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

TIKKUN

PHILIP ROTH'S DIASPORISM

Sidra DeKoven Ezrahi, Daphne Merkin, Morris Dickstein, Anita Norich & Daniel Lazare

TWENTYSOMETHING & JEWISH

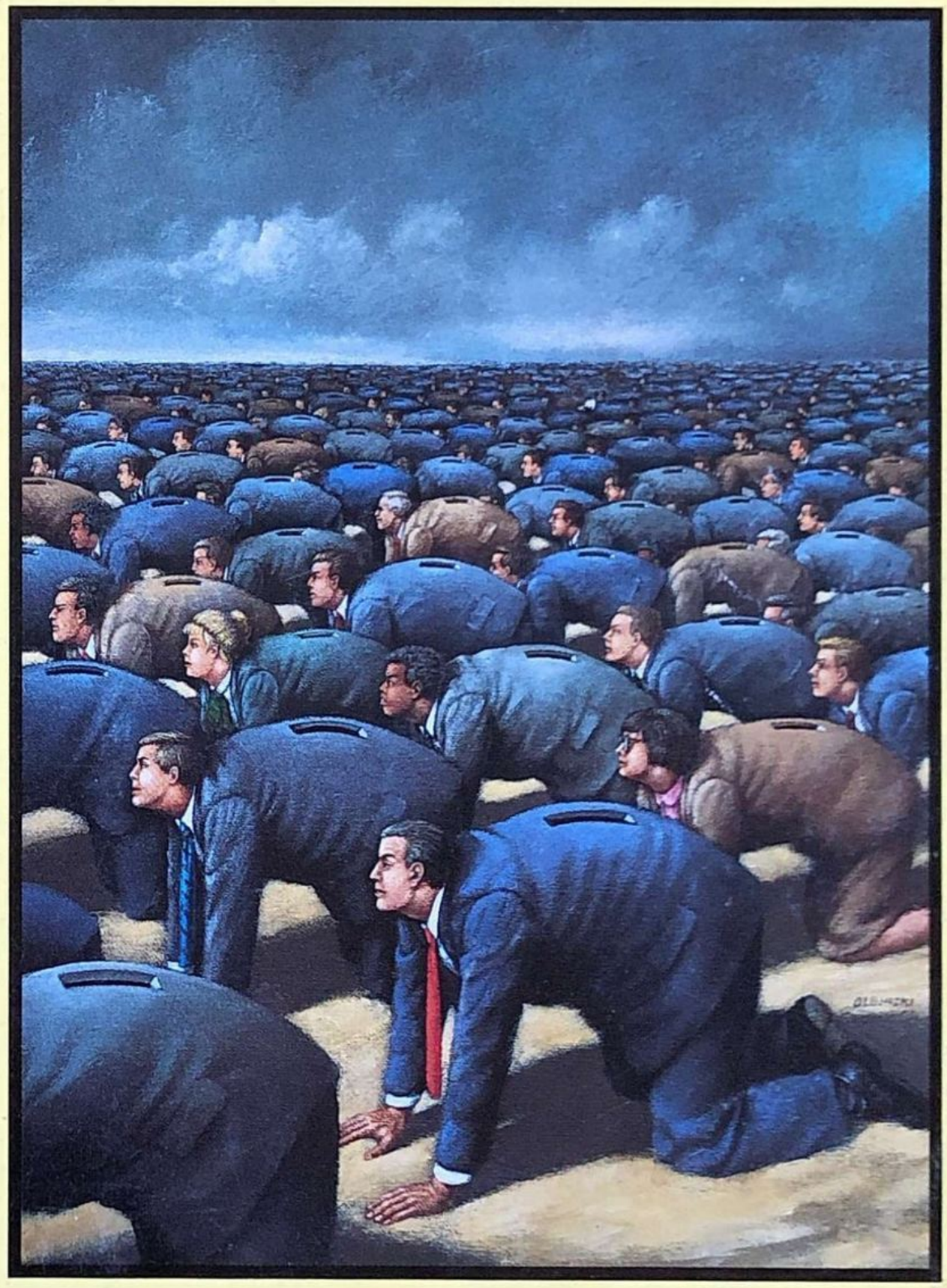
A Roundtable

A BIMONTHLY JEWISH CRITIQUE OF POLITICS, CULTURE & SOCIETY MAY/JUNE 1993 $6.00

It's Not Just the Economy, Stupid

The Clintons' Struggle for a Politics of Meaning

Jay Rosen, U.S. Senator Paul Wellstone, Jeremy Rifkin, Charles Derber, Daniel Yankelovich & Michael Lerner



Fearing Islam
George Perkovich

Foucault's Passion
Frank Browning

Black Liberators
Letty Cottin Pogrebin

Gays & Jews
Judith Plaskow

Warsaw Ghetto
Lawrence L. Langer

Jewish Mourning
Joyce Slochower

Plus:

Stan Cohen on Fear & Violence in Israel • Gary E. Rubin on Anti-Semitism

Arthur Waskow on Brothers

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Lost Continent

We ascended from the sea like out of a fog,
lost continent strewn with human bones and archaeological
remains: temporary lodgings, five layers
of graves, here and there a shrine, an unemployment office. We read
the writing in cuneiform: it spoke of us
so we didn't understand.

Now and then a car drove by, a scorched shell
on wooden steps. In the distance the fog horn
hooted. Shrubs appeared to kneel under the weight
of the water. This is where the final battle took place, preceded by blind
gropings, interim contacts, assessments. The guide was misguided, had caught a cold, trilled like a cricket.

We parked at the inn. The food wasn't bad
though patience was lacking. From the window one saw the contours
of a monument worn down by water: somebody riding and somebody ridden.
The waiter was a stranger, slant-eyed, apparently from the Far East.
It felt good sitting by the fire and watching the Tube, remote
control in hand, unwinding as tourists do, while listening
to the voice rising from the box, speaking neither to me nor to you.

Lost continent. The promise that was kept and broken, a place
that emerged and sank back into the sea, a dim place,
a grim place, no love from above, no dove. You know
how such words jingle in tunes. The band was good, possibly
black. Sated after dinner, even
the waitress baring her breasts in the new style didn't earn
more than a passing glance.

One should always be on the move, never settle down, as we believe when young.
Only travel guarantees perspectives, reductions for advance payments, Let
me out - hollers the jailbird as he rattles the bars. To get out
is the law of nature: the chick abandons its egg, otherwise
it perishes. Leaving is a privilege one cherishes. Being not only here or there
but everywhere and for everyone so long as the odds are even:
to sing, yet without words, in the deaf world, like the surging sea
during a winter day, like nightfall on the strand,
To sit among strangers and practice silence in a language nobody understands
as all around you life sinks back to where it came from:
first the vegetation. Then people: men, women
and children clutching books and clocks, like refugees, and tickets,
and from an unseen place someone calls and from another
someone answers and inspectors hustle and soldiers with k-rations
in their hands carry the aged, while here and there a battered suitcase falls,
unsuited for travel, and the ships are already here, they're
always here, the ships, sailing in and out, as old as the world, in dream
of a world that never was, filled with broken glass and prophets of doom, gloom and
screams in Jewish, in German and in Arabic, and water covers everything
without fuss, the sand as soft as it was years ago, and we grow
accustomed
and it's good to lie on the shore and never to wake up.

Natan Zach

(Translated from the Hebrew by Gabriel Levin)

TIKKUN

A BIMONTHLY JEWISH CRITIQUE OF POLITICS, CULTURE & SOCIETY — VOLUME 8 NUMBER 3

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SPECIAL FOCUS: It's Not Just the Economy, Stupid

Some of President Clinton's advisers may think in reductionist and economistic terms. But early in April, using the language of TIKKUN, Hillary Rodham Clinton called for a "politics of meaning" to build an ethos of caring. Several TIKKUN authors explore how a politics of meaning would work in practice.

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Poetry: Inside front cover: Natan Zach teaches comparative and Hebrew literature at Haifa University; page 83: Enid Shomer's book of poems is *This Close to the Earth*. Her book of fiction, *Imaginary Men*, won the 1992 Iowa Short Fiction Award. **Cover art**: *Fool and His Money*, Rafal Olbinski, 1990, acrylic on canvas, courtesy of the artist. **Photography**: p.11, Marcy Nighswander/AP/Wide World Photos; p.15, George Cohen/Impact Visuals; p.23, Jim West/Impact Visuals; p.27, Russ Marshall/Impact Visuals; p.31, Claude Aflalo/AP; pp. 37 and 39, courtesy of YIVO Institute for Jewish Research. **Illustration**: p.24, p.53, Suzanne M. Long.

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Letters

CLINTON

To the Editor:

How I wish that Clinton and his entourage would read your editorial ("Clinton's Economic Crusade: The Missing Ingredient," March/April 1993) and adopt the language and the vision that you propose! If Clinton's people could frame their policies in the language of building, to use your language, "a new ethos, an America based on loving and cooperation and caring for each other, an America that embodies a set of values" rather than trying to make us more efficient at competing, a leaner and tougher America ready to promote our self-interest in the world capitalist market, they could indeed build a base of support that would last. But Clinton's people just aren't smart enough to understand what you are saying. I'm sure that what they think you are saying is that you've got a few slogans for them to use, and in that case, they are content with their own speechwriters. But what TIKKUN is really saying is that there's a whole new way to do politics, a new way to think about the world, based on a different way of thinking about what human beings are. Do you really think that the policy wonks and narrow thinkers who Clinton has surrounded himself with are able to think this deeply, to question dominant paradigms, to rethink the whole way that they do politics? I'm willing to accept your account of Clinton himself and his responses to TIKKUN's politics of meaning—but I just don't see how you are ever going to pierce the wall of resistance that will inevitably greet your ideas from those who are Clinton's gatekeepers and policy experts, most of whom are more likely to feel threatened than enlightened by a politics of meaning. So I doubt very much

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if we are likely to hear very much of your new paradigm from Clinton—despite the fact that you've made an overwhelmingly clear argument for why it would be in his interests to take this perspective more seriously.

Regina White
Saint Louis, Missouri

To the Editor:

I was heartened to learn that Hillary Clinton had asked you to send TIKKUN to the White House. It's unrealistic to expect that the Clintons are going to adopt the politics of meaning very quickly—the pressures for a politics-as-usual are so overwhelming that it's amazing that they are willing to go as far as they do using the old paradigm. But eventually I think that Hillary and Bill will both come to understand that their own policy initiatives would get more support if they were framed within the context of the kind of ethical and spiritual vision that TIKKUN proposes. Michael Lerner's articulation of a "politics of meaning" is one of the most original ideas I've seen in the past few decades—so don't abandon it or play it down just because it doesn't get an immediate response from the Clinton people. Just as Bill Clinton recognized that it was your perspective that made the most sense

MAY & JUNE TIKKUN EVENTS

NY Salons: (all are vegetarian pot-lucks) May 15: "Judaism and the Body", 144 W. 80th St., 1st floor, 7:30; May 25: Tikkun Leyl Shavuot (traditional study of Jewish texts, 10 p.m.-2 a.m., 255 W. 95th, #1D; June 13: "Tensions Between Blacks and Jews," 529 W. 113 St, 1st floor, 7:30.

San Francisco: June 27, Founding conference of Commitee for Judaism & Social Justice. Call 510-482-0805 for info.

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There is no money available to pay for interns—the work is entirely voluntary. Summer interns can sometimes use the experience to help them get into graduate school. Nine-month interns often find that this experience helps them get full-time paying jobs in publishing. Graduate students often manage to use the opportunities that they get in this work (e.g. recruiting articles from respected academics in their field) to advance their careers in academia.

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CONFERENCE OF JEWISH WRITERS AND JEWISH WRITING

New York City — January 16-18, 1994

What is the place of Jewishness in the emerging multicultural world? Is there a way of embracing our Jewish particularity without falling into the kind of ethnic chauvinism whose manifestations in Bosnia and Eastern Europe we find abhorrent? How do we overcome the compulsive individualism of contemporary American culture and reconnect with what is exciting and nurturing in our Jewish cultural heritage? We invite novelists and poets, writers for magazines, television, movies, and academics. There will be a special focus on the needs of new writers just beginning their careers.

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Paper or session proposals accepted through June 12.

of past failures of the Democrats, so future political leaders and maybe even the liberal and progressive social change movements will come to understand that your politics of meaning provides the only plausible direction for social change and the healing and repair that your magazine's name endorses.

Ricardo Cisneros
San Antonio, Texas

To the Editor:

Yes, there's a struggle going on between two paradigms of politics. I'm a new subscriber to TIKKUN, and I'm proud to be identifying with your paradigm—a paradigm that places ethical vision and spiritual connectedness at the center of politics. Since I started to receive TIKKUN a few months ago I've begun to raise these issues to friends, and I'm stunned at how many people agree with your perspective once I've taken the time to explain it. I wish there was some more sexy way to present it besides calling it "the politics of meaning," because it's an idea that has amazing explanatory power. I'd given up on politics for the past two decades, but with the election of Clinton on the one hand, and finding TIKKUN and its really good idea of how to move the Clinton presidency in a progressive direction, I'm re-energized. What I've decided to do is to spend some time every day convincing some new person about the politics of meaning and why it's better than the politics of rights and entitlements. Sometimes I need your help to explain it more fully—but luckily, I get TIKKUN and it's been doing a good job of giving me the concrete things I need. Keep up the good work.

Millie Richards
Denver, Colorado

To the Editor:

As a veteran of the sixties and an engaged intellectual for social change, I am dismayed by what can only be described as your fawning over Bill Clinton. While there may be a legitimate case for acknowledging the resonance of the symbolic politics of a Clinton presidency with what you call the "liberatory spirit" generated by the sixties, much of the substance of Clinton's administration remains wedded to a corrosive and retrograde politics-as-usual. Granted that his positions on reproductive and gay rights carry on a tradition of self-determination and tolerance for diversity that emerged in the sixties and energized movements through the eighties, these positions cannot be the only measure of a transformative politics for the nineties.

In particular, I find your capacity to overlook and downplay Clinton's continuance of imperial and militaristic policies to conflict with both the spirit of the sixties and the needs of the nineties. One of the critical motivating forces for change in the sixties was the anti-war and anti-imperialist movement. To neglect Clinton's blemished record as a supporter of contra forces in Nicaragua during his tenure as governor, and right-wing Cuban factions during the campaign was a betrayal of any commitment to either the rule of international law, the regard for human rights, and a sense of solidarity with those struggling against the arrogant power of the "pax Americana."

Perhaps in the flush of ridding Washington of the troglodytes of the Right, you turned away from casting a sharp eye on the contradictions of Clinton's politics and lost sight of any responsibility for the oppressed of the Third World. However, what will you now say to those Haitians languishing in terror and prevented by the Clinton administration, in violation of international law, from seeking refuge in the United States? What do you say to those civilians in Iraq who, as a consequence of the militarism of their brutal dictator and the punitive politics of the Pentagon and Secretary Aspin, continue to suffer? And finally, how do you explain to Third World peoples that the Clinton administration is looking after their true interests when the new undersecretary of the Treasury for international affairs, Lawrence Summers, called for the exporting of more pollution to the Third World?

While I know that TIKKUN realizes that the moral repair of the world requires more than rhetorical and symbolic change, it is disturbing to see how oblivious much of your commentary has been to the real grounding of Clinton's politics. I hope you can come down to Earth now and begin to speak truth to power. And if we should, in the best traditon of the sixties, give power to the imagination, we must not forget those who are ground down by an imperial politics still emanating from Washington.

Fran Shor
San Diego, California

Editor Responds:

American imperialism is not the explanation for all the world's woes, nor is it sufficient explanation for some of the problems in Clinton's foreign policy (e.g. his retreat from democratic promises on Haiti and Bosnia).

I haven't forgotten that the dominant economic arrangements in the world market function to keep the poor nations impoverished and that the mass starvation in many of those countries is not a product of nature but of international social relations that were established by the advanced capitalist countries and that benefit the few at the expense of the many. But I don't see Clinton as someone who is trying to stengthen this arrangement, but rather as someone who has never fully grasped the connection, and whose moral sensibilities would lead him to challenge them if he did.

That Clinton is a moral human being is something that standard leftie accounts have no room for. However, for those of us who see the complexity and goodness in Clinton, the task isn't simply to stand on the sidelines and throw intellectual darts, but rather to find a way to connect with his goodness and move it in a constructive direction.

That's why we've been emphasizing the politics of meaning that Clinton responded to when he wrote me in the past. The politics of meaning proposes an ethos of caring and community that stands in sharp contrast to the ethos of selfishness and me-firstism and looting that is a central part of the capitalist market. The logic of a politics of meaning eventually leads to challenging the imperial politics that would strengthen the hegemony of the rich over the poor on a world scale.

But the question is, "How do you build a mass constituency for a politics of meaning?" Certainly not by using the same old language and tired phrases of a defeated Left! My answer: by showing that an ethically and spiritually based politics makes more sense, both because it speaks to our deepest experience, and because it provides a possible bridge to the ethical sensibilities of Clinton and those who surround him. Perhaps this strategy will never work, and the Clintonites will never actually feel adequately engaged by our politics of meaning to force them to rethink what they are doing. But it is worth a try, because this is a far more plausible strategy than that of those who think that they can "sing the

old melodies" and excoriate others who no longer respond to the tune. Clinton needs the politics of meaning, because without it his own constituency won't have the intellectual, moral, spiritual, and psychological foundation to hang in there with him through the intricacies of the debates that lie ahead. And should he ever fully and unequivocally commit to a politics of meaning, lefties would have a much stronger foundation from which to raise the quite legitimate concerns about the way that the world economy keeps so many people in economic misery.

Rap Music

To The Editor:

I was glad to see Marshall Berman's piece on rap, and while I think it's important for progressive Jews to pointedly distance themselves from the way that conservative Jewish leaders denounce rap, I cannot endorse Mr. Berman's disingenuous remarks regarding Public Enemy's "Welcome to the Terrordome."

Chuck D's use of the phrase "so-called chosen" is bigoted, and dangerous. If, as Berman insists, he should be viewed as a poet, not a journalist or lawyer, then why not an anti-Semitic poet? The fact that Berman can point to Jews who are "messianic and implacable" and who are "arrogant in their opinion of themselves" does not make Chuck D, the self-described "follower of Farrakhan," any less of a bigot.

Mr. Berman also fails to mention, in his several references to Ice Cube, that Cube's latest record contains a number of crude anti-Semitic statements. He criticizes Black "Uncle Toms" during one cut, for "tryin' to be white or a Jew/ well who are they to be equal to?" Elsewhere on the record, he rails against his former group, NWA, and their Jewish producer, and says, "can't be the 'nigga4life' crew/ when you got a white Jew/ tellin' ya what to do." And later in the same cut, he again condemns NWA for consorting with us filthy Juden: "you let a Jew/ break up my crew?" Offended, anyone?

As I said, it is extremely important that progressive Jews also speak out against conservative Jewish voices on this issue. In this regard, Mr. Berman is partly correct when he says, "The B'nai Brith Anti-Defamation League (ADL) and other Jewish groups have overreacted to ['Terrordome']."

The racially biased outcries from the Right, however, ought not to translate into craven apologetics on the Left. We have a responsibility to engage someone like Chuck D in an honest progressive debate on his insensitivity toward Jews. This is in no way inconsistent with recognizing rap, at its best, as a beautiful art form, nor with supporting African-American struggles for social justice. I should mention that I give Mr. Berman enormous credit for writing the first Jewish article on rap I've ever seen that treats the subect with a semblance of objectivity and good faith. Yet I think we Jews ought to be very consistent in our denunciation of anti-Semitism, and never withhold entirely legitimate objections when epithets are hurled our way, by anyone.

David R. Adler
New York, New York

Marshall Berman Responds:

One of the exciting things about rap is that so many thousands of kids engage in it, along with a great many who aren't such kids any more. So rap and rappers fill the whole spectrum of beliefs and values alive in our culture today, from the best to the worst. Indeed, some of the most interesting and perplexing incarnate both the best and the worst.

I'm not going to analyze Public Enemy again, but I'm curious about Adler's epistemology. Given a range of an image's possible meanings—"so-called chosen frozen"—I wonder how Adler knows that the true meaning is the anti-Semitic one. But I'm glad he mentioned Ice Cube's latest record, *The Predator*, which was in one of my drafts but didn't make it into print. *The Predator* has a lot of pretty awful stuff in it. It maligns Jews, all right, but it insults Asians, homosexuals, women, and whites even more virulently. We are right to be disgusted with Cube's anti-Semitism, but we also should recognize that it's only one aspect of a thoroughly and profoundly disgusting worldview. In fact, the ambience of *The Predator* is a black hole where indignation devolves into nihilism and militancy into misanthropy. Ice Cube's furious energy only deepens his personal abyss. (Though it may be that he'll be able to cry all the way to the bank!)

Are rappers in special danger of this abyss? Maybe, especially gangster rappers, whose spiritual power comes from their sense of having passed through the fire. But sometimes the fire burns them out and turns their souls to ashes. This is an occupational hazard, not only of gangster rap, but of modern art. King Lear, the first great modern art work, is about what it's like to live in the hole, but also about what it's like to come through. When somebody we care about falls in, we can only hope he or she will come through and live again. But modern life is risky, and while some will, some won't. I love rap because it's so nakedly out there on the heath with the king and the bastard and the fool, trying to survive and become human and start life again.

Rabin's Expulsions

To the Editor:

Your March/April issue was the best American coverage of the situation in Israel, barring none. I sometimes hear people say that Tikkun is too analytic or heavy or hard to get through—but after reading your lively roundtable debate, your interviews with Israel's leading philosopher Yishayahu Leibowitz and with Hanan Ashrawi, and the gripping and very moving account by Wendy Orange of her experiences as a Jew on the West Bank, I just don't understand how anyone could not find Tikkun one of the most lively intellectual journals in America. Nor do I understand why you have continued financial problems—there must be 300 American Jewish liberals each of whom would be willing to donate $1,000 a year to keep Tikkun in the black.

I don't get it—what gives? Why don't people understand how important you are and put their money where their mouths are?

Sandra Simon
New York, New York

Editor Responds:

I almost can't believe that I got such a wonderful letter. Normally, people either cheer or attack, but few actually understand that we are always financially struggling, that we are not some huge institution with wealthy or institutional backers, that we need financial support and don't get it. If I had a hundred dollars for every time someone has said "there must be some wealthy liberals out there who would support us" we'd be on easy street, but unfortunately we have nobody to depend upon but people for whom the

$1,000 donation is a stretch. Moreover, liberals and progressives are more used to critiquing institutions than financially supporting them—though after their institutions collapse they then bemoan their fate. The fact is that we probably do have enough readers who could, if they stretched, afford the $1000 a year—but they don't do it, magically imagining that someone else will step in and provide the support. Though TIKKUN really functions as a kind of national community center, people who would give a $1,000 a year to support a synagogue or community center simply don't see themselves doing that for a magazine, even though in their heart of hearts they know that this magazine has a tremendous impact in creating the background realities that make it possible for their own views not to feel so marginalized. On the other hand, there are many people who ought to be supporting us who don't on principle—either because as liberal Jews they feel that we have pressed them too hard by our insistence that they say publicly what they believe privately (a demand that makes them feel that they might lose their influence in the organized Jewish community, so rather than grapple with the moral dimension of our challenge they dismiss us as "too radical"), or because as liberals who "happen to be Jewish" they find that we are too Jewish for them (I can't tell you how many times I've been told by liberal Jewish funders that they wouldn't fund something that was so explicitly Jewish). And then the people who read this letter who will acknowledge what I'm saying, nod their head, hope that TIKKUN survives (which it will, though only by cutting down on some of what makes it so terrific), even hope that someone else will up their annual donation, but still can't see that it is they themselves who are being asked to stretch far more than they've done in the past. Now do you get it?

To the Editor:

It's hard for me to believe that the Israeli peace party, Meretz, could have done something so stupid as to support Rabin's expulsions. I read and reread the justifications of this action, and I just can't understand how any reasonable person would have come to the conclusion that expelling 400 Palestinians was going to advance the peace process. What, exactly, is the peace party going to say when Likud returns to power and expels even larger numbers of Palestinians? Why can't it use the same justification—that it's really doing so to reassure the Israeli population, so that it will get a mandate to make (unspecified) concessions at some (future) negotiation?

And Likud will win again in the future, unless Labor produces a real peace settlement. Not a few token concessions, but peace. And there's nothing in what it has been offering that is even close to being sufficient to overcome the tremendous anger that the expulsions have generated, hence nothing close to being sufficient to stop the spontaneous outpouring of rage that is being manifested in the random and misguided violence that Palestinians are now delivering to Israelis. Faced with this violence, Israel will feel compelled to offer less, Palestinian negotiators will be unable to settle for what has been offered, and Rabin will deliver an ideological victory to Likud that Netanyahu's charm will turn into an electoral victory in a few years. All this might have happened anyway, but at least Meretz might have been there to explain it to the Israeli public, instead of being locked into defending the actions that may have put the lid on the coffin of the peace process.

Michael Sagentz
Los Angeles, California

To the Editor:

Wendy Orange's piece is a powerful counterexample of your general policy of insisting that your writers on Israel be Israelis. I delighted in her piece. And yet, even though I hope you'll get Orange to write more, and even though I urge you to accept other pieces if they are as sensitively done, I nevertheless support your general position on this question. I often find myself arguing about Israel based on articles that I've read in TIKKUN, and it often helps to bolster my case to be able to point to the fact that it is Israelis who are writing, not Americans who don't really know the terrain. I remember hearing the criticism of TIKKUN's conference in Israel a few years ago—that you were from America coming to give advice to Israelis—and I must admit that the criticism stung and temporarily deflected my attention from the wisdom of your insights, until you were able to point out that of the eighty-six speakers at your conference, seventy-nine of them were in fact Israelis and that the points being made by TIKKUN in Israel were being made by Israelis. I realize that there is something irrational about this—after all, I never rejected criticisms of South Africa when they were being made by American Blacks who had never lived in South Africa, or criticisms of Cuba being made by American leftists just because those leftists were not Cubans, or criticisms of Serbia being made by non-Serbs, or criticisms of contemporary Germany being made by non-Germans. But I guess I do feel differently about Israel, do feel that somehow it mattered to me when I realized that you, the editor of the magazine, were personally involved in Israel and not just standing and criticizing from afar, and that your articles are usually written by people whose future lives are deeply intertwined with the fate of the people of Israel. So, don't be absolute about it, but keep going in the same general direction and don't flood us with articles by Americans. I must admit, by the way, that even calling herself a "naive American" helped me a lot, gave me a sense that she understood the problem, and that hence she was more credible in my eyes.

Sarah Levine
Chicago, Illinois

To the Editor:

Wendy Orange's coverage of her own inner struggle about whether to trust Palestinians or not is one of the deepest, most complex, and sensitive pieces of writing I've ever seen on the Palestinian conflict. Bravo TIKKUN!

Sandor Cohen
New York, New York

To the Editor:

I am happy to learn that Wendy Orange has gone to Israel to see what it is like to live as a Jew and to learn Torah. However, she will not learn about Torah and the Jews of Israel by "hanging out" with Palestinians in Yehuda and Shomron.

I once learned while studying Torah that a Jew must first learn to love himself/herself, then his family and friends, then his local Jewish ocmmunity, then the Jewish people as a whole, and then he/she may begin to "love" the "stranger," that is to say, all of humanity. For a person who does not love himself and where he comes from is in-

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IT'S NOT JUST THE ECONOMY, STUPID

James Carville's now-legendary sign, "It's the economy, stupid," highlighted for Bill Clinton's campaign workers a seasoned political consultant's take on the central issue of the 1992 presidential campaign. But Clinton won the Democratic nomination because he focused not just on the economy but on the deprivation of meaning that is central to most Americans' daily life experience. It was Clinton's adept interweaving of this sensitivity to society's ethical and spiritual malaise with the economic crisis that led to his victory.

Once in office, however, Clinton has found it harder to focus on this integrated approach. Counseled by some of his advisers to be "hard-nosed" and "practical," the President has at times sounded like a narrow technocrat. To stay the course that brought him to the White House, Clinton needs to remember that the primary goal of his presidency is to move the country from an ethos of selfishness and me-firstism to an ethos of caring and social solidarity. Every policy and program ought to stem from its utility in fostering this new consciousness.

The struggle between the older, economistic paradigm and a newer paradigm of caring and concern is being waged both inside and around Clinton. Few of his advisers know how to develop policies consonant with a politics of meaning. Yet without that larger vision, Clinton can never hope to sustain the political allegiance of the many Americans who are only liberal when they are hopeful; those citizens may quickly move to the right if the administration's policy "realists" prevail. Unless Clinton consistently articulates a politics of meaning and transforms that perspective into policy, the stultifying tones of the Carter era may subvert the new spirit and energy that Clinton's presidency promised.

There is, however, considerable reason for optimism that Clinton's best instincts may prevail. In early April, Hillary Rodham Clinton made her first major speech about health care. To our delight, she talked about the need for "a new politics of meaning" and argued that as much as any economic factors, a "sleeping sickness of the soul" is at the root of America's ills. Mrs. Clinton has begun to frame the national conversation in terms we heartily endorse, and we hope that she and the President will work toward translating these words into deeds.

In this and upcoming issues of TIKKUN, *we will attempt to define more clearly what specific policy steps would implement the politics of meaning perspective. To that end, we have invited some writers who advocate a politics of meaning to describe how they would address some of the issues facing the Clinton administration. They represent no single perspective—nor do we necessarily agree with their specific proposals. As always in* TIKKUN, *the authors have somewhat different and at times sharply divergent understandings of how to implement a politics of meaning. Yet all share our rejection of the reductionist policy approaches of the past. All have come to realize that it's not just the economy that will determine our eventual understanding and judgment of the Clinton years.*

Hillary Clinton's Politics of Meaning Speech

University of Texas, Austin *April 6, 1993*

A month after Michael Lerner's March/April editorial argued that the United States needed a politics of meaning that would address the psychological, ethical, and spiritual crisis of American society, a few weeks after Washington Post *columnist William Raspberry had dedicated his March 25 column to praising* TIKKUN*'s politics of meaning as articulated in Lerner's editorial, and the same day that the* Los Angeles Times *ran an op-ed piece by Lerner based on these same themes, Hillary Rodham Clinton made the following speech in Austin, Texas. Because no transcript was available, we have made selections from notes transcribed from a tape of her speech, and we have shortened the speech by skipping paragraphs or by adding transitional phrases. This is Mrs. Clinton's speech—and her use of phrases such as "ethos of caring" or "the politics of meaning," while they seem straight out of* TIKKUN, *are in fact her words and her choice.*

ADDRESS BY HILLARY CLINTON:

We are at a stage in history in which remolding society is one of the great challenges facing all of us in the West. If one looks around the Western world one can see the rumblings of discontent, almost regardless of political systems, as we come face to face with the problems that the modern age has dealt us.

And if we ask, why is it in a country as wealthy as we are, that there is this undercurrent of discontent, we realize that somehow economic growth and prosperity, political democracy and freedom are not enough—that we lack meaning in our individual lives and meaning collec-

tively, we lack a sense that our lives are part of some greater effort, that we are connected to one another. This isn't very far below the surface, because we can see it popping through the surface—the signs of alienation and despair and hopelessness that are all too common and cannot be ignored. The signs are in our living rooms at night on the news. They are on the front pages; they are in all of our neighborhoods.

I read in a newspaper this morning about the desperate conditions in so many of our cities—filled with hopeless girls with babies and angry boys with guns. And yet, it is not just the most violent and alienated that face this problem. All of us face a crisis of meaning. Coming off the last years when the ethos of selfishness and greed were given places of honor never before accorded, it is certainly timely to ask about this problem.

This problem requires all of us to play a role in redefining what our lives are and what they should be. We are caught between two great political forces. On the one hand, we have our economy—the market economy—which knows the price of everything, but the value of nothing. That is not its job. And then the state or government which attempts to use its means of acquiring tax money, of making decisions to assist us in becoming a better, more equitable soicety. We have political and ideological struggles between those who think market economics are the answer to everything and those who think government programs are the answer to everything—but neither is adequate to address the challenge confronting us.

What we must do is break through the old thinking that has too long captured us politically and institutionally, so that we can begin to devise new ways of thinking about not only what it means to have government that works again, not only what it means to have economies that don't discard people like they were excess baggage that we no longer need, but to define our institutional and personal responsibilities in ways that answer this lack of meaning.

We need a new politics of meaning. We need a new ethos of individual responsibility and caring. We need a new definition of civil society which answers the unanswerable questions posed by both the market forces and the governmental ones, as to how we can have a society that fills us up again and makes us feel that we are part of something bigger than ourselves.

Now will it be easy to do that? Of course not. Because we are breaking new ground. This is a trend that has been developing over hundreds of years. It is not something that just happened to us in the last decade or two. And so it is not going to be easy to redefine who we are as human beings in this postmodern age. Nor will it be easy to figure out how to make our institutions more responsive to the kind of human beings we wish to be.

But part of the great challenge of living is defining yourself in your moment, of seizing the opportunities that you are given, and of making the very best choices you can make. That is what this administration, this President, and those of us who are hoping for these changes are attempting to do.

Here are a few applications of this way of thinking:

• If we believe that the reconstruction of civil society with its institutions of family, friendship networks, communities, voluntary organizations are really the glue of what holds us together, then we should realize that children are shaped both by the values of their parents and by the values of the society in which they live. So supporting families requires helping children grow and be strengthened. Now one can debate how to best strengthen the values of parents and the values of society—that's the kind of discussion that has to get beyond the dogma of right or left, conservative or liberal.

• We are in the midst of an intensive effort of trying to determine how we can provide decent, affordable health care to every American. We need to recognize how each of us, whether we are a care giver or a care receiver, will have to think differently about health care. We have to come up with a system that promotes wellness, promotes health and provides care for us when we are sick that we can afford.

Our ancestors did not have to think about many of the issues we are now confronted with. When does life start; when does life end? Who makes these decisions? How do we dare to impinge upon these areas of such delicate, difficult questions? And yet, every day in hospitals and homes and hospices all over this country, people are struggling with these very profound issues.

These are not issues that we have guidebooks about. They are issues that we have to summon up what we believe is morally and ethically and spiritually correct and do the best we can with God's guidance. How do we create a system that gets rid of micromanagement, the regulation and the bureaucracy, and substitutes instead human caring, concern, and love? And that is our real challenge in redesigning a health care system.

• How do we make values enter the arena of the media? How do we rid ourselves of the lowest common denominator that is the easiest way of conveying information? How

do we have a media that understands how difficult these issues are and looks at itself honestly because the role it must play is so critical to our success in making decisions about how we will proceed as a society?

Every one of our institutions is under the same kind of mandate. Change will come whether we want it or not, and what we will have to do is to try to make change our friend, not our enemy. But probably most profoundly and importantly, the changes that will count the most are the millions of changes that take place on the individual level as people reject cynicism, as they are willing to be hopeful again, as they are willing to take risks to meet the challenges they see around them, as they truly begin to try to see other people as they wish to be seen and to treat them as they wish to be treated, to overcome all of the obstacles we have erected around ourselves that keep us apart from one another, fearful and afraid, not willing to build the bridges necessary to fill our spiritual vacuum.

One of my favorite quotes is from Albert Schweitzer, and he talks about how you know the disease in Central Africa called sleeping sickness; there also exists a sleeping sickness of the soul. The most dangerous aspect is that one is unaware of its coming. That is why we have to be careful. As soon as you notice the slightest sign of indifference, the moment you become aware of a loss of character or a serious lessening of enthusiasm, take it as a warning.

Our greatest opportunities lie ahead, because so many of the struggles of the Depression and the World War and the other challenges posed by the Cold War and communism are behind us. The new ones are equally threatening. But we should have learned a lot in the past few years that will prepare us to play our part in remolding a society that we are proud to be part of.

Convener-in-Chief: Celebrity, Civility, and the Clinton White House

Jay Rosen

A politician must become a person again, someone who trusts not only a scientific representation and analysis of the world, but also the world itself. He must believe not only in sociological statistics but also in real people. He must trust not only an objective interpretation of reality, but also his own soul; not only an adopted ideology, but also his own thoughts; not only the summary reports he receives each morning, but also his own feeling.

-Vaclav Havel

The jammed phone lines are apparently a result of the higher volume of calls from the public. During the Reagan and Bush years there would be about 5,000 calls a day to the White House general number, although the numbers would rise in crisis periods like the Persian Gulf War. By contrast, there are 40,000 to 65,000 calls a day now to the general number alone.

-New York Times, *February 20, 1993*

Jay Rosen is media editor of TIKKUN *and an associate professor of journalism at New York University.*

The end of the Cold War is one of those "events" that keeps happening, regardless of whether we continue to experience it. We would do well, then, to keep this event in view, lest our grasp of the present lose a certain depth.

Consider the figure of the president as a signifying presence in American life. During the Cold War, he was the man whose finger we had to trust on the nuclear button. Other duties—other identities—were overawed by this one, and our relationship to him became threaded with a kind of guilty dependence. Forced to rely on the president to save us from the unthinkable, we were also aware that he carried an inhuman burden: the knowledge that there really was a button, which it might be his duty to push. Somewhere in the national id there grew a terror, anxiety, and guilt about this relationship. The assassination of JFK, that elusive and complex event, allowed us to experience our guilt as grief and forced future presidents to take elaborate measures to protect themselves—from us. The demands of "national security" and the problem of the president's personal security thus came together to deepen one of the oldest myths about executive power: the loneliness and isolation of the figure at the top.

Even now, the president is accompanied wherever he

goes by a military aide with a leather case containing the codes needed to launch a nuclear strike. The case is oblong, and among Secret Service and White House staff it is somewhat nervously dubbed the "football." The president alone carries a white laminated card that when inserted into the football actually authorizes a launch. Upon being sworn in, the new president is handed the card, and no doubt it was the exchange of this small piece of plastic that during the Cold War constituted the true (and truly grave) transfer of power.

But today that sort of power does not mean as much. With the waning of the nuclear peril, "national security" is not the defining duty of the chief executive. Although the president still has power, it is not the same sort of guilty power over us and the fate of the Earth. As we grow less dependent on him for security of the most basic type, we have a chance to redefine our relationship to the president, just as he is free to seek a new connection to us.

Clinton sets the standard for what a "great communicator" should be: an exemplary talker and a man who understands government.

George Bush, most comfortable in the role of commander-in-chief, never understood how the peace dividend could have this psychological dimension. "Don't put me on the couch," Bush would often say to White House reporters when their questions veered toward his state of mind. Bush's hostility to personal psychology hurt him politically. He was indeed "out of touch," as the partisan charge went, but it wasn't only the domestic economy he had neglected. The emotional economy of the Cold War was also breaking down, an event that is bound to make the president a different sort of figure in our lives. As the missiles recede from national consciousness, so does the required depth of presidential isolation, the intensity and complexity of the fears linking (and separating) the president and the American people.

Here, then, is one way of interpreting the figures that emerged in February from the White House switchboard: 40,000 to 65,000 calls a day under Clinton, compared to 5,000 a day under Bush. At some level, the new president obviously feels "reachable" to more people, although one doubts that many callers got through to the Oval Office. For his part, Clinton seems to be reaching across some of the barriers that isolate the president. He has let it be known, for example, that the Secret Service will be pressed to allow him more freedom of movement. It is not a trivial matter. The security bubble that surrounds him is a highly visible psychic divider, separating the presidency from the public through a kind of routinization of fear—his fear of us, our fear of him, our fears for him, and a bigger, collective fear of sudden disaster in a dangerous world.

The Cold War was nothing if not a routinization of fear, a pattern from which political life is just beginning to free itself. Clinton's campaign battle-cry, "Vote your hopes, not your fears," would not have been possible if the Cold War still defined our relationship to the president. But that dynamic had evaporated by 1992. What will replace it is being worked out between Clinton and us, a public drama that bears watching in the months and years ahead.

I have spoken of our "relationship" with the president. But is this the proper word? Relationship talk, one may reasonably argue, should be reserved for intimates and acquaintances. With political leaders we have interests, and it is best to leave it at that. To seek a better "relationship" with an elected politician is asking for trouble. Not only is disappointment sure to follow, but the demand itself is a dangerous one in a democracy. It seems to invite charisma into politics, which can easily lead to an authoritarian "cult of personality." Moreover, talk of relationships only confuses the realities of a representative system. We vote for them, they do for us—or don't, as the case may be. Throw the bums in, throw the bums out, but don't look to politics for meaning, uplift, or a clarification of one's experience. That way lies madness, of a most illiberal sort.

There is wisdom in this warning, but not the only sort of wisdom we need at present. For the conditions of politics have changed in the media age, and the change is most profound in the case of the president. He is now a ubiquitous figure in daily life, a cultural presence as unavoidable as Michael Jordan or Madonna. We may as well admit it: The president is a celebrity. He "stars" in a production—his presidency—which every one of us attends whether we're attuned to politics or not.

A presidency, in fact, is a kind of co-production, arising from the infiltration of the president into personal life through the media. Think of the message about greed and gain that radiated outward from the Reagan White House. This was not only something the Reagan crowd "did." It was something that happened between the Reagans and the rest of us: The radiation needed sensors to work, and in that capacity we were all recruited into the Reagan presidency. Even if we did nothing more than joke about Nancy's glitzy gowns, we were participating



in the production of meaning that is now, in the media age, one of the presidency's central functions.

It matters, then, which meanings get produced, and that task is not to be left to Jay Leno or White House media advisers. In evaluating Clinton, we need to inquire into the signals radiating outward from a presidency in the early stages of production. But we must also ask ourselves if we are tuned to the right frequency, seeking the right relationship with a president who appears to be seeking a different connection to us.

Bill Clinton is by nature gregarious, a man for whom discussion is the purest form of self-display. We saw this first in the economic conference he convened in Little Rock during the transition period, an event wholly original in design and intent: the presidency as national teach-in. More than a preview of his economic policy, the Little Rock conference hinted at a role Clinton may choose to play as the biggest celebrity in politics—our convener, rather than commander-in-chief.

Almost everyone makes fun of Clinton for talking too much, including the man himself. It is a curious line of criticism, for among the political arts talking is by far the most important—and the most democratic. Amid the jokes about his long-windedness, few have remarked on the impressive fact that Clinton is doubly gifted as a talker. On the one hand, he is a dedicated policy "wonk," to use a sarcastic term favored by the press. He knows what the experts know about the intricate problems of governance. But he is also known as a master of human contact, with an uncanny ability to connect with people. Moreover, the connection seems to work on television, which is not always true of the most artful pols.

The blending of these disparate skills in a single political figure is rare in official Washington. Richard Darman, budget chief under Bush, was known for his intimidating grasp of the details of government. But to observe Darman in action was to experience the haughty manner of the distant bureaucrat, armed with technical knowledge the rest of us would never share. Ronald Reagan, to take a contrasting example, was considered a master communicator. But no one doubted that Reagan's grasp of policy was disturbingly thin. Clinton sets the standard for what a "great communicator" should be: an exemplary talker, able to straddle the split between policy issues and public awareness, a man who understands government in full detail and can reach the audience with this knowledge.

In his 1974 classic, *The Fall of Public Man*, Richard Sennett linked the misuse of charisma in politics to an equally dangerous trend: the disabling rule of experts. Sennett writes:

> In its most recent, televised form charisma deflects the masses of people from investing much feeling in social issues at all; one is so taken up with the president golfing or dining with an ordinary family that one doesn't pay attention to issues until they arrive at a crisis point, beyond rational solution... By diverting attention from politics to politicians, secular charisma keeps people from worrying about unpleasant facts—that a war has

broken out around the globe, that the oil is running out, that the city is running a deficit—just as the absorption of each of these problems into agencies or ministries with "experts" to handle them keeps them out of mind.

Sennett's observation underlines the importance of Clinton's dual competence as an effective communicator and policy "wonk." For it is precisely the authority of distant agencies and unaccountable experts that Clinton's personal mastery of the issues undercuts. By communicating to the nation his own command of policy, Clinton can try to put public reason in place of bureaucratic expertise, while at the same time he trades Reagan's emphasis on soothing imagery for a display of his own skills as a convener and discussant. Reagan benefited greatly from the dramatic visuals his advisers staged for him, but he was also unmatched as a public speaker. Clinton is a good but not great orator. His real strengths are in listening and responding, explaining himself as he absorbs the views of others.

In March, Clinton accepted an invitation from Republicans to come to Capitol Hill and listen to their criticisms of his economic plan. No one in Washington could remember a precedent for the event; it was reminiscent of "Question Time" in the British House of Commons, a weekly ritual during which the prime minister responds to criticisms from the opposition party. Clinton's willingness to meet with Republican doubters (albeit in private) was testimony, not only to his supreme self-confidence, but to the high value he places on civil discourse, in which we all assume a duty to explain ourselves and respect others as they do the same.

The presidency has traditionally been seen as a "bully pulpit," a unique platform for speaking out on the issues of the day. An innovative use of this platform would be to exhibit the president in the mode of civil discourse—speaking out but also listening and responding to others, demonstrating through his willingness to be clear about complicated matters a kind of conversational goodwill that challenges others to be equally civil. This was the promise implicit in the Little Rock conference: that the image of an informed president engaged in rational discussion would radiate outward from Clinton to become a ruling motif in politics. Remaking the presidency into a civil pulpit will not be easy—nor would abandoning partisan discourse always be wise—but Clinton deserves credit for venturing into new territory, where the definition of "leadership" expands to include the president as a discussion-leader, exhibiting to all what political talk could and should be.

On the day after his inauguration, Clinton stood for some five hours in a reception line at the White House, meeting and greeting a procession of 1,800 ordinary Americans. Three weeks later, at his first "town hall" meeting, he took questions from studio audiences in four cities. Several weeks after that, Clinton was seen on ABC responding to questions from children, as if their concerns were his concerns. Then he showed up on MTV to discuss his plan for national service.

What are we to make of these events? Journalists have given us one sort of answer. Settings like the televised "town hall" illustrate, in the words of Richard Berke of The *New York Times*, "the extraordinary measures [Clinton's] media advisers will take to control the presentation of the President and to bypass the filter of White House reporters asking uncomfortable questions." An image-conscious president and his clever aides, we are told, have taken the media event to a new, interactive level. The president manages to appear open and accessible while avoiding a nasty confrontation with a skeptical press.

Journalists have an obvious investment in this interpretation. It redescribes their lost authority as a presidential plot, and celebrates the cult of toughness so important to their sense of self. But what about the rest of us? As sophisticated observers of politics, aren't we obliged to see through these events and their phony populism? Isn't the "town hall" format just another campaign tactic, carefully staged to make the president look like a "regular guy?" When Clinton invites kids to the White House for a question-and-answer session, isn't the purpose transparent? The kids with their "serious" questions are irresistibly cute, Clinton looks earnest, likeable, and fatherly, the producers at ABC are delighted—but who can take this seriously as a political occasion? Shouldn't we agree with Jeffrey Rosen of the *New Republic,* that it's time to fear a "big, politically correct love fest under Clinton?"

The answer depends on your view of politics. If politics is about the clash of interests, then what really matters is who gets screwed. Do his appointments reflect the influence of Wall Street? Does he cave in on gays in the military? Does he sell out the Haitians? Does he get tough with the timber industry? That's politics. All this other stuff—town meetings, kids at the White House—is just atmospherics, part of the hoopla surrounding the president, who (regrettably) is a celebrity and must try to appear likeable.

Of course politics is a battle of interests, and we would be foolish to ignore our own interests in evaluating Clinton. But it is equally foolish to overlook the cultural dimension in a presidency, the signals a president sends

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Rx for American Health Care

Paul Wellstone

On the eve of the report from Hillary Rodham Clinton's health care reform task force, and the Clinton administration's proposal for reform, it's time to look past labels and evaluate the elements of a proposal that can meet the standards Americans have a right to expect.

I propose that the test any health care reform proposal has to pass is whether it meets people's expectations for health coverage. People don't get up in the morning and ask, Do I want single-payer or managed competition? They have some very basic questions about proposals to change the health care system: Will it cover the benefits I need? Will I be able to afford it? Can I rely on it to hold costs down and provide for me and my family over time? Will I have a choice about which doctor or other health professional I go to see? Will it eliminate administrative bloat, profiteering, fraud, and waste? Will consumers be included in the decision-making loop, or will insurance companies continue to hold all the cards?

The Clinton proposal seems bound to include some elements of a theory known as managed competition. As originally advocated by the Jackson Hole Group—a three-year-old informal organization founded by Dr. Paul Ellwood and comprised of approximately one hundred policy experts, doctors, and business executives—managed competition did not satisfactorily meet any of these expectations. Based on market competition among health plans for consumers, this untried and enormously complex system promises to preserve the worst of insurance company practices.

The principal mechanism of control under this plan would drive consumers into managed care plans, such as HMO's. Those who could afford it would buy their way out to a better tier of care.

But the managed competition system doesn't have to be a captive of the insurance industry. That system could meet the public's expectations by incorporating some of the principles of the single-payer system reflected in my bill, the American Health Security Act.

The health care purchasing cooperatives should be established as public or nonprofit authorities that administer health plans. The insurance industry should play no role in the purchasing cooperatives. Everyone in a region would enroll for care directly through the purchasing cooperative, not through employers or separate welfare agencies. This would guarantee universal coverage and the same quality and level of services for all.

Under an effective managed competition plan, people should have the option to choose doctors and other professionals who work on a fee for service basis, or to choose managed care plans. Fee-for-service health plans should be administered by publicly accountable purchasing cooperatives, not by insurance companies. Recent evidence suggests that existing managed care plans by and large do not save money and may in fact provide worse care than fee-for-service providers. But these plans have tremendous potential, if they were to be used to improve radically the way health care is delivered.

We now waste 25 percent of our $838 billion health care budget on administration and unnecessary procedures. A patient-centered managed care system could offer a full range of services under one roof, improve quality, and hold down costs by getting their multidisciplinary providers to consult with each other and to use data on outcomes to educate each other.

Health care must also be affordable. That means fair and progressive financing. It also means that plans would have to attract patients based on the quality of their services, not because they're cheaper. If people are forced to choose the lowest-priced plan because that's all they can afford, it's a fair prediction that low-income people will end up in inferior plans, and we'll jump right back into the spiral of cost shifting from one plan to another that's strangling the system today.

Health care professionals should have fair opportunities to set up managed care plans. Right now, insurance companies have sufficient capital to set up these managed care networks. Insurance companies should not be rewarded by being allowed to spend their profits to get a head start under the new system, especially when those profits were gained from not spending premiums on patient care. A purchasing cooperative can serve as an ally for professionals, if it serves as an accountable clearinghouse and not as an institution manipulated by insurance companies to squeeze out profits.

There must be a decent package of federally mandated benefits, including primary and preventive care, mental health and substance abuse services, and long-term care. This is fair for people, and essential for the system. An annual federal health care budget, and set prices for hospitals and doctors, are imperative. We cannot promise the

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Paul Wellstone, a Democrat, is the junior United States senator from Minnesota.

The Clinton Dilemma

Jeremy Rifkin

The United States is awakening from its long period of Cold War somnolence thanks, in large part, to the bountiful energy of its new baby-boomer president. Bill Clinton has sparked a rebirth of the American spirit and given hope to a new generation anxious to imprint its own stamp on the pages of history. While the conscience and consciousness of the country has been roused, a faint wind of uncertainty has begun to waft over the political landscape as the American people wonder where the new president is going to lead the nation. To better understand Clinton's vision for America, we need to be mindful of the historical experience that helped shape his administration's view of the world.

Both President Clinton and Vice President Al Gore are products of the 1960s. Their thinking, lifestyle, and values have been influenced and shaped by the technological marvels of our era and tempered by the increasing devastation of the planetary and human environments. Like most of us, they are of two minds, incorporating elements of two very different worldviews. They are awed by space travel, satellite communication, artificial intelligence, and gene splicing and, at the same time, increasingly concerned about the plight of the biosphere, the destruction of community, and the increasing disenfranchisement, impoverishment, and alienation of the American people, especially the young.

It's not surprising, then, that the Clinton/Gore administration finds itself caught between two visions of the future as it attempts to define America's third century. On the one hand, the President has asked the American people to join him in creating a high-technology infrastructure and economy for the coming century. On the other hand, he has championed the building of a sustainable society squarely rooted in community values and responsive to the carrying capacity of the Earth's biosphere. So far, neither Clinton nor the country has confronted the inherent incompatibility of these alternate visions, each of which is rooted in a unique historical tradition and buttressed by its own set of ethical and cultural assumptions. Understanding those assumptions is critical to evaluating the many choices that we, as a people, will have to make as we chart a new course for the third millennium.

The Clinton high-technology vision of the future is steeped in the politics of the global marketplace and traces its lineage to the beginning of the colonial era and the emergence of a money economy. High-tech politics is the politics of commercial enclosure of the global commons and the ever-increasing commodification of the lands, resources, and peoples of the planet. It is a worldview based on optimizing resources, accelerating the flow of economic activity, and expanding commercial opportunities.

Over the course of the past five centuries, humanity has increasingly enclosed sphere after sphere of the global commons, transforming the Earth's biosphere into a latticework of private domains whose value is measured almost exclusively in commercial terms. The land surface of our planet has been divided in recent centuries, with nation-states, corporations, and individuals all claiming ownership over bits and pieces of the Earth's integrated ecosystems. The oceans have also been partially enclosed, with each nation claiming economic sovereignty over 200 miles of ocean extending out from its coast—an area comprising 36 percent of the high seas. In this century, the nations of the world enclosed the atmospheric commons, transforming the skies into commercial air corridors, negotiable in the marketplace. More recently, the electromagnetic spectrum has been divided up and leased out to service a range of electronics and communications technologies. Now, even the gene pool is being commercially enclosed. The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office allows corporations to patent and own genetically engineered microbes, plants, and animals.

The very idea of owning and commercially exploiting large parts of the biosphere for short-term financial gain is anathema to the proponents of sustainable development. Unlike the high-tech vision, the sustainable development vision is immersed in the politics of sacralization and intimate participation with the biosphere and propelled by a deep sense of collective responsibility for the rights of present and future generations as well as the needs of the many other creatures who live alongside us

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on Earth. Advocates of the sustainable development worldview argue that society must learn to live within the constraints imposed by an increasingly fragile and compromised biosphere and not continue to produce and consume at a rate that exceeds the Earth's ability to recycle the wastes and restore the stock of resources upon which all economic activity depends.

The politics of meaning has found expression in the modern age in a variety of movements—ecology; organic agriculture; holistic health; animal rights; eco-feminism; liberation theology; humanist psychology; and the appropriate technology movement—all of which share a vision of the world: a belief in the intrinsic value of life and the interconnectedness and mutual dependency of all creatures in the earthly household. In this sense, these movements differ fundamentally from the interests of the marketplace, whose concerns rarely extend beyond the commodity value of the Earth's vast riches.

Very different temporal values animate these two worldviews. The high-tech society places a premium on hyper-efficiency— continually maximizing output in the minimum time, expending the minimum labor, energy, and capital in the process. Every conceivable social force and natural resource is mobilized to the task of accelerating the flow of economic activity and the production and consumption of goods and services. In the sustainable society, sufficiency is the dominant time value. Conserving resources, minimizing the flow of economic activity, and producing and consuming goods and services only to the extent needed to sustain a healthy existence becomes the primary temporal standard.

It is no wonder that in the high-tech society Gross National Product (GNP) is the primary index for measuring the well-being of society, whereas in a sustainable society quality of life is a far more valuable measure of social well-being. While GNP is concerned only with the increase in the production of goods and services, quality of life indexes measure such things as levels of literacy and schooling, the rise or fall in infant mortality, the conservation of natural resources, and the health of the environment.

The high-tech model and the sustainable development model also have very different spatial orientations. In the newly emerging high-tech society, virtual communities increasingly replace organic communities as a spate of sophisticated technologies allow people to interact and carry on more and more business electronically, enclosed away from each other and the natural world. In the sustainable society, the spatial orientation is intimate and organic, emphasizing the restoration of human communities and increased participation with the natural world that sustains the social order.

These two visions also presuppose very different assumptions about the role of science. The former is steeped in the Baconian tradition. Francis Bacon, the founder of modern science, argued that nature could be "forced out of her natural state and squeezed and molded." The goal of science, according to Bacon, was "to enlarge the bounds of human empire" by conquering and subduing nature, by "shaking her to her foundations."

The sustainable development advocates, on the other hand, argue that environmental relationships are similar to personal relationships. Both require love and acceptance. By attempting to subdue nature, by manipulating it to serve expedient short-term material ends, we have made our long-term relationship with the

environment less secure and now face the prospect of a wholesale depreciation of the life-supporting process of the planet. They call for a new, more sophisticated vision of science if we are to heal our relationship to the Earth, one based on empathy with the environment.

Clinton and Gore are caught between two visions of the future and so far, they have failed to confront their inherent incompatibility.

While the sustainable development vision does not eschew technology, or the values of efficiency, productivity, and profitability most prized by proponents of the high-technology vision, it places equal value on sufficiency, generativity, and conservation. Its advocates are committed to highly sophisticated new technologies, from photovoltaic cells to solar automobiles—technologies that sustain rather than drain the environment.

The two competing economic frameworks also differ in their approaches to progress. The high-tech society measures progress almost exclusively in terms of output and short-term material gains. The sustainable development mode casts human development in more spiritual terms. Transformation of consciousness and the steady advance toward species awareness are goals for those dedicated to mending personal and planetary relationships. Thinking as a species requires transcending traditional classifications of race, religion, ethnicity, and nationalism and acting first and foremost as *Homo sapiens* whose primary responsibility is to the continued reaffirmation and resacralization of all living relationships on Earth.

The high-tech proponents' primary institutional loyalty lies with the global corporations, the new quasi-political organizations that are increasingly vying with the nation-state for control over the planet's resources and peoples. Robert B. Reich, the author and former lecturer in economics at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, who is now the Secretary of Labor, argues in *The Work of Nations* that the knowledge elite or "symbolic analysts"—the new global labor force who manage, work for, and benefit from their affiliation with multinational companies—are already seceding from the Union, at least psychologically. As their interests and horizons are now more global than national, they are far less willing to make sacrifices for "the good of the nation" and far more anxious to identify with the global corporate community which sustains their livelihood.

Those advocating a sustainable society also have loosened their ties to the political interests of the nation-state. "God and Country," the traditional cry of American patriotism, has given way, for them, to the oft-heard aphorism, "think globally, act locally." Their loyalties and allegiances extend from the local biome to the biosphere. They extol the virtues of human-scale communities and, when possible, local production for local consumption and democratically owned and managed enterprises.

President Clinton and Vice-President Gore are determined to rebuild the national economy, revitalize American communities, and restore the global environment. Unfortunately, they appear to share the belief that the answer to the economic, human, and environmental crisis lies, in large part, in harnessing the human talent and national resources of the country toward the task of creating a powerful high-technology society in the coming century. In focusing the energy of the nation primarily on a high-tech vision, they may unwittingly be laying the groundwork for the ultimate triumph of the material-centered, utilitarian worldview that will inevitably accompany the new global technological order. In so doing, they may strike a crushing blow to the politics of meaning, resacralization, participation, and stewardship.

Clinton's High-Tech World

Even the most cursory examination of the first two major initiatives of the Clinton administration—the proposal to create a high-tech infrastructure, and the plan to provide universal health care—raise profound questions about the values and assumptions that will guide public decision-making in the years ahead.

In the 1992 presidential election campaign, Governor Bill Clinton attacked the "trickle-down" economic policies espoused by two successive Republican administrations. Now, as President Clinton readies the nation for his own brand of economic reform, he may be creating an equally damaging economic myth—one that might seriously undermine his efforts to create a sustainable, caring society. The President is proposing a new national economic plan that amounts to little more than trickle-down technology.

The President's plan calls for a unique new partnership between the federal government and corporate America to spur new high-technology industries and a twenty-first-century infrastructure to accompany them. Clinton hopes to fuel the new technology renaissance by transferring billions of dollars of research and development funds from the Pentagon to civilian commercial uses. High on the list of research priorities are biotechnology, robotics, artificial intelligence, digital imaging,

and data storage.

The administration is pitching civilian high-technologies to Congress and the country as a vital national security interest—a strategic effort to maintain the U.S. competitive trade advantage and commercial clout against both the Japanese and the European Community. According to the President, "only by strengthening our civilian technology base can we solve the twin problems of national security and economic competitiveness." Vice President Gore will direct this government effort.

The decision to pour billions of dollars into the creation of new high-technology industries may prove to be a mistake of great historical proportions, with incalculable consequences for society. Clinton's high-tech vision could, if fully implemented, lead to increased unemployment, a further erosion of the fortunes of the American middle class, an even greater disparity in income between the rich and poor, and the continued deterioration of the global environment. To understand how and why this dystopian future might come to pass, consider the unique set of economic and social forces being set in motion by the current transition of the American economy toward a high-technology future.

The modern age has been an era of unparalleled technological innovation. New technologies have increased productivity, quickened the pace of economic growth, and provided new employment opportunities. Even when technologies replaced human labor, new fields opened up to absorb the displaced work force. This was the case in the late nineteenth century in America when agricultural mechanization forced millions of workers off the farm. New manufacturing industries, however, were waiting to absorb the displaced agricultural workers. The automation of the manufacturing sector, beginning in the 1950s, forced a second mass dislocation, this time of blue-collar workers. Fortunately, the emerging service and white-collar industries were able to utilize much of the surplus labor. Today, the new high-technologies are beginning to force a similar dislocation in the white-collar and service industries. This time, however, no new mass employment sectors are emerging.

Two recent high-tech innovations illustrate the likely future impacts on employment as new, sophisticated technologies increasingly replace white-collar and service jobs. The U.S. Postal Service recently announced its plans to cut 47,000 workers as a result of high-technology innovations. The Postmaster General predicted that by 1995, computers would be able to read letters and sort mail far more efficiently, increasing productivity and significantly reducing the labor force required to move the mail. Similarly, AT&T has announced that it will eliminate 3,000-6,000 operators and close thirty-one offices by the end of 1994, replacing them with voice-recognition technology. Callers will converse with a robotic operator. Currently, more than 75 percent of the American work force—approximately 90 million workers—is employed in simple, repetitive tasks that can increasingly be replaced with computers, automated machinery, and robots.

The administration hopes to accelerate such advances by creating a high-tech infrastructure. President Clinton is expected to announce plans to construct an elaborate, nationwide electronic data "superhighway" that promises to do for high-tech communications what the transcontinental railroad and the U.S. interstate highway system did for the flow of goods. The high-speed fiber-optic computer network would provide an electronic infrastructure for the exchange of vast amounts of information, restructuring the very nature of public and private life. In the high-tech electronic culture of the twenty-first century envisioned by the Clinton administration, "virtual" communities will increasingly replace traditional communities, as millions of people carry on the business of day-to-day life—from shopping to banking—over the computer transom, bypassing face-to-face exchanges in the marketplace.

If the Clinton high-tech vision succeeds, millions of American workers in the service and white-collar sectors will likely be replaced in the coming decades—with little or no prospect of subsequent employment. The

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only significant increase in employment opportunities is expected among professionals—particularly scientists, engineers, highly trained computer specialists, high-level management, and teachers—and even in these areas, the numbers will be small compared to the growing population of chronically displaced workers.

If Clinton pins his hopes for economic revival on high technology, he runs the risk of creating a new and dangerous America, a nation of permanently unemployed people.

The potential impacts of trickle-down technology become even more troublesome when placed in the context of the current profile of the American work force. President Clinton and Secretary of Labor Reich talk enthusiastically about the need to retrain American workers in the more sophisticated skills necessary for the high-technology age. They neglect to mention, however, that such training requires a level of education far beyond the reach of most American workers. How do government-assisted retraining programs turn adult white-collar workers or service employees into scientists, engineers, computer specialists, teachers, or high level managers? And even if re-education and retraining of this magnitude were possible, not enough high-tech jobs will be available in the automated economy of the twenty-first century to absorb the legions of dislocated workers.

The prospects for mass employment in this demanding high technology economy dim even further when we consider the fact that one out of every three adults in the United States today is functionally, marginally, or completely illiterate. More than 25 million Americans are either unable to read, or have less than a fifth-grade reading level. An additional 35 million Americans have less than a ninth-grade reading level. As Jonathan Kozol points out in his book *Illiterate America*, "employment qualifications for all but a handful of domestic jobs begins at ninth grade level." For these Americans, the hope of being retrained or schooled for a new job in the elite knowledge sector is painfully out of reach.

While the high-technology industries will seriously undermine employment, they are likely to have an equally devastating effect on the environment. The high-tech global market is dedicated to an ever-expanding growth curve; high technologies are designed to optimize the use of resources and increase production and consumption. That being the case, the increasing use of high technologies is likely to greatly increase the flow of production and, in the process, quicken the pace of resource depletion and pollution accumulation on the planet.

None of this is to argue that high technology is without merit. Certainly a few high-technology industries could benefit the American people—the production of new pollution-control technologies, electric automobiles, and high-speed rail come immediately to mind. Still, in an era marked by an ever-accelerating federal deficit and shrinking revenues, the Clinton administration's proposal for upgrading the economy relies far too heavily on investment in new high-technology capital.

Our society is so fixated on the technologies of efficiency and substitution that we have given little serious thought to the development of technologies that promote sufficiency and participation. Technologies are never neutral; they are imbued with the values of the civilization that creates them. As long as we continue to place expedient time values above empathetic time values and seek power, detachment, and control from a distance, we will continue to be marginalized by our own tools and become less involved and relevant to the workings of the economy and society.

For too long we have asked only that our technologies, save time, and reduce toil. We now need to ask for a new generation of technologies that increase meaningful participation at work, create greater intimacy between people, and help forge a new sense of shared partnership with the natural world. In every field of human endeavor, from agriculture and energy use to construction and public health, sustainable technologies already exist as models and harbingers of an alternative economic vision. These technologies, many of which are as sophisticated as any currently being advanced by the Clinton administration, offer a new approach to economic development and employment based more on humane, and less on instrumental, values.

Up to now, the Clinton administration has aligned with the global corporations largely in pursuit of high-tech goals. Alternative technologies—organic agriculture, renewable energy, sustainable construction, holistic healing, and a host of others—remain in the wings, waiting for a chance to take center stage in American life.

By pinning his hopes for America's economic revival on high technology, President Clinton runs the risk of creating a new and dangerous America—one in which a small elite of corporate managers and professionals exist inside a nation of permanently unemployed people. American corporations may well win the race to dominate global markets and trade while millions of Americans lose their livelihoods and their hope of a better tomorrow. The human and environmental toll of trickle-

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National Service: The Sixties Meet the Nineties

Charles Derber

When I walked into the downtown office of Boston's City Year—the much-praised community service program, whose T-shirt President Clinton sports—memories of Mississippi Summer 1965 flashed through my mind. In a cavernous warehouse, with posters of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Gandhi plastered over the walls, scores of City Year kids are feverishly debating and caucusing, working the phones, stamping envelopes, and planning community events. The atmosphere is electric, and it is the most racially diverse group of young people I have seen in Boston. Like my fellow civil rights activists in Mississippi thirty years ago, City Year kids are fired up with passion and purpose, believing that they are changing Boston neighborhoods, and maybe about to change the world. Al From, one of Clinton's top domestic advisers, recently told City Year kids, "We want to know what you've done here to use it as a model across America."

But if service is the new youth movement of the 1990s, it's important to understand the true meaning of the notion of service. Is service a meaningful form of citizenship education, as City Year proclaims, and a strategy for "rebuilding our communities," as President Clinton recently wrote in the *New York Times*? Or is it, perhaps, another version of George Bush's "thousand points of light?" Is it charity, politics, social movement, or civic education? And are there ways to structure national service that will help make it, in the French social theorist André Gorz's classic formulation, a "radical reform" that can set in motion deep and progressive change?

City Year, founded in 1988 by Harvard Law graduates Michael Brown and Alan Khazei, sends its 225 recruits into Boston's neighborhoods to tutor in schools, clean up inner city parks and playgrounds, distribute food to AIDS patients, build and repair shelters for the homeless, help elderly people renovate their homes, and perform many other community projects. The young people, easily recognized by their red jackets and black caps with the City Year insignia, gather every morning for calisthenics and then fan out in teams to their projects, which last from three weeks to four months. The teams—bearing the names of Reebok, Bank of Boston, and other corporate sponsors—are the heart of City Year; racially diverse mini-communities of ten to twelve young people meet daily to plan and evaluate their projects and work through interpersonal differences and hassles. They also organize conferences and city-wide events such as the "serve-a-thon," which enlists corporations to donate workers for a day to paint schools, wash streets, and feed the hungry while raising money through pledges from friends and colleagues. City Year kids typically work for a year and receive $100 a week, as well as a year-end $5,000 bonus. The program, funded privately, now also receives a $7 million federal grant as a National Service demonstration project.

It is tempting to characterize City Year service as a new incarnation of 1960s social activism. The "corps members," as they are called, have the same idealism that led me to Jackson, Mississippi, and City Year is revolutionizing their lives in ways that the civil rights movement changed mine. Leila, a corps member from affluent Brookline, told me that daily problem-solving with her incredibly diverse team in the inner city guaranteed, much as I had felt about my own Mississippi experience, that she would never again see the world through the narrow lens of the suburbs. Virgil, raised in the inner city by his blind Puerto Rican father, said that City Year had taught him that he could, like activists of the sixties, empower local communities and "inspire by example."

City Year is fostering a repudiation of the selfishness of the 1980s and a commitment to grass-roots direct action that has parallels to the participatory politics of the 1960s. But while it is committed to a rhetoric of empowerment, City Year, which studiously avoids even the whiff of partisan politics and is allergic to any notion of change through confrontation, has adopted a different vision of empowerment. When I asked one corps member whether he might help organize the public school students he tutors to protest the lack of books, he called such action "aggressive" and foreign to City Year's philosophy. Every corps member I interviewed told me that City Year rejects

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the tactic of confrontation, and the kind of protests that pit one part of the community against the other, or communities against the state or corporations. City Year's belief is that real change is more likely to happen through establishment of a common ground.

City Year is a form of pre-political civic activity. While it lacks the discourse and maturity of a fully developed citizenship enterprise, it is nevertheless an important corrective to the breakdown of community that characterizes America in the 1990s. It is part of the effort needed to rebuild the foundations of civil society that are antecedent and necessary to democratic politics. As the Eastern Europeans are now demonstrating by painful example, it is impossible to build or practice democracy until minimum levels of trust, solidarity, and commonality have been established.

City Year has failed its corps members by neglecting analysis of the economic and social forces that create inequality, powerlessness, and other community problems.

Service, as exemplified in the City Year model, is a new social practice with two central elements: cultivation of a culture of caring and giving, rooted in a person-to-person helping relation that creatively melds individualism and community (for it nourishes self-development through doing for others); and mobilization of social action to foster the ties, resources, and common ground of communities. Service includes a major commitment to bridging and healing differences of race and class within and across communities, an area where City Year has excelled partly by the inspiration of the marvelously diverse community it has built among its participants. Service is more than charity, for it seeks to build the collectivity as well as the individual, but it is a weak, circumscribed form of social activism or civic politics, because service programs eschew all forms of "advocacy" or "partisanship," which mobilize the community for collective action in the larger public arena. Service nourishes the communitarian impulse in corps members and the communities they serve, but it does not, at least in its current form, inspire the understanding of social structure and political insights necessary for the economic and political tasks at hand.

With our civil society in disarray, the potential of service to help reshape our national values and contribute to the rebuilding of communities should be enough to warrant our enthusiastic support. But progressives should strongly press for certain reforms that can address the limitations of the existing model, particularly those that turn service into a truncated form of civic activism and unnecessarily strip it of its potential for radical reform.

Service programs must reconceive and expand their concept of service education. City Year's greatest success is the personal growth and learning it has fostered among its corps members, a testimony to its democratic and participatory structure, its diversity, and the sensitivity of City Year staff to their young charges. But City Year has failed its corps members by not exposing them to the full range of civic education necessary to their mission. The poverty of analysis within the program of the economic and social forces creating inequality, powerlessness, and other community problems is startling. When I ask why Chelsea—a poor Boston neighborhood where City Year focuses its work—is so beset by problems, nobody responds in economic or political terms. I repeatedly draw a blank when I ask what kinds of redistribution of power and resources might be necessary to solve Chelsea's woes. The City Year kids do not seem to have ever considered whether without such changes, City Year's work might only be a Band-Aid, stanching the bleeding but not healing the underlying wound.

Political theorist Benjamin Barber, the guiding spirit behind the Rutgers University community service project that Clinton visited in March and chose as the site for the announcement of his national service proposal, has argued forcefully for rooting service in universities precisely to ensure this educational approach. But it is not necessary to link service to the classroom or any formal academic setting. There is no shortage of intellectual dialogue in City Year, for example: only a failure to open up the full range of social discourse and analysis that corps members need to understand to carry out their work and intellectually assimilate their daily experience. Service programs should offer workshops on the community's economic structure, social stratification, and political elites, encouraging corps members to think clearly about how such institutions contribute to the problems they are seeking to remedy.

A second reform concerns the criteria by which community projects are selected. If service projects are to fulfill their mission of strengthening communities, the nature of the community organizations they work with, and the prioritizing of projects they pick, is of extraordinary importance. It is politically safer for service projects such as City Year to choose non-controversial projects that are primarily directed to helping individuals, such as tutoring kids in after-school programs or serving in a soup kitchen. But service programs need to

include in their repertoire a much broader array of projects, including locally based initiatives to create jobs, provide legal aid, or offer shelter for battered women. Such programs, which strengthen the community's capacity to help itself, are fully in the spirit of the service idea, and any controversy they generate will contribute to citizenship education, which cannot be divorced from civic controversy. Any project with strong grass-roots support and the potential to empower the community should be eligible; this will not "politicize" the service movement; rather, it will enable the service movement to succeed at its mission—helping communities meet the needs left unattended by both the market and the state.

As national service planners begin to flesh out their program guidelines, they should insist that funded programs:

- Enlist the participation of grass-roots community groups, including community development corporations, in the selection of projects;
- Ensure that the projects demonstrably serve both individual and community-wide needs and are not disqualified on the grounds of being "partisan" or "advocacy-oriented;"
- Ensure corps members' active and democratic participation in the design, evaluation, and administration of service projects and the program as a whole;
- Establish recruitment policies that encourage race and class diversity reflective of the locality; and
- Introduce seminars and workshops covering a wide range of ideas and intellectual approaches to community and the political process.

These criteria will help ensure that even a fast-growing national service program will be democratic and participatory rather than hierarchical and bureaucratic, and that it fulfills the dual purposes of contributing to the growth and civic education of corps members while shoring up the foundations and self-reliance of our communities.

The danger to national service now is that deficit politics is eroding Clinton's commitment, paring his short-term program to a paltry 1,000 summer youth placements nationwide and creating a lethal gradualism in the program's build-up. In contrast to the moderate Democratic Leadership Conference's proposal for 800,000 placements, Clinton is now proposing merely 25,000 in the first year and 100,000 by 1997. Progressives should energetically press the administration to fund at least 100,000 in the first year and a half-million by the end of Clinton's first term. Even accepting the $10 billion annual cost figure for a 500,000-member national service program (which wildly inflates the net new costs and discounts the economic value of the service projects and potential savings in prison, police, or social welfare costs that might otherwise be expended on social service participants and their clients), service remains relatively economical, one-third the price tag of one squadron of Stealth bombers.



The White House Office of National Service reports that Clinton is "still in love with the program. It's his baby," but that the President feels it is important to go slow to "make sure it works"—and is under budgetary pressure. To help stiffen the President's resolve against the deficit hawks, send him postcards reminding him of his excitement at meeting City Year kids who define their American Dream in terms of giving back to the community—and who really mean it. Tell him it excites you too—and that his gradualist approach threatens the critical mass the program needs to capture the public's imagination and make a real impact on the nation's youth and communities. National service may still be Clinton's best hope to inspire a moral renaissance that takes us beyond the degraded individualism of the last decade. Mr. President, give your New Covenant and ours a chance. □

DANIEL YANKELOVICH RESPONDS:

Since the late 1960s, I have been conducting an annual study of changing social trends among a national cross-section of the American public. The results strongly suggest a shift in the mood and outlook

of the public in the 1990s, especially among young people. Americans hope almost desperately to hold onto the flowering of personal choice that characterized the recent past. But at the same time they trace many of our nation's social and economic problems to a flawed morality that exalts personal self-seeking above all else. They are turning their backs on the greed, selfishness, and radical individualism of the 1980s. A new moral sensibility, taking expression through the idea of service, is beginning to bud.

Professor Derber approves wholeheartedly. Seeing this new ethic embodied in the eager young people of the City Year project fills him with hope—and rightly so. The new trend augurs well for the society. But Derber's reaction to it is mixed: While he likes much of what he sees, he has one decisive reservation.

His ambivalence is well-expressed in his characterization of the project as a "pre-political" civic activity. This is not all bad. It may, he says, represent "an important corrective to the breakdown of community" and an "effort needed to rebuild the foundations of civil society that are antecedent and necessary to democratic politics."

His reservation is that in being pre-political, the project for all of its good will runs the risk of being ineffectual or worse. He fears that these young people who reject the tactics of confrontation and protest as undesirable expressions of "aggressive behavior" may "unnecessarily strip (civic activism) of its potential for radical reform." The young participants, he feels, are generous in spirit but politically innocent and underdeveloped. They lack any cogent analysis of the "economic and social forces creating inequality, powerlessness, and other community problems." From his perspective as a sixties activist, this failure vitiates the program, and he calls upon progressives to remedy this near-fatal flaw.

For the purposes of discussion, I would like to offer a very different interpretation of City Year—one that hails its reluctance to push toward protest and confrontation as a political strength, not as a weakness of people who are still too young to have their consciousness properly raised. Nor do I see this attitude as pre-political; I believe it to be an expression of political wisdom, indispensable to recreating a genuine sense of community in America.

This is not a thesis that can be documented in a few short paragraphs, But here are three points for further discussion.

The first is the likelihood that the decade of the eighties, in all its gaudy expressions of individual self-seeking, was fathered by the sixties. It did not spring spontaneously from the brow of Ronald Reagan; he merely accentuated one strand, the least attractive, of the self-fulfillment movement that incubated in the sixties and reached full flower in the seventies and eighties. (I describe this evolution in three books I wrote in that period: *Changing Values on Campus*, *The New Morality* , and *New Rules*.) Derber's personal development was so deeply shaped by the sixties that he may not realize the extent to which the elements he deems missing in City Year—most notably a confrontational, protest-driven cutting edge—are precisely the features of the sixties movement that spawned the radical individualism of the eighties, which he correctly holds responsible for the destruction of community. For City Year youth, this confrontational side of the sixties is not a missing piece of the service ethos; it is its very antithesis.

The second point is closely related. Derber prescribes which aspects of the service movement of the nineties progressives should embrace, and which aspects they should seek to reform. In his article, he also cites political theorist Benjamin Barber of Rutgers University who argues forcefully for rooting the national service approach in the universities, where it can be guided by people with a progressive outlook. Both Derber and Barber want workshops to teach service volunteers the political realities of how communities actually work.

No one can argue with the desirability of debriefing service volunteers and helping them to understand the larger context in which they serve. But I would argue strenuously against the suggestion—and it is a strong one—that we use the classroom for political indoctrination. The subtext here is that right-minded progressives should seek to coopt the service movement by making sure that the learning experience is a politically correct one.

My concern is not simply that the surest way to kill the service movement prematurely is to convert it into a partisan, political issue with progressives pitted against the majority of moderates and conservatives in the country. The service concept is costly to implement. If in a time of budget stringency it becomes a captive of either the Left or the Right, it will have little hope of prospering.

There is another, more philosophical concern. Progressives in universities embrace a double standard of diversity. They welcome the search for common ground on racial matters, for example. They recognize how divisive confrontation can be here, and they rightly insist upon rules of discourse that create genuine community. But communities also include people of different political orientations, and toward this sort of diversity, the progressives' attitude is harshly intolerant. They regard the search for common ground with these "others" not as a desirable form of pluralism, but as political appeasement of the enemy. The whiff of ideology (and tribalism) is unmistakable.

Third, assume for discussion's sake that the progressive critique of social structure is correct. It does not fol-

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Work: A Politics of Meaning Approach to Policy

Michael Lerner



When Bill Clinton first wrote to me in 1988 telling me that "the politics of meaning" had clarified his thinking, he was responding to a perspective that had emerged from ten years of research I had been doing as a psychologist for American unions. A group of us—psychologists, family therapists, and labor union activists—had created The Institute for Labor and Mental Health in the San Francisco Bay Area to serve the needs of American workers, and to better understand the psychodynamics of middle-income Americans in the world of work and family life. We had been activists in the social change movements of the 1960s. Our concern was to discover why middle-income people had not been more attracted to those movements and why, in the 1970s, they seemed to be moving toward the political Right. What we quickly discovered was that our issues were not *their* issues. It was not, as the media sometimes represented, that working people were deeply disillusioned with government, or with liberal economic entitlements, or the extension of rights to minorities. Rather, it was that the liberal and social change movements, embodied for the public mind in the Carter administration, simply seemed to have no idea about what it was like to experience the pain and frustration that are part of the daily life experience of most Americans.

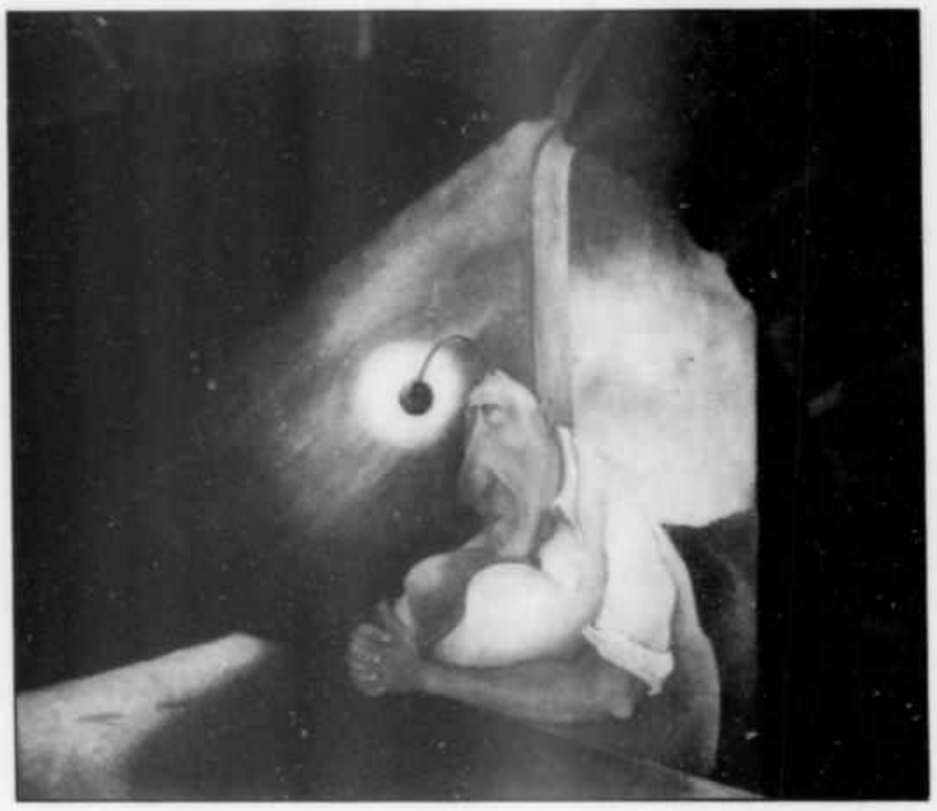
We found that most middle-income people were and continue to be in deep pain in their daily lives. Their most fundamental human needs—to be in loving relationships and abiding friendships that are themselves linked to communities of meaning and purpose that transcend the individual and link her or him to some higher reason for living—were being systematically thwarted. Lacking any analysis of why this was happening, they tended either to blame themselves and feel terrible about their personal failures (the typical self-blame response), or to buy right-wing explanations and hence to blame some designated Others—Blacks, gays, Communists, feminists, liberals, Arabs, Jews, Japan, immigrants—who were seen as the cause of the breakdown.

Liberals and progressives, we concluded, needed to switch their focus away from economic entitlements and political rights and begin to address the deprivation of

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meaning, particularly as manifested in the world of work and family life. Bill Clinton was the first Democratic presidential candidate to understand this need—and now that he is president he is in a unique position to introduce a progressive politics of meaning. And since the crisis of meaning is most acutely experienced in the world of work and in family life, it is here that it is most important to transcend the typical liberal and progressive solutions and to develop a meaning-oriented approach.



In the old vocabulary of liberal and progressive politics, issues such as worker's control at the workplace or support for families have often been posed in the language of new "rights" that we were supposed to demand. In the traditional liberal approach, some group is being deprived of a "right" and the goal of liberal politics is to convince the public that more of these rights should be acknowledged and guaranteed. But since liberals were always discovering more and more "rights" for growing numbers of groups, in actual practice they had to make priorities about which "rights" they would fight for. This often was determined by the question of which group was "most oppressed" and hence most immediately needing to have the wrongs redressed. In the resulting hierarchy of oppression, the rights of most working people and most families usually got short shrift, in large part because middle-income American workers were seen as being less oppressed and hence having less of a claim on liberals' already overextended political resources. But in any event the focus on rights necessarily missed the deeper needs that were being systematically thwarted.

A politics of meaning starts from a very different conception. Recognizing that human beings have a fundamental need to be part of communities of spiritual and ethical meaning and purpose that transcend the individual, we are drawn immediately to look at the two main arenas in which most people spend the majority of their time in adult life: work and family. For us, the question is not "What rights are being denied?" but "How much do these institutions foster or undermine our capacity to be loving, caring, intelligent, creative, morally and spiritually sensitive human beings?"

True enough, we could address the deprivation of meaning in the language of rights, or in the language of productivity. In my research I found that the absence of control over work had a profoundly negative impact on productivity and on health. I also found that if you reestablish a sense of community and undermine the self-blaming that tends to go along with breakdowns of social support you could increase health and productivity, as well as bolster family ties.

But framing the issues in this language, although it might be necessary to sell a given program to a particular congressional committee, only has the negative impact of re-enforcing a faulty understanding of policy issues. Instead, we need a new definition of productivity, one that stresses that "efficient work" is work that produces goods that promote the common good and done by workers who are most fully actualizing their human capacities and satisfying their basic meaning needs. Similarly, when looking at family life, our goal is to build families that foster loving and caring human beings and that provide a context for ethical and spiritual development and fulfillment.

The deep hunger for "change" that so many Americans articulated in the 1992 election stems from the deprivation of meaning in daily life. The Clinton administration may find itself deeply perplexed when it develops many programs that seem to address the economic needs of people, reduce the deficits, and extend health care benefits—only to find that Americans are still not satisfied.

Most Americans are not hungering for more benefits—they are hungering for more meaning. That hunger may be temporarily satisfied by the sense of community engendered by sharing the burden of increased taxes, or by excitement about the creation of a national service program—but daily life with its deep-seated alienation and pain will weigh back into the national consciousness as it always does, and suddenly the Clinton administration will be blamed for failing to deliver on its promises. Clinton and his advisers are likely to be perplexed, because the blame will be articulated by the media in ways that may seem unfair. Yet the dissatisfaction will not be about how many economic problems were solved, but about how it feels to be a person in daily life in America. What I discovered in ten years of research with middle-income Americans is that for most people it feels terrible—and although they do the most they can

to ward off those feelings, they keep returning, with increasing severity. People are willing to reach out for anything that will give relief—to a drug, a television show, alcohol, aerobics, Reaganite politics, fundamentalist religion, right-wing fanaticism, ethnic chauvinism or nationalism—by connecting them to something that promises to give meaning and purpose to life, or at least drowns the pain and helps one to forget or refocus.

The only solution to the deprivation of meaning is the reconstruction of our society in ways that do provide meaning and purpose. While a true reconstruction would require a fuller transformation of economic and political institutions than is politically feasible in the current climate of the early 1990s, there are steps that could be taken to shift the experience of daily life in America qualitatively, and begin to give Americans a sense of their power to achieve a more fulfilling life experience. Call that a "right" if you insist, but recognize that it is a need. If left unmet, it will explode in potentially destructive ways, not only for the society as a whole but, to invoke self-interest, for Clinton and the forces of liberalism and progressivism.

Policy for the World of Work

The goal should be to create workplaces that workers experience as places within which they get to develop some of their most valued human capacities and contribute to the common good.

As the Israeli kibbutz experience shows, even the most boring work can be fulfilling to workers when it is experienced as part of a larger project that has a transcendent meaning and is democratically shaped. When I worked on a kibbutz, I used to marvel at the degree to which garbage collectors, manure shovelers, chicken pluckers, dishwashers, cucumber-pickers and machinists in the newly developing kibbutz factory could all revel in their work, seeing in it an expression of their contribution to the kibbutz or to the building of Zionism. There were three elements in the kibbutz experience that seem to me to be relevant to building a sense of community in the American workplace: seeing work as relevant to a larger communal goal; governing workplaces democratically; having the possibility of job rotation.

When President Clinton talks about us all being in the same boat, he hints at the larger goal—the common good. But people will not sacrifice for the common good if they believe that in so doing they become suckers for others who will manipulate them in the process. To the extent that Americans bought the idea that Clinton was asking everyone, including the rich and powerful, to bear the burdens of sacrifice equally, they went along. In the world of work, sacrifice always seems to be asked of workers, and those who benefit are top management or owners.

Corporate and government leaders have temporarily diverted America's attention from this reality by focusing on an external enemy. "Sure," the argument goes, "those who own or manage the workplaces may benefit more than you, but there is a common danger that we face that requires you to suspend your own legitimate grievances and focus on the more serious problem." It's an argument likely to work during a war such as World War II, much less likely to work when the danger is that the Japanese will prevail in international economic competition, particularly since not every worker immediately thinks that it's obvious that life would be so much worse if they worked for Toyota or Sony rather than Ford or General Electric.

Clinton could implement a workplace-oriented politics of meaning that would increase his political support and improve workers' health and productivity.

Moreover, when workers realize that they are producing goods whose primary reason for existence is to produce profits for a particular corporation (often at the expense of our declining natural resources, and in ways that increase the total pollution of the planet), they are likely to be very skeptical of any attempts to characterize that work as having a higher purpose. Rightly aware of how much energy goes to foster a public desire for goods that might not otherwise have a market, sensitized to the ways that they are being manipulated by television and advertising even at the moments when they allow themselves to succumb to these manipulations, many workers are skeptical of the old and largely discredited argument that if a product finds a market it has proved that people really "need" it. Nevertheless, just because a product is making a profit doesn't prove that people don't need it, or that no higher good is being served.

What we need as a first step is a heightened consciousness that workplaces ought to serve the common good, both in terms of what they produce and in terms of how they produce it. And a first step in this process is to get workers and managers to begin to articulate their own conception of how they are serving these higher purposes.

So, POLICY RECOMMENDATION No. 1: Every

workplace should be mandated to create a mission statement explaining its function and what conception of the common good it is serving and how it is doing so. Management should produce such a statement, but there should be a totally separate process, fully protected by legal strictures of confidentiality, by which workers can gather and discuss these issues and report on what they believe their workplace is actually doing and how it is doing it—as well as what kinds of changes would be necessary if the workplace were to serve the common good and were to provide meaningful work. To ensure that time is allocated for this purpose, the government should mandate a series of two-hour segments on succeeding weeks in which workers are given paid time to meet together and develop their own positions. The Department of Labor should organize this process and publish the results.

The process itself will be the first step in developing a higher level of awareness among Americans of their need for a meaningful workplace. Given the high degree of cynicism that exists about work, most workers believe that the best they can do is to "get through" work and to escape it, hoping either to repress or forget what they have been feeling all day. As we discovered in our research at the Institute for Labor and Mental Health, however, neither the physical nor the psychological consequences of work can be escaped through a flight into "private life." The way we have been spending most of our day, the ways that we shape ourselves to fit in and succeed in work, have a profound impact in shaping what we will be like during our remaining waking hours. The psychological consequences of work cannot be thrown off like so many dirty clothes. In fact, they have a tremendous effect on family life. But the impact is usually denied by workers, because to face that would be a massive blow to self-esteem. Most workers believe that they deserve these work situations—and hence feel terrible about themselves for having failed to earn a better and more fulfilling life. So they do their best to cover up the resulting shame and to focus their attention away from work and toward their fantasies about private life.

Our research reveals that even when workers don't pay conscious attention to their workplaces, the negative impact of work remains. Neither denial, developing a "positive attitude," nor avoidance improves physical health, mental health, or productivity. Thus, it makes more sense to try to focus on how to improve the workplace.

One way to begin this refocusing process is to legitimate the notion that things could and should be better—that work should actually feel more like a fulfillment of a higher purpose rather than a wasteful diversion from one's principles. A second step is to confront head-on the feeling that work cannot be altered for the workers' benefit. Because workers believe that stress is an inevitable component of work, they doubt that any changes at the workplace are likely to improve the situation. In our research at the Institute, however, we discovered that a great deal of what normally gets labeled "stressful" at work is really the way that alienation, powerlessness, and meaninglessness infuse themselves into the details of daily work assignments. Thus, much of what is stressful is not the inevitable consequence of work, but the consequence of alienating and unfulfilling work. Yet before we could even begin to address this question on the macro scale, we would need to create a constituency of people who feel that they have the right to care about the negative consequences of stressful work.

So, POLICY RECOMMENDATION No. 2: The Department of Labor should initiate an annual national "Occupational Stress Day" dedicated to educating the public and the government about the stress that people face at work, the way stress gets brought home into family life, and how this stress might be buffered or reduced.

Following a model that we already tested out in the San Francisco Bay Area in cooperation with the labor movement and various governmental agencies, every community should be mandated to create a set of public hearings about stress at work and how work could be reorganized to make conditions less stressful. Legislators, media, academics, and church and community leaders should all be asked to participate in panels "taking testimony," and working people should be encouraged to provide first-hand accounts of the stressful conditions they face on their jobs. Every worker should be given permission to attend these hearings, and those who clock in and out for a complete day would be given a full day's pay. A report that summarizes the variety of stress problems should be published.

Recognizing the existence of stress at work is an important step. To understand this problem fully, workers need an opportunity to discuss more fully what they learned on Occupational Stress Day. So, POLICY RECOMMENDATION No. 3: The Department of Labor should mandate that all workplaces offer Occupational Stress Groups (OSGs) in which workers can learn how to recognize stress more fully at the workplace. Every workplace should provide paid leave for a worker to attend twelve two-hour sessions on stress, and providers of these OSGs should be compensated by a fund paid for jointly by the government and by the employer. To be effective, OSGs should have no management personnel, and facilitators should be chosen by workers from a list provided by the government. The goal of OSGs should be to teach workers to recognize ways that

the workplace might be reconstituted to provide greater opportunity for them to actualize their human capacities for creativity, intelligence, cooperation, and ethical and spiritual sensitivity, and to teach workers how to recognize and defeat the societal messages and psychological mechanisms within them that make them feel that they are not entitled to a more fulfilling experience in the world of work.

OSG providers should not be firms that provide "stress mangement" or "stress reduction" as their primary service, but rather firms that are skilled at helping workers recognize what aspects of the work environment may be generating stress, and skilled also at training workers with tools to facilitate "consciousness raising" about the impact of stressful work on family life. In general, the goal of OSGs is to provide workers with an instrument of self-empowerment.

Empowerment entails not only recognizing work-related stress and feeling entitled to change the circumstances that create it, but providing mechanisms to enable workers to effect the realities of work on a day-to-day basis. For that reason, POLICY RECOMMENDATION No. 4: The Department of Labor should mandate that every employer allow workers to elect an Occupational Safety and Health Committee empowered to require changes in the organization of work to increase workers' safety and health, including mental health, and to increase workers' opportunity to actualize their skills and talents. Management may appeal decisions of the Occupational Safety and Health Committees (OSHC) to regionally elected Workplace Review Committees that have the power to override local decisions only if doing so is required for the continued viability of the firm in question, and only if the firm can show that its continued viability serves an overriding function in promoting the common good. In that case, the Regional Review Committee is empowered to mandate as many as possible of the changes requested by the OSHC and consistent with the continued survival of the firm. Should workers feel that the Regional Review Committee has not adequately implemented possible changes, they may appeal to the federal district court. In the circumstance where OSHCs consistently appeal decisions to the district court in a particular region, the court is empowered to suspend the Regional Review Committee and to call for new elections.

While all these changes continue to allow owners to maximize profits, taken as a group they create a dynamic in the workplace in which work begins to appear to workers as something within their control and about something other than being ripped off by people more powerful than they. If coupled with a serious national commitment to develop societal goals and a societal definition of the common good, they could be important steps in changing the experience of work.

To further encourage this process, POLICY RECOMMENDATION No. 5: The Department of Labor should sponsor "Honor Labor" campaigns designed to highlight the honor due to people for their contributions to the common good. Labor Day may have originally had this intention, but it has been ironically turned into a new entitlement, a day off that allows workers an



opportunity to forgo the workplace, providing a three-day weekend at the end of the summer. Using a sustained educational campaign via television, movies, videos, billboards, schools, government and religious institutions, we can educate Americans about what ordinary people do in the world of work—and why the rest of us need to treat working people with respect.

Of course, most of us know the dangers of this approach. Given the ethos of selfishness and me-firstism that has totally pervaded every section of American society, many of us suspect that occupational stress groups would turn into endless "bitching," and occupational safety and health committees would become a new racket, allowing people to do less work and justifying it in terms of lowering their stress levels.

These concerns are not unfounded, given the larger context of selfishness in the larger society. A politics of

meaning at the workplace can only be one part of a larger transformative vision that seeks to generate a communitarian spirit and a sense of solidarity and mutual caring in every corner of the society. To the extent that "the bottom line" in most American institutions continues to be the self-interest of the powerful, every limited attempt to create an ethos of caring and a sense of values will be somewhat undermined. That is why it is so hard for parents to instill a sense of values and a commitment to others or to some larger community within their own children; teenagers have already learned that the dominant societal ethos is "everyone for himself and take as much as you can get without regard to the consequences for others"—what Charles Derber calls "American wilding."

On the other hand, as part of a Clinton administration commitment to creating a new ethos of caring, community, and ethical sensitivity, the steps recommended here could have a profound impact on changing some of the psychological dynamics that lead to the pervasive ethos of selfishness which, if not challenged, will ultimately undermine every aspect of the Clinton program. People will act in community-affirming ways when they believe that they are part of a community that really stands for something they support. American workers demonstrated this ability to transcend self-interest during World War II, and would do so again if they felt that they were not being suckered into some "work ethic" or "productivity drive" that was actually just a clever way for the owners of the corporations to maintain or improve their profits. If people feel that everyone is being treated equally, they are going to feel more open to taking workplace reforms seriously. It was the failure to institute this sense of "being in it together" that undermined workers' willingness to be productive in Eastern Europe. Under the guise of socialist values, a small ruling elite managed to concentrate power and privilege—and everyone knew it. Many workers withdrew into alcohol and slothfulness, finding ways to use their newly won protections at work as a further excuse not to work. They saw through the rhetoric of equality and cheerleading for the common good—they understood that the communist bureaucrats were merely manipulating the language of idealism for their own benefit.

Cheerleading for the common good will seem empty and will be greeted by cynicism here, too, until Americans come to believe in the substantive vision of the common good being proposed by the administration. That's why health care or housing or education programs are all relevant to what happens in the world of work, and conversely those other programs cannot hope to engender lasting support unless the dynamics of the world of work are addressed in this way. If the Clinton program remains at the level it begins—focused on training or retraining workers to get high-tech jobs to more effectively compete against Japan or Germany—it will only re-enforce the skepticism and self-centeredness of workers, and that will eventually undermine other aspects of Clinton's program.

Yet it would be equally foolish to underestimate the resistance to change that any program of worker empowerment faces. Having been socialized to powerlessness, workers are not running to grab new powers. One of their most effective mechanisms of self-protection has been their ability to deny to themselves that they really care about what is happening at work. In our own research and in other studies conducted in the 1980s, it was determined that at any given moment in many workplaces over 70 percent of all workers are daydreaming about their sex lives or about what they will do once they leave work. Though the dynamics of the workplace are often brought home in ways that undermine family life and relationships (a topic I shall discuss further in the July/August issue of TIKKUN), the illusion of "personal life" as a realm apart from and hermetically protected from the problems of work helps contribute to workers' resistance to making any emotional investment in the world of work or in changing it to become more humanly fulfilling.

Thus, to build a program aimed at empowering workers and giving them a new sense of dignity, to create an ethically meaningful work environment, we must build the psychological conditions for trust and mutual caring, and that means fostering a climate of trust and emotional openness that has until now been foreign to many workplaces.

We began to take on this task at the Institute for Labor and Mental Health when, together with a variety of labor unions, we developed a program for training union shop stewards with psychological skills and a variety of mental health professionals with class-consciousness skills. What we learned is that it is possible to develop a sophisticated assault on people's skepticism, if that assault is skillfully tailored to the various workplaces in accord with the specific needs of working people in that location, and if workers at each workplace know that the same kinds of things are happening at most other workplaces and in the society as a whole (e.g. because they see these activities being portrayed on television, in the newspapers, on public billboards, etc.).

One skill that is central to such training is the ability to undermine self-blaming. Totally oblivious to the class realities and structural constraints (the fact is that if they all had gotten M.B.A.s, roughly the same number of them would still be in stressful working-class jobs,

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MOVIE REVIEW

Clint Eastwood: Unforgiven

Harry Brod

The motion picture industry has been busy this season bestowing accolades upon Clint Eastwood for his film *Unforgiven*. In addition to receiving Oscars for best picture and director, he's been named best director by the Directors Guild of America, and the film was dubbed best picture by the Los Angeles Film Critics Association and the National Society of Film Critics, as well as receiving the best dramatic picture Golden Globe Award from the Hollywood Foreign Press Association.

The film's virtue, Eastwood was quoted as saying in the *Los Angeles Times*, is that "it demythologizes people who indulge in violent behavior," and critics agree with this assessment. In a way it does. (I'll pass over the oddness of his choice of the word "indulge." Violence appears to be a pleasure some of us manage to discipline ourselves to avoid, sort of like rich desserts). Showing that lethal violence is often perpetrated in less than heroic ways is a good lesson for the American public to absorb after the media show of the Gulf War, which tried to teach the opposite lesson using techniques learned from Hollywood. In the sense that greater realism demythologizes violence, the climax of *Unforgiven* may do for the genre of Western films what the end of *Bonnie and Clyde* did for gangster films.

But there's a false ring to a call for demythologizing violence from a man who did so much to create that mythology. How many men's violent impulses were strengthened by mental images of Eastwood in his various tough-guy incarnations? How many campaigns of right-wing, law-and-order politicians were buoyed as they appropriated Eastwood's "Make my day... Read my lips" rhetoric?

The eagerness with which the entertainment establishment is responding to Eastwood's plea to be forgiven for the violence he helped to promote calls to mind another set of pardons granted by George Bush before he left the presidency. Bush and Hollywood alike seem to believe that if we can see that true-blue American boys have noble motives in their hearts, then the harm they cause should be forgiven—honored, even.

How many men's violent impulses were strengthened by images of Eastwood's tough-guy incarnations?

Just as I object to the Iran-contra gang's pardons, so I resist granting Eastwood his absolution. The rush to forgiveness is very convenient for co-conspirators, whether those in government who broke the law, or those in the entertainment industry who are Eastwood's partners in disseminating violent images. Maybe Hollywood's collective guilt for profiting from images of aggression is behind all the praise for Eastwood.

Unforgiven offers a new twist on the gender dynamics of violence. Eastwood joins a long line of classic Western film heroes—Gary Cooper in *High Noon*, Alan Ladd in *Shane*, Glenn Ford in *The Fastest Gun Alive*—whose violent behavior is opposed by the women around them. But now real women are no longer necessary on the screen; men can simply internalize the feminine. In *Unforgiven*, the wife who taught the gunslinger the errors of his wicked ways is already dead by the film's opening. Like Dustin Hoffman in *Tootsie*, Eastwood emerges a better man for being more like a woman. Or is the final message of the film ultimately the futility of the attempt to pacify, i.e. feminize, men? When removed from the presence of women and children, the film indicates, men will revert to type in the end, as demonstrated by the film's final shoot-'em-up scene, so much like that of *Shane* that I kept expecting the writer to run after Eastwood, yelling "Come back,... "

In a conversation between William Munny, played by Eastwood, and Ned Logan, played by Morgan Freeman, we learn that men don't even need women for the one thing for which they're traditionally said to be valued: Men can either abstain, or use their hands. Munny is saved from having to answer Logan's query about his use of the latter method by the sudden need to duck flying bullets. Is the point that you can always count on a good fight to rescue men from intimacy with each other, or that combat is the form intimacy takes for men?

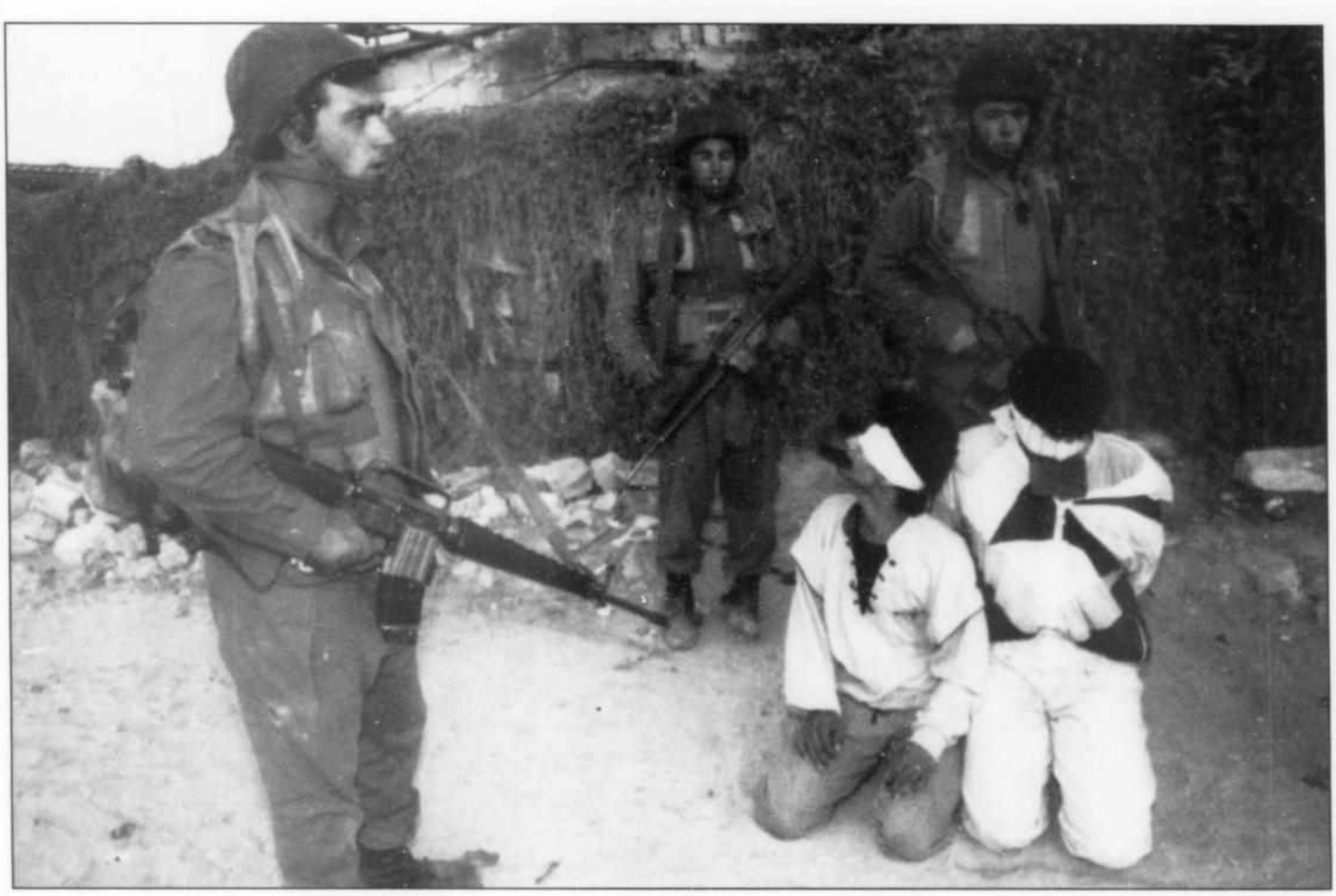
Judaism teaches a crucial lesson about forgiveness. Only the victims may forgive crimes against them. On Yom Kippur, we ask God for forgiveness for crimes against God, but for crimes against other people, we must ask their forgiveness.

In Eastwood's case, film critics and members of the motion picture academy are the wrong polling sample. I'd like to see a poll of all the surviving victims of male violence during the years Eastwood was one of the top box-office stars in the world, with those closest to deceased victims empowered to cast their votes. Then we'd know if Eastwood should be forgiven or unforgiven. □

Harry Brod teaches in the Program for the Study of Women and Men in Society at the University of Southern California and is spokesperson for the National Organization for Men Against Sexism. He edited A Mensch Among Men: Explorations in Jewish Masculinity.

Fear and Violence in Israel

Stan Cohen



"The solution to the problem of terrorism has nothing to do with the solution to the political dispute with the Palestinians."

- Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, March 30, 1993

Soon after the current wave of violence in Israel and the Occupied Territories started—once there were waves and intervals, now every incident merges into the next—a journalist from an American daily paper phoned me. How could he explain current events to his readers? The fear produced by terrorist stabbings in the streets of Israel and the killings of settlers and soldiers in the Occupied Territories; the call by the Police Inspector-General for citizens to be armed; the Prime Minister's plea to high school students to be as courageous as their parents' generation in standing up to "Arab terror." Were all these actions comparable to the fear of crime in American cities?

At some primal level the comparisons are valid. The jogger stabbed in Jerusalem would have experienced the same moment of fear as a jogger attacked in Central Park. But in Jerusalem, the attacker shouted "*allah al-akhbar*" (Arabic for "God is Great"). At this point, the cases become so obviously different that all comparisons lose their point.

It is not that the violence, despair, and insecurity in the ghettos of America do not have their own political economy. Even the most blinkered of good citizens sense that the problems revealed by the Los Angeles riots are too deeply rooted to be solved by more police patrols. And that "crime in the streets" is a code for "the Black problem." But in Israel, no such deep decoding is needed. The politics of fear and violence are in the open, in "each drop of Jewish blood spilt." Every government

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decision, every reaction in the street, every slogan screamed on both sides takes its shape from the bitter and endless Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The Israeli Right actually has an interest in exaggerating the political-tactical meaning of the current round of violence. For them, any indication of an Israeli willingness to negotiate and compromise directly causes more violence. Every knife, bullet, and stone is ordered by the Palestinian leadership—PLO or Hamas—as part of a deliberate policy to push Israel into a "fateful unilateral concession." The answer: Stand fast and wait till they break. In the meantime, "ensure security" through the usual desperate resorts: house demolition, further mass deportations, undercover units hunting down and killing *m'vookashim* (wanted men), curfews, and sieges to seal off Gaza and the West Bank, calls for the death penalty, the open legitimation of lynch mobs.

The knife-wielding Palestinian has been humiliated at a hundred roadblocks; someone in his family has been shot, beaten, or arrested.

The Israeli Left (of what is referred to as "left" here; most are barely liberals) also makes the political connection obvious. "Peace is the Response to Terror" is today's Peace Now slogan. After a nine-month slumber induced by the Labor-Meretz coalition, Peace Now has woken up to the urgency of the current situation. In major newspaper advertisements on April 1, the movement called on the government "to find the inner strength to take the initiative and break the deadlock in the negotiations." It sets out a sensible program (establishing an interim autonomy arrangement, easing the conditions of Palestinian lives, ending all Jewish settlement activity) that is a clear response to the right-wing campaign "to topple the government by dancing on the blood of victims."

The center—that is, Rabin's Labor coalition and most of the population—deals with the political connection in a more disingenuous way than either the radical Right or the peace movement. Theirs is the Israeli version of the Kissinger "two track" doctrine: bombing in Vietnam and talking in Paris. Thus Rabin's regular catechism: Pursue peace as if terrorism did not exist; fight terrorism as if the peace talks were not happening. Decent people everywhere are attracted to this grotesque bad faith. It is based on two illusions. First, that the current Israeli position (wholly supported by the Clinton administration) offers the Palestinians much more than the occupation in another name. Second, that the continued violation of Palestinian rights does not produce even further resistance to a settlement.

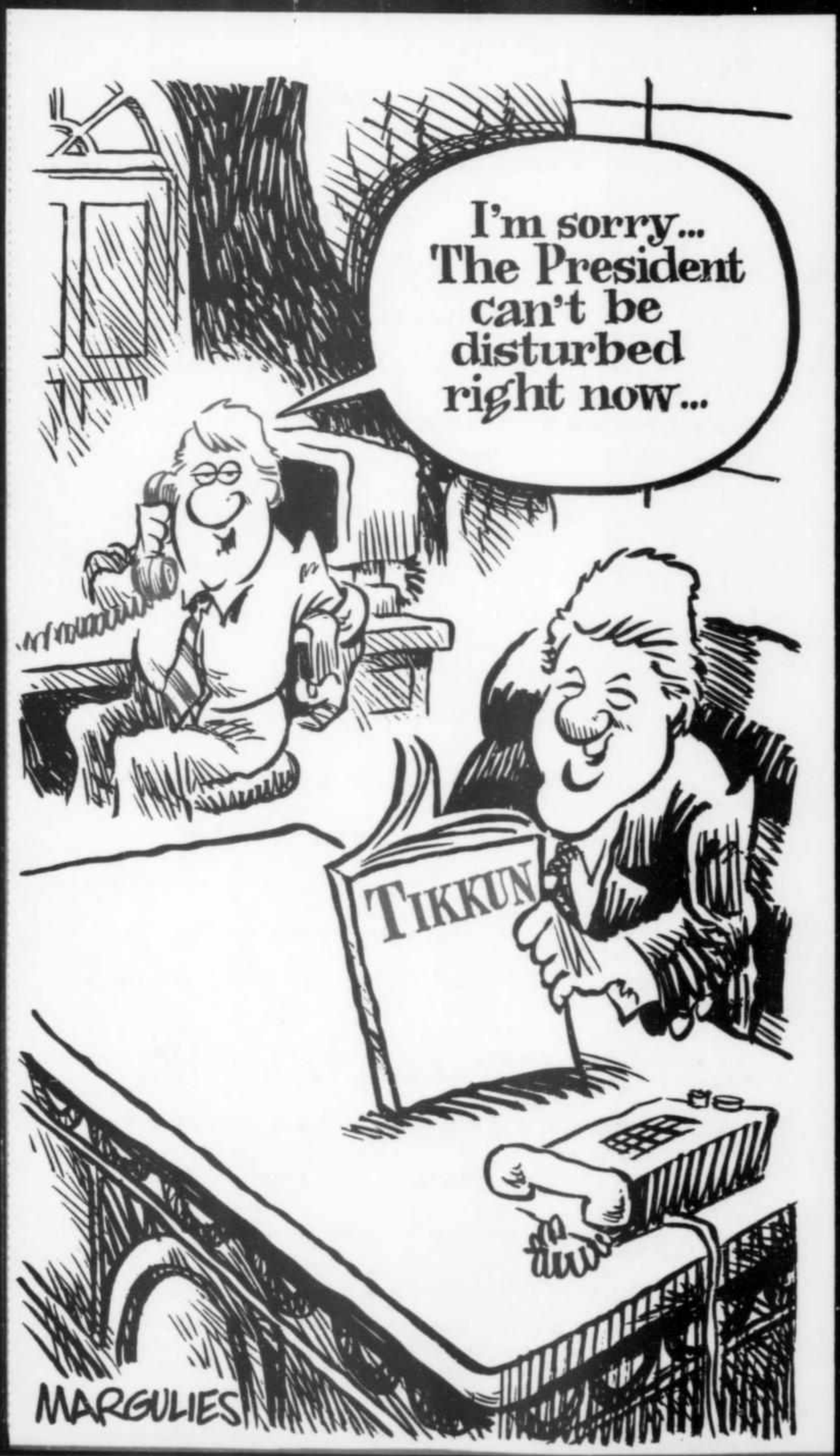
In a curious way, all sides share a political discourse that underplays the reactive nature of Palestinian violence. By overemphasizing "politics" in the sense of peace and diplomacy, the cumulative daily effect of the occupation is elided from memory.

The knife-wielding Palestinian from the refugee camp in Gaza is not a mere puppet operated from Tunis or Teheran. Nor is he a criminal. His despair is not an unfortunate by-product but the deliberate result of Israeli policy. He has been humiliated at a hundred road blocks and check-points; someone in his family has been shot, beaten, or arrested. His intent to kill any Israeli Jew in the street—and the religious fanaticism that justifies this—comes from an experience that rational politics misses.

Most Israelis dimly recognize this fundamental truth. Even army generals appear on television to explain patiently that no military action can touch the conditions in Gaza that breed violence and terror. But the same generals talk about such "conditions" as if they somehow just happened, as if the twenty-seven-year Israeli military occupation had no responsibility for them. In the three months in which seventeen Israeli citizens have been killed, some fifty-six Palestinians have also been killed. The dominant agent of violence has always been the authorities.

And one event from recent history has been wholly lobotomized from Israeli consciousness: the December 1992 mass deportation of 415 Palestinians—an event that marked a new epoch in Israeli political culture. In place of individual punishment, the government introduced a collective threat to the entire Palestinian population, a revival of their worst nightmares from 1948. No one—least of all, the Meretz leadership—openly makes any causal connections between the deportations and the subsequent despair at the diplomatic and daily level. And no one asks what (if the collective punishment of 415 people for seven Israeli deaths so obviously failed as a deterrent) would be the "appropriate" level of response to the far greater violence two months later.

Meanwhile, the fear and violence escalate. Some escalations will be dramatic—pogroms by the settlers—but more important are the incremental effects on the quality of life. Yesterday, driving home down an ordinary Jerusalem street, I noticed a fourteen-year-old boy wearing a *kippa* walking quietly on the sidewalk, the type of kid I think of as a member of the Kach Little League Baseball Club. Probably on his way to a demonstration, he nonchalantly balanced on his shoulder a sign that read "Death to Arabs." No one appeared to care. □


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How To Build Utopia in Only Minutes a Day In The Privacy of Your Own Home

Don Futterman

Part I

for David z"l

Silent Marty Samuelson and I swore eternal loyalty to each other at age twelve, the day I wanted to leave Jewish summer camp six weeks early to go home. He talked me into staying with the simple promise that he would be my best friend.

We became inseparable. We played—basketball mostly, but we did a lot of hanging around also, daydreaming together, not talking about what we were thinking. Marty didn't like to talk, so we didn't talk much. We were dreaming privately but next to each other. "Dreaming in parallel" you could call it.

We went back to camp every summer, all the way through high school.

The best thing about camp was that there were no parents and no dating. You didn't have to call girls up to ask them out, find a way to pay, or borrow somebody's car, because there was no telephone, there was no money, and there was no place to go. All you did was take a girl's hand and walk down to the Delaware River together and let your awkward passion get caught up in the rush of the water.

We called summer camp "Real Life." Every summer we had two months of "Real Life."

Our summer camp was part of Young Judaea, the largest Zionist Youth movement in America. Neither of us was a member of Young Judaea but I missed camp so much that I convinced silent Marty to join with me. That's when I discovered ideology.

The first principle of Young Judaea was peer leadership, which meant that just like in camp, there were no adults around. We decided what to do with ourselves, following the subtle guidance of our *madrichim*, our "leaders." They were only three years our senior, but in the compressed life span of the movement, an entire generation ahead of us. At times they created the illusion that we really made everything happen without their help, and at times we created the illusion that we could not have had our programs without them.

The second basic principle was *dugma ishit*, setting a personal example. As a true leader you must embody all the principles of the movement within yourself, and your example will show the way. I took this very seriously. I knew if my life was not different from other people in an exemplary way, I was selling out to the seductions of suburbia or—as my more sophisticated and more indoctrinated socialist Zionist friends used to call it—the narcissistic oppression of bourgeois life.

By the end of my junior year of high school, Marty was the president and I was the programmer of Queens Region of Young Judaea. It's not that Marty was more popular or more successful than me. I wanted to be programmer. I liked deciding what everyone was going to do, and I loved having all the power with none of the responsibility.

My job was planning the conventions, our four-day retreats. Pedestrian programmers would schedule a film strip or invite a speaker. I was more interested in creating events, participatory adventures on the order of naval war games.

In my senior year of high school I found my cause and I staged my masterpiece. I was obsessed with the idea of chosenness—that the Jewish people was chosen. Not that we were superior but that we were obligated, that we were supposed to set an example for the whole world. The Jews were supposed to be a light to the nations. That's what the prophet Isaiah had said. We had to be a shining light, an example for other people to follow, a personal example.

But what kind of example were we setting for anybody? Suburban homes with manicured lawns, successful professional careers dependent on eighty-seven-hour work weeks, enough security fences and insurance to shield us from the pain not only of disasters but of any experience at all, emotional catharses and financial contributions summoned on cue by the slightest mention of the Holocaust or the State of Israel coupled with an ignorance of Jewish sources so complete as to seem conspiratorial. And

Don Futterman is a writer, performer, and commentator for public radio living in San Francisco. This essay is adapted from an autobiographical performance piece.

that was the best there was. With all the confidence of my sixteen-year-old self-righteousness, I was dead certain that this plasticland of despair masquerading as decorum was not what the prophet was talking about.

I decided to put the Jews on trial.

I made up a program; a trial with a judge, a jury, a prosecuting attorney, a defense attorney, the whole works.

I would charge the Jewish People with failing to be a light to the nations.

For the judge I chose my mentor, my Young Judaea group leader. Like me he was from Queens, but he had fought for Israel in the Yom Kippur War. In other words, he was a living hero. I was the prosecuting attorney and I assigned our administrative vice president to be counsel for the defense. To Silent Marty Samuelson I gave the non-speaking part of bailiff. He could keep us on schedule without having to address the crowd.

The members of our region would be the jury. Queens Young Judaea would judge the Jewish people.

I took all sixty-seven members to Kaplan's, a rickety hotel in the Borscht belt. I set up a courtroom in the old Galaxy Ballroom. And there for four days I called up witnesses and I introduced evidence. And at the end of four days they had to vote—guilty, or not guilty.

Of course, I had written the script. We thrashed our way through Jewish history, finding failures under every stone. We even displayed our disdain for prettified Zionism with a scathing report on the social problems of Israel. But I saved my clincher, the *pièce de résistance* for Saturday night. To reveal the depths and banality to which American Jewish life had sunk, I staged a bar mitzvah. Everybody who came got bar mitzvahed, and afterwards we had a reception, complete with a bar mitzvah band and cocktail franks. The evidence was overwhelming.

Sunday morning, the sixty-seven members of the jury were called upon to pronounce judgment. They had been arguing in small groups all weekend, debating the evidence. Now, one by one, each person had to stand up and in full view of the entire court declare his or her decision. There was a gravity in that room that none of us were used to. Voices cracked in giddy anxiety. Loud declarations of condemnation were followed by defiant pleas of innocence. The votes were cast and the judge counted them and we waited.

And just before the verdict was announced, suddenly Silent Marty the bailiff ad-libbed a line. He said, "Will the defendant please rise."

The defendant?

Who was the defendant?

There was a spontaneous movement throughout the room. The members of the jury were rising to their feet. Everyone was standing. And without a word they moved forward and formed a circle. We were all part of the Jewish people. And the judge, he was Jewish too, so he stepped down from the judge's bench and he came and stood next to us.

The best thing about camp was that there were no parents and no dating. You just took a girl's hand and walked down to the Delaware River.

And as we joined hands, standing there in a big circle, we felt united, and I was so impassioned, so breathless and excited, I felt our fate really would be decided when the judge announced the verdict.

And we were standing there, feeling very guilty.

And that was as far as I had planned the program.

And just before the moment collapsed into embarrassment, the judge, my living hero, stepped into the circle and proclaimed:

"You are the ones who will change the world. For once in 2,000 years we have our own country. Do not miss the moment. The Jews of the world are asleep so we will wake them up. We'll start with ourselves and then we'll set an example to the world of what a country can be. We'll be a light. A light to the nations!"

As he talked, it was very clear that he was speaking only to me.

I was going to change the world. I would set an example.

But what could I do?

That year, my senior year of high school, I traveled all over New York showing a slide show to different Young Judaea clubs. The show was about a kibbutz that had just been started in the Arava by people from Young Judaea. Night after night I would go to elementary school and high school groups with my projector and give my spiel about the new world that this group was trying to build. And as I watched the slides again and again, I learned to do my talk on automatic, and I became hypnotized by the images I was looking at. There was one slide that became imprinted on my soul.

Twenty young American Jews were standing in the desert in front of a corrugated tin hut, the site of an army outpost. They were in a big circle, squinting in the bright sun, and they were receiving a folded Israeli flag from the army. This handoff of the flag meant that the kibbutz now belonged to the group. It was their commu-

nity. Their own little world. To start from scratch. They could do what they wanted with it.

I would build a community. A model community. A living model for other people—for other communities to imitate.

It was the most exciting, absolutely compelling idea I'd ever had. It was original, new, and mine.

I knew my community would be in Israel. But I didn't know what kind of community it would be. I had no specifics. I started to read about the kibbutz movement, about an early kibbutz, a small group of people who settled on a hilltop in the Galilee in the 1920s, an embryonic kibbutz called Bittania. They were going to remake themselves through manual labor and unflinching honest intimacy.

I imagined my friends and me living on Bittania.

There was Silent Marty. There was my friend Arthur. And there was the girl I secretly loved, Alison. And there were fifteen of my other friends. Every morning we would go out and pull rocks out of the ground for ten hours. In the afternoon we would climb fruit trees, trees we had planted the year before, picking apples and oranges and bananas that were growing in incredibly dense clusters all in the same tree, and the whole time we would be singing anti-war songs, Phil Ochs, "I ain't marching anymore!" and Israeli folk songs we had learned in summer camp, and we'd keep working and singing, drunk, not on wine but on our new selves, our bodies reforged in the Israeli sun, the sun that never bothered us because we were protected by our dark brown sun-drenched leathery skin, our souls cleansed by the pinpoint singular focus of our lives, working and singing every day from dawn until six o'clock when the winds kicked up and we'd stop working—not because we were tired, we never got tired—at six o'clock we'd stop so we'd have enough time to read Kierkegaard before dinner.

After dinner the real life started. That's when we would get together and we would talk—about everything. We already shared our food and our clothing. Now we shared our innermost feelings. As the night wore on, we got more intense and more honest.

And emboldened by this honesty I finally declared my love to Alison. Simply and truly, with no jokes and no games. And she told me she loved me too. And the two of us fell to the ground in a desperate embrace. We started to make love right in the middle of the group, and everyone else came around and we were all one big tangle of arms and legs and lips and nipples and thighs all making love with each other. And then we started making love with the ground, with the earth.

And in the morning we woke up. Refreshed.

And we went out singing to start our new day.

When I graduated from high school I went to Israel to see what kibbutz life was really like. I went to a kibbutz in the Galilee. An archaeologist had declared this kibbutz to be on the actual site of the original Garden of Eden.

Kibbutz Garden of Eden was a gorgeous green, with manicured lawns, exotic trees, and a view from the mountaintop down past a Crusader fortress into a spectacular valley. It was a country club with crops.

Only the houses were disappointing. They were ugly little pre-fab boxes set six yards apart, a drab expression of equality and an aesthetic disaster. But you didn't need much in your house; no real kitchen, no real dining room, no laundry room or even kids' rooms. Because you ate in the communal dining room, dumped your dirty clothes in the communal laundry chutes, and only yanked your kids out of the communal children's house when you had your daily childrens' hours generously allocated just to spend with them.

The people were also disappointing. I got tired of visiting my adopted kibbutz parents. We drank tea and ate cake and tried to talk in Hebrew but the Hebrew was hard and the men were tight-lipped and intimidating and I couldn't find anything to talk about.

I kept waiting for when I could take part in one of those emotional truth marathons when everything was going to come out. If only they'd let me in on one of those all-night discussions, I would find that passion that keeps a community alive. I wanted to feel ALIVE!

Then they told me that they didn't have truth-telling sessions on kibbutz anymore. They had discovered that if you spend six hours a night spilling your guts it doesn't make for a very stable environment.

"So what holds this community together?"

Manual labor!

Well, all right. They haven't lost manual labor. I realized that it was not a new idea. The early pioneers had tried to shed their overintellectualized bourgeois diaspora selves through physical work. But so be it! I cried. Let me remake myself through manual labor!

So they put me to work.

I washed dishes.

I sorted nuts and bolts.

I picked onions.

I stuffed chickens into cages, sending them off to their deaths while they scratched my arms and pissed and crapped all over me.

I even pulled rocks out of the ground.

And I began to yearn for anything that would engage my mind and make the endless hours speed up until my transformation was complete.

Then they told me I would get to drive a tractor. That was more like it. A pioneering farmer, masterfully guiding the tractor through its treacherous maneuvers, high

in the saddle, the tractor cried out for the new man I was becoming.

Actually it was not a normal tractor—it was a caterpillar. A caterpillar is like a tank without a turret. It has treads instead of wheels, and it's called a caterpillar because of the way it moves. It doesn't roll; it crawls.

My job was to drive the caterpillar on top of a huge pile of grass, grass stacked up twenty feet high between concrete supporting walls. The caterpillar would crush out the oxygen so the grass wouldn't rot and could be stored for the winter. This had to be done day and night without a break, they explained to me, so the oxygen wouldn't come rushing back in. My friend Barry and I had the night shift.

All night we rode, each of us on his own two-ton caterpillar—crawling up a pile of grass, twenty yards forward, up to the top of the hill, tilt slowly, crawl twenty yards down, turn around, and up again, twenty yards forward, twenty yards back. The engine was so loud it drowned out a transistor radio I had strapped to my head and the only light came from the single glaring makeshift headlight dangling off the front of each caterpillar. The one thing keeping me awake—a very effective stimulant—was my fear that I would run into Barry on his caterpillar.

The boredom was driving Barry nuts. One night he disappeared and I heard later that he had been steamrolling the flower beds in front of the houses on the kibbutz. Then he drove his caterpillar along the top edge of the supporting wall, risking a twenty foot drop, and chewing up the tread. He told me it was the only way he could keep the monotony at bay. I went to the work coordinator and made up a story about an accident to explain the tread damage, but hinted that a catastrophe was not unlikely, and finally the work coordinator agreed that the following week he would transfer us.

It was our last night of grass crushing. I tried to keep my eye on Barry, but around 4 a.m. he disappeared again. I couldn't see very well as I trudged up to the top of that pile, trying to catch sight of him in my single beam. I turned off my engine to listen for him, expecting to hear a rumble across some distant quadrant of the kibbutz, but Barry roared out suddenly, behind me, climbing the grass mountain with his headlight dark, heading straight for my caterpillar. I restarted my engine, pummeling the gas pedal but before I could get away I felt my tractor tipping up into the air. I looked back, frantically trying to get Barry's attention but I couldn't see anything, just shadows, and I imagined Barry staring through me at nothing. His caterpillar was mounting mine. The two machines were mating, and I hung on to my seat, praying I wouldn't fall out, until his caterpillar slammed down, his tread locked inside the tread of my caterpillar. Inseparably linked, they spun together and crashed into the supporting wall, cracking it but not destroying it and ending our days of piloting tractors forever.

And I knew kibbutz was not the answer.

I had to find something else but I was very confused. Kibbutz had made so much sense in the books. But when I thought back on the caterpillars, I knew kibbutz was crushing my soul, that I had been happy to hit that wall, and the only pleasurable moment in the whole experience was when I told Barry the story of my love life while we waited for the dawn and for the mechanics to wake up so they could come fix our mess.

I went to college, the next step after my year in Israel. But the university was the loneliest place in my life. I didn't fit in at all. I was so Jewish. I was looking for a better world, and other students were reaching for those golden rings of success, or retreating into academic niches. Finding myself so alone for so long, I became more convinced than ever that the answer was community. That old ally, the family, was something I had been drilled to leave behind but the world was too big to face alone.

I spent my senior year of college reviewing the errors of kibbutz instead of planning for a career. I survived college with two powerful convictions:

One person could not change anything but a community had unlimited potential power. And manual labor was not the way to build the new man and woman. Some regular, structured, communal baring of those souls—this was crucial to keep a community on the edge, to make life the unending adventure it was supposed to be. The old kibbutz world had abandoned this practice and they had been swallowed by the drudgery of physical work.

But they had not given up public soul-searching arbitrarily. It was difficult, unsettling, and it frightened people. Secrets could be revealed. Marriages could crumble. When all was said and done, the kibbutz preferred an even keel in public life and perhaps still believed in the bourgeois family.

If I ever did succeed in gathering a group around me, we could not start by casually pouring out our secret passions. I would have to be patient, wait for the right moment, and try to guide us to our group catharsis only once we were ready. But when the time came we would face our passions and our demons and we would be free.

And now that I was free of school, it was time to complete my new vision so I could gather my group together. I tried to visualize my community into existence through sheer force of will but it was foolish and impossible to do all the imagining on my own. I needed to see a more complete picture. To build a community, I needed a team of visionaries. □

End of Part I. To be continued.

Tainted Legacy: Remembering the Warsaw Ghetto

Lawrence L. Langer



Does Holocaust "remembrance" have redemptive power? Although this assumption has nurtured an extensive commentary on the Holocaust, it is at odds, linguistically and ultimately factually, with the reality of the survivors' memory. In framing the Holocaust through the lens of heroic rhetoric, Holocaust chroniclers exhibit their own discomfort with the facts left to us by Holocaust victims, dead and alive, and reveal the inadequacy of our language in the face of what there is to tell.

When the German administrator of the Warsaw ghetto told Adam Czerniakow, president of the Warsaw Jewish Council, that starting on July 22, 1942 he wanted 6,000 Jews daily for "resettlement" to the East, Czerniakow, undeceived, decided that he did not wish to preside over the destruction of Warsaw Jewry: The next day, he committed suicide. This is a piece of incontestable documentary evidence, but like much other evidence of this sort, it offers us no guidance.

How shall we, generations later, judge this act? Does it represent courageous defiance or a withdrawal from responsibility? Czerniakow, after all, was the leader of his community, and his voice might have summoned his fellow Jews to some act of public resistance. Decades after the war, Marek Edelman, one of the few surviving leaders of the Warsaw ghetto uprising the following spring, criticized Czerniakow for failing to make a public declaration of the truth—that the Jews were about to

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be murdered. "One should die only after having called other people into struggle," Edelman charged. He and his dead friends reproach Czerniakow "for having made his death his own private business."

But as Yisrael Gutman, also a member of the Jewish Fighting Organization during the uprising and today a distinguished Israeli historian and director of research at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, points out in defense of Czerniakow, at the time "even the various underground factions were unable to concur in an appraisal of the situation, address the masses of Jews with a common appeal, or call for resistance as a means of response." We also know from Czerniakow's diary that only two days before the deportations were to begin, he went to half a dozen Gestapo, S.S., and civilian officials seeking confirmation of the persistent rumors that a massive "resettlement" operation was about to start, and to a man they denied the rumors as utter nonsense.

Lies and deception were integral parts of the German strategy; Czerniakow's mistake was to believe what he needed and wanted to believe, but he can hardly be blamed for that, since he shared that weakness—or naiveté—with most of his fellow Jews in the ghetto. His death must have been an admission to himself that he had been a tool of the Germans all along, and a sign of his refusal to accept that role any longer. Since there was no organized resistance in the ghetto in July 1942, and little possibility of any appearing, Czerniakow seemed to have had little choice. But this does not make his final act any easier to assess so many decades later.

Edelman tells another story: When the Germans entered the ground floor of the children's hospital in the Warsaw ghetto to round up the young patients for deportation to Treblinka, on the upper floor Adina Blady Szwajger, a Jewish doctor, was busy poisoning the sick children to

"rescue" them from that doom. "She saved these children from the gas chamber," says Edelman. "People thought she was a hero." This is perhaps the most bizarre definition of heroic behavior we will ever encounter. The issue is not whether the designation is correct; the issue—here, as in the case of Czerniakow's suicide—is the poverty of traditional moral vocabulary when we address the subject of human conduct during the destruction of European Jewry.

Much writing about the Holocaust, including some works of history, illustrates the failure of language to grasp the thoroughly disruptive, not to say disintegrative impact, of that event on familiar value systems. Marek Edelman goes so far as to call the Warsaw ghetto uprising "undramatic," because for him dramatic action depended on choice, on making a decision. The fate of every Jew in the Warsaw ghetto, including those who took part in the uprising, was predetermined by the Germans: It had already been established that they were all to be killed; any exceptions (and there were very few) would be owing to chance and luck, not choice. As a cardiologist (after the war), Edelman knew that doctors often made decisions that might save a patient's life. But in the Warsaw ghetto, he admits, "It was always death that was at stake, not life." The victims, especially those who joined the uprising, knew that they were supposed to die. If we raise that awareness to a public level, it means that historians of the period must accept the fact that they are writing of a moment in time without a future. The challenge to us is to try to suspend the privilege of having a future in order to enter sympathetically into the daily ordeal of human beings who could not share it.

Fortunately, we have the testimony of survivors and victims to help us make this transition, but we must be prepared to face a reality that cannot be normalized or sanitized by romantic references to heroes and martyrs. Most victims did not see themselves that way. Listen to the voice of Abraham Lewin, whose recently translated *A Cup of Tears: A Diary of the Warsaw Ghetto* is one of the most important sources providing us with an account of the daily struggle to stay alive. Lewin writes:

> The proportions of life and death have radically changed. Times were, when life occupied the primary place, when it was the main and central concern, while death was a side phenomenon, secondary to life, its termination. Nowadays death rules in all its majesty; while life hardly glows under a thick layer of ashes. Even this faint glow of life is feeble, miserable and weak, poor, devoid of any free breath, deprived of any spark of spiritual



> content. The very soul, both in the individual and in the community, seems to have starved and perished, to have dulled and atrophied. There remains only the needs of the body, and it leads merely an organic-physiological existence.

Those of us familiar with descriptions of the Warsaw ghetto as a model for heroic resistance and the resolute will to survive may have difficulty reconciling Lewin's desperate portrait with that more congenial version. The conflict leads us to consider the two planes on which the event we call the Holocaust takes place in human memory—the historical and the rhetorical, the way it was and its verbal reformation, or deformation, by later commentators.

Since the Warsaw ghetto has become the emblem of Jewish resistance for many of those commentators, we need to balance the attitude based on a rhetoric of heroism with the testimony from those who were there. Probably the most important witness, in terms of the archive of documents he collected and buried, was the historian Emmanuel Ringelblum. After the war, ten cases and two milk cans of his records, diaries, journals, and historical commentary were discovered in the ruins of the ghetto. They represent an invaluable legacy of a man who tirelessly inspired a staff of writers—Abraham Lewin was one of them—to preserve for history the narrative of their people's ruin. This was not only Ringelblum's life work; it was also his death work, since when he had an opportunity after the uprising to be smuggled out of the country by the Polish underground, he refused. He preferred to continue writing in hiding until, in March 1944, the Gestapo discovered him and his fam-

ily and thirty-five others and executed them all.

One of the most famous passages in Ringelblum's notes is the entry for October 15, 1942, about a month after the great deportation was temporarily suspended. Writing as historian rather than psychologist, Ringelblum raises an issue that continues to trouble many students of the Holocaust today:

> Why didn't we resist when they began to resettle 300,000 Jews from Warsaw? Why did we allow ourselves to be led like sheep to the slaughter? Why did everything come so easy to the enemy? Why didn't the hangmen suffer a single casualty? Why could 50 SS men (some people say even fewer), with the help of a division of some 200 Ukrainian guards and an equal number of [Latvians] carry the operation out so smoothly?

Ringelblum neglects to mention at this point the role of the Jewish police in the roundups, although he was certainly aware of it. Promised exemption for themselves and the members of their families, the Jewish police in the ghetto played an active and sometimes a brutal part in helping the Germans with their plans. They did it not out of hatred, but fear—a natural, if not a particularly commendable response. Threatened by similar dangers, victims from other nations behaved in the same way. It was a human, not a Jewish, reaction, made ironic by the fact that in the closing days of the deportations, the Jewish police and their families were themselves shipped off to Treblinka. Ringelblum's rhetorical questions reflect the despair of a man who has witnessed the disappearance of hundreds of thousands of his people. But they are also a trifle naive, and if we continue to ask them today, when we know the total has risen to the millions, we share in that naiveté.

The questions Ringelblum raises are troublesome and remind us that documentary evidence is only the beginning of our inquiry, since it provokes the need for interpretations that threaten our comfortable belief in the redeeming power of memory. Remembering the Holocaust is the most unredemptive task one can possibly imagine. Ringelblum clearly knew that many hungry victims went voluntarily to the trains in Warsaw because the Germans promised bread and marmalade to those who complied with their order. Pleas to the human spirit, to brotherhood and cooperation, to say nothing of physical resistance, usually fall on deaf ears when those appealed to are driven to the verge of death by hunger. And even when, some months later, the Jewish Fighting Organization was finally molded into a resistance group in the ghetto, it numbered only several hundred—estimates range from 250 to 800—from the more than 50,000 to 60,000 Jews who were still alive in Warsaw in April 1943. Of course, the lack of weapons helped to keep those figures low. Still, the majority of the ghetto residents chose to defend themselves from the resumption of deportations by building secret hiding places or bunkers.

We who from the safe vantage point of the future expect heroic gestures from a weakened and terrified people betray an innocence of the fundamental nature of the psychology of despair. The Germans understood it well, which is one reason why, as part of their plan for extermination, they deliberately reduced their victims to a bare minimum of physical and moral energy. We don't need to guess what this must have been like; we have ample testimony from the documents. Lewin himself records meticulously his response when during the mass deportations his wife is sent off to Treblinka. His remorse is genuine; but so is his paralysis. "Eclipse of the sun, universal blackness," he writes:

> My Luba [his wife] was taken away during a blockade....To my anguish, there is no prospect of rescuing her. It looks like she was taken directly into the train. Her fate is to be a victim of the Nazi bestiality, along with hundreds of thousands of other Jews. I have no words to describe my desolation. I ought to go after her, but I have no strength to take such a step.

As we survey the spectacle of Lewin remembering his wife, and his inability to do anything to save her, we begin to understand how little an expression like the "redeeming power of memory" can have for him, or for us. Holocaust memory redeems only when it falsifies; Lewin's subsequent reactions to his loss document the efforts of what I call unheroic memory to wrestle with a legacy that has tainted his consciousness with an indelible stain. The following day he writes:

> I will never be consoled as long as I live. If she had died a natural death, I would not have been so stricken, so broken. But to fall into the hands of such butchers!

Lewin speaks of the tragic end of their life of twenty-one years together. But in tragedy, the victim is an agent, or at least a partial agent, in his or her own fate. We know, and as we slowly perceive, Lewin does too, that a main source of his anguish is his failure to find a role for his wife or himself in what happened to her. This fills him with an unappeasable grief: "My soul can find no peace," he records two days later, "for not having gone after her when she was in danger, even though I could also have

(Continued on p. 85)

Philip Roth's Diasporism: A Symposium

Once again, as he did more than twenty-five years ago, Philip Roth has succeeded in shaking up some of the complacencies of Jewish existence. Not taking any chances this time, however, Roth refrains from creating a character who might be taken as his alter-ego. (Me, I'm not Alex Portnoy, and my mother is not Sophie, he seemed to be saying in all the novels that followed Portnoy's Complaint*); in his newest novel,* Operation Shylock, *he creates an alter-ego ("Philip Roth") who is, patently, NOT the author. If Alex Portnoy outraged millions of Jews by masturbating on the pages of Jewish fiction, Philip Roth the Imposter will enrage some of those millions (or their children) by espousing the theory for which George Steiner was run out of town: that the Diaspora is the only viable place for Jews. To be more exact, that the Jews of Israel, who face imminent destruction at the hands of the Arabs (read the "second Holocaust") should be dispatched back to Warsaw, Prague, Berlin, and Kiev.*

Roth, in the New York Times *essay that announced the publication of this book, called this posturing a "bit of Jewish mischief." But having largely succeeded, with Portnoy, in "putting the id back in Yid" and changing the provenance of American Jewish literature, he is, one might argue, a writer to be reckoned with—precisely when he sounds most outrageous. The theory of "Diasporism" is espoused in the context of the Demjanjuk trial on the one hand and the Intifada and the miscarriage of justice in regard to Palestinians on the other. Bearing in mind that it is not Philip Roth but "Philip Roth" who espouses such ideas,* TIKKUN *has asked a number of writers to respond to* Operation Shylock *and the philosophy of Diasporism.*

Sidra DeKoven Ezrahi

Whether *Operation Shylock* should be shelved next to Ber Borochov and Y.L. Pinsker as a polemical tract debating the fate of the Jews, or next to Amos Oz and David Grossman as a travelogue through the occupied areas of the Jewish mind; whether it belongs among the textbooks for Judaism 101, highlighting the Great (and Not So Great) Ages and Ideas of the Jewish People—from Jacob wrestling with the angel through the language codes of the Chafetz Chaim to the diaries of Leon Klinghoffer (with Moshe Pipik dancing a jig in the wake of each somber procession); whether it is a novel of espionage and counter-espionage that demonstrates that, after *Shylock*, we will always be three thousand ducats short in the coffers of our own self-esteem—but cleverer by half than all our enemies; whether there are no real jewish people in the book but only The Jewish People (and their counterpart, The Palestinian People)—it is a narrative that, by its own admission, aspires to be "something more drastic than a mere book." It may turn out to be considerably less drastic than a "mere" book; the stakes, in any case, are high. "I've been putting myself in difficulties like this all my life," admits the narrator, Philip Roth; "but, up till now, by and large in fiction. How exactly do I get out of this?"(p.142).

The struggle here, which may appear, from the endless diatribes delivered by interested parties, to be a contest between Zionism and Diasporism for privilege in the late twentieth century, really boils down to a choice between something we might call Life and something we might call Fiction. Of course, we've already visited that Great Divide under the auspices of Philip Roth: *Facts* and *The Counterlife* were both experiments in trying on alternative destinies and rescuing one's dear ones from their mistakes and their coronaries through the power of the pen.... But never has such intervention been so consequential. The fate of whole peoples now seems to lie in the balance. (To wit: the deletion of the "eleventh chapter" of the narrative, in which certain secrets of the Israeli Intelligence Operation might have been revealed...)

Putting the id back in Yid was child's play compared to the task of removing the rock from under Jacob's head (if some Palestinian teenager hasn't already requisitioned it for the Intifada), folding it up like a notebook (as the rabbis suggested nearly two millennia ago while engaging in what may have been the first monumental textualization of territory), and sending Jacob back into the world to wander for another eternity.

Our great comfort is the expectation that the Wandering Jew will also be a storyteller. *Operation Shylock* is, in fact, a very noisy novel. Words are flung like stones, done and undone like refugee bundles on an endless highway. Diaspora is the place where people talk. It is also the place where people eat. Even the whitefish salad has a genealogy: In a "Jewish food store on Amsterdam Avenue...the bitter fragrance of vinegar, of onions, of whitefish and red herring, of everything pickled, peppered, salted, smoked, soaked, stewed, marinated, and dried, smells with a lineage that...more than likely led straight back through the shtetl to the medieval ghetto."

These are the passages we can sink our teeth into, words with the promise of a story. Exile is the beginning of narrative. In the Middle East, however, where exile comes to an end, so, it seems, do the stories. Talk becomes consequential. Words can kill. Each of the pale speakers in this series

of endless monologues presumably conceals a knife or an Uzi (although a few of the non-Mediterranean types use weapons from Roth's more conventional arsenal...). Though the names of some of the characters have been changed to protect their "identity," the American-educated Palestinian, who might still have been talking about Raskolnikov had he remained at the University of Chicago, is actually gunned down in the streets of Ramallah. And the Mossad's secret weapon, "*loshon hora*," has the power to silence any potential defector. Heady stuff, when the American Jewish writer—or his double—is recruited by the PLO and the Mossad, invited to speak with Lech Walesa, the Pope, and Arafat. His only shield the thought that, when all this becomes too threatening, he at least can find some way out of the plot and return to New Jersey, to fiction that doesn't really count so much, to textuality that doesn't kill. For that is what Diasporism amounts to here, the privilege to try out any role, any character, without paying the consequences of identity. (Identity which is a bit shaky after all these years, anyway. Is Demjanjuk, on trial in Jerusalem for the duration of the narrative, really Ivan the Terrible—or is he Ivan the Not-So-Terrible?? And the Israeli Jews themselves: After all these years, they don't look much like victims anymore...)

When "nomadism" competes with "nativism" not only in English and anthropology departments but among Jews who are increasingly disgusted with the abuse of Israeli power in a postcolonial era; when speech acts become the passport into the highest echelons of the American elite, and "narrativity" is the ascendant order of the imagination; when, after all these years, Gimpel the Fool (a saner Moshe Pipik—and a better storyteller) can compete again for cultural privilege with the swarthiest of Israeli soldiers—"Diasporism," in its more sanitized version, becomes as politically correct as Zionism was twenty-five years ago.

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Daniel Lazare

How do I respond to the philosophy of Diasporism? Positively. Unlike Roth/"Roth," I don't think it's an issue of who's better, the Jews of Israel or the Jews of Europe and America. Both groups have their good and bad, left- and right-wing elements, and any attempt to categorize an entire people in this manner is bound to be inaccurate. Rather, it's a question of ideology, i.e., assimilationism versus nationalism. To the degree *Operation Shylock* is a brief in favor of the former, it's welcome. Roth has taken sentiments that European and American Jews barely allowed themselves to breathe for most of the postwar period and has delivered them full blast.

And what are those sentiments? Roth, a man whose work essentially celebrates all that is mixed up and confused about twentieth-century existence in the Diaspora, comes down, not surprisingly, four-square in favor of mixing and confusion. For years, a certain type of querulous Jew in this country has allowed him- or herself to be racked with guilt about marching in behalf of Black civil rights, sleeping outside the faith, or worshiping at the shrine of Marx or Freud when real Jews were supposedly fighting Arabs and planting trees in Israel. To which Philip Roth (in whole or in part) now replies: Nuts, our angst is our strength. Instead of feeling guilty, we should be proud. Out of this anxious, scattered, unheroic existence in Europe and America have come socialism, psychoanalysis, and the theory of relativity. Out of the nationalistic, embattled, ethnically-cleansed existence in Israel has come—what? The invasion of Lebanon, the West Bank and Gaza Strip settlements, and the Intifada. As one of Roth's various pro-Diasporist mouthpieces (in this case an embittered Palestinian) puts it: "What do they know about 'Jewish,' these 'healthy, confident' Jews who look down their noses at your Diaspora 'neurotics'?... Jews who make military brutes out of their sons—and how superior they feel to you Jews...who know in their bones the meaning of give-and-take? Who live with success, like tolerant human beings, in the great world of crosscurrents and human differences?" (pp. 124-125)

Exactly. Roth has taken the Zionist stereotype of the insecure, deracinated Diaspora Jew and stood it on its head (or, to paraphrase Marx and Engels, on its feet). It's not mixing it up with the rest of the world that's the problem, he suggests, but Israeli-style self-ghettoization and withdrawal. The "neuroticism" of the Diaspora Jew is actually the result of political and ethical engagement with an imperfect, conflict-ridden world, whereas Zionist "health" is the result of the opposite: ethical disengagement and surrender to the amoral *realpolitik* that governs relations between and among nation-states. In a moral sense, it's healthier to be neurotic, a sentiment that a true-blue Zionist would find incomprehensible but the various characters in *Operation Shylock* do not.

Or so Roth seems to argue. Unfortunately, one of the many defects of *Operation Shylock* is the author's studied ambiguity on the assimilation-separatism question, an ambiguity which allows him to rail against Zionism through his various fictional creations (assuming, of course, they are fictional) while signing up as a Mossad agent at the end of the novel.

At its most radical, assimilationism argues that mixing it up with non-Jews is nice but insufficient. Much as Marx called for the liberating of Jews from Judaism (to use a much-maligned phrase), the task these days is to liberate Jewishness from the Jews. Israel represents a throwback to the blood-and-soil ideology of romantic nationalism, whereas life in a heavily but not exclusively Jewish neighborhood like Manhattan's Upper West Side, which Roth celebrates, represents the opposite, a fast-forward glimpse into a post-nationalist future in which outmoded concepts like ethnicity and homeland matter not a whit, and whose genes we carry is less important than how we conduct ourselves or what kind of society we choose to build. If we agree that modern Jewishness has had something to contribute in terms of tolerance, justice, and democracy, then the sooner these qualities are divorced from any ethnic base and become the common property of all, the better off we'll be—Jews, Blacks, Puerto Ricans, et al. Ethics are, by definition, universal. If the Jews really are a light unto the nations, then their assignment in this age of Sarajevo and the Intifada is to help lead the rest of the world out of the swamp of nationalism and ethnicity.

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Daphne Merkin

I begin with a few crabby questions, brought on by an observation that kept nagging at me while reading *Operation Shylock*—this hybrid, self-devouring novel/confession/whatever. The late critic Anatole Broyard once remarked to me that the problem, as he saw it, with serious writers who became famous or celebrated was that they no longer had any input coming through, except of the most adulatory kind. Broyard had in mind a particular set of writers—Roth among them—and I think his comment had less to do with a sense of these writers being perched enviably up above the world, immune to critical assessment and able to do as they pleased, as with a sense of their no longer being porous, no longer being able to hear what was going on around them. This, of course, is a particularly dangerous situation for someone who makes his living by catching the winds of awareness as they ruffle our lives—by putting on paper what the rest of us only dimly divine.

To wit: Does the sight of the two words—blow job—on the page really alarm, or even titillate, people anymore? Even when performed by a blonde, shiksa goddess incarnate on a member of the deeply tribal and neurotic Chosen People? Does the "Jewishy Yiddishy" country of Philip Roth's infinitely nostalgic, not to say stalled, imagination—an America of "green lawns and white Jews," of knishes at Zabar's—still speak to our current sense of things, the *realpolitik* of life at the tail end of the second millennium, when anti-Semitism has reared its obdurate head in new and complex ways not only in Europe or in the fundamentalist rearguard of America but right here in the heart of "Hymietown"? Lastly, is there anything left to be wrung out of the preoccupations of our "leading Jewologist of international literature?" Do we want to know anymore than we already know about his happy childhood in Newark as a doted-upon and academically gifted second son, his love of baseball, and his fatal attraction to benign-seeming but ultimately entrapping Gentile females, which led to his "lurid first marriage" (referred to twice in those exact words in *Operation Shylock*), his literary influences (Dostoyevsky and Henry James, most signally), his Jewish problem, his ire taking particular aim at doctors and their benighted consumerist habits—forever playing tennis, forever traveling for the pleasure of staying at the Ritz and emptying out Gucci's?

"Part of the Jewish problem," Roth explains to us near the end of *Operation Shylock*, "is that the voice is too loud. Too insistent. Too aggressive." A good part of my problem with this book is that Roth doesn't seem to have gotten wise to the fact that: (a) Taboos, as well as dress fashions, date. Starting with the sixties, starting perhaps with *Portnoy's Complaint*, the erotic life and its discontents—"the hazardous allurements of the flesh and the pecker's irrepressible urge to squirt" (as unappetizing a description of the libidinal impulse as any I've read, right up there with Roth's description of vaginal secretions as having a "heavy, clinging, muttony[!] stench")—has been given full exposure in both high- and low-brow books and movies.

It's difficult, in other words, to *épater les bourgeois* if there's no *bourgeois* left to *épater*. I would hazard a guess that even well-brought-up Jewish boys-turned-men don't get a charge, as they once did, by being privy to "dirty goy secrets."

Times have gotten hard for those, like Roth, who cling to the concept of the literarily *outre*. What you get left with is the wish to shock—and a bunch of slightly limp sexual sight-gags. What you get left with, almost in desperation, are women—like Wanda Jane "Jinx" Possesski—who talk in the idiom of pimps, as though there were stimulation to be had in the very gender-appropriation of those tired four-letter words: dick, fuck, tits, shit, etc.

The other part of my problem is that (b) the vexed is-

sue of assimilationist, proto-ethnic Jewish identity has undergone changes since the glory days of Lenny Bruce and Catskill hotels, although you wouldn't know it by reading *Operation Shylock*. Roth's still talking "Goodbye Columbus," nouveau-riche Jews with groaning refrigerators—as though nothing has intervened in some forty-odd years of looking and listening except for the canny idea to put a Hebrew epigram on his latest book. (Why Hebrew, when, by his own admission, he doesn't retain a word of the language from his restless after-school studies in the "small, ill-ventilated classroom" of a Newark Hebrew school? Why, except for the fact that Roth has caught on—and yes, there are some things he still takes in—that High Seriousness in an American-Jewish Writer no longer means a sprinkling of "colorful, rich, vernacular" Yiddish and immersion in Henry James and Lionel Trilling; High Seriousness means Going Back to the Sources, a sprinkling of pristine Hebrew and immersion in Aharon Appelfeld and the Chafetz Chaim. No one said the man wasn't smart.)

One would think that, with the completion of his Zuckerman trilogy and the books that came afterward, Philip Roth might have finished with the business of cogitating on The Paradox of Being Philip Roth—musing, in agitated and often beguiling fashion, on the intractability of selfhood, on, as he put it a whole shelf-load of books ago in *My Life As a Man*: "You being you! And me! This me who is me being me and none other!" Through the magnifying loop of refracted, mirrored, meta- and semi-selves, Roth has tackled the conundrum of what lies "beneath the disguise of me" —"the universal urge to be otherwise"—at exhaustive and increasingly insistent length. There has, in this writer's work, been less and less effort to provide what he was once so noticeably good at—i.e., the stuff of fiction, the look, feel, sounds, and tastes of things. Israel might as well be London, might as well be a study in Connecticut for all we learn of them, except as a backdrop for Roth's interior drama.

Indeed, if the flurry of publicity attending the publication of *Operation Shylock*, with its intimations that the author had taken up a new career as a Mossad spy, led you to envision a different and far-ranging Mr. Roth, unfasten your seatbelts, dear reader, you're in for a very unbumpy ride. *Shylock* is dizzyingly, almost embarassingly self-referential. (Maybe this is what you get for having your *tuchas* kissed too much as a child? "They all adored you," says the diligent imposter known as "Philip Roth," who carries a full mental dossier on the real Philip Roth's life, just in case we don't. "Your mother, your Aunt Mim, your Aunt Honey, your Grandma Finkel—when you were a tot they used to stand around the crib, and when your mother changed your diaper, they used to take turns kissing your *tuchas*....")

Maybe there is something to be said, artistically speaking, for a sliver of deprivation—of, at the least, inattention? Under all its "sacrosant pranks," its theories of Diasporism and relentless sighting of Jewish culprits, here and in Israel, its musings on fiction versus reality, on imposterhood and the Eternal *Doppelgänger* who lies in wait, this book features Roth at his old, intellectually onanistic best, trying once again to "subdue the inner quarrel."

As for Roth's generous peppering of his text with real-life events—the Demjanjuk trial, the Achille Lauro incident, the Klinghoffers themselves, the Intifada, the Holocaust, the Pollard case, the initial reception to Herzl's dream of a Jewish homeland.... It's as though, late in his writing life, he's discovered that there was more to this Jewish story than the version he was fed back in Newark. If he has seen fit to move on from chopped herring salad to a more substantive and not entirely risible Judaism, there is still little of the Israel I know that is recognizable in these pages, despite the carefully transliterated Hebrew phrases, just as neither Israeli nor American Jewry seem true-to-contemporary-life.

Much of *Operation Shylock* appears cynically conceived, verging on the exploitative. Except by way of the King David Hotel and meetings with prominent Israeli authors and credential-bearing Palestinians, it doesn't seem to me that Roth has bothered to stoop to understand the indigenous Middle-Eastern situation. If I were living in Israel—if I were my sister, say, who lives in Jerusalem with her American husband and four American-born children despite ongoing doubts and criticism—I would despise this book. As someone whose emotional investment is safely tallied from these shores, I merely dislike it.

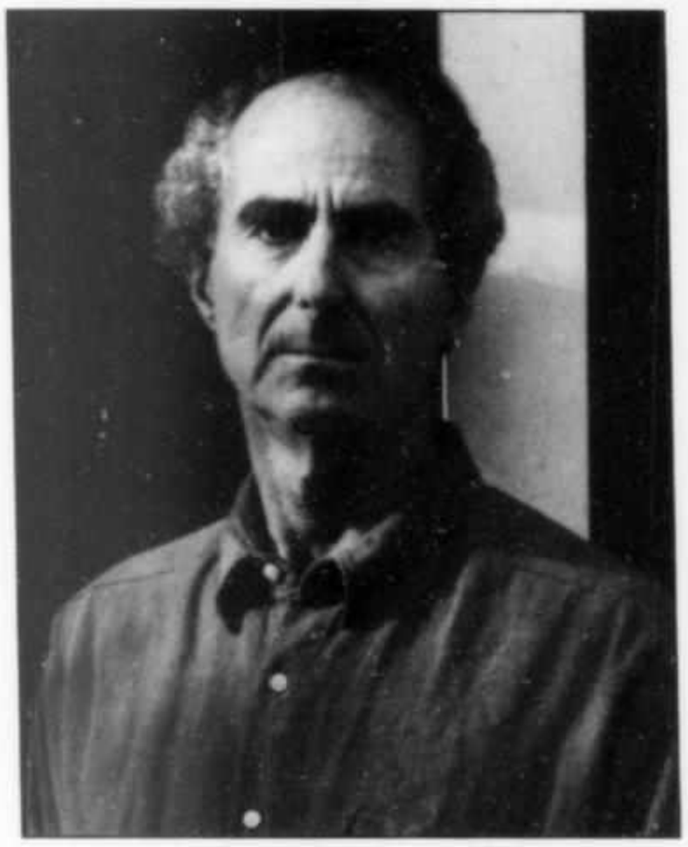
Daphne Merkin is the author of Enchantment *(1986) which won the Edward Lewis Wallant Award for best Jewish-American novel. She is at work on a second novel,* The Discovery of Sex, *to be published by Poseidon Press.*

Morris Dickstein

Do you really expect me to take "Diasporism" seriously when Philip Roth doesn't propose it seriously? Diasporism is Roth's way of defending himself for living in America, for not making Aliyah. Does this need defending? When I was growing up, in the shadow of the Holocaust, Zionists were always telling me that Israel was the only safe and authentic place to be a Jew. Never again should Jews be trapped as unwelcome guests in someone else's state. I spent years in Hebrew-speaking schools and summer camps acquiring the culture

that presumably would make me feel at home once I got to the promised land. I remember a fiery speech by David Ben-Gurion at the Jewish Theological Seminary—a speech he must have given a thousand times—castigating the illusion that Jewish life could continue indefinitely outside Israel.

When Philip Roth began visiting Israel he was no doubt put though the same wringer. Some of these conversations made their way into The *Counterlife* (1987). "They kept wanting me to explain why American Jews persist in living in the Diaspora," says Nathan Zuckerman, "and I couldn't answer. . . .Does anybody know? Can anyone answer?" Diasporism is Roth's tongue-in-cheek answer. It's not only a rebuttal to Zionism but a mischievous parody of it, with its own Law of Return, casting Israel itself as the vulnerable and suffocating Jewish ghetto. Like Zionism, it ignores the hostility of the indigenous population. The people of Berlin and Bucharest, Warsaw and Odessa, are no more likely to welcome back the Jews than the Palestinians did.



No one visiting such places today can fail to be moved by the eloquent Jewish absence, the void that was once the heart of a busy cultural life. I remember my fury at seeing a plaque on a bank in Ulm commemorating the destruction of the Great Synagogue, once located on that site, and the unexplained "departure of our Jewish fellow-citizens"—Ulm, home to Jews since the Middle Ages, birthplace of Albert Einstein! I hear that today in Poland—a land that pioneered anti-Semitism without Jews—everything Jewish has suddenly become intellectually fashionable.

We can't help feeling a poignant nostalgia for the murdered culture of European Jews. Roth has republished some of their books in his "Writers From the Other Europe" series. But the Diasporism of Roth's activist alter-ego has nothing to do with today's Europe, everything to do with America. It's an apologia for the secular, assimilated American Jew, a defense of America as the true promised land, where kids from the Lower East Side and Newark could grow up in safety and freedom, could become rich and famous and play a genuine role in Western culture. Roth feels uneasy enough about this need for self-justification to exaggerate it satirically and put it in the mouth of his manic, deranged double; and he chooses as spokesman for his attack on Zionism a Palestinian-American intellectual who has made his own unhappy Aliyah, a man whose brilliance is clotted with hatred and fantasies of revenge.

Part of this man's role is to flatter his old friend Roth as a loyal son and critic of the Jews and defend him against the guilt-trips of the Israelis: "These provincial nobodies look down on you. Can you imagine it? There is more Jewish spirit and Jewish laughter and Jewish intelligence on the Upper West Side of Manhattan than in this entire country... there's more Jewish heart at the knish counter at Zabar's than in the whole of the Knesset!"

Fortunately, this is a false choice. The Jews of Israel are neither so terminally threatened nor so intolerant as Roth imagines; few American Jews are this desperate to justify themselves. The Zionists thought they were creating a new kind of man, but the resurgence of Orthodox Judaism underlines Israel's continuity with Jewish history. Though Roth's work has become more Jewish over the past decade, partly because of his contacts with Israel, the assimilation he defends has made many Americans far less Jewish, often not Jewish at all. His promised land is not the real life of American Jews, which he has mercilessly satirized, but a circle of literary friends, a skein of precious memories, and a pantheon of favorite writers.

Most of us feel no need to choose between the knish counter and the Knesset. We know how insubstantial knish-counter Judaism can be. We would shudder before suggesting "transference" and "resettlement" even as metaphorical solutions to the Jewish problem, despite the voluntary Israeli diaspora that already exists from Paris to Sydney. Luckily, Roth's talky novel is a collection of spiky riffs that disarm criticism with comedy and give us (in good Jewish fashion) five sides to every point. At least no one can say the book isn't provocative.

Morris Dickstein's books include Gates of Eden *(Penguin) and, most recently,* Double Agent *(Oxford).*

Anita Norich

Having indeed tried to put the "id back in Yid," Philip Roth seems now to be turning his attention to the second half of his decades-long quest: putting the "oy back in goy." This time, we have Anti-Semites Anonymous, an organization devoted to the cure of anti-Semitism. Confess, repent, form communities of anti-Semites, know that this is

(Continued on p. 73)

A No-Nonsense Look at Anti-Semitism

Gary E. Rubin

Recently, an African-American friend who has dedicated much energy and commitment to Black-Jewish relations asked me what I thought of public reactions to the results of two 1992 surveys—one sponsored by the Anti-Defamation League and the other by the American Jewish Committee—and their disturbing assessments of Black attitudes toward Jews. He did not deny that Black anti-Semitism exists, although he did question whether it was as virulent as reports of the studies made it seem. His primary problem was with the interpretation these findings have received within the Jewish community. The most persistent messages Blacks now hear from Jews, he continued, do not convey support on civil rights and social policy matters but worry over the presence of Black anti-Semitism.

The Black-Jewish relationship had changed, in his view, from one of alliance to one of mutual suspicion. Blacks are increasingly coming to see Jews as potential accusers, not as allies in common campaigns for equality and social progress. Did I believe, he asked me, that this development, which he attributed specifically to the way we interpret and publicize our survey results, furthered real Jewish interests?

We had best heed my friend's question, since the honest answer is troubling. A conceptual flaw, in fact, runs throughout contemporary studies of anti-Semitism. This fundamental misconception involves both a misreading of the data and a counterproductive strategy to combat opposition to Jews. Most current studies adopt a common mode of analysis. They seek, through survey questions, to identify the most anti-Semitic portion of the population, discover their particular characteristics and therefore make clear the groups that pose the greatest threats to Jews. This method results in an overestimation of the coherence of anti-Semitism, an underestimation of its breadth and ineffective efforts to defend Jewish interests.

Gary E. Rubin is director of national affairs at the American Jewish Committee. The views expressed in this article are his own.

The public reactions to the two 1992 surveys on anti-Semitism are cases in point. The first was a study on anti-Semitism in American society as a whole conducted by the firm of Marttila and Kiley for the Anti-Defamation League; the second was a poll on attitudes toward intergroup relations of New York City residents carried out by the Roper Organization for the American Jewish Committee.

The Marttila survey follows the traditional mode of examining anti-Semitism that researchers have been using for three decades. Its central investigative device consists of an eleven-item scale made up of questions designed to detect anti-Semitism in respondents. If a person responds to the questionnaire with six or more answers deemed to be negative, he or she acquires a rating of "most anti-Semitic." Between two and five negative answers result in a rating of "middle" on anti-Semitism. A respondent who gives only one or no anti-Semitic answers merits a "not anti-Semitic" designation.

By this reckoning, 20 percent of the American public rate as "most anti-Semitic," 41 percent as "middle," and 39 percent as "not anti-Semitic." Some sub-populations measure differently on this scale. The Marttila firm oversampled Blacks and found that 37 percent come out as "most anti-Semitic," 48 percent as "middle," and 14 percent as "not anti-Semitic." In both the general and Black cases, these figures represent declines from measures of anti-Semitism found in previous polls.

The Marttila survey uses these findings to isolate the most anti-Semitic segment of the population and identify its salient characteristics. Cross-tabulating its attitudinal research with demographic data, the researchers conclude that "older, less-educated, blue-collar and black Americans are disproportionately more likely to hold anti-Semitic views than the general public." Obviously, Jewish communal defense should target these groups. The survey describes its own chief value as "exploring the composition and the attitudes of that segment of the population which is most critical of Jews."

The central assumption in this endeavor is that a par-

ticular segment of the population can be definitively identified and targeted for defensive efforts. Yet information in the survey itself raises serious questions about this presupposition.

Two problems weaken the assumption that the eleven-question survey in fact isolates identifiable classes of more or less anti-Semitic respondents. First, respondents may not have perceived some of the questions as reflecting negatively on Jews. For example, one question asks whether respondents think Jews tend to stick together more than other Americans. It is quite possible that non-Jews answering this question see an affirmative answer as a positive trait that they wished characterized their group as well. Indeed, if "sticking together" is by its nature a negative perception, then Jewish communal leaders now pursuing continuity programs would have to rate as anti-Semitic. Similarly, a positive answer to "Jews always like to be at the head of things" could signal an admiring evaluation of Jewish leadership as much as it could hostility. To be sure, some of the questions, such as those asking whether Jews engage in "shady business practices," "don't care what happens to anyone but their own kind," or are not as "honest as other businessmen," test unambiguously negative attitudes. But, by the Marttila firm's own reporting, the ambiguous items received many more affirmative responses than the clearly hostile ones. For example, 51 percent of the sample said that Jews stick together more than most Americans, and 39 percent agreed that Jews like to be at the head of things, while 15 percent said that Jews don't care what happens to anyone but their own kind and the same proportion responded that Jews are not just as honest as other businessmen.

The survey authors show some awareness that the questions' wording may present a problem. Focus groups and other research, they admit, "revealed that one or two of the questions on the anti-Semitic index were ambiguous." Their corrective to this methodological weakness was to require six or more negative answers among the eleven to designate a respondent as "most anti-Semitic," whereas previous surveys had used five as the threshold. This accounting device, however, hardly suffices to address the problem. The ambiguous questions counted as much as the clearly negative ones in measuring anti-Semitism on this poll, leaving the reader to wonder exactly what the content is of an ominous-sounding category like "most anti-Semitic."

A second conceptual flaw is even more serious. Let us assume that all the questions on the survey measured negative attitudes toward Jews perfectly. Even if we accept all of the items as excellent indicators of anti-Semitism, a basic ambiguity in the findings remains.

Take the "most anti-Semitic" grouping. A respondent qualifies for this category by giving six or more negative answers. This means that a person can be rated in this group by giving six negative answers and five pro-Jewish ones. In fact, the great majority of the "most anti-Semitic" respondents gave this type of mixed rather than wholly negative set of answers. A quarter of the "most anti-Semitic" respondents gave the minimum six negative responses to qualify for this group. Another 35 percent gave seven negative answers. Thus, even among the most hostile group to Jews, six out of ten gave pro-Jewish responses, or at least no negative answer, on four or five of the eleven questions. On the other hand, only 5 percent of the "most anti-Semitic" group—1 percent of the entire sample—gave negative answers to all eleven questions. A similar proportion responded negatively to as many as ten questions. What we have here is not an unrelievedly anti-Semitic group but one that has very mixed feelings about Jews.

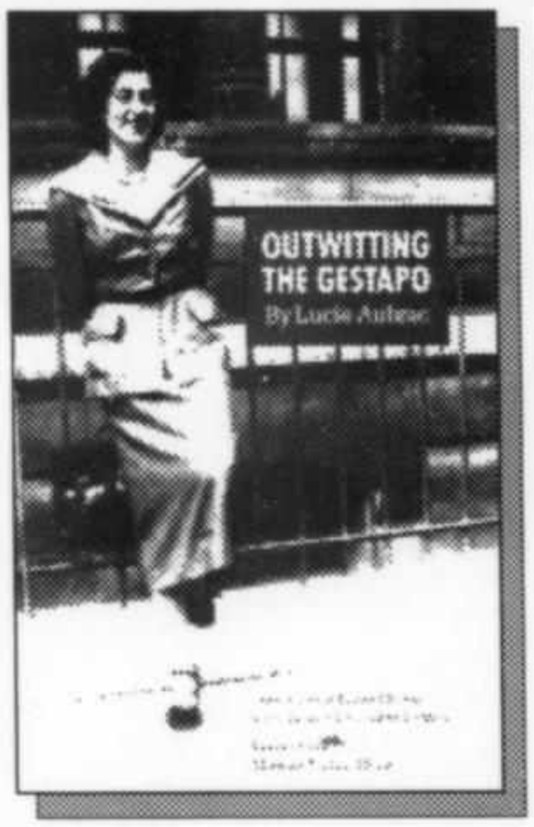
The same analysis applies to the other categories in the survey. The "middle" group by definition holds mixed views about Jews. But, even the "not anti-Semitic" category is divided between 49 percent who gave no anti-Semitic answer and 51 percent who voiced one anti-Jewish response. None of the three categories, in short, is pure; except at the extremes, they all reflect some mixture of pro- and anti-Jewish attitudes.

This mixed pattern raises the possibility that we are

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dealing with a more complex phenomenon than a neat tri-partite division would indicate. Even among the "most anti-Semitic," there exist identifiable pro-Jewish feelings. Among the "not anti-Semitic," some anti-Jewish attitudes can be found. Clearly, to fully grasp the nature of attitudes toward Jews, we need a more sophisticated conceptual scheme.

The Roper survey helps greatly to explain this mixed pattern. When it was released, press attention focused on its stunning finding that fully 47 percent of New Yorkers surveyed said they believe that Jews "have too much influence in New York City life and politics." This figure far exceeded any that previous surveys had recorded. Scholars have long regarded this "too much" influence or power question as the single best indicator of anti-Semitism on survey questionnaires, so this finding caused great concern, at least about attitudes toward Jews in New York. Coming at about the same time as the Marttila survey, the Roper findings reinforced worry about the existence of substantial, hard-core anti-Semitism in the contemporary United States.

Yet, like the Marttila poll, the significance of the Roper survey is much more complex than is immediately apparent from its most widely reported findings. Indeed, it unlocks many insights into the nature of anti-Semitism that had been bypassed in earlier polls.

The 47 percent "too much influence" finding is certainly very disturbing. It cannot be explained away by noting that Jews in reality have acquired much power in New York whether measured politically, economically, or socially. The question does not ask whether Jews are powerful. It specifically focuses on whether they have too much influence. An affirmative answer to that question can hardly be understood as anything other than hostility to Jews.

The survey, however, contains additional rich data about attitudes toward Jews. The same sample that believes that Jews have too much influence also admires Jews more than it does any other group in the city. Using a seven-point scale, the survey compared respondents' ratings of six communities—Jews, Blacks, Hispanics, Irish, Italians, and Asians—on certain group characteristics. Jews ranked highest among all groups in being "intelligent" and "rich," and lowest on being "prone to violence" and preferring "to live off welfare." Respondents rate Jews second only to Asians as least prone to be "lazy." Interestingly, and contrary to Jewish self-perception, respondents saw Jews as marginally least "tolerant of other racial and ethnic groups." Clearly, the findings of this survey are not simply negative. Along with disturbing attitudes, New Yorkers have a variety of admiring views of their Jewish neighbors.

The general finding holds for sub-groups as well. For example, fully 63 percent of Black respondents believe that Jews have "too much" influence in New York. At the same time, Blacks rate Jews highly on the positive traits of being intelligent and not being lazy or prone to live off welfare. Blacks do see Jews as more prone to violence than others perceive them to be. In general, Blacks, like other New Yorkers, hold both significant positive and negative attitudes toward Jews, although the level of their positive attitudes is lower and the level of negative views higher.

These Roper survey findings reinforce and deepen the conclusions reached in the analysis of the Marttila study. It is an oversimplification and a distortion of reality to characterize most people as either anti-Semitic or not anti-Semitic. While these pure categories exist at the margins, the great majority of Americans, if these surveys are remotely accurate, hold mixed views toward Jews, ranging from the dangerous to the truly admiring.

To be sure, the Marttila and Roper surveys are accurate in asserting that anti-Semitic attitudes are more prevalent in some populations than in others. A higher proportion of negative answers to survey questions is found among lower-class, poorly educated, and minority group Americans. It does not follow, however, that these groups are implacably hostile to Jews. On the contrary, they voice positive and admiring attitudes along with the negative ones. At the same time, better educated, higher-class, and white Americans give some negative responses along with their predominantly positive ones. It is inaccurate to generalize too broadly about either type of respondent.

Following the Roper survey, there is no logical inconsistency in believing that Jews are simultaneously intelligent, hard-working, not lazy or prone to be on welfare, and quite powerful. All of these traits fit into a coherent view of the Jewish people. In some circumstances, they could combine to produce favorable attitudes toward Jews and in other times or conditions, very negative views. The potential for varied outcomes exists within most individuals.

The crucial principle in analyzing anti-Semitism, then, is not the identification of a separate group of particularly dangerous people, although that seems to be the goal of the most recent studies. It should rather be the realization that positive and negative attitudes coexist within almost all individuals. The practical question then becomes not how to target a particular social group for opposition but how to strengthen positive attitudes in the population at large while working to counter widespread hostile views.

(Continued on p. 79)

JEWISH FEMINISM

Burning In Hell, Conservative Movement Style

Judith Plaskow

In the late 1970s, I spent three years in the "buckle of the Bible belt" teaching religion at Wichita State University. During my time there, several students told me I was going to burn in Hell because I had not "accepted Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior." They did not say this with any malice. On the contrary, they were simply telling me how the world works. It was because they liked and respected me that they wanted me to save myself before it was too late.

I had mixed feelings about being the recipient of such tidings. Part of me was condescendingly amused that they could believe such nonsense. Part of me sympathized with the fundamental conflict that being taught by a Jew caused them. But mainly, I was angry that the students chose to hold onto the narrow tenets of their faith against the evidence of their own feelings. I was offended that they would rather squeeze me into an anti-Semitic system than let my reality as a person serve as the starting point for rethinking their religious assumptions.

I am reminded of this experience and the feelings it evoked as I reflect on the Conservative movement's year-old decision to condemn homosexual behavior. In March 1992, the Rabbinical Assembly Law Committee voted thirteen to seven (with three abstentions) to support Joel Roth's long *tshuvah* (decision) arguing that traditional proscriptions against homosexuality remain valid and compelling. Fourteen months later, Roth has resigned as dean of the Jewish Theological Seminary's Rabbinical School, and the issue of homosexuality deeply divides the seminary's faculty and student body as well as the Rabbinical Assembly. Still, the *tshuvah* remains the official teaching of the Conservative movement, and the chancellor of the seminary insists on reading all dissent as the product of external political pressure.

The movement's stance calls to mind my Wichita experience because Roth's *tshuvah* is as confident about the place of "homosexuals" in the divine economy as my students were about the place of Jews. Homosexuality is not innately abominable, Roth assures gay and lesbian Jews. It is just that God has defined it as such! The Torah's blanket prohibition of homosexuality as *toevah* (an abomination) is so clear and binding that the force of extra-legal considerations would have to be overwhelming to compel rabbis to rethink the law. In Roth's judgment, none of the available theories concerning the origins or nature of homosexuality constitutes cogent or compelling reason to overturn precedent. The "responsible halachist," therefore, is constrained not only to oppose the acceptance of gay and lesbian rabbis and cantors, and refrain from recognizing or participating in gay and lesbian commitment ceremonies, but to counsel gay and lesbian Jews that "Jewish law would have you be celibate."

I see a number of analogies between this *tshuvah* and the stance of my former students at Wichita State. Both affirm a traditional understanding of religious authority and teaching. Both see themselves as doing so not on grounds of prejudice, anti-Semitism, or homophobia, but of religious necessity. And both choose religious doctrine above human beings.

By claiming that no contemporary evidence is strong enough to outweigh the words of Torah—not psychoanalytic or scientific theory, and certainly not the testimony and reality of gay and lesbian Jews—the Rabbinical Assembly Law Committee avoids having to examine the presuppositions of its religious system. Were it to begin with people rather than Torah, on the other hand, were it to entertain the possibility that homosexuality is not an abomination—that it is simply a mode of sexual expression, as loving or as alienated, as much or as little a vehicle for turning toward God as heterosexuality—then it might be forced to surrender its certainty that God's will is identical with the words of Torah. While the Conservative movement has generally rejected a fundamentalist stance, in this case it is certain that it knows the mind of God.

There is another layer to my analogy as well. Both the Conservative movement and my former students ignore the history and context of the actual power relationships between the groups in question. Thus Roth argues that his decision does not support intolerance because the Jewish community should be no more intolerant of violations of sexual prohibitions than it is of violations of other halachic norms. But in the real world, being gay or lesbian is not equivalent to other halachic violations. Sabbath desecrators are not the victims of hate crimes in every city in this country. No state has yet put a referendum on its ballot abrogating the civil rights of the religiously intermarried.

The *tshuvah*'s inattention to political context is precisely analogous to that of my students. Jews are people, they said; we are welcome in the universities; we should have civil rights; we should just know that God says we are going to burn in Hell. And regardless of the benign intent with which the students say it, every Jew knows full well that they are reflecting and supporting two thousand years of anti-Semitism. If the Rabbinical Assembly Law Committee cannot see that it is reflecting and sup-

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Judith Plaskow is a Jewish feminist theologian and professor of religious studies at Manhattan College. *She would like to thank those rabbis and other members of the Conservative movement who spoke with her at length about this issue. She dedicates this column to Rebecca and Christie.*

porting a long history of religious homophobia (Jewish and otherwise), then it is either willfully blind or patently dishonest. The fact is that, despite its protestations to the contrary, with this *tshuvah* the Conservative movement allies itself with the anti-gay hate that is sweeping the country.

I do not have the space here to explore the halachic, religious, ethical, and communal implications of the full acceptance of gay and lesbian Jews. But enough has been written in the pages of TIKKUN and elsewhere to make it clear that the question is not simply one of Halacha—there are halachic arguments for acceptance of homosexuality—but of religious authority and power. Why did the law committee vote in a way that closes off discussion of this issue, and what would make it change? Why is Chancellor Schorsch choosing to attribute deeply held moral convictions to the influence of outside agitators, and how can he be convinced he is wrong? My interest as a lesbian Jew with ties to the Conservative movement is how lesbians, gays, and our allies can seize the opportunity provided by the present debate to bring about lasting change.

It seems important to recognize, first of all, the extent of the divisions within the Conservative movement. The vote of the law committee was not unanimous, and the committee is not elected by the Rabbinical Assembly and does not necessarily represent the views of all the Rabbinical Assembly's members. The committee that passed Roth's *tshuvah* thirteen to seven also gave eight votes to an alternative *tshuvah* offered by Eliott Dorff, making it a minority opinion that can be used by congregational rabbis. Dorff provides an excellent critique of Roth's halachic formalism, labels the results of his reasoning "unbelievably cruel," and calls for the establishment of a study commission to look at homosexuality as one aspect of a broader examination of Jewish attitudes toward sexuality. At its meeting in 1992, the Rabbinical Assembly established such a commission and also passed a resolution affirming gay and lesbian rights to rabbinic services. At the 1993 Rabbinical Assembly meeting, Rabbi Harold Shulweiss gave a keynote address calling for the integrations of Halacha and ethics, using homosexuality as a prime example. *B'tsalmeinu* ("in our image"), a group of rabbis formed to discuss gay and lesbian issues in the Conservative movement and to effect positive change, collected well over a hundred signatures on a statement asking (among other things) that the law committee not institutionalize discrimination.

The divided rhetoric of the Conservative movement provides an excellent point of departure for those who would press for change. Soon after the law committee's decision, the United Synagogue and Rabbinical Assembly passed resolutions that, while "affirming [the] tradition's prescription for heterosexuality," supported full civil equality for gays and lesbians and welcomed them as members of synagogues. While such statements mainly seem designed to ease the movement's conscience about its halachic stance, they could provide a mandate for education and real encounter with gays and lesbians that might in turn pave the way for genuine acceptance. If the support expressed in these resolutions is serious, then all Conservative synagogues can be expected to include events on gay and lesbian Jews as a regular part of their educational programs. Women's League might launch a series of lectures and meetings parallel to its efforts on women's issues twenty years ago. Movement camps and youth programs should initiate training programs and workshops to combat the homophobia that is as rampant among their constituents as elsewhere in the youth and adolescent populations.

Meanwhile, individual congregations and Conservative Jews are not waiting for the movement to take action. Forces for transformation were at work before the law committee's vote—which provided the impetus for its consideration of the issue in the first place—and continue despite (or because of) it. Some congregations have written letters to the Jewish Theological Seminary, the Rabbinical Assembly, and United Synagogue, protesting the decision. Individual congregants have withheld from their annual synagogue dues the $33.50 that goes to the United Synagogue—a form of resistance that is also open to congregations. Education committees have taken the initiative in setting up lectures, workshops, and other programs on gay and lesbian concerns. Some synagogues are reaching out to gay and lesbian Jews in their communities through special programs, through services for people with or touched by AIDS, and through the issues addressed from their pulpits. Since many rabbis may want to explore this issue but are afraid of lay resistance, congregants can make clear that they want to hear sermons on, and see efforts to include, gays and lesbians in the Jewish community. Congregants can also support individual rabbis who practice "civil disobedience" by participating in gay and lesbian commitment ceremonies.

Two groups of Jews are especially crucial to this process of resistance and transformation: the friends and families of gays and lesbians, and gays and lesbians themselves. Chancellor Schorsch has argued that gays and lesbians are at most 2 to 5 percent of the population, and that homosexuality therefore affects few people and is not of interest to the Conservative laity. Rabbis who have raised the issue with lay people, however, have a different tale to tell. They hear stories of loved ones lost to AIDS who could not be mourned publicly; they are thanked for speaking out by parents, children, brothers and sisters of gays and lesbians who had long felt isolated and invisible. My partner's parents, for example, are long-time, prominent members of a mainstream Conservative congregation. There must be thousands of family members like them, many of whom are kept from sharing both their pain and their celebrations by the movement's homophobia. If these Conservative Jews could find concrete ways to raise with their rabbis and fellow congregants the dilemmas they face as relatives and friends of people whose behavior the movement has labeled "abominable," it would quickly become apparent that many lay people care deeply about an issue that is very close to home.

Families of gay and lesbian Jews are helped to speak out by a strong gay and lesbian witness and presence. Just as my very existence as a Jewish professor was a challenge to my students' unexamined faith, so the visible participation of gays and lesbians in Jewish life is the most effective challenge to those who pretend to accept us while at the same time insisting that God rejects our loving sexual expression. The Conservative movement has available to it solid halachic arguments for new attitudes toward lesbians and gays. Jews—especially gay and lesbian Jews—taking action to create a new reality in our individual communities will either hasten the day when the law committee finds the will to refine and apply these arguments, or they will render its work colossally irrelevant. □

The Therapeutic Function of Shiva

Joyce Slochower

In memory of my father, Harry Slochower, with gratitude to Dr. Sharon P. Kaplan and Minyan M'at.

Most of us know only too well that the death of close loved ones, whether dreaded or wished for, is a profound and wrenching experience. This is especially so when we lose a central and irreplaceable relationship—a parent, sibling, spouse, or child. Deaths like these affect our lives in profound, not necessarily temporary ways. Our immediate experience of loss reduces our capacity to be involved in the world of real relationships or activities and may permanently alter our sense of our place in the world.

Loss of this magnitude requires that we allow ourselves to mourn. Mourning is a process whereby death is directly addressed—the mourner expresses grief about the loss, sorts out memories and mixed feelings about the death, and lives through a temporary depression. Ultimately, the work of mourning allows us to give up the lost relationship as a real, alive one, while forming and preserving an internal relationship to the deceased person in all its complexity.

Jewish tradition has provided us with a remarkably detailed, and, I believe, a brilliant structure within which to address death—the customs of *shiva*. Yet few Jews outside of traditional communities fully observe these customs, and many are completely unfamiliar with *shiva* rituals. This should not be particularly surprising: Death continues to be a subject that is treated gingerly by contemporary culture, very much reinforcing our own natural discomfort with such pain. It often seems easier simply to get on with life and to relegate traditional mourning observance to the antiquated customs of our grandparents' generation. We may view as excessively restrictive and time consuming the requirement to set aside a full seven days (*shiva* means seven), during which we withdraw from the world and face our loss. In fact, for many, "sitting *shiva*" has come to describe a brief social afternoon following a funeral, during which the mourners provide a spread for the guests. Such a setting is actually antithetical to the intent of *shiva* observance and, I am convinced, is most unlikely to facilitate mourning. Yet the traditional laws of *shiva* have become inaccessible and even alien to many of us.

The very complex Jewish laws of mourning outline aspects of observance from the moment of death and for a full eleven months thereafter. (Norman Lamm's 1988 book, *The Jewish Way in Death and Mourning*, describes mourning ritual in detail and is an excellent reference.) One sits *shiva* only for a parent, sibling, spouse, or child—those with whom we have the most irreplaceable of relationships. The mourner first concretizes his/her loss in the custom of *Keriah*: At the moment of death or at the funeral, a tear is made in the mourner's outer garment. This will be worn throughout the week of *shiva*, which formally begins when the mourner returns home from the burial. The mourner washes his/her hands before entering the home (this symbolizes a cleansing following contact with death). All mirrors (traditionally associated with vanity) are covered. Those who gather at the mourner's home join the mourner in a symbolic meal of condolence. The community, not the mourner, provides this meal, which includes foods associated with life such as bread and hard-boiled eggs. The mourner lights a memorial (*yahrzeit*) candle that will burn for the seven-day *shiva* period. Traditionally, *shiva* lasts for seven days, throughout which time the mourner remains at home unless the *shiva* house is elsewhere and the mourner cannot reside there for the week.

The laws of *shiva* alter virtually every aspect of ordinary social behavior for both mourner and visitor. The mourner's grief is concretized in a variety of ways: he/she does not wear leather shoes (traditionally associated with comfort and vanity). The mourner neither bathes nor changes clothing, especially the rent garment. The mourner does not use cosmetics, cut his/her hair, or engage in sexual contact. The study of Torah is also forbidden, since such study is believed to bring joy. The mourner is free to walk, stand, lie, or sit but only on a low stool or chair. Contrary to popular belief, the chair need not be hard or uncomfortable. Instead, the low seat sym-

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bolizes the mourner's lowered emotional state. The mourner does not rise in order to greet the visitor; in fact, the front door is left ajar to free the mourner from this obligation. The mourner is excused from all household tasks (cleaning, etc.) and does not prepare or serve food for others or him/herself. The mourner is thus freed from all social obligations and distractions and is expected to be involved solely with: the mourning itself.

A *shiva* caller operates under similarly unusual rules. A *shiva* call is considered its own good deed and obligation (mitzvah). In traditional communities, such calls are paid by most of the mourner's community, whether or not they were personally involved with the mourner. Callers generally come unannounced at any time during the day or evening. The purpose of the *shiva* call is explicit; to support the mourner in his/her grief by offering an opportunity to speak about the loss and by sharing with the mourner memories of the deceased. *Shiva* callers are not permitted to greet the mourner; instead, they wait until the mourner notices and greets them. Conversation must be initiated by the mourner, who may choose to speak of the deceased, of other things, or to remain silent. The caller does not, however, attempt to distract the mourner unless the mourner indicates such a need. Thus, at times, the caller may simply sit silently with the mourner; at other moments, the caller may be engaged in conversation of more or less emotional depth. The caller, who is not expected to stay long, does not say good-bye, and instead utter a traditional phrase, "May G-d comfort you among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem." The mourner does not respond to this farewell and remains seated when the caller leaves.

At the end of the seven days, the mourner "gets up"—resumes daily activities in most respects. However, during the subsequent thirty days (*shloshim*), certain activities (such as attending parties) designed to bring joy are curtailed. Many male mourners refrain from shaving throughout *shloshim*. This represents a most powerful and visible expression of bereavement. In fact, for a full eleven months following a death, the mourner is expected to acknowledge this loss concretely by saying Kaddish daily, and, in the case of a parent's death, also limiting social activities and festivities.

When my own father died last year, I sat *shiva* for the first time and found it to be an extraordinarily reparative experience. As a psychoanalyst, I was struck by the degree to which the *shiva* situation evoked many of the most healing aspects of psychoanalytic treatment. Although psychoanalysis is popularly viewed as a situation in which the analyst offers interpretations to the patient, I believe that non-interpretive aspects of the therapeutic situation play a critical role in the treatment process. D.W. Winnicott, who was both a pediatrician and a psychoanalyst, described this dimension of psychoanalytic experience as a "holding environment." The psychoanalytic situation holds the patient figuratively, by protecting him/her in ways that allow a full experience of the self to develop. The analyst who provides a holding environment functions not as an interpreter of the patient's experience, but as a reliable, available, potentially empathic presence who communicates confidence in their mutual survival. When the analyst maintains a holding stance, subjective responses to the patient are contained by the analyst to establish an emotionally protective setting within which the patient can expose private experience, often for the first time.

In thinking about what it took for me to assimilate my father's death, it became increasingly clear that the structure of *shiva* created a therapeutic holding environment that tremendously facilitated this task. From the moment he died, I derived comfort from the knowledge that my own community rather than strangers were caring for his body. At the cemetery, I experienced something simultaneously raw and essentially real as my family, according to custom, shoveled earth upon the unprettified pine casket. The denial of death was impossible, and the shock was intense.

I returned home to the comfort provided by my community; I was both protected from and deprived of the external distractions that might be viewed as relieving the pain of loss. I did not work, or shop, or cook for myself or my family. Yet I was far from alone; a stream of *shiva* callers appeared who set aside their own concerns and allowed me to talk about my father when I needed to and about other things when I did not. They came and left unrequested, and so freed me from the burden of having to ask for the company that I did not always know I needed; at the same time, they made it possible for me to retreat in privacy when I wished to do so. They made sure that there was a minyan so that I could say Kaddish and provided a meal for Shabbat. Many *shiva* callers brought food; few ate mine. Some were close friends or relatives; many were more casual acquaintances, yet most made it possible for me to talk, to stay with the feelings of loss as long as I needed to. Their traditional farewell offered the comfort of community, reminding me that I was not alone in this experience. I emerged from this very intense week of remembering exhausted but relieved. My recovery did not end there, but was steady, and at the end of the year I found myself largely at peace with this loss.

How did *shiva* help? I was forced to express my grief in multiple concrete ways; my shoes, clothing, lowered chair, etc., underlined my state of mourning and interfered with the possibility of "putting on a face" (false self) to the world. Yet the community's visits, even people's parting words, required no acknowledgment from me. The *shiva* custom requiring that I speak first, for exam-

ple, facilitated a direct response to me and to death by the community by making it harder for us to escape into social convention. The prohibition against ordinary greetings and farewells was awkward for many of us, yet it served as a compelling reminder of the visit's non-social nature.

Taken together, what at first appears to be a rigid set of rules creates an environment designed to facilitate mourning by creating an emotionally protective setting that is reminiscent of the analytic holding environment. The community of *shiva* callers collectively provides this hold, which is symbolized by both concrete care and emotional space. The *shiva* setting makes a demand on the community: to permit the mourner to use people within the community without regard for the community's needs. In this sense, the mourner is permitted to express and experience the self in a way that mimics many aspects of the psychoanalytic holding situation.

It was not until I experienced *shiva* as a healing process that I became aware of the ways in which *shiva* is often distorted. When the mourner's community is unaware of, or uncomfortable with *shiva* ritual, observance becomes a burden rather than a support for the mourner. The mourner in this sort of environment often feels obligated to entertain visitors and to distract them both from the uncomfortable knowledge that the mourner is in acute pain. I vividly remember a previous *shiva*, when those present (who were unaware of *shiva* tradition) sat in strained silence interspersed with self-conscious political comments as they ate a meal provided by the family. The mourner's grief had no place in this context, and "*shiva*" provided no relief at all.

Yet even those who are familiar with *shiva* rules may struggle with the obligation to visit the mourner, which requires us to tolerate our own anxiety and social awkwardness about facing death and encountering what may be an unfamiliar set of people and traditions. To enter a *shiva* house and not to greet anyone, to sit in silence (often among a group of strangers) waiting to be acknowledged, is an intensely uncomfortable experience. It can leave us wanting to fade away, to leave as quickly as possible, even to wish not to have come at all. To further complicate matters, the mourner will not necessarily express gratitude for our visit.

I have never paid a *shiva* call without some degree of discomfort; further, I have rarely found the visit to be what I expected. The "house of mourning" will be most variable; I have entered homes to discover mourners sobbing in grief, chatting about their own lives in an attempt to gain some emotional relief, or laughing in an apparently disconnected emotional state.

It shouldn't be surprising that different mourners respond to death differently, of course, depending on their own tolerance for grief, and also depending on the nature of their relationship with the deceased. For some, death represents a shock too great to assimilate with overt grief. To the degree that a mourner is defended against the experience of loss, grief may emerge in a diverted form or may be apparently absent. When the mourner is someone with little tolerance for emotional experience, a powerful need not to experience grief may be communicated. The mourner may behave as if nothing is wrong, as if the *shiva* call were, in fact, a social visit. In paying a *shiva* call, then, we may feel puzzled, bored,



shut out, even judgmental of the mourner's apparent lack of grief. What do we do? How do we behave in such a context? Do we join in the social atmosphere, or sit silent, as if it is we who are grieving? *Shiva* custom would imply that we neither introduce nor distract from the subject of death. That is, we need to do our best to remain with the mourner as he/she is, and not demand that the mourner express real feelings. From my perspective, such a stance gives the mourner both space and potential contact. Eventually, this space may permit the mourner to feel safe enough to confront the loss and to connect to it in a fuller way.

To the extent that the mourner's own feelings about the death are complex and involve guilt about past actions or inactions, feelings of hatred toward the dead person, etc., the mourner is likely to experience expressions of concern ambivalently. When we pay a *shiva* call to a mourner in this state, our very care may intensify the mourner's guilt about felt failures vis à vis the deceased. At other moments, the caller's concern may frustrate the mourner by its inadequacy in the face of loss. The mourner may react to the caller with irritation, or respond with anger or guilt to expressions of sympathy that inadvertently evoke guilt. To say the "wrong thing" during a *shiva* call can be chillingly uncomfortable; an irri-

table mourner is hardly likely to relieve such feelings. It is far from easy to tolerate being unappreciated, unhelpful, or even hurtful to the mourner. Yet by remaining emotionally present but not intrusive, we communicate confidence about the mourner's ability to survive the difficult feelings generated by the grieving process.

Despite my familiarity with *shiva* tradition, I have often found the *shiva* call to be painful or uncomfortable, especially when I was not personally involved with the mourner and/or the deceased. It was not until I sat *shiva* myself that I became aware of the powerful impact of people's visits during *shiva*. I felt "held" by these visits, by the fact that I could both count on my family and best friend to turn up each day, and by the calls of people I had never been personally involved with (including someone I had never met before). I had often hesitated to pay *shiva* calls to people I knew only superficially. Most paradoxically, I found these "superficial" visits to be extraordinarily moving; they made me aware in an immediate sense that I was part of something larger than myself or my grief. Some of these *shiva* callers followed Jewish tradition to the letter while others did not. What mattered was not the specifics of form but rather my sense that the caller had come to be with me during a period of intense grief.

For those readers who feel outside of traditional Jewish observance, then, I would like to urge you to consider the *shiva* process to be a gift that you can provide yourself when you face a death, and one that you can offer others in the same circumstance. The details of ritual observance are far less important than is the setting aside of a week within which to do little other than remember. As a mourner, allow others to do what they can for you and do your best not to entertain. Set out photographs of the deceased, or mementos that will make it easier for you and for others to enter the process of remembering. Try not to feed or serve others. Most important, make use of people's visits in the way that is best for you—no one cries all the time, and laughter is not prohibited. Simply living through a week of suspended life is therapeutic.

When contemplating paying a *shiva* call, consider visiting in the early evening if you prefer to be with a large social group, or during the day if you would rather talk alone with the mourner. Some people prefer to phone ahead and ask whether a particular time would be a good one. Take your cues from the mourner and remind yourself that your presence itself is of value, even if you don't know the mourner well. Many people feel uncomfortable about the formal farewell and simply say "may we meet again on a happier occasion." Finally, remember that you don't have to stay long; a half-hour visit is fine.

It is clear that the laws of *shiva* are largely designed for the protection of the mourner and make powerful demands on us as a source of support during *shiva*. To require that we enter a situation perhaps unique in its social discomfort only to tolerate the difficult range of feelings evoked by a mourner is a considerable demand. *Shiva* laws do, however, take into account the vulnerability of the community. Interestingly, as *shiva* callers, we are protected in ways similar to the protection provided the analyst. *Shiva* calls are short, ordinarily paid not more than once by any individual. The mourner's larger community is expected to assume the ongoing obligation. The holding function of *shiva* is thus shared by the community, falling lightly on its individual members.

On the seventh day of *shiva*, the mourner must "get up," whether emotionally "ready" or not. The community is thereby automatically freed from further obligation at the end of the *shiva* week. Further, *shiva* is interrupted by Shabbat, and is actually cancelled by major holidays. These laws may in part reflect the community's need to remain involved in life, in joyous or religious events that supersede even the needs of the individual mourner. Like the therapist who ends sessions, takes vacations despite the patient's need for treatment, *shiva* laws place the mourner's needs within the larger context of community need. It is evident that the mourner may be quite unable to suspend grief just because Shabbat or a holiday interferes. To the extent that this failure in adaptation to the mourner's needs was preceded by a period of holding, however, it may be strengthening rather than traumatic. A break in the *shiva* experience may actually begin to draw the mourner back into life, much as a disruption in holding may facilitate an integrative process in a patient. There are times, however, when community needs do interfere and even prevent the grief process from fully unfolding. When a major holiday falls during *shiva*, the *shiva* period is actually cancelled. In such an instance, the mourner's need for a holding is overridden by the community's need to be involved in ritual observance.

Thus, while Jewish tradition views the mourner's needs as great, they are not paramount—they do not consistently override the needs of the *shiva* caller. It may be that the limits placed on the mourner's needs are actually what permit the community to tolerate the very great demand that is made of it during the period of *shiva* observance. It is, of course, not uncommon that the practice of *shiva* fails to hold the mourner, because either the mourner or the community cannot tolerate the discomfort generated by such an experience. *Shiva* cannot provide a holding in the absence of some degree of cohesive community, which is absent for many contemporary Jews.

Yet in the context of community, *shiva* laws meet an individual's temporarily intense need in its varied aspects while protecting the larger group. These laws are, in many ways, a brilliant pre-psychoanalytic adaptation to a universal human need, reflecting the capacity of society to provide a temporary holding for its members while also insuring that the community remains a going concern. □

Truth or Consequences: The "Liberators" Controversy

Letty Cottin Pogrebin

The Hebrew word *emet* (truth), and, in English, the motto, "Truth Even Unto Its Innermost Parts," appear on the seal of my alma mater. While *emet* struck me as a pure distillation of the values of the school's founders—many of whom were victims of Goebbels's Big Lie—the longer maxim always seemed pretentious and inelegant, arcane and redundant. Now, thirty-odd years since my graduation, I finally get it. I understand why the elaboration is necessary and how profound is the call to search for truth at a level deeper than facts.

What brings the Brandeis motto to mind is the controversy roiling around "Liberators: Fighting on Two Fronts," the PBS documentary about African Americans in the racially segregated armed forces, and the role all-Black units, particularly the 761st Tank Battalion, played in the liberation of Dachau and Buchenwald. "Liberators" was televised nationally last November on Veterans Day, and the book version was published simultaneously. The film was celebrated at a widely publicized screening at Harlem's Apollo Theater, sponsored by Time Warner, such VIP Jews as Elie Wiesel, financier Felix Rohatyn, commmunal leader Peggy Tishman, and top flak Howard Rubenstein, and such prominent Blacks as the Reverend Jesse Jackson, Congressman Charles Rangel, Betty Shabazz (Mrs. Malcolm X), and New York City Mayor David Dinkins. Before an interracial crowd of 1,200, speakers hailed "Liberators" as an antidote to Black-Jewish tensions, a catalyst for educational dialogue, and the spearhead of a new cooperative relationship between two communities at odds with one another. The reviews were glowing. The Rainbow Coalition announced it would show the film before interracial groups in twenty-five cities. Screenings at Harvard and Yale spawned passionate debates on racism and anti-Semitism. New York City made plans to distribute copies to junior and senior high schools. In February, "Liberators" was one of five documentaries nominated for an Academy Award.

But, even as "Liberators" produced this flood of good feeling, its detractors had begun to speak out. A WBAI radio interview with members of the 761st Battalian sparked a rash of challenges to the film's historical accuracy. Black veterans of the 761st confirmed that their unit never took part in the liberation of those camps. Veterans of the units credited by World War II and Holocaust scholars with the liberation of Dachau and Buchenwald accused the film of nullifying their achievements. When questioned by reporters, two Black vets shown in the film making a "return" to Buchenwald said they saw the camp for the first time in 1991 when the producers brought them there. Members of the 761st worried that the film's "false history" would discredit their real record: 183 days of combat in 1944 and '45, during which they captured more than thirty major towns and four airfields, fought in the Battle of the Bulge, and liberated at least one concentration camp, Günskirchen in Austria. Survivors of Buchenwald remember Black soldiers but it seems clear they weren't from the 761st tank unit. And after nearly fifty years' effort to gain recognition for their valor, the men of the 761st do not want credit for someone else's deeds.

Holocaust survivors and scholars disputed the film's version of events. Robert Abzug, a history professor listed as the documentary's historical adviser, says he never worked on the film and is "heartsick" about its errors. Army research institutes said they were never consulted. Historians at the U.S. Holocaust Museum could find no evidence to support the film's claims. A senior official at the U.S. National Archives echoed Jewish warnings that any erosion of the truth about the Holocaust fuels right-wing revisionists critical of the film. Articles appeared in the *New York Guardian*, *New York Post*, *Newsday*, The *Forward*, and The *New Republic*. Most definitive was the American Jewish Committee's fifteen-page report written by Kenneth S. Stern, after three weeks of interviews with survivors, experts,

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Black veterans, the film's producers, and WNET executives. The report acknowledged the "glorious, and generally unappreciated" contribution of Blacks in World War II but found "Liberators" marred by "serious factual flaws well beyond what can be written off as 'artistic license.'"

The film's producers—Nina Rosenblum, a Jew, and William Miles, who is Black—both of whom are experienced, award-winning documentary filmmakers, have been accused of everything from politicizing history to outright fraud. In response, Rosenblum has denounced the film's critics as neoconservative racists who would write Blacks out of history. She says she didn't consult military historians because their testimony would have been unreliable, the result of military prejudice against Blacks. She says oral history is as valid a tool as any means of chronicling events. She and Black veteran Dr. Leon Bass offer this explanation of the factual discrepancies: the 761st was splintered; parts of the unit were constantly being attached and reattached to three different armies and were therefore spread over 100 miles at the time of liberation; members of the 761st entered concentration camps under other units' jurisdictions.

Some of the critics of "Liberators" seem to be angered by the very premise I applaud: that there was a moment in history when Jews needed Blacks and vice versa.

Rosenblum and Miles defend their film. They say minor errors of time and place should not impugn its main message: Blacks fought racism at home and at war and then witnessed the ultimate racism in the fate of the Jews in the Holocaust; Blacks and Jews have a common enemy in bigotry.

At this writing, WNET, which owns the TV rights, has withdrawn "Liberators" from further distribution pending a review of its detractors' claims. Direct Cinema, which owns the theatrical rights, accepts the film's veracity. "Liberators" did not win an Oscar, but the producers campaigned energetically on its behalf—even enlisting Lou Gossett, a Black actor, to win endorsement of the film from General Colin Powell, hero of the Gulf War and the first Black chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who is a favorite of both Blacks and Jews. The book's editor, Claire Wachtel, says Harcourt Brace Jovanovich is standing behind "Liberators" because "we recognize that oral history is always subjective"; however, the publisher is retaining a historian to read the book "with an eye toward correcting any problems" in the next edition.

When human experience is reified in print or on film, no reasonable person can argue that truth is irrelevant. When the *Washington Post* piece by Janet Cook on "Jimmy," an eight-year-old heroin addict, was exposed as fiction, the ensuing scandal shook the journalistic establishment. The credibility of television news has been hobbled by the "enhanced" explosion of a GM pick-up truck on "Dateline NBC."

From all the evidence thus far, it seems the producers of "Liberators" lost sight of the boundaries between fact and drama. And their crossing of the line between documentary accuracy and factual manipulation was artistically unnecessary, ethically wrong, and historically indefensible. More than that, it was stupid. Permitting factual distortions in the film has changed the public focus in the same way that allowing detonators to be planted under the GM truck fender diverted viewers from the hazards of sidesaddle gasoline tanks and redirected our attention to the over-zealous news producers. The exposer was exposed, the victimizer became the victim, and the tables were turned. With "Liberators," the producers have created a controversy that threatens to transform innocent soldiers from good guys to con men, from subjects of admiration to objects of suspicion.

By playing tricks with the truth, the filmmakers compromised their own goals and destroyed what I believe was the film's greatest potential: to advance the radical notion of reciprocity in the historical relationship between Blacks and Jews by showing Blacks in the "helping" role that has most typically been played by Jews. If the producers had been satisfied with the simple truth—that the 761st crashed the gates at Günskirchen—they would have given us enough of a fresh take on an old story to provide retrospective healing and a stimulus for change.

Some would disagree.

"...the valor of one generation cannot atone for the failings of another," insists one scold in a letter to The *Forward*. I say, tell that to those Americans who used the Gulf War to atone for Vietnam. Tell it to the Israelis who cite Jewish passivity in the 1940s as a rationale for Jewish militarism in the 1990s. Tell it to the American Jews who keep pointing to the civil rights partnership of the '50s and '60s as proof that contemporary Jews are more unbiased than other Americans. Today's activists always try to score points from yesterday's heroes; that's why we have parades.

And that's why the hottest ticket in town last December (before the naysaying mushroomed) was the event at the Apollo Theatre, an evening that can only be described as a Black-Jewish love-in. After the screening,

the Jewish survivors and the soldiers they called "Black angels," now wrinkled and stooped, lumbered up on the stage, embraced each other, and wept under the spotlights. Surrounded by VIP's such as Robert Morgenthau and the Reverend Al Sharpton, (I couldn't help but notice most were men, but so too was the wartime context), David Dinkins quoted Hillel, and the Reverend Jackson held hands with Satmar Rabbi Leib Glanz, and they prayed for us all.

Buoyed by that closing tableau, stars and audience repaired to a huge street tent for a buffet dinner that seemed a culinary metaphor for Black-Jewish co-existence. Our plates piled with catfish fritters and kasha varnishkas, grits and gefilte fish, we sat together family- style, strangers, Blacks and Jews, basking in easy conversation, acceptance, mutual respect, simple normalcy—a momentary utopia, a miracle of possibility.

I saw the future that night at the Apollo—and then came the Fall. Hope crossed out by the fact-checkers. And now, rather than engendering positive change between Blacks and Jews, the film has become just one more lightning rod. To fighting words such as Bakke, Hymietown, and Crown Heights, now we can add "Liberators."

Progressive Jews may be tempted to dismiss the mistakes in "Liberators" as trivia because they make Blacks look good without making Jews look bad. But today's well-meaning fib greases the slope for tomorrow's pernicious lie. Next time, it may be harder to protest when someone tries to make Blacks look good by making Jews look bad (to wit, CUNY Professor Leonard Jeffries blaming "the Jews" for masterminding the slave trade; or Chicago's Steve Cokely charging that Jewish doctors infect Blacks with the AIDS virus).

Seeking historical truth is only half the battle. Searching deeper for what the Brandeis motto calls the "innermost" truth, one senses in a number of critics motives less admirable than the pursuit of factual accuracy: rather, what leaks out is their desire to destroy everything the film stands for.

In some of the criticism, I detect what Bill Clinton called the "gotcha" component—the suggestion that Blacks have been getting away with undeserved social aggrandizement and have finally tripped up. And who better to take them to task than the justice-seeking Jew who is only doing the world's work, denying credit where credit is undue and keeping history honest. After the American Jewish Committee report was released, its author said he received many gloating phone calls from Jews who willfully misread his findings and said things like, "See, we knew Blacks did nothing in World War II except KP duties and bringing up supplies."

After the lip-smacking "gotcha" brigade come the self-righteous. Their approach presupposes that no Jew would ever be so morally self-serving as to compromise historical accuracy for the sake of a better version of the Jewish past. And yet, just last year, officials of predominantly Jewish trade union groups—the United Federation of Teachers (UFT), the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU), and the Jewish Labor Committee—did just that. They withheld their endorsement of the Jewish Museum's "Bridges and Boundaries" exhibit, a magnificent overview of the intermingled histories of Blacks and Jews in America, because it exposed certain negative interludes in each union's good old days. The UFT objected to displays that revisited the Ocean Hill-Brownsville confrontations which pitted mostly Jewish teachers against Black parents and community-control advocates. The ILGWU didn't like what researchers turned up about a race discrimination suit filed by the NAACP against the union in the 1960s. (The ILGWU did endorse the exhibition after the curators substituted a text panel that provided the same information in terms less damaging to the union's otherwise exemplary commitment to social justice. The UFT never endorsed.)

Some attacks on the film may mask a backlash against anticipated Black economic progress under the Clinton administration.

Other critics of the Rosenblum/Miles project seem to be angered by the very premise that I applaud: that there was a moment in history when *Jews needed Blacks* instead of vice versa. Any such reshuffling of the power balance between our two peoples disturbs the well-burnished narrative that for decades has reflected the Jewish self-image in warm, flattering tones. Instead of crusading liberals helping Blacks win their rights (and never being properly appreciated for it), the Jews in the film were vulnerable men who had to be rescued by Black angels.

I'm well aware that certain Gentiles find Jews likeable only when we are victims, but I don't think that dynamic explains Black enthusiasm for this film. Nor do I see Jewish supporters of "Liberators" as self-hating or politically correct. The fact is Jews were victims of the Nazis, and some Blacks liberated some survivors and de-

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Becoming Brothers

Howard Waskow and Arthur Waskow

Arthur

Watching our mother die, struggling with the hospital to let her die, had brought us brothers into the closest relationship we had ever had. Her funeral posed the danger of an intense explosion.

How to shape a funeral that would honor her truth? That she would want it to be Jewish was clear; that she had no institutional connections—not even to a friendly rabbi or a once-a-year synagogue—was equally clear. I alone had focused my life around Judaism; did that make me the maven, the expert, even the "rabbi," for this moment? What would that do to my father, my brother?

We agreed that I would call a rabbi who was a friend of mine, a man of unusual learning, openness, and wisdom. He agreed to lead the service. But he had a suggestion: Perhaps Howard and I should each speak about Honey's life, what she had meant to us and in the world. Better us than someone who barely knew her.

To me that seemed perfect. I went back to Howard to propose it. "No," he said. "To you it's perfect because you know how to take what's intimate and make it public. That's how you write, that's how you speak. I can't do that. I would break down, just stand there weeping. It's too close, too intimate, for me to do."

"My closeness to her was different from yours," he went on. "Maybe you are more like her than I am. But I could talk with he—you couldn't. And she could talk with me. She did talk with me. I can't tell all that, and I can't talk without telling all that. So I can't talk."

For one murderous moment, a flash of hatred ran through me. "He's saying Honey loved him more than me!" I thought.

And then I thought, "So what?"—"But if he says that, I ought to kill him."—"Really?"—"Well, at least I ought to hate him."—"Really?"—"Well, I do hate him!"—"Really?"

So I looked for the murderous flash, to prove I hated him. But it was gone. The days of loving wrestle were still there. With a shiver of regret, almost nostalgia—"Where are you, Murder, now that I really need you?"—I turned back to my brother.

"All right, I understand. If you can't do it, you can't. But I can, and it's what I know to do to give her honor. You said it, it's true that I can take what's intimate and say it in the world. Is that okay?"

A long pause. "Well, I would feel terrible, I would feel diminished. It would look as if you were speaking for us all—as if your version were the truth. My truth of her would get left out. I know I'm choosing to leave it out, but I don't want yours there and mine not. So I wish you wouldn't speak."

"But that's not fair! That's not legitimate! You decide you won't speak, and then because you won't speak I shouldn't speak. Come on!"

"I know it's not 'legitimate.' But if you talk, I'll feel diminished."

I walked away in total pain. Pain for me, pain for him. A double bind.

To be who I fully am—in the moment out of my whole life when I most want to be my fullest self—means to speak aloud my love, my honor, my truth about my mother. But what honor would it be to my mother to make my brother feel terrible? What fulfillment of my self would it be to make my brother feel diminished? Back and forth, back and forth—

Would it be my responsibility if he made himself feel terrible? No! And for a moment I felt released. I could do what was mine to do, he would be responsible for feeling bad.

But it didn't matter. Did I want him to feel diminished? No! Did I want him to feel fully himself? Yes! Then must I take the positive steps to make that possible? Not for his sake but because I wanted it that way? —Yes, yes! — But what about my own fulfillment? Back and forth, back and forth.

I went to Phyllis. She listened. She suggested: "Ask Max [our rabbi friend] to meet with both of you and all of us, to hear our stories of Honey and retell them—as our stories, not as his. It won't pretend to be a polished eulogy, it won't shimmer and flow. It will be real, it will have in it what you want to say and whatever Howard is able to say and whatever the rest of us say."

I went back to Howard. He listened, nodded. "That's

This is a chapter by Arthur Waskow from Becoming Brothers, *(Free Press, June 1993). Copyright 1993 by Howard Waskow and Arthur Waskow. Reprinted by permission.*

fine, that's what I'd want." —Me again: "But not what I want!" —And for a few minutes we go through the whole thing again.

My heart is hammering, knocking with a silent voice of its own: "You know what you're supposed to do. You're the older brother. You've been first, you wrote about it even—all that stuff about Ishmael and Isaac, and Esau and Jacob, you know what you're supposed to do. Give it up, give it up, give it up!" —And me, in silence answering back, a voice not from my head or heart or lungs but even deeper, "I can't do it, all right I know but I can't do it. Why should I do it? No, don't tell me why—it doesn't matter; I can't do it. I can't."

And then an outburst, yelling at Howard. "It's not a compromise, it's not half-way, you understand? I don't want it, it's not what fits me. It fits you and not me, you understand? I don't want it, you understand?"

He looks at me quietly: "I understand."

And then the barrier between my two silent voices collapses. My vocal voice says aloud: "OK. Let's do it. Let's ask Max to collect our stories. I'll call him."

And I feel solid. Not joy, not love, not sadness, not anger, not relief, not resignation. Not...anything "peculiar." Solid. There's work to do; let's do it.

I went off to call the rabbi, ask the family to think of the stories they wanted to tell, jot down some of my own. The rabbi said all right. The work was under way.

An hour later, my brother came to talk: "Would you do it? Do it the way we said to have Max do it? Would you collect the stories and then tell them—not in your own voice but in all our voices? I'd like for you to do that."

And then I cried. Then I remembered: Surrender, and space opens up. Maybe your brother will surrender back to you. (Maybe not.) Surrender, and the universe might surrender back. Surrender what you wanted: it might use the new open space to open up some new path, some new possibility. It might turn out you want the new path even more.

So that is what we did. I gathered stories, and I told them. I began with a story about Honey's love of pistachio ice cream, and I went on with stories of her passionate, curious love of all of us and all of life, and I ended with the story of her passionate love of Dad. Howard hugged me and said he felt his voice well spoken.

And I had been the best myself I could be—even better than my best own self, because the wrestle had forced me to hear the other selves as well and speak them.

"Two brothers," I said in my talk. "Two brothers from the same womb; so different. From the same womb, two different intertwining stories."

Up to that moment, Howard and I had wrestled many wrestles. Some were simply for the joy of it; some for power and advantage; some, a higher, more subtle interplay of love and struggle. This had been the highest of our wrestles so far, because we were most conscious of each other's pain as well as his own.

The highest, but probably not the last, for now we know it goes in spirals. One wrestle may lead to reconciliation, and then the new relationship may somehow spark again that flash of murder. And we will find ourselves in still a different wrestle.

What is growing on these spirals? What makes them go somewhere, instead of just around in circles?

It comes to me that the spiral is about the teaching, and the knowing, between us. For years I tried to teach him, and for years he refused to learn from me. I know he imitated what I did. But face to face—from me—he wouldn't learn.

And then it changed. I began to learn from him.

When I think about the years of his divorce, the years when he was asking, probing, digging in the half-forgotten tales of Cottage Avenue in order to uncover his own story, the few years just after our long talk in the snowed-in cabin when I was learning to wrestle with him and with Torah, the years when I was learning to discover my own story in the "family history" of the Bible—when I think of what was changing in those years, it was that I had begun to learn from Howard.

What was I learning? Not just that divorce could be survived. I was learning to look more closely at the people close around me. All my life I had been "far-sighted," looking beyond the family and the neighborhood toward the larger world. After all, if the family locked me out and left me wailing there, what could I finally do but turn my back on them and look outward toward all those shimmering distances?

In those years when I began to learn from Howard, I began to look more closely at the close-in people in my life. Not just to look at them, but to see the work of those relationships as part of the work of my life. I didn't give up politics, trying to heal the broken relationships in the "big" world. But I began to see what it might mean to try to heal the broken relationships much closer to home.

When I wrote a book, *Godwrestling*, about what was emerging from my wrestle with the Torah and my intimate Jewish community, the family was in it too. Howard was in it, my marriage and divorce were in it, intertwined with the "big world" of Israelis and Palestinians, the powerless and the powerful, men and women. Howard was in it not only in the content, but in the process. For my very willingness to think and write like this I had learned from my new connection with Howard, and from Howard's exploration of the close-in world around

him. It was in the conversations with him that I had learned how to think this way, and it was partly from a book of his that I learned to write this way—a book he had written about fathering his kids, a book in which his own childhood and theirs had become intertwined as ways to learn about each other.

But now I see that even then, in the first wave of my learning, I was looking at the people of my close-in world more in memory than in actuality. I was looking at them in the past, in history, learning the ancient tangled family tales from Howard. I was untangling what had made me Ishmael. But I was not yet ready to stop being Ishmael.

In the present, in my relationships with my wife, my kids, with Honey and Dad, with the "band of brothers" at the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington where I shared a politics in a time of utter intensity in politics, even with the fellowship of Jews with whom I prayed and studied Torah—with all these close-in people I still kept my distance.

In the spiral of relationship with Howard, that was where things stayed for about ten years. I was clear enough about having learned from him that in the dedication of my book *Godwrestling* I could say it—that it was from Howard that I had learned how to wrestle and how to write in this new way.

It's true that it did not occur to me to dedicate *Godwrestling* to him. Howard asked me, and at once I saw how truthful it would be. But even his willingness to ask—his voice trembled when he took the chance of being refused—even his willingness to ask, and mine to agree, signalled that we were a great deal closer to each other.

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The next curve upward on the spiral came with Honey's dying. I spent that week looking at the people closest to me. At Honey, over and over to see whether she was dying, how she was dying. At Howard and Dad, to see what they were thinking and feeling. At my kids, and Phyllis, and Irene, and Betty. Even at the doctors. There was no one else to look at—no bigger world. And no wall between me and the family. No one had the strength to put one up.

During our wrestle just before the funeral, Howard had said, and I had agreed, that I knew how to take the intimate and make it public. But we were mistaken. Until the funeral itself, what I knew how to do was take what had been intimate and make it public. I knew how to take an ancient hurtful past, in which I had not even been fully conscious of what hurts I was suffering; learn what it had meant; and then make that intimate knowledge public.

But to expose my present suffering? That I really did for the first time at the funeral itself, when I spoke about Honey. For the first time I was not uncovering an ancient past but sharing present consciousness. "This is not the past walking into the future, the walk is painful, into the present," says Muriel Rukeyser in a wonderful poem on the great Rabbi Akiba. Painful indeed. Now comes the test of whether I can continue to make the intimate public.

The first round of wrestling with Howard was when we were children. The wrestle was on its lowest level—only about power and control. It ended with the polite, invisible wall.

The second round began in the snow-bound cabin and continued along the Oregon coast; it was about our pasts and about our willingness in the present to explore our pasts together, even when there were overtones of murder in our memories.

The third was the week of Honey's dying. The wrestle then was wholly in the present, the kind of wrestle that was much more making love than making war. Intense, and short—because it was focused so intensely on Honey's life and death.

And then, a year later, began a fourth round of wrestling, in which the thinking and writing of this book is the arena. A strange kind of wrestle, since each of us was groping toward ending the very split between us that made for wrestling in the first place. Howard reached beyond that split when he asked me to write a book with him about the two of us. I reached beyond it when, in telling the story of Honey's life and death, I realized that I needed him to join with me in telling it—and asked him.

In the midst of this wrestle, I have come to see that it is my job to end the split within me. To end the stereotype I have been frozen in.

The split between us can end only if the split within each of us is ended. □

ROUNDTABLE

Twentysomethings

This is the first of what will be an ongoing feature in TIKKUN*: A column that gives voice to the issues and concerns of people in their twenties.*

In the past two years TIKKUN *has been involved in creating an organization of twentysomething Jews, which calls itself Students for Judaism and Social Justice (SJSJ). (Because many of the participants are twentysomething Jews no longer in school, there has been some talk of changing the name.)*

In the spring of 1993, SJSJ held two conferences: a founding gathering for the East Coast at Columbia and a second conference for the West Coast at Berkeley. From those two conferences we assembled a small group of SJSJers to discuss the issues their generation faces. Yigal Schleifer is a freelance journalist who interns at TIKKUN *magazine. Daniel Fisher is a graduate student in clinical psychology at the University of California at Santa Barbara. Akiva Lerner is a student of history at the University of California, Berkeley. Rebecca Segall studies political science and women's studies at the State University of New York at Albany. Sunny Rosenfeld studies clinical psychology at the University of California at Santa Cruz. Michael Steinberg is a graduate student in cultural studies at New York University and an intern at* TIKKUN *magazine. Gayle Kirshenbaum is an editor at Ms. magazine.*

TIKKUN: What are the distinctive problems and issues facing what popular media are beginning to call "twentysomethings" today?

Dan Fisher: Our formative high school years were the "yuppie eighties" with an extreme of the "me" focus that had emerged in the seventies. That had a profound impact on our consciousness, accounting in part for the lack of social consciousness that characterizes many of us in our twenties. There was a very powerful emphasis on forging a materialistic lifestyle...

Rebecca Segall: Part of the "me" generation was encouraged by a fantasy that the major social problems had been solved by the generation of the sixties...so many of the people on my campus (SUNY Albany) tell themselves that racism and sexism have really been adequately addressed already and that only the most subtle forms of these problems persist. In the 60s nobody was denying the existence of these problems.

Michael Steinberg: Actually, I find that many of my twentysomething peers today have a new sensitivity about injustice that may not have been true a few years ago. But the dissatisfaction with the world that they express often becomes merely a stance that sometimes leads people to become cynical nonbelievers in anything. And that stance, which manifests in a certain superficial identification with the language of "political correctness," is quickly shed when they enter the work world.

Akiva Lerner: A defining characteristic of our generation has been its aestheticization of politics. We've become comfortable with the destruction of any notion of a political totality about which we could think or in which we could act. There's an REM song that reflects this, with lyrics that say, "It's the end of the world as we know it and I feel fine." This has resonance with anarchistic movements of the past, and its basic notion is that the disintegration of society is something we should cheer on. Instead of reacting with horror and outrage over this disintegration we respond to it as an aesthetic moment. Politics ought to be a realm in which people interact with each other and come to decisions about how they ought to govern their lives. By turning politics into art or media events, whether it be the dramatization of smart bombs destroying Iraqi civilian populations or the reduction of the presidential campaign to playing sax or "Rocking the Vote," people's ability to authentically interact and make reasonable decisions is undermined.

The notion that I think is shared by many of our generation is that somehow through the disintegration of our social and economic order something new and better will emerge.

Art used to be emblematic of some kind of resistance to hegemonic systems, but now art concentrates on color and flash that capture our senses but don't transform our consciousness. It no longer seeks to express a deeper social desire for a different order. In America in the fifties or maybe even the sixties one could talk about the dominant society (bourgeois, increasingly becoming suburbanized, dominantly white) and then "the others" (Blacks, homosexuals, Jews, etc.). But with the disintegration of the larger totality, many more people are claiming "otherness"

as their primary identity, there is no longer a sense of a singular cohesive something that keeps us together, a hegemonic culture against which the others get defined. Whereas before one might have imagined a single painting with a variety of different colors, today the society feels more like a mosaic of distinct tiles, none of which interact with the others, and they are kept together only by some underlying cement. In this context, there can't be a counterculture, but only countercultures. And whereas I know that there was more than one counterculture at various moments in the past, today it almost feels as if the society is constituted by nothing more than a variety of different competing countercultures.

P.C. politics reflects this fragmentation. Through its implicit celebration of various racial and sexual particularisms it sometimes thwarts efforts to create a unified vision of the society or how to change it, or efforts to get people to join with each other. P.C. is a politics of linguistics—people take on "radical identities" that maintain the hyperindividualism of the 80s, now manifested in social groups. Our generation is caught with this paradox: we want to express solidarity with subjugated peoples but at the same time we express ourselves in categories that make it very difficult to connect and involve ourselves in social transformation.

Gayle Kirschenbaum: In the 80s we stopped seeing the government as a viable vehicle for social change. So the campaigns for gender, class, and race consciousness on campus reflected our awareness that it might only be in a smaller arena like the campus that we would have any social power to influence the society. And that focus should be validated, because these struggles did have an impact on the consciousness of many of those who are now working in the society and in more established political organizations.

Moreover, the impact of movements of the sixties and seventies, particularly for young women, is that many of us entered political life with higher expectations for ourselves and our society than our mothers had. We expect everything from ourselves and nothing from the government around us. It is this tension that has defined our generation up till now.

Sunny Rosenfeld: What most characterizes our generation is a certain kind of cynicism—the ability to have piercing insight into each thing, to be able to give the three-line dissection of each argument. We have insight but no transcendence—we don't come together to create something after we've expressed our cynicism, so we are left with a hyperindividualistic apathy. Even when people do develop some kind of political consciousness, for example, in the women's movement, people are very factionalized. So we have African-American women's groups, lesbian women's groups, older traditional women's organizations, newer organizations that express the needs of younger women, but there is very little coming together.

Yigal Schleifer: This is the first generation to be raised by the social developments of the sixties, by women dealing with feminism and fathers who had liberated or "trying-to-liberate-themselves" wives, and the conflict that this brought about was part of our upbringing. Our parents were trying to incorporate these things, but hadn't fully figured out how to do so. And all this may have been confusing for our generation.

Segall: I wouldn't want to exaggerate how much our P.C. consciousness has really permeated most students on campus today. Apart from a small group of activists, the ignorance, apathy, racism and sexism remains pervasive. It's not like the sixties.

TIKKUN: It was like that for most of the sixties as well. Only a minority of people shared the movement's consciousness about imperialism, racism, or sexism. Some counter-culturalists self-consciously decided to forge the myth of a generational consciousness, hoping to use that myth to open young people to progressive ideas by suggesting to them that they weren't "really" part of our generation unless they shared these ideas. The whole notion of a "youth culture" was forged by people who wanted to convince others that there was something profoundly revolutionary in the needs that had drawn them to rock music, drugs, and other unconventional activities. The amazing thing is that eventually this myth began to constitute a new way of people seeing themselves, so that the generational definition became one of rebellion and questioning authority. In winning hegemony over that generational definition, however, we were often involved in trying to convince people that they ought to see themselves in a certain way, not simply describing how they did see themselves.

Rosenfeld: The Vietnam War helped you get a cohesiveness that we don't have today. Environmentalism isn't linked to African Americans, or those two to lesbianism. It's very difficult on campus to build links between these different movements, in part because there is a real resistance to totalizing ideologies that suggest that we have something in common. There is such a fear that any emphasis on commonality will mean that our individual or particular voices will not be heard, so universalist ideologies are suspect.

I'm hopeful that this is a stage, and that it's just at this

moment that people need a context to talk to people who share similar problems—Jews need a place to talk to Jews, lesbians to lesbians, African Americans to African Americans, but that eventually there will be a time that we can transcend this and get together. I don't know if this is going to be transcended very soon—but perhaps in saying that I'm simply mirroring the cynicism of my generation.

Lerner: Every generation tends to see the categories it has been given as defining how things really are, and seeing the world as permanently being that way. Part of my involvement in TIKKUN magazine's student outreach organization, Students for Judaism and Social Justice (SJSJ), derives from my hope that we might be able to bring people together who share a sense of the possibility that we might change the cynicism and the fragmentation. I'm hoping that the dialogue and action SJSJ facilitates will provide a way to break through the despair, and that I can meet other people who share a desire to participate in that process.

Kirshenbaum: But isn't the drive toward particularism sometimes a positive thing? I think it may be a process that we need to go through before we can connect in larger communities. Groups that define themselves according to aspects of their identity are doing something positive.

Rosenfeld: I do see a lot of good things that have come from this "P.C." movement and its embracing of particularism. I think it is good that our generation has become sensitive to the whole "responsibility of speech" so that it knows that there are things you can't say anymore. But the problem is that P.C. has been effective only in the realm of linguistics and not in the realm of action. Corrective speech doesn't lead beyond itself.

Segall: Don't forget that the whole creation of the term "politically correct" was done by people who were trying to silence those of us who were politically active—we in the social change movements didn't develop this concept. And our attempts to recreate an English language that is less racist, sexist, and homophobic is political action.

Schleifer: With the election of Clinton twentysomethings came out in force, and this is the first administration in which we are beginning to explore what it might be like to interact with government. We are wondering what our access is going to be. If the administration is truly accessible, it might take away some of the apathy of the past; but if our generation comes to feel that the access promised was only a manipulation to get our votes, then it may create an even deeper cynicism.

Lerner: Clinton ought to help create twentysomething town hall meetings on campuses around the country, and listen to them. If he showed a serious interest in those meetings, he might help recredit the public sphere as a place where the discourse different groups need to engage in could take place.

Rosenfeld: The Clintons could be a very important model for our generation: they are the first two-income couple to be in the White House, and there's quite a bit of excitement about the role that Hillary has been taking. Their relationship is a model that really encourages people in our twentysomething generation. But except for that relationship, which is very important, I don't feel that Clinton has done anything since taking office that really does speak to my generation.

Kirshenbaum: People suspended their disbelief long enough to be part of the campaign. But for the political activists of my generation, our involvement in grass roots activism is the shaping experience that will continue to influence how we relate to the Clinton experience. We will bring that to our involvement with government.

Steinberg: One problem anyone wanting to change things faces is that in American society as a whole there has been a disappearance of public spaces. We feel much safer in the small groups that are pockets of otherness. But it's very difficult to have contact with the overall society—the only way we do rub up against it is when it is oppressing us.

Rosenfeld: We have so much language of community—"the women's community," "the African-American community," the "academic community,"—and yet I think most of us really feel very little sense of being part of community or even of knowing what this sense of community would feel like. Our generation sees itself as critics, not as part of something. And since media-generated styles come and go so quickly, most of us are afraid to be in to any particular identity, to get "typed" as some specific thing which will be gone just as we are getting into it, so we are constantly defining ourselves as "other."

All the big labels have died—communism is dead, socialism is dead, every totalizing ideology that sought to create community is seen as likely to lead to a totalitarianism.

Lerner: Perhaps Judaism and the Jewish people offer another model—a worldview that does commit itself to social change but that does not totalize in the way that

many of the Western social change ideologies do. Judaism has allowed for a pluralism of expression and belief, and that may have contributed to its strength as an ongoing community. If we want to build social change, we need first to reconstitute feelings of community and a sense of commitment to each other. Those are prerequisites for anything else to happen, and Jewish experience has much to teach us about how to sustain an ongoing community.

Segall: Unfortunately, until TIKKUN came along, the organized Jewish community was so very conservative—so these small communities can also be problematic. For example, on my campus the group planning a Holocaust commemoration wouldn't let the gay group on campus speak or pass out pink triangles as part of the commemoration. And many of those involved in the Zionist groups on campus make outrageously racist statements and they have little consciousness about this. The Zionist groups only care about Jews but they don't see or care about anyone else's oppression—that is simply not part of their agenda.

On the other hand, the progressive groups on campus are very insensitive to Jewish issues. They are often explicitly anti-Zionist, and they do little to understand anti-Semitism as a social disease or to include Jewish experience in their analysis of oppression.

Professor Jeffries came to speak on my campus. The most politically active group on campus is called the National Women's Rights Organizing Coalition. This group always protests whenever any hateful fascist oppressive speaker comes to campus, and they protest against professors on campus accused of racist or sexist actions; or against visiting speakers who have anti-abortion or anti-gay perspectives. But when Jeffries came they handed out literature about why to be against Zionism.

We also had a visit from representatives of Pan-Africanists whose talk was advertised with posters saying that the topic would be "Why it is essential to smash Zionism in order to uplift the Black Nationalist movement." I sat in the back and at first the speaker said very valid and wonderful things about the disempowerment of Black people in this country and the need for an immediate remedy. He gave a historical analysis of why people have a connection to Africa as the homeland. But then he started to give an analysis of Jewish history and stated that there was no such thing as the Jewish people, that it was only a religion, that the whole idea of having a Jewish state was merely a political idea and had no connection to Judaism, that Jews were major participants in the slave trade, and then went on to make a series of "humorous" put-downs against Jews. What amazed me most was that the white socialists in the audience, members of the International Socialist Organization, were also applauding all this, laughing at the anti-Semitic "jokes," and generally participating in this problematic scene. This is not progressive behavior.

I wrote an article in the newspaper in which I tried to explain the similarities between Black nationalism and Zionism, how they can at times be distorted and become fascistic, and also why, in the context of a white Christian world, both are necessities for survival for these two people. And I challenged the problematic statements that the speaker had made. My housemate, a leader in one of the campus feminist organizations, reacted to this by telling me that Israel was an imperialist tool created and used by the European countries and America to function as a police state within the Middle East. I tried to give her the history of Jewish experience, and a more historically nuanced account of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

It was very important to me that I have had TIKKUN and *The Socialism of Fools: Anti-Semitism on the Left* (Michael Lerner's book) to bolster my arguments. They've given me some concrete assistance in figuring out how to respond to progressives who make these kinds of statements.

But, as I said, the problems are there in the Jewish world as well. I was a leader of the Zionist youth group Young Judea for six years, but when in college I became best friends with a lesbian, I found that my old comrades were spreading rumors about my sexual orientation that spread like wildfire through the whole Young Judea network.

That wasn't easy for me. Israel and this community of young Zionists was very important to me. I had found it difficult to crtitique Jewish behavior or Israeli politics up till then, but now I was given the space to rethink these issues.

I began to distance myself from many of the Jews I had known before this time, but I didn't want to give up my Judaism. So I began to read Jewish feminist thinkers and others with a social justice orientation toward Judaism. I found within TIKKUN many important articles that helped me think things through. Now I feel I am finally finding a humanistic and Jewish approach toward political activity.

Steinberg: Before I became active with TIKKUN, I had started to wonder why I ought to remain connected to Jewishness. I came from a Reform Judaism background but what I got there was just decoration, a Judaism that appeared only at holidays a few times a year but that didn't engage me or try to engage me in a deeper and more regular daily way.

Schleifer: And Jews growing up in the Jewish world rarely find a Judaism that allows or encourages any real activism. Conversely, the social movements never really

(Continued on p. 89)

BOOK REVIEW

Take it to the Limit

Frank Browning

The Passion of Michel Foucault by James Miller. Simon & Schuster, 1992. $27.50, 491 pp.

A few months ago I found myself in a conversation with a liberal Catholic theologian about the legitimacy of sex between men. Many modern Catholics now believe that two men (or two women, presumably) can form a passionate, moral unit with each other, he told me, so long as it is cast in the faithful model of marriage that God has sanctioned between men and women. They can do so, he said, because the love that serves as foundation for their relationship is a creative reflection of the love that is God.

Very well, I responded. Such love is exquisite. But what about orgies in the labyrinths of darkened sex clubs where five or six or seven men tangle themselves together in nothing more (or less) than ecstatic celebration of their writhing physicality, where the sacrament is the momentary loss of each one's distinctive personal identity, the total obliteration of the self?

No, he said, he could not accept that form of sex.

"For sex to be human," he told me, "it must be personal. The more it is based on long-term commitments of self-giving love, the more personal it is. The less it is based on that, the more impersonal it is and the more depersonalized a person becomes. Depersonalized sex harms people, and it also harms the community." Q.E.D., anonymous sex is inhuman and destructive of civilization.

More than any modern philosopher, Michel Foucault devoted his life—which is to say his philosophical inquiry—to the examination of the obliterated self. Unlike my friend, the liberal theologian, Foucault was certain that we could preserve our "humanness" only by looking straight into the abyss of self-obliteration, by ripping at the fabric of "humanistic" order, by propelling ourselves into a succession of what he called "limit experiences" through which we see the raw aggression of power that human beings draw upon to create the orderly, civil world. Foucault found true moments of clarity not in liberal social programs or in progressive courts of justice or in the fidelity of the marriage vow, but in the corridors of the asylum, in the upheavals of popular, revolutionary vengeance, in the flesh-piercing pain of the S/M chamber, in the final annihilation of self that is death.

James Miller's exquisite intellectual biography of Foucault is a passionate, intense journey through the French philosopher's life and work. Miller is that rare bird in American letters: a vibrant, journalistic storyteller and an unashamed intellectual. The task he has set himself—to chart the dialectical dance between Michel Foucault, the lusting, physical homosexual man, and Foucault, the often impenetrably obscure man of ideas—is especially difficult for an American writer who must address a society that insists on the neat separation of mind and flesh. If, at times, Miller is repetitive in his explanations of sadomasochism and his explications of Kant and Nietzsche, he succeeds at the biographer's primary call: He leaves us intimately familiar with his subject.

Inevitably, *The Passion of Michel Foucault* will leave many of Foucault's progressive followers upset. Indeed, social democrats and liberal reformers often found the real Foucault brilliant but mad. To the heirs of the Enlightenment—from Adam Smith to Marx and even to Sartre—Michel Foucault's lifelong assault on universalist systems of morality represented the horror of savagery, an atavistic, amoral surrender to the beastliness of mankind. Both Christians and secular humanists rightly understood Foucault as their enemy, for he found in the Enlightenment rules of social progress all the tools of modern repression.

Consider his most famous study of prisons, *Discipline and Punish*. He opens the book with a grizzly tableau of a condemned man's dismemberment in the era of absolute sovereigns, showing how the public mutilation and destruction of the king's enemies made manifest the brutality of power in human relations. The arrival of citizen governance and justice at the end of the eighteenth century, he argued, did not eliminate power and hierarchy in human affairs. Instead, with the invention of the penitentiary, punishment was turned inward. The propensity toward aggression, toward destructive evil, was forced into the silent psyches of those who had offended power. The penitentiary was, after all, conceived as an institution for the generation of penitence, a place to reflect upon and thereby dissolve one's own inner evil. Even more, the penitentiary was by its very physical design, meant to destroy the possibility of evil through the application of the ever-observing eye of power. The prisoner was so placed in his cell that he could never be out of sight of the central guard station. The architectural concept came from Jeremy Bentham, the father of utilitarian ethics. Bentham called it a "panopticon" and explained its value simply: "To be incessantly under the eyes of the inspector is to lose in effect the power to do evil and almost the thought of wanting to do it."

Foucault understood the panopticon prison as a metaphor for the wholesale reorganization of work and civil life at the opening of the nine-

Frank Browning is the author of The Culture of Desire *(Crown, 1993). He reports for National Public Radio and is currently working on a book about the myths and origins of apples.*

teenth century. Church, factory, school—even the architecture of the home—served to leave modern man directly exposed to the watchful eyes of authorities. Appropriating Bentham's terminology, Foucault called this transformation "panopticism," and he argued that it enabled authorities to place "the plebeian, popular, proletarian and peasant population" under "a general, continuous submission to supervision through new forms of political power." The ever-expanding system of observation in social life led to a general, collective imprisonment of the entire society. The object was that no individual should escape the rules of order.

Pressing Nietzsche's declaration that secular democracy had brought about the death of God, Foucault saw in the triumph of watchful civil order the imminent death of Man. By death he meant each individual's lost capacity to press through the limits of his or her own given social identity, to know and realize the *daimon*, the inalienable essence that destiny has provided: to know it all and completely. The taming of modern man under the ever-present eye of the panopticon had turned all our aggressive energies inward where they were compressed and mutilated and allowed release only through the carefully managed expressions of sexuality. Contrary to democrats and libertarians who complain of a puritan repression of sexuality, Foucault saw in modern society a surfeit of sexuality—in everything from toothpaste ads to automobile construction—that imprison us in narrow definitions of what it means to be human.

How are we to break free of this gentle panoptical imprisonment to know our *daimon*, to become who we must be? Only by acknowledging that our bodies, our flesh, our very "animalness" contains and organizes our essence.

"Where religions once demanded the sacrifice of human bodies, knowledge now calls for experimentation on ourselves," Foucault asserted, even if evil and death come as consequences. Indeed, an operation which does not seek out the evil and the aggression that is within our human essence, the drive to dominance, the reality of submission, would itself be a betrayal of the imperative to know: "The secret for harvesting from existence the greatest fruitfulness and the greatest enjoyment is—to live dangerously."

Foucault derived a measure of his methodology from the Paris student revolution of 1968, captured under the wall slogan *SOYON CRUELS!* or BE CRUEL!:

> "—Be CRUEL in your quest for the truth, ruthless in your honesty, savage in your irreverence. . . .
> "—Be CRUEL in your resoluteness, welcome the harsh renunciations and sometimes brutal costs of relentlessly pursuing any vaulting ideal, be it truth, godliness, or revolutionary purity. . . .
> "—Be CRUEL in the works of imagination that you create: spare nothing in painting the demons in the desert who tempt Saint Anthony: a horseman with a head made of thistle, a mermaid riding on a rat, a tonsured devil with a pig's snout, . . . give us the death of Damiens in unbearable detail, make us queasy, tell us exactly how red-hot pincers singed his flesh, how his thighs were carved up and pulled apart. . . .
> "—Be CRUEL in your erotic play: snap on handcuffs, neckcollars, and chains, lock pins and clips on nipples, administer meticulous floggings. . . mimic the ancient 'art of unbearable sensations'. . . savor the disintegration and humiliation of the self in the *jouissance* of exploded limits. . . .
> "—BE CRUEL in the license you give to individual acts and political practices that issue in suffering and death: sing the praise of murderers, unrestrained sovereigns, and bloody movements of popular revolt."

Though later in his life Foucault would revise his enthusiasm for popular vengeance, he insisted that to be fully human required the individual to taste, touch, and feel the inner tissues of cruelty that are released through rebellion and revolution. It was not enough for him to be a celebrated radical professor. He had to experience the revolt in his body, to feel the adrenaline coursing through his veins as he joined the students atop an occupied classroom building heaving bricks onto the police below. That was the "limit experience" of revolution, of breaking through his role as professor, merging into the unified disorder of common action. It gave him a glimpse of human transcendence.

Alas, the courts of the post-revolution seem to look pretty much like the courts of the *ancien régime*. Political revolt seemed only to replace one power pyramid with another, never to disrupt it for longer than a moment. In the end, as a philosopher driven to the question of what it means to be human, driven to know what it meant for him to be human, he was left with nothing more than the flesh, his flesh. The only way remaining for us (him) to know the living self is through the ruthlessly cruel sacrifice and obliteration of that self. Whence to the chamber of S/M horrors in San Francisco, where he sought to re-enact a secularized Passion play upon his own body, thereby to re-invent, through the ritual of S/M, a "new body," a new sexuality, a new self.

People who count too much on newspapers, television and radio see the sex clubs and S/M parlors as escapist chambers of debauchery where individuals use each other for momentary release. That happens. But for Foucault and many others they are sacred zones. Foucault found in them a laboratory where both body and mind might be reinvented and released from the internalized, structured aggressions of modern society. Through the simultaneous experience of pain/pleasure, body and mind might escape the tyranny of a sexuality defined by genitalia and their "proper" procreative uses. He looked to a ritualized theater of the body—"a homosexual *ascesis*"—where man might create a "new body" and a new sexuality free of the taboos and impulses of today's murderous world and "infinitely more sensitive to pleasure."

To thinkers like my friend, the liberal Catholic theologian, Foucault's project can be nothing less than the ultimate blasphemy—to wrench Christ from his cross, pierce his nipples with hot spears, anoint him with burning wax, and resurrect him through the exploded *jouissance* of transcendent sensuality. But that is precisely Foucault's great gift to modern secular man: He shows us that, absent a recognizable god, we retain a transcendent force of animal eros.

His titillated detractors, most of them good liberals and social

democrats, point to his death from AIDS as somehow proof of his amoral, Nietzschean philosophy. Yet they fail to examine his quest closely enough. Foucault never saw death as his enemy. Rather, he argued that the failure to find beauty in death reveals an inability to discover beauty in our lives. In his language, death is the ultimate "limit experience." If our death is the paramount moment of our life, the answer to the enigmas posed in our previous "limit experiences" through which we hope to intimate what life is, ought we not cast it as beautifully as possible? The contemplation of a beautiful death meant the embrace of the idea of suicide. "I am a partisan of a true cultural struggle [to] teach people that there is not a piece of conduct more beautiful, or, consequently, more worthy of careful thought than suicide," he wrote. "One should work on one's suicide throughout one's life."

Suicide, to most Americans, denotes a failure of will, a failure to order our emotions, our desperations. Foucault's message is the reverse. Since we all contemplate our death as the omega point of our lives, the consummation of our flesh, the release from our torturous aggressions, it behooves us to create a theater of our end. For him, for many of us, that is the theater of the darkened labyrinth in the sex club, that alley of aroused, anonymous, animal flesh, a collective production of what the French call *le petit mort*, the little death. To my Catholic friend, I would say the pursuit of the inside of the little death is the pursuit of the bigger life. While it may be anonymous and it may use sex as sacrament, it is hardly inhuman. To be fully human requires that we find a theater in life that permits us to shed the safe and watchful security of personal order, even of personal intimacy, in favor of "cruel" transcendence.

As for AIDS, Michel Foucault took the epidemic very seriously, not as something to be sought out (as the pop psychologists would have it), but as a collective experience he would use to press further into the enigmas of death and eros. Those who see Foucault's final trips to the baths and the S/M parlors as desperately suicidal miss the essence of the man (and they misunderstand the disease since it takes years, not months, to move from infection to illness). It is much wiser to see those journeys, as he did, as working studies for the remaking of the body and the spirit. Or, as Foucault remarked to one of his Berkeley colleagues, "To die for the love of boys: What could be more beautiful?" □

BOOK REVIEW

Mothers and Children First

Nelson Lichtenstein

Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States by Theda Skocpol. Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1993, 693 pp.

During the 1992 presidential campaign, Bill Clinton made the inadequacy of America's welfare state a centerpiece of his attack on the Reagan-Bush economic record. In contrast to virtually all other advanced industrial nations, the United States has no universal health care system and no federally mandated program of worker retraining. Meanwhile, U.S. assistance to the jobless, whether in the form of "welfare" or unemployment compensation, remains far less than that offered citizens in other industrial nations. Clinton's willingness to weigh American social policies on such a comparative scale proved refreshingly cosmopolitan, perhaps even a signal to the shrunken liberal-labor wing of the Democratic Party that the Arkansas governor was a stealth social democrat.

Of course, President Clinton is not the first U.S. policy maker who wants this country to catch up to Western Europe. The failure of the nation to offer a modern system of social provision has been at the center of political and social debate for almost a century. Historians and social scientists have long been puzzled by the fact that political elites in such class-bound societies as Edwardian Britain and Bismarck's Germany instituted old-age pensions, health insurance and unemployment insurance more than a generation earlier than did their counterparts in democratic America. "Why is there no socialism in the United States?" asked the German academic Werner Sombart in 1906. His query is still relevant, although today scholars and policy makers are less interested in the absence of an actual socialist movement than with the political and institutional obstacles American society puts in the path of social reforms that might eliminate poverty and ameliorate class tensions.

In *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers,* Harvard sociologist Theda Skocpol answers Sombart in a perceptive but highly controversial fashion. According to Skocpol, the United States has not lagged behind Europe at all, for, by the early twentieth century, the American polity was well on its way toward embracing a distinctively "maternalist" system of social provision. Reformers and feminists came close to forging a female-dominated welfare

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apparatus in which advocacy groups such as the Consumer's League and public agencies such as the Children's Bureau implemented regulations and benefits targeted at mothers, working women, and children. Their achievement has been largely obscured by our envious fixation with the European, "paternalist" model, in which male bureaucrats administer regulations and social insurance for breadwinning industrial workers. In the United States, however, the maternalist idea has seemed less alien and won far more political support than its social democratic rival.

Indeed, the Clinton brand of social reform seems particularly "maternalist." Marian Wright Edelman's Children's Defense Fund (CDF) is clearly making its weight felt in the corridors of power; both Hillary Rodham Clinton and Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala are veteran CDF activists. Such traditional social democratic reforms as labor law revision and a higher minimum wage stand far down on the administration's agenda, but the Family and Medical Leave Act passed Congress in a flash. And President Clinton has proposed big funding increases for such CDF priorities as infant immunization, the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) nutrition program, and Headstart. To Clinton and Clinton the prototypical American worker may well be the hard-pressed working woman who juggles career, checkbook, and children in a barely successful effort to keep her modern family intact.

To understand why a maternalist road to the welfare state has proven so attractive, Skocpol takes pains to explain how the path toward a European-style alternative was blocked. In the late nineteenth century the United States did have the embryo of a paternalist welfare state: the Civil War pension system, which served as a crude but effective counterpart to the old-age insurance schemes of Germany, Britain, and New Zealand. Skocpol labels it a "precocious spending regime" on which the federal government spent more than 40 percent of its income, a higher proportion than Social Security takes today. For Northern white males of a certain generation, the government pension check was a virtual entitlement.

Benefits were generous, but eligibility depended upon a set of political, moral, and geographical criteria, not unlike that of welfare recipients today. Thus, scandal and corruption were inherent in the system; just as some contemporary pundits find it easy to denounce teenage mothers and inner-city "welfare queens," so too did their nineteenth-century counterparts regularly uncover the cheats and schemers of that era's pension system.

The politicized character of Civil War pensions—a key element in the "patronage democracy" of that era—soured a generation of reformers on the idea that the state could effectively deliver social services. Unlike Germany or Britain, the United States had no elite corps of bureaucrats standing above the ebb and flow of partisan politics. Thus, even the most advanced Progressives, whose outlook and social standing were not dissimilar to that of such architects of the British welfare state as Sidney Webb and William Beveridge, hesitated to advance a universal system of old-age pensions.

The trade union road toward a European-style welfare state has been no less problematic. Today, liberals and leftists assume that whatever their other limitations, organized labor has been in the forefront of this struggle. After all, the AFL-CIO began pushing for some kind of universal health insurance even before Harry Truman first took on the American Medical Association in 1948. But labor has actually been a comparatively recent recruit to this struggle. During the era of Eugene Debs and Samuel Gompers, unions left and right had little confidence in a more expansive and powerful American state. Labor had no problem with patronage democracy, but its leaders feared the power of the courts, then a bulwark of *laissez-faire* economics and Lockean constitutionalism.

Skocpol brilliantly explores how America's uniquely independent and reactionary judiciary not only curbed social experimentation, but also shaped the ideological character of the reform impulse itself. In Great Britain, the Trade Union Congress, the Liberal Party, and the progressive wing of the civil service worked together to lay the basis for the great social reforms of 1908 and 1909, including old-age pensions, minimum wage boards, and unemployment insurance. But, in the United States, the judiciary made the legislative road to social provision virtually impassible, at least for male breadwinners. The AFL did endorse old-age insurance: the unions proposed an "Old Age Home Guard of the United States Army," modeled directly on an enlarged version of the Civil War pension system. But the AFL's disastrous experience with the judiciary turned its leadership into right-wing syndicalists, obsessed with freeing unions from judicial repression. Declared Cigarmakers' Union leader Adolph Strasser in 1894, "You can't pass an eight hour day without changing the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of every state in the Union...I am opposed to wasting our time declaring for legislation being enacted for a time...after we are all dead." To which socialist Henry Lloyd replied, "I sometimes wish I had been born in any other country than the United States. I am sick and tired of listening to lawyers and laboring men like Mr. Strasser declaring everything we ask unconstitutional."

But if the judiciary's veto closed the door on the paternalist welfare state, it kept it open a crack for the maternalist alternative. The law presupposed that capitalists and workers were equal citizens, but if women were dependent, or in any event different, then reformers might well find an opening in the judicial armor through which their forces could march. And it is precisely this path that Skocpol seeks to chart.

If the United States had neither an efficient civil service nor a powerful labor movement, it did nurture one of the largest and most assertive "woman movements" in the world. Thanks to the Women's Christian Temperance Union, the General Federation of Women's Clubs, and the predominantly female settlement house movement, the idea of a "separate sphere" for women had become a template upon which to measure and enhance social change. The "separate spheres" ideology denied women formal civic equality, but it did legitimize an activist role for them and for the state, based on what Skocpol calls "solidarity between privileged and less privileged women and honor for values of caring and nurturance." Thus Skocpol quotes clubwoman Rheta Childe Dorr on "municipal housekeeping": Once "men and women divide the work of governing and administering, each according to his special capacities and natural abilities, [the city] will be like a great, well-ordered comfortable, sanitary household. Everything will be as

clean as in a good home. Everyone, as in a family, will have enough to eat, clothes to wear, and a good bed to sleep on."

Skocpol celebrates this maternalist impulse, defining and distorting it as the social force that could substitute on American shores for that social democratic project having great impact on the other side of the Atlantic. Just as European workers conflated a movement for trade union power, social welfare, and a broader suffrage, so too did Progressive-era women combine a quest for greater political participation with a "state-building" strategy that established female-oriented commissions, bureaus, and regulatory laws to aid working mothers and their children. Among the monuments to this project were the Brandeis brief of 1908 (which persuaded the Supreme Court of the constitutionality of maximum hours laws for women), mother's pension schemes passed by more than forty states, and the remarkable Sheppard-Towner Act of 1921, which briefly united conservative clubwomen and left-wing feminists behind a federal program that operated nearly 3,000 prenatal clinics, thus challenging private physicians' monopoly on the delivery of health care services to women and babies.

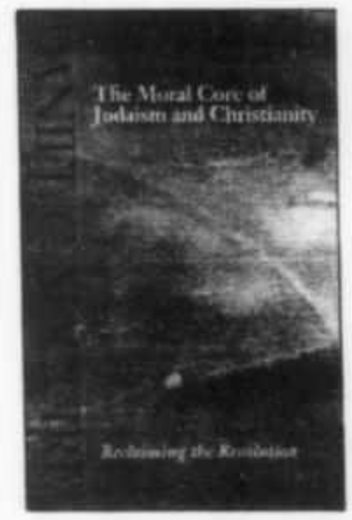
Drawing from this pre-New Deal experience, Skocpol offers the wish that "hopeful scenarios for contemporary American social politics will become more likely... if feminists can learn to recapitulate in contemporary ways some of the best ideas and methods once used by the proponents of maternalist social policies."

But she will be disappointed, and it's a good thing too. The problem with her maternalist schema is both historical and political. In the first instance, other students of the welfare state such as Gwendolyn Mink and Linda Gordon reject Skocpol's vision of an ideologically self-conscious, cross-class maternalist movement. Like the trade unions and the administrative elite, the Progressive-era women's movement was shot through with class and ethnic prejudice; virtuous motherhood (drawn from a Protestant, white, middle-class model) often became an excuse for condescending judgments. At the same time, the nineteenth-century doctrine of dual spheres was in radical decay among such welfare state pioneers as Florence Kelley, Jane Addams, and Grace Abbott, who understood the nature of women's particular role in society, but whose outlook was solidly social democratic. While deploying maternalist rhetoric, they also aimed for a system of universal citizenship and class-wide social provision. One suspects that Hillary Rodham Clinton and Marian Wright Edelman have adopted much the same strategy. Certainly, it doesn't fool the "family values" Right, who recognize their liberal and feminist agenda.

Moreover, Skocpol's focus deflects attention from the more pervasive structures of American politics that have stymied the realization of a welfare state. The absence of a broad and powerful working-class movement on these shores may be a familiar tale, but it nevertheless remains a debilitating one. If, for example, one probes voting patterns at the height of the Progressive era, it is clear that the working-class franchise may well have been wider in Western Europe than the United States, where huge sections of the immigrant population and virtually all African Americans were without a vote. And the powerful congressional delegation that represented the interests of the Southern oligarchy waged a successful, half-century campaign, both at home and throughout the nation, to keep wages low, workers insecure, and racial and gender hierarchies intact.

Americans need a comprehensive welfare state, but a reborn maternalism will not deliver one by itself. It is hardly coincidental that such perspectives as Skocpol's have arisen during those decades—the 1920s, the 1950s, and the 1980s—when a hostile state and the absence of left-leaning social movements have thwarted egalitarian reform. When broader vistas opened up—in the 1930s and 1960s—American reformers again began fighting for a broad and inclusive citizenship, both social and political. This alternative—neither paternalist nor maternalist—generates an "entitlement" based not upon one's poverty or gender or occupation, but upon a minimum level of social provision due all by virtue of their residence within the same nation. Only such broadly inclusive programs avoid the invidious resentments and command the political support essential to their long-term legitimacy. These are lessons Bill, Hillary, and Donna should remember. □

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Sikkum

A Bookshelf of Jewish Books and Books Jews Should Read

The Store That Mama Built by Robert Lehrman, Macmillan, 1992. Always on the lookout for good family literature with a Jewish theme, we have recently discovered a real winner. This book can be read by eight to fourteen-year-olds and read aloud by adults to children five and up. It is a fictionalized account of the author's aunt's life story: a Russian Jewish immigrant widow and her five children trying to launch a grocery store in Central Pennsylvania. Should Mama sell non-Kosher meat? Should they seek out customers in the poor neighborhood the kids in school call "Niggertown"? Should they stay open after sundown on Friday? Should they extend credit when they themselves are deeply in debt? The book engages both children and adults and generates many important dicussions about Judaism, ethical values, and acculturation.

Nancy Fuchs-Kreimer

The Telling by E.M. Broner, Harper, 1993. In direct yet elegant prose, writer, academic, and ceremonialist Ester Broner, author of the transcendentally liturgical novel, *A Weave of Women*, chronicles the fifteen years of feminist seders that she and her "seder sisters"—Bella Abzug, Letty Cottin Pogrebin, and Gloria Steinem, among others—have created in order to reclaim their history as Jewish women.

Kathrine Kurs

Understanding Essays on the Hermeneutic Of Max Kadushin by Peter Ochs, University of South Florida Studies in the History of Judaism, Scholar's Press, 1990. A collection of essays on Max Kadushin's pioneering efforts to uncover the logic underlying our inherited tradition of early rabbinic commentaries on the Bible. Of particular interest to me was Ochs's own attempt to do postmodern Jewish thought, informed by the philosophic tradition of C.S. Peirce. Ochs gave me a new appreciation of the value of what Kadushin was trying to do in books like *Organic Thinking*, *The Rabbinic Mind,* and his commentary on the *Mekilta*. Ochs's book and essay are must reading for anyone serious about using midrash as a source for modern Jewish thought.

Norbert Samuelson

The Selected Poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke, edited and translated by Stephen Mitchell, Random House, 1982. In these late years of the twentieth century—murderous, angry, and frightening—the work of the German poet Rainer Maria Rilke (1875-1926) becomes a window through which we can rediscover our own Jewish religious experiences, if we permit his generous gifts to awaken anew our hesitating hearts. Rilke is a stunning source of luminous visions and healing intuitions. His words sing surprising truths often new to our souls, truths that embrace us with the irresistible energy of love and of redemptive understanding.

Eduardo Rauch

People of the Body: Jews and Judaism from an Embodied Perspective, edited by Howard Eilberg-Schwartz, SUNY, 1992. A collection of fourteen essays that focus on attitudes toward and representations of the body in Jewish culture and literary texts, this ground-breaking volume serves to remind us, as Eilberg-Schwartz maintains, that "Jews do not simply read and write books." As people with bodies, Jews have long worried about how to understand and manage their bodies. Illuminating the experiences of men and women in a variety of communities throughout Jewish history, these essays explore ways in which bodily concerns have helped shape past and present conceptions of Judaism and the Jewish people.

Ellen M. Umansky

Land, Labor, and the Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict by Gershon Shafir, Cambridge University Press, 1989. Basing his analysis of Israel's founding fathers and mothers on diaries, correspondence, minutes of meetings, and other primary source material, Shafir shows that once they were in Palestine, virtually all of what the early immigrants believed about Zionism proved useless. Their foremost problem was how to exclude Arabs from a labor market which, if open to Arabs, would deprive Jews of a "European" standard of living. The norms of Hebrew labor, national ownership of land, collective/cooperative agriculture, and militant confrontation with the Arab "enemy" did not emerge in conformity with ideological blueprints, but rather were chosen (after other failed alternatives) because they enshrined or rationalized this exclusion.

Ian Lustick

Silence, Simplicity, and Solitude: A Guide for Spiritual Retreat by David A. Cooper, Bell Tower, 1992. This book, with chapters on the tradition of spiritual retreat within Judaism as well as Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, and Islam, can be useful for those interested in beginning a meditative practice and for those already engaged in one. The second half of the book can help answer a common question regarding meditation and/or spiritual retreat: "Am I doing it right?" For those who believe they are, this book provides the tools for further insight and enrichment.

Mark Sirinsky

Arguing with God by Anson Laytner, Jason Aronson Inc., 1990. Laytner's subject is the long Jewish heritage of "laments and dirges, complaints and arguments, all protesting God's mistreatment of His people." In separate chapters he examines arguments with God in the Bible, the rabbinic use of these biblical arguments in the Midrash, argument motifs in the standard liturgy, *piyyutim* of protest, and the arguing with God motif in Hasidic tales, folk songs, and modern Yiddish and Hebrew poetry. The chapter on the *piyyutim* (poems written for insertion in the liturgy) is the core of the book. These *piyyutim* asked, after the massacres during the Crusades, and after pogroms, Why are You silent?, where are Your miracles now? Laytner argues that the insertion of old or new *piyyutim* of protest into the the existing liturgical structure is consistent with tradition and is needed to give some balance to the praise and thanksgiving that still dominates fifty years after the Holocaust.

David Curzan

Insecurity and Islam

George Perkovich

On many levels, the bombing of the World Trade Center hit home. It localized what had been a somewhat distant American fear and loathing of "Islam." Radical and violent Islamic militants are here. Sheik Omar Abdel Rahman, with his blind white eyes televised daily into living rooms across America, is a made-to-order symbol of this new American nightmare. The fearsome specter of Islam grows.

Of course, the "Islamic Threat" loomed large in American consciousness even before the February bombing. For several years now—since the Soviet Union dissolved and the Cold War ended—pundits, defense industrialists, elected officials, and other opinion-makers have portrayed a rising green tide of Islamic fundamentalism which could threaten to turn Western cities red with terrorist-wrought blood, overthrow American-friendly governments in oil-rich Arab states, unleash weapons of mass destruction on Israel, and ultimately threaten the United States with nuclear attack. The proposition is summed up in the recent headline, "Rising Islam May Overwhelm the West."

Some observers have noted that the Islamic Threat may be replacing the Cold War Soviet Threat in the American mind. Indeed, the similarities between the Cold War and the emerging U.S. (and international) posture toward "Islam" and certain Islamic states deserve systematic analysis. However, it seems accurate to say that the perception of the Islamic Threat is inflated and distorted. It is a curious product of next-to-zero knowledge multiplied by a large integer of fear. This is not to dismiss the despicable and counterproductive violence of extremists, nor to ignore the hostility of leaders and citizens in certain nations populated by Muslims. Rather, the point is simply that American society appears inclined to see and act toward "the world of Islam" in a dangerously unrealistic and uncomprehending way—to commit the time-held fallacy of "fighting the last war," in this case reprising the Cold War in circumstances where the model does not apply.

Unlike communism in the 1940s and 1950s, Islam appears to hold little potential to seduce and subvert American workers, children, filmmakers, State Department officials, or others on whom the American way of life depends. Islam as a worldview and Muslims as a group hold no power to undermine Western values or institutions. Islamic armies pose no match for American forces, as the Gulf War demonstrated. And Islam is not monolithic, as Iran's backing of Armenia in the conflict with Azerbaijan indicates as one example among many. The external military threats to Israeli security today are no greater, and perhaps are less significant, than those of the 1960s and 1970s, due to peace with Egypt, negotiations with a Syria which is cutting its military spending, and a weakened Iraq. In any case, concern for Israel does not explain the widespread American fear of the Islamic Threat.

Perhaps terrorism accounts for the movement of Islam into the place once held by communism in the American mind. Yet, the likelihood of being killed in America by an automatic-weapon-wielding American kook is much greater than the chance that an Islamic terrorist will cause your death. In reality, the national security establishment and its massive budgets and arsenals can offer lamentably little protection against the small and diffuse terrorist threat. And if Islamic movements threaten to overturn unrepresentative but American-friendly governments in oil-rich territories, an American strategy motivated by Cold War-like hostility and military preparation will be ineffective. The most potent threat is political; it cannot be defeated by arms and will only be inflamed by a high-profile "us" versus "them" American posture. Again, this is not to ignore the real conflicts of interest between the U.S. and Islamicist forces in Iran, Egypt, or the Occupied Territories, but rather to put the threat in perspective.

American and international fixation on the Islamic Threat is profoundly ironic. For "Islam," and the silent majority of "practicing" Muslims, have a great deal to fear from the West. Islam as a way of life—a code of traditional values and practices, family relations, social and sexual mores, a habit of dress, a way of understanding humankind's place in nature—is under siege by Western influence. Radio and television waves lead the assault. Madonna symbolizes it. At least this is the view that Akbar Ahmed offers in his witty, trenchant, and judicious *Postmodernism and Islam* (Routledge, 1992). Ahmed, a renowned Pakistani-born Cambridge University scholar, explains that Islam has clung to its traditions unlike other cultures, in part because it rejected the epistemology, skepticism, and flexibility of the Greeks. As a result of these influences, Judeo-Christian cultures embraced scientific rationalism and the modernist belief that progress entails adaptations of religious belief and practice. The tensions of hanging onto Islamic culture against the countervailing pull of media-delivered Western culture has made traditional Muslims feel threatened. In Ahmed's view, contemporary Islamic revivalists are responding both to this tradition of scientific

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rationality and rapid change, and to its successor, postmodernism, with its rejection of the possibility of any unifying worldview. The "centre of their crisis today," Ahmed writes, "[is] how to preserve timeless moral precepts in a rapidly changing world." (p. 58)

We in the West have spent so much time since the 1979 Iranian revolution fearing Islamic fundamentalists that we have not stopped to consider what the world looks like from their mosques or universities. The problems are not merely cultural—Madonna versus Mohammed. "Most of the Muslim nations are ruled by authoritarian figures in or out of uniform, often employing an Islamic idiom to support their rule. Corruption is endemic, and law and order constantly threatens to collapse. The picture for Muslim education is also bleak," Ahmed writes. (p. 117) Expectations of common citizens have gone unmet, particularly in the case of the educated young urban population who now comprise the heart of Islamic protest movements in Egypt and turbulent Asian states, and who have been excluded from political participation and upward mobility.

Weak and besieged by the anti-values of the Western world, many Muslims seek protection and redefinition in their "ethnic or Islamic identity (not necessarily the same thing and at times opposed to each other) as against an imported foreign or Western one," according to Ahmed. "The catalyst may well have been provided by the political and military disasters after the first flush of independence from the colonial powers." (p. 32)

Indeed, post-independence failures lie at the core of Muslim insecurity, foremost among them the inability to significantly improve standards of living. Technological and technocratic development have lagged badly. Many factors explain this underdevelopment. But one profound cause is often underestimated, perhaps because analysts and commentators tend not to explore the philosophy and history of science and technology. That is, neither science nor technologies and the capacity to produce and manage them are created in cultural vacuums. As Jacques Ellul, Langdon Winner, Michel Foucault, and others have demonstrated, societies that achieve high levels of material development through science and technology end up being organized at least in part by technology's dictates. Technology speeds the pace of work and life; it enshrines the values of innovation, constant change, and merciless efficiency. Education becomes secularized under the influence of science—and churches are separated from states, whose mission becomes in large part the perpetuation of society's technical apparatus. Even moderately technological societies witness a sundering of family webs, as labor becomes specialized and migrates to where the technology is, often away from the home or village or neighborhood. In short, highly technological societies experience a weakening of religion and traditional culture as the dominant guides and sources of meaning in the daily lives of individuals and the larger society. Science and technology are profoundly secularizing forces—except where they become their own "religion," which is precisely what traditionalists fear.

Can Islamic societies develop technologically and still maintain their traditions—achieve indigenous mastery over science and technology, not just import it but create it? Can a society reject scientific rationalism—repositing authority in open-ended inquiry into the causes and effects of human and non-human phenomena—and still achieve a high level of education, industrialization, medical care, and transportation? If the answer is negative, what are the prospects for economic development in Islamic societies that choose to reject the culture of science and technology which has been identified with the West?

Although *Postmodernism and Islam* touches frequently on the tension between Islam and science and technology, Ahmed never says whether this tension is inherent in Islam. He does not locate current Islamic scientific and technical weaknesses in history or politics as, for example, the Pakistani physicist, Pervez Hoodbhoy does in his laudable book, *Islam and Science*. Hoodbhoy observes:

> About 700 years ago, Islamic civilization almost completely lost the will and ability to do science.... Many Muslims acknowledge and express profound regret at this fact. Indeed, this is the major preoccupation of the modernist faction in Islam.

Hoodbhoy's more political analysis suggests that while many features of Islam run counter to science, this is not inevitable. Leaders choose whether to invest in education and science, and it is in their power to let their most skilled scientific and technical minds operate freely. It is not necessarily irrational or backward to reject the speed, loneliness, and sterility of technological society; but if national leaders want to have the spoils of science and technology while maintaining the deep traditions of Islam, they will have to demonstrate much greater understanding of the forces with which they are dealing.

The outcome should matter greatly to "us"; our future as well as theirs is implicated. Underdevelopment is in fact among the causes of Islamic militancy and hostility to the West. Militant Islamicists in turn may undermine the security of countries ranging across the Fertile Crescent of Asia. If traditional Islam cannot assimilate the ways of technology, Islamicist-led societies and the international community may be sucked into a downward spiral of hostility toward the West. Seeing the risk, Ahmed concludes that "the logic of the argument demands that the West uses its power—which includes the media—to assist in solving the long-festering problems that plague Muslim society." The power the West wields best is science and technology, including technocratic management of government. It remains unclear whether the Islamic tradition—and more to the current political point, the voices of Islamic traditionalism— will allow or make adequate use of this inherently secular assistance.

Ahmed does not attempt to predict the future. His purpose is more general and palliative: to urge tolerance in the Islamic world toward the West and to open Western minds to the virtues of Islam. On the latter point, Ahmed writes that Islam "can provide a corrective and a check to the materialism that characterizes much of contemporary civilization, offering instead compassion, piety and a sense of humility [and] security and stability in family life, in marriage and in care for the aged." (pp. 117-18) The notion that Islam could offer something of value may seem inconceivable to many in the West, especially given the usurpation of Islam's image by the small number of terrorists and extremists carrying the banner of fundamentalism. But contemplating this possibility turns out to be an interesting exercise in self- and national examination. □

Roth Symposium

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a disease for which there is no cure but which you must fight anew each day. This to the goyim. And the parallel disease for Jews seems, in this novel at least, to be Zionism, a belief that the Jews can form a normal nation, that they can find a home of their own and be safe in it. Instead, Jews must embrace Diasporism, the ideology that urges Ashkenazim to return to the Europe Hitler hoped to leave *Judenrein*, a Europe now eager to welcome them back and thus undo twentieth-century history.

But how are we to respond to Diasporism? On the one hand it is the philosophy of a drugged, dying madman and is as insane as he is. Or it is a perversion perpetrated by Israel's Mossad which creates "PR" in order to entice Philip Roth into espionage activities that are suppressed in the novel. Or not. On the other hand, as we are reminded, Zionism and "transfer" (the plan urging Israel to deport its Palestinian population) were both deemed mad when first proposed. Presented as an ideology whose motives are the preservation of Jewish lives, Jewish culture and well-being, and the enrichment of a tragically depleted Europe, Diasporism is meant to be redemptive. Even if it were not the product of insanity or delusion, readers tempted to take it seriously would find all sorts of obvious problems with it, not least of which is the question of where it leaves that part of Israel's population who do not come from Europe and thus cannot redeem that past.

Although unacknowledged by any of the novel's characters, what readers may find most disturbing about Diasporism is the extent to which it posits Israel as perfectly *negotiable*. It's not territory or Palestinian rights that must be negotiated; nor is it the fate or identity of Palestinians, anti-Semites, Demjanjuk, Jews, or even Philip Roth that is in question. Instead, we encounter Israel as a forty-year mistake, a short blip in the trajectory of Jewish history, a curiosity but not a living, complicated nation-state.

Roth reminds us throughout this book that he doesn't mean it, that the views of his characters are not necessarily his own, that the imagination must be given free rein, that his is, after all, a fictional account. And, in the end, that even such formulaic disclaimers are false. "*Im tirtzu, ein zo agada*" [If you will it, it is not a legend, or fiction], the familiar Zionist song proclaims, echoing Theodor Herzl. Surprisingly, Roth may now be singing that tune too. □

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Letty

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serve recognition for it. Furthermore, after all is said and done, this film is *about* Black soldiers in the Second World War. Jews, for all our centrality in our own history, are the film's supporting cast.

Other rages may be motivating the more rabid critics (like those who call in to Bob Grant or Rush Limbaugh). White racists and anti-Semites enjoy nothing so much as watching Jews and Blacks fight it out in public. Some Jews are still punishing Blacks for Louis Farrakhan. Others—and not just Jews—are out to weaken Jesse Jackson and David Dinkins, whose support for the film is being recast as guilt-by-association now that there is an accuracy scandal. The people who held the mayor responsible for the Crown Heights riot and the Lemrick Nelson verdict, who call him an anti-Semite at public hearings, or circulate "WANTED" posters bearing his picture will jump at anything to hurt Dinkins.

Defending the mayor or Jesse Jackson would be easier had they shown more willingness to struggle publicly and unequivocally against anti-Semitism in their own community. Unfair accusations of anti-Semitism against the mayor led him to appear on television and in many New York synagogues making passionate statements defending his record. But what he did not do was to use the Crown Heights struggle to raise consciousness among African Americans about why they should be engaged in education against anti-Semitism in the Black community. Black political leaders should not leave it to scholars such as Cornel West and Henry Louis Gates, Jr. to condemn hate speech before it festers into hate crimes, or to confront Black anti-Semitism as forcefully as they confront white racism. Jews who suspected that Dinkins and Jackson were using "Liberators" as a substitute for really confronting Black anti-Semitism may have sympathized with attempts to torpedo the film.

Finally, some critics of "Liberators" may be using the cover of cultural disputation to join the general backlash against anticipated Black economic progress under the Clinton administration. Salvos that sound respectable in intellectual discourse may mask a pre-emptive effort to cut Blacks down to size before the pendulum swings in their direction.

Whether my speculations are right or not, anyone concerned about the political manipulation of intra-group rivalry ought to be alert to the hidden agendas at the heart of the "Liberators" controversy. The film presents us with a problem of ethical slippage and well-intentioned embellishment, not a hoax. Truth must be defended, yes; but so must the liberal vision of Black advancement and the struggle for Black-Jewish harmony. □

capable of genuine love for others.

I cannot bring myself to love my Palestinian Arab enemy who cheers as missiles crash on Tel Aviv, or who wants to set up yet another Arab state in the Middle East in Israel, the historic and only homeland of my people. Instead of putting her life at risk, for her fears are not irrational, I suggest that she dialogue with the many various groups of Jews that live in Israel. She could start by visiting the family of Simcha Levy, z'l, 45, who was knifed and axed to death by three Palestinian Arab men dressed as women. She believed in Arab-Jewish coexistence and many Arab families made their livings through her. Next, she could visit the Yeshiva of my friend Yehoshua Friedberg, z'l, who was kidnapped and murdered by Palestinian Arabs. She could speak to his friends and see what motivated a twenty four-year-old Jew to leave the good life in Montreal and come to Israel to learn Torah and to volunteer in the IDF in an elite combat unit. Finally, Ms. Orange must realize that Israel is in a perpetual state of war, not a cold war, but a bloody, hot war, and we as Jews cannot "turn the other cheek" and love our enemies. However, we can learn Torah and begin to learn to love all Jews and our Jewish heritage as we are obligated. Wouldn't that be a better start?

Yehezkel Goldfrad
Philadelphia, Pa.

To the Editor:

If ever there was proof needed that Jews are no smarter than anyone else, we need only look at the mess that Israelis continue to make in their dealings with the Palestinians. Apparently blinded by their own delusional picture of reality, they daily shreik outrage at the newest armed assaults against them, never once connecting this with the daily shootings of Palestinians by the occupation troops, never once asking themselves if the expulsion of 415 Palestinians might have anything to do with the escalated level of terror they face, never once imagining that Rabin's refusal to consider allowing Palestinians to elect a national assembly that could chart their own direction might make all the talk about "getting back to negotiations" seem less connected to reality and more another public relations stunt. Yet the Israeli press never talks about this, never gives us a hint as to how we might understand what is happening from the Palestinian perspective. So I want to thank TIKKUN for printing Wendy Orange's very exciting account of the Palestinians and their way of viewing recent developments. I still hate it when a random Palestinian enters a schoolyard and starts to stab random Israeli children, and I will never justify violence on either side. But Wendy Orange's article gave me, for the first time, an understanding of how violence on one side is related to violence on the other.

Yoram Ben Ami
Washington, D.C.

To the Editor:

Here is a statement concerning the State of Israel and the Law of Return that Palestinian organizations consider discriminatory:

> The idea of what constitutes "Jewishness" is bogus. Consider the wooing by the Israeli government of so-called "ethnic Jews," those foreigners, mostly East Europeans, who can prove some vestige of Jewish ancestry. Last year alone, 220,000 of them came to Israel, attracted by an array of taxpayer-paid benefits. These immigrants often speak no Hebrew and, other than having perhaps a Jewish grandmother in the family tree, are no closer to Jewish culture than their "un-Jewish" counterparts. The terminology beautifully discloses this prejudice: If you are an "ethnic Jew" you "go up" to Israel where you belong (aliya) but if you are "non-Jewish" and just want to immigrate, you come from "out" there (hagira).

This passage is a close paraphrase of a few lines from Elliot Neaman's "The Escalation of Terror in Germany," (TIKKUN, Jan/Feb 1993) with "Jewish" and "Israel" substituting for "German" and "Germany," and the Hebrew words bracketed above used in lieu of their German equivalents. It is all too easy to single out only old villains—the Germans—whose fault takes no effort to prove. Immigration to the State of Israel is based on a similar conceptual framework, and no amount of whitewashing can deny this, at least not to TIKKUN readers. You may wish to visualize the following two episodes. One is the arrival of thousands of Russian citizens in Ben Gurion Airport, showered with affection and material rewards. The other, a long line-up of Palestinian Arabs at an Israeli ministry trying to arrange entry permits for their relatives who left the country for a few years abroad. These relatives may have grown up in Jerusalem and speak not only Arabic, but often a lot more Hebrew than the ingathering Jewish exiles. None of this is of much help: the Law of Return excludes these "un-Jews" even if these were born and educated in the country.

It is surprising indeed that the usual moral sensitivity of TIKKUN editors has failed them this time and let a blatant expression of double standards and hypocrisy slip onto its pages.

Yakov M. Rabkin
Monreal, Quebec

Editor Responds:

Even if Rabkin were right that the Neaman article reflected double standards and hypocrisy on this point, we would not have rejected the rest of Neaman's analysis, nor would we have required him to change this point. We frequently print articles with which we strongly disagree. That's our idea of how to model a community sharply divergent from the conformism of the organized Jewish community, by the American Right, or at times even by an increasingly "P.C." oriented American Left.

As to the substantive point, we have always defended the double-standard implicit in affirmative action. And the Law of Return is affirmative action on the international level. We would argue the same case for Bosnian refugees applying for citizenship in a future Bosnian state, but not for Serbian citizens of that same state. In short, it matters whether or not you were the oppressed or the oppressors when claiming a right of return. Communities that have historically faced oppression have historical claims that others do not have. Similarly, it would not be racist for a Palestinian state to give special rights of return to Palestinian refugees and not to Jews who wanted to live on the West Bank. Sometimes these distinctions may require complex and controversial historical judgments, but even if one might occasionally err in making such judgments, doing so is not inherently "hypocrisy."

CORRECTIONS FOR MARCH/APRIL '93:
Stewart Burns's name was spelled incorrectly in the table of contents. In "Malcolm X and the Revival of Black Nationalism," the date of Malcolm's death was incorrectly given as 1964. It was 1965.

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down technology may in turn unleash potentially explosive political forces in American society.

A More Down-to-Earth Vision

While President Clinton has stressed the administration's high-tech vision of the future, he has failed, thus far, to entertain policies and programs for rebuilding communities and promoting jobs and technologies that sustain rather than drain the environment. Millions of low-technology jobs could be produced, for example, in the fields of housing, public transportation, and energy conservation over the next decade if the administration set its sights on the pressing needs of those Americans who will be forever locked out of the new global electronic web.

Nothing could be more important to developing a sustainable society and re-establishing a sense of meaning in our communities than providing adequate housing for the millions of Americans who live in substandard conditions, or are homeless. Yet, the United States spends less on direct housing that any other industrial nation. Housing starts fell to a postwar low of 1.01 million in 1991, less than half the number of homes built twenty years earlier. Only 509,000 homes were sold in the entire country in 1991, again the lowest figure in more than two decades. Meanwhile, the number of homeless has swelled to more than 1.2 million. Millions of others live doubled or tripled up in overcrowded apartments.

The President should establish a national goal of renovating and building enough affordable low- and middle-income housing to accommodate those who are currently unable to afford a decent home for their families. Millions of urban dwellings currently lie in disrepair. Many have been boarded up, or abandoned altogether. In the past decade, more than 2,000 grassroots organizations, including tenant associations, unions, community development corporations, and churches have come together on the local level to renovate and develop nearly 320,000 housing units, creating more than 90,000 permanent jobs. These "housing partnerships," working in tandem with the federal, state, and local governments, and leveraged with sufficient public assistance and private investment capital, could rebuild neighborhoods across America.

In 1992, less than $1.5 billion was allocated to the federal government's HOME program to provide assistance to state, county, and local governments to rehabilitate substandard housing, revitalize inner-city neighborhoods, and provide financial help for low- and moderate-income families to purchase homes. These small efforts need to be greatly expanded if we are to reverse the process of social disintegration and begin restoring neighborhood, and re-establishing communities. A national commitment to housing commensurate in scale to the Veterans Administration housing program that helped build and finance houses for returning GIs and their families after World War II would stimulate the economy, revive the depressed construction industry, and provide millions of long-term jobs for American workers.

More than any other single factor, the modes and patterns of transportation a nation creates are critical to its social arrangements and economic relationships. In 1956, President Dwight Eisenhower signed into law the Interstate Highway Act, providing for the construction of a network of superhighways, stretching approximately 41,000 miles and connecting every region of the country into a single, unified grid. It was to become the most expensive and ambitious public works project in world history. Its construction paved the way for the "highway culture," a wholesale change in living arrangements, work patterns, and lifestyles that transformed the American cultural landscape. The highway culture helped facilitate the flight of the middle class from the cities to the suburbs, as well as the exodus of tens of thousands of businesses, leaving the inner cities empty shells, populated by poor, unemployed, largely minority populations.

The highway culture helped spawn a massive increase in the number of automobiles in use, as millions of new suburban dwellers came to rely almost exclusively on their car to shuttle between home, work, shopping, and school. Today, there are more than 140 million automobiles on the road. This single mode of transportation has had a more destructive impact on the Earth's environment and biosphere than any other technology in history. American automobile emissions account for 33 percent of all carbon dioxide and 45 percent of all nitrous oxide released into the sky, making the car the largest contributor to global warming. The automobile is also responsible for 60 percent of the total air pollution in the United States.

The Clinton administration ought to embrace a new vision of transportation for the twenty-first century, based on moving beyond the gas-powered automobile and toward solar and electric cars, public transportation, and a fundamental change in community development and regional planning that will encourage human-scale interaction and rely more on alternative forms of transportation such as bicycling and walking.

The administration should also be turning its attention to the ecological infrastructure. A study by the

American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy concludes that various energy conservation programs could generate up to 1.1 million net new jobs by the year 2010, and within just forty years cut our oil needs in half, dramatically reduce our nation's foreign debt, save consumers more than $2 trillion, and cut carbon dioxide emissions by more than 70 percent. In addition to energy conservation, the shift to more benign, renewable sources of energy also generates jobs. According to The Worldwatch Institute, generating 1,000 gigawatt hours of electricity per year requires 248 workers on a solar thermal facility and 542 workers in a wind farm, in contrast to only 116 workers in a coal processing plant and 100 workers in a nuclear facility.

What Kind of Health Care?

Nowhere is the clash between the high-tech and sustainable development visions more pronounced than in the differing approaches to health care reform. Clinton is making health care reform the centerpiece of his presidency. Yet he has chosen to reform a treatment-oriented system of health care rather than reshape the paradigm of health from one of curing disease to one of promoting wellness.

For the better part of the twentieth century, American medicine has been devoted almost exclusively to treating illness rather than preserving health. For this reason, virtually all of the discussions on health reform have centered around the question of who's going to pay for treatment with little or no discussion of the underlying philosophy of health care that is largely to blame for the crisis at hand. As long as our health care philosophy is based on sickness rather than wellness, the best-laid health care reform plans of the current administration will fail. The country will be unable to stem the rising tide of health care costs associated with an aging population dependent on an ever more costly high-technology, sickness-centered health care system. In 1992, the average American family spent 14 percent of its income on health care. It is estimated that by the year 2000, family expenditures on health care could exceed 16 percent of total family income, and the nation will spend more than $1.4 trillion a year or an amount equal to 16.4 percent of that year's entire GNP.

More than half of the increased costs associated with the nation's escalating health-care bill arise from high-technology innovations in medical services, including automated laboratory equipment, sophisticated diagnostic equipment such as scanners and magnetic resonance imaging, and the high price of genetically engineered pharmaceutical products. A recent Congressional Budget Office report warned that unless health care costs are dramatically slowed, the federal deficit will rise above $500 billion in the next century.

Only a fundamental restructuring of health care and a radical change in the habits of the American people can reverse the present course and save the taxpayer and the economy from the potentially devastating consequences of a health care system that is careening out of control.

Americans are overweight, over-stressed, exercising less, smoking too many cigarettes, drinking too much alcohol, and being exposed to increasingly dangerous levels of pollution. According to a recent Harris survey, American health habits have deteriorated since the 1980s. To begin with, we are the fattest people on earth. Over 66 percent of all American adults weigh more than the recommended weight—up from 58 percent in 1983. The American public has continued to gain weight in every decade of this century since World War I with no end in sight. In the 1980s, for example, men and women were, on the average, five pounds heavier than men and women of the same age and height a decade earlier.

American eating habits have also worsened over the past decade. The Harris survey found that Americans are eating more fatty and salty foods than ever before and eating less vegetables and foods rich in fiber. The nation's consumers appear to be on a junk food binge. Equally troubling, the number of smokers and drinkers has declined only slightly—24 percent of Americans still smoke, and 60 percent still drink.

The relationship between overweight, poor nutrition, and personal health is buttressed by decades of studies. According to a report of the Surgeon General of the United States, of the 2.1 million deaths in the United States in 1987, 1.5 million were related to dietary factors, including consumption of saturated fats and cholesterol.

Our dietary habits in the United States and other industrialized nations have consequences far beyond personal and public health, affecting the well-being of the planet, our fellow creatures, and hundreds of millions of other human beings around the world.

For example, consider the issue of cattle and other livestock production in developing countries to serve the animal-based diets of Northern consumers living atop the world's food chain. The continued overgrazing of animals contributes, in large part, to the destruction of the world's rain forests and grasslands, and the irreversible loss of countless plant and animal species. At the same time, more than one-third of all the grain currently produced on the planet is feed grain, much of it grown in the developing world and shipped to Europe and Japan where it is fed to livestock who are, in turn, fed to the world's wealthiest consumers.

Americans, Western Europeans, and increasingly the Japanese, are eating ever-higher up on the world's food chain, gorging on grain-fed beef and other meats and dy-

ing of diseases of affluence—heart attacks, cancer, and strokes—while hundreds of millions of our fellow human beings are increasingly denied access to arable land to grow food grains for their families, leaving them impoverished, malnourished, and vulnerable to the diseases of poverty.

By choosing to reduce the amount of saturated animal fat in their diet, and by voluntarily moving down the food chain, eating more vegetables, grains, and legumes, Americans and other consumers in the wealthy nations take personal responsibility for their own health, the health of the planet, and that of their fellow beings.

Americans also experience increased stress. In 1983, 28 percent of the public said they felt stress nearly every day. By 1992, the number of Americans experiencing serious stress increased to 33 percent. Work-related stress has now reached epidemic proportions. People are also sleeping less. Nearly one-third of those surveyed by Harris say they got six hours of sleep or less a night, up from 25 percent of the population a decade earlier. Much of the increased levels of stress are associated with the accelerated pace of production and flow of information in highly automated, high-tech work environments. The International Labor Organization, a United Nations agency, estimates that job stress cost U.S. employers more than $200 billion a year in lower productivity, absenteeism, rising insurance costs, and other medical expenses.

The American people also exercise less and lead an ever more passive, sedentary life-style. According to Harris, only 33 percent of the population engage in strenuous exercise at least three days a week compared to 37 percent of the population ten years earlier.

Like diet and stress, the increasingly sedentary lifestyle of Americans is, in part, a function of the high technology world we've created with the ever-increasing substitution of machine surrogates for bodily activity and interaction. Ironically, while most Americans are using their minds and bodies less, they still experience increased mental duress, fatigue, and even burnout as the ever-quickening pace of economic activity at the workplace and in the community overloads individual attention spans. Although many high-tech advocates are incredulous over the mere suggestion of reducing or even eliminating the use of some of the many machine substitutes that have come to dominate our lives, a growing number of critics question the value of a culture in which human beings have less opportunity to participate actively in their own lives and make meaningful contributions to the world.

Finally, Americans are exposed to high levels of toxic pollution in the air they breathe and in the water and food they consume, seriously compromising their long-term health and well-being.

The implications of these findings are enormous and far-reaching. The critical link between diet, lifestyle, environment, and health ought to send a clear signal to both the professionals and pundits that something is very wrong in our nation's current approach to health. Unfortunately, these connections have yet to be adequately addressed by the President's health care advisers or even raised in the reams of articles and editorials that have appeared over the past several months of debate over the future of health care reform.

President Clinton and Hillary Rodham Clinton have focused national attention on health care reform for the first time in our history. The question is whether they will take advantage of the moment, seize the initiative, and help redirect the health vision of the nation. If they fail to do so, the health of the American public will continue to deteriorate and medical costs will continue to rise to pay for an ever-increasing sickness-prone population.

While the Clinton health team has raised the issue of preventive health, thus far its proposals have centered more on passive measures such as childhood vaccinations, pre-natal screening, and yearly examinations. A far more bold and expansive program is needed—one that can begin to enlist the American people directly in a campaign to radically reorient the eating habits and behavior of the entire population.

In the past decade, several highly successful preventive health pilot programs have been established around the country. For example, the city of Birmingham, Alabama, with the help of a $1.5 million grant from the National Institutes of Health, carried out one of the most innovative and effective wellness programs ever attempted at the workplace. Government workers were provided a range of intervention programs, including seminars and workshops on weight loss, nutritional education, cholesterol/triglyceride reduction, blood pressure control, stress management, smoking cessation, and physical fitness. City employees attended all sessions on city time during work hours. In addition, employees were encouraged to take part in more comprehensive after-work wellness programs at city expense.

The results of the program were impressive. Many of the participants lost weight, changed eating habits, stopped smoking and drinking, and began a rigorous exercise program for the first time in their adult lives. The improved health of the participants saved the city more than $11 million in medical costs by the end of the fifth year of the wellness program. The city estimated that it saved nearly $10 in health costs for every dollar invested in the wellness program.

Similar wellness programs should be built into the

Clinton health care reforms and made a mandatory and indispensable part of the employer obligation in the delivery of health care services. Wellness programs should also be mandated for every grade school, junior high, high school, and college in the country receiving federal, state, and local financial assistance.

For the millions of unemployed Americans and for those receiving welfare assistance, basic wellness programs should be established in neighborhoods and communities throughout the country to dispense information. Neighborhood residents could be trained to provide vital information on wellness to local residents. The President should also consider requiring mandatory participation in workshops and seminars on nutrition as a condition for receiving universal health care coverage.

The federal government should also consider extending additional financial assistance to upgrade municipal parks and recreational and sporting facilities in the inner cities and provide expanded physical fitness programs for those millions of Americans who will not be reached by employer-sponsored programs.

In addition, the President can set the tone for a shift in the health vision of the country from one of sickness to one of wellness by calling on Congress to levy heavy "sin taxes" on cigarettes, alcohol, and foods containing excessive levels of saturated fats and to end federal subsidies to tobacco growers and beef producers. He should press for a ban on all forms of advertising and promotion for cigarettes and alcohol and set aside several billion dollars a year to promote wellness in the mass media. The federal school lunch program should also reduce the number of high-fat, animal-based products on the menu and increase the number of high-fiber vegetables served to children.

Finally, the administration should encourage the transition of American agriculture away from petrochemical farming, with its heavy reliance on fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides, and toward ecologically sound farming practices that protect both the environment and public health.

New breakthroughs in high technology medicine are not without merit, nor should they be rejected wholesale. The issue is one of perspective and priorities. The first order of business should be to promote wellness. High-technology treatment ought to be viewed as a supplement, not a substitute.

Although many of these suggestions may seem unorthodox and even radical, they are essential to wean our society away from a health care system based on treating sickness. Only by promoting a holistic approach to health that draws on the critical connections between diet, nutrition, lifestyle, and environment can we hope to restore and safeguard the health of the nation.

President Clinton has made the issue of personal responsibility a centerpiece of his vision of a renewed America. By enlisting the American people directly in a campaign to help preserve their own health and the health of the environment, the President can establish an important precedent, early in his administration, for other important initiatives in the years ahead.

Millennium Politics

With the third millennium fast approaching, the American people are faced with two divergent paths into the coming era. Conventional wisdom and mainstream institutions have coalesced behind a high-tech, market-oriented vision of the future. A still small but growing opposition has taken up the cause of the politics of meaning and sustainable development.

President Clinton appears, at this writing, to have a foot in each philosophical camp. Ron Brown, the Secretary of Commerce, argues for increased government assistance to global corporations to hasten the development of new technologies that will inevitably increase the flow of economic activity, accelerate the use of planetary resources, and further deplete the world's biological and mineral reserves. At the same time, the Secretary of the Interior, Bruce Babbitt, talks of protecting biodiversity, restoring whole ecosystems, and preserving public lands against unwarranted commercial exploitation at the hands of private business interests.

Nowhere are the contradictions between the high-technology and the sustainable development visions more apparent then in the policies advocated by Vice President Gore. He warns of the global environmental crisis and calls for a new ecological ethic rooted in renewed partnership with nature and a restoration of the global commons. With equal fervor, however, he champions the commercial enclosure of the Earth's genetic commons and the patenting and exploitation of genetically engineered micro-organisms, plants, and animals.

Such worldview schizophrenia is not unique to the present administration. It pervades contemporary American discourse and sends a clear signal of our conflicting values. We want our corporations to dominate the global marketplace, but we also want to conserve the global resources upon which the corporations depend for their survival and profit. We want to increase our consumer comfort; at the same time, we would like to lead a more examined spiritual life unencumbered by too many material needs and desires. We are obsessed with efficiency and covet any new technology that saves time and accelerates the flow of economic activity. On the other hand, we experience increasing stress at the workplace and in our personal lives and lament the fast pace of society that is undermining civility and making us less patient as a people. We are in a desperate search to re-establish a sense of community and de-

velop intimate bonds of relationship with each other and nature and yet continue to recede into an enclosed electronic world of E-Mail, virtual reality, and simulations, further removing ourselves from bodily contact in real time and space with our fellow human beings.

Conflicting aims, values, and expectations have long been part of the American experience. Today, however, the stakes for our society and world are far larger, requiring a more coherent and unified vision on the part of the American people. The very survival of our species and the planet now hangs in the balance. The decisions we make in the coming decade will lock the world community into a course of action well into the next millennium.

It was Thomas Paine, the great American revolutionary, who said, "Every generation must be free to remake the world anew." Our President has asked us to join him in that journey. The question is, which world will we choose? □

ANTI-SEMITISM

(Continued from p. 48)

Statistics do not interpret themselves. Almost always, the raw data which surveys produce are subject to varying interpretations. It is important to understand the answers given by respondents in the light of other information available to the Jewish community. Jewish communal leaders, in fact, have extensive experience in dealing with non-Jews in dialogue and coalitional settings. Integrating insights from this experience with the findings of surveys would maximize the resources available to us in understanding non-Jewish attitudes. Yet we often fail to take what we have learned in other settings into account in interpreting the complex data that polling produces.

What would experience in intergroup relations bring to the academic study of anti-Semitism? The following insights are based on a decade and a half of involvement with the leadership of America's African-American, Latino, Asian, and white ethnic groups. They bear directly on the meaning of the survey findings.

The first thing one notices in dealing as a Jewish professional with non-Jews is a widespread ignorance and curiosity about things Jewish. Even when non-Jews have interacted fairly extensively with Jews, they have rarely undertaken serious study of Jewish culture and beliefs. What they "know" about Jews consists of an amalgam of personal experience, cultural lore—some of it favorable, some containing negative stereotypes—and the findings of social scientific research they are likely to have come across in their academic training or their professional careers. They are much more knowledgeable than the average American about Jews, but they have done little systematic research or thinking on the subject.

These ethnic and racial leaders generally want to develop and maintain excellent relations with Jews, both because of their personal commitment to pluralism and because their communities' interests gain from having Jews as allies. African Americans desire Jewish alliances on civil rights, Latinos on immigration, Asians on initiatives countering ethnic violence, and white ethnics on social stereotyping. For these personal and practical reasons, intergroup meetings usually go quite well.

But not always. Anyone with extensive experience in Jewish-ethnic meetings in recent years would have heard Blacks accuse Jews of a concerted attack for reasons of group power against Black mayors in major cities; Latinos and Asians charge that Jews are capturing an unfair slice of federal money dedicated to immigrant resettlement; and white ethnics declare that Jews support trials against Nazi-era war criminals out of hostility to East European nations and communities derived from them in the United States. In these accusations focused on power, money, and historical crimes, it is not difficult to discern echoes of classic anti-Semitic canards. Yet the people leveling these charges are often the same individuals working to create coalitions and personal friendships with Jews.

If we are honest, we will have to admit that similar contradictory feelings infuse our relationships as Jewish professionals with non-Jews. We too are products of a larger society that has influenced us with its stereotypes of other racial and ethnic groups. We try and often succeed in overcoming these prejudices in our dealings with others, but in difficult moments, we find ourselves reverting back to old assumptions, including racist ones. Societal racial and ethnic attitudes are never abandoned completely, hard as we may try. They remain with us for as long as we live; we need to struggle with them constantly. This truth about our prejudices applies as much to Jews as it does to others.

Because of the mixed attitudes all groups and the individuals who comprise them hold toward others, anyone who has ever participated intensively and honestly in ethnic dialogue or coalitions has said or felt negative things toward others in the room that have required later reexamination and correction. This happens not because we are bad people or unskilled group diplomats, but because we all hold conflicting opinions about others that will inevitably surface in our mutual encounters. Dialogue and coalitional skill consist not in eliminating these feelings, which is impossible, but in recognizing them and building a realistic relationship that can enhance positive and contain negative attitudes.

It is out of this experience that the recent polls on anti-Semitism must be understood. Trying to isolate one segment of the population as most dangerous to Jews,

or stressing fears of Jewish power to the exclusion of other attitudes paints a false picture of the great majority of non-Jews and their actual feelings toward Jews. Those of us with extensive experience working with the groups on which the surveys focus would place greatest emphasis on the findings that demonstrate the contradictory attitudes that most non-Jews—as well as most Jews—hold. Most people interviewed for the surveys, as most people in real life, embrace a complex mixture of opinions on Jews, which Jewish communal strategy, if it is to be effective, must take into account.

Still, questions remain about the validity of applying practical intergroup relations experience to understanding survey data. Our contacts in these encounters are necessarily with the elite of non-Jewish communities. These leaders are unusual in having extensive contact with Jews and a stake in positive relations. How do we know that interaction with them can teach us anything about the masses of their group whom we have not met in dialogue sessions?

That, of course, is exactly why we need surveys. Polling data allow us to explore attitudes of people too numerous and socially inaccessible to meet personally. But these data too are subject to limitations. Because we have never met respondents or interacted with them extensively, we can never be sure that our interpretations of their answers are accurate. We then need to maximize our resources in interpreting several types of data we understand imperfectly by marshalling all our experience and skills in exploring non-Jewish attitudes. We must draw on our personal encounters and on statistical findings and ask what each can teach about the other. We will be reinforced in our conclusions if, as in the present case, the data from surveys and from personal experience lead to the same conclusion, that non-Jews hold mixed positive and negative attitudes toward Jews. In this way, dealing with the elite adds experiential insight whose validity is confirmed by the survey data and helps to further understand them.

An important factor influencing our understanding of surveys on anti-Semitism is pressure from the Jewish community. There exists an unspoken, but nonetheless real, expectation that any study of attitudes toward Jews will produce evidence of hostility. An agency reporting little or no finding of anti-Semitism will face accusations of failure to protect Jewish interests, so survey analysts stress the most alarming of their findings, even if doing so presents a simplified and inaccurate portrait of the polling results. To understand current conceptions of anti-Semitism in America, it is vital to explore the source of this pressure for negativity.

American Jews are in all ways but one the most sophisticated who ever lived. They are the most highly educated segment of the population, the most occupationally successful, and among the most generous patrons of the arts. To all of these pursuits they bring impressive knowledge and breadth. In fact, there is only one facet of their lives in which they allow themselves a large measure of ignorance: Judaism and their Jewishness.

It is an anomalous but regular occurrence that an American Jew can reach the top of his or her profession, serve on a symphony or museum board, and appreciate modern music or literature but know little or no Hebrew, be unfamiliar with home or synagogue ritual, and lack the competence to cite major events or even broad periods of Jewish history. The Jewish self remains undeveloped in contrast to a rich and intensely studied secular life.

To the degree that Jewish identity is important, this discrepancy is intolerable. No person used to sophistication in all areas of life wants superficiality in one segment, especially one that defines something as basic as a religious and ethnic identity. Pressure builds to acquire a meaningful Judaism even in the face of ignorance of things Jewish.

The one thing Jews believe they can understand on a deep level even in the absence of Jewish skills is anti-Semitism. Hatred is an emotion known to all. If a good deal of Jewish history can be said to revolve around opposition to Jews, then Jewish identity becomes accessible even to those who know little else about it. A stress on anti-Semitism allows American Jews to feel as conversant with Judaism as they do with other aspects of their lives.

This dynamic can be seen most clearly in American Jews' interest in the Holocaust. The past decade has seen the proliferation of Holocaust literature, the explosion of Holocaust courses on campuses, and the expenditure of millions of dollars on Holocaust memorials. In one sense, this intense interest is fully justified. The Holocaust is a crucial event in Jewish and general history that needs full documentation and commemoration. But it is impossible even to begin to approach the Holocaust intelligently without a knowledge of centuries of Jewish history, of which many current commemorators are quite innocent. The harsh but true judgment must be that they are using the Holocaust as a quick way to acquire a profound relationship to Judaism, since tragedy and hatred are concepts they can understand without immersion in Jewish texts and observances.

The same analysis applies to many American Jews' attitudes toward anti-Semitism. They desire a deep connection to Judaism; positing and combatting hatred toward Jews is a way to acquire a powerful link without taking the more arduous path of study. Understanding and fighting anti-Semitism becomes for these individuals a way to find meaning in Judaism.

This negative quest for Jewish meaning explains the

pressure to find bad news in surveys of non-Jewish attitudes toward Jews. If it were found that the general population had positive or even mixed views of Jews, a major mode of identification with the Jewish people would collapse. Only findings that show hostility and therefore reason to identify Jewishly can continue to provide the rationale many American Jews require to maintain a meaningful relationship to their religious and ethnic identity.

Thus, what would logically be good news—that most Americans admire Jews and want to accept them—becomes instead a threat to Jewish continuity. Any agency producing good news is deemed "soft" on the matter of protecting Jews. Only surveys showing a "most anti-Semitic" segment of the population or demonstrating fears of Jewish power will be viewed as credible by many in the Jewish community. A complex reading of the data, although it might provide a more accurate interpretation, fails to meet a basic need. So communal leaders tend to distort the findings out of a superficial view of their community's needs, at the expense of relationships we need to thrive in the larger society and to further genuine Jewish interests.

Much more than scholarly interest is at stake in these debates over the proper understanding of anti-Semitism in America. How effectively we protect Jewish interests depends on how we understand the challenges we now face.

To reduce the options now before us to their simplest terms, the current strategies of our leading agencies assume that 20 percent of non-Jews are 100 percent anti-Semitic. We would be much more effective if we acted instead on the premise that 100 percent of the population is 20 percent anti-Semitic.

This difference, far from being merely semantic, has profound implications. The way we presently organize Jewish opposition to anti-Semitism assumes that there exists a sizable hard core of Jew-haters who must be implacably countered by every legal, political, research, public relations, and policy means at our disposal. We spend significant communal resources maintaining extensive files on known and suspected anti-Semites, exposing them to law-enforcement authorities and public scrutiny and assuring that they receive no support from mainstream communal or political leaders. This latter task has taken on great importance in recent years. Many prominent non-Jewish figures are likely to have their initial or even primary contact with the Jewish community in the form of an inquiry into whether they support a particular controversial figure or ideology associated with their group and are willing to dissociate publicly from him, her, or it.

There can be no doubt that this vigilance is one aspect of a necessary strategy to protect Jewish interests in America. Recent surveys disclose that there exists a hard core of Jew-haters at the margins of our society who must be monitored and countered. Moreover, we dare not let their ideology spread unchallenged. Any expression of anti-Semitism, whether intentionally stated or not, must be brought to public consciousness and repudiated to make the crucial point that this way of thinking is simply unacceptable in our democracy.

Indeed, an assumption of 20 percent anti-Semitism in everyone leads to an even greater degree of vigilance than would be warranted by other interpretations of the surveys. A statement that we need worry only about a fifth of the public who rate as "most anti-Semitic," or that two-fifths are "not anti-Semitic" can lead to a false security about danger to Jews. If, in fact, almost all Americans harbor mixed feelings, then negative attitudes can be stirred up in almost anyone by a particular combination of circumstances. A severe economic downturn, festering social unrest, or a viciously skilled demagogue can unleash latent feelings of hatred even in people whom surveys tell us are now safe. Assuming that 100 percent of the population is 20 percent anti-Semitic reminds us to keep up our guard generally and not to target our defense efforts too narrowly.

The problem lies not with this strategy of vigilance but with its current status as the primary means we adopt to protect Jewish interests. The real lesson of the recent surveys is that our present defensive efforts are necessary but woefully insufficient.

If we assume that most non-Jews hold mixed positive and negative images of Jews, then a rational strategy would lie in enhancing the positive as well as in countering the negative. We have an excellent opportunity to reinforce the goodwill that exists in other communities toward Jews by working closely with others on matters of mutual concern. Yet, because of our defensiveness, we do not pursue these activities with anything like the enthusiasm we reserve for identifying and combatting anti-Semitic bigots. We pay a heavy price for this neglect of positive initiatives.

Two specific examples underscore the importance of this choice of focus. The first occurred during the transition period between the Bush and Clinton administrations. Heading Clinton's educational transition team was Dr. Johnnetta Cole, the highly respected president of Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia. The African-American community sees Cole as one of its most successful and beloved figures. In December, a report appeared in the Jewish newspaper The *Forward* that Cole had past connections to organizations with pro-Castro and pro-Palestinian ideologies. The

clear implication of the article was that Cole was a foe of Jewish interests. Some Jewish leaders rushed to call her presence in the Clinton camp inappropriate.

In truth, Johnnetta Cole has had an extensive and positive connection to the Jewish community. She instituted a Jewish studies program at Spelman because of her belief in its importance for African-American students. Moreover, she has been a leading participant in Atlanta's Black-Jewish dialogues and coalitions. Since she had a well-deserved reputation as one of the most enthusiastic supporters of Black relations with other groups, including Jews, the accusations against her outraged African-American leaders. That they were put forward in a Jewish publication and endorsed by some prominent Jewish spokesmen made Black leaders openly wonder how much they actually gain at this point from continuing relations with Jews. Only quick testimony on Cole's record in Atlanta from the local Jewish community prevented serious discord between the two groups.

A second example focuses on Polish American-Jewish relations. I was the first coordinator of the National Polish-American Jewish-American Task Force, founded in 1980, and I have served as a member ever since. Frequently, when I mention this work to Jewish friends and colleagues, their reaction ranges from amusement to outrage. How can you expect to make any progress, they ask, with a population so inherently anti-Semitic? The very idea of fruitful relations with Polish Americans strikes them as impossible and foolish.

In over a decade of this work, I have indeed witnessed anti-Semitism. But I have also seen a genuine effort to come to terms with the Holocaust, to better understand Jews and Judaism, and to explore matters of common concern. At present, the Polish-American community is one of our few reliable allies in campaigns to retain interest and funding in international affairs and to counter growing isolationism in America. They have provided consistent support for maintaining admissions of Eastern European refugees, including Russian Jews. They have encouraged the growth of ties between Poland and Israel. We would lose much if we allowed our unthinking hostility to overwhelm a relationship that clearly furthers our interests.

The Cole incident and reactions to Polish-Jewish ties exemplify the dangers of a strategy that begins with the assumption that 20 percent of the population is 100 percent anti-Semitic. At the first sign of a problem, we behave as if the offending person or group is a hopeless enemy and must therefore be vigorously attacked and defeated. We never stop to consider that individuals or communities that are problematic in some ways may in fact be very helpful in others. In rejecting this possibility, we alienate potential allies and make the realization of Jewish interests more difficult.

The opposite strategy is both more realistic and more in our interest. If we assume that 100 percent of the population is 20 percent anti-Semitic, we will not be surprised to find hostility in many places. We must work to root out this attitude in individuals and groups that harbor it. But we must also realize that much goodwill toward Jews that we ought to appreciate and nurture exists in almost all people. Given her record of intensive Jewish ties, it is absurd to relegate Johnnetta Cole to the status of an enemy. In view of our need for a strong American foreign policy, it makes no sense to turn away from Polish-American support. We must oppose anti-Semitism wherever it poses a real threat, but to posit it where it does not exist smears those falsely accused and prevents the realization of important Jewish goals.

What would an accurate assessment of anti-Semitism mean for the Jewish communal agenda? First, it would require uncompromising opposition to the considerable anti-Semitism that surveys demonstrate still exists today. But it would also demand that we appeal to the large amount of good feeling toward Jews that the studies also reveal. We have an excellent opportunity to further our interests by enhancing our friendships but we can only do so if we move from a posture primarily of defense to one of outreach.

Operationally, this task entails revitalizing that part of the Jewish agenda that reaches out positively to other groups. It means stress on policies of combatting poverty, protecting immigrants, defending civil rights, fighting bigotry of all kinds, and rebuilding urban areas. Not too long ago, the Jewish community was a leader in these causes. We have since slipped not only from a position of leadership but even from one of consistent involvement. We need to recommit to this agenda not because it is a "nice" thing to do but because it serves our true interests. By appealing to positive feelings of non-Jewish communities that we know from research predominate in their attitudes toward Jews, we will truly be countering anti-Semitism.

This strategy will produce additional benefits for American Jewry. It will encourage the genuine expression of Jewish values in the pursuit of a Jewish policy agenda so that identification with Jewish causes will no longer be so dependent on finding hatred in others. In reaching out to others, we will also create the conditions for internal revitalization.

Moving in this direction requires a fundamental shift in how we understand the studies we conduct of American public opinion. We need to respond responsibly to bad news. But we also need to learn how to accept good news. □

National Service

(Continued from p. 22)

low, however, that progressive tactics of confrontation and protest are also correct.

The best definition of politics is not confined to the clash of interests. In a deeper sense, it is what Hannah Arendt recognized as the heart of the political enterprise—a search to find appropriate ways of living together. In practicing the art of living together, relationships are just as important as interests. Every mature adult has learned the lesson—in marriage, or the workplace, or friendship—that it is fatally easy to win the argument and lose the relationship.

Professor Derber places the highest value on community and the need to repair the ravages of the past few decades. He sees clearly that the service ethos of programs like City Year helps to heal both those who serve and those who are served. Because he is so thoughtful and generous in spirit, I would urge him to transcend his own rootedness in the sixties and recognize that the decision to make service an act of seeking common ground and helping is the essence of good politics, not a mere prologue.

We need at present to search for the common ground for facing the threats to the whole community: degradation of the environment; brutal global competitiveness; a health care system out of control; the erosion of the middle class; mediocre educational performance; a deterioration of civil society. The young people of the nineties seem to understand this. Why can't the now-mature generation of the sixties learn to let go of their own prejudices, when not letting go defeats the very goals they care most about?

Charles Derber responds to Daniel Yankelovich

Yankelovich suggests that a communitarian politics must move beyond "confrontation" politics characteristic of the 1960s. A militant politics of polarized interests, he suggests, is what has gotten us into our current fix; he indicts the "protest-driven cutting edge" of the sixties as precisely what "gave rise to the radical individualism of the eighties." But the Reagan-Bush era was the legacy, quite obviously, not of the civil rights or anti-Vietnam war movements, but of our long national romance with the mythology of rugged individualism and the wealthy elites and corporate power that Yankelovich now says our young people in City Year need not study or confront.

A communitarian politics has to understand the systemic aspects of our emerging global society—capital flight, plant shut-downs, the new labor market of disposable workers, to name only a few—that underpin the breakdown of community. City Year kids need to know something about why Boston has lost 50,000 jobs in the last decade if they are to help Boston neighborhoods get back on their feet. In calling for such service education, I am certainly not advocating "political indoctrination" or a cloning of service from the 1960s youth movements, but only opening the door to the economic and political questions about community decline that City Year disregards. Let me be clear: Kids should not be hostage to either the Left or Right, but exposed to the widest range of theoretical frameworks and social analysis. There is the danger of political manipulation, but all education carries this risk; that is not a reasoned argument to abandon education in service or anywhere else.

I am deeply sympathetic to Yankelovich's "search for a common ground for facing the threats to the whole community," and some issues, such as homelessness or global warming, may provide a basis for partial development of the common-ground politics he seeks. And yes, a vital and richly innovative component of the communitarian politics we need is the caring volunteerism and bridging of race and class that City Year beautifully exemplifies. But the forces that are undermining community will not melt away in the warmth of a politically transcendent, cross-class love-fest. Building community requires changing the market institutions that give rise to our increasingly polarized class divisions and the culture that fuels our hyperindividualism. Such change will be militantly resisted and will summon us to sustained political struggle. □

King David Memorial Gardens

I went to help put my father
in the ground, the way you lock
something in a box
but don't throw away the key.
I went to see that he was really
gone, that the cruelty
would turn simple and green,
that he would at last receive
the riches of the rain and be rendered
unharmable and harmless—cut
by a mower blade and not bleed
and not warp the steel.

Enid Shomer

CONVENER-IN-CHIEF

(Continued from p.12)

about who he is and where we are as a nation. Often these signals are conveyed through the media, including the sort of staged appearances we have been taught to dismiss as "media events." Undoubtedly, these events are planned with a political purpose in mind. But that does not make them any less meaningful—indeed, it obliges us to see them as a deliberate form of action. What we need is a political vocabulary for judging the cultural acts a president undertakes by virtue of his peculiar brand of celebrity. Rather than condemn media events for trading in images, we should attend carefully to the image of politics such events convey. Politics as discussion, with the president as a well-informed discusser-in-chief, is an inherently democratic notion, for it invites the participation of the citizenry and closes the psychic distance between the chief executive and the rest of us.

It received little notice at the time, but there was something almost revolutionary about the atmosphere at the first televised "town hall" event in Detroit. Although this was a public appearance by a sitting president, Clinton's entrance was surprisingly modest. The official introduction, "Ladies and Gentlemen, the President of the United States," was not heard. When the president appeared on stage, it was without the fanfare of "Hail to the Chief," without a podium between him and the audience, and without the imposing authority of the Seal of the President of the United States. The spare imagery, the eschewal of pomp and circumstance, fit with the best civil traditions of the American republic. The setting also forced Clinton to generate his own authority through force of argument and manner of address. Visually, the overriding image was of a person, not a president, willing to stand before us and explain himself. Surely, no one in the audience forgot who Clinton was, and some of the questioners did seem a bit awestruck. But the message of the format rang clear: Attend to what I say, not to who I am.

Despite the complaints of the press, it is not true that responding to questions from "ordinary" people is always easier for a president. One of the first questions at the town meeting came from a middle-aged woman who simply said, "I'm concerned about your campaign promise to not raise taxes on the middle class and how you intend to keep that promise." It was actually more difficult for Clinton to respond to her than it would be to spar with a White House reporter. For the woman in Detroit represented the average taxpayer far more effectively than a well-heeled Washington journalist ever could. In order to make his reply convincing, Clinton had to convince this particular person standing before him as the embodiment of the American middle class. Televisually, it was a moment, not of high drama, but of some intensity, for a failure to be genuine would be instantly felt in living rooms across the country. What Clinton said was quite sober: "I wish I could promise you I won't ask you to pay any more." Unable to make that pledge, he gave a short preview of his upcoming State of the Union address. He then advised his questioner: "Listen to what I have to say next week. Decide whether you think it's fair and tell me and your senators whether you think I'm right or wrong."

The tone of this reply fit with the whole character of the event. The presidency came at us on a modest scale, with the president engaged in a very human act of dialogue. "Listen and decide for yourself" is as far from demagoguery as a political leader can get, serving as it does to invite critical awareness and popular participation. Clinton was undoubtedly selling himself, and the event was, in a sense, "staged." But what it staged for us was a vision of politics as public dialogue, a series of signals vastly preferable to what we knew during the Cold War as the "imperial presidency."

If a politician is to become a person again, as Havel advised, then there is something in our new president that understands this imperative. He is a gifted politician, calculating and smooth, but he is also a complicated and—we should recognize—an interesting man. Television, at odd moments, works like an x-ray, and there is some reason to hope that it will reveal in Bill Clinton a welcome sight: the soul of a democrat. □

HEALTH CARE

(Continued from p. 13)

security of universal access to care without effectively controlling costs.

States must be able to institute their own full-fledged state-based single-payer systems. There must be a real commitment to overcome the obstacles to a single-payer state plan in a managed competition environment.

Finally, there must be a commitment to covering everyone as soon as possible.

I have great hopes for the Clinton administration, hopes I know many of us share. Its success will be colored by the success of the health care reform plan we ultimately adopt. I am working with the administration, as are millions of people across the country through their letters of support, to shape a viable health care proposal. We cannot afford to gamble on a plan that runs the risk of failure. □

TAINTED LEGACY

(Continued from p. 40)

disappeared." The heroic imagination conjures up all kinds of knightly exploits that Lewin might have attempted, but these are the stuff of romantic literature or folklore, not life, and though some of us persist in imposing such exploits on the grim reality of the Holocaust, Lewin's humble words remind us how humanly unexceptional most of us are, even in moments of extreme disaster. I think if pressed, Ringelblum might have admitted this too.

"Today is the seventh day since the great calamity that befell me," Lewin writes after a week has passed. "If only I could die and be free of the whole nightmare. But I am still tied to life and it is still difficult for me to take my own life." Whatever we may call his clinging to life, celebrating it as an affirmation of the human spirit, considering the immediate context of his loss, would be to misconstrue his situation and his attitude. Since virtually all surviving victims share a similar kind of loss, it is little wonder that they demur when we ply them with the rhetoric of heroic behavior. They know we do this to shield ourselves, not to praise them.

Lewin's own vista of what lay ahead paid homage to the limitations, not the infinite vitality, of the human spirit.

"The burden on our souls and on our thoughts has become so heavy, oppressive," he wrote, "that it is almost unbearable. I am keenly aware that if our nightmare does not end soon, then many of us, the more sensitive and empathetic natures, will break down. I feel that we are standing on the threshold of the intolerable, between existence and annihilation." One can imagine Adam Czerniakow thinking those very words before he swallowed his poison.

These are not options that endear themselves to the contemporary imagination. But if we are to teach this history faithfully, we must heed without flinching the implications of testimony such as Lewin's, written from within the cauldron. Students of the Holocaust need to know what life from the threshold of the intolerable looks like. Lewin did, and he leaves us the legacy of his vision:

> If we ever live to see the end of this cruel war and are able as free people and citizens to look back on the war-years that we have lived through, then we will surely conclude that the most terrible and unholy, the most destructive aspect for our nervous system and our health was to live day and night in an atmosphere of unending fear and terror for our physical survival, in a continual wavering between life and death—a state where every passing minute brought with it the danger that our hearts would literally burst with fear and dread.

If we ask today, sometimes with a faint if self-righteous air of disapproval, why Jews in the camps or ghettos behaved the way they did, the answer, more often than not, lies locked in a heart bursting with fear or dread. It is an answer beyond judgment—but not beyond compassion.

The language of moral evaluation simply does not serve us in situations like the ones I have been describing. Adina Blady Szwajger, the Warsaw ghetto doctor who poisoned her young patients as the Nazis arrived to seize them, survived the Holocaust and recently wrote a personal account of the episode, leaving us with the challenge of interpretation. She was not driven by her own fear or dread, she says, but by the fear and dread of the children, whose plea that she stay with them "until the end" she resolved to heed. She decided that she could best fulfill this pledge by becoming the agent of that end. She thus seized two large containers of morphine (the "poison" that Edelman spoke of), and calmly narrates how she proceeded:

> I took the morphine upstairs. Dr. Margolis [head of the tuberculosis ward] was there and I told her what I wanted to do. So we took a spoon and went to the infants' room. And just as, during those two years of real work in the hospital, I had bent down over the little beds, so now I poured this last medicine down those tiny mouths. Only Dr. Margolis was with me. And downstairs there was screaming because the Szaulis [units of Lithuanian collaborators] and the Germans were already there, taking the sick from the wards to the cattle trucks.
>
> After that we went in to the older children and told them that this medicine was going to make their pain disappear. They believed us and drank the required amount from the glass. And then I told them to undress, get into bed and sleep. So they lay down and after a few minutes—I don't know how many—but the next time I went into that room, they were asleep. And then I don't know what happened after that.

Dr. Szwajger managed to escape from the ghetto and live with false papers on the Aryan side for two years as a courier for the Jewish Fighting Organization, but

she confesses that those years "still didn't manage to wipe out any of what had happened the day I gave the children morphine." That's why, she concludes, "I was always different from everybody else. And nobody ever understood this. Everybody thought I'd forgotten about everything and didn't care any more." This is a classic example of what I elsewhere call tainted memory, a concept vital for us to understand if we are ever to assess adequately the legacy with which the Holocaust has smitten our consciousness.

Since the children, like all the other Jews in the Warsaw ghetto, were sentenced to death anyway, does it matter how they died? Knowing what they were spared, we are forced by the circumstances to view the killing of the children as an act of mercy, and this itself reminds us of what the Holocaust has done to the systems of value that we cherished before its advent. The more we immerse ourselves in the personal ordeal of victims such as Abraham Lewin, Marek Edelman, and Adina Szwajger, the more we must adapt ourselves to an idea that in its relentless harshness shares the stage with the painful notion of being sentenced to die—and that is the anguish of being sentenced to live. The postmodern replacement of the death sentence that dominated western thought from Freud to Camus is the life sentence.

What can this mean? Because, unlike other crucial episodes in history such as the French or American revolution, the Holocaust is an event without a future—that is, nothing better for mankind grew out of it—memory is sentenced to confront it without any relief from expectation. Death is no longer a destiny to be postponed (or transcended), but a constant companion. During their ordeal in the Warsaw ghetto, inhabitants knew that daily survival was merely a respite, not a triumph. And even after the war, people like Marek Edelman and Adina Szwajger realized that little had changed. You don't remake your life after an event like the destruction of the Warsaw ghetto; you simply are sentenced to live with the memory of the ruin.

One of the laudable rhythms of public or private history is that most human beings eventually seem able to resume their lives after a disaster. Superficially, this is true of Marek Edelman and Adina Szwajger too. But if we read beneath the lines of their testimony, we hear a muted theme, and it is here, in what I have called, following Auschwitz survivor and memoirist Charlotte Delbo, the realm of deep memory, that a darker truth emerges: tainted memory leaves a tainted legacy and a tainted life. For Marek Edelman, recalling details of the Warsaw ghetto uprising leads to a bitter discovery: history is not a chronology of events; rather, "historical order turns out to be nothing more than the order of dying."

Dr. Szwajger turned to pediatrics after the war, specializing in tuberculosis in children, pursuing her belief that one becomes a doctor in order to save life. "But somewhere underneath," she admits, "I thought that I had no right to carry out my profession. After all, one does not start one's work as a doctor by leading people not to life but to death." She knows there were reasons for her behavior during that time, but memory cannot appease such knowledge. She is unable to escape the feeling that "along the way something was not as it should have been." And she concludes her formal narrative with a question that continues to echo in our own helpless minds: "Maybe it was too heavy a burden for the rest of my life?"

Possibly we can relieve that burden by adding some of it to our own consciousness. This requires us to accept and generalize Dr. Szwajger's private conclusion: in the history of the Warsaw ghetto, along the way not only something; but *everything* was not as it should have been. The Germans were ruthless in their plans for total destruction. The Polish underground's supply of arms to the Jewish uprising leaders was scanty and, as it later turned out, inappropriate: they provided pistols, when the Jews needed rifles and machine guns for the street fighting. Meanwhile, the outside world simply ignored pleas for help. The number of Jewish fighters engaged in the uprising was never more than between one and two percent of the remaining ghetto population. The majority of those who outlived the search and the subsequent burning of the ghetto were shipped to Sobibor or Treblinka. Few survived. On the fourth day of the uprising, the commander of the Jewish Fighting Organization, the twenty-three-year-old Mordecai Anielewicz, wrote to his Jewish liaison on the "Aryan" side: "I can't begin to describe the conditions under which the Jews are living. Only an elect few will hold out under them. All the others will perish, sooner or later. Our fate is sealed. In the bunkers where our comrades are hiding, it is not even possible to light a candle at night for lack of air. . . ." Two weeks later, the Germans discovered the command bunker; most of its inhabitants, including Anielewicz, died, either through suicide or the poison gas that the Germans pumped into the bunker after blocking the exits. A handful, including Marek Edelman, managed to make their way out of the ghetto through the sewers to the "Aryan" side. The ghetto itself was doomed.

What was the Warsaw ghetto's role in the history of the Holocaust? We will go on interpreting it for decades and perhaps generations, with the help of the immense number of documents from Jewish, Polish, and German sources. Simply celebrating the exploits of its courageous, if futile, defenders seems to me a hopeless effort at self-delu-

sion. I think Claude Lanzmann understood this as well as anyone, since he chose to end his nine-and-a half-hour cinematic epic on the destruction of European Jewry, *Shoah*, with the voices of two figures who were central to the ghetto's defense. What they say allows Lanzmann to deflate the desires of his viewers, many of whom, when the subject of the Warsaw ghetto was finally raised in the film, must have expected some heroic relief from their long and dismal encounter with unnatural death. But they were to be disappointed. Lanzmann chose to let the ruins of memory prevail. One of his voices [Simha Rotem, known as "Kazik"] prefers facts to heroism:

> I don't think the human tongue can describe the horror we went through in the ghetto. In the streets, if you can call them that, for nothing was left of the streets, we had to step over heaps of corpses. There was no room to get around them. Besides fighting the Germans, we fought hunger, and thirst. We had no contact with the outside world; we were completely isolated, cut off from the world. We were in such a state that we could no longer understand the very meaning of why we went on fighting.

That search for meaning was complicated by Rotem's description of the situation outside the ghetto:

> In Aryan Warsaw, life went on as naturally and normally as before. The cafés operated normally, the restaurants, buses, streetcars, and movies were open. The ghetto was an isolated island amid normal life.

And there it will remain throughout history, unless we allow it to penetrate our consciousness and shatter the rhetorical shield of heroism that protects us. The other voice with which Lanzmann ends his film is that of Itzhak Zuckerman, second-in-command of the Jewish Fighting Organization in the Warsaw ghetto and, along with Edelman, the only surviving member of the leadership. Asked by Lanzmann to comment on his memory of the event, Zuckerman succinctly replies:

> I began drinking after the war. It was very difficult. . . .you asked for my impression. If you could lick my heart, it would poison you.

If normal memory is an internal ordering of images from the past, then tainted memory is an internal disordering of those images, and Zuckerman's uncommon response to his Warsaw ghetto experience reveals the origins of that taint. It is an austere and vexing legacy, but the Holocaust, when truly faced, offers us little else. □

WORK

(Continued from p. 28)

because the society has no way of providing work for tens of millions of MBAs), most people nurture a very detailed story of how they personally screwed up their chances and condemned themselves to meaningless and frustrating work. Part of the reason that many workers don't want to invest in changing their experience in the world of work is that the whole topic of work is too painful for them, bringing up these feelings of self-blaming for having screwed up their own lives. In part, they have come to believe that they don't deserve work that is more fulfilling, because if they did deserve it they would have gotten it. The meritocratic fantasy, re-enforced by American social and religious tradition, permeates virtually every television show, and most public statements by America's political and intellectual leaders. So a first task in generating the psychological preconditions for the effectiveness of OSGs and OSHCs is the training of tens of thousands of people who can lead groups that could defuse inappropriate self-blaming and encourage a healthier sense of responsibility.

Undermining self-blaming need not create a new class of victims with a passive victim-mentality. Our research showed that when inappropriate self-blaming decreased, responsibility and self-generated activity increased. When people are empowered to go beyond the highly individualistic account of reality and to see themselves and their situation as part of a larger social and political world in which the options facing them in part shape who they are and what they can be, they are often in a better position to make realistic choices and to enjoy an increased sense of efficacy. What our OSG groups at the Institute for Labor and Mental Health definitively proved was that undermining self-blaming in this way led to an increased sense of power and efficacy, and a greater ability for workers to use existing social support systems (their families and friends, for example) as buffers to stress. Training people to lead OSG groups and to be activists in the creation of OSHCs must focus on these particular skills if the whole enterprise is to work.

To facilitate this process, POLICY RECOMMENDATION No. 6: The Department of Labor should create a program to train a corps of union personnel, worker representatives, and psychotherapists in the relevant skills to assist developing a new spirit of cooperation, mutual caring, and dedication to work. If done correctly, this training could produce a corps of people in every industry and workplace committed to the new ethos of caring, who would be representatives of a new con-

sciousness that would run counter to the cynicism that might otherwise doom this and all other aspects of Clinton's economic programs.

Underlying a politics of meaning approach to workers is a value commitment to work itself. One of the reasons why the Protestant work ethic has been so scorned in liberal and progressive circles has been our understanding that under contemporary conditions work almost always means alienated work. The person who puts a value on work seems to be either a fool, allowing himself or herself to be exploited by elites of wealth and power while exhausting him- or herself at work, or else a clever manipulator figuring out how to gain advantage at the expense of everyone else. Rather than choosing to be in either position, many working people choose resistance to the work ethic and quite reasonably find ways to avoid or minimize the amount of energy and attention they give to work. Such resistance would be less necessary and less valued in a society in which work was humanized, organized to enhance our human capacities, and seen as a vehicle to building the kind of world we all believe in. In such a world, a new kind of work ethic would emerge.

Yet the total amount of work in anyone's life should probably be reduced. Technological changes in the organization of work will require a reduction in the total amount of time our society needs to devote to the tasks of work. It will soon be possible for every worker to have greater leisure time in which to play, relax, or develop new intellectual or artistic capacities.

But leisure loses its allure if instead of being divided equally among everyone, it is dumped on a small percentage of the population in the form of unemployment. In that case, most workers will do all they can to resist technological change, rightly suspecting that the workplace of the future may have little room for them.

The realities of the world market will require profound changes in the nature of American production, and a continued willingness on the part of American workers to learn new skills and to rationalize the productive process. But workers will resist these changes, and further weaken American productive capacities, if they suspect that the changes are likely to lead to many of them being unemployed.

The solution here is not to sing the praises of leisure, oblivious to the class realities of what leisure will mean to the unemployed. Rather, it is to ensure that the work that is available gets redistributed in such a way that everyone has employment, even though that may mean that each person only works thirty or thirty-five hours a week.

To accomplish that kind of change will take dramatic social planning that is beyond the scope of this article. But in the meantime, to ensure that America can make the changes in work without facing massive resistance from American workers, we need some bottom-line protective measures for workers. Hence, POLICY RECOMMENDATION No. 7: Unemployment insurance must be raised to a level that would make it possible for all employees unable to find work to continue to live at a level of income equal to the amount that they were making at the time of their employment or equal to the median income in the society, whichever is less. Such insurance shall be available for the first half-year as a right, for the next year only if the worker is enrolled in a retraining program and performing satisfactorily in that program, and after that only if the worker is willing to take any job offer that does not require a reduction from previous income levels below the median average income of the society. To ensure that such jobs continue to be available, federal legislation should be passed to prevent any company from moving or closing its plants in a given area without first making a social-environmental impact report on the human consequences. Companies would be fined, up to confiscatory levels, for those moves that negatively effect on the health of the community, unless they can show that they have done everything economically feasible to convert the facility to worker-controlled enterprises producing goods that might sustain future employment for those they previously employed.

Are these reforms unlikely in the present climate, given the costs? Certainly there would be much resistance on the part of some to this plan, yet the security that it proposes to give to American workers would fundamentally change America's economic and political dynamics. Workers would be far more enthusiastic about making all the changes necessary in the economy, and far less likely to torpedo attempts to reduce military spending or to rationalize production, if they knew that they were not going to get hurt in the process. Would a real community do less than provide for those who had been forced into poverty through no fault of their own? Jewish law says that this is what is required, and I believe that it is also required by common sense if the goal really is to create a sense of caring and community.

Measures of this sort can create a new feeling of security and a concrete embodiment of an ethos of community. Taken together, these policy recommendations could create a politics of meaning in the world of work that would greatly strengthen all other attempts by the Clinton administration to foster communitarian values and a commitment to the common good. □

TWENTYSOMETHINGS

(Continued from p. 64)

developed a Jewish component. Jews tried to not make a big deal of their Jewish identity. So finding a Judaism that has a serious social justice component is very hard.

Lerner: One issue twentysomething Jews face is the question of how to relate to Israel. Unlike many Jews in their thirties and forties, by the time we came to political awareness Zionism was already a very problematic issue. We don't have memories of the '67 war or the '73 war. Our memories are more of the Lebanon war and the massacres of Sabra and Shatilla, and then the subsequent struggles during the Intifada—and that has shaped our awareness of Israel. Much of American Jewish relationship to Jewishness in the past few decades has revolved around their relationship to Israel, but for our generation there is more of an effort to break away from that way of defining our Jewishness, to reconcile ourselves to Galut (to the Diaspora) and this gets reflected in the revival of interest in Yiddish as an attempt to come to terms with what is positive in their Galut identity.

A second issue for us is how to deal with our particularism, particularly in light of the universalism that has attracted so many Jews ever since the Emancipation. Since part of what many Jews have been trying to do for the past two hundred years is to emphasize our universalism, Black nationalism and other particularisms offer a special challenge, since they implicitly ask us to celebrate our own particularism. Our generation's task is to navigate through this complicated situation of how to develop a particularism that keeps in-tact our sense of universalism.

Kirshenbaum: The American Jewish community I've been familiar with has acted as a community under seige. My grandparents have great difficulty in understanding why our precarious situation as Jews in the world isn't enough reason to keep our generation within the Jewish fold. What they have difficulty with also is seeing Judaism as a spiritual path for getting meaning. To the extent that we develop a distinctively Jewish spiritual path, we would then be moving closer to a universal concern for spirituality.

Steinberg: Twentysomething Jews either don't connect to Judaism at all, or else they connect to their own branch of Judaism very strongly and don't care about or connect with any of the other Jews. So Jewish particularity doesn't manifest in one community, but in a wide variety of splintered communities.

Lerner: It's important for us to find a way to articulate our particular identity in ways that are positive and yet don't exclude us from participating in the general unfolding of the country. In the Jewish world we need both to incorporate the consciousness of race, class and gender and to avoid the ways that those categories become too limiting. Otherwise, Judaism is going to be left to the Schneersons [Menachem Schneerson, leader of the Lubavitch Hasidim], and most everyone else will walk away. Because of the Intifada, Israel as a sacred cow for American Jews has become increasingly problematic.

Schleifer: That's why SJSJ and TIKKUN could be so important to students. People on campus come to Hillel for a bagel brunch or for a Sukkot party or Purim party, but it doesn't really offer a place for young Jews to look at Judaism in a progressive way. TIKKUN and then our SJSJ conference created a way for people to connect. At the SJSJ conference it was wonderful to see how excited we were to meet each other, to find other twentysomethings who shared similar interests and who were thinking about the same issues, and who still wanted to be Jewish in their lives. It was almost like finding an oasis. Part of what excites people about SJSJ is that we don't focus just on security for the Jewish people. Our generation is one that grew up in a world in which Jews felt safe and secure in America, so it doesn't have the fire under its butt of worrying about our survival—so it needs to be appealed to in a different kind of way.

Lerner: Yigal is right, we need a Judaism that transcends a focus on our collective pain and our fears for future survival that have largely been focused on support for Israel. Our challenge is to develop a spiritually and ethically based connection to Judaism. □

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תיקון

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