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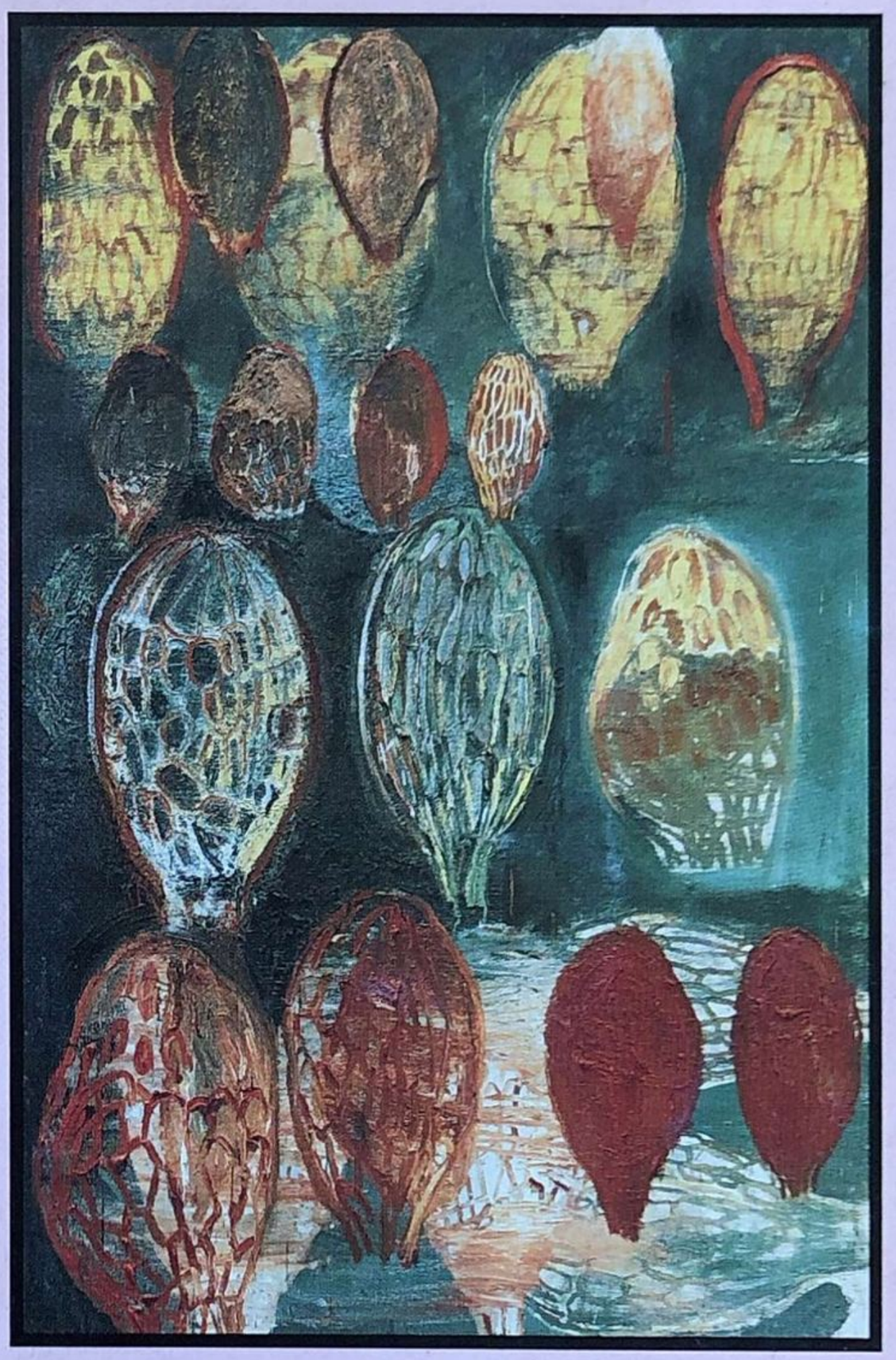
Clinton's Economic Crusade:
The Missing Ingredient
Michael Lerner

A BIMONTHLY JEWISH CRITIQUE OF POLITICS, CULTURE & SOCIETY MARCH/APRIL 1993 $6.00

Rabin's Expulsions

Rifts in the Israeli Peace Movement

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Passover Haggadah Supplement: 1993

After

After the scattering, after the nights of shattered
glass, broken stones, scrawls, marked
houses, chalked walls, after the counter
threats, shouts, shots against the scattered
unhoused stones, after the bombs from over
the ocean, the desert, after oil has mixed
with blood, after the blossoming desert is bombed
to sand and risen again to blossom, though this
is more than the story tells, the story, simply
begun with the scattering, ends with the gathering
in again from distant cities, countries, corners,
basements, caves where children were hidden, graves
whose bones were moved to be burned, ashes that would
not burn, from earth, from air, the people will come
together, they will ride in carts and trains
and cars, they will walk and run, and this
is the story, the people will cross the oceans,
they will cross the rivers on bridges made
of paper, blank and inked and printed and painted
paper bridges will bring them together, over
the waters the borders the wars will be over, under
the paper bridges that bridge the most the best we can.

by Martha Collins

TIKKUN

A BIMONTHLY JEWISH CRITIQUE OF POLITICS, CULTURE & SOCIETY — VOLUME 8 NUMBER 2

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Letters

MEMOS TO CLINTON

To The Editor:

I doubt if Bill Clinton has the wisdom to take up your idea of an "Ethical Environmental Impact Report." Nor does it seem plausible that he would create a summit on ethics and community if for no other reason because after having appointed Ron Brown and Zoë Baird he probably feels too vulnerable on these kinds of issues. What amazes me about TIKKUN is that you think that Clinton could consider these kinds of ideas. I think you are overly optimistic both about his smarts and about his ethical vision.

But perhaps I'm wrong. If so, why doesn't he take up these ideas—clearly the best to come down the pike in America today? If your answer is that he doesn't have people around him who can think in these kinds of terms, then why not let TIKKUN provide the example? Since Clinton is reading TIKKUN, perhaps publishing ethical environmental impact reports as a regular feature might give him a specific and concrete idea of what you are talking about. And perhaps you ought to convene a conference—the kind of summit on ethics that he'll never make happen.

James Horowitz
Los Angeles, California

To The Editor:

I owe thanks to TIKKUN for allowing me to fully experience one of the most exciting moments in recent history—the overthrow of twelve years of conservative rule in America. Your editorials convinced me that despite my liberal skepticism about everything it would be O.K. to trust Clinton. I know, I know—you didn't really say that. You said that if we built a movement there would be the possibility of pushing Clinton to live up to the idealism that

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he at times embodied. But even that possibility was enough to get me to feel elated, to vote for him, and then to go to the inauguration. There were hundreds of thousands of us there, many of us veterans of social change movements, and most of us shared the TIKKUN perspective that something good could happen. Frankly, I haven't been with more than five people at one time who actually thought something good could happen for over a decade. It was an incredible experience, but I know I would never have let myself feel it if you hadn't provided me with a convincing argument to believe that this wasn't necessarily going to be another sell-out rip-off like the Carter presidency. Then, while I was standing there on the Mall, and groups of us were passing around a TIKKUN (would you believe it—I counted eight people reading your Jan./Feb. 1993 issue that Wednesday morning before the ceremony began), I began to notice that you yourself are not really so sure that it won't be Carterism all over again. Your idea for New Democrats rang a bell with me—I hope it can happen. But even if it doesn't, I feel sure that "there's something happening here, and we don't know what it is" and that in some deep way "the times are a changing." Sorry to seem so sixties (which I missed, since I didn't get into politics myself until 1975), but I could feel the energy of the people who have been attracted to Clinton, and we won't let him do to us what previous Democratic Party liberals did to their constituencies. And even to think that this is my president, that I have a right to demand that he live up to his best and most idealistic self, I owe to TIKKUN—because your arguments convinced me that sometimes its better to hope than to always be sure that things won't work out.

Roberta Glazer
Baltimore, Maryland

To the Editor:

I am more disappointed than surprised by the generally hopeful tone of

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In this issue, TIKKUN introduces **"Sikkum: Jewish Books and Books Jews Should Read"** (page 60). Michael Paley, our Jewish book editor, welcomes queries from authors and suggestions of new books worth exploring. Write to him at: Earl Hall, Columbia University, New York, NY 10027.

Call for papers: Jewish Writer's Conference, January 1994

We are open to suggestions about how you would oranize a session, who you might realistically expect to participate, or what you want to talk about—at a conference addressing the kinds of issues TIKKUN might raise about Jewish writers and writing in the contemporary period (including writing for movies, television, fiction, poetry and social change).

INTERNS AND VOLUNTEERS NEEDED for TIKKUN's New York & California Offices

Interning at TIKKUN is a perfect way to make a real contribution to social change—and a perfect entry into the world of professional publishing. Unfortunately, we can't pay our interns, but we can offer you intellectual excitement and the opportunity to make a real difference in the world. In the past, some interns who have worked for us for nine months have been hired at New York publishing houses and major newspapers, and some have been hired by TIKKUN.

We require a sixteen-hours-per-week minimum time commitment. Interns read and assess incoming manuscripts, help with editing and proofreading, help plan and publicize TIKKUN salons, conferences, and summer retreats, and do a wide variety of office tasks including mailings, answering phones and letters, leafletting and soliciting subscriptions and donations. Interns for spring, summer or 1993-94 academic year.

Or, you can volunteer for the magazine. You can help us work on press contacts, fundraising, public relations, legal matters, setting up speakers' engagements, helping plan our conference on Jewish psychology or our conference of Jewish writers, or helping get new subscribers.

To apply: Write a self-revealing letter telling us what turns you on about TIKKUN, describing your skills, and specifying what time you have available. Write to TIKKUN, 251 W. 100th, 5th floor, New York, N.Y. 10025.

New York TIKKUN Events

All salons are at 7:30. Bring a yummy main-course vegetarian dish to share with 12-15 people. RSVP at 212-864-8253 to be sure location has not been changed.

March 13:
Salon: Clinton's First Two Months.
251 W. 100th St., 5th Floor.

April 13:
"Messianism and Judaism" will be discussed as part of Se'udat Ha'Mashiyach—a potluck vegetarian dinner concluding Passover and traditionally dedicated to Messianic speculation.

April 18:
Warsaw Ghetto Uprising: 50th Anniversary Commemoration. A Tikkun teach-in on the rise of neo-Nazism in Germany and Memorial Service. 2 p.m. 15 W. 86th St.

May 8:
Salon: Judaism, Sexuality, and the Body
144 W. 80th St.

May 25:
Tikkun Ley'l Shavu'ot—
traditional study of Jewish texts.
10 p.m. - 2 a.m., 255 W. 95th St., Apt. 1D
Bring dessert for potluck.

June 13:
Salon: Tensions Between Blacks and Jews.
529 W. 113th St., 1st Floor

Form A TIKKUN Salon in Your Area

Thousands of people around the country are already participating in TIKKUN salons, but most of them are filled. So you can create your own. They typically meet once a month, start with a vegetarian pot luck meal, and then move to a 20-30 minute presentation on some TIKKUN-related topic, followed by group discussion and informal socializing for the next few hours—a great way to meet your social and intellectual needs. If you are willing to hold the first meeting in your living room and can do leg work to publicize it in your area, we'll give you some useful advice (though we don't have staff time to do follow-up). Contact Randi Locke c/o Tikkun, 251 W. 100, N.Y., N.Y. 10025; 212-864-4110.

your post-election articles on Clinton. As a governor and as a candidate, Clinton has waffled, compromised, listened carefully to monied interests, and taken conservative positions.

In his campaign, Clinton virtually ignored Green issues, particularly overpopulation and biodiversity. Gore's positions are likely to be ignored. Perhaps we need a Green political party, or a party around Amitai Etzioni's communitarianism or Michael Lerner's "politics of meaning." Instead, what we seem to be moving towards is a consolidation of the two major parties into one major center-right party, and the fight between two wings, a fight that is really between incumbents and non-incumbents rather than about fundamental differences in policy.

Philip D. Roos
Jefferson City, Missouri

To the Editor:

James Atlas wants President Clinton to acknowledge intellectuals, make his interest in our endeavors known, and give us a public voice. He cites approvingly August Hecksher's statement that by inviting intellectuals to the inauguration, Kennedy affirmed that "the intellectual doesn't stand anymore at the fringe of the national life, an odd and perhaps dangerous person." I'm afraid that James Atlas fails to notice that it was precisely this failure to stand at the fringe that led intellectuals to sign up as the ideologues that justified the war in Vietnam. So hungry for approval, many rushed in to become the lap dogs of the powerful after years of feeling on the outs. It's the classic position of the assimilated Jew, desperately trying to get inside, to make it in the mainstream, now transposed into the role of hungry intellectual seeking approval from the powerful. To me, it stinks! Maybe this would be impossibly hard to imagine for someone who has enough of a corporate-mind to have worked his way up to be an editor at The *New York Times* (not famous for allowing intellectual diversity amongst its hired help), but I suggest that Atlas try to wrap his mind around the notion of a different kind of intellectual: one that speaks truth to power rather than hobnobs with it. For this other kind of intellectual, the last place they need to be is in the approving glow of White House recognition. And for that same reason, I caution Michael Lerner not to get too enamored of all the letters he has been getting from Clinton—don't get addicted to getting approval from those who have dedicated their lives to seeking power. The Psalms said it most clearly: "Do not trust in princes."

Abe Abrams
New York, New York

To The Editor:

Jay Rosen calls for President Clinton to embody "a new civility" as he deals with the press. But wasn't it precisely doing that that made it possible for the press to crucify him during his first weeks in office when they made gays in the military the sole issue of attention? Had Clinton been a tough fighter, rather than a gentle practitioner of civility, he might have stood his ground, fought hard, and demanded a different focus from the media. Instead, the very appearance of civility created the ground upon which the military, its right-wing supporters in both parties, and the press managed to make Clinton look like a compromiser and a man in retreat. Didn't this whole incident really prove that what Clinton needs is a more combative self—one that stands up more forcefully for what he believes in? Isn't the real danger that Clinton will appear to be liberal not just in what he believes but in how he fights for it—namely someone who is willing to give up on what he believes in order to show that he is reasonable. And isn't that why people hated Carter and Dukakis, because they felt that this kind of inner civility was actually a reflection of a lack of passion, and hence something you couldn't really believe in? Isn't the reason that many people feel more trusting of the Right is that the Right will fight for its ideals (which Bush didn't do, which is also why people abandoned him, because he wasn't a real rightist or a real anything)? So wouldn't we be better off with a little less civility and a little more dedication to some principles besides the principle that Rosen supports of demanding that Clinton be the best "us" that he wants us to be, the model of who we ought to be? Frankly, I'd prefer a Clinton who stood for something rather than the slippery Willie who never stands his ground. (Wasn't this the guy who was going to cut my middle-class taxes and simultaneously reduce the deficit, or did I miss something?) Clinton may indeed be what Rosen calls "the new communicator-in-chief," but what he is communicating is the old message: You can't trust liberals because they never really are willing to fight for what they say they believe in.

Andy Stein
Chicago, Illinois

Jay Rosen responds:

The metaphor of politics as warfare appeals equally to the Left, the Right, and the press, who constantly imagine themselves at loggerheads with each other. In fact, they agree that fighting is the essential political art, while talking is just fighting with words. It is true, of course, that a president unwilling to stand and fight will earn the contempt of voters, opponents, and journalists. But if dogged dedication to principle will ease the deficit, solve the health care crisis, improve our schools, and bring our cities back from the dead, then let us hear what those principles are. Politics as warfare has its limits, and we should want Clinton to recognize this, not by declining to fight, but by using the presidency to reach and teach, listen, and persuade.

BLOOD, MIKVEH, & PURITY

To The Editor:

Rachel Adler's "In Your Blood, Live: Re-visions of a Theology of Purity" (Jan./Feb. 1993) is the most powerful challenge to Jewish religious orthodoxy I've ever read. Simply stated: if human is full of holes, bloody, diseased, breaking—then this reality, created by God, cannot be impure.

Yet, at a deeper level, Adler is really rejecting the whole distinction between holy and ordinary or regular (*kodesh le chol*) which has been central to orthodoxy. In an earlier TIKKUN article she argued that Jews are the *Ivrim*, those who go over, the boundary crossers—but I really think she means the boundary smashers. Isn't the whole woman-hating ethos embodied in those boundaries—so that man is seen as holy and woman as unholy, impure, or ordinary (*chol*)?

What I take from the implications of Adler is a theology of oneness that accepts everything, that acknowledges everything as holy, holy, holy, the whole earth filled with God's glory and really being the embodiment of God. This view has nothing to do with any Judaism I was ever taught, but perhaps this is the new feminist Judaism that is emerging today. If so, I embrace it enthusiastically. Thank you, TIKKUN, for

being the place where Rachel Adler's prophetic words are first being published! To me, that is a more practical act of support for feminism than your attempts to print an equal number of women (which, in any event, you always fail at) or your printing p.c.-type articles proving how feminist you are. It's in being the magazine where I can read the best ideas that Jewish feminism has to offer that TIKKUN actually becomes a serious ally and embodiment of feminism—and you're doing a good job at it.

Alice Hoffman
New York, New York

To the Editor:

Pardon me, but in your attempt to discredit orthodoxy through Rachel Adler's poetic musings about blood and purity, you seem to have abandoned Judaism altogether. I'm not a religiously observant person, and I've never been to a mikveh in my life nor do I intend to (despite Shira Dicker's rapturous praise of her own experience there), but I do still believe in a Jewish God. And that is not what Rachel Adler is talking about. To me her language conjures up the Jesus of the Gospel According to John, or perhaps latter-day Christian apologists—God being found in the bloody fragments, the Torah as "broken and bleeding just like me." (Has Rachel been reading too many accounts of "the host" being miraculously discovered to be bleeding—but remember how we Jews got the blame for all this blood?) There's something very goyish about all this blood as the source of life (yes, I know Torah says to get rid of the blood from the animal because the blood is the life, but that doesn't make blood into something holy). Couldn't blood just be blood? You know—the kind of thing we need to live, just like we need air and food. And if every month some part of the human race was losing part of its stomach or part of its lungs, wouldn't we rejoice when that had stopped happening, and the person was returning to a fully healthy place? Why not acknowledge that the loss of blood is frightening not because blood is holy or *treyf*, but just because it's something we need to live? And then, why not see ritual immersion as a kind of celebration of returning to a life not endangered by the loss of blood? Perhaps that is different than what the religious meant by the practice, but certainly it's also different from the kind of sanctification of bleeding that you get in Adler's Christian-like theology.

Sarah Ettinger
Boston, Massachussetts

To the Editor:

Rachel Adler recants her "Tum'a and Tahara," which is a modern Orthodox defense for the mikveh rules. Now a reform theologian, Alder no longer accepts mitzvot as binding and as a consequence she rejects her previous elegant apologia for an institution she now believes is oppressive. On Adler's reading of Halacha, the blood of male circumcision is ritually pure, while women's blood is defiling. As a modern woman, she believes that these rules and the distinctions on which they are founded should be rejected.

But the way to understand women's impurity is to compare it to another Torah impurity—namely that of the *zav* or *zavvah*. An uncontrolled male emission similarly makes a man impure. This follows Mary Douglas's understanding of "dirt" and disorder as human matter out of place, anticipating death. Both male emissions in this case and female menstruation in the case of *niddah* ritually defile, so it's unfair to suggest that only women suffer defilement in Judaism. What has changed for Rachel Adler since her earlier article is her community of significant others and the theological/social agenda they now share—one that starts from the assumption that orthodoxy is inherently unfair to women.

Rabbi Alan J. Yuter
Congregation Israel
Springfield, N.J.

Rachel Adler responds:

Some days, "the dream of a common language" seems particularly remote. Ettinger thinks I'm a Christian. Hoffman thinks I'm an antinomian monist. And Yuter, after reading an essay that grapples with the ethics of theological revision, concludes that I am so passive or so utterly unprincipled that I am merely a mouthpiece for whatever "significant others" have me in tow. Surely *someone* out there must have heard what I really said!

For the record: I do not believe that everything is one, that everything is holy, or that everything is O.K. Nor do I believe that there are no binding mitzvot. I *do* believe that since we fulfill our obligations within social contexts, tradition and social experience must stay in conversation with one another, so that we can keep refining socially constructed injustices out of our attempts "to do justly." That is why it is relevant to ascertain what impact a religious practice has upon actual human lives. How many *zavim* on Rabbi Yuter's block, for example, suffer the slightest social consequence from their discharge? How can he maintain that their situation is identical to that of the *niddah*?

AUSCHWITZ

To the Editor:

I have long admired the work of my colleague and friend James Young. However, Professor Young disparagingly misrepresents reality in his article on "The Future of Auschwitz" (Nov./Dec. 1992).

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum did not go "foraging" for artifacts nor did we "cart off" material.

The planners of the permanent exhibition of the museum wrestled with the issue of how best to present the reality of the Holocaust to the American public in a museum setting, especially at a time when Holocaust deniers are disseminating pseudo-scholarship in a public campaign to deny its reality. We concluded that the best way of presenting the reality of Auschwitz in a convincing and irrefutable manner was to use, wherever possible, authentic artifacts of the period or castings made from such original material.

We then held extensive discussions with the leaders of Poland and the director of the governmental Museum of Auschwitz and came to an agreement ratified by the appropriate public bodies in both countries that allow for the transfer from Birkenau to the museum of a barracks that was to be torn down because it could not be preserved.

Only when the director of Auschwitz was convinced that the Museum would teach the lessons of Birkenau in a respectful and appropriate manner was permission for the loan granted. And the barracks we received was not, as Professor Young represented, one of the last remaining wooden barracks.

We salute all efforts international, governmental, and philanthropic to preserve Auschwitz/Birkenau. The chairman of the International Relations Committee and the director of this museum serve on the Auschwitz Council, and we have contributed significant funds and solicited significant

contributions on behalf of the conservation project.

Professor Young is a brilliant, responsible scholar. His statements on the museum were an uncharacteristic lapse.

Michael Berenbaum
Project Director
Holocaust Museum
Washington, D.C.

James Young responds:

Having learned so much from Michael Berenbaum over the years and admired his scrupulously clear vision for the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, I feel that Professor Berenbaum may be responding more to the tone of my report on Auschwitz than its content.

In fact, I did try to reflect the disapproving tone adopted by the Yarnton group toward the removal of any of the artifacts from Auschwitz. At the same time, I didn't mean to impugn the U.S. Holocaust Memorial's reasons for taking the barracks back to Washington. I might prefer that the Museum not use a barracks this way, but I do understand why they would want to show it as evidence. As for my suggestion that this was one of the last remaining wooden barracks, I should say that even though this is not the last remaining wooden barracks at Birkenau, it is one of the only remaining two dozen or so.

Finally, even if we disagree slightly over the means of memory, Professor Berenbaum and I agree completely on its ends. Given Professor Berenbaum's profound memorial vision and integrity, I have no doubt that the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum will succeed in its extremely difficult mission.

James E. Young
New York, New York

Jews & Latinos

To the Editor:

Tsvi Blanchard in "Jews and Latinos" describes the *Forward* as one of Congressman Solarz's "supporters." For the record, please note that the *Forward* made no endorsement in the 12th District. Our editorial argument was limited to opposition to the notion that Mr. Solarz should withdraw from the race because he is Jewish.

Seth Lipsky
Editor, The *Forward*
New York, New York

Nationalism & Ethnic Chauvinism

To the Editor:

Bodgan Denitch ("Roundtable on Nationalism & Ethnic Particularism," Nov./Dec. 1992) falsely asserts that third-generation Croatians living outside Croatia are allowed to vote in elections while non-Croats living in Croatia are not guaranteed citizenship. The fact is this right is guaranteed to anyone, living in any place in the world, whether or not they are of Croation ethnic background, if they can prove through documentation that they or their parents were born in Croatia. Moreover, all people living in Croatia are automatically guaranteed citizenship with full equal rights regardless of their nationality.

Dr. Denitch also claims that there was no oppression of certain national groups in Yugoslavia except for Albanians. But he ignores the massacres of hundreds of thousands of Croatians in the months following the conclusion of World War II. Many of those killed were children, killed not for being anti-Communist, but for being Croatian.

Yugoslavia was really only an extension of Serbian power over other groups. When Yugoslavia existed Serbs controlled the military, the diplomatic service, the media, the regular police, the secret police, and every other field of importance. In Zagreb, the capital of Croatia, only about 4 per cent of the population were Serbs, but Serbs made up 80 per cent of the police. The situation was the same throughout the rest of Croatia.

Most Croatians never accepted the Yugoslav state and were treated as an enemy population by the Yugoslav (mainly Serbian) authorities. Croatia was actually a nation under foreign occupation within Yugoslavia. It was inevitable that Croatia would seek its freedom once democracy came.

Louie Marasovic
Summit, Illinois

Bogdan Denitch responds:

Mr. Marasovic illustrates the apologetic nonsense which nationalism leads otherwise quite possibly reasonable people to write. Nationalists automatically rush to what they think is the defense of their nation.

As to the contents: massive denial of Croatian citizenship to long-time residents of Croatia of Serbian, Alabanian, and Rom (Gypsy) ethnic origin is well documented. It is mentioned by the Helsinki Watch as well as by opposition parties in Croatia. I happen to be well informed about this matter since I campaigned for office as a candidate of the Social Democratic Union of Croatia in the summer of 1992. Ethnic Croats from Bosnia, as well as long time emigrés, not only voted in the elections but assumed high political and administrative office.

The indefensible massacres of anti-Communists immediately after the war were not ethnically based. Serbian, and Montenegrin Royalists, and Slovenian and Croatian Nazi collaborators and anti-communists were massively massacred by Slovenian, Serbian and Croatian (Dalmatian) Communist-led partisans. That is the consensus of all authorities.

If Yugoslavia was merely an extension of Serbia why did the present Croatian President Tudjman serve as a general in the Yugoslav army as well as much of his new nomenklatura. Some even served in leading positions in the Communist political police. The major leaders of Communist Yugoslavia, Tito, Kardelj, Dolanc, Bakaric etc, were, for the most part non-Serb. At the time of its break up, federal Yugoslavia had a Slovenian, Drnovsek as President of the collective presidency, a Croat, Ante Markovic, as Prime Minister, and a Croat, Loncar, as Foreign Minister. Yes, Yugoslavia desperately needed to be democratized, but except for the Albanians there was no national oppression in what was an authoritarian communist one-party state. I hope for a modern and democratic Croatia which does not oppress its minorities, because I care for my second country, and I believe that it deserves democracy.

Neo-Nazis

To the Editor:

Early in November an incident occurred in Rome which exemplifies the lack of clarity and cohesion of the Jewish response to the growth of neo-Nazi violence. Young Jews, provoked by anti-Semitic violence, ransacked the office of the neo-fascist group known as Movimento Politico. No injuries were reported—this was an attack on property, not persons. Nevertheless, leaders of the Roman Jewish establishment condemned the action. American Jewish organizations took no stand.

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EDITORIAL

Clinton's Economic Crusade: The Missing Ingredient

Michael Lerner

Let's start with the congratulations Bill Clinton deserves. In his State of the Union address, Clinton became a courageous embodiment of some of the best attitudes of the sixties generation by "speaking truth to power," confronting an irrational system, and telling those who supported it that it had to change, yet doing so in a language that was nonconfrontational, compassionate, and accessible. While Clinton incorporated some of the best aspects of liberal programs of the past—his insistence on the needs of the poor and those who do not yet have access to the benefits of American society, and his concern that the rich pay a larger share of taxes—there were moments when he moved toward articulating a politics of meaning, reminding us not to think of what's in it for us as individuals but rather to think about how we together would benefit from his programs.

By being willing to discuss complex matters of policy in a manner that people could understand, Clinton contributed to the deepening of critical intelligence in the society. This, in fact, may be the most threatening aspect of his presidency to many people in the press. Many of the commentators, news analysts, and columnists depend upon their ability to portray themselves as having a special knowledge of complex matters that they can translate for the general public. The willingness of the public to listen to the cynical inanities of many of these commentators will decrease if the President continues to educate the public as he did in his mid-February address.

Equally important, the President tried to teach the American public that we should take a long-range view of civic responsibility. For the past two decades, presidents thought in terms of the next few years, and sometimes even just the next few months. Clinton asked us to think ahead several generations and to take responsibility for the future. Here, once again, he embodies the spirit of the sixties, with its willingness to dream, to "imagine" a future, and to insist that the desirable may be possible because the times they are a-changing.

But most important of all was Clinton's challenge to the embedded cynicism which has been the hallmark of American politics, both left and right, for decades. Clinton's spirit conveys the sense that we can do it. His presence communicates self-confidence—not the kind of self-confidence that is arrogant and authoritarian and hierarchical, but one that is contagious and communicates to us a sense that we too could feel safe and confident taking risks, pursuing dreams, and speaking truth to power. His presidency poses for every American a central question: Will we, too, dare to go with our most hopeful feelings and overcome the paralyzing cynicism that leads people out of the struggle for a better world and into a privatized sphere of self-seeking and me-firstism?

It seems almost incredible that we could have someone this good as president, given the mediocre or malign people that the system has pushed into positions of power over the course of most of our adult lives.

And yet there's a problem. Clinton may be unable to accomplish what he has set out to accomplish, not because he has gone too far, but because he has not gone far enough. Although few people would articulate it in these terms, what excites most people about Clinton is precisely the degree to which he speaks to their hunger for meaning and purpose, their half-conscious and often inchoate desire to transcend the selfishness and meaninglessness of a materialistic and narcissistic society, their hunger to live in a community that stands for something and creates a morally and spiritually meaningful framework for their lives.

So far, however, Clinton has been unable to carry through the implications of his own paradigm shift. Instead, just at the moment when he has whetted the appetite of idealism, he conveys a picture of what he's fighting for that is so limited, so much a projection of the individualism of the contemporary world, so much a reification of the current system and its values, that his supporters are left without adequate ammunition to carry through the fight for a different kind of world. The programs that he proposes make sense precisely to the extent that they embody a principle of mutual care and social responsibility. But until Clinton is willing to explicitly articulate and fight for that principle, it is all too easy for his opponents to drag us down into the mire of the arguments that seem appropriate for the existing discourse ("Aren't you just taxing and spending?" or "How

quickly will that program produce measurable results?"). Unless we have, for example, a criterion of "what works" that speaks about the degree to which a program generates a sense of community, a degree of trust, a sense of solidarity among human beings, a propensity to act toward others in a loving or caring way, then "what works" will be defined in narrower and more materialistic terms that are based on an older paradigm of what is really important in our lives.

Our first instinct is confusion. "Sure," we say to ourselves, "he doesn't seem to quite get it, yet what he is saying is so far superior to whatever else has been said in politics in the past decades by anyone with real power that we would be making a mistake not to embrace Clinton's crusade, defending him against all challengers. Aren't we expecting too much? Are we pathologically committed to thinking that nothing is ever enough?" But questioning Clinton's approach is not a mean-spirited attempt to undermine him. Our objective is to focus the President and those around him on the implications of his own paradigm so that he will fully embrace them. I was pleased to get a note from Hillary Clinton asking me to send TIKKUN to the White House, and I envision addressing these remarks to people who are very smart and who want to make significant changes, but who, in my estimation, are making a serious mistake that is still remediable. Let me explain.

The real struggle taking place in America is that between two paradigms. The old paradigm is that of individualism, self-interest, and me-firstism—symbolized by the Reagan era's profligate dismantling of social programs, shifting of the tax burden from the rich to middle-income and working people, and frantic pursuit of individual fortunes at the expense of the collective good (think only of how destructive the leveraged buyouts and subsequent bankrupting of savings and loans were for the society as a whole, even though they were very functional for enhancing the wealth of some of the investment bankers and speculators that brought us these catastrophes). The old paradigm argued that each person pursuing his/her individual interests would somehow produce a collective good (we'd been hearing this ever since Adam Smith's "invisible hand" that was supposed to reconcile individual greed and collective well-being). The recession of the Bush years helped show how badly mistaken this paradigm hasd become. The new paradigm (actually, the oldest paradigm of the Bible, a paradigm that has been articulated by religious movements, socialist movements, and movements for psychological and physical health) emphasizes solidarity, mutual aid, social responsibility, and a sense that we are all in it together and that we must all take care of each other as if we were all part of the same family. Though conservatives claim that the new paradigm was actually tried during the Great Society and Carter period, many of us believe that the largescale impersonal bureaucracies of those periods and their process of handing out inadequate benefits in a degrading and personally humiliating manner to the supposed beneficiaries was a far cry from a politics of caring and solidarity. The new paradigm pays attention to the inner experience of human beings—it asks about the meaning of actions, not just some supposedly objective impact. So compassion isn't simply giving someone something that they need, it is doing the giving in a way that empowers, gives dignity, and conveys a sense of caring and concern. The new paradigm addresses the hunger that people have to be part of a community of meaning and purpose that transcends their own self-interest and connects them to a larger moral and spiritual purpose.

To the extent that liberals shied away from thinking in these larger terms and instead tried to make politics a "science," or a question of abstract, value-free technological rationality, in which the central issue (to paraphrase the 1988 Democratic presidential nominee, Michael Dukakis) is "competence," or to the extent that they thought that people wanted nothing more than a laundry list of economic entitlements and political rights, they tended to leave most Americans cold. In the mid 1980s, TIKKUN began to tell liberals and progressive social change movements that what Americans wanted was something very different—a sense of meaning and purpose—because they lived in a society in which their highest moral and spiritual needs were being systematically frustrated. And we were delighted when Bill Clinton wrote us in 1988 to tell us that our "politics of meaning" had helped him understand why the Democrats had lost in the past and what had to be done to change that.

Part of what was so exciting about Clinton's adoption of the language of a politics of meaning during his presidential campaign was his ability to make people feel safe by providing them with a vision of a society in which people really do care about each other. And when he talked to me last spring, he seemed to understand that the meaning needs were not just an expression of economic insecurity. The need to be part of an ethically and spiritually grounded society is every bit as central to people's well-being as their need for material prosperity and political rights.

Thus, I couldn't help feeling disappointed when Clinton failed to provide any substantial vision of what a New Covenant could and should be about during the first months of his presidency. During his first State of the Union address, Ronald Reagan articulated some basic principles which could be understood by everyone as the terms on which his presidency would be judged. Clinton needs to do the same—and to embrace unam-

biguously the paradigm shift that can make sense of his programs and give guidance to the many Americans who wish to fight on his behalf but don't quite know how. Although many of his specific, programmatic ideas reflected a larger vision, Clinton shied away from delineating a few easily understood principles that could provide a rallying point for his supporters and a criterion by which his programs could be judged. His program was animated more by his person than by an articulated principle, and he failed to call on his supporters to fight for a new paradigm, so they were left with nothing to do but fight for each specific program.

I imagine that the words that could electrify the country and strengthen the Clinton presidency would go something like this:

> For the past twelve years we've lived in a society that encouraged selfishness, self-centeredness, and consequently a distrust of social programs, because government was a self-perpetuating bureaucracy acting out of its own interests rather than a democratic expression and instrument by which we could act to take care of each other. The goal of my presidency is to challenge the ethos of selfishness and to replace it with an ethos of caring, social responsibility, trust, and mutual aid. I want you to judge each of my programs by the degree to which they model an America in which people really care about something higher than themselves and their own immediate needs for money, power, success, or recognition—an America in which ethical, environmental, and spiritual sensitivity abound. And I want each of you to be a personal emissary of that new consciousness, which in fact is the old consciousness, the consciousness of the Bible and the consciousness of ethical sensitivity that has a long history not only in the traditions of America but also in the best traditions of all peoples of the world. Each of you, in your personal lives, in your families, at your workplaces, in casual conversations, and in public actions can become part of building a new America to the extent that you challenge cynicism and despair, the ethos of self-interest, and those who tell you that it's all a sham and that "really" everybody knows that people only care about themselves and that you have to be foolish to sacrifice yourself for anyone else. You must challenge the claim that people are purely selfish by showing that its possible to combine self-love and donate time, money, and emotional energy to caring about others who are more distant from you and who need your support. That's what this presidency is going to be about, and when the media tell you that I am merely jockeying for advantage in a struggle to win you over, or to beat Congress, or to manipulate you in some way, remember that what we are really trying to do is something very different—to create a new way of thinking. The media don't yet understand it, and so they try to force us back into the more familiar, narrow frame of self-interest and power-politics. You can influence media perceptions if you let them know that they too need to join in the struggle to think a different way and to act in a more caring, more socially responsible way about the problems we face. So this presidency is based on a new form of thinking; its goal is the establishment of a caring and ethically and environmentally sensitive world, and we can take the first steps toward that together. Those who oppose us, Republicans and even some Democrats, are often stuck in the old paradigm, the paradigm that believes that the only motive that works is self-interest, and that all that you care about is yourselves and no one else. That cynicism can and must be defeated, and that's why the Republican consciousness must lose, not because it's the wrong party and because we want to get our friends into positions of power, but because they are stuck in a past that hasn't worked and can't work, because it is based on an inadequate view of human nature, one that ultimately reduces us to creatures motivated by material needs and sees no room for the spirit of God within us.

O.K.—it doesn't have to be these words. But it has to be some kind of unifying vision that challenges the ethos of selfishness by explaining to people their own role in participating in that ethos and showing them that it could be changed. And it has to be uttered with the conviction of someone who knows that the older paradigm is more than just mistaken—it is morally mistaken, because it does not validate what is best and highest and most precious about human beings.

What was exciting about Clinton's State of the Union speech were the moments in which Clinton hinted at this vision, even when he shied away from fully articulating it. What he did do was to talk about everybody being in this together and needing to sacrifice for the common good; what he did not do was to posit a vision of a common good that went beyond an economistic and reductionist account of human needs. He did not say: "Here is the shared principle or ethical goal: to reject selfishness and to establish caring for others at the center of our personal and so-

cial lives. And we are for that principle not only because acting on it is a more effective way of doubling our standard of living in some specified time period, but because this way of being with each other is a better way, and the kind of society we want is one in which people treat each other in a kind and caring rather than in a manipulative and self-aggrandizing way."

Clinton asked us to sacrifice. And so hungry are Americans to be part of something, to feel that they have a community that transcends their own lives, that many Americans were ready, for the moment, to join a crusade for economic change even if it required personal sacrifices and higher taxes.

But sacrifice for what? There were moments when Clinton seemed to reach for programs that embodied higher values—this is the possible significance of his focus on health care. But all too often his focus was far too narrowly economistic. "Reducing the deficit," "rebuilding America's economic infrastructure," even "competing more effectively with Germany and Japan in the world marketplace" are reasonable goals for a rational capitalist economy—and if you are going to live in a capitalist society, as we are, then it's certainly better to live in one that is rationally functioning than in one that is totally irrational and governed by the narrowest short-term interests of one sector of the ruling elite. But making our society more effective at doing what it's already doing, while a plausible goal, doesn't really address the basic needs that are being systematically thwarted in this society. Having worked as a psychotherapist for a decade with American workers, and having discovered the great pain in people's lives—the pain of loneliness (even of those who on the surface seem to be embedded in families or social networks), alienation, and a deep sense of meaninglessness (often covered up by frenetic engagement in politics, religion, sports, television, sex, aerobics, drugs, or alcohol)—I am convinced that a politics aimed primarily at reducing the deficit or making America better able to compete in world markets is a politics that will not hold the loyalty of people for too many years, nor will it ultimately work to reduce their sense of pain, estrangement and the society-wide depression that manifests as frenetic forgetfulness of anything that happened earlier than the past few moments.

So, after the exhilaration we will experience in joining Clinton's fight against the special interests; after enjoying watching the rich and the corporate interests start to yelp because they've been asked to pay for part of the changes (although not proportionate to what they've gained through decades of social policies that favored them); after enjoying the freedom that comes with being part of a movement that calls for change, most Americans are going to have to return to daily lives that still remain trapped in alienation and meaninglessness. To address the most fundamental pain that people face in daily life, Clinton would have to take the politics of meaning far more seriously, asking how to restructure American economic life to promote cooperation and mutual support, and rewarding human beings for acting in a caring and socially responsible rather than in a selfish and self-centered way. He would have to ask not only about how to provide Head Start for the disadvantaged, as he did in his February address to Congress, but family support networks and a consciousness of the relationship between personal pain and societal irrationality. In fact, he would have to challenge the whole notion that the society gets strong by encouraging people to compete for self-interest.

Similarly, he would have to paint a very different picture of the future. At the moment, we are encouraged to sacrifice in the present so that we can have a strong America for the future. But the future Clinton depicts is highly individualistic—an America that is better able to compete, a leaner and tougher America. He does not talk of a new ethos, an America based on loving and cooperation and caring for each other, an America that embodies a set of values in which we can believe, but instead an America that projects the current values of individualism and competitiveness and makes us do them more effectively.

Clinton may soon face the reality that such a vision is insufficient to sustain the kind of movement that he needs to mobilize to make substantial change. Without that more transcendent, politics-of-meaning vision to mobilize and unify his supporters, they will be unable to sustain the strength to resist each particular attempt to pick apart his program. If health care reform, for example, is merely about cost-containment and greater access, important as these are, but not about challenging the notion that profitability for service providers is as reasonable a concern as maximizing the health and well-being of the rest of us, then people will get lost in the details of how best to contain costs and will lose interest in opposing the doctors, insurance companies, and service providers who will attempt to thwart meaningful reform. To go further, to have a coherent value picture, is actually better and smarter politics—the most plausible strategy for withstanding the attacks of the coming years.

Until now, Clinton has conveyed his politics of meaning by his tone, his gaze, his passion. But if he is to have real allies, he needs to put it in words, and through those words empower his potential supporters so that they can take the basic principles and apply them to each particular, defending them as integral to the whole transfor-

(Continued on inside back cover)

Memo to Clinton:
Rebuilding the Economy

Michael Zweig

To rebuild the U.S. economy, we have to rebuild the productive capacities of U.S. labor. Twelve years of financial manipulation and speculation have weakened our economy. Shifting to production means focusing on work.

I know that you shied away from talking about workers during the campaign. Even though many of your campaign themes directly addressed the needs of working people, you referred to them as "middle class."

I understand why that made political sense. A recent poll in Michigan, once the heart of the labor movement, showed that autoworkers describe themselves as middle class. In a society where work is denigrated, labor called marginal, unions are on the skids, and conditions of working-class life are steadily eroding, working people resist identification with the pain of their own lives and aspire to something better. At a time when "working class" suggests lower class, and lower class suggests the poor, and poverty brings to mind an urban African-American and Latino underclass, workers of all races and nationalities seek to put distance between themselves and such a working class.

Yet, understandable as it is, constant reference to a vast middle class muddles our thinking about society. It is as if our whole country is in denial about the existence and extent of the working class, who are 65 percent of the population. The decline of manufacturing employment and the rise of services have not ushered in a post-industrial society in which classes and class differences have disappeared.

Even for the "information generation," traditional labor relations continue largely unchanged. The new service and information workers, like their industrial counterparts, have little ability to protect their jobs or win the rewards of higher productivity and profits. They too find themselves with little control over the conditions of their work, and so still experience the alienation which is a major component of stress at work. Is it any wonder, then, that people flee from the world of work, trying to forget the experience, eager to think of themselves as middle-class consumers rather than producers? If you are going to get the economy moving, however, you need to get workers to be your partners in the world of work. That means recognizing and responding to their needs as workers.

Labor can take two approaches to economic issues as an active organized social force. It can engage in class-confrontational strategy and tactics, defending itself from attack and asserting its own interests in a hostile environment. Or, more productively, it can participate as a social partner in a new industrial relations system. Which road labor takes depends as much on business actions and government leadership as it does on the inclinations of the labor movement itself.

Secretary of Labor Robert B. Reich has proposed a new approach to labor. In testimony at his confirmation hearing, Reich recognized the positive role unions can play and expressed commitment to a Labor Department functioning as a true advocate of working people. This outlook is a welcome change with great promise.

You have begun the process by identifying the need to improve the skills and health of workers. But to bring the full talents of workers into play it will be necessary to develop an industrial relations system wholly different from what we have had in the past. The new system we need requires business leaders to put aside their hostility to labor, manifested in the assault on unions in the 1980s and the decline of U.S. wages to levels below those in Germany, Japan, and many other countries.

Instead, labor must participate as a social partner within a corporatist framework, one in which labor, together with capital and the government, negotiates national economic policy, business practices, and the distributions of income and wealth so that everyone gains from economic progress. When progress inflicts pain—as it always does—on labor and capital caught in the transition, compensating programs should be in place. The inevitable conflicts between labor and capital might then be contained and structured within a larger framework

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of mutually accepted common purpose.

When President Reagan destroyed the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization (PATCO), he made it clear that labor no longer had a place in the process of formulating economic policy consensus. Even though PATCO and some other unions had supported Reagan in 1980, labor was thrown out of the loop. Reagan's action signalled business that unions were fair game and that government would not protect them from corporate attack. This is the labor policy that you should decisively and publicly repudiate to break old patterns of conflict, mutual disregard, and fear, and secure labor's participation in the tasks of economic reconstruction ahead.

A program to change the place and condition of working people in the United States should, at a minimum, uphold the right of workers to organize and represent their interests collectively, at the workplace and at the level of industrial and government policy formation. To accomplish this, the damage of PATCO must be reversed. Your offer to rehire the air traffic controllers fired by Reagan will go some distance to reverse the personal loss the workers suffered, but the situation requires much more.

You have endorsed legislation to ban the permanent replacement of striking workers. This will help restore labor's capacity to organize and so help establish the basic conditions needed for a new industrial relations system. I would suggest several additional steps to help strengthen labor:

• Change the National Labor Relations Board. The Reagan/Bush administrations converted the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) into an agency actively hostile to unions. Your appointments should restore it as a safeguard of union organizing, the original intent of the Wagner Act.

• Repeal Article 14b of the Taft-Hartley Act. "Right to work" laws are significant impediments to union organizing and collective bargaining and have long been the understandable target of organized labor. It is time that federal law fully support unions as a necessary and welcome part of our economy.

• Ensure workplace health and safety. Every worker should have an enforced right to know what materials s/he is working with and be afforded adequate protection from hazards. To these ends, workers should have the right to elect shop-based committees to monitor conditions and secure employer compliance with health and safety standards. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration also needs resuscitation after years of smothering.

• Mandate benefits for part-time workers. The explosive growth of temporary services agencies and other forms of part-time employment has played a major role in driving down worker living standards. Benefits should be provided on a *pro rata* basis, and temporary services agencies should be investigated and regulated to protect their employees.

• Increase the minimum wage. A full-time, year-round worker receiving minimum wage now earns only 78 percent of the poverty level for a family of three, 60 percent for a family of four, even after the recent increase to $4.25 an hour. Two year-round, full-time workers cannot bring a family of five above the poverty level. We need an immediate increase in the hourly minimum wage to $5.60, which will allow a full-time worker to support a family of three just above the poverty line. To preserve real purchasing power, the minimum wage should then be indexed to match any future increase in prices.

• Maintain U.S. standards in international trade. You should not endorse any NAFTA or GATT agreement which undermines U.S. labor or environmental standards by dismissing them as non-tariff barriers to trade. When you disbanded Dan Quayle's Council on Competitiveness, you correctly characterized it as a means to evade U.S. law. You should now lead resistance to the same purpose when it appears in any form on an international scale.

• Restrict capital flight. To secure labor's cooperation in adjusting its interests to the needs of the economy, business should look after the same needs and invest in domestic capacity. Companies have regularly secured concessions from labor only to invest the savings abroad. Such disrespect and narrow self-service should simply be prohibited by law.

• Open the books. If labor is to play a full part in the recovery and redesign of our economy, workers must have access to all information available to employers concerning operating and capital costs for existing and contemplated activity.

These steps will have their greatest impact if you fight for them explicitly in the context of a new industrial relations system in which labor is honored and workers participate in creating economic policy. If you work on both fronts, increasing respect for working people while empowering them, you will create the context necessary to change attitudes about work. You will make it easier for workers to enter into fruitful cooperation with business and your administration and abandon the fear that "cooperation" and "responsibility" are merely code words for new demands for sacrifice which will not be shared by employers or those who control society.

Workers will welcome a transformed industrial system in which labor is a fully respected, powerful social force; there is even a prospect that business will be won over, following the experience of capital in other, more successful economies. But if it is to happen, we need you to provide the guiding vision and the policy muscle to bring business and labor along.

You have often said that our work force is our greatest potential strength. There is indeed a tremendous

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Close to the Edge: Reflections on Rap

Marshall Berman

So don't push me 'cause I'm close to the edge,
trying not to lose my head. *Huh*!
It's like a jungle, sometimes it makes me wonder
how I keep from going under.

"The Message,"
Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five, 1982

Lazer anesthesia, maze ya, ways to blaze your
brain and train ya
...What I got, get on up, better get some, hustler
of culture
Snakebitten, been spit in the face but the rhymes
keep fittin'...

"Welcome to the Terrordome,"
Public Enemy, 1990

Nobody I know got killed today, in South-
Central L.A.

"It Was a Good Day,"
Ice Cube, 1992

Spike Lee, in a climactic scene in his film, *Do the Right Thing,* brilliantly orchestrates the power and the perils of rap. All through the film, Lee makes it clear that he loves rap. He features the rap group Public Enemy, opening the film with a video version of their great hit, "Fight the Power," a classic of revolutionary romanticism.

Radio Raheem, a character who haunts the movie and precipitates its cataclysmic conclusion, is obsessed with the song. He is an overgrown kid, built like an NFL lineman but unsure of what to do with his strength and bulk—he flaunts a tatoo of "Love" on one hand and "Hate" on the other, echoing the homicidal maniac preacher played by Robert Mitchum in *The Night of the Hunter.* Raheem carries a huge boombox that incessantly plays "Fight the Power" at maximum volume. He frightens everybody on the screen.

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'Round midnight, after the hottest day of the year, we see Sal (played by Danny Aiello), ready to close his pizza parlor when Raheem enters, box at full blast, and demands service. Sal doesn't like rap; when he hears the boombox, the beat, the deafening volume, the thundering Black male voices, the clashing and crashing noise behind them, he feels personally assaulted and battered. All at once—although he acts as if he has been waiting for this opportunity—an evil gleam fills his eye, and he turns into a raving *meshugginer*. Brandishing a baseball bat like a lethal weapon, he smashes the offending box and dares Raheem to smash him. His act of hysterical violence triggers the riot that forms the film's gruesome climax. At the end, Raheem is dead—Sal's store and his life are in ruins.

Lee's depiction of rap music is deep and complex. For most of the film, he portrays rap as vibrant, free-floating cultural energy, created by Black Americans but open to all the world, a universal force of life. But his depth as an artist (a depth he does not always welcome) drives him to imagine a nightmarish alternative, where rap and fear of rap combine to turn a peaceful and decent man—in fact, the most complex and attractive character Lee has ever created—into the malignant "other" he dreads. Lee shows us that rap has come to be a cultural lightning rod, bringing together and setting off the static electricity loose in both Black and white America today.

Can America thrill to the light without dying from the shock? I think we can. But we have to learn how to listen, not only to the modes of noise that rappers produce, but also to the noise in the listeners' heads, including our own.

Rap was created by Black kids in the late 1970s, in the ghettos of the South Bronx. It took several years before they could get anybody to record them, then more years before they attracted enough of an audience to get play on the radio. (In many parts of the country, white college radio introduced listeners to rap.) One of the first raps to resonate outside the ghetto was

"The Message" by Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five, released in 1982 by Sugarhill Records. Flash and his friends come from the most ravaged urban neighborhood of the 1970s, world-famous for its recent ruins, and still reputedly the poorest congressional district in the United States. Flash chants in an unnervingly clear diction that forces us to hear more than we may care to know; his voice is rich in emotional color, and at its strongest moments it evokes Marvin Gaye.

The rap begins: "It's like a jungle/sometimes it makes me wonder/how I keep from going under." Then Melle Mel takes us on a neighborhood tour: broken glass everywhere, people pissing on the street like they just don't care; he can't stand the pain, can't stand the noise, but "got no money in my pocket, so I got no choice." Rats in the rooms; junkies in alleys with baseball bats; predatory repo men; good girls turned into bag ladies; lousy schools; kids, cynical before they're ten, who want to be drug dealers because it's the only admired vocation; youths who go from "unemployed" to "Pretty Boy Floyd" to corpses in cells, so young. On and on, myriad horrors are pressed into a couple of minutes. The rapper sounds close to hysteria but driven to press on. His chorus warns: "So don't push me, 'cause I'm close to the edge/I'm trying not to lose my head." Then the jungle, the despair, once more—a riff about a girl pushed in front of a train but given a new arm, and one about a dying man given a new heart. Then the chorus again. Then a collage of street sounds, culminating in a police siren, a (Black) cop's order for everybody to freeze, the car taking them all away; the street is empty in the end; only the beat goes on.

"The Message" became an instant classic, endlessly quoted, parodied, and sampled. But it also made a breakthrough for the genre: Suddenly, there were a lot more people who wanted to hear rap. If we play "the message" today, a decade later, we can get some idea why: We feel at once its emotional force, its up-front desperation, its in-your-face vividness and authenticity. But we also hear its wit, the rapper's way with words, his ability to be playful with language even in the midst of misery, his hope that the power of words can pull him through. Note also the lack of sentimentality: The rapper can show that the people around him are victims, but he doesn't claim victimization makes them innocent or nice.

In the country of "Ford to City: Drop Dead" (the infamous *Daily News* headline during the 1975 New York fiscal crisis), rap can show us the people who actually are dropping dead, day by day, but it can also make us feel that these people are longing and fighting to live. The existence of rap music itself is part of that fight. The album cover of "The Message" portrays the group against the background of an abandoned block of New York tenements and shops. The message was: We come from ruins, but we are not ruined.

Raps like "The Message"—and like Kool G Rap's late-1980s "Streets of New York," Naughty by Nature's "Ghetto Bastard," and Ice Cube's "It Was a Good Day (in South-Central L.A.)"—connect us very vividly to the agony of American city life. But they also tap into the classic vision of the modern city that engendered the realistic novel, echoing of Dickens, Eugene Sue, Zola, Stephen Crane, Dreiser, James Farrell, Richard Wright, Nelson Algren, Sholem Asch, I.J. Singer, Mike Gold, and Henry Roth. They show us how much of the nineteenth-century horrors that were supposed to have been overcome long ago are alive and well in every American city today.

At the same time, rap is a product of the late twentieth century, not only in politics and economics, but in art. Rap operates according to the basic principles of twentieth-century art, collage and dissonance. It scrambles things, it does the police in different voices. Collage and dissonance account for much of rap's power as a cultural form, and help to explain why many people all over the world who don't know a word of English can "get it" right away.

Rap also has a special relationship to Jews. Note how many of the great realistic writers cited above are Jews, and I could add more. (Arthur Miller; Grace Paley; the Bernstein-Sondheim-Laurents team that created West Side Story; the aged, blacklisted screen writer Daniel James, who transformed himself into the young Chicano novelist Danny Santiago; et al.) Note, too, that "ghetto" is our word, imported from Venice to designate the neighborhood where Jewish refugees from Spain and Portugal were welcomed—but also were locked up and isolated from the rest of the city. The ghetto is at once an unbearable prison and a fountain of creativity. When the rapper Treach, of Naughty by Nature, says that

> "If you've never been to the ghetto, don't come
> to the ghetto,/
> 'cause you wouldn't understand the ghetto,/so
> stay the fuck out of the ghetto!"

whoever he thinks he's talking to, it isn't us. Every Jew has been to the ghetto, wherever he lives now. We all remember the ghetto better than we think.

And yet, in the late twentieth century, we *can't* live in a ghetto even if we want to. All Jews born into



The Fist

ghettos are *geworfen* into a modern world as they grow up. In this modern world, said Marx, "All that is solid melts into air," and everybody is thrown together with everybody else. Einstein, Freud, Durkheim, Schoenberg, Chagall, Kafka—so many of the creators of modern culture were "marginal men," Jews who didn't fit into ghettos, whom anti-Semites tried to throw back into ghettos, who never lost their feeling for ghettos. But they saw beyond the ghettos into a world that all modern men and women have to share, where nobody is ever really "at home," where everybody is a marginal man or woman.

In this world, we can't program the images we see or the sounds we hear every day, those raucous boomboxes, those loud and pushy groups of Hasidim on the street. We have to *share space* with all sorts of people whom we might not have created if we were God. But God *did* create them, and threw us all together in the same spaces, where there never seems to be space enough. When Flash says he is close to the edge, Jews should be smart enough to recognize that he's talking about our neighborhoods too, and that we ourselves lead marginal lives and walk the line. Can we walk the line together? I think so, if we all learn to hear and see. That's why, just a century ago, our cities built big, wide, green streets such as Eastern Parkway in Crown Heights.

When rap music first appeared on the sidewalks and in the club basements and dance halls and parks and subways of New York, it was very simple—music without instruments, created by people who had never been able to afford instruments or lessons. Its simplicity was one of its most attractive features: At a time when pop music had become a series of overblown Hollywood spectacles, rap—like the punk rock that many white kids were making at just that moment—felt close to life. Rap's simplest form could be (and sometimes still can be) seen in the streets or subways: One kid rapping into a mike, and a small amplifier placed on the ground just behind him that carried a drum synthesizer track.

The more typical form, which developed in places where the rappers didn't have to run for cover, was bipolar or tripolar. In the bipolar form, the MC (master of ceremonies) defined the foreground, while the DJ (disc jockey) established the background. The MC was the one who actually did the "rapping": He would speak, call, cry, grunt, chant, or—not often but sometimes—sing. What the DJ did was called "sampling": He created the beats, the rhythm, sometimes a melody, and the environment in which rap could take place. The DJ usually had two turntables, a drum track, and dozens or hundreds of records; on one turntable he would collage tracks at amazing speed to create complex allusive melodies, while he scratched

the other side for extravagant percussion. (In recent years, the DJ job has been differentiated and multiplied, as digital samplers have made it easy to do far more elaborate, nuanced, multilayered sampling. Rap is going through the same metastasis of production facilities that overtook rock music in the early 1970s, with many of the same results, both positive and negative.)

The MC would be out there, visible, boastful, threatening, ingratiating, working his audience; the DJ would usually hug the shadows, but he and his fans would feel that he was the one who gave the music its power. We might see their relationship in the language of the garment industry: The MC is the "outside man" seducing the customers, while the DJ is the "inside man" who keeps the factory running. Sometimes the partnership works and sometimes it doesn't, in rap as in rags.

Rap, as much as any living cultural form, is a product of the American welfare state. Street-level social service bureaucrats—high school teachers, social workers, housing officials, and drug counselors—have always been in the house.

One of rap's cosmogonic myths is built around the life journey of the brilliant KRS-One: Kris Parker was a runaway living in a shelter for homeless kids in the South Bronx, when his social worker, Scott Sterling, recognized his talent, began taking him to clubs, encouraged him to perform, and finally became his DJ, Scott LaRock. The bond between them became an archetypal welfare state tragedy when Scott, acting like a good social worker should, tried to keep a street hassle from getting out of hand and was shot to death.

In the ghetto in the Reagan decade, rap music was the best news there was: not just rap as a cultural form, but rap as an honest buck. At first, few people thought rap would ever make it off the street: It seemed too gritty to attract kids in the white, suburban malls where the big bucks were. But true grit turned out to be rap's biggest market asset. Two low-budget movies, Charlie Ahearn's *Wild Style* and Harry Belafonte and David Picker's *Beat Street*, showcased many rappers amid picturesque South Bronx ruins.

Entrepreneurs appeared and started independent rap labels: Sugarhill by Sylvia Robinson (a veteran R&B singer, half of the duo Mickey & Sylvia, who sang the early-sixties hit "Love is Strange"), Tommy Boy by Tom Silverman, and Def Jam by Russell Simmons and Rick Rubin. Russell Simmons (brother of Joey Simmons, a.k.a. Run of the rap group Run-DMC) from middle-class, suburban Hollis, Long Island, is the most creative entrepreneur in rap's history, and the person who has done most to take it from the ghetto streetcorners to the world. The new rap labels established elaborate national touring operations, orchestrated videos and fashion appearances (the "B-Boy style," clothes that clashed in color and materials, fell off the body, but exuded "attitude"), helped generate rapper personality cults, and created intricate market tie-ins where few people suspected there would be any markets at all.

Midway through the 1980s, Simmons and Rubin orchestrated a brilliant crossover move that integrated rap with the "metal" music that was sweeping the white suburbs. The 1985 hit "Walk this Way," a Run-DMC collaboration with Aerosmith, and the rap album "Raising Hell," not only expanded rap's musical possibilities by giving it a tremendous background "wall of sound," but also created a market setting in which Black kids could rap to a curious, enthusiastic, and enormous white audience. Now hundreds of groups of rhythmic and angry Black kids from all over the country were getting into the ballgame, and some pretty smart and hot white kids as well. (The Beastie Boys, Jewish kids from Stuyvesant High School, gained overnight celebrity as rap's Marx Brothers.) And the message to the biggest media conglomerates—Columbia and Time/Warner most of all—was clear: Rap music could be a gold mine.

The rap-metal crossover opened up a great democratic vista. But the view was always cloudy. The new rap audience was probably the most genuinely integrated group in Reagan's America. Its vast size made rapping a path to serious money. Meanwhile, though, back on the streets that the rappers were rapping about, kids were killing each other every day. This was the Reagan ghetto, a lot grimmer than Fats Waller's or James Baldwin's or Sly Stone's. The bedrock of blue-collar jobs was crumbling, and working-class Blacks were among the first victims of the deindustrialization of America. Politically, the Reagan-Bush years were a time of malignant assault on public education and health. The federal government abruptly stopped building low-income housing (and then everybody wondered where all those homeless people were coming from). Babies were making babies, and the government was literally taking food out of their mouths. People in power, from the President on down, were going out of their way to show their extravagant contempt for Black and poor people. Reagan and Bush spent billions on the "war on drugs"; their strategy made the price of marijuana prohibitively high, while the price of cocaine got invitingly low, making coke the most democratic drug in the country, and the most alluring business on the

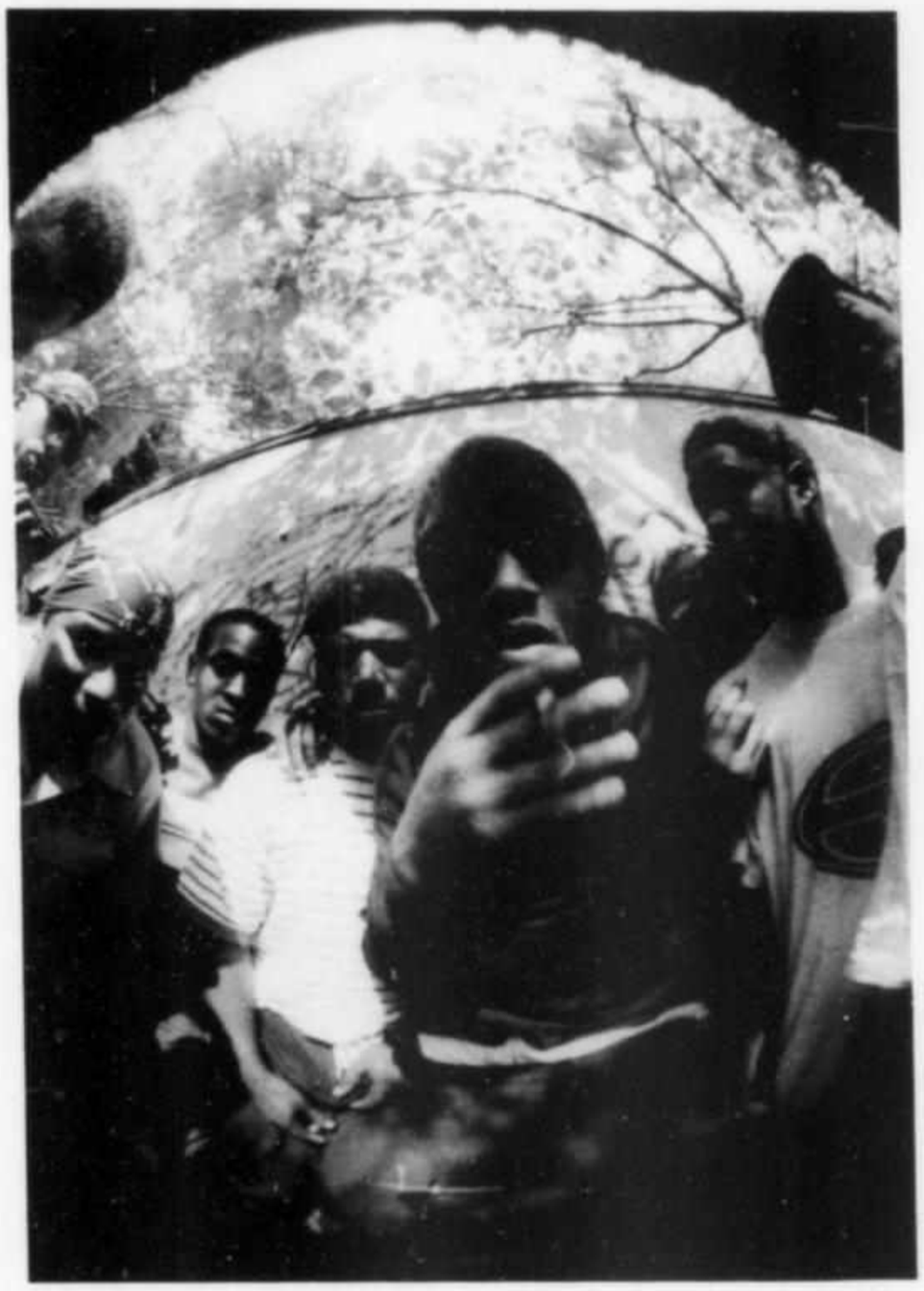
street. Kool Moe Dee lamented that cocaine had become "the alter ego of rap."

More than ever, as the eighties went on, disaster was prime rap material, dread propelled the beats and rhymes. Yet the market's metastasis was giving the rappers themselves an escape route. They found themselves in the same spot as Blacks who had gone to college and become professionals after the 1960s. Indeed, as the 1980s progressed, the rappers themselves were far likelier to come from Cosbyesque backgrounds and to have good college educations. Rap could be a prime ticket to upward mobility. Rappers had a real chance to get away—or else to stay away from the street. How could they not grasp any chance they got? Yet how could they not feel like hell? And there's another question: If rappers stayed off the street, for very good survival reasons, could rap itself survive?

Some rappers have embraced their middle-class roots and become, in effect, folkies with a beat. Long Island's De La Soul were pioneers in this project—a project not only in making music, but in creating identity—and groups such as Milwaukee/Atlanta's Arrested Development carry it on. They make no pretense of being street-tough guys and dis rappers who do. Their sounds are soft and melodic, specializing in polyrhythms and elaborate sampling. Their vocal style is jazz singing—maybe a little Abbey Lincoln, a little Brazilian. They are down with the seven types of ambiguity. Their lyrics are as searching and reflective as any prime cut of Paul Simon or Joni Mitchell or Leonard Cohen. Rap is a lot healthier because they're there. Their presence opens up breathing space, and ensures that rap will have plenty of different things to say.

Others have dealt with their guilt feelings about success by erecting fortresses of bad faith. Many rappers have come to embrace (or maybe "defer to" is the right verb) the metaphysics and cosmology of Afrocentricity, and this has opened up vast, self-deceptive paths. Some of my friends think I don't respect Afrocentricity enough. In any case, it should be legible to Jews familiar with the varieties of Zionism. It resembles Jabotinsky's concept of a "pure" Judaism, free from all "alien" influences. Some rappers present the same profile as Jabotinsky: multilingual, highly educated, cosmopolitan, and an ultra-tribalist ideologue. (Or take Dostoevsky, or Yukio Mishima, two of the most complex and cosmopolitan writers ever, who wanted nothing more than to belong to the supposedly pure and simple *Volk*.)

The more impure their music becomes—and digital sampling has helped make rap the most creatively



Redman

impure music ever invented—the more righteous are the rappers' declarations of racial purity. The more their lives entwine with whites— managers, producers, audiences, critics, film-makers—the more they insist they have no relation to whites at all, and speak to Blacks alone. The more they thrive in the multinational market that has left so much of their audience behind, the richer they get and farther from the boyz in the 'hood—not so much in miles as in class—the more vehemently they claim to be organically united and identically oppressed. Even as they are raising rap into a universal language, they are fighting against themselves to change it back into a segregated men's room.

The group that has exploited rap's possibilities most creatively and gotten most caught up in its contradictions, is Public Enemy. In 1988, their rap "Bring the Noise" launched a new, explosive sound that convulsed people in much the same way that the sound of Elvis Presley had convulsed many of their parents in 1955. Spike Lee gave the group his imprimatur in *"Do The Right Thing."* Public Enemy was created by two middle-class Black men who grew up on Long Island and attended Adelphi College: lead rapper, lyricist, and conceptualist Chuck D. (a.k.a. Carl

Rider, Charles Ridenhour) and comedian harmonist Flavor Flav (a.k.a. Will Drayton). Their records featured a DJ, Terminator X, and a spectacular production team, known as the Bomb Squad, led by Hank Shocklee.

The more rappers get away from the boyz 'n the hood, the more they claim to be oppressed like them.

Public Enemy (PE) produced the most formidable wall of sound ever heard in rap, a dense structure of grinds, crunches, wails, slashes, and shrieks, suggestive of Alben Berg, Coltrane and Ayler, Jimi Hendrix, and Pere Ubu. And it introduced a man, Chuck D., whose booming bass ("bass in your face") was strong enough to scale and bestride that wall. Chuck raps with the vocal presence and authority of Gary Davis, Ray Charles, or Howlin' Wolf, but also with a jazz singer's mastery of rhythm and tempo and syncopation, a preacher's seriousness and intensity, a modern poet's feeling for rich imagery, and a conceptual artist's flair for provocative words. What PE produced in the late 1980s was a kind of modernist breakthrough within rap. It's tricky to make comparisons with art and literature, and I don't want to sound overblown, but in an important way PE's work is comparable to cubism in painting, to Faulkner and Joyce in the novel: This is music with a capacity to express different voices, multiple perspectives, inner transformations.

It is ironic that Public Enemy has created a sound so richly multivalent when the thing Chuck seems to want to be most is a revolutionary orator and to promote very blunt, crude, simple agitation. (Agitation for what? It isn't so clear.) But this irony itself is a classic modernist tradition—think of Brecht, or Eisenstein. Chuck's impulse to create lyrics and images of modernist complexity (and sometimes obscurity) often impedes his ideological brutalism, but as "the rhyming animal," he won't break his word. Sometimes his performing persona projects brute certainties, which are played off against the music's thick complexities. Sometimes he plays King Lear, hurling paranoid anathemas at the state and the universe, while his partner Flavor Flav—a great clown, hardly ever given his due—plays his Fool, dances around him, laughs at his pretensions, and reduces his *geshreis* to human scale.

Chuck comes across something like an American hero in a European movie—think of Jack Nicholson in Antonioni's *The Passenger*—a figure who is larger than life, but is caught in a web of strange forces even larger than he is—except that Chuck is also the director, who choreographs all the inscrutable forces in which he is caught up. When he said "Rock the hard jams—treat it like a seminar/Teach the bourgeoisie, and rock the boulevard," there's no evidence that the bourgeoisie learned much, but many intellectuals felt Chuck wanted them to care about Public Enemy and stay on its case, and they did so gladly. (Did Chuck know that one of the marks of a good seminar is lack of deference? that people jump right in when they think somebody, including the teacher, is full of shit?)

Chuck D. and Public Enemy did for rap in the late 1980s what Elvis did for rock in the late 1950s: They made people see it mattered, probably mattered more than any other cultural product currently made in the U.S.A. Remember, rap grew at a time when America's ruling class was singing "Don't Worry, Be Happy" while the country was falling apart. Public Enemy's primal drama of an assaulted, angry, and agonized subject in an exploding world told the truth more vividly and forcefully than American music had done in a long while. Its triumph raised the stakes in rap and brought rappers close to a different edge. Much of the trouble rappers have had (or made) in the past few years springs from a widespread feeling that America needs rap to tell the truth about the way we live now. Public Enemy had, and made, plenty of trouble. Its primary source was Professor Griff (Richard Griffin), not himself a rapper, but the group's "Minister of Information" and leader of its "security force." In the spring of 1989 Griff gave an incredibly crude, anti-Semitic interview to the *Washington Times*. Griff promoted Henry Ford's infamous anti-Semitic pamphlet *The International Jew* and proclaimed it a great book; he said that it would be great if Palestinians "took up arms, went into Israel and killed all the Jews"—presumably he didn't notice that many of them had been trying to do so for some time. He pitied President Bush because "the Jews have their hands right around Bush's throat." And he said that "the Jews" were to blame for "the majority of wickedness that goes on across the globe." Could this be for real? It was like a textbook case of anti-Semitism as "the socialism of fools." Public enemies of Blacks were delighted; but people who saw themselves as part of Public Enemy's "seminar" were stunned and enraged. And they brought the noise.

The Griff episode gave the group great publicity, but for the first time it was publicity they hadn't

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Revolution in the Teamsters

Robert Fitch

Teamsters Convention, Caesar's Palace, 1986. Teamsters president Jackie Presser, off his diet and swollen to more than 300 pounds, is borne into the hall on a red sedan chair by four weightlifters costumed as Roman centurions. The delegates, overwhelmingly Teamster officialdom and their employees, wave their pinky rings and roar their approval. Many wear the "Free Jackie Presser" watches given away at the door.

The faux centurions, carting their wide load around the room, are select members of BLAST, "the Brotherhood of Loyal Americans and Strong Teamsters." By 1986, a court order has reduced BLAST to these ceremonial functions. But for years it had been Presser's own goon squad, storming across the Midwest, beating up Teamster dissidents and disrupting their meetings.

Of all the dissidents, it was the Ohio Teamster rank-and-filers led by Ken Paff who had particularly rankled Presser. Paff, who had been a Berkeley graduate student in the late 1960s, and his fellow drivers had dared to show up at the meetings of the Cleveland local Presser had inherited from his father William, the juke-box king of Cleveland. (Restaurant owners who failed to install the elder Presser's juke-boxes frequently found their restaurants reduced to rubble.) Instead of sitting in loyal silence, Paff and his Cleveland Teamsters loudly denounced the Presser regime for nepotism, multiple salaries, and sell-out contracts in front of the startled members.

"He's a big crybaby, a loudmouth, a nothing guy who's never done anything," Presser complained of Paff in 1978 to a reporter from the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*. "The guy doesn't represent a flea." But in the late 1970s, despite beatings and badmouthing, firings and blackballing, Paff and his fellow dissidents began to get a reputation and a following. They called themselves "Teamsters for a Democratic Union" (TDU).

Climbing off the sedan chair, Presser resembles a huge human hill undergoing a mudslide. It's time to eat. The hosts, Barry Feinstein and Joe ("Joe T") Trerotola, bosses of the Eastern Conference of Teamsters, have provided $647,960 worth of shrimp, roasts, cold cuts, caviar, cheeses, wines, liquor, and soft drinks. The members, of course, are picking up the tab.

On the final day of the convention, Presser mounts the stage to give the traditional disjointed but defiant rant to which Teamster officialdom have become accustomed.

Just a month after Jimmy Hoffa's disappearance in 1976, at the Las Vegas Convention Center, then-Teamster President Frank ("Fitz") Fitzsimmons had set the oratorical tone for the post-Hoffa period. No longer vexed about a possible Hoffa comeback, Fitz said confidently, "Yes, we have had setbacks. We'll have them in the future, possibly. But for those who think and those who would say it is time to reform this organization, that it is time that the officers quit selling out the membership of this union, I say, Go to Hell!"

For the better part of a decade, Fitzsimmons not only stayed the course, selling out the members—he was also prophetic about setbacks:

- When President Carter instituted deregulation of the trucking industry in the late 1970s, the Teamsters began shrinking at an incredible rate: from 2.2 million to 1.6 million by mid-1980. But dues were plowed into a jet fleet for officers, not to support organizers.
- Although the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT) remained America's biggest, richest, and most powerful union, the Teamster top brass seemed powerless to defend the wage and benefit gains built up during the Hoffa era.
- Members overwhelmingly voted down officially negotiated nationwide contracts that cut wages as much as 15-20 percent. But Presser approved them anyway.
- Roy Williams, Presser's immediate predecessor as Teamster boss, got caught, while head of the Teamsters' Central Conference, trying to bribe Nevada Senator Howard Cannon in an effort to effect a roll-back of deregulation.

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• To avoid jail, Williams admitted his own and Fitzsimmons's ties to organized crime. He revealed that almost all the Teamsters' 800-plus locals were mob-influenced and that the high point of collective bargaining on nationwide freight agreements would come when employers' representatives arrived with suitcases of cash. They would simply dump the money on the table and the "negotiations" would start.

Rumors mounted that the Justice Department would take over the Teamsters as a branch of organized crime under the provisions of the Civil Racketeer Influenced Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO).

TDU's roots grew out of a 60s student radicalism coupled with a will to find a common language with workers.

A decade's worth of "setbacks" are temporarily forgotten as Presser delivers his rant, defiant and focused. The union's problem is TDU, a bunch of outsiders. To save the union from this outside force, Presser called on followers of Lyndon La Rouche to mastermind a propaganda counter-offensive. They also provided him with his rhetoric. TDU, it goes, is made up of communists, hippies, and Naderites. It is funded by the Rockefellers. TDU, not organized crime, is an outside force in the union. It is not Teamster corruption that threatens the union with a government take-over; it is TDU. In a final peroration, Presser tells the cheering, whistling delegates, "To those who don't know it, I am going to say it. We attended the funeral of TDU this week. That's right. That's right...When you go home, put up a bulletin, let them rest in peace. Put it up. They died. Don't let them do it again."

TDU Convention, St. Louis, October 1992. Mike Ruscigno, ex-warehouseman, now the recording secretary of Teamsters Local 138, Long Island City, New York, is emceeing the Saturday night session of the seventeenth annual convention of TDU. In 1986, the same year Presser announced the funeral of TDU, Frank "Butch" Ribustello, then president of the Local and a reputed member of the Columbo crime family, found Ruscigno in an aisle of a Key Foods warehouse, beat him bloody, and then called his fellow workers to witness what happens to dissidents. "The guy responsible for me blowing my job, he better fucking watch out and watch his fucking back."

Ribustello was good at beating up Teamsters but bad at standing up to the employers. Key Foods was free to hire non-union workers at selected warehouses. But the workers weren't free to file any grievances against the company. In December 1986, less than two months after the attack on Ruscigno, the warehouse workers of Local 138 voted for Ruscigno and against Ribustello.

"Now what am I bid for this genuine Jackie Presser watch?" Ruscigno asks the nearly 700 attendees. "There are only a few of these left, brothers and sisters. This may be your last chance to have an authentic keepsake of the old order."

The bidding starts at $10. Finally Steven Kindred, the business agent for westside Manhattan Local 295, bounds up to the podium and claims the Presser watch for $200. Kindred is a veteran of the University of Chicago anti-war movement. He trained for union hall debates in arguments with Bruno Bettelheim and Chicago president Edward Levy. But he scarcely resembles the leader of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) the media cited as responsible for shutting down classes for nearly two months. Kindred's hair has grown steel gray during his years of traveling around the country, meeting in living rooms with small groups of rank-and-filers. He has put out newsletters, supported wildcat strikes, and helped to stir the rich broth of local resistance that began to boil in the 1970s.

Because of people such as Kindred, who often financed their activism with unemployment compensation benefit checks between lay-offs from trucking jobs, veterans of reform groups such as Teamsters United Rank and File (TURF), Teamsters for a Decent Contract (TDC), and Professional Drivers Council, Inc. (PROD), eventually came together in 1976 as a single national organization, TDU.

Kindred, Ken Paff, and Mike Ruscigno have helped to create a nationwide, rank-and-file organization. It has all the passion, diversity, militancy, flair, and strategic sense that have been missing in the labor movement for almost forty years. Not just since Reagan-Bush, but since 1955, when the CIO ended its twenty-year civil war for the soul of labor and joined the AFL, the story of American labor has been one of slow rot at the top, punctuated by failed resistance at the bottom.

Not surprisingly, the origins of TDU go back to the experiences of some of the most dedicated campus activists of the 1960s. Yet no serious analysis of these formative years has ever appeared.

To probe the sources of TDU's convictions is not to invalidate its achievements but to illuminate them. TDU's roots grew out of the sixties ideals that gave people such as Paff and Kindred the power to endure for twenty years, as well as the will to find a common lan-

guage with workers—people written off by most student radicals as not being like us, not really caring about the character of their institutions as long as they got paid.

As he returned to his seat in the hotel dining room, Kindred could see the hall ringed with the flags of local unions captured by this improbable band of rank-and-file Teamster activists. Veteran sixties campus activists and rank-and-file truckers, warehouse workers from Long Island City to Watsonville, California, have joined to carry off the most improbable, the most universally unexpected, and what could turn out to be the most significant victory in modern U.S. labor history.

The Teamsters' four-story headquarters in Washington, D.C., built in 1955 of white marble and occupying the entire block of Louisiana Avenue, has been turned upside down. In December 1991, IBT officialdom, forced by the terms of a civil RICO suit to hold free and supervised elections, were ousted by the members. An opposition slate headed by an outsider, Ron Carey, swept every contested office.

TDU members now hold a majority of the Teamster International Executive Board. Diana Kilmury, a former heavy equipment driver and supporter of the labor-based Canadian New Democratic Party, got the most votes. As a result, she is the IBT's first international vice president, a position once held by Hoffa. Should anything happen to Carey, Kilmury would run the Teamsters. Union democracy has made Kilmury one of the most powerful women in the United States. Other winning TDUers included John Riojas, the first Latino ever elected to national office in the Teamsters, and Leroy Ellis, an African-American rank-and-file truck driver from Local 705 in Chicago, who won the most votes for Central Conference regional vice president.

With 48.5 percent of the votes, Ron Carey buried a Teamster officialdom that had split into feuding Eastern and Southern regions.

Within less than one hundred days of his February inauguration, Carey had the Teamsters acting like a union. Billy McCarthy, who had been selected to run the union following Presser's death by Anthony ("Fat Tony") Salerno, of New York's Genovese crime family, had negotiated two previous carhaul contracts. Each one had been turned down by the membership. (Even before winning the right to vote for national officers, TDU had forced the right to meaningful votes on national agreements.)

Carey personally negotiated the best carhaul contract since deregulation. Then he persuaded 8,500 Northwest flight attendants—sick of Teamster sell-outs and indifference to working conditions—not to bolt to another union. And, in California, Carey stopped Safeway from ditching the Teamsters with a successful community organization campaign that hit the company with massive boycotts.

Ron Carey is an immensely appealing leader. He is a fifty-five-year-old ex-Marine, the son of a United Parcel Service (UPS) driver. In a union where the point of gaining local office was to steal from the members, Carey has been incorruptible. He has lived in the same modest two-family house in Rego Park, Queens, where his parents occupy the top floor, for the last twenty-five years. During the campaign, he pointed out that his yearly salary of $45,000 as president of Local 802 was lower than of the chef at the "Marble Palace," as the Teamsters' Washington headquarters is known.



Ron Carey, 1991 Teamsters convention

Unlike many local leaders, whose workdays start at eleven or not at all, or who shield themselves from members' complaints through their business agents, Carey showed up. He was available. For twenty-five years, he could be found every workday at 7a.m. at the truck barns listening to his members' concerns. And most important of all, he delivered for them: Carey's contracts with UPS, Macy's, and Lord & Taylor got his people the best pensions, best grievance procedures, and best wages in the industry.

But as admirable as Carey is, he would never have gotten through the door of the Marble Palace without TDU. There were lots of reformers vying to be president of the nation's largest union. Like them, Carey had never run for national office. Like them too, he had no network of dedicated supporters outside the union, no national newspaper, no internal organization. What effectively set Carey apart was the support of the 10,000-plus-member TDU organization.

TDU is not the first "progressive" labor organization,

nor is it the only one to have racked up victories. The Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers' Union's (ACTU) seventeen-year campaign to organize J.P. Stevens provided the inspiration for Sally Field's "Norma Rae." And there have been many noble, inspiring local struggles. Some fairly glowed with the spirit of universal justice. In 1986, the Hormel strikers of Local P-9 of the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) in Austin, Minnesota, tried to organize a breakout from the UFCW's concessionary bargaining. In the course of their bitter battle against the company and the international union, the workers painted an eighty-by-sixteen-foot mural depicting the history of packinghouse struggles. When it was finished, they dedicated it to Nelson Mandela. The UFCW, "determined to extirpate the culture and memory of P-9's struggle," as Alex Cockburn reported at the time in the *Village Voice*, obtained a court order to destroy the mural. When not a single worker in Austin would do the dirty work, staffers from the International sandblasted it to oblivion.

Why did TDU's culture survive, when so many reform efforts failed? What really differentiates TDU from even the most "progressive" labor organizations in America are its bottom-up values. Rank-and-filers are encouraged not just to participate on terms defined by union officers—to phone bank for approved political candidates, for example—but to take over the leadership; to be the union.

In a word, TDU is the embodiment of the "participatory democracy" that SDS never quite succeeded in moving off campus during the 1960s.

From Sproul Hall to the Marble Palace

The single most important influence on TDU's "bottom up" politics, the man who most animated students with the need to take democracy off campus and into the workplace, was a Berkeley librarian who would become best-known to the public as a prize-winning translator of Heinrich Heine's poems. But Hal Draper found time to do much more than just catalog books and translate poetry. His brilliant political pamphlets were among the most influential tracts of the 1960s.

Draper's gloss on Clark Kerr's "Uses of the Multiversity," titled "The Mind of Clark Kerr," attacked the idea—novel then, largely accepted today—that the purpose of attending university is to gain an apprenticeship for a corporate career. "Draper had a big influence on me," recalls Steve Kindred. "He showed who the trustees really were. Not neanderthals. Corporate leaders. It wasn't only his critique of the multiversity. It was his analysis of students. He didn't think students were the new class."

In "Two Souls of Socialism," Draper attempted to dispel the Stalinoid cast of much radical thought on campus. His favorite terms were "from above" and "from below." Since socialism rested on workers' control "of the decisions which affected their lives," socialism could never be something imposed on the workers from above. "Democratic socialism" was a redundancy, "undemocratic socialism" an oxymoron. Like Martin Buber, Draper stressed the liberatory elements of Marx, Lenin, and Trotsky.

At Berkeley alone, Draper's International Socialist Club (ISC) attracted students such as Joanne Landy, a recent MacArthur Fellowship recipient and the editor of *Peace and Democracy News*; Mike Parker, a long-time rank-and-file militant in the United Auto Workers and the author of *Quality Circles*; Richard Arneson, who teaches philosophy at the University of California; Samuel Farber, a sociologist and author; James Petras, a Latin American scholar and author; and Jack Weinberg, a prominent student activist and later a leader of rank-and-file steelworkers.

How did these graduate student intellectuals come to care so much about democracy for workers, especially at a time when intellectuals were turning away from the labor movement? From quite different perspectives, theorists such as Herbert Marcuse, Paul Sweezy, and Daniel Bell each had argued that workers had been pretty thoroughly "integrated" into advanced industrial capitalism. Thus, there would be little for radicals or liberals to care deeply about in the realm of labor.

IS'ers, however, didn't buy this. Part of the reason was Draper's influence. But there was the impact, too, of the larger sixties Berkeley experience, which posed the issue of democracy not in abstract terms but existentially, as a battle for student democracy. Being there, you couldn't avoid the question, "Which side are you on?"

The question was posed for me the first week I arrived on the Berkeley campus in 1964 after thirty-three months in the U.S. Army. One thousand people sat down in front of a police car in Sproul Hall Plaza, keeping the cops from driving off campus. Inside the police car was Jack Weinberg, who had been arrested for attempting to collect money for the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE). For Weinberg, the campus movement was a continuation of Mississippi Summer, the campaign organized to win Blacks the right to vote. Campus rules allowed Democrats and Republicans to hustle for votes and cash on campus, but it was illegal for students to raise money for the civil rights campaign. "Join us. Sit down!" the students shouted.

Later, in the biggest mass arrest of the 1960s, more than 800 students were taken into custody for the right to free speech. Moved by their commitment, the faculty

voted to support the demands of the students. The bureaucrats of the multiversity had been brought down by mass action from below. It was a model of action for a whole generation.

Berkeley students used their newly won rights to organize on campus to fight old-line liberals in the Democratic Party who supported the Vietnam War. Ken Paff joined Bob Scheer's campaign to defeat Congressman Jerry Cohelan. Despite Cohelan's reputation as one of the most liberal members of Congress—all the traditional civil rights groups supported him, as did all the local unions—he supported the war. With the help of student activists such as Paff, Michael Lerner, and off-campus activists such as Jerry Rubin and Alice Waters, Scheer came within 5 percent of pulling off a major upset.

To be a campus socialist or a Marxist in the 1960s was to have a special identity problem. There was a student revolution going on at Berkeley: pickets, tear-gas, cops on campus, arrests. You had to participate. But if you were a socialist, you couldn't forget that the biggest task was to democratize the off-campus world. Berkeley was overcrowded, registration was humiliating, the administration dispensed quasi-industrial instruction to an unprecedented mass of students having no contact with their professors. But compared to just about any workplace, Berkeley was paradise.

The faint absurdity that attaches to today's professorial proponents of "political correctness" is that they have settled for so little—establishing tiny enclaves of virtuous speech and behavior in the top universities for upper-class kids passing through. This focus reflects a deep conviction that it is impossible to reach, organize, educate, or radicalize the larger American populace, who will remain perpetually stupid, misguided, bamboozled by the media, and unsaved.

But it wasn't always this way. In the sixties, there was a fierce debate between those in academia who despised American workers and those who believed that their own privilege required them to reach out to other sectors of the American population.

How could radical students with socialist ideas not try to bring our movement to working people off campus? If the administration held us *in loco parentis*, what about the workers who had to ask to use the toilet? If our assembly-line classes and constant exams didn't give us a chance to explore great ideas in depth, what about those whose lives never permitted them even to read a book?

The proposed solutions to the question of identity took three main forms:.

• Students are the new working class. Technology is changing the nature of work so that more and more people will work with their brain instead of their back. Happily, then, there is no conflict for aspiring young careerists; pursuing your own career is really pursuing working-class interests, advancing the working class by advancing yourself.



Ken Paff

• We are the natural leaders of the working class because we have the correct consciousness, which we've achieved through such paths as studying the Marxist classics and critical theory. Workers should listen to us—we've got all the answers.

• We have to establish commonality with the working class by sharing their experience, participating in common struggles, and respecting their values and concerns.

The IS'ers chose the third option. But unlike the Communist Party, which the IS rebuked for attempting to become leaders of the labor movement in the 1930s and 1940s by hiding their communist affiliations and down-playing their communist politics, the IS insisted that the people seeking to identify with the working class must be totally honest about their beliefs.

One fall day in 1969 on Telegraph Avenue, I ran into Jack Bloom, one of the most brilliant graduate students in the Berkeley sociology department. At the time, the department offered courses taught by famous scholars such as Seymour Martin Lipset, Robert Blauner, and Rheinhard Bendix. But instead of registering for these classes, Bloom was heading off to participate in "industrialization."

Along with thirty or forty fellow students from Berkeley and other institutions, Bloom was off to get an in-

dustrial job in the Midwest. Of the lot, Jack was perhaps the most unlikely industrializer. About 5'6", maybe 135 pounds, with incredibly thick glasses and a wonderfully goofy grin—few would mistake Bloom for an autoworker, the life he subsequently led for more than ten years. The next time I met Jack, the cumulative effects of a decade's beatings and stabbings had left him with full use of only one arm, unable to work.

Kindred testifies to the industrializers' first painful efforts to make the transition from student politics to industrial politics. "I remember trying to organize a meeting down in Memphis in the mid-seventies," he recalls. "We had just put out an edition of our newspaper with the feature article on gay liberation all across the front page. There was this long-time activist trucker I was trying to get to come. I thought for a second that I should give him the issue that had come out just before the gay liberation issue. But I felt it would be unprincipled. He took the paper. And he showed up at the meeting anyhow."

First Blood

TDU did not change Teamsters culture overnight. From its inception, TDU had to overcome fear—not just fear of physical violence, but of economic violence as well. "How's a guy with a high school education making $15.00 an hour going to support his family if he loses his job?" asks Ken Paff. In this intimidating atmosphere, there was still tremendous rank-and-file opposition to reform. People would keep their dissatisfactions to themselves, or try to escape from the Teamsters, taking the locals into some other union or going independent.

The first open assault on the Presser hierarchy in Cleveland took place in 1976. "There were about six of us," Ken Paff said. "We had *Convoy-Dispatch*, this funky one-page flier. We were all scared; there were about fifty of them. The guy that was running the local was only about five feet tall. He looked like Mr. Magoo. But he wore guns. And his sons were about 6'6", I swear. They were his goon squad. They knocked us down and snatched our leaflets. We had some injuries but we picked ourselves up and went into the union hall. No one wanted to sit next to us. Everyone spread out. Then one member gets up and goes over to the microphone and asks, 'Is kicking the shit out of these guys a one time deal? Or are you going to do it every time they show up.' It got real quiet. And then the little guy at the microphone said something like 'why don't you go out and sell hot dogs?' On the way out someone hit the member in the head with a garbage can. We wondered whatever happened to him. He never got in touch with us."

It was true. You couldn't simply beat up the dissidents every time. Nor was killing them a painless alternative. Local cops could be bought off. But there was the FBI. For decades, J. Edgar Hoover denied the existence of organized crime in order to focus on the communist menace. In New York alone, there were four agents assigned to deal with the Mafia, and 400 to infiltrate the Communist Party.

After Hoffa's disappearance and presumed murder in 1975, the national outcry forced the FBI to pursue the Teamsters with more energy. The Teamster bosses suspected of killing Hoffa drew the most intense FBI surveillance—their every move was watched, every conversation tapped. Presser had to try new ways to silence his opponents. First, his lawyers sued TDU for disrupting meetings, essentially for passing out leaflets. The case came to court. But the judge assigned to the case refused to impose any penalties. "We called the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*," recalls Paff, "and declared it a big victory."

Neither beatings nor lawsuits worked, so Presser tried red-baiting. "Presser claimed we had big stacks of Maoist literature in one of our headquarters," Paff recalls. "He thought it would scare everyone off. Actually, it made us legendary. I knew we had turned a corner when I was in the rest room at a truck stop and this Teamster told me that he actually knew Ken Paff. 'Had you ever talked to him?' I asked."

"All along," Paff explains, "we were lucky because we had no rights at all. We had no choice but to organize; there were no elections; no offices; we had to keep organizing at the base. We had our newspaper, which became the *New York Times* of the Teamster movement. Still, we didn't yet have enough support to win local elections. But we started to grow."

The dissidents' biggest break came in 1983. Presser gave the employers a secret relief rider to the National Master Freight Agreement. It lowered wages and established a two-tier system. In some instances, wages were actually cut 33 percent, a pay cut to non-union levels. The document leaked, but Presser tried to keep it secret anyway. "This was total buffoonery," Paff observed. "The whole hierarchy tried to deny it. But it's all over *Convoy-Dispatch*. Meanwhile, they're holding meetings trying to sell the agreement. Everything is playing into our hands. Presser even makes the exact pitch that management makes. 'It's not going to hurt you,' he says of the two-tier plan. But truck drivers are union-minded. There's an element of solidarity. They won't buy it. We're on the phone twenty-four hours a day. We take over the meetings. We've taught the members how to take over the meetings from the leaders. Finally the local officials stop trying to defend the agreement. In Cleveland, Presser's hometown, 300 Teamsters burn the agreement. There are motions for Presser to resign. In the balloting, we know we've won.

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If You Step On a Crack...

Sharon Solwitz

Her first and only husband sat on the couch in front of the pre-game interview. From four doors south across Waveland Avenue the lights of Wrigley Field cast their salmon glow on his long-sleeved shirt. Three stories down, the steps of Cub and Cardinal fans crunched along the alley, overlaid by spates of mild, ritualized jeering. Blue and red caps bobbed toward the bleacher entrance. "Come let's cheer them on to ignominy," said Andy, to whom she had been married longer than any of her friends to their husbands. He held out his hand.

She had been watching a golden-haired boy of twenty or so take a whizz in the alley. "What fun," she said, to either, to both.

He laughed. "You have to think like a Cub fan. It's not victory we're after. It's watching them play almost well enough to win, then making fun of them and yourself for getting sucked in to hoping!" He laughed again, as if this was the first time he'd said this. A high school vice principal, he was in his heart the Cubs play-by-play man. He'd call the games just ahead of Brennaman and Harry Carey with patter at times identical to theirs.

"That's my back door," she called out the window. "Why don't you go smell up your own neighborhood?"

The boy turned up a face hauntingly beautiful in the manufactured twilight. "Wanna zip me up, lady?"

"I'm calling the police!"

"Like I'm scared," he said.

"I'm boiling the oil," she shouted, "so why don't you stay right there under my window with your thing hanging out—"

"Maya," Andy said, "he's a Cardinal fan. That's how they're raised in St. Louis."

She turned, saw her five-year-old twins at the doorway, their identical mouths open in the same little O. "Guys, come here, I want to show you what not to turn into."

"Maya."

"I want to help speed you to an early death in which your body parts erode slowly," she whispered into the dusk. Her sons were dancing on tiptoe at her elbow, her husband, massaging the back of her neck, but she felt alone on an island. Last week at the mammogram follow-up she'd read upside down the last line of a paragraph on the print-out on Ahranjani's desk: The possibility of tumor cannot be ruled out.

—What are the chances either way? she'd asked him. Coolly, she thought.

—Fifty-fifty, I'd say. The calcifications bother me.

—Why do they bother you?

—They don't follow the line of the vein.

—But calcifications—They sound so innocent!

—Maya, get hold of yourself.

At the door of Andy's study trying to recall the tremor or whatever it was in her voice that Ahranjani had responded to, she'd felt her knees go weak. But Andy had processed the information so quickly she wasn't sure he'd absorbed it. "Fifty-fifty? Well, we'll think about the good fifty!"

She hadn't wanted to distress him. She'd wanted to bear her apprehension with grace and courage. But his optimism seemed as empty and vague as a sound bite.

"Maya, honey, you'll know tomorrow. The worst part's the uncertainty."

"I'll know?" she had said, the words coming from between her teeth. "What do you mean I'll know? Am I the only one who'll know?"

"Of course I'll know too," he said, more confused than wounded.

She did not say that the worst part was not at all the uncertainty but the chance of pain and disfigurement and early death. Her friend Gail, four years younger, had just had a lumpectomy. Her aunt had died from something that started with a bad mammogram. Her childhood heroine had been Edith Cavell, an English nurse and member of the anti-German underground who, facing the firing squad, had refused a blindfold. Maya imagined Edith with her back to the bloody wall, a corner of her gray cotton gown rippling in the wind, her open eyes boring deep into the mouths of the muskets that would end her life. But she didn't want to be Edith Cavell. She didn't want to be caught and shot. "Let's make water

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Sharon Solwitz's stories have appeared in American Short Fiction, Ploughshares, *the* Chicago Tribune, *and many other magazines.*

balloons," she said to Seth and Simon. "When the enemy comes we have to be ready."

Because now everything meant something.

It was like twenty years ago when she swallowed a whole tab of acid when everyone else was doing half and got stuck in that quivery space right after the luminous ascent. Objects unfurled and refurled, into and out of whatever they were made of, threatening to freeze at the point of terrifying ugliness. Then, it had been dangerous to speak with friends you didn't absolutely trust or look too long at your face in the mirror. Now, for the past week, she ate only brown rice and vegetables high in vitamins A and C. She watched films from the forties with their classic, unambiguous lines of comedy or heroism. She tried to visualize the troops of her white blood cells marshalling their protective force at given parts of her body. But still her mind or whatever was attempting the control could not fully manage itself. She saw herself bald and then weak, sick, dead, mourned for—Andy bereft, then marrying again, Seth and Simon confused by her absence, then used to it, till she was a fragment of memory only a shrink could call up, a sweet, blurry face in a photograph.

Twenty years ago before husband, children, house, job, tripping on daredevil acid in women's lock-up she had kept panic in check by meditating on the worst life could present her—poverty, shame, imprisonment for up to five years (the maximum penalty for possession of a shopping bagful of marijuana). She'd imagined herself ugly and old on a park bench, sans family and friends, a filthy blanket, a few torn paperbacks—all she owned—in a bag at her feet, and her mind, infused with the Zen she'd been practicing those days, had, gasping, managed to say, I can take it! When her boyfriend's family's lawyer came to lower her bond she was calm and remote, amused, almost, which annoyed, she could see, even her boyfriend. But now, tonight, testing each possible downward step in her current potential tragedy to see if it could bear her weight, she couldn't get as far, even, as "bald." She couldn't embrace for a minute the vision of her hair falling out, not one coarse, wavy red strand. So although she had come to the point as a Cubs fan of being able to recognize Andre Dawson on the street and to impress her husband's friends with her recall of, say, the number of homeruns he'd hit his first year as a Cub (49), she couldn't watch the Cubs on TV with Andy tonight. If she stepped on a crack she'd break her mother's back. When someone peed on their aluminum siding it eroded her small store of good luck. If the Chicago Cubs lost to the St. Louis Cardinals tonight, her body's immune system would be overwhelmed, her t-cells helpless in the face of the dark area in the x-ray of her right breast, a spot that was to be removed tomorrow morning and biopsied. And the Cubs were a game below five hundred, their hitting the second worst in baseball.

Her sister called. "Maya," she said, "I had three and they were all negative!" Her voice was loud and bright, thrumming with her own medical good fortune.

"I know," Maya said.

"You sound on top of it," her sister said. "I was a basket case the first time. I kept thinking about— you know. The last time wasn't so great either, I thought three strikes and you're out— "

"Call no man happy till he be dead," Maya said. "Sophocles said that. Or was it Aeschylus?"

"You're showing off, Maya."

"Janice," she said, "I have to put the kids to bed."

"Frankly," Janice said cheerfully, "I think it's just a matter of time. Sometimes I think I should get a preventive mastectomy."

"Janice, the kids are screaming for me."

"Janice drives me crazy," she said to Andy.

"Me too," he said, laughing as if he knew just what she meant. She felt none of the flow of warmth that signaled that she believed he did know.

He leaned back against the couch and stretched his legs as the Rainbow Children's Choir, all of whom had a physical or mental handicap, sang the national anthem. Her children sat on the floor with their backs to the screen, working on their Lego constructions. Seth's were always closed, perfect boxes, while Simon made vehicles bristling with flags and weapons. "The Star-Spangled Banner" rose swirling, pure and shrill into the air of the TV room. "Look, Mom," one of the boys would say from time to time, thrusting a primary-colored artifact into her hands. "Oh dear," she'd say, "will it explode?" Or, "I'd feel so safe inside!", relieved to see by their expressions of pleasure that she had not inadvertently conveyed her self-concern.

Once, the sound of crunch signaled footsteps in the alley. She and the boys leaned out the window, giggling frantically, juggling the wobbly balloons they'd filled with water. But so far no one else had tried to urinate. "It's a beautiful night here at Wrigley Field," Andy said.

"It's a beautiful night," said Harry Carey, "as the Cubs fight to hold onto third place."

Her parents called as they always did at eight on Sunday. "It's raining here," her father said, his voice full of significance like a TV weatherman.

Her mother clicked on. "Maya, we got you! You're never home! Did he tell you, we started the grill and then the heavens opened up? I stood out there holding an umbrella over his head, we should have had a picture but the salmon was terrific, I wish you'd been here. Oh, and by the way your father is just a little angry with you.



There's only one grandma left and how many birthdays is she going to have?"

"Hey," her father said to her mother, "don't put it on me."

"Oh dear," Maya said. "I'm sorry."

"It's your mother, Irving," her mother said plaintively.

Her parents' voices were a waterfall in which she stood breathing shallowly. Tomorrow's surgical procedure was one of a number of things she couldn't tell them about, including her long ago drug arrest, the theft of her purse at gunpoint and something Simon had said to his teacher at school.

"Don't be upset, Maya," her father said. "If you call tomorrow she'll understand."

"She probably doesn't even remember," her mother said.

"I'll call her tomorrow." Her lips were curved in the small firm smile of Edith Cavell before the firing squad. "Bye. I love you."

By the time the children's lights were out it was the top of the third, and the Cubs were already two down. She thumbed through the paper on the kitchen table, gazed at the first of the four words to unjumble on the Dear Abby/mindgame page— FLONE. She tried elfon; fenol; arriving at felon, staring till it too looked wrong. She wandered from room to room, adjusting pillows, returning small bright plastic figures to bright plastic tubs. She settled across the sofa from Andy, stretching her bare feet toward his lap.

He began to massage the arch of her foot, kneading deliciously just short of pain. He slipped a finger between two of her toes, a gesture as exquisitely sexual as junior high school, that sometimes liquefied the lower half of her body. But now her skin felt numb to the sixth or seventh layer. On the screen the Cubs pitcher walked two men in a row. His next pitch was so low the catcher collapsed on it, searched for it under his knees as the men went to second and third. "Ball three low," Andy said. "Wilkins picked it out of the dirt. I think Morgan's losing it."

"Wilkins made a great stop," said Harry Carey. "Looks like Morgan's having a little control problem."

Maya sat with her foot on her husband's lap, gauging the depth and the parameters of her isolation. It had been there last year at the cabin they rented in Door County, amid the pines, the mosquito repellent, Andy and the boys' obvious joy. It had been there the year before over expensive food at the Drake on their fifteenth wedding anniversary. In their current lovemaking she sometimes counted her husband's eyes one, two, three, four, or rode into orgasm on a fantasy of cinema and leather in which he played no part.

She returned to the kitchen, unscrambled the rest of the words without a pause, STORN (snort), DAWTOR (toward), SPOCER (corpse), angry with the Jumble editors for that last word. She stuffed the paper in the wastebasket.

There had once been between her and Andy something that could stop her thought. She remembered an airport goodbye, and tears in his eyes as he bent to pick up his suitcase. And the taste of his breath, the light prickle of the hairs on his arms; the entire week of his absence she slept with her cheek to the T-shirt he'd left at her apartment. When she'd had the twins at thirty-eight she had started to believe all over again that nothing was too late, there was nothing they couldn't have if they worked hard enough. But the euphoria was gone, and that sense of visceral, passionate connection so remote it was less a feeling than a remembered idea—not through anyone's viciousness, just the normal erosion of intensity over time. If things turned out well tomorrow she would be happy, and perhaps happy with Andy, but some time not very far away, she felt sure, they would separate.

The Cubs tied it up in the bottom of the third, and Maya returned to the TV room. Andy held out his arms. She sat down beside him.

"Feeling better?" he said.

Blandly handsome Ryne Sandberg, who'd just gotten a double, took a step out from the base. In the on-deck circle Andre Dawson swung three bats around and around his head. Mark Grace, who looked like a new

U.S. Marine, grounded out to the pitcher. "I'm trying not to think about it," she said.

He nodded approval. "For the best."

A flash of white streaked before her eyes. She said in a light, conversational voice that hurt her ears, "You know, the real problem with illness and death is how alone you are."

"Maya," he said, "I do not believe you're ill. In fact, you look terrific tonight."

The sexual desire in his voice made something harsh rise to the back of her throat. "I'm trying to behave," she said. "I don't seem to be doing very well."

"You're doing fine," he said. She folded her hands in her lap, watched Dawson fly out to end the inning.

"This is how it's been," Andy said. "They are just not executing!"

"They look tuckered out," Harry Carey said cheerfully.

Steve Stone said, "They look bored. For 43 million you'd think they'd put out a little!"

To ease her sudden, irrational anger, which filled the air around her head with a kind of black dust, she tried to direct her breath in one nostril and out the other, a meditation she'd last practiced with her legs crossed on the bare metal bunk in women's lock-up. But she hadn't done anything like this in twenty years, she was assailed by the image of herself in a beauty chair, asking the operator, please, to weave the long thick curls she was shaving from her head into a wig that wouldn't look like a wig. Wearing the imaginary cunningly-fashioned natural-hair wig that still looked like a wig, she saw the shock in the eyes of her friends as they said words of admiration or consolation and turned away, just as she had turned away from the blue cotton-knit turban her friend Gail had worn over her own balding head. Blue is restorative.

Unable to erase or alter the mental picture she worked to embrace it. Envisioned her face without the mane of hair that even now, in her forties, strangers would comment on. Imagined her features sans the aureole of her hair, small and ordinary-looking below the chemotherapy turban. Imagined her hair growing back under the turban, thicker and curlier than before, just as her aunt's had, miraculously, without a trace of gray; in her coffin she had looked young and tragically beautiful, like Snow White. Standing before the firing squad, Edith Cavell had shaken her head at the proffered blindfold. Maya said the word "brave" to herself, a cup of tea to hold in her hands. Andy sat with his arm stretched out toward her on the back of the couch. Shyly, almost, he touched her shoulder. She inhaled through her left nostril, observed the stream of air passing out through her right, though her breaths were coming so hard her throat hurt trying to slow them down. "I keep thinking about my aunt," she said.

He lowered the volume on the set. "That was a long time ago. Detection is better now."

"I can't remember what they called the bad stuff on her x-ray. Was it calcifications?"

"Maya, you're going to drive yourself crazy."

"Do you want me to read Norman Cousins?"

"I don't know!"

She picked up one of the water balloons that were laid out on a towel under the window. She jiggled it in her hand. "The problem," she said, "is you have no capacity for flashforward."

"Would you like to make love?"

"No!" Her voice was pure and high to her ears, soundless as a dog whistle. "I would like to throw this water balloon at you!"

"Go ahead," he said.

"That's the problem."

"What? That I won't fight with you?"

"You skitter over the surface of things. Your feelings have no substance." She shifted the heavy balloon from hand to hand, a little bomb; a breast. Within such frail walls its unexpected weight made it seem surreal, as if it had come from a place with laws different from hers.

"Maya," he said, "I know why you're doing this."

He explained that she, like most people, revised history in the light of present good or bad fortune. If you're happy, then everything that's ever happened seems a rung in the ladder that has brought you there; and vice versa. "Mostly you like me, Maya. Try to remember that."

"Jesus," she almost shouted, "don't go rational on me! If I disappeared, you'd grieve for a day, then onward."

"That's idiotic!"

Her throat hurt where the words had emerged but there was more to say. "If someone accosted me on the street, you'd smile politely. You'd say, I wish you'd stop that, young man."

She squeezed the balloon, daring it to burst. "I hate Norman Cousins," she said more lightly. "How can you tell someone to lower stress? Doesn't it create stress, working to lower stress?"

When she looked up, his face had gone rubber. As if she had said something in English that turned out to be, in the local language, an obscenity.

She opened the refrigerator, gazed at the covered bowls, the row of clean-wiped condiments in the door compartment.

She walked into the living room, raised the blind, gazed out on the dark garden. A roar from the crowd came in the window, crescendoed, stopped abruptly, a long fly ball caught on the warning track or rocketed into the stands just below the foul pole.

She ran down the hall to the children's partially open

(Continued on p. 69)

Fifty Years Later: The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising

Michael Steinlauf



German troops fighting Jewish insurgents.

On April 19, 1943, in the streets of what used to be the heart of Jewish Europe, from which, only months before, over a quarter of a million Jews had been herded to the gas chambers of Treblinka, a handful of ragged, barely armed young men and women began shooting at German soldiers. According to our current knowledge, some 750 of them managed to inflict perhaps as many as several hundred German casualties, inspire thousands of other Jews to acts of resistance, and involve about 2,000 troops and substantial German weaponry for about six weeks, before succumbing to an attack that turned the streets of the Warsaw Ghetto into smoldering rubble. The relatively modest military significance of these events is overshadowed by their astonishing afterlife. Over the intervening years, Jews, and especially survivors, have so fastened on the memory of the uprising, that its commemoration has most often been used to commemorate the Holocaust as a whole. Commemorations like round numbers. Since only a minority of us will be around to mark the hundredth anniversary of the uprising, this April will probably offer us the opportunity for the most important Holocaust commemoration of our lifetime. But what can be added to the rivers of words that have already been expended on the Warsaw Ghetto uprising?

Lying on my desk is one of my most precious possessions, an inheritance from my parents, Holocaust survivors from Warsaw. It is a worn booklet with shiny paper covers, published in New York in 1953 by the United Committee to Commemorate the Tenth Anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising. On the English-language cover there is a photograph of the monument to the uprising erected in postwar Warsaw; the Yiddish-language cover has a drawing of a burning brick wall with a huge fist smashing through, a memorial candle above a scroll inscribed "*Nisht fargesn un nisht fargebn*" ("Not forgotten and not forgiven"), and in the lower right hand corner, partially scraped off, a little tree beginning to sprout leaves. I never knew how my parents acquired this book; I doubt that they attended this early commemoration, at a time when only a small minority of primarily left-wing Jews, which they were not, involved themselves in such things. I do know the effect this booklet had on me during my childhood

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and particularly during my adolescence in the 1960s. Endlessly beyond the stultifying nullity of post-war America, here was a message from another world, from an original and authentic underground: "Resist!" it said, "Against all odds keep up the fight!," and as a guarantee offered the refrain of the "Partisan Hymn," sung at every Warsaw Ghetto commemoration: *"S'vet a poyk ton undzer trot: Mir zenen do!"* ("Beneath our tread the earth shall tremble: We are here!").

Yet opening this book today is extremely disappointing. "To the very last drop of their blood," the introduction tells us, "until the last of the heroes fell in battle, the Ghetto defenders fought for their human dignity, for the honor and survival of their people, and for the liberation of mankind from the curse of fascism." OK, but how about those who didn't "pick up the gun," as we used to say: a mother who stayed with her children, a son or a daughter who remained with their aged parents? Did their deaths lack human dignity? And there's more: setting the uprising within "the continuous struggle between the forces of progress and the forces of backwardness," and referring to the "new great democratic Poland." The convoluted reality is that for some two decades after the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, at a time when the great majority of Jews, not to mention non-Jews, had chosen respite from the horrors that Allied armies had uncovered in certain corners of Germany and Poland, Jewish communists played a major role in sustaining the memory of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising. But the narrative into which they wove the story of the uprising was ideologically self-serving, and shot through with falsehoods. The sprouting little tree on the cover of my beloved booklet, for example, was meant to represent Jewish life in the appalling police state that was Poland in 1953.

No event is significant in itself; it is we who pour significance into it. Had I grown up in Israel rather than in the United States, my memories would doubtless involve a narrative in which the Warsaw Ghetto uprising is the prologue to the Israeli War of Independence, unfolding under the sign of the phoenix, the mythological bird reborn from its own ashes. And I would probably be insisting that the logic that finds the meaning of the Holocaust in the establishment of the Jewish State is an abomination. Or as the Yiddish poet Aron Zeitlin put it: "Does the Shekhina believe/That for a child hurled into an oven/It's adequate payment when Jews get a state?" All this suggests that rather than having exhausted the signficance of the uprising, we need to confront it once again. The rivers of words heretofore expended on the uprising simply mean that for our current commemoration we need new words.

We need new words not only because this is the fiftieth anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, but because, in a rather uncommon way, the underpinnings of the world that observed its tenth, twentieth, thirtieth and fortieth anniversaries have been swept away. Fifty years after the Holocaust, the world of bipolar economic, political, and ideological systems locked in combat, and the entire set of post-war habits and assumptions that have defined the limits of what we have been able to think and do, are now relics. While much about it is still mysterious, it is obvious that a new era has arrived, one that will probably define the horizons within which the rest of our lives will be lived and thought, and perhaps those of our children as well. On this particular anniversary, therefore, we are presented not just with an opportunity to say something new, but with its unavoidability.

First of all to ourselves as Jews. If the first two decades after the Holocaust were marked by a Jewish unwillingness to dwell on what had happened, the last three decades have, in one sense, more than made up for them. Today we are awash in Holocaust centers, memorials, musems, speakers, and publications. The Holocaust has become a cornerstone of contemporary Jewish identity, an article of faith, one of the twin pillars, along with Israel (gradually even dwarfing Israel), of what has been termed the civil religion of American Jews. But "the six million," as we have represented them, verge on becoming an oppressive abstraction, as too many of our children, exposed to current efforts at Jewish education, have begun to agree.

Who were these numbers? They were not just Jews, but in their overwhelming majority they were the Yiddish-speaking Jews of Eastern Europe, the heirs of a sophisticated Jewish civilization nearly a thousand years old, probably the most successful diaspora civilization in Jewish history. At the end of the last century, while their relatives went off to search for a living in America and other corners of the earth, they remained in Eastern Europe. Many moved from small towns into the largest cities, and devoted great energy to developing a new kind of Jewish culture, one that was both thoroughly modern and thoroughly Jewish, whose goal was, in the words of their culture hero, Y. L. Peretz, "to see the world, but with Jewish eyes." In Poland prior to World War II, at the forefront of this culture were Jewish youth groups, primarily Zionist and socialist, that organized a generation of idealistic young people around visions of a new Jewish future. In

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Warsaw Ghetto Uprising Commemoration

April 18th, 1:30 pm, 15 W. 86th St., New York City

A teach-in on the rise of neo-nazism in the new Germany and its relation to the rise of fascism in the 1920s and '30s in the old Germany. Plus a memorial ceremony honoring the Warsaw Ghetto uprising. Tikkun's unique way of observing Yom ha'Shoah (Holocaust Memorial Day): "Don't *just* mourn; organize." Plus strategizing about what American Jews should do to stop the growth of facism. Cosponsored by the Society for Advancement of Judaism.

the memoirs of Holocaust survivors, they are often described as the best youth the Jewish people ever had. In Warsaw, these are the kids who, their adult leaders gone, organized the uprising. What do most of us know of East European Jewish civilization, traditional or modern? A few recipes, some comical Yiddish, and *Fiddler on the Roof*? The problem is complex, because it antedates the Holocaust. Beginning at the end of the nineteenth century, for the Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe, the image of the world they left behind began to blur. American Jews, who had commonly fled some of the most oppressive corners of Eastern Europe, could not believe that while they "americanized," those back in the Old Home were doing anything other than stagnating. Other powerful ideologies compounded this image. For Zionists, Eastern Europe was the home of the cringing Jews of the Exile, the antithesis of everything the Jewish State would represent. For Jewish socialists and communists it incarnated the baleful rule of "superstition" and "backwardness" that only a workers' revolution could overcome. When this world, already imagined as moribund, was physically annihilated, for American Jews there was little left to remember. Nor, understandably, was it psychologically possible for most survivors to nurture the memory of what had been lost. Finally, the very lands in which this civilization had flourished disappeared into the never-never-land behind the Iron Curtain.

Fifty years later, our ideological lenses removed, it becomes possible for us to look for a new relationship to our past. This is a way of filling the abstraction of "the six million" with content, remembering not only how Jews died but how they lived. As if to signal this possibility, the old lands of Eastern Europe re-emerge like a lost continent into our common history; Poland and Lithuania; Belarus, Ukraine, and Russia; Slovakia, Hungary and Rumania are now no further away than anywhere

Partisan Hymn

Never say that there is only death for you,
Though leaden skies may be concealing days of blue,
Because the hour that we have hungered for is near,
Beneath our tread the earth shall tremble —
we are here!

From land of palm-tree to the far-off land of snow,
We shall be coming with our torment and our woe,
And everywhere our blood has sunk into the earth,
Will our bravery, our courage blossom forth.

We'll have the morning sun to set our day aglow,
And all our yesterdays will vanish with the foe,
And if the time is long before the sun appears,
Then let this song go like a beacon through the years.

This song was written with our blood and not with lead,
It's not a song that birds sing overhead,
It was a people amidst toppling barricades
That sang this song of ours with pistols and grenades.

So never say that there is only death for you,
Though leaden skies may be concealing days of blue,
Yet the hour that we have hungered for is near,
Beneath our tread the earth shall tremble —
we are here!

translated by Aaron Kramer

Zog nit keynmol az du geyst dem letstn veg,
Khotsh himlen blayene farshteln bloye teg,
Kumen vet nokh undzer oysgebenkte sho,
Svet a poyk ton undzer trot — mir zenen do!

Fun grinem palmenland biz land fun vaysn shney,
Mir kumen on mit undzer payn, mit undzer vey,
Un vu gefaln iz a shprits fun undzer blut,
Shprotsn vet dort undzer gvure, undzer mut.

Svet di morgn zun bagildn undz dem haynt,
Un der nekhtn vet farshvindn mitn faynt,
Un oyb farzamen vet di zun in der kayor,
Vi a parol zol zayn dos lid fun dor tsu dor.

Dos lid geshribn iz mit blut un nit mit blay,
Siz nit keyn lidl fun a foygl oyf der fray,
Dos hot a folk tsvishn falndike vent
Dos lid gezungen mit naganes in di hent.

To zog nit keynmol az du geyst dem letstn veg,
Khotsh himlen blayene farshteln bloye teg,
Kumen vet nokh undzer oysgebenkte sho,
Svet a poyk ton undzer trot — mir zenen do!

Hirsh Glick (1920-44), a poet and a partisan, wrote the words to this song in the Vilna Ghetto when he heard about the Warsaw Ghetto uprising. It became the battle hymn of the Jewish partisans, and is traditionally sung at commemorations of the uprising and the Holocaust. Aaron Kramer's translation of "the Partisan Hymn" originally appeared in Jewish Life, *now known as* Jewish Currents, *in April 1947.*

else. There are new initiatives afoot in Jewish education and scholarship, both in the old West and the old East, and rising interest among students. Even survivors, who used to insist that there was no conceivable reason to return to "ground soaked with Jewish blood," are returning to remember, often bringing their sons, daughters, and grandchildren. In other words, the amnesia spawned by the most catastrophic trauma in Jewish history is just beginning to lift, signifying a new stage in our healing. Commemorating the Warsaw Ghetto uprising at this moment in history should recognize it as the last stand of a millennial civilization on which the Nazis focused the extremity of their fury. Nothing disturbed Hitler more than the image of the *Ostjude*, the bearded, black-garbed, Yiddish-speaking Jew of Eastern Europe; his spirit was the apotheosis of everything Nazism sought to eradicate from the world. To remember this Jew and his world is to hear "*Mir zenen do!*," the refrain of the "Partisan Hymn," in a new way. It is to deny Hitler a posthumous victory.

But 1993 reveals another perspective on the uprising as well. Ever since the nineteenth century, two great visions—nationalism and socialism—have competed for the hearts and minds of masses of people. Both nationalism and socialism were premised on the rapid changes of modernity that dislocated individuals from traditional structures and meanings. Increasingly, it seemed, the prospect of being nothing more than a human being, of being able to make common cause, that is, either with no one else, or with everyone else, made people miserable. Both nationalism and socialism offerred new intermediate forms of identification to those lost in the new world—nationalism the nation, socialism the class—and enlisted their followers in political and cultural struggles to establish new structures and meanings based in the new identifications. Both visions have great achievements to their credit, but both also spawned monsters that destroyed themselves along with much around them. In the world now emerging, it is still too early to tell whether the socialist vision will re-emerge in a new form, but what is certain is that nationalism, nationalisms, and a host of related "identity movements" will accompany us far into the future. However much we might long to free ourselves of its nightmares by freeing ourselves from nationalism itself, it seems that for most of us simply being a human being will continue to be insufficient. We will insist on developing and celebrating the gamut of distinctions that link us collectively to particular places, cultures, memories, and identities. This is something those who "relate" as Jews, for example, particularly understand, but also those who "relate" as French or Palestinian or gay or African-American.

But to live with nationalism and its cousins is to live amidst a multiplicity of "us's" and "thems," and therefore to live at risk. That risk has never materialized with greater force than in Europe fifty years ago. This was the radical attempt of one "us" to redo the world exclusively in its own image. It was radical because Nazism worked not only at the level of social representation, but at the level of biology. Through the administration of life and death, eugenics and mass murder, it sought to imprint itself quite literally into humanity's flesh. This absolute totalitarian "us" discovered in the Jews its ultimate "them": what it termed "life unworthy of living." It was hardly a random choice. For two thousand years, for a web of religious, economic, and social reasons, the Jews had been the only non-Christian group tolerated at the heart of Christendom. They had perfected, most successfully in Eastern Europe, a way of life lived dispersed among others. Their survival and growth hinged on their ability to maintain their own "us-them" balance: to take from "them" and to give to "them," just enough but not too much. What terrified Hitler most about the Jews was precisely this: their own portable borders, their ability to thrive in the borderlands of other nations and cultures, their at-home-ness amidst multiplicity. This was the "bacillus" that most threatened the entire Nazi project with "infection," for Jews could best be counted on, in other words, to resist the extinction of the rainbow of human difference. This too is what the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, the first revolt against the Nazis in all of occupied Europe, was about, another way of hearing *"Mir zenen do!"* □

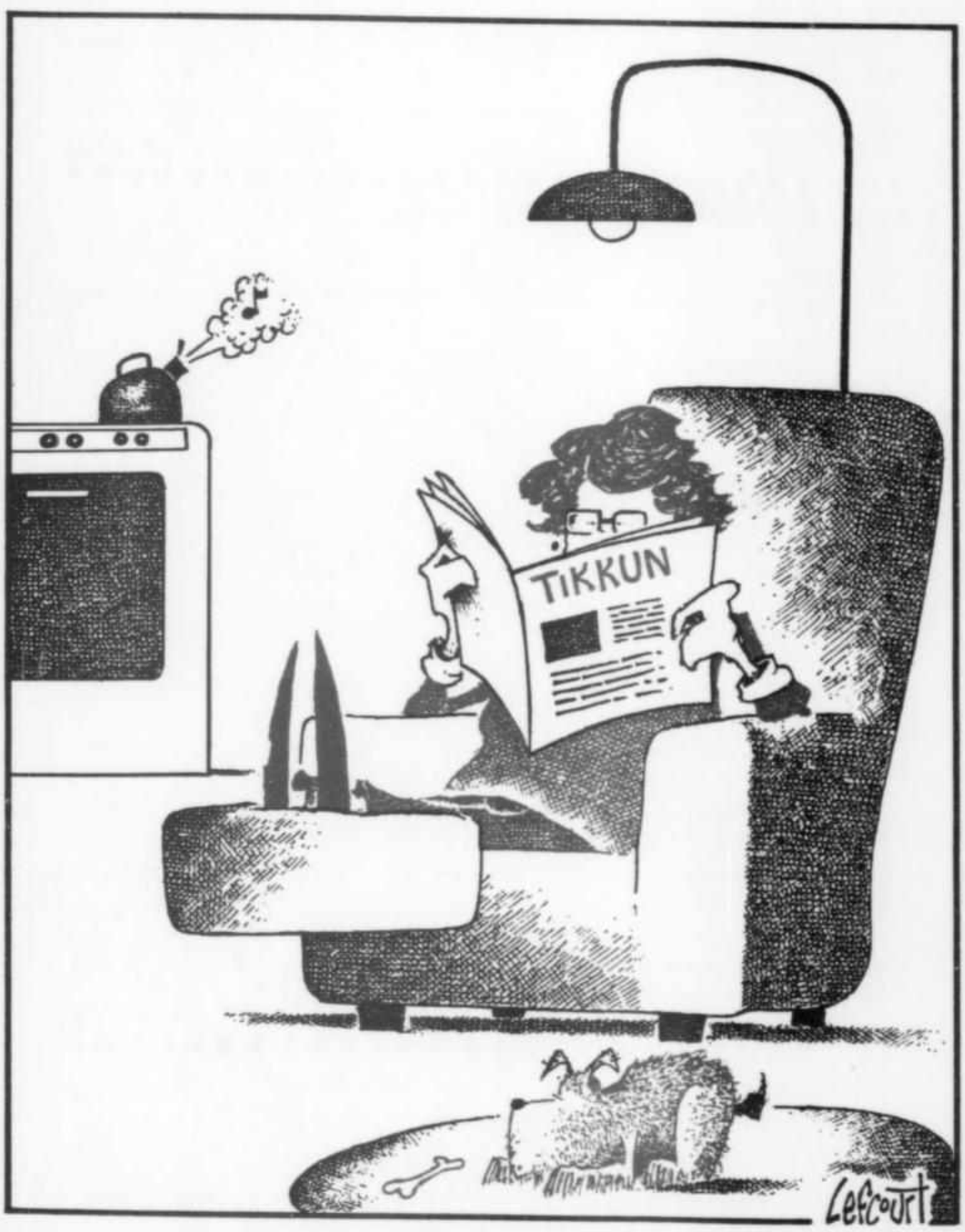
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Passover Haggadah Supplement 1993

50th Anniversary, the Uprising of Warsaw Ghetto

Fifty years ago tonight, Jews in Warsaw celebrated the Seder before commencing their historic revolt against Nazi genocide. For fifty days, they waged a heroic battle that redeemed the sacred spirit of the Jewish people against those who started by demeaning and devaluing Jewish life and who eventually went on to demean and destroy the Jewish community of Europe. Decimated by hunger, fatigue, disease, and the systematic murder of some 400,000 Jews, the remaining tens of thousands rose in battle not because of any misguided hope that they could take on and defeat the Nazi armies and their airplanes, tanks, and rifles, but because they knew that the spirit of God embedded in each human being requires that we fight against oppression even when the odds are overwhelming.

Ever since Rabbi Akiba used the Seder to plan a revolutionary struggle against the Romans, the Jews have used the Seder as a time to grapple with their current reality. They have used the Haggadah not as a sacred text, but as an inspiration to address their own reality and to imagine concretely how to change it. It is in this spirit that we encourage you to make any Seder you attend a lively and spirited occasion by attaching this Haggadah supplement to whatever text is being used. This supplement is intended to add controversy and liveliness to your Seder discussions. Stop and discuss the ideas, debate them, and, if necessary, reject them. Engage in your own analysis of how to make Passover's message not just an interesting historical memory but a contemporary commandment to seek liberation in this world. Only thus can we fulfill the Torah's obligation to view ourselves as though we personally had gone out of Egypt.

Kiddush

Before the Kiddush
(the first blessing over the wine).

We are gathered here tonight to affirm our continuity with the generations of Jews who have kept alive the vision of freedom inherent in the Passover story. We proudly affirm that we are the descendants of slaves—the first group of slaves in recorded history ever to wage a successful rebellion against their slaveholders. Ours was the first historical national liberation struggle, and the prototype of many struggles that other nations would wage against those who oppressed them.

There are others who would have done their best to forget their humble past. There are other peoples that saw themselves as descendants of gods or of superhuman heroes. We are proud that our people has clung to its vision of itself as a slave people and has insisted on telling its story of liberation as the central founding event around which its culture was built.

Ruling classes have traditionally tried to convince their subjects that domination is inevitable and is built into the very structure of the universe. The Jewish people's Torah, telling the story of our liberation struggle, has been a perpetual thorn in the side of these ruling classes. Not only was our very existence a proof that the world could be changed, but every Passover, and every Sabbath, we insisted on recounting the story and drawing the lesson: The way things are is not the way things have to be; the world can be radically altered. While ruling classes, slave owners, and bosses want no limits on how much they can exploit human labor, the Shabbat institutionalizes the first absolute limit and is the prototypical worker's victory over the power of bosses. For twenty-four hours, the Jewish people declare that they are withdrawing from anything connected with labor—the activity of acting on and changing the material world. Getting and spending, using money, lighting fires, building, harvesting, and writing are forbidden. For twenty-four hours we stop attempting to dominate and control the world, and instead celebrate its grandeur—and celebrate the victory in our struggle for freedom which allows us to rest and rejoice in this way.

No wonder that the constant recounting of our quest for freedom has predisposed Jews throughout the ages to support the liberation struggles of other oppressed groups. While there have been Jews in every age who thought that they best served the interests of our people by cuddling up to the powerful and allying with them, most Jews have rejected this strategy and instead have sought ways to ally themselves with the oppressed.

How tragic that today the Palestinians perceive us as their oppressors. Although we are happy that

in the past year we witnessed peace negotiations and the election of a government in Israel that was interested in exploring the possibilities for peace, we are also mindful that there is a growing despair among Palestinians about the failure of those talks to generate any substantive change in the conditions of occupation. That despair in turn leads many Palestinians to be attracted to a vicious and ruthless form of Islamic fundamentalism committed to the destruction of a Jewish state. We would never support a solution to this problem that endangered the existence of the State of Israel, but neither can we remain silent year after year as the Palestinian people continue to live under conditions of harsh occupation in refugee camps in the Arab world, where they are used as pawns by Arab states who care little about their plight, and in diasporas around the world, yearning for a homeland just as we Jews once yearned for our own return to Zion. Their liberation and freedom can and must be achieved without harm to the safety, security, and freedom of the Jewish people—but we cannot close our ears to their cries and their pain.

We are mindful of celebrating this Passover at the beginning of a new era in American politics as well. The voices of despair and cynicism will try to construe all that happens as a repeat of politics as usual—but we know that what happens in politics is not independent of what we human beings do. We have witnessed great social movements, such as Zionism, the women's movement, the peace movement, and the civil rights movement, make profound changes in the world. Part of the message of Passover is that the cynics are wrong—things can be different, and we, ordinary people, can make those changes. So what happens in the next years in America will partly be a function of the degree to which we overcome the detached, cynical, above-the-fray observer consciousness of a media-saturated spectator, and instead become involved in shaping social movements that can create the kind of America we hope for.

After a decade of selfishly squandering the resources of our society, we now find ourselves without the will or the resources to eradicate the vast inequalities that the past years have deepened. We are glad that the United States has the military power to challenge expansionist dictators; but we still know that the military budget could be decisively cut and tens of billions of dollars could be redirected to fight hunger and homelessness. Any celebration of our own freedom is incomplete unless we use this occasion to rededicate ourselves to redistributing the world's resources—and to remedying the inequalities that allow many of us in the United States to live in luxury and self-satisfaction while turning our backs on and shutting our ears to the thirty million children who will die of hunger this year. We are mindful that the very international economic arrangements that have brought comfort and wealth to the United States have simultaneously brought increasing poverty and suffering to peoples in the Third World. And we are saddened that it has become so easy for people of the advanced industrial countries to shut their ears, and close their borders rather than face the pain of Bosnians, of Haitians, of economic as well as political refugees.

When we see Islamic fundamentalism, East European ethnic particularism, various Third World nationalisms, and other ideologies used to mobilize masses of people into armed struggle, we realize that those mobilized are often decent people who have not found a more humane way to express legitimate anger. We will never condone the way this anger then gets linked to anti-Semitism, racism, and other reactionary belief systems. But we also understand the complexity of world oppression. We remember that even our real enemies are also human beings. We understand that American selfishness and materialism have contributed to the problems faced by the peoples of the world. Passover, then, is not just a celebration of our own freedom—it is a moment in which we rededicate ourselves to the struggles for peace, justice, and equality for all peoples.

Bless the Vegetation of the Earth in Times of Ecological Crisis

Add to the section where we dip the parsley or greens of the earth in the salt water and say the blessing "boray pree ha-adamah."

Our holiday of freedom is also a time to rejoice in the bountiful blessings of the Earth. The Earth pours forth its riches, allowing us and God's myriad creatures to flourish and enjoy the splendor of life. Each spring we witness the miracle of renewal as vegetation returns to the planet.

This Pesach we pause to reflect on the ways that we have failed to take adequate care of the Earth. The free market, in a relentless fury to amass profits without regard for ecological consequences, has generated tens of thousands of corporate ventures and products that have combined to do incalculable damage to the life-support systems of the planet. Willing to let corporate concerns for profit count more than the general interest, we have restricted our responses to ecological insensitivity.

Our biblical injunction to work and to exercise stewardship over the Earth has been transformed into a notion that the Earth is simply a resource for exploitation. If we construct a society in which people are encouraged to look out for themselves and advance their own interests without regard for the consequences to others, an ecological crisis becomes almost inevitable.

As Jews, however, we recognize that our own fate is closely connected to the fate of others. The peasant in

Brazil who has no other way to make a living but to cut down the rain forest, the Japanese fisherman who has no way to live but to deplete the sea, or the auto manufacturer who uses political clout to block funds for mass transit or for stricter environmental policies—all are acting rationally, given the logic of the competitive marketplace. Nevertheless, their actions have dire consequences for the rest of us. Our task is not to condemn these people, but to construct an economic and social system in which people no longer have to choose between their own best interests and the best interests of the environment. This is not a question solely of learning as individuals to be more ecologically aware—though this is also important—but also of transforming the social system that makes it possible for some people to profit on activities that destroy or endanger our planet Earth.

We approach the Earth not only as our sustainer, vital to our survival, but also as a sacred place, worthy of our respect and awe. The Bible teaches us that the whole Earth is full of God's glory—that every part is alive, holy, and miraculous. Today, as we rededicate ourselves to saving the Earth from the ecological damage that has been done, we also rejoice in the Earth and thank God for its beauty and wonder.

Blessed are you, God, King of the universe, who creates the fruit of the Earth.

Drops from Our Cup of Joy

Before reciting the Ten Plagues.

It is traditional to spill a drop of wine from our cups as we recite each plague. Our cup of rejoicing cannot be full if our enemies are suffering. The Talmud recounts that when the heavenly angels sang songs of praise to God as the Egyptians were drowning in the Sea of Reeds, God reprimanded them for celebrating the suffering of his children the Egyptians.

Our people did not return to its ancient homeland with the intention of displacing or oppressing another people. The historical responsibility for the tragedy is two-sided; when we were refugees fleeing from the oppression of Christian Europe, the Palestinian leadership did all it could to block our return and refused to consider sharing the land. When the UN offered a two-state solution in 1947, Israel accepted and the Palestinians refused. Yet most Palestinians who fled were not involved in these decisions; they were peasant farmers with little knowledge of or involvement in the affairs that would eventually lead to displacement from their homes.

Our cup of joy cannot be full as long as millions of Palestinians live in refugee camps or under Israeli military rule.

We drop wine from our cups also in sadness and outrage at the "ethnic cleansing" and genocide in the former Yugoslavia, at the outrages caused by neo-Nazis in Germany, at the oppression of Kurds by Islamic oppressors, at the oppression of Moslems by Hindus, at the continuing anti-Semitism in Russia and Eastern Europe, at the violence of Africans against Africans, and at all the other needless suffering.

Our tradition teaches us compassion—and from this teaching we can also learn that if we really want peace in the Middle East, we will have to approach the conflicts with compassion for all sides. Peace is impossible as long as we hold onto the idea that one side has all the good and the other has all the bad.

In Every Generation

After reading "vihee she'amda" (that in every generation there have been those who rose up against us, but God ultimately saved us from their hands).

Why the Jews? Why should we have been the subject of persecution for thousands of years?

Was it perhaps our exclusiveness, our separateness, our insistence on being special—or some other aspect of our internal collective pathology? No!

To counter this, we affirm our Jewishness today. We have not been the cause of our oppression. We have been a very convenient tool for various ruling classes: a separable and recognizable minority that could be used as a scapegoat, a convenient target upon which to vent their hostility.

Jews have not been the only scapegoats to be used in this way. But in Western Europe they were the primary and most consistent scapegoat.

Our target status was largely responsible for our headlong rush into assimilation once that was legally possible. The Judaism that was abandoned, full of tears and suffering, was a Judaism whose sense of joy and inner confidence had been replaced by a narrow defensiveness—itself a response to external oppression. Even Hasidism, born as a protest against the joylessness of a rigidifying Eastern European Judaism, eventually lost much of its spontaneity and its earlier creativity, increasingly reproducing the dogmatic spirit it sought to replace. It is only now, decades after one-third of our people was wiped out, that we can begin to imagine reclaiming the more joyous and life-affirming aspects of our Jewish heritage.

Yet even here we are not free of the dynamics of world oppression. In class societies, virtually everyone is enmeshed in a web of oppression, in some respects by forces outside our control, in some respects by partici-

pating and benefiting from the oppression of others. Whether as tax collectors and small tavern owners in Eastern Europe, or as shopkeepers, government bureaucrats, social workers and teachers interacting with people in American ghettos, Jews are sometimes perceived as representatives of the established order in their dealings with other oppressed groups. In the process, and quite unfairly, anti-Semitism is regenerated. It is understandable why we Jews would become angry at the groups who participate in these dynamics—the peasants in Eastern Europe or some African-Americans in the U.S. We wish that they would understand that we too are victims, yet it's understandable why they may see us otherwise.

Similarly, when people point to the relative material prosperity of Jews compared to other ethnic groups in the U.S. and use this as a reason to claim that Jewish oppression is a matter of the past, they fail to understand the history of that oppression. Jews were doing well from a material standpoint in prewar Germany as well. Anti-Semitism, like sexism, cannot be reduced to an economic category—there are other unique forms of oppression besides material deprivation. Jews who sympathize with the oppression of every other group but who have little understanding or knowledge of the history of their own people may be engaged in a massive denial of reality. This denial is sometimes inspired by internalized anti-Semitism and the resulting need to convice oneself and one's non-Jewish friends that Jewishness "really isn't very important," and that it's "really just an interesting historical relic of the past."

There is no easy way out, no way for one people to make a separate peace with a world of oppressors or assimilate successfully and without moral compromise into that world. Our own liberation and our own mental health require the liberation of all, and the end of all oppression.

Pour Out Thy Wrath

After the meal, before opening the door for Elijah and before saying "Shefokh Chamatkha."

Tonight we remember our six million sisters and brothers who perished at the hands of the Nazis and at the hands of hundreds of thousands of anti-Semites—many of them Germans, Poles, Croatians, Ukrainians, Lithuanians, Latvians, Estonians, Romanians, Hungarians, Austrians—who assisted those Nazis throughout Europe. We remember also the Jewish martyrs throughout the generations—oppressed, beaten, raped, and murdered by European Christians. And we remember tonight with pride the Battle of the Warsaw Ghetto, and the tens of thousands of Jews who resisted, fought back, joined Partisan units, or engaged in acts of armed violence against the oppressors.

It is not fashionable to speak about these atrocities—particularly since some reactionary Jews use these memories to legitimate human rights violations against Palestinians, as though they were still fighting the Nazis, as though shooting rock-throwing children could somehow compensate for our own failure to have taken up arms soon enough against the Nazi oppressors. Others use the violence done to us as an excuse to be insensitive to the violence done to others—as though our pain was the only pain—or to legitimate a general "goyim bashing" attitude based on a total distrust of non-Jews. But though the memories of past oppression are sometimes misused to support insensitivity to others, it is still right for us to talk about our pain, what was done to us, how unspeakable, how outrageous. So tonight we recall in pain and in anger what was done to us.

To get beyond the pain, we must first be allowed to express our anger. Permitting ourselves to articulate our anger rather than trying to bury it or forget it or minimize it is the only way that we can get beyond it. So, tonight it is appropriate to speak about our history, about the Holocaust, and about the ways that the American government and peoples around the world failed to respond to our cries and our suffering. What was done to us was wrong, disgusting, an assault on the sanctity of human life and on God. It is with righteous indignation that Jews have traditionally called out "*Shefokh Chamatkha ha'goyim aher lo yeda'ukha*"—pour out your wrath, God, on those people who have acted toward us in a way that fails to recognize Your holy spirit within us as it is within all human beings. [This might be an appropriate place to pause for discussion.]

Yet, even as we speak our anger, we reaffirm our commitment to the messianic vision of a world of peace and justice, a world in which inequalities have been abolished and our human capacities for love and solidarity and creativity and freedom are allowed to flourish, a world in which all people will recognize and affirm in each other the spirit of God. In that day, living in harmony with nature and with each other, all peoples will participate in acknowledging God's presence on earth. We remain committed to the struggles in our own time that will contribute to making that messianic vision possible someday.

Written by Michael Lerner, editor of TIKKUN, *born in 1943 and shaped by the experiences of the Jewish people in that year. Please copy this Haggadah supplement, use it, and encourage its readers to subscribe to* TIKKUN *magazine, in which the themes developed here are debated, refined, and developed into a Judaism for the contemporary age. Subs: $31 to* TIKKUN, *Cathedral Station, Box 1778, New York, New York 10025.*

Roundtable on the Expulsions and the Peace Process: Divisions Within the Israeli Peace Movement

Daphne Golan is a member of the board of B'Tselem, the Israeli Human Rights Organization. Avram Poraz is a member of Knesset from Meretz, the Israeli Peace Party. Aaron Back teaches social work at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Avigdor Feldman is a civil rights lawyer who represented some of the families of Palestinian deportees. Galia Golan teaches Russian history at the Hebrew University and is a leader of Shalom Achshav (Peace Now) in Jerusalem. Yoram Lass is a member of Knesset from the Labor Party.

TIKKUN: When the cabinet members of the Meretz Party, the Israeli peace party, voted to support the expulsions of more than 400 alleged members of Hamas, they told supporters that they were doing so in order to advance the peace process. Could any of you help us in the United States better understand that reasoning?

Avigdor Feldman: Those who have tried to justify the deportations by arguing that this might somehow strengthen the hand of Rabin in making peace are really simply trying to hide the fact that this was an immoral and illegal act.

TIKKUN: But it was supported by Meretz ministers in the cabinet whose specific difference from the doves in the Labor Party was not around the peace process but around the fact that they represented themselves as civil liberties devotees. So how do we understand this?

Avram Poraz: There really isn't so much of a difference between Meretz doves and Labor doves either on the peace process or on civil rights. The Labor doves also care about civil rights. What faced the Meretz ministers was the supposition that we needed to fight Hamas. Hamas refuses any negotiations with Israel. It was to the benefit of peace to fight against Hamas, which is the biggest enemy of the peace process. We believed that in striking a blow against Hamas we would be advancing the peace process.

Daphne Golan: Dedi Zucker of Meretz said on television that the deportations would strengthen the PLO among the Palestinians. Such incredible arrogance to think that we Israelis could enter the Palestinian camp and figure out what to do to strengthen the side we are for!

Feldman: When the rumors of deportation reached me, I consulted with Meretz Knesset members, and they told me that this action was what the P.L.O. wanted.

Aaron Back: I was at the Supreme Court during the hearings on the expulsions and a judge asked Attorney General Harish what the criterion was for deporting the people, does it include everybody who is part of a hostile organization, everyone who is in opposition to the peace process? And Harish answered: "Possibly, if we want to uproot the organization, we might possibly have to deport everyone." So my question to MK Poraz is: Where do you draw the line?

Poraz: Various experts led us to believe that if we could just get rid of the leadership of Hamas, we would give them a decisive blow and this would be helpful to the peace process. We now see that they were wrong but this explains the behavior of our ministers at first.

We also faced a problem with public opinion—they were demanding that we do something, so we did something. I think the fourth Geneva Convention dealing with expulsions really meant what was happening in Yugoslavia, where the goal is to expel an entire people—not what we did, where the expulsions are directed at individuals for their individual actions. Deportations for a limited period when the people have a right to come back is more humane than keeping them in detention in tents where they are deprived of their liberty. Expulsions in the past were more humane—the deportees were accepted by Arab countries and they got to live a nice life in the Arab world, better than they could have had in an Israeli prison.

Feldman: Anyone who is not sensitive to the meaning of "expulsions" in the Palestinian community really doesn't understand anything about the peace process, about the Palestinians. . .the emotional, historical significance to the Palestinians of expulsions is central. Anyone who says that deportation is better than tents in the Negev doesn't know anything about Palestinians.

Daphne Golan: It is almost a joke to say that the Arabs

spoiled the plans of Israel. I think that the very first sentence that opened the fourth Geneva Convention is worth quoting: "Any individual or mass deportation is prohibited." This is very clear. The night before the deportation, one of the arguments was that the situation was such that they had to take urgent measures or something more dramatic would happen. In the past five years more than 14,000 people were detained without trial. Is this no longer enough?

TIKKUN: You've just said that there was not a climate of outrage in Israel, or a powerful response after the murder of the policeman who was kidnapped, whereas in the United States, we heard that the response was so great that Rabin had to take some dramatic step to appease the tremendous outcry and anger of the Israeli public. Is this a misunderstanding on the part of Americans?

Daphne Golan: Yes, there never was so much pressure. Moreover, since we are going through a very difficult process in which there will probably be other victims, what is going to happen every time someone is murdered? Is the Israeli government going to deport 400 people for every victim of the peace process? Is that the message that they are giving the public?

Poraz: First of all we should remember that in the last election that we had, Meretz got only twelve seats while the Labor Party got forty-four seats, and the Labor Party is the one that until two years ago, for a period of six years, was a partner of Likud in a national unity government with our present Prime Minister as Defense Minister under Yitzhak Shamir. Our Prime Minister is not happy with the present coalition, because he would like in his coalition nationalist parties like Tzomet and Mafdal. In his eyes, we are too dovish. We had no other alternative than to stay or leave, and in both cases it would have been a worse government for Israel and for the peace process than the present government. Sometimes we have to pay the price for the maintenance of the coalition.

Feldman: If they are already paying this price—400 deportees—at the beginning of the coalition, what is going to happen in the future? The "street" is always crying, but the government should be wiser than the street.

TIKKUN: Do you think that if Tzomet and Mafdal had been in the government instead of Meretz, they would not have agreed with the expulsion?

Feldman: They would at least have asked how many. Meretz didn't ask anything regarding the number of people to be expelled.

TIKKUN: Some people are saying that Rabin may have strengthened his credibility by showing that he is tough and that will allow him to give up something during the negotiations without appearing weak.

Galia Golan: I think Rabin sees the peace process as entirely separate from the way he handles the Palestinians and the Territories. He does want to reach a peace agreement, and he doesn't see much of a connection between the two. But if you're talking about the response of the Israeli public, I don't think he's achieved anything, particularly after his compromise with the Americans. There is one part of the public which thinks he's simply stupid politically, another part of the public which thinks he's not standing firm enough because if the expulsions were really necessary for our security then why accommodate to the American pressure, and I don't think he's won any ground from anybody.

Feldman: Israel will have to fight very hard now to gain the confidence of the Palestinians as negotiators because deportation or expulsion is really the main trauma of the Palestinian community. To use deportations if your goal is to strengthen the peace process seems to me a very wild concept.

Poraz: I agree with Galia Golan. Rabin presented himself as a hard-liner, and we should be honest with ourselves. One of the reasons for the victory of the Labor Party in this election was choosing Rabin and not Peres. We may differ with him, and we do, but his hard line was something that had an appeal to some of the Israeli voters. This hard line is one of the reasons that the Labor Party got more votes and this is the reason that we are now in the government, because we had a majority actually of one, and if it had been somebody else at the head of the Labor Party, a dove, we'd all be in the opposition together, because it would have been a very different government.

Daphne Golan: I want to ask Avram Poraz why did we send you to the government? What are you good for? I mean, I understand why Rabin is in the government, but what are you there for? You keep saying that you are only twelve people, but twelve people is a lot. You should have had a big voice, you were in the government exactly to represent us, and to tell Rabin "No!" But you didn't do your job.

Poraz: Well, first of all, I agree with you there was a mistake in the government. I don't really have a moral problem here, or a moral dilemma, because according to the Geneva Convention capital punishment is O.K., is legal, so should we execute people instead of expelling them? What is more fair, more human? By my standards, ex-

pulsion is more humane.

Feldman: Avram, whom are you going to execute there? Anyone of those 400? There is nobody there to prove anything against. What are you saying?

Poraz: My point is that if you use the Fourth Geneva Convention as your bible, you realize that it allows executions but doesn't allow deportations, whereas I see deportations as more humane.

Feldman: Some rational and leftist papers can agree that the person who commits a mass murder should have capital punishment, I have no problem with this. But first you need to prove some crime before you punish people. I have a problem with deporting 400 people when nobody really knows what they're charged with. In this case, everyone was deported after review of one minute. I have a big problem with this. I am quite shocked to see this type of moral argument that justifies this because it is less bad than capital punishment.

Poraz: Of course, what was done was stupid.

Feldman: I have yet to hear any cabinet minister, even from Meretz, saying "I was wrong."

Poraz: Well, let me speak about myself as a member of Knesset. I supported for about twenty hours the government decision until the moment I found out the amount of people and the fact that they were not being accepted by an Arab country as deportees had been in the past. I had no moral problem with them being expelled if they had been relocated to another Arab country but what I oppose is the political damage that is now being done by this deportation.

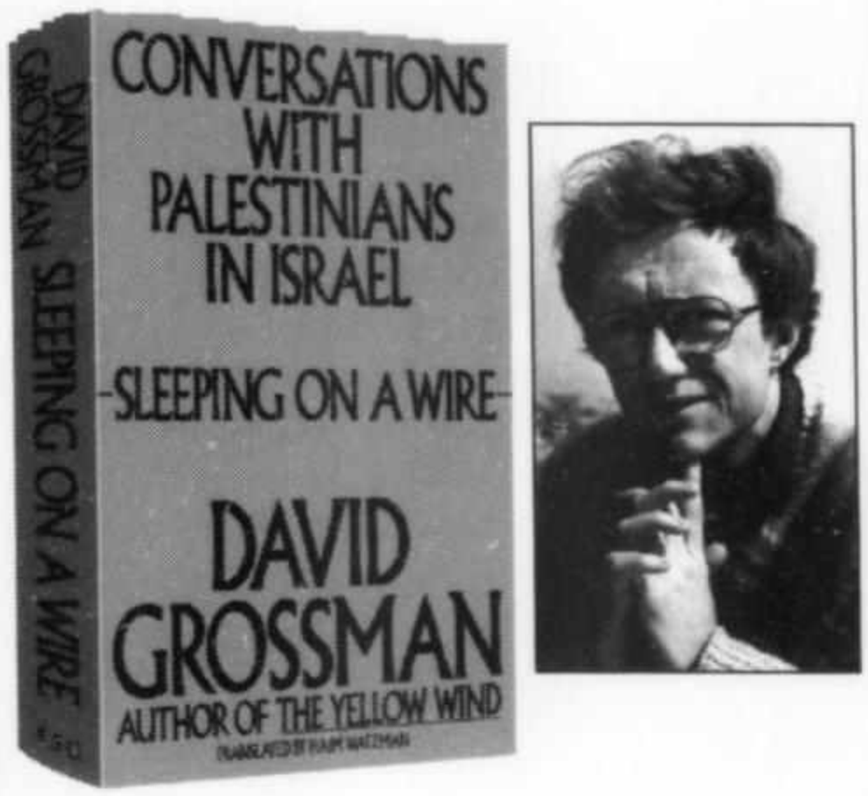
Daphne Golan: You are saying that you don't have any morals. You are willing to pay any price to retain your seat in the government as long as it works practically. You don't have any "red line."

Galia Golan: Certainly we in Peace Now want to see this government remain in power, and we want to see Meretz in the government. But this wasn't a question of whether Meretz would be in or out of the government, but of saying, "whoa, wait twenty-four hours," or opposing the move. You would not have been thrown out of the government for abstaining or saying no.

Yoram Lass: We in the Labor Party represent the majority opinion of Israelis on this question, and that opinion is as follows: We are in a real war with the Palestinians and

DAVID GROSSMAN

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we are fighting this war. Therefore, moral issues really don't apply here. We don't kill women and children for fun. But this is a war. I believe Rabin had no choice...he was elected as a "tough guy," someone who would bring the peace but would keep our security interests primary. Yet day after day there were terrorist attacks and people getting killed on the streets. And people were feeling great anxiety that they would walk down the street suddenly someone might jump on them and kill them. So the moral issue when you are fighting a war is different—this is not a seminar in the university, this is a situation in which you have to come up with real answers that the public can follow and understand what you are doing.

We must realize that these Hamas people are the Khomeini types who see us Jews as a people who contaminate the holy land. In their view, anybody who is not Moslem should be killed. We are the collective Salman Rushdie, and we are to be eradicated. This is a war. So in this situation we can't conduct a university seminar in human rights. I would agree that technically it should have been done better.

Daphne Golan: We haven't been giving the Palestinians seminars in human rights for the past five years since the beginning of the Intifada. More than one hundred thousand Palestinians have been arrested. More than fourteen thousand of them were never charged. Many of them spent six months, a year, two years, five years without ever being charged. There were houses that were demolished. There were undercover units that found wanted people and killed them. So this isn't exactly seminars that we've been giving Palestinians and it isn't as if we had no tactics to use against Palestinians so that we now suddenly needed to invent something and came up with the idea of expulsion. Israel has been violating human rights for the past five years on a very large scale. Our human rights reports have demonstrated that there was torture going on on a large scale in all Israeli prisons.

The fourth Geneva Convention that forbids expulsions is about war. It's not about how to deal in peace time. It's a set of rules about what to do in times of war. The idea of the Geneva Convention is that even in times of war there are certain basic dignities of human beings that ought not to be violated. The deportation is the most sensitive issue among Palestinians.

Galia Golan: The entire conflict between us and the Palestinians centers around the issue of land and us kicking them off the land and their feelings or view that this is what Israel is all about. If you want to deal effectively with Hamas, it's important to understand why and how Hamas has gained strength in the Occupied Territories over the past few years. To a large degree, it's a result of

Interview with Hanan Ashrawi

(Hanan Ashrawi, the chief spokesperson for the Palestinian delegation to Mideast peace talks was interviewed in February by Wendy Orange in Ramallah.)

TIKKUN: Are you surprised by Rabin's recent expulsion of Palestinians suspected of being Hamas members?

H.A.: No, we've always expected Rabin to be hard line on what he calls security issues, which for him is a huge umbrella under which all sorts of human rights violations can be carried out. We cautioned against euphoria after his election last June. We said, "We know Rabin..We know him as a defense minister, as a bone breaker. He has the challenge of being peace maker but we know how he operates: with a military mind."

Since his election, life has become more and more difficult. Gratuitous cruelties are on the rise. Look at the examples of homes. Shamir used to have to go to court to get a court order to demolish a home. Now Rabin says: There will be no official demolishing of homes. We won't get court orders authorizing this. So what do they do? They say there's a fugitive or a person wanted from this home...they give a few moments to have the person leave and then they demolish it with anti-tank missiles. They've demolished more homes in the last few weeks than Shamir demolished in months.

More children under age sixteen have been killed, thirteen in the last few weeks. So this killing of children, especially by undercover units, is something that...I can't think of anything worse really.

TIKKUN: Do you believe Rabin wants a negotiated settlement?

H.A.: Yes, I think he does but he wants it on his own damn terms. I never doubted that he wants a settlement but he has a clear perception of what he wants. He wants to prevent a possibility for the creation of a Palestinian entity that has geographic integrity and contiguity and that would have the possibility of, in any way, becoming a state in the future. So he's fragmented the territories with his so-called "security settlements" and he's trying to undermine any possibility of a genuine source of authority in the form of a legislature.

He wants to annex East Jerusalem. He wants to keep security as his own domain, not as a subject of negotiation. In his kind of settlement he would get legitimacy for his settlements with our blessings, he would pre-empt the possibility of a Palestinian State and then he would have the Palestinians off his hands. There's no way we will accept that.

TIKKUN: Israelis from Peace Now also believe this is the best government we're going to have.

H.A.: I think Peace Now's assessment is right, that this is probably the best government they can have because you're not going to have a Peace Now government. But maybe the best government is not good enough for peace. I don't know.

frustration. There was support for the peace process and for Madrid when it took place even among the Palestinian people in the villages. But over the course of the past fifteen months there have not only been no results, but an actual increase in hardships and deterioration of human rights and this strengthens Hamas. You could defeat Hamas in the territories if you made serious concessions in the area of human rights and the daily life experience and in the peace talks. But in the absence of this, of course Hamas is going to gain strength.

Lass: Every year we lose at least 500 lives in road accidents. From Hamas we lose ten or fifteen. So it's a matter of public psychology. There's no rationality in what happens in the public psychology. But if some Palestinian gets up in the morning and kills a young girl, this is not even organized crime, the guy is simply crazy, but if he says "Allah Akbar" he is perceived as being Hamas even if he's not. Most of the killings are done by individuals, and they are not really Hamas.

But in this situation, the government must rule. It must not be seen by the public as indecisive, as doing something. So when the Hamas takes credit for killings, the government had to act, and so it deported leaders temporarily (this was only for two years, and now it is reduced to only a year) and this must be understood as punishment.

The Socialism of Fools

ANTI-SEMITISM ON THE LEFT

by Michael Lerner

The problem is pervasive—not just among political lefties, but among the culturally hip and liberal intellectuals as well. So many of them, particularly Jews, have internalized the anti-Semitism of the larger culture and become monitors to other Jews, insisting that they not be "too Jewish" or lose their credentials as sophisticated intellectuals, progressives, or culture critics. And the problem is even worse on college campuses and in liberal political circles.

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That's the real question I think.

I hate to preach or moralize, but there's a traditional mistake made by Labor. They've always allowed themselves to self-destruct by trying to please everyone. They've lacked the courage to take a position of principle that may not be very popular at the moment, but that will gain them support as people with courage, vision, with clear-cut decision-making ability, and proceed with it. Now that they're in power, Rabin is trying to play off Tzomet against Meretz, and he's neutralized Meretz. So they've always made this mistake of not having a clear-cut program and agenda and vision.

It's true you have to be sensitive to your own public opinion. We are. But you cannot use that always as an excuse not to lead. They always tell us: You have to lead, make difficult decisions. We say: We've made the most difficult decisions in the history of Palestine. We have taken personal risks. We have put all our lives at stake and we have persisted. And you, who are a government and who have a structure and an apparatus, are afraid of taking any decision that may be perceived as being in the least bit unpopular.

TIKKUN: Do you still have hope?

H.A.: It's hard to sustain hope when houses are demolished, when people are put in prisons and tortured, when people are deported.

But I personally have hope. I've seen Israelis who are not just sympathetic but are people who have taken real risks, for the sake of peace and genuine understanding and justice. But I've also seen soldiers break children's bones and kill people deliberately, and I've negotiated with Israelis over a dead body for over a week—just to try and get back a dead body.

I don't say all Israelis are bad, or good, or all Israelis are army and they kill and so on. I know whom I can talk to and I know whom I can work with and demonstrate with and so on...But at the same time, I think the Israelis have allowed themselves to fall victim to the psychology of the occupier, where you study the occupied only for the purposes of domination and control and where racism has become the dominant premise of their analysis.

I still hear statements like: "The Palestinians only understand violence," or "they're a violent people by nature," as if it's genetically born by them, or "We cannot make concessions, they will perceive it as a sign of weakness and they will ask for more," or "The Palestinians are chronic liars." I've heard those stereotypes and generalizations all the time.

What is more criminal to me is the way the fear and phobia is nurtured among the Israelis in power in order to manipulate others, for political ends. They keep feeding the notions: "beleaguered, besieged, surrounded by enemies, we're going to be killed, we can't trust them." That's very, very deliberate.

TIKKUN: Isn't it your role as the more conscious party, as the oppressed who sees further, who sees the way the media and the government twist the Israelis into racism, isn't it up to you, as we women feel in other contexts, to carry that consciousness and to open hope for others?

H.A.: But we have. We've been active. We've taken risks and we've made many painful decisions. I'm risking my life. I'm definitely affecting my own children. They suffer. I begin to feel responsible for those twenty-seven children killed. Don't you see—the peace process has been terribly harsh, a disaster for our people.

Back: If the numbers killed by Hamas is relatively small, but the deportations were responding to public pressure, then where is the place of leadership in pointing out that the numbers are small, and there are more important things we need to attend to, like the peace process.

Lass: What about the concentration camps in The United States for the Japanese during World War II. After fifty years, you can apologize, you can compensate but during the war the public psychology created a real pressure to do something. The problem is that there is nothing you can do against an individual who feels that he is getting orders from heaven to kill some Israeli. You can't disrupt his communication lines, because there are none. So you have to take some steps against the organization that advocates and takes credit for such actions. You have to show these fundamentalists you will not tolerate the kind of atmosphere that they are trying to create that legitimate these individual acts of violence. So you do something that is extreme but there was no other choice.

Daphne Golan: So you know that what you are going to do won't really deal with the problem, but because you have to do something you act without regard to the human-rights consequences. You're split into two: In the morning you rule and in the evening you have moral scruples?

Lass: What our government had to do was to send a message to the fundamentalists. Everyone knows that there is no direct way to eliminate terrorism, so this is all we could do.

Feldman: There is something you can do: Lower the level of frustration. Why not try some positive measures like helping Palestinians economically? Give them something to lose and you might lower the level of terrorism.

Lass: I fully agree with you, but at this particular moment in time there was so much frustration on the part of the Israeli population that we had to act.

Daphne Golan: So you stopped all the killings with the deportations?

Lass: No.

Daphne Golan: Of course not.

Feldman: Why 400, why not 400,000?

Lass: Instead of using the opportunity of negotiations to increase trust on both sides, there has been an escalation of violence on their part because the Palestinians have no leadership.

Galia Golan: They have a leadership, but Israel refuses to talk directly with that leadership in Tunis. If we won't talk to that leadership, it's going to be very hard to get an agreement we reach with someone else to really hold.

Lass: Hundreds of Palestinians have been killed by Palestinians. A real leadership would not have allowed this.

The official policy of the Israeli government is to promote economic development of Palestinians in the territories. Any money they can recruit—we will not look at the source. The truth is that we don't want the Palestinians to have to depend upon employment inside Israel—we want them to work in the territories. We want Israel to be Israel, a Jewish and a democratic state, we want the Palestinians to agree to the autonomy, and we want them to develop their economy in the territories.

TIKKUN: If Meretz had not gone along with the expulsions, would Labor have sought to expel them from the government or to bring in other parties that would go along with it, either a national unity government or one with religious parties or with Tzomet?

Lass: No. This was not a real danger. The majority of people in the Labor party thinks that the present government is best, and we don't want to have Tzomet or Mafdal in the government because they would jeopardize the peace process. There can't be any peace process with Mafdal in the government, because they are a branch of Gush Emunim. So we want the present government working for the next four years. And we'd like to see Rabin approach 1996 with a Rabin-type Camp David victory. We would like to see some of the other religious parties in the government that don't oppose the peace process.

TIKKUN: Do you think the majority of Israelis still think that the expulsions were a wise and good move?

Lass: I believe that the majority would say that it was a good move, but technically it went wrong. They should have been put in small groups in many different places in the Middle East. Putting all 400 in one spot in bad weather with the whole world media following them was a bad move technically. In principle it was correct, but it should have been done better.

Galia Golan: The general support for the peace process comes from a sense of realism and exhaustion and a desire to have an end of this entire conflict. The majority of the

(Continued on p. 80)

Meeting Between Two Tragedies

Wendy Orange

In the subculture inhabited by many culturally hip Americans, it's often taught that it is through the subtle act, the small move, the creative conversation that we crack the essential code of ourselves. Yet in Israel, such a belief is scorned as naive and foolish. The psychology many of us nurture and take for granted—accurately mirroring each other, seeing our own responsibility when problems erupt, trying to see from the other's point of view—these approaches seem foreign here, where demonizing of the other, so entrenched in the collective psyche, presses upon everyone to conform. So when I first started to get to know Palestinians, I brought a set of cultural assumptions not heard by many Middle Easterners.

I first came to Israel for the TIKKUN Peace Conference of 1991 and couldn't leave. I imagined I was entering a rich world of political dialogue, but in fact I lived in Israel for over a year before I met any Palestinians. In their sinister way, stereotypes operate most powerfully in the absence of direct experience. I had begun to fear every kaffiyah on the street, every blue license plate, every bunch of Arab kids in the park. What I believed before I moved to Israel about possibilities for peace through dialogue and what I was feeling day by day were moving poles apart, a process I can observe just because I am green, not steeped in the litany of wounds on both sides, exactly because I am an American Jew and not an Israeli Jew. In the absence of direct experience, the stereotypes take root—the way, as kids in New York, we heard that people in Kansas actually thought Jews had horns because they never met one. It is a process that I now see happens to everyone here—Israelis, and Palestinians—fear and ignorance feeding stereotypes; acts of violence cementing those stereotypes.

Traveling past the green line for many weeks recently, I found an ease of discourse you could never fathom from the images on television every night: those patches of hell called Gaza or Hebron, with violent kids terrifying the innocent-looking soldiers—an ease and sweetness one in Israel wanted to hear about. Everyone (my Israeli mate, my woman's writing group, my friends from the States and Canada who "used to be liberal") dismissed my perception. Yet those who are so certain have not ventured past the green line in years. It is they who repeat the mantra "You don't understand the Arabs." And I don't.

Those who "understand" point to the newspaper: "You see that picture?" (One Arab shoots another at close range in Gaza. The man's head is blowing off, in full color, taking three-quarters of the front page in the Israeli press.) "That's the Arab mentality. They kill one another; how can they make peace with us?"

Those who "understand" shudder in disgust at the grisly details of the way Arabs killed Toledano (the border guard who was kidnapped and mutilated by Hamas, and whose death led to the recent deportations) and then turn Toledano into the latest icon and rallying point for hate. Toledano and the photo from Gaza are the images writ large on the common Israeli consciousness these days, a consciousness that led 91 percent of the public to approve the deportations.

Like Alice falling down the rabbit hole, I fell into the Palestinian world one afternoon, trying to secure an apartment belonging to an Arab landlord. In his office in East Jerusalem, I sat next to a Palestinian journalist. After talking for twenty minutes, we agreed he or one of his associates would take me any and everywhere in the West Bank and Gaza. Within two days, Abdul (not his real name), Roger (another Jewish American trying to enter the mindstream of the Middle East), and I are going through the looking glass into a world utterly invisible to most Jews who live here.

For years, TIKKUN has avoided printing stories like mine, knowing that one technique defenders of the status quo like to use to dismiss any critique of the Occupation is to put us all down as "naive Americans" who can't understand the complexity here. So TIKKUN has insisted that its writers on Israel be Israelis, and the magazine's insightful critiques have usually been subtly nuanced to reflect the current positions of the Israeli

Wendy Orange is a psychologist currently living in Israel.

peace movement. But this time they agreed to listen to a member of TIKKUN's community who knows she is green, because they agree that what I see has a certain truth that could only be gotten to through my naiveté, which allowed me to transcend all the normal defenses Israelis put up and to see and hear what I report herein.

I can best describe Abdul as a man with such a good internalized mother that you feel, after a few days with him, that you are safe putting your life in his hands. A good thing, this, since today Roger and I have put our lives in his hands, and in the hands of his cousin Mohammed, who grew up in Dheisheh Refugee Camp; they are our guides. Although we are literally only moments from my home in Jewish Jerusalem, we've entered a foreign world. Circled by barbed wire, in cold, bleak houses that resemble cages, we sit and drink hot sweet tea and talk. My hands are freezing, the conditions grim, but all that disappears as Mohammed describes for us his years in and out of prison. His manner of speaking is both severe and spellbinding, as is his attention span, the way he can describe what he's been through in vivid detail and then listen carefully to anyone else, never losing an inner focus that gives his lean and dark face that particular beauty concentration confers.

During the early days of the Intifada, he tells us, he was married and was taking his bride to meet his brother in Jordan when, for no discernable reason, since he was not political at the time, he was arrested. Those first months he spent in prison have defined who he has become. "Prison is the university for the Intifada," he says. "There was a group of thirty to thirty-five of us arrested together the first time. The Israelis are not certain who's a terrorist from who just maybe, maybe has heard something or knows someone who knows something...so everyone is tortured. After twenty to twenty-five days of torture, we all go delirious, an experience you both cannot believe you have lived through and will also never forget...in your delirium you don't know what you're saying, and by the time you get out, if you weren't politically active in the first place, you are now. You know the Occupation is wrong, that you must study the situation, you must fight for your people."

By our third hour here a lively group of fifteen men has formed around us as we move from house to house looking at enlarged photos of "martyrs" on the walls, seeing many windows with bullet holes (some years old), meeting their kids, drinking cups of sweet tea. The conversation's momentum builds, the talk becomes increasingly detailed.

The Intifada, they say, has passed through many phases. "By 1990 we accepted that we must be open to talk to Israelis," Mohammed's brother-in-law says. "If they are not our cousins, then at least they are our neighbors."

Dheisheh is a "bad" camp, and yet the men around us (the women today are at the "market") are not only eager to talk, but can talk in nuances. What is it that so surprises me about these guys, all between twenty-four and forty, all fitting the physical stereotype of the Arab (black jackets, dark, thin)? Is it their intelligence? humor? How polite and approachable they are not only to us, but to each other? Some combination of all the above, maybe mostly that communal feeling any oppression evokes, leading to a feeling that as a Jew living in Israel I must do something to convey their situation. We are disagreeing about the June elections. They don't see Rabin as a man of peace. Few believe that Israelis vote for anything more than their own pocketbooks. We are engaged on this point when there's a loud banging at the door.

Just as we were settling into Palestinian consciousness, getting to know Mohammed and the others, in come three soldiers, hands firmly on their guns, grim-faced, looking nothing like the kids in khaki you see all the time on Ben Yehuda or King David Street. All conversation freezes. Had the entry of these soldiers been staged for dramatic effect (or cognitive dissonance), it could not have been better timed. These guys did not feel like nephews, your best friend's kids, your neighbors' sons. They did not arouse the usual familial camaraderie. What they aroused was panic, reminding me, as they marched around the room, interrogating us, confiscating the only book, scrutinizing each face, that the form "Jewish" takes for most Palestinians in this time and place is ugly, demonic: exactly who we do not believe ourselves to be.

Most Israelis have few, if any, Palestinian friends. Most Palestinians I met do not count many, if any, Jews as friends. They live off their enmity; any friendship that does develop has a rocky soil. A greater percentage of American Jews have the habit of friendship with non-Jews. We Americans are the multicultural kids, not systematically educated to hate others by accidents of birth. It's hard for Americans to imagine the utter schism here, two worlds so physically, economically, and emotionally intertwined, yet remaining so psychologically estranged that each believes the other has horns (and so creates those horns).

There are tiny "dialogue groups" in Israel that counteract the mutual demonizing of the other that happens on both sides. One (the Beit Sahur group) includes fifteen or so Israelis who've met with fifteen or so Palestinians for years. Another group (the Nablus-

Jerusalem group) began last summer. On December 4 this new group planned a big event: Busloads of Israelis, many of whom had not traveled into the West Bank since the Intifada began, would leave Jerusalem at 7:30 in the morning and be welcomed in Nablus, an hour away (though far into another world of meanings) into the homes of Palestinians.

By December 4, I'd spent weeks visiting with Palestinians—ordinary families in Nablus and Bethlehem, advisers to the peace delegation in Ramallah and East Jerusalem, editors and intellectuals, kids from refugee camps and prisons. I'd been tasting the sweetness, the depression, the frustration of the Palestinian consciousness, as well as imbibing (every emotional osmosis here is both powerful and the best source of information) the black hate that fills the hearts of many Arabs. The hate I had expected, and when it didn't terrify me, I understood it. The intensity of community, the value that activist Palestinians now put on communication, open dialogue, self-disclosure, their ability to listen and to affirm was the surprise.

Yet most Israelis continued to discount my experience. They thought me not only naive but in danger, and responded to my descriptions with cynical dismissals, rhetoric, paranoia, or the logic of history, all of which seemed increasingly irrelevant. You know how your most painful personal defining moments can disappear and cease to define you in moments of mutual self-disclosure? How the past gets dislodged from its tyranny in new moments of communion? We feel then the presence of what Michael Lerner calls the Jewish god of transformation, where what "will be" breaks the repetition compulsion, is radically different than what has been before. In the midst of such moments, all is forgiven. The whole mess of our lives is redeemed, we feel suddenly lucky. Exactly so, I felt the tribal forces of hate palpably diminish when conversation between strangers who had been taught to fear and hate each other became creative.

On the morning of December 4, Abdul, Roger, and I are once again driving in my little blue Renault with the yellow license plates (signifying Jewish), navigating the rural roads in the Territories connecting Jerusalem to Nablus. We have mastered the rudiments of crossing the Green Line. In an Israeli car, driving slowly, arms hanging out the window, removing sunglasses (which signify Israelis), right blinker on (signifying solidarity with the Intifada), kaffiyah adorning the dashboard—still we feel vulnerable surrounded by blue Arab license plates. It's a grey day, drizzling, and in the quiet of the empty hills you can see the West Bank as a country yet to be born. What work Palestinians will have ahead of them, I think, when the situation will call for their creative rather than destructive energy.

This is my second trip to Nablus in a week and as we approach I feel fear in my gut, a surreal disbelief that I, a New Yorker who wouldn't hang out in Central Park after dark, nor stroll the streets of the South Bronx or Harlem, am in a place potentially far more dangerous to any Jew. Will the Islamic fundamentalists or the Hamas rejectionists show up today and disrupt this meeting? We have long heard that the obstacles to peace are the extremists on both sides, and Nablus is known to be home to many. For a Jew, driving deep into the territories is a vivid experience of being pried loose from all moorings, unsafe, endangered. Because there's so much propaganda and fear here passing as "information," I know there's no way to accurately assess the danger. Given that ever-present choice in our lives to trust or distrust, to make the leap of faith or refuse to leap, the huge stakes here make the risk worthwhile, I try and convince myself as we circle Nablus.

We pull up at the meting hall in Al-Najah University, greeted by the news that the buses and TV crews never left Jerusalem. Shocked, the three of us are now in the huge empty hall surrounded by fifteen or so of the Palestinian organizers who emotionally tell us the following:

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"We can't believe that no one showed up," one man says, as if hypnotized. "We've been working, some of us for eighty hours a week since July, on this peace conference. We had Israeli families coming to visit Palestinian families, many of whom have never met the 'enemy' intimately, all of whom have been hurt by the Occupation and the Intifada. Deaths and losses in almost every family: Jewish and Arab. Six months of planning and the civil administration calls off the meeting at 8:00 p.m. last night, too late for us to re-arrange our careful plans."

The Palestinian organizers explain that the civil authorities declared it unsafe for Israeli families to enter Nablus today without military accompaniment. They could not recommend meetings in homes, suggested that we meet only in this hall, surrounded by Israeli soldiers, exactly the opposite scenario or experience we had planned. "We cannot accept such conditions. The whole idea of this activity is to show Israelis and the world that even in Nablus (known to be hard-line with 30-40 per cent of the population against the current peace talks) it can be 100 per cent safe to get to know each other."

"Why did you want to talk to the Israelis?" I ask. "We want to put an end to our situation," says Sami Yaish, a professor. "To show them our hopes and aspirations and hear theirs. We want to live in a just peace which means breaking the ice between two populations. Now we live together in hatred. We need to pull down this wall between us, listen to each other directly, not hear each other through the media or the government."

Abdul leans over and whispers to me: "This is like a bad dream. You dream to make something and you get so frustrated. Today's meeting was as important as Madrid." Most of those people, he tells me, have served long periods in jail, have given their lives to build their own state, have come to believe in dialogue.

Israeli military authorities claim that they had to prevent the visit because the day before a Palestinian had been shot by Israeli soldiers in a nearby camp, so

Leibowitz on the Expulsions

Yishayahu Leibowitz, Israel's preeminent theologian and social critic, was interviewed by Michael Lerner in early February.

TIKKUN: The Israeli peace party Meretz's representatives in the Israeli cabinet voted for the expulsions of alleged members of Hamas. Why?

Yishayahu Leibowitz: It was a terrible error. The whole thing reminds me of a nineteenth century thinker who said, "There is a way from humanity through nationality to bestiality." When nationalism becomes the highest value, men become beasts.

Israel's existence is not threatened by Hamas. What Hamas is doing is using terroristic methods to fight its war of independence. If we persist in maintaining our domination over the Palestinian people, this terrorism is inevitable and unavoidable. Israel should get out of the Occupied Territories.

TIKKUN: Some Israelis worry that that will put Israel in danger.

Leibowitz: Once we decided to form our Jewish state in this part of the world, in the midst of a sea of Islam, we made it inevitable that Israel would always exist in a state of danger.

TIKKUN: But then, that's precisely why people say that Israel must be vigilant in maintaining its strength.

Leibowitz: We can never be strong if we pit ourselves against the entire world. And if we persist in ruling over the Palestinian people and prevent them from achieving the freedom and self-determination that they seek, we will drive the entire world onto the side of those Arabs who oppose us. Meretz was supposed to understand all this, but they disappointed us. Nevertheless, they have accomplished something—they have gotten rid of the law prohibiting all contacts with the P.L.O., and that is something in the direction of peace.

TIKKUN: The Israeli Knesset recently voted to give you the Israeli Peace Prize, the country's highest honor. You then declined it recently. Why?

Leibowitz: There was an uproar about my position on Hamas. And I decided for my personal reasons that I didn't want to be in the midst of such an uproar—the reasons for my declining were personal rather than ideological. I was fed up with this uproar.

TIKKUN: In TIKKUN we are attempting to show that there is no inherent conflict between a commitment to Judaism and a commitment to humanistic values and progressive politics. When I was there [Israel] I found it hard to find people who shared that perspective.

Leibowitz: The big problem is the attempt to make an identification between Judaism and the contemporary Jewish people. We have in Israel a political problem, not a problem about Judaism.

TIKKUN: One reason why some Jews have distanced themselves from a commitment to Judaism is that they have been taught that it sanctifies the current government and practices of the State of Israel.

Leibowitz: To sanctify the State of Israel is pure idolatry—*avodah zarah*.

The problem we face is that there are many people who are enamored of being Jewish, of their Jewishness, but for them this has no connection with Judaism. So this becomes a nationalism that quickly falls into idolatry and self-deception. Israel is not a state of Judaism—it is simply a secular state whose problems have nothing to do with Judaism.

TIKKUN: We are taught that to be a good Jew one must support the policies of the State of Israel.

Leibowitz: There are some people who believe that in order to be a good Jew one must believe in the messiah of Crown Heights Brooklyn.

they feared for our safety. But sitting there, in the midst of the supposed danger, I wonder if the Israelis should not have found a way to get there anyway, as I had done. A Palestinian is killed every day; the army can always use that to prevent the dialogue movement from becoming more effective.

Driving home, Roger says: "Imagine if instead of driving here on our own, we had gotten onto the buses and were told the Israeli Government felt it wasn't safe for us to go because of the killing yesterday and the angry mood of the people? How would we have felt?" "Grateful," we both acknowledged, "protected," we say in unison. Had we been on the buses in Jerusalem far more menacing images would have occurred. Our fear of Arabs would have been reinforced.

I'm in East Jerusalem the day after the expulsions at a rally in support of the deported Hamas 415. Many of the moderates I've met are here. It's a cold day; the mood is agitated and grim. The talk is angry. The unity seems unassailable. Mainstream Fatah people are certain that the Israeli tactic of trying to divide the P.L.O. from Hamas will not work. Deportation, albeit in another form is what the Palestinians experienced in 1948; the specter of this unprecedented move that might lead to further expulsions ("Today 415, tomorrow 4,500," someone mutters) is a totally different order of punishment than imprisonment. Each speaker says that this move will only strengthen and intensify the Palestinian struggle against occupation, that the violence of removing men from their homeland will strengthen not weaken Hamas, that the Israeli tactics of collective punishment will be met by new, more violent forms of resistance.

I'm trying to understand the meaning of this move, and at the same time I am sitting in that by-now familiar, if mysterious, mix of emotions. I'm afraid—a visceral reaction when surrounded by angry Arabs, and yet I feel this edge between Jewish and Palestinian consciousness is just where I want to be. Like all heightened states of mind, this edge of enmity and understanding, this border between hope and hopelessness is an adrenaline rush. And something else I intuit: The psyche is drawn to the more wounded party in a dispute because when any of our wounds are truly open, the healing of communal feeling can begin, if needed.

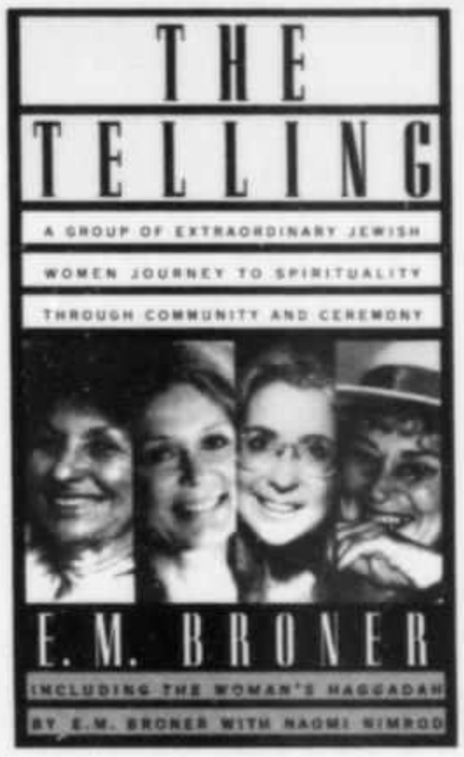
It's a sunny afternoon in Bethlehem two days after the deportations. I sit with a Hamas wife whose husband of four and a half years has been expelled. She's afraid of me (was not notified that I was coming) and her fear is contagious. Without her willingness to open up I cannot relax, such is the primacy of the relation in these encounters.

She doesn't take her unblinking, angry, suspicious eyes off my face. She's probably worried I'm a spy, will bring more trouble to her family. Through an interpreter she only wants to know for which magazine I'll be writing. I cannot, in this context, utter the Hebrew word "Tikkun." (Every other Palestinian I've met knows I'm Jewish; it's part of how I introduce myself.) The room is filling up with neighbors and children. No one is smiling. Everyone is staring at me. "The American Wing," I reply, plucking a name out of thin air, meaning "not Jewish, I am not Jewish." I ask her questions about her husband, feel no sympathy, every detail she hesitantly offers up feeds the stereotype of a terrorist. It's an imaginary world I can't (don't really want to) enter.

Driving back with Abdul, settling into our by-now enjoyable post-interview analysis, we talk of how tense an hour it was. I tell him how many peace-loving Israelis have said the point of hopelessness for them are the fundamentalists and Hamas, those killers. But he says simply: "You have your extremists and we have ours. Shouldn't we each handle our own?"

Like looking at a Gestalt picture of a face/vase, it's almost impossible to see both tragedies, or even both points of view at the same time. Sometimes, it's seductive to let the whole thing recede, to fall back

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—Gloria Steinem



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into being Jewish in a Jewish world and leave "the Palestinian Problem" to the soldiers, the media, the government. For many Jews here there is still the fantasy that it is the Palestinians' problem. Since at this point we hold all the cards, have the power, it is they who must come to their senses and compromise. (One could argue the exact opposite, of course.)

I'm back in Jerusalem where people are basically free, where the occupation is invisible. There are Arabs everywhere but in the year and a half I've lived here, there have rarely been any problems in our day-to-day life. There is less fear and anxiety here than in the streets of any other big city I lived in (New York, Boston, London). Children walk unescorted to schools, ballet, down to the grocery store. Seven-year-olds navigate the bases alone. Kidnapping, murders, danger: virtually none.

This morning the Palestinians and their problems with us start to recede. To my amazement the expelled Hamas leaders in the no-man's land between Israel and Lebanon start to revert to stereotype in my mind. I see them on CNN as enemies of the State. The media help neither side hold to any complexity, I realize. In between two tragedies we are trying to make a space, but this morning I watch as their tragedy shrinks while ours grows in my mind.

Without talking to Abdul, who's out of the country, without hearing his soft voice, his authentic pain, I begin to forget why the expulsions are so morally wrong. (That they are strategically dangerous should be—but is not—obvious to everyone.) All about me is the self-congratulation that we got rid of them, a certainty that the Palestinian anger will blow over and that Israel will be safer. I hear Israelis of every political stripe, class, and age group declare how good these deportations will be both for peace and security. The uniform horror about the deportations among the Palestinians, fearful that someday they, too, may be deported, is not acknowledged or understood by the Israelis. This is a testimony to how out of touch Israelis are with the Palestinian mood. And I slowly find myself momentarily slipping back into this luxurious oblivion.

It's now three weeks since the deportations. Yesterday Abdul and I went to Bir Zeit University, where five thousand or more Palestinians, mostly students, flooded the halls to hear Dr. Abdel Haidar Shafi, the head of the Palestinian peace delegation, speak. He was talking of the urgent need for Palestinian unity, of the importance of refusing to return to any peace talks. Had the peace talks been productive in the first fifteen months, he stressed, the issue of the deportations could be put on the table. But since the Israelis never showed willingness to compromise or understand the people's cause, now we "must refuse to return until our men are back from Lebanon."

Driving up here I sensed a change in Abdul. We haven't seen each other in these three weeks and the mood between us is cool. Usually we hug hello, this time he stepped back. Usually conversation between us flows, this time I can't read him. He's quiet. When he speaks he reveals little, his words are superficial, he's far away. Only says he feels defeated about the deportations. Without trust between us, the crowds of Arab students at Bir Zeit filling the parking lot, the cafeteria, jamming the halls outside the huge auditorium, fill me with terror; suddenly I remember the murder a few months ago of an American professor here.

We can't get inside the room. Standing in the overcrowded halls, Abdul is taking notes on the talk and, since I don't understand Arabic, I'm taking notes on my mood. I'm too frightened to look around me as all the stories of Arab violence I've heard since I moved to Israel whistle through my mind. Specifically (this happened before) I'm afraid of being roughly pulled away into a waiting car. Hostage-taking and kidnapping are not unknown here in the Middle East. No one knows I am here today. Maybe Abdul has plotted something. I think, fully aware I'm being paranoid but not able to break the flood of suspicions.

All that talk of sweetness and dialogue, mutuality and mirroring. It's all contrary to the mood here (the mood in the room, the mood in my mind). I force myself to look around, and find the Arabs as scary as they were when I first came to Israel, before I talked to any Palestinians. No one is smiling. I imagine there's a subtext here: "kill a Jew." Then I imagine my Jewishness is obvious. The more tense I become, the more tense the faces looking at me seem (that incredible way the outer environment often mirrors the inner—an isomorphism central to this situation).

Loudspeakers amplify the Arabic speech while a loud siren of fear envelopes me as I sit on the floor, write in my journal, check my watch, dying to be out of here, not remembering why in the world I've been attracted to hanging out on this borderland where Jewish history, as we embody it, meets Arab history, as they embody it. Right now all I know is that this situational racism is far bigger than I am.

Abdul does not check in with me or give reassuring glances as he has always done. It's me who is checking him. Why does he call me so often? Why was he so insistent this would be an important talk? What do I really know about him?

In the rush of the crowds, someone jostles him and the sheets of thin white stationery he's been writing on

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Malcolm X and The Revival of Black Nationalism

Michael Eric Dyson

The cultural rebirth of Malcolm X is the remarkable result of complex forces converging to lift him from his violent death in 1964. Malcolm's championing of the common Black person, and his crusade against the vicious stereotypes that have for centuries crippled Black communities, have won him a new generation of admirers. Indeed, a large part of the cultural crisis that has precipitated Malcolm's mythic return is rooted in an ongoing quest in Black America: the search for a secure and empowering racial identity.

That quest is perennially frustrated by the demands of our culture to cleanse ethnic and racial particularity at the altar of a superior American identity, substituting the terms of one strain of nationalism for the priorities of another. By this common ritual of national identity, for instance, the Irish, Poles, Italians, and Jews have been absorbed into a universal image of common citizenship. But the transformation of Black cultural identity is often poorly served by this process, impeded as much by the external pressures of racism and class prejudice, as by internal racial resistance to an "inclusion" that

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would rob Blacks of whatever power and privilege they enjoy in their own domains.

Malcolm's reborn appeal is also linked to the resurgence of Black nationalism over the last two decades. Gusts of racial pride sweep across Black America as scholars retrieve the lost treasures of an unjustly degraded African past, continuing a project of racial reclamation begun in earnest in the 1960s but recast to fit the needs of end-of-the-century utopian nationalists, ranging from followers of Leonard Jeffries to what Huey Newton termed "pork-chop nationalists." The Afrocentric movement has quickened the debate about multicultural education and cast a searching light upon the intellectual blindnesses and racist claims of Eurocentric scholars, even as it avoids acknowledging the romantic features of its own household. Malcolm's unabashed love for Black history, his relentless pedagogy of racial redemption through cultural consciousness and racial self-awareness, mesh effortlessly with Black Americans' recovery of their African roots.

Malcolm's take-no-prisoners approach to racial crisis appeals to young Blacks disaffected from white society and alienated from older Black generations whose contained style of revolt owes more to Martin Luther King, Jr.'s nonviolent philosophy than to X's advocacy of self-defense. Rap music has adopted Malcolm's militant posture, while exaggerating to shrill effect the already disturbing machismo and misogyny that laced his early rhetoric. (See "Close to the Edge," page 13) Malcolm's articulation of Black rage—which, by his own confession, tapped a vulnerability even in Martin Luther King, Jr.—is the centerpiece of much of rap rhetoric, replacing a concrete politics aimed at renewing the conditions of social and moral decadence it graphically portrays. Ironically, the venting of anger, while cathartic and at moments even healthy, ultimately betrays the monumental task of supplying strategic alternatives to the unstinting suffering of aggrieved Blacks.

If the reemergence of Black nationalism and Malcolm's explosive popularity go hand in hand—are parallel responses to the continuing plague of an equally rejuvenated racism—then not only their strengths, but their limitations as well are mutually revealing. For example, Malcolm's brand of Black nationalism was not only a fierce attack on white Americans, but a sharp rebuke as well to Black women. A product of his times, Malcolm went to extremes in demonizing women, saying that the "closest thing to a woman is a devil."

Although he later amended his beliefs, confessing his regret at "spit[ting] acid at the sisters" and contending that they should be treated equally, Malcolm's Black nationalist heirs have failed to take his reformed position on gender seriously. Like the early Malcolm and other sixties nationalists, contemporary Black nationalists have cast the pursuit of racial liberation in terms of a quest for masculine self-realization. Such a strategy not only borrows ideological capital from the white patriarchy that has historically demeaned Black America, but it blunts awareness of how the practice of patriarchy by Black men has created another class of victims within Black communities.

Further, the strategy of viewing racial oppression exclusively through a male lens distorts the suffering of Black women at the hands of white society and loses focus on the especially difficult choices that befall Black women caught in a sometimes bewildering nexus of relationships based on race, class, and gender. Reducing Black suffering to its lowest common male denominator not only presumes a hierarchy of pain that removes priority from the Black female struggle; it also trivializes the analysis and actions of Black women in the realization of Black liberation. Malcolm's heirs ignored the virtues of his later, enlightened attitudes toward gender.

The cultural renaissance of Malcolm X also embodies the paradoxical nature of Black nationalist politics over the past two decades: Those most aided by its successes have rarely stuck around to witness the misery of those most hurt by its failures. The truth is that Black nationalist rhetoric has helped an expanding Black middle class gain increased material comfort, while Black nationalism's most desperate constituency—the working class and working poor—continue to toil in the aftermath of nationalism's unrealized political promise. Talk of Black cultural solidarity and racial loyalty has propelled the careers of intellectuals, artists, and politicians as they seek access to institutions of power and ranks of privilege as esteemed *vox populi*. Yet the irony is that the perks and rewards of success insulate them from the misery of their constituencies, cutting them off from the very people on whose behalf they claim to speak.

The greatest irony of contemporary Black nationalism may be its use by members of the Black middle class to consolidate their class interests at the expense of working and poor Blacks. By refusing to take class seriously—or only half-heartedly as they decry, without irony, the moves of a self-serving Black bourgeoisie!—many nationalists discard a crucial analytical tool for exploring the causes of Black racial and economic suffering.

This is not to say that nationalism's vaunted alternative, bourgeois liberal integrationism, has enjoyed wide success, either, in bringing the Black masses within striking distance of prosperity, or at least to parity with white middle and working classes. Commentators usu-

ally gloss over this fact when comparing the legacies of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr. For the most part, Malcolm and Martin have come to symbolize the parting of paths in Black America over the best answer to racial domination. While Malcolm's strident rhetoric is keyed in by nationalists at the appropriate moments of Black disgust with the pace and point of integration, King's conciliatory gestures are evoked by integrationists as the standard of striving for the promised land of racial harmony and economic equity.

In truth, however, King's admirers have also forsaken the bitter lessons of his mature career in deference to the soaring optimism of his dream years. King discerned as early as 1965 that the fundamental problems of Black America were economic in nature, and that a shift in strategies was necessary for the civil rights movement to become a movement for economic equality. After witnessing wasted human capital in the slums of Watts and Chicago, and after touring the rural wreckage of life in Mississippi's deep Delta, King became convinced that the only solution to Black suffering was to understand it in relation to a capitalist economy that hurt all poor people. He determined that nothing short of a wholesale criticism and overhaul of existing economic arrangements could effectively remedy the predicament of the Black poor and working class.

This is a far cry from contemporary Black capitalist and business strategies that attempt to address the economic plight of Black Americans by creating more Black millionaires. Highly paid entertainers and athletes participate in the lucrative culture of consumption by selling their talents to the highest bidder in the marketplace—a legacy, we are often reminded, of King's, and the civil rights movement's, vision of a just society where social goods are distributed according to merit, not color. King's willingness, toward the end of his life, to question the legitimacy of the present economic order and to challenge the logic of capital has been obscured by appeals to his early beliefs about the virtues of integration.

The relative failure of both Black nationalist and integrationist strategies to affect large numbers of Black Americans beyond the middle and upper class raises questions about how progressives can expand Malcolm's and Martin's legacies to address the present crises in Black America. Black progressive intellectuals and activists must view class, gender, and sex as crucial components of a complex and sophisticated explanation of the problems of Black America. There are at least two advantages to such an approach. First, it provides a larger range of social and cultural variables from which to choose in depicting the vast array of forces that constrain Black economic, political, and social progress. Second, it acknowledges the radical diversity of experiences within Black communities, offering a more realistic possibility of addressing the particular needs of a wide range of Blacks: the ghetto poor, gays and lesbians, single Black females, working mothers, underemployed Black men, and elderly Blacks, for instance.

Black progressives must also deepen Malcolm's and Martin's criticisms of capitalism and their leanings toward democratic socialism. The prevailing economic policies have contributed to the persistent poverty of the poorest Americans (including great numbers of Blacks), and the relative inability of most Americans to reap the real rewards of political democracy and economic empowerment. A democratic socialist perspective raises questions about the accountability of the disproportionately wealthy, providing a critical platform for criticizing Black capitalist and business strategies that merely replicate unjust economic practices.

A democratic socialist perspective—which criticizes capital accumulation and the maximization of profit for the few without regard to its effects on the many; which advocates an equitable redistribution of wealth through progressive taxation and the increased financial responsibility of the truly wealthy; and which promotes the restructuring of social opportunities for the neediest through public policy and direct political intervention—also encourages the adoption of political and social policies that benefit all Americans, while addressing the specific needs of Blacks, such as universal health care. Presently, Black Americans are overwhelmingly represented among the 37 million unin-

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sured in our nation. A democratic socialist perspective asks why a nation that pays over $820 billion, or 13 percent of the G.N.P. for the well-insured cannot redistribute its wealth through a progressive tax of the wealthiest two percent (and a fair tax on the top 50 percent) of our country to help provide the $50 or $60 billion more needed to provide universal health coverage.

By refusing to take class seriously, many Black nationalists discard a crucial analytic tool to understand Black racial and economic suffering.

The quest for Black racial and economic justice has been heavily influenced by Black religious conceptions of justice, charity, equality, and freedom. During the civil rights movement, King articulated Black Christian conceptions of justice through the language of human rights and the political language of civil religion. Likewise, Malcolm X expressed his conceptions of divine retribution for racial injustice and the religious basis for healthy Black self-esteem through Black Islamic, and subsequently, orthodox Islamic belief that accorded with Black secular ideas about racial self-determination and cultural pride. A democratic socialist perspective encourages the broad expression of conceptions of justice, equality, and political freedom that are tempered by regard for the widest possible audience of intellectual interlocutors and political participants, including those trained in the rich traditions of Black social protest.

Finally, Black progressives must make sensible but forceful criticisms of narrow visions of Black racial identity, especially after the Clarence Thomas/Anita Hill debacle. That wrenching drama provided a glimpse of the underdeveloped state of gender analysis in most Black communities and provoked a serious reconsideration of the politics of racial unity and loyalty. In reflecting on Clarence Thomas's nomination to the Supreme Court, Black Americans were torn between fidelity to principles of fairness and justice, on the one hand, whether Thomas was qualified for the nomination and devotion to race on the other, whether Blacks should support one of their own, despite his opposition to many of the legal principles cherished by Black communities.

The introduction of Anita Hill's perspective into this already complex calculus ripped open ancient antagonisms between Black women and men. In a public and painful manner, the hearings forced many Black Americans to a new awareness of the need to place principles of justice above automatic appeals to race loyalty premised exclusively on skin color. Many Americans, including many Blacks, came to a clearer understanding of the social construction of racial identity, recognizing that Black folk are by no means a homogeneous group. The differences that factors such as geography, sexual preference, gender, and class make in the lives of Black Americans are too complex to be captured in a monolithic model of racial unity. Progressive Blacks share more ideological and political ground with a white progressive such as Barbara Ehrenreich, for instance, than they do with conservatives of the ilk of Clarence Thomas, or even Anita Hill.

For Black leaders, the political and social significance of this fact should be the building of bridges across the chasm of color in the common embrace of ideals that transcend racial rooting. Progressive Blacks must join with progressive Latinas and Latinos, gays and lesbians, feminists, environmental activists, and all others who profess and practice personal and social equality and democracy.

The absence of sustained progressive Black political opposition, or even a radical political organization that expresses the views of the working class and working poor, signals a loss of political courage and nerve in the United States that characterized Malcolm and Martin at their best. The nature and history of the remembrance of these two figures is also instructive about the character of political leadership in our own times. That two dead leaders are the twin pillars of contemporary Black culture, and the continuing object of its most passionate declarations of admiration, trust, and hope—serving not as signs but substitutes for present Black leaders, who often lack (as do their white counterparts) integrity and a will to sacrifice—reveals the crisis of purpose and vision among contemporary Black leaders.

In the end, Malcolm and Martin are in varying degrees captives of their true believers, trapped by literal interpreters who refuse to let them, in Malcolm's words, "turn the corner." The bulk of each man's achievements lay in his willingness to place truth over habit in the quest for the best route to social reconstruction and racial redemption. Their legacy to us is the imagination and energy to pursue the goals of liberation upon as wide a scale as the complex nature of our contemporary crises demand and our talents allow. □

Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Empowering Legacy

Stewart Burns

April 4 marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the murder of Martin Luther King, Jr. As he has increasingly attained the status of a national icon—surpassing even Washington and Lincoln as the only American leader with a national holiday in his name—the conflict over the meaning of King's legacy has intensified. Groups across the political spectrum claim the authentic interpretation, or act in his name, often to further their own aims. Conservatives praise King's dream of a color-blind society that they contend is violated by affirmative action and "reverse discrimination." Some progressive African Americans deem King's nonviolent approach a failure, affirming Malcolm X's judgment that it was masochistic; others place King with Malcolm as a harbinger of a radical new vision and strategy of human liberation cut short by an assassin's bullet.

If King's legacy is to transcend iconic status and remain vital to us, it must speak to the current political, economic, and moral crisis of American society. It must speak to the "sickness of America's soul" that anguished the young preacher but has grown much worse in the quarter-century since his death. It must speak in particular to the sharp divisions within the broad liberal and progressive sector of the American public that he once led and sought to unify.

As one who considers himself a disciple of King, from the time (at age twelve) that I heard him speak at a college chapel in 1961 and at the March on Washington two years later; whose own activism drew inspiration from him; and as one who has studied his work, I offer my interpretation of his legacy as it speaks to the world of the 1990s.

The apparent centrist consensus that underlies Bill Clinton's presidency masks a deep division between the two major factions that constitute the progressive core of his winning coalition. One faction I will call "consensus liberals" is excited about Clinton's vision of a "New Covenant" for Americans that ties inclusiveness to a new social contract in which rights are regulated by personal responsibility. Stressing what Americans hold in common more than their differences, the consensus liberals want to build a lasting political consensus chiefly around broad social and cultural concerns rather than push potentially divisive class or racial interests. Among the intellectual vanguard of the consensus liberals is the "communitarian" movement, which has grown out of an effort to transcend traditional Left/Right mindsets and is associated with such thinkers as Amitai Etzioni, Robert Bellah, and Mary Ann Glendon. Communitarians are committed to restoring a strong "moral voice" to American life and politics and to creating a responsive community "whose moral standards reflect the basic human needs of all its members," according to their initial platform. Citizens "would draw on a common definition of justice" that incorporates "the full range of legitimate needs and values rather than focusing on any one category, be it individualism, autonomy, interpersonal caring, or social justice."

Across the political divide are the multiculturalists (with whom I identify), whose focus is economic, racial, and gender justice, along with justice for gays and lesbians. This grouping, based in the inner city, in higher education, and in progressive think tanks, media, and advocacy groups, accentuates and celebrates cultural differences and perceives society as a "house of difference," in the words of the late poet Audre Lorde. This perspective suggests that people are defined and constituted by their differences rather than by their similarities. The multiculturalists might profess to have a "common definition of justice," but in fact their vision of justice is not cohesive or comprehensive but an amalgam of the separate justice claims of the different constituencies. In the past decade the most visible multiculturalist expression has come from King's protégé Jesse Jackson and his National Rainbow Coalition (NRC). Another is the grass-roots New Party that is sprouting in many communities.

The seeds of the division between multiculturalists and consensus liberals were planted during the late 1960s. At that time many activists began to mobilize around racial and sexual identity and empowerment,

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while others, mainly white, tried to organize an interracial majority to back more limited movement goals. Until the mid-1960s, however, these perspectives were essentially congruent, with King leading a left-liberal consensus for civil rights that won majority support for historic rights legislation. When this broad progressive coalition was torn asunder by the Vietnam War and the failure of rights reforms to eliminate racism and poverty, Black and white radicals awakened to the perceived bankruptcy of liberalism and resolved to chart a course independent of unreliable coalitions with liberals.

Despite the Left's increasing fractiousness, in the late sixties King began to form a new, multiracial coalition for the poor and disadvantaged, and he died a fallen warrior in his rainbow army's war on poverty, the Poor People's Campaign. Although King himself nearly gave up on white liberals, he never quite abandoned his hope of galvanizing a majority coalition for justice and peace.

Thus, in an important sense, King's legacy calls us to bridge the divide between the inheritors of this 1960s conflict. Only by staking out common ground and working for shared purposes can the consensus liberals and multiculturalists forge the broad social movement needed to pressure the Clinton administration to fulfill its promises and do so equitably—holding Clinton accountable to his own goals of inclusiveness and "putting people first"—and to shape and implement bold new reforms at the grass roots. Without such a movement, Clinton will drift inexorably toward the priorities of his coalition's more conservative and corporate elements.

Given the depth of the division, what grounds are there to imagine a political convergence? First, there are historical precedents from the early 1960s and Roosevelt's New Deal coalition. Second, contrary to appearances, the two sides agree on fundamental values and goals; they differ mainly over strategies to achieve them. For example, not only does the communitarians' emphasis on reclaiming a moral voice resonate with King's vision, but it strikes a chord at the heart of multiculturalism; they also concur to a large extent on the need for community-level solutions and local responsibility. Third, many consensus liberals who seem to reject multiculturalist goals do so because they judge them either politically unattainable, incapable of being fully or fairly implemented, ineffective if achieved, or in conflict with other priorities. Thus the great moral and intellectual challenge for both sides is to narrow their differences while respecting them, and to act on what they can chart in common. I believe that the King legacy not only obliges us to reconnect but that its substantive meaning is a common thread capable of knitting these groups together into a "single garment of destiny," to use King's metaphor.

What is the spiritual and moral underpinning of King's legacy? His deep faith in God that was rooted in the Black Baptist tradition sustained his activism. He believed in a loving, personal divinity that acted in history for human betterment, offering "cosmic companionship" for oppressed peoples in their struggles for freedom, and that upheld universal values of right and wrong. "All reality hinges on moral foundations," he said many times; "the universe is on the side of justice." The fourth generation of Baptist preachers, his great-grandfather a slave preacher, King felt called to serve both as a leader of the Black community and as a prophet conveying divine purposes to all humanity. His leadership of the Black freedom movement was anchored in a prophetic mission to reconcile the demands of justice with the ethic of love, the latter the "supreme unifying principle of life."

If justice as expressed in the Old Testament represented absolute moral ends such as freedom from oppression, symbolized by Moses' deliverance of the Israelites out of slavery, Christian love as taught by Jesus required that no matter how just a particular end, no human being could be violated in the course of attaining it. King demonstrated the dialectical relationship between justice and love inherent in ethical action. Together they form the moral fabric of the "beloved community," which he defined as a "socially conscious democracy" that reconciles individualism and collectivism.

Speaking as one who identifies as a King legatee, committed to building the beloved community, I embrace the Clinton and consensus liberal rhetoric about inclusiveness, tolerance, moral responsibility, and society as a family. Yet I ask them, as I think King would, where is justice? I mean justice not merely as abstract fairness or reciprocity but as substantive moral ends involving freedom from want and pain.

I welcome Clinton's championing of personal responsibility, but I stress responsibility for others, particularly of the better-off for the poor, the haves for the have-nots; and everyone's responsibility to overcome racism, sexism, and homophobia. I am disturbed by the degree to which "responsibility" has become a code word for curtailing entitlements, especially to social welfare. The principle of responsibility requires doing not less but more for the jobless, the homeless, the sick, and for children. I am troubled that so much of the responsibility talk seems aimed at African Americans and other people of color, groups that throughout American history have exercised the most citizen responsibility to advance both justice and democracy.

It seems to me that opinion leaders have betrayed King's legacy by setting rights and responsibility against each other in an intellectual assault on rights from all sides. Conservatives such as Charles Murray and Thomas Sowell argue that individuals, at least those who



Martin Luther King, Jr. and Abraham Joshua Heschel publicly question the Vietnam War.

do not fit the traditional mold of self-made (white) man, already have an excess of rights, that the nation can no longer afford costly entitlements such as welfare rights and affirmative action.

Many on the Left also question rights, claiming that they promote competitive individualism, separation from community and one another; that property rights of the few have taken precedence over the rights of the many. Critical legal theorists contend that the state's partial implementation of rights robs them of their transformative potential, legitimizes the cultural understanding of societal injustice and inequality as a matter of individual behavior, and thus coopts struggles to confront institutionalized oppression collectively. Critical race theorists such as Derrick Bell argue that civil rights and affirmative action cannot eliminate racism and tend to benefit white institutions more than disadvantaged minorities. Carol Gilligan and other feminist thinkers criticize rights as masculine constructs whose impersonal abstractness conflicts with a relational ethic of care. Communitarian legal scholar Glendon argues that much rights language expresses "unbounded desires and wants." The disparate critics all seem to agree that certain individualistic rights violate the rights of the majority, the public good, democracy itself.

King came to see the limitations of individual rights as conventionally understood. Moreover, he learned from his own mistakes that the compartmentalizing of rights efforts into single-issue battles was one of the major stumbling blocks in movements for rights. After King and his coworkers won passage of the Civil Rights and Voting Rights acts, he developed a richer and more comprehensive vision of human rights that reflected his own moral and spiritual compass. "We have moved from the era of civil rights to the era of human rights," he told a movement meeting in March 1967—rights not found in the Constitution but "clearly defined by the mandates of a humanitarian concern." Indeed, King seemed to be taking his cue from Malcolm X, who in his last year spoke tellingly of the need to "expand the civil rights struggle to the level of human rights."

During the last years of his life, King stressed the need for a human rights movement placing economic justice at the center.

Both Martin and Malcolm were reclaiming and reshaping the legacy of their forebears. From the end of the eighteenth century, African-American leaders had grounded their interpretation of rights in Black spirituality and in what they saw as the divinely authorized Declaration of Independence. African Americans perceived their human rights, no matter how unfulfilled, as a covenant with a personal God intervening in history on the side of justice. "Blacks always believed in rights in some larger, mythologic sense—as a pantheon of possibility," explains legal scholar Patricia Williams.

According to this deeper view that King embraced, rights are more than private possessions; they both express and transcend individual needs. Rights properly understood are not whatever a person claims as his or her due, without any moral or political boundaries, but rather what is required for all people by the higher laws of justice and love. Legitimate rights are inherently lim-

ited by the same moral laws. In this sense, rights and responsibility are not a dichotomy but interwoven. Individuals have a moral responsibility to secure just rights for themselves and others. That is why, rooted in biblical faith, African Americans have experienced rights both as personal possessions and as shared resources, and why many have felt a moral duty to realize them not just for themselves but for their people. This perspective departs sharply from the classic liberal ideology of open-ended and unbounded rights owned by an isolated, unencumbered self devoid of community ties.

During the last years of his life, King stressed the need for a human rights movement, a "human rights revolution," placing economic justice at the center. "It is morally right," he wrote in his last book, "to insist that every person have a decent house, an adequate education, and enough money to provide basic necessities for one's family." As early as 1964 he advocated a "Bill of Rights for the Disadvantaged" guaranteeing education, jobs, and social services to impoverished citizens, white as well as Black and brown. He pushed the idea of a multi-billion-dollar "domestic Marshall Plan" to eliminate poverty and rebuild the inner cities, compared to which the Johnson administration's War on Poverty was a half-hearted skirmish. When he promoted preferential or "compensatory treatment" for the poor and disadvantaged, he primarily meant collective solutions, such as the reconstruction of public education and massive public jobs programs. Such proposals contrasted with subsequent affirmative action programs that, along with their successes, fostered competitive individualism and class stratification among people of color and white women and did not fundamentally alter social relations of wealth and power.

How, in the tradition of King, should we confront the urban crisis and poverty? First, we need to convince the American people as well as the Clinton administration that long-term economic prosperity will not be secured without economic justice. A new trickle-down economics from the middle class to the poor will not allow justice to run down like waters but will dry it up. Second, like King, we need to transcend the false dichotomy between efforts at moral uplift, community self-help, and institution building—goals identified with Malcolm—and efforts to achieve legislative reform, legalized rights, and federally funded programs, goals associated with King.

King understood that federal poverty programs, job creation, educational reform—even with sufficient funding and political will—would accomplish little unless they dovetailed with what he called the "enhanced role of the citizen." His friend Kenneth Clark, the social psychologist, concluded that a major reason for the failure of Johnson's War on Poverty was the "charade" of poor people's involvement in running the local Community Action Programs. The continuing urban crisis will be resolved only through an equitable partnership of community self-help and national power, of decentralized initiative and centralized resources, of local and national responsibility.

Some critics fault King for narrowing the platform of the 1968 Poor People's Campaign to the single goal of a guaranteed livable income for all citizens, which he saw as the most rapid and effective means to abolish poverty. Yet this demand was the cutting edge of his emerging vision of universal human rights, mandated by the Declaration of Independence's equal and inalienable right to pursue happiness. King had faith that universal values, and the rights that spring from them, were not only most likely to win support from the majority but were most likely to meet the specific needs of the poor and disadvantaged.

The idea of human rights goals as the common ground and shared commitment of a broad social movement uniting diverse constituencies is more compelling than ever. Since King's death, basic human rights have for the first time gained widespread international legitimacy.

These rights are authorized not only by the transcendent principles of the Declaration of Independence but more concretely by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights enacted by the United Nations General Assembly, representing the world community, in December 1948. Everyone has the right to "an existence worthy of human dignity," the 1948 Declaration asserts—"the right to work, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment. Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family," including entitlements to housing, medical care, and social services. These rights are by no means unlimited, however. The UN Declaration makes clear that they are bounded by respect for others' rights and by the general welfare. One's rights are both restricted and enhanced by one's "duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible."

As a first step in the process of educating Americans about the meaning of these rights, and of reuniting consensus liberals and multiculturalists, we might launch a public campaign to pressure the United States Senate to ratify the UN Declaration, whose implementing covenants have been approved by many other countries.

Even as I criticize Clinton and the consensus liberals for promoting social harmony and national togetherness while neglecting social justice, I fault fellow multicul-

turalists for an approach to establishing justice that is mired in a parochial and self-protective identity politics. King had much to do, early on, with nourishing the seeds of identity politics, but he recognized its limits as a transformative strategy even if all people of color were unified. It makes sense for African Americans or Latinos or Asians to organize independently where they constitute a majority, but it is ultimately self-defeating for groups engaged in coalition efforts to give lip service to multiracial cooperation while privileging separate racial loyalties. While I believe it was disrespectful for candidate Clinton to criticize Sister Souljah from the podium of the Rainbow Coalition convention last year, Jackson's reflexive defense of the rap singer—reminiscent of his defense of Louis Farrakhan in 1984—reveals his coalition's rigid priorities. This is an especially pressing dilemma in communities such as South Central L.A., where tensions among peoples of color are nearly as charged as with whites. If it is O.K. for Blacks to kill white people, as Souljah was quoted as saying, why not Koreans, Latinos, or Jews? Unless coalition leaders draw moral lines more courageously, it will be impossible to build lasting multicultural alliances.

My main objection to unbalanced racial politics, including nationalist expressions that King criticized but did not repudiate, is its interference with fostering a wider class identity that King believed was essential to the sustenance of long-term true alliances. Indeed, while King always encouraged cultural identity as the underlying motive force of change, he wanted to build upon such motivation a more encompassing political identity as a community oppressed by race fused with class, a symbiotic structure of oppressions that we now know encompasses gender and sexual orientation.

To some extent the multiculturalists' core commitment to autonomous cultural identities obscures the attachment of many of them to middle-class values and constituencies; King himself never completely let go of his middle-class myopia. While we must continue to support strong affirmative action programs that federal courts gave teeth in the decade after King's death, we must recognize that their built-in biases have benefited the better-off and better educated much more than the truly disadvantaged. We need to look at the inadequacies of affirmative action to learn how to do more, not less, to remove inequality.

Furthermore, we need to question the idea that entrepreneurialism is the key to alleviating poverty. Although entrepreneurial energy will play a central role, without democratic community control that reinvests capital back into the community and creates jobs, it will result in a trickle-downism that is only a bit less exploitative than before. King's own experiment with af-

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Menfriends

Terry A. Kupers

Why all the fuss about men's friendships? Is it only about men needing buddies? Is it merely that men are realizing they need each other to ward off the loneliness and envy that ensue when women get together with each other and leave them out? Or is there also some potential for progressive social change in men's soul-searching about friendship?

Discussions of men's friendships traditionally begin with the way men have learned to distance each other and keep their cards close to their chests as they climb up the hierarchy in a dog-eat-dog world. Then, there is the issue of homophobia. And, of course, it's all true. There was that list of rules for boys on the schoolyard, including "Never walk away from a fight," "Never let the other guy know he hurt you," and "Don't do anything that will lead other guys to think you're gay." And the rules did serve to prepare us for survival in that dog-eat-dog world. So, as adults, we don't touch each other (except in those exuberant post-touchdown moments), we don't linger too long in an affectionate glance and we certainly don't get too tearful in male company. Thus our interactions with each other seem dead. We prefer the company of women—there's more vitality, more opportunity to talk about personal things, and less risk of "being shafted." And, when asked about friends, many of us complain that "there isn't a really good friend."

There is a vicious cycle that makes it very difficult for men who want to change. Many of us would like to cross the lines that define and constrict traditional masculinity, the lines one does not cross if one wants to avoid being perceived as unmanly. It would help to have the support of other men in the crossing. But men are not very good at being close and supportive with each other. In fact, we tend to distance ourselves from a man who seems unmanly. Often the man who sincerely wants to build close friendships finds that other men shy away from him because they perceive him as "too needy." So the crossing can be very lonely.

The difficulties men have being friends are aggravated by the cyclical dynamic. Since men are socialized to believe one can judge a man's worth in relation to the men he befriends, association with someone who appears not to be "one of the guys" can be the undoing of a man who is trying to climb up the ladder. There is always the risk that, if a man relaxes his guard, and displays too much tenderness, or if he is too willing to cop to his foibles, then he will be mocked by other men. Consider the man who objects vociferously to sexual harassment or gay-bashing and is told: "Come on, don't take everything so seriously, it's only good clean fun." But men tend to remain silent about their critical concerns. After all, it would not look good if a man who is vying for promotion were to sound off at work about how distasteful he finds men's obsession with their place in hierarchies (including, by implication, the structure of authority and remuneration in his office). So men cultivate the habit of hiding their disdain for traditional male posturing.

Friendship could be the key to breaking the vicious cycle. If men who, as a matter of principle, refuse to take part in traditional manly "fun" were better able to build friendships with like-minded men, the crossing of those lines would not be so lonely. Take, for instance, the line at work that divides the loyal company man who stays late from the "less committed" (in other words, unmanly) one who has to get home to be with the kids. The "family man" begins to feel like a failure in comparison with others. Perhaps he does not get the promotion he coveted, or is laid off. His self-esteem sinks precipitously. Perhaps, merely as a result of the renewed conviction that others love him for the values he holds dear, he can return to work and continue to live out his principles. His friends might even help him devise new ways to seek promotion, ways that do not contradict his principles.

There might even be a ripple effect, a burgeoning challenge to what many men already believe is wrong with contemporary notions of masculinity. Perhaps, if men begin to know each other better and express feelings and needs more readily with each other, the cycle could be made to work in reverse: Men who are inclined to cross the lines, with the support of like-minded male intimates, could begin to change gender relations in the workplace. Of course, straight men would need to form alliances—and friendships—with the many women and gays who are already active in that struggle. And in the process of transcending the limitations of men's friendships with men, we would find many other opportunities to improve our gendered social relations. □

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The Sycophant Prophet

Stuart Klawans

Hollywood vs. America: Popular Culture and the War on Traditional Values, by Michael Medved. HarperCollins-/Zondervan, 386 pages, $20.00.

If liberals have a lock on American culture, as Michael Medved claims, then how come he's got a TV show and I don't?

In 1985, when a new co-host was needed for "Sneak Previews," the public television film review program originated by Gene Siskel and Roger Ebert, PBS chose Michael Medved, even though I was available. You might have been available, too—the duties were not onerous. Medved had only to give a thumbs up or thumbs down to whatever American movies had been pumped that week through the studio pipeline.

He might have recast his role for the better. For example, Medved could have thought hard about the movies he reviewed, or, if dissatisfied with the stuff being passed before his eyes, he could have sought out something other than big-studio American product (Ebert does). Instead, helped by an intriguing variety of supporters—right-wing academics, an Orthodox rabbi, even the executives of a major film studio (who were happy to have a pet reviewer)—Medved used his platform on PBS to set himself up as a social critic.

He achieved success in this endeavor in October 1992, in the midst of the Republican Party's campaign against fictional T.V. characters. That's when Medved's own campaign, imputing disastrous effects to mass-media causes, brought forth a book, *Hollywood vs. America*. Its theme: A vicious, self-serving liberal elite is out to destroy the moral fiber of our nation, using as its weapons *The Little Mermaid* and *Honey, I Shrunk the Kids*, *Star Trek V* and *Hook*, *GoodFellas* and *The Last Temptation of Christ,* and the never-to-be-forgiven *Nuns on the Run*.

At once, critics jumped on the book like picnickers trying to capture a greased pig. In a scathing review in The *New Republic*, David Denby noted that Medved consistently ignores the visual meanings of films; he seems never to have looked at the pictures he despises. But then, as Louis Menand noted in a scathing review in The *New Yorker*, Medved doesn't pay attention to plots, either—only to episodes. His book is full of howlers not only because he's ignorant (we'll get to that) but because he thinks movies are strings of discrete moments, each meaningful in itself. But then, as Christopher Lehmann-Haupt noted in his scathing review in The *New York Times*, even the howlers become hopelessly garbled, because Medved contradicts on the odd-numbered pages what he asserts on the evens.

The critics jumped; the greased pig got away. However damning the reviews, Medved succeeded in publicizing himself through the *Times*, The *New Yorker*, and The *New Republic*, through *Newsweek* and The *Washington Post*. He was talked about on ABC News; he got puff pieces in *Publishers' Weekly* and The *Christian Science Monitor*. I myself debated him on Voice of America, where I vainly tried to debunk a mere fraction of the balderdash he'd been invited to broadcast to a worldwide audience of millions. While dozens of worthy writers were being abandoned to howl in the wilderness, without ad budgets, without reviews, in some cases without publication, Medved was steadily promoted to ever greater fame and influence.

As of this writing, he still holds forth on "Sneak Previews" and any number of talk shows. And his censorious agenda? It's doing nicely. After the election, Bill Clinton, too, began mouthing pieties against the supposed excesses of the mass media. On Capitol Hill, members of Congress opened hearings on the subject of violence in film and television; while in Los Angeles, studio executives announced that their forthcoming movies would be much, much nicer.

If liberals have a lock on American culture, then how come Medved is winning?

Like one of its notable forerunners, the 1986 final report of Attorney General Edwin Meese's Commission on Pornography, *Hollywood vs. America* cloaks itself in scientific objectivity. There are lots of statistics and research findings—some bogus, some misreported, some merely misleading. Go behind this patchwork of "fact," however, and you'll discover that the substance of the arguments lies in the author's attitudes and emotions.

And that's as it should be. Although *Penthouse* centerfolds and the films of John Hughes cannot unfailingly be called art, they are at least artifacts, of a sort that would be useless unless they engaged somebody's emotions. The real task, then, is to examine the attitudes and feelings that are so engaged and to ask how well they suit the artifact. Let us ignore all those *USA Today* surveys that Medved is so fond of citing and begin with the primary evidence: the tone of his writing.

Like most Americans, Medved finds art to be suspect. Only a certain type of art, in fact, is worthy of the name. It must be didactic, illusionistic, and technically polished. For all other kinds of art (many of which simply don't fit this description) and for art-making itself, Medved expresses the contempt of a hard-working American who knows it's all a con game.

Such contempt is of course bipartisan. It becomes specifically conservative only when the punitive note is sounded. You can hear in Medved's complaints how dearly he would like to whip them back into line. (We'll soon enough get to "their" identity.) And like all too many art-despising conservatives, Medved also betrays a Yiddish inflection, characteristic of someone who knows himself to be culturally superior to them. You've heard that tone in the voice of your horrible Uncle Murray when he talks

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about the schvartzers. You've heard it in the newspapers, too, in the relentlessly first-person pronouncements of Abe Rosenthal and Ed Koch. It's audible in the voice of Medved, who wants full credit for belonging to the People of the Book, even though he hasn't read many.

His Jewishness becomes an issue up front, in the acknowledgements, where he devotes an entire paragraph to the spiritual guidance of Rabbi Daniel Lapin, his "friend and teacher," to whom "I can never sufficiently express my appreciation." Rabbi Lapin runs an outfit in Los Angeles called the Bay Cities Synagogue/Pacific Jewish Center—an Orthodox synagogue and school, which is, in the words of one person I spoke with, "the closest thing to a cult I've seen in Judaism." According to my informant, a dropout from the congregation and therefore by definition disgruntled, the good side to the center is that the members help one another. "If you're sick in bed," my source reported, "they'll cook three meals a day for you and keep it up for months." Such fellowship is hard to come by anywhere, but it is especially rare in Los Angeles. On the other hand, my informant described the center's adult-education classes as authoritarian and closed to all debate; the children's classes as shockingly harsh; and the political atmosphere as unabashedly racist. In defense of the center, I objected that a disgruntled drop-out might use the same terms to describe a good many Orthodox synagogues.

My informant was ready with the rebuttal. "The rabbi," I was told, "ordered us not to let the kids watch 'Sesame Street'." Rabbi Lapin's vigilance is apparent throughout *Hollywood vs. America*. On pages 88-89, for example, our author protests against the Richard Gere kitsch-o-rama *King David*, on the grounds that the film "took extreme liberties with its source material." In the tones of a sermonizer addressing a particularly obtuse congregation, Medved explains that the film's David undergoes a crisis of faith, whereas "The real-life King David authored The Book of Psalms." The real-life King David lived around the year 1,000 B.C.E. The real-life Book of Psalms includes laments on the Babylonian captivity, which therefore would have been written, oh, 400 years later. Such is Medved's intellectual rigor when discussing a subject in which Rabbi Lapin must have instructed him. When he wanders off on his own, he really goes hog-wild.

I pick at random four consecutive pages.

Page 25: Medved complains that in 1992, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences nominated for Best Actor only men who had taken on unattractive roles:

> Three of them played murderous psychotics (Anthony Hopkins in *The Silence of the Lambs*, Robert De Niro in *Cape Fear*, and Warren Beatty in *Bugsy*); one of them played a homeless, delusional psychotic (Robin Williams in *The Fisher King*); and one of them played a good, old-fashioned, manic-depressive neurotic (Nick Nolte in *The Prince of Tides*) who is the product of a viciously dysfunctional family background.

Shocking. Next, they'll be praising some actor for pretending to be a king who killed his father and married his mother; or an African general with a murderous temper and a weakness for white women; or, get this, maybe a nasty god, who incites a woman to tear her own son to bits and then wave his severed head at the audience. Actually, that one got something better than the Oscar—it won Euripides the first prize in the Athens drama festival in 405 B.C.E. Or maybe it was during the reign of David. Anyway, I bet Sherry Lansing wishes she'd thought of it first.

Page 26: The "arts establishment," Medved writes, turns "a suspicious eye on any efforts that respect convention, including representational painting, rhyming poetry, melodic music—or life-affirming movies." With a range of reference that stretches from *Home Alone* to *Home Alone 2*, Medved apparently does not know that some of the hottest trends in the 1980s were neo-Romantic music, figurative painting and so-called Formalist poetry (meaning, in this case, bland stuff that rhymed). I've got nothing against rhyme, myself. Unlike John Milton, I can tolerate the jingling. I just figure that rhymes, or the lack of them, should be appropriate to the poem in hand. Same thing for life-affirmation. I felt it was okay in *The Lady Eve*, when Barbara Stanwyck explained to Henry Fonda that good women weren't as good as he supposed, and bad women weren't as bad. That's life-affirming, all right. But at the end of *Going My Way*, when Barry Fitzgerald's old mother totters into the church while the choir sings "Tura Lura Lura," I always hope she'll tear the old faker to bits and wave his severed head at the camera.

Page 27: One of my favorites. Medved repeats the old lie that the National Endowment for the Arts gave a grant to Annie Sprinkle, the post-porn performance artist. In fact, the grant went to The Kitchen, a well-known center for video and performance in lower Manhattan. The Kitchen then invited Annie Sprinkle to take part in a series it had organized. No federal money went to her—as Medved would know, had he consulted a source less hilarious than *New Dimensions: The Psychology Behind the News*.

Page 28: No, I think this is my favorite. Medved is shocked that Twentieth Century-Fox should have released *Naked Lunch*, which "bears only the most casual connection to the classic junkie novel by William Burrourghs on which it is allegedly based. In the course of the film, director David Cronenberg depicts gigantic talking vaginas..." Actually, that would have been a departure from the source. In both the novel and the film, they're talking assholes. Has Medved never read the "classic" novel? Or is he suffering from a wicked case of astigmatism?

So it goes, page after page, in a text that combines the tradition of the *cri de coeur* with the C– high school term paper. When a book is so flimsy—and also, to hear Medved tell it, so unpopular in its sentiments—you might expect it never to see print. But *Hollywood vs. America* did get published. What's more, it was brought out by HarperCollins, a company owned by Rupert Murdoch, who also owns Twentieth Century Fox and thereby profited from *Naked Lunch*. We may therefore conclude that Medved is not what he claims to be, a Nathan to the movie colony's debauched King David. Instead, he's just one small part of the infotainment machine—a safety valve, let's say, which keeps things running smoothly by letting off steam with a tweet.

The system does need its safety valves, since it functions, as Medved should know, by keeping up a steady pressure of shock and outrage and simmering horniness. A recent example: A writer at *New York Newsday* decided that the Amy Fisher story had received too much attention from the press.

Weary of hearing about her, he wrote a satirical article—which the newspaper then flagged with a front-page headline, accompanied by five full-color pictures of the wretched child.

An Aristotelian culture would have no such need to disavow Amy Fisher while thrilling to her story. Aristotle taught that our Amy Fishers should be enjoyed as safety valves in themselves. But Plato is the philosopher who long ago triumphed in America, where everyone from Jesse Helms to Jesse Jackson feels that images should uplift the spirit (and never mind what gets uplifted at the local video shop). Medved, too, subscribes to this Classics Comics version of Platonic doctrine: Good images foster good behavior, and bad images foster bad. Can it be that Rabbi Lapin never told him about the Jewish tradition, which is neither Platonic nor Aristotelian?

If so, too bad—because rabbinic literature represents a third way, which assumes that people don't just respond mechanically to stories but invest them with meanings of their own. The rabbis, smart Jews that they were, performed marvels in making Torah mean what they wanted. They could make Abraham at his sleaziest look like a hero, and Esau at his noblest seem like a sleaze. Even non-Jews may exercise a similar creativity. James Baldwin, in *Go Tell It On the Mountain*, allowed a small boy to give a highly imaginative reading of a Bette Davis vehicle. You might also browse through the British paperback *Seeing in the Dark*, edited by Ian Breakwell and Paul Hammond (Serpent's Tail Press, 1990), which is chock-full of such individualistic reactions to movies. In fact, Medved himself is pretty imaginative, with those funny-shaped vaginas he sees everywhere. But, not being a smart Jew, he can't admit that he sees what he wants to see. If he did, he'd no longer have a reason to go tweet, and so would lose his place in the big machine—a place he's truly earned.

Medved began his rise to his present eminence a dozen years ago by writing with Harry Medved, *The Golden Turkey Awards*, and its sequels, *The Hollywood Hall of Shame* and *Son of Golden Turkey Awards*. These were guidebooks to laughably bad movies. Their purpose, which will be recalled by anyone who has frequented campus film societies, was to promote a debased form of camp—a camp without wit, without any discovery of new values, without a longing for transcendence, however trashy the vehicle that might carry you away. All Medved did was to give young, moneyed white men something else about which to feel superior. Show up for the screening of *Pather Panchali*? Forget it. But wait until Saturday night, when they're showing *Plan 9 from Outer Space*—the joint will be jumpin'.

Medved began by saying, "These movies are bad. Mock them." Now he says, "These movies are bad. Fear them." Either way, his career depends on an uninterrupted supply of movies he can complain about. All that's changed is his sense of superiority, which has shifted from social to moral.

On what grounds does he claim to be better than other people? This is a man who makes part of his living "reviewing" films released by studios such as Paramount. In 1992, when Art Buchwald was suing Paramount for breach of contract, Medved accepted between $8,000 and $10,000 from the studio to testify on its behalf in Los Angeles Superior Court.

But then, Medved has been embarrassed by other associations. *Hollywood vs. America* opens with a paean to Hillsdale College in Michigan; Medved credits Hillsdale with beginning "the process that led to this book." Hillsdale, a favorite campus of the radical Right, has been on the censure list of the American Association of University Professors since 1988 for violating standards of academic freedom. Hillsdale also forbids its students to receive federal loans or funds from the GI Bill. The purpose of this maneuver is to circumvent the Civil Rights Restoration Act. Hillsdale's student body is 98 per cent white.

And that, I think, is what *Hollywood vs. America* is finally about. Although Medved tosses around all sorts of statistics in an attempt to prove that Hollywood gives a false picture of American life, what he seems to fear is that the picture might be true. Once upon a time, the movies were 98 per cent white. But they're not anymore—and neither is Medved's world.

Here's the tell-tale passage from his book. On page 268, Medved at last raises the obvious objection to his argument: If you don't like the movies, you don't have to watch them. Stay home. Keep your money in your pocket. But that's not solution, Medved replies, because the insidious effects of popular culture are everywhere, not just in the multiplexes. Why, he once went to the park with his little daughters, and wouldn't you know it? Some kids turned on a boom box. The toddlers had to listen to rap music, which was filled with the most disgusting lyrics. Well, actually, the kids were too small to understand any of the words. But they heard the bass line all right, and it was awful—nothing but throbbing, lewd, jungle music.

How easy it would be to laugh off such stupidity—the blustering of an authoritarian who's posing as a rebel, a sycophant pretending to be a prophet. But then, just as Medved functions as a diversion within the infotainment business, so does infotainment serve as a distraction within the political economy as a whole.

Infotainment refers all events back to itself. (To quote a celebrated ad campaign: "Just keep saying, 'It's only a movie.'") By so doing, infotainment keeps us from asking whether ugly, brutal, grotesque, and vicious films—of which there are indeed plenty—might be an effect of our sins and not a cause of them. We are not meant to ask whether such films might have something important to tell us, despite themselves, or whether we might be the ones who corrupt the screen.

I think of a news story that broke in October 1992. There are many like it; this one just happened to emerge when *Hollywood vs. America* was published, and got a lot less attention than did the book. Forensic archaeologists in El Salvador dug up a mass grave in the town of El Mozote, where at least 794 peasants had been murdered in 1981. The majority of the victims were women and children. The murderers, members of the Salvadoran army, had been trained, paid, and supported by the United States government, which for the next eleven years denied the massacre had occurred.

A genuine Nathan, speaking not to movie executives but to the people who really hold power, might point to the symbolism of those corpses, which for so long were hidden from view. America covers up its murderousness in El Mozote and elsewhere; but the evidence of our violence must come to light somewhere. Maybe part of it has been leaking onto movie screens. Maybe the films we've been watching are the judgment of a righteous God. □

The Movies vs. History

Judith Pasternak

Hoffa, directed by Danny DeVito (20th Century Fox); *Malcolm X*, directed by Spike Lee (Warner Brothers); *Chaplin*, directed by Richard Attenborough, (Tri-Star).

"Never let a stranger into your cab, your home or your heart," says Jimmy Hoffa (Jack Nicholson), the organizer, early on in *Hoffa*, the movie. "Unless he's a friend of labor."

But he has already swung himself up into the cab, over the objections of the truck's driver (Danny DeVito). It's okay, though—he is a friend of labor.

The message of DeVito's *Hoffa* is that the much-maligned Jimmy Hoffa was one of the best friends labor ever had. A fierce and towering performance by Nicholson in the title role and a riveting, hyper-kinetic script by playwright David Mamet bring conviction both to that thesis and to the movie's own friend-of-labor pretensions.

They are only pretensions, however, sustained by drastically rewriting the real history of Jimmy Hoffa's life and times. Using the Classics Illustrated brand of narration—remember Classics Illustrated comics? They were what we had before television—*Hoffa* fills the bare-bones outline of the Teamster leader's rise and fall with stirring pictures, while bowdlerizing the details that give the story its meaning.

The outlines of that story are widely known. The son of an Indiana coal miner, James Riddle Hoffa rose through the ranks of Detroit Teamsters during the Depression by a combination of formidable organizing and negotiating talents, mob connections, and strong-arm tactics. By mid-World War II, he was a major figure in the union throughout Michigan, by 1952 vice-president of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, and president of the international by 1957. During the same years, the Teamsters became one of the largest and most powerful unions in the country—and one of the most corrupt.

By 1967, Hoffa and several colleagues were serving time in federal prison in Lewisburg, Pa., for jury tampering, fraud, and conspiracy. His sentence was commuted by then-President Richard Nixon in 1971, one condition of the commutation being that he abstain from union involvement for ten years. He was still fighting that restriction when he disappeared from a restaurant near Detroit in 1975, never to be seen again. Legend has it that the mob killed him and buried his body in the New Jersey wetlands now undergirding Giants Stadium, where he remains to this day, some say under the fifty-yard line, others under one of the end zones.

Like the classics illustrators of my childhood, screenwriter Mamet and director DeVito have fleshed out the story with thrilling pictures. The film's early sequences deliver scene after scene from the Teamsters' fight to organize. Armies of club-wielding goons and entire police forces wade into picket lines and union marches in epic, bloody confrontations; murdered strikers' widows and children weep at a mass funeral; Hoffa and other union leaders deliver rousing speeches about the right to organize and the power of solidarity.

Interspersed with those epic images are more intimate vignettes of Hoffa organizing one-on-one, negotiating, using mobsters against the bosses to win his points. (So that's why he dealt with them—for the sake of the union!) And every time he says "The International Brotherhood of Teamsters," he sounds like a priest talking about the Church.

The film even glancingly admits to some less-than-savory tactics on Hoffa's part; in one stunning early scene, an older organizer (Robert Prosky in a powerful cameo) dies horribly when he and Hoffa attempt to burn down the shop of an independent trucker who has refused to enlist with the union. It's strong stuff, all of it, made stronger by its relative rarity among Hollywood movies.

Much of it is also fiction. That in itself is no cause for complaint; no one's life is completely documented, and judicious guesswork is a necessary component of any biography. But what is added and what is left out draw, between them, a false and misleading picture of the labor movement. And, in 1993, misleading is the last thing U.S. labor needs.

The most significant omission is that of the left wing of the labor movement in general and the Teamsters Union in particular, a left wing that was alive, active, and often opposed to Hoffa throughout his career—and that he ruthlessly suppressed at every opportunity.

Some of those omissions could be the result of the film-makers' ignorance; U.S. Left history, after all, is rarely given its due in mainstream texts. It is possible that neither Mamet nor DeVito knew of the massive, Trotskyist-led Minneapolis Teamster strikes of the early 1930s, or of the dissenting forces within the union in the early 1970s that grew into the now-triumphant Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU) whose support was crucial to the 1992 election of Ron Carey to the Teamster presidency. (See "Revolution in the Teamsters, page 19.) They may even have been ignorant of the crucial role American communists played in the larger labor movement and in the formation and growth, during and after the Depression, of the trade unions (especially the CIO). Without the ideological underpinnings communists brought to the movement—not to men-

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Left/feminist Judith Pasternak was managing editor of the late Guardian *newsweekly and now edits* Tenant, *the newsletter of New York's Metropolitan Council on Housing.*

tion their energy and commitment—U.S. unions would probably never have attained what now appears as their golden age of power and prosperity in the 1940s and 1950s.

In at least one instance, the disappearance of the Left from *Hoffa* appears deliberate. It is 1957, and a young, ambitious Robert Kennedy (Kevin Anderson) is interrogating Hoffa on behalf of the U.S. Senate's Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field, known to history as the McClellan Committee. Mamet and DeVito take considerable pains to establish Kennedy's animus toward Hoffa with what must be one of the least sympathetic film portraits of any Kennedy. The callow, weasely Bobby pokes, prods, and jabs at Hoffa over the issue of corruption; then, out of left field, as it were, he suddenly hits him with an accusation of communist presence in the union. It is as if communists were a figment of his imagination; and, of course, Hoffa answers proudly, "There are no communists in the Teamsters."

By 1957, there probably were no communists in the Teamsters, but not because there never had been. They had been ruthlessly purged. But *Hoffa* places communists, socialists, and their ilk in outside of history altogether, and into the fevered imagination of an enemy of labor.

It is a placement that profoundly affects the array of forces depicted in the movie. In the absence of Left Teamsters, Hoffa himself becomes the Left, a lone David fighting Big Business, its government allies, and the mob. He has no choice but to ally himself with what he perceives as the least of those evils.

And when that necessary and inevitable alliance leads to his fall, it is labor itself that falls. The gathering dusk into which a truck (irony of ironies) carries Hoffa's murdered body at the end of the film is the twilight of labor. *Hoffa* the movie is both a tribute to the valor and tenacity of James Riddle Hoffa and the U.S. labor movement, and a dirge for his—and its—inevitable and irretrievable decline.

U.S. labor has declined since 1975, to its lowest ebb in three generations. Union membership is a shadow of its former self both, in absolute numbers and in proportion to the American work force. From the breaking of the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization in 1981 to the desperate struggle for survival of the Newspaper Guild at New York's hometown paper, the *Daily News*, as this is written, union-busting has been the order of the day since the election of Ronald Reagan, with devastating effect.

> Hoffa *isn't alone in its erasure of the left from Hollywood's version of history.*

The complex historical reasons for that decline, and the resources for reversing it, are another discussion. But it was not the loss of the Hoffas of labor that weakened the unions, nor does their hope lie in the return of leaders of his ilk. Friend of labor, indeed. With friends like Jimmy Hoffa, labor didn't need enemies. With friends like *Hoffa* the movie, it won't need them now.

But *Hoffa* isn't alone in its erasure of the Left from Hollywood's version of history. Spike Lee's *Malcolm X* and Richard Attenborough's *Chaplin*, two other big bio-pics vying in the race to the Oscar, rewrite the past in similar ways.

The Classics Illustrated analogy is even more apt when applied to *Malcolm X*. Lee is literally illustrating a classic—the late Alex Hailey's *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*. That the film fails to catch fire, despite its now-famous flag-burning opening, is a function of the narrow focus of the book as well as of Lee's failure to broaden it sufficiently.

The strength of the autobiography lay in Malcolm's indictment of racism, his descriptions of its impact on his life, and his efforts to fight it. It never attempted to set his life into the context of the broader civil rights movement, a movement that, while shaped by the grass-roots work of African Americans, was informed to a considerable extent by earlier years of anti-racist work on the part of the American Left. Yet it was in that context that Malcolm came into his own as a leader. People followed him, not only because he was fiery and brilliant, but because there was a movement going on, of which the Nation of Islam and Black nationalism were only one face.

Onscreen, the omission renders *Malcolm X* ahistorical. We may know where Malcolm was coming from, but we don't know whence his following came. A few isolated film clips—of Martin Luther King, Jr., of the beating of Rodney King—fail to place one man's life in the story of a movement.

Finally, *Chaplin*—a film of which the less said, the better—goes to ludicrous lengths to portray its subject as a genius isolated from the world in which he lived. Chaplin's Little Tramp evolved from a stock slapstick figure in the 1910s and early twenties to the emblem of the nation's oppressed in *Modern Times* in 1936; it was the heyday of U.S. communism, and Chaplin's later works are permeated with the idea of class struggle. And the Hollywood of the time was crawling with reds—although never a communist himself, Chaplin nevertheless knew them, socialized with them, and gave his name more than once to their causes. In the witch-hunting times of the 1950s, Chaplin's U.S. visa was lifted by the Immigration Service on the strength of his one-time associations.

In *Chaplin*, however, none of that ever happened. The sight of a few homeless people in the depths of the Depression prompts him to observe, "People are hungry. And I haven't done anything for them. Shame on me." Voilá—*Modern Times*. As to the loss of Chaplin's visa, Attenborough goes to some pains early in the film to establish personal animus on the part of J. Edgar Hoover as the explanation. *Chaplin*, like *Hoffa*, regards communism as a specter that exists only in Hoover's imagination.

What would it take to obliterate the Left from history? Never mind what it might take in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union; what would it take here in the United States, where the socialist movement, though it never held power, nevertheless played a meaningful role from time to time? If *Hoffa*, *Malcolm X*, and *Chaplin* are the measure, Hollywood might succeed in doing it all by itself. □

Sikkum
A Bookshelf of Jewish Books and Books Jews Should Read

In Potiphar's House by James Kugel, Harper Collins, 1991. Unsuccessfully seduced, then slandered and imprisoned, the biblical Joseph in the House of Potiphar serves as a metaphor for the temptations and tribulations Jews face in exile. Kugel shows how the Talmudic sages' close midrashic reading of this fascinating Biblical narrative creates opportunities to expand the Joseph story, and he convincingly illustrates that many of these oral traditions of midrash originate much earlier than previously imagined. This book is deft, insightful, and a delight to read.

Avi Weinstein

Four Centuries of Jewish Women's Spirituality edited by Ellen M. Umansky and Dianne Ashton, Beacon Press, 1992. Organized chronologically, this source book of Jewish women's spirituality presents excerpts from diaries, letters, ethical wills, prayers, poems, sermons, minutes from meetings, rituals—the voices of women—from 1560 until the present. It is wondrous to hear, in different women's voices, how women's concerns have evolved over time even as they have remained constant.

Laura Geller

Mr. Mani by A. B. Yehoshua, Doubleday, 1992. For many years, the Sephardim have made up a majority of the Jewish population of Israel, yet their experience has rarely been made the subject of significant Israeli literature. Now A.B. Yehoshua, who is himself a fifth-generation descendant of a Jerusalem Sephardic family, has taken on this challenge in a powerful and inventive new novel. Yehoshua chronicles several generations of one such family (the Manis), but with a twist on the usual family saga formula. He begins in the present and goes back in time to the middle of the nineteenth century. It makes for riveting reading.

Alan Mintz

Rescuers: Portraits of Moral Courage in the Holocaust by Gay Block and Malka Drucker, Holmes & Meier, 1992. If middle-class blues are making you listless, read *Rescuers* and enter a universe that will erase yours of bills, exhaustion, importuning children, and alienation from your labor. Each of these riveting portraits and empathic photographs of people who risked their lives to save Jews fifty years ago is a novel in itself—and each will fling you with an immediacy you'd forgotten into the largest mysteries of the soul in its capacity for astonishing evil and even more astonishing goodness.

Nessa Rapoport

Loyalty: An Essay On The Morality Of Relationships by George P. Fletcher, Oxford University Press, 1993. This book can be read as a philosophical attempt, from a lawyer's perspective, to reconcile a commitment to the universal welfare of humanity with a prior commitment to those near and dear. In short, it is a way that a Jew thinks about the universal responsibility that flows from being human, created in the image of God and the specific, particular responsibilities that flow from being a Jew.

James Ponet

Meetings by Martin Buber, edited by Maurice Friedman, Open Court, 1973. Sift carefully through this collection of autobiographical fragments, epiphanal meetings—and mismeetings—which carved the inner contours of Buber's life, and you will discover the shards of your own reflection. Pointing to the eternal in the transitory, Buber reminds us that what matters is not what we see, but that we see.

Michael Posnick

American Jews and the Separationist Faith: New Debate On Religion In Public Life edited by David Dalin, The Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1992. American Jews have generally been identified as among the most ardent supporters of the "wall of separation" between Church and State. In this volume of thirty-eight short articles, many argue that organized Jewry has gone too far in the direction of promoting secularism at the expense of religion. Several of the articles are brilliant, particularly those making the moral and commonsensical case for federal aid to parochial schools.

Joseph Telushkin

Justice, Gender, and the Family by Susan Moller Okin, Basic Books, 1989. Okin points out that by viewing the institution of marriage as beyond questions of justice, or by idealizing family life, contemporary male ethical theorists have failed to explore the ways in which the institution of marriage continues to oppress women. Although Okin offers no easy solutions for redressing women's oppression, her insistence that societies cannot claim to be just as long as the individuals in that society are raised in homes that are oppressive, may help progressive Jews recognize that unless we expand our understanding of justice, our efforts to repair the world will ultimately be doomed to failure.

Ellen M. Umansky

The Schocken Guide To Jewish Books edited by Barry W. Holtz, 1992. In addition to its more obvious benefits, this impressively practical and accessible anthology serves as an informal architectural plan to the immense field of Jewish Studies. On a more literal level, it invites those of us outside the academy to approach and study major texts, events, and personalities with the help of their most eminent interpreters. Through a series of annotated bibliographical essays, sixteen scholars of ancient, medieval, and especially twentieth-century Jewish life and literature outline their respective areas of expertise. While the result is not exactly bedside reading, this is a book that no Jewish library, institution, or inquisitive individual should be without.

William Novak

BOOK REVIEW

German Past Imperfect

James E. Ponet

Slow Fire by Susan Nieman. *Schocken Books,* 1992. $23.00, 320 pp.

"Every time I think of you I think of Dachau...baby." This, the opening sentence of Susan Nieman's picaresque memoir of her seven years as a graduate student in Berlin, should have been the title of her book. In *Slow Fire* she records the splendid torture of a young American Jew who is in love with classical German culture and who is enchanted and horrified by the Germans she meets in contemporary Berlin. She writes: "The last thing I'd expect to confront in Europe was the present; it turned out to be all that mattered."

A student of Kant, a believer in the continuing relevance of Enlightenment principles to the human prospect, Nieman traveled to Berlin like a pilgrim, the way an aspiring Diaspora talmudist ascends to Jerusalem. Ostensibly arriving there in order to write her Harvard dissertation, Nieman discovers in 1980s Berlin her own cracked-mirror Zion, a city of ruins that like Jerusalem is focused on a wall and burdened with a past that makes it mythic. Nieman's Berlin seethes with inner contractions and a shrewd certainty that it is the center of the world, "outpost of democracy, showplace of capitalism."

Writing in a stark, staccato, quasi-diaristic style, Nieman uses interior monologue, snippets of conversation, vignettes, and a connecting narrative voice-over. "It's not really a novel," she explains to a friend. "It's a description of things I've experienced here. Under the rubric *vergangenheitsverarbeitung*."

"*Vergangenheitsverarbeitung*," literally "working through the past," is in fact an obsessive ideology, a kind of commitment to public *teshuvah* (repentance) which has been more or less foisted upon the West Germans by the Occupation. Nieman found signs of this struggle to come to terms with Nazi history everywhere. She also learned to appreciate the personal obstacles to "working through the past" from her German lover, Dieter Brock:

> "How shall I explain it?" he began. "Knowing you confronts me with myself. It brings up rage, it brings up sorrow. I can't really deal openly with you without dealing openly with my parents. And I don't know how to do it."
>
> "What do you mean?"
>
> "Look. Every time I see you I think of Dachau."
>
> His eyes were without expression, withdrawn to a distant pain. The place was very still. I doubted my right to speak. Could I tell him, for example, that he had to forgive his parents for being Nazis? In whose name?

Repeatedly, Nieman careens toward compassion for the alienated children of Nazis, then recoils in horror and confusion as she bumps up against their own moral obtuseness. "Could the sins of the fathers be so great that their children had lost the very notion of sin?" she wonders. After Dieter's father dies, she notes, "I knew he couldn't cry for his father's death because his father couldn't cry for the deaths of millions."

Nieman never finds sanctuary from the corrosive ironies of "working through the past." Not even inside Berlin's tiny Jewish community of 6,700 members. Heinz Galinski, survivor of Auschwitz and, until his death, director of the Berlin Jewish community, rejects Nieman's Jewish husband, Michael, who has applied to serve as cultural director of the Jewish community. "So you eat a lot of garlic?," Galinski inquired of Michael. "You'll have to change that, if you intend to represent the Jewish community of Berlin." Instead of Michael, he appoints a man who "has a neatly trimmed blond beard and is said to be thinking of converting to Judaism."

Conservative, scared, riven, the Jewish community of Berlin faces not only the usual threats of violence, but strange new threats of invasion: "Guilt-ridden young Germans wanting to solve their problems by inventing a Jewish grandmother. Older people, too, with who knows what on their conscience. Seeking redemption by sacrificing a piece of foreskin." There are as well Germans who, having just discovered that they are in fact Jews, go into despair.

A sharp and pained observer, seasoned with years of seeing and reporting, Nieman never ceases to be an American innocent abroad, ever stunned and ever hopeful. And she remains a stubborn exponent of the need to recover and restore faith in reason as a moral guide. In the end, she takes up the vision of Herman Cohen, the great German Jewish interpreter of Kant who taught at Marburg and died in Berlin in 1918. "In vain I searched the streets for an echo of...[Kant's] simplest thought: you carry out those actions which you can imagine carrying out for everyone."

Like Herman Cohen, Susan Nieman is a philosophical socialist who believes in the messianic task of Judaism to bring about a united humanity. And like Cohen she believes, fifty years after the Shoah, that Germans and Jews are still "bound at the soul." □

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BOOK REVIEW

World of Our Ballplayers

Warren Goldstein

Ellis Island to Ebbets Field: Sport and the American Jewish Experience by Peter Levine. Oxford University Press, 1992, 285 pp.

Several years ago I interviewed for a position as curator of a museum exhibit to be devoted to the history of Jews in American sports. I didn't know much about the subject but figured I was well qualified: I am Jewish, had written about sports history, and still had fond memories of Sandy Koufax's refusal to pitch on the High Holidays. When I told friends about the job, most struggled to keep straight faces. "Okay," said one, "Hank Greenberg, Sandy Koufax. Then who—Mark Spitz?" And then, unintentionally mimicking turn-of-the-century Lower East Side mothers whose sons informed them that they wanted to be professional baseball players, "For this you expect to be paid?" I tried the same experiment when I was reading Peter Levine's *Ellis Island to Ebbets Field: Sport and the American Jewish Experience* and got similar responses. When I mentioned the book to a librarian friend, an athletic Minnesotan raised Methodist, she inquired politely: "Oh. (pause) In which sports?"

Like many histories that are no longer useful, that might even have become embarrassing to a people, the history of Jews in American sports has mostly been lost. Levine's book is therefore a valuable reconstruction of a world long past—but one that, from the turn of the century until at least the mid-1950s, exercised powerful influence in the lives of young Jewish men and their families, the principal subjects of his narrative.

Sport, Levine argues, played the role of a middle ground where the sons and grandsons of Eastern European Jewish immigrants played out the many dramas of cultural and religious identity, generational conflict, and assimilation. Most immigrants, consumed by the struggle for economic survival, had no sporting experience and little interest in playing catch or batting a ball. For their children, however, sport was one of the principal routes to becoming American.

Around the turn of the century ideologues and baseball promoters used up acres of newsprint touting baseball's allegedly "American" values of (pick three or four) individualism, patience, persistence, hard work, skill, speed, daring, and intelligence. Such litanies were essentially meaningless, but by playing this indisputably American game, immigrant children participated in the rites of their new country; what made it American, was that it was not Polish or Russian or Lithuanian. Think of Yankl/Jake in the movie *Hester Street*, teaching his American boy Joey (not Yossele) to play baseball in the park.

Abraham Cahan understood this well. In his column in the Jewish Daily *Forward* one day in the summer of 1903, he noted a letter received from a father complaining about baseball. "It makes sense to teach a child to play dominoes or chess," the father began, "But what is the point of a crazy game like baseball? ...I want my boy to grow up to be a mensh, not a wild American runner. But he cries his head off." As Levine points out, Cahan's reply may have shocked his readers: "Let your boys play baseball and play it well, as long as it does not interfere with their education or get them into bad company....Bring them up to be educated, ethical, and decent, but also to be physically strong so they should not feel inferior....Let us not so raise the children that they should grow up foreigners in their own birthplace."

Jewish boys didn't wait to see if their parents were going to take Cahan's advice. Especially in New York and other large cities, they participated in a huge sporting culture centered on baseball and, even more, on the quintessential—and newly invented (1891)—urban game of basketball. From YMHA's and SPHA's (in South Philadelphia) to the great City College basketball teams of the thirties, forties, and fifties, to independent teams such as the Brooklyn Dux and the early professional basketball leagues, Jews dominated Eastern basketball. Many people—Jews and gentiles alike—even referred to it as "the Jewish game." To an extent difficult for contemporary Jews to realize, basketball was one of the principal cultural institutions in urban Jewish neighborhoods during the first half of this century. For the Jews who played and the Jews who followed the exploits of their heroes, athletic prowess offered clear refutation of anti-Semitic stereotypes of Jews as bookish, weak, and physically inept. Athletes and fans alike used athletic heroism as a way of demonstrating pride in Jewishness, even when the athletes themselves showed little or no interest in religious observance.

Some older, second-generation Jews still celebrate this history through local Jewish sports halls of fame, banquets, and occasional reunions. More than 300 men and women—about half of whom played basketball on community, college, or professional teams, mostly from New York—attend an annual "Basketball Fraternity" reunion in Miami Beach each December at which they commemorate and revel in the good old days of Jewish basketball.

While these men—and occasionally their wives—recall such experiences as central to their youth and Jewishness, later generations have less to remember. While reading Levine, I had occasion to ask my father about the basketball team at Eastern High

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Sandy Koufax pitching, 1966.

School in Washington, D.C., from which he graduated in 1942. He didn't remember the basketball team as particularly Jewish, because there weren't many Jews in the school. Then he got out his yearbook and discovered that the team was at least 25 percent Jewish, the kind of disproportionate number that we might expect today from a predominantly white high school with a small number of African-American students. The true story wasn't useful to my father any more. He has lived most of his life in assimilated environments in which Jewishness was less a neighborhood and community experience than a set of religious practices.

The basketball team at Eastern is all black these days, as are the neighborhoods in which my father grew up. In the last thirty years, basketball has assumed an even more prominent place in the lives of African-American children, young men, and communities.

Ellis Island to Ebbets Field illuminates not only aspects of immigrant life, the process of assimilation, and the felt meaning of Jewishness. Levine also provides terrific material for reflections on the comparative experience of Jews and African Americans.

A generation before Jackie Robinson, Andy Cohen joined the New York Giants. Seeking a box office attraction to rival the crosstown Yankees' slugging 1927 "Murderer's Row," Giants manager John McGraw settled on second baseman Cohen, who had starred with the Triple A Buffalo Bisons the year before. In his debut at the Polo Grounds in 1928, the highly touted "Rabbi of Swat" batted in two runs, scored twice, and led his team to a 5-2 victory over the Boston Braves. New York's Jewish fans erupted, carrying him triumphantly on their shoulders around the field as though he were an orthodox bridegroom. All over the country, Jews sponsored banquets and special days for their new folk hero, with predictable consequences. According to sportswriter Paul Gallico, "Every time Andy comes to bat he feels he must make a hit, not only for John McGraw, his teammates and the city of New York, but for the Jewish race as well, which is a large order." Too large, as it turned out. Cohen's bat produced less the following year, and McGraw sent him down to the minors in 1930, from which he returned only briefly—as a coach, thirty years later.

Cohen's experience throws light on the Jackie Robinson-Branch Rickey saga of the mid-1940s. While Rickey was lionized as courageous and principled for bringing the first Black player to the majors, no one ever suggested that McGraw's interest in Cohen had anything to do with fighting prejudice. He wanted paying Jewish spectators, and Cohen appeared to be the answer to his prayers. Rickey was an anti-Semite who had refused to sign Jewish ballplayers in St. Louis in the 1920s and 1930s. But, once in Brooklyn, he avidly hunted for Jewish stars to attract the local fans. (When he failed, he could always point to first-base coach Jake Pitler, for whom my grandfather—same name, different spelling—was once mistaken in a Cincinnati hotel.)

There's more. Robinson, who had already completed a stunning collegiate athletic career (as an All-American in four sports) before signing with the Kansas City Monarchs in the Negro League, could take the pressure that Cohen couldn't. Rickey also prepared carefully for Robinson's debut as McGraw had not for Cohen's. In patronizing terms, Rickey warned Black leaders that gloating or public enthusiasm could ruin Robinson's chances. He may have been right. The self-disciplined behavior of the African-American community during Robinson's first few years contrasted

sharply with the Jewish community's lionizing of Cohen in the late 1920s.

Branch Rickey may have been remembering the painful story of a Black college athlete reduced to tears by discrimination, but, above all, he was a brilliant baseball businessman. Rickey saw both the economic potential of African-American spectators, and, as the historian Ron Story suggests, a new, plentiful source of cheap baseball labor.

Sports fans like to dream and reminisce about the good old days when money didn't seem to matter much, but once you start looking, those days are hard to find. Deep Throat's advice to Woodward and Bernstein—"Follow the money"—may be the most helpful guide when exploring the history of professional sports. But don't follow it with clodhoppers that pound on about corruption and obscure the trail. Follow it lightly, at a distance, attentive to its seductive twistings and odd turnings.

Watch, for instance, how money persuaded skeptical Jewish parents to value their sons' sporting activity. Abe Attell, the "Little Hebrew," held the world featherweight title from 1901-1912. Attell first deceived, then promised his outraged mother that his initial pro fight would be his last. When, unhurt, he handed her the $15 victory purse, she was astonished—and asked, "Abie, when are you going to fight again?" Up against desperate poverty, anti-boxing principles took a dive. Can we gain some insight here into Attell's later career as a notoriously crooked boxer and gambler who helped fix the 1919 World Series?

Then there's the story of the great Jewish boxer Bennie Leonard, who came home after one of his early fights with a black eye and $20. While his mother wept over the injury, his father spoke out of sweatshop need. "All right Benny, keep on fighting. It's worth getting a black eye for $20. I am getting verschwartzt [blackened] for $20 a week." Might Attell's mother and Leonard's father help us sympathize with a poor Black mother's dilemma when her son comes home sporting a new pair of Reebok Pumps and lays $250 on the kitchen table?

Desperate to escape their poverty, Jews moved into whatever economic arenas were open to them and in which they could gain the slightest foothold. They found it easier to work and play in newer, more open institutions which either hadn't had time to develop anti-Semitism, or gained little from it: movies, basketball, and the ring. According to Levine, there were twenty-two Jewish world title holders between 1910 and 1939. Baseball, by contrast, had, by the 1890s, firmly excluded African-Americans from the national pastime; football was played principally in colleges and universities restrictive to Jews; club sports by definition took place in venues where Jews were not welcome.

But by the mid-1950s, the exclusionary force of anti-Semitism began to wane; Jews migrated into new economic and professional opportunities and spent far less time on the courts and the canvas. As Jews left sports and urban neighborhoods, African Americans moved in to stay.

Given the current deplorable state of Black-Jewish relations, especially in New York, it may be worth suggesting that the comparative sports history of the two groups can help explain some of the tensions. Though Levine doesn't say it, there must be some lingering resentment on the part of older Jews toward the transformation of basketball from a Jewish sport into a Black one.

Furthermore, the way in which Jewish sports history is selectively remembered obscures important similarities between the experiences of Blacks and Jews. Those American Jews who oppose affirmative action policies conveniently forget that most Jewish major-leaguers were chosen to attract Jewish baseball customers.

Al Rosen, an All-Star third baseman for the Cleveland Indians from 1947 to 1956 and, until recently, a baseball executive, grew up in Miami observing Judaism more with his fists than through prayer. Throughout his career he identified himself strongly, even pugnaciously, as a Jew: challenging anti-Semitism, raising money for Jewish causes, and sitting out games on Yom Kippur. His urge to be "American" led him, in 1953, to distort his own experience, when he declared baseball free of prejudice, "where color and religion don't mean a thing.The only question baseball asks ...is 'can you produce?'" Rosen's own experience had demonstrated that this was patent nonsense. Baseball asked lots of other questions besides.

Once African Americans were allowed into professional sports, there they have stayed. True, the money inside sports has soared; between the power of television and its celebrity endorsements, professional sports, along with entertainment, may be the career paths most attractive to Black youth.

But Levine's evidence suggests that if a racial or ethnic group dominates a sport, we may infer the group's relative exclusion from the mainstream of economic life. Most African Americans, in other words—not despite but because of Michael Jordan's multi-million dollar income—are not likely to join Jews in the middle-class suburbs. Carefully observed, sports are neither mirrors nor levellers nor safety valves: Rather, they are like canaries in coal mines, alerting us to developments we should not ignore.

I didn't get that curator's job, by the way. Levine should have. But I do remember thinking more about Sandy Koufax than I had in a long time. Even though Koufax played for the Dodgers, a team in the wrong league entirely, he was my hero. He didn't play baseball on the High Holidays, and that, more than anything else, helped me, as a nine- and ten-year-old, explain my Jewishness in the suburban southern California elementary schools of my youth. None of my classmates had the slightest idea what a Jew was, and my attempts to explain were wasted breath. But when I could point to Koufax doing the same thing, they sort of got it.

There are ironies in this story. On the one hand, Jewish ballplayers' dilemmas regarding the High Holidays frequently made it into the national press from the 1930s on. And in a sense, their decision (mostly) to sit out Yom Kippur was a refusal to submit to the great mass uniformity of the consumer culture. As I remember those days spent glued to radios during recess, baseball itself seemed a refusal to the world of math, social studies, lunch, art, meetings, reports, and the like. Koufax's Jewish resistance was a kind of a touchstone to otherness, to worlds elsewhere, outside of the clock and grownup rhythms. At the same time, Koufax performed a contrary service, explaining who we were, making it all right, helping us all fit in.

Perhaps that is the last function of the history, completing the process of assimilation that sports first promised to immigrant Jewish children. Once enacted, the story is done: The World Series is played on Yom Kippur and at night, and Jewish athletes are barely even noticed any more. □

Unsettled Issues

Rita E. Hauser

Zealots for Zion by Robert I. Friedman. Random House, 1992. 304 pp., $23.

The contents of *Zealots for Zion* will come as no surprise to the readers of TIKKUN. Indeed, the details and color that Friedman provides about the agenda of the messianic Jewish settlers in the West Bank and Gaza will surely deepen the foreboding that often grips supporters of a truly democratic Israel. Above all else, Friedman documents the extent to which Israeli political figures have used the settler movement for their own purposes. He also argues convincingly that the general unwillingness of many Israelis to thwart the zealots poses a grave threat to the future of Palestinian-Israeli relations and the tenuous chance of negotiating a peace between Israel and its Arab neighbors.

Friedman opens his history of contemporary zealotry with the story of Rabbi Moshe Levinger, whom he calls Israel's Ayatollah Khomeini. Levinger embodies the view that God, not Theodore Herzl, was the first Zionist. For him, it is God's laws, not those of the State, that govern, and in the name of God, all is permissible. Like the late Rabbi Meir Kahane, whose life Friedman ably depicted in an earlier book, Levinger is a violent, somewhat repugnant man, who openly professes hatred and racist beliefs about the Arabs residing within and without Israel, and who is willing to confront, with force if necessary, Israeli civilian and military authorities to accomplish his aim of reclaiming all of God's land for the Jews.

Not all settlers are religious, but almost all are hawkish in their desire to rid the West Bank and Gaza of those Palestinians who do not accept Jewish dominance even in areas heavily populated by Palestinians.

Friedman vividly describes the story of Jewish settlements in Gaza, including the difficulties faced by the Israeli army in its disagreeable task of providing security. In June 1992, thirty-six highly decorated reservists petitioned both Shamir and Rabin for immediate withdrawal of the army from the Gaza Strip which, they contend, has no security value for Israel. Subsequent violence, however, demonstrates that even if Israel were to contemplate a complete evacuation of Gaza, the presence of settler families there virtually precludes such a move.

To date, about one-third of Gaza's land is under exclusive Israeli control, as is a third of the underground water supply. Overpumping by the Jewish settlements has produced excessive salination of the area's groundwater, resulting in the devastation of the orange groves that produce the Palestinians' main cash crop. Protesters against these arrangements generally have wound up behind barbed wire.

In the book's final chapter, Friedman briefly traces the role of Peace Now in its attempt to expose and oppose the settlement movement, along with the extraordinary efforts of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) and other established Jewish groups to discredit the efforts of Peace Now in the American media and among members of Congress. Friedman concludes that Israel must choose between keeping all the land and knowing no peace, or giving up control of the land to the Palestinians while assuring an Israeli military presence there.

The Palestinians and most Arab states have accepted the fact of Israel and are willing to make peace. But, warns Friedman, unless the Israelis end their occupation soon, Zionism, the national liberation movement of the Jewish people, will be sunk by the zealots and the chance for peace lost for the foreseeable future. □

Tellers of Jewish Tales

Barry W. Holtz

The Book of Legends/Sefer Ha-Aggadah Edited by Hayim Nahman Bialik and Yehoshua Hana Ravnitzky Schocken Books, 1992, 897 pages, $75.

Is there Judaism without ritual? Judaism without Jewish Law? Sefer Ha-Aggadah, the immense compendium of classic rabbinic legends edited by Hayim Nahman Bialik and Yehoshua Hana Ravnitzky, came into being as an affirmative answer to those iconoclastic questions. It was an attempt by its editors to do no less than reconceptualize the classical Jewish tradition, and it is one of the great achievements of modern Jewish literary culture. First published in Hebrew in 1908, it now appears in a long-anticipated English version by the late rabbi William G. Braude.

"Aggadah" is the term used commonly to refer to virtually all non-legal traditional Jewish literature.[1] It is used in contradistinction to Halachah, Jewish religious law and practice. Here, in almost a thousand large, double-columned pages, is a vast resource of legend, midrash, fantasy, and tale. Organized in six sections, the work begins by retelling legends according to biblical chronology. This section includes tales about heroes and

prophets, the creation of the world, and the building of the Temple. *Sefer Ha-Aggadah* then moves on to relate legends of the lives of the early rabbis: the story of Hillel, Shammai, and the proselyte who wants to learn the entire Torah while standing on one foot; the tale of Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai, smuggled out of Jerusalem in a coffin as the Romans lay siege to the city; the death of Akiva and the Ten Martyrs.

Bursting with stories, wandering across the length and breadth of classic rabbinic literature, *Sefer Ha-Aggadah* explores a variety of themes—Israel, God, Torah, language, Messiah, Sabbath and festivals, man, and nature. This is a big, sprawling book, filled with multiple versions of stories, in its own way very much like the classic rabbinic literature itself.

Braude and the publisher have done us all a service by providing reliable notes locating the original sources of the texts. The translation, though slightly old-fashioned in style, provides an accurate, readable representation of the original.

In creating Sefer Ha-Aggadah, Bialik and Ravnitzky were quite consciously engaged in a revolutionary cultural project—for traditional Jewish thought, the possibility of an authoritative Jewish text without Halacha was almost unimaginable. Christians since the time of St. Paul portrayed Judaism as being in thrall to the Law. By the late nineteenth century, some Jews had begun to share that negative valuation of Halacha.

The Haskalah, the Jewish Enlightenment, challenged such fundamental assumptions of Jewish traditional life as the existence of a God who gave the Torah and enacted a set of commandments and accompanying practices that Jews were required to fulfill. The resultant crisis of faith led some to reject Judaism as a discipline of behavior. Others, such as Samson Raphael Hirsch, mounted a neo-Orthodox defense of the traditional way. Still others during the same period sought to accommodate tradition and modernity through approaches that would eventually emerge as Reform or Conservative Judaism.

Bialik and Ravnitzky mapped out yet another route. Rather than rejecting Judaism, reaffirming tradition, or finding a middle road to religious faith, Bialik and Ravnitzky chose to reinvent Judaism *from within* by turning to the often-under-appreciated "aggadic" elements of the tradition. In doing so, they mounted a defense of Judaism on artistic or literary grounds rather than on its religious merits.

In creating Sefer Ha-Aggadah, Bialik and Ravnitzky were consciously engaged in a revolutionary cultural project.

They were not alone in exploring Aggadah. It was no accident that within a short period of time at the turn of the last century, two other major works—like *Sefer Ha-Aggadah*, both anthologies of texts—were devoted to an examination of the aggadic side of the Jewish tradition. For Bialik and Ravnitsky were part of a general intellectual *zeitgeist* that flowed out of nineteenth-century Romanticism and represented, at least in part, a reaction against the rationalism of the previous era. The wisdom of the emotions, as represented not in high art but in folk literature and fairy tales, engaged the interest of researchers and writers, including the Brothers Grimm. Micah Bin-Gorion's *Mimekor Yisrael* stressed the folkloric aspects of that tradition and, contrary to common assumptions, he sometimes viewed the *later* versions of stories as the more authentic. Freed from rabbinic "censorship," these later stories, in Bin-Gorion's view, reflected the deepest core of Jewish consciousness. His focus on folklore, however, meant that much of the early rabbinic tradition was ignored in his collection.

Louis Ginzberg's *Legends of the Jews* focused on the Aggadah surrounding biblical narratives, conflating numerous stories into a seamless retelling. His voluminous footnotes traced the relationship between parallel versions of the same Aggadot, but unlike *Sefer Ha-Aggadah*, *Legends* does not provide a straight-forward presentation of the tales and interpretations as they appear in the rabbinic works. Ginzberg's work is immensely useful as an overview of the legends, for example, about David and Goliath, or the rabbinic view of Queen Esther, but does not give the midrashic work in its original form, with biblical prooftexts, puns, and wordplays that are at the heart of rabbinic style and exegesis.

Of these three great works, *Sefer Ha-Aggadah* is closest in style and presentation to the classical texts themselves. Although Bialik and Ravnitzky reworked some of the stories and in certain ways presented them out of context, the legends of *Sefer Ha-Aggadah* are very much tied to the ancient sources themselves. In his elegant and insightful introduction to this new translation, David Stern, a professor of rabbinic literature at the University of Pennsylvania, traces the way that modern scholars have studied the changes that Bialik and Ravnitzky made in the early texts as they put together *Sefer Ha-Aggadah*. Nonetheless, as Stern puts it:

> For all their subtle revisions, Bialik and Ravnitzky preserved the rabbis' own voices; even when they altered the details of an Aggadah, they treated their material with a tact and sensitivity that are hard to fault. Indeed, it may even be suggested that, in editing the Aggadot, Bialik and Ravnitzky were acting in the spirit of Aggadah itself.

Still, it is important to remember that Bialik and Ravnitzky, unlike the ancient rabbis, did not view Aggadah as a religious enterprise. These men were the products of three interrelated secular forces, which coalesced in the creation of *Sefer Ha-Aggadah*. First, Bialik and Ravnitzky were late nineteenth-century Enlightenment Jews whose focus was no longer on God, but on human beings and particularly on the people of Israel. Second, they were Zionist visionaries who believed in the necessity of creating a modern Jewish culture in Hebrew. As the great national poet of the modern Hebrew language, Bialik saw his mission as two-fold: creating

a contemporary literature and recovering the roots of that literature, building on the sources of that literature, by exploring the now-unfamiliar classics of the Hebrew literary past—particularly in the Aggadah. Ravnitzky, his long-time friend and his "discoverer" as a poet, was an editor and book publisher who shared Bialik's sense of mission and founded the journals and publishing houses to put that agenda into effect. The two envisioned *Sefer Ha-Aggadah* as the inception of their project of cultural change.

Finally, Bialik and Ravnitzky were heirs to the general romanticism of the age. They viewed *Sefer Ha-Aggadah* as preeminently a literary work, and the romantic belief in the almost mystical power of art looms behind the "in-gathering" of texts (to use Bialik and Ravnitzky's term) that was the mission of *Sefer Ha-Aggadah*. Through this volume they aimed to create an artistic past for the Jewish people—a canon that would form the core of a modern artistic imagination.

We live in a time that has seen a remarkable resurgence of interest in the power of story, manifest in the numerous storytelling festivals that have sprouted up around the country in recent years, in publications of traditional folktales such as those from African or Native American cultures, and even in the popularity of figures such as Garrison Keillor and Spalding Gray. There is something in the human psyche that seems to demand story, that relies on it for understanding and insight. Sefer Ha-Aggadah is the greatest modern collection of classic Jewish stories, and the new English translation is the easiest way for even the uninitiated reader to uncover the enormous range and variety of tales from the Talmudic age. For people who may be more familiar with Jewish folk tales of Eastern Europe, this work reveals the sources behind that later literature and, more important, the foundation stories of a rabbinic culture that shaped and dominated Jewish consciousness for 2,000 years.

Bialik and Ravnitzky surely were correct—perhaps more than even they could have anticipated when *Sefer Ha-Aggadah* first appeared—that a post-Emancipation version of Judaism was going to rely far more on Aggadah than on Halacha. The simple fact of life at the end of this century is that most Jews do not view traditional Jewish observance as binding and authoritative. Those who perform the traditional rituals and accept the traditional prohibitions—even among some Orthodox Jews—may view "law" as custom rather than divinely mandated commandment.

A Judaism based on Aggadah, however, brings its own set of problems. It is harder to build community, at least in a localized sense, without a consistent and reliable communal practice; and it is harder still to build a meaningful and symbolically resonant religious life without a discipline of actions. Hardest of all, perhaps, is to pass such a culture on to the next generation, as we in America have learned all too well. Yet Bialik and Ravnitzky, who saw a Jewish state as the ultimate future of the Jewish people, may have felt that the issues of observance and practice were relatively peripheral and, from their Zionist perspective, perhaps they were right.

Whether or not one shares the editors' perspective, there is little doubt about the value of *Sefer Ha-Aggadah*. I am sometimes asked to name the ten Jewish books that should be in every Jewish library. With this new publication I can begin my list without hesitation—buy a Bible, a prayerbook, and a book about the Jewish life-cycle, festivals, and ritual practice. Then, as soon as possible, buy *Sefer Ha-Aggadah*.

[1]There are some classic texts that are neither aggadic nor halachic—such as classic philosophical works such as *The Guide of the Perplexed* or medieval Hebrew poetry both secular and religious—nonetheless such books tend to be the exception before the modern period. Even the classical mystical texts take the form of either halachic or aggadic commentaries. □

KING'S EMPOWERING LEGACY

(Continued from p. 53)

firmative action, called Operation Breadbasket, a campaign of pressure on major corporations to hire inner-city Blacks and invest in the ghettos, proved more beneficial to Black businessmen than to the unemployed. Entrepreneurial impulses may fill the void left by the lack of grass-roots movement-building but they are inadequate substitutes for a coherent transformative strategy to overturn systematic injustice.

Another danger, in my view, is the multiculturalists' distance from King's philosophy of nonviolent resistance. While revolutionaries in Eastern Europe consciously emulated his nonviolent methods in successfully overthrowing communist tyranny, the tool of mass civil disobedience has been largely rejected in his native land. This is partly because, unlike in the anticommunist revolutions, disciplined nonviolent action has rarely been bold or forceful enough to correct the widespread belief equating violent with militant and nonviolent with passive. With few exceptions, such as recent AIDS protests by ACT-UP, neither its practitioners nor its detractors have given nonviolent direct action a fair test of its potency and potentiality.

Although King's nonviolent perspective has most often been criticized on the tactical level, especially the refusal to defend oneself with violence, its foundation is more spiritual and psychological than physical, more about resisting "internal violence of spirit" than injuries of the flesh. Because of his faith in the sacredness of human personality and in redemption and reconciliation as the road to the beloved community, he was troubled by the depersonalization of individuals that collectively produced the sickness of America's soul. It is essential, therefore, that activists refuse to contribute to this dehumanization but offer an alternative stance affirming

people's humanness while firmly resisting behavior that depersonalizes or objectifies others.

I suggest that King's nonviolent philosophy is in part an ethic of struggle to sustain the spirit of activists for the long haul while fostering a conducive moral and psychological climate to make change ultimately more agreeable to the opposition. A vital element of this ethic is the need for activists to maintain their equilibrium—to adhere to nonviolent principles, as activist/writer Barbara Deming put it, not "to remain pure" but "to escape becoming dizzy." If activists do not strike a balance between asserting their own rights and responsibilities and respecting the rights of others, they will depersonalize themselves as well as their opponents, losing their own humanity, and effectiveness, in the name of social progress.

King's genius lay in arousing the moral passion and courage that are the lifeblood of social movements. Yet when commitment to absolute ends degenerates into moral absolutism, the result is self-righteous moralism, dogmatism, and intolerance, which can gravely damage movements and their goals. King witnessed this dynamic in his own time with the increasing moral rigidity of Black Power advocates and the white New Left—the birth of "political correctness." Moral passion must be balanced and tempered, its hard edges softened but also deepened, by a complementary dimension of moral power—a spirit of moral openness, sensitivity, and compassion. Embodying this creative tension, King balanced his adherence to absolute and universal values with a refusal to chain himself to the false god of political certitude. This attitude of questioning and self-criticism, of doubt wrestling with faith, stands in stark contrast to the moral dizziness that has distorted movements for racial justice and peace.

The unifying vision of the promised land that King held at the end of his life and that we have inherited—of love and justice joining hands to heal the nation's soul—has, like most prophetic insight, been little seen and largely unexplored. His faith in universal truths, as ends and as means, may seem old-fashioned at a time when postmodernism celebrates moral relativity. Just at the historical moment when a unified challenge to the status quo is most needed and most propitious, the moral and political fragmentation of the multiculturalists and their potential allies appears to be a major roadblock to transformational politics. Yet now that the right-wing forces and their mean-spirited moral absolutism seem finally to be losing ground, space is in fact opening for another perspective: a new democratic vision of human rights grounded in universal values that will speak to a twenty-first century world civilization very different from the one that King lived and died in, but whose challenges and complexities he helped us to confront. □

ORANGE

(Continued from p. 44)

float to the floor. Still trying to reconnect with him, I scramble to help him pick up his assorted notes and there on one sheet of paper, written in English (all the other pages are in Arabic) to my horror and disbelief are written the words: An American Jew.

Why would he write those words? My head is spinning. Could this be, maybe it is, the note he was going to pass to the terrorists before they bundled me off in a van with blue plates? Now I'm sitting in the cafeteria sunk in the collective paranoia, desperate to reason with myself, a repository of all those stereotypes I've been arguing against. On some level, I know I am succumbing to the archetypal forces of hysteria and fear here. On some level, I believe those words he wrote might be innocent, but at this moment, surrounded by hatred for Israel, I can't be completely sure of anything except that I want to get home alive.

On the ride home and then over a long dinner, Abdul and I talk for hours. The two of us are now living out the essential paradox of Occupation/Intifada: We can only move against this war by moves toward trust and friendship, opening the channels of communication, but any incipient trust, the "merely personal" is vulnerable to the far stronger ancestral forces of fear here in the Middle East. The atmosphere is better, but now that mistrust has started up it's insidious and contagious. I don't know how to talk about it, haven't truly recovered from seeing that note. Nor have I broken the ice by asking him about it. How can I?

I recall how the civil administration interrupted the peace conference in Nablus. I reflect on how the soldiers interrupted a vital conversation at Dheisheh, and how a fragile, probably innocent piece of paper is disrupting my relation to Abdul, without whom I can go nowhere in the West Bank. In a strange way, the Israelis were right; the obstacles to creative relationship and subtle conversations are huge in this part of the world. About those obstacles, I was indeed naive.

Abdul and I plan out the coming week, decide to go back to Nablus the next day today. He very much wants me to go to Gaza on Friday. We'll meet members of the peace delegation. In the planning it all seems plausible, but this morning I know I can't spend a day combatting paranoia. Yesterday there were shootings at Israeli cars in Nablus. Last night Abdul called twice, changing ideas about which car we should take. Whatever new information I would have picked up today in Nablus (and I intend to see Sami again, and Marion and Lila) the most important piece of information is exactly this paranoia and discomfort,

this most unsweet distrust that infects me as it does almost everyone else here.

Over dinner, Abdul tells me that Doctor Abdel Shafi told the crowd that Israel started the war of 1967. Yes, they matter, these different readings of history matter immensely, especially when the personal dimension breaks down. Without understanding Arabic, I intuit how much demonizing of Israel goes on, I realize why Amos Oz says: These people never try and imagine what it's like to be an Israeli. Of all those sweet conversations I don't know what to say except that I will return for more, knowing now that in Israel all sweetness between the two factions is limited, that scapegoating and stereotyping work both ways, that killings and deportations directly affect personal relations between Palestinians and Jews, without which the space between two tragedies disappear.

The small community of journalists from all over the world, many of whom are Jews, are the only ones who see first hand what's going on in the West Bank and Gaza. Yet the Israeli press and especially the Israeli government often distort what they report, focusing Israeli public opinion against the dangers of Hamas and Arab extremism, ignoring the way they themselves, by stalling on the peace process, feed those very groups.

From the Israeli government down to the ordinary Israeli citizens, there's little sense of urgency about the Palestinians and their needs, little emotional emphasis on the peace talks. It does not take a visionary to see that in the absence of real movement in the peace negotiations, the mood of despair building among the Palestinians will eventually explode in the form of increased bloodshed.

TIKKUN readers may think me gullible, perhaps imagine me as one of the sixties radicals who negated her Jewishness by over-identifying with, for example, the Black movement, or as someone easily duped and deceived by our seductive, publicity-hungry enemies in the Holy Land. You know the type: flirting with members of an oppressed group, thinking that they are so wonderful, unable to look at them clearly, riddled with guilt. But I do not fit that profile. I have always identified with my own kind: I am attracted Jewish men, and to the women's movement. I've never sought friends who were politically correct.

I came to Israel not to do political work or to work out political guilt, but to find my ancestral roots. I came here to study Torah, to live inside a Jewish world, not to take a stand against it. My increasing belief in the wrong-headedness of the Israeli position toward the Palestinian population doesn't make it easier for me to "fit in" with the Israelis I know. In fact, I live now with an Israeli man who is right wing and who is often upset with my views. My kids are not getting enough of my attention as I put myself in potentially dangerous situations day after day just to find out first hand what is going on here. Feeling empathy with Palestinians does not win any popularity in Israel.

My caring for the Palestinians is not a form of self-hate but of self-love. It's an affirmation of what is best in Judaism, a proud claiming of our tradition by a Jew who is not afraid to take seriously the Torah injunction "ve-ahavta la-ger," ("you must love the stranger"). And there's something politically useful—building a necessary optimism—when Jews and Palestinians hang out together, seek to get to know each other, in this time of rare opportunity and eroding hopes. And so I end as I began, believing, despite the unpopularity of this belief, that only through the cultivation of friendship between our two people will peace on the ground, as they say, be achieved. □

STEP ON A CRACK

(Continued from p. 28)

door, her eyes following the crack of hall light across Simon's blanket. She tiptoed into the room, lay down on the floor beside his futon. He breathed softly, evenly, in and out. His neck smelled sweet.

She returned to the living room. Outside, the pink-purple air hummed with the sounds of Wrigley Field, the rise and fall of fan pleasures and disappointments, a net of normality to catch her if she fell. She raised the screen, leaned out as far as she could, drinking in the warm, noisy summer air. If she believed in God, she might have resorted to bargaining: Give me good news tomorrow, and I'll plant an acre of trees in Israel, I'll give a tenth of my income to the JNF. But her offer, she was sure, was too paltry and trite for a God with real power over life and death, and even if the Eternal would have agreed to such a specifically Jewish, unimaginative pledge, she would have had to preface it with, "Excuse me, I know you haven't heard from me in a while, and I know it's wrong to come to you just when I need something, and I'm not sure even now, talking, if someone is listening out there," her words dying into the silence of embarrassment and shyness.

"Don't jump," Andy said.

She pulled her head in, turned politely around.

"You were awful to me," he said.

"I know. I'm sorry." Although close enough to touch, he seemed small to her, as if she were looking at him through the wrong end of a telescope. "I don't think I love you, Andy."

"You don't mean that."

She fixed on the fine black mesh of the screen above

the open mouth of the window, wanting to suck her words back into wherever they had come from. As a teenager, her first uttered "I love you" had made something like flowers leap from her skin, melded the jumble of joy and terror and weakness in her limbs into a single emotion that felt eternal. Certain words, she had always known, had an alchemical creative force. She gave him a look of terrified apology.

"It's not true," he said. "Why do you say it if it's not true?"

Her eyes bored into his eyes, she cocked her head to the same side and at the same angle as his, trying to become better than she was. "I'm a bad yogi. I can't make the journey all by myself to the end of pain."

He embraced her, kissed her neck, kissed down the top of her chest to where her bra began.

"Here's a Zen story," she said. "A monk is being chased by a tiger to the edge of a cliff. He starts to climb down the cliff, but there's another tiger below, looking up hungrily. As the ledge he's on starts to crumble he sees a flower growing out of a rock, and smiles at the flower. And receives instantaneous and perfect enlightenment."

"And so?"

"I don't feel like smiling at flowers."

"Maybe you need more tigers in your life."

He unhooked her bra, kissed a circle around her right, her questionable breast.

He said, "Don't you want me to do this?"

She wanted to want him to do this, their perhaps last lovemaking with her body intact. But the idea made her shudder. Her skin was a layer of dead whitish cells, dry and tight over her bones; she could not suffer the opening and entry into her body like Edith Cavell. She turned to one side, shielding her chest with her upper arm. "Okay," he said. "All right."

He returned to the TV room. She walked downstairs, out to the front gate. South across Waveland the heads of the top row of bleacher fans bobbed and swayed against the purple sky. Behind her, their own white-sided building glowed a ghostly amethyst, insubstantial as a storybook house. The air shimmered with the silence of a mass of people waiting for something to happen. There came a loud cheer; someone had done something good. But lots of Cardinal fans had come to the game. She couldn't see the scoreboard, didn't know whether to be pleased or concerned.

The wind rose slightly, a cool September breeze. Turning to go back in, she saw at her feet, glowing salmon-pink like everything else, a crumpled McDonald's carryout bag. Inside were the remains of a Big Mac and an empty Batman cup, recently tossed over the chain-link fence that encircled their yard. Holding the bag between thumb and forefinger she felt her way along the narrow passage between her house and a neighbor's, unlocked the wooden gate to the alley.

She had just dropped the bag into one of the alley trash bins when footsteps she hadn't registered made her aware of them as they abruptly ceased. Less than ten feet away a man stood with his back to her. She watched a dark spot form between his legs at the base of her house. A puddle gathered at his feet. He danced out of the way, resnapping his pants, giving her a smile of somewhat inebriated complicity. Blond, with small, exquisite features, he might have been the man she had screamed at earlier that night.

"You seem to like our facilities," she said.

He gazed at her, his smile drying on his face. He shrugged and walked away. She stared at his retreating back, the triangular narrowing from shoulder to hip of a well-built young man. She called out, "You know, you're not that well hung."

He stopped, turned. "What's that, Ma'am?"

"Did your mother bring you up to be a disgusting pig? Where are your manners and your brains?"

"Shit," he said.

She stood her ground, inured to pain like a yogi, like someone who knows no matter what that she will die tomorrow. "You have an itsy-bitsy teeny-weeny dick. I want you to think about that next time you want to pull your pants down where you're not supposed to. What, are you going to sock me? There's a brave lad."

He took a step toward her, a hand upraised. His handsome boyish face looked red, though it might have been the lights of Wrigley. Part of her wanted to run but her legs were stiff; she didn't move even when he was close enough for her to smell the beer on his breath. But when he grabbed her shoulder so hard the little bones crunched together, she was astonished to find herself doing what had been forbidden so many years ago she couldn't remember ever having had the impulse: She bit the back of his hand. As he fell back, drawing his hurt hand to his mouth, she felt on her tongue the little hairs on his skin, the oddly metallic taste of his blood, and she fled inside the gate and upstairs, locking doors.

From the TV room window she and Andy tossed out water balloons, watched the young man vanish into the shadows at the end of the alley. They gave each other a high five. She was trembling, he, unnerved by what she had just done, laughing wildly. He put his arms around her; they sank to the floor. She looked at his face, wondering whether or not she honestly wanted to kiss him, when a small, blurred but unmistakeable jolt ran through her body along her spine to the bones of her skull. It was the physical equivalent of a dream she sometimes had of falling out of bed. She jumped up, noticing that one of the children's Lego constructions had fallen off its shelf. Andy shouted out the window, "Stop

that!" She felt another jolt. The TV rocked on its stand. "It's your friend," he said.

Down in the alley an old white convertible backed up three or four feet till it banged the garage on the other side. In the driver's seat was a blond-haired, red-faced, handsome young man. Head down, shoulders hunched like a football player, he slammed his car at a corner of their building. There was a distinct crack.

"Our back gate," he said.

In the purple light the man's wet hair looked pink, his head smaller than before. He backed up again. She dialed 911, but as she gave their address she was thrown to the floor. "Andy honey, he's trying to knock our house down!"

"We should have built out of brick," he said.

"That's really funny."

"We're taking things into our own hands," he said, raising the window as high as it would go. He took out the screen. "Let's hear it for Bernard Goetz. Give me a hand with the TV, darling."

Together they lifted the heavy set to the windowsill, balancing it on the edge. "When he makes his next move, just let go," he said. "Let's hear it for Bernard and Mrs. Goetz. Your Honor, Sir, I was protecting my family. Aim for the windshield. I hope we don't kill him."

"Andy, are you sure you want to take the chance—"

Her words trailed off. She stood at the window beside him, burning with a fury so pure and unfettered it was almost love, the two of them, husband and wife together holding their relatively new twenty-four-inch Sony portable television set against the ravaging hordes. There was a siren, a flashing blue light. Startled, she let go of her side of the load. To compensate, Andy pulled back on his side, then to stop the set from falling on him, he sent it forward and out the window. It dented the trunk of the big white car speeding off down the alley, then smashed into its elemental shards of glass and pressboard.

The police car screamed away after the convertible and for a moment there was silence. Then came a roar, at first tentative, then crescendoing, sustaining itself. They ran to the living room, turned on the radio to learn that Mark Grace had just crossed the plate. He had blasted a ball out onto Waveland Avenue. With a man on. Bottom of the seventh, Cubs 4, Cardinals 2.

She sat down on the floor beside Andy, leaning back against the sofa. "The floor feels sloped. Does it feel sloped to you?"

"It's always been sloped."

"We should inspect." She tried to get up.

"Tomorrow."

"I'm busy tomorrow," she said. "That's supposed to be funny!"

She broke away from him, saw tears in his eyes, sat down. "What's the matter, Andy? The Cubs might win this one."

He kissed her forehead.

"Andy," she said, "tell me why you're crying."

He wouldn't look at her.

"Andy," she said, "I know why."

He took her hand, kissed it. His cheeks were damp.

"This is what I wanted." She kissed his mouth. Her lips felt warm and larger than usual, she loved kissing him. "To know you're in this too."

"Of course, I'm in it!" he said. "Where else have I been?!"

"But now I feel it. Before, I couldn't feel it."

"I don't see why you couldn't feel it!"

He seemed a little angry with her but she was kissing his face, his hands. They made love on the floor like teenagers, wild and mindless of consequences. When at last they rolled onto their separate backs on the rug, he said, "So from now on I can only have you when there's a war going on outside?"

"That's right. If I know you're concerned about it."

"I don't know if I can take it." He laid his head against the base of the sofa, gazing out at the salmon-gray night.

"You'd better," she said. She watched him absorb the top of the ninth. There was one out. According to Steve Stone, Assenmacher (4 saves) was keeping the ball low. "You'd better," she said, but without urgency. The voices of the announcers seemed preternaturally sharp, almost luminous. Balls crackled like lightning into the catcher's mitt. She felt whole, well, immortal as a teenager. "I have this nice feeling," she said, her lips to the top of his arm.

"It'll go away," he said.

"But it's here now," she said, licking his arm, savoring the sharp, sour taste of salt. □

TDU

(Continued from p. 24)

Presser keeps extending the time to vote. But we have the silent Teamster. The fucker could've extended the time limit forever. We won by 88 percent."

TDU had scored a victory on a national level; the dissidents had defeated the leadership on the biggest contract in the industry. "Not only had we blocked the agreement," said Paff. "We slaughtered them. Most journalists think TDU won because the members got fed up with corruption. Corruption wasn't the biggest issue," Paff explained.

What really drove the rank-and-file to throw out their leaders was the recognition that corrupt leaders couldn't effectively fight the employers.

George Bush and Union Democracy

What really crippled the delivery power of the post-

Hoffa IBT generation was deregulation. Competition meant falling trucking rates, which impaired the bosses' ability to provide even crumbs for union members. As the contracts got worse and the pesky TDU'ers exposed their failings, the Teamster bosses scrambled to bring back regulation—naturally not by political mobilization from below, but through pay-offs and manipulation at the top. One of these manipulations, the bribery of Nevada senator Howard Cannon, chairman of the Commerce Committee, triggered a chain of events beginning with the conviction of Roy Williams in 1982 and ending in March 1989 with a consent decree establishing free elections in the IBT.

The rank-and-file finally threw out the Old Guard when they recognized that corrupt leaders were ineffective in delivering good contracts.

Presser had been a formidable political force even before he became president of the IBT in 1983. He controlled Democratic, Republican, Independent Voter Education, known as DRIVE, the strongest statewide political machine in Ohio, equipped with phone banks, grass-roots leaflet distribution, envelope stuffers, and a multi-million-dollar warchest. Ohio DRIVE owned a state-of-the-art rolling sound stage, complete with electrical outlets and a broadcast system that could be transported by truck from city to city.

Presidential candidate Ronald Reagan hitched a couple of election rides on Ohio DRIVE. In the 1980 and 1984 campaigns, he used the rolling sound stage seven times, and he used Presser's equipment at both of his inauguration ceremonies. In return, Mr. Free Market backed de-deregulation. In a 1980 speech to the Ohio Conference of Teamsters, Reagan attacked the Carter administration's deregulation program as "ill-conceived and not in the best interests of the transportation requirements of the country."

As president-elect, Reagan appointed Presser to his transition team. Presser even got to name the Secretary of Labor, Raymond Donovan, a New Jersey construction company executive. Attorney General Edwin Meese was Presser's biggest defender in the administration. Meese's indifference to the Teamsters' corruption is apparent in his assessment of Presser's integrity: "He's never been indicted," Meese told a former Reagan aide.

Who would have thought the Republicans would wind up helping militant trade unionism? Especially when Ronald Reagan and Jackie Presser were, as Liz Smith would say, "thisclose." And yet in 1988 the U.S. Justice Department finally invoked the RICO Act against the Presser regime, despite the fact that the Teamsters were pouring millions in cash and equipment into Republican campaigns. Why flush it down the toilet by getting rid of your benefactors?

Stanley Aronowitz, a noted union activist, author, and sociologist, sees the government's move against the Teamster old guard as part of a comprehensive effort to destroy the labor movement. "People like Richard Darman and David Stockman think in long-range terms," he notes. And the implication for Aronowitz, a vocal defender of Barry Feinstein and no admirer of TDU, is that the whole RICO process has weakened the labor movement.

A 113-page complaint charged the Teamster hierarchy with being coterminous with the Mob. Tracing a bloody skein of twenty murders, plus innumerable shootings, beatings, and acts of intimidation, the suit showed how the Teamster bosses had deprived the members of their rights as trade unionists. It established as a goal a gangster-free union environment for all Teamsters.

The terms of the remedy the government finally proposed were based on the letter Ken Paff had written to the Justice Department. Paff's position was "no takeover, free elections." In exchange for not bringing the leaders to trial, the Teamster bosses would have to agree to hold direct elections for all top offices. Rudolph Giuliani, the U.S. attorney for New York, had, in effect, bought TDU's argument.

Thomas Geoghegan, the author of *Which Side Are You On?*, and a principle member of TDU's legal team, writes, "Giuliani did this on his own. Congress, the Labor Department, all of them opposed rank-and-file elections. He had no support in official Washington."

Certainly not a lot. But for Giuliani to act, he had to get jurisdiction. And the Reaganites were divided. Some in the Justice Department wanted to keep the case in D.C.; they fought to keep the notoriously tough Giuliani from handling it in New York. Administration "moderates," such as Darman, and Republican Teamster supporters such as Meese and U.S. senator Alfonse D'Amato of New York fought over deregulation; over whether or not to institute civil RICO proceedings against the union; and over who should handle the case.

What was at stake? Why did Darman and his cohorts prevail? We know what interests suffered from deregulation, but who benefitted? The "consumer," according to economists. But in the case of trucking deregulation, the "consumers" were the big auto and steel companies who formerly paid marked-up freight costs. And these

costs had become increasingly intolerable as more and more Japanese cars rolled off freighters at Long Beach, California and Elizabeth, New Jersey.

When Roy Williams got caught using the Teamsters' Central States Pension Fund to bribe Senator Cannon, he traded mob secrets for leniency. New evidence on just how "mobbed up" the Teamsters were played into the hands of the mainline, corporate wing of the Republican Party. After the election of George Bush in 1988, during Reagan's lame-duck period, with Meese gravely weakened by allegations of his own shady dealings, the Justice Department finally decided to use civil RICO against the Teamsters. Judge David Edelstein's courtroom became the arena where the endgame was played.

TDU's attorneys, Geoghegan and Susan Jenik, pointed out that the Wagner Act provides for elections as a remedy for union corruption. The Justice Department finally bought their argument. But without mobilization at the base, elections might have simply legitimated boss rule. Thus, by establishing the terrain of participatory democracy, TDU had created a slippery slope down which the Teamster tops would slide to oblivion.

"Not even the Dead are safe if they win."

— Walter Benjamin

The old, internecine politics of the Teamsters was an always secretive, sometimes murderous struggle between the wiseguys of New York, Chicago, Detroit, Kansas City, and Boston. Whichever crime family got control of the International Executive Board got an "edge": smoother access to the members' pension funds; improved leverage in extorting funds from companies; political clout in influencing judges, politicians, and law enforcement.

In the new Teamster politics, the wiseguys are no longer fighting each other for control of the Marble Palace. The old guard struggles to maintain control of the middle level of the union—the fifty joint councils, about the size of states—and the four regional conferences. It's at these middle levels that jurisdictional decisions are made, grievances are decided, and the union gets much of its money and muscle for collective bargaining.

Some TDU'ers talk about a "vise" strategy to squeeze the old guard to death: The Carey administration exerts pressure from the top, while the TDU rank-and-file fights from below. But the actions and motives of the actual forces in play are more ambiguous.

A recent issue of the IBT's magazine, *The New Teamster* contains, as a condition of the consent decree, a federal government insert updating what the Justice Department is doing to clean up the union. After a dozen or so pages of legalese, the reader finds out the score: the government has removed more than 300 corrupt union officials. Carey–zero. Carey has allowed the government to perform all the heavy lifting in the work of cleaning out the Mob.

But Carey, his defenders in TDU point out, is in a complicated position. Right now, they concede, although he's set up an "Ethical Practices Committee," he hasn't expelled anyone or taken over any locals because of corruption. And why should he? If he does nothing to fight the old guard, if he tells the government, in effect, "Butt out of union affairs, I'm the corruption fighter here," the government is still going to remove the old guard under the terms of the civil RICO Act. He gets the benefit of government action without antagonizing the old guard.

"Don't kid yourself, the old guard can make Carey's life absolutely miserable," explains Herman Benson of the Association of Union Democracy, whose suit kept Teamster officials from counting the ballots and probably saved the integrity of the elections. "If Carey says 'A' they say 'B'. He needs them. The Teamsters as a union can't fight UPS, or any of the big companies without these local leaders."

Those who say a bridge has to be built to the old guard by the new leadership point to California. Early in 1992, Carey organized a successful statewide boycott which stopped Safeway from ditching their Teamster contract. Carey could not have won the battle without the help of California Teamster officials such as Chuck Mack, who had supported rival R.V. Durham's candidacy for IBT president.

The irony is that Carey, the man who campaigned using caricatures of Durham dressed in a zoot suit, wielding an Uzi, now works openly with his old-guard supporters. At the same time he keeps a careful distance from TDU. Carey spoke at the St. Louis TDU convention, but his name never appeared in pre-convention publicity. No one knew for sure until the last minute whether Carey would show up. He arrived Saturday afternoon, spoke for twenty minutes, and left twenty minutes later.

Carey takes an essentially *laizzez-faire* position on TDU. "I'm not TDU," he says. "But they have the right to express their views."

While some TDU'ers may think it's time to "rehabilitate" the old guard, many others say that Carey hasn't moved the union fast enough to drive them out. Carey may have sold off the Teamsters' jet fleet, but they don't see much change at the ground level. Highly knowledgeable observers, such as Arthur Fox, founder of PROD, say the Carey administration will never succeed in clearing out the old guard from the middle levels.

"The time to act was in the first hundred days," Fox said at a September 1992 TDU conference workshop on the IBT power structure. According to Fox, Carey's authority is going to be steadily diminished by this failure to move immediately and decisively.

TDU's formula—"A rank-and-file organization that's independent of the leadership but works with it," as Paff describes it—reveals a fundamental tension between those who see the need to support Carey's efforts to keep the union united and those who feel that TDU simply has to do what it does best: unite the members through mass participatory action in fighting the boss. Priorities are different depending on where you sit. TDU's newly elected "business agents" and local presidents see things from the perspective of the union office; and the rank-and-file looks at them from the perspective of the warehouse or the car barn.

No advanced industrialized country has so weak a labor movement. Does any other industrialized country have so weak a Left? Maybe this detachment of the Left from labor and labor from the Left explains a lot.

As the strongest radical presence in any union in America, TDU now has critics, including some on the Left who minimize the importance of Carey's election. According to Stanley Aronowitz, "Ron Carey is just a pork chop unionist," one who has no intention of changing the status quo, simply working toward the next contract. Aronowitz also believes TDU's influence has been exaggerated. "Where's their power in New York? What locals do they control?" he asks. Besides, Aronowitz contends, TDU is an organization that has no politics.

TDU's constitution, in fact, prevents it from taking any "political" stands. The clause was inserted at a time when the organization felt the need to focus on decisions they could influence in Detroit and Memphis, rather than those in El Salvador and Managua that they couldn't.

Perhaps the time has come to embrace a wider view of TDU's role. But at the St. Louis convention, a motion to go on record in support of creating a labor party was defeated almost unanimously.

The point of conventions, says Mike Parker, one of the original Berkeley industrializers, who attended the convention, is not to pass good resolutions. "Any convention tends to bring out the radicals in the organization. But TDU has to be for all the members. They have to feel comfortable in it. These rank-and-filers have to be able to go back to their locals and build TDU. If the resolutions we've passed have built a wall between them and those possible recruits, we've harmed TDU."

Ken Paff and Diana Kilmury—like Bill Clinton and Al Gore—represent a new generation of leaders. If anything, the differences between TDU and the old-line progressive labor leaders are wider than those between today's political generations. TDU has not become part of the labor establishment. Carey's election brought no more staff jobs. TDU's influence still remains restricted to one union—albeit the richest, most powerful, most mythic in America. Because of TDU, however, wiseguy culture no longer flourishes openly in the Teamsters. In its place, a culture of solidarity and a new method for achieving it—rank-and-file union democracy—is growing. If there are dilemmas and obstacles, they are a lot richer than those posed twenty years ago, when Hal Draper first talked about the need for students and intellectuals to get off campus and get a toehold in the union movement.

You can see the line running through American labor history that joins TDU to the CIO uprisings of the 1930s, Mother Jones, Eugene Debs, and the Knights of Labor. But much of today's intellectual Left, along with the union bigs, don't want to connect the dots. A mutual nonrecognition pact is in force: The Left wants to forget about labor, and labor wants to forget about the Left.

"Don't quote me," requested a former TDU'er who is now a top staffer at a big AFL-CIO union, "but the labor movement is a pitiful thing without the Left." It's true—the American trade union movement is weak, fragmented, shrinking, unable to live up to its ideals. No advanced industrialized country has so weak a labor movement. But what about the American Left? Isn't it also weak, fragmented, shrinking, and equally unable to live up to its ideals? Does any other industrialized country have so weak a Left? Maybe this detachment of the Left from labor and labor from the Left explains a lot of their mutual predicament.

In every city and on every campus in this country, Blacks and whites are at each other's throats. Yet at the TDU convention in St. Louis, it was Blacks and women who got the biggest hands from middle-aged white Teamsters, who are obviously struggling to show not just tolerance, but solidarity. A Black Teamster from Memphis, the leader of a TDU rank-and-file ticket that lost a local election by a handful of votes, obviously wanted to share this spirit. He ended his speech by saying, "I don't care if a guy looks like me, I care if he thinks like me."

If America could be unified in the pursuit of social justice by alliances at the top, it would have already happened. David Rockefeller and Vernon Jordan get along beautifully. It's at the bottom where solidarity has to be built. □

Close To The Edge

(Continued from p. 18)

sought. Chuck D's first response to the noise was to assure the media that, of course, *he* didn't believe any of this stuff. Few people thought he did: He has often seemed foolish, but not dumb. But what did it say about Public Enemy if this racist bullshit was coming from its minister of information? And how could its leader not know? Chuck was sounding like Richard Nixon or some equally distinguished white politician. For a time he seemed to regard all the flak as mainly an attack on *him*. At this point, many people who had merely loved Chuck's sound and fury found they cared about his soul; they held their breath and hoped he would remember the difference between badness and evil, and do the right thing.

It took awhile, but at last he did it: He said "You can't fight racism if you're a racist," and kicked Griff out. People who loved Public Enemy and rap were relieved, but many remained skeptical. Did Griff's expulsion really signify anything beyond damage control?

We can see now that the Griff scandal put Chuck through a kind of identity crisis. Within a year, PE brought out what for my money is the greatest-ever rap record, "Welcome to the Terrordome." In this rap, Chuck lets go of his macho arrogance and self-certainty, and allows himself to sound uncertain, vulnerable, inwardly troubled. The rap begins, "How to fight the power?"

Remember, "Fight the Power" was the group's greatest hit, and there Chuck seemed to know how to do it, and he told the world in no uncertain terms. Now he doesn't know, and he seems to be asking. Now the Bomb Squad's seismic shifts and breaks can express a clashing and broken consciousness, and rap can become a mode of *Bildung*, part of the process of soul-making. Chuck faces the breakdown of an axiom that is not only a dogma of Black nationalism, but one of the driving forces in his career, the equation "I=WE", the belief that his own beliefs and needs are identical with those of all Black people. "Every brother ain't a brother," he raps with real anguish, " 'cause a color/could just as well be undercover." In other words, race could signify solidarity, but could "just as well" mean its opposite.

This is one of the few moments in rap when we hear a rapper talking less to others than to himself. And it's a crucial moment, because, as Yeats said, men make rhetoric out of their quarrels with others, but poetry out of their quarrels with themselves. The climax, repeated several times, is a stunning image that at once expresses the rapper's decision to speak for himself, alone, and recognizes how his pain echoes through the lives of others: "My home is your home/Welcome to the Terrordome." "Terrordome" is a rapper's way of saying he will overcome, a breakthrough to a rap humanism.

The B'nai Brith Anti-Defamation League (ADL) and other Jewish groups have overreacted to this song. Here, as elsewhere, the ADL seems to be spoiling for a fight. They hear images like "Crucifixion ain't no fiction," or "they got me like Jesus", and they take it as the classic charge of deicide. This is silly. They're inattentive to the modern poetic language Chuck speaks and writes in: a language that's cryptic, dense, allusive, sometimes obscure, rich in images and often conflicting symbolisms (think of early T.S. Eliot; think mid-to-late 1960s Bob Dylan), in which words have no obvious referents, consciousness jumps and jolts around, and experience is both a collage and a mystery. In a culture that's both Christian (by inheritance) and modern (by experience), when people say they feel crucified, they're not talking about Jews but about themselves, and what they're expressing is wounded narcissism.

Another phrase in "Terrordome" offends the ADL *et al.*: "so-called chosen frozen." Here Chuck D. probably is alluding to some Jews, and saying they're at once arrogant in their opinion of themselves and inflexible about something. About what? We'll probably never know, because he communicates like a poet, not a journalist or lawyer. (Of course, it may not be about Jews at all: Both America and the world today are full of people who think they're chosen.) Do we want to say we don't know any Jews like that? Not bloody likely! In fact, Jews like that, at once messianic and implacable, have been controlling Israel for most of the last fifteen years and enforcing dreadful policies toward the Palestinians. Other Jews, who don't have their self-certainty or their rigidity, have been resisting and criticizing these policies. Any number of critical articles in Tikkun could've used Chuck's trenchant phrase as their title (and said Thanks). Last summer, Israeli voters themselves decided that the "so-called chosen frozen" were in need of a thaw. The same could be said about American Jews' capacity to hear and read.

What's dangerous to Jews, I think, is a paranoid world-picture that knows all the answers, knows who all the real villains are, and clamors for revenge. If Blacks move from paranoid answers, *á la* Professor Griff or Sister Souljah, to reflective questions, Jews should be glad, if we're as smart as we think we are.

As Public Enemy gained in depth and complexity, it may have lost some of its public. The next wave in rap was brutal simplicity, associated with the genre called "gangsta rap." This genre features stark narratives

of the rapper as robber, predator, murderer; wounds and ballistics are richly detailed; attitudes range from surly defiance to what sounds like willed stupidity to often brilliant gallows humor (Ice Cube's "Now I Gotta Wat'cha"; Ice-T's "I Wanna Kill Sam ['cause He Ain't My Uncle]").

Gangsta raps need victims: The pool includes guys who dis the rapper on the street, members of rival gangs (sometimes rival rappers), Jewish managers and WASP editors, Japanese and Korean shopkeepers, cops who stop the hero on the highway (this is probably gangsta rap's primal scene), and—here is rap at its most vicious and cruel—women who don't give the man the desired submission and adulation.

Tales of blood and gore have always been a part of rap; KRS-One, Houston's Geto Boys, North Philadelphia's Schoolly-D, all told them in gripping ways. But a unique explosive burst of gangsta energy emanated from Los Angeles at the very end of the 1980s. Its heroes included Ice-T, Ice Cube, Eazy-E, Dr. Dre, and the group N.W.A., "Niggaz with Attitude." Their single, "Fuck the Police," and their album, "Straight outta Compton," were the biggest rap hits of 1989.

L.A. gangsta rap created two dominant personalities, Ice-T and Ice Cube, who became overnight sensations in the movies (T as a cop in *New Jack City*, Cube as a robber in *Boyz 'n The Hood*). T and Cube both project a ferocity as chilling as Chuck's, without making any of Chuck's political or intellectual demands. The gangstas carried rap to a new plane of commercial success, nearly on a par with white heavy metal music, whose biggest band today, Guns n' Roses, trashes "niggers and immigrants," celebrates killing women, and projects a level of violence that no rapper could get away with; GNR's leader, Axl Rose, acts like a loathsome young thug whose sexual charisma is irresistible.

It's impossible to talk about the explosive success of gangsta rap without talking about something much bigger: the romance of violence. This romance goes back a long way: warrior epics, with violence that's very explicitly gory, are among the earliest forms of culture. (The *Iliad*'s killing sequences made Greeks faint in the ampitheatres; read them today and you'll know why. The Song of Deborah [Judges 2-5], reputedly the oldest passage in the Bible, features a young girl who uses a tent spike to crush a general's skull.) But the distinctively modern element in the romance of violence is the idea of violence as transgression: violence committed by an outlaw, expressing scorn for the idea of a "civil society" where everybody's rights can be recognized and negotiated peaceably.

Outlaw heroes abound in folklore. The moment they enter modern art is probably Schiller's play *The Robbers*, which started riots in Germany and Central Europe (sometimes it got suppressed, which started even bigger riots) just before the French Revolution, and put the gangster hero forever on the map. Karl Marx, as a handsome youth, was said to look at the way people imagined Schiller's hero; his wife and kids and Engels always called him by that hero's name—flag for marginality!—"the Moor." In Schiller's play, as the gang are discussing what to do next, what sort of "job" would be worthy of them, the Moor suggests forming a Jewish legion and fighting against the Turks to conquer Palestine. Do you think the nineteenth-century inventors of Zionism remembered this line? Hmmm?

Some of the greatest modern artists—Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Nietzsche, expressionist poets, Dadaists, surrealists—have celebrated art as an ultimate (or permanent) outrage. When Mayakovsky and Brecht became communists, and when Isaac Babel became a Jewish communist Cossack, they were all transforming their transgressive visions of art into politics, and seeing political life as a source of ultimate ways to be *bad*. But Pound and Celine, in their embrace of fascism and Nazism, were engaged in exactly the same spiritual quest. In our century-long ideological struggle between Left and Right, who was the baddest of them all? I think the Left should give it up: Even its baddest moves are pretty pallid, compared with genocide. Even when it is acting autocratic and brutal, the Left is still trying to make people free and happy; deep down it is committed, locked into, being good.

America has always produced a bonanza of ways to be bad. We were the first nation in world history to come into being by violent revolution, one of the baddest ways there can be. Our Bill of Rights, just after it says categorically that no one can abridge our freedom of speech, says in an even stronger way that nobody can ever take away our guns. And this is one of the basic reasons the world loves us. Graphic images and visions of badness have always been among our prime exports. (It's why leftist intellectuals in Paris or São Paulo will stand for hours in the rain to see Joseph Lewis's *Gun Crazy* or Howard Hawks's *Public Enemy*.) Rap Brown was obviously right when he said, back in the 1960s, that violence is as American as apple pie; he just didn't get how bloody *weird* it was to be part of a country where badness is vital to the pursuit of happiness.

So when the boys from Compton broke out, with their primal scenes of gangbangs and shootouts with cops, their dead-on vicious attitude and their knockout gallows humor, even as respectable forces professed indignation, just underneath it was a vast sense of public relaxation and relief—reflected in tremendous sales to whites: Hey, it's all right, dig it, know ourselves, these guys are telling us who we are. After our decade

of sleazy decadence, sliding into an increasingly scary economic collapse, gangsta rap helped millions of Americans feel at home in what the folklorist Richard Slotkin calls the "gunfighter nation," and helped set the stage for Desert Storm and its orgy of patriotic gore.

The gangstas have been a permanent tidal pull in rap: so many of these guys can't bear to look less bad than the baddest. Take Public Enemy's "security force": dressed in military fatigues and berets, they stride onstage, hunch their shoulders, and glare sullenly at the audience. Their look is supposed to be based on the Black Panthers of the 1960s, but it comes across somewhere between an Afro-Caribbean dictator's bodyguard (or maybe extras from *The Emperor Jones*?) and a high school drill team. They could be modeling gangsta/fascist chic for *GQ*, and they might be fun to look at, if we didn't know that, even as we're sitting there, young men from their neighborhoods are being killed by young men who look just like them. Grandmaster Flash in "The Message" got that look just right: "you lived too fast and died too young."

How should we respond to all this? My feelings are mixed. First, I basically agree with Kant, who argued, defending freedom of speech 200 years ago, that if people can enjoy images of crime, that joy will allay their desire to commit real crimes, Middle-aged people should see these raps in the tradition of the crime movies we grew up on—about Billy the Kid, Jesse James, Al Capone (often a hero in gangsta rap), Murder, Inc. (our *landsleit*, remember)—and recognize that, for the overwhelming majority of the audience, even the most cold-blooded raps have the same conservative function today.

Second, it's pretty strange for us, white citizens of the world's champion "gunfighter nation"—the country of General Custer and Teddy Roosevelt's Rough Riders and Rolling Thunder and "smart bombs"—to be reproving Blacks for *their* violence. Still, maybe our attack on ghetto violence can gain some street credibility if, acting as American citizens, we do our best (worst?) to get our gunfighter nation down from its high horse.

Third, Jews have a far more complex relationship to violence than we usually like to admit. When Jews hear rap and feel the Cossacks are coming, we have to face the facts: since 1948, and especially since 1977, on the West Bank and in Gaza, we've been close to the edge of becoming Cossacks ourselves. The Holocaust deprived Jews of innocence about violence. The generation of 1948 saw what they had to do, and they did it, and they had the right, the primal right to life. We, their children, cried for joy in 1967, when the IDF blew the *momsers* away, and we stood tall like the Tall Ships on July 4, 1976, after the raid on Entebbe. Since then, when Jews have criticized Israeli policy on the West Bank, or Lebanon, or in Gaza, we have never for an instant doubted Jews' right to defend their lives "by any means necessary." (This was a favorite phrase of Malcolm X, who admired Israel.) What we protest against in Israel is violence that *isn't* necessary, violence that may be sweet to its perpetrators as an expression of their will to power—and revenge for decades or centuries of powerlessness—violence that becomes a romance, but that turns out to undermine and endanger far more lives than it ever saves. Public Enemy, in its early rap, "MiUzi Weighs a Ton," seems unaware that the Uzi is one of Israel's contributions to contemporary civilization. But Jews know, and we know the dead weight, and Jews will mourn. We've got to know ourselves. If we Jews are worried about other people's romances of violence, it's vital to recognize and fight against our own.

So now let's go back to worrying about rap. Take an album like KRS-One's "By All Means Necessary" (1988). On the front cover KRS is brandishing one of those Uzis. On the inside cover is a photo of a nice little boy, who turns out to be Scott LaRock, Jr., approximately two years old, son of the social worker who died saving KRS' life. KRS' text says "By all means necessary the rap audience must grow up!" Now, it's nice to see an older rapper asserting some sort of responsibility for the kids in the neighborhoods. But in a country where young Black males have a homicide rate nine times higher than whites, are heavy handguns going to help those kids grow up? Is that the help Scott Jr.'s father would have left him? If you listen to KRS rap for awhile, you can usually hear a complex, original mind at work; he's always telling his audience to read, and he calls himself "the Teacher." But this made me want to ask—as the rapper Prince Be asked last year—"a teacher of what?" Maybe, before those sweet kids out there can get the help they really need to grow up, some of rap's long-term perpetrators are going to have to grow up first.

Erik B. and Rakim may be trying in their recent rap, "Know the Ledge." Rakim describes a day of pushing people of both sexes around, committing casual robbery, threatening sexual violence, at home, in school, in the subway, on the street. The chorus points back to "The Message" of a decade ago: "I'm standin' on shaky ground/too close to the edge/hopin' that I know the ledge." But after his day's gangsta routine, suddenly he sees he is surrounded by assassins, who all fire at once. He lies, bleeding, and—here's the kick in the song—we realize he's dead. Only now, from beyond the grave, does he know how much he didn't know: "Guess I didn't know the ledge."

What rap is doing here is not simply reproducing the romance of violence, but reflecting on that romance, and rejecting it as a fatal lack of knowledge. When rap does this, it is working as a medium of education. In an era of massive attacks on public education, rap and rappers at their best manage, ironically, to be a thousand points of light.

Another point of light concerns sex. The most vicious and shameful motif in rap is brutality toward women. Typically, the man (or boy) boasts of the rapes, sodomies, and other brutalities that he has already committed, or else of those he is going to commit; he says this is all women really want, and given a chance they will beg for more. Miami's 2 Live Crew, who specialize in detailed celebratory narratives of sexual cruelty, seem to be the most disgusting, though some of the L.A. gangsta groups give them a run for their money. (I can't bear to sit here and type out their lyrics, but they're roughly in the same ballpark as white mysogynists such as Andrew Dice Clay.) Outbursts of virulent sadism in rap are pretty rare; far more frequent is a nonviolent fantasy (typical of the blues tradition) where women throw themselves at the rapper because he's so great, and he genially accepts their homage. But you can listen to rap radio for quite awhile without hearing an account of sex that's anything other than crude male domination; after awhile, even a devoted fan may turn the dial. There are a number of strong and dynamic women in rap today—MC Lyte, Salt-n'-Pepa, Queen Latifah, Yo-Yo, for instance—and they seem to get respect on the street, and maybe, by and by their presence, will change the ballgame. Yet we also know that the presence of strong and dynamic women can threaten men who are less sexually secure than they boast. Or men can say: I respect *you*, but not those bitches and ho's out there. The Nation of Islam offers a formula like this, in which women are protected so long as they remain veiled and submissive, but menaced if they act up. What do they talk about when they talk about love? Here we can feel the extent and depth of the inner wounds that they talk about in raps like "The Message." In rap today, to hear about sex as something sweet and mutual is like seeing the sun come out after cruel storms.

But it does come out sometimes. It comes out in "Mama's Always on Stage," by Arrested Development (1992), in which the rapper not only shows impressive empathy for a single mother, but offers to share childcare, even in the middle of the night.

As a mode of seduction, this strikes me as real progress, though Mama may want to wait and see if this guy actually comes through. And it comes through in Naughty by Nature's "OPP"(1991). This delightful rap is a sexual comedy about how all of us, men and women alike, find people irresistibly attractive when they are "OPP", i.e., "other people's property." It includes a couple of garbled Marx Brothers-type narratives, told at motor-mouth velocity, featuring smuggling people in and out of bedrooms. It is overlaid by a sample track of heavy breathing, such as all of us have done, and by one of the all-time classics of Black music— of *American* music—the Jackson Five's "ABC," with Michael's voice soaring through the air, at the end of the 1960s, at a moment of great collective hope.

What makes "OPP" really fly, though, is its call-and-response dynamics, which take us back to the earliest days of rap. There is a bunch of guys and a bunch of girls here; you could call it a party record, but a metaphysical party record. Every minute or so, after each little chapter or disquisition by Treach, the rapper asks "Who's down with OPP?" and the boys answer "Yeah, you know me," and the girls answer "Every last lay-dee."

What's so liberating about "OPP" is that it portrays sexuality as something fresh and delightful that men and women are in together—you can just about hear them smiling at each other—and that they know they share. The choral voices are clearly Black, but Blackness isn't their point here: They sound like they are feeling themselves as vibrantly sexual human beings. (President Clinton could come in on the chorus, "Yeah, you know me.") Now it's true, in this rap, that the sexuality they share is foolish, perverse—feeling thrilled by someone else's lover more than your own—but it's a foolishness that's universal, democratic, and if our heads are together we can face each other and forgive and laugh. In their sound of laughter and forgiving, these rappers are down with the revolutionary poet William Blake:

> Mutual forgiveness of each vice,
> Such are the gates of paradise.

"OPP" is not only one of the most exciting raps I've ever heard, it's also a fine instance of what rap can give. I think we should hear this rap as a parable about rap itself, an art form whose very life depends on grabbing other people's property—sonic property, cultural property—and being understood and forgiven. But we can also read it as a parable and a promise of what modern life as a whole could be: Imagine racial fear and hate transformed into empathy and acceptance, imagine stealing of property transformed into sharing, imagine ripoffs transformed into embraces, imagine solitary life close to the edges transformed into communal life in a center where there's space for us all. At its best, rap can imagine communities where any of us might feel at home. Isn't that a reason to keep listening? □

Memo to Clinton:
Covenantal Gatherings and National Renewals

Michael Gottsegen

How quickly the "inside-the-beltway" crowd reimposes politics as usual. Already your inaugural moment has fallen victim to those who never wanted to understand what you meant by a "New Covenant"—to a press that skeptically reduces all idealism to self-interest, and to a social conservatism more interested in preserving the prejudices of the past than in imagining what America could be in the future.

What these first months have shown is that the campaign and your inaugural address were not in themselves sufficient to forge a national consensus and new commitment to the common weal. Your administration's success depends on achieving that new understanding, so building it must become your first priority.

You made a good start when you introduced the covenantal conception of American society during your campaign. That conception holds society to be a covenantally constituted entity and depicts its members as so many interdependent organs, none of which can flourish apart from the well-being of the body as a whole. If citizens are able to internalize this conception they will come to regard themselves as shareholders in the common weal and will transcend that hyper-individualism that has made them indifferent toward the common good. This sounds abstract—but it's the absolute key to your political success.

How do you make this happen? How do people transform an abstract idea they hear articulated by the President into a concrete idea that can inform their daily lives? There is one way: set in motion a process that can lead Americans to re-covenant with one another in the communities where they work and live.

Imagine if this coming July 4th you were to ask people to gather in their communities to reflect upon their economic, social, and moral interdependence—and to recommit themselves to a shared vision of the common good. Imagine a day on which tens of millions of Americans took their patriotic duty seriously and came together for the sake of reestablishing their fundamental covenant with each other, for the well-being of their local communities and of the larger society.

Every community (and in some large cities, every few blocks) would hold a gathering in which people would be able to discuss their common goals and problems. I imagine that the concrete details would differ from community to community but let me suggest one version that might appeal to some. In the morning, citizens will gather to read some "statement of covenantal interconnectedness" (perhaps drafted by you) that will clarify the day's purpose and will serve as the focal point for group discussion. Then I envision that a panel of speakers from different occupations, ethnic groups, and political orientations—who have been selected because they exemplify the community's diversity—will be asked to talk about what connects one member of our community to the next and about the obligations we have to one another. A capable moderator will be essential to guide the discussion way from self-interested bickering or meaningless platitudes.

Small group discussions will follow, in which people will be encouraged both to discuss their connectedness and to express their skepticism and their doubts about whether they can trust, or even ought to care, about others. The groups' leaders will be people who have been trained to encourage honest discussion and to move participants beyond their doubts. Then, with an eye to the first year of an ongoing covenantal process, each group will attempt to develop a plan for strengthening their covenantal connectedness, and to commit themselves to take whatever practical steps this involves.

All the groups will then convene and each will report on its discussions and upon the details of what the members have covenanted to do in the coming year. Finally, the meeting will end with a ceremony of some kind that symbolizes the renewal of the covenant and the commitment that all have made to an ongoing process of strengthening the covenant in the years to come. Since it is the Fourth of July, the rest of the day could include baseball, picnics, swimming, music, and fireworks—activities to

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enjoy and promote a deepened feeling of community.

I understand that my proposal will provoke considerable resistance—precisely because of the level of fragmentation and alienation that exists today within most communities. Many people will respond to these events as either hollow ritual, or will distance themselves, preferring to observe rather than participate. To make the event truly significant for those who attend, organizers must insure that everyone will participate in a fully individualized and highly personal way. Again, much will depend upon getting facilitators for these events who are capable of eliciting a level of honest self-disclosure that American civic life generally disparages. But if you overcome the obstacles, the pay-off will be substantial.

Just imagine the impact that you could make if gatherings akin to the one I have described take place every Fourth of July. By the fourth year of your presidency not only will you have significantly increased the degree of commitment to the common good—a commitment which you can draw upon as you promote your legislative agenda—but you will also have established an institution which will continue to invigorate the civic life of every community for years to come. Moreover, your commitment to the covenantal idea will have created an annual event that could become one of the most significant in American life. □

THE ECONOMY

(Continued from p. 12)

reservoir of talent, experience, and ideas for improved productivity in the working class. But it can't be tapped effectively on an individual basis alone, or through "quality circles" that appear to draw workers into partnership with management, but are instead little more than latter-day suggestion boxes and a club to defeat unions.

A new labor movement is needed to revive the economy and bring the gains of our generation's movements to all. If you deliver for workers, they will play an important role in delivering the long-term economic recovery that you promised to America. □

ROUNDTABLE

(Continued from p. 38)

people here want peace for pragmatic reasons that have very little to do with Palestinians' rights or any sense of justice. So you get this kind of response to the deportations: very few will pay attention to the moral aspects, some more will be concerned with the lack of due process.

Daphne Golan: I think that we need to emphasize that this was an action that was morally wrong whether or not it was smart opportunism on the part of the Labor Party.

Galia Golan: I don't think that Shulamit Aloni and Yossi Sarid really believed that the expulsions would help the peace process. I think that they understand the Palestinians better than that. Peace Now protested the deportations, and we met with the Meretz government ministers, and my impression from those conversations is that they believed they would be kicked out of the government if they opposed the expulsions. Peace Now wants to see this government stay in place. They had pure motives, but they could have taken their stance without losing their position. But now the question is, if you stay in the government, the point must be to do the right thing when you're there, not to compromise endlessly for the sake of maintaining your position. Don't forget that they've now set a very destructive precedent. What are they going to do if a future Likud government wants to deport 4,000?

I don't think Rabin wants to be the left-wing of a Tzomet government—he feels more comfortable being the right wing of a government with Meretz. But he has been doing a very good job of keeping Meretz people in line.

Feldman: In fact, the Meretz-Labor government has done tremendous damage by marginalizing the human rights community; and Meretz has done great danger to itself by allowing itself to be seen as opportunists. □

LETTERS

(Continued from p. 6)

But the incident raises important questions: Have we arrogated to Israel—and only Israel—the moral authority to meet force with force? Is the Diaspora as disorganized and helpless today as it was a little more than a half century ago when facing overt acts of violence? Do our habits of liberalism and universalism prevent us from recognizing and countering attacks aimed directly at us as Jews? Do they interfere with our ability to honor exemplary acts of Jewish self-defense as they occur? Is there a non-violent alternative that can and should be articulated?

American Jews are well organized in defense of the security of Jews in Jerusalem, Haifa, and Tel Aviv. Are we to be any less concerned for the Jews of Moscow, Berlin, and Rome?

For a variety of reasons, including the speed of events, but not excluding our own passivity, our response to the changed situation has been slow in coming. TIKKUN can help by promoting a serious, sustained debate about the new situation and the alternatives available to us. In the absence of any compelling arguments to the contrary, I urge TIKKUN to honor and support the young Jews of Rome. Let them know at least some American Jews have heard of their actions and are with them. Let their action be applauded as an instance of sanity and a sign of health.

Harvey Blume
Cambridge, Massachusetts

EDITORIAL

(Continued from p. 10)

mation being sought because they reflect the basic principles. Unless Bill Clinton thus empowers his supporters, unless he is able to trust others deeply, he is going to find himself more alone than will be politically wise.

What Clinton may face is a classic dilemma: to really take seriously the values he believes in, he may have to rethink some of his political assumptions and be willing to challenge the economic structures of American society in a far more radical way than he currently seems interested in doing. Our job in the TIKKUN community is to support Clinton as he takes these steps and to show him that the implications of his own approach need to be further developed. His only political hope rides on his ability to carry out the fullest implications of the new paradigm he has embraced. Just as he has given many of us the confidence to make this the moment to return to our highest aspirations, so we now need to give Clinton the confidence that he can afford to act upon his own ideals, to draw out their implications, and to realize the best picture of what American society could and should be like.

There is a whole new consciousness ready to take hold in America, but within each of us there remains the nagging voice of skepticism, cynicism, self-doubt and doubt that others can really live up to their own ideals.

In his State of the Union speech, Clinton implored his congressional audience to recognize that "We must scale the walls of the people's skepticism, not with our words but with our deeds." Clinton himself has gone too far in this laudable direction to turn back, but he does not yet have around him enough people who are willing to support him in that challenge—to think through the next steps, or to take this language of caring and move it away from new age, flowery but empty language into specific policy terms. It's certainly not going to be The *New Republic* crowd, or the neo-cons, or the media hacks who represent themselves as "news analysts," or the Carter-era policy wonks who are going to defeat the cynicism and encourage Clinton to take his own paradigm seriously. TIKKUN began to do that in our platform for a politics of meaning in the July/August 1992 issue, and in our suggestion in the January/February 1993 issue that Clinton require every administration program to be accompanied by an ethical environment impact report that would demonstrate how the program contributes to a sense of solidarity and caring among the people whose lives it touches. In future issues of TIKKUN we will continue to define specific ways to translate a paradigm of meaning into policy terms. □

The Holy Land

That land is built on stories,
but beneath its mortal plots of brick and steel
it is what it always was,
a thinly watered corridor
between the mountains and the sea.
There passionate partisans forever die
to prove the land is theirs
and theirs the right to tell its tales.

Hopes of exiles and survivors heap the hills
with homes, clog the streets with fumes, fill
the air with polemics and prayer.
A young country muscles towards plenty
over the bones of two hundred generations.
Yet that is not any country, but Zion,
for whose wedding we were prepared
by bards and prophets
in the childhood of our world.

I made my *aliyah*. I have returned
and people ask, "What was it like?"

In that holy land
only the Judean hills are clear.
They hump their gentle backs
mile after mile between Jericho and Jerusalem.
For them the wind still rushes,
some nettles bloom, tiny white shells
fleck the scattered stones,
and shepherds trail their flocks
over uninhabitable horizons.
There alone I met an ancient god
who dreamed the world and me.

"Nothing else?"
Nothing. The rest is history,
the feuds, the festival, the endless holocaust
of history. There is no place for worship
where men have scarred the earth with shrines.
Only the hills' bare scrolls
receive the empty present.
Only the wastes are holy.

Peter Pitzele

Tikkun (tē-kün) ...to heal, repair and transform the world.
All the rest is commentary.

תיקון

The Socialism of Fools

ANTI-SEMITISM ON THE LEFT

by Michael Lerner



This is a powerful and provocative book.

Michael Lerner is a major progressive Jewish intellectual who has been an outspoken critic of the conservativism in the American-Jewish community and of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank. His critique should not be dismissed as an attempt to set Israel above criticism or to conceal conservative interests in the Jewish world.

Lerner's text goes far beyond the issue of anti-Semitism to put forward a creative and challenging interpretation of Jewish history and Jewish destiny.

—Cornel West, Professor of Religion and Director of African-American Studies at Princeton University

Anti-Semitism Even Pervades the Culturally Hip, the Psychologically Sensitive, and the Progressively Intellectual

Jews are often the worst offenders—incorporating into our own consciousness the anti-Semitic attitudes of the larger culture, doing our best to show others we are not "too" Jewish, altering our noses, our hair, our clothes, our physical appearance, how loud we talk, putting each other down for being too intellectual or pushy or attention-seeking and, in myriad ways, disciplining each other so that we more closely conform to the ethos and style of the dominant society.

We see it all the time at TIKKUN—the many people who would subscribe to TIKKUN because they know it's the best intellectual/cultural magazine in the United States but don't do so because it's a Jewish magazine. So many Jewish artists, writers, intellectuals, therapists, and social change activists are invested in playing down their Jewishness, certain that if they don't, they will be "marginalized" and not taken seriously by others (many of whom, in turn, are also Jews trying to be assimilated).

Lerner is aware of the Right's tendency to accuse anyone who critiques Israeli policy of being an anti-Semite or a self-hating Jew. As a leading critic of Israeli policy toward Palestinians, Lerner analyzes the difference between legitimate and anti-Semitic criticisms. He also spells out a strategy to combat anti-Semitism in Third World communities. Lerner insists that the main problem of anti-Semitism continues to come from the Right, not the Left—but he also insists that there is a real problem among culturally hip and liberal intellectuals.

This book is an invaluable tool—for college students, for writers and thinkers, for therapists and teachers, intellectuals and social change activists.

To order: Send $12 to Tikkun at 5100 Leona St, Oakland, CA. 94619 or call 1-800-738-5571 for Visa/MasterCard orders.