficult to understand, she values her relationship with him. As disgusting as he might seem at times, she keeps hoping he will stop. Then she can continue her professional relationship with him, and continue advancing her career, which is so dependent upon his good will. Like many women, she knows she gets men to do things for her not just because of her intelligence, accomplishments, or credentials, but because of how well she pleases them.

An unusually confident man might stand up to a boss who is mistreating him and say "cut it out" and even get away with it. But a woman knows that a man confronted by a woman feels humiliated by her. He acts like *he* is the aggrieved party and may become dangerously angry. In the words of legal scholar Catharine MacKinnon, "Hell hath no fury like a man exposed."

The woman who makes a complaint about sexual abuse from her father, brother, or boss knows that she cannot even count on her mother, sisters, or co-workers to support her. Many are simply too intimidated; some are in denial about what has been done to them; some

have succumbed to the "men-will-be-men" strain of fatalism that permeates our culture; and still others persist in holding the victim responsible. And fear of the angry male authority ensures that few subordinates of either sex will side with the victim.

Without an old-boy network to support them, women have good reason to be more afraid than men to stick out their necks. In countless ways, patriarchal society has declared them by their very nature inferior. And many female co-workers, struggling to get ahead, may envy the woman who does succeed, and falsely accuse her of doing so on the basis of sexual favors. As we saw at the Thomas hearings, women may try to compete over who is truly "close" to the male authority. And while the Thomas hearings focused on the plight of the professional woman, consider the still-greater vulnerability of the vast majority of women who struggle to earn a meager wage while supporting their children.

That, indeed, is the lesson of the hearings: Men abuse women. They do it in the home, the school, the workplace and, yes, the U.S. Senate, even as they are being televised. Then they act disbelieving and even outraged when they are accused of it. Eventually they chalk it up to the insanity of even the most clearly rational woman. Afterward, they self-righteously commiserate with each other over how much pain the whole thing has caused them.

But there's another dismal lesson: There were no heroic men at the Thomas hearings. Men may clamor to the defense of each other, and sometimes to the defense of a clearly defeated and harmless woman. When a woman stands up to men in the male domain, however, she must do so alone.

Many of us awaited the hearings with hope. There would be a renewed dedication to the equal rights and dignity of women, and specifically to acknowledging and redressing male abuse of women. *One brave woman, Anita Hill, would lead us all toward redemption.* Instead, we saw Hill cast once more in the role of victim rather than redeemer: a person as vulnerable as she was courageous, trying her best to cope with accusation, disbelief, indifference, diagnosis, hostility, and an occasional patronizing gesture of support. No one, absolutely no one, stood up in outrage on her behalf. Led by the raging Thomas, the Republicans seized the day.

Like children unable to side with their siblings in the face of oppressive parents, men and women throughout America became unable to side with Anita Hill. In the opinion polls, they sided against her out of a fear of authority and a lack of leadership. Had one senator been truly honorable, had he been heroic in defense of Anita Hill, Americans might have been moved to take his example to heart.

For everyone who has ever wished they could see someone just one more time—



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Some good will come out of the hearings. There will be an increased caution on the part of a few men in the workplace. An occasional man and many women will find themselves appalled by the senators and inspired by Anita Hill. But the benefits will be limited because men, thus far, seem little affected.

As Senator Barbara Mikulski (D-Md.) declared during the confirmation debate, it's time for men to do more. We can start by getting angry at ourselves for the way we've been controlling and abusing women for ten thousand years or more. Then we can get angry about our failure to stand up to other men in defense of women and their rights.

If candidacy for high office was truly open only to men who had never abused a woman, most men would be disqualified. What we need are repentant men, men willing to examine themselves and to reject a system that's organized to their benefit at the expense of all women. Only then will women begin to get a fair hearing anywhere in society.

But what is a "repentant" man? He is not a man who caves in with guilt and shame, and supplicates himself before women. He is not a politician who apologizes under the heat of an upcoming election. In regard to his personal relationships with women, he knows he must transform himself just to reject the role of superior. He knows that he, like all men, has taken advantage of the power imbalance between men and women. He recognizes that he has not done enough to resist the male abuse of women.

Having repented, he takes action. He refuses to take advantage of the imbalance of power inherent in cross-gender relationships. He is willing and able to discuss honestly issues of patriarchy and male domination—and to confront and reject the male abuse of women and children in the public as well as the private sphere.

The repentant man is, of course, open and vulnerable. But now, after the debacle of the Thomas hearings, vulnerability seems the easy part. Men need to begin confronting other men in order to stop them from abusing women. Had more men done so during the Thomas hearings—and had *any* of the senators on the Judiciary Committee done so—the U.S. Senate could have presided over a new dawn in gender relations. Instead, it rallied to protect and reassert business as usual in the male-dominated halls of power. □

Sex, Lies, and Vulnerability

Ruth Rosen

One of the many questions people still ask, months after the Clarence Thomas hearings, is: Why didn't Anita Hill come forward earlier? Many harassed women still haven't. Let's remember our history. Until the late 1970s, when feminist legal theorists coined the term sexual harassment, women possessed no language with which to describe these offenses. We just felt offended or violated. We kept silent because we wanted to keep our jobs, we dreaded publicity, and we feared our integrity would be impugned. True, by the time Anita Hill worked for Clarence Thomas, the idea of sexual harassment had entered legal discourse. But it was not yet illegal.

Whether or not Anita Hill's allegations are true, there are good reasons why they are persuasive. About half of all working women have experienced some form of sexual harassment. Judge Thomas, moreover, forfeited his credibility when he repudiated long-held conservative principles in order to win confirmation votes.

Some men think sexual harassment is an insignificant breach; I'd like to counter with a true story. One year ago, at a film screening, I spotted a white-haired professor emeritus in the audience. For twenty-two years, I had never confronted him. As soon as he recognized me, he greeted me with flattering remarks about my career. Suddenly, I heard myself say: "I will never forgive you for trying to destroy my career." He looked genuinely shocked. A veteran womanizer, he could not recall what I could not forget.

In 1969, I was a young graduate student in a program I intended to transfer out of after I received my master's

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degree. The department nevertheless admitted me to the doctoral program. Soon afterward, this professor, the chair of my thesis committee, repeatedly called and asked me out on dates. I refused consistently.

Several weeks later, I received notice that I had not been advanced to the doctoral program after all, and I wondered what had happened. A secretary in the department confided to me that this professor had suddenly protested my acceptance to the program. When I asked him why, he coolly told me I wasn't "Ph.D. material."

When a male colleague turns up in the office looking sharp, we say, "You look great today." We know how to compliment an individual without embarrassing anyone and without issuing a sexual invitation.

If I had wanted to pursue this field, my career would have ended right then. My confidence was severely undermined. Fortunately, the history department, where I wished to transfer, immediately accepted my application for the doctoral program.

Around 1982, when Clarence Thomas became chair of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, I finally realized I had been a victim of sexual harassment. This man had intentionally punished me for refusing his advances. A big supporter of liberal causes, he often showed up at faculty benefits or meetings I attended. My body always stiffened with rage, but still I said nothing. Even today, I won't reveal his name. This is not because I want to protect him, but because he is retired, cannot harm other students, and does not seek a lifetime appointment on the Supreme Court. Like Anita Hill, I prefer my privacy to scandal. I also want to make a larger point: Millions of working women experienced sexual harassment long before we knew what to call it.

What still shocks me is that *the* moment of truth during the hearings was so widely ignored. Because Anita Hill testified during the day, rather than during prime time, one of the most important facts was lost amid more lurid details. Anita Hill was asked if the FBI report of her last dinner with Clarence Thomas was accurate. The report was damning: It said that Thomas threatened to ruin *her* career if she made a case against him for what had happened at the EEOC. In careful, precise language, Anita Hill refuted the FBI report. That's not what he said, she testified. He said that if she told anyone, it would hurt *his* career.

At that moment, Anita Hill's credibility should have been secured forever. She could have agreed with the FBI report. It accused Thomas of the most egregious kind of coercion—threatening to destroy an employee's career—which would have amounted to a charge of blackmail, a felony. But Anita Hill didn't let that charge stand. She corrected the record and diminished the crime—for which she could have had no other motive than to tell the truth.

No Democrat picked up on Hill's refutation. Amid all the charges and countercharges, Hill's commitment to accuracy, her unwillingness to charge Thomas falsely, was ignored. Even her defenders on the Senate Judiciary Committee ignored this decisive moment. Most people have never heard or read about the most convincing reasons why they should have believed Anita Hill's testimony.

Men now feel a new kind of vulnerability in offices around the country. Many men are confused

A man and a plant in a house

You on a ledge in the sun's co-active
diffusion, with seeds furred
in orange berries, I, with a bed, each capable
of seeding, we start fresh in this house,
being womanless, mutely wailing
continuity and warmth.
But my eyes, these foolish witnesses,
had forgotten those with nothing.

In this room I'm to speak little in, you follow
those gentle battered forms,
your confederate equals, trees the wind sways
open, spreadeagling stormy birds.
Like lace fidelity is lovely
between us. But the flimsy pain of those
I betray, shakiness mine from birth;

for now the modest tender colours weep
at me not strong enough to staunch their blood;
I hear the angels of rebuke, those scratching the glass,
whom I must admit, familiars of dread
sawing ice from a blue pond
for the refrigeration of souls.
I must perish or speak with them.
In the world, not a leaf is guilty.

Jon Silkin



about what constitutes sexual harassment. How should I behave? they ask. I don't like this infringement on my speech and action, they gripe. It's a woman's problem, not mine.

In many ways, these complaints signal that the hearings actually rattled many men's consciousness. Men *should* be confused, because too many male co-workers have never before considered a woman's point of view. If men must now suffer a temporary period of self-consciousness, it will perhaps afford them a glimpse into the reality of women's daily lives. We are supposed to look attractive, yet we must also plan how to dress to avoid the possibility of street rape or harassment. We worry about how we should act in order to prevent date rape. We tip-toe around husbands' egos to avoid domestic violence. Much of the female experience is riddled with painful self-consciousness.

Men might rethink their behavior by consulting their female co-workers. When a male colleague turns up in the office looking particularly sharp, we say, "You look great today." We know how to compliment an individual without embarrassing anyone and without issuing a sexual invitation.

If men are still confused, I suggest the following thought experiment: Imagine your daughter, sister, or mother at work. How do you want her male co-workers to address her, to compliment her, to treat her? What kind of behavior would enrage you? What words would make your blood boil? Reflect on your answers and you'll know how to treat your female co-workers.

Feminists, for their part, have rarely recognized that rage is the least effective way to convince men of women's needs. Recrimination against men in the abstract will not create peaceful coexistence at the workplace. Sometimes, the quickest way to a man's heart is not through his stomach, as we were taught, but through his concern for the women he loves.

During and after the hearings, thousands of women swapped stories of past sexual harassment. At the State Univeristy of New York, Buffalo, women faculty and students organized a speak-out at which women spilled tales they had buried for twenty or thirty years. On countless op-ed pages, women described—often for the first time—the sexual blackmail they had experienced and explained why they, too, had never told a soul.

Anita Hill ignited a national discussion that was long overdue. We have realized that we must redraw the boundaries of what constitutes acceptable behavior; so far, no national consensus has emerged. Sex is not the same as sexism; sexual attention is not the same thing as sexual harassment. It is not harassment to tell a woman she looks nice or ask her out for a date. It *is* harassment to leer, snicker, insult, not take no for an answer, make a woman's work environment inhospitable, or threaten her job. In the end, I think we will all agree that sexual harassment can be avoided if we remember the purpose of etiquette: to avoid offending another individual's feelings.

While we thrash through these questions of gender protocol, this much remains clear: Whatever the political and cultural fallout from the hearings, sexual harassment has ceased to be just a "women's issue" and has entered mainstream national politics. In the years to come, many men will learn what women already know: that sexual harassment is not a compliment. It is a violation of the law. □

ROUNDTABLE

Sexuality After Thomas/Hill

Kimberlé Crenshaw is professor of law at UCLA and a leading writer on critical race theory and Black feminism; her study of violence against women of color will be published in the Stanford Law Review. *Peter Gabel is president of New College of California and associate editor of* Tikkun. *Orlando Patterson is professor of sociology at Harvard University and author of* Freedom *(Basic Books, 1991). Gary Peller is professor of law at Georgetown University and a frequent contributor to* Tikkun. *Kendall Thomas is associate professor of law at Columbia University and teaches law and sexuality and constitutional law. Michele Wallace is author of* Black Macho and the Myth of the Superwoman *(Verso, 1990) and assistant professor of English and women's studies at CUNY. Linda Williams is professor of film studies at University of California, Irvine, and author of* Hard Core: Power, Pleasure, and the "Frenzy of the Visible" *(University of California Press, 1989). Ellen Willis is associate professor of journalism at New York University and has written extensively on feminism and on cultural politics.*

Tikkun: Some commentators have argued that the confrontation between Clarence Thomas and Anita Hill must be understood in terms of the specific cultural dynamics of the Black community. These observers contend that the struggles between Black men and Black women cannot be understood simply in terms of the categories that are available to the larger white society. Some of these points were made by Orlando Patterson in an article that appeared in the *New York Times* the week after Thomas was confirmed.

Orlando Patterson: I'm very concerned about the state of gender relations among Black Americans, a problem that goes back to the period of slavery. One of the fundamental aspects of slavery was the complete demoralization and emasculation of men and the defeminization of women. Unfortunately, one aspect of the dehumanization of slavery was the compensatory behavior on the part of Black men in the face of their own humiliation—domination and objectification of Black women, sometimes seeing conquest of Black women as a means through which they could repair their wounded pride. This became an entrenched aspect of Black life.

Black women, perhaps with too much generosity, have sometimes swept this problem under the carpet, sensing a need for solidarity in the face of the common threat of racism from the larger society. This has rightly been exposed by a variety of Black women novelists.

Having said all that, we still should acknowledge that different groups of women have different problems in relationship to their men—Jewish women have one set of problems in relationship to their cultural heritage, and other groups have different problems. But the domination of the feminist movement by one group of women has tended to blur these differences. I tried to emphasize this domination in my op-ed piece in the *New York Times,* and got blasted for being a crude relativist, though in fact I've been a lifelong feminist and very supportive of Black women who have been raising these concerns in our community. A second aspect of the Thomas/Hill struggle has been a puritanical emphasis on sexuality. But this obscures other issues in the Black community.

It's not that I don't believe Hill, but that I suspect we are not getting the whole story from either Thomas or Hill. The outrage over "Long Dong Silver" and that sort of thing doesn't ring true to me as someone who comes from a nonpuritanical Caribbean culture.

Michele Wallace: I think your piece in the *Times* may have contributed to the interest in an advertisement entitled "African-American Women in Defense of Ourselves" that a group of Black women placed in the *New York Times* at the time of the Thomas hearings. Your piece seemed to be a blurring of the question of whether anything wrong had really happened between Anita Hill and Clarence Thomas. And it wasn't a puritanical disapproval of Clarence Thomas that was being raised by many of us who are feminists in the African-American world, but rather the question of power relations and the misuse of power by Thomas over Hill. The strong implication of your piece was that sexual harassment was not a problem for Blacks in the same way that it is for whites.

Patterson: I believe—and said in the *Times*—that a rigidly imposed sexual-harassment protocol for the workplace is essential in any modern society, and as the father of two daughters I strongly, strongly support that. One of the problems I have with Anita Hill is that her failure to make use of the law was spineless. Perhaps my own cultural background is a problem—I just don't understand the notion of pursuing one's own career at the expense of one's honor.

Once we get beyond the obvious and clear-cut situation of a man doing an explicit quid pro quo—"If you don't date me or go to bed with me, I'll deny you promotions or otherwise hurt your career" (behavior that

is obscene and should be punished whether it applies to Black women or white women)—then we get into a variety of ambiguities in the question of what counts as sexual harassment. And these ambiguities are mediated through cultural expectations. It's absurd to deny that Black women face a set of issues around sexuality that are specific to their cultural situation. Marriage has nearly broken down as an institution in the Black community, and we see male conceptions of women that are almost proprietorial, disgusting conceptions of women reflected in rap music. It's ridiculous to say that these problems don't impact on expectations of how Black men will interact with Black women.

Kimberlé Crenshaw: You are absolutely right that the women's movement has not adequately comprehended that gender issues differ across races and classes. Indeed, my own work has focused on the way that racism and sexism intersect to create a unique form of oppression for Black women. The consequences of this failure were borne out in the inability of women's groups to speak to the dimensions of Hill's dilemma that were specific to Black women. However, I am baffled by how your own analysis exacerbates and legitimizes two of the most salient features of this double oppression of Black women.

First, by suggesting that Anita Hill was disingenuous in her complaint on the ground that Thomas's harassing behavior was familiar to her as simply "down-home courting," you perpetuate the age-old mythology that Black women are amenable, and in fact receptive, to abusive and demeaning sexual conduct. It is precisely these beliefs about Blacks in general and Black women in particular that have frustrated efforts to hold men accountable for their sexual abuse of Black women. Research indicates that these myths continue to play a role even today; men who sexually abuse Black women receive considerably lesser penalties because jurors routinely disregard the sexual integrity and veracity of Black women.

Second, Black women are pressured to remain silent about the sexual abuse that many of us experience at the hands of Black men. While it is true, as you have acknowledged, that many of us remain silent for fear of contributing to the oppression of Black men, there is simultaneously a degree of coercion that renders Black women silent. You intimate that Anita Hill's reaction to Clarence Thomas was somehow feigned and thus not true to her cultural sensibilities. By making that claim, you are attempting to shun Anita Hill, to place her outside the community. This serves as a threat to other Black women, a threat that if they speak about intra-racial sexual abuse, they, too, will be portrayed as pawns of white feminists and ultimately as traitors. Thus, I am stunned by your claim that Hill was spineless for not initiating charges against Thomas. What a catch-22 you are placing her in: If she maintains her silence and attempts to maintain her ties to her cultural and professional community, you call her spineless; if she speaks out against harassment, she is being disingenuous.

Patterson: I don't assume that what Hill reported was true in its entirety. If it was true, then it was sexual harassment and the law should have been applied. It was taking out of context a particular style of interaction. Let me speak from my own cultural background from lower middle-class Jamaica. Women in that context have robust and almost Chaucerian interactions, women crack lewd jokes, and when men come on to them in a salacious manner they respond by rebuffing in an equally salacious manner, which often puts a man in his place in ten seconds.

Crenshaw: If I understand your point, you seem to be suggesting that because working-class Black women in Jamaica respond to sexually aggressive verbal gestures by putting men in their place, it was somehow "out of character" for Hill to claim that she was repulsed and injured by Thomas's behavior. You present this as a friendly sexual game that Black women freely participate in, that may even serve as a source of bonding with Black men.

Setting aside for the moment the question of what Black women's participation in this sexual repartee represents, the power dynamic in the highly stratified workplace so thoroughly raises the stakes for Black women that such behavior, however familiar in the social world, is wholly inappropriate and threatening in the workplace. You fail to recognize that we're not simply dealing with a man who is rebuffed or bested by a woman and who simply moves on, but with a supervisor who can wield his superior institutional power over a woman to impose sanctions or force her to compromise her sexual autonomy. And don't think for a moment that our shared cultural identity somehow protects us against retaliation. I, and countless other Black women who have found ourselves battling for our institutional lives as a consequence of rebuffing such "down-home" overtures, can tell you that these cultural ties you celebrate provide little moral or political constraint upon brothers who are wounded or angered by our response.

More fundamentally, you seem to assume that simply because Black women have responded to such behavior by displacing the sexual aggression onto a plane of humor and wit, they are neither offended nor threatened by it, and that somehow this "style" is defensible

as cultural. Yet simply because Black women have developed self-defense methods doesn't mean that the aggression is not unwanted. Anita Hill is not acting white when she refuses to engage in a kind of sexual repartee that you apparently think all Black women are willing and prepared to perform. She is, quite simply, trying to resist. And white middle-class women have developed their own repertoire of responses to deflect verbal aggression, as have women of virtually all communities. The particular verbal competition that many Black women utilize probably results from the dearth of options available to them within a society that has demonstrated manifest disregard for their sexual integrity. After all, who will defend the sensibilities of women whose societal image suggests that sexually assaultive conduct is perfectly normal and even desired by them?

The most insidious aspect of your op-ed article is that it confirms for many people some of the worst stereotypes about African-American sexuality—some of which are particularly damaging to Black women. I am personally offended on a daily basis when I walk into my office and see your piece prominently displayed on the doors of some of my most conservative colleagues, people who have never expressed any interest in my cultural particularity, but who now seem to accept your cultural defense of sexual harassment on the grounds that Black women are different from white women. I am infuriated when, in settings where I am the only Black female, your article is quoted to me by white males who say they are "intrigued" by your argument, intrigued with the idea that while their wives, mothers, and daughters would certainly be offended or threatened by such conduct, I might not because as you have proclaimed on the pages of the *New York Times* to millions of Americans, Black women are different. This is how your arguments are being used, and this is how at least one African-American woman has had to struggle with it.

Patterson: That's terrible.... I'm sorry to hear that. I've always been a radical feminist all my life. It seems that the complexity of a position such as mine gets distorted in the political discourse of the society.

Kendall Thomas: For me, the implications of the Patterson editorial are crystal-clear. His article suggests that Hill was perpetrating a fraud on white Americans, who are unfamiliar with Black cultural styles. Now he says that we should not take Hill at her word. Patterson is blaming the victim, which is exactly what happened in the Senate hearings. Unlike Patterson, I am not a bit surprised by the uses to which his editorial has been put. He positioned himself in that editorial as an inside expert on matters of Black sexual politics. His references to his personal experience invited the inference that the source of his claims added to their force. Quite frankly, I find it hard to see how Patterson can deny intellectual or political responsibility for the all-too-foreseeable consequences of his intervention.

Wallace: The relations in the Hill/Thomas dispute, and its relationship to problems between Black women and Black men, are heavily mediated by the construction of these events by the media and its articulation of what is happening between Black men and Black women.

Gary Peller: The predictable political consequence of Patterson's intervention was precisely what Kendall just described, because it fed into the liberal norm of non-intervention. The idea is that white progressives have no right to introduce their own judgments about, say, gender domination, because the cultural autonomy of these groups must be respected.

Ellen Willis: Many white feminists and cultural radicals have been attacking cultural relativism for a long time. We rejected it, for instance, when people tried to justify sexism in Saudi Arabian culture by saying that as Westerners, we had no right to criticize a Third World culture.

Thomas: I don't agree. Questions of racial, ethnic, and cultural difference continue to pose a political mine field for white progressives. Their anxiety is not entirely misplaced. One of the most vexing aspects of liberal-left politics in America is that many white progressives are still unwilling or unable to admit that they are just as guilty as other white Americans of speaking about people of color, instead of speaking with them. It is extremely difficult to build coalitions with people for whom you know you remain at some level a problem, rather than a full, coequal partner. Against this backdrop, white left-liberals should not be surprised when their interventions in the sexual politics of the Black community or other communities of color receive a hostile reception.

Willis: Class difference was also a factor in the media's shaping of the hearings. Many women interviewed who did not believe Anita Hill were working-class women who said: "If this happened to me I would have told my boss where to go or I would have quit my job." Part of what was going on for these women was working-class hostility at what was perceived to be careerism or a commitment to upward mobility over integrity. Upper middle-class women who believed Hill were often women whose experience is such that they intuitively understand how crossing a supervisor could ruin their careers.

Wallace: It may also have to do with how much these women have acknowledged victimization in their own lives, in their own work, in their own families.

Tikkun: We also want to address the issue of the new puritanism that sometimes gets mixed up in these discussions. On the one hand, we have a community of readers deeply concerned about the way that unequal power between men and women has played out in the realm of sexuality. We identify with the efforts to equalize power between the sexes and seek to prevent men from dominating, exploiting, or objectifying women. In part, this means we support the efforts to free women from sexual harassment at work, date or spousal rape, from harassment on the streets, or indirectly through the media's sexualization of women's existence. We encourage women to say "no" when they do not want to be approached or dealt with in a sexual manner (and we encourage men to accept that "no"). On the other hand, we are also concerned to find a way to retain what was liberatory in overcoming sexual puritanism or repression, and to create a progressive world that does not become so obsessed with sexual political correctness that it dries up sexuality, and ironically begins to fit in with an antisexual, patriarchal agenda.

Willis: I am both a sexual liberationist and a feminist. There is a basic tension in the way that feminists have dealt with the question of sex—on the one hand, the sexual repression of women has been one of the basic elements of male supremacy, the denial of women's sexuality, the refusal to allow women to control fertility, the double standard in regard to sexual freedom. In all patriarchal cultures, women's sexuality has been severely restricted by various rules. Thus, one of the projects of feminism has been to demand equal sexual freedom and equal sexual pleasure for women, the fight for contraception and abortion, against the stigmas connected to unmarried sex or unmarried pregnancy, and more recently the more complicated demand for equal sexual pleasure—which is different from equal sexual opportunity, because having sex is one thing, but having it on one's own terms in a way that one can enjoy it is another.

At the same time, sexual violence and exploitation have also been integral aspects of male dominance. So there is another tendency within feminism that has become more dominant in recent years: a tendency that emphasizes sexual coercion rather than repression as women's fundamental oppression in the sexual realm. But here is where things get complicated. Sexual coercion of women has historically been a means of enforcing sexual repression—if women step out of their place or violate traditional sexual restrictions, they get defined as "bad women," for whom sexual violence and exploitation are acceptable. In the prefeminist days, men defined sexual liberation as making women more available for men's needs rather than more sexually autonomous. And when women are more sexually free, many of the rules of patriarchal culture that insisted that they not "ruin" those women who were seen as "respectable" also start to fall into disuse, so that men feel freer to engage in sexually exploitive behavior with women in their own class. Women who demanded freer sexuality, which was basically a feminist impulse before it was encoded in a specifically feminist movement, thus found that they would face more exploitation in a more open and more permissive sexual culture. The freedom to be sexual became the obligation to be sexual on male terms. This experience was very common among young, white, middle-class women who later got involved in women's liberation. As a result, the feminist movement has been very confused in its attitude toward sex.

We have learned from this experience that sexual liberalism is not enough. Unlike many women in the antipornography movement, I think that sexual liberalism is an advance for women. But we still need radical changes in the sexual culture, in order to address the profound antisexuality of people's character formations—in both men and women—that equate sex with violence and destructiveness.

Peter Gabel: I don't think we can understand the structure of sexual domination or sexual harassment without looking at the issue that Ellen just raised of the repressive sexuality of the culture as a whole. This is related to the profound isolation and inability to make contact that people routinely experience in schools, in workplaces, and in their family lives.

People live out a form of sensual deprivation in the everyday experience of anonymity and the kind of indwelling or "boxed-in"-ness of their capacities for sensual experience and connectedness. This environment is contradicted by the pull of desire—by which I mean sexual desire but also the larger desire for connection between human beings, which has a powerful sensual-sexual dimension. This contradiction between the pull of desire, which can never be totally eradicated, and the relatively anonymous desexualized existence that we face in this society creates a particular dynamic for many: the fusing of desire with rage, so that the spontaneous desire that people feel, their pull toward connection and sexuality, is linked with anger at its repression. This is partly responsible for the sadomasochistic character of much sexuality in this culture and is probably constitutive of patriarchy and its history. It may well be this historical alienation of desire accounts for the

construction of gender in general in human history and for the construction of the dominant/submissive paradigm in gender roles as they are lived out in everyday life in American society. Social being has formed itself into these gender dimensions in order to embody the effort to realize sexuality through these distorted forms of domination, in part because they cannot be realized through the alienated norms of everyday life. To my mind, there is no "sex-manual" solution to the problem, no normative model of "healthy sex" that can solve such an embedded conflict of such tremendous explosiveness and power.

I see the antipornography movement and certainly the support for sexual-harassment laws as moving in a good ethical direction because they have the effect of bringing to consciousness the realm of sexuality that is otherwise embedded in the private sphere. But at the same time, I don't think that the explosive problem I've been describing can be adequately dealt with by suppressing the symptoms of it on the surface.

We have to think of developing a politics that can simultaneously condemn sexual abusiveness in all its forms and that also addresses the issue of opening up sexuality and of the dis-alienation of sexuality and the freeing of sensuality from the restraints that we live out in our daily routines.

Wallace: I would not make this generalization of gender and power throughout history or cross-culturally, though it does apply in contemporary American culture. But I do agree that these liberal reform movements around pornography or harassment, although they do not get to the underlying issues Willis and Gabel raise, nevertheless force us to think about these deeper issues.

Peller: I agree that the kinds of generalizations that Willis makes just don't apply cross-culturally. Willis has presented the issues as though it is possible to separate out the movement for sexual "freedom" and "pleasure" from the social struggle against the coercion of women. One of the deepest demonstrations of the antipornography movement has been that what we find erotic, what gives us pleasure, is not simply some "natural" and "presocial" instinct we have. Instead, our sexuality is socially constructed, even at the deepest levels of fantasy and desire. It's not a matter of freeing up some innate impulse from the repressions of neo-Victorianism, as if just removing the repression would release a healthy eroticism. Sexuality is inevitably socially constructed through the dynamics of power. And the issues of freedom and pleasure are therefore different for Blacks and whites, given the very different ways our sexuality has been constructed. In fact, Blacks have historically been constructed in white ideology as precisely the carriers of "primitive" and "animalistic" sexual freedom that the so-called Victorian sensibility marginalized as uncivilized for "proper" white people.

Crenshaw: These differences are often overlooked in the way we talk about and politicize sexual coercion and sexual freedom. It is true that the sexual repression of some (primarily elite white) women has been enforced through the "bad woman" category. But it is crucial that we recognize the difference between the threat of falling into this realm where sexual exploitation is acceptable and, on the other hand, living as a woman who is always located there based on her identity. Black women's struggle for sexual freedom is initially directed not toward Victorianism, but sexual abuse. To be sure, the image of Black women as sexual beings likewise devolves from patriarchal distinctions between the good women and the bad women; but there is a qualitative difference between the struggle of many white women to free themselves from the constraints of the pedestal and the struggle of Black women to free ourselves from the social projections of our "natural" lasciviousness. For us, then, feminism is not primarily about freeing ourselves from Victorian repression; rather, it means confronting the myths that we are sexually available.

Linda Williams: The very term of obscenity is not even applicable anymore—there isn't any privacy about sex, there are fewer and fewer sexual secrets. The spectacle of the Senate Judiciary Committee was part of the process of bringing what was once obscene onto the scene of our national discourse. There's a national obsession with sexual secrets. Even the slogan "just say no" requires some kind of knowledge in order to know what kind of sex to say no to. The solution to these problems is not neo-puritanism or the antipornography feminist line; it is rather to increase the quality and sensitivity of our discussions about sexuality. The feminists who argue against pornography and sexual representations of women fail to see that we are in a new era of sexual politics. We need to learn how to talk about abusive phallocentric male power, to curb its abuses, but not at the expense of women's sexual pleasure. Power and pleasure must be talked about more specifically than we have talked about them in the past.

Gabel: Sexual violence is born out of sexual passion—it has the intensity of desire with all of its force, and this can't be solved by sensitive discussions of sexuality or by using the word "pleasure." We have to find a way to talk about passion that goes beyond trying to put it in an entirely rational frame. We have to talk about the realities

of dominance and submission as manifestations of the structuring of passion in distorted forms, and figure out ways of intervening in each of our lives in ways that help us thaw out the bondage that desire is in.

Willis: When it came out that the Judiciary Committee had not intended to deal with the problem of sexual harassment, there was a wave of female anger that made the committee change its mind. This anger was far more than anger at sexual harassment—it was anger at men and male domination that welled up out of the repression that has characterized all these years of conservative rule. The whole phrase "You just don't get it" applied to much more than just Anita Hill.

This anger over male domination was able to surface in the context of unwanted sex. Even with all the obstacles that are put in the way of women getting justice on issues of sexual violence and sexual harassment, it is nonetheless more socially acceptable for women to express their anger at unwanted sex than it is for them to express their anger over lack of sexual freedom or not being able to get abortions. Fighting against sexual violence or harassment is so easily coopted and fed into the sexual repressiveness of the dominant culture. In the first surge of radical feminism, the issue of rape was always put in the context of how rape was used to curb women's freedom. Later on, as conservatism triumphed in the larger society, some feminists started to frame the issue of violence against women in a much more conservative way, calling for the protection of women against marauding men, and some feminists began to talk as though men were essentially rapists. This conception of sexual violence was neo-Victorian, conceptualizing women as fragile beings that needed protection against the ravaging male beasts—and this conception came up in some of the discussions about Anita Hill. Some of what was said in order to condemn Clarence Thomas was that he was interested in pornography and went to see sex films—but who cares if he went to see porn films? The issue is, how did he exercise power over Anita Hill, not what his sexuality was.

Wallace: Part of the discourse that invalidated Anita Hill during the hearings had to do with the question of why she did not come forward at the time, but waited for ten years. And this was connected to the issue of what was really going on with her at the time—so that the only way we could defend Hill during the hearings was to remove her from all suspicion of being (then, before, or after) a desiring sexual being. If she had been in any way implicated in even a moment of desire, then she would have failed to be adequately representing the feminist demand to repel unwanted sexual advances, and she would have become the target of anger for having these desires.

Crenshaw: Unlike Ellen, I don't think the problem was that Hill was constructed as a "fragile" being in need of protection; rather, it was just the opposite. She wasn't believed because of the deep-seated idea that Black women are tough, they can take care of themselves, and they are part of a lustful culture anyway. The inability to grasp this aspect of the Thomas/Hill controversy is an example of the difficulty that many white feminists have in understanding how race and gender intersect. The tendency is to apply the framework of white women's oppression to all women, and thus to suppress the specificity of, say, the situation of Black women. This is precisely the reason why the women's movement is widely perceived as a white middle-class movement and at odds with the interests of the Black community, a perception that Clarence Thomas successfully exploited. The political ramification is two-pronged: On the one hand, the development of a Black feminist movement has been stunted by the perception that feminism doesn't speak to us; on the other hand, by presenting the particular gender dynamics of whites as paradigmatic, the white feminist movement itself has been impoverished by the inability to speak outside its own race and class context. Taking account of the differences in the race and class situation of various women will strengthen rather than diffuse feminist analysis; instead of treating race, class, and gender analyses as independent and risking them becoming antagonistic, we need to enrich feminism politically by constructing a discourse within which all women can see themselves represented.

Thomas: I find the terms in which Willis and Gabel frame the issues much too general. Nothing they have said about the struggle for sexual freedom addresses the particularity of race. In the Hill/Thomas hearings, race and sexuality intersected in a way that demands a more precise analysis. I agree with the notion that Anita Hill was forced to present herself as asexual. What needs to be added, though, is that Clarence Thomas had to be similarly desexualized, not only because he is a Black man, but because he is a Black man married to a white woman. I think this goes a long way toward explaining Thomas's fury when he returned to the hearings after Hill testified: The sexual harassment charge had blown his cover. Given the historical images of Black male sexuality as a threat to white women, Thomas's use of the lynching metaphor, though objectionable, was understandable. The crucial point here is that the sexual representation of Hill and Thomas cannot be explained

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Drumming up the Wrong Tree

R. W. Connell

Why are American men taking to the woods? In the media, on the best-seller lists, and on the frontiers of the therapeutic marketplace, men can be seen beating drums, mourning lost fathers, and reviving primitive rituals of initiation. Beneath this often perplexing spectacle, however, is an important and disturbing realignment of the politics of gender.

We first need to appreciate that the resurgent interest in masculine identity has emerged as a response to feminist critiques of male power and privilege. The particulars of these critiques should be familiar enough. Men control the major institutions of our society: corporations, the state, the media, the education system. And it is scarcely news that there are massive economic advantages to being a man. More men than women have paid jobs. Among people with paid jobs, men, on average, get higher wages than women. Men control the large concentrations of wealth (look at any list of billionaires). The majority of people without an income, or who earn very low incomes, are women. In the 1980s, researchers began to speak of the "feminization of poverty," the rising proportion of female-headed households among the very poor. But in a basic sense, women's economic disadvantage had been there all along.

On top of economic and political inequality, men still are alarmingly apt to commit violence against women. Rape, often dismissed in the past as an act of passion resulting from provocation by promiscuous women, is now recognized to be mainly about men asserting power. Research on domestic violence in the 1970s and 1980s uncovered a huge volume of assaults by husbands on wives, traditionally ignored by police and condoned by public opinion. Street intimidation, workplace harassment, the prostitution industry, pornography, and misogynistic advertising can all be understood as parts of a pattern of men's abuse of women.

This adds up to a fairly tough indictment. What feminism offers to men is not just an open-ended invitation to venture out of their sex roles. Some of the men who listened carefully to the message during the past two decades experienced a paralyzing guilt. Many more men responded with complete denial. Still others tried to work out better ways of relating to women; and from these attempts came the media image of the "new man."

Some of the first feminist consciousness-raising groups in the late 1960s had both women and men as members. The women's liberation movement rapidly adopted a focus on autonomy, and mixed groups were abandoned. But some CR groups for men started in the early seventies. For the next few years, a small feminist movement among heterosexual men took root. Its members sought to refine their analysis of sexism and tried to eliminate sexist attitudes and practices from their own lives. Some took note of the gay liberation struggle against the oppression of homosexuals, and tried to do something about homophobia too, addressing prejudice in their CR group discussions, and supporting gay-rights issues in public.

From this starting point, the incipient men's movement grew into several distinct spheres of activity. Academic researchers, mainly psychologists, interpreted patriarchy as a question of "sex roles" and set about researching the "male sex role." This research established the existence of popular stereotypes about proper masculinity. It did not establish much else. But it provided a language for talking about men that avoided the tougher parts of the feminist indictment. In sex-role theory the constraints on men and women appear to be entirely a matter of mutual expectations rather than the question of unequal resources or power. The language of "sex roles" suggests men and women are in parallel, not unequal, positions, and that men suffer from restrictive sex roles just as much as women do.

Several authors in the mid-1970s began to create a popular literature about masculinity that suggested change in this "role" was both easy and desirable. Books such as Jack Nichols's *Men's Liberation* and Warren Farrell's *The Liberated Man* proposed that men could have fuller emotional lives, more inventive sex lives, closer relations with women and children, even better health.

And if men were psychologically injured by their sex role, many concluded that psychotherapy might be the answer. During the 1970s, another movement emerged, which might be called "masculinity therapy." It consisted of a network of therapeutic groups, workshops,

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and individual therapists, and it gave rise to a small industry of books with titles such as Herb Goldberg's *The Hazards of Being Male: Surviving the Myth of Masculine Privilege*. As this subtitle suggests, the facts of inequality received little attention and the focus shifted to the psychological needs of men. In practice the therapy attempted to assuage the guilt set up by the feminist indictment.

This seems to have been a popular enterprise. A stream of masculinity-therapy books continued throughout the 1980s (including new titles by Farrell and Goldberg). The current "mythopoetic men's movement" has its roots in this milieu; as we shall see, it offers a kind of group therapy and a complete denial of guilt.

The idea of "men's issues," created as a mirror image of "women's issues" in the 1970s, soon turned into a defense of men's interests against women's. By the late 1970s a number of "men's rights" groups had formed to oppose women in divorce and custody cases. Such activism soon spread outward to challenge more and more of the feminist agenda, such as gender-based affirmative action and women's right to abortion. By the end of the 1980s much of heterosexual men's activism had assumed an antifeminist cast.

But the original feminist impulse of the men's movement was not forced completely underground. Men could still be found sharing domestic work and child care, and agitating against sexism and violence against women in the public realm. But most of these initiatives have remained small-scale, generating little media attention or public discussion. Given the political swing to the right in the 1980s, this counter-sexist position had little support from public policy, and often this came across as the response of an embattled minority.

Clearly, as the "new man" has receded from view, a new politics of masculinity has taken shape, in which men's involvement in sexual politics is more openly debated—in the media, in academic research on masculinity, and in therapeutic literature. Enter, on the stage thus prepared, a poet with a message for troubled men.

Robert Bly is a well-known American poet—white, married, and presumably heterosexual—who has summoned the powers of the mythopoetic muse to the help of men. For the last ten years or so he has been giving lectures and leading workshops in which he has expounded a view of masculinity, its troubles, and how to heal them. A definite movement has grown up around him. Bly has now put his ideas together in a book, *Iron John: A Book About Men,* which has become a nonfiction best-seller.

An unstable compound of personal reflection and selectively chosen historical, literary, and anthropological items, *Iron John* is loosely based on a story recorded by the Brothers Grimm early last century. In this rambling and little-noticed tale, Bly discovers a mighty allegory of masculinity and masculine initiation. It provides a peg for his reflections on the central preoccupations of the new men's movement: the loss of true manliness in modern culture; the need for men to be "initiated" into manliness by other men (their symbolic or actual fathers); the need to separate from women; and the need to revive ancient masculine rituals. The masculinity eroded in modern industrial culture can be redeemed if men reclaim and celebrate the lost archetypes that Bly draws from the Grimm tale: the Warrior, the King, the Magician, and, of course, the Wild Man.

It is clear that Bly's story has a strong emotional appeal for a particular group of men, and it is important to consider why. When you strip away the mythopoetic superstructure, the central themes of *Iron John* are the tensions and unresolved conflicts in emotional relations within the family, especially in boys' relationships with their mothers and fathers. This is, of course, the classic territory of psychoanalysis, and is currently host to a kaleidoscope of therapeutic movements and cults.

More telling, perhaps, is the historical moment in which Bly's work has appeared—a period of deepening political conservatism, but also a period when the feminist critique of masculinity has powerfully affected the group of men (white, middle-class, heterosexual North Americans) from which Bly's adherents are recruited. Bly calls on them, in effect, to stop feeling guilty about their privileges, to celebrate masculinity—and effectively to secede from women.

That point is the emotional key. Bly's reading of the emotional life of the family—an interpretation that lays heavy stress on fear of engulfment by the mother—fuels his central prescription for reform: Build a separate men's culture. (His proposals are, indeed, a mirror-image of the separatist feminism of the late 1970s, which also discovered a mythic past and proposed to build a separate future.) True masculinity, Bly insists, is developed only by links between men. One of his most effective appeals is to his followers' feelings that their fathers let them down or blocked their emotional development. The movement's emphasis on initiation rituals seeks to institutionalize the quest for substitute fathers.

Yet ritual insulation from women is not only a mode of emotional retreat; it affords men a political escape hatch. Bly's story about the "Wild Man," his insistence on the importance of fierce, untamed emotion and bold action, and his rhetoric about warriors and swords all must be read in the light of the feminist indictment of male violence. Bly clearly thinks that feminism has

unmanned men, and he wants to de-wimp them. He is smart enough not to present himself as openly antifeminist; the doctrine of separate spheres is his way around the problem.

Bly's cult of the virile warrior points up another problem that has become acute for North American middle-class men in the last decade. The familiar rhetoric of American self-reliance has been worked up, by the ascendant Right, into a public celebration of aggressive individualism. The entrepreneur, the competitor, the self-made man, are proclaimed the reigning heroes of American culture.

But this rhetoric corresponds very little to the realities of most white-collar working lives. The German sociologist Claus Offe demonstrated, in a classic piece of social science, that in the highly organized, large-scale production systems characteristic of modern economies, it is impossible to get a rational measure of any individual's productive worth. The massive contradiction between the public exhortation to aggressive individualism, and a social order in which most white-collar workers are embedded in massive organizations, is neatly resolved by transporting the scene of action into a mystic cult of masculinity. We can't all be Donald Trumps but, by God, we can be equally fierce in our hearts.

So much for Bly's emotional appeal. But where is this pied piper leading his troop? Given that Bly is now so much referred to as the last word on masculinity, we have to put some tough questions to him. Especially, is what he says about men actually true?

There is now a body of research against which we can check Bly's ideas. The result of the check is unequivocal: Bly is massively wrong. Four points about the book stand out. It is poorly argued and shows little respect for truth; it confuses very different cultures and historical epochs; it is based on an obsolete concept of masculinity; and it is fundamentally ethnocentric.

To start with, Bly's level of argument is abysmal. For those of us who have been trying to get questions about masculinity on the intellectual agenda, it is deeply embarrassing to see such material publicized as the latest word about men. It is not just that *Iron John* is a little cavalier with the facts. By any intellectual standards, the book is appallingly bad: overgeneralized, underresearched, incoherent, and at times self-contradictory. The text is packed with sweeping statements about what "men" are, feel, or need. Most of them have no basis in evidence or argument at all. Bly continuously ignores countervailing evidence, such as evidence of cultural diversity. He routinely distorts material from mythology, history, anthropology—even other people's poetry—to suit what he wants to believe.



One could easily document these excesses in detail, but the exercise would soon prove tedious. For sheer verve, however, it is hard to improve on claims like these:

> We could say that a third of each person's brain is a warrior brain; a third of the instincts carried by our DNA relate to warrior behavior; a third of our thoughts—whether we like it or not—are warrior thoughts. This is a sobering idea.

> More trickster energy seems to be stored in the North American soil than in any continent in the world.

> Powerful sociological and religious forces have acted in the West to favor the trimmed, the sleek, the cerebral, the noninstinctive, and the bald.

Powerful stuff. When Bly gets to talking about the world most of us live in, he consistently distorts the facts. Consider the following:

> Kings as leaders of huge cities and empires, holding broad powers, are first noticed during the second

millennium B.C. in the city-states of Mesopotamia. No one is sure if the Sun King in China preceded or followed the Mesopotamian king. The political king merges heavenly sun power and earthly authority.... The Sun King and his Moon Queen ... held societies together for about four thousand years. As principles of order, they began to fail in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Europe.

As a matter of cold fact, kingship emerged before the second millennium; the relative chronology of Mesopotamia and China is quite well known (Bly didn't bother to look it up); the idea of universal sun monarchy (incidentally, based in Egypt, not Mesopotamia) was discredited in historical scholarship as long ago as the 1920s; in many cultures kingship was not identified with the sun; many "societies" existed between 2000 B.C. and the eighteenth century without kings of any sort (among them such obscure cases as Athenian democracy, the Roman republic, Venice); and the mystique of European kingship was challenged before the eighteenth century (remember Machiavelli? Cromwell?). The passage is a farrago of error and misinterpretation, and this is typical of Bly's excursions into history and anthropology.

But then Bly isn't interested in the truth of what he says; he is interested only in its emotional effect. The effect of passages like this is to create a sense of continuity between his readers/hearers and an imagined stream of forefathers stretching back into the mists of the past.

To create this kind of effect, however, *requires* intellectual confusion. To produce his myth of an overarching male culture, Bly muddles together bits and pieces from different periods of history, different cultures, different modes of experience. He grabs a sun king from China, an initiation ritual from aboriginal Australia, a poem from Ireland, and throws them all into the blender. The resulting language, as the quotes show, is cloudy and abstracted, sustaining a prophetic tone at the expense of meaning.

Bly's whole presentation, in fact, rests on a stereotyped, outdated, and now untenable concept of what masculinity is. Bly's underlying idea is that there is one basic masculinity, one pattern of true masculine rituals, one set of male psychological needs. At times he asserts that this masculinity is genetically determined, as in his pseudoscientific musings on the composition of the warrior brain.

The notion of a single masculine template is ethnographic and historical nonsense. Abundant evidence shows that cultural representations of masculinity, and men's actual ways of life, vary widely between cultures. What is "masculine" in the central desert of Australia is different from what is "masculine" in New York, and both are different from what is "masculine" in the Eastern Highlands of Papua New Guinea. Definitions of masculinity change in history, and they are diverse within any one culture at a given point of time.

At times, Bly registers a fleeting awareness that there is a struggle going on over cultural definitions of desirable forms of masculinity. But he manages to ignore homophobia—a central feature of hegemonic masculinity in American culture, as routine news reports of gay bashing and AIDS hysteria testify. He manages to ignore the differences produced in men's lives by their class situations and by racial oppression, let alone colonialism. He therefore misses most of the interesting issues about masculinity that have been raised by researchers and activists during the last thirty years.

Bly assumes that the masculine template exists independently of women; that "male values," "male initiation," etc., are *separate* from women's affairs; so in healing their wounds men must follow a separate path. Abundant evidence from ethnographic and life-history research confirms that masculinities are constructed in *interaction* with women. It is not just that cultural images of "masculinity" are always defined in relation to images of "femininity." Real women, real women's work (such as child care, housework, or emotional support work), are intimately involved in making and remaking men's characters.

Finally, Bly's vision of the world is ethnocentric to the point of racism. He comes out with astonishing statements about the "Indo-European Race" and its warrior heritage, or about the glory of golden hair. More important, however—and central to the whole "mythopoetic men's movement"—is his invocation of a contrast between primitive and civilized peoples with "primitive" societies serving, of course, as the treasured repositories of "ancient" male rituals that "civilized" cultures so desperately need to recover. Bly loves to cite snippets of anthropology to prove this, indiscriminately consigning all non-Western cultures—Arab, African, American Indian, Australian aboriginal—into the same "primitive" basket.

One would be more impressed with Bly's use of examples from non-Western cultures if he had taken the trouble to learn about their ways of life. He hasn't. His text is riddled with crude, jarring errors. For instance, he waxes eloquent about the swords used in Australian aboriginal initiations—in cultures that did not have metal tools at all. He assumes that Australian aboriginals all spoke the same language and had the same myths—when in fact there were about seven hundred different languages and dialects in aboriginal Australia and an equal diversity of rituals. Instead, aborigines appear as flimsy ciphers in Bly's imagined magic circle of

"primitive" masculine virtue: The actual cultures, languages, and ritual practices that define their lives matter far less to him than his own stereotyped, racist caricatures of their behavior.

Bly is quite right on one major point, the key to his success. His readers are worried about sexual politics, and lack a language for talking about them. They lack this language precisely to the extent that they have refused to listen to the uncomfortable truths told by feminism and gay liberation. In the final analysis, *Iron John* and the "mythopoetic men's movement" are a massive evasion of reality. Bly is selling simplified fantasy solutions to real problems. In the process, he distorts the complex realities of men's lives and distracts men from practical work on gender inequalities.

Sam Keen has listened to feminists, and to gay men, and has accordingly written a better book. *Fire in the Belly: On Being a Man* is much more literate and consequent than *Iron John*. Keen has some concern about offering evidence, and has some sensitivity to social conditions. He has heard about racism, homophobia, global inequality, and environmental issues. The book has some good passages of social and cultural criticism. He has practical experience in a men's group that has worked unpretentiously on consciousness-raising and sexual politics.

A book about men with these qualities is rare in the literature. I would rejoice over it, if it were not for the parts about masculinity. Here, Keen's account is quite close to Bly's. The basic territory is the same: the emotional needs of men and emotional relations in the family. Gender is psychologized. And Keen uses much the same method: speculative generalization spiced with snippets of history, anthropology, and contemporary anecdotes. Keen constructs a speculative and ethnocentric "history of manhood" from the Stone Age to the postmodern era, which is nearly as thin as anything in Bly—though to his credit Keen recognizes the fact of continuing historical change.

Like Bly, he draws on Jungian notions of male and female archetypes. Like Bly, he argues that modern men lack initiation rituals, and proceeds to invent some to fill the gap. Like Bly, he insists that men need to separate from women to do their healing; though some of the time he specifies that this applies to the archetype of Woman and not to actual women in the flesh.

However, Keen departs from Bly when it comes to the question of what form this separation should take. Rather than calling for an all-male cult, Keen views a renewed masculinity as an individual psychic quest, a "pilgrimage." Here he shows his closer relationship with growth movement ego-psychology. The political agenda Keen recommends is basically a therapeutic one: healing the male psyche, healing relations between men and women, healing the planet. This is a larger vision than Bly's; but whether it will have a different impact depends on how far Keen can get beyond the "male psyche" part.

Using his practical experience in counseling and psychotherapy, Keen has some useful suggestions for the first step in this agenda. For instance, he offers some sound practical tips on running a men's group. But the impulse seems to run out at the second step. Keen doesn't carry us much beyond face-to-face relations; nor does he have much to say about the institutions and social structures that shape personal life. He doesn't have much of a sense of practical politics, or any useful advice about the grubby business of actually changing public policy in child care, housing, pay equity, or the environment.

This disappointing ending is, in a sense, built into his analysis from the start. Keen draws on psychological traditions that have little room for what is now called "the social construction of emotion"—the production of emotions (and emotional problems) by social structures and culture. Indeed, the whole movement for masculinity therapy, which reads questions of social inequality as

Inscribed

As in the Bible,
where one massacre precedes another,
she was born with her father's war
in her body.
There in the damp, clayey flesh:
a yellow field of grain
where the men lie bleeding.

Her father recognized
the yielding piece of land
he had walked on after the bombing,
stepping carefully through the wheat sheaves,
the dismembered
as slick as newborns.

He held her body
in his arms. When she was wet,
sometimes he thought she was bleeding
from the killing he saw.

He tilted the warm bottle
into her mouth.

Lisa Bernstein

questions of personal identity, invites blurred thinking and the speculative manufacture of archetypes.

One must ask, then, what "healing" of masculinity is possible through the kind of individual psychic quest Keen advocates. Therapy, of course, has value for dealing with situations of crisis and despair. In less dramatic situations it often helps with sheer survival. But to *transform* emotional relationships, and a complex emotional structure such as "masculinity," is inherently a collective project and not an individual one. It must involve large numbers of people; it must deal with the institutions (e.g., the labor market, the state) that regulate men's lives; it therefore must centrally involve social action. "Healing" is a metaphorical language for human relationships that has only a limited reach. To grasp adequately the project of changing masculinity we also need a language of "justice" and "equality."

Bly, Keen, and others in the genre are talking about real issues, however limited or mystifying the language they use. What would be a more adequate, clearheaded response to these issues?

The starting point has to be this: We cannot solve emotional problems about gender by ignoring the social conditions that give rise to them. Psychoanalytic researchers, from Sigmund Freud and Alfred Adler to Jessica Benjamin and Dorothy Dinnerstein, have shown in great detail how emotional tensions in masculinity grow out of the social arrangements that define a particular form of the family and particular social positions for women and men.

What from one point of view is a feminist indictment of men, from another is a description of the social inequalities that have to be dismantled before either men or women can be "healed." This remains the central task for heterosexual men who want to do something constructive about masculinity.

Specifically, they have to go to work on each of the structures of inequality outlined at the start of this essay. Here is a modest agenda, building on existing activities of counter-sexist men:

1. Share the care of babies and young children equally between women and men. Change hours of work and policies of promotion to make this practical.

2. Work for equal opportunity, affirmative action, and the election of women, until women occupy at least 50 percent of decision-making positions in both public and private organizations.

3. Support women's control over their own bodies, and contest the assertion of men's ownership of "their" women. Actively challenge misogyny and homophobia in the media and popular culture, as well as sexual harassment in the workplace.

4. Work for pay equity and women's employment rights, until women's earnings are at least equal to men's.

5. Support the redistribution of wealth and the creation of a universal social security system.

6. Talk among men to make domestic violence, gay bashing, and sexual assault discreditable. Work positively to create a culture that is safe for women and for gays and lesbians.

7. Organize political and economic support for battered women's shelters, rape crisis centers, and domestic violence intervention.

This agenda, obviously, involves work in other forums than the therapeutic men's groups preferred by Bly and Keen. It involves politics in the workplace and in the public realm. In other countries, one of the most important forums for such work is the unions. The union movement is so weak in the U.S. that it is hardly ever noticed in discussions of masculinity; it is nevertheless important, not least because of its working-class base. Many narrow, therapeutic strategies for changing men come unstuck over issues of class; they frequently come off as condescending middle-class prescriptions for working class uplift. A realistic approach will recognize the importance of exploitation and powerlessness in working-class life, without wishing away the misogyny and violence that often go with them. Following a more explicitly political agenda such as the one I have tried to outline doesn't call on working-class men to add guilt to their other burdens. It calls on them to do positive things in the name of equality, which will benefit working-class women.

This is far from an exhaustive agenda, but it illustrates how we might begin to get to the source of the problems. It is not an agenda for the nervous. These issues are tough enough to engage the energy, fierceness, and creativity of a vast number of men. Maybe some of the warriors would care to come down from the hills and lend a hand in the cause of social justice.

This suggestion is not entirely a jest. A political agenda such as this, though it works to resolve emotional contradictions in the long run, is highly stressful in the short run. Quite frankly, it requires heterosexual men to act against their own immediate interests, in the light of a larger human interest in justice and equality. Activists will have to endure internal guilt and fatigue, suspicion from women, outright hostility from powerful men, and sometimes physical threats. Under such conditions, the techniques of emotional support worked out in the "men's movement" might be very helpful for personal survival, and for sustaining a campaign of genuine social change. It would be nice to see these methods, and all this enthusiasm, put to better use. □

FASCIST WINDS RETURN

From Nazi skinheads brutalizing "foreign elements" in Germany to Gypsies being condemned and attacked in Romania, from Nazi war criminals being rehabilitated in Lithuania to former Nazi David Duke winning a majority of the white vote in Louisiana—the stench of reaction and fascism is with us again.

Stopping David Duke and Patrick Buchanan

A Strategy for the 1990s

Michael Lerner

It would be silly to imagine that neo-Nazism or fascism is about to sweep through the U.S. in the 1990s. But the candidacies of David Duke and Patrick Buchanan for the Republican presidential nomination are likely to give new publicity and respectability to only barely disguised racist, anti-Semitic, and xenophobic ideas in American politics. Right-wing extremists are creating a poisonous tendency in American political discourse, as they seek to establish a pseudo-community among the white middle class by mobilizing anger against the poor, the homeless, welfare recipients, immigrants, Blacks, gays, Jews, or the Japanese, and by rallying around talk about "America first" (the slogan of the pro-Nazi isolationists in the 1930s). The social conditions that allowed David Duke to capture 55 percent of Louisiana's white vote are likely to be more rather than less prevalent in the U.S. over the next generation, and the type of politics Duke and Buchanan represent will likely command a large audience nationwide. So this article is not particularly concerned with this year's election—we think it unlikely that either Duke or Buchanan will win the nomination—but with the social movements that they will be mobilizing in the years ahead.

The Dukes and Buchanans get some of their support from hard-core right-wingers, racists, and fascists whose character structures and ideological commitments attract them to racism, hatred, and violence. But to move beyond their hard core to the much larger constituency that voted for Duke or that is listening to Buchanan, the ultrarightists have learned how to appeal to many decent Americans by speaking to real and legitimate needs, to acknowledge the pain in their lives, and to give them the sense that they are being recognized and respected. Because our goal is to find ways to dislodge this sector of the population from the Right, we need to understand what these legitimate needs are and to speak to them in a way that separates the legitimate recognition of their pain from the illegitimate expression of that pain in racist or xenophobic directions.

Michael Lerner's book Surplus Powerlessness *(Humanities Press, 1991) describes in greater detail the mass psychology of compassion and politics of meaning outlined in this article.*

The problem is that liberals and progressives rarely understand this issue, rarely ask what legitimate needs are being spoken to when the fascists start to gain a mass audience, and hence are often unable to develop an effective strategy to prevent the David Dukes and Patrick Buchanans of this world from reaching power. Similarly, if we turn to the way that most people have been taught to think about the triumph of fascism in Europe in the 1920s and 1930s, we find that few of the analyses of this critical episode in history provide us with serious answers to the question we are raising.

Instead, conventional answers to this question tended to fit the agendas of those seeking to justify various post–World War II political alignments. Western countries were anxious to rehabilitate former Nazis and to gain popular support in Germany. A West German state, they reasoned, could face down the ideological appeal of communism and withstand the potential military threat of the Red Army. But to secure German loyalty, Nazism could not be portrayed as arising out of something deep and abiding in the situation of the German people or its culture. Instead, it became popular in the West to absolve most Germans of any responsibility for what had happened by thinking of Nazism as some kind of collective psychosis that had magically descended on the German people in 1933, and magically disappeared in 1945. This consciousness reached its fullest expression in President Reagan's visit to the Bitburg cemetery in which former SS officers were buried along with other former soldiers of the Nazi army, and in the West's celebration of the reunification of Germany. We need only witness neo-Nazi skinhead attacks on immigrants to see how premature this reunification really was.

Soviet explanations of the Holocaust, meanwhile, were equally tailored to the Soviets' need to mobilize the East German population into the cold war. What caused Nazism, the communists argued, was capitalist imperialism itself. The industrialists, preoccupied with the imminent threat of communist rule as the worldwide depression deepened, used the Nazis to keep the workers in line. In the version popularized by Bertolt Brecht in his play *The Remarkable Rise of Arturo Ui,* the

industrialists hired a gangster, but the gangster eventually turned on his employers and took on a life of his own, becoming in the process something far more ugly and sinister than the hired thug he was at the play's outset. The solution, then, was simple: Eliminate the gangsters first; then uproot the capitalist system that had created them. The Soviets went even further than the West in ignoring the complicity of the German population in all this. Soviet propagandists were desperate to recruit a German population that had long been warned of the horrors of Soviet rule—and that had shown a great deal of enthusiasm for the Nazis.

Both of these accounts were remarkably superficial. Both denied the important role of anti-Semitism and of the deep needs that Nazi ideology was able to exploit. And both conscientiously avoided dealing with the growing numbers of Germans who voluntarily and eagerly joined the Nazi party in the late 1920s and early 1930s, and who formed an electoral majority for the Nazis in 1932.

Unlike these cold war interpretations, the typical Zionist account had the advantage of acknowledging the popular support for fascism in Germany, even though it then conjured up another magical concept: the supposed inevitability of gentile hatred of the Jews. Zionists quite correctly drew upon the long history of anti-Semitism in the West to show that Nazism was not an aberration, solely the product of its social background or historical moment. Rather, it was a full expression of the Jew-hating in which Western politics and culture had been steeped for centuries.

But many Zionists tended to essentialize anti-Semitism as a permanent fact in the consciousness of the goyim. Jews could deal with this ugly fact either by making clever deals with ruling elites who might control and suppress it among the masses, or by assuming that it might reemerge at any moment, leaving nothing to be done but secure a strong military for the Jewish State. By essentializing anti-Semitism as the perennial irrational hatred of Jews, the Zionists avoided the question of what could be done to combat its rise. Rather, the only relevant question became: What do we do to give strength to the State of Israel, a place to which the victims can escape?

If escape is one extreme, based on a pessimistic assessment of the fundamental stupidity or evil of those attracted to the Right, the other extreme was taken up in the twenties and thirties by the communist Left in Germany. The CP correctly noted that German capitalism required imperialism. Since the world's markets were already dominated by the U.S., England, and France, German capitalists had only two choices: either allow the current depression to continue, with the inevitable radicalization of the population in ways that might lead to socialist revolution; or resist the ruinous program of reparations and trade restrictions the victorious powers imposed on Germany after World War I, in which case an aggressive German nationalism would have to be restored to its former prestige. The CP concluded that since the aggressive nationalism was the inevitable outcome of capitalist rule, the only solution was to preach immediate revolution. And since Germany's large Social Democratic party did not favor such a revolution, the Social Democrats, and not the Nazis, were deemed the real enemy: In blocking a revolution they were condemning Germany to a capitalist regime that would necessarily lead the country into fascism.

However, both the Social Democrats and the Communists failed to understand that Hitler was growing in popularity not only because of Germany's desperate economic situation, but also because he spoke to a set of *other* needs that the socialists could not begin to understand. After all, if it were solely economic issues that motivated Hitler's supporters, the Communist program had as much to offer as the fascist one did. In fact, the fascists put themselves forward as national socialists—that is, as a force that, like the Left, would combat the power of the capitalist class. Once they took power and consolidated their hold on government and society, the Nazis also became reconciled with Germany's industrialists. Nonetheless, the Nazis drew some of their mass appeal from their image as enemies of Germany's business elite.

But the fascists added to the economic picture an understanding of the deep humiliation and sense of powerlessness that most people were feeling as they faced the unemployment and inflation of the post–World War I years. These economic humiliations were coupled with a deep spiritual and ethical crisis that characterized German society under the Weimar Republic. The values of the feudal past had collapsed rapidly, but what seemed to be replacing them was an ethos of extreme self-interest, profligate sexuality, moral relativism, and family collapse. The older communities that formerly gave mooring and direction to life were rapidly disintegrating, or perceived themselves to be under unrelenting attack. To be sure, some of the resistance to the cultural revolution of the 1920s was based on a reactionary longing for a past that was oppressive to most or for the security that patriarchy offered. But not all of this resistance was simply reactionary. Some of it was based on a correct assessment that the new society emerging in Germany was oppressive in a different way. Those who still felt some allegiance to precapitalist values sensed that Weimar society provided little

opportunity for many people to feel good about themselves, or to feel confident that what they *had* managed to achieve for themselves in their work, family life, and community was likely to survive the winds of change.

In these circumstances, the fascist Right has developed a formula that wins it considerable mass appeal, and that, under some conditions, allows it to gain power. First, it validates these concerns. Second, it proposes that people can overcome the alienation they experience in daily life by becoming part of a fantasized community—the powerful Nation. But in fact, the experience of being part of the Nation doesn't work for very long, because after the parades and the song-fests and spectacles, people return to the alienating workplaces and oppressive family relations that shape their daily lives. The Nation, in other words, is a fantasized community—provided as an *alternative* to changing the oppressive institutions of daily life. So, when people's pain and alienation returns, we go to part three of the fascist program: the identification of an Enemy, who has somehow insinuated itself into the daily life of the nation and undermined the experience of solidarity and mutual caring that supposedly would have been there otherwise. This Enemy is typically the Jew or the Communist, but also, in the case of David Duke's American brand of protofascism, the Blacks (now carefully identified in speeches with such coded references as "welfare cheats" or "beneficiaries of wasteful government programs"). Whichever identity this Enemy assumes, it must be rooted out if the people of the nation are to achieve the human satisfactions and community that they seek.



An intelligent Left in Germany would have started by acknowledging that the experiences of pain and powerlessness and under-confirmation of people's being was real. And instead of simply talking about economic solutions and political revolution, leaders of this Left would have tried to create programs that immediately spoke to the pain, frustration, alienation, and under-confirmation that people were experiencing.

George Mosse, the renowned historian of fascism, suggests in his book *Masses and Man* (Wayne State University Press, 1987) that the Left may also need to consider ways to develop a progressive and humane nationalism. Certainly one might argue that progressive forces could have legitimately affirmed some elements of German national culture. Certainly the communist internationalism that the Left envisioned as the only alternative to German nationalism was itself already dominated by Stalinist totalitarianism and thus presented, at best, a dubious substitute for a progressive version of a usable German past.

But this analysis raises a host of more basic, theoretical questions. What, first of all, would a progressive nationalism look like? It would, of course, have to move beyond the fantasy nature of reactionary nationalisms. By validating the humane, life-affirming, and morally sensitive aspects of the tradition and culture in which it is rooted, it would also directly challenge racist and national chauvinist accounts of the pain and powerlessness in people's lives by providing alternative explanations. Progressive nationalists would identify the current structures of the competitive marketplace and of patriarchal society most responsible for making daily life unfulfilling and alienating.

There are real risks in identifying with *any* nationalism—and you can see grim testimony to those risks in the other pieces in this special section of the magazine. Thus we might consider addressing some of the same concerns in another form. For example, I've suggested that the American Left adopt a progressive profamily program that would substantially address the same issues of alienation, powerlessness, and self-blame that a progressive nationalism would seek to address—and yet avoid some of the problematic features of nationalism (though I acknowledge that much of my argument could also be used to support an attempt to develop a progressive appropriation of national symbols of history). Once again, we start by acknowledging that people are correct to feel that there is a real problem in family life and that people's desire for long-term loving and committed relationships is a legitimate desire. We then try to separate these legitimate concerns from the reactionary elements of family life that the Right has appealed to—the oppressive patriarchal order, the insistence on only one "correct" form of family life, the attempt to stigmatize gays and feminists.

A progressive profamily program would include gay families and single-parent families. And rather than idealize the pathologies that afflict many existing families, it would acknowledge the pain and stress that often distorts family life, and would then help people understand this pain as part of a larger set of competitive, market-dominated social relations. People are rewarded in the marketplace precisely because they succeed in manipulating and controlling others. Yet these very qualities, embodied in the "smooth operators" and "cool people" who "make it" in the competitive marketplace create narcissistic personalities: precisely the character types that are unable to make long-term loving commitments in family life, or even in friendships. Even when they genuinely wish to achieve intimacy, they don't know how to stop manipulating and attempting to control the very people they wish to have as lovers or friends. And the stress that people experience in the world of work—a direct function of the way that work gives people little opportunity to fulfill their capacities for creativity, intelligence, cooperation, and self-determination—is brought home into family life. There it often erupts in irritability, depression, insensitivity, or a general lack of energy and awareness, each of which works to undermine loving relationships. This is just one realm—albeit an extremely important one—in which the Left could develop what I call a politics of meaning. This isn't a question merely of providing a set of economic benefits to families or to provide family rights (though I think we should *also* develop a Bill of Rights for workers and for families). Rather, it's a question of helping people understand why it's so hard to build loving relationships, acknowledging their pain, helping them to stop blaming themselves, and allowing them to see that some personal problems are rooted in societal pathologies. Once the Left begins to address the pains of daily life, it can provide many deeper and ultimately more fulfilling ways for people to understand what is actually bothering them.

The exact way the Left might have applied this kind of thinking to the Europe of the late twenties and early thirties might be debated. But what I have been arguing is that this whole way of thinking—this entire confrontation with the question of what was hurting people's daily lives and how that pain was transformed into rage at "the Other"—was absent and as a result, the Left had no plausible way to fight the ascent of fascism.

That same error has emerged in the Left's response to the growth of the radical Right in the seventies and eighties in the U.S., and to the growth of Duke-style fascism in the nineties. If current trends continue, many of this country's leading industrial corporations will move manufacturing jobs out of the U.S. The huge debts generated by the reckless military spending of the Reagan and Bush years will thwart the development of an economic and educational infrastructure that could give the U.S. a competitive advantage in the emerging scientific and technological revolutions in production. As a result, the standing of the U.S. in the international capitalist market will continue to slip. Growing unemployment and inflation will produce a sense of general despair about the future. One plausible Left response to such conditions would be to push for a worldwide system of rational planning—both to deal with the ecological crisis that threatens to destroy the entire world, and to prevent a new clash between rival nationalisms. A progressive approach to international planning would require both a refined ecological sensitivity and a fair allocation of the world's resources and productive capacities, advantaging countries equally, taking into account the needs of the Third World as well as of the advanced industrial societies. Without such an international plan, we are likely to face a twenty-first century plagued by ecological disasters and competing economic nationalisms. And it is not unthinkable that the U.S., unable to rely on its waning superiority in science, engineering, and productive technology, would be tempted to turn to the one arena where it *has* committed its resources: military superiority. Justifying a new aggressive nationalism would require some kind of popular movement—and here the Duke-type forces, perhaps shielded by the Republican party's right wing, would play an important role.

An alternative economic solution that required international planning and rational use of the world's resources would benefit everyone, and might save the world from ecological disaster. But such a solution will be impossible to implement as long as the U.S. government is dominated by a corporate elite more interested in its own freedom to maximize profits than in the long-term well-being of the society as a whole. For some corporate leaders, the possibility of moving their capital to more productive countries is an adequate solution; for others, the possibility of using American military power to back their corporate interests provides the necessary insurance. But few corporate leaders are willing to use America's current strength to push the other capitalist countries into any plan of long-term cooperation.

If we want the U.S. government to use its power to help mold an international plan, we need to found a popular social movement to challenge the entrenched powers that serve the interests of the corporations. The promise of this kind of movement has always been what lies behind the appeal of the populists, those who

tried to articulate popular resentments against the entrenched interests.

Our task in the U.S. is to create a populism that does not appeal to the racism, sexism, and national chauvinism that have disfigured right-wing and fascistic forms of populism. To do this, we need to address the *crisis in meaning:* the forces that cause people to feel alienated, devoid of meaning and purpose, lacking in community, and unrecognized. Listening to some of the in-depth interviews that were done with people who voted for David Duke in 1991, we hear over and over again variations of one theme: "I am here, I count, and David Duke made me feel that he was the only one who noticed that." Underlying this assertion is the pain of people who feel that their cares and concerns are receiving little validation or attention.

Of course, liberals, progressives, and many of the community-relations professionals of the Jewish world respond to this critique by saying something like this: "Sure, there is underlying pain, but that pain is deeply embedded in racism and anti-Semitism, and we can't make any compromises with those kinds of feelings." But this misses the point. To validate the pain is *not* to validate the racism, but to try instead to drive a wedge between the legitimate pains and illegitimate racist and fascist solutions, precisely in order to *defeat* racism and anti-Semitism.

The liberal and progressive responses typically lead to one of two strategies: eliminate the economic problems and we will eliminate the potential for fascism; or outlaw racism and coerce those who practice it with economic or political pressure. But both strategies are unlikely to work. America's economic problems cannot be solved in the long run unless we talk about limiting the freedom of the marketplace and creating real international cooperation and planning. Yet at the same time, liberal Democrats and corporate leaders will be represented prominently in any antifascist coalition. They will totally oppose this direction, and can be expected to use their considerable power to prevent anyone from making it part of the antifascist strategy. So instead we will be treated to a variety of stop-gap economic spending programs that may temporarily reduce unemployment, but will not work to reverse the larger trend of American economic decline. And ironically, conservatives will cite the failure of these measures as further proof that any governmental program will necessarily fail, and hence convince people that what we need is *less* planning rather than more.

On the other hand, the second set of liberal remedies —legal constraints to punish racist and discriminatory practices—won't work. We live in a democracy; and the more racist ideas are able to win popular support, the more we will have right-wing judges and legislators dismantling the programs that had served previously as constraints on both racism and fascism.

Given this deadend in traditional liberal politics, there's no real alternative but to win popular support for a progressive populist program. To do so, progressive populism must go far beyond visionary plans for an international planned economy, and directly address the pain of daily life. A progressive profamily program, a progressive approach to the world of work, and a progressive nationalism may all be elements in such a populism. And a serious antifascist program must show people that we care about their lives, not just that we believe in some abstract sense in their "rights" or "equal opportunity." We must speak concretely to what is actually happening in their family lives, and to the sense of loss that afflicts the communities they inhabit. We will be successful when we can help people understand the pain they experience in their daily lives. This pain takes many forms: the sense of abandonment the elderly feel when they are denied respect, caring, and gratitude from their children or when they sense their children have rejected wholesome values and have become selfish and insensitive. Or it surfaces again in the feelings that haunt many of our personal relations: the sense that we have fewer friendships that we can count on, or that our marriages and families are likely to collapse. Or it could be the painful realization that work has proved to be a "dead end" and feels dull and alienating. We must begin to acknowledge the central importance of all these pains in our political life. And we must clearly convey that we understand and care about such pain, and have ideas about how it can be alleviated.

Ultimately, the struggle against fascism is a struggle for the minds and hearts of the American people. To win, we need to acknowledge that the moral relativism and spiritual deadness of the contemporary world is indeed something that needs to be fought—and that these ills are products of the reductionist logic of capitalist materialism. Similarly, we must work to create thousands of consciousness-raising groups in workplaces and communities that will encourage people to understand their personal pain in its full social context. The Left must also redesign and adopt the technologies of individual transformation, so well utilized both by the twelve-step programs of the therapeutic recovery movement, and by many organizations on the Right to empower and mobilize people to a different kind of politics. The Left can also appropriate national symbols and national mythology in public events that reflect a progressive program of social change. Imagine, for example, public events in every

community in the U.S. to celebrate the Bill of Rights, and to encourage communities to develop their conceptions of a fuller sense of human rights applicable to the twenty-first century. In the 1980s, we at the Institute for Labor and Mental Health developed a Family Day for the city of Oakland, which thousands of people attended. Imagine a similar yearly event in every major U.S. city aimed at helping people recognize that many of the problems they face in family life are actually rooted in larger social ills that a progressive program was designed to change.

These consciousness-raising aspects of a politics of meaning would find concrete applications in a set of programs aimed at reshaping our society so that daily life would enhance our abilities to be loving, creative, and caring human beings. These changes would include democratization of the world of work, a government restructured to emphasize person-to-person caring activities over the workings of an impersonal bureaucracy, and schools that teach values and nurture spiritual and ethical sensitivities. The economy, meanwhile, should be restructured toward cooperative and caring behavior. That such a society would be more likely to be productive and competitive in the international market of the twenty-first century is an important by-product, but not the major goal, of a transformative and compassionate politics of meaning. And a progressive politics that showed this kind of caring for the American people would *win*. The Left could then be in a position to push for international economic planning that could reverse the steady decline of the U.S.'s economic well-being into the next century. Unlike the right-wing and fascist programs that can only provide a fantasized community, the democratic restructuring that our program calls for would actually create a less alienated and more fulfilling daily life. Yet only our willingness to recognize people's pain, and to help them overcome self-blaming, could possibly put us in a position where we would have the power to restructure the society in a humane way.

Call this approach a mass psychology of compassion. But it is *not* the liberal compassion that merely doles out to the most economically oppressed a set of economic entitlements. On the contrary, this kind of compassion starts from a recognition that the same kind of pain that afflicts those attracted to the Right also afflicts the rest of us. Indeed, those on the Left are often in as much trouble and pain as those on the Right. Liberals and progressives have developed their own ways of dealing with that pain, e.g., psychotherapy, recreational drugs, sexual "acting out." Such solutions may be, on the whole, less socially destructive than the fascist counterparts that emerge on the Right, but the fact is that we are *not* on a different planet or in a different psychological universe than those who ended up voting for David Duke. Recognizing this fact would be the first step toward a politics of compassion: If we could allow ourselves to really understand this, we would not project the elitist image that so infuriates the people whom we allegedly wish to reach. Yet this may be the hardest point of all for liberals and leftists to accept: They are so addicted to their sense of moral superiority that they often prefer it to political victory. Yet in fighting the potential fascisms of the coming decades, we cannot afford this self-indulgence. Morality yes, superiority no. The best way to avoid this temptation is to confront our own lives deeply, acknowledge our own pain, frustration, and vulnerability, and begin to understand the ways that these feelings are similar to the pains of many who describe their experiences in right-wing language.

A united front against fascism, then, must be based on a real alternative to fascism—not just an analysis of why fascism is bad or what it has led to in the past, but a substantive view of how to reorder our society in ways that relieve the pain that leads people to embrace fascism in the first place. It was not inevitable that the fascists would win in 1928 in Europe. Their ascent could have been blocked, had people developed a compassionate strategy that addressed the kinds of concerns I've outlined here. And while the Dukes of the world are inevitably going to be part of the political discourse of the 1990s, their victories are by no means inevitable. Establishment rightists such as Bush will not be able to fight off the threat of a resurgent domestic fascism, since they appeal to the same dynamics but only draw the line at more external enemies. That's why it's not unfair to link Bush and Duke—the entire American Right uses the same basic strategy that has paved the way for the legitimation of a fascist and anti-Semitic character like David Duke. And liberals and progressives who refuse to take seriously the psychological and spiritual crisis of contemporary society will prove no more effective in the antifascist struggle. They will hold assemblies, perhaps mobilize mass demonstrations, certainly sign petitions. But they won't look at the pain, anger, and frustration that this society has engendered—because doing this would force them to ask questions about the need for a radical restructuring and to see how much they have in common with the people they love to disdain—the people who are drawn to racist, anti-Semitic, and aggressive nationalist ideologies. It is urgent, then, for a united front against fascism to concentrate on a politics of meaning and a mass psychology of compassion in order to resist the destructive possibilities of the coming decades. □

Whitewashing the Holocaust: Lithuania and the Rehabilitation of History

Efraim Zuroff

There are new monuments on some of the sites of the mass murder of the Jews in Lithuania; new monuments and new inscriptions. These inscriptions no longer feature red stars to symbolize the country's liberation by the Red Army; nor do they use stock Communist slogans commemorating "Soviet citizens murdered by Hitlerite fascists." In independent Lithuania, it is no longer forbidden to identify the victims as Jews, and Lithuania has openly inscribed their identity in marble and stone. But these new inscriptions tell only half the story. For while the victims are restored to their true identity, the Lithuanians are still exceedingly reluctant to admit publicly the extent to which the local population participated in the murders. In view of its history during World War II, Lithuania's failure to face up to its past is hardly surprising.

Unlike most of the Nazis' Jewish victims, who were killed in concentration camps in Central and Eastern Europe, the overwhelming majority of the Jews of Lithuania were murdered near their homes. The perpetrators, moreover, were in many cases local collaborators. In Lithuania, the Nazis encountered enthusiastic support for their anti-Jewish policy in all strata of Lithuanian society.

During the initial days of the Nazi invasion, even before the Germans occupied the country, pogroms took place in scores of towns and villages. When the Nazis occupied the country, thousands volunteered to serve the occupiers and actively helped to carry out the Final Solution. Collaborators showed such zeal in the murder of Jews that units of Lithuanians were also sent to other areas to carry out similar actions. Numerous Lithuanians served as guards in Polish death camps.

The most notorious Lithuanian participants in the Final Solution were the members of the special murder squads established under the aegis of the Nazis. The Ypatinga bura (the Vilnius Sonderkommando, or "the special ones") carried out the murders of approximately seventy thousand Jews at Ponar outside Vilna, and the Twelfth Lithuanian Auxiliary Police Battalion murdered thousands of Jews in Kaunas and Byelorussia. These units specialized in mass murder and earned a reputation for their cruelty, which on occasion shocked even their German allies. In late October 1941, for example, Carl, the German Gebietskommissar of Slutzk, complained to his superiors in Minsk about the brutality of the Twelfth Lithuanian Auxiliary Police Battalion, which had murdered the local Jews. "I beg you to grant me one request," he concluded his letter. "In the future, keep this police unit away from me by all means."

Besides these special units, the Lithuanian police persecuted and murdered Jews in more than two hundred cities, towns, and villages. Local policemen played an important role in every stage of the Nazis' extermination plans. This large-scale collaboration yielded horrifying results. Approximately 95 percent of the two hundred and twenty thousand Jews who remained in Lithuania during the Nazi occupation were murdered during the Holocaust. (About seven thousand were deported to Siberia shortly before the Nazi invasion and some fifteen thousand managed to escape to the Soviet interior during the initial days following the outbreak of the war.) And while there were some brave Lithuanians who at great risk extended assistance to Jews, the number of their compatriots who actively collaborated in or carried out the murders was immeasurably greater.

After the war, the Communists commemorated the victims as "Soviet citizens" as if their being Jewish played no role in their fate. And the perpetrators were usually referred to as "fascists" or "bourgeois nationalists" as though Lithuanians per se played no role in the events of World War II. Under these circumstances, the Lithuanian people were spared a painful confrontation with the scope and extent of their collaboration.

The recent emergence of Lithuanian independence, however, brought this issue to the surface. From the

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beginning, the leaders of Sajudis, the Lithuanian independence movement, assumed that their relations with the State of Israel and the Jewish people were likely to have a significant impact on the support they would be able to obtain in the West. As staunch believers in the well-established Eastern European myth that "The road to Washington goes via Jerusalem," the Lithuanians sought to initiate good relations with Israel and the Jewish world. It was obvious, however, that more than good will would be required for Lithuanians and Jews to open a new era in their relations, given the bitter memories of the past.

In their zeal to undo the convictions handed down by the Soviet courts, Lithuanian officials granted rehabilitations even to individuals who had been convicted of participation in murder.

With an eye toward these diplomatic considerations, Lithuanians have begun to sponsor official commemorations of the Holocaust. These efforts have included the erection of new monuments on the sites of mass murder, a call for a day of remembrance for the victims, and, most importantly, a resolution of the Lithuanian parliament regarding "The Genocide of the Jewish People." In June, the Lithuanian government sought to stress this new commitment with the dedication of a large monument at Ponar, the site of the mass murder of the Jews of Vilna. Prime Minister Gediminas Vagnorius participated in the ceremony, as did a large contingent of Israelis, including a delegation of six Knesset members headed by Speaker Dov Shilansky.

Such gestures seemed at first to augur well for a rapprochement between Lithuanians and Jews. Upon closer examination, however, they raised serious doubts about the true intentions of the Lithuanians. Rather than serving as a forthright admission of guilt and an honest reckoning with the dismal record of Lithuanian collaboration with the Nazis, these steps were actually part of a concerted effort to maximize political gain with minimal political costs.

The May 8, 1990 proclamation of the Lithuanian Parliament serves as a classic example of this approach. While it unequivocally denounces "the annihilation of the Jewish people during the years of Nazi occupation in Lithuania," it evades the issue of Lithuanian participation in the murders. Thus the declaration notes that "among the hangmen who served the occupiers were Lithuanian citizens as well." Instead of explicitly referring to the role of "the Lithuanian people" or "Lithuanians," the declaration, which specifically notes that it was issued by "the Supreme Council of the Republic of Lithuania *on behalf of the Lithuanian people*" (my emphasis), chooses to classify the murderers as Lithuanian citizens—a category that is not restricted to Lithuanians and could even (by a twist of perverted logic) include Jews as well. It also effectively distinguishes between the ostensibly blameless "Lithuanian people" and the murderers, who according to this formulation were merely *"Lithuanian citizens,"* i.e. not necessarily Lithuanians by nationality.

The speech Prime Minister Vagnorius delivered at the dedication of the monument at Ponar was still more revealing. Instead of admitting widespread Lithuanian complicity in the murders, Vagnorius bemoaned that "these representatives of our society cast a shadow of evil and wrongdoing over all of our nation." Instead of accurately describing the proportions of Lithuanians' crimes, Vagnorius tried to minimize their scope: "This tragedy lasted for more than an eye-blink, but at least three months," Vagnorius declared. In fact, however, Lithuanian Jewry suffered at the hands of their neighbors for three years, not three months.

More distressingly, Vagnorius sought to depict the assistance Lithuanians gave to Jews during the Holocaust as though it had been much more widespread than it was. He tried, in addition, to link it to contemporary Jewish support for Lithuanian independence, as if it were somehow justified by the assistance some Lithuanians extended to Jews during the war: "The noble humanity of a Lithuanian priest who dared to shelter Jewish children in an hour of sorrow, the loaf of dark Lithuanian bread shared by one ordinary farmer, and the active cooperation in raising a Sajudis banner in the common land of our forebears, are repeated proof that a group of criminals cannot outweigh the good name of a nation, nor can it rob it of its conscience and decency." The prime minister's assertions regarding conscience and dignity might be true. However, one is likely to draw a different conclusion if the crimes committed were the norm rather than the exception, as was the case in Lithuania during World War II.

Such public pronouncements are in a sense only the tip of the iceberg. On a practical level, the Lithuanian government has taken measures that seriously harm Jewish interests. Thus, for example, Parliament's recently

ratified law regarding the return of stolen property was formulated in such a way as to effectively exclude most Lithuanian Jews. The law restricts the restoration of property to present-day residents of Lithuania, and thus prevents 99 percent of the Jews who originally lived in that country—and their heirs—from reclaiming their possessions. In addition, many communities have made no effort to restore Jewish communal property (schools, synagogues, etc.) to Jewish hands or to make financial compensation to the present-day Jewish community.

Despite such discouraging developments, some still have hoped that the Supreme Council's proclamation on genocide and the government's other recent efforts were signs that a rapprochement was indeed possible. But this hope was severely put to the test by the news of the rehabilitations granted to convicted Nazi war criminals in Lithuania. This revelation clearly demonstrated the drastic differences between the Jewish and Lithuanian perspectives on Lithuania's complicity in the Holocaust.

The rehabilitation scandal first came to light thanks to a Lithuanian Holocaust survivor named Rivka Bogomolnaja. An eyewitness to the persecution and murder of the Jews of Butrimonys, Bogomolnaja learned over a year and a half ago that Juozas Krasinskas, a collaborator who had participated in the murders in her hometown, had been granted rehabilitation and was living in Kaunas. (Those rehabilitated are given 5,000 rubles and the return of whatever property was confiscated by the Soviets in the wake of the conviction. The average monthly salary in Lithuania today is approximately 320 rubles.) She protested to Lithuania's Procurator General Arturus Paulauskas, but he refused to rescind the rehabilitation, despite Bogomolnaja's affidavits verifying Krasinskas's role in the murders and her list of prospective corroborating witnesses.

Bogomolnaja and a group of Jewish activists in Vilnius then sought to arouse public opinion in the West, but their initial attempts were unsuccessful. But in late June 1991, MK Dov Shilansky, MK David Libai, and I met with Paulauskas, and the rehabilitation issue began to gain more attention. Paulauskas adamantly denied that his office had made any mistakes. He pointed out that the May 2, 1990 law on "Rehabilitation of Persons Repressed for Resistance to the Occupying Regime" specifically forbade granting rehabilitation to individuals who had participated in genocide. He offered to submit all problematic cases to a committee of local Jewish lawyers. Paulauskas explained that the individuals being rehabilitated had been tried by "troikas," special Soviet courts in which defendants were unable to defend themselves properly. In his opinion, the lack of due process and the use of illegal means to obtain confessions invalidated these convictions.

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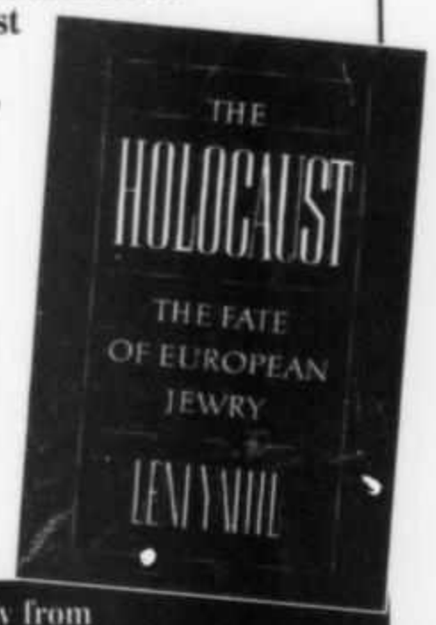
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Paulauskas's explanations seemed plausible for a nation emerging out of decades of Communist repression. But additional research and subsequent meetings with Lithuanian officials and members of parliament in late October made it clear that the situation was far worse than anyone had realized. During my trip to Vilnius in June, I received a list of eleven other men convicted of participation in war crimes and then rehabilitated. The local Jews who had played an active role in publicizing this issue had previously informed us of only two such cases. While these cases were being investigated, the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Jerusalem obtained the original trial documents of eleven convicted Nazi collaborators who had been granted rehabilitation during the past two years.

Despite Paulauskas's claim to the contrary, rehabilitations were being granted to individuals who had served in murder squads and death camps—and on a much larger scale than his account of things had led us to believe. Either the review process had broken down completely, or the official criteria were being deliberately ignored. How else could rehabilitation have been granted to people such as Aloizas Juodis, who admitted that he participated in the shooting of hundreds of Jews

while he served with the Twelfth Lithuanian Auxiliary Police Battalion in Byelorussia, or Petras Krikscuinas, who had served as a guard at the Majdanek death camp? There are scores, if not hundreds, of similar cases in the records on rehabilitation in Lithuania, which are still coming to light.

How can such miscarriages of justice be explained? Were they caused by fanatic nationalism, anti-Semitism, the bureaucratic inefficiencies of a new and inexperienced administration—or perhaps by a combination of all three factors? Meetings with President Vytautas Landsbergis, Paulauskas, and leading Lithuanian officials have produced some tentative answers. The key issues are legal and political, but they reflect more broadly on the worldview of nationalist Lithuanians. Although the law forbade the rehabilitation of people who had participated in genocide, the officials in charge of the law's implementation sought to apply the most narrow definition of that term. In their zeal to undo the convictions handed down by the Soviet courts, they granted rehabilitations even to individuals who had been convicted of participation in murder. When evidence of this practice was brought to the attention of the procurator-general, it became clear that he regarded only people who had personally murdered civilians as ineligible for rehabilitation. Although witnesses recently testified that they had seen Krasinskas lead Jews to the murder site, none of them could report that they had seen him shoot any Jews; thus the procurator-general confirmed his rehabilitation.

Equally revealing is the legal issue of the burden of proof. People who served in police units or vigilante squads were not asked to prove their innocence. On the contrary, the procurator-general expected those protesting the rehabilitations to prove the guilt of the petitioners. Given the relative inaccessibility of Holocaust documentation in Lithuania and the very small number of survivors, that task is extremely difficult. In addition, Lithuanian authorities made no effort to check archival sources outside the country, or to seek survivor witnesses living abroad. With such procedural considerations working in their favor, it is small wonder that so many participants in genocide were granted rehabilitation.

To date, approximately thirty-five thousand Lithuanians have been granted rehabilitation, but their names have never been publicized. In his recent meeting with representatives of the Wiesenthal Center, President Landsbergis said he was concerned that publicizing the lists would mean that everyone granted rehabilitation would automatically be suspected of collaboration. Yet this very point is what is at issue: Unless all the names can be checked against Holocaust documentation worldwide, we will never know which of the persons rehabilitated really deserved exoneration.

This problem came to the fore recently in the cases of five men from Kelme who were granted rehabilitation. Once their exoneration became public, several local non-Jews came forward to testify that the individuals in question had aided in the murder of the Jews. Who knows how many more cases like this exist?

Many Lithuanians have sought to explain the country's complicity in the Holocaust by invoking the leading role played by Jewish Communists in the establishment of Soviet rule in Lithuania and in the deportation of Lithuanians to Siberia in 1941. Journalists and members of parliament have adopted this argument in an apparent effort to balance the record and thereby deflect the blame. But this kind of specious historical analogy only bears further testimony to the failure of Lithuanians to face up to their dismal record during the war. (The same objection applies with equal force to the references that Lithuanian officials make to Jewish policemen convicted by the Soviets of collaboration with the Nazis.)

Lithuania's small Jewish community of approximately six thousand, meanwhile, has greeted the rehabilitation scandal with some ambivalence. There are many who perhaps would have preferred that the whole question had never been raised. The specter of local anti-Semitism looms ominously in a country full of mass graves. Others, however, were adamant that the memory of the victims not be desecrated by granting rehabilitations to their murderers. But even if Lithuania were to argue for such demands, the Jews' position will be precarious and troubled in a country overrun with nationalistic fervor and enthralled by its independence, but bereft of any countervailing democratic tradition. As long as Lithuania hopes for aid from the West, however, their freedom and welfare are relatively assured.

Last June, when I visited my grandfather's shtetl of Lingmiany (Linkmenys), I found a dramatic contrast between the two Jewish burial sites. A brand new marble monument had just been erected on the site where the Jews had been murdered in the summer of 1941, but the Jewish cemetery was unmarked and in a total shambles. Given the Lithuanians' current preoccupation with commemorating the Holocaust's victims, this contrast was not surprising. Nor was it surprising that the inscription on the new monument does not note the participation of *Lithuanians* in the murders. From everything the rehabilitation scandal has taught us, the ruins of the original Jewish cemetery in Lingmiany are a far more eloquent monument to Lithuania's neglect of its past than the Holocaust monuments are testimony to the newly independent state's recovered memory. □

German Roulette: The Loaded Gun of Nationalism

Hajo Funke and Elliot Neaman

The news footage of recent attacks on foreigners in Germany has conjured up eerie remembrances of things past. But it is too simple to explain away these events as evidence of an incorrigible drift toward Nazism in Germany's population. Rather, the current Bonn government has taken quite conscious account of the rise of xenophobia and aggressive nationalism since reunification in 1990. And although these sentiments are still confined to a vociferous minority, the leaders of the new Germany are seizing upon them as part of a political strategy for easing the difficult transition to market capitalism in the former East Germany.

The German government has three years—until the federal elections of 1994—to make good on its inflated promises to bring economic prosperity and social integration to the citizens of the former German Democratic Republic. Kohl's master plan is to allow the weakest parts of the German population—both East and West—to bear the economic and social burden of unification while the government oversees a wholesale colonization of East Germany. By playing the nationalist card—that is to say, by doing little to fight the outbreaks of nationalism and by overdramatizing the issue of asylum-seekers—the government is seeking to ensure that others take the blame for the current economic mess, and that Helmut Kohl's own conservative-nationalist leanings remain firmly on the agenda.

Essentially, there have been three waves of right-wing radicalism in the Federal Republic of Germany since 1945. Directly after the war, various neo-Nazi parties attempted, quite unsuccessfully, to stir up the population against the newly founded democracy. In the 1960s, the National German Party had some limited parliamentary successes, but then faded into obscurity. Since 1989, a new wave of radicalism has emerged on the Right, including such parties as the Republicans, who hold six seats in the European Parliament, and the German People's Union (DVU), which recently won almost 7 percent of the vote in a local election in Bremen. Taken together, all of the right-wing parties in Germany today can count on the sympathy of between 6 and 10 percent of the electorate. This potential appears to be steady, though in the current state of economic and political flux, anything can happen.

Before the Berlin Wall came down, the radical Right in West Germany could count on the economic resentment harbored by the underprivileged, who now constitute one third of the German population. In contrast to the Nazi party, which received strong support in rural areas via its racist ideology and appeals to a mythic German *Volk* life, today's radical Right is an urban movement, which addresses itself to modern issues. It is particularly strong in areas where Germans and foreigners live in close proximity. The orientation of the Right has changed markedly with unification. On the one hand, West Germans greatly resent the idea of using taxpayers' money to reconstruct East Germany. On the other hand, the Right is seeking to win voters in the East by promising that they will be included in a larger and potentially expandable Greater Germany.

The politics of the ruling Christian Democratic Union (CDU) must bear the responsibility for much of the radical Right's success. In the 1980s, the economic policies of the Christian Democrats put increasing pressure on the lower strata of German society, thereby recruiting a new electoral base for Germany's right-wing parties. The reconstruction policies enacted since unification have only added to the deep uncertainties that had already troubled East German citizens. For example, the economic planners behind the rush to reunification believed the introduction of the deutsche mark would automatically mobilize market forces. But East Germany's command economy had left

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the country's infrastructure so dilapidated that the conditions for an economic boom simply did not exist. Instead of instituting economic policies to generate employment, rebuild housing and work facilities, and improve transportation and communication—policies, in other words, that might have actually permitted the market to function—an inflexible, state-controlled public trust (the Treuhande) has put East Germany up for sale.

As a result, industrial capacity has been greatly diminished, the number of jobs has declined from 9.7 million to 5 million, and capital transfer has flowed into consumption rather than investment: a Keynesian program for West Germany, in other words. The weakest sectors of society—women, older workers, and foreigners—either face unemployment or settle into insecure, low-paying jobs. And hundreds of thousands of Germany's young people are now out of work, a lost generation of the nineties.

The extent of the radical Right's activity in eastern Germany cannot be measured solely at the ballot box. In a way, the extraparliamentary activity of the Right is even more threatening. Forty years of government officials disseminating facile "antifascist" propaganda among the young, while treating foreign workers and Eastern Europeans with open contempt, has prompted much cynicism and distrust of the government among young people. The East German regime left a political and moral vacuum that, in a situation of crisis and loss of identity, can be easily filled by the radical Right: The skinheads and hooligans who go around beating up on foreigners do not have a coherent ideology, but they instinctively sense how to create panic, shock, and alarm in a climate of social distress.

It may come as a surprise that many of the recent attacks on shelters for political refugees have taken place in West Germany. This has come about, however, because the Bonn government has used the issue of asylum seekers as a smoke screen to conceal its own policies. Less than 10 percent of all immigrants in the former West Germany are political refugees, but the CDU is pushing for a constitutional amendment to prevent refugees seeking asylum from coming to Germany. While certain CDU politicians, such as President Weizsäcker, have gone on record saying that such an amendment wouldn't stop emigration to Germany, hardliners such as Volker Rühe, secretary of the party, have instructed party leaders at all levels to make the "asylum policies topic number one." By forcing Germany's Socialist Party to take a public stand on this controversial issue, the CDU hopes to play on the general fear that Germany is becoming overrun with foreigners.

On November 9, the anniversary of Kristallnacht, more than 100,000 protesters took to the streets of Germany to combat xenophobia, and Jewish leaders around the world appealed to Chancellor Kohl to make a public statement in support of their efforts. But just as Kohl kept ominously quiet for much of last year on the issue of the Polish border, so this year he has made himself conspicuous by his silence on the rise of Germany's radical Right. In addition, his desire to resettle the "German-blooded" citizens of Eastern Europe in Germany has lent an air of respectability to discredited notions of German racial uniqueness, and thereby tacitly encouraged anti-Semitism and xenophobia.

The Bonn government could have spared Germany much of this unrest by dismantling the East German economy gradually, and distributing the social burden of reunification more justly. But the Bonn government evidently sees the ugly excesses of the extreme Right as a small price to pay for the sake of a little official peace and quiet. Dazzled by visions of ever-expanding markets, Kohl can look on with some complacency at the tensions that are tearing at the soul of the newly unified, but still very divided, German nation. The Jewish leaders who expected a gesture of humanity and solidarity should not be surprised that it didn't materialize. Kohl is playing a dangerous game with nationalism for short-term gains, rather than providing the kind of leadership that will solve the long-term problems that continue to haunt the new Germany on its troubled path to reunification. □

Old Hatreds in the New Europe: Roma After the Revolutions

Toby F. Sonneman

Foreigners in every country, Jews and Gypsies have been plagued by European xenophobia since the Middle Ages. Nonterritorial peoples who inhabited a vast range of the continent, Gypsies and Jews have been linked by a long history of persecution culminating in their barbaric murder under the Third Reich, a crucible that bound their destinies together inextricably. Although Communist rule in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe officially silenced public expression of ancient ethnic hatreds, the recent revolutions in the former Eastern Bloc have unleashed latent prejudices and resurgent nationalism. Overt hostility toward Jews and unrestrained persecution of Gypsies are erupting throughout Eastern Europe, where the new, democratically elected governments not only tolerate but often openly condone such xenophobia—and the violence that accompanies it.

An April 1991 survey on democracy and economic reform in Eastern Europe, conducted for Freedom House and the American Jewish Committee, revealed that anti-Semitism persists in Hungary, Poland, and Czechoslovakia, but that "Jews are regarded less unfavorably in all three countries than several other groups studied, particularly Gypsies" and the "strongest negative attitudes by far were expressed toward Gypsies." A Times Mirror poll conducted in September found that "the one sentiment that unites Western and Eastern Europe is hatred of Gypsies."

Gypsies, who prefer the name Roma, have become convenient scapegoats for the economic and political ills of Eastern Europe. Particularly in Romania, where enslavement of Roma was practiced only four or five generations ago, government officials and the general public alike still casually accept the stable of popular libels against the Roma. Accused of theft, black marketeering, and informing for the Securitate (Romania's secret police), Roma are not only blamed for all of Romania's current problems, but are seen as profiting from them.

Romanians commonly hold to the idea that Roma are genetically inferior. "You might give them a good education, but who knows what will come out," one young, well educated woman remarked in a recent interview. "We have a saying in Romania: 'You can't change the blood.'" Popular racist attitudes are given an air of official credence in newspaper and television reports, which routinely portray Roma as generic "suspects" in the rising tide of crime and black-market activity that has emerged in the revolution's wake. These perceptions were further reinforced in April 1991, when the editor of *Romania Mare,* Romania's largest weekly, demanded the expulsion of all Gypsies.

Such overt, daily shows of prejudice have served to incite violence against the Romani population. Large groups of Romanians, sometimes numbering in the thousands, frequently loot and burn Gypsy homes and drive the Romani residents out of town. These pogroms are organized by ordinary citizens, usually in collusion with local police and government authorities. Attacks have steadily escalated over the last year, since the June 1990 assault on Roma by miners in Bucharest. At least eighteen attacks on Romani communities have been documented since the December 1989 revolution.

In Kolgalniceanu in October 1990, approximately one thousand non-Gypsy villagers (including a large number of Macedonians) gathered in the village center and destroyed thirty-three homes belonging to Roma. Approximately two hundred Roma have been without homes ever since. In the town Bolintin Deal in April 1991, after a Rom was charged with killing a Romanian student, a mob of several thousand set fire to twenty-two houses belonging to Roma, destroyed another five, and burned three cars. In May, when Roma tried to return to stay in the homes that were devastated but not burned, these houses, too, were set on fire, and the Roma were chased from the village.

Recently, Romania's Ursari Gypsies have been stereotyped as criminals and selected as targets of violence. In

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May, twenty-six of their homes in Bolintin Xar and Bolintin Plaj, neighboring villages outside of Bucharest, were destroyed by bulldozers and gasoline bombs. In June 1991, more violence occurred in the village of Plăieşii De Sus when an angry mob of ethnic Hungarians attacked two Gypsies whom they falsely accused with the stabbing of a village guard; later, the mob burned twenty-seven homes belonging to Roma. New waves of mob violence besieged Roma in Carpenis and the village of Tirgu Lapus. One hundred fifty-seven women and sixty-eight old men were forced to live in the village marketplace. No young males were included in the statistics; they were all in jail.

At least five Gypsies have been killed during these recent pogroms, and many more have been beaten. Yet no non-Gypsies have been arrested for these attacks, and government officials have taken little interest in prosecuting those who might be responsible. According to a recent Helsinki Watch report, Romanian police "have actually been accused of participating in the violence by calling the villagers together and urging them on. In almost all of the cases to date, the police have failed to provide any protection to the homes and property of Gypsy families...."

Due to the long history of exile and displacement that followed closely upon the Roma's arrival in Europe from India sometime in the middle of the thirteenth century, Roma today lack a single, cohesive culture, and few generalizations can accurately characterize all Romani groups. While Roma in the Balkans (Moldavia and Wallachia—the area that is now Romania) were held in slavery from the fourteenth until the mid-nineteenth century, the other half of the Romani population dispersed through the continent, inhabiting every country in northern and western Europe by about 1500 C.E.

The separate legacies of these two diaspora cultures have made it difficult for the Roma to retain a strong sense of cultural unity. Yet the many distinct groups of Roma have still managed to preserve a shared cultural and linguistic core. A parallel could be drawn with Ashkenazi and Sephardi populations, which differ considerably but share a Jewish identity. Like many ethnic groups surviving conditions of slavery and diaspora, the Roma have developed a strong sense of family and respect for elders. Romani cultural identity also revolves around a complex set of pollution taboos, derived from India's caste system. Roma divide the world in two: Roma and *gajé* (non-Gypsies), ritually clean and ritually polluted. Prohibitions against prolonged contact with *gajé,* who are regarded as defiled and defiling, have created a cohesive system of cultural identity that ensures the perpetuation of the Romani people. The idea of ritual pollution, embodied in strict hygienic, moral, and social codes, extends into every aspect of Romani life.

Even a cursory examination of Romani history in Europe suggests strong parallels with Jewish experience in the West—and illustrates why Jews, in particular, should be concerned with the Roma's plight. The Christian populations who first encountered the Roma in medieval Europe confused the dark-skinned Roma with the Islamic conquerors of the incipient Ottoman Empire. This confusion, combined with the traditional Christian association of darkness with evil, made for racial prejudice. Romani slavery soon took root in southeastern Europe and anti-Gypsy laws in the rest of the continent kept Roma in a state of permanent displacement. By the 1600s, laws in Germany, Finland, and England made it a hanging offense simply to be *born* a Gypsy.

At no time were the fates of our peoples more tragically intertwined than during the Holocaust. Nazis deemed both Roma and Jews a racial threat, and targeted both groups for extermination. Methodical persecution of Gypsies in Germany began with the establishment of the Central Office for Fighting the Gypsy Nuisance in 1899. By the time Hitler came to power in 1933, the Romani population was under constant surveillance and anti-Romani laws were already firmly in place. From 1934 onward, German Rom and Cinti Gypsies were sent to camps at Dachau, Diselstrasse, Mahrzan, and Vennhausen to be sterilized by injection or castration.

These initial atrocities only foreshadowed the all-out campaign of extermination waged by the Third Reich. In 1935, the Nuremberg Law for the Protection of Blood and Honor made unions between Gypsies and non-Gypsies illegal, and a party statement issued in the same year read, "...only Jews and Gypsies come under consideration as an alien people." "Clean-up week," during which thousands of Gypsies were brutally herded together and arrested, took place from June 12 to 18, 1938. In the same year, Nazi race scientists determined that if two of an individual's great-great-grandparents were even part Gypsy, he or she had too much "Gypsy blood." This categorization was exactly twice as strict as the definition that applied to Jews.

In 1939, Nazi party spokesman Johannes Behrendt called for the "elimination without hesitation" of the Romani population. Gypsies were transported to concentration camps in Berlin and Poland. In the Baltic States, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, France, Italy, and the Balkans, large-scale round-ups were in effect by 1943. By April 1943, over ten thousand Cinti and Rom were incarcerated in Sachsenhausen for later extermination. Thirty thousand Gypsies deported to Poland perished in the



Exiles at the end of history: a Romani family in Timisoara, Romania.

death camps of Belzec, Treblinka, Sobibor, and Majdanek. On August 1, 1944, four thousand Roma were murdered in Auschwitz in a single night.

Although the total number of Roma who died in the Holocaust was less than the number of Jews, the proportion of losses to the Romani people was comparable. Between 70 and 80 percent of all Roma in Nazi-controlled territories were destroyed—a figure that in turn represented well over half of the Roma's entire world population. The exact number of deaths will never be known, both because of the lack of documentation (many were killed in open countryside) and because many Romani victims were not classified as such. Although the most frequently cited number of Roma killed is half a million, the independent findings of several scholars, mainly in Germany, have placed the total losses at more than a million.

After the war, no Promised Land awaited the survivors; no government or humanitarian organization attempted to reorient them. As they resettled in the same nations that had collaborated in their destruction, Romani survivors found few non-Gypsies who cared to hear their story. No invitations were extended to Roma to testify at any of the war-crime tribunals. The first trial for wartime crimes against Roma, that of Ernst August Koenig, accused of beating his victims to death in Auschwitz, did not take place until December 1990. Few survivors received war-crimes reparations—and then only after years of waiting. In addition, reparations have been awarded only in cases where non-Romani witnesses provided corroborative testimony.

The specter of Nazi-style atrocities—and plans of extermination—did not subside for the Roma at war's end. In 1976, a government proposal in Czechoslovakia recommended sterilization of the Roma as an act of "socialistic humanity." Romani women were subjected to compulsory sterilization and their children placed in government homes. As recently as 1981, police systematically rounded up and expelled Roma from Poland, abandoning them at sea without the papers necessary for their return.

Romania, with its long, largely unacknowledged history of Gypsy enslavement, is the most flagrant violator of Romani human rights. After five hundred years of slavery, the policies of systematic discrimination enacted after abolition have solidified prejudice toward Roma at every level of Romanian society and continue to undermine self-esteem within the Romani population itself. "After centuries of being property, it takes centuries to regain your dignity," says Dr. Ian Hancock, who represents the International Romani Union to the United Nations. The Ceauceşcu regime, committed to the eradication of Gypsy traditions, forced sedentarization by forbidding Roma to graze animals and to camp—rights that were protected by law before 1939. Although 70 to 80 percent of Gypsies in Romania led a nomadic life before 1945, now only 3 percent are still nomadic.

In 1977, the Romanian Communist party initiated a program for social integration in towns and villages throughout the country. This plan—euphemistically termed a "systemization" campaign—forced the breakup of families, relocated individual family members to

widely isolated locations, and reduced all contact within the Romani community to a bare minimum. Plans to raze Romani villages were already in place; pending their implementation, the government halted all services, including water, electricity, schooling, and medical care.

Under Ceauceşcu, Gypsies lost the right to representation they had enjoyed in the prewar democratic parliament. "In 1974, I went to ask Ceauceşcu personally to give rights to the Gypsy people," said Ion Cioaba, president of the Democratic Union of Romanian Roma. "But Ceauceşcu said to me, 'Leave the Gypsies alone. In Romania, there are no Gypsies.'"

Now, two years after Ceauceşcu's overthrow, Romania is still haunted by the same cultural hatreds that fueled Ceauceşcu's worst excesses. Dismal orphanages throughout the country house over 120,000 children, victims of a plan for population expansion that was to create a large, uneducated labor force—a plan supplemented by denying access to birth control and abortions, forcibly requiring pregnancy tests, and giving tax incentives to couples for having more children. Destitute parents, lacking employment and unable to feed so many children, are often forced to relinquish their children to state institutions, where they suffer neglect, mistreatment, and abuse.

Most of these children are Gypsies. Although there are at least 2.5 million Gypsies in Romania (this is a conservative figure; since many Roma don't report their ethnic identity, the actual number may be as high as 6 million), they constitute only 10 to 15 percent of the population. Yet an overwhelming percentage of the children in the orphanages are Roma. James Nachtway, writing for the *New York Times Magazine* in June 1990, reported that three-quarters of the children in the orphanages come from Gypsy families, and firsthand accounts often exceed that estimate.

This disproportionately high number of Romani children bears tragic testimony to Romania's policy of continued persecution of the Roma, says Dr. Hancock. "For anyone familiar with Romani culture, the fierce devotion with which Gypsy parents regard their children is no revelation, and the emotional struggle facing those parents who surrender their children to strangers, rather than letting them grow up in contemporary Romanian society where they face persecution and murder, is agonizing."

Such deep-seated social inequities drive Roma into poverty and hopelessness. Holly Cartner of Helsinki Watch observes that although education is available to Gypsy children, parents consistently report that their children are labeled as either stupid or slow learners, put in the back of the class, and ignored by teachers. Such attitudes, combined with the effect of seasonal travel, ensure that many Romani children don't attend school.

Discrimination in employment follows the same pattern. Romanians are promoted or paid more than Roma with equal qualifications, and often Roma are denied employment solely on the basis of their ethnic identity. And as the country struggles to institute economic reform, Gypsies, who have the least amount of training and work in unskilled factory jobs, have been the first to lose their jobs in massive layoffs.

Denied both education and employment, living in abject poverty, many Gypsies have resorted to begging, subsistence theft, and black-market activity to survive. Even though many non-Roma are also engaged in these activities, the much-publicized appearance of Roma in these roles only serves to reinforce ancient stereotypes, affording a convenient rationale for their resurgence among post-Ceauceşcu Romanians.

Romania's new National Salvation Front (NSF) government has been slow to denounce anti-Romani violence, as have the opposition Peasant and Liberal parties in Romania, both of whom claim to support minority issues. The Civic Alliance, a newly formed opposition party, takes a more aggressive human-rights stance, and has denounced the rapid spread of anti-Semitism. But any similar denunciation of anti-Romani crimes seems unlikely, given the party's need to rally popular support. After last summer's series of assaults, Minister of the Interior Doru Viorel Ursu went on Romanian television to announce that the government was finally taking a firm stand against violence. A commission to investigate the attacks was formed shortly afterward. But the commission declined to prosecute anyone in Constanta, where twenty-five Romani houses were destroyed, and looting and arson drove Roma out of town. Officials defended the commission's decision by claiming that prosecution of the case would result in a "civil war." In other towns, some Gypsies were told they couldn't return to their homes unless they withdrew legal complaints; others were given money to compensate for the damage, but weren't allowed to return.

Roma throughout Eastern Europe find little political support. In Hungary, only the Free Democrats include Gypsies in their party platform, and one Free Democratic supporter, a veteran dissident, speculates that support for the Roma might be "the kiss of death for the party." In Bulgaria, not a single party defends the interests of the Gypsies, and Gypsies are prohibited from forming their own political parties.

With Romani political isolation guaranteed, anti-Romani harassment and violence are either condoned or actively supported amid the nationalistic zeal unleashed

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The Fog of Political Correctness

Paul Berman

The national debate over political correctness has been vast and lively, but at the same time terribly confusing, and to such a degree that confusion should count as this debate's central characteristic. No three people seem to agree about the meaning of terms like "deconstruction," "difference," "multiculturalism," or "postmodernity," yet the argument can't be conducted without them. The entire debate seems to have been gotten up to demonstrate the validity of Paul de Man's theories about the indeterminacy of meaning. We study the polemics in the magazines, we listen to the speakers, we scribble notes. But the moment of clarity never comes. We are in the realm of what the deconstructionists call aporia. Puzzlement reigns.

What accounts for this confusion? All sorts of explanations can be offered, but the one that seems to me unavoidable lies in the peculiar history of certain very radical ideas that came out of the sixties. The left-wing movements of circa 1968, both in this country and in France, had two phases, which were in perfect discord, like two piano strings vibrating against each other. The first phase was an uprising on behalf of the ideals of liberal humanism—on behalf of the freedom of the individual against a soulless system. But the second phase was entirely the opposite, at least philosophically. It was a revolt *against* liberal humanism. It said, in effect: Liberal humanism is a deception. Western-style democracy, rationalism, objectivity, and the autonomy of the individual are slogans designed to convince the downtrodden that subordination is justice.

This second phase, the phase of ultra-radicalism, received a supremely sophisticated expression at the hands of various Paris philosophers, in the theories that can be called postmodern or post-structuralist. Or maybe it's better (since everyone argues over what the correct label is) to call these theories "'68 Philosophy," as suggested by two of the younger Paris thinkers, Luc Ferry and Alain Renaut. The theories were, in any case, something other than mild doctrines of social reform. They were extravaganzas of cynicism. They were angry theories (though coolly expressed), hard to read, tangled, more poetic than logical. They were by no means internally consistent, one theory with the next. But if they had a recurring theme, it was this: Despite the claims of humanist thought, the individual is not free to make his own decisions, nor is the world what it appears to be. Instead, we and the world are permeated by giant, hidden, impersonal structures, the way that human forms in *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* are inhabited by extraterrestrial beings.

What are these permeating structures? They can be described every which way, mix-and-match style, according to the different versions of '68 Philosophy. There was, thus, the version of the Paris Heideggerians, for instance Jacques Derrida (we are permeated by the entire unfortunate tradition of Western thought). Or the Paris Nietzscheans, for instance Michel Foucault (we are permeated by the will to power). Or the Paris Freudians, for instance Jacques Lacan (we are permeated by the structures of the unconscious). Or the Paris Marxists, for instance Pierre Bourdieu (we are permeated by economic structures). Or the Paris anthropologists who were influenced by Claude Lévi-Strauss (we are permeated by unchanging cultural structures).

Mostly there was the idea that, regardless of how the permeating structures are labeled, One Big Structure underlies all the others, and if this deepest of all structures can be described, it is by means of the linguistic theories that derive from the work of Ferdinand de Saussure. That is: We are permeated by the structures of language. We imagine that language is our tool, but it is we who are the tool and language is our master. Therefore we should stop deluding ourselves with foolish humanist ideas about the autonomy of the individual and the hope of making sense of the world. Or maybe—this is an alternative possibility implicit in several of the '68 theories—by recognizing the existence and power of the permeating structures, we will bring on a grand revolution, Marxist-style, or even grander. The theories rarely said anything specific about such a possibility, though a

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writer such as Foucault might speak of "an Apocalyptic dream." But even without a direct invocation of the Apocalypse, there was an urgent tone in how these ideas were written, and the tone sometimes conveyed a touch of millenarian expectation.

What if, by unlucky chance, it turns out that everything in the world is not a language structure? What if the difference between democratic societies and nondemocratic societies turns out to be real, not just rhetorical?

Whatever else could be said about these theories, they were, at least, wonderfully expressive. The whole period from World War I through the end of the cold war was (maybe still is) an era of ever-recurring catastrophe and mass death, with still greater catastrophes lurking in the future in the form of nuclear war or God knows what; and in such an era, to cast a cold eye on rationality and humanism seemed entirely sensible. It was a way of saying that: a) things are out of control; and b) the effort to get them under control by looking to logical analysis or proposing a lofty view of mankind is like summoning a criminal to stop a crime. The theories evoked something about middle-class life in noncatastrophic conditions, too—the feelings of emptiness, drift, and purposelessness that seem to afflict the middle class everywhere and that make some people susceptible to the idea of an impending catastrophe.

The theories were modern art's extension into philosophy. They were the equivalent of *Finnegans Wake* or canvases by Mark Rothko, and in that respect, they were artistically faithful to the bleak twentieth-century spirit. But there was no point in asking whether these theories were faithful to truth and reality in the ordinary sense that such notions applied to social science or conventional philosophy. Super-brilliance was their panache, and the more super the brilliance, the murkier the ideas. The prose was characteristically mud, as befitted a philosophy that regarded clarity and lucidity as engines of Western oppression. Sometimes the theories were put-ons or jokes, or fictions that claimed to be nonfictions. They elevated puns into a literary genre. Even to understand certain of these theories, you have to be a little out of your mind, at least while you are turning the pages. The truest class struggle in the '68 sense was always the struggle between the hip and the unhip, and these theories were, in short, the *Das Kapital* of hip. They were illegal thoughts, so to speak—"provocations, not programs," in Allan Megill's phrase. Of course that will always be the subversive appeal of '68 Philosophy.

Still, sooner or later the irritating, flat-footed question about ordinary truth and reality and its relation to these ideas is bound to intrude. For what if, by unlucky chance, it turns out that everything in the world is *not* a language structure? In the field of politics, for instance, what if the difference between democratic societies and nondemocratic societies turns out to be real, not just rhetorical?

The many dazzlements of '68 Philosophy were never any use in addressing mundane questions like these. The great god of the Paris thinkers was Heidegger, who was second to none in holding Western rationalism and humanism responsible for all the unhappinesses of modern life and for hinting at millenarian alternatives. But the alternative he savored most was the movement led by Adolf Hitler. Of course the Paris ultra-radicals who imbibed the theories of '68 Philosophy were anything but right-wing. But there was nothing in their leftism to prevent a substantial number of them from tilting to an opposite extreme and celebrating dictators like Mao Zedong, so long as the horrors of liberal civilization were being opposed. For the whole point of postmodern theorizing was, after all, to adopt positions that were so far out, so wild, as to blow your mind.

In Paris, the '68 theories had their day, which lasted well into the late seventies and beyond. Then a new generation of writers came along, the people who were students in '68 but came into adulthood only in the calmer years that followed—writers like Ferry, Renaut, Pascal Bruckner, Alain Finkielkraut (and writing in English, the late J.G. Merquior), who worried about the mind-blowing ultra-radicalism of the older generation. These younger writers began to suspect that '68 Philosophy, in turning so ferociously against liberalism, sometimes bore a closer relation to the old German romantic philosophies of the far Right (the cult of irrationalism, the eagerness to disparage universal ideas of rights, etc.) than anyone seemed to imagine when the theories were in vogue. They worried that by carrying skepticism to extremes, the '68 Philosophers were turning into a species of idiot, the sort of people who can no longer make sensible judgments because they stumble around wondering: Is that a door? Is that a window? The younger writers raised an eyebrow at the muddy prose style, too, and suspected, as Merquior commented (citing Alexander Pope), that

> Much was believ'd, but little understood,
> and to be dull was constru'd to be good.

The younger writers set out to resurrect the very notions that '68 Philosophy was designed to debunk—an admiration for Enlightenment reason, clarity, lucidity, and Western-style freedoms. Their resurrections have sometimes leaned in a more leftish direction, sometimes in a more conservative direction (whatever those terms might mean in today's world). Either way, the drift toward humanism was unmistakable. Even a few of the elders of the sixties, disturbed by the implications of their own doctrines, pulled back over the course of the later seventies and the eighties. There were writers like Tzvetan Todorov, the Paris literary theorist, who shifted camp altogether. And in the realm of ideas a new liberal age, the era of human rights, was at hand—in Paris.

The history of leftism's ultra-radical phase in America was very different. The sixties' revolt against liberalism in America was a matter more of action than of theory. Political liberalism, having pushed America into Vietnam and having shown itself incapable of doing much for black America, seemed to have failed, and the radicals responded simply by going outside the liberal way of doing things.

They turned away from the liberal civil-rights movement, away from the liberal Democrats, the unions, and the social-democratic intellectuals and they took actions and built organizations of their own, and among these ultra-radical efforts, the most important, the ones that made a permanent change in American life, were the sundry campaigns that arose at the end of the sixties and eventually came to be known as "identity politics"—including the movements for a certain kind of feminism, for gay and lesbian liberation, for the Jewish and other ethnic revivals that have been much commented on in these pages, and for black nationalism (which had different origins but in its campus version was related nonetheless).

The secret of these movements, their genius, was simply to invent alternative personalities and encourage people to adopt them. The radical Left fell apart after a few years in America just as it did in France, mostly because it became too extreme for its own good. But the identity-politics movements remained. They were useful, even indispensable, to their own adherents. And they were adaptable. They didn't stay forever locked in a war with political liberalism: They pushed their way into the Democratic party and the general culture, and they became permanent features of American life.

Radical leftism in the American sixties naturally made all kinds of efforts to work up some ambitious theories, too, and part of those efforts—no small part either—was to import ideas from France. But that was slow going, possibly because the original works in French were translated only gradually, and in several cases made it into print only after the radical spark from the sixties was gone. Or it was because the French ideas were too baroque for American tastes, and too cynical; or because writers like Herbert Marcuse and others from a German tradition of philosophy who were already established in the United States seemed to make it unnecessary to turn in French directions.

Still, the sixties Paris ideas did establish some footholds in the United States, in the art world, for instance, where radical posturing has a certain virtue—the more radical, the more virtuous, if you do it well. But the biggest and most important of the footholds, the foothold that has mattered most in the current debate, was established in the humanities departments of a handful of universities. French ideas moved in successive waves of fashion to these departments during the seventies and into the eighties. There was an early vogue for the anthropological/Marxist/linguistic ideas of Roland Barthes. Next came a wave for the Heideggerian/linguistic ideas of Derrida, in the form of de Man's theories of "deconstruction" (meaning: interpreting literature in order to show the impossibility of a definite interpretation). Then came a feminist wave for the Freudian/linguistic ideas of Lacan, and after that a wave for Foucault. But of all these waves, the one that finally

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sparked the PC debate of today didn't begin in Paris at all. It was an authentically American mutation of '68 Philosophy, something different, a New World spin on the Paris ideas—a novel variation to add to the already established mix-and-match versions that drew from Heidegger, Nietzsche, Freud, Marx, linguistics, and anthropology.

The new variation drew from American identity politics. Its fundamental unit was the identity-politics idea that in cultural affairs, the most important way to classify people is by race, ethnicity, and gender—the kind of thinking that leads us to define one person as a white male, someone else as an Asian female, a third person as a Latina lesbian, and so forth. With this idea firmly in place, the new American thinkers picked up the freshly translated volumes from Paris, plus a few that were written over here, and went rummaging through the varieties of '68 Philosophy, picking and choosing selected components, sometimes finding ideas already suited to the new version and bringing them into stronger American focus, other times making a few alterations.

From Derrida and '68 Philosophy as a whole came the idea that language and literature are the vast, impersonal structures that, more than economics or politics, determine the nature of society. Linguistics in its '68 version defined the meaning of words by their difference from one another. From this notion came the idea of defining people in the same way, which thereby offered the crucial analogy between identity politics and linguistic analysis. From Foucault and the Nietzscheans (as well as Antonio Gramsci) came a theory of culture as a field of struggle for achieving political power. Also from Foucault came a focus on marginal social groups. From Marxism came the millenarian sense of an impending beneficial social change. From Lacan and the Freudians came a sharp emphasis on the erotic and on male domination. From Third Worldist writers came an anti-imperialist variation on Heidegger's view of the regrettable intellectual tradition of Western civilization.

And voilà: the new mélange, '68 Philosophy in its American mutation. Its name is, or ought to be, "race/class/gender-ism," since "race, class, and gender" is the phrase that dominates its analyses. There is no single author who has succeeded in giving the idea an authoritative definition, no one book or article that you can point to. But I will draw a caricature.

Race/class/gender-ism, in my caricature, pictures culture and language as the giant hidden structure that permeates life. But culture and language are themselves only reflections of various social groups, defined by race, gender, and sexual orientation. (The word "class" is invoked only for the purpose of conjuring a slight aura of Marxism.) Groups, not individuals, produce culture. Every group has its own culture, or would, if oppressors didn't get in the way. Thus we have the cultures of white men, of black men, of women, of black women, of homosexuals, of Hispanic women, etc. Categories that go beyond race, gender, and sexual orientation might also play a role—especially, any trait that could put a person at a disadvantage, such as being handicapped.

The different cultures are engaged in a struggle for power. The culture of white males (specified sometimes as European males, other times as "whitemales," most popularly as Dead White European Males or DWEMs) has pretty much won this struggle, and thus has achieved domination over the rest of the world. The strategy of domination has succeeded by using terms like rationalism, humanism, universality, and literary merit to persuade other people of their own inferiority and thereby "silence" them.

Race/class/gender analysis, however, shows the culture of white males to be a culture of domination and destruction, more or less the way Heidegger pictured Western philosophy, or the way anti-imperialists picture imperialism. By teaching everyone to appreciate the culture of all groups in equal measure and by discouraging the use of certain common phrases that convey racial and gender hierarchies—in short by altering the literature and the language—we will bring to an end the domination of this one small group. The name of this domination, "Eurocentrism," evokes the "ethnocentrism" that is criticized by the French followers of Lévi-Strauss as well as the "logocentrism" that is analyzed by the French Heideggerians. (Logocentrism in this context means the intellectual tradition of Western civilization that has led to the errors of rationalism and humanism—and can be conflated with still another centrism, phallocentrism, to become phallogocentrism, meaning, more or less, the regrettable tradition of imposed masculine logic. Not to mention phonocentrism, which is the original sin that made logocentrism as bad as it is.) And in eliminating these various centrisms, in abandoning the idea of any kind of cultural "center" at all, a new and more egalitarian society will emerge, giving full rein to diverse cultures of every kind.

Race/class/gender-ism is, in short, a bit of the old ultra-radicalism. It is '68 Philosophy, American-style, with certain virtues of the French original, too—the impiety carried to eye-opening extremes, sometimes the wit, though the American version tends to be more earnest and less clever than the French. The American idea even offers something of the old apocalyptic spirit, not openly but by implication—in the excitement that these ideas have aroused, the feeling that a new intellectual revolution is at hand, something monumental

like the invention of modern physics at the beginning of the century. This is, by the way, an intriguing notion. For even if the theory that I've just described is utter nonsense, it is true that, due to the democratic social reforms in the Western countries during the last few decades, and due to the anticolonial revolution around the world, the social basis for a global culture is far huger than it ever was before, and who can say what this will produce, a hundred years hence?

But if the American doctrine has some of the appeal of '68 Philosophy, it is also vulnerable to all the criticisms and questions that were posed several years ago in Paris. For instance: Does race/class/gender-ism, in putting primary emphasis on a category like race as a factor in culture, offer a refreshingly candid view of influences that have always existed but are normally concealed? Or does the emphasis on race bring us back to the dubious theories of the European past, as Todorov has suggested? Is there a hint in these ideas of the old German romantic philosophies of the far Right?

It pains the admirers of Yale deconstruction and of race/class/gender-ism when anyone points too insistently to the unfortunate early pre-Yale career of Paul de Man, on the grounds that a young person's early mistakes should not be used to hound his later achievements. Yet the controversy over de Man and his youthful errors has had one merit at least, which is to give everyone the opportunity to read some Nazi-style literary criticism—for instance de Man's 1941 article from a pro-Nazi Belgian newspaper, "The Jews in Contemporary Literature," which has been brought back into print. Now here was an example of cultural analysis in which writers were categorized on the basis of racial "difference," the Jews on one hand and the Europeans on the other.

Exactly what makes de Man's early reactionary harping on race different from the postmodern, supposedly progressive harping on race today? It is argued that "race" in the postmodern, sociological, progressive usage has nothing to do with "race" in the old, reactionary, biological or "essentialist" usage, and that only someone who is motivated by hostility or by a stubborn unwillingness to entertain new ideas would detect in these up-to-date progressive ideas a scent of old-fashioned reactionary rightism. Yet the distinction between the postmodern ideas and the reactionary ones is not necessarily so clear—if only because, among some of the deconstructionist masters of literary interpretation, there is a peculiar inability to detect any Nazism at all in de Man's Nazi articles, which raises doubts about the reliability of the new techniques. And because, in the movement for multiculturalism that has emerged out of race/class/gender-ism, a touch of the young de Man's Eurostyle racial thinking does sometimes creep into the discussion, obviously not among the sophisticated thinkers, who are embarrassed by the problem, but on the margins of the movement. It was disturbing, for instance, but not terribly surprising, to discover a certain inappropriate and hostile fixation on the Jews in the thinking of a couple of the professors who helped draw up the proposed new multicultural public-school social-studies curriculum in New York state.

Some deconstructionist masters of literary interpretation show an inability to detect any Nazism at all in de Man's Nazi articles, which raises doubts about the reliability of the new techniques.

To be sure, someone might say about the several doubts and problems that hover over the new ideas: So what? Just because a doctrine is a bit dotty or has trouble fending off unattractive elements, valuable results might come of it anyway, in the right hands. "Saying absurd things," as Richard Rorty observes about the adherents of these ideas, "is perfectly compatible with being a force for good." Especially in America, I would add. In France, every educated person receives a pretty good schooling in philosophy, which has the evil effect of encouraging people to be logically consistent in their foolish ideas. But in America, we tend to be suspicious of philosophy, unless it is something like John Dewey's mixture of see-if-it-works pragmatism and social democratic reform. We like ideas, but we water them down.

The natural instinct for most American intellectuals, when it comes to doctrines from France, is silently to demote philosophies into methods—into techniques that you *apply,* selectively, the way you might apply a carpentry technique. Some of the professors who promote race/class/gender-ism are happy to embrace the idea in all its radical grandeur. But a far larger number have no interest in way-out implications. Working up a philosophical opposition to humanism and rationalism was never their idea, except maybe for rhetorical effect. On the contrary, these professors *are* humanists, and always were. They seek the further flowering of liberal democracy.

When they argue for multiculturalism, they don't mean to displace the culture of rationalism and humanism

with a variety of nonrationalist and nonhumanist traditions. They merely wish to remind everyone not to allow the central culture that does exist to fall prey to habits of bigotry or small-mindedness. Fundamentally they wish us to be *more* rational, not less. They pursue tolerance, that grandest of concepts from the Western Enlightenment. They don't mean to overthrow the Western literary canon the way Heidegger wanted to overthrow the Western philosophical canon. They want to expand it. They mean to remind us to look around to see if, because of discrimination in the past or its persistence today, certain authors and works of art have been overlooked. And sure enough, certain authors and works and perspectives have suffered that fate, and today some of them have been rediscovered, which is testimony to the value of the new ideas. And it is good to look for still more writers and traditions and variety of every sort, not in order to undermine the general culture but to strengthen it.

The liberal professors who play with these ideas are not revolutionaries against modernity. Mostly they mean to teach a good course—even if, here and there on the faculty, someone may like to keep the students and the state assembly on their toes by uttering a fine rattling enigmatic Paris slogan now and then or by railing against universal standards and the rule of white males.

To professors like these and their supporters, to the postmodern liberals who spice up their teaching and writing with a few sprinkles of race/class/gender-ism or a bit of world-weary deconstruction, something about the current debate, confusion and all, is very chilling. They see the *Newsweek* cover pointing a finger at the "Thought Police," which means themselves, and they see President Bush denounce them, and they look around for their own allies, who turn out not to be many. And because of the vast disproportion between their own power and that of the hostile institutions arrayed against them, they have reason to feel a pinch of fear.

They wonder: Isn't something overblown about the outrage over PC and the new theories and the curricular debate? There are silly panels at the Modern Language Association conventions, but do these merit a national crusade? The tales of PC power make them rub their eyes in disbelief. And these charges of McCarthyism! The real-life McCarthyism of the fifties was a hysterical movement against a relatively small number of American Communists, but its real target, according to one very sound interpretation, was the heritage of New Deal liberalism from the thirties. Might not something similar be at work today, and might not the real target in the anti-PC campaign, as some writers have speculated, be the heritage of democratic openness and social reform that dates from the radical sixties?

The feminist transformation of American universities has the look of irreversibility, strictly on demographic grounds. But in the age of AIDS, it's hard to know what will be the eventual status of the freedoms that have lately attached to homosexuality—the freedom to speak about it openly, for instance. The future status of racial integration in the universities is likewise hard to predict. Official segregation in American universities sounds like something out of the Middle Ages, but was entirely common no more than thirty years ago; at a place like Duke University, today the home of some of the friskier literary theorists, black students were simply not admitted, as the literary critic Louis Menand has pointed out. The anti-PC argument leapfrogs sometimes from a criticism of PC obnoxiousness and the daffiness of the new literary theories to a criticism of affirmative action, in fact to an argument that affirmative action has turned into a fiasco, not just in its details but as a whole. But that may not be the case.

At the time when schools like Duke were barred to black students, the university-educated African-American middle class was small. Today that class has multiplied several-fold, partly because of affirmative action pressure on the universities, which suggests success, and on a grand scale. Yet the success could easily enough be rolled partway back, given the wrong confluence of political forces. The statistics on African-American admissions to universities seem to bob up and down for mysterious reasons even without any effort to push them down, and the statistics on keeping the students in school are not good.

Does the vehemence and enthusiasm of the campaign against PC threaten these shaky successes, possibly because of an extra anger that clings to the PC debate, some last lingering resentment from the long struggle to achieve campus desegregation? It may sound insulting to the fair-minded academic crusaders against PC even to ask this question, since their own irreproachable intentions are confined to freeing up the intellectual atmosphere and to standing firm against bad ideas in educational reform. Yet the popular enthusiasm against PC, the way the issue has seemed to appeal to a public far wider than the academy, raises the question all by itself. Even on campus, where life is supposed to be a little rosier than in the rest of the world, incidents of racist meanness against black students and other minorities are not exactly unknown. For a while in the late eighties, those incidents grew more common, sometimes with the encouragement of right-wing campus journalists, who

(Continued on p. 94)

Assad Story: The Long Captivity of Syrian Jews

Daniel Gross

On May 1, 1991, Subhe and Sa'id Kastika, two Syrian brothers traveling with their wives and two children, ages two years and three months, were arrested on the border between Syria and Turkey. After being held incommunicado for three weeks, their wives, who had been beaten, were released. The men, who were also beaten, remain locked up in a Damascus jail. Their crime: trying to emigrate from Syria.

In a Damascus courtroom about two months earlier, Salim Soued, a forty-seven-year-old father of seven, and his younger brother, Eli, twenty-seven, were handed sentences of six years and six months. Their crime: "making contact with the enemy." Four years earlier, while on a trip to Rome, the two brothers had flown to a third country to visit a sister they had not seen in thirty years. Upon their return, they were arrested and held incommunicado for nearly two years. Since the sentencing, they have reportedly both gone on hunger strikes.

The third country that the Soued brothers visited was Israel. And their fate, like that of the Kastika brothers, underscores the cruel reality facing Syria's remaining Jews. Now that restrictions on Soviet Jewish emigration have eased and the Ethiopian Falashas have been airlifted to safety, Syria's 3,800 Jews stand as the world's largest, and perhaps last, captive Jewish community. It is their misfortune to live in a brutal society that charges Jews with treason for visiting family in Israel or trying to emigrate. Victims of official anti-Semitism that masquerades as official anti-Zionism, Syria's Jews are held hostage by Syrian President Hafez al-Assad, not long ago President Bush's ally in Operation Desert Storm.

Conditions have become noticeably worse for Syrian Jews in the months since Syria's entry into America's Gulf War coalition. "They have gone backward when they were going to go forward," says one congressional staffer. In 1989, Syria allowed twenty-four Jews to emigrate legally. In 1990, it allowed half that number. As of November 1991, only six had been granted permission to leave, which is why young Jews like the Kastikas are trying to get out any way they can.

The recent Madrid peace conference produced no change in the status of Syrian Jews, but it did bring new attention to their plight. As the world watched, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir decried the fact that Jews in Syria have "been exposed to cruel oppression, torture, and discrimination of the worst kind." As the Arab delegates looked on, stone-faced and disinterested, Shamir pleaded: "We appeal to you to let Jews who wish to leave your countries go." In response, Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk al-Sharaa dissembled. After proudly announcing that "we have never carried the banner of war and destruction," Sharaa feigned indignation at Shamir's charges. Syrian Jews are not persecuted, he said. Far from it: "Historians know that Syrian Jews live in full equality and with the same freedoms of other Syrian citizens."

One can read this statement either as a deliberate lie or as cruel irony. To a degree, Syrian Jews *do* enjoy the "same freedoms" enjoyed by other Syrian citizens—since those freedoms are largely nonexistent. The rights of free emigration and free travel, along with most other basic human rights, are not extended to any Syrian—Jewish, Christian, Muslim, or Druse. Assad's security forces are equal opportunity oppressors, subjecting Muslim fundamentalists, Palestinians, communists, socialists, doctors, lawyers, engineers—anyone who challenges the status quo—to the same detentions, beatings, and mock trials that Jews suffer. In the last few years, Amnesty International has documented the plight of hundreds of Syrian prisoners of conscience, as well as the widespread use of torture. A 1987 Amnesty report catalogued thirty-five different torture methods used in Syrian prisons.

But in many ways, Assad's quasi-totalitarian regime *does* treat its Jews differently from other Syrian citizens. Although no other Syrians are identified by religion on their passports, the passports of Syrian Jews travelling within the country are stamped *Musawi*—Arabic for "Mosaic." Like many other Arab countries, Syria demands that visiting aliens disclose their religion on visa applications, and denies entrance to any traveler whose passport bears an Israeli stamp. While all Syrians face some restrictions on emigration and travel, Jews are the only group barred from emigration. In addition, any Jew who travels abroad must post a substantial bond—between $5,000 and $10,000—and must leave at least one family member behind.

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The entire community is under the constant surveillance of a special branch of the Mukhabarat, Assad's secret police, which patrols Damascus's Jewish Quarter around the clock—ostensibly to protect the Jews, but mostly to keep an eye on them. No foreigner can meet with a Syrian Jew without receiving permission from the Mukhabarat.

Unable to confront or defeat the Jewish state directly, the Syrian government projects its anti-Zionism onto the indigenous Jewish population.

But Syria's Jewish community remains vital even amid such conditions. The vast majority of Damascus's three thousand Jews live in the city's old Jewish quarter, where they maintain an active religious and communal life. (Six hundred Jews live in Aleppo, and two hundred are in the northern city of Kamishli.) There are nineteen synagogues in Damascus alone, and three in Aleppo, though most are open only on the High Holidays. Damascus has two Jewish elementary schools, which are directed by non-Jewish government appointees. (The teaching of Hebrew as a modern language is strictly forbidden.) Most Syrian Jews work as merchants and artisans, and a few have risen to become doctors. But all government positions, which are reserved for members or beneficiaries of Syria's ruling Ba'ath party, are off-limits to Jews.

Those Jews who remain in Syria are remnants of a once-proud and large Jewish community, which has maintained a continuous presence in Syria since biblical times. At the turn of this century, Syrian Jews started to head west in large numbers, mostly to New York. (Eventually, thousands of Syrian Jews formed a traditional, tightly knit community in Brooklyn, where some thirty-thousand Syrian-American Jews thrive today.) Since 1947, when half of Syria's remaining twenty-thousand Jews fled in the wake of the anti-Jewish riots that greeted the United Nations partition of Palestine, the population has grown older and steadily dwindled through death and escape.

In the first years of his reign, Assad actually took a few steps to improve the condition of Syrian Jews. In 1973, in the wake of the Yom Kippur War, he sent government forces to protect Damascus's Jewish community from an anti-Jewish riot. Soon after, he repealed the extremely restrictive laws that limited Jews' ability to travel within the country and to buy and sell property.

Such modest improvements notwithstanding, Syria's Jews yearned to leave, and many did so, despite the severe dangers. But since April 1974, when four young Jewish women were raped and killed while trying to escape to Lebanon, women have tended to stay behind while young Jewish men have continued to flee. Thus the traditional patriarchal community of Syrian Jews has become populated disproportionately by young women. By 1977, an estimated five hundred Syrian Jewish women could not find Jewish men to marry. That year, as the result of efforts by President Jimmy Carter and Representative Stephen Solarz, who represents the Brooklyn district where most Syrian Jews live, a dozen young Jewish women were permitted to leave after proxy marriages had been arranged.

But the gains won by the Carter administration's emphasis on human rights were erased in the 1980s. The war in Lebanon, suspicion of Syrian involvement in terrorist acts (most notably, the bombing of Pan Am Flight 103), and the Reagan State Department, which neglected the plight of Syrian Jews, collectively undid the prior entente. Even so, as the withdrawal of the Soviet Union from Middle East power politics in the late 1980s forced Syria to seek a reconciliation with the West, Assad seemed to be loosening his grip. In November 1989, the State Department announced that the Syrian government would favor the petitions of unmarried Jewish women seeking to emigrate, together with the applications of Jews wanting to be reunited with their families. In August 1990, Solarz visited Syria and met with community members, Foreign Minister Sharaa, and Nasser Khadoun, the minister of state for foreign affairs. According to one congressional staffer, the results of Solarz's visit were "fairly encouraging, and it seemed like the government was prepared to be sympathetic."

But that was before Assad joined the anti-Saddam coalition. Once it was apparent that the West needed his cooperation, Assad saw little need to deliver on his promises. So in February 1991, when Solarz again pressed Sharaa in Damascus on emigration for Syrian Jews, the foreign minister parroted Assad's standard line: Syria's Jews will be free to leave as soon as Israel permits the 500,000 Syrians who fled the Golan Heights in 1967 to return.

On the face of it, this statement is absurd, if only because there were nowhere near 500,000 Syrians in the Golan Heights, either when Israel captured the region in 1967, or when it was annexed in 1981. More significantly, this rhetoric reveals the inability of Assad to distinguish between Jews and Israelis, between Syrians who practice the Jewish religion and citizens of the State of Israel.

This failure of demographic vision is but one symptom of an ugly phenomenon: As is often the case in the Arab world, Syrian anti-Zionism is inextricably intertwined with Syrian anti-Semitism. Unable to confront or defeat the Jewish state directly, the Syrian government projects its anti-Zionism onto the indigenous Jewish population. In 1986, for example, Syria's minister of defense, Mustafa Talas, published a history of the Damascus blood libel of 1840, in which eight Jews were accused of murdering a Catholic priest and his servant and using their blood to bake matzoh. In the book, which bore the revealing title *Fatir Sahyun* (*The Matzoh of Zion*), Talas wrote: "By following daily events in the occupied land [Israel], we get day after day proof ... that what is termed 'Zionist racism' is just an extension of talmudic teachings and development of the same teachings."

The supreme irony is that Syrian Jews are not ardent Zionists. In fact, were they allowed to leave, most of Syria's Jews would head for Flatbush, not for Haifa. The vibrant and prosperous Syrian-Jewish community in Brooklyn is ready, willing, and able to support and assimilate its cousins. "There are thirty-thousand Syrian-American Jews in New York who want them. We have jobs for them," says Alice Sardell Harary, government liaison of the Council for the Rescue of Syrian Jews.

Despite assertions to the contrary, most Syrian Jews would leave if they could. In a 1990 *New Yorker* piece, Milton Viorst reported that community leaders told him that "not more than 30 percent of the Jews would leave Syria if restrictions were lifted." But according to those who have spoken with relatives and community members more recently, the numbers are substantially higher. "If restrictions were lifted, about 60 percent would leave in six months. And most of the rest would leave soon after," says Gil Cahn, director of the Council for the Rescue of Syrian Jews.

Despite the recent setbacks, activists retain a margin of hope. In the last two years, the plight of Syrian Jews has commanded a good deal of public attention. Shamir publicly raised the question in Madrid; a Syrian-Jewish caucus has been organized in Congress; and after years of neglect, the State Department has finally become interested. Secretary of State James Baker has raised the plight of Syrian Jews during at least one of his recent visits with Assad, and Edward Deredjian, the U.S. Ambassador to Syria, has a list of divided families whose members seek to emigrate. Unlike his immediate predecessors, Deredjian has taken an active interest in the status of Syrian Jews.

But apart from such encouraging signs, there remains little real cause for optimism. Assad has basically tied the release of Syria's Jews to the return of the Golan Heights, thus mingling a simple matter of human-rights



From ostracism to photo-ops: President Hafez al-Assad has managed to soft-pedal his regime's oppression of Jews since Syria joined forces with Operation Desert Storm.

policy with an incredibly complex matter of foreign policy. Given Shamir's statements and the Knesset's recent actions, the return of the Golan to Syrian sovereignty is simply unimaginable. And as Syria, practically alone among the Arab states, remains rejectionist, maximalist, and recalcitrant, concessions on free emigration seem distant at best.

More disturbingly, Assad's participation in the Gulf War has all but rehabilitated his tarnished image. A succession of smiling photo opportunities with President Bush and Secretary of State Baker has helped him develop the veneer of statesmanship. Most recently, the U.S. absolved Syrians of any complicity in the Pan Am 103 affair. And last summer, when Assad finally signed on to an American-sponsored peace plan, the wily despot was all but deified. ABC News dubbed him "Person of the Week," an honor usually reserved for social workers, cub scout leaders, and other do-gooders. In one typically naive piece of puffery, Peter Jennings glossed over Assad's fifteen-year occupation of Lebanon, downplayed the Alawite regime's savagery, and did not even mention Syria's unprovoked attack on Israel in 1973. Needless to say, Jennings never once mentioned Syrian Jews.

Just as it allowed him to solidify control over Lebanon, Assad's participation in the Gulf War allowed him to tighten his grip on Syria's Jews. And for the time being, he appears to have little interest in coming to the peace table. So the Jews of Syria wait. Their future hinges on the delusions of a man whose ambitions to rule the expansionist Greater Syria are no less a threat to the Middle East's stability than Yitzhak Shamir's misguided dreams of a Greater Israel. Assad's treatment of his country's Jews speaks volumes about his regime's attitude toward Israel and human rights. But the survival, hope, and courage of Syria's Jews—and the activity of their distant relatives on their behalf—speak just as loudly, to anyone close enough to hear. □

FICTION

A Pox on Shmulik

D. H. Garnick

A calf was born without eyes in the vicinity of Sokolief, a village of a thousand souls in the Kiev gubernye. The church bell rang. It was a Monday morning and the Jews were caught between the hammer and the bell.

Shmulik, Bassy-Nessy's child, lay in delirium. Some said that it was a verdict from heaven, that the willful youth had brought the smallpox on himself for reading the gentile book. What would happen next?

Everyone asked what would happen next. Some said that the luckless youth had brought the divided community one step further down the road to the grave.

The Sokoliefker rebbe took unaccustomed action. He sent a telegram to his estranged son, Dr. Chayn, the physician in Warsaw, and dispatched Yankel the sexton to fetch him from the Korosten station.



It was the last but one stop for the Warsaw-Kiev overnight express train. Who would not wish to be somewhere else? The predawn chill was numbing. It was more like December than the middle of October, and the station guard was not drunk.

The little czar of the night took a turn around the platform. The angel of death peered out from his eyes. Bad luck: It appeared he'd spotted Yankel. It happened when, on climbing down from his wagon to relieve himself at the side of the road, Yankel was encircled by a pack of undersized dogs—this one barking, this one snapping, this one inching closer. Yankel stamped his foot to no avail; then he wielded his stick like the swift sword of justice. The dogs were scattered, thereby earning him the guard's indifference. Neither had his right arm lost its cunning nor had he lost his surefootedness among the gentiles, an important but much underrated art in the circle of the rebbe's disciples.

For the sin of worshiping the golden calf in the wilderness, the greater part of the children of Israel was denied the caste of priesthood. The righteous remnant of the rebbe's diminished flock could not support a full-time sexton. Truth to tell, they didn't provide the merest pinch of snuff. It was Yankel's partnership with his brother in the horse and wagon that provided, but it had not gone unremarked in Sokolief. A sexton-wagonmaster? It was a coarse trade, admittedly, but a wagonmaster seldom went hungry.

With Dr. Chayn, the abdicated heir to the Sokoliefker rebbe's throne, on Yankel's wagon, the mission looked to go without a hitch. Sokolief fell nearly midway between Korosten and the western limits of Kiev on the low left bank of the Dnieper. The others hereabouts called it the Dniepro, in spite of the Russification campaign. The borderland nationalities dreamed of their former glory: Each regarded itself a nice piece of cake, but not for Czar Nicholai's table, and not for the other nationalities, and certainly not for the Jews. There was no place for Jews in the empire, not one quiet corner.

Rabbi Tarfon used to say: "The day is short and the task is urgent." It was understood that it was not for Yankel's musings that Dr. Chayn had returned to his father's domain. But it was chilling, the way he sat, swaddled in his cloak, in unpromising silence. People have bad luck each in their own way; the rebbe's misfortune was his children.

Eight small shops and an inn lined either side of the road at the entrance to Sokolief. Day by day the trade had diminished. It was the Czar's progression. From one day to the next the shopkeepers extended their hours; anything to make a transaction and elude the watchers. Who could say how long before the Black Hundreds?

Nessy's greengrocery shop was as bare as dry bones. Nothing was there to obstruct passage to the curtained-off living area Nessy shared with her grandson Shmulik. Yankel hadn't ventured behind that curtain before Shmulik was stricken, nor was there reason to do so now. Dr. Chayn's grasp on his physician's bag was as unyielding as a baby's fingerhold on a rattle.

It was said that Dr. Chayn numbered more than a few Warsaw eminences among his practice, so something should be said for his return to Sokolief after all these years, even if the report of his apostasy could be credited. True, his appearance had changed, but beardlessness and cropped earlocks were not evidence of apostasy. The high collar and pince-nez were something else; it gave him the constipated look of a Lithuanian schoolmaster. Perhaps it was to elude the pogromtchiki.

D.H. Garnick retired in 1990 as associate director for regional economics, Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Department of Commerce, to turn to more evocative fiction.

A Tatar, when asked the cause of his brother's death, answered: "his life." Men endure the bitterest of winters only to fall like flies in May. The old die, yes, and the young. And women in labor, like Bassy, Shmulik's mother. Bassy had been like a rose between thorns; some said that Nessy's stock was predisposed to smallpox. When Yankel had put the question about predisposition to Dr. Chayn on the ride back to Sokolief, he did not answer. He would not answer that nor any other question. His was a taciturnity as unremitting as anti-Semitism.

"It's only a mild case; he'll be up in no time," Dr. Chayn called to Nessy, his words trailing behind his approach to the front door. He paused and then added: "I'll look in on him tomorrow," as if on counting his words he reckoned that he hadn't doled out a fair measure. Then with the verbal parsimony Yankel had come to expect from him, he signaled with a nod and a jerk of his Lithuanian head to return to the wagon.

"I'm puzzled by his symptoms," Dr. Chayn said to his father the rebbe. "There's no sign of pustules. Everything but the high fever indicates a modified smallpox. It's just possible he was immunized in the womb."

"I'm not sure I understand," the rebbe said. The old sage appeared distracted, his hat askew and his hoary head crowned in confusion. "Old age is the mother of forgetfulness," the Father's Admonition teaches.

It was Yankel's intention to leave the father and son alone together, but who else would see to the tea? The service had been left over from a happier time, the steaming glasses inserted in little silver holders to protect fingers more delicate than Yankel's.

A steaming glass of tea is to restore life: It had been a hard fifteen years. There was the great smallpox epidemic, when more than half of the many who had become infected died. Not one household was left untouched by sorrow. Sokolief was a veritable vale of tears.

It is told that every Jewish soul was present at the giving of the Law at Sinai. How is it, then, that some despair? The rebbe's family took it harder than the others, only the devil knew why. Some said it was a scandal that the rebbe's daughter took to bed and just stayed there. She was said to have the pallor of a maggot. And the son, the crown prince? It seemed that he had vanished off the face of the earth; only later was it reported that he was studying medicine with the other apostates in Vienna.

"What was it you were saying about a gentile book?" Dr. Chayn said. He was looking directly at Yankel. "In the wagon, Yankel, you were saying?" he prodded.

The cube of sugar perched between Yankel's front teeth was all but dissolved in the stream of hot tea. But that wasn't what had slowed his speech; it was astonishment. It seemed to him that the court physician hadn't heard one word, or if he had, he'd discounted what the likes of a Yankel had to say.

So Yankel repeated once more what some had said but, truth to tell, he didn't know what to think himself and he had come to think not too highly of what the others had said. And he said so and, immediately, he felt the embarrassment that followed this quickness to speech. "What I mean ..." he said; he stammered.



"Hmm," Dr. Chayn said. "So where did he get this book?"

He has eyes but he does not see, Yankel thought. The books in the rebbe's study had multiplied many times over during the years of the physician's absence. There were piles of books, some whose pages were still uncut, on piles the ordinary man would have thought contained all that it was possible to know. The study was the reserve of the rebbe's remaining disciples and of some of the remaining youth—Shmulik notable among them. The rebbe's feverish book-collecting had given rise to the jest that the disciples would erect his gravestone in the form of a book. (He should live to a hundred and twenty years.)

Some said that the gentile books were a scandal. The Zhitomer rebbe was reported to have said that the entire collection was a vanity. Yankel had a different surmise. And who would know better than he? A package of raisins, a package of almonds from an absent son cannot fill the void in an old man's heart.

Light dawned in the wise physician's eyes, finally. "From here?" Dr. Chayn said.

It is told that the prince of darkness took the form of a great black bull and freely roamed the void before the world began. The status was pleasing to him, but it was in dispute in the court of the Most High. When the course of night and day was fixed, the black bull's resentment knew no bounds and in his boiling blood were born all the afflictions that would come to plague mankind.

There is nothing new under the sun that was not revealed to Moses on Sinai. The Redeemer of Israel elects whomsoever He will. Thus it was that the abdicated heir to the rebbe's throne was elected for the deliverance of the Jews of Sokolief. Who could say why?

The disciples were convened and consulted. The rebbe's son made the case that for the past one hundred

years the effectiveness of the serum derived from cowpox was known (but not well known, some of the disciples insisted, as was evident from the suffering that had prevailed in this part of the world). Some asked, what if the sacrificed calf, from which the serum was derived, turned out to be unclean? There was no time to resolve the issue to everyone's satisfaction; the serum in the physician's bag had to be dispensed before it spoiled.

Yankel was kept busy shuttling the assenting families who could not on their own make it to the rebbe's house and back. But the Zhitomer rebbe's disciples in Sokolief refused the inoculation, and few troubled to hide their spite on the next morning, when every last one of the Sokoliefker rebbe's flock was discomforted.

It was a time of trembling in the heavens and on earth, and the Jews were more divided than ever. Everywhere the youth were in rebellion against the elders. And of the elders, what could not be said? All agreed that the war with Japan was a disaster and that Czar Nicholai was good for nothing, but agreement ended there. It is taught in the Sayings of the Fathers: "Any controversy that is for G-d's sake shall in the end be of lasting worth."

On that midweek morning following prayers, the disciples met as usual in the rebbe's study. They deviated on this occasion from the regular lesson to deal with the recalcitrance of the Zhitomer rebbe's disciples. "It is not a matter of splitting differences," said Reb Itzik, the innkeeper and wholesale tea distributor, and primary local user of Yankel's cartage services.

Who would take issue with him? Not the rebbe who, sunk in thought as usual, likely did not see fit to comment. Not Yankel. And not Yankel's brother, who had returned from America weeping after catching sight of his son smoking on the Sabbath. And who would not have wept at the sight? It was hard to be a Jew with all the reported distractions there. But daily it was becoming more dangerous here.

Dr. Chayn came into the study just then. "I want you to take this message to the telegraph office," he said to Yankel. It would mean another trip to Korosten.

It was addressed to the medical inspector in Kiev. Yankel was startled, of course; he turned it over to the rebbe, who also appeared startled. "This is not the way," the rebbe said, with unusual sharpness.

"Tata, we don't know the source of the infection, nor how virulent the strain is, nor who's been exposed. It has to be reported," the physician said.

"But what about the inoculations?" the rebbe said.

"The vaccination will immunize only those who receive it on time. Even now, it's probably too late," the physician said.

"And in that case whom will it help to report it?" Itzik said. "What do they care about us in Kiev? They'll seal off Sokolief. No one will be able to get in or out. Some are sure to starve. I'll tell you what, I'll go to Zhitomir and talk to the rebbe there." If anyone could convince the Zhitomer rebbe to have his disciples inoculated or vaccinated or whatever, everyone agreed it had to be Reb Itzik.

But even as Reb Itzik was speaking, Dr. Chayn was polishing his pince-nez; one look at his eyes and Yankel divined his intention. "Take me to the Korosten station," the physician said. He looked toward his father, but the rebbe averted his eyes, and turning once again to Yankel, he said: "Yankel, get the wagon ready; I'll just put a few things together." Then he left the room.

And then Itzik said to the rebbe: "Say something. Can't you say something to stop him?"

For the past fifteen years the rebbe had said very little indeed, and this morning was not to be different. "What is there to say?" he said.

You could see Itzik's face turn purple. He always knew what to say. "Gewald!" he said. "Yankel, it's up to you."

Yankel was alarmed. "Me?" he said. "How me? Why me?"

"How you? I'll tell you how you. You're on the wagon with him for however long it takes, two hours, ten hours, you understand? However long it takes to convince him not to contact the authorities in Kiev. Why you? Who else is with him, that's why you. And besides, your little friend, Shmulik, got us into this mess. A pox on the both of you."

Nothing Yankel could say would dissuade the physician, it turned out. Nothing helped. It was the next Monday morning when again the church bell tolled. Now it continued to toll for days. In one way Reb Itzik had gotten it right: You could not get out of Sokolief under the Medical Inspector's quarantine, but you could get in.

Those Jews who could make it in streamed in, bearing the news from all over: From Dusyata in the Baltics to Simferopol in the Crimea. From Bialystok in Byelorussia to Kishinev in Moldavia. From Moghilev to Melitopol in the east, from Lodz in the west and from Odessa in the south. From Minsk and from Gomel. From Syedlitz and from Brest-Litovsk. From Kiev and from Zhitomir. They were fleeing from the pogromtchiki, from the smashing and the burning, from the raping and the cutting down, from the provocations of the Black Hundreds and from the sport of the Cossacks. Few Jewish communities were spared in the borderlands then. Berdichev was spared for its self-defense. Sokolief was spared for its smallpox. □

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What's Wrong with Hierarchy?

Judith Plaskow

No aspect of my feminist critique of Judaism provokes more demands to defend or explain myself than my critique of hierarchy. The assumption that a hierarchical understanding of relationships between people—and of the relationship between God and the world—is humanly destructive and antithetical to feminism raises serious questions. Is hierarchy all bad? Isn't it sometimes necessary? Doesn't leadership imply hierarchy, and how can any group exist without leadership? Isn't rabbinic leadership essential to the health of the Jewish community? Aren't there certain natural hierarchies—the hierarchy between parent and child, for example? Doesn't the assertion of norms—even the assertion that equality is better than hierarchy—itself create hierarchies?

These questions have not convinced me to abandon the critique of hierarchy, but they do make me want to clarify it. I see them arising out of important concerns about the limits of nonhierarchical structures in feminist groups and in the Left more generally. But I think such questions also reflect an anxious equation of hierarchy and order that stems from a lack of experience with other models of leadership.

Feminist skepticism about the effectiveness of nonhierarchical models may have roots in the consciousness-raising groups of the 1960s and 1970s. These groups were usually committed to maintaining a leaderless structure that was simultaneously empowering and frustrating. On the one hand, specific techniques for sharing group time and space often enabled habitually silent women to find their voice and claim their experience. On the other hand, as Joreen pointed out in her now-classic essay, "The Tyranny of Structurelessness," the absence of recognized leadership often masked the formation of controlling cliques that remained unaccountable because they were unacknowledged. Moreover, as consciousness-raising groups wanted to move from discussion to action, they found that if they did not allocate responsibility and define structures of accountability, they became paralyzed.

If we understand the need to control others as disease and injustice in our social relationships, why should the experience of God as a dominant hierarch be liberating or holy?

If the critique of hierarchy is equated with early feminist repudiation of any kind of effective leadership, I can see why the critique would raise objections. But as Joreen pointed out even as she took critical note of the problems and contradictions of a "structureless" group, apportioning responsibility is not the same as endorsing hierarchy. The challenge is precisely to create group structures that maximize general participation while establishing clear norms of accountability.

In criticizing hierarchy, I am not opposing leadership, or even authority. Rather, my feminist suspicion centers on the essentialization of authority: the identification of authority with certain groups that are invested with power by virtue of their so-called nature. Thus the feminist critique of patriarchal social structures continually returns to Simone de Beauvoir's insight that men have been defined as the normative human beings, and women as Other. When this insight is refined further in the view of other forms of dominance, it becomes clear that not all men are defined as normative either. White men, men who own land or have access to certain resources—or in the Jewish community, men with a particular kind of learning—are invested with the power to control and define community institutions and values. These are the hierarchical *dualisms* that feminists have criticized—the assignment of human beings to opposed and unequal categories on the basis of their presumed essential characteristics.

A different concept of authority would be the anarchist notion of "natural authority," the authority that resides in an individual by virtue of her or his competence and knowledge in a particular area. "In the matter of boots, I defer to the authority of the Bootmaker," says Bakunin—not out of any social constraint or any imperative stemming from the nature of the bootmaker, but because her or his ability elicits respect. All communities need to take advantage of those who have natural authority in different areas; not to make use of such people constitutes a waste of resources and ultimately flattens out individuality. But the fact that the bootmaker—or scientist, or rabbi, or CEO—is good at what s/he does will not endow him or her with intrinsic authority or authority outside specific areas of competence. Nor should the fact of competence in one area negate the authority of others in the community.

Judith Plaskow teaches religious studies at Manhattan College. She is the author of Standing Again at Sinai: Judaism From a Feminist Perspective *(Harper and Row, 1990).*

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The test of nonhierarchical leadership or authority is the purpose and accountability of authority. Is authority aimed at securing and aggrandizing the power of the person who exercises it, or is it aimed at empowering others? If the latter, does the goal of empowerment gain concrete expression in the life of the community? The *havurah* movement, for example, was from its inception committed to the creation of nonhierarchical forms of Jewish religious community. Probably in any particular *havurah,* those with "natural authority" provided the initial leadership. In some *havurot,* that natural authority gradually was institutionalized, so that it became clear over time that certain familiar groups (e.g., women, or men without strong Jewish educations) were never taking leadership. But other *havurot,* through classes, skill sharing, and consistent rotation of leadership, found concrete ways to empower all members to share in responsibilities, so that the fund of natural authority was continually increased.

This test of the purpose of authority is helpful in considering the issue of so-called natural hierarchies—such as the hierarchy between parent and child and, in a different way, between teacher and student (or between rabbi and congregant). I would agree that inherently hierarchical elements exist in these relationships. Simply to wish or declare the two sides equal is self-deceptive and only serves to disguise the power dynamics that continue to operate despite lip service to equality. At the same time, I do not think that these examples legitimize hierarchy or negate the critique of it; rather they point to its profound dangers. As the intolerable prevalence of child abuse indicates, so-called natural hierarchies lend themselves to terrible abuses of power. To exercise power legitimately in such relationships means continually to undermine or work toward the demise of the hierarchy—to allow the child space for individuation and prepare him or her for independent adulthood. In the teacher-student relation, legitimate authority encourages learners to build on their strengths, define their own perspectives, and share the things they have to teach.

A hierarchy of values does indeed underlie this critique of hierarchy: Equality is better than hierarchy; legitimate power continually works to empower others so as to create greater equality. The feminist critique of hierarchy is not the same as an abdication of all norms. What a hierarchy of norms does not and must not do, however, is associate greater and lesser *values* with the nature of *persons:* so that, for example, men are depicted as always forming hierarchies and women as trying to relate more equally. This association of positive and negative values with groups of persons is precisely what establishes destructive patterns of communal domination.

And where does God fit in here? Isn't it all right, I am often asked, to have this one hierarchical relationship? Doesn't the notion that God is God, the only final authority, help to relativize and delegitimize the hierarchies between people? While it might seem that the notion of God as ultimate authority ought to function in this way, in reality it has been used far more often to support hierarchical dualisms than to subject them to criticism. Perhaps because the very idea of a male king ruling over the earth is already the product of human hierarchical thinking, it cannot, in any consistent way, free us from such thinking.

But let us suppose that the notion of God's authority does serve to delegitimize human domination. Why, still, would we want to imagine our relationship with God in terms of a model we reject in all our other relationships? If we ask of parents and teachers and rabbis that they nurture and speak to the peer in the child, student, or congregant, why would we want to be perpetually children in relation to God? If we understand the need to control others as disease and injustice in our social relationships, why should the experience of God as a dominant hierarch be liberating or holy?

In my last column, I discussed the ambiguity of God and images of domination as they relate to the frightening side of divine power. In this context, hierarchical imagery may express not just superiority and subordination in personal relationships, but also a sense of smallness and impotence before the mysterious and terrifying aspects of existence.

But if we use such imagery to evoke the inherent inequality of the divine-human relationship, we also need to undermine that imagery in just the way we need to undermine all other

hierarchies. The strand of protest against divine injustice that weaves its way through the Jewish tradition offers one means of destabilizing a hierarchical understanding of the divine-human relationship. Images of God as web, wellspring, or ground of life reflect a part-whole model of the divine-human relationship rather than a dualistic one, and thus avoid the hierarchical separations that divide the dominator from the dominated. Or perhaps the notion of natural authority is also a fitting image for the divine. Is not God the ultimate natural authority, never actually wielding the bolts of lightning that punish or coerce us, but addressing and persuading us through something deep in ourselves and through the web of our interrelations with a complex and changing world? □

BOOK REVIEW

In Love with Labor

Nelson Lichtenstein

Which Side Are You On?: Trying to Be for Labor When It's Flat on Its Back by Thomas Geoghegan. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1991, 287 pp.

> "Organized labor." Say those words, and your heart sinks. I am a labor lawyer, and my heart sinks. Dumb, stupid organized labor; this is my cause.

Thus does Thomas Geoghegan assert the despair and the commitment that are the dual themes of his marvelous book—part memoir, part history, part acute social reportage. He has a wonderful ear for dialogue, a penetrating sense of the absurd, and a self-effacing sense of humor. Geoghegan presents himself as an Eastern yuppie, a Harvard-trained lawyer destined for a more trendy career, now trapped inside the rusting hulk of the Chicago labor movement. Out in the heartland, he practices the kind of labor law that has no "policy" component, nothing cutting-edge about it, just a cold immersion in the grim social decline that has overtaken the blue-collar working class since the dawn of the Reagan era.

Geoghegan got his start as a labor lawyer during what he calls the "Sixties Enlightenment," which finally made its liberating influence felt within the unions during the mid-1970s. "In America," he writes, "everything gets down to the working class after it's over." As a volunteer ballot box observer with the insurgent Miners for Democracy, Geoghegan met his first unionists when he was sent to the played-out anthracite coal fields of eastern Pennsylvania. There he stepped into the midst of a nineteenth-century blood feud, for with the mines closed and the pension fund empty, the election represented one last chance for revenge by miners with black-lung disease and their pensionless wives against the old guard bureaucracy of the United Mine Workers (UMW).

The reformers won and Geoghegan took a job at union headquarters in Washington, D.C. His description of the takeover playfully captures the spirit of that now-forgotten moment:

> To the rest of Big Labor, with its nobility, its crowned heads, its landed estates in Dupont Circle, it must have seemed like the French Revolution. It was their worst nightmare come true: the "members" crossing over the beltway, running wild through the buildings, swinging from the chandeliers. I think that's what they hated most about the UMW: we let them roam through the *building*. They hated the staff, i.e. the "kids," the people like me, the VISTA volunteers, the grad students. To them, we were the real Jacobins.... To hear them talk, you would think we had set up guillotines in the streets.

Geoghegan spent two tumultuous years at the UMW, where the rank and file took the promise of a militant and democratic union all too seriously. Strike after illegal strike swept through the coal fields, which put radicals on the UMW legal staff in a quandary: Defend the strikers and the union would be destroyed by the courts and the companies; try to suppress them and watch the credibility of the union leadership collapse. It was a moment of truth for Geoghegan, the first in a series of crucibles that posed the time-honored question, "Which side are you on?"

Nelson Lichtenstein is a professor of history at the University of Virginia. He is writing a biography of Walter Reuther, and is editor of the forthcoming volume Industrial Democracy: Past and Present *(Cambridge University Press, 1992).*

Geoghegan fled for his soul, moving on to the campaign of Edward Sadlowski for president of the United Steel Workers of America in the winter of 1976–77. It's hard to remember how different the social terrain was then. It was the Indian summer of the union movement, before Reagan, before the air-traffic controllers' strike, before capital flight and a sky-high dollar destroyed the steel mills of Youngstown, Buffalo, and South Chicago. Then the Steelworkers' union had triple today's membership and real clout in the Democratic party. More important, it was still possible to talk about democratizing the workplace rather than just saving jobs, to campaign for a social-democratic reorganization of American capitalism, and to see in Ed Sadlowski's candidacy an Old Left–New Left symbiosis that would finally revive and redirect the union movement.

"When people ask me, 'Why can't labor organize the way it did in the thirties,' the answer is simple; everything we did then is now illegal."

Sadlowski lost, but Geoghegan fell in love with the idea, if not the actual grit and grime, of South Chicago, with its huge, still-bustling steel mills and a bar and pizzeria on every block. Geoghegan is no romantic; he escaped as soon as he could to the North Shore. But he could not resist the sense of humane solidarity and purposeful struggle that he often stumbled across. Indeed, Geoghegan finds in the union movement the nation's "real counterculture, a black hole in American culture," where "paunchy, middle-aged men, slugging down cans of beer, come to hold hands, touch each other, and sing 'Solidarity Forever.'"

In Chicago, Geoghegan represented steelworkers robbed of their pensions by International Harvester, Teamsters battling the thugs who ran their locals, Peoria nurses who wanted a union, and workers of all sorts who fought for a pension or a promotion. It's a depressing tale, but oddly inspiring: A whole industrial infrastructure was crashing down around his clients, but they kept plugging away, renewing a quest for dignity and justice even as politicians remained silent, union leaders retreated, and many professors rationalized the calamity as the dawn of a new high-tech era.

And what did Geoghegan of Harvard Law find at the heart of America's blue-collar unions? Well, he found more lawyers. Every staff representative or business agent, Geoghegan writes, "has to function like a lawyer. The entire labor movement is like a giant bar association of nonlicensed attorneys." In their windbreakers and ties, they have the look and feel of the kind of lawyer who hustles cases in traffic court; some are sharp as a tack, others criminally inept; all are frustrated at their job.

> It is sad to go into their offices. Find a staff rep, go into his office, and on the wall you see May Day posters, posters of Eugene Debs, posters (in German) announcing the General Strike. And then look on the desk and you see grievance forms: stacks and stacks of grievance forms, most of them stuck in the last "step...." No soap box, no stump speech, no calling out, in a beer-barrel voice, to hit the bricks. The working-class hero in our time. A miserable little career in Philadelphia lawyering.

How did we get to this impasse? Geoghegan has obviously read his labor history, and in his own breezy and flippant fashion he distills much of the radical scholarship of the past generation. He wants to get the state off labor's back, to return to those early New Deal days when democratic reorganization of society was the key item on the practical Left's agenda. To Geoghegan, the labor law that was the real Magna Carta of the union movement was the Norris-LaGuardia Act, passed in 1932. This law finally curbed the power of the reactionary courts, outlawed the labor injunction, and allowed the unions and the employers to slug it out by themselves. Of course, Geoghegan knew that Norris-LaGuardia alone was not enough to generate the "Big Bang" of the 1930s; it took a seemingly friendly president, a Wagner Act that made illegal many traditional anti-union tactics, and a union leadership that was not afraid to fight. Not unexpectedly, Geoghegan's hero is Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) founder John L. Lewis, a man of multiple contradictions who nevertheless understood the need for bold and decisive action when it counted most.

For a few short years, the Wagner Act intimidated employers and offered labor's bolder spirits a kind of legitimization that only a freshly ratified law can provide. But all this passed quickly. In little more than a decade, the postwar Taft-Hartley Act restored the labor injunction and brought collective bargaining back under the purview of the courts. For about twenty years afterward nothing seemed to happen—this was the high noon of American capitalism, the era of "mature" collective bargaining. But when the economic winds finally grew colder, the corporations found few legal or political obstacles blocking their brutal counteroffensive, which featured strike breaking and demands for wage concessions. By the 1970s the Wagner Act was a dead letter, the National Labor Relations Board a "bloodless, bureaucratic death squad" into which union organizing campaigns disappeared with hardly a whimper. Indeed, private-sector organizing had come to a complete halt even before the hard times of the 1970s and 1980s sent organized labor into headlong retreat. Geoghegan puts it plainly: "When people ask me, 'Why can't labor organize the way it did in the thirties,' the answer is simple; everything we did then is now illegal."

But it isn't just organizing that has been thwarted by Taft-Hartley and the train of labor legislation that followed in its wake. Led by Supreme Court liberals like William Douglas and William Brennan, the courts did much to bureaucratize the internal life of the trade unions themselves. The theory that underlay postwar labor law is what Marxist legal scholars call "industrial pluralism": Labor and management meet on an equal footing. The office or factory is a kind of civil society in which virtually all disputes can be resolved through a noncoercive system of industrial jurisprudence.

For most of the postwar era, labor liberals defended this idea as a vindication of union rights, while capitalists resisted it as an invasion of their

management prerogatives. Thus, the laborites cheered when the Supreme Court enshrined grievance arbitration as the key to a workable collective bargaining contract. But the effect was to outlaw the strike during the term of the agreement, and to burden the union with a new set of peace-keeping responsibilities. There was now no excuse for a work stoppage, since all disputes would be resolved by a legally sanctioned system of industrial jurisprudence.

Not unexpectedly, this grievance arbitration system grew into a costly and corrupt monster. Grievances are sometimes "won," but management always holds the trump cards. "Management acts, the union grieves" is a well-established industrial relations principle. And if managers find their workers too restless, they can always close the plant, transfer production, or just reopen in the name of a new corporate shell. Against these kinds of odds, even reasonably honest union officials ignore, trade, and sell out the grievances of their members.

And there's another bit of labor history, whose consequences Geoghegan daily confronts, but whose origins he has neglected. His hero, John L. Lewis, hated Roosevelt and his liberal administrative state. Lewis broke ranks with his CIO comrades in 1946 and won directly from the mine owners an industry-financed health and welfare fund. At the time, this seemed a progressive innovation: It extended important material benefits to the rank and file. But it got the postwar labor movement off on the wrong foot, inaugurating the era of contract collective bargaining in which each of the big, powerful unions negotiated for their own little Swedish-style welfare state.

The American system of firm-centered collective bargaining proved a historical dead end. Capitalism is not stable enough to sustain it, and the wave of bankruptcies and reorganizations that climaxed in the 1980s demonstrated the vulnerabilities of even the best established benefit programs. In the U.S., more than a third of all labor costs in unionized firms cover these indirect fringes; thus companies have an enormous financial incentive to avoid unionization or cheat on the welfare obligations they negotiated in more prosperous times. (In recent years, more than half of all strikes have been over health care coverage.)



Big men on paper: The executive council of the AFL-CIO ponders its future over muffins and coffee.

Meanwhile, millions of workers have been turned into voluntary serfs, afraid to switch jobs for fear of losing their pension credits or health insurance. Geoghegan offers a particularly harrowing tale of pension roulette in the trucking industry, where frequent layoffs and complicated vesting eligibility rules deprive thousands of unwitting Teamsters of their long-sought retirement pay. Trade unions without a dense welfare state are like fish out of water: They flap about with great energy, but gradually expire in the thin, cruel air.

But those who regard the unions as nothing more than a special-interest group might reply, what about America's shift to a postindustrial society, to a world of shopping malls and computer terminals far removed from the trucking barns and shuttered steel mills in which Geoghegan finds so many of his clients? After all, these are relics of the 1930s, and we are two generations removed from all that. On the night in August 1989 when Nissan Motors beat back a UAW organizing drive at its new plant in Tennessee, workers stood before their Japanese bosses and sang the company song, "We're the Number One Team." This is a line of argument that, in their despair, even many leftists have come to accept, albeit with a variety of more sophisticated formulations that cite the hegemonic power of "late-capitalist" consumer culture.

"We can talk 'culture' until we all go mad," replies Geoghegan. "But isn't it possible that the law itself may help create the culture? The Jim Crow laws create one kind of culture, and the Civil Rights Act over time creates another. Likewise with the labor laws."

Of course. Today, you have an excellent chance of being fired if you are one of the activists in a union organizing campaign. This is standard operating procedure for all economically rational managers. It's technically illegal but well worth the cost when and if companies have to pay up three or four years down the line. This is repression, pure and simple, of the same sort we used to condemn east of the Elbe. And it would be refreshing if journalists and social scientists began to study the American workplace with some of the same analytic tools they sharpened so well in probing the old Communist regimes. In any authoritarian setting, many people identify with the boss and shrink from the dissidents without quite knowing why.

Indeed, the weaker American labor has become, the more it is resented, and not only by those who hire fifty-dollar-an-hour plumbers and get their cars fixed at union garages. Confined to a few high-wage bastions, union labor seems a privileged elite, remote and irrelevant to the working majority. It may therefore look "arrogant," but it is in fact suffering from an isolation thrust upon it by its enemies.

But when workers can get away with it, they flock to the trade unions, even when their occupations are those of the white-collar, postindustrial future. In Canada and in most public-sector workplaces, the danger of trying to organize a union is minimal; as a consequence, unionization rates are two or three times higher than in private American firms. In Canada—Geoghegan calls it the "free world"—all you have to do is get 55 percent of all workers to sign a card, and bang, they're a union. Geoghegan is therefore exasperated with those neoliberal theorists of the industrial relations future, prophets of a nonadversarial, participatory work regime, who preach an identity of interests that only obfuscates the essential question of power at the workplace.

Geoghegan proclaims himself a New Deal liberal. His solution is therefore an old-fashioned one: Let the people vote. Reform the labor law and let the workers join unions without the fear of being fired. Such a prospect would certainly stop labor's headlong decline and might even revive the labor-liberal wing of the Democratic party.

But how do we get from here to there in this political season? Geoghegan offers no guidelines; indeed it's clear that the solutions now lie outside the labor movement itself. The contemporary stalemate in American politics and social policy is a product not only of capital's intransigence, but of the racial loyalties and fears that so decisively divide the working class and dominate the language of domestic politics. Geoghegan is notably silent on this dilemma, a failure he shares with many others in the rank-and-file school of labor activism.

But if Geoghegan fails to tell us "What is to be done," his passionate tale of witness and solidarity nevertheless restates for our jaded time a fundamental question: If democracy is triumphing around the world, why is it so absent in the American workplace? The future health of our society may depend on resolving the contradiction. □

BOOK REVIEW

Slouching Toward Lebanon

Benny Morris

Pity the Nation by Robert Fisk. Atheneum, 1990, 678 pp.

The past few months have witnessed the completion of Syria's victory over Israel in Lebanon. This last act consisted of three Syrian-engineered scenes. First, there was last year's "civil war within a civil war" fought inside the Christian East Beirut–Jounieh enclave between the Samir Geagea's Maronite Phalangist militia and General Michel Aoun's official Lebanese Army, a war that exhausted the main potential opposition to a Syrian takeover. Second, Syria was able to exploit the world's focus on the Persian Gulf, by crushing Aoun's army in a lightning campaign, capturing the Lebanese presidential compound and defense ministry at Ba'abde, and driving the hapless general into "exile" in the French Embassy in Beirut. Finally, in May, Syrian President Hafez al-Assad and Lebanese President Elias Harawi signed in Damascus a "special relationship" and "cooperation" treaty binding Lebanon firmly to Syria's will and writ, effectively converting the Land of the Cedars into a vassal state.

Thus, in stages, beginning with the Syrian peace-keeping force's entry into Lebanon in January 1976, Assad at a snail's pace has accomplished what Israel tried to do in one fell swoop in the invasion of 1982: to turn Lebanon into a semi-autonomous protectorate. And the Syrians managed to do this mainly by the clever manipulation of a succession of proxy forces, such as the Druse and Shi'ite militias and a variety of Lebanese-bred terrorists. There is a profound lesson here for political scientists and international relations experts. And there is profound hypocrisy (and irony, and a sense of hurt) in Israel's instant condemnations of the May treaty and the Syrian takeover in that Assad has simply managed to do—and far more cheaply, in terms of his countrymen's lives—what Begin and Sharon tried and failed to do in June 1982. Moreover, the Syrian takeover, accompanied by a demilitarization of the militias, for the time being augurs an end to the internecine bloodletting that has been Lebanon's hallmark since 1975 and that all, including Israel, had tried unsuccessfully to halt. Assad, at least for the moment, has pacified what many considered an unpacifiable land, possibly to everyone's benefit. He has presented Sharon with a "new Lebanese order," but one in which the Gemayels—the Maronite *zuama* (chieftains) family in recent decades—figure nowhere and Israel figures only very marginally.

Pity the Nation ends just before the Syrian takeover and, in this sense, is incomplete. It ends in the disorderly,

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bloody mess that was Lebanon just prior to this last act, with Christians (Phalangists) killing Christians (Lebanese Army) in the alleys of East Beirut and Moslems (Hizbullah) killing Moslems (Amal) in the hills east of Sidon. Still, *Pity* is well worth reading. It is easily one of the best books written on the recent travails of Lebanon, better than Jonathan Randal's *Going All the Way: Christian Warlords, Israeli Adventurers, and the War in Lebanon,* and better, in many ways, than Thomas Friedman's excessively praised *From Beirut to Jerusalem.*

Pity is not a history. Fisk was the Beirut-based Middle East correspondent of the *Times* of London from 1975 until 1987. Since then, he has continued to live in Beirut—one of the few Western correspondents left in the Lebanese capital—covering the Middle East for the English newspaper the *Independent.* So this is a journalist's-eye-view of the Lebanese wars between 1975 and 1990, a first-class, knowledgeable, perceptive, and empathetic reporter's record of what he saw and heard as Lebanon was tearing itself apart and as strangers—Palestinians, Syrians, Israelis, Iranians, and Americans (and their French, Italian, and British allies)—helped the Lebanese do so.

Fisk understandably devotes a great deal of space to this involvement of the "strangers." Rarely in modern history have a nation's internal conflicts sucked in so many foreign protagonists: Perhaps Spain in 1936–39 is the only parallel. Of course, most of the "strangers" became involved not so much out of an interest in the host country's well-being or future as out of eagerness to visit hurt or revenge upon other "strangers" (again, as in the Spanish Civil War). The Lebanese quagmire succeeded in corrupting all its invited and uninvited guests, as Fisk persuasively records. It has also succeeded in defeating all of them—except, so far, Syria.

The guests that Lebanon has swallowed up are legion; even to review its last forty years briefly is a daunting task. The Palestinians entered Lebanon in two waves, in 1948–49 and in 1970–71. The first wave arrived without plan or design as refugees from the Jewish-Arab conflict in Palestine. The second wave reached Lebanon as a result of the Jordanian clampdown, in "Black September" (1970) and "Black July" (1971), against the Palestine Liberation Organization fighters who were threatening King Hussein's rule. This wave, consisting mostly of PLO cadres, arrived in Beirut and southern Lebanon precisely with the purpose of carrying on their fight against the Zionist entity from new bases. Sorties across the Jordan were no longer possible; sorties and missile attacks south of the Litani River in southern Lebanon were now the only option.

The Lebanese quagmire succeeded in corrupting all its invited and uninvited guests.

Both waves of Palestinians contributed to the destabilization of Lebanon. The first introduced into the country a large, disaffected, dispossessed minority and substantially increased the country's Moslem population, demographically enhancing the threat to Maronite Christian dominance (as codified in the unwritten Lebanese constitution or "National Pact" of 1942). The second wave reinforced the Palestinian guerrilla campaign against Israel's northern border, which had turned "serious" in 1969. For the Palestinians, Lebanon became a base from which to strike at Israel. This, in turn, led to Israeli counterstrikes, including large scale use of artillery against the southern Lebanese villages—leading to the depopulation of villages and the flight north of many thousands of Shi'ite inhabitants. (These dispossessed Shi'ites were to resurface in the slums of southern Beirut as the angry Amal and Hizbullah gunmen who did so much to destroy Beirut and Maronite dominance a decade later.) By the mid-1970s, the PLO had managed to establish a Palestinian "state-within-a-state" stretching southward from west Beirut to the Litani River—precisely the "state-within-a-state" that Israel sought to destroy in its 1982 invasion. Fisk, it should be noted, is highly critical of the PLO's role and behavior in Lebanon: Historically, he "blames" the Palestinians for much of Lebanon's travail and charges them with gross callousness and insensitivity toward Lebanon and the Lebanese. The PLO, Fisk repeatedly charges, deliberately sited their anti-aircraft guns and tanks in Sidon and Beirut next to civilian apartment blocks, schools, and hospitals—and did not much care that this would lead to Lebanese civilian casualties when Israel attacked.

The Syrians arrived in January 1976, at the height of the Moslem-Christian Lebanese civil war, to save Lebanon from itself—and they arrived with the imprimatur of the Arab League. Historically, Syrian nationalists had always viewed Lebanon as a natural part of "Greater Syria," artificially sheared off Syria by imperialist conspiracies. Initially (and ironically), the Syrians intervened in 1976 to save the Maronites, who were on the verge of defeat at the hands of the Moslem-PLO-Druse coalition: The Syrians did not want the PLO to emerge as Lebanon's powerbroker. But within months, the Syrians were trading artillery barrages with the Phalangists, and such were to remain their relations until the end of the 1980s. Syria, of course, had embarked upon its Lebanese adventure not with the purpose of saving Lebanon (or its Christians) but to expand in conformity with the vision of "Greater Syria." As well, Syria sought to safeguard its own western flank—both against the possibly pernicious influences of Lebanon's sectarian fighting on its own heterogeneous population (Sunnis, Shi'ites, Alawis, Kurds, and Druse) and against a possible "left hook" by Israel through southern Lebanon against Syria itself.

The possibility of such a "left hook" began to materialize, at least in the Syrian imagination, with the emergence during the 1975–76 civil war of Israel's proxy "Free Lebanese Army," commanded by Major Sa'ad Haddad, which controlled a string of southern Lebanese villages along the Israeli border. The fact that in late 1975 and early 1976 Israel turned into the Maronites' main arms supplier and political backer did nothing to deflate Syria's fears of Israeli designs on Lebanon or of the potential "left hook."

The Israeli involvement in Lebanon—again, designed not so much to interfere in Lebanese affairs or to minister to Lebanese needs as to counter the PLO threat from Lebanon to its northern border—had a logic of its own. After having "helped" the Syrians

enter Lebanon (Jerusalem, backing the Maronites, had grudgingly acceded in the Syrian army's 1976 intervention), Israel rightly feared that Syria might exploit its presence there to open up a "second front" along Israel's northern border in the event of full-scale Israeli-Syrian hostilities on the Golan Heights. Hence, Israel had to beef up its own presence in the "security zone," increase overflights of the Syrian-controlled Bek'a Valley and Beirut, and reinforce its alliance with the Maronites. This, in turn, helped nurture Maronite cocksureness and led directly to the Phalange challenge to Syria in Beirut, Zahle, and Mount Senin, overlooking the Bek'a, in 1978 and 1981. Syria responded with massive bombardments of East Beirut and Zahle and the conquest of Mount Senin; Israel shot down two Syrian helicopters; and the Syrians introduced an anti-aircraft missile network into the Bek'a, thus posing a potential challenge to the Israeli Air Force's dominance of Lebanon's skies.

All this set the scene for 1982, when one of the (initially) unspoken aims of the Israeli invasion was to drive the Syrians out of Lebanon. The main, spoken aim was to destroy the PLO or at least to drive it out of Lebanon. Again, neither Lebanon nor the Lebanese was Jerusalem's main concern. Indeed, in its battle against the PLO (and the Syrians), Israel—meaning the Israeli Air Force and the IDF Artillery Corps—incidentally slaughtered thousands of innocent Lebanese (and Palestinian) noncombatants. One of the major contributions of Fisk's book to the history of 1982 is its effort to evaluate and record these civilian casualties. Israeli spokesmen in the summer of 1982 claimed that "only" some three hundred civilians had died in the IDF invasion and in the subsequent siege of West Beirut. Fisk collected statistics of casualties, made the rounds of hospital mortuaries and graveyards in Beirut and Sidon, perused graveyard, hospital, and police records, interviewed gravediggers and policemen, doctors and countless officials—and tallied a figure in excess of ten thousand civilians killed in IDF bombardments and artillery barrages.

The Iranians and Americans (and their French and Italian allies) entered the Lebanese fray in 1982, following and partially in response to the Israeli invasion. The Iranians, sent by the fanatical ayatollahs of Qom and Rey, saw in the situation a god-sent opportunity to export Shi'ite revolution. Hundreds of Iranian "Revolutionary Guards" and agents, settling into bases in and around Baalbek in the northern Bek'a, began to propagate the message and organize, finance, and train Lebanese Shi'ite fighters. The organizations that emerged from these shadowy clandestine activities were the Hizbullah (eventually emerging as a counterweight to the Syrian-aligned Amal militia) and the Islamic Jihad. The Iranian presence was to have a lasting, radicalizing impact on Lebanon and was to leave, via its Shi'ite proxies, an indelible stamp on the annals of international terrorism.

The Americans (and their allies) came, as is often their wont, on a mission of mercy: to provide "international cover" for the PLO withdrawal from West Beirut in August–September 1982. The PLO's leaders feared that Israel or the Phalange would exploit the pullout of the Palestinian contingents to attack either the departing fighters or their civilian relatives being left behind in the refugee camps in Beirut. The pullout on chartered cruise vessels and by land along the Beirut-Damascus highway passed smoothly. But the international force itself withdrew back to its ships after a mere seventeen days; a bombing mission organized by Syria destroyed the Phalange Party HQ at Ashrafiya, killing president-elect Bashir Gemayel (September 14); the IDF took over West Beirut (September 15–16); the Phalangists (perhaps assisted by a handful of Haddad's fighters from south Lebanon) avenged themselves on the unarmed Palestinians in the Sabra and Shatilla camps, slaughtering, according to Fisk, between one and two thousand men, women, and children (September 16–18); and, within two days, the multinational force (MNF) returned. This time, the MNF arrived with no clear purpose, except perhaps a vague idea of propping up the Phalange-dominated government of President Amin Gemayel, the late Bashir's speedily elected brother. This purposelessness, amounting to confusion, was to accompany the MNF's activities during the following eighteen months. The MNF, in fact, was inserted helter-skelter into the middle of a battlefield, and was soon to fall prey to the whims and shells of the various antagonists.

The MNF (soon joined by a British contingent) was to "hold" parts of Southern and West Beirut until its embarrassing departure, tail between its legs, in February 1984. The MNF left, having accomplished nothing, after enduring deadly Shi'ite truck bomb attacks on their HQ in October 1983 (243 U.S. servicemen and some 60 French paratroopers killed); Shi'ite sniper attacks; and intermittent Druse and Syrian shellings. Suicide bombers at this time also (twice) destroyed the U.S. embassy in Beirut and an Israeli military and Shin Bet HQ in Tyre. Who had organized and sent these bombers on their missions—Syrian intelligence or the Iranian Revolutionary Guards or the Lebanese Hizbullah unassisted—has never been made clear. But they clearly outclassed in their sheer effectiveness the American and French responses, by attack aircraft and naval guns, against Shi'ite and Druse targets in Baalbek and the Druse-dominated Shouf Mountains to the southeast of Beirut. The Western retaliatory attacks succeeded only in stirring up the various hornets' nests that made up Lebanon. Fisk, who surpasses himself in describing the Marines under fire and the MNF interlude in general, concludes the chapter on the short-lived Western involvement with a marvelous quote from Captain R.D. Milligan, the commander of the USS *New Jersey,* whose 16-inch guns had managed to ravage a few Druse villages (and, apparently, not much else): "I think the battleship is a definite weapon of peace. And I hope we have made some impact on bringing peace to Lebanon."

The Israelis, who seem to have been corrupted by Lebanon more than most, were to suffer the same fate as the MNF. Having sown the wind (the decade of shelling of the Shi'ites in southern Lebanon, the aerial and artillery bombardment of Tyre, Sidon, and West Beirut in the summer of 1982, and the repression of the Shi'ites and Palestinians in the occupied area of southern Lebanon in 1982 and 1983), the Israelis soon reaped the whirlwind. Fisk devotes a chapter to Israel's struggle in 1983–85 against the mainly Shi'ite guerrilla movement that eventually drove the IDF out of the Shouf, out of the lower Bek'a Valley, out of

Sidon and Tyre, out of the Arnoun Heights, back to the old "security zone" along the international frontier.

It was an awful, bitter struggle, like most guerrilla wars against foreign occupiers. Israeli repression—curfews, mass arrests, beatings, torture—was followed by Shi'ite car-bombings, ambushes, mining, abductions, the murder of collaborators. All of which was followed, in turn, by Israeli assassinations of Shi'ite activists, more torture, demolition of houses, the odd massacre. Fisk, who travelled often around the "wild south" (sometimes shadowed by Shin Bet security servicemen), recorded interviews, firefights, ambushes, raids, and counter-raids. He became the first to describe the modus operandi of the Shin Betniks with their Mercedes limousines with Lebanese license plates, their yellow T-shirts and long-barrelled M-16s, their informers and local henchmen. At the troublesome Shi'ite village of Maarakeh, Fisk recorded, "we watched [the IDF] tipping olive oil over beds, mixing sand in the village rice store, smashing furniture with hammers." At Sohmor, in September 1984, South Lebanese Army contingents murdered thirteen of the menfolk after lining them up in the village square; thirty more lay wounded. The descriptions of assassinations and bombings (invariably based on Fisk's interviews with bystanders and relatives a day or two after the event) make riveting, if unpleasant, reading. It would appear, as well, that the Shin Bet picked up in the "wild south" various nasty habits that were later unleashed on rebellious Arabs in Israel and the Occupied Territories (e.g., the murder by Shin Bet agents in April 1984 of two Palestinian terrorists who had hijacked an Israeli bus, which touched off the so-called "Shin Bet affair"; the "Nafsu affair," which had Shin-Betniks torturing and framing on spy charges an Israeli Circassian who had served as an IDF lieutenant in Southern Lebanon; and the torture of thousands of intifada activists recently documented in the B'tselem report on torture in the Occupied Territories).

Focusing on the "strangers" in Lebanon, of course, can easily lead to distortion (as much as focusing on the Condor Legion or the International Brigades in 1930s Spain would lead to misunderstanding the nature of that civil war). For, ultimately, Lebanon's wars were civil wars, and their initial and primary causes lay in Lebanon itself. The primary Muslim-Christian divide and the tertiary subdivisions and conflicts within each category underlay the decade-and-a-half of bloodshed. The Palestinian presence may have speeded up the process; the Israeli invasion may have temporarily halted certain trends. But, essentially, the multiple feuds that resulted in the protracted fighting were homegrown: the Maronites' efforts to stay in the saddle even though they no longer constituted a majority of the country's population; the Christian fears of the Muslims; the Shi'ites' poverty and political alienation, despite their numbers; the Druse's fears that their very small numbers would lead to political extinction and subordination; the Sunni middle class's jealousy of and competition with the Christian merchant class. All these constituted a multifused powderkeg that internal political, social, and economic processes would probably eventually have ignited. The foreign interventions only speeded up or slowed down the processes, or changed and distorted their emphases.

Reporters in war zones usually end up taking sides—if they have not already arrived in the field with ideological predilections and baggage. Fisk is no exception. Though he often in this long book seems to damn all equally ("In Lebanon, they are all bad"), there surfaces a sharper cutting edge when it comes to Israel and its allies. The Palestinians may have behaved brutally and insensitively at each juncture of the Lebanese wars, but in Fisk's eyes they were and remain victims. While perhaps victimized down the ages (by Christians in Europe and by Arabs more recently), in Lebanon the Jews are clearly among the oppressors.

The Maronite Phalange militia has always enjoyed a bad press in the West (save in Israel). The Phalange are the bad guys in most recent books about Lebanon (see Randal and Friedman). The same tendency to see in the Phalange creatures a degree more evil than their rivals also obtrudes in Fisk, perhaps because Tel al Za'tar (1976) and Sabra and Shatilla were by far the most extensive and least discriminating massacres in the modern history of Lebanon. That the Maronites, an embattled Christian minority trying to survive in a belligerent Muslim environment, also have a claim to victim status somehow fails to emerge in Fisk's narrative.

Interestingly, Fisk begins his book with interviews with death camp survivors in Warsaw and Israel, with Israelis who moved into former Palestinian dwellings and Palestinian exiles living in Lebanon who had once owned these dwellings. They make interesting reading. But they also make for historical distortion. For even if, in a sense, the Palestinians in 1948 (and continuously thereafter) paid the price for Christian and Nazi persecution of the Jews in Europe over the ages, is that really the natural starting point for a book about Lebanon? Are Lebanon's wars and civil wars really all a result or a by-product of the Israeli-Palestinian or Israeli-Arab conflict? The Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 was not the start of the cycle of Lebanese bloodletting. Nor did Israel invade ir. an effort to "punish" the (Arab) gentile for Christendom's persecution of the Jews since 70 C.E., though Begin's metaphoric comparisons of Arafat in his bunker to Hitler in his bunker in Berlin certainly provide a clue about one causal strand in Israeli decision making in 1982. Lebanon, the self-ravaged state, was not all or mainly Israel's fault. Nor was the U.S. quite as bad or murderous as some of the protagonists (such as Syria). Fisk observes at one point that Libyan president Muammer Qaddafi "was sentenced to death by the Americans, every bit as crudely as the Ayatollah Khomeini was later to sentence the British writer Salman Rushdie to death for 'blasphemy.'" Which, of course, is absurd. If Qaddafi was indeed a major target of the U.S. raids on Libya in 1986, it was because Qaddafi was a major financer, equipper, and political supporter of international terrorists such as Abu Nidal. All Rushdie had done was publish a novel that shed some unpleasant light on Islam.

Fisk has some very good pages on political semantics and terminology.

He spends a great deal of time describing and analyzing the various uses of the term "terrorist," and the multiple hypocrisies involved. For Israel, anyone it killed or detained in Lebanon was a "terrorist." The use of that term to describe PLO or Shi'ite fighters was part of the process of demonization that facilitated dismissal or abuse of the enemy: It is easier to kill or torture someone whom you have been previously conditioned to regard as not quite human.

Fisk berates the inequity of the various usages, by Israel as well as in the Western press (which Israeli officials usually mistakenly believe to be "anti-Israel" or "pro-PLO"). Above all, of course, stands the word "terrorist." Anyone in Lebanon who attacked Israeli Occupation (or American) troops was a "terrorist" (in Hebrew, *mehabel*); any militiaman supporting Israel or the Americans was a "militiaman" or "soldier." But when Phalangists murdered hundreds of Druse, Palestinians, and Shi'ite civilians at roadblocks in the Shoof or southern Lebanon, were they "troops" or "terrorists"? When a Shi'ite dispatched by the Israelis planted a car bomb in West Beirut killing dozens of civilians, was he a "militiaman," "agent," or "terrorist"? When Israeli aircraft intercepted a Syrian airliner carrying as it turned out Ba'ath Party officials and forced it down in Tel Aviv, Fisk's own paper, the *Times,* called it a "mid-air swoop" or "interception" rather than an act of air piracy. When the Israeli navy stopped and hauled to Haifa a Lebanese ferryboat plying the Beirut-Larnaca route, the boat was said to have been "diverted." Had the Syrian navy done the same thing to an Israeli civilian craft, would the term "diverted" or "hijacked" have been chosen? Jewish extremists who blew off the feet of two Arab mayors in the West Bank or sprayed with automatic gunfire a group of Palestinian students on the campus of Hebron's Islamic University, killing three and wounding thirty, were usually referred to in the Israeli media as members of an "underground" (echoes of the anti-Nazi resistance) rather than simply as "terrorists" or "Jewish terrorists." When Lebanese resistance fighters captured Israeli troops in Lebanon, they were reported to have been "kidnapped"; when guerrilla suspects were detained by Israeli troops, they were said to have been "captured." Israeli troops in Shi'ite or Palestinian captivity are often referred to as "hostages." But Palestinian or Shi'ite fighters or suspects held by the South Lebanese Army at Al Khiam prison or in Israel are referred to as "prisoners." And so on.

Such insights represent just a few of the political lessons that can be drawn from Fisk's book. Different readers, of course, will find different meanings in *Pity*'s narrative. Some will doubtless brand it shocking or offensive; most, I suspect, will find it unsettling. A book need accomplish no more. □

BOOK REVIEW

Maimonides the Humanist

David Biale

Maimonides on Judaism and the Jewish People by Menachem Kellner. State University of New York Press, 1991, 168 pp.

This is the first in an ongoing series of short reviews, edited by David Biale, concerning books of Jewish interest.

Jews fight their battles with each other using weapons fashioned out of the tradition. Meir Kahane argued that Judaism had nothing in common with democracy; David Hartman finds that Jewish history provides an instructive model for the foundation of a pluralistic society in a Jewish state. If the tradition as a whole can be mined to support such diverse political viewpoints, Moses Maimonides, the greatest medieval Jewish philosopher and legal authority, is no less susceptible to such treatment. For today's religious messianists, such as Gush Emunim, Maimonides legitimizes human initiative in bringing the redemption—no need to wait for the Messiah to come first. Maimonides's political version of messianism has afforded them a vision of the State of Israel, and particularly the Occupied Territories, as building blocks for the Messiah's reign.

Menachem Kellner offers another reading of Maimonides, one that emphasizes the universalist strain of his thought. Many Orthodox Jews today see essential, occasionally even racial, differences between Jews and gentiles; but in the twelfth century, Maimonides had begun to undermine the philosophical foundations of such differences. Jews and gentiles, Maimonides wrote, have exactly the same capacity for understanding truth and achieving holiness. A Jew, for Maimonides, is not primarily someone born of a Jewish mother (although he couldn't dismiss this law); rather, a Jew is primarily identified by his or her beliefs. Thus Maimonides recognized no difference between those born Jewish and converts. Similarly, he refrained from using the term "chosen people," with its implications of some intrinsic, inherited difference between Jews and gentiles. Indeed, by Kellner's account, Maimonides believed that those very categories would disappear in the messianic era, when all gentiles would convert to Judaism.

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The Jewish tradition needs to be rescued from those secular and religious chauvinists who claim to be its custodians. Kellner has aided this cause with his careful and persuasive interpretation of Maimonides as a liberal universalist. Nonetheless, Maimonides cannot be forced into any neat category of modern thought. Judaism remained for him the religion closest to rational truth, and Jews the people most equipped to attain enlightenment. Moreover, despite the egalitarianism embedded in his psychological theory, Maimonides, like most medieval thinkers, was an elitist and a long way from advocating any sort of religious or cultural pluralism. Few Jews and certainly no women could, in practice, acquire truth; and gentiles could only await conversion at the end of days. There are, after all, limits to just how much a medieval philosopher can say to our age.

Today's conflicting interpretations of Maimonides are all grounded in the creative ambiguities of his thought. In the final analysis, Maimonides's greatness, as Kellner's crisp little book shows, lies in the fact that he can still serve both sides of the contemporary conflict over Jewish identity nearly a millennium after he wrote. □

BOOK REVIEW

Keep the Faith

Casey Blake

The Good Society by Robert N. Bellah, Richard Madsen, William M. Sullivan, Ann Swidler, and Steven M. Tipton. Alfred A. Knopf, 1991, 368 pp.

Battered by resounding electoral and ideological defeats, liberals and leftists have spent the last decade searching for a usable American moral tradition. From populism to communitarianism to civic republicanism, thinkers on the Left have turned to a host of competing interpretations of how Americans think of their shared political culture and civic obligations. To those who view the United States as a "shining city on a hill," the Left has responded with traditions that call upon the redeemer nation to make good on its democratic promise. If *their* America was "a country where someone could always get rich," in Ronald Reagan's words, *our* America was a country whose moral and political traditions sustained the memory and vision of more democratic vistas.

No book in the 1980s better articulated the contested nature of such traditions or more eloquently defended the generous impulses in our heritage than *Habits of the Heart,* the 1985 bestseller by Robert Bellah, Richard Madsen, William M. Sullivan, Ann Swidler, and Steven M. Tipton. Like *The Lonely Crowd,* David Riesman's classic of fifties cultural criticism, the Bellah group's study of "individualism and commitment in American life" spoke to the conscience of liberal, middle-class readers who were profoundly uneasy about the waning of personal and civic obligations in a market society. The ideology of unbridled individualism, the authors argued, had eroded the trust in others and the capacity for respectful dialogue between clashing points of view that were the "habits of the heart" necessary to sustain private commitments and public citizenship. Bellah and his associates discovered that our everyday practice revealed a richer conception of community than did the individualistic justifications we offered for our behavior. But that practice is in danger of being overwhelmed by the claims of individualism, the authors warned, if Americans fail to recover the language of their country's biblical and republican traditions, and to reaffirm that "the individual self finds its fulfillment in relationship with others in a society organized through public dialogue."

The success of *Habits* was due as much to its rhetoric as to its message. Adopting the prophetic stance of the Protestant social gospel, Bellah and his associates practiced what Michael Walzer has termed "connected" social criticism. They urged Americans to give meaning to the best of their actions by reviving a vernacular idiom of moral judgment they had learned long ago, but had come to take for granted. The authors described *Habits* as an invitation to an ongoing, public conversation about how to renew and reshape America's communitarian heritage, a conversation that would serve as both the means and ends of a politics of democratic reclamation. That

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conversation would not provide Americans with blueprints for utopia, but it would offer the vocabulary and sense of shared purpose indispensable to a revitalized public sphere. Many liberals and leftists reeling from the vindictive nationalism of the Reagan years found personal solace and social hope in the book's American jeremiad: This was our country too.

A crisis of legitimation has led most people into one or another form of retreat—into the haven of the family, a defensive strategy of looking out for number one, or into radical strategies that forsake the prospect of reforming established institutions.

But it was precisely the communitarian rhetoric of *Habits* that drew the fire of others on the Left, who blasted the authors for their alleged sentimentality and claimed that their appeals to tradition revealed a longing for forms of authority—especially in family life—that were no longer defensible. For these critics, Bellah and his friends were guilty of obscuring the realities of political conflict in cloying, mutualistic cant; their calls for a revitalized civic culture clashed with their nostalgic image of an idyllic American past, which ignored the complicity of the republican ideal in patriarchal and racial hierarchies.

Even if one shared the authors' fundamental premises, there were reasons to be uneasy about the book's ambiguities and silences. *Habits* appeared to offer contradictory diagnoses of the country's impasse. At times, echoing the philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre, the Bellah group often sounded like wholesale opponents of the Enlightenment, offering little more than the lost *gemeinschaft* of medieval Catholicism as the antidote to the modern malaise. At other moments, they condemned their contemporaries for clinging to particularistic loyalties—such as membership in rural communities—that were obsolete in an interdependent modern economy. And most surprising of all, for a work of "connected" social criticism, *Habits* displayed little interest in twentieth-century American social critics who had struggled to redefine their country's critical traditions in terms appropriate to an industrial-capitalist society. The modern social theorists most relevant to the Bellah group's enterprise—John Dewey, above all others—were conspicuously absent.

The Good Society, the sequel to *Habits,* is evidence that the authors meant what they said six years ago when they invited readers to enter into a conversation with them about the vitality of their country's traditions. Bellah and his associates have listened closely to their critics and have produced a book that, while clearly indebted to its predecessor, shifts the terms of discussion in significant and beneficial ways. Whereas *Habits* was concerned with the need to restore a "moral ecology" appropriate to personal and civic renewal, *The Good Society* examines the crises of our institutions, arguing that even in a culture that places a premium on individual autonomy, institutions form the self and "give shape to collective and individual experience." Its authors locate in our schools, our places of worship, and even the agencies of the welfare state a residual commitment to reasoning in public about matters of common moral and civic interest. As they turn from political economy and global security to the family, education, and religion, Bellah and his associates probe the possibilities for reclaiming institutions other critics have condemned as hopelessly corrupt, or paralyzed by bureaucratic inertia. The result is a compelling work of social criticism that is more sensitive to recent history and more alert to political questions than was its predecessor.

The most noticeable shift in the authors' analysis is their definition of what ails us. MacIntyre has given way to Jürgen Habermas as the inspiration for the group's diagnosis of contemporary culture. Following Habermas's theory of "the colonization of the life-world," the authors describe how the logic of a multinational market economy has invaded every realm of social life, disrupting the very traditions and obligations that had sustained the earliest phases of capitalist growth. The family, the schools, the Protestant work ethic, and political argument have succumbed, one by one, to the pressures of cost-benefit analysis and other market-driven conceptions of individualist fulfillment. Capitalism is devouring its own cultural foundations, the authors argue, while institutions that once cultivated an autonomous rationale feel compelled to reorganize themselves according to the most narrow criteria of administrative efficiency and profitability.

This capitalist assault on culture, earlier anticipated by such theorists as Karl Polanyi and Lewis Mumford, has been compounded by more recent developments that have confronted working- and middle-class Americans with an unprecedented economic insecurity. Decades of military mobilization during the cold war have derailed hopes for a more expansive welfare state, while the collapse of the New Deal social contract during the 1970s has made fear of unemployment a defining feature of most Americans' inner lives. The result is a crisis of legitimation that has led most people into one or another form of retreat—into the haven of the family, a defensive strategy of looking out for number one, or into radical strategies that forsake the prospect of reforming established institutions for the purity of nature, the commune, or an isolated congregation of the faithful. Since the authors believe such withdrawal is ultimately futile, they see only two possible responses to this crisis of legitimation: Either we can continue on the present course into cynicism, or we can try to retrieve and reconstruct a history that places our capacity for collective deliberation and moral education at the center of our institutional life.

Not surprisingly, the authors opt for the latter, and *The Good Society* is characterized by much of the relentlessly hopeful rhetoric that pervaded *Habits.* But now, the authors have joined their appeals for cultural uplift to a careful examination of Progressive-era thinkers in Britain and the United States, who struggled to embody the religious and democratic aspirations of their culture in a viable politics. In the early decades of the twentieth century, Herbert Croly, John Dewey, Walter Lippmann, and Graham Wallas (an influential English Fabian) understood that the rise of new social and political forces knitting the modern

nation-state and the world at large into a "great society" had not been matched by a cultural awareness of that phenomenon or by a politics capable of bringing modern society under democratic control. As Dewey put it in 1927, "Our concern at this time is to state how it is that the machine age in developing the Great Society has invaded and partially disintegrated the small communities of former times without generating a Great Community."

The turn to Progressive theorists gives *The Good Society* a degree of sociological and political concreteness, since it locates the genesis of our dilemma not in "modernity" but in the ascendancy of corporate capitalism over other institutions. Yet this position has its own ambiguities. In arguing for a politics appropriate to the challenge of a centralized economic system, *The Good Society* closely resembles Croly's influential manifesto of 1907, *The Promise of American Life*. Croly urged Americans to give up their Jeffersonian belief in small government as obsolete in an age of large corporations. He advocated using Hamiltonian means (government regulation of the economy) to achieve Jeffersonian ends (protection of workers and other less powerful citizens). Many Progressives, exaggerating the antidemocratic strains in Croly's thinking, began to argue that bigness in economic life required the countervailing force of big government. They ridiculed the idea of democratic self-government by an "omnicompetent" citizenry as a fantasy of the frontier era and insisted that only the technical knowledge developed within the corporation provided the skills necessary to discipline corporate power. Toward the end of his life, Croly largely repudiated this elitist version of his thought, but the fascination with bigness and central authority left an indelible mark on American Progressives and liberals. Walter Lippmann's work from the 1920s on also followed this reasoning, as did the journalistic efforts of Croly's successors at the *New Republic* in the 1930s and 1940s, who prided themselves on their technocratic liberalism and unsentimental disdain for participatory politics, even as they flirted with the Jeffersonian rhetoric of the Popular Front.

The Extravagant Beauty

It all slips down to an off-white couch in the afternoon, and
my lying here killed by the extravagant beauty outside the window,

the view I am so lucky to have, the tight space in my eye for it.
Cannot let it come in, cannot, like a child, let it rest on me.

It all comes down to this, to the peas slowly growing without a fence,
to the dandelions bright yellow stars on the chest of the whole earth.

I met an old lover at a party. He remembered we made love
outside a restaurant in 1973. "What?" I say, "I'm embarrassed,

I don't remember this at all." He says, "I'm embarrassed I do."
It all comes down now to his stroking the half inch of bare skin

on the front of my calf and me wondering if I'd shaved my legs,
and when, not remembering. Cannot remember when I loved

one man so much it was all I did; when I wasn't in bed, I was.
Cannot crave in such a way. It all comes down to remembering

when my love was dangerous—my smitten lovers, how I wanted
to eat up my kids. It slips down to my mother's tone of voice

asking me every Sunday to save her, and I cannot make her legs work,
cannot keep her friends on this earth, my father from his atheism,

cannot erase anti-Semitism, will not argue with her about the Arabs.
It all slips down to two steps back, cannot take the world into my arms,

cannot let the door open wide, the sky fall down. Cannot hold a banner
up with two hands, cannot lift it with all my might. I know both sides

of the story, see the tiny spaces for air between the weave
of the cloth, the machine that made it, the noise, the tired women

on their feet all day. It slips down to one thing, one afternoon so
small, cannot open my mouth wide enough for it, will not.

It slips down to one day, one coin. No one else to shine it;
first I spit on it, then I rub.

Gene Zeiger

John Dewey, on the other hand, saw the challenge of the new society very differently. As Robert Westbrook shows in his recent intellectual biography, Dewey struggled throughout his life to articulate a politics that would submit the structures created by industrial capitalism to the acid test of democratic participation. He spoke for a politics that would attempt to organize a self-conscious public in schools, trade unions, and third

parties. In the thirties, Dewey tried to create a leftist third party in the American grain; he was concerned with the local organization of citizens who considered themselves "middle class," rather than with influencing Roosevelt's brain trust or professing Marxist orthodoxy. Dewey's populist impulses stand in stark contrast to the elitist strain in Progressive-era theory that emerged, in part, from Croly's embrace of Hamiltonian state regulation. Reclaiming a viable public through autonomous political and educational action and forging a corporatist alliance between business and government are vastly divergent projects.

For most of *The Good Society,* the authors take their cues from Dewey, as well as from Greens, religious radicals, and other advocates of a democratic localism. Their ideal principle is "subsidiarity"—the belief that "power should devolve on the lowest, most local level at which decisions can reasonably be made." And their commitment to participatory democracy has a distinctly greenish hue. They endorse Lewis Mumford's ethic of "cultivation," in which the restless pursuit of short-term profits would give way to an ecological culture of settlement and renewal. In the best chapter of the book, dealing with religion, Steven Tipton shows how debates within organized Methodism provide concrete examples of such a politics. Despite their obvious differences, Tipton argues, conservative evangelicals and radicals inspired by feminism and liberation theology both seek to revitalize the local congregation as a center of spiritual fellowship and a source of resistance to the marketplace. As much as these groups fight over specific policies, they share a belief in the associational life of religious institutions that pits them against the bureaucratic liberals who have transformed the mainline Protestant churches into Washington-based lobbying organizations.

But the politics of "subsidiarity" clashes with other themes in the book, notably a romance with the emerging "postindustrial" economy that is reminiscent of Croly's enthusiasm for the innovations of the turn-of-the-century corporate economy. Like Croly and many other early-twentieth-century Progressives, the authors of *The Good Society* ascribe a logic to economic growth that favors their particular political and cultural position. For Croly, it was the belief that corporations fostered professionalism, long-term planning, and the techniques of applied science. For Bellah's group, it is the belief that "the productivity of a high-tech company resides in the quality of its work force, in the competence and responsibility of individuals, but also, critically, in the trust they have in each other to nurture creativity and innovation."

The authors have uncritically adopted the cliché that the new information-oriented economy depends on the creation of a better-educated work force and a more democratic workplace. But the Japanese miracle in technology and marketing does not necessarily constitute the creation of a "good society" or a democratic one. For the deindustrialized portions of the United States, the high-tech global economy offers none of the benefits Bellah and his associates describe, but rather the substitution of overtime work at low-paying service-sector jobs for manufacturing jobs that have moved overseas. To view the rise of global economic interdependence as a beneficial phenomenon, or even a neutral one, implies very different political choices than an analysis that stresses the predatory behavior of multinational corporations that roam the globe in search of cheap labor. *The Good Society* undermines the force of its Deweyan arguments when it reassures readers that the high-tech economy helps us to challenge the imperial marketplace. A politics of "subsidiarity" has an obligation, above all else, to address the structural obstacles that thwart the ability of individuals and communities to exercise responsibility over their own destinies.

Perhaps the authors have deliberately refrained from burning their bridges to a middle-class readership that has a greater tolerance for utopian fantasies of postindustrialism than for the harsher rhetoric of a populist politics. But at some point, the discussion has to get around to potentially divisive matters such as who gains and who loses in the new global economy. When it does, generalities about "interdependence" only get in the way of frank talk about what many Americans experience as a declining standard of living and a deepening of their own powerlessness.

Many liberal and radical critics of *Habits* argue that the Bellah group is incapable of advancing political arguments, and that their communitarian jeremiad substitutes appeals to first principles for a realistic appraisal of power and conflict. There are passages in *The Good Society* that will feed that suspicion. Commenting on the generational conflicts between liberal Protestants in government, think tanks, and mainline churches during the Vietnam War, the authors write, "In an earlier era public theologians like Reinhold Niebuhr, and political leaders, too, might have expressed those elements of the biblical tradition that would demonstrate the common ground these different constituencies shared." One may regret that young New Leftists blamed their liberal parents for the horrors of Vietnam. But weren't they right to condemn the foreign policy that produced the war? There are times when disagreement, however harsh and painful, is not only unavoidable but necessary. At such times, concern for the moral center of our political discourse gives way to the need to speak clearly and truthfully about what divides us. The politics of truth—as C. Wright Mills called it—better serves our democratic heritage in periods of serious disagreement than appeals to community and prophetic leadership.

Yet to dismiss the Bellah group's project of reconstructing our country's core traditions would leave us with very little to counter the ugliness that pervades the U.S.'s contemporary political culture. The hope for a moral "common ground" may result in fuzzy politics, but the so-called realism that imagines politics only as a contest between the strong has little to offer the weak except sectarian purity, rhetorical extravagance, and a profound despair about the possibility of democratic self-government. At a time when so many radicals rush to endorse the Right's view that a will-to-power lies behind all forms of idealism, it is exhilarating to watch the Bellah group as it makes its long march through American progressive thought in search of traditions capable of sustaining a new political opposition. Their calls for a politics of local responsibility and their hopes of reclaiming spaces for collective dialogue

within our institutions remain the best response to the cynicism that characterizes so many "realists," on the Left and Right alike. By measuring our institutional practice against Dewey's vision of a democratic public sphere, the authors join communitarian hope with an awareness that hope alone will not bring us to a good society.

At the end of the twentieth century, Americans confront the possibility that their culture has run out of ideals, and that their country has lapsed into a profound state of civic stagnation. Bellah and his collaborators remind us there is no escape, no state of nature or individual freedom untainted by the corruption of our organized institutional life. They urge us not to flee from the moral corrosions of modernity, but to begin a long and hard process of self-scrutiny. Only such introspection will allow us to recover the "capacity for common discussion and public invention" that is the fragile legacy of our democratic history. By promoting discussion and even disagreement about that legacy, the authors of *Habits of the Heart* and *The Good Society* are among its greatest heirs, clearing spaces in the unsettling present for a settlement we can only imagine. □

BOOK REVIEW

Western Rootlessness and Muslim Rage

Laurie Mylroie

The Jews of Arab Lands in Modern Times by Norman Stillman. Jewish Publication Society, 1991, 604 pp.

That relations between the West and the Middle East are problematic, and sometimes openly hostile, is beyond dispute. However, the reasons for this situation are hotly and emotionally contested. Some observers hold that the roots of the problem lie in the imperious actions of the region's leading Western powers, most recently the United States—supporting the State of Israel, giving the Palestinians short shrift, bombing Libya, and waging war against Iraq. The upshot of such actions, these critics maintain, is to generate Arab hostility to the West.

A contending school of thought draws on a formidable body of historical research to argue that these troubled relations stem from more than simply the sins of the West. "The roots of Muslim rage," to borrow the title of a recent article by the distinguished Princeton historian Bernard Lewis, lie in the region itself and its modern history, which is conventionally said to date from Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1798. From this perspective, the West can do comparatively little to ameliorate these tensions, because their underlying causes stem from within Muslim societies.

Norman Stillman writes from this perspective, and his book reveals almost as much about Arab lands as it does about Jews. The Arabs' harsh treatment of Jews in modern times, and the increasingly bitter relations between Jewish and Arab communities, according to Stillman, arose from the responses of each community to modernization—the complex of political, social, and economic changes that have accompanied the rise of the West and the spread of its influence. The hallmarks of the West—democratic government and the economic prosperity of a market economy—are tremendously attractive to peoples everywhere; and even regimes that have little desire for either democracy or markets want to acquire the West's technological capacity. Their dilemma is always how to import the science of the West without its political ideas.

Yet modern industrial-capitalist society has a darker side too. It entails the breakup of traditional communities that are based on religious identity and tribal and family loyalties. It atomizes people and generates feelings of alienation and insecurity. That so many of Israel's zealots are of American rather than Sephardi origin bears witness to the alienation that liberalism breeds, and to the radical thirst for a sense of community that it can engender.

Modernization has presented a particularly difficult challenge for Muslims. Unlike Christianity or Judaism, Islam almost since its inception has been linked to political authority. Among its basic tenets is the dictum that Muslims should live under Muslim governments. During much of its first millennium, Islam was one of the world's preeminent civilizations; only in the last three hundred years have non-Islamic societies come to surpass it dramatically in power and prestige. As Stillman explains, Muslims have had to cope with that reversal—including the occupation of Muslim lands by foreign powers—as well as the emergence of new ideas of Western origin that are hostile to religious orthodoxy, such as secularism and liberalism. Jews and Christians welcomed the encounter of Islamic civilization with modernity. Both groups were underdogs in Islamic society; and both had contact with Western coreligionists

Laurie Mylroie was recently a visiting fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, where she wrote The Future of Iraq *(WINEP, 1991).*

NEH Summer Seminars for College Teachers 1992

Jews in Modern Culture: Literature, Ideology, History

June 15–August 7, 1992
Yale University

Director: **Benjamin Harshav (Hrushovski)**
The modern age saw, on the one hand, the emergence of a new, secular Jewish literature in Hebrew, Yiddish and other languages; and, on the other hand, Jews played a conspicuous role in general culture and science. We shall examine both directions of this centrifugal movement and ask to what extent modes of "Jewish discourse" have influenced the work of assimilated Jews. Theoretical discussions will be combined with close readings of texts by Mendele, Sholem Aleichem, Babel, Bellow, Agnon, Amichai, Freud, Sartre, and especially Franz Kafka. Participants will receive a stipend of $4,000. Application deadline: March 2, 1992. For further information and application forms, please write to Professor Benjamin Harshav, Yale University NEH Summer Seminars, 246 Church St., Suite 101, New Haven, CT 06510-1722; tel. (203) 432-2430.

Jewish American Writing Since 1925

June 15–July 31,1992
University of Chicago

Director: **Mark Krupnick**
This seminar will focus on representative authors and texts spanning three generations, from Anzia Yezierska and Henry Roth in the 1920s–30s to Saul Bellow and Bernard Malamud in the middle generation to Grace Paley, Cynthia Ozick, Philip Roth, and younger figures who have emerged since the 1960s. The seminar will take particular account of feminist writing from Yezierska to E. M. Broner, and to the modulation from ethnic to religious concerns in recent Jewish fiction (Ozick) and criticism (Harold Bloom). Participants will receive a stipend of $3600 (seven-week seminar). Application deadline: March 2, 1992. For further information and application forms, please write to Professor Mark Krupnick, Divinity School, University of Chicago, 1025 E. 58th Street, Chicago, IL 60637.

keen to introduce them to the new ways of the West. For Muslims, however, the encounter with the West was far more problematic. This in a nutshell is Stillman's thesis, well documented, in clear and cogent prose, of interest to scholars and laypeople alike.

The historical narrative of *The Jews of Arab Lands* covers the troubled course of Jewish-Arab relations over the last two hundred years. Stillman supplements this story with "source" documents, many of which afford the reader a vivid image of the complex interactions of the modern Jewish, Arab, and Western worlds. Although some commentary to guide the reader through the material would have made the documents even more helpful, some of them speak volumes on their own. Consider those documents on the disputes between the traditional Sephardi Jewish establishment and the Alliance Israelite Universelle. The organization of liberal Jews, imbued with the nineteenth-century French spirit of the *mission civilatrice,* sought, among other things, to bring modernity to their coreligionists in the Arab lands. In the documents assembled by Stillman, we learn how Alliance members were appalled by much of what they found—the marrying off of eight-year-old girls in Morocco; the communal eating habits of the Jewish cave dwellers of Libya; the traditional schools of Yemen, in which children appeared able to read the Torah at a precocious age, but in fact had learned it by rote, understanding little of what they had "read."

Yet the Jews whose "moral progress" the Alliance sought to advance did not necessarily share its view of their condition. In one document, Rabbi Agassi of Baghdad denounced the new secular schools of the Alliance for the rise of an unprecedented immorality in the Jewish community—the public desecration of the Sabbath, the bare-headedness of women, even homosexuality. Similarly, a Syrian rabbi railed against the "new intellectuals" who purported "that their desire is to benefit us, but either intentionally or unwittingly they are taking our souls." Many Muslim clerics would have agreed with the two rabbis; therein lies an important aspect of the "roots of Muslim rage."

Pan-Arabism and pan-Islamicism were the Arab world's strongest responses to Europe's imperial incursions into the region after World War I. Both movements were able to command popular support by strongly opposing the West and the Zionist movement in Palestine. Both offered emotional release to a population that felt oppressed by foreign rule and foreign customs. They also represented xenophobic ideologies, sustained even after the Arabs gained independence. All minorities fared poorly as the weak governments of the new states played to chauvinist sentiments. The first to suffer were the Assyrian Christians, massacred one year after Iraqi independence. The massacre made a hero of the general in charge, who then led the Arabs' first military coup.

Anglo-Americans in the Middle East were often strangely indulgent toward Arab nationalism, failing to recognize its inherent anti-Westernism—a position that sometimes transgressed the liberal principles of their own societies. The distinguished British Orientalist Sir Hamilton Gibb condemned the attack on the Assyrians, but also explained that "in an Arab Muslim State non-Arab and non-Muslim minorities have rights only insofar as they recognize that fundamental fact." With its long experience in the Middle East, the British army stood by several times as mobs attacked Jewish communities, most notoriously in Iraq. The passivity of Britain's forces in Baghdad was intended to avoid compromising their Arab allies. However, the restored Iraqi government, to its credit, vigorously condemned the pogrom, and conducted an investigation, which Stillman excerpts in his source materials. Nor was this a peculiarly British predilection. An American official in Algeria in 1941 advised Washington not to take up the cause of Algerian Jews after the Vichy regime began to legislate and implement anti-Jewish laws, lest the U.S. alienate the "sympathy" of Algerians for the Allies.

Such sentiments are far from a thing of the past. Consider America's recent experience with Iraq, where expert

opinion in Washington maintained that the Ba'ath party still provides a coherent structure to control Iraq—on the eve of the most widespread popular revolts Iraq has ever seen. Hence, a National Security Council staffer told a Senate aide on the eve of the uprising, "we want to remove Saddam, not change the regime." One of the major intelligence miscalculations of the war was the failure to recognize that the pan-Arabist Ba'athist ideology was bankrupt, and that terror was the real force behind Ba'athist rule.

The seeds of such attitudes, remote as they may seem from the Jews of Arab lands, can be discerned in this book. Stillman's outstanding analysis, backed by his vast knowledge, represents an important chapter in the long story of the Middle East's continuing struggle with modernity. His perspective on the Israeli-Arab conflict is neither very optimistic nor unrelentingly bleak. The intensity of present tensions is the product of specific historical circumstances, one element in the Arab reaction to the cultural challenge posed by Western liberalism. Until now, there were always major international powers hostile to liberalism—the fascist regimes between the two world wars or Communist governments afterwards—ready to provide material support and political recognition to stridently anti-liberal forces in the Middle East. As a result, "the end of history"—the collapse of any credible alternative to the social and political order of the West—is bound to affect the Middle East. It is unlikely that as democracies spread in the rest of the world, citizens of the Arab states will resign themselves indefinitely to the military dictatorships of nationalists and the medieval theocracies of Islamic fundamentalists. The suggestion implicit in Stillman's argument is that if and when the Arabs come to terms with liberalism, they and the Jews will be better able to address the issues that divide them, unencumbered by the excess baggage that embitters present relations. □

MUSIC REVIEW

African Voices Calling from Israel

Norman Weinstein

Liturgies of the Jews of Ethiopia by various Ethiopian Jewish Priests. INEDIT Compact Disc W260013. Distributed by Harmonia U.S.A.

The voices of praying Ethiopian Jews on this recording call forth a range of enigmatic sensations. This music sounds, simultaneously, vaguely familiar and oddly alien. Snatches of melodies slide in and out of the pentatonic scale, a scale surely familiar to those acquainted with European Jewish liturgical music. Like Jewish liturgical music from around the globe, it is a dynamic set of exchanges between soloists and choruses. But like the Ethiopian Jews themselves, this music is autochthonous. Perhaps this is in part because Ethiopia throughout the centuries successfully resisted colonialism, and that the Falasha settled in remote mountainous regions. Tragically, however, the pressures of acculturation to Israeli society are rapidly erasing this musical culture. Catch it through the medium of this disc while you can. There is nothing in the spectrum of Jewish holy music exactly like it.

This recording is from Israel; it seems a safe bet that no future recordings of Jewish liturgical music will ever be made in Ethiopia, where perhaps a third of the estimated thirty-thousand Falasha remain. But there is one still commercially available, and anyone interested in these people and their music should seek it out. It is a field recording made by Columbia University professor Wolf Leslau, fifteen minutes in length and available through mail-order only, from Smithsonian Folkways (Office of Folklife Programs, 955 L'Enfant Plaza, Suite 2600, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. 20560). In spite of vocal distortion so severe it can set your teeth on edge, it records a music very similar to what you intermittently hear on the sonically crystalline compact disc. And unlike *Liturgies*, it offers instrumental accompaniment. You hear a kettledrum and iron gong on two selections. They don't mark time in any of the complex ways often identifiable in African music. You hear a simple heartbeat resonating from the drum, a gong tolling on a prayer where voices welcome Passover. Yet within a matter of minutes you become conscious that this is African Jewish music.

Whatever African Jewish music is vocally, it's immediately clear what it isn't. There are three chief traditions of Jewish liturgical vocal music: Yemenite, Sephardi, and Ashkenazi. Falasha belongs to none of them.

Here begins a thorny controversy. Some musicologists—among them Kay Kaufman Shelemay, author of *Music, Ritual, and Falasha History*—suggest that Ethiopian Jewish music has been heavily influenced by the music of the Christian monastic order of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. Both use the classical Ethiopian language of Ge'ez—though for Falasha in Israel that language is being replaced by Hebrew. Both use similar forms of vocal ornamentation and feature overlapping choral voices (overlapping is inevitable since no choirmaster attempts to synchronize the voices).

Ethiopian Jews who had to spend years fighting Orthodox rabbis in Israel concerning the authenticity of

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Norman Weinstein is a poet, critic, and author of A Night in Tunisia: Imaginations of Africa in Jazz *(Scarecrow Press, 1991).*



The voices of a vanishing tradition: Falasha priests gather to welcome the Sabbath in the village of Ambober, Ethiopia.

their Jewishness would probably not appreciate Shelemay's argument. It is one matter to say that Falasha are authentic Jews in spite of their isolation from the influence of talmudic Judaism for centuries. After all, they observe monotheism strictly in their major rituals, keep kosher laws devoutly, draw rigorously upon the Hebrew Bible for spiritual guidance. But it is disconcerting to begin to acknowledge a large Ethiopian Christian influence upon their liturgical music. If Ethiopian music heavily influenced Falasha music, is it not possible to theorize a Christian influence upon Falasha theology? There are surely historical examples of sacred music acting like a Trojan horse and preparing the way for religious conversion.

In the liner notes to *Liturgies,* musicologist Simha Arom takes a position counter to Shelemay's. Arom points out the uses of different musical scales among the Falasha, and a greater emphasis upon fitting music to words through extensive use of free and irregular rhythms. Interestingly, though, he also mentions briefly the distinctive uses of body movement and body percussion. He doesn't make much of this fact—but I'm going to, since it has everything to do with the "African quality" of this Jewish music.

The first voice you hear on this recording is a chanting soloist who is answered by a raggedy sounding male chorus: what Arom calls a "heterophonic weft of voices." Every male chorus voice—thirteen priests participated in this 1986 recording—responds to a solo voice with his ornamented and slightly melodically modified version of the soloist's offering. This "every man for himself" sense of musical performance contrasts strikingly with the precisely unified sound of Ethiopian Orthodox Church music. It doesn't sound as superficially pretty as accomplished polyphony, simply because our culture has not attuned us to the beauties of heterophony. But these supplications and praises of God are clearly embodied in a musically powerful set of melodies and rhythms.

Tragically, the pressures of acculturation to Israeli society are rapidly erasing this musical culture.

The melodies and rhythms, alien to most U.S. musical listeners, begin to sound comprehensible about ten minutes into the recording. Then something utterly unexpected happens: a sudden movement from regular to irregular rhythms, or vice-versa. A first-time listener is never sure when such a transition looms on the horizon. The third selection on this disc, for example, offers a prayer for the end of Yom Kippur. The singing begins in a freely irregular rhythm, and I expected it to continue in that manner. Suddenly the voices are joined by percussive sounds, feet stomping on the earth in regular rhythm. Then yet another surprise: Singers vocalize through a panting, whooshing sound, becoming human bass strings. A more rhythmically expressive and dramatically engaging Jewish liturgical music would be hard to imagine.

Emphatic foot stomping marks the rousing morning prayer for Shavuot, as well as the prayers for a wedding ceremony. The special vocal effect, a baritone hyperventilation, blends with body percussion to form a music strikingly reminiscent of the Zulu choral music that Ladysmith Black Mambazo has brought to the American ear. In no way am I suggesting that the Falasha were directly influenced by the South Africans—yet in some uncanny way, I can't hear singing from Ethiopian Jews and Zulus without thinking about how African both sound. This is a point Shelemay and Arom, for all of their musicological expertise, seem to bypass. In much sacred African music I have heard, words are sounded in imitations of the forces of nature: the winds rush, rains beat, trees whisper.

The Falasha are rapidly yielding their ancient Ethiopian language in favor of Hebrew. But one wonders what will happen to their unique liturgical singing style. What changes will Israeli life bring to that? There is an out-of-print record on the French Ocora label called *Israel, Volume Two: The Jews of Ethiopia* (Ocora 558670), that may offer an answer. Unlike the INEDIT disc, this recorded collection offers secular as well as religious songs, and female vocalists as well as male priests. A secular Falasha song entitled "O My Beautiful," recorded in Nazareth, is set for voice, flute, drums, and ancient Ethiopian lyre and fiddle. The lyrics protest the crazed violence of the military that the Falasha suffered under in Ethiopia. It proclaims how much better life is for them in Israel. As bodies beat out rhythms, voices explode into vocables, "you-you," nonsense syllables to provoke dancing. The sounds will be familiar to listeners of African vocal music. The song's words are as quintessentially Jewish—protesting injustice, affirming the Holy Land—as the vocal delivery is African. It suggests a day when Falasha music recorded in Israel will wholly reflect the delicate balance of home (Ethiopia) and Home (Israel). □

BOOK REVIEW

Thinking About Jesus

Harvey Cox

The Gospel According to Jesus: A New Translation and Guide to His Essential Teachings for Believers and Unbelievers by Stephen Mitchell. HarperCollins, 1991, 312 pp.

Who was Jesus, really? Today, the most engaging answers to this age-old question are those that place him squarely within the social and religious struggles of his day. Never before have so many Jewish and Christian scholars—stimulated by new manuscript finds, the refinement of archaeological procedures, and new analytic methods—joined the debate about who Jesus really was. Even more interestingly, instead of dismissing these new probes into the question of Jesus' identity as impertinence or meddling, for the first time in nearly two millennia, Christians are beginning to pay appreciative attention to such alternative portraits.

In 1906 Albert Schweitzer, after years of research, declared the quest for the "historical Jesus" to be a useless endeavor. There just wasn't enough genuine evidence. Now, however, with new evidence in hand, the quest has begun in earnest. The newest effort at such revision is a stunningly documented and elegantly written book by John Dominic Crossan of De Paul University, *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant* (Harper San Francisco, 1992). Crossan flatly contends that Schweitzer was wrong, and that it is now possible to sketch the outlines of Jesus' life. Crossan's rendering depicts Jesus as both a social revolutionary and a compassionate healer.

Crossan's book is very persuasive, but it enters a tough field of candidates already in the running. Five years ago, in a widely influential article, the Jesuit biblical scholar Daniel J. Harrington suggested that there were many plausible contending portraits of Jesus in scholarly circulation. One was E. P. Sanders's picture in *Jesus and Judaism* (1985) of an eschatological prophet bent on reforming the Temple and Jewish society. Another was the revolutionary Jesus of S.G.F. Brandon's *Jesus and the Zealots* (1967). In 1978, the historian Morton Smith published *Jesus the Magician,* in which he claimed to discern behind the gospel stories—especially the exorcisms and the sojourn in Egypt—a popular wonder-worker who disturbed the religious establishment. Harvey Falk in *Jesus the Pharisee* (1985) places Jesus within the School of Hillel during its struggle with the School of Shammai for control of the Jewish community in Palestine. Geza Vermes's *Jesus the Jew* (1981) portrays him as a Galilean charismatic and Bruce D. Hilton's *The Galilean Rabbi and His Bible* (1984) sees him as a teacher of Torah.

Instead of dismissing such interpretations of Jesus as watered-down diminutions of the real thing, many Christians view them instead as valuable insights that can be integrated selectively into their own understandings of Jesus. At the meetings of the section of the American Academy of Religion that deals with Christology, one hears very few discussions about the Chalcedonian formula, but papers abound on the significance of feminism, liberation theology, interfaith dialogue, and religious pluralism to an understanding of the significance of Jesus. The emerging consensus seems to be that one can no longer work out one's doctrine of Christ in advance and only later enter into the dialogue about his life. The dialogue must rather shape Christology from the outset.

Can we really deal with the New Testament on the basis of such unapologetically subjective criteria—take what you like and leave the rest?

Such a historical and contextual approach may sound novel at first, but in fact it isn't. From the beginning, Christians have drawn on the philosophical categories and religious images of the cultures around them to express who they thought Jesus was. Early Christians borrowed the idea of the logos from the Hellenistic environment of the early church; and they took the images of the sacrificial lamb and the dying and rising savior from the mystery religions of their time. Some historians have contended that Christianity is at its most vigorous when it can boldly utilize the cultural imagery of its time and place, and at its weakest when it rigidly rejects this material and clings defensively to previously defined formulations. If so, then this is a vigorous period indeed, and what some fearful defenders recoil from as syncretism is in fact willingness to plunge in and take risks.

Among the explosion of non-Christian writing about Jesus in recent decades is the work of two prominent Jewish scholars, David Flusser and Pincus Lapide. Their work is probably best known, but there is much more. Why this enormous new interest?

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Rabbi Alan Mittleman explains it this way: Beginning with Moses Mendelssohn and his contemporaries, Jewish writers were already departing from the caricatures of Jesus that their medieval predecessors favored and discovering in him, instead, "a like-minded Jew." Jesus, Mittleman says, has been in a sense "returning to his ancestral home," and this homecoming is an important part of the modern Jew's discovery of Jewish history, an aspect of the current Jewish search for "essence and self-definition."

A very critical question, however, hangs over this entire enterprise. What is the relationship between the historical critical reconstructions of the life of Jesus, like the ones Harrington catalogued, and the imaginative resymbolizations of him in the poetry, iconography, cinema, theology, and devotional life of twentieth-century people? Do the historical records and the canonical scriptures set any limits on the freewheeling play of the religious imagination? One might be struck at first by the variety of historical Jesuses that Harrington identifies, but a second look reveals that they all have one very important thing in common: They are all recognizably Jewish in that they are all participants in one of the many Jewish subcultures of first-century Palestine. The God Jesus talks about and whose will he tries to make known is not the deity of some generalized theism, but the God of Abraham, revealed through the covenant with the Jewish people as One who has active compassion for outsiders and who promises justice and healing to all nations. This Jewish understanding of Jesus, although one may disagree on its exact boundaries, defines the playing field within which new images of Jesus must be worked out unless they surrender all claims to being connected to the historical figure they claim to interpret.

How then—in the midst of all this redrawing and redefining someone who, whatever else one might say, is probably the most influential single figure in human history, are we to read Stephen Mitchell's engaging new book *The Gospel According to Jesus?* Mitchell was raised Jewish, attended a private Christian school as a boy, and later underwent horrendously difficult training to become a Zen adept. He is also a gifted linguist and has already published other translations of religious texts. But the book is not mainly "a new translation," as the subtitle suggests. Rather it is a highly selective rereading and interpretation of those parts of the gospels that engage Mitchell's own very demanding and finely honed spiritual sensibilities.

Like Thomas Jefferson, who once used a pair of scissors to snip out the portions of the gospels that did not appeal to his Deist leanings, Mitchell has culled through the synoptic writings and given us brisk and accurate renderings of several portions, paired with his fascinating reflections on them and some apt comparisons to other philosophers, Zen masters, visionaries, and poets. This may sound like a risky approach, but in Mitchell's hands it succeeds brilliantly. Jesus, or at least Mitchell's attractive portrait of him, leaps into life and will fire the interest of believers and nonbelievers alike. Mitchell's treatments of the account of the woman taken in adultery, the parable of the prodigal son, and the healing of the Syrophoenician woman are particularly engaging.

But what about this Jeffersonian approach to the texts? I do not suggest this comparison offhandedly: Mitchell himself compares his snip-and-paste method to that of the sage of Monticello in his introduction. Can we really deal with the New Testament on the basis of such unapologetically subjective criteria—take what you like and leave the rest? On the one hand, I suppose, there is no reason why we cannot. In fact people have been doing it for centuries, often with considerably less candor than Mitchell. After all, the canonization process was itself highly selective; the leaders of the early church put some gospels in the New Testament and consigned others to the dustbin (or, more accurately, to desert caves, where quite a few have shown up in recent years). And as Elaine Pagels has argued in *The Gnostic Gospels* (Random House, 1979), the people who made that selection were hardly evenhanded. They were all celibate men who, in effect, scissored out embarrassing references to Jesus' relationship with Mary Magdalene and texts that suggested that God might be female or that one could find Him/Her without the mediation of a hierarchy. Ever since the canon was set, every theologian has had a "canon within the canon," working some of the teachings of Jesus to death while ignoring others. How many times have I heard opponents of liberation theology spout the verse about the poor being with us always or about leaving things of this world to Caesar? But they seem to ignore Jesus' constant condemnations of the rich and his promise of the first fruits of the Kingdom of God to the poor, the sick, and prisoners. Mitchell is simply being more up front about a subjectivity that is always operative in these matters.

But I am still uneasy. As it happens, I almost always resonate with Mitchell's choices of what to include, although I am sorry he did nothing at all with the resurrection stories. This decision puzzled me, since his is no

ultra-rationalist edition. For example, he offers a wonderful reading of the annunciation—the story of the angel Gabriel informing Mary that she is to have a child—and throws in a marvelous description of his own experience with angels during his one-hundred-day Zen meditation ordeal. But even though Mitchell and I are attracted to the same passages, I could not help wondering as I read his collage of excerpts what Jerry Falwell's scrapbook of gospel stories would look like, or Pat Robertson's. If we are to avoid the danger of the "a-thing-is-what-I-say-it-is" morass, then it is important for people with Mitchell's daunting capabilities to wrestle with precisely the most intransigent and unattractive episodes in Jesus' life. What do we do with Jesus' cursing of the innocent fig tree, his ordering his disciples to equip themselves with a sword (a sore embarrassment to pacifists), and other instances of abrasive behavior and speech? Was he serious when he said that even to look at a woman with a lustful eye was as bad as adultery? Or was he engaging in hyperbole? Or demonstrating vividly that when it comes to sins of the flesh we are all pretty much in the same boat, so there is no excuse—as the Buddhists would say—for "moral aggression"? I would love to hear Mitchell's views on these questions, but since he discusses only the passages he takes a shine to, we are deprived of that exchange. And that, in my view, is too bad.

Nonetheless, Mitchell's is one of the

(Continued on next page)

The Gospel According to Jesus

by Stephen Mitchell

Stephen Mitchell's books include The Book of Job *(North Point, 1987),* The Selected Poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke *(Vintage, 1989),* Tao Te Ching *(Harper, 1989), and* Parables and Portraits *(Harper, 1990).*

The essence of Jesus' teaching is simply that the love we all long for in our innermost hearts is already present, beyond longing. Most of us can remember a time (it may have been just a moment) when we felt that everything in the world was exactly as it should be. Or we can think of a joy (it happened when we were children, perhaps, or the first time we fell in love) so vast that it was no longer inside us, but we were inside it. What we intuited then, and what we later thought was too good to be true, isn't an illusion. It is real. It is more intimate than anything we can see or touch, "unreachable," as the Upanishads say, "yet nearer than breath, than heartbeat." The more deeply we receive it, the more real it becomes.

When Jesus talked about the kingdom of God, he was not prophesying about some easy, danger-free perfection that will someday appear. He was talking about a state of being, a way of living at ease among the joys and sorrows of *our* world, not something alien or mystical. Most of us lose it as we grow up and become self-conscious, but it doesn't disappear forever, though we have to search hard to find it. The rich especially have a hard time reentering this state of being: They are so possessed by their possessions, so entrenched in their social power, that it is almost impossible for them to let go. Not that it is easy for any of us. But if we need reminding, we can always sit at the feet of our young children. Because they haven't yet developed a firm sense of past and future, they accept the infinite abundance of the present with all their hearts, in complete trust. Entering the kingdom of God means feeling, as if we were floating in the womb of the universe, that we are being taken care of, always, at every moment.

Does this make me a "Jew for Jesus"? Gimme a break. "Jews for Jesus" are Jewish kids who believe that Jesus is the Messiah, that if you believe in him you are saved, and if not, you're not. In other words, they have swallowed the fundamentalist dogma, hook, line, and sinker.

My intention is the opposite. I want to disentangle the authentic teachings of Jesus from the spiritually inferior material added by the early church. Jesus himself—Yeshu ben Miryam of Nazareth, not the church's "Jesus Christ"—was a Jew teaching Judaism to Jews. His *authentic* teachings were an inspired commentary on the central teachings of Judaism: "Love God with all your heart," and "Love your neighbor as yourself." They can be accepted, without any sense of conflict, by people who consider themselves as wholly within the Jewish tradition.

Just one example of later accretions to Jesus' teachings is the anti-Semitism of the Gospels, which developed out of the growing mutual hostility between church and synagogue in the decades following Jesus' death. It is already vicious in Mark, who, in trying to convince a Roman audience that Jesus is the Savior, does everything possible to tone down Roman guilt and deflect it onto the Jews. But the anti-Semitism becomes even more wicked in Matthew's account, which has the hostile crowd say, "May his blood be upon us and on our descendants." And it pervades the whole Gospel of John, where Jesus' enemies are called "the Jews," and Jesus is made, horrifyingly, to call them "the children of the devil." There is not much of a step from John (which Christians have, ironically, considered to be the Gospel most filled with love) to statements by such Church Fathers as John Chrysostom and Gregory of Nyssa that Jews are the enemy of the human race.

I know there are Jews who think that after two thousand years of Jewish history, it is impossible to separate love of Jesus from hatred of the Jews, as if there were an intrinsic connection between the poison and the radiance. Any Jew who loves Jesus is morally responsible for pointing out the hate-filled passages in the Gospels and clearly stating that these passages were added by a church that had failed to understand Jesus' teaching. But I don't believe that the anti-Semitism of the Gospels in any way invalidates the authentic teachings. That would be to deprive Jesus of what Tolstoy called "the right every man may claim, of being answerable only for his own words." □

best, and certainly not the last, of this species. It is a wonderful book to ponder, if only because it raises such tricky questions about the next such effort to come along. Is there anything to prevent Al Sharpton or Madonna or Camille Paglia from regaling us with their favorite extracts from Holy Writ and their comments on what they bring to mind? Indeed, how are we to arrive at some judgment about the religious, to say nothing of the historical, authenticity of such productions? For those of us who hold to the central religious significance of Jesus, whether we call ourselves Christians or not, the old creedal formulas may remain oddly important. What they were trying to say, in their clunky Greek metaphysical categories, is that Jesus was a *real* historical figure, not a phantom, and that his continuing moral and spiritual meaning—his power to reveal God to us, if you will—depends absolutely on his historicity. For me this means that the Jewishness of Jesus, and his identification with the outcasts and impoverished of his day, which led to his fatal clash with imperial authority, are not optional elements in a future Christology. They have theological significance *because* they are historical.

But on the other hand, the significance of Jesus for people like me is not *merely* historical. That would be antiquarian: an interesting study, but not existentially crucial. Maybe the stubborn recognition that Jesus must be both fully historical and yet somehow more is what sparked those curious resurrection stories—so fugitive and incongruous—with which the four gospels all come to their strangely postmodern, inconclusive ends. How sorry I am that Mitchell, who was not afraid to take on the angel at the annunciation, backed away from the one who confronted the women at the tomb and asked them why they sought the living among the dead. Perhaps, like Jacob, he should have wrestled with that one too, even if it took him all night. I think his Zen master would have approved. □

BOOK REVIEW

Where Have All the Sit-Ins Gone?

Paul Boyer

Political Protest and Cultural Revolution: Nonviolent Direct Action in the 1970s and 1980s by Barbara Epstein. University of California Press, 1991, 327 pp.

Remember *The Day After?* Helen Caldicott? Jonathan Schell's *The Fate of the Earth?* The nuclear-freeze movement? Today they all seem as remote as Teapot Dome.

Our nearly half-century encounter with nuclear weapons has been characterized by episodes of intense political activism and cultural attention, followed by periods when the issue seemed to disappear down a national memory hole. The most recent of these cyclical upsurges began in the late 1970s with a movement against nuclear power. "No Nukes"—initially meaning no more nuclear power plants—became the slogan of the day. In the early eighties, this movement evolved into a powerful national revulsion against the nuclear arms race and what seemed a deepening threat of total war.

Yet both the fear and the movement have almost completely faded from view. The cold war, evil twin of the nuclear arms race, has ended. The INF treaty has eliminated intermediate-range nuclear weapons from Europe, and plans are underway to cut strategic nuclear arsenals by as much as one half. The Strategic Defense Initiative, Reagan's notorious "Star Wars" proposal, struggles on, but with diminished funding and minimal public attention. The U.S. nuclear power industry languishes, with few new plants coming on line, and no orders for new plants reported for several years now.

Ironically, all this came about less as a result of antinuclear activism than as a by-product of other circumstances. The nuclear arms race abated in the wake of the Soviet Union's internal crises and the collapse of its empire in Eastern Europe. The nuclear power industry largely wrought its own undoing, not only with the high-profile accidents at Three Mile Island and Chernobyl, but through a series of less dramatic but cumulatively damaging stories of safety problems, long-term radiation hazards, and technical failures.

In this context, Barbara Epstein's *Political Protest and Cultural Revolution,* an account of one facet of the late antinuclear movement, seems caught in a time warp. One reads it with a sense of distance, even a kind of nostalgia. As a work of history by a participant-observer, the book is superb. Since I happen to be a historian, I consider that high praise. But I suspect Epstein will think this judgment damns her with faint praise, since her aspirations for the book are far greater.

Political Protest and Cultural Revolution is written on two levels. First, it offers a critical history of three local direct action movements. Second, it seeks to situate these movements theoretically and to argue for their relevance to the contemporary American Left.

Paul Boyer is Merle Curti Professor of History at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. His books include By the Bomb's Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age *(Pantheon, 1985) and the forthcoming* When Time Shall Be No More: Prophetic Belief in Contemporary American Popular Religion *(Harvard University Press, 1992).*

Epstein is most successful at illuminating the process by which the antinuclear *power* movement of the 1970s segued into the antinuclear *weapons* movement of the early 1980s. She narrates and interprets the short histories of the Clamshell Alliance, founded in 1976 to fight a proposed nuclear power plant in Seabrook, New Hampshire; the Abalone Alliance, which protested a planned nuclear power facility near San Luis Obispo, California; and the Livermore Action Group (LAG), which, between 1981 and 1984, organized demonstrations against a major nuclear weapons research center east of the San Francisco Bay.

Epstein reveals how groups with wildly different ideologies briefly came together in uneasy alliance. In a 1983 action at Vandenberg Air Force Base, one group of arrestees played "Truth or Dare," a sexual fantasy game while, in the next room, radical Christian arrestees gathered to pray. She also recounts the similar trajectory each movement followed: initial involvement by a core group of activists; a brief efflorescence in the glare of media attention, when thousands participated in specific actions; and a final stage of decline, internal bickering, and collapse.

At the time, these movements were often billed as spontaneous "grass-roots" uprisings. This was part of the story, but Epstein documents their social complexity and the different agendas of their constituent groups—post-sixties hippies and commune dwellers, Christian pacifists, pagans, witch covens, radical feminists, lesbian affinity groups, aging peaceniks ("Elders for Survival"), Quakers, anarchists, Marxist-Leninists, academics, even a group of Bay Area horticulturalists ("Revolutionary Garden Party")—with secular and religious Jews sprinkled all across the spectrum.

But her larger project is to explore the prospects for a renewal of the Left in contemporary America. The nonviolent direct action movement could lead this renewal, she suggests, with its turn from direct political action to the goals of altering consciousness and transforming culture; its ethic of nonviolence and egalitarianism; its concern with community-building; its commitment to a utopian, "prefigurative" social vision; and its sensitivity to the role of emotion, symbolism, and ritual in mobilizing social action. Women participants, and particularly the self-styled "anarcha-feminists," she argues, were central to shaping such an ethos.

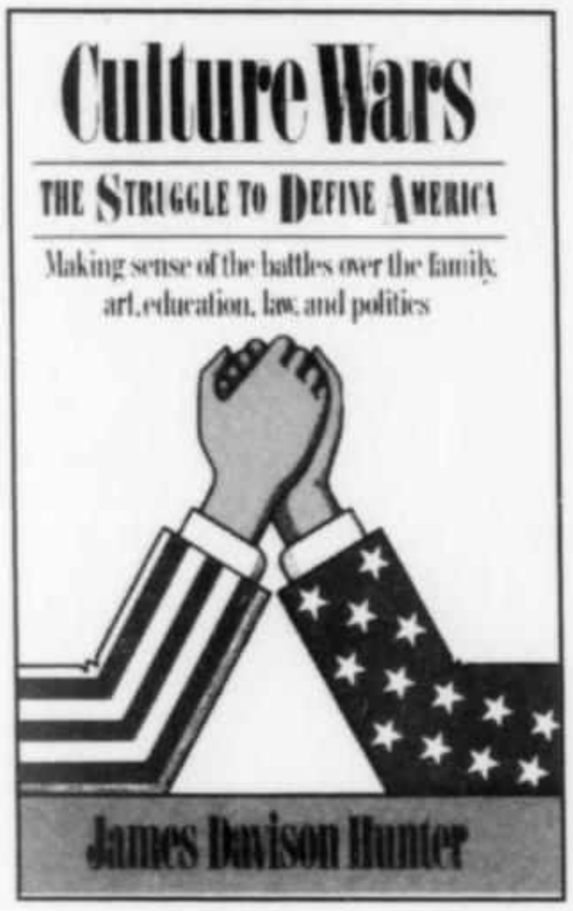
Unfortunately, Epstein's countercultural vision gives scant attention either to history or the particularities of contemporary American society and politics. Her interest in the U.S. past begins with the "hegemonic project" of the Communist party of the 1930s in organizing the American working class. The rich earlier history of communitarian, direct action, and civil disobedience movements remains untapped.

Remote as they may seem, the utopian communitarians of the 1840s, individual radicals like Henry David Thoreau, and the abolitionists of the 1850s faced many of the same issues Epstein explores. Thoreau and the abolitionists, for example, grappled with the ethics and political uses of civil disobedience and symbolic action. And, like the recent direct action movements, they confronted the lure of violence. For the Clamshell Alliance, it was the "Hard Rain" faction in Boston, with its zest for invading nuclear sites; for the abolitionists, it was John Brown.

Neither does Epstein show much interest in the specifics of the nuclear power or nuclear weapons issues, about which her infrequent comments do not go beyond the most general level. And were one's knowledge limited to this book, one would scarcely guess that these three direct action campaigns were only a small part of a much larger national movement.

This lack of political texture grows directly from the book's ideological perspective. Epstein frequently cites the anarchist philosopher Murray Bookchin and writes sympathetically of the "anarchist" strain in the direct action movement, expressed as an affinity for decentralized power. This benign "grass-roots" anarchism appears central to her own ideology as well. She displays little interest in existing governing structures or electoral politics. But, except as prefigurements of a radically different social order, what relevance might direct action strategies have for the complex public-policy issues we actually confront—the health care crisis, for example?

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"Direct action" emerges in this work less as a means to concrete political ends than as its own end. The new consciousness, the sense of community, and the utopian vision nourished by participation in such movements become the sufficient justification for the actions themselves. One would wish to learn more about how the participants in these transitory actions are affected in the long run, and the extent to which individual changes are translated into larger patterns of social change.

Like hanging, the prospect of vaporization concentrates the mind wonderfully.

In her conclusion, Epstein, to her credit, does acknowledge that "the direct action movement" is an elusive and flawed instrument. Indeed, it is not at all clear that such a "movement" exists in America today, except as a kind of Platonic abstraction. Specific *movements* briefly flourished in the late 1970s and early 1980s, but a viable, ongoing *Movement* seems more concrete in the pages of this book than it does in reality.

Like many works that strive for timeliness, this one has been overtaken by history. In a reprint from a Santa Cruz newspaper, included with review copies of the book, Epstein boasts of how quickly her campus mobilized against the Persian Gulf war. "UCSC faculty are so progressive," she says; "they were able to organize themselves more quickly than faculty on other campuses." With the benefit of hindsight, what strikes one is not how rapidly an antiwar movement surfaced, but how quickly it was buried in a blizzard of flags, yellow ribbons, media images of high-tech weaponry, and "welcome home" parades heavy with military hardware.

For some time, America's most dynamic religious upsurge has come not from the radical Christian Left, which has figured prominently in the direct action movements Epstein chronicles, but from a rising fundamentalism that embraces superpatriotism and a right-wing political agenda. Recently, the most notable grass-roots actions have emanated from the Right: mass blockades of family planning centers; picketing the homes of physicians who perform abortions; boycotts of TV shows and rock groups accused of promoting perversion, drugs, and "secular humanism." "Direct action" is a politically neutral instrument, and today that instrument is mainly in the hands of the Right.

But the "creative potential" Epstein discerns in direct action movements on the Left is undercut by her own trenchant analyses of them. She repeatedly criticizes their aversion to structure and formal leadership; the consensual decision making that allowed individual dissidents to hamstring an entire group; and the "substantial streak of anti-intellectualism and intellectual laziness."

Epstein also documents the narrow social profile of the participants. Despite the surface diversity, activists were overwhelmingly middle class, white, and college educated. Blacks, blue-collar workers, and "mainstream" middle-class citizens rarely joined. Epstein asks us to take a giant leap of faith to find in these movements—which arose at a specific historical moment that is now past and that represented "marginal and exceptional constituencies"—a seedbed for radical change in America.

Where, then, does this leave us? Certainly it would be unwise to proclaim that the threat of nuclear war no longer exists. Given our human capacity for evil, mischief, and conflict, one can easily imagine a future in which humanity again faces the threat of nuclear annihilation. But, for the present, the danger has obviously diminished.

During the cold war, the "nuclear threat" had a terrifying clarity about it: the prospect of "global thermonuclear war" was horrifying, but its very horror provided a powerful focal point for activists and the media. Like hanging, the prospect of vaporization concentrates the mind wonderfully. Today, the issue has fissioned into a number of smaller, more specific issues, each of which has its own configuration and history, and requires its own hard analysis. Internationally, we confront the highly complex problem of nuclear proliferation. (The problem has always been with us, of course, but it was muted when attention focused on the Big One.) This issue is most dramatic in the Middle East, where President Bush threatens to renew attacks on Iraq if Saddam Hussein does not abandon his dreams of nuclear prowess. (Of course, in Israel, the Middle East already *has* a nuclear power.) But this is only one manifestation of a threat that simmers in many parts of the globe. The genie is out of the bottle; it will be difficult to put it back again.

Meanwhile, highly unsafe nuclear power plants in Eastern Europe are being exposed to fresh scrutiny as political changes transform the region. More Chernobyls may be waiting in the wings.

As the Soviet Union rapidly implodes, the future of its nuclear arsenal arouses anxious tension. Domestically, estimates of the cleanup of nuclear weapons sites escalate astronomically; and a moribund nuclear power industry poses complex problems as aging plants face decommissioning. New revelations surface about years of concealed problems and radiation leaks. And no state or locality seems willing to be the dump for spent fuel rods and other radioactive materials that will remain lethal for thousands of years. In short, the "nuclear issue" has become a congeries of sub-issues, each involving quite technical matters. They do *not,* for the most part, lend themselves to direct action strategies.

The participants in the actions Epstein studies were, generally speaking, thoughtful, committed, and appealing individuals, and Epstein has rendered them, and us, a valuable service by listening to them carefully and setting forth their ideas lucidly and thoughtfully. Her book also reveals (albeit unconsciously) the continuing appeal of utopianism in American thought—especially, perhaps, in the precincts of Santa Cruz, California.

How relevant are these movements, then, to the challenge of rebuilding the Left in the nineties? It is far from evident that the revival of a direct action movement, even one purged of the problems Epstein identifies, should be a goal of the Left. When all is said and done, the task remains political, and any work that abandons the political—or pushes it far into the misty future—sharply diminishes its claim to speak to our contemporary concerns and dilemmas as we push our way through the confetti and sound bytes of George Bush's America. □

FILM REVIEW

Reproduced and Abandoned: Hollywood's New Orphans

Kay Sunstein Hymowitz

The abandoned child, helpless and alone, has long been a cultural image full of pathos. From Oliver Twist to Little Orphan Annie, the orphan's plight has prodded adult society to recall one of its most fundamental biological duties: to protect its young. Today, on occasion, such images still have power: in the photojournalism of war, for instance, or in the success of the Broadway adaptation of *The Secret Garden,* the novel by Frances Hodgson Burnett about an ill-tempered and plain girl who nevertheless revives her brooding, self-absorbed uncle.

But Hollywood will have none of this. The orphan from the coast, strutting his way through a number of recent popular movies, including the phenomenally successful *Home Alone,* is savvy, cool, and devilishly resourceful. Nothing in his demeanor suggests need or demands pity. On the contrary, both he and his dilemma are encased in a polished veneer of wisecracking, hip irony. While this irony has a seductive appeal for both adults and children, it barely masks a hidden strain of neglect and bitterness in contemporary American culture. In fact, Hollywood, through its nasty reworking of both the nineteenth- and twentieth-century orphan story and the traditional fairy tale, cajoles both parents and, more disturbingly, children into surrendering laughingly to their bitter fatalism about family life run amok.

The orphaned child of the late twentieth-century popular imagination is a kind of monstrous prodigy. Take Junior, the hero of *Problem Child,* a kids' movie released in the summer of 1990 and followed by a sequel this past summer. Unlike his ancestor Oliver Twist, an all but helpless and pure babe longing for "more"—more food, more love, more caring—from a corrupt society bent on destroying his innocence, Junior is the orphan from hell. He takes pornographic pictures of the nuns who run the orphanage, later sets fire to the room his adoptive parents have lavishly and fondly decorated for him, and teaches obscenities to his family's pet parrot. While Oliver Twist stumbles naively into the lair of Fagin and completely misconstrues his felonious crowd, Junior proudly models himself after the psychopathic "Bow Tie Killer," to whom he writes letters so sick they convince the convict he has found his diabolic superior.

Junior has close kin in Kevin McAllister who, while not literally orphaned, is nevertheless "home alone," and now America's best-loved orphan since Annie. (*Home Alone* is the highest grossing comedy ever.) Interestingly enough, Chris Columbus, the director of *Home Alone,* has said that he found in David Lean's 1951 version of *Oliver Twist* a model for the lonely child, bewildered by an ominous adult world. And in fact, Macaulay Culkin, who plays Kevin McAllister, has the look of a slightly undernourished, red-eyed waif. But Kevin, although he is at times frightened enough to hide under his parents' bed, is hardly a creature who evokes pathos. His ingenuity in outwitting the bumbling robbers stalking his home suggests a child as devilish as Junior: He sears their hands by placing a hot iron on the metal doorknob and cuts their feet by laying out shards of broken glass. Even though Kevin, unlike Junior, engages in these guerrilla tactics out of self-protection, he is far from the innocent hero of Dickens's imagination, whose naughtiness extended only as far as an occasional failure to learn his lessons.

The image of the helpless orphan created a potent symbol of innocence in an increasingly heartless laissez-faire society; even a master of the universe like Daddy Warbucks could be touched. But this image appears to have given way to the child no one could love—a connoisseur of crude put-downs and prodigy of cruel tricks. Other Hollywood creations repeat the motif: movies such as *Look Who's Talking,* in which an infant is given the voice-over of a sex-crazed vulgarian, and TV characters such as the wisecracking Bart Simpson or the brothers in "Blossom," another orphan tale in which a young teen and her family are abandoned by their mother for her singing career. These unlovable kids are the diabolic alter egos of the innocent; instead of evoking pity, they absolve adults of their indifference and neglect, while laughing along with their children: as Junior says, "No one ever really accepted me. Who would be that caring? Who would be that loving? Who would be that *stupid?*" *Home Alone* is essentially the initiation story of the inexperienced young Kevin as he learns that he can buy his own food and do his own laundry; this homunculus does not even seem to need a family.

Don't Tell Mom the Babysitter's Dead, advertised as the "teen movie of the summer," is another initiation story of children who discover how easy it is to manage without parents. After the children's mother leaves for a vacation in Australia and the militaristic babysitter inexplicably drops dead (we know she has to go because she forces the kids to turn off the TV and read the encyclopedia), Sue Ellen, the oldest child, eagerly takes charge of the house and her four younger siblings. In make-up and

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dress-for-success outfits, she finds a job as an executive assistant at $37,000 a year, balancing career and home far more successfully than her cipher of a mother can. When the mother was still on the scene, the house was a landfill of junk-food refuse; by the end of the movie, it is immaculate. Lights gleam on the water of the repaired swimming pool and the children serve gourmet hors d'oeuvres to Sue Ellen's business guests.

Of course, today's Hollywood orphan is not lacking materially. Unlike Dickens's orphan, who is so destitute he has to beg for "more" watery gruel and settle for any leaky roof over his head, these designer orphans binge on ice cream sundaes, sleep in bedrooms that must have upset inventory control at F.A.O. Schwartz, and drive Volvos. Their affluence is yet another means of deflecting pity, and suggests that the lonely and helpless child, desperate for adult nurturance, has gone the way of the little chimney sweep.

The flip side of the jaded, consumer orphan is the narcissistic, indifferent adult. The single exception is Little Ben Healy of *Problem Child,* who is a failure and a wimp, flaws that appear to offer the only explanation for his devotion to his adopted son. The other adults care only about number one. Florence Healy, Little Ben's wife, is a conniving social climber who gives us an idea of what would have happened if Lady Macbeth had moved to the suburbs and married a sporting-goods salesman. At first she is unwilling to consider adoption because, she says, "I don't wear secondhand clothes and I won't have a secondhand kid"; her husband is able to convince her only after he helps her imagine adoption as a kind of shopping expedition where you can pick your own progeny. "Being a parent is about power," she says later. Big Ben Healy, Little Ben's father, is a case study in such cynicism. He has already revealed his indifference toward his mushy son by sadistically refusing him raises and selling the family business, to which his son has devoted his working life, to the Japanese. In *Problem Child 2,* Little Ben complains to his father, "Dad, you hate me"; "OK, OK," Big Ben admits. "You found me out."

The shadowy single mother of *Don't Tell Mom the Babysitter's Dead* may be less direct, but her message is the same. She says to her unkempt brood as she leaves them for two months in the hands of an unknown babysitter: "I've had a rough thirty-seven years and I need a break." When the youngest child, the only one who ever exhibits the slightest anxiety, whines, "Mom, you'll call every day?" she retorts, "This *is* my vacation."

Hollywood, through its nasty reworking of the orphan story and the traditional fairy tale, cajoles parents and children into surrendering laughingly to a bitter fatalism about family life run amok.

It would be an understatement to say that the adults—and older siblings—in *Home Alone* aren't much interested in nurturing young children. Although the Wet Bandits set out merely to rob the house of the vacationing McAllisters, they find that greed is secondary to their sadistic fantasies about their worthy—albeit eight-year-old—adversary; they are determined to scorch his hair, place a hot iron on his face, and tear out his fingernails. At various times in the movie Kevin is called an idiot, a jerk, incompetent, a phlegm-wad, a disease. No one could argue with him when he wails, "Everyone in this house hates me!"

Even though Kevin's mother becomes distraught after leaving her young child alone in their empty house and vacation-emptied neighborhood, she would appear to be suffering from bad conscience rather than the pangs of motherly love. Her indifference toward her youngest is apparent from the first scenes of the movie when she uses him as a scapegoat for domestic chaos. The epiphany she reaches as she crawls her way back to him from Paris—"I'm a bad parent"—is no news to the audience. She proffers this revelation to an apparently kindly polka musician who offers to drive her home to her abandoned son; and he himself tells the story of (accidentally?) leaving his child in a funeral parlor all alone with a corpse. The significance of a child abandoned by grown-ups in a house of death is hard to miss; Dickens used it to great effect when Oliver Twist, apprenticed to an undertaker, was forced to sleep pitifully among the coffins.

In some respects, then, these contemporary popular tales are nothing new. Western culture, from its earliest literary expressions, has been crowded with cruel adults and abandoned babes—from Oedipus to Hansel and Gretel, from Moses to Little Thumb. Traditional folk fairy tales give imaginative expression to the child's latent fear of separation and abandonment. Bruno Bettelheim, in *The Uses of Enchantment,* explains the appeal of these stories, many of which strike modern readers as too terrifying for young children (ironically enough, given the movies and TV shows their children are watching).

> These stories [about desertion] direct the child toward transcending his immature dependence on his parents and reaching the next stage of development.... The child of school age cannot yet believe that he ever will be able to meet the world without his parents; that is why he wishes to hold on to them beyond the necessary point. He needs to learn to trust that someday he will master the dangers of the world.

Thus, "the child's being sent out into the world ... symbolizes both the parent's wish that the child become independent and the child's desire for or anxiety about independence."

Much the same could be said for the updated Hollywood version of the fairy tale. The child-heroes of these films do indeed come to find that they can "master the dangers of the world." The skeletal plot of *Home Alone* mirrors the traditional fairy tale: The child encounters severe difficulty alone, learns to use his own intelligence and initiative to overcome the evil giants who would like to "eat" him, and is finally reunited with either his family or a loved one. In a society where abandonment—at least as is perceived by the child—by divorced or busy working parents is a common threat, such stories become all the more resonant.

Yet Hollywood directors and screenwriters seem intent on filtering out

any tender feelings in the traditional tale, leaving the dregs of bitterness behind. The fairy tale allows the child to resolve unconscious hostility toward the adults who control her life by first defeating them symbolically, in the guise of a wicked stepmother or giant, and then rejoining them in loving reunion. Hansel and Gretel, for instance, defeat the witch and then return happily to their father. But these children's movies, overflowing with raw hostility between adults and children, pander only to the child's hostile feelings. In *Problem Child 2,* Junior's grandfather calls his grandson a "little psycho"; the principal of Junior's new school comes right out with it: "I love being principal because I hate children, I *hate* children." There is no imaginative transformation of secret, painful feelings at work here; they flash in technicolor lights for the child whether he's ready or not. The hip, ironic tone may reassure adults, but it can offer little such reassurance to a prepubescent child who needs to resolve, rather than partake in, this diffuse rage.

This rage lurks everywhere as these movies go on to offer abundant images of the Hobbesian viciousness of modern family life. "Families suck," Kevin puts it succinctly. "Don't trust anyone," Big Ben Healy says to his son, who counters, "Not even your own father?" Answer: "Especially your own father." Little Ben Healy, good-natured as he is, finds himself ready to smother his adopted son—with a pillow pointedly embroidered with the words "Home, Sweet Home."

These Hollywood movies repeatedly undercut any suggestion that family life can be healed; *Problem Child* even reflects a contemporary skepticism with therapeutic promises of such healing. Little Ben, who wears a hat with "SuperDad" mockingly printed on it, begins his life as a parent by reading *How to Be a Great Dad,* moves on to *How to Discipline Your Child,* and graduates to *The Exorcist.* The Dickensian Mr. Peabody, supervisor of the orphanage and supposed child expert, sneers and snivels the platitudes of the "helping professions": "Maybe all Junior needs is to be loved." ("Cut the crap," snaps the head nun.) "Bad parents make bad children," he continues. Junior himself offers a violent response to such psychobabble: "You stupid dick."

Undoubtedly convinced that such talk evokes family life with gritty realism, Hollywood smirks at the fairy-tale ending. Oddly enough, one is more likely to find such an ending in "adult" movies such as the hugely successful *Pretty Woman.* In many kids' movies no loving reunion is allowed—or if it is, it is stabbed in the back with irony. What this denies, of course, is not only the innocence behind children's love of such endings; it also neglects the psychological resolution they provide. When the mother returns in *Don't Tell Mom,* a pall is cast over the slick designer surface of the film; since we know that the bitter chaos of life before she left will resurface, the film is trapped inside the ugliness of its own cynicism. Its ending offers only meager compensation for this miserable reunion when Sue Ellen orders her blank-faced mother to her room. (Yes, she goes.)

Despite these uneasy endings, though, one can spy a telling, nostalgic counterpoint to the cold, degrading indifference that is the substance of Hollywood's vision of contemporary family life. *Home Alone* creates resonant tension between the bleak present and the lost dream of domestic warmth. The Christmas setting provides a number of images of vanished familial innocence: festive Hallmark-card celebrations attended by girls in velvet-and-lace dresses and fat-cheeked babies in their mothers' arms. In one scene, Kevin wanders into a church, and we repeatedly see in the sacred art and hear in the Christmas hymns the story of the baby Jesus, the major Western symbol of pity and compassion.



Over and out: Precocious latchkey brats pull the strings on their remote-control mother as their house slides ever deeper into a chaos of product placement in Don't Tell Mom the Babysitter's Dead.

Yet there is something empty at the heart of these allusions. As so often happens in Hollywood creations, substance is reduced to style and surface. The McAllisters' spacious house is a good example. Overflowing with the comforts of contemporary middle-class domesticity and abundantly covered with floral and paisley wallpaper, it almost comes to life in its own right. (Schumacker Wallcoverings even receives a line in the credits.) This "character" evokes the promise of a vital, cozy family life; yet it is a promise we are seduced by not because it seems a genuine ideal within the world of the movie, but because it looks so good. In *Home Alone,* the kitchen's rich, emerald-green tile and mile-long breakfast table are a luscious distraction from the nastiness of its inhabitants and a glittering reminder of the compensations of middle-class family life. It packages parenthood as nothing more than a glossy lifestyle.



The war at home: Hollywood's best-loved orphan, Kevin McAllister (Macaulay Culkin), armed to the teeth with light artillery, latex paint, and self-protective irony.

Nevertheless, the dream of domestic warmth still occasionally colors *Home Alone* with a hint of melancholy. It is telling that this melancholy was not noticed by reviewers, although *Newsweek* did refer to some "sentimental wallowing." In fact, the jaded child and his wretched family are so deeply ingrained in the contemporary American imagination that they are eagerly recommended for family entertainment. (The PR office at Twentieth Century Fox seems to understand the matter a little more clearly: They advertise the movie as "a family comedy—without the family.") The seductive irony that pervades these movies seems to shrug at potential critics, "Hey, lighten up," and disarm serious concern.

More than anything else, it is this ironic tone that renders these particular "family" movies radically different in feeling from their fairy-tale and nineteenth-century ancestors. Irony does not merely deny the possibility of a happy ending or undercut loving encounters; it effectively squelches all innocence and sadness, keeping only the ashes of hostility smoldering underneath. In the orphan tales of the past, the listener or reader was emotionally connected to the terror of the lonely child wandering in the woods, confronting giants and witches, or journeying through strange cities. Hollywood irony, on the other hand, has no use for enchantment and sweeps its emotions vigorously out the French doors. On a few occasions you can hear them whimpering to come in, but the sound of hip laughter always mocks them. When the youngest child in *Don't Tell Mom* cries, "I miss Mommy," his older siblings look at him with ironic exasperation, ridiculing and completely discrediting his sense of loss.

This is a point worth lingering over, for an ironic stance pervades much of children's television, movies, and even literature today, and that irony is frequently directed at fairy tales. On "Sesame Street," for instance, the tale is turned into a parody of itself as Kermit the Frog, dressed in a newsreporter's mackintosh and hat, interviews heroes and heroines who have been reduced to vain princesses, foolish princes, and inept witches. This mockery is almost identical to that in *Fairie Tale Theater,* an extensive series of videotapes produced by the actress Shelley Duvall. Duvall's princesses sneer and primp; the princes whine and stumble. Under the banner of sophistication, which is supposed to be the hallmark of today's child, the raw emotional power of the tale is always dismissed. The audience identifies with the child-hero, if it identifies at all, not because he is good or misunderstood or merely pathetic, but because he is savvy and superior. Hollywood-educated children are offered new dreams of themselves as hipsters extraordinaire and masters of the ironic put-down, a piece of candy they can hardly resist.

Hollywood sets few limits on children's sophistication. In *Don't Tell Mom the Babysitter's Dead,* two children no more than nine years old are discovered in passionate embrace in the back seat of a car. *Kindergarten Cop,* another recent popular "family" movie which otherwise allows children a bit more innocence, depicts two youngsters necking in the teachers' lounge of their elementary school. The laughter aroused by such images is not laughter at the absurdity of children that age in such positions, but of Hollywood winking along with the kids at the stupid, surprised adults. Don't they realize how mature, how hip kids really are?

Indeed, this is the message offered repeatedly to Americans today, not just by Hollywood producers but by child "experts," in advice columns, on talk shows, by progressive educators, by social scientists (is there any research on infants today that doesn't marvel at their competence?). The enlightened adult revels in the child's precocity and maintains a cool distance. Hollywood's jaded, superconfident child, while a tonic for ambivalent, preoccupied parents, thus reinforces the rootless independence so widely promoted in a technocratic consumer culture. The smirking, ironic stance, which masks a deeper sense of rage and emptiness, helps grease the consumer machine. Hence, Hollywood, under the banner of enlightened hipness, is the ultimate pied piper, marching abandoned but savvy children off to the marketplace, their parents proudly waving. Should some parents object, they are implicitly understood to be backward and uncool; they should prepare to be mocked like the strict babysitter in *Don't Tell Mom.* Contemporary parents, already mired in doubt promoted by experts, are, to use Mark Crispin Miller's phrase, derided and conquered, fearful of children's scorn and the culture's contempt.

Thus the American fascination with the child who is not a child. This weird, contemporary creature is all around us in movies such as *Look Who's Talking* and its sequel *Look Who's Talking, Too;* characters like the boy-man played by Tom Hanks in *Big;* in the plots of other movies in which parents and children switch identities such as *Like Father, Like Son, Vice Versa,* and *Freaky Friday;* in the TV character Doogie Howser, a sixteen-year-old prodigy who is a staff doctor at a large hospital; and the more recent prodigy in the aptly titled *Little Man Tate.* In these popular-culture creations, Americans seek to reassure and congratulate themselves for their enlightened desentimentalization of children and their families. But in the end, the hipster child of Hollywood, constantly outwitting adults and entirely capable of being home alone, is no more realistic than the Victorian angel; he is only an updated artifice, fathered by the mass media and mothered by the marketplace. As the saying goes, you've come a long way, baby. □

Fascist Winds Return

(Continued from p. 52)

after the overthrow of Communist regimes in Eastern Europe. In the disintegrating multi-ethnic state of Yugoslavia, citizens have forcibly prevented thousands of Roma from voting in elections. In Hungary, walls are defaced with the slogan "OMC," which stands for "Oldd Meg A Cigányt," or "Kill the Gypsy," and a pop song on the radio proclaims, "I will exterminate all Gypsies, adults and children...." One of Hungary's new, widely read tabloids announced last fall, "If Hitler had killed the Jews and the Gypsies he would have served humanity, because they are reproducing like rabbits." In Czechoslovakia, Romani children are afraid to go to school because gangs of skinheads roam the streets hunting down Gypsies and beating them. Reports of beatings and murders of Roma in Romania, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia reach the U.S. office of the International Romani Union with alarming frequency. The Human Rights Committee of the International Romani Union reports that in the last year, twenty-four Roma have been killed and some four hundred Romani houses destroyed in Romania, Czechoslovakia, and Poland alone.

Desperate to escape these conditions of ostracism, poverty, and political disenfranchisement, thousands of Roma are streaming out of Romania and other Eastern European countries to seek asylum in Western Europe, particularly Germany. An estimated eighty-thousand Gypsies have entered Germany over the last two years, mainly from Romania, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Poland, and the USSR. Although France and Austria have also absorbed many Romani immigrants, the comparatively generous provisions for asylum seekers in Germany have drawn the greatest number of refugees from Eastern Europe.

When Germany opened its doors to guest workers in the 1950s and 1960s, hundreds of thousands of Turkish workers came to help rebuild the war-torn nation. When the labor shortage disappeared in the 1970s, Turks were offered financial incentive to leave, but most did not. Although the Turks are still treated like second-class citizens, they are settled, well established, and organized. In contrast, the newly arrived Gypsy families have nowhere to live, are in miserable health, impoverished, and in many cases illiterate. They have little in common with the sixty thousand Gypsy families who have lived in Germany since the 1950s or earlier—families that are integrated into German culture, and have in many cases become quite affluent.

Germany's liberal asylum laws were an attempt to distinguish West Germany's postwar government from its Nazi predecessor, but stubborn anti-Romani prejudices continue to obstruct the path to equal treatment. Many Roma claim German citizenship on the grounds that they were forcibly relocated to Germany during World War II; however, since they are unable to produce documentation, the German government denies their claims. Roma often apply for political asylum as well—but only someone who has committed a political crime or is in danger of becoming a political prisoner is granted asylum. Since Gypsies have been tormented for racial rather than political reasons, they rarely qualify. Many in Germany and Austria have been deported, and Czechoslovakia no longer allows refugees to pass through its borders from Romania on the way to Germany. Those who do arrive receive permits for a very short period, which have to be renewed again and again. Without work permits, education, or job training, impoverished Romani refugees are forced into begging or subsistence theft to make ends meet.

Although Germany encouraged the migration of foreign workers when they were needed and created liberal asylum laws to show the world a new tolerance, the idea of non-Germans becoming a part of society has never been accepted. "We are just not a multiracial and multicultural society," said Berlin mayor Walter Momper. "We are a really pure, good German society, with a German social and cultural heritage." And last May, William Schmidt of the neo-Nazi Democratic People's Union (DVU) said of the Roma in Hitler's concentration camps, "It's a pity that only so few of them were killed!"

But the memory of the Romani Holocaust has been reawakened in more than just public speeches. Germany's harsh treatment of the most recent wave of Romani refugees has been eerily reminiscent of its gruesome history. The Social Democratic state government issued a decree ordering Roma to leave the town of Bremarhaven in northern Germany. In the state of Saarland, several thousand newly arrived Gypsies were rounded up and put in an overcrowded camp, set off by barbed wire. And a vigilante "Citizen Patrol," to keep Gypsies out of town, was recently organized in Recklinghausen after State Parliament member Marr-Müller called for the expulsion of Roma.

In September 1991, the first anniversary of German reunification brought with it an ominous rash of violent attacks on the homes of foreign refugees by neo-Nazis and far-right extremists. These twenty assaults on immigrants brought the total to nearly ninety for the year. And contrary to earlier impressions, many of the assaults occurred in the western, rather than the eastern, part of the country. Popular sympathy for the violence was

reflected in the polls as well. In state elections in Bremen on September 29, the DVU party polled 6.5 percent, almost double its 1987 showing.

European governments, meanwhile, are seeking to appease this resurgent intolerance by cracking down on immigration. Representatives of major European states recently met in Berlin and recommended increasing the border-patrol force, securing borders between East and West, and fining airlines for transporting illegal immigrants. The assembled representatives had nothing to say, however, about the overwhelming number of appeals for political asylum, half of which come from Eastern Europe.

According to the Rom and Cinti Union, more than 80 percent of the Eastern European refugees are Roma. Bitterly alluding to Germany's Nazi past, Romani leaders titled the Berlin meeting the "Second Wannsee Conference for the Final Solution of the Gypsy Problem" and staged a demonstration that began in Berlin and headed toward Denmark. Along the way, demonstrators chanted, "Germany is too dangerous; Gypsies wish to seek refuge elsewhere."

But in all of Europe there may be no refuge for the Roma. In Southern Spain, Roma suffered a mob attack that bore a chilling resemblance to recent incidents in Romania and Germany. Residents in the town of Mancha Real, enraged by a murder committed by a Rom, rampaged through homes belonging to their Romani neighbors of twenty-five years, burnt their cars, and forced them to flee. Eighty Civil Guards were required to protect four Romani schoolchildren from the angry mob.

Yet the resurgence of these ethnic hatreds in Germany and across the entire continent has only strengthened the resolve of the international Romani community to prevent the horrors of the recent past from ever happening again. Now, more than ever, political organization is proving indispensable to Roma as they struggle to unite their fragmented population in the quest for greater collective power. Romani groups in Eastern Europe have organized politically since the 1900s, although such activity has been obscured by popular images of Gypsies as happy-go-lucky wanderers. This political initiative has often revolved around Zionist-inspired plans for a geographic homeland. More recently, however, Roma have been focused on making practical improvements in current conditions around the world.

Romani political activity flourished in Eastern Europe in the wake of World War I, but was disrupted by the disastrous consequences of World War II. Roma were reluctant to draw attention to their ethnicity in the shell-shocked postwar period; by the 1970s, however, the Romani movement for self-determination had gained renewed strength. The International Romani Union, formed at the Second World Romani Congress in 1978, now is the largest organization representing Roma, linking together more than seventy Romani organizations in twenty-eight countries.

The need for political unity among Roma is especially urgent now, as conditions in Europe continue to be volatile. Representatives of the International Romani Union and other Romani organizations met in Rome in late September to plan to have Romani concerns addressed at December's European Community summit in the Netherlands. Received by Pope John Paul II, Romani leaders publicized their demands for formal recognition as a minority in every nation where they live, and full recognition of their human and civil rights.

"This hatred is leading to a new wave of mass genocidal action—a second Holocaust," says Dr. Hancock. "The world turned its back in 1939; this must not be allowed to happen again."

As the collapse of Communist rule threatens to unleash long-suppressed ethnic strife in Eastern Europe, the region's divided populations seem more likely than ever to forge unity among themselves through their shared hatred of the Roma. In a time of profound nationalist upheaval, those who lack a nationalist allegiance become easy scapegoats for a vast range of popular discontents. Eastern European Jews are singled out in vicious anti-Semitic propaganda, while violent anti-Romani incidents have begun to soar out of control, spreading to Western Europe and threatening millions of Roma who lack any clear path of escape. To avert the threat of another genocidal catastrophe, Jews and Roma must draw renewed compassion and strength from their historical bonds, and unite to resist vigorousiy the ancient specter of prejudice, together. □

Political Correctness

(Continued from p. 58)

in turn were backed by conservative foundations and powerful political figures. Isn't *that* the biggest problem on the American campus?

The postmodern professors gaze at their accusers, and they see bad faith. They see conservatives who claim to be more liberal than the liberals, and cultural critics who talk about insulating culture from politics but who wield the literary canon like a club, knocking heads whenever their *own* political

preferences come under attack. And the postmodern professors would laugh—if they weren't ducking under a table.

Are their responses foolish? Merely incomplete, I would say. For there still remains what is, finally, the central issue—the intellectual atmosphere on the campuses and in a few other places. The anti-PC professors' organization, the National Association of Scholars, has its share of well-regarded members, not all of them operatives of the conservative movement, who are eager to recount unpleasant memories in gory detail, the hazing they have undergone at the hands of politically correct university colleagues, the need they feel to bite their tongues or to move to a different department merely to get on with their conventional work. The NAS journal, *Academic Questions,* publishes new complaints all the time: The issue in front of me takes jabs at Brown, Smith, and Duke. A spirit of hyperbole animates some of these complaints, just as it animates the debate as a whole, and doubtless the entire accusation against PC would sound more convincing stripped to essentials, without any of the entertaining references to Mao's Red Guards. But exaggeration does not make a complaint untrue.

As Todd Gitlin wrote not long ago in the *Village Voice:* "A bitter intolerance emanates from much of the academic left." The thing exists—even if not everywhere. And if the intolerance is bitter among some of the professors, how much worse is it in the world of their own students, among the hard-pressed student leftists especially? Merely to hold a reasonably well-attended left-wing meeting at a campus today can turn into a nightmare when politically correct requirements are insisted on, what with the demands for racial and gender balance and correct phrasing and the accusations about racism, sexism, homophobia, and Eurocentrism that fly at the drop of a hat. The leaders of the conventional adult Left are always pulling their hair out over these things, looking for ways to offer a word of friendly advice to the self-persecuting student leftists. The very history of the term PC testifies to the left-wing awareness of a left-wing syndrome. But the syndrome doesn't disappear.

Here is the mystery in the debate over PC. For if the professors and their students are as devoted to every kind of tolerant and humane idea as they say, and if their radical instincts are closer to Michael Harrington than to Martin Heidegger, and if pluralism is their utopia, how can they work up, some of them, so much zeal for small-time inquisitions? All sorts of explanations can be proposed—for instance, the explanation that points to a heritage of Hawthornean puritanism that is every bit as nasty and unconscious among liberals as among conservatives. Or there is the argument that liberals, too, have their share of bad faith. You could point to old habits of left-wing intolerance that persist long after they have been discredited.

But here is an explanation suitably based on structures of language, which I derive from Pierre Bourdieu's theory of academic jargon. In a polemic against Heidegger, Bourdieu observes that professors like to suppose that academic jargon can mean anything they

Errata: One sentence in "Free Associations" (November/December 1991) was garbled. It should have read, "For a moment, when the Senate was forced to publicly consider sexual harassment charges by Anita Hill, tens of millions of Americans allowed themselves to feel renewed hope that something fundamental might change in our society." Ironically, in "Letters" of the same issue, the phone number of Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting was in error. The correct phone number is (212) 633-6700.

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want it to. If someone defines a word to denote ideas that are, say, strictly liberal and open-minded, the professors imagine that no other meanings will inhere. But Bourdieu (who was trying to show that Heidegger remained something of a Nazi even when he was merely an unpolitical academic) insists that words, even academic words, have meanings of their own that can't be wished away, even by professors.

Currently we have a lot of academic terms like "difference," "diversity," "the Other," "logocentrism," and "theory," that are intended to be consonant with humanist traditions of the liberal Left. But these words hark back to a cultural theory that has its roots in the anti-humanist intellectual currents of a generation ago, and buried within those terms may be certain definite ideas that are anything but liberal. There is the idea that we are living under a terrible oppression based on lies about liberal humanism, and that with proper analysis the hidden vast structure of domination can be revealed. There is the temptation to flirt with irrationalist and racial theories whose normal home is on the extreme Right.

And there is the idea that, sparkling like jewels here and there, a millenarian alternative is somewhere lurking, that we can turn the world upside down—if we, the anti-bigot reformers, can only get hold of the dominating verbal structures. For if we can only command the school curriculum, or dictate the literary canon, or get everyone to abandon certain previously unanalyzed phrases that contain the entire structure of oppressive social domination, and replace these phrases with other phrases that contain a new, better society—if we can only do that, great results will occur, and the radiant new day will be at hand.

That is a wild notion, which no one believes consciously, at least not in full. Yet bits and pieces of that idea peek out from the academic vocabulary. And wild or not, the bits and pieces have a popular appeal, if only because they promise that something can be done about the social inequalities and injustices in the United States that seem so intractable in a conservative age. Perhaps if the possibilities for social reform were a little greater right now, the temptation to embark on verbal campaigns of political correctness and to invest these campaigns with outlandish hopes would be less, and the students and younger professors would put their energy into real-life democratic movements instead, which might be a relief to their harassed colleagues. A peculiar sort of leftism is plainly an origin of the PC syndrome, but it's easy to imagine that another kind of turn to the Left—to a conventional movement for social reform—would also be the solution.

Meanwhile here is a phenomenon that is weirder and less productive than any conventional movement for democracy. Dwight Macdonald defined 1930s fellow-travelling as the fog that arose when the warm ocean currents of American liberalism encountered the Soviet iceberg. Political correctness in the 1990s is a related syndrome. It is the fog that arises from American liberalism's encounter with the iceberg of French cynicism. □

Sexuality After Thomas/Hill

(Continued from p. 30)

solely in terms of the regnant erotophobia of American society. There was a distinctively racial dynamic at work in this aspect of the hearings, which has to do with the fact that the ways in which Black Americans view their sexuality cannot help but be influenced by the ways in which the dominant culture constructs Black sexuality. I would like to think that the Senate hearings provided an opportunity for Americans to talk openly about how race insinuates itself into the most intimate aspects of our sexual lives. I fear that the pain and anger so many of us felt as we watched the hearings, along with the failure of Black leaders and white progressives to speak to the issues, will drive discussion of imposed and internalized sexual racism even further underground. As a political matter, that would be unfortunate, because I believe that for African Americans, both the right to be sexual and the right to be free from sexual violence must be central to any progressive antiracist agenda.

Willis: Many of us have opposed the attempts by the media to portray the antisex elements of feminism, embodied in the antipornography movement, as *the* voice of feminism. We've insisted that sex must be understood not only in terms of danger but also in terms of our commitment to pleasure. We won the intellectual arguments, but we've been losing the political argument on a mass level, because the antipornography, neo-Victorian argument is so much more deeply embedded in the culture and so much more the direction that the culture has been going in this conservative time. What is

(Continued on inside back cover)

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Sexuality After Thomas/Hill

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necessary is a new New Left that can turn around the entire atmosphere on cultural matters and contest the Right all across the board.

Gabel: We have to do that through emotional means, through manifesting ourselves as an oppositional community that can deal with sex in a way that is playful; that simultaneously recognizes the gravity of sexual violence and the power and intensity and importance of sexuality. We need a playful or humorous and enlivened way of being—otherwise, people will feel that those feelings that they have in themselves don't connect with the Left, and since they also don't connect with the puritanism of the Right, then people withdraw into their own private selves.

At one point, we in the Left were a magnet for people to come join us in part because of our sexuality, because of the openness, high-spiritedness, and passion of the scene we were able to create. The paradox for us is how to simultaneously side with women's power struggle against male domination and yet to maintain an atmosphere that partakes of that magnetic sexuality. The power of music, the power of nonrational ways of manifesting ourselves, these are all connected to the kind of sexuality that I'm speaking about and that are in my view central to how we could thaw out the power of patriarchy and the power of sexual violence. We need a politics that is expressive, evocative, and that speaks to desire—to the desire for social meaning and connectedness, and that speaks in a nonrational way to sexual desire as well, in an affirming way. This is a quality of politics, rather than a specific content.

Willis: To accomplish any of this, we need a new New Left, a specifically cultural radical Left, a Left that takes for granted the importance of feminism, of race, of sexuality, of freedom versus domination—and that challenges the cultural conservatism of this period. □

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