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

TIKKUN

WORLDS OF PAIN REVISITED

Working-class families of the '90s

Lillian B. Rubin

A BIMONTHLY JEWISH CRITIQUE OF POLITICS, CULTURE & SOCIETY JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1994 · $6.00



What Happened to Our Hopes?

CLINTON AFTER ONE YEAR

Tom Hayden, Charles Derber, Gar Alperovitz, & Martin Carnoy

Jewish Master Spy
An interview with Markus Wolf

A Father's Frailty
Adelaide Donnelley

Violence & De-Meaning
Michael S. Roth

Sexual Harassment
Carmela Ingwer

Economic Justice
Meir Tamari
Judith Hauptman

Latino Identity
Ilan Stavans

plus... **David Bollier** on Stephen L. Carter's *Culture of Disbelief*
Wendy Orange West Bank Update
Gil Aberg and **Richard Elman** on I.B. Singer
Fiction: Three New Writers
Lawrence L. Langer, Laurence J. Silberstein, and **James E. Young** on the Israeli - Palestinian peace accords

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Leavening

I was bred on rye
with caraway seed: dark rye;
light rye; salami sandwiches rich
with mayonnaise and tomato, sour
pickle docked like green canoes
on my plate.

I was bred on occasional hysterics,
Yiddish idioms; broken
English hurled
against the kitchen walls, echoing
in the lonely farmhouse huddled
under hissing stars.

My grandfather dipped black crusts
in vodka for breakfast, my father,
a boy, given the moist
crumbs. During the War
my mother hid stale bread she
softened in the rusty rain.

Hastening out of Egypt
there was no time to bake.
The leavening was of people;
banded together like well-kneaded grain
they breathed as one rising mound
in the heat.

In There With Those Girls

The chickens didn't give anyone their eggs
the way they gave them to my daddy,
like they loved him - the way
he learned their language. *Ladies,* he'd
call softly in English and Yiddish as soon
as he came through their door. *It's just me.*
Takiteasy, he would say - one long word
he stroked them with. *Takiteasy.*
If I came in with him instead of
staying out by the feed bags - they'd
cackle like crazy like they weren't going to
calm down no matter how nice he asked them.
So I would go out and just listen,
listen to my daddy sing song those mean white birds
with his *tss tss tss* and the *kehtsela*
and *bubala* he reserved for my mother.
He'd roll up his sleeves, all the time making his sweet
sounds and looking them right in the eyes,
sliding his hairy arm under their plump bodies, his
fingers stretched in the straw for
one of their warm eggs. They would never
peck at him or balk. Once in a while
one of them talked back and
my daddy would answer straight off promising,
I won't hurt you, sheina meidela. You don't need
to worry. He never ran out of sounds.
He'd have whole
conversations while he filled his wire baskets
with the white eggs that cooled so quickly.

At dinner or in Uncle Menasha's kitchen
in the Bronx, daddy said he hated the stink of the coops,
the dust, having to worry
about the price of eggs dropping.
He knew the big farms - who did it all
by machine - would sooner or later drive
the small farmers out. *The handwriting*
was on the wall, he would have said had he
known English better. He complained instead:
It's a fa-shtinkenna business. That's all
there is to it. But in there with those girls he was
someone who threw the clock away,
moving among them like he was dancing,
like he was making love,
as if he'd been born on a chicken farm - clucking to them
all the way - soft clucks, staccatos,
whispering that they were so good, so beautiful,
such dedicated mothers.

Ani Tuzman

TIKKUN

A BIMONTHLY JEWISH CRITIQUE OF POLITICS, CULTURE & SOCIETY — VOLUME 9 NUMBER 1

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Letters

MUTUAL RECOGNITION

To the Editor:

I can't tell you how important it is to us Israelis to have a voice like TIKKUN in the midst of a public dialogue that is often skewed toward pessimism and despair about peace. You probably think that the subsequent violence on both sides has made you sound too naive. But the argument made by Michael Lerner—that how we act has some real impact on how the Palestinians will act back toward us—was surely relevant in the past months since the signing of the accord, months in which both Rabin and Arafat spent more time reassuring their own respective communities that they didn't really mean it, that they weren't really giving up too much, than they did trying to explain why this accord was in the real interests of both sides.

In particular, it's incredible to watch the way the Israeli army gives right-wing settlers freedom to attack Palestinian civilians without restraint. Every week we have a mini-Crown Heights type situation, except that it's the Jews who are the perpetrators and the Palestinians who cower, often frightened, before angry and armed Jewish settlers.

The reportage by Wendy Orange strengthened Michael Lerner's point. What Orange captured was the tremendous hunger people have for peace, but at the same time the extreme lability of emotion as people become fearful that what they hoped for won't really happen.

That's why it's so important to infect the larger climate with TIKKUN-style celebration and optimism. I sometimes hear people saying things like "The mood doesn't matter; all that matters is what the politicians actually do." But this is crazy. What the politicians think

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they can do is always shaped by the mood here. I wish there were some way to raise enough money to publish TIKKUN in Hebrew and Arabic, because its way of thinking is precisely the counterbalance we need to the cynicism of Israeli politicians and journalists (if you think you know from cynicism in the American press, just try an Israeli) and to the equally destructive defeatism and despair in Palestinian circles.

Avraham Fox
Haifa, Israel

To the Editor:

Would you guys wake up? Can't you see that all the talk of reconciliation is merely a convenient cover for the expansion of Arab power, now into the West Bank and Gaza, later into the remaining parts of Israel that Palestinians still hope to see "liberated" but have temporarily stopped fighting for while they take the gains they can get at the moment?

Phil Lerner
New York, New York

To the Editor:

As a Palestinian who appreciates what peace-oriented Jews are doing, and the risks they are taking, I still find it disturbing to read the way that Michael Lerner has embraced this accord without the slightest recognition of how much Palestinians have given up in this process. In accepting a token amount of land around Jericho as the only part of the West Bank from which Israeli troops will withdraw, the PLO has essentially given the Israelis the false impression that we Palestinians are ready to settle for far less than a Palestinian state. In so doing, they've risked creating a political dynamic in which Israelis will feel that they've already "given up so much" (namely, Gaza, which they all admit they have no use for, and a tiny sliver of the West Bank) and so should no longer make any compromises. Don't you think TIKKUN has an obligation to explain that to your audience? But instead, you jump uncritically on Rabin's bandwagon, as though he were your long-awaited messiah. Frankly, I don't understand why you would forget your own past messages about Rabin as a pharaoh who ordered the breaking of bones of young children who were throwing stones of protest against Israeli occupying troops.

Alman al-Shabi
Los Angeles, California

To the Editor:

As a longtime activist in New Jewish Agenda, I was really quite happy to see TIKKUN graciously acknowledging our role and the role of other peace-oriented groups in helping to create the space in which changes of attitude leading to changes in behavior could take place in the Middle East. There's no doubt in my mind that TIKKUN played an absolutely major role, and that your courage in defending linkage of settlement freeze and loan guarantees was part of the causal chain that led to the Labor victory. Similarly, the conference you did in Jerusalem in 1991 was almost certainly a landmark event in stimulating a new way of thinking among Israeli peace activists (though few of them have the ability to overcome their Israeli chauvinism and admit that an American Jew could have played a role in their thinking or their subsequent victories). But what has been lacking for me in TIKKUN has been the ability to say who else contributed to this process. Perhaps in its earlier years you felt insecure and needed to feel like you deserved all the praise for the risks that you took (which were considerable). But what I saw in Michael Lerner's editorial was a new maturity and a new generosity of spirit, when he went out of his way to list groups that had made a real contribution, to thank them. I felt appreciated, and that has made it easier for me to acknowledge to myself how really important TIKKUN has been in the past few years, how much it helped to create and legitimate a renaissance of progressive Jews who could feel proud of being both Jewish and committed to Left politics, how glad I am that it has survived, how much I hope that it continues to be a thorn in the side of those Jews who are insensitive to the legitimate claims of Palestinians.

Mickey Lacks
Los Angeles, California

JUDAISM AND SEXUALITY

To the Editor:

The participants in your roundtable on "A New Sexual Ethics for Judaism" (September/October 1993) seemed interested primarily in controlling the

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dangerous power of sexuality, and in defining ways of expressing it that won't offend God.

The panel gave no recognition of the many positive ways that people use sex, such as to heal themselves or each other, to find existential meaning, to express their creativity or self-love, to honor their bodies, or to transcend the daily demands of secular life, including the conventional dimensions of time, space, and ego. There was no recognition of healthy lust or of ecstatic union that comes from joyful surrender.

The panel could only confirm readers' worst fears about their own sexuality, and their suspicion that Judaism offers little to help them make contemporary sexual decisions. The roundtable should have been called "grappling with the fear of sex by attempting to control it."

Martin Klein, Ph.D.
National Board, Society for the
Scientific Study of Sex
Palo Alto, California

Homosexuality in Judaism

To the Editor:

Thank you for Rabbi Yaakov Levado's extraordinarily eloquent essay on being Orthodox and gay.

For me, the reality of falling in love at fifteen and at nineteen and at thirty easily overwhelmed the single verse in Leviticus said to ban homosexuality. All the more so once I became familiar with the description of David's love for Jonathan (I Samuel 18).

As to the concern about gays not reproducing, I am sure that there have been numerous Jews who have been unable to reproduce themsleves throughout Jewish history. To me, the important question is not whether one has children, but , if one does not, how the time and resources one would normally spend on one's children are used. I have found joy in the present and linkage to the past through helping the elderly. I have found joy and linkage to the future through nieces and nephews, godfatherhood, children of friends, teaching Sunday school, being a Big Brother, and by being a mentor to younger men both as a senior military reserve officer and as a businessman. We ought to be able to embrace a larger definition of family than mere biology, than mere close blood relationships. Tradition reminds us, for good reason, that we are all descended from a single couple. All of us are family. All children are our children.

Best of luck to Rabbi Levado in his struggle.

Ron Friedman
Richmond, Virginia

To the Editor:

I think the problem facing Rabbi Levado is rooted in the mistaken belief that the Torah should be read literally. The early rabbis taught us that Torah is now in the hands of people, and that we are responsible to use our intellect as well as our heart to embrace it. If a literal reading of a text doesn't make sense, we must find an interpretation of the text that does make sense.

As the author of your article points out, his homosexuality is not the result of irresponsible pleasure seeking. He is not intentionally disobeying God; he was made homosexual by God. His homosexuality is a gift from God. Denying his God-given nature does not make sense. I believe it is a sin to deny who we are and not be thankful for what God has given us.

I would suggest the following more reasonable reading of the passage in question ("Do not lie with a male as one lies with a woman, it is an abhor-

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rence.") A homosexual male should lie with his male lover as a homosexual male would lie with another homosexual male, without either of them acting as if he were indeed a woman. He should act in consonance with who he really is. And he should bless God and be thankful to God for making him as he is.

Barry Leonard Werner
Seattle, Washington

To the Editor:

After reading TIKKUN's September/October 1993 issue, I was moved to act in the following three ways:

I took the "Al heyt" prayer to Yom Kippur services, used them in my own meditations, and shared them with other members of my Havurah.

I copied the article by a gay Orthodox rabbi and brought it to a forum on Judaism and homosexuality sponsored by the adult education committee of my Reconstructionist Havurah.

Lastly, I wrote to the authors of the piece on "Jews, Money, and Social Responsibility," offering to get involved in their efforts to connect the Jewish and Social Responsibility movements in promoting urban economic development.

TIKKUN is one of the few publications which speaks to the many aspects of my life and identity as an American Jew, feminist, lesbian, progressive "Bureaucrat," urban activist, and person interested in connections between personal/spiritual and political change.

A long way of saying "thank you" for helping me to transform our world!

Sue Hoffman
Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts

POLITICS OF MEANING

To the Editor:

I was gratified to see some of my own reservations about how TIKKUN has articulated its politics of meaning developed by Michael Sandel. (Roundtable, September/October 1993). TIKKUN destroys its credibility when it proposes to engage in what is in essence mass psychotherapy at all levels of society, local and national. Proposals such as requiring courses in empathy in public schools, awarding paid vacation to families whose children are the most loving and supportive in their communities, and establishing councils of elders to model caring and compassion leave me feeling absolutely incredulous. For those seeking opportunities to discredit TIKKUN and mock the politics of meaning, such proposals must seem too good to be true.

As Sandel accurately states, family support groups and occupational stress groups serve a valuable purpose, but do not provide an appropriate model for a national political program. A politics of meaning can meet spiritual and emotional needs without being therapeutic.

Tony Frank
Evanston, Illinois

To the Editor:

I came to TIKKUN's politics of meaning after hearing it being attacked almost daily by Rush Limbaugh. From last June through early December 1993, I don't believe that there was anyone attacked more frequently by Limbaugh than your own Michael Lerner. I love to listen to Limbaugh. I don't always agree with him, but I do like the way he is spunky and doesn't bow to all the normal idols of public opinion or political correctness.

Limbaugh kept mentioning that he had dedicated a section of his book to Lerner, so I looked up that part of his book and was surprised to find that Limbaugh, while totally attacking Lerner, seemed to have trouble totally dismissing him as easily as he can other liberals. So I picked up a copy of your magazine. Well, imagine my surprise to find Lawrence Chickering making a rather convincing case for why conservatives should support the politics of meaning. And I even found myself agreeing with Michael Lerner's contention (against Marshall Breger) that the psychodynamics of work have a tremendous impact on what happens in family life (though I still think that Lerner's language, if not his conscious intent, sometimes feels like he is falling back into the old liberal line that whatever goes wrong in people's lives is just society's fault—and this then leads to the kind of liberal pandering to "oppressed groups" and to playing down individual responsibility).

But though I was quite moved, and astounded, to find a group of liberals and progressives who seem to really care about ethics and spiritu-

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ality, something that heretofore I thought was only available on the Right, I still suspect that the whole venture is too totally connected to an anti-capitalist agenda. You keep quoting Hillary Clinton's quite remarkable statement that "the market knows the price of everything but the value of nothing." Why would you not bury that statement as a blooper unless you shared with her an anti-capitalist agenda? And that's what worries me. I've asked around, and I know that many people in other Left organizations think that you really aren't part of the Left at all, and that maybe the whole politics of meaning thing is TIKKUN's ticket to respectability and selling out left-wing principles. But after a close reading of your material, I think that Rush Limbaugh isn't really so crazy to be denouncing you. It seems to me that you may be a more effective Left critic of capitalism than any of those that toe the official Left line. So, I think that Chickering has been taken in, that the politics of meaning is far more subversive than a lot of the "multicultural" stuff coming out of the Left, and that in your seemingly well-intentioned attempts to put spirituality and ethics into the spotlight you are also raising a critique of capitalism heard almost nowhere else in the society. And it doesn't need to be—because with the collapse of communism, that topic has been resolved definitively in the minds of most Americans. Which is why the politics of meaning is actually, in its deepest sense, reactionary—a reaction to the worldwide triumph of capitalism that some of you people still won't accept.

Regina Fontana
Washington, D.C.

To the Editor:

I felt a lot better about the Clintons after reading Mike Espy's piece in the November/December 1993 issue. Frankly, I've tended to feel that TIKKUN has been exaggerating the degree to which anyone in the administration remains serious about the politics of meaning. And that has made me feel less good about the Clintons. Remember the grounds that you got me to support them in the first place: your claim that even if they couldn't follow through on progressive policies (which they certainly haven't), that they would at least legitimate a new kind of idealism that would replace the cynicism of the Reagan years. Well, apart from a brief flurry of Mrs. Clinton's involvement with you in the spring, I haven't seen too much of this politics of meaning language from the Clintons. So it was really good to read a cabinet member talking as though he was really with the program, and that he saw that as part of what the Clintons were about. I can stand some policy disappointments if there would be more politics of meaning talk, but apart from Espy I haven't heard it. Still, this was an encouraging development.

Sandra Neumark
Saint Louis, Missouri

COMMUNIST CHICKEN FARMERS

To the Editor:

A personal note in response to Paul Buhle's review of Kenneth Kann's book on California Jewish communist chicken farmers. In 1978, I was part of a back-to-the-land movement inspired by progressive social ideals. I settled near Petaluma where the communist chicken farmers lived and got involved in trying to organize a local campaign for a nuclear weapons freeze.

Our group lacked grass-roots organizing skills till an elder from the Jewish communist chicken farmer group sat on our board and taught us how to fundraise, how to run an organization, and how to succeed on the small amounts of donations we could acquire. Others of them joined our petition drives and demonstrations.

When a few years later the movement was able to pass a proposition on the California ballot calling for a bilateral nuclear weapons freeze, our local county had the highest percentage of nuclear weapons freeze voters in California. The experience of this success, and the skills we had acquired, inspired many of us to dedicate our lives to social change organizing, and even to endure the Reagan years when many others in our generation felt they could not.

Personally, I went on to found Chiropractors for Social Responsibility, worked for a local Sane/Freeze chapter as a board member, and was part of a group of locally active Democratic women who helped keep Barbara Boxer in the House of Representatives and then were successful in campaigning for her election to the U.S. Senate.

When the Cold War ended, it ended in part because of what we did, because of the way millions of us, here and around the world, waged peace. But we didn't celebrate our victory in the streets, as we should have. We didn't collect our peace dividends. A major problem on the Left is that we don't see, or celebrate, our victories. But it was in fact the many little steps taken by us that helped create the conditions to end the Cold War. Part of what made the waging of peace possible were the actions of the Jewish communist chicken farmers. The transmission of their visions and grass-roots organizing skills to younger generations was an important part of the process, and they deserve to be honored in loving memory.

Linda Elyad
San Rafael, California

GERMAN FASCISM

To the Editor:

I've read some wild stuff in TIKKUN, but nothing as wild as the argument made by Martin Jay that we don't have to worry about a resurgence of fascism because it was a protest against modernism which couldn't be repeated, since modernism has been replaced by postmodernism. Was he being serious?

The key to fascism, as you politics of meaning people taught me, is that it speaks to the need of people for a community of meaning and purpose that is absent in most capitalist societies. That crisis of meaning is more there than ever, particularly in a Europe that has lost its communist meanings and so has nothing but the marketplace to look to for purpose and value. In that circumstance, of course, fascism remains a possibility. And as Susannah Heschel brilliantly argues, the culture of anti-Semitism remains so deeply part of German society that even the antifascists still retain elements of it. So if fascism revives, don't be surprised if it still uses anti-Semitism along with whatever anti-immigrant elements it also incorporates.

Henryk Rosen
Berlin, Germany

EDITORIAL

Reflections on Israel and Jewish Continuity, Violence and Crime, How Clinton is Doing, and The Politics of Meaning

Michael Lerner

If you read some Jewish newspapers, or attend lectures by some policy experts or rabbis, you'd think that the Jewish people have never been in deeper trouble, now that Israel has decided on seeking peaceful reconciliation with the Palestinians. Throughout the organized Jewish community in the United States there has been a pervasive discounting of all that transpired when Yasir Arafat and Yitzhak Rabin shook hands. Instead of attempting to reach out to Palestinians in the United States and to build a new relationship between our two communities, the organized community has spent most of its energies poohpoohing mutual recognition, inflating every subsequent instance of anti-Israel terrorism, and ignoring or openly condoning West Bank settler pogroms against Arab civilians.

It took Rabin and his cabinet to call these West Bank settlers "terrorists" who were fomenting insurrection. In this country, there has been a curious indifference to the violence that the settlers almost daily inflict on their Palestinian neighbors. Some settler groups have publicly stated that if the new Palestinian police force were armed, and approached them to, for instance, deliver a traffic ticket, the settlers would shoot first on the assumption that these people are indistinguishable from terrorists. The head of one Orthodox rabbinical group defended this position, saying that he didn't even trust Palestinians who were dead in their graves for thirty years, so why should anyone trust them when they are alive?

Some American Jews have organized a campaign to make sure that no Israeli deal will involve pushing settlers out of the West Bank. We agree with their position that no country has a right to be *Judenrein* (free of Jews). We hope the settlers stay and live under the laws of the new Palestinian entity that emerges. In that state they should enjoy the same rights for the first ten years that Israel gave to *her* minority population (of Palestinians) in the first ten years of *her* existence. Check the historical record to see what Israel accorded the Palestinians—the land expropriations, limitations on civil liberties, military supervision—and you get the *appropriate model* for what a state does when it inherits a hostile minority. None of this is to say that Palestinian terrorism should be winked at or greeted with "understanding." Palestinian terrorists, usually Hamas or renegade factions of the PLO who have opposed peace negotiations from the start,



West Bank settler shooting at a crowd of Palestinians, December 1993

would be repressed by a government selected by a majority of Palestinians, if Israel allowed elections and if Israel allowed the Palestinians an armed police force. The criminal actions of these terrorists should be punished—but not by random attacks on anyone who happens to have been born a Palestinian and who has the misfortune to be caught now in the territory occupied by the Israeli army.

The mean-spiritedness of the response to peace possibilities weakens those possibilities and strengthens the hands of the extremists who feel that if they can provoke the other side to outrageous actions they will succeed in proving everyone's worst fears and hence undermining the whole process. But it also has another effect: It further deepens the alienation of younger, ethically principled Jews who have been leaving the organized Jewish community in droves ever since militant and narrow self-interest became dominant over moral sensitivity.

Jewish leaders spend millions of dollars doing studies or launching pilot programs to create Jewish continuity, now that they've discovered that their young are abandoning the community. They scheme to send teenagers to Israel, or to promote more activities for singles, or to open the doors for converts. All these activities are fine—but they miss the point. The reason why young Jews are leaving is because of the moral and spiritual deadness at the heart of the organized Jewish community.

The only serious program for Jewish continuity is one that reclaims the moral fire of Torah, that stands not as a cheerleader but as a prophetic critic of Jewish political and economic power, that reminds Israel of the many variants in Torah of the injunction "When you come into your land, do not oppress the stranger, remember that you were strangers in the land of Egypt." If it sought to honor non-Jews, such a project wouldn't seek those U.S. Senators who can sell us advanced military technology, but those people, such as the Dalai Lama, or Robert Coles, or Buddhist meditation teacher Thich Nhat Hanh, or Mother Teresa, who have lessons to quench our spiritual thirst.

But the organized community still doesn't get it. If "love your neighbor as yourself" and "justice, justice shalt thou pursue," and "remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy" and "you shall rejoice in your festivals," and "you shall love the stranger" were all descriptions of the actual reality of Jewish life instead of injunctions read on "religious occasions" to make us feel good about what a deep Torah we have, with little relationship to the reality of daily life of our community, the Jewish world wouldn't have to spend millions on continuity, because it would be happening.

A politics of meaning for the Jewish world would be one that would ask: What kinds of institutional changes in every aspect of Jewish education, synagogue and communal life, Jewish organizations and Israel, would facilitate the development of a community in which these Torah notions actually became the guiding principles and daily realities of our life? How would we configure synagogue life or Jewish communal life to make young people feel that they were involved in an ethically and spiritually committed world where these ideals were embodied, comprised of Jews who honored those who were their best practitioners, and who judged themselves by the degree to which their daily lives reflected this kind of ethical and spiritual sensitivity?

Fighting Crime and Violence

Isn't it time for the Right to acknowledge that its approach to law and order has wildly failed?

The murderous rampage in December on the Long Island Railroad, the daily shootings on our city streets, the abduction and murder of a little girl in Northern California—these are only the tip of the iceberg of an epidemic of violence that has only gotten worse, as year after year American politicians give us more prisons, more policemen, more sophisticated crime-fighting technologies, and more laws ensuring tougher penalties for criminals.

The Right began touting its law-and-order strategy under Nixon and Ford, intensifying the rhetoric and the penalties under Reagan and Bush. But the strategy has been worthless.

The reason is that the law-and-order types totally miss the boat about what is actually going on. We have an epidemic of social alienation and paranoia induced by the breakdown of community and the triumph of selfishness. On every level of this society people learn as "common sense" that they should put themselves first, get what they can in any way they can, and to hell with the consequences for others. The people who are best rewarded are those who have most dulled their moral sensitivities and are most talented at screwing others.

We have tens of millions of people who feel isolated, marginalized, and despairing. I discovered this when, as a therapist for American labor unions, I and my colleagues interviewed thousands of American working people who seemed on the surface to have their lives together, were making middle-class incomes, and were living normal lives. But under the surface, we discovered people who are desperately alienated. They consume endless amounts of drugs and alcohol, isolate

themselves in front of televisions, and do everything they can to hold themselves together and avoid conscious connection with what they are feeling.

These people feel isolated for a good reason. They are living in a society in which others really are acting selfishly and cannot be counted on.

The amazing thing is that we don't have more acts of random violence. We are surrounded by millions of people on the verge of exploding with anger and frustration, yet most of them manage to direct that anger inward, giving themselves psychosomatic disease, depression, or mental disorder. Or they contain it within the family, acting out their fury on spouse or children, who in turn will act out their anger on others on the streets.

The Long Island Railroad gunman and his ilk, who make headlines spraying bullets in post offices or fast-food restaurants, are just the most "out there" representatives of this paranoia and mutual hostility and distrust that permeates the society. Thinking that you can repress the most extreme manifestations of this paranoia, alienation, and collective hostility is magical thinking—it simply can't be done without addressing the way of life that produces it.

To create an alternative we would have to insist on a politics of meaning as the dominant framework for economic and political life.

President Clinton, trying to prove that he's not a typical liberal, has jumped on the wrong bandwagon, and is now hawking the same snake-oil that the Republicans have tried for decades without any improvement in our situation. Clinton has decided that the National Service Corps should direct its initial energies at strengthening traditional forms of policing, as though that was going to accomplish anything.

He'd do well to pay attention to Peter Gabel's more innovative proposal. Gabel, chair of the San Francisco Commission on National Service, and associate editor of TIKKUN, has developed a proposal to work with police and community groups, aimed at involving young people from San Francisco's Latino-dominated Mission community in a different kind of anti-crime program. Participants, who will receive education vouchers and a stipend, will attempt to construct alternative forms of communal identity to street-gang membership. Painting murals instead of graffiti, eliminating toxic chemicals from the industrial section of the Mission, working together on communal projects in which they and their neighbors can take pride—and through that getting a chance to go to college—could provide these young people with the very sense of community that otherwise is available only in the form of violent gangs. The strategy is to implement a politics of meaning framework by beginning to create meaningful alternatives and to reduce the alienation and despair.



Here's our strategy.

Try these four measures and crime will be inconsequential within a generation:

a. Create full employment, guaranteeing every American a job at pay adequate to sustain their families at the level being shown to them as normal on television. View this not as "an entitlement," but rather as a concrete way to convey a sense that we are willing to care for each other. If you believe that, without undermining a sense of community, you can turn your back on people when they are thrown out of work, lose their unemployment benefits, and eventually end up living on the streets or working under impossible conditions, think again. If you care so little about me that you can worry more about protecting your high income from taxes than about what it's like for me to have no income whatsoever, then why am I supposed to care about you? And why are you surprised when people whom you callously disregard start to develop anger that can get expressed in irrational ways? There are always a few who will channel that anger into mayhem, because that seems most "appropriate."

And, by the way, let's acknowledge that a

disproportionate number of people who are unemployed are Blacks, a legacy of American racism. So when you turn your heads to the plight of the poor, you are also quite frequently turning your heads from the condition of people of color. Is it any wonder, then, that some of those people feel so much anger at whites that they are willing to strike out randomly?

I do not condone that violence. It is wrong, wrong, wrong! And I don't blame anyone who wants to respond to it with anger and vengeance. The violence is disgusting, the criminals ought to be imprisoned, and sometimes we just want to be violent toward those who have been violent toward us. I don't want that hot anger to be tamed. But I also know and demand that the Right acknowledge that retaliatory violence is useless in eliminating violence.

b. Put public pressure on television and movie producers (not legislation that would limit their rights, but vigorously mobilized public pressure) to show people the real consequences of violent actions by depicting the pain and suffering of those who are its victims. Refuse to screen those portrayals of violence—from children's cartoons to television news to police shows—that seem to suggest that the consequences are nonexistent, light, or quickly surmountable. Unlike proposals to ban all violence from television—an action that would result in television programming even more divorced from the realities of our violence-infested world—this measure would require programming decision-makers to eliminate the magical thinking that television helps to generate.

c. William F. Buckley, Jr. and Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders urge us to explore drug legalization. Here's how their idea could work. Government could produce and supervise drugs, thus eliminating much violent crime and the drug pushers. Supervised distribution could restrict drug users to certain areas where they could use the drugs without charge, but must remain until the effects of the drugs have worn off. If you're worried about the effects on people who choose drugs, then focus on creating communities of meaning and purpose with an ethos of caring and idealism—and both drug and alcohol abuse will diminish. By itself, legalization could be a mistake. But if implemented with points a. and d., it would significantly reduce violence and crime.

d. Make a politics of meaning the dominant framework for economic and political life. Change the dominant discourse from an ethos of selfishness and cynicism to an ethos of caring and idealism. Reward those who engage in individual or communal acts of generosity and sensitivity to others. Give societal honors to those who raise ethically and spiritually



sensitive children. Give tax and other benefits to corporations that have managed to strengthen the moral and spiritual lives of the communities in which they function. Teach empathy and moral responsibility in schools, and make skills in cooperation and caring for others criteria for admission to the best colleges. Jail white-collar criminals. Punish corporations or individuals that pollute the environment or use the resources of the planet with reckless disregard to the consequences for future generations. Replace the index of Gross National Product with an index for Mutual Responsibility, Caring, and Ecological and Spiritual Sensitivity. Make the "common sense" of the society that the *real* bottom line is how much any corporation, government program, or private institution is able to produce human beings who are morally, ecologically, spiritually, and ethically alive. Honor families. Treat aging as an opportunity for growth—and insist on learning from the experience of older people. Value spiritual knowledge. Make it safe for people to feel free to express love, caring, hopefulness, idealism—and to celebrate publicly God's presence in the universe.

Follow these paths, and crime will be dramatically reduced. Try any other avenues, and you will have politics as usual, and crime persisting.

How's Clinton Doing?

From the start, we recognized Clinton as a political expression of the center-right of the Democratic Party. But we said that despite the ways in which his specific activities would disappoint us, we believed that he might begin to legitimate a discourse of idealism and caring that would create the psychological and political space for the re-emergence of political forces that would go far beyond anything that he consciously intends.

So far, on *that* issue, the evidence is inconclusive. True, his abandonment of promises about Bosnia, Haiti, and gays in the military, his withdrawal of Lani Guinier's nomination, his insistence on linking health-care reform to an expansion of private insurers and health-care conglomerates in ways that may eventually discredit the whole notion of government involvement in public services, his pushing for the kind of NAFTA that was insensitive to ecological and labor concerns, and his seeming indifference to the persistence of hunger and homelessness among millions of Americans could certainly shake our faith in the administration. But *no* set of specific retreats or promises broken would be sufficient in and of themselves to cause me to be disillusioned.

Clinton argues that he *did not win a majority* and that he therefore cannot deliver on the promises made on the assumption that he had received a mandate. In that circumstance, he argues, it is sufficient if he blocks anti-abortion forces in the country, appoints liberal judges to the federal courts, keeps us out of imperialist ventures abroad, and then manages to get a few important pieces of legislation passed (such as expanding minimal health-care benefits to 37 million previously uninsured Americans, or passing family leave legislation, some minimal gun control, a small scale national service plan, or the kind of welfare reform that is tied to retraining, child care, and real jobs).

He may be right about what is possible. But we, in turn, can demand that he speak honestly to us about what he is doing, without seeming to turn his compromises into principles. This he has not done.

More important, his commitment to a transformative language has been sketchy and inconsistent. After publicly endorsing the politics of meaning last Spring, the Clintons have done little to continue to speak this language, or any other language of ethical and spiritual hopefulness. They have not been willing to say that the goal of their administration is to move the society from an ethos of selfishness to an ethos of caring. It is the failure of language, more than the failure of substance, that is most discouraging, because for that the Clintons don't need a majority.

Asking about how the Clintons are doing may be the wrong question, a reversion to politics as a spectator sport, a way of avoiding our own responsibility, of hoping that someone else will do it for us while we pursue our private lives.

Given the cynical press coverage that greeted Hillary Rodham Clinton's call last April for a politics of meaning, and the failure of the liberal or progressive camp to come to the defense of this position (except for TIKKUN, which was then pilloried by the media as well), why should the Clintons continue to propound this philosophy when the rest of the country seems unprepared to respond to their call?

Unfortunately, on this, as on so many other issues, the Clintons seemed to retreat the moment they faced serious opposition. It would have been much more principled, and much more effective politically, had they been willing to respond to the first attacks by

holding their ground and saying, "yes, we really *do* believe that most Americans want a more morally and spiritually centered society, that the ethos of selfishness and me-firstism really *is* detrimental to our collective health, and that the 1990s ought to be a period of social responsibility and mutual caring rather than a continuation of the spirit of self-interest that governed in the Reagan/Bush years. No, this is not a question of blaming ordinary Americans for some alleged malaise—because the problem isn't with ordinary Americans, but with economic and political institutions that reward selfishness and with a media that is cynical about all forms of moral idealism. But it is about embracing a new way of thinking, a politics of meaning that insists that the bottom line is not how much money we have accumulated but how much ethical and spiritual sensitivity we have been able to embody in our daily lives. And that is not only a question of changing social institutions, but also of taking individual responsibility in our own lives to challenge a certain kind of selfishness and social irresponsibility—whether you come upon that in your workplace, your community, your political leaders, or your media stars."

That kind of leadership is what we thought we might get from the Clintons, but so far we haven't.

Nevertheless, it still remains possible that they could begin to articulate these kinds of ideals. I still have reason to believe that they share these goals, at least some of the time. But whether they will depends on whether we can make it safe for them to do so.

And that requires a movement for a politics of meaning—a movement that emerges from below, that makes itself felt in public debate, and that creates a context within which presidential leadership can take place. Perhaps some of us who wish it were the other way round, that it would come *first* from Clinton and then from us, are merely finding another excuse for political laziness. But if this is going to happen at all, given the reality that the Clintons are unwilling to remain out on a limb for very long, we need to create a movement.

If we want to see the Clintons really live up to their potential, we have to create a prophetic movement for a politics of meaning that can simultaneously create the pressure and the political space for the Clintons. So asking about how the Clintons are doing may be the wrong question, a reversion to politics as a spectator sport, a way of avoiding our own responsibility, of hoping that someone else will do it for us while we pursue our private lives. The clearest message we are getting is—that formula won't work. If we want to escape the selfishness and cynicism of the '80s, *we* (yes, *us*, not some anonymous other) are going to have to create the nineties as something different. It lies in our hands and the hands of millions of others who deeply need a different kind of society.

Strategy for a Politics of Meaning

"It's a nice idea, but when are you going to make it practical, turn it into specific policy proposals?"

We already have, in our Platform (TIKKUN, July/August 1992), and I will expand on that in a book that should be published by Viking by the end of 1994. But the key is not practical programs.

The politics of meaning is a paradigm shift whose closest analogue is feminism. When the women's movement reemerged in the second wave of feminism some twenty-five years ago, many people saw it as pure utopianism. Just as today they challenge the politics of meaning by asking for us to present one example of a society based on caring and idealism rather than selfishness, materialism, and cynicism, so too the second-wave feminists were dismissed as utopian idealists because they could not name a single society in recorded history where women were given substantive equality.

Similarly, there were many who dismissed "consciousness change" as an insubstantial goal and insisted that legal strategies, like an Equal Rights Amendment, were the only practical direction for feminist ideas. But in fact the most lasting contribution of the women's movement was the change in consciousness that it produced. All the specific pieces of legislation flowed from those consciousness changes, not vice-versa.

Our strategy for a politics of meaning:

1. A campaign to legitimate the fundamental ideas. In every arena we will challenge the technocratic thinking, the materialist assumptions about what it is to be a human being, the bottom-line consciousness that dismisses love and caring and ethical and spiritual sensitivity as "soft" and counterposes a "tough-minded realism" that is merely a vulgar and reductionist account of human life. We will insist that the real bottom line is whether our societal arrangements foster loving and caring, spiritually and ethically alive human beings.

Like feminism, this idea starts off being counterintuitive, given the dominant ethos of cynicism and selfishness. That's why, as with feminism, the most effective first step possible is the creation of consciousness-raising groups in which people meet weekly and discuss their work lives, family lives, and politics—all from the standpoint of a politics of meaning.

For example, the occupational stress groups developed by the Institute for Labor and Mental Health for labor unions were such a politics of meaning activity. In these groups, working people felt

(Continued on inside back cover)

"People Don't Know Right From Wrong Anymore"

Lillian B. Rubin

"I can't believe what kids do today!" exclaims Marguerite Jenkins, a white forty-year-old divorcee whose seventeen-year-old daughter, Candy, had just had an abortion.

I last met Marguerite more than twenty years ago when I interviewed her for *Worlds of Pain*. The slim, pretty young woman who welcomed me into her home then is gone now, replaced by an older, heavier version who bears the visible marks of life's difficulties. As I listen to her angry words about her daughter, the memory of our last meeting moves from the recesses of my mind into awareness. At age twenty, Marguerite already had two children under three; Candy wouldn't come into the world for another three years. Her first-born son had been conceived when she was still in high school. But abortion wasn't an option then. So a few months after she discovered she was pregnant, she left school and married Larry Jenkins, the nineteen-year-old father of the child she was carrying. By the time I met her she was a distraught and overburdened young mother, worrying because her husband had just lost yet another job, fearful that her dream of living happily ever after was crumbling.

I remember the story Marguerite told of finding out she was pregnant—her terror; her anger at her father, who wanted to throw her out of the house; at her mother, who didn't protect her from her father's rage; her bitterness because they were more concerned about what others would think than about the predicament she found herself in. Hearing Marguerite now, I can understand her concern for her daughter, her fear that Candy will repeat her mistakes. But given her own experience, I wonder about her outrage, her seeming lack of compassion for Candy and for what she might be feeling. So I say, "I'm a little surprised to hear you talk so angrily, since you got pregnant when you were about her age."

She looks somewhat abashed at the reminder, shifts uncomfortably in her chair, then says, "C'mon, you know it's different now. Sure, I got caught, too, but we got married. *We had to get married; we didn't have a choice.*"

"We had to get married"—words spoken by 44 percent of the couples I interviewed two decades ago. But what does "had to" mean? These marriages weren't coerced, at least not by any obvious outside agent. There were no old-style shotgun weddings, no self-righteous fathers avenging the violation of their daughters' virtue by forcing their errant lovers into saying their vows. The compulsion was internal, part of the moral culture of the community in which they lived. It was simply what one did.

Sometimes the young couple married regretfully; often one partner, usually the man, was ambivalent. It didn't really matter; they did what was expected. If you "got caught," you got married; that was the rule, understood by all. As one of the men I interviewed then put it: "If you knocked up a girl, you married her; that was it. You just did it, that's all. End of story."

But in fact, it was only the beginning of the story. Seven years and three children after Marguerite and Larry Jenkins did what their parents and their community expected of them, he walked out. Young, unskilled, and seething at being tied down by responsibilities he was unable to meet, Larry floated from one dead-end job to another, at each one acting out his resentment until he got fired or quit. Marguerite, frightened for her children, furious with disappointment, and exhausted from their constant battles, finally gave him an ultimatum: Shape up or get out! To her surprise, he stormed out of the house and came back only to claim his belongings a few days later. "I said it, but I didn't really think he'd do it. I figured I'd finally scare him into being more responsible," she explains as she reviews those years.

With no family to help her and three small children

Lillian B. Rubin is an internationally recognized author and social scientist whose most recent book, Families on the Fault Line, *from which this article is excerpted, will be published by HarperCollins in February 1994. She lives in San Francisco, where she is also a practicing psychotherapist.* *Copyright ©1994 by Lillian B. Rubin.*

whose father couldn't or wouldn't support them, Marguerite had no choice: She spent the next five years on the welfare rolls. "I was so ashamed to go down to the welfare office. I can't explain how bad I felt; I wasn't raised that way. My parents, they had their problems, but my father was a hard worker. He didn't make much, but we got by without charity.

"I used to think welfare people were freeloaders, you know, like they were lazy bums. Then it happened to me and I kept thinking: *I can't believe it! How did this happen to me? I'm not like that.*" She looks away, trying to contain the tears that well up as the memory of those hard times washes over her.

It's the sense that their children see the world so differently that's hard for working-class parents. For it seems to say that now, along with the economic dislocation they suffer, even their children are out of their reach.

"Marrying Larry, that whole thing, it was a giant mistake right from the beginning. You get married with this dream that everything's going to be wonderful, but it never works out that way, does it? How could it? We were babies, and there we were trying to be grown-ups. We had two kids by the time I was nineteen and he was, I don't know, maybe not even twenty-one yet. I wasn't ready to be a wife and a mother, and he sure wasn't ready to be a decent husband and father."

The Jenkinses' story is a common one among the families I met twenty years ago. Two young people thrust into a marriage by the lack of acceptable moral or social alternatives, only to divorce a few years later. Since they married so young, sometimes even before they finished high school, the women had little opportunity to develop any marketable skills, certainly none that would enable them to support their children and pay for child care while they worked. Of the thirty-two *Worlds of Pain* families I was able to locate, eighteen (56 percent) had been divorced. All but one of the men had remarried by the time I met them again. The lone exception had separated from his wife a few months earlier and was already involved with a woman in what he took to be a serious relationship.

For the women it was different: Only eleven had remarried; the rest had been single for five years or more. All of them talked about the economic devastation divorce wrought in their families. Well over half needed some form of public assistance during the years when they were divorced. Some were on the welfare rolls; others got by with food stamp supplements alone. For the women who haven't remarried, life continues to be economically unstable at best.

If their own young marriages so often were, as Marguerite Jenkins says, "a giant mistake right from the beginning," why aren't such women more supportive of their daughters' choices? Indeed, why aren't they pleased that the young women they raised have so many more options available to them? I ask the question: "Given what's happened in your own life, I wonder why you're not glad that Candy could make other choices?"

"Don't get me wrong, I think it's okay to have an abortion; I'm—what do they call it?—oh yeah, for choice," explains Marguerite. "I mean, I don't think people should run around having abortions just like that, but nobody's got a right to tell somebody what to do about being pregnant or not. God knows, I don't want her to do what I did. It's just that . . . ." She stops, searching for the right words, and after a moment or two, continues, still uncertain. "I don't know exactly how to say it. Look, I was scared to death when I found out I was pregnant, and so was Larry. These kids, they're not even bothered now."

It's this sense that their children see the world so differently that's so hard for working-class parents. For it seems to say that now, along with the economic dislocation they suffer, even their children are out of their reach, that they can no longer count on shared values to hold their families together. It doesn't help either that no matter where they look, they don't see a reflection of themselves. If they look up, they see a life-style and values they abhor, the same ones that, they believe, are corrupting their children. If they shift their gaze downward, they see the poor, the homeless, the helpless—the denizens of the dangerous underclass whose moral degeneracy has, in the working-class view, led to their fall. It's as if their beliefs and values have no place in the institutional world they inhabit, not in the schools their children attend, not on the television shows they watch, not in the films they see, not in the music they hear, not in the laws their government promulgates.

It's true that this isn't a problem only for working-class families. Middle-class parents also worry about the changing cultural norms; they also fret endlessly about "what kids do today." Indeed, generational conflict over changing values and life-styles is common

to all families, with parents generally holding onto the old ways and children pulling for the new ones. But it's also true that the issues that create conflict in families differ quite sharply by class.

Middle-class parents long ago accepted the norms, values, and behavior that have only recently filtered down into the working class—the open expression of premarital sex, for example, or living together without benefit of clergy. Partly perhaps these changes came earlier and with less upheaval in middle-class families because it was their children who initiated the struggle for change. But there are other reasons as well. High among them is the fact that middle-class parents are likely to be more educated than those in the working class. And it's widely understood that a college education tends to broaden perspectives and liberalize attitudes about the kind of life-style and value changes we have seen in the last few decades.

Since most working-class parents haven't been exposed to the array of ideas found in a college classroom, they tend to be more tradition bound. "You get used to doing things one way and then you think it's the right way," says thirty-six-year-old Jane Dawson, a white mother of two teenagers. Without the expanded horizons that higher education affords, the old way often becomes the only way. "If it was good enough for us, it's fine for my kids," proclaims her husband, Bill.



But the cultural changes that have swept the land during these past decades will not be stayed by parental nostalgia, fear, or authority. The young people in this study agree that their values about such issues as sexual behavior, marriage, and gender roles are radically different from those their parents hold. And they're pained by the family conflicts these differences stir. But they also insist that they're not the thoughtless, hedonistic lot of their parents' imaginations. "My mom thinks I think getting pregnant is no big deal, but she doesn't understand," says Candy Jenkins, her blue eyes turning stormy with anger when we talk about this a few days after my meeting with her mother. "Just because I didn't carry on like some kind of a crazy person, she thinks I didn't care. But it's not true; I did care. I was scared to death when I found out."

"I was scared to death when I found out"—the same words spoken decades apart by a mother and her daughter. Both shared the fear of their parents' response. "I thought my father would kill me," says Marguerite. "I was afraid my mother would murder me," shudders Candy. Beyond that, however, the words have entirely different meanings for each of them.

For Marguerite, getting pregnant was a problem; not to have gotten married would have been a catastrophe. For her, therefore, the critical question was: *Will he marry me?* "I was terrified. What if Larry reneged and wouldn't marry me? What would I do?"

For Candy, however, the pregnancy could be taken care of; marriage loomed like a calamity. "The one thing I knew was I didn't want to get married and have a baby. I was really scared my mom would try to make me. She kept going on about how ashamed she was, and what was she going to tell grandma, and all like that. But she didn't push me about getting married. I mean, she talked about it, but she knew it was a bum idea, too. Look at what happened to her."

For Marguerite, shame was a big issue, not just the memory of her own shame, but the fact that it wasn't one of her daughter's preoccupations. "I just can't get over it," Marguerite remarks, shaking her head in bewilderment. "I wanted to die because I was so ashamed. I felt like I'd never be able to hold my head up again. Now these kids, it's like it's nothing to them; they've got no shame. I'll bet half the school knows she

was pregnant. They probably compare notes about their damn abortions," she concludes with disgust.

Shame and guilt—the emotions that give evidence of the effectiveness of our social norms, that reassure us that the moral culture has been internalized, that there will be a price for its violation. If our young suffer, if they're tormented by shame, haunted by guilt, we can at least be assured that they share our values about good and evil, right and wrong. Without that, the gap between us seems disturbingly wide and the future frighteningly uncertain.

But to cast the issue in these terms—that is, either we suffer shame and guilt or we don't—misses the point. It's not true that our children don't experience



these feelings. But what evokes them is not fixed in eternity. Rather, it changes with time, each historical moment delivering up its own variation of a culture's norms and values, each one defining its transgressions and eliciting shame and guilt for their violation.

For Marguerite's mother, divorce would have been unthinkable, a humiliating and guilt-ridden scandal, a painful public admission of failure and inadequacy. By the time Marguerite was divorced, it was a sad but commonplace event, certainly nothing to hide in shame about. For Marguerite, her pregnancy was a shameful confession that she had, in the language of the day, "gone all the way"—an act, once it became known, that threatened to cast her out of respectable society and to label her a "slut." For Candy, there was a mix of feelings, some of them no doubt the same as her mother felt decades earlier—regret, fear, sadness, confusion, anger at herself for taking sexual chances when she knew better. But not shame—not because she's a less moral person than her mother but because she grew up in a sexual culture that gives permission for a level of sexual freedom unknown to her mother's generation.

"As long as two people love each other, there's nothing wrong with making love," declares Tory, the white sixteen-year-old daughter of the Bowen family. "I don't understand why it's only supposed to be okay if you're married. I mean, why is getting married such a big deal?"

This, perhaps, is one of the most important changes underlying the permissiveness about sex. If getting married is no longer "such a big deal," why wait for marriage to explore one's sexuality? If sexual relations outside marriage are acceptable once people have been divorced, then why not before they get married? Repeatedly, the young people I met raised these and other questions as we discussed the changing norms around marriage and sex.

The sexual revolution, which changed the rules about the expression of female sexuality; the gender revolution, with its demand for the reordering of traditional roles and relationships; the divorce revolution, which fractured the social contract about marriage and commitment; the shifts in the economy, which forced increasing numbers of married women into the labor force—all these have come together to create a profoundly different consciousness about marriage and its role divisions for young people today.

Twenty years ago it was marriage that occupied the dreams of a working-class high-school girl. Among the *Worlds of Pain* families, the women were, on average, eighteen when they married; the men, twenty. Two decades later, none of the families I reinterviewed has a son who married at twenty or younger, and just one has a daughter who was only eighteen when she married. The others either married considerably later or are still single—some at twenty-four and twenty-five—something that almost never happened by choice twenty years ago.

The national statistics tell the same story. In 1970, the average age at which women married for the first time was 20.6 years; for men, it was 22.5. Two decades later it had jumped to 24.2 for women, 26.2 for men. Today 18.8 percent of women and 29.4 percent of men are still unmarried when they reach thirty, compared to 6.2 percent and 9.4 percent, respectively, twenty years ago.

Women in particular are much more ambivalent about hearing wedding bells than they were a couple of generations ago, aware that the changes they have undergone, the kind of marital partnerships they now long for, are rarely matched by the men who are their prospective mates. Therefore, they talk of wanting to explore the options available, to live life more fully and openly before taking on the responsibilities of marriage and parenthood.

But delaying the trip to the altar isn't a rejection of marriage and the commitment it entails. Rather, it's a dream deferred, part of a changing culture, which itself has developed in response to shifting social realities. For the culture of a nation, a group, or a tribe is a living thing, stretching, changing, expanding, or contracting as new needs arise and old ones die, as the exigencies of living in one era give way to new ones in the next. So, for example, now that great advances in medical technology have lengthened the life span beyond anything earlier generations ever dreamed of, the age when people marry moves upward.

When people died at fifty and large families were the norm, there was a good chance at least one parent would never live to see the children into adulthood. Therefore, it made no sense to wait until twenty-five or thirty before starting a family. Now, when, on the average, women live to nearly eighty and men to a little over seventy, we can marry and bear children very much later, safe in the knowledge that we'll be around to raise and nurture them as long they need us. The forty-year-old first-time father today worries about whether he'll be able to play football with his son at twelve, not whether he'll be alive when the boy becomes a man.

I don't mean that we think consciously about the impact of our longer life. It's the kind of knowledge that generally remains out of awareness but that, nevertheless, profoundly influences our life decisions. For a social change of this magnitude, one that gives us so many more years of life, also adds stages to the life course that were unknown before. Adolescence is extended, adulthood becomes another stage in our continuing growth and development, and old age appears on the scene as a part of life that requires planning and attention—changes and additions that have social, cultural, and psychological repercussions.

The same is true for the culture of marriage. When life ended at fifty, people didn't feel deprived if their relationships weren't intimate or companionable enough. They were too busy earning a living, raising their children, and hoping they'd survive long enough to see them grown. Now, when wives and husbands know they have decades of active life ahead of them after shepherding their children into adulthood, the emotional quality of the marital relationship takes on fresh importance. *What will we talk about after the children are gone?* becomes a crucial question when people expect to live thirty or forty years beyond that marker event. And marriage takes on a different and more complex character as a whole new set of needs comes to the fore.

Delaying the trip to the altar isn't a rejection of marriage and the commitment it entails. Rather, it's a dream deferred, part of a changing culture, which itself has developed in response to shifting social realities.

Although class, race, and ethnicity all affect marriage patterns, only among African-Americans do the marital statistics tell a significantly different story. In 1991 just over 41 percent of Black Americans were married, compared to nearly 62 percent among whites and Hispanics. Thirty-five percent of Blacks have never been married,while for whites the comparable figure is 20 percent. And Black brides and grooms are, on the average, two years older than their white counterparts when they walk down the aisle for the first time.

For as long as I can remember, I've heard these differences explained as an artifact of culture—an explanation that suggests that Blacks value marriage less or that their moral code is less lofty than the one by which other Americans live. It's an easy explanation, one that allows us to look away from unpalatable social realities and their effect on the most personal decisions of our lives. If culture is the culprit, then it's people who need fixing, not society. But, in fact, beneath these cold statistics lies a story of immeasurable human suffering and loneliness.

This is not to say that culture plays no part in the marriage patterns of African-Americans. Their history of slavery and the prejudice and discrimination they have suffered since then undoubtedly have left their

mark in the shape of subcultural variations that affect beliefs and attitudes about marriage. Obviously, too, the cultural fallout from past experience can take on a life of its own and linger into the present long after the immediate provocations are gone. But in this case, it's the social and economic realities of life in the Black community today, not the adversity and suffering of the past, that control the difference in marriage rates between Blacks and Americans of other ethnic and racial groups.

The need for the kind of iron control working-class parents so often exhibit has a psychological dimension. Only if their children behave properly by their standards can the parents begin to relax about their status in the world.

The official unemployment rate for adult Black men, for example, is roughly 15 percent, compared to 6.8 percent for white men. And it's common knowledge that more than twice that number never make it to the Labor Department's unemployment statistics. At the same time, Black men in the prime marriageable ages of twenty-five to thirty who are lucky enough to have jobs earn nearly one-third less than whites: $14,333 compared to $20,153. With unemployment so high and underemployment virtually epidemic, it's hard to imagine how either women or men could make serious plans for marriage. A man who can barely support himself isn't likely to look forward to taking on the responsibilities of a wife and children. Nor is a woman apt to see him as a great marriage prospect. Add to these economic realities the fact that roughly one in eighty young black men is a victim of violent death and that half the inmates of our state prisons are Black men, and we have a picture of a community with an acute shortage of marriageable men.

These are the social conditions out of which the marriage patterns of the African-American community have grown. To speak of culture and its effect on the timing and sequencing of the various life stages, including when or if we marry, without knowing the particular life circumstances of a people misses the crucial connection between the emergence of cultural forms and the structure of social life. In the African-American community, eligible women far outnumber marriageable men—the major reason why fewer people are able to make the trip to the altar and also why those who marry do so substantially later than men and women in other ethnic and racial groups.

For a Black woman, then, finding a man with whom to share her life presents a far more daunting challenge than for others of the same class and age—a source of concern to both parents and daughters in the African-American families I met. "I worry that my daughter's never going to find a good man," Regina Peterson, a forty-year-old Black cashier says, shaking her head sadly. "It's not like when I was coming up; there were still some good men around then, like her father. He's a good man; he always took care of his family, even when it was hard. But today, whew, I don't know what these young girls will do. It's a real problem."

Regina's husband, Sherman, echoes her worries and adds angrily, "The young men today, they're nothing but bums. I don't want no daughter of mine taking up with the likes of them."

When I meet Althea, the Petersons' eighteen-year-old daughter, she talks solemnly about the difficulties the dearth of marriageable men raise for Black women, then exclaims hotly: "It's crazy; it makes me so mad. The papers and the TV keep saying about how Black girls are always having babies without being married. But who are we supposed to marry, tell me, huh? It's not like there's some great guys around here, sitting around just waiting for us. Most of the guys around here, they're hanging on the corner talking big talk, but they're never going to amount to anything. When I see those white people on the TV telling us we should get married, I just want to tell them to shut up because they don't know what they're talking about. What Black girl wouldn't want to be married instead of raising her kids alone?"

I wonder, as I listen to her, what this young woman who's headed for the middle class will do when her time comes. So I ask: "What about you? Will you have children alone if you don't find someone to marry?"

She sits quietly for a moment, her chin resting on her closed fist, her brow furrowed in an expression of sober concentration, then says, "I can't say what I'll do. Right now I know I have to get educated if I want to make something of myself. When I finish college and have a good job, then I'll see. I know I want children some day; not now, but someday. And I'd like to be married like my parents; I know it's better for kids that way. But what if I can't find someone to marry? Then I don't know for sure, but I think I probably would have kids on my own. It's better than not having any, isn't it?" she concludes rhetorically.

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In Between the "Handshake" and the Troop Withdrawals

Wendy Orange



November: Conversations on the Ground

It's a dispirited "in between" time in Israel and the territories. The euphoria of the "handshake" is gone. As if to underscore the mood, winter has come on as it always does here: suddenly bleak and cold, inside and out. In day-to-day life, the collective mood is analogous to how we all feel when our personal highs dissipate, when peak experiences we feel will go on forever—a fantasy intrinsic to the high itself—collapse. The current crash following September's euphoria is now lived as resistance to the accords, as an epidemic of fierce negativity.

The process is still on track; objectively all is as we knew it would be (difficult but not derailed). But the collective subjective experience of this past month is filled with negativity, even despair. In the last issue of TIKKUN, writers warned that unless both sides approached each other in a generous spirit, highlighting optimism with gestures that generated hope ("confidence-building measures") they would soon find both sides abandoning the spirit of mutual recognition, returning to that familiar terrain of mutual

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distrust. In this interim time, the rejectionists in both the Israeli and the Palestinian camps have played a skillful game of provoking each other and using their overreactions as a basis for arguing that the agreement itself is so deeply flawed as to be useless.

Palestinians, and they are not always Hamas, kill settlers. Many settlers use these random acts to begin their own nascent intifada: killing if they can, burning Palestinian schools, chicken coops, cars, scaring the Palestinians, disturbing their already limited freedoms.

There are disheartening symmetries between Jewish pessimism and that of Palestinian thinkers. The two societies share much in their mirroring schisms and paranoid projections.

The government and soldiers seem at this time to give the law-breaking settlers, if not free rein, then at least more time and latitude than seems fair or wise. Clyde Haberman, a correspondent in Israel for The *New York Times*, asks Labor Member of Knesset Haim Ramon: "If these were Palestinians, wouldn't they be shot or imprisoned? Why are you affirming through inaction the lawbreakers, rather than giving support to those distressed settlers who are acting within the confines of a democracy?" (Ramon's answer: "The soldiers don't understand the new rules as yet.")

Some in the Israeli peace movement describe what is happening as a Jewish pogrom. When a Palestinian kills an Israeli, thousands of West Bank settlers feel free to shoot, to beat, to burn buildings or crops, to disrupt traffic and break windows of Palestinian owned cars, and generally to terrorize the Palestinian population. The settlers justify these behaviors by talking about their fears of the newly created Palestinian police force, who they believe will be a legitimized form of "terrorism," life-threatening. "If they attempt to stop me on the road for a traffic violation," more than one settler declares, "I will shoot first."

Fear and negativity show up in obvious ways everywhere I go. Spending an evening with journalist friends who have covered the West Bank and Gaza for years, I find that they aren't in the least sympathetic to the Palestinians' anger toward and fear of the settlers. "I gave seven years of my life to keeping an open heart for those Palestinians and their plight," Daphna says. "Now I don't want to hear about the settlers from them: I want to hear announcements about their commissioners, I want to hear about how they're organizing their new state." Her husband, who has written some of the most sensitive and respected essays all through the intifada, agrees: "This is their moment; they have to grab it now, organize. Maybe they'll surprise us, maybe they'll blow it; this is their chance."

Judah Passow is a dedicated photographer who, when covering a story, lives for long stretches in the West Bank or Gaza. Israeli born, he's usually passionate about Palestinian rights. As we sit around the dinner table, he says: "A good revolution has structures in place, anticipates that someday they'll win, and then what? The main priorities now are not, or we hope are not, continued lamentation about Israeli intransigence; that's old news, not the wisest way to focus their energies. They've got two or four weeks to put their infrastructure in place, to get their economists, water and road commissioners together."

Daphna is leaning over her dining room table, head in hands, irritable: "I don't want to hear them whining now, I want to see them acting responsibly, creatively."

Are these passionate, concerned journalists comparing the Palestinian disorganization and seeming lassitude to our Jewish beginnings in 1948? "We put it together overnight," Judah says.

"To create a state, you don't whine, you plan," Daphna reiterates.

I stop off to see Judith Green, a dialogue group organizer who lives in Abu Tor. She's about to leave for a peace conference in the Philippines. Unlike the journalists, she is saddened and perplexed by the latitude and attention the Israeli government has been giving to the settlers. "I just can't understand it, the constant television programs about settlements, underscoring their pride, lavishing attention on them; A.B. Yehoshua and Amos Oz and Shulamith Aloni of all people, visiting them, reminding them how important they are, almost courting them. What those settlers are doing to the Palestinians is illegal; why is Rabin coddling them?"

So many people I talk to have retreated from optimism; they are either paranoid or pessimistic or both. Dropping in for a short visit with my next-door neighbors, an unusually loving couple in their seventies, I drop into yet another take on the situation. Moshe Ben Giat is a well-known real estate magnate, Israeli born, macho to the core. He sees Shimon Peres's name on the cover of the copy of TIKKUN I'm carrying; this sight drives him to distraction. These neighbors, invariably kind and loving, no matter how we differ politically, are like the best grandparents: always ready

to help with those myriad details of daily life that are hard to navigate as a Hebrew illiterate, a powerful family who, once they take you into their hearts, are forever on your side.

"They're killing us," he says, referring to the government. "You know nothing. You have no idea what those Arabs do." Walking around the apartment in true grief, he begins his familiar but now highly intensified talk about all the Arabs who've tried to kill him, and all those wars and fights and skirmishes in which he showed them, "And now they're getting the Jerusalem-Tel Aviv highway," he says, shaking his leonine head, slouching into his leather seat. "They're giving them the Jerusalem-Tel Aviv highway; don't speak to me of Shimon Peres, he's killing us," he says almost in a whisper, his head shaking back and forth, his eyes tightly shut.

Fearing he'll have another heart attack, his wife Helen and I keep saying in unison: "No, they're getting Gaza, not Tel Aviv." "Gaza now, Tel Aviv next; you know nothing," he says to both of us as Helen, a woman with a face lit with rare kindness and love, turns to me and says, "He's been fighting Arabs since he was seventeen years old," as if to say you have to understand. I do understand. His world is coming unhinged.

"They want a smaller country and they want us to celebrate. The government is killing us and they think we don't understand. *You* don't understand, you give an Arab a finger, they take a hand. No one loves a Jew. Nowhere. Who helped us during the Holocaust? No one, they want our money, or for us to make money for them. What does the world care for Jews?"

Helen and I underscore our agreement that no country cared about Auschwitz. "You see, she agrees with you," Helen says, winking at me, while Moshe's eyes remain clamped shut, a portrait of a man in mourning. He's been sitting with his eyes shut for half an hour now. "She agrees about Auschwitz," Helen repeats, motioning me to change the subject, which we do only with concerted effort. This powerful businessman who usually astounds me by being psychic about life now seems psychotic. "Not Tel Aviv, Gaza," I hear Helen saying as I rush out the door.

Where do you go to get a real dose of optimism? The peace accord is irreversible: That's what the experts all say, that's the conventional wisdom. I've heard these words from Itamar Rabinovich, the Israeli chief negotiator with Syria (and Israeli ambassador to the U.S.), from Haim Ramon, from every random commentator on CNN, from the journalists who've covered this area for decades, from Hanan Ashrawi, the former chief spokesperson for the Palestinian delegation to the Mideast peace talks. So how do you keep your eye on the prize and generate hope when the news is dismal, when it feels like nothing has changed, when the thought occurs that this accord could be just a blip on the landscape of history, which, especially after the festivities, is just humanly painful?

In this interim time, rejectionists in both the Israeli and Palestinian camps have played a skillful game of provoking each other and using their overreactions to argue that the agreement is so deeply flawed as to be useless.

Ha'aretz correspondent Danny Rubenstein, who has been covering the territories for two decades, reminds me that each side has made real symbolic, ideological, and territorial concessions in the Declaration of Principles. The official mutual recognition contains concessions both ways. Now, he explains, each side wants to feel they've gotten something in exchange. Israelis want personal safety; most don't want to live in Nablus or even visit there, but they do want to go to the Old City of Jerusalem, to the Western Wall of the Temple, and be assured that they won't be attacked. The Israeli mindset reasons, "We recognized Arafat and so the killings should stop."

Palestinians want the same kinds of assurances: They know, as do the Israelis, that the economic benefits will take time, but they expect after their compromise that they'll have normal family lives, that their imprisoned friends and family will be freed, that they'll be able to travel, have family reunions, feel improvements in the quality of their lives. Both sides are frustrated that the "other" hasn't met their expectations, that in fact the violence and scapegoating are escalating. Danny seems only marginally concerned with this immediate situation, the intensification of frustrations, the daily killings. "Basically I'm very optimistic," he says, "but it will take a lot of time, there's no way back."

He explains why he's optimistic, on what basis the momentum toward peace seems irreversible. First of all, he says, Israel is less ideological than she used to be, less grounded in biblical thinking and historical rights, more focused on security concerns which are easier to negotiate because they don't have such religious intensity. Security concerns are negotiable

because they are less symbolic, more technical. Then there's the obvious "new world order": the demise of communism, the United States as the only superpower, leaving the Palestinians in the territories less secure without the earlier anti-American bias of the Arab states. The Palestinians have to be more flexible with us because of this insecurity, he tells me.

Moreover, for the younger generation of Palestinians the desire to return to their original homeland is more abstract than for their aging or dead grandparents who had to flee in 1948 (as the Holocaust is more abstract for young Israelis). And finally in these times, land anywhere is less important than capital, an acre isn't what it used to be. Malthus was wrong: Much smaller amounts of land can feed much larger amounts of people. With urbanization, even in this region land will not have the emotional charge it used to have.

We arrive at Hanan Ashrawi's house; she seems much more relaxed than before the accords. I talk to her of Palestinian fears of dictatorship, fears of Arafat that are rampant, and she says: "I don't have time to speak to most Palestinians now, I travel abroad so much, but I would encourage them to get active; you don't correct a nascent society—one without an infrastructure in place—with fear, but with participation, risk-taking, by showing initiative."

"Such a down time," I say. She nods her head, quoting T.S. Eliot: " 'Between the motion and the act falls the Shadow.' This *is* a time of great shadows," she says, but moves immediately to credit Israeli officials—"some of them"—with having made that "imaginative leap" so essential to creating a new epoch, contrasting them with the majority on both sides who can't or haven't shifted "from the old frame of reference into the new one."

I'm sitting in the town of Arram, talking to Simon Khouri, a man in his late fifties who works with the U.N. Khouri used to be a prosperous businessman in Ramallah; now he looks tired and unhappy. "Let me tell you what we got. We got 1 percent of our land and they want us to rejoice. You can quote me here: Now we have Occupation and Arafat to worry about," he says; "now we have two bullies who will work together to strangle us." (This fear of "institutional collaboration," as Carol Rosenberg of the *Miami Herald* calls it, is now a pervasive concern among Palestinians). "Arafat will start waving money and the Palestinians will fight and kill over it," Simon goes on. "Things will only get worse for the ordinary Palestinian. Mark my words. The worst is yet to come." (He sounds so much like my neighbor, Mr. Ben Giat; although his words express opposite fears, the mood they create is identical).

Conversations in My Mind and on the Page: Journalists and Theorists

Many journalists and political commentators covering the Middle East, while not immune to the highly contagious ups and downs of the breaking news, have achieved a wisdom about the deeper process. I interviewed Sari Nussibeh in East Jerusalem during the height of the deportation crisis a year ago, another time when the mood was cataclysmic, and he said quietly, with princely charm, "It's a process," meaning that there are deeper currents from which each "event" emerges. There's an underflow, an invisible river running beneath all these events. As if tracing a dream, he went on: "The process has its own trajectory; yes, something could derail it, but it's unlikely because the forces toward forming two states have long been in motion. A healthy outcome, while not absolutely inevitable, is highly likely."

Carol Rosenberg, the Mideast correspondent for The *Miami Herald*, concurs, dismissing Palestinian grandstanding. "I don't care what they think—the Israelis or the Palestinians—or even what they feel; all that matters is what they do." Talking to Carol, who has covered the Middle East for nine years, we wondered together about these "fearful symmetries" between the two cultures every journalist sees, about whether some of the intensified fighting between Palestinians and Israelis isn't an expression of each society's fear of facing its own internal divisions and contradictions. Demonizing serves organizing, we agree. If the problem is all the "Other," how hard it is to look at oneself; how addictive, how convenient, how frightening to let that "Other" go.

Back in the States for Thanksgiving week, reading magazine coverage of the accords' progress, I find that writers and theoreticians observing Israel from outside seem less insightful than those writing from within. Distance alone apparently does not confer depth perspective. Nowhere in the pages of the latest *New Republic*, *Progressive*, or *Commentary*—three magazines with cover stories on the accords—do I find that imaginative leap of faith. Rather, these experts seem ready to bury the accords before they've been implemented.

Not only do these magazines fail to capture the texture of life in Israel; they distort with their certainties a world that is now in the grip of myriad ambiguities. A good example of the quasi-certainty that kills hope even as it pretends to be impartial and analytical is Eliot A. Cohen's essay in the December 6 issue of the *New Republic* titled "The Cheaters: How Middle East Peace Could Get Picked Apart-Now."

Cohen leads with a quote from Ambrose Bierce: "Peace, n. In international affairs, a period of cheating between two periods of fighting." My mouth hangs open; while we want to avoid false hope or ungrounded optimism, this author's perspective is not realism but a destructive and as yet unwarranted pessimism.

Cohen also misinforms, glossing over the realities of life in the West Bank and Gaza. Only someone writing at a remove from events on the ground could write: "... the IDF's performance has been remarkably good: it achieved its objective of containing the (intifada) violence (it could not hope to suppress it altogether) while operating reasonably close to the standards of humanity required by Israeli law and conscience." Has he tried to connect to the Palestinians' reality, or would it muddle his certainty? Equally astounding is his certainty about the settlers. Apparently unaware of the various schemes the Labor Party is considering, Cohen insists that "a forcible evacuation of these settlements is virtually unthinkable, as is their placement under Palestinian jurisdiction."

The underlying assumption in The *New Republic, Commentary*, and other magazines of the Right and center is that the deepest roots of the conflict are in Arab rejection of Israel and Jewish fears for security, a completely asymmetrical view passing out of vogue even in the mainstream press. (Ethan Bronner's November 24 article in the *Boston Globe*, for example, documents new proof of Israel's violent expulsion of Palestinians in 1948.)

I'm outraged, not because our viewpoints differ but because Cohen's predictions and certainty, so typical of attitudes I've encountered in the mainstream American Jewish community (and among their official representatives I met at the White House accords ceremony last September), are based on a mix of speculation, misinformation, and strong bias toward his *fantasy* of Israel. These self-defined "friends of Israel," to the extent that they give implicit support to the hard-liners, will only prolong the agony of Israelis

Moving Toward Dignity

Lawrence L. Langer

Since the broader perspective of Jewish history, Jewish destiny, the meaning of Zionism, and the meaning of Judaism did nothing to prevent the mass-murder of European Jewry in the twentieth century, I think it would be foolish and incautious to view the current Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations as the first step in the evolution of what you call a "transformative event." Redemption may grow out of the sharing of love, but the Versailles Treaty after World War I and the Potsdam Accords after World War II should have taught us by now that negotiations like the ones under discussion represent a sharing of power, not love, accompanied perhaps by some grudging and mistrustful concessions—like the reluctant handshake we all witnessed—that only the most incorrigible romantic could interpret as "the beginning of the flourishing of a redemptive tendency within Judaism or Jewish history." Cynics may well maintain in the future that economic advantage was the main driving force behind these negotiations. Peace, security, and a more honorable justice than the one now in force are worthy enough as goals to justify almost any more practical and less idealistic means to achieve them.

But my enthusiasm for the short-term prospects that may accompany a successful conclusion of the negotiations is not joined by any sense of the deep personal significance of these events. My reading of contemporary history warns me that a change in leadership on either side could ignite suppressed resentments and undo the gain at any time. Just as the pains of the Holocaust are not undone by reparations, apologies, or even the passage of time, so the pain generated by decades of hostility between Israelis and Palestinians cannot be undone simply by the agreement on both sides that it is time to try a more reasonable approach. Forgiveness may be too much to ask; but for me mutual respect for present and future generations, if not for past ones, is itself a sufficient achievement, a liberating movement toward the restoration of dignity to two cultures that have suffered enough in its behalf.

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and Palestinians. Cohen's words directly and subliminally reinforce the "old paradigm" of rampant mistrust and impede his educated American readers from moving toward that "leap" Shimon Peres, Hanan Ashrawi, and anyone interested in progress toward peace agree is essential. If we do not dismantle the entrenched symmetry of Jew- and Arab-bashing, if such polemics continue unabated, this peace accord might indeed become a blip on the screen of Mideast history instead of its defining moment.

In the guise of reporting their thoughts, Eliot Cohen and his ilk create the very reality they claim to fear. If Eliot Cohen throws wet bricks at the peace accords, David Bar Ilan in the lead "story" in *Commentary* shoots his predictable "scud" at the process: "Make no mistake," he assures us at the end of his calculatedly convincing essay, "when Arafat ["Saddam Hussein's ally and staunchest supporter" he reminds us, lest we forget and move forward] and his associates say 'Next Year in Jerusalem,' they mean it." No subtlety, no mystery, no possibility of anything ever changing.

There are disheartening symmetries between this Jewish pessimism and that of many Palestinian thinkers. After all, the two societies share much in their mirroring political schisms and paranoid projections on the ground as well as in the realm of ideas. In a recent issue of The *Progressive*, Edward Said has the cover story, "A Palestinian Versailles," illustrated with a collage of a caged bird composed of pieces of a torn map of the Middle East. Said encourages us in the first paragraph to look at the peace accords "with the common sense it requires," revealing them as lopsided and flawed. He focuses on the "truly astonishing proportions of the Palestinian capitulation." Because Said, a poetic writer, offers insight and critical analysis of his own culture, much of what he says is palatable to me. His notion that "Having a state is much less important than the kind of state it is" seems on the mark at a time when both peoples need to redefine their basic ontology. Yet this essay exudes a tone of wariness and regret at opportunities lost that may well undermine hope altogether.

These accords, however flawed, are all we have. They present an opportunity for all of us to shift frames of reference. Our optimism and courage, badly needed now, are so fragile and yet potentially so powerful. And the leaders on both sides who made this bold leap now seem confused about how to make it manifest so that their people can feel hope. On bad days, I wonder: Did that handshake wring it all out of them?

I share the viewpoint of many of the journalists who live and work in Israel: This may be a good time to ignore or discount what the other side thinks, while reaching out for those mutual areas of work and kindness that touch us in our optimism of the will. Blind optimism has grave dangers, but in these two cultures, it's hard to imagine that if we drop our pessimism for a time it won't be available to us if we need to retrieve it. I wonder if optimism of the will might not come first now, letting pessimism of the intellect retreat for a time to the shadows.

Think of the way many political commentators were burying Bill Clinton before his tenure as President was even minimally underway, before he found his presidential feet. I hope we do not bury these peace accords with our collective brilliance. Pray we do not doom them before we allow ourselves time and space to breathe life into them.

December 13: Conversations in Jericho

I'm sitting with Ishtaq Shawa, a grocer in Jericho—an educated man, a chemical engineer who speaks three languages. He's influential in his community, a man emotionally attached to every micromovement of hope this process, at its best, generates. Today he shows me the daily feature, "Twenty Years Ago," in *Al Quds*, the leading Arabic newspaper here. "It's all exactly the same. Don't talk to me of peace today, talk to me of war," a phrase I've heard from many today, including friends covering Gaza and Hebron.

For many months now, Shawa has been encouraging his neighbors, cousins, friends, and customers toward hope. They credit him with an ability to read between the lines of the news, to catch the deepest currents. Now he feels like a fool. Last night neither he nor his wife could sleep, he tells me, as he begins to soften, for he's been barking at journalists all day (Jericho today seems to have ten journalists for every one Palestinian). Now, late in the afternoon, he's feeling some chagrin. For he has developed a vested interest in generating the hope that, despite himself, he still harbors. Even after the news that at the last moment Arafat and Rabin had called off the troop withdrawals scheduled to begin today, Shawa expected at least symbolic signs of peace. Instead what he saw was occupation intensified: more troops staking new tents on the hill above his shop.

"My mind is at war with my heart," Shawa tells me. "In my heart I believe the Israelis are not really going to ever recognize us or trust us; yet my mind says, O.K., maybe in ten days. . . ." I watch him actively resist caving in to the anti-Israel and anti-Jewish views rising in him, the result of the day's frustration, his own disappointment. Yes, he knows he's off, "nervous." He's suffering from a mild version of what the extremists

feel—the certainty that the Israelis cannot be trusted. (Of course, the Israelis have parallel fears, believe that the Palestinians are not yet ready to take control. Yet in terms of power, this is one area of extreme asymmetry. For we Jews in Israel live a life full of freedoms and opportunities, under a democratic government, replete with a sound infrastructure; a wonderfully vital society. The Palestinians have none of the above—have almost nothing at all.

"When you really want anything, you make it happen," Shawa says. There are a hundred solutions or ways to compromise if you are determined. I'm sorry to

A Post-Zionist Discourse?

Laurence J. Silberstein

For those of us, Americans and Israelis alike, who believed that Zionist discourse had provided the most effective means for conceptualizing Jewish identity—our relationship to the narratives of the Jewish past and the realities of the Jewish present—the period since 1967 has been both painful and bewildering. In the wake of the occupation, the invasion of Lebanon, and the Intifada, our faith in Zionism's effectiveness as a life-shaping discourse has been steadily eroding. This erosion has been exacerbated by the post-modernist deconstruction of nationalist meta-narratives in general, and the specific deconstruction of the Zionist meta-narrative by Israeli historians, journalists, and cultural critics in particular.

Ironically, it fell to Yitzhak Rabin, an unlikely theorist of Jewish life, to deliver a crowning blow to the prevailing Zionist discourse. Unlike his predecessors, whose views of Zionism and Jewish history were a product of European social, cultural, and political conditions, Rabin's sense of Jewish identity and history is a product of the Middle East. Through word and deed, he has effectively undercut the old rhetoric of Jews as perennial victims, David against Goliath, and Esau hates Jacob, replacing it with a more daring, imaginative, albeit pragmatic rhetoric. In this rhetoric and in the actions that complement it, we sense a different, bolder understanding of Jewish power and our relationship to the Arab Other.

In the midst of our rejoicing, Rabin, intentionally or not, is forcing American Jews to confront the peculiar brand of neurosis which has prevented us from confronting the actual conditions of American Jewish life. Differing significantly from the distorted Zionist version posited by A.B. Yehoshua, our neurosis is a function of our obsession with the images of the Holocaust and Israel. For most American Jews, the relationship to these images is vicarious. Nevertheless, we have grounded our communal existence on a discourse built around them, the effectiveness of which is rapidly eroding before our very eyes.

The new, courageous Israeli response to changing political realities will, if successful, create conditions that no longer allow us to conceal the internal fissures and contradictions of American Jewish life. Just as Israelis are being compelled to confront issues buried since 1948 beneath the mounds of military threats and defense needs, we American Jews must now address issues of Jewish identity and culture long buried beneath the rhetoric of Never Again and Israel Besieged. Reading the handwriting on the wall, leaders of American Jewish organization are already seeking new slogans with which to motivate their members and alternative legitimations with which to justify their survival.

Thus, if changing political realities are rendering contemporary Jewish discourse problematic, they are also forging new opportunities. 1967 had the effect of awakening American Jewry to its responsibilities to Israel. Perhaps 1993 will awaken us to the urgent need for a new discourse, one that is suitable for creative Jewish life in a pluralistic, democratic society.

For many years, in both Israel and the United States, there has been evidence of a growing quest for a post-Zionist discourse. The peace process has sharpened many of the issues that fuel such a quest. This post-Zionist discourse, while building upon Zionist discourse, moves beyond it in search of more adequate ways to talk about Jewish culture, identity, and history.

Those among us who remain unswerving in our commitment to Israel's survival and who continue to remember and reflect upon the implications of the Holocaust should be made to understand that this commitment and these memories do not have the power to sustain an American Jewish discourse. In a post-Zionist era we need other narratives, other memories, other images around which to construct such a discourse. While it is up to the Israelis to struggle to make the peace process work, it is up to us to respond to the challenge that follows in its wake and that is directed at us.

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say but I believe now that the Israelis just want to humiliate us, to tease us, and then to laugh at us, saying with their actions: You people are only good for dreams; we'll throw you a dream and then we'll step on it."

Forgetting in his pain that I'm Jewish, Shawa leans forward and adds, "Well, maybe the Jews only know trouble, war. Look at their history; why so much trouble wherever they go?"

His question does not feel to me like the anti-Semitism of Europe, Russia, or elsewhere in the world—a disease that flourishes, like Elvis sightings, independent of reality. This variety of anti-Semitism is bred from experience and needs to be fought in a different way—a distinction I'm not sure the Israeli government or much of the population makes. Shawa's anti-Jewish sentiment, which is palpable today all through the territories, and is especially fierce in Gaza, is born of daily humiliations, denigrations, and persecution by Jews far more than from abstract ideas.

The poignant side to Shawa and people like him who struggle to feel hope is that he wants a Palestinian society "just like Israel." He scorns and deeply fears a Palestinian "entity" that in any way emulates the unjust societies of the Arab world. Like many Palestinians, he wants democracy, a two-party state that allows dissent, free press, and free speech. But just as the daunting task of building these longed-for institutions is about to fall to his people, he is focused again on imagined Jewish machinations, expending his energies in rage against the Jews. What choice does he have?

Earlier in the day, I was walking in East Jerusalem, down a side street with Suher Ismael, a wisp of a woman who is in fact a study in no-nonsense strength. Suher is a filmmaker who lives in the Daheisha refugee camp. She is involved in a peace project with three other Palestinians and four Israelis, each of whom is chronicling the peace process by filming their lives and thoughts day by day.

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For the Time Being, Forget Memory

James E. Young

"Does the mutual recognition between Palestinians and Israelis matter to the future of the Jewish people, our self-understanding, our Judaism?"

Yes, but in profoundly double-edged ways. For we are being asked simultaneously to remember events we have not regarded as our own and to forget events that have been too much a part of our past. Until the Zionist revolution, our very idea of Jewish history, not to mention the covenant itself, was intertwined with the assumption that we are an acted-upon people. "I am the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt," i.e., you know me by what I have done for you (and to you). "Remember what Amalek did to you," i.e., remember what the enemies of Israel have always done to you. In 1949, this changed when Israel transformed itself from the meek little leaf shuddering in the wind to the wind itself. Even so, it has taken almost two generations to get used to both this active role in history and to the responsibilities that come with it.

For the first time, we are being asked to remember the pain and suffering that have accompanied the Palestinians' displacement from their homeland and our negation of their national aspirations. This hurts not just because our own past makes us so sensitive to the pain of others but also because we are now being asked to recognize our own part in causing this pain: that is, our history has consequences for others around us. In this way, we are being asked to consider the possibility that Jewish history is not just a history of Jews but of our neighbors as well.

At the same time, and here is the other painful edge, we are being asked to forget the years of terror and negation perpetrated on Jews by the Palestinians. For as long as we remember too well, that outstretched hand will always be a bloody one and thus forbidden. In effect, we are attempting to change the very rules by which we have understood ourselves as Jews—a people constituted by our relation to a vociferously remembered past. Indeed, we are being asked not only to forget this past but, in a twist on the Passover refrain, to remember the Palestinians' past as if it were our own. It turns out that if we want history to proceed and not merely circle back on itself, we have to forget it for a little while. Or, in the words of Nietzsche, "there is a time to remember and a time to forget." If we are going to make peace, now is the time for a little of each.

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Violence and the De-Meaning of America

Michael S. Roth

When the philosopher Eric Weil joined the French army at the start of World War II, he was given a common French name—safer than "Weil" when fighting the Nazi invasion. Denounced by one of his fellow prisoners of war and exposed as a Jew, Weil barely survived the years of captivity. At the war's end, he returned to France and immediately began work on what would become his magnum opus, *The Logic of Philosophy*. For Weil, the task of philosophy was to find meaning and direction in the world, but in order to do so it had to confront its greatest adversary, violence. Thus, the first section of *The Logic of Philosophy* is devoted to violence, the Other of philosophy and the alternative to reason.

For Weil, there was a primordial choice between reason and violence. He knew very well that reason could be employed in the service of violence, and that violence was for many an important device in their attempts to actualize reason in the world. But Weil was deeply concerned with the radical violence that was a rejection of language, of community, of politics—in short, a rejection of the possibility of giving our lives a meaning and direction (*sens*, in French) that could be shared in discourse. Weil saw philosophy as preserving the longing for shared meaning and direction in conditions of fundamental uncertainty. He saw politics as the action that grew out of that longing.

I started thinking about Weil again in the aftermath of the Los Angeles trial of Damien Williams and Henry Watson—"the Reginald Denny beating trial." Denny was dragged from his truck in South Central L.A. and brutally attacked in the hours after the four white police officers were acquitted of charges in the beating of Rodney King. The chant, "No justice, no peace," rang out all over the country. The acquittal of the police officers was an incredible acceptance of violence and was thus understood by many as a denial of meaning and direction in our society. No meaning, only violence.

The attack on Denny can be read as part of an uprising of the oppressed against a symbol of their oppressors. But we can also view Denny's beating as Weil saw violence: as another denial of meaning, as a refusal to see the world as having any significance, any direction. In a meaningless world, things—and people—can be smashed, crushed, destroyed without loss. There is nothing to mourn, nothing to repair.

One of the most striking aspects of the trials stemming from the King and Denny beatings was that the acts of violence had been captured on videotape. We saw those beatings, and the juries saw them, countless times. The defense lawyers in both trials apparently found that repeated screenings of the videos immunized the jurors against the horror of seeing someone brutally beaten. The tapes could be fast-forwarded, slow-motioned, enhanced, stopped at any moment. After

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several viewings, the horror apparently wore off.

Can it be that when we first see these tapes we recognize the people in them as being somehow connected to us, as sharing our world? When we see them brutalized we feel ourselves, our world, attacked. We recognize the violence as a denial of the meaning and direction we find in our world. But as we see these tapes again and again, we become increasingly detached from what they record. The gruesome events no longer belong to our world. They happen somewhere else, in a place where they don't have to count for us. The threat that the violence poses to our ability to make sense of our world evaporates in the repetition that immunizes us from care.



Repetition creates the music (or is it only the noise?) that allows us to pass through an atmosphere of violence without paying the least attention to it. Violence becomes inaudible, unrecognizable in its senseless repetition. Through repetition, actions lose their vital force and, as Milan Kundera puts it, they cross the border into meaninglessness. On a weekend in Los Angeles, twenty people are murdered. Every weekend. Of course, for all those who are immediately affected by these attacks, there is nothing inaudible about them. They come crashing down to disrupt or destroy families, friendships, networks of relationships. But for those who are not forced to feel these losses, and who do not think of themselves as immediately at risk, the attacks may seem as distant as what happens on the video machine. Another world that can be stopped, ejected, and exchanged.

In his effort to make mainstream America think about violence as more than an evil force to be contained by building more prisons, President Clinton rightly has talked about the epidemic of violence as an important national health issue. The President, by couching talk of violence in terms of health, has made it clear to the American people that they pay monetarily as well as emotionally and physically for the effects of violence. Speaking last November in Memphis at the church where Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. preached the night before he was assassinated, the President stressed that 37,000 of our co-citizens die of gunshot wounds each year, and most of them are without insurance. Thus, the violence should be relevant to most citizens because we pay its medical costs.

Linking violence to economics may be a rhetorically successful strategy, but ascribing the primary significance of violence to dollars and cents would signify an extremely impoverished notion of citizenship. The violence in our society should matter to us because our co-citizens are dying. But the increasing incidence of violence in our world has had the effect of obscuring our connections to one another. The prevalence of senseless brutality numbs us to the plight of others, lessening the care that is a necessary ingredient for a community, a citizenry. Too many of us function as isolated particularities, doing our best to ensure our personal safety and that of our families and distancing ourselves from those who cannot do so, who are at ever greater risk of becoming victims. We see them only as distant figures on the screen.

In his Memphis speech, President Clinton was not purely economistic; he passionately addressed this crisis of caring. At the pulpit from which Dr. King told us he had seen the promised land from the mountaintop, Clinton described what he termed a "crisis of spirit" in the United States. Dr. King had told his followers that he saw the end of the journey; they had sacrificed, they had struggled, but he could see that they were nearing that place from which sacrifice and struggle would be made fully meaningful. This was the promise he made in Memphis in 1968. Clinton, in contrast, went to Memphis to describe struggles in the darkness, destruction without reason, and lives that end without hope. He went to Memphis to diagnose our "public pathology"—meaningless lives across the border of repetition. Exposing this border by invoking the memory of Dr. King, President Clinton asked us to make his memory powerful again by restoring to our public lives the meaning and direction they had lost in the years since his death. In stepping up to that pulpit, Clinton acknowledged this loss as he also attempted to tap into one of our deepest resources of transformation.

But of course it will take more than symbolic gestures to help us to begin to rescue our public life from the effects of violence. It will take more than powerful memory to combat the flood of brutality that

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Who "Owns" the Life of the Spirit?

David Bollier

Save America! Bring back God and religion!

The message that launched the religious Right into its current high-flying orbit fifteen years ago is now "going wide," as they say in the movie business. Not only are journalistic circles abuzz with talk about religion in American life, the Clintons are making bold forays into this territory as well. The First Lady broached the topic in her now-famous "politics of meaning" speech last April in Austin. And early this fall President Clinton called for renewed religious involvement in public life, dispensing lavish praise on Stephen L. Carter's new book, *The Culture of Disbelief: How American Law and Politics Trivialize Religious Devotion*. (The portrait of Clinton recently unveiled at Yale Law School depicts him holding Carter's book.)

This new enthusiasm for public discussion about religion, God, and the life of the spirit is filled with great promise; it offers a rare chance for Americans to contemplate deeper meanings in our secular society, perhaps leading to moral and political renewal. But already there are disturbing signs that the public discourse about faith will once again be used in all the wrong ways: to sow seeds of division, to claim divine sanction for partisan political agendas, to degrade the sanctity of some people's search for higher meaning. What is particularly alarming is the unexamined assumption that only credentialized religionists are qualified to talk about the spiritual crisis of our time. Those who don't speak a validated form of God-talk risk being ignored, dismissed, or ridiculed for being spiritually deficient.

The larger issue is the integrity of American religious pluralism. Just as the disintegration of the Soviet state unleashed a riot of destabilizing tribalisms, so it is with the decline of the white, male, Protestant monoculture that so confidently held sway in this nation for generations. As never before, an increasing number of the nation's 1,600 recognized religions are asserting themselves in public life, asking for recognition of their own sacred concerns. And spiritual searchers with no ties to organized religion are proliferating in number and visibility. One need only look at the explosion of books on such topics as mind/body healing, cultural myths, "after-death experiences," New Age regimens, and spirituality in business to realize that this is a broad-based, robust movement.

But will the dominant religious voices in our culture honor this broad diversity of conscience? The facts suggest that our nation's nominal commitment to *E pluribus unum* will be sorely tested in the years ahead. At stake is who will "own" the life of the spirit.

There is no question that the resurgence of religious participation in public life is a legitimate and generally healthy development. Throughout American history, religious voices have provided a rich source of moral renewal, inspiring the anti-slavery, civil rights, anti-Vietnam War, and nuclear freeze movements. The tradition is so esteemed, in fact, that the pro-choice and "Christian family" movements now both claim to be its legitimate heirs and standard-bearers.

What few celebrants of the new religious activism care to acknowledge, however, is that a truly robust spiritual pluralism itself creates new problems—problems that we have barely begun to acknowledge, let alone grapple with. The nominal pluralism of the past—the "melting pot"—did not truly confront America's rich diversity of faiths. Its idea of progressive-minded pluralism was the "Judeo-Christian ethic," a contrivance that often did not extend the mantle of respectability to heterodox sects or non-religionists. The religious pluralism of America today—in which Buddhists outnumber Episcopalians, "new religious movements" are proliferating, and mystical creeds run the gamut from angels to twelve-step groups—is another matter entirely.

In the 1980s, Lutheran theologian Richard John Neuhaus gained considerable notice for arguing that

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Americans live in a "naked public square," a culture devoid of religious symbols and meaning. In practice, Neuhaus used this arresting metaphor to misdiagnose the secularization of public life. He blamed secularization on left-wing governmental elites (a charge that rings hollow after twelve years of Presidents Reagan and Bush) and on liberals who supposedly misused the First Amendment to ban nativity scenes on town greens and prayer in the schools, resulting in today's moral chaos. (Neuhaus has little to say about the great engines of free enterprise that have denuded the public square in their own way by glorifying hedonistic consumption.)

A real intolerance often lies behind public piety: Instead of a vehicle for healing and reconciliation, religion is a moralistic cudgel for beating up on one's political opponents.

The most pernicious and distortive charge made by Neuhaus and the religious Right is that civil libertarians are secularist bullies seeking to expunge every last vestige of religion from public life. They complain that the First Amendment never intended a naked public square. But what the Right has trouble accepting is America's actual religious pluralism and the role of the First Amendment in protecting it.

The First Amendment does not mandate a naked public square, liberals retort. It simply demands that government not favor one religion over another financially, legally, or symbolically. Otherwise, religious groups are free to participate fully in public life—while also (it is hoped) honoring the spirit of the First Amendment by respecting other religions. Indeed, by avoiding government entanglement with religion and the rule of majoritarian faiths, the First Amendment makes religious liberty all the more robust.

Yet even liberals have not really grappled with the cultural issues that lie beyond this constitutional debate. As the civil rights movement has learned, the protections of law can be subverted by a hostile culture that rejects the spirit of the law. Even with First Amendment protections, therefore, one wonders whether our religiously diverse culture can begin to develop a common spiritual and moral vision. How can dozens of incommensurable faith claims be reconciled in our national culture without unleashing a sectarian free-for-all?

These are not idle questions. Many religious voices ardently proclaim a creed of "religious liberty for me, but not for thee" (to adapt Nat Hentoff's phrase). The religious Right, most notably, openly seeks to "Christianize America" and does not cringe from blasting its adversaries as satanic, anti-Christian infidels. Its vision of government is well captured by the words of a Christian Pledge of Allegiance recited by many on the religious Right: "Life and liberty for those who believe." Hardly the stuff of democratic renewal.

Liberals, in their understandable zeal to counter the religious Right's political excesses, have generally responded by hoisting up the First Amendment. It is a vital rejoinder, to be sure, well-supported by history. Yet there is more at stake in this debate than

politics or constitutional law, and liberals ought to be among the first to recognize this.

There are also spiritual issues at stake. Our secular, scientific, market-driven technological culture *has* lost a sense of the sacred mystery of life. The religious Right is not alone in sensing that our vast heterogeneous culture is spinning wildly out of control, not just in an administrative sense ("things just don't work any more"), but in a profoundly moral and spiritual sense. How can a conscientious civil libertarian begin to grapple with this deeper truth while not forsaking cherished constitutional values?

Few liberals have shown much relish for this dilemma, which helps account for the attention that has greeted Carter's *The Culture of Disbelief*. To his great credit, Carter talks openly, unashamedly, of the importance of faith in public life—its legitimacy, its moral importance, its potential for democratic renewal. He celebrates the metaphysical potency of religion, and its "extraordinary power of resistance" against state authority. What secularists may see as irrational, Carter quite properly sees as an alternative way of knowing, with its own mystical logic and magisterial wisdom.

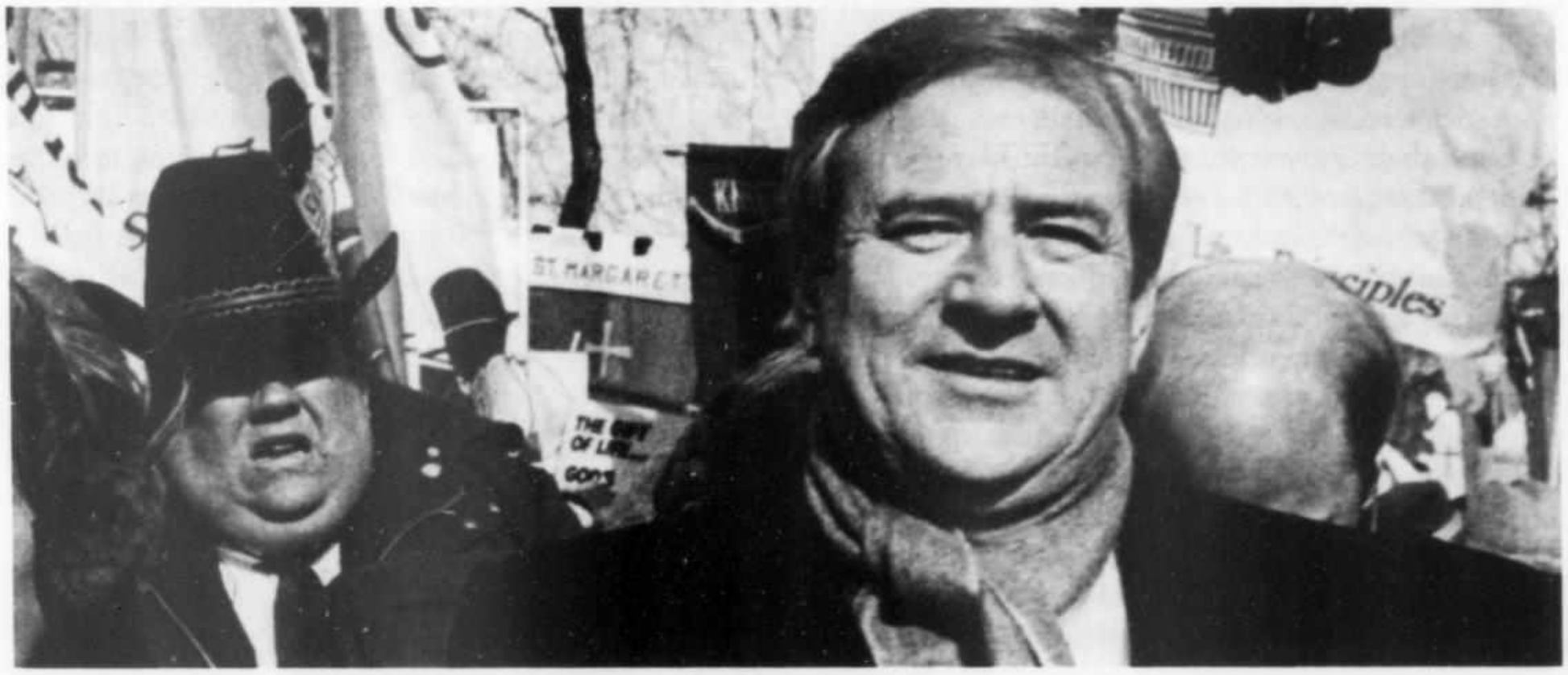
All of these themes offer timely, compelling instruction for our time. Too bad, then, that Carter diminishes the credibility of his arguments by engaging in some unseemly partisan sniping and historical revisionism.

Carter's challenge is how to make a compelling case for religious participation in public life when the most notable contemporary religious activists—Pat Robertson, Donald Wildmon, the LaHayes, Phyllis Schlafly, Pat Buchanan, and other religious Right stalwarts—espouse such odious views. His basic strategy is to affirm the value of religious activism in the abstract, purportedly eschewing partisan judgments.

Yet in his zeal to defend religiosity *per se*, Carter's partisan biases become clear. He blames liberals for their supposed hostility to religion over the past twenty years, despite their steadfast support for the First Amendment and despite the activism of liberal religious leaders such as Jesse Jackson, Theodore Hesburgh, Robert Drinan, and others (whose prominence Carter perversely maintains is "a symptom of the problem, not evidence against its existence").

The great unresolved question is how to establish a new cultural ethos of respect for all manners of spiritual pilgrimage.

At the same time, Carter generally discounts the actual menace posed by the religious Right. This results in some serious misjudgments of contemporary politics. Carter asserts, for example, that the "fundamentalist Christian Right has lost much and perhaps most of its power." Yet Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition is now the largest political organization in the country; it expected to have one million dues-paying members at the end of 1993, which would make it larger than either the Democratic or Republican National Committees. The coalition is waging many vigorous and effective crusades against gay rights and "anti-Christian" school curricula and textbooks. It has sponsored dozens of "stealth candidacies" for local elected offices, begun new



advocacy against health-care reform and environmentalism, and is making a surprisingly effective new outreach to minorities.

While bashing liberals for their supposed anti-religion animus, particularly since *Roe v. Wade* in 1973, Carter never seems to recognize that mainstream perceptions of "religion" have a lot to do with what "religion" does. If the Catholic Church and the religious Right choose to bear witness to their faith in the political arena, as is their prerogative, it is not unreasonable for the public to judge their political views, tactics, and rhetoric. And if the public finds that advocacy distasteful… well, that's democracy.

Carter insists on seeing liberal hostility toward the religious Right as simple secularist bigotry. Liberals are hypocrites, he essentially argues, because they themselves once invoked deep religious commitments in their crusades against the Vietnam War, racial segregation, and nuclear arms. Activist religious leaders such as Martin Luther King, Jr., William Sloane Coffin, and the Berrigan brothers, Carter argues, were "rarely… accused of trying to take over the Democratic party for narrow religious ends. Probably the reason was that the causes in which the word of God was enlisted were causes that were more popular, particularly among the opinion makers who have ever since been dumping on Republicans for daring to mix church and state."

Such revisionism is worthy of Dan Quayle. The civil rights movement was assuredly not "popular" in its early years. Nor, for that matter, were the early protests against the Vietnam War, or nuclear arms. They were all highly contentious, uphill struggles with few friends among the "opinion makers"—Carter's rhetorical equivalent for Quayle's "cultural elite." And the Democratic Party hardly embraced liberal religionists of the 1960s the way that the GOP has embraced the religious Right.

Quite simply, the reason that King, Coffin, et al. were not seen as having "narrow religious ends" was because their ends were anything but narrow. Their faith-witness transcended sectarian theology or dogma. It had a trans-religious, inclusivist appeal to the human spirit. It sought "a social order of justice permeated by love," in King's words, and its broad ecumenical support was a demonstration of that fact. Can the same be said for the faith-witness of the religious Right, which claims God's explicit sanction for hateful invective and politically partisan campaigns?

Carter refuses to concede that the GOP's mixing of church and state has been fundamentally different in character—in pernicious ways—than that of 1960s liberals. He has trouble admitting that the religious Right has failed to make religious liberty in America more robust. Rather, they have undermined it at every turn by attacking the very First Amendment jurisprudence that Carter regards as indispensable.

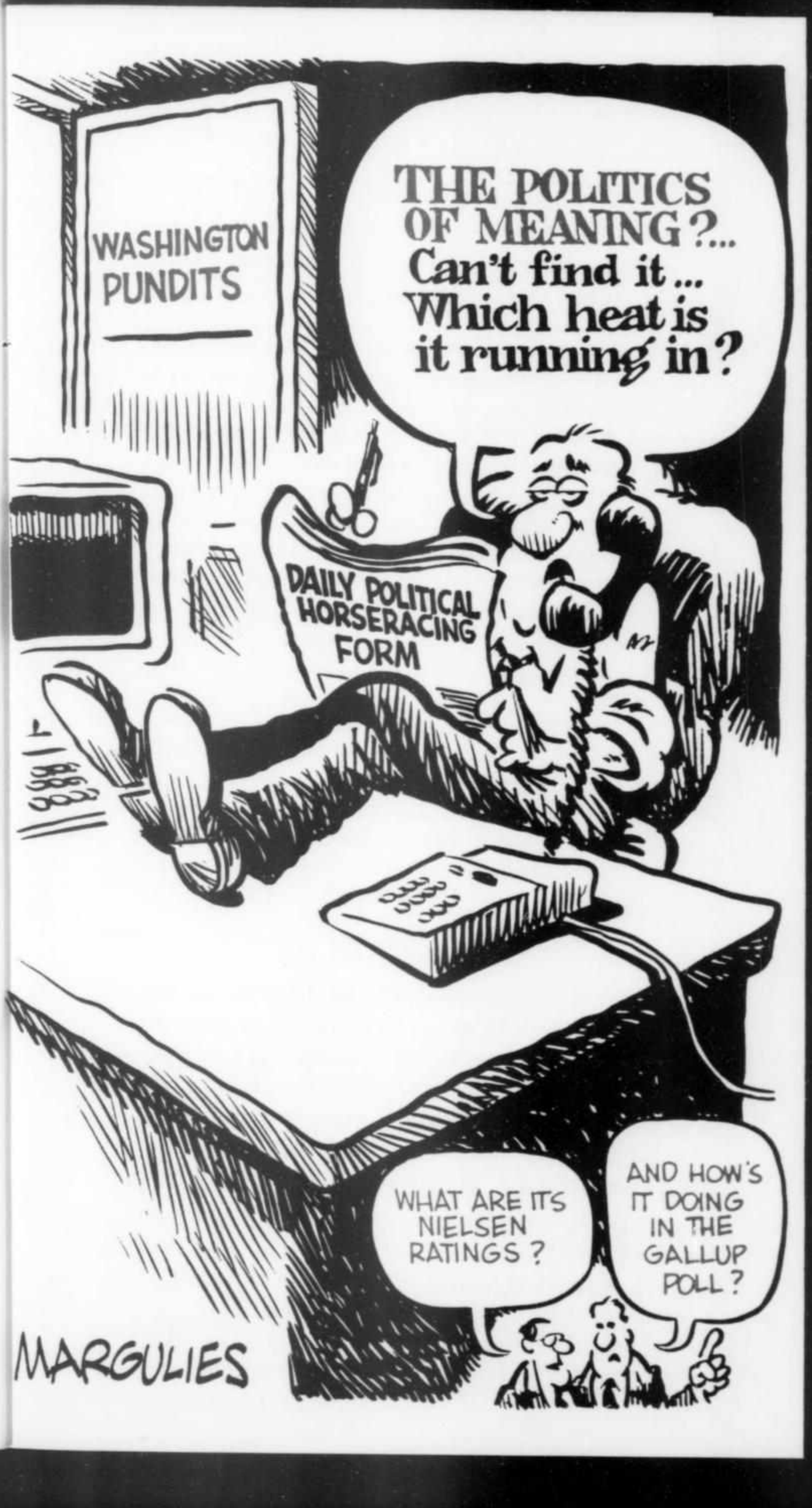
When talking about religious liberty, the central issue is how to nurture a culture of *E pluribus unum*—out of many, one. Unfortunately, like so many academic commentators, Carter has an unwarranted faith in the power of law and politics to resolve matters that reside in the subterranean climes of culture and the human spirit. "Liberty lies in the hearts of men and women; when it dies there, no constitution, no law, no court can save it," said Judge Learned Hand. I worry that the "liberty" that many religionists have in mind could easily overrun the power of the courts, constitutions, and law, especially if they win control of those institutions.

It is certainly possible that a new religiosity in America will help our country find its moral bearings and renew its spiritual vigor. But this begs the question of how a spectrum of very different faiths can live together in a common national culture, whether in the public schools, the military, or politics. How will the dominant, mainstream faiths treat those of other faiths, or the great mass of unaffiliated searchers?

A new birth of religious faith in America will not necessarily renew democracy, as Carter argues, if the faith-witness is marked by interfaith bickering and hostility toward "non-believers." It will only hasten the fragmentation of a culture that desperately needs a unifying ethos. A new public religiosity may simply shift the rancorous multiculturalism debate now raging in academia into the religious arena as well, contributing to the same sorts of mean-spirited barbarism.

The great unresolved question, then, is not just how to nurture religious liberty, but how to establish a new cultural ethos of respect (and not just tolerance) for all manners of spiritual pilgrimage. Only now is our mainstream culture coming to terms with the actual diversity of American religious and ethnic traditions. Not surprisingly, it is difficult for the white, Protestant norms of American culture to accept, let alone celebrate, Muslims on Main Street, Native Americans in the suburbs, and even New Age searchers with offbeat notions of the Divine. Looking from within their respective faith traditions, too many Americans see only doctrinal error and moral confusion in others. (In the religious Right's vocabulary, "spiritual" is a catch-all pejorative for any religious pursuits it considers cultish or New Age.) Unfortunately, too many mainstream

(Continued on p. 89)


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Running in Place
Pushing Past the Market in the Clinton Era

Tom Hayden

We are, all of us, exploring a world that none of us understands. But there are some things we feel, feelings that our prevailing, acquisitive, and competitive corporate life... is not the way of life for us. We're searching for more immediate, ecstatic, and penetrating modes of living.

Hillary Rodham, 1969

The Clinton era wakes me up. I read the morning papers from the East with an eagerness I never felt in the 1980s. Here, for example, were my reactions to simply one recent edition of The *New York Times:*

• *Item: "House, 255 to 175, Votes to Restrict Campaign Spending."* Nothing is more important than to break the stranglehold of the Special Interest State on the democratic process. Clinton may sense this, but he's also a master of the game. Will he challenge Congress on this issue, as he hinted in a recent *Rolling Stone* interview? Or will he accept the token reforms which the Democratic leadership hopes will satisfy the public?

And where are the public interest groups? Why is Common Cause touting the House package as an "important step forward" instead of insisting it doesn't go far enough? The House proposal preserves PACs, the monstrous legacy of the Watergate "reforms," and includes voluntary spending "limits" of $800,000, twice the cost for successful incumbent campaigns in 1992. There are token reforms here, but overall these "reforms" are designed by incumbents for appearance's sake. Progressives should demand more.

• *Item: "Airline Strike Ends as Clinton Steps In."* The outcome is a victory for labor unions and working women. Clinton deserves credit for his role. But why am I nagged by the thought that the President is soothing labor's feelings after crushing them the previous week on the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)? Clinton's action was a welcome reversal of Reagan's approach to the air traffic controllers' strike. But why did he commit his presidency to NAFTA, a global trickle-down concept sure to devastate union wages more than any airline settlement can begin to compensate?

And where is organized labor? Will it continue to mount independent pressure on Clinton, build on its NAFTA alliance with Public Citizen and the Sierra Club, or fold back into the Democrats' conventional and increasingly threadbare "growth" agenda?

• *Item: "Agriculture Department, in Shift, Will Punish Corrupt Contractors."* Hooray. The department says it will stop pumping millions of tax dollars to agribusiness companies convicted of fraud in school lunch programs. But wait: The Agriculture Department is simply complying with President Reagan's 1986 directive.

Why do I think this has something to do with The *New York Times*'s front-page revelations that the department's programs were dominated by corporations guilty of criminal abuse? Under Democrats as well as Republicans, the role of investigative reporters remains critical in making government act as it should.

• *Item: The Brady bill will surely pass, and the President is urging further gun controls.* Terrific. The new public demand for gun control is beginning to turn the tide against the NRA. But it took ten years from the Reagan assassination attempt to pass a bill that requires only a five-day waiting period and a skimpy background check. If Reagan and James Brady had not been shot, would this bill have a chance? The last time Congress acted decisively on gun control was in 1968 to ban the mail-order sale of rifles after the murders of Bobby Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr. Yet I should be thankful for this, especially to the Bradys, and for the President's strong statements.

• *Editorial Item: "China Stiffs the President."* After campaigning for human rights, Clinton decides that a corporate "NAFTA of the Pacific" takes precedence. I find myself agreeing more with A. M. Rosenthal than Bill Clinton on human rights. Will Clinton next June continue "most favored nation" treatment to this slave-labor dictatorship and sell out the people of Tibet? It will

Tom Hayden, a founder of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), is a member of the California State Senate.

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depend on the mobilization of the human-rights and peace activists, whose numbers have dwindled.

These items made the news on November 22, 1993, exactly thirty years after the killing of John F. Kennedy. Are we better off? Is a cycle of change beginning anew?

As with the Kennedy era, Bill Clinton has us moving again. I feel energized even from the stagnant pond of Pete Wilson's Sacramento, knowing there are Democrats, environmentalists, personal friends to work with in Washington after so many years. The phone and fax messages are constant, and I have visited Washington more times this year than in the entire Reagan-Bush era. I can be "at the table," as they say, which certainly beats exclusion.

There is too much gazing... ranging from pure gossip to lamentations that he is not a savior.

Then why is it also so frustrating? The ambivalence in my reactions to the day's news items begins to explain it. It is more painful to push your political friends to do the right thing constantly than it is to rail at people you consider beyond hope. Yes, we are "moving" again, but more in Newton's sense of objects in perpetual motion than in Gandhi's or King's sense of the movement of people toward justice.

Marion Wright Edelman, a long-time intimate of the Clintons who presumably has boundless access to the powerful, expressed the dilemma quite frankly in a *Los Angeles Times* interview: "It is wonderful to have people in power committed to many of the same goals...(but) in politics, there are no friends. We have had lots of input, and Mrs. Clinton is committed to protecting children. But there are many, many different pulls and pushes... her role is different from our role... we are going to have to build a strong, well-informed public constituency."

So despite the fact that progressives are "at the table," despite the fact that Bill Clinton was an anti-Vietnam protester, despite the welcome presence of Hillary Rodham Clinton and Al Gore, the work of justice still feels like that of Sisyphus, rolling the stone up the hill to watch it roll back down.

In analyzing this frustration, there is too much "Clinton-gazing," even among progressives, ranging from pure gossip to lamentation that he is not a savior. Instead of spending so much time divining the President's daily moves, there are two key points that all progressives need to clarify for themselves in this new era. First, we need to recognize the central differences between Clinton's ideology, which I will label corporate or market-based liberalism, and that of self-described progressives, which still lacks a coherent consensus. Second, while accepting as legitimate the role of progressives working inside the administration, we must stress the deep need for independent social movements, reminiscent of the '60s, in challenging the administration from the outside.

The reform that Clinton represents is a commitment to gender and racial diversity not seen in previous administrations, reflecting a '60s consciousness finally arriving in the White House. Clinton's functional ideology often seems to be sheer pragmatism, with the priority on building a successful coalition that can hold power and govern. This underlies Clinton's longtime passion for being a "winning" Democrat and his sharp criticism, bordering on disdain, for "knee-jerk liberals" who are forever losing for their principles. He turns the venerable formula of the Left upside down: Instead of changing conditions before achieving power, Clinton wants to seize power and then change conditions.

This muscular pragmatism contains within itself conflicting values that reflect the tensions in governing. On the one hand, Clinton must promote the interests of the women, unions, environmentalists, and minorities who voted for him, while also maintaining acceptance among the financial and corporate interests whose support he considers essential to his success.

The result is an emphasis on reform but always within an assumed ideological framework of an expanding market. The core of Clinton's pragmatism is subsumed within a larger ideology which promotes corporate expansion. "Making us competitive again" is only the current slogan of this worldview. It is rooted in the frontier ideology of "manifest destiny" itself, which Vice-President Gore unconsciously revealed when he recently compared NAFTA to the Louisiana Purchase.

The new diversity being promoted by the Clinton doctrine is diversity only within this corporatist framework. The women and people of color in the Clinton administration come mainly from private law firms, large corporations, major development firms, prestigious universities, or upper realms of state bureaucracy.

In environmental policy, the Clinton ideology means an emphasis on "market incentives" to reduce toxic pollutants, which appears to be an improvement over

the Bush administration. The progressive alternative which the Clinton approach tends to ignore would ban or phase out proven carcinogens through government action. Clinton's program on global warming similarly emphasizes voluntary incentives, and rejects the notion of requiring auto companies to achieve a 50-percent increase in fuel efficiency. Such government mandates, which were effective in raising auto fuel efficiency from 13 miles-per-gallon to 27.5 in the past two decades, are intellectually spurned these days as "command-and-control," a pejorative almost implying Stalinism.

Here, I think, is the ideological divide. The problem for progressives is that belief in the market has become so widespread as to be almost the new litmus test for political legitimacy. Despite its wild excesses in the 1980s, a marketplace philosophy dominates both political parties as well as media discourse. Strangely, the ideology of competition permits no competition with itself.

There is no Left left, having collapsed into a wilderness of intellectual confusion and political ineffectiveness. In the vacuum, even many self-described progressives work as best they can to advance the causes of social and environmental justice within the limits of the market model. For example, Clinton's global warming plan would have been trashed by environmentalists if it was offered by George Bush. But there in the Rose Garden extolling the President was the head of the Natural Resources Defense Council (NDRC). The NRDC also came to the defense of NAFTA, splitting from grass-roots environmental organizations such as the Sierra Club.

Efforts by such groups to make alliances with the White House often lead to material gains, but at a price. Not only are citizens movements ruptured by such compromise, but the advocate groups have to accept a broad market framework where real answers to environmental degradation, chronic unemployment, preventive health care, or the crisis of meaning are secondary or illegitimate.

For a long time, there was a viable Left which summarily rejected market models and market morality. Many on the Left believed that the public sector was inherently more accountable and should absorb the private sector, socializing big businesses while regulating a private market for small entrepreneurs and family farmers.

There are many reasons for the decline of this view. One of the most legitimate is the loss of confidence in the old equation of the public sector with the public good. Clearly, there remain some public institutions (universities, Social Security, Medicaid, for example) that are effective and popular. But there is a well-founded disillusionment at the rise of permanent bureaucratic cultures in the public sector that leave communities and individuals as hopelessly unrepresented as they would be under the most impersonal corporation. Year after year the numbers of young people projecting careers in what used to be called "public service" diminishes.

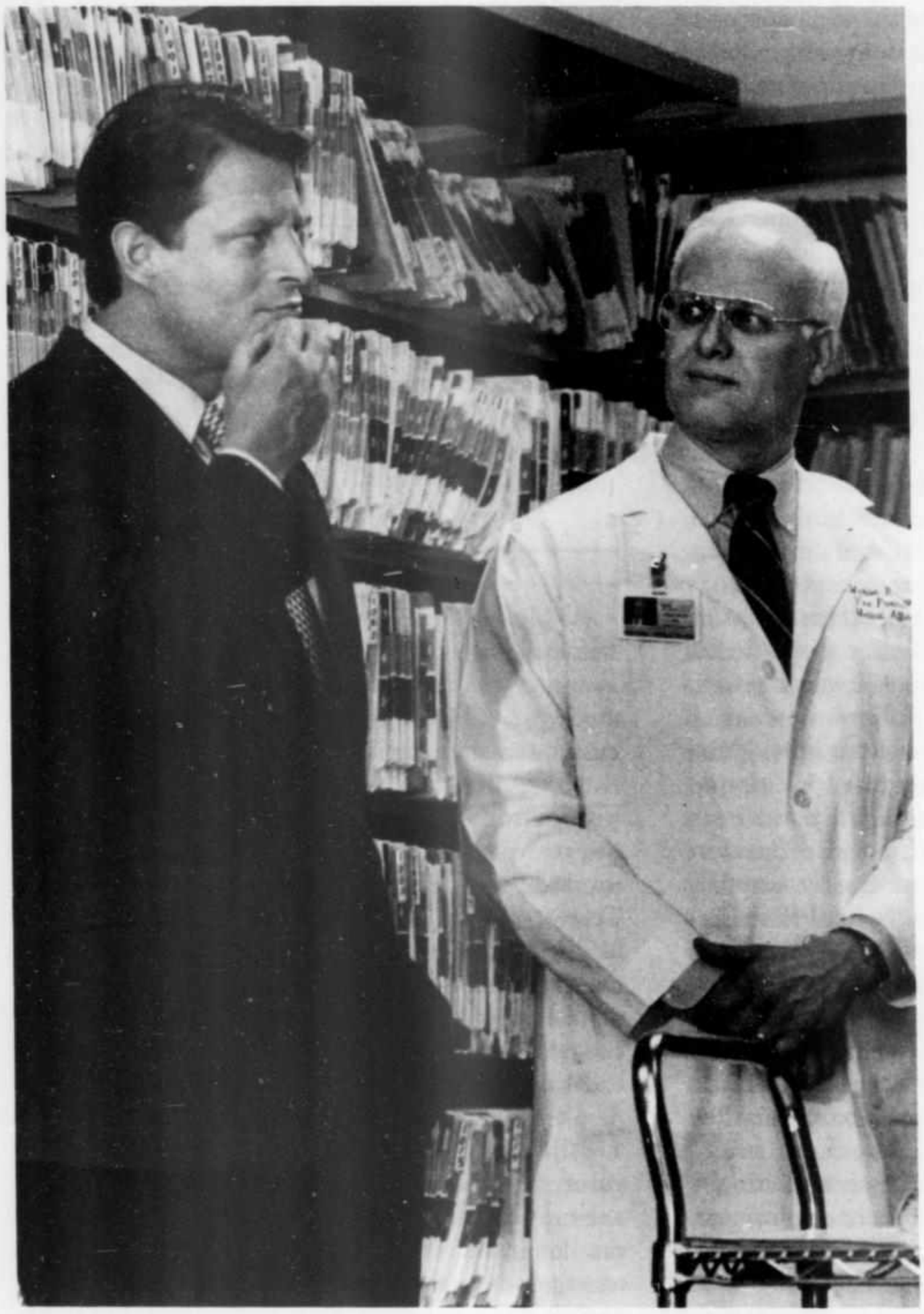
The problem for progressives is that belief in the market has become so widespread as to be almost the new litmus test for political legitimacy.

As Michael Harrington suggested late in his life, the Left was mistaken to imagine that markets would go away after the Revolution. The concept of a market has many meanings, from rapacious capitalism to the cushioned state-capitalist variety found in Western Europe. Markets are the structured forms of production, distribution, and consumption. The question is what morality and meaning markets promote, and there the critique of the Left (and that of TIKKUN) continues to be valid.

The market makes sharks of us all, promoting a feeding frenzy whose end is dominance. Thus, the market can never be the framework by which human progress is measured; by most market indicators, for example, the economy is said to be in a "recovery" mode despite the chronic crisis of unemployment and poverty.

While much of the current talk of "reinventing government" is healthy, particularly when it involves strategies for real citizen or employee empowerment, the dominant discourse favors corporate models of managerial efficiency. In these models, workers and community representatives achieve something feeble called "input," which in practice means going to interminable meetings in hopes of getting a favorable hearing by someone with real power.

Even the administration's most imaginative thinkers skirt this problem by supposing that we are entering a liberating "information age," rather than an industrial-bureaucratic one. Vice-President Gore claims that "in the 1980s, major American corporations reinvented themselves; in the 1990s, governments are struggling to do the same." What this romantic picture downplays is that waste, fraud, and abuse are no less prevalent in modern corporations than modern government, and that most of the recent corporate "reinvention" has



consisted of brutal downsizing and layoffs. In Gore's idealization, "information highways" are presumed to be inherently more democratic than manufacturing plants, but in fact the market still controls the flow of information, which is managed like traffic.

In Secretary of Labor Robert B. Reich's "new frontier," where symbolic analysts work and play, there is a serious neglect of community and environment. We will experience "the work community... replacing the geographic community as the most tangible American social setting," he writes. The image of a "work community" implies a humanized environment of fulfilled workers, not the Silicon Valley computer chip plants where minority and immigrant women work amidst reproductive hazards at mind-numbing tasks for little pay. And the loss of "geographic community" suggests a similar illusion, that it is somehow progressive to uproot people from "merely" local (read: provincial) communities into a globalized world of blinking computer screens and talking heads on 500 channels.

The "new information highway" will process us ever faster without revealing a clue about our destination.

The administration's guru of the "new information age" seems to be Tom Peters, who wrote the forward to the Gore Report, and who almost gushes in a recent book over the possibility of generating 50,000 bits of data on an average health-care claim, up from the paltry 250 bits we generate today. He exalts the new capacity of the Chicago Parking Authority to use electronic wands to deal with its one-year backlog of 23 million overdue parking tickets. He applauds the fact that "data will be downloaded to a central system at the end of each day."

These are the viewpoints George Orwell warned us about in *1984*, the promotion of what Mark Twain called the "limitless multiplication of unnecessary necessities." As Henry Thoreau once warned that the railroads would "ride on us," the "new information highway" will process us ever faster without revealing a clue about our destination.

Building bigger information systems is of course not an answer to the crises of jobs, environment, or

meaning. In the 1960s, Americans were told that buying computer software would solve information technology problems; in the 1970s, packaged software applications were the big rage; the 1980s brought computer consulting and, Peters admits, was "the decade of the failed process of systems integration." Yet he is captivated by "today's frenzied environment" while recognizing it as a "world gone mad for instant everything." Peters approvingly quotes Ted Turner as having said, "What is 'focus' anyway? If you're on live all the time, how can you have focus?"

Progressives need to work toward an alternative vision. One place to start retrieving the idea of government from market dominance is by focusing on real reforms of campaign finance and serious regulation of lobbyists. The system is so rigged that it calls for a constitutional challenge under the Fourteenth Amendment's equal-protection clause. The power of interest-group money over access to office-holders is a denial of equal representation that resembles white supremacist practices aimed at de facto disenfranchisement decades ago.

Health-care reform in 1994 will crystallize the problem of market dominance in addressing human needs. How can we provide quality coverage for 37 million more people and keep it affordable under a market model of "managed competition?" The President's solution to our medical crisis, while a big improvement over no system at all, will resemble the notion of freeways as a solution to our traffic crisis. We will be cramming more sick people into a bureaucratic medical system, when we should be reducing the incidence of disease already known to be preventable. This means more than mammograms and cholesterol testing. It means initiatives like getting rid of toxic chemicals and pesticides that mimic estrogen and are demonstrably associated with the breast cancer epidemic and the dramatic decline of male sperm counts. That will require discounting the market mentality that incorporates economic costs when calculating "thresholds" for human exposure to such chemical compounds.

The 1990s debate ought to include the possibility of restoring decentralized decision-making in the late Jeffersonian (or Quaker, or Native American) tradition. Many progressives have been wedded to centralized or bureaucratic government processes since the New Deal, and seem comfortable today with power centralized in a few blocks of the nation's capital.

Community-based government, including community-based information systems, is the only alternative I know to the bureaucratic state, which now smothers human initiative and diversity. As Vaclav Havel bravely points out, the new role of politicians should be to honor the subjective quality of the human, instead of perpetuating the model of the Objective Administrator. Participatory democracy, gaining a voice in decisions that affect our lives, remains the genuine call of the '60s to which most Americans will respond.

The mystique of the market amounts to America's secular religion. In this worldview, the grid of the market is imposed upon community life, and the environment is reduced to a storehouse and wastebin.

The mystique of the market amounts to America's secular religion. In this worldview, the grid of the market is imposed upon community life, and the environment is reduced to a storehouse and wastebin. But the reality is that market arrangements are not primary; they are derivative of human society, which in turn arises from an earth community and a cosmic matrix of mystery. These are living, organic systems; in theologian Thomas Berry's terms, "communities of subjects rather than collections of objects."

From Adam Smith to Karl Marx to Lord Keynes, from supply-side to demand-side, the serious downside of economic theory has been the degrading of community and environment in the name of progress. Clinton's model of growth continues to depend on finding new resources, promoting excessive consumption, and centralized expansion into new markets. Those paths, however, are reaching their limits. The present recession is about the rising cost of degrading the environment to continue growth. In the alternative model, the priority is on creating markets, communities, and eco-systems that are sustainable for generations to come. The doubling of world population while vital resources are diminished by half just in our lifetimes poses a challenge the market model cannot address.

We face an unprecedented employment crisis. While most middle-class families are stretched thin and stressed out from overwork, millions are facing the permanent specter of part-time jobs, the link between college degrees and professional careers is being

severed, and minority youth face futures without any hope. To his credit, Clinton has spoken of this emerging crisis. His brain trust is laboring on blueprints for a post-Cold War economy. The President has promoted infrastructure spending, summer jobs for youth, and the National Service Corps. But none of these efforts begin to meet the need. The Service Corps aims at a few thousand jobs, while the Civilian Conservation Corps in the Great Depression employed three million. "Enterprise zones" have created only 837 jobs in Los Angeles during the past five years, yet a new version called "empowerment zones" is the centerpiece of the administration's urban model.

Few of our policymakers seem to recognize the colossal waste and failure these jobs programs represent. In the market model to which planners are devoted, work is seen as that labor which can be extracted from a human being in exchange for the least compensation. The creation of jobs is seen as a by-product of expanding profits and then only if labor is cheaper than automation or going to Mexico. Employment is prohibited from being a direct goal in the market system. In the alternative view, work is seen as a central goal to be pursued in its own right, because it fosters the socially valuable expression of an individual's creative energies. If corporations insist that "growth" requires greater and greater tax credits, government should insist on a guarantee that profits are reinvested in creating real jobs.

Finally, the market model encourages a rollback of environmental, labor and consumer protections to combat economic recession. NAFTA, for example, allows private panels of trade experts to decide whether California's environmental laws comprise "trade barriers." If so, they must be "harmonized" with those of Mexico and Canada (and, under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, the rest of the world). In contrast, under the democratic alternative, California's statutes would serve to pressure for an "upward harmony" with those of our neighbors. The progressive alternative should insist that investment in the environment and people will increase both jobs and purchasing power, and that democracy can lead to greater productivity.

Thus, in evaluating policies, the ideological divide for progressives can be found by assessing whether they promote empowerment of the powerless, preserve community stability, restore environmental quality, democratize institutions from below, and take the human factor seriously. Any policy which promotes markets as the ultimate framework to which individuals, communities, political institutions, and eco-systems must be adjusted is retrograde and anti-human.

What I am suggesting is not a lessening of the present emphasis on pursuing diversity. But in fact these goals cannot be achieved beyond modest levels in the market model, which limits meaningful employment and requires conformity to a standardized ethos. It is wonderful to have two feminist Democratic Senators from California, but they still are stuck in a system of campaign finance and market models that limits their options. In Santa Monica, we have a "left-wing" city council and a lesbian mayor, yet they are promoting the commercial expansion for the RAND Corporation, bringing a six-fold increase in air pollutants and 30,000 new cars to the center of the city, all on behalf of "growth"!

What I am suggesting is that the Clinton administration be credited with creating a greater diversity at the top and challenged with a deeper, democratic and ecological framework than its market model. Inspiration for such a vision can be taken from certain of the writings of Thomas Paine, Benjamin Franklin, and Thomas Jefferson, not to mention the Iroquois and other tribes that preceded the European arrival. The global market model, by contrast, is more like the European mercantilisms that early Americans rejected.

TIKKUN has taken the lead in asserting the need for a spiritual dimension to progressive politics. Personal or group empowerment is vital, but not deep enough as a progressive goal. Empowerment on its own can fuel a thirst simply for more power, producing an endless cycle that mirrors the existing system or results in burnout, unless it is accompanied by deeper spiritual values such as compassion, simplicity, service, reverence for a Great Spirit, or the sacred dimension.

TIKKUN's philosophy could be deepened, I believe, by extending the idea of moral covenants to the whole living Earth, not simply the human community. We obviously cannot heal the human while ravaging the Earth. There can be no social justice through continuing to degrade and diminish our soils, forests, oceans, and atmosphere. What wealth will we redistribute when the forests are gone, the soil eroded, the minerals depleted, the deserts covered with our hazardous waste?

We need economic and ecological sustainability, but even more. We need ways to heal our deep frustration at being only human. We flounder in escapism and denial and power-trips because we seek immortality, a special passport to another place beyond this mere Earth. We need instead to restore the lost dream of the continent, the native Earth-based spirituality which dreamt of living with harmony and reciprocity toward

the Earth and cosmos from which we come and to which we return.

In addition to ideology, we need cosmology. We need to blend liberation theology with an Earth theology. The term *tikkun olam* itself translates as the task of repairing and healing the whole natural world, not saving the human from the coils of earthly existence, as strains of Christian thought have long proposed.

In this regard, one of the administration's most important initiatives has been to endorse the new interfaith National Partnership for the Environment, which is planning to draw the religious community into a deeper reverence and social action on behalf of the Earth. TIKKUN and grass-roots activists can join the Partnership and embrace the spiritual dimension of the alternative vision we all need.

There is a real role for progressives working within the Clinton administration, especially if the limits are understood. They can act as a conscience, a source of creative ideas, a resistance against special-interest and corporate pleaders, and a linkage to outside social movements seeking to pressure the administration toward social and environmental justice.

It is important, too, that the Clinton administration not fail for lack of progressive support, which could plunge us back into another lost decade of Republican rule. The present crisis has been long in coming and will take longer than four years to begin to resolve. Progressives within the administration will have to work aggressively on the crucial issues in an attempt to persuade the eroded middle class, union members, minorities, environmentalists, and youth constituencies to vote for Clinton again in 1996.

But we hardly can count on progressive insiders to lift the shadow of the special interests from Washington, much less evolve an alternative vision to the market-based one of the President. They necessarily are caught up in trying to survive through the politics of daily compromise and crisis management. They are constrained in their ability to question the administration's vision, and expected to be loyal to their bureaucratic hierarchies. As more than one of them has said to me, "we need you to beat up on us."

That is why the preservation and growth of independent social movements, focused on specific issues, but united in an alternative vision, remains so deeply important. We do not have the equivalent today of the civil rights, student, and peace movements of the 1960s. We do not have the unifying links of disenfranchisement or escalating war. But we do have the powerful energies of women's movements, burning anger among AIDS activists, resentment at the rising costs of college education, smoldering moonscapes of despair like South Central Los Angeles, relentless pressures on the middle-class standard of living, and new levels of political corruption. In the past, corrupt politicians have been able to deliver tangible benefits to their constituents, keeping them complacent about their leaders' abuses of power. The great difference today is that politics is not only corrupted but cannot seem to deliver anything anymore. Therefore it is a time of great transition and inevitable change.

We can hardly count on progressive insiders to lift the shadow of the special interests in Washington, much less evolve an alternative vision to the President's market-based view.

In making hazy historical comparisons with today, I would not dwell on the 1960s to the exclusion of the 1930s and the New Deal. Then as now, there was a failure of political and economic structures, of old visions that no longer worked. In the 1930s as now, the new corporate remedy was to centralize and expand the market system. Then, the New Deal. Now, NAFTA. Tomorrow, NAFTA everywhere.

There are differences, of course. We will not see full employment achieved through World War III. But the principal similarity I sense is that the most lasting and progressive reforms of the New Deal were not achieved until the crisis had deepened in President Roosevelt's second term. Having waited long enough for the President's policy wonks to come up with solutions, Americans began to form powerful new populist and labor movements to shape history themselves.

That scenario could await us in a few short years. In the meantime, there is work to do. The Left has disappeared, the market has triumphed, and yet the system continues to spiral out of control. Social activists in this country have a wealth of experience in organizing for a better life. Can this experience give us a new vision, or are we destined only to be dissidents in the new world order? It is not enough to demand greater representation in a system that does not work. It is up to us to state, from our hearts as well as our heads, in original rather than borrowed rhetoric, the meaning of the "politics of meaning" and fight for it. □

Clintonism: Beyond Left and Right?

Charles Derber

A lot of people still are wondering whether Bill Clinton is a friend of the Left or the Right. Clinton appears to tilt Left with his Health Security Act, "Motor Voter" bill, family leave act, tax increases on the rich and expanded income credits for the working poor, and easing of the ban on fetal tissue research. But he seems to drift Right with his deficit-oriented budget and elevation of "deficit hawks" such as Treasury Secretary Lloyd Bentsen and Budget Director Leon Panetta, his aggressive sponsorship of NAFTA, Pacific Basin, and GATT "free trade" initiatives, his studied distance from labor and minorities (including the Lani Guinier debacle), and his crime bill, which among other things pours billions more into police and prisons and expands the death penalty.

One might conclude that Clinton is either 1) a half-hearted liberal; 2) a mildly conservative "new Democrat"; or 3) an opportunist lacking a clear ideology. But there is a fourth possibility: that Clintonism, while mushy or unintelligible within the terms of traditional political discourse, is entirely coherent within a new political language and ideological framework. This is the view that the President himself seems to believe and it is consistent with recent writing about the obsolescence of traditional ideologies.

In his recent book, *Beyond Left and Right*, A. Lawrence Chickering argues that the grand traditions of both Left and Right are crumbling in the face of their own internal divisions and are no longer relevant to our era. Emerging from the ideological ruins are new polarities based on different ways of balancing freedom and order, which Chickering argues has become the central modern political dilemma. The defining Left/Right debates about capitalism and the role of the national government are merely distractions from the realities of the profound cultural and structural changes our society has undergone. Changes in national policy alone cannot ultimately help us recover our sense of meaning and community, lost when we fled the bonds of traditional society. We need a new politics of moral renewal and local community revitalization, according to Chickering. His post-Left/Right politics aims at building self-governing institutions and a new voluntary ethos of personal and social responsibility.

Chickering's effort to jolt us beyond Left and Right is bold, if ultimately flawed, but it is helpful in deciphering Clintonism (although Chickering does not discuss Clinton in any detail and certainly does not embrace him as the model of the new politics he has in mind). Clinton has long shunned the label of either liberal or conservative, proclaiming that he rejects "the old ideologies and the false choices they impose. Our agenda isn't liberal or conservative. It is both, and it is different." In concert with other "new Democrats," he advocates a new politics that transcends the old divisions and brings people together to heal our crisis of values, family, and community.

Clintonism can be described as a form of what I call "pragmatic communitarianism." Clinton's vision is communitarian in underscoring our strong mutual responsibilities, pragmatic in that it seeks to advance our common purposes without radical change in our market or governmental arrangements. Clintonism thus constitutes an important challenge to the extreme individualism of the last twelve years, and creatively reconfigures some Left/Right debates. But it does not decisively move us beyond a politics of Left and Right. It cannot ultimately solve either the economic morass of poverty, bad jobs, and widening inequality, or the social and moral pathologies that weaken our families and communities.

Clinton's Health Security legislation is a model of pragmatic communitarianism, overriding the individualism of a market logic which would deny care to those who can't afford it. Its pragmatism lies in its accommodation to the insurance companies and

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organized medical providers, who rejected a single-payer system which would deliver more egalitarian benefits, jeopardize their own survival, and potentially threaten the free-market system.

National Service, the signature program of pragmatic communitarianism, enlists the young in idealistic service to the community without the confrontational elements of 1960s-style social movements. Clinton's support of social reforms such as expanded day care, family leave, universal childhood immunizations, abortion funding for poor women, and battered women shelters also constitutes pragmatic communitarianism, embodying a Clintonian variant of "family values." Other Clintonian communitarian initiatives include his worker retraining program to offer security for all employees, his community economic development agenda, with new funding for community banks and credit unions, and his sponsorship of labor-management cooperation, which increases community in the workplace without threatening private control of capital.

Clinton's political rhetoric is suffused with his communitarian perspective. During his presidential campaign, Clinton introduced the slogan of the New Covenant, which harkened back to the religious roots of our family and communal obligations and introduced a spiritual dimension to his new politics. A few months into the new administration, Hillary Rodham Clinton incorporated the language of TIKKUN's editor, Michael Lerner, calling for a new "politics of meaning." Pointing to a crisis of values ultimately occasioned by the market, she pronounced in a speech at the University of Texas that the market "knows the price of everything and the value of nothing"—language which began to move from pragmatic toward a more radical and prophetic communitarianism.

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Recently, Clinton has embraced a new language of "security," far less visionary than the politics of meaning but effective in touching the raw anxieties of the public. Americans increasingly fear violence; fifty percent tell pollsters they fear losing their jobs and their health care. In Memphis, on November 13, 1993, Clinton helped define his "security" vision, speaking emotionally of the intolerable effects of drive-by shootings and gang violence on families and neighborhoods and calling not just for more police and jobs, but for a reawakening of conscience and

communal responsibility. Along with Senator Bill Bradley of New Jersey, Clinton has called for a new "economic security platform," which commits the government to ensure that all Americans will be guaranteed health care, adequate pensions, and lifetime training and retraining.

Clintonism seeks to unite the middle class and the poor, appealing to common concerns about jobs, values, family, and the erosion of the social fabric. His growing list of legislative accomplishments, combined with the compelling simplicity of his security rhetoric, is beginning to help him sell Clintonism to the public, just as Ronald Reagan was able to command public support by articulating a simple and clear Reaganism that moved hearts and minds. (Clinton thus appears to have learned a lesson from the one-term president, George Bush, who failed to produce a coherent "Bushism" that could define his presidency.)

Clinton follows the lead of communitarian thinkers who detach the problem of community from the basic realities of capitalism.

On issues such as health care, national service, crime, welfare reform, and family support, Clintonism offers the hopeful glimmerings of a politics "beyond Left and Right." His initiatives in these areas seek to meld conservative thinking on responsibility and discipline with the liberal concern for equal rights and social democracy. But Clinton has yet to do the hard part: to reclaim part of the tradition of the Left and confront the Right if he hopes to address the underlying, systemic causes of community decline and mass public insecurity. In the name of new political thinking, he has buried an "old" but still crucial debate about capitalism, essential to solving our communitarian crisis.

Clinton's advocacy of The North American Trade Agreement (NAFTA) illustrates the limits of his "new thinking." The common wisdom is that Clinton won big on NAFTA, accepting the need for open markets and major economic restructuring, while speaking compassionately to the need to protect displaced workers caught in the transition. But joining Third-World Mexico and the United States in a common market is a communitarian's nightmare. Beyond dislocating the blue-collar and minority workers already marginal to the community, NAFTA gave management new leverage for concessionary demands from virtually all employees, thus permanently weakening the very social contract that Clinton seeks to rebuild. The day after the crucial House vote supporting NAFTA, Clinton flew to Seattle, carrying his "free trade" agenda to eleven Asian powers—a move, Clinton aides acknowledged, with far greater implications for job displacement. The giant "sucking sound" of jobs moving to China, Indonesia, Taiwan, and South Korea will make the Mexican flow sound like a whisper.

The underlying issue—how much social destabilization we must endure to reap the profits and prosperity of capitalism (and what we can do about it)—has been with us for as long as capitalism itself and lies close to the heart of the "old" politics of Left and Right. Melding the "outdated" concerns of the Left with the new agenda of his pragmatic communitarianism could have led Clinton to a reworking of NAFTA more consistent with his core values. A communitarian NAFTA would add tough provisions to end exploitative labor arrangements in Mexico and permit wages (currently kept artificially low by the state) to rise with productivity, as well as ensuring both training and decent employment to displaced American workers.

Clinton follows the lead of communitarian thinkers who detach the problem of community from the basic realities of capitalism. As I earlier argued in TIKKUN ("Coming Glued," July/August 1993), the "communitarian movement" founded by sociologist Amitai Etzioni and Clinton domestic policy adviser William Galston is hobbled by its failure to address the relation between capitalism and community. Etzioni's recent manifesto, *The Spirit of Community*, which has insightful discussions of families and schools, for example, contains not a single mention of capital flight, private control of investment, nor indeed of capitalism, leaving the remarkable impression that the decline of community can be understood and reversed without any change in our economic arrangements.

Harvard Law School professor Mary Ann Glendon, another influential communitarian thinker, shows in her book, *Rights Talk*, that our legal thinking is radically individualistic, reflecting the traditional doctrine that each man is the king of his own castle. While pinpointing the corrosive impact on our morality and communities, Glendon never discusses capitalism or the vital role of business in shaping legal

individualism. Neither does she show how a more communitarian legal framework might be useful in binding corporations as well as individuals to a new standard of social responsibility.

Chickering, a conservative communitarian, explicitly rejects the view that capitalism is responsible for our crisis of values and community, declaring that "any effort to explain the breakdown of values in terms of systems—in terms of economic, social, or political structures—will fail." Chickering argues that the level of selfishness and materialism in the former socialist societies was no less than in Western capitalist societies—a clear indication, in his view, that the transformation of capitalism will not solve our crisis of values. Indeed, he argues that free markets are consistent with whatever values we choose and are entirely compatible with non-materialist communitarian ideals.



The communitarianism of Japanese capitalism leads some observers to support the view that we can't entirely blame our crisis of community on the capitalist system. Different models of capitalism can clearly accommodate different cultures and value orientations, but that is quite different than Chickering's argument that capitalism (or the various national capitalisms) are "value-neutral." American capitalism is the great atomizer, throwing us on our own resources to sink or swim. If it does not always cultivate greed and narcissism, as it did in the 1980s, capitalism binds most of us to a morality of dedicated self-interest. Market values penetrate private life, and while they do not reduce all family, work, and friendship ties to the icy calculations of the cash nexus, as Marx described it, they certainly undermine the trust and cooperation on which civil society, and the market itself, ultimately depend.

In the context of shuttered manufacturing plants and deindustrialized ghost towns across America, it is stupefying that mainstream and conservative communitarians can suggest that economic systems are unrelated to our crisis of community. Ever since the British enclosures which threw the peasantry off the land, as Karl Polanyi described fifty years ago in his epochal book, *The Great Transformation,* the history of capitalism has meant never-ending social dislocation, with the restless drive for profit always leaving a trail of broken communities and uprooted workers. This is true even when capitalists are committed to social responsibility, as in the case of Arnold Hiatt, former CEO of Stride Rite, the shoe manufacturer, who invested in inner-city communities during the 1970s and then disinvested and relocated Stride Rite plants overseas in the 1980s. Hiatt fought against the plant closings with his board of directors and ultimately resigned, but his personal commitment to helping poor communities could not counter the system forces leading his corporation to betray those very communities.

The premature relegation of concerns about capitalism and "system thinking" to the historical

dustbin by Clintonian and conservative communitarians is closely connected to political realities. The "new Democrats," including Clinton, depend heavily on business support. They have worked hard to get it by accepting the free market order, speaking to the need for a moral agenda that realigns the party with mainstream values, and denouncing the alliance of white liberals and minorities that has allegedly discredited Democrats among business and the white ethnic working class. The political side of getting "beyond Left and Right" has been to purge the Democratic Party of any whiff of leftist identification or anti-capitalist sensibility.

Ironically, it will take a new dialogue between Left critics of capitalism and communitarians such as Clinton to rebuild our social fabric. The obstacles, however, lie on the Left as well as with the communitarians and Clinton. A strain of economism lingers among some sectors of the Left, who argue against serious Left attention to values and social issues. Jeff Faux, an economist who is president of the Left-leaning Economic Policy Institute, argues that the "New Democrats" are "obsessed with abstract debates over social values while the nation stumbles into decline."

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Faux's critique of the New Democrats in the Fall 1993 issue of *The American Prospect* brilliantly captures how they use a rhetoric of "beyond Left and Right" to move the party closer to corporate interests, all in the name of bringing the Democrats back in sync with mainstream American values. But he implicitly cedes the "values" issue to the Right, arguing that the Democrats should focus on the bread-and-butter issues of jobs and economic security. Faux does not seem to entertain the possibility that there is another way than that of the New Democrats to speak to the family and value concerns of ordinary Americans, one that would politically enhance prospects for a progressive economic agenda rather than undermine it.

Left economics (and the Left agenda generally) has failed politically in part because it has permitted the Right to depict it as "un-American." The Left needs a moral discourse of the kind that TIKKUN has begun to introduce, which speaks compellingly to popular concerns about the breakdown of the social fabric and shows how the Left economic agenda is vital to rebuilding family, neighborhood, and morality in American life.

The identity politics of the Left—carried by women, gays, and minorities—is also raising surprising obstacles to a necessary dialogue with Clinton. Identity politics has shed the Left's economism and has helped catalyze political concern with the communitarian issues of family and morality. But despite the obvious affinity, identity politics and communitarian politics move on different—often antagonistic—tracks. Mainstream and Clintonian communitarians see the community offered by identity politics as parochial, turning African-Americans, women, and gays into narrow "special interest" groups whose demands ultimately fragment the larger national community. This critique has merit, for the rise of identity politics has not only failed to offer a vision of what binds men and women, gays and straights, Blacks and whites together, but has fragmented the Left itself, threatening to dissolve it into segregated movements for racial and sexual equality.

The prospects for common cause among the many "identity" movements are eroding precisely because "difference" is prioritized over a new vision of solidarity. The writings of Elizabeth Fox-Genevese and bell hooks both demonstrate that feminism and other identity movements are spawning their own forms of individualism, manifest in neglect of economic and class issues and the rise of new forms of hierarchy and competitiveness. The Left thus needs a dialogue with the communitarians as badly as the practitioners of the "new politics" need to engage the Left.

Beyond an intellectual dialogue, however, what can we do to take Clinton beyond the limits of his pragmatic communitarianism? On the one hand, people need to hold Clinton to his own communitarian ideals, showing how many of his policies are undermining his own values and goals. Writers, activists, and ordinary citizens should publicize widely the



continuing deterioration of community in the workplace, our central cities, and our families. Intellectuals have the responsibility to show how key Clinton policies—particularly his "free trade" agenda and his retreat from a strategy of public investment, especially in the inner cities—are deepening the very insecurity and social unraveling that his administration is most committed to reversing. At the same time, such critics should give due credit to Clinton's legislative achievements which advance his communitarian aims, such as his income-tax changes which begin to close the income gap between rich and poor.

"It's the economy, stupid" should become a mantra for a "social market," which can reconcile capitalism with community. Clinton has already shown interest in social market innovations such as employee ownership, which offers an exquisite communitarian approach to the workplace, and may be a back-door route to regulating capital flight (since employee-owners are far less likely to shift production overseas). We should also press Clinton to encourage targeting of the over three trillion dollars in pensions into community development (affordable housing, community development corporations, inner-city job creation, etc.), since it costs the federal government virtually nothing, while placing the largest pool of private capital in the world in the service of a communitarian agenda.

But "It's the economy, stupid" (even when transformative of capitalism) is ultimately stupidly economistic. We need to help Clinton in his effort to make politics speak to our needs for new values, secure families, and common purposes. Clinton has some of the right moral discourse, but we need to encourage a bolder critique of market values and a clearer statement of democratic and egalitarian alternatives.

Clinton's technocratic style sabotages the effort to catalyze moral renewal and social activism at the grass roots. A top-down politics driven by (even the most brilliant) Washington policy wonks is dangerous and futile. A communitarian politics, which truly helps us all live more connected, purposeful, and civil lives, cannot be delivered by national leaders who "put people first," as Clinton put it in his campaign. Rather, communitarian leaders have to help us do the job for ourselves. The lasting contribution of Clinton's hero, President Kennedy, was not a federal program, but his success in catalyzing a tremendous renewal of political hope and activism by ordinary citizens. Historians will measure Clinton by the same standard. □

Clinton and Jobs

Martin Carnoy

After a year in office, President Bill Clinton looks and acts like a CEO who wants to restructure America Inc. to make it profitable again. Although his performance is consistent with one of the main themes of his campaign, to correct the excesses of the 1980s, the President's image and legislative record are not generating much confidence among the American workers who voted for him.

Most corporate restructuring programs increase productivity and expand output by saving on labor, or at least saving on labor costs. True, when the CEO is friendly to labor, restructuring can have positive effects. No one doubts that the President wants to create more and better jobs. But beyond some commissions in the Labor Department and an important phone call to American Airlines, his efforts so far do not bode well for rising paychecks or a more satisfying work environment.

Wage earners see such ominous signs as the President's compromising on his economic stimulus package and his championing of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) with Mexico, highly favorable to investment south of the border. These major concessions to financial interests send a strong signal that, at best, American workers are going to do better very slowly during the Clinton first term. Changing that course means convincing the President to use the jobs issue to take on conservatives' politically powerful economic ideology that whatever private business does is good for America, and whatever labor, communities, and government do is bad.

The President is not wrong to want to reorganize the American economy and to change the government's economic role. We are still the most productive nation in the world, but our major competitors have been catching up, mainly because we invest much less in our productive capacity than they do. We have also done much to destroy the social fabric of our society, making almost everyone qualitatively worse off even as average productivity goes up.

For the past twenty years, increased economic output has been distributed unequally, shifting income to the already rich. Government spending is not too high; it is just going to the wrong places: to anachronistic military contracts, agricultural subsidies, prisons, and health-care insurers instead of to education, training, transportation infrastructure, and into building communities that nurture human life rather than tear it apart. Turning all that around does require making government more efficient, increasing private investment, expanding export markets, restructuring the health-care system, and raising educational standards. But it also requires much more, as the populist Bill Clinton argued repeatedly during the campaign. Beyond rationalizing the economy financially, the administration has to make it more incorporative and more just. Employees' compensation, work conditions, family, race relations, and the community must be at the center of policy-making rather than at the fringes.

Despite the deficit-reduction tilt of the budget package he presented to Congress and his vigorous advocacy of NAFTA, the President is neither anti-poor nor anti-labor. Far from it. The final budget legislation included raising taxes on the rich to help finance deficit reduction, and an earned income tax credit to help low-income families rise above the poverty line. It was the most progressive redistribution of the tax burden since the 1960s. Though the President lost much of his proposed funding increase for Head Start, he is sure to keep fighting for early childhood programs. Health-care reform is not only a government efficiency measure, it is also a transfer of social benefits to the lower-wage working class—those employed in small and medium businesses and in part-time work. Much more accessible health care for lower-income workers and their children will help improve their lives. The administration's educational reforms, which Congress will act on by early 1994, will help working-class youth get better quality education and vocational training, and proposed labor law

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reforms will put labor in a stronger bargaining position. And a week after organized labor's loss to the President on NAFTA, he delivered a strong pro-labor message to employers by pressuring American Airlines' CEO Robert Crandall to arbitrate the flight attendants' strike. If that intervention were more than just a token political gesture, the signal it and future calls send may do more for organized labor than a better trade accord.

Clinton needs to use the jobs issue to take on the conservatives, who argue that whatever private business does is good for America.

The question is whether the President's populism will move him beyond the economics of lower interest rates and freer foreign investment in Mexico to what he promised would be the keystones of his administration—creating new, higher-paying jobs, uniting an increasingly racially diverse American society, and restoring a sense of family and community responsibility.

This is not going to be easy. Under the deficit-reduction package employment is increasing, but more slowly than in the 1980s. The employment rebound coming out of the 1990-1991 recession is the lowest in history. But the pattern of job growth in the rebound makes the President's task even greater. Job growth in the past year looks like the pattern of the 1980s, except that banks, insurance companies, and business services that were major sources of new, "good" jobs in the 1980s, seem to be downsizing their employment at all but the professional and managerial level. This means that in the next several years women (who are still paid relatively much lower wages than men) should still get much of the increased employment and their wages should continue to catch up with men's, but perhaps more slowly. Men should get jobs with declining inflation-corrected wages, middle-aged men should be displaced from higher-paying to lower-paying jobs, and Black and Latino men should get many of the new male jobs, but these will be overwhelmingly low-paying. This pattern—partly the result of stagnant employment in manufacturing and expanding employment in services—contributes to greater inequality and forces families to work more for the same income. It also worsens the divisions of our society through a trend of higher-income new jobs for whites and lower income new jobs for Blacks and Latinos.

The President is clearly aware of the problems in this pattern of job and wage growth but seems far from developing the work and social policies needed to deal with it. So far, the administration is putting most of its policy chips on improving education and training so that more workers can qualify for good jobs. In and of itself, this is positive and may give groups with less schooling, such as Blacks and Latinos, a better chance to compete. But relying on a greater supply of better-educated workers to raise incomes assumes that good jobs will grow quickly enough to employ most of them at higher wages. This did not happen in the 1980s, at least not for male workers, and nothing has changed in the 1990s to make educational policy alone a sufficient answer to the wage inequality, increased job displacement, and family stress associated with this kind of employment growth.

One policy—rejected almost immediately by conservative forces inside and outside the administration—that could at least increase job growth and average wages was proposed by Bill Clinton in the presidential campaign: A serious public investment program that would not only develop the human capital for the next century, retrain displaced workers, and provide career training and apprenticeships for youth not going to college, but would also stimulate job growth through modernizing infrastructure, rebuilding inner cities, and helping develop new industries.

There are other more radical options, involving reconceptualization of wage work, that ironically may be more palatable to the American public because they do not require greater government spending. For example, Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis recommended in these pages a redistribution of wealth through increased housing ownership for the poor and employee ownership of workplaces ("Memo to Clinton: Economics," TIKKUN, January/February, 1993). Michael Lerner, also in these pages, has emphasized empowering workers through greater participation and control of work. Wealth redistribution and greater participation together would equalize income distribution, make work a more creative and meaningful activity, improve worker productivity, increase investment by worker-owned firms in worker training, slow down layoffs and displacement, increase work flexibility within firms (if not between them), and slow down investment flight to low-wage countries—all enormously positive outcomes.

But many employees would end up holding stock in industries with declining comparative advantage, while

others—just through the good luck of having jobs in growing industries—would do relatively much better. Some people currently have no jobs at all, and successful worker-owned, worker participation firms are more reluctant to hire new workers or to vest new workers once hired. Neither would the current race (and to a lesser degree, the gender) division of labor and wealth be touched by such reforms. To overcome these negatives, wealth redistribution should include a national mutual fund (or a set of funds) in which everyone would have shares in addition to their shares in the firm where they work. All Americans would then have a source of income from America's growth that would be independent of their particular jobs. It would level the playing field among workers and allow them more job mobility. Two steps would go far in helping the administration reach these goals: a simple one of changing employee stock ownership (ESOP) laws to allow firms to be more easily purchased by workers, and a much more complex one of allowing the Social Security Administration to invest some of its assets in stocks and a small percentage in community development, so that it could serve as a national mutual fund.

The President should also be willing to consider measures that make work less conflictive with a meaningful family life. Increasing ownership and participation at work would go a long way to reducing family stress by making the social aspects of work more rewarding. Another measure is to increase the value of family work itself. Reducing the work week and promoting job-sharing would lessen the need for both parents to work full time when they have young children at home and in school. An income tax credit inversely related to family income would provide similar relief for families with children where one parent does not work. The tax credit could be matched with (and at low incomes be larger than) a cap on tax deductions for children.

Bill Clinton knows that taking these steps or others to counteract the negative effects of the present structure of job growth requires major ideological change. As his speech last November in Memphis invoking the memory of Martin Luther King, Jr. and exhorting us to face the problems of violence and inequality suggests, he intends to make renewed moral discipline among families and communities a key part of his administration's response to social disintegration. He is right to do that. We are as much in a crisis of reproduction as production. A decent society cannot exist without decent homes and decent communities. But to convince American workers that he and the Democratic Party can find a way to achieve that decent society means linking the message about responsibility for violence delivered in Memphis to a new ideology on markets and work. The President can hardly expect individuals to pull together to fight crime and violence while they are being exhorted to compete with each other in a violent struggle for scarce, low-paying jobs. He needs to take on the task of making jobs and the work environment a community responsibility as well. □

The Clinton Adminstration, the System, and Us

Gar Alperovitz

What—beyond superficialities—are we to make of the Clinton presidency? The simple points are obvious. Whatever its faults, the Clinton administration is a relief from the Reagan-Bush era. There has been some improvement in social spending, some interest in environmental matters, some concern for civil rights. The President also seems truly to care personally about questions of social justice, and he has appointed many decent people to office. Hillary Rodham Clinton, in particular, is a gift.

On the other hand, Clinton handled the gays-in-the-military question badly; he showed no backbone on the Lani Guinier appointment; and he has been indecisive on Bosnia and Somalia and has retreated on

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Haiti. The NAFTA victory was achieved only with Republican support and straight pork politics because it could not pass on the merits and because it was and is Republican legislation which will harm the environment, workers, health, safety, and jobs—and the economic underpinnings of many communities.

Clinton's deficit-cutting economic package was written by bond market professionals in the White House—and was more conservative, fiscally, than anything Bush attempted. (That's why Federal Reserve Board Chairman Alan Greenspan supported it.) His health-care reform package is too clever by half—and probably won't pass except in minimalist form.

With the Cold War over—and Russian plutonium available almost on the open market—Clinton's failure to take leadership personally in developing a truly serious initiative to control nuclear proliferation is an abdication of responsibility and a betrayal of trust.

A second level of assessment takes us to the man and his style. Clinton is obviously intelligent and concerned—as well as extremely cautious. The best way to understand his style, I believe, is to recall that he was defeated—burned badly—when in his first term as a youthful governor of Arkansas he experimented, unskillfully, with a bolder style. His subsequent reversion to traditional politics was all but total. The simple truth is that most of the President's real-life adult experience and on-the-job training has been as the chief executive of a small Southern state.

Clinton's worldview is primarily that of a governor used to dealing with his state like a small fiefdom where politics is based on personal relations, back-room glad-handing (often in Little Rock via the Rose law firm), and when necessary, public back-stabbing (as with Jesse Jackson in the Sister Souljah imbroglio, or labor on NAFTA). "He's still doing things the Arkansas way," Ross Perot observed early on.

Not quite: In reality, Clinton's "new" Democratic pastiche of deals is part old Arkansas and part old Washington. He hopes the larger public either will not notice, or will forgive and forget, or will be won over by the simple fact of a presidential "win" or two (whatever the substantive content of the "win.")

As I argued a year ago in these pages ("Memorandum to President-Elect Clinton," TIKKUN, November/December 1992) it is possible to conceive a different presidential leadership style which would dramatize—and then exploit—the corruption, power-plays, and dishonesty of the corporate and other players who pushed NAFTA and now block serious health reform. Such a style, however, is apparently incompatible with either Clinton's psyche or his life experience.

A third-level assessment of the Clinton presidency's first year is much more fundamental, but it requires us to confront an unpleasant truth: Beyond token gains, there is, in fact, only a very modest basis for progressive politics at this stage of history. Bill Clinton could have—should have—made more of what political potential there is, but any way you look at it, he is a minority (43 percent) President who might very well not have been elected had Ross Perot not split a Republican Party already badly weakened by Pat Buchanan's primary campaign.

Not surprisingly, the President is moving to pick up what he doesn't have: moderate and conservative suburban and southern votes. He knows progressive voters have no place to go; although they may threaten to sit on their hands if he moves to the right, in the end they will probably come around when they have to choose between Clinton and whoever the Republicans nominate.

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Nor (in the absence of any billionaire socialists) are efforts to build a new progressive party likely to overcome the enormous logistical, financial, and political difficulties to become a serious political force by November 1996—although many good people are now devoting their energies in this direction for the longer term future.

A fourth-level analysis takes us past mere hand-wringing at the fact that the fundamental basis of a serious progressive politics (at least in traditional form) simply does not exist.

The truth is that all of the major Western systems are in political and economic trouble: The global economic crisis has jammed them all, in different ways, with unemployment, budget pressures, middle-class tax anger, and racial and ethnic scapegoating. Major public and social investment programs—*in theory*—could do a great deal: But there is little capacity to enact such

programs in any of the political-economic systems.

Moreover, our own system is demonstrably weaker in its social and political capacities than virtually all the others: Public domestic activity in general (as measured by the share of non-military spending in the Gross Domestic Product) is a mere 29 percent here in the United States—and the political basis for this is weakening, not strengthening. In Germany, it is approximately 42 percent; in France, 44 percent; in Sweden, 57 percent.

If you have the nerve to realize that politics as usual is not likely to dent many of the deeper problems we face—then a long, difficult reconstruction is likely to be the only choice available other than cynicism and despair.

Some of the reasons we are so low on the totem pole—and falling—are also well known: Unlike most Western nations (to say nothing of Japan), fundamental rather than marginal racial and ethnic divisions throughout the society make progressive alliances extremely difficult. Moreover, our unionized sector is a mere 16 percent (compared, say, with 33 percent in West Germany, and 84 percent in Sweden). Our huge continental scale also makes building a *national* consensus harder than it is in most other nations. (West Germany could easily fit into the state of Oregon, for instance.)

None of this is a secret. The trouble is we don't like to think about hard facts or confront the implications. Clinton's *basic* problem derives from the fundamentals: Put simply, our system is in profound, not temporary stalemate. Practically speaking, this means there simply are few jobs and no money to work with in the Clinton era. All you really need to do to grasp the realities beneath the headlines coming out of Washington is take a walk through the inner city—if you have the personal courage to dare to do so.

If the real questions are system-related and fundamental, of course, then we are also part of the problem to the extent we fudge on the nature of the challenge we face.

We very easily grasp that the traditional socialist system collapsed because of inherent problems at the core. But we have enormous difficulty in considering the possibility that profound structural problems at the heart of our own capitalism are the source of the economic decay and political stalemate which set the defining terms of reference for Clinton's presidency. If the difficulties are in fact built into the very architecture of our system, then let's push for as much improvement in as many areas as we can squeeze out of Clinton, but let us not feign surprise when we quickly hit the limits the system imposes on traditional politics at this stage of our history.

The Clinton era and the final decade of the twentieth century pose some truly fascinating questions: First, whether we can begin to confront the real nature of the problem we face (and the possibility either of no significant change or of change only in the very long run); second, whether we can begin the difficult work of attempting to define a coherent vision of an alternative system which might one day begin to take us beyond both traditional socialism and capitalism in the new century; and third, whether—even as we press for short term gains—we can screw up the courage for the very long process necessary to rebuild.

A community-oriented and regional "third way" might eventually be constructed over time, building upon the hundreds of worker-owned firms and thousands of co-ops now operating around the country. There are also numerous community development corporations of all shapes and sizes—and many community-owned enterprises—springing up in every region. Many involve ecologically important experiments. In fact, as the larger political/economic processes continue to falter, there are many signs of hope at the grass-roots level in a wide range of communities.

A slow rebuilding process, however, is clearly a very long shot for most Americans. We are a people brought up on the allure of instant gratification politics who like to wish away difficult truths.

If you are disappointed by the limits of what is possible in the Clinton era, however—and if you have the nerve to realize that politics as usual is not likely to dent many of the deeper problems we face—then a long, difficult reconstruction is likely to be the only choice available other than cynicism and despair.

That is what is sometimes called a hard rap. It also may well be the only real way to develop a politics of meaning based on facing—and, it is hoped, ultimately transcending—the deeply rooted difficulties confronting the United States as we get set to move from the Clinton era into an entirely new millennium. □

Markus Wolf:
East Germany's Jewish Master Spy

In the wake of the collapse of the East German government (GDR), the newly unified German government picked one of the more highly placed Jews in the GDR to become the focus of a show trial in which anticommunist anger could be expressed. Markus Wolf was convicted of crimes against the German state for his role as director of the East German foreign intelligence-gathering operation (a division of the the "Stasi" separate from its notorious internal security services).

Yet, as Ian Buruma points out in an op-ed in The New York Times *on December 8, 1993, the trial was more a show trial aimed at reminding people about history and the evils of communism than a legitimate trial for crimes committed by this particular individual.*

Given that, it is particularly disturbing that the German government chose to put a Jew on trial as the representative of the evils of communism. In a country threatened by a growing neo-Nazi revival, the focus on Wolf plays into traditional Nazi themes that saw communism as a Jewish conspiracy against the nation. As Markus Wolf points out, there were good reasons why, in 1945, Jews returning to Germany at the conclusion of the Holocaust would have been attracted to the secret police services charged with exposing former Nazis. Rather than simply killing Nazis ad hoc, as many returnees wanted *to do, Jews who joined the secret police could find legal protection while they sought justice and retribution.*

In this interview, conducted in December, Markus Wolf reflects on his Jewish roots and on some of the mistakes that were made in East Germany. Some members of our editorial board wondered whether the story told here is plausible, given the skills of master spies to artfully construct stories that fit their interests. Others insisted that there must *be a history of association with violence that Wolf denies and that the German prosecutors were unable to uncover. Anyone who was associated with the Stasi has moral responsibility for having helped keep in place a social order that was repressive and that played a major role in discrediting the idea of socialism for generations to come.*

On the other hand, when we met with Wolf in Berlin, what was most impressive was his absolute refusal to repudiate socialist ideas—despite the fact that doing so is de rigeur in German society. Eschewing an opportunism that would have won him greater support and perhaps even protection from prison, Wolf insists that he remains loyal to the socialist ideals that led him into the Communist Party, the betrayal of which by the German political leadership he decried years before East Germany began to crumble. We are in no position to assess his crimes; but whatever they were, Markus Wolf is a far more complicated reality than can be summed up in Cold War sloganeering. And the persecution of Wolf, whatever its justification, may be playing a dangerous role in the attempt by some Germans to rewrite history so that the primary culprits are communists and Jews who are victimizing poor Germans, conveniently forgetting why communists and Jews thought that Germany needed some heavy-handed cleansing in the decades after the Holocaust.

TIKKUN: To what extent was your Jewishness a factor in how you got involved in these spy activities?

Wolf: My father came from a religious family, and a long line of rabbis and Jewish communal leaders. Like many German intellectuals in the early part of this century, he was influenced by the dominant culture and assimilated to it. But he retained many of the Jewish values that he had learned in his family, though we did not speak about them as Jewish.

My father served in the trenches for four years during World War I, and was very upset with the social system that created that war. He hoped that the social democrats who took power in 1918 would create a new order, but in fact they did not. They made fundamental compromises with the old order and allowed many of the reactionary elements of the old system to reappear in Weimar Germany.

As a doctor, my father continued his struggle for

human rights and for social decency. He became famous as a champion of abortion rights, and in 1928 he was arrested for performing abortions (though in fact, he had only advocated them). The Communist Party championed abortion rights, though the Weimar Republic had made abortion illegal. So in 1928 he joined the Communist Party.

As the Nazis became popular, my father became involved in fighting against anti-Semitism. In 1933, he wrote a drama called *Professor Mamlock* describing the fate of a German Jew who took part in the First World War but who is imprisoned by the Nazis and eventually commits suicide. It was shown in thirty countries before the second World War began. So he was an outspoken opponent to the Nazis, and helped mobilize public opinion against anti-Semitism.

After the burning of the Reichstag in the Spring of 1933 by the Nazis—used as their official excuse to repress the Communist Party who were blamed for the fire—our family fled Germany and the only country that would take us in was the Soviet Union.

For us, the Soviet Union seemed to be one country that was really unequivocally opposed to Nazism. We knew little of the purges or of the anti-Semitism surrounding Stalin. But I did feel like an outsider, and began to recognize myself as a German Jew while I was in Russia. So I returned to Germany after the Nazis had been defeated in 1945.

I worked for a Berlin radio station and as a correspondent for them I covered the Nuremberg trials. What I experienced there permanently shaped my life. Every day for a year I sat and listened to the detailed testimony of war crimes and the preparation and execution of the Holocaust. We had known that Jews had been subject to special persecution, but we had not understood its dimensions. I told my listening audience in Germany and Austria that after this experience, we should dedicate our lives to doing everything we possibly could to ensure that this kind of inhumanity would never again happen. My own uncle had been killed in a concentration camp.

So it was natural that I would want to become involved in anti-Nazi activity in Germany. And so I joined the intelligence work of the East German state. Many other Jews took a similar path, becoming active in the Stasi to hunt down former Nazis.

TIKKUN: But was this really a way to do Nazi-hunting?

WOLF: It was a way to counter the legacy of Nazism that seemed to us to remain strong in West Germany. I felt the intelligence work was necessary because there were plans of NATO to rearm West Germany, and this was a Germany where former Nazis remained as generals.

The chief of the office of the chancellor was a man with rank of minister named Hans Globke who was one of the intellectual shapers of the Nuremberg Laws against the Jews, and now he was one of Adenauer's key assistants. Globke was responsible for coordination of all West German intelligence services.

The first president of the West German intelligence service was the former Nazi General in charge of military intelligence, Reinhardt Gehlen. The CIA knew all this, and consciously used former Nazis, including members of the Gestapo. So we in the East were afraid of the remilitarization of the West, its joining NATO with their access to atomic weapons. We in the East felt a real danger.

TIKKUN: What did you imagine would happen?

Wolf: Infiltration then leading to a small war in which West German troops would occupy the GDR, and establish an anti-communist government. There were counterrevolutionary organizations that had these plans, extremely right-wing, and these people had some power in the West German government, particularly in the intelligence and military services. And we also feared the possibility of a big atomic war. Our task in intelligence was to prevent any such surprises.

TIKKUN: But there were former Nazis in the GDR as well.

Wolf: It can't be compared. I can assure you that there were no major former Nazis in my intelligence operation.

TIKKUN: All through the communist world there was a tendency, when discussing World War II, to ignore the war against the Jews, and not to teach about the Holocaust as a specific Jewish-related phenomenon. Why didn't the communists do more to educate people about anti-Semitism?

Wolf: I pushed this question out of my mind. Inside the Communist Party, the intellectuals felt that this problem was something so far from our ideology that we thought it couldn't exist, and if it existed we ought not to speak about it. I never believed that a real communist could have any sympathy for anti-Semitism. But now in retrospect I can see that it did exist, though it was often covert or was legitimated by being expressed in the form of opposition to Israel and Zionism. I should mention that our East German intelligence operation never operated against Israel or targeted Israeli intelligence.

Originally, the Communist Party had fought against anti-Semitism. It became less and less of a focus under Stalin.

But as a communist, my father worked with German prisoners during World War II, trying to reeducate them about why anti-Semitism was not right.

TIKKUN: After the war, you have the whole German

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Sexual Harassment and Jewish Education

Carmela Ingwer

Lately, scattered comments from a variety of quarters are raising my feminist hackles, occasionally trouncing the newly legitimized issue of sexual harassment with enough force to transform Anita Hill into a wily Jezebel. Colleagues deemed enlightened and sensitive, a radio talk-show host, a guest on "Nightline," suddenly claim that a great deal of identifiable sexual harassment is exaggerated *narishkeit* (nonsense). Teasing is teasing, opine the belittlers of sexual harassment—taunts containing sexual content are essentially no different from other mean-spirited gibes. Sexual harassment is a non-problem for anyone with an understanding of human nature and a passing grade in Self-Assertion 101.

Have those who would deflect the struggle against sexual harassment been vacationing off the planet? After the final Pentagon report on the Navy's Tailhook Convention scandal, and an equally distressing American Association of University Women survey revealing widespread sexual harassment among students in eighth through eleventh grades, who could turn a blind eye to the magnitude of the dilemma?

Seeking new avenues to strengthen the anti-harassment stance, I found myself pondering these recent remarks of Dr. Benjamin Spock: "In trying to make sex seem more natural and less scary...we leaned over backward and have forgotten to emphasize that sexuality has as much to do with spiritual matters as the physical and mental." Although Spock did not refer directly to sexual harassment, his focus upon the impoverished spiritual dimension in sexual relationships suggests a value-poor America where, even after twenty-odd years of feminist entrenchment, such harassment persists.

Can Judaism assume a spiritual and intellectual role in shaping a structured discussion of sexual harassment in Jewish classrooms? In what ways would students benefit from such an inquiry? As a Jewish educator and feminist, I wish to respond to these questions on three related levels:

- A Jewish classroom critique of sexual harassment
- Empowerment of Jewish women to combat sexual harassment
- Derailing the JAP stereotype

The classic image of the Jewish people as a *mom-lechet cohanim* (nation of priests), a people imbued with holy purpose and a distinctive destiny, strikes any probing observer of the American Jewish scene as absurd. Deceptive in their ubiquity, our synagogues and schools occupy a largely barren spiritual terrain. Jewish classrooms abound, but they rarely address students' spiritual needs. What typically passes for "spirituality" in the curricula of most afternoon religious schools amounts to an emphasis on the mechanics of reading Hebrew prayers, customs and ceremonies, and a smattering of Jewish history. The more intensive day school programs, justifiably lauded on numerous counts, also frequently lack sufficient awareness of their pupils' spiritual needs. One plumbs the majority of Jewish curricula in vain for the uncompromising heart of Jewish spirituality—the integral connection between the temporal and the holy, between an active pursuit of justice and a disciplined study of traditional texts. The widespread failure of Jewish curricula to transmit this understanding of spirituality accelerates our loss of young people through intermarriage and assimilation. Thus, the issue of how to replenish the spiritual life of students in Jewish schools is pivotal.

It is evident to this writer that only when a meaningful link is established between the Judaism taught in the classroom and the most vital of real-life concerns facing young Jews can Judaism re-engage its spiritual staying power. In an era in which sexual self-concept is often excruciatingly complex and controversial, and too many young men are still socialized to objectify women, a lively Judaic discourse on sexual harassment in Jewish classrooms would be one way to establish that link. Beginning in the seventh grade, our children could experience, in an age-

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appropriate manner, what it means to appraise sexual harassment through the prism of Jewish values. Rather than continue only to scratch the surface of a tradition they increasingly perceive as peripheral to their lives, students would see that Judaism can speak to issues raised by America's sexual culture.

Drawing upon the Jewish vision integrating the sanctity of life, dignity, and sexuality, we should craft curricula examining sexual harassment. What are the interfacing strata of our tradition that leave no space for tolerance of sexual harassment?

Judaically empowered to combat sexual harassment, our young women might more passionately close ranks in the campaign to end it.

The first stratum has its seminal expression in Genesis 1:27 when, crowning His divine labors, "...God created humanity in His own image...; male and female He did create them." Every man and woman has been endowed with the likeness of God, and is a designate of His ineffable holiness. Flowing from this bedrock are the numerous precepts to honor and preserve the dignity of *hazulat*—the other. Defiance of these precepts is a violation of the Divine image, a scoffing at God's will. The prophets passionately enjoined our ancestors to elevate one another in God's name, presaging the talmudic dictum: "Whoever humiliates a friend publicly, it is as if that person has shed the other's blood." Clearly, the thrust of a tradition which so relentlessly engages its concern for *hazulat* can only abhor sexual harassment.

The iconoclastic Judaic preoccupation with the inherent worth of each individual profoundly shaped the practical aspects of *kedusha* (holiness) in the development of the nation's sexual ethos. Talmudic parameters of sexual conduct frame this ethos, comprising a second, more female-specific stratum of statutes and advisories implicitly opposed to sexual harassment. It is characterized by respect for the feelings and sexual integrity of a woman before and after the marriage contract. While acknowledging that Jewish feminists are justified in demanding change in talmudic laws that hamper or denigrate modern women, the overall talmudic view advances the concept that a woman's sexual dignity must not be compromised.

For example, *Kiddushin* 41a establishes that although a father has the right to give his daughter in marriage while she is still a minor, he should refrain from such action, enabling her to make the decision on her own when she is of age. A well-known biblical precedent for this precept is Rebecca, whose mother and brother consulted her before acquiescing to Eliezer's demand that she immediately journey to Canaan to marry Isaac. A husband is not permitted to force his wife to have sex; in fact, his conjugal duties toward her include the arousal of her desire when necessary, in order to assure her enjoyment of the sexual act. A husband should also not change his occupation without his wife's agreement if this will alter her conjugal rights (*Ketubot* 62b). If he takes up an occupation generally considered distasteful, or falls ill with an odious disease, a husband can even be required to divorce his wife (*Mishnah Ketubot* 7:10). One ennobling passage counsels a man to love his wife as himself and to esteem her more than himself (*Yebamot* 62b). In short, the Talmud exercises considerable care to respect a woman's sensibilities and avert a marital relationship which proves abhorrent to her.

Guided toward an appreciation of the sources cited above, students could tap into Judaism's exquisitely tuned reverence for what Abba Hillel Silver called "the esthetics of morality." Talmudic discourse remonstrates against all speech and action that is insensitive, unseemly, or lewd. Its sexual ethos represents an unequivocal condemnation of sexual harassment.

Crafting a Judaic sexual-harassment curriculum requires a grasp of the uniqueness of Jewish tradition and a strategy for imparting it to pre-teens and teens. The sine qua non for the curriculum, defining its intellectual and spiritual orientation, should be an inherently Jewish mode of viewing sexual harassment.

As an American Jewish woman, I consider myself fortunate. The recipient of an excellent religious education in the late sixties and seventies, I had achieved fluency in Hebrew and a degree in Hebrew literature by the age of twenty-two. Synagogue and academy embodied for me both matrix and refuge, the epitome of a loving community. Yet, when a few years later I became ill and, amid physical anguish, suffered an act of sexual misconduct at the hand of my doctor, it never occurred to me to turn to my tradition or community to gain perspective or seek help. Despite all my Jewish knowledge, I felt painfully disconnected and alone. My cherished Judaica teachers had been pre-feminist to a fault; the notion of women's issues as *obiter*

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Judaism and A Just Economy

Judith Hauptman

Torah and Talmud both present a vision of a just society and a just economy. The pages of Torah resonate with a profound concern for the socially and economically vulnerable segments of society—the poor, the day laborers, the orphans and widows, the resident aliens, and even the Levites who, unlike the members of other tribes, were not assigned any parcels of land in Israel. Much of the widespread contemporary appeal of Judaism derives from this high-minded ethical vision.

But a message accompanies Jewish tradition's humane social and economic policies: Should it come to pass that the policies designed to bring about justice do exactly the opposite, Torah and Talmud mandate that other policies replace the failed ones. The rabbis of the Talmud, time after time, with little fanfare, altered and even rescinded rules set down by Torah: e.g., they allowed one Jew to charge interest of another although the Torah disallows it, they allowed debts that were to be remitted in the Sabbatical year not to be remitted. For some of their enactments they gave a purely social—as opposed to religious—rationale, to repair the social and economic order. Without losing sight of their goals—by keeping those very goals before their eyes—they found alternate means of accomplishing them.

The wide variety of legislative changes found in the Talmud and the subsequent codes of Jewish law indicates that the rabbis saw the system's policies as time-specific and limited, as only one possible route among many that would establish a just society, and, obviously, as mutable and amendable.

True, Torah and Talmud and codes do *not* envision a society in which there is equal distribution of wealth and *do* envision a society in which prosperity, or the acquisition of material goods, is considered desirable and even a sign of divine blessing. The patriarchs are all described as men of considerable wealth. But if a crucial message of the Talmud is that means can be altered so long as goals are kept constant, then it follows that other kinds of economic systems are also consistent with Judaism and that determining what we mean by a just economy is of a higher order of importance than devising specific policies for achieving this goal.

Kibbutz communism or Israeli histadrut socialism, when viewed as paths to a just economy, can just as easily be found to be compatible with classical Jewish texts as the modified capitalism which is the default economic setting of Torah, Talmud, and codes. And I even have my doubts about Torah's preferred economic system. In Chapter 25 of Leviticus, for example, we read about land reform, return of properties to their original owners at the end of a fifty-year period, and the emancipation of all Hebrew slaves—regulations that are not fully consonant with the notion of the inviolability of private property.

Were it not for this self-corrective mechanism, Judaism would be a society that still sanctioned slavery and the subordination of women to men. It is clear to me that when, in the seventeenth century, the world began to frown upon slavery, and similarly, when in the past several decades the social prophets of our day pointed out to us the inherent, debilitating sexism of most societies and religions, thoughtful Jews did not say Torah is therefore outdated and irrelevant. Instead, like the rabbis of the Talmud and codes, they recommended refining Jewish social policies—Halacha—yet again in order to reconcile Jewish practice with evolving social and economic truths. Contemporary sensibilities allow and even prod us to find new meaning in old texts.

The twin concepts of *tzedek* (justice) and *tzedaka* (good works and philanthropy) are frequently cited as two paramount Jewish goals for a just society. But how to achieve them—which perhaps may be called the politics of change—is to be decided anew in every generation.

Another defining characteristic of a just economy, as envisioned by Jewish sources, is its stance on welfare entitlement: If we are obligated to provide minimal needs to all those who lack them, then they are entitled

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to receive them. That is, those who have no source of sufficient income have a right to put their needs on the public purse with no shame attached. I do not want to see anyone choose to adopt welfare as a way of life, not because I will have to pay more for their upkeep but because I think it ultimately and profoundly self-debasing never to be able to fend for oneself. But I will not sit in judgment on welfare recipients. First, because this runs counter to the Jewish sentiment of not judging others until you find yourself in the same place. Second, because increasingly it is women who make up the poor in our society and women's situation is often complicated. I would find it unconscionable to suggest that a mother of young children, with no source of income from their father, feel ashamed if she chooses to go on welfare in order to stay home and raise her kids herself instead of going to work and placing them in the full-time care of others. Similarly, I would not want an eighty-year-old woman to choose to work instead of suffering the shame of receiving welfare payments.

I think it is almost impossible to distinguish between those whose welfare needs are legitimate and who are therefore entitled to public support and those who should work and not be supported by public funds. If the problem with the welfare system is that it is open to abuse, then it should be changed. Or if there are people who find a life of welfare preferable to a life of work, then they should be helped to re-evaluate their decision.

I think that my attitude toward welfare is like my attitude toward abortion: Let it remain legal but teach people that it is often a morally poor choice to make. Similarly, let people feel they are entitled to welfare when the circumstances justify it but teach them to make other choices about how to live their lives when circumstances permit them to.

The notion of entitlement without shame can be found in the Talmud. Concerned in their day about the feminization of poverty, the rabbis of the Talmud instituted a *ketuba*, a marriage document, so that widows—young and old—would not find themselves alone and destitute. Please note that the society for which the *ketuba* was designed was one in which women did not, as a rule, earn a living, and exercised no control over any financial assets, even their own: whatever small amount they earned, for instance from the sale of handicrafts, had to be turned over to their husband, as well as whatever income accrued from their real assets. For a woman whose husband predeceased her, the *ketuba* stipulates, among other things, medical coverage, domicile in the marital residence for as long as she chooses to remain there, and full maintenance for her and even for her daughters for as long as they were underage or not yet married. It is not suggested that she earn her keep. This kind of document, which has been called by many one of the most progressive pieces of Talmudic legislation, can serve as a model for how to care today for women and men who are unable, for a variety of reasons, to support themselves. But the larger point is that women, just one example of economically precarious individuals, are recognized as such by the Talmud and are given the necessary economic and social protection as their right, albeit from the private sector.

The Talmud even presents a theory about an efficient way of delivering services to those who need them. The Torah often stresses the importance of blood relationship or kinship ties. A major theme of the early history of the Jews, found in the book of Genesis, is sibling responsibility, beginning with radical abdication of such responsibility in the narrative of Cain and Abel but ending with full assumption of fiscal responsibility for one's family in the saga of Joseph and his brothers.

In later books, the Torah talks about caring for "your indigent brother," or assisting your brother who has fallen on hard times, treating him differently from the way you would treat others. The rabbis of the Talmud integrate these scattered references into a coherent system of care: When faced with limited financial resources and numerous competing claimants, they recommend that one give precedence to the poor of one's own family over the poor of one's hometown, or to the poor of one's town over the poor of another town. Like assigning children for care to their own parents—a system that has not been surpassed for efficiency, quality of care, and ease of implementation—those parts of Torah that talk about special treatment for Jews as opposed to non-Jews should not make us uncomfortable but should be valued for what they are—an attempt to devise an efficient and effective system for caring for those in need. If, for example, Jews care for every poor Jew by lending him money interest-free in order to help him get back on his feet, but do not do the same for non-Jews because interest, in the eyes of Torah, *is* fair compensation for the use of one's money—a point often missed by commentators—then rather than be embarrassed by this piece of legislation, we should recognize it for what it is—a system for insuring that every person in need has a caregiving person or community to whom to turn. No one is abandoned. The set of poor is mapped onto the set of those able to support them.

We read in the Talmud:

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Wealth, Torah, and Morality

Meir Tamari

Although contemporary Jewish education presents positive role models in the areas of prayer, religious observance, and Torah study, there are no clear examples regarding economic behavior. The absence of a clear, Jewish economic behavioral model from the lessons taught in many Jewish schools and synagogues may lead Jews to assume that there is nothing within Jewish tradition to counter the extreme individualism and cutthroat competitiveness that characterize our market-oriented, capitalist system. This separation of business and material wealth from the sphere of everyday Jewish life creates a "religious/economic split personality." Yet the disjunction stems not from values inherent in Jewish tradition, but from fundamental distortions of that tradition. Those willing to explore the Halacha to solve this dilemma will find that the tradition, in its treatment of the ethical issues of money and wealth, contains the tools for overcoming the excessive materialism and competitiveness so prevalent in modern economic life.

Jews who exhibit the economic/religious split personality often make a great show of piety and careful religious observance while routinely engaging in ethically questionable financial and business practices. "Business is business, and Torah is Torah" is the familiar slogan characterizing this phenomenon. A similar split operates at the level of personal behavior. In a consumer-oriented society, Jewish morality clashes with widespread wastefulness, selfishness, and materialism. Yet an unholy preoccupation with "overconsumption" and the business of making money can be pursued even while observing halachic rules in other areas.

In many of the world's religious traditions, the quest for the spiritual is in tension with the material world, which serves as a snare, a powerful force preventing humankind from attaining the highest levels of piety and oneness with the divine. Christianity and some of the Eastern religions find their solution to this conflict in the quest for otherworldly religiosity, which can lead either to asceticism or to a complete separation of the affairs of the material world from religious consideration. Judaism, however, has found in Torah a method of combining the spiritual with the material, so that the latter can also become a means of spiritual redemption. Samuel of Sochochow, an early twentieth-century Polish spiritual master, points out that, unlike the angels, Jews are not commanded to be *tahor* (pure), but rather to become *k'doshim* (holy people) by sanctifying permissible actions rather than avoiding them.

Thus acquiring wealth is permitted in Judaism, as long as sanctity is involved. When Jews engage in business in an open society with Jews and non-Jews, each transaction is a potential *chilul ha-Shem* (desecration of God's name) or *kiddush ha-Shem* (sanctification of God's name). There is no basis in Halacha for a double standard in dealings with Jews as opposed to non-Jews. The *Shulchan Aruch* and Moses Maimonides both state, "Stealing from a non-Jew is forbidden." Nowhere in the human experience is the challenge to be holy as great as in the marketplace. Therefore, Jewish tradition recounts that when a man enters the World to Come, the first question he is asked is, "Did you deal truly and honestly in your business?"

The Philanthropist

One pervasive contemporary role model, that of the benefactor of educational institutions and philanthropist, is particularly difficult to reconcile with Torah. And because it has far-reaching negative effects both on individuals and communities, it warrants serious attention.

Judaism requires philanthropy, but the giving of money does not exempt us from moral obligations in the marketplace. Unfortunately, philanthropic activities inevitably make way for the unintentional normalization of two distortions of Judaism. On the one hand, generous support for charity and education

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can make it easy to salve one's conscience or earn community respect despite questionable or illegal business practices. On the other hand, financial support of Torah scholars can be used to evade one's own obligation to study Torah.

Jews are not commanded to be pure, but rather to become holy people by sanctifying permissible actions.

This role model develops from two distortions of the *Shulchan Aruch*. One who defrauds through false weights or measure or other forms of theft can only repent if he returns the stolen money. If one has defrauded scores of customers, shareholders, or creditors, however, complete restitution is virtually impossible. Out of mercy for the poor soul who cannot achieve *t'shuva* (repentance), charitable giving is proposed as an inferior, second-class penance, but Judaism has no place for sharing ill-gotten goods with Torah students and the poor.

All Jews are required to study Torah, regardless of age, status, wealth, or background. This personal obligation cannot be delegated to another party or a special group of professionals. The *Shulchan Aruch* exempts only those who are unable to learn or who are *tarud* (preoccupied with the chores of earning a living). These exemptions do not apply to most business-people. Earning a living today generally does not require "total immersion" in the world of work. Rather, it is the insatiable desire for an ever-escalating, unattainable standard of living that frequently drives the workaholic. If we curb our economic appetites, we will have plenty of time for Torah.

Talmid Chacham

Maimonides' description of the *Talmid Chacham* (Torah scholar) could serve as a positive model for contemporary Jewish economic behavior. In describing the *Talmid Chacham*—Judaism's ultimate role model—Maimonides outlines his business precepts and practices:

> The commerce of the *talmid chacham* has to be in truth and faith. His yes is to be yes and his no, no; he forces himself to be exact in calculations when he is paying but is willing to be lenient when others are his debtors. He should keep his obligations, even where halachically he is able to withdraw or retract, so that his word is his bond; but if others have obligations to him, he should deal mercifully, forgiving and extending credit. One should be careful not to deprive one's neighbor of his livelihood [even where this is legal] or to cause hardship and anguish to others [either bodily or financially].
>
> (*Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot De'ot*, Chapter 5, halacha 13.)

Maimonides preceded these injunctions by stressing that one should eat, drink, and provide for one's household according to one's income and not become overly involved in business as a result of increased expenses.

Restoring the "Jewish Community": Public Sector Funding, Peer Pressure, and Din Torah

Many of today's Jewish communities regard adherence to a Jewish economic ethos—like all other aspects of religious observance—as a matter of individual choice. The absence of an independent legal and communal framework for business activity prevents the implementation of a Jewish economic value system, thereby perpetuating the religious/economic split personality.

In the premodern era in Europe, for example, Jews were organized into *kehillot*, halachically governed communal bodies that were at least semi-autonomous legally and administratively. Today, however, the only evidence of communalism in the Jewish world is voluntary—community support of ritualistic and educational needs such as synagogue, *mikveh*, schools, or the production and oversight of kosher food.

Prior to the dissolution of halachic communities, social, educational, and municipal needs were funded by taxes, while halachic authorities monitored the fiscal system. The spiritual and administrative leaders of communal institutions were not usually directly involved with fund-raising. In this way, unethical behavior and communal controversy regarding funding of schools, synagogues, and charitable institutions were kept to a minimum.

Today, however, communal needs in the Jewish world and elsewhere are primarily met through the fund-raising efforts of the educational or social institutions themselves, often without overarching communal or halachic supervision. These private initiatives are open to the same moral challenges and potential for

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Visit

Adelaide Donnelley



I recently returned from a visit with my parents. My father has Parkinson's, and his once vital and athletic body has compressed to little more than skeletal proportions. He is stooped, often motionless, drooling, barely able to talk or swallow—as if his body has finally rebelled against the years of pressure and iron-clad control to which he subjected it. He is increasingly incapable of controlling anything except his mind, which is fixated on the interminable replaying and rewriting of his life's story.

Being in his presence affects me on so many levels.

I am angered at the continuing and all-encompassing self-absorption that has been his hallmark all these years, although until recently it was mitigated by his sense of adventure and lusty appetite for experience.

I am touched by the poignancy of his fragile bird-like body—by the thin strands of hair, like worn out threads, combed with as much care as he can muster, over his pale translucent scalp. After waking from each of his many daytime naps, he says, as he struggles to come back from the formlessness that is more and more his home, "I think I'll comb my hair." And we shuffle to the bathroom to find the long, angled bar that enables him to comb, barely lifting his arm. It is his way, I think, of continuing to participate in the world of civility.

I am touched, too, by his eager, pointy little ears, with all the freshness and earnestness of an infant's (apt, as hearing is his *one* faculty that has only improved with age). The sight of a baby's ears sticking out so very earnestly, the sight of the soft flowing nape of its neck, have always moved me; something about the trusting and innocent nature they represent, unsuspecting of the life that is about to descend. It is that quality, naively trusting and unsuspecting, that surrounds him now.

Helping him out of his chair—which takes great effort, pulling the front, lifting from behind until he is finally standing in a lopsided and teetering way—I am humbled by the silhouette of his back, the oversized head and infant ears precariously perched on such a very frail and listing body. Even seeing it in my mind as

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I write, I feel an overwhelming and maternal sadness.

There is vague apprehension at the sight of his swollen and frozen hands, ankles, feet, so like my own and hinting to me at an ominous and unforgiving future that might be mine as well.

It is strange how he enters me when I am with him, how I take him on and leave feeling years older, stooped and stiff, moving haltingly and awkwardly. His image seems to imprint itself indelibly on me at a cellular level, and after being with him I experience a kind of urgency to find a psychic surgeon to cut it out, scrape it away, scour it clean before it takes hold and becomes inevitably fated.

I kept looking at my father, trying to grasp how so much past and future, so much pride and need, so much appetite and stubbornness, could exist in such a frail and shrunken being.

As we age, the genetic predisposition seems undeniable. But are we not also shaped by the models we have, by what we see as possible?

And images of him, buried in the frozen landscape of his being, follow me, appearing in my dreams, haunting me, driving me to search for a contrasting and more positive vision to take its place. Like post-traumatic stress victims needing to look on a gentler landscape to erase the images of war, I am driven to find other images, other models, of aging.

When I am with him, I become frozen and remote myself—as if I were a deer caught in the headlights of intensity I cannot escape. Overwhelmed by the enormity of his daily routine, I am humbled, and it is difficult to connect with him as I would like.

Sitting beside him for hours as he eats, rotely wiping his mouth, trying to catch the food-filled drool before it falls and begins to build like small stalagmites in his lap. Lifting the medically corrected L-shaped spoon with bite after bite, hoping each time he will swallow without choking or coughing or throwing it all up. And at night, the laborious bed time procedure: dental tools to dig, brush, flush out the remainder of the day's meals into a little plastic bowl; peeling the socks like elastic tubing slowly over his swollen feet; removing the velcro "button" shirt, suspenders, pants, diaper, trying not to see his misshapen body, the skin dripping down like layers of wax on a candle that is fast burning out. Then positioning him seated on the rectangular bath mat at the center of his bed with the rope, specially installed for such a purpose, in hand. (He once held onto the rope, he tells me, for twenty minutes, when he slipped off the bed, feet caught in a tangle of books in a nearby case as my mother ran to get the downstairs tenant to help lift him back up. "We couldn't stop laughing," my mother said.) Swinging one leg then the other onto the bed while he holds on, wavering uncontrollably toward his pillow, and prying, pulling, pushing until he is somewhat symmetrically arranged; and, finally, fitting the urinal over his numb and limp penis—"the thing," as he calls it—thinking as I do, "So that is what my father's penis looks like" and trying to imagine it in its more youthful days, erect and proud. He was extremely modest; I only saw it once before, when I was very young. But a clear memory remains of a very small me, asking incredulously, "*What* is *that*?" to which he replied, "It's a turtle on a rock." And for days I pondered the miracle of a turtle on a rock lodged precariously somewhere below my father's stomach.

During the visit, I kept looking at him, trying to grasp how so much past and future, so much pride and need, so much determination and unconsciousness, so much appetite and stubbornness, could exist in such a frail and shrunken being. What *is* it in there, I wondered over and over, tempted to reach in through the eyes and try to touch it as if it were a tangible thing like the body. It makes me wonder what this elusive invisible stuff is we call life/person/psyche/being—and it makes me ache to reach through the barriers we both have erected to touch in a softer way.

This morning the taxi came early. As I left, the sight of his head, his little ears, positioned in front of the ever-present T.V., and of my mother, so small and brave and full of unacknowledged longing, standing unsteadily at the door caught me as if in a crossfire of love, hate, sadness, and fear and filled me with an old, familiar feeling: the need to protect and parent them while needing to be parented and protected myself.

Now home, I am momentarily lost to myself, inhabited by their life—their future—which I've struggled so long to escape.

It will pass; my rational mind knows that. But at the moment I'm a child treading water, desperate to stay afloat, and an old woman struggling to remember who I once was. At times like this, one's life compresses into past-present-future all at once, and there is an odd kind of luminescence to it—quieting in a strange sort of way. As I said, I know it will pass. □

The two memoirs that follow present sharply divergent portraits of the late Isaac Bashevis Singer, the Nobel Prize-winning Yiddish writer. They are proof texts for the axiom that in the economy of fame, for every hagiography there exists an equally compelling, darker tale.

The Silence of God

A Reminiscence About Isaac Bashevis Singer

Gil Aberg

Some time before Isaac Bashevis Singer was awarded the Nobel Prize, I went to see him in his New York apartment. I was in my early fifties and in the grip of a crisis. My job, my marriage, my ambitions to be a playwright, my relationship with God—all seemed about to crumble. I needed a friendly shoulder and I had reason to believe that Singer could—and would—provide it. He had come to the provinces where I live to give a talk. He did so with his customary panache and penetrating wit. I was captivated, as indeed I had been with many of his books and stories. During a social hour following the talk I was introduced to him.

Without hesitation he reached up and pinched my cheek—no mean trick since Bashevis Singer was as short as I am tall. "Aha," he said, "an artiste, eh?" He did not know who I was, or what I did, or what I hoped to do but some sixth sense told him I was a kindred spirit. I was thrilled by that recognition and, before the evening was out, I asked him if I could come to see him when I was next in the city. Actually, I intended to make the trip for the sole purpose of seeing him but I didn't want him to know that. I'm sure he did. You didn't put anything over on a man like that.

About three months later I presented myself at his apartment on the Upper West Side just off Broadway. It was in one of those fortress-like monoliths that must have been put up in the 1890s. I had to pass through what had once been a porte-cochère where now a uniformed security guard presided. He phoned ahead and told me to go on up.

A woman answered the door, escorted me to Bashevis in his study, and disappeared. I didn't think she was a maid but I was not introduced to her and I passed it off as one of the peculiarities of a famous writer's menage. But the incident did lead me to feel there was a charge about the place—an emotional charge—and had I been wise enough I would have realized it was a harbinger of things to come.

I don't remember how I began but it must have been obliquely. Indirection is one of my failings. It is also a strength because when you can't say what's really bothering you—up front and in so many words—you learn to express yourself in abstractions. That's called thinking, and thinking is an ambiguous virtue: It can be healthy and productive, or it can be a form of escape—evasive and tramontane. That's how I must have started with Singer, not with my problems but with the world's. In any case it triggered a response in kind.

"God," I heard him telling me, "is silent."

He said that with a deep sigh and a far-off gaze. I knew what he was thinking, and he knew I knew. I realized right off that I was not going to get any relief for my real-life crisis from this man. And I didn't. Not directly at least. What I did get when it finally came was oblique and took years to make itself clear to me.

We wandered on for about forty minutes. I was more or less crushed at first, although I took some consolation from the fact that I was with a kindred spirit who acknowledged me as a kindred spirit. There was no "I'm-so-glad-to-be-here-at-the-feet-of" adulation on my part and no condescension on his. We were two Jews who had seen the world-sadness and knew there could be no relief from it. Not that I didn't contend with him. I did. The notion that God is silent offends me and triggers in me a strong urge to rush to the Lord's defense. I said that God is not silent. That "God speaks to us through people like you"—writers and artists whose work reflects God's intent. And through science too: Every discovery shows us the

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order inherent in the universe and the beauty that goes along with it.

I was at that time a science writer by trade. I had been drawn to science by the elegance of its pictures of the world. There is nothing shabby about this place except we make it so. And against almost every threat except cosmic annihilation—against hunger, poverty, disease, bigotry, and war—we have it in us to prevail. Even chaos, currently the darling of the cognoscenti, is only a precondition of understanding. Once things fall into place—or rather are put into place by a leap of human consciousness—disorder is resolved. There is no end of turbulence under heaven but that is no excuse to call our confusion God's. Our job is to discover where turmoil belongs in the scheme of things. Every work of art worth the name imposes order. Or used to. Now it is the fashion to deconstruct order so as to expose the underlying chaos.

We were two Jews who had seen the world-sadness and knew there could be no relief from it.

Bashevis listened to my arguments but I felt he was not moved. So, months later, I sent him a photomicrograph showing the arrangement of atoms at the tip of a finely drawn tungsten wire. The image was made with a Mueller field ion microscope, the first instrument capable of making atoms visible. I knew Mueller. He was a no-nonsense, rigorous-minded physicist who had been somewhat surprised when I called attention to the fact that every one of his atom micrographs was a thing of beauty. A rather simplistic beauty, to be sure—sort of like the patterns one sees in a kaleidoscope—but striking all the same.

I said as much to Bashevis Singer in a note accompanying the picture. Even at its most fundamental level, I wrote—even among atoms that we can never directly see—nature shows evidence of a principle we recognize as harmonious. (Nietzsche calls that recognition a pathology; order is our need, not God's plan. But Nietzsche would.) I was, and to this day am still shocked, surprised, and not a little delighted by what Singer wrote me by way of reply:

"If you would have sent me a check for a thousand dollars I wouldn't have been as happy as seeing a picture of atoms with its great symmetry and harmony.

You are right. Only God, only a divine mind, can build with such tiny particles such beautiful designs According to (the) Kabbalists, beauty is one of God's attributes."

And then, as a kind of a postscript, he added:

"Don't be too frustrated (about your crisis). It will only enrich your spirit."

But all that was months afterwards. Despite my attempts during our talk to fend off Bashevis's skepticism, I found myself sinking. Answers, answers, there are no answers. And Singer, I felt, was sinking with me. The emotional charge I had sensed when I walked in was real. Life is sad and God is silent, say what you will. Finally, he said he had some errands to do and would walk with me to my subway stop. The interview was over. But not quite. There was one more scene to be played out.

That happened, perhaps appropriately enough, on Broadway. It was a brisk fall morning, drenched in sunlight. But something about being on the street provoked Bashevis Singer to give me a parting salvo of admonitions. He chattered rapidly about the dangers and pitfalls of living in the city. He spoke about crime and overcrowding and drugs and fear—the whole spectrum of terrors that constitute a threat against the person. I had not said anything about wanting to move but he sensed that that must be in the back of my mind. As indeed it was: I grew up in Chicago—in the city proper, not in the suburbs—and I somehow attributed some measure of my current malaise to living in the middle of nowhere.

Suddenly, as we were about to part, Bashevis Singer stopped in his tracks, looked up at me, and said: "You are a sportsman, no?" Out of the blue that came, with neither preparation nor explanation. I had no idea what he was getting at, but there was no time to figure it out. I shrugged, and nodded more or less tentatively. We shook hands and went our ways. I never saw him again.

I brooded about that remark for fifteen years. I was sure it was part—perhaps the essence—of what Isaac Bashevis Singer was trying to say to me. What had he meant: Are you a sportsman? Of course I am a sportsman. I am American-born. I love baseball. I play tennis to the point where my right arm is a tailor's nightmare. That makes me a sportsman, doesn't it? Not a sportsman's sportsman, but a sportsman—doesn't it? But what of that? I found his remark extremely enigmatic. What in God's name was he trying to tell me?

Years later, I stumbled on the answer, again out of the blue. I was walking with a friend on a crowded street just after a heavy snowfall. The snow was wet and perfect for packing. I packed and started throwing snowballs at a no-parking sign across the street.

My friend, a confirmed "thinker" if there ever was

one, who could not throw a ball of any kind if his life depended on it, was suddenly aghast. I knew he was embarrassed by my antics, but that was only part of it. He was sure I was going to break a window, or hit a car, or conk some innocent pedestrian on the head. He was simply projecting his ineptitude onto me. Actually, I have pretty good control and can hit your average no-parking sign about three and a half times out of five. I've never hit anybody I didn't want to hit.

As my friend began to screech at me to stop, I thought about Bashevis Singer and his enigmatic question. I knew then what he was trying to tell me. It's in Deuteronomy, among other places. "Choose life," he was saying. If you can throw a ball, throw a ball—a snowball, even. I was reminded of the old chasidic story about the disciple who goes to study with a certain *tzaddik* only to discover that what his master most wants him to do is watch the way he ties his shoelaces. Wisdom lies in the way a *tzaddik* ties his shoes. Wisdom for me lay in being what I am, part of which is a "sportsman." It was Bashevis's way of telling me what he wanted to tell me, and it was so oblique as to be almost silent.

Perhaps that is the hallmark of the artist after all. The richest texts are dark and obscure. Not with the intent to confound—or to provoke useless and befuddling commentary—but because the best answers, perhaps the only answers, are the ones you wrest yourself out of the darkness.

Oblique is God, and dark and troubled too. But not silent.

I am still as oblique as they come and forever in the grip of some crisis or other that seems to threaten my life, or my sanity, or both. But from time to time I think about my encounter with Isaac Bashevis Singer—a sad and troubled man—and know that that was a watershed experience in my life.

Oblique is God, and dark and troubled too. But not silent. □

Bashevis

Richard Elman

Isaac Bashevis Singer used to call my old high school friend, who sometimes visited Singer's flat with me, "The Professor." My friend, Ronald Sanders, a self-taught scholar of Jewish history and Yiddish, was a bit formal in his manner, and a literary conservative, preferring the writings of Peretz and Singer's older brother, Israel Joshua, to Bashevis's "modernist" evocations of the demonic.

In conversations with Bashevis, Singer's nickname for my friend sometimes made him blush and stammer, and seemed aimed to do precisely that, as Ronny was a little stiff as well as unsure of himself, and also unemployed at the time, living on hope and fear. Bashevis was criticizing my friend's book-learning, his seeming naiveté. With a certain formality, on the other hand, Bashevis always called me, who had far less book-learning, "Mr. Elman," even after I had written reviews of his books for the *Nation* and *Commonweal* and The *New York Times*, had interviewed him in *Commentary* and for the U.S.I.A., and wrote a profile of him for *Holiday* magazine. In those days, I was young enough to glance over my shoulder metaphorically whenever he called me "Mr. Elman" to see if my father had just entered the room.

When I first got to know him well in the early 1960s, Bashevis was living next door to the Walter B. Cooke funeral parlor on West 72nd Street off Columbus Avenue, and sometimes, pretending to be shy, like the wolf in "Little Red Riding Hood." He was still hardly known beyond Yiddish literary circles but seemed, in

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retrospect, to be anticipating larger renown, a profound change in his circumstances through the adulation of certain young American visitors like me. Every word he spoke that first day was poised and apt, a parable for literary treasury hunters. "Whenever I see a hearse parked outside," he said as we entered the flat, "I think the angel of death has been patient long enough. But in a city like New York this angel is truly overworked. He has such a busy schedule. There's a death everyday around here, and sometimes I think they're all my Yiddish readers."

Without seeming ancient, he sustained an illusion of frailty, this acute but diffident man in his fifties standing in the sunny front foyer of that spacious flat while proposing so many ironies about his literary situation that I was enlisted almost instantly to his cause solely on the basis of ignorance, and ambition. It would be Singer and myself against the *goyim*, I thought—the likes of T.S. Eliot, for whom anti-Semitism was a matter of literary aesthetics. Why couldn't a Jewish writer be a great artist? Singer was. But Singer soon disabused me of believing we could ever be allies for the same causes. My choosing him to emulate didn't necessarily reveal great discrimination on my part.

"Do you believe in ghosts, Mr. Elman? I don't necessarily believe in the other-worldly," he pointed out, "but I don't disbelieve. That's another matter entirely. Some people are just very gullible, and you remind me of one, a person I knew in Warsaw. A certain friend was maybe just a little like you. You could be him, or then again somebody else entirely a free-thinker, like you."

I protested that I hardly knew who I was at all, but I was trying very hard to learn by writing a lot.

"You shouldn't try so hard," Singer said. "Young people don't know how to be happy. It so happens the torments of this world are as nothing compared to the next..."

He was smiling, amused with me, and with himself. I was tempting him to see me as the fool and it couldn't be helped, since I persisted in admiring him so much.

"Maybe you should go back to school," he once observed, "and study for a profession. It's hard to be a writer without gifts..."

Here he was, the great Yiddish master in a city where Yiddish was dying day by day, and he still wrote a column for the *Forwards* in which he confessed he sometimes had to invent from the whole cloth recollections called even now "Memories of Warsaw," but when he looked at me it was through the murky prism of my shoddy faults. "I only want to be of help to you," I told him, which was a lie, as we both knew. If his works were suddenly finding him a new audience in English through the translations of "Americans" such as Isaac Rosenfeld and Saul Bellow, Bashevis claimed he was still pretty much in the dark about who was who in this America where he'd been living since the 1930s. I could maybe be his guide. For example, who was this Mr. Saul Bellow? he asked. Was he so important?

Behind Singer's back his writing space was closed off by uncurtained glass doors. He wore the same severe costume every time I visited: a pair of dark suit trousers and a stark white cotton dress shirt, and plain black shoes, but there was nothing ordinary about his pale face, or deportment. A white fringe of hair framed his ears; his blue eyes were clear and quick with scrutiny, the smile ironic. Often his pet parakeet would be perched on the dome of his quite bald head when he came to the door, and his smile was always winning and friendly. He took you in with it, and got your measure, and offered you a seat, and was easy in his discourse. His English was fluent but heavily accented.

"I used to have two such little birds," he announced. "It was also an arranged marriage, and it worked for quite a while. They would fly around the flat together like lovers. But my wife one day left the window open and in a city like New York such opportunities can be devastating to even the best arranged marriages."

Almost from the first, Singer loved to talk about women and sex, "though not like certain Polish officers," he would protest, and especially out of hearing of his wife, Alma, who worked days in the Better Dress Department at Lord & Taylor.

Bashevis also loved flirting with the young women I brought along to visit with him and asking them impertinent questions such as, "Do you sleep with men?" "Are you a virgin?" "Do you have any women friends who still are?"

He was partly coming on to these vivacious literary admirers, but also gathering information for his fiction about an America he kept from himself at some remove.

Whenever I interviewed Singer he always, in turn, interviewed me. I asked about his reading of Flaubert and Dostoyevsky. He wanted to know why, in an America of boundless economic opportunities and comforts, the son of a successful Jewish real estate lawyer would want to be an impoverished writer.

He always made sure I understood that he believed in good and evil. From a very poor Jewish family, a religious background, he was, nevertheless, not the usual sort of self-denying Puritan but very interested in erotic experiences, and temptation. Singer said he truly

believed in the temptations of the Evil One. They were real and vivid to any sensate being. When we met he was still barely managing to get by in New York, in part because of the lingering effects of his departure from Poland, all those griefs and dislocations, and also because of his threadbare Bohemian manhood in Warsaw and New York as a literary journalist. America was so strange, for that matter, the Evil One always so present here too. Was that why Singer always looked like an atoning sybarite? He always dressed in those stark blacks and whites, with maybe a navy blue tie, even during the heat of summer.

Once we met for lunch at Steinberg's Dairy Restaurant on Broadway on a sweltering afternoon, and when Bashevis arrived looking like a professional mourner in his dark suit and tie, I wondered how he would respond if I were to give him a gift, a T-shirt with his customized logo, or a gaudy Hawaiian cabana shirt.

That day Singer made it clear that he was not so stand-offish as he appeared. He talked with an extravagant intimacy bordering on indiscretion about the estranged wife of a famous poet who was assisting him translate some stories. "It so happens she is very wholesome and good-looking," he exclaimed, "like certain first ladies of the Warsaw theatre. So fair and still pleasingly voluptuous..."

Then he told me about all the affairs that were being carried on inside the restaurant over lunches of *tschav* and mushroom barley soup by various middle-aged ladies and their escorts. Bashevis ate very sparingly in my presence that day, as he almost always did. "Like a bird is one way of putting it," he suggested. "Maybe you thought they come here for a glass of tea with a handle," he added, suddenly.

I'd come to see him the first time with my friend, the journalist Joel Blocker, after reading his brilliant collection of stories, *Gimpel The Fool*, to declare myself his devoted protégé. But he was not quite interested in me as that; my Yiddish was much too rudimentary to be of any utility in translating his stories. I came looking for a master, and what I got was his imitation of the "Evil One."

"It's very good of you to praise my work," Bashevis said, shrugging, and handed me a copy of *Partisan Review* with a new translation of one of his Market Street stories.

I've since learned that Singer's Gimpel was not to be interpreted as a fool at heart, but was wise to remain gullible if he was also to remain truly loving to his unfaithful wife, but in those days I felt pretty much like a fool every time I opened my mouth in Singer's presence.

I also probably needed help with my writing, if I had any talent at all, he seemed to be inferring, and I certainly needed a different father, but Singer never for one instant permitted himself to act *in loco parentis* with me except to reproach me when I later left my first wife. If I ever had a literary career it would surely have to be without his help.

Singer was simply hopeful that I could be helpful to him as an enthusiast. I reviewed books once in a while. Perhaps I might review one of his, if I liked.

He really wasn't a celebrity yet. When I later circulated stories I'd helped to translate among magazine editors, most had never heard of him. When Joel Blocker and I conducted an interview with Bashevis that was eventually published in *Commentary*, we did so only after we had considerable difficulty convincing George Plimpton of the *Paris Review* that he should consider the piece for that quarterly's famous series of interviews with writers. After holding onto the piece a couple of years it was Plimpton's considered opinion that Singer, who was now beginning to publish widely to astonishing notices, was still not worth the same attention he was lavishing on James Gould Cozzens and Isak Dinesen.

I was working as an interviewer and producer at WBAI, a non-commercial radio, and when I asked Singer to read from one of his stories on the radio he did so graciously, but he did not wish to be interviewed by me on what he'd heard to be "a communist radio station."

Fairly early in our relationship, Singer asked me if I was a believer. When I replied that such questions didn't really interest me Bashevis responded, "Nevertheless such questions are important. One chooses to believe or disbelieve. Are you a socialist?"

I said I thought I probably was something like that.

"Its a sin," he replied, "choosing to disbelieve." But he added, flatly: "It's not surprising they call the Jews a stiff-necked race."

One of the first people Bashevis introduced me to was his editor, Cecil Hemley, of Noonday Press. Cecil was a stocky man with a high color who smoked too much, had a little trouble breathing, and always seemed to be in a rush.

He wore baggy old grey suits and sweated a lot, and when he died of a heart attack, Singer seemed bereft.

A gifted novelist and poet, Cecil was devoted to Singer. He seemed to drop by every day on the way home from work, and he was very pleased to meet me with Blocker, and seemed to have high hopes that our enterprise on behalf of Singer's reputation would justify his efforts for the writer at Noonday.

When I finally reviewed *The Magician of Lublin* favorably in the *Nation*, Singer didn't comment on my notice of his work, but Hemley sent me a generous personal note.

Singer, who forswore meat and strong drink, sometimes served us tea and dried fruits or cold cherry pop in his flat, and once in a while his wife would bring home pastry and other sweets for the guests. She was a handsome blonde woman who spoke no Yiddish. Legend had it they'd had a passionate affair some years back and for Isaac she'd left a professional man and grown children in the suburbs.

The longer I knew him, the more I saw him as closed off, harsh, ruthless, manipulative, cold. He was determined both to blaspheme and to sing praises unto the Lord.

She was never very forthcoming in our presence, and used to stay in the bedroom or the kitchen most of the time when Bashevis had visitors. Once though, when I asked him about Dostoevsky after he'd confessed to having translated *The Possessed* into Yiddish while still in Warsaw, Bashevis would not speak about that Russian writer except to say he no longer read "such books" until Alma Singer interrupted from the next room.

"Tell them the truth Isaacal," she said, "about how you used to love Dostoyevsky..."

Bashevis seemed to grow quite annoyed with her. "Alma," he said, "when you write a novel and they'll come to interview you, you'll tell them about Dostoyevsky and Jacob Wasserman both together, but they are here to interview me so please, Alma, don't say another word...not even about Sholem Asch..."

Afterwards he was smiling, as if his seeming exasperation had been a game they played regularly, but she was silent for the rest of the evening. Was she also resentful? Showing me to the door when Bashevis went off to speak on the phone with a copy editor at the *Forwards*, she told me I was to come again for tea the following Sunday, and bring my wife, if I liked.

Isaac and I never really socialized. We were friends only within limits, though he used to use that word sometimes when I dropped by with a newly published review I'd written of one of his books. How can you be friends with a man who holds you in sure contempt for wanting to be more like him? His experiences were so distinct from my own that it was amazing we could even communicate about his work. We spent a lot of evenings together, with others, and sometimes tête à tête. Singer enjoyed my admiration and wanted my esteem to serve his purposes, but he did not regard himself as similarly obligated, and I never blamed him for that in those days. I felt I could be a student of his every mood and gesture. If he was also giving me some of his free time, as he surely might have maintained if I'd ever protested his treatment of me, that was surely the sort of education I could not get from any other sources.

He was a European; he was a Jew and entirely unassimilated, unlike Hemley, and Blocker, and myself. So much of what he represented had been turned to ashes, though not Singer, who had escaped that fate to be my teacher, not only through his writing but through his conversation about his life in Warsaw, his friends and lovers, though not about the child of love he'd abandoned to escape to America; I was to learn about him elsewhere much later when I read *The Family Moscat*, and about the child's mother, a communist, Singer's former mistress. Sometimes when we walked together on the Upper West Side, Bashevis claimed to want to talk only with the pigeons.

"The Kabbalists believe birds are the agencies of human souls," he once assured me, "and they are sentient beings, just like you and I..."

His "you and I" was flattering, and it was a first. Bashevis never complimented me except in odd ways: "You have good color today." I thought that was because he did not really enjoy my company or my conversation.

He also had nothing good to say about any other writer I claimed to find interesting. Jean-Paul Sartre was not "a good writer," he told me, when the Frenchman was awarded the Nobel Prize, and "Babel was a Marxist until it killed him."

It's probably no accident that living in the middle of the city I chose to write my first extended fictions through various Central European mouthpieces; there were in such books as *The Twenty-Eighth Day of Elul* parodic elements abstracted from the careful, accented speech of Bashevis. Isaac Singer never bothered to read those books, even when some years later they were published and well-reviewed.

He claimed not to read any of his Jewish-American contemporaries and certainly not the writings of young "sociological Jews," his way of referring to writers like me. When asked to name some living writers he admired he'd mention Henry Miller, and the man he called "Petrakis," a Greek-American from Chicago

who had written flatteringly about his work.

Singer claimed to detest the *belletrist* Maurice Samuel for mistranslating and bowdlerizing *The Family Moscat* when it was published unsuccessfully by Knopf in the early fifties.

Other literary journalists he actively disliked were Maurice Hindus of The *New York Times Book Review* and the critic Irving Howe. Howe's sin, according to Bashevis, was that he read Singer's writing as a socialist and a Marxist materialist, seemingly invulnerable to the temptations of the Evil One, and didn't know what to make of the master's constant evocations of imps, demons, incubi, succubae, and dybbuks.

Singer really pretended to keep to his own world and occult fantasies, but he was always glancing over toward the rest of the talent in the big American room he now shared, especially if they were writers with larger reputations than his own. Once we spoke of Robert Lowell's "*Life Studies*." "A *mishiginer*," Singer told me.

"Crazed is what Cecil told me. Have you ever met this poet? Cecil says he gets very violent just like Essenin..."

"This Norman Mailer," he said another time, "he's just crazy too, isn't he?" As if that said everything there was to say about such a protean genius of obsessive self-advertisement and real talent. It certainly seemed to cover over a good deal of worldly curiosity and envy. He once described himself to me as "hidden from sight on the Upper West Side next door to a ritual bath, a man who goes to Miami Beach in the summer because I have such a bad hay fever," but he was never so unworldly not to take note of each new upsurge in his growing literary reputation. Whenever a favorable review of one of his books appeared he'd ask me the same questions about the reviewer: "Is he a famous writer? Is he well regarded?"

I can remember how proud he was of the fan mail he got from Edmund Wilson hand-scribbled in Yiddish, which Wilson had taught himself in order to express his admiration for Bashevis. "This Wilson," he said, "he's not such a nice man, and he was married to Mary McCarthy, and she was a great beauty, I heard, with the appetites of Catherine the Great, but Cecil says he is also an important critic..."

"Very," I affirmed.

"Do you know him?" he asked me. "Is he a nice man...?"

I shrugged.

"I'm sure he isn't really so nice," Singer said, "because he drinks so much, but he's influential, and he's teaching himself Yiddish like the Professor, your friend... I don't have to be his friend, but I am truly grateful..."

If Singer was really not the Evil One, he was certainly not a nice man, I learned to my increasing dismay during the course of my weekly visits. I had also gotten somewhat involved in the peace movement and civil rights agitation. When I mentioned my admiration for the courage of people who were putting their lives on the line in the South, he told me, "A Jewish boy like you (I was then in my late twenties, or early thirties) shouldn't try to help the *schwartza* because these Blacks are all anti-Semites and they hate Jews just like everybody else of their class."

He told me, "A Jewish boy like you shouldn't try to help the schwartza because these Blacks are all anti-Semites and they hate Jews just like everybody else of their class."

The longer I knew him, the more I saw him as closed off, harsh, ruthless, manipulative, cold. He was determined to have it both ways, to blaspheme and sing praises unto the Lord, unlike his straighter, more liberated brother, and he was both the empathic teller of love stories about women and men and a world-class misogynist who believed women were to be used by men as their playthings. He confided to me once, presumably from experience, that many communist women were "nymphomaniacs." He teased me that he personally liked to go to bed with two women and "to watch what they do with each other, if I can...Women have no shame," he confessed, " and there's no sin to it in Talmud," he added, "or *Shulchan Aruch*. What women do together is just like playing—fooling around—whether it be Miss Susan Sontag or that Frenchy, Colette."

On the other hand, he took great delight in a correspondence he had with a Yiddish-speaking nun, a convert named Sister Muriel, in Minnesota.

When my first child was born, his wife sent my wife a layette blanket. Singer said a man's children were like good deeds, "good deeds and bad," he added.

Four years later, when my wife and I were close to separating, and I let slip the confidence that I was having a love affair with another woman, Singer was cold and cynical. "You shouldn't expect sexual bliss in marriage... That you have with other kinds of women."

He became increasingly moralistic. "A Jewish husband," he went on, like my own mother, "should behave more sensibly." This from the admirer of Knute Hamsun's ecstatic "Pan," the author of that passionate love story, "The Slave."

It was 1969, a year of revolution. At thirty-six I decided that I had outlived any further usefulness to Singer, and it was just as well as I had my own life to lead, a talent, my own needs. I wasn't going to be Bashevis's epigone any longer.

I was teaching at Columbia when Erica Jong, until recently a student poet, published *Fear of Flying*. Singer wanted to know "what kind of girl could she be to write such a book?"

Around that time, Singer published a children's book about his growing up in Warsaw, a spin-off from his journalistic memoirs of his father's rabbinical court, and in it he made the remarkable statement that there were no slums or anti-social behavior in the poor Jewish neighborhood in which he'd grown up. He'd only recently been mugged in the elevator of his apartment building and he was feeling very bitter toward the New York underclasses, but his statement was both ridiculous and untrue, even in terms of what he'd depicted in his earlier fiction, and I went after him in print for being a bigot.

After that, we only spoke again twice. I was on a train a few years later going upstate; I turned in my seat and there was Bashevis sitting deep in conversation with a very young woman. I'd just come through a difficult time and I was in a forgiving mood. I went back through the car to shake his hand and say hello.

Bashevis pretended he didn't know why we'd ever been estranged, and treated me with the uneasy joviality that one uses in confronting a recently released mental patient.

"You look healthy," he said, as he introduced me to his young companion. She was his assistant at Bard College, he assured me, to which he commuted once a week to teach.

"You never come around anymore," he said. "Why not? Have you not been feeling well?"

To all of which I shrugged and nodded cheerfully enough, without giving him any assurance that I was ever coming by again.

When my associates at Bennington College's summer workshop asked me to invite Singer to visit I reluctantly agreed to call him in the city. Bashevis was curt with me. The honorarium was much too small, he said, which was fair, and nowadays he summered in Switzerland, or occasionally went to Israel to see his son. He was simply not available.

I didn't quarrel with Isaac. I was prepared to say goodbye and wish him well, but I wondered what Singer wished for me, his old promoter.

"I do understand," I said. "And I'm sorry you can't come. It would have been nice to hear you talk again..."

"You should see my new book," Singer said. "Many of the stories were published in the *New Yorker*..."

I said I was aware he was publishing there.

"Are you still trying to be a good writer?" he asked.

Some months after that Bashevis was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature. I was very pleased, and proud that we had once been associated in any way. I was also moved and amused by the address he made in Stockholm, which was in praise of the Jewish joke and his *mameloshen*, the Yiddish language. I thought I'd contributed something to Bashevis's worldwide elevation, and when I reread many of his books I was pleased that I still admired some.

When my friend "the Professor" became Bashevis's official biographer, I was a little astonished and upset. They'd had no liking for each other at all, and my friend had always been a man of great integrity; I wondered why Ronny had agreed to write the life of a man whose work he disliked. Then I found out that Singer had lost his memory, and was in seclusion in Florida waiting to die, and my friend was also dying, and I wondered if it was the sad truth of dying that had somehow brought these two antagonists together again.

Within months of each other they were gone, and that biography was never completed. I thought then desperation over my own career might eventually lead me to try to write about my time with Singer, but I didn't choose to do so, preferring to write more fiction and poems (still trying to be a writer, Singer might have said). Then Singer's publishers chose another biographer and I thought I would not have to write anything about the pain of my encounters with Singer's misanthropic genius ever again.

It's hard to write about being disabused of certain important admirations. Such humiliating reconsiderations are the loss of hope, and such losses always mean I am that much closer to my own death, when time will intervene and waste away my cares until they all seem petty and misguided. That time when I came to visit my latest "master" in his flat and he greeted me with a parakeet perched on his bald head was more than thirty years ago. I always used to be afraid that if Bashevis ever read something I wrote he would scorn my evident lack of genius. His dying allows me to escape such ridicule and obliges me to continue my struggle. □

TIKKUN is proud to publish fiction by established authors such as Ida Fink, Ivan Klima, A.B. Yehoshua, and Joyce Carol Oates. It is also open to new voices. In this issue we are happy to present three stories by four authors who have never before published any fiction.

Water and Fire

M.G. Larsen

Flew-The-Coop wore baggy pants and a shirt that strained to contain his tub-shaped middle. He looked warily at two boys holding two captured ponies by rope halters, then leaned back on the post fence that surrounded the playground that Isaac had built on vacant city lots. The boys, Pompio and Nelson, wouldn't bother him when Isaac was nearby. Flew-The-Coop waved his hand toward the racket coming from up the block where a bulldozer was shoving debris from the old Grand Hotel into a pile. "I was there when it was good," he said to Isaac, who was forking hay into the ponies' stall. "Dressed fit to kill. Suit. Tie. Stepping high on those blue carpets. Come right up to my ankles."

Isaac paused, leaned on the hayfork, and raised his eyes skeptically. Flew-The-Coop was a bum who for years lived in a third floor room in the abandoned Grand Hotel, a room facing east so the earliest morning light shone in, a comfort at the end of a bad night. Now, while he was looking for another place to live, Flew-The-Coop kept his bundle of things under the hay in the stable Isaac had built for the ponies.

Flew-The-Coop raised a trouser leg, showing a bit of mottled brown ankle. "I was good looking then," he said. "The ladies liked me." He leaned back against the fence, his belly projecting into the playground. Isaac returned to pitching hay. "They had everything there." Flew-The-Coop's mouth matched the downcurve of his belly. "Wouldn't know it now. But what they come and tear it down for? They ain't never went to it when it was good. Should just leave it alone. Someone come along and fix it up like it was."

"No money in that," Isaac said. The Grand Hotel was on Main Street one block up from the playground. In the '50s party-goers danced under its chandeliers in thirteen ballrooms. But by 1960 it was in decline, and by 1970, a few years after the City's riots, it was closed. People no one knew drove off with the chandeliers and blue carpets and almost everything else. The leavings were picked over by the neighborhood. Pompio and Nelson, for fun, aimed rocks at the windows, breaking some as far up as the fifth floor. For years, then, the building stood, a fourteen-story shell that the winds blew through, rustling the odd-lot possessions of the bums who set up housekeeping in the ballrooms or, like Flew-The-Coop, in the guest rooms on the lower floors. From the Grand Hotel's glory days only the harmony of its stone proportions and the delicacy of the stone detail in its facade remained, like the bone structure and last jewels of an old countess way down on her luck.

Next to the Grand Hotel stood a square, flat-faced abandoned office building with the look of a giant file cabinet. Developers had gotten money to turn it into apartments for the aged, and they wanted the land under the Grand Hotel for a little park for the old people. It would be a north-facing, walled-in place for them to cool their old bones, but a park was a federal requirement that came with the money. The developers hired Carter's Demolition Company.

Pompio and Nelson, who by the time Spring came hardly ever went to school, were on hand the morning Carter's crew arrived and started to build a shed. The two fifteen-year-old boys, one dark, one fair, watched from across the street, then moved closer, and after awhile they were handing nails to a young guy on the crew, hoping to get to do some work for pay. When Carter arrived in his black pick-up, striding over, looming, quiet Pompio stepped back but Nelson grinned and grabbed a handful of nails. Clowning, he tossed them up, and caught most of them, looking up at the man.

"Get these kids out of here," Carter said, not even

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yelling. As he strode off a stone whizzed past his head; turning, he saw that Pompio and Nelson were already too far away to bother with. He ordered his crew to put up a board fence along the sidewalk and run razor wire along the back of the work site.

The next day Carter hauled in a trailer to use as an office. Through its small window people could see his big workboots resting among a disorder of important looking papers on a metal desk. By the end of June the noise of his bulldozer was routine, as were the dust clouds that made children in the playground sneeze.

It was a hot summer. A block down from the Grand Hotel and across the street from the playground was a fire hydrant. Isaac loosened its heavy bolt with a foot-long rusted red wrench, letting the water flow out fast and cold. The hydrant corner became a cool and misty oasis in the surrounding heat and dust. Mothers and grandmothers came with toddlers who splashed in the clean gutter stream that flowed down Apple Street. Straddling the source, a child could direct the water stream into a high arc, aiming it with a tin can. In the sunlight the water droplets became prisms that created a rainbow under which the young people played, struggling towards and against one another, throwing each other into the hydrant's flow.

"Get Pompio," Doreen yelled, and the young girls ran after him and grabbed his arm, hung onto his waist, and got hold of a leg, while he half-heartedly pulled away. Every day the girls pushed and dragged and wrestled Pompio's broad dark body into the spray. That summer five girls were in love with him and took his easy smile and his dark, dark eyes that never showed anger into their shared daydreams.

Handsome Nelson didn't stray far from Pompio, but the girls ignored him. Nelson had been a loner, a skinny white boy with mercurial blue eyes, quick to strike. But that summer dark Pompio and fair, freckled Nelson were friends, and as friends they shared the responsibility of the hydrant. One of them turned the hydrant on in the late morning and late at night one of them turned it off. They made sure there were no unfair fights and that grown-ups didn't get sprayed. They kept an eye out, too, for the cops and the water department.

The police cars always drove by slowly. Then not much time would pass before the city water department van arrived. Neighborhood people casually moved away, watching while the water department officials stalked to the abandoned flow and shut it off. As soon as they left, Pompio and Nelson reopened the tight valve with Isaac's wrench and the water flowed again.

For Nelson that summer, the hydrant seemed the source of something new that he could feel but not name. He made the hydrant corner his home; the mothers and aunts became his mothers and aunts and the little kids were his little kids. Nelson felt good. He stayed away from his bickering indoor home. It took only a few minutes in there before Nelson would feel the goodness seeping out of him.

Pompio didn't stay indoors much either; his home felt unsteady. Tables and chairs had no proper places; neither did the beds which were helter skelter in every room. Pompio's family, renowned for difficult children and fires, never stayed long in any single apartment. Their apartments always had fires. Pompio and his six brothers and sisters knew how to clamber over furniture through thick smoke to get to windows, and then to shinny to the ground, still in their nightclothes.

So Pompio and Nelson were, as usual, out on the corner the hot afternoon that a water department truck drove up and three men got out and shut off the hydrant. Then two of the men drilled into the street while the other stood, supervising. From the street and from their windows the neighborhood watched. Young children small enough to be ignored crept close to look into the hole, and saw when a fat pipe was uncovered and saw the boss go into the hole and turn something. Then the workers filled in the hole and left. After their truck turned the corner, Nelson and Pompio reopened the hydrant valve, but no water flowed.

That evening after city officials had gone to their homes in the suburbs Isaac dug into the street. He uncovered the fat pipe and reversed the turning. Before he refilled the hole he poured cement into it.

"Water falls from the sky," he said to Pompio and Nelson. "They don't own it." The next day Isaac made a water slide out of pieces of steel and attached it to the hydrant.

To stop traffic, for the water slide brought more children into the street, he put saw horses at both ends of the block. "It's a play street," Nelson said to drivers. "No cars here."

While their children played on the water slide, women set up tables and folding chairs and grills and began to cook. Mothers and aunts, and fathers and uncles ate and talked and watched the children go down the water slide, and observed, through the dust cloud up the block, the continuing demolition of the Grand Hotel.

Carter's Demolition Company was tearing down the Grand Hotel floor by floor. The crew would cut through the steel support beams on a floor, then ran cables around the cut sections of the beams and down to the bulldozer on the ground. As the bulldozer slowly moved away from the building, the cables

tautened, the cut sections of the beams came out, and the whole floor collapsed straight down. Carter, directing the bulldozer driver from the roof of the abandoned office building, would disappear in a new dust cloud, then gradually become visible again, a big man swaying forward and back on the balls of his feet, satisfied.

One afternoon the neighborhood watched Carter on the roof of the abandoned office building, moving his raised hand slowly along the direction of the slowly moving bulldozer. The cables were taut; the bulldozer was pulling on the cut support beams of the ninth floor. Just when the floor was ready to fall, then past ready, just when it had to fall, the driver braked. The ninth floor of the Grand Hotel rocked, debris slid down, but the ninth floor itself just veered over and hung, suspended, not falling. On the roof of the abandoned office building Carter flapped his arms and everyone knew he was cursing, though they were too distant to hear. Everyone wondered at the young driver who had braked just at that in-between moment.

"He felt pity," said Flew-The-Coop, who was sitting on a milk crate, a piece of chicken in his lap.

"I told him in my mind to stop," called Nelson from the bottom of the water slide where he was catching little kids as they came shooting down, riding the water on their bellies.

"Why?" Isaac asked. "They don't belong here. They don't like us." But Lucy said that the driver didn't watch Carter because he was watching Marisa who was holding her little daughter in one arm and cooking chicken on the grill with her other hand, and it was when Marissa and her small daughter both smiled at him full in the face that the driver stopped.

"You'll see him down here tonight," Lucy said, and she was right. The driver was there the next day, too, when Carter and two of his men walked down the block to the hydrant.

"We need water," Carter shouted. "There's not enough pressure. Turn off the hydrant." He glanced at the driver and spat.

"It's a playstreet. The water's for the kids," an uncle answered. The young driver, standing by Marissa, said nothing.

"Where's the permit?" Carter demanded. Then he saw fair, freckle-faced Nelson dancing in the hydrant spray, droplets of water shining on his hair and shoulders like stars, and like stars on his third finger raised and pointing. Carter took a threatening step forward, but stopped at the edge of the spray. Nelson let out a whoop, and little kids ran to join him, dancing and leaping with third fingers raised and pointed at Carter. Carter and his two men retreated.

Early the next morning it was Nelson who found the saw horses pushed aside, and flattened pieces of metal laying across the street. Nelson stared down at the destroyed water slide. Then he ran across the playground to Isaac's house and called up to his window. He shouted to Isaac, "They ran over the water slide. They killed it."

Isaac and Nelson carried the pieces of metal away. They put the saw horses back. Nelson turned the hydrant on. By the time the next rubble-filled truck from the Grand Hotel backed out and started down the street the fathers and uncles were out, standing behind the saw horses. The truck backed up.

That afternoon Carter walked down the block again. Nelson moved in front of Carter, reached into his pocket, drew something out and snapped it. Carter made a fist and socked Nelson, knocking him into the street.

"The little shit pulled a knife on me," Carter yelled. "It was a comb. I was gonna comb my hair," said Nelson from the pavement. "Nelson pulled a comb on Carter and Carter beat him up," was how most people told it later. "It was a knife," Isaac said to Flew-The-Coop. "Nelson never combs his hair." They were leaning on the playground's post fence, watching a group of angry fathers and loud talking young uncles gather and move like a dark cloud up the block to the Grand Hotel. They watched Carter stand waiting, his crew behind him, and behind them the bulldozer whose new driver hefted a rifle. The nine-story unstable remains of the Grand Hotel loomed over them.

"They should of never come here," Flew-The-Coop said. "It's not them," Isaac replied. "It's the money. The developers." The crowd of neighborhood men moved back down the block. But late that night flames burst from Carter's equipment shed and then from his trailer. Wakened by the smell of smoke, Flew-The-Coop saw the flames from the stable where he'd been sleeping on the hay. Others saw too, people coming home late, and people unable to sleep who saw the orange tongues through the windows of their dark bedrooms. But no one pulled a fire alarm or picked up a phone. The next day people looked at the smoke blackened metal walls of the trailer and glimpsed, through the hole where its window had been, the desk covered with ashes. Everyone thought about Pompio. No one saw him until that afternoon, when he and Nelson came to the playground to ride the ponies.

"What about the fires?" Isaac asked them. Leaning down from his pony Nelson said, "Carter, he's not a good man. Hitting children. Breaking things."

"They don't own fire," Pompio said. Then Nelson

and Pompio whacked the ponies and galloped off.

Soon school started. Nelson and Pompio decided to try hard and this year, at last, to pass; it was a familiar hope that carried them through every autumn. As the weather grew cool people moved indoors. No one turned on the hydrant anymore. Isaac took away the saw horses. Only Flew-The-Coop marked the day that the Grand Hotel disappeared entirely and Carter and his crew moved on.

"Gone now," Flew-The-Coop said to no one. He sat alone by the hydrant on the last folding chair left outside. He took a sip of wine from his bottle in its brown paper bag. "I'll never forget that carpet," he said. "Blue. Right up to my ankles." □

Cool Girls

Dina McClellan

Five days a week, Sasha Serkin takes the train from Jackson Heights to the city and walks down 137th to Convent Avenue, through the big Gothic portals of the High School of Music and Art. Once in the building, she hightails it to the third-floor girls' room to switch clothes. This morning she pulls off the turtleneck and jumper her mother bought for her at Abraham & Strauss, stuffs it, along with her bra, into her shoulder bag, dons a long-sleeved, dun-colored helenca top she has mutilated to the point where it falls off her shoulders and down to the hollow between her breasts. She puts on a purple wraparound Capezio ballet skirt that she hikes up to the top of her thighs, and a pair of bracelet-sized hoop earrings she'd picked up at Fred Leighton's on MacDougal for two bucks. She covers her face with Max Factor pancake and paints in Maybelline cat's eyes with a skinny black brush. She bends down, shakes out her hair, and provokes it into a state of wild disarray. She strikes a pose, regarding her reflection in the smeary full-length mirror. She looks, if anything, like a warrior poised for battle. She pounds her thighs in agony. She is still fat. And she is still from Queens. Two strikes against her: She will never be cool.

Sasha thinks about food all the time. When she is not eating it, she is thinking about it; often, she is thinking about it and eating it at the same time. Sitting in class, the mere sound of words causes her mouth to water uncontrollably: Raymond Carver makes her think of Thanksgiving Day turkey; oxygen, the vision of chocolate wafers sandwiched around thin disks of vanilla creme; General Custer, the texture of smooth white pudding; symmetry, the taste of glazed carrots cooked with honey and plenty of raisins. She eats nothing in the cafeteria at lunchtime, then dips into her locker at strategic points during the day to fill up on Cheez-its, Mallomars, Jordan almonds—feeling dirty, and frightened, and out of control.

She would gladly lop off ten years of her life for the chance to be Faith Cheney, or Posey Dobkin, or Leda Davidoff—willowy, straight-haired girls, with porcelain skins, faraway looks, and reputations for being totally out of their minds.

The cool girls hang out for hours on Convent after school smoking Marlboros and dope with the boys, the deep ones with shoulder-length hair, khaki knapsacks, and manic, springy walks. The cool girls narrow their eyes against the wind and the smoke and laugh knowingly. One carries a single fresh-cut rose with her each day, along with her schoolbooks; another wears a gilded picture-frame over her head like a necklace; one girl with heavy ripply gold hair that falls to her waist chops it all off because, she says, she'd been using it as a crutch; still another is the focus of a class-action suit involving school dress codes that goes all the way to the Supreme Court. Sasha knows all about them. They had gone to Little Red, or Country Day, or Ethical Culture, or New Lincoln. They go to Harlem jazz clubs, or know people with crash pads on the Lower East Side, or have brothers who are tight with Dylan,

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or chant Hare Krisna down on Mott Street, or deal amphetamines in the lavatories, or run around with older boys they refer to as men. They live on West End, or Riverside, or—better yet—the Village, with their parents, who are artists or Marxists or writers or beatniks or have lovers or open marriages or walk around the house stark naked, smoking grass. They write with rapidographs and cross their sevens. The cool girls go to high-priced psychiatrists on Central Park West and feel extraordinary. Their fathers are not old, half-blind men who had barely escaped extermination; their mothers do not lie around all day in Mitchell-Lama housing projects in Queens in their underwear, playing cards and watching "Truth or Consequences" and bitching about how fat their daughters are.

Sasha can't wait till the bell. When it rings, she grabs her belongings and heads for the school's back exit—neatly avoiding the cool girls on Convent—and walks to the Sabrett stand on St. Nicholas, where she buys a hot dog with sauerkraut. On Amsterdam she buys another, one for the road, promising herself that she will forgo dinner. Descending the steps of the 7th Avenue line, she allows herself just one bite, so that it will last her, if she is careful, at least until she changes trains. She prays there will be no one on the platform she knows, who might witness her disgrace, but ah, yes, there she is, as fate would have it, a girl from French class, one of the cool ones, Hyacinth Greenwald. Why isn't she in front of the school where she belongs?

To Sasha's horror, Hyacinth appears to have seen her. So she reasonably decides against invisibility as an option. Sasha quickly trashes the remainder of her hot dog—an act she knows she will regret miserably—and gives Hyacinth of the ankle-length purple cape and the wraithlike body what she hopes will be taken for a world-weary look. What can she possibly talk to her about? Sasha has never done drugs, she knows nothing about abstract art, she has never read Gide, she cannot talk knowledgeably about the death of God, her favorite songwriter is Monteverdi, and all she can think of to say about Vietnam is that it's a crying shame.

"Hiya Hyacinth," says Sasha, and sees at once that this is a terribly uncool thing to have said. It sounds like a baby-joke Hyacinth must have heard every day when she was in grade school. But if she has taken offense, Hyacinth is far too cool to comment. Instead, she blinks her eyes through her John Lennon glasses and raises a hand laconically in response.

"Hey, what's happening," she says.

"Not a whole lot," says Sasha, trying to match the tone.

Sasha is fairly sure Hyacinth lives near Columbia, no doubt with her parents whom she calls by their first names and are radical professors of sociology. The train is coming. That gives her five to seven minutes until Hyacinth's stop. Can she sustain a conversation with Mademoiselle Greenwald for five to seven minutes? Sasha digs furiously around in her brain.

"Was that your painting, the still life with the oranges, hanging out by the office on the second floor? I really like it."

"It's a comment on the death of romanticism," says Hyacinth, sounding as if she were personally responsible.

"Yeah, I figured," says Sasha.

"I'm trying to address," says Hyacinth, "the issue of illusion in art by working idiomatically, using conventional imagery."

Hyacinth's ability to open and close her jaws while speaking appears to be in serious jeopardy.

"I'm not art, I'm music," says Sasha apologetically. "Voice, actually."

"Oh," Hyacinth says. "You know Dayna?"

"Dayna Kurtz? Sure, we're in choral group together."

Dayna wouldn't give Sasha the time of day if she'd begged for it on her knees. Dayna was way up there on the coolness scale; not only did she live in a loft on Barrow Street with her writer-father, but she was the bastard mulatto offspring of a Jewish intellectual and a beautiful Black night club singer who died tragically of a heroin overdose when Dayna was just a kid. As if all this wasn't good enough, Dayna was stunning, read four languages, sang in a rock band, and was thin, thin.

"Dayna's a trip," says Hyacinth. "Saturday there was this party down at her place, and some guy, plays with the New York Dolls, got totally fucked up on STP, tried to jump out the window, thought he could fly. We had to talk him down. Weirdness upon weirdness." She emits a low chuckle of self-mockery.

(Saturday night Sasha had gone to a dinner party with her parents. She'd filled her plate three times with brisket and sang two songs in Yiddish, one a tragic ballad about a partisan fighter in the Ghetto, the other a worker's song about spiritual transcendence in a world gone mad with machines. The old people cried and clapped and said how pretty she was, and Sasha felt loved.)

The doors open and Sasha and Hyacinth get in. Frantically, Sasha tries to think of something to say that is both relevant and intense. The boy who thought he could fly? It rings a bell. Something she'd heard once. Sasha takes a breath. "Herman Hesse," she says with authority, "wrote that the only reason we can't fly is

that there exists in our minds the possibility of doubt. What I'm saying is that maybe this guy really *could* really have flown, at that particular moment of blind certainty."

Hyacinth looks at her dead on. Sasha has obviously hit pay-dirt.

"Yeah," says Hyacinth slowly, "but the fact that the rest of us held in our minds the possibility of doubt might have been enough to do him in."

"That's what's wrong with the world," says Sasha, not quite knowing what she has meant by this statement but feeling reasonably sure that, if necessary, she could defend it.

"I guess people will always be threatened by those who lay claim to a higher knowledge," says Hyacinth. "You know. The Icarus myth."

"Really," says Sasha. She is so elated by the fact that she is actually having a serious conversation with a cool girl that she has forgotten, for the time being, the half-eaten hot dog in the trash, still juicy and warm, smothered in mustard and kraut.

"Well," says Hyacinth, as the train rolls into 110th, "this is my usual stop, but I'm not going home now, I'm heading on down to Canal to pick up some art supplies."

Sasha panics. They'd had a good conversation, really good, she can't possibly think of anything else to say, and now they've got till 42nd Street. Shit. The subway doors gape tantalizingly.

"Oh, shit," says Sasha, as if jolted by a realization, "is this 110th? I've got to get off, I forgot, I promised to meet a friend, bye, catch you later."

And Sasha is out the door and onto the platform, from which point she will board the next southbound train to Times Square, where she will pick up the F into Queens, away from Hyacinth, away from Manhattan, away from the world of teeming life, and interesting people, and the whole damn thing. □

Freud's Phonographic Memory and the Case of the Missing Kiddush Cups

Lawrence Douglas and Alexander George

The recent discovery of a hitherto unknown letter from Sigmund Freud to Princess Marie Bonaparte, his erstwhile patient and later colleague and confidante, resolves one of the most perplexing enigmas concerning the father of psycho-analysis: the mystery of his missing Kiddush cups. Perhaps of even greater interest, the letter links the resolution of this mystery to another longstanding controversy in both academic and psychiatric institutions, namely the meaning concealed within Freud's most curious Freudian Slip.

In the summer of 1932, at the age of seventy-six, Sigmund Freud completed the *New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis*. These seven "lectures" conclude and update the general introduction to psychoanalysis that fifteen years before had held audiences rapt in the baroque *Hörsaal* 2 at the University of Vienna. In the preface to this new volume, Freud wistfully describes his composition of the original *Introductory Lectures*: "In those days," Freud recalls fondly, "I still possessed the gift of a phonographic memory."[1]

The phrase Freud employs to describe his famous powers of recall is clearly anomalous. Although the advent of recording technology created new similes such as "faithful as a phonograph,"[2] by the end of the first quarter of the century, tropes of memory had become firmly associated with a separate, developing technology. The *Oxford Dictionary of 20th Century Metaphor* finds references to "photographic memory" dating back to the 1890s, just a few years after Muybridge scandalized the world with his freeze-frame

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photographs of frolicking nudes. Freud's original German—*Ich besass damals noch die Gabe eines phonographischen Gad chtnisses*[3]—confirms that the expression is not a printer's slip or an error on the part of the translator, but fails to clarify the matter, as the expression "phonographic memory" is no more idiomatic in German than it is in English.

It seems, then, that Freud himself has committed a *fehlleistung*—a Freudian slip. That he should do so in the opening pages of his new introduction to psychoanalysis is especially striking: At the moment that he positions himself before his reader as an authority about such parapraxes, he appears oblivious to his own—perversely intensifying the reader's interest in the very field that would claim the power to "read" the meaning behind such slips. Ironically, one of the baits that Freud used to hook his audience's attention in the original *Introductory Lectures* was the *fehlleistung*, although at the time he cautioned over-zealous over-readers that not all slips were of analytical interest. "A cigar," he is claimed to have said, "is sometimes just a cigar."[4]

Though perhaps apocryphal, this aphorism actually suggests the interpretation of Freud's "phonographic" memory that prevailed until only recently.[5] At the time of the writing of the *New Introductory Lectures*, Freud, an inveterate smoker of Havana "Grandes," was already suffering from the cancer of the palate that would claim his life in seven years' time. Having survived twenty-one of the thirty jaw and larynx operations he would altogether endure, he no longer could speak publicly. Indeed, the most unusual and poignant rhetorical feature of the new "lectures" is that, while written as if transcribed from lecture notes ("Ladies and Gentlemen," they begin, "After a silence of more than fifteen years, I have brought you together again ..."[6]), the audience is wholly imagined. By characterizing his memory as "phonographic," Freud may not only have been revealing his anxiety about being photographed in a disfigured state — he rarely permitted himself to be photographed as his cancer advanced, and then only in full or semi-profile, obscuring his ravaged and partially collapsed jaw—but also betraying his wish to hear once again his own voice, now barely audible, filling a crowded lecture hall.

This interpretation, long considered definitive, assumed, of course, that the phrase "phonographic memory" *was* an error on Freud's part. That Freud knew *exactly* what he was writing and deliberately employed the neologism is the startling thesis recently advanced in a widely celebrated new work. We are referring, of course, to Arnulfo Casanova y Casanova's *A Hundred Years of Hysteria: Free Associations on the Freudian Century*.[7] This radical study undertakes a bold new examination of the preface to the *New Introductory Lectures*. There, Freud seems to be describing how, at a younger age, he could deliver an entire lecture without consulting his prepared notes. While such a power would bespeak a *photo*graphic memory, Casanova y Casanova argues forcefully that Freud is in fact discussing his manner of readying his already-delivered lectures for publication. Rather than work from his written notes, revising and expanding where necessary, Freud is described by Casanova y Casanova as engaged in an unusual process by which he would in effect transcribe the content of his oral presentation. In support, Casanova y Casanova quotes from a long-overlooked letter to the Austrian writer Stefan Zweig which offers perhaps Freud's most revealing discussion of his own compositional technique:

> I have long tormented myself to find a comparison with your manner of working: yesterday I finally got the idea, conjured by the visit of a friend who is an epigraphist and archeologist. It is the procedure occurring when one makes a paper copy of an inscription. As is well known, one lays a moistened paper on the stone and forces the soft material to fit in with the smallest depression of the writing surface.[8]

The act of writing is thus likened to the printing of an engraving, or to any process of retrieving information encoded in depressions. Just as the aural disturbances of an opera singer etch themselves into the grooves of a record, so does Freud's (remembered) speech guide the movements of his pen. This capacity —to compose his text simply by recalling himself speak it—seems to support the claim that Freud had, in fact, a *phono*graphic memory. What common wisdom considered a case of mis-writing on Freud's part, now appears, in Casanova y Casanova's revisionist reading, an intentional act, indeed an inspired one that confirms Freud's gift of original exposition.

This brilliant attack on the slip thesis has been quickly and widely accepted as decisive—and no doubt would remain so were it not for the recent discovery by the authors of an important letter from Freud to Bonaparte.[9] The significance of this correspondence can be best appreciated, however, by approaching it via an account of Freud's missing Kiddush cups, themselves long a source of intense speculation among Freud scholars.[10]

In the spring of 1938, Freud reluctantly agreed to

quit his native Vienna and resettle in London. The decision could not have occasioned greater pain in the eighty-two-year old—he was frail, a year shy of his death, and though earlier in his life he had written "I have never felt really comfortable in this city,"[11] Vienna had become his spiritual home. Only in the face of an ominous and escalating campaign of Nazi harassment, culminating in the Gestapo's arrest and interrogation of his beloved daughter, Anna, did Freud agree to move.

In the seven years since the appearance of the *New Introductory Lectures*, Freud's aversion to photography had increased. Now, on the eve of his departure from Vienna, he consented to having photographs taken of Berggasse 19, his workplace and home for almost half a century. These photographs, he hoped, would not only aid in the recreation of his Viennese quarters in his new London home, but would also serve as a record for posterity of the birthplace and nursery of psychoanalysis. To this end, a young photographer, Edmund Engelman, was permitted to visit Berggasse 19 with his Leica and Rolleiflex over a period of a few days in May 1938.[12]

Careful scrutiny of Engelman's record, which includes the now-famous photographs of Freud's couch draped with Oriental rugs and surrounded by a vast collection of antiquities, reveals a puzzling discrepancy. In three of the five photographs of the table that was directly in Freud's view as he sat at the head of the couch [Plates 11, 16, 19], we find a veritable forest of Egyptian wooden funerary figures. In the remaining two photographs of the table [Plates 15, 17], however, one can easily make out, standing in the foreground and obscuring several of these figures, two silver Kiddush cups, ceremonial drinking vessels used in the Jewish celebration of the Sabbath. An examination of Engelman's other photographs reveals that nothing in Freud's entire apartment was removed or in any way rearranged during the course of the photographer's visual cataloging — nothing, that is, except for the pair of Kiddush cups. Indeed, the cups never seem to have made their way to London after Freud, and to this date their location remains unknown.

The newly discovered letter, however, finally sheds some light on the matter. Addressed to Bonaparte (in Engelman's photographs, several pictures of her can be seen adorning the walls of Freud's study) and written from his London exile, it recounts aspects of Freud's hasty departure from Vienna. In the course of this, Freud writes:

> A young photographer, Edward Engelberg [sic], then came to record the house "for posterity." Late at night of the day he first arrived, as I was at my desk putting the finishing touches to *Moses* [*Moses and Monotheism*], I looked up into the consulting room and saw my two antique Kiddush cups standing amidst a toy army of Egyptian statuary. Before I knew what I was doing, I had walked over, placed them in a drawer and shifted some Egyptian pieces to the sites the cups had previously occupied.
>
> I thought nothing of this incident at the time. I suppose that if I had, I might have simply conjectured that I had been struck by the fact that the Jewish artifacts looked out of place surrounded by the relics of their biblical oppressors. I do recall thinking that I must have been made especially sensitive to this in the course of writing *Moses*, which I expected would arouse a strong negative reaction among my fellow Jews. (Correctly, as it turned out: I was pained to see the sanctimonious and confused comments by Buber's disciple Lask in *The Palestine Review*.) But thoughts of the incident have continued to return to me, and I resolved recently to probe more deeply into their roots.
>
> I received the cups in the winter of 1917 at a reception that was held upon the conclusion of my lengthy lecture series at the University. The event was hosted by members of Vienna's then largest Temple. Toward the end of the evening, the Rabbi's wife, an ample woman of my mother's age, presented me with the cups. As I took them from her outstretched hands, the bearded face of her husband beaming behind her, the flash of a camera exploded just a few feet away, blinding me for what seemed like a very long while. As I groped for my bearings, I heard the voice of the wife repeating over and over that all was well, an experience that I recall finding intensely reassuring.
>
> It seems clear now that what must have happened was this: the tendered cups—rounded, stemmed vessels from which blessed nourishment is drunk—I associated with my mother's breasts, which were being offered to me in accordance with Oedipal phantasies. The sight of the Rabbi behind his wife, however, must have been sensed as the gaze of the castrating father whose jealous wrath came to be expressed in the punitive flash, blinding me and inflicting on me the very punishment Oedipus suffered.
>
> I believe that this episode and the unconscious significance it came to bear provide the key to

(Continued on p. 90)

BOOK REVIEW

Fiesta on the Border

Ilan Stavans

Becoming Mexican-American: Ethnicity, Culture, and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945, by George J. Sanchez. Oxford University Press, 1993, 349 pp.

Translated Woman: Crossing the Border with Esperanza's Story , by Ruth Behar. Beacon Press, 1993, 372 pp.

A refreshing new concept has emerged in academic circles and beyond: to live in the cultural hyphen, to inhabit the borderland. Nowhere is the debate surrounding it more candid and more historically enlightening than among Hispanics in the United States. The idea of a homogenized minority group from the Caribbean and south of the Rio Grande is rather recent. Until the last decade, Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, and the like were considered independent units, never part of a whole. Linguistically tied together by the 1990 census (which counted 22 million), Latinos emerged as a solid political and social force, the second largest minority after African Americans. Before, they appeared like a monstrous creature whose metabolism was difficult to define. Assimilation was seen from independent national viewpoints: For instance, most Cubans who came to the country after the 1959 revolution were upper- and middle-class, educated people; their adaptation had a far different rhythm than that of Puerto Ricans, who, as jíbaros from rural areas on their native island, arrived in the United States with a working-class mentality and with scarcely a dollar.

In the 1960s and '70s, most Latino intellectuals resisted the very idea of integration into mainstream American culture. Influenced by Juan Gómez-Quiñones, dean of Chicano history, the discussion centered on what theoreticians called "negative assimilation."



Immigrants from Spanish-speaking countries, it was asserted, wanted to retain their ancestral heritage against all odds and costs; their daily existence in the United States was a painful chain of struggles against the Anglo-Saxon milieu. The Anglo, always the enemy, was seen as colonizing and enslaving, a view not unlike the one held south of the Rio Grande since the Mexican-American war in the 1840s. The Chicano movement, inspired by César Chávez and Rodolfo González (among others) and linked to protests for Black power and against the Vietnam War, became, for many Latinos, the apex of opposition. To affirm collective traditions, to remain loyal to the immigrant culture, was deemed the crux of political virtue.

How things have changed. Led by feminist writers such as Gloria Anzaldúa and Cherrie Moraga—who analyze "the *mestizo* worldview" (one composed of both European and native identities)—interpreters today are engaged in an altogether different discussion. Living in a universe of cultural contradictions, Latino thinkers have ceased to revel, militantly, in their separateness. They have decided to embrace an ambiguous, labyrinthine identity—to enjoy their transactions with the Anglo environment. Down with political activism and radical rage, welcome to fashionable exoticism.

Resistance to the English-speaking mainstream has been replaced by what Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortíz called "trans-creation" and "transculturation"—to exist in constant confusion, to be a hybrid, eternally divided like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. Octavio Paz and Julio Cortázar, a pair of distinguished Latin-American intellectuals, once offered the *axolotl*, a Mexican salamander, as a symbol of the Hispanic psyche—always in profound mutation. Such a metaphor fits the new Latino perfectly—a collectivity whose reflection in the mirror is built as a sum of parts in unrestrained metamorphosis, an identity shaped like one of the perfect spheres imagined by Pascal, with its diameter everywhere and its center nowhere.

So the hyphen as an acceptable in-between is in fashion. Monolingualism, say people in East L.A., is curable. What's applauded today is a life hap-

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pily lost in translation, neither in Shakespeare's tongue nor in Cervantes's but in Spanglish. Ever since publication in 1989 of Oscar Hijuelos's novel *The Mambo Kings Play Songs of Love* and its subsequent Pulitzer Prize (and forgettable movie version), Latino artists have overwhelmed the country. Andy Garcia and Rosie Perez have become movie stars; Gloria Estefan, with her polyrhythms, is the established queen of the new Latin Sound; and such writers as Ana Castillo and Pablo Medina have rich contracts for their next novels.

The fever that once surrounded Latin America's magic realism— exemplified by Gabriel García Márquez's Macondo with its rain of butterflies and epidemic of insomnia—has been eclipsed by barrio nightclubs and street jargon. You don't have to travel to Buenos Aires or Bogotá anymore to feel the Latin beat. Today's cultural agenda is embodied in the slick prose of Sandra Cisneros and the cultic status of Frida Kahlo. The objective is to revolutionize society from within—to use media, the old enemy's tools, to infiltrate the system and promote a revaluation of things Hispanic. Anglo culture may still be vilified, but the attitude is less aggressive, more condescending.

Academics are also spreading the news about a change in climate. George J. Sanchez, who teaches at the University of Michigan, is the author of *Becoming Mexican-American*, a brilliant historical study of Hispanic assimilation, resistance, and self-reflection in Los Angeles between the turn-of-the-century and World War II. He travels through generations to chart the psychological evolution of Mexicans into Mexican-Americans and Mexican-Americans into Chicanos. The immigrants' Catholic faith changed in interplay with Protestantism and the secular milieu. And, ironically, government programs rewarded those who assumed an "ethnic" identity rather than simply adapting to Anglo norms.

Ruth Behar's *Translated Woman* recalls the anthropological studies of Oscar Lewis and the fiction of Zora Neale Hurston. It is oral history with an autobiographical twist. Esperanza, the Indian "subject" Behar (who also teaches at Michigan) encountered in Mexico in 1983 on the Day of the Dead, tells her grim story with rage and a thirst for redemption. From a miserable childhood to life as an abused wife, street vendor, and practitioner of magic, she has traveled a sadly predictable road. Behar assumes the role of silent vehicle, allowing Esperanza to speak without interference—until the very last chapter. Then the writer takes center stage to describe, at times in embarrassing terms, her intellectual odyssey as the daughter of immigrant Cuban Jews. She attended an Ivy League college and now searches for her feminist voice as a tenured professor.

Behar, it seems, felt that Esperanza's existential pilgrimage could be used as a mirror of her own life. Although separated by class and culture, both women are committed to finding their own place in society, ready to make a stand and seize the day. In the end, however, the anthropologist should have saved her self-reflections for another text and time. This was Esperanza's show, her opportunity to speak out, unobstructed.

What both volumes have in common is an understanding of borderland. Sanchez and Behar suggest that border is not just the legal boundary dividing two or more nations; it is first and foremost a mental abyss, a cultural hallucination, an invention. Their subjects can no longer afford to live peacefully on this side or the other. Instead, they prefer to make their home in it, to sit in the crossroads where I am meets *yo soy*. Home is nowhere and everywhere.

Indeed, Sanchez is particularly concerned with what Mexican-Americans, during the long and continuing migration, have considered to be their homeland. For the newly arrived, he implies, *la patria*, one's nation, is the past, a reality left behind. He begins with a handful of voyagers from Michoacán to the city of Angels, paying attention to the historical and political changes sweeping the region from 1890 onward. During this period, Mexico rapidly traversed from semi-feudalism through a long revolution to a modern, technological state. The U.S. society the migrants encountered created a sense of ambivalence. The past, now represented by a nation undergoing massive change, ceased to be home. In its place was a hard-working present and a promising, if deracinated, future.

In Behar's narrative, the idea of a homeland is replaced by a fashionable, gender-oriented approach to womanhood. Her protagonist is not a traditional immigrant; the voyages Esperanza takes across the border are metaphorical ones. She travels from one female role to another—daughter, wife, lover, etc.—from oppression to rebellion, from Catholicism to native *brujería*. Her journey, Behar implies, is a form of translation; she forces those around her to understand, to play different roles, to be divided, to switch from one mental dimension to another. And since Esperanza speaks neither her ancestors' Nahuatl, nor Behar's English, her dilemma is all the more tantalizing; her tongue is a hybrid, a loss that becomes an asset. A crucial leitmotif in *Translated Woman* is that of a "talking serpent," capable of telling stories to her victimizers if her tongue is not cut out.

The concept of borderland is obviously linked to the current multicultural environment. Bilingual education, which began in the '60s when Miami Cubans wanted their children to speak Spanish in school, has enforced the importance of a second language among Hispanics. Now, it is common for third-generation Latinos to study the language in order to sharpen their own bifocal identity. In ebullient urban centers from New York to San Diego, Cubans, Puerto Ricans, and Chicanos are, with the help of artists and historians, searching for a unique form of self-esteem. While many have doubts a homogeneous Hispanic culture can or should be built, the fact that both government and television—not just the Spanish channels—address them as a single group makes the possibility quite tempting. After all, why refuse to acknowledge the power entrusted by one's milieu?

Sooner or later, this desire to inhabit the hyphen, to be an *axolotl*, will pass. The act of translating oneself on a daily basis will give way to a different approach to the Hispanic spirit. The age of political apathy may soon give way to a new commitment: Hispanics will force the United States to recognize them as an essential part of the polity. When that happens, the imperfections of the current intellectual debate, which applauds ambiguity, will become self-evident. Meanwhile, Latinos are experiencing a rebirth; they are having a festive time deciding to be undecided. □

BOOK REVIEW

How Not To Be The NRA

Carl T. Bogus

Under Fire: The NRA and the Battle for Gun Control by Osha Gray Davidson. Henry Holt & Co., 1993, 306 pp.

NRA: Money, Firepower & Fear by Josh Sugarmann. National Press Books, 1992, 285 pp.

Recently, I met a prominent attorney who had been shot. He was on the way to his office early one morning when he was greeted by a young woman holding a .357 magnum. He recognized her immediately; she was a former client who had discharged him after he suggested she needed psychiatric help. Now she emphasized her displeasure by pulling the trigger.

The first bullet missed, but the second hit him squarely in the chest. He thought he was dying. He was flown by helicopter to a Philadelphia hospital, where doctors discovered he was a lucky man. The bullet had grazed his heart and broke a few ribs, but he would survive.

What the lawyer learned at the hospital, however, surprised him almost as much as looking down the barrel of a gun. Hospital emergency rooms today resemble MASH units. In the course of a year, police cruisers, ambulances, helicopters, and just plain wobbly legs carry more than 600 gunshot victims into the hospital in which the lawyer found himself—one of many local hospitals that routinely treat gunshot victims. And Philadelphia is not an especially violent city; its violent crime rate is only half that of Boston, Dallas, Los Angeles, New York, or even Kansas City, Missouri, and less than a third that of Atlanta, Miami, or Newark, New Jersey.

Yet Philadelphia is far more dangerous today than ever before. In 1960, the violent crime rate in Philadelphia was 336 per 100,000 residents; by 1991, it had skyrocketed to 1,429 per 100,000. And Philadelphia is typical; in the nation as a whole, the violent crime rate has more than quadrupled since 1960.

As the lawyer with a hole near his heart lay recovering in the hospital, facts like these were called to his attention by his physicians, who were understandably frustrated and angry over the increasing carnage with which they must deal. The lawyer had something of a near-death-bed conversion experience; he decided he must help bring gun control to America. And he knew just how to go about it: He would use his skills as a mediator to bring together gun control advocates and the NRA. He would help them find a middle-ground on which they could agree, help them jointly to fashion a "sensible" gun control proposal. It was a task not unlike others he had undertaken in his professional career—helping two seemingly intractable parties recognize that a compromise was possible.

The lawyer may be forgiven for his naiveté. After all, nearly everyone labors under two misconceptions. The first is that the NRA singlehandedly blocks the path to gun control in the United States. The second is that the NRA represents the views of hunters and sportsmen, who have not yet awakened to the rising tide of violence. If these views were accurate, it would be reasonable to try to fashion a deal that both provided for effective gun control and assured sportsmen that they were not starting down a slippery slope that would end with the government confiscating hunting rifles. But as one can learn from *NRA* by Josh Sugarmann or *Under Fire* by Osha Gray Davidson, these are, at best, half-truths. The key to achieving effective gun control lies not in converting its opponents, or in finding middle ground, but in galvanizing its supporters.

This is not to deny that the NRA is large or politically powerful. Due to a vigorous campaign following the L.A. riots, NRA membership may be higher today than ever before, slightly exceeding three million. But while an organization of this size is large, it is not unique. The American Legion and Mothers Against Drunk Driving each have slightly more than three million members, for example, and the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) has 33 million. While the two national groups devoted solely to advocating gun control are relatively small when compared to the NRA—Handgun Control, Inc. has about 300,000 members and the Coalition Against Gun Violence about 75,000—a host of other politically potent organizations also strongly support gun control—including the American Bar Association, American Medical Association, National Education Association, AARP, AFL-CIO, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, the Fraternal Order of Police, and virtually every other national police organization, and religious groups of all denominations—from the American Jewish Committee to the National Council of Churches to the Mennonite Central Committee.

The power of the NRA purse is also overrated. The NRA's PAC disbursed $5.7 million during the 1991-92 election cycle, making it the fourth biggest spending PAC in the nation. This dwarfs Handgun Control's PAC, which spent $380,000 during the same period, yet it represents only a tiny fraction of the nearly $400 million

Carl T. Bogus, a visiting professor at the Rutgers University School of Law (Camden), writes frequently about gun control.

spent by all PACs during that time. Even $5.7 million is not a lot of money when it is spread not only among federal candidates but in state races throughout the country.

Ultimately what counts is not members or money but votes, and no asset is more important than public opinion. Here there is no contest: The public overwhelmingly supports gun control. Sixty-eight percent favor banning cheap handguns known as "Saturday Night Specials," 72 percent favor banning semi-automatic assault weapons, 78 percent want laws relating to the sale of firearms to be more



strict, 80 percent favor handgun registration and 95 percent favor a seven-day waiting period for handgun purchases. The near consensus of opinion makes it difficult to describe these as "controversial" issues.

The single question on which the public is truly split is whether there ought to be a total ban on handguns. But the percentage of Americans who would support a total handgun ban has been climbing.

Strikingly, according to the polls, the views of gun owners are virtually identical with those of the public-at-large. "The hard-line views of the NRA are crafted not from the majority of gun owners, or even from its members, but from its leadership and an activist core of 600,000 members," Sugarmann writes. This group—which zealously opposes any form of firearm regulation—controls the internal politics of the NRA. No group of this size, however, has the power to frustrate the national will.

Why, then, have gun control efforts been unsuccessful?

It is not because gun control forces have overreached. In 1986, Handgun Control, Inc. (HCI) decided to devote itself to passing the Brady bill, which would establish a national seven-day waiting period for handgun purchases. Its strategy was simple: This was so modest a measure that any opposition would appear unreasonable. As someone succinctly put it, anyone who can't wait a week to get a handgun is exactly the kind of person who shouldn't have one.

HCI had an appealing way to market the Brady bill. Leading the fight would be Sarah Brady, wife of Jim Brady, President Reagan's press secretary who had been shot in the head during John Hinckley's assassination attempt on Ronald Reagan. Sarah would be able to begin every speech by saying, "I am a Republican and a conservative," and preach simple common sense.

About half the states already had handgun waiting periods, some up to fifteen days. A 1981 Gallup Poll had found that 91 percent of the public favored a twenty-one-day waiting period for handgun purchases. Wanting to appear moderate, however, HCI sought only a seven-day waiting period. Its immediate objective was not effective gun control legislation but a political victory.

Founded in 1974, HCI had been unsuccessful throughout its organizational life. Not only had it failed at getting any new gun control laws enacted, it also was unable to protect existing federal legislation. In 1985, the NRA succeeded in having Congress pass the McClure-Volkmer Act, gutting key provisions of the Gun Control Act of 1968, which had been enacted after the assassinations of Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy. Although HCI would not admit this publicly, federal gun laws are more feeble today than they were before the organization was established.

There is superficial sense to a strategy premised on the theory that the way to prevail in the future is to be perceived as having beaten the NRA in the past. The reasoning runs as follows: The NRA's principal asset is its image of omnipotence and invincibility. Legislators believe the NRA has the power to deny them re-election (NRA omnipotence), and that it is pointless to take risks or expend political capital on the issue because gun control legislation won't pass anyway (NRA invincibility). Thus it is crucial to win a battle—any battle—to destroy the NRA mystique and free legislators to do the right thing.

But the reasoning, and thus the strategy, are flawed. By choosing to make the Brady bill its flagship proposal, HCI signaled that it did not believe it could win a meaningful victory. What HCI considered the strength of the proposal—its moderateness—was also its weakness. HCI did not so much look reasonable as afraid. The Brady bill was simply too weak to become a priority issue for voters. Few believed it would have any apprecia-

ble effect on gun violence. While it seemed like a nice idea (good enough for voters, when asked, to tell pollsters they favored it), it wasn't something voters thought would make a difference. Ross Perot expressed this view during one of the 1992 presidential debates when he said the Brady bill was a "timid step in the right direction but it won't fix [the problem], so why pass a law that won't fix it?" Thus a bill that was supposed to be politically irresistible failed for seven years.

Now that the Brady bill has passed, will it achieve its original objective or will it be a Pyrrhic victory?

It has taken so long to achieve so little that neither the Clinton administration nor the congressional leadership are likely to be eager for another handgun proposal. Nevertheless, public alarm over rising violence may force gun control onto the national agenda. One of the unfortunate legacies of the Brady bill, however, is that it conditioned opinion leaders to accept a flawed premise about how gun control must work.

There are only two basic approaches to controlling handguns: either (1) everyone may have a handgun except those who fall into a prohibited category; or (2) no one may have a handgun except those who fall into a permitted category. We can call the first a general eligibility system and the second a restrictive permitting system. The difference between the two is profound. The Brady bill is grounded in the first system, but only the second offers a genuine prospect of reducing gun violence.

To appreciate the difference, consider the case most often associated with the Brady bill—the shooting of Jim Brady. John Hinckley purchased his handgun from a Dallas pawnshop five months before his assassination attempt on Reagan. Sarah Brady argues, nevertheless, that a waiting period would have stopped this sale because it would have given the police time to check Hinckley out—to see whether he was a minor, a convicted felon, mentally unstable, or otherwise prohibited from owning a handgun.

Hinckley, of course, was mentally unstable, but would the police have discovered this? Probably not. About two million handguns are sold every year in the United States, and it is impossible for the police to investigate every purchaser. They might check handgun applications against felony records, but neither Hinckley nor 71 percent of the people who commit handgun murders are previously convicted felons. Sarah Brady argues that the police would have stopped the Hinckley sale because he was not living at the locale he listed as his home address. Yet there was nothing that would have prompted the police to discover this; Hinckley presented a valid Texas driver's license listing the address at which he had lived when he was a student in Texas.

A general eligibility system cannot work. There is no feasible way to identify people with criminal intentions, violent propensities, psychoses, uncontrollable tempers, suicidal depressions, or those who become dangerous when drunk or are irresponsible enough to leave a loaded gun where a child may find it. Moreover, even if all this were possible, the general eligibility system would still fail because all someone who cannot buy a handgun need do is have someone buy it for him.

Studies have shown, however, that restrictive permitting systems significantly reduce gun-related deaths. When the District of Columbia adopted a restrictive permitting system in 1976, for example, gun-related murders and suicides were both cut by about one-quarter while there was no corresponding change in the immediately surrounding areas of Maryland and Virginia. This law did not turn Washington into the Garden of Eden, of course, yet it had a marked effect even though it was implemented on a small political island.

Canada, which uses a restrictive permitting system, offers another basis for comparison. Epidemiologists studied crime in Seattle and Vancouver, two cities with remarkably similar geographies, histories, population sizes, demographics, cultures, and overall crime rates. The burglary rates were nearly identical in both cities, for example, as were rates of assault and murder with knives and clubs. But the risk of being shot to death was nearly five times higher in Seattle, and the chance of being assaulted at gunpoint in Seattle was eight times greater than in Vancouver.

Under a restrictive permitting system, only certain categories of people may own handguns—law enforcement officers, military personnel, licensed security guards, and persons who can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the police or a court that they have a special need for one. A "special need" must be more than a generalized desire for self-defense; there must be a concrete reason to fear attack. Indeed, as confirmed in a study published recently in *The New England Journal of Medicine*, a gun in the home actually increases the risk that the owner or a family member will be shot.

The restrictive permitting system is based on the concept that the police can best assess both someone's need for a handgun and his or her trustworthiness. Someone facing a genuine emergency is better off under a system in which he or she can go to the police station and explain the situation in person; and the police are better able to evaluate such a request when the applicant is in front of them.

The police should have discretion to tailor permits to particular circumstances and to grant permits on the spot when necessary. Permits would be issued for specified periods and for particular guns, which must have engraved serial numbers and be presented for inspection. Rejected applicants would have a right to judicial review. Under a restrictive permitting system, two million people would not be able to buy handguns every year—and that is precisely the point.

Opponents will argue that such a system will not be perfect. They will be right, but no system can be perfect. The issue is not whether a restrictive permitting system will be perfect but whether it will be better than alternatives. Colin Ferguson sat out California's fifteen-day waiting period before buying the 9-millimeter Ruger he used to shoot twenty-three people on the Long Island Railroad. Lee Harvey Oswald would have had no trouble passing a shooting skills course, which may be the next step down the dead-end street of a general eligibility system. Milquetoast measures will not do when more Americans are being shot to death in the United States every sixteen months than were killed in combat during the entire Vietnam War.

If a restrictive permitting system sounds extreme, it is in part because for so long the gun control debate has been framed by the Brady bill. Yet it is the medicine America needs. □

Bar Mitzvah Bocher

In that day will I make a covenant for them with the animal of the field,
and with the fowl of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground:
and I will break the bow and sword and the battle out of the earth,
and will make them to lie down safely.
—Hosea II:18

Don't think I'd remember much about the reign
of Jeroboam II in the eighth century BCE, the light
and smoke when Hosea's wife cheated on him,
so the Prophet wailed against all Israel.
And Israel was the wayward bride. The argument,
in short, is that only God delivers salvation
and consolation. Don't reckon I'd remember it at all

Except today I took the bible that was given me
to buy my own first prophetic incantation. The *haftarah*
for the service Sivan 5, 5724, signed by Mrs. Falkoff
of the Beth Sholom P.T.A. and Rabbi Hoschander
confused me in those days. The first U.S. planes
were strafing Laos. Cheney and Schwerner and Goodman

Were a month for this life, so close to Southern earth:
and I rehearsed the *trop,* the notations to sing
Hosea's rage. Jeez, what's all this stuff about
merciless vengeance on children of whoredoms,
of Israel stripped naked, of prostitutes eaten by all
the wild animals of the forest? *Apocalyptic tomes*
in squeaky voice the signboard blared outside the *shul.*

That was the right of passage: I became a man in *halachah,*
was called to the Torah proclaiming: "Now I will
uncover her lewdness before the eyes of her lovers,
and none shall deliver her out of my hand." Our tribe
had assembled from as far as New Jersey and Indiana
to hear this prophesied: Just imagine! And now as then
these were not my thoughts, but a funny, acrid rule.

To come to vengeance, to come to adulthood:
unusual terms for a kid. Practice the notations,
recite a tantrum that yells "whore!" a lot,
and promise divine deliverance, since earthly salvation
is not given to the works of Man.
No wonder the weeks were terrors.
I wore haircloth shorts, threw tantrums
Like a real prophet should, bruised and taunted my
brothers
so the Tribe could tell me they were proud of me
so that Mrs. Falkoff could give me this handsome bible.
Would Falkoff or Hoschander know any more than a
Senator
"Jeez, what's all this stuff about merciless vengeance
on children of whoredoms?" That was the question
before
the time of ascent to adult acceptance.

It's the only real question I've asked ever since.
Yesterday one of the fledglings nested in the maple
made first flight. Good for him. Hard work, getting big.
Back when, Jeroboam had some hotheads on his hands.
I wish him well, and dear God, no envy.

David Shevin

RIGHT FROM WRONG

(Continued from p. 18)

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With the changed economy, the fantasies about marriage that once separated white women from their Black counterparts have faded. Like their Black sisters, few white working-class girls or young women now harbor the illusion that they'll be stay-at-home moms. Since it's harder to convince themselves that they're working just to mark time until real life begins with the man of their dreams, work becomes a more central part of their life plan.

Twenty-year-old Nancy Krementz, a white clerk in a New York insurance company who lives with her family, talks about her expectations: "If I'm going to have to work after I get married anyway, I might as well wait. This way I get to do things I wouldn't be able to if I was married and had kids. This job I've got is okay, but I really want to work myself up a little. I figure if I'm going to have to work, I want to do something more interesting. So I'm taking some night courses on the computer now, and maybe I can get one of the better jobs in the company. I don't know, sometimes I even think maybe I'll go to college. I couldn't do that if I was married, could I?"

The men also have no plans to rush into marriage. "I'm not going to get married for a long time," says Nancy's nineteen-year-old brother, Michael. "It's not like it used to be when my father was growing up. People expected to get married right away out of school. But not now. I'm going to have some fun before I get married, you know, meet a lot of girls, travel around, things like that."

For the men, such dreams aren't new, even if they were rarely fulfilled. But the women's talk about work, about travel, about wanting to live on their own for a while—all options that few young working-class women dared dream of in my earlier study—represents a dramatic shift from the past. "Sure, I want to get married some day, but I'm not ready to settle down—not for a long time yet," says Claire Stansell, a white nineteen-year-old office worker. "There's too many other things I want to do, like traveling and seeing different things. You know," she says, her eyes opening wide, "the first time I was ever on an airplane was last year after I graduated high school and got a job."

The changing marriage patterns have had a profound affect on the lives of working-class families. Among the families I interviewed two decades ago, it was unthinkable for an unmarried daughter to live outside the family home. From father's house to husband's, that was the expectation, the accepted way of life for a young working-class woman then. Even sons generally were expected to live at home until they married, partly because their earnings were important to the family economy but also because it was the way of the world in which they lived. Now, both daughters and sons are eager to leave the parental roof as quickly as they can afford it.

But how does this fit with all the stories we hear about adult children who don't want to leave home these days because it's easier, cheaper, and more comfortable to live with their parents? Once again, class tells. Middle-class adolescents have long expected to leave home at eighteen, when they go off to college. For them, therefore, there may be some novelty in coming back into the family household as adults, essentially able to live their lives as they please.

For the grown children of working-class families, however, it isn't living at home that's new; it's the cultural changes over the last two decades that have made it possible to think about leaving. For them, this has been a liberation—a liberation the failing economy has stripped from them and about which they're unhappy and resentful.

But the culture of class isn't the whole answer. Class culture is, after all, bred in the economics of class. And it's in their different economic situations that particular attitudes about living at home are born, as this chance conversation I had with the twenty-four-year-old son of an upper middle-class white professional family shows so clearly: "I moved back into the old homestead because it's more comfortable than anything I can afford," he explained easily. "My old room's still there; the food and service is great; and it doesn't cost anything. I've got plenty of privacy; nobody pays any attention to my comings and goings. So why not? This way I get to live the life I'm used to, which I can't afford on my own. I can travel when I want and do what I want. Instead of wasting the money I make on the exorbitant rents you have to pay in this city, I put it into living a decent life. I guess it's got its down side, but the up side outweighs it by a lot so far."

He spoke so easily about freedom and privacy that I found myself wondering: *Would this be equally true for the daughters in these families? Would parents be as easy about a daughter's privacy, about her comings and goings, about where she might be spending the night, or with whom she might be sharing her bed?* Although there are no good studies to answer these questions, the significantly smaller proportion of women aged twenty-five to thirty-four who live under the parental roof—32 percent of single men, 20 percent of women—suggests that far fewer women than men voluntarily make this choice.

This digression aside, my conversation with my young friend was illuminating, since it raised so sharply the difference class makes for young adults who live at home. As Katherine Newman, an anthropologist writing about the declining fortunes of the middle class, puts it, "It is precisely among the more affluent of America's families that the drop in a young person's standard of living is most acutely apparent when they move out on their own. Hence it comes as little surprise to discover that children living in households with annual incomes above $50,000 are more likely to remain at home with their parents than those in households less well heeled."

Internal resistance to new ways of being has nothing to do with whether we want to change. The old ways worked, perhaps with more pain than was neccessary, but we accommodated and survived.

For the working-class young, living at home is a necessity, not a choice. And necessity rarely makes good bedfellows or housemates. Like the adult children of middle-class families, the young people I met also "get to live the life" they're used to. But it's not a life they covet. For there's not much of an "up side" to outweigh the down in a house that was already too small to permit privacy when they were children, a house whose walls seem even more confining in adulthood. Nor does living at home allow them the freedom to travel or the chance to do what they want—the very things that make living with mom and dad an attractive alternative for the children of the middle class.

In working-class families, where it's a stretch to pay the bills each month, there's no free ride for adult children who live under the parental roof. Instead, a substantial portion of their income goes to paying their way. Socially, too, living at home confines their lives much more closely than if they were out of the house. For unlike the culturally liberal middle-class parents of the young man above, most working-class parents continue to try to keep a tight rein on their children and to insist on a code of moral behavior that more closely matches their own.

In *Worlds of Pain* I argued that the authoritarian child-rearing style so often found in working-class families stems in part from the fact that parents see around them so many young people whose lives are touched by the pain and delinquency that so often accompanies a life of poverty. Therefore, these parents live in fear for their children's future—fear that they'll lose control, that the children will wind up on the streets or, worse yet, in jail.

But the need for the kind of iron control working-class parents so often exhibit has another, more psychological dimension, as well. For only if their children behave properly by their standards, only if they look and act in ways that reflect honor on the family, can these parents begin to relax about their status in the world, can they be assured that they will be distinguished from those below. This is their ticket to respectability—the neat, well-dressed, well-behaved, respectful child; the child who can be worn as a badge, the public certification of the family's social position.

Since neither the internal needs nor the external conditions change when children reach adulthood, working-class parents continue to try to control their adult children's behavior so long as they live under the parental roof. "It's my house; he'll do what I say," is a favorite saying of fathers in these households. Obviously, it doesn't work that way much of the time. But this doesn't keep them from trying—an effort that makes for plenty of intergenerational conflict.

It was no surprise, therefore, that—whether male or female—every one of the working-class young adults I interviewed was itching to find a way out of the parental home. "As soon as I got a job and saved some money, me and my two friends found this apartment," explains Emily Petrousso, a white nineteen-year-old who shares a tiny one-bedroom apartment with two roommates.

"How did your parents feel about your moving out?"

She makes a face, wrinkling her nose, and says with a shrug, "My mom's okay; I think she understands. But my father, he's something else; like, he's living in another century. He still thinks it's terrible that I don't live in his house and get his permission to go out on a date. Both of them worry about the neighborhood I live in; like, they're afraid it's not safe and stuff like that. But it's okay now. It was a big deal at first, but they got used to it. And anyhow they knew they couldn't stop me."

"They knew they couldn't stop me"—a sentence her parents wouldn't have dared to speak at her age and precisely the source of parental concern. "You got no control over kids anymore!" storms Emily's father, George, a second-generation Greek-American. "What the hell's a kid like that doing out there living by

herself. We got room here; nobody gets in her way. If my sister would've even *thought* about something like that, my father would've killed her. I'm just glad he's not alive to see what kids do today. It's not right; I tell my wife that all the time. But even she don't listen; she just sticks up for her."

His wife, Nicole, whose role in the family has always been to soothe and smooth the relationships between father and children, tells it this way: "He thinks I stick up for Emily; I don't know, maybe I do, but it's only because he gets so crazy sometimes, and I'm afraid if he keeps going at her like that, she'll stop coming around." She pauses, thinks for a moment, then continues with a sigh, "So I keep telling him she's a good girl, but everything's different now. You can't compare what we were like. I mean, I didn't even *think* about the things she talks about doing, like going on some kind of a trip by myself or with a girlfriend. *Who thought about things like that?* I don't know; what do you say to kids today about anything. It's so different now."

"Is it just different, or do you also think it's worse?" I ask Nicole.

She looks surprised at the question, then after a moment leans forward in her chair and lowers her voice as if to confide a guilty secret: "You know, I ask myself that question, but I don't hear anybody else wondering about it like I do. So then I think maybe there's something wrong with me. Everybody's always talking about how bad things are, you know, how the kids do such terrible things, and all that. But sometimes I sit here thinking I don't know if it's so bad; it's such a different world. I mean, some things are worse, sure, but maybe not everything. I mean, was it so good in our days?

"In a way I'm kind of glad she doesn't live here now. This way I don't have to see what she's doing all the time. I know she does things I wouldn't like; she doesn't tell me, but I know. My husband, he knows, too, I guess. It's why he's so angry at her all the time." She sighs, "Me? I worry a lot because I don't know how it'll end." She pauses as she hears her words and laughs. "That's it, you don't know the end of the story, so you worry."

"You don't know the end of the story, so you worry." This is precisely the issue. But it's not just the end of the moral story that's in question, it's the economic future that's also unknown. True, working-class parents have always worried about economic hard times for themselves and their children. But until the recent turmoil in the economy, they could also dream about a better future. It's this new reality that has turned up the emotional register around the cultural changes. At the very moment that the economy has let them down, the moral structure on which they've built their lives has been shaken by a jolting, jarring upheaval that has shifted the ground on which they stand. If the old values are gone, what's to separate them from those below? What's to protect their children from falling into the abyss?

Unlike culturally liberal middle-class parents, most working-class parents continue to keep a tight rein on their adult children living at home and insist on a code of moral behavior that closely matches their own.

Is it any wonder that these families feel as if they're living on a fault line that threatens to open up and engulf them at any moment? Both economically and culturally they're caught in a whirlwind of change that leaves them feeling helplessly out of control. As they struggle with the shifting cultural norms—with the gap between the ideal statements of the culture in which they came to adulthood and the one into which their children are growing today—nothing seems to make sense anymore. Even those who inveigh most forcefully against the new morality and proclaim most angrily that "people don't know right from wrong anymore" are no longer so sure about what they really believe. Consequently, they respond to my questions about any number of the moral issues that vex them with unequivocal answers about right and wrong—only to retreat into uncertainty and ambivalence in the next sentence. They yearn for a past when, it seems to them, moral absolutes reigned, yet they're confused and uncertain about which of yesterday's moral strictures they want to impose on themselves and their children today.

It isn't that they're unaware that the absolutes didn't govern so absolutely, that what people said and what they did were often at odds. But the unambiguous rules seemed at least to promise a level of stability and a consensus that's missing now, not just in families but in the nation at large. The very clarity they seek eludes them, however, as they're forced by circumstances to make choices in their own families that fly in the face of their stated beliefs.

People who worry about the high divorce rate and insist on the sanctity of the family bond suddenly become

less certain when marital misery hits home. Asked whether they would want their own child to stay in an obviously bad marriage—one where a spouse is abusive, an alcoholic, or a drug user, for example—the answer is an emphatic no, a response that's delivered especially forcefully by women who themselves have done so.

Is it any wonder that these families feel as if they're living on a fault line that threatens to open up and engulf them at any moment?

Women who say they believe mothers belong at home with their children leave to go to work every day. It's an economic necessity, they explain. But listen to them for a while and they'll soon admit that there's much about being in the world of work that they enjoy—and that they wouldn't give it up easily.

People who shudder at the idea of homosexuality take a deep breath and another look when a son or daughter comes out of the closet. They may weep bitter tears when they hear the news; they may deny the reality of what they've heard; they may rail against God; they may blame themselves. But in most families, acceptance eventually comes. Asked how it's possible, given their earlier fears, feelings, and hostilities, they have many answers. "I see that he's happier now." "Her partner's such a nice person." "I didn't really understand about it before." "It's his choice; what can I do?" But the bottom line is: "This is my child!"

Parents who disapprove strongly of premarital sex also wish their children wouldn't marry as young as they themselves did. But they know, too, that their daughters are unlikely to remain celibate into their twenties. I say "daughters" because, despite the changing norms around female sexuality, a son's sexual activity is taken for granted, a daughter's is still a problem for most working-class parents. Asked to choose between an early marriage for a girl and premarital sex, most parents—especially mothers—opt for sex, consoling themselves with the hope that their daughters will wait until "they're old enough." What this means varies, of course, but the most common response is, "at least until they're eighteen."

People who don't approve of abortion will also tell you that they wouldn't want their sons and daughters to "have to marry." Forced to make a choice between a teenage marriage, an adoption, and an abortion, they agonize; they suffer; they equivocate. But when the last word is in, most come down on the side of abortion.

Tales from the abortion battlefront suggest that this is not uncommon, even among people who are antiabortion activists. During the 1992 presidential election, Vice President Dan Quayle, an ardent and outspoken foe of abortion, was asked what he'd do if his teenage daughter became pregnant. The politician retreated; the father stepped forward. "I hope that I never have to deal with it," he replied. "But obviously I would counsel her and talk to her and support her on whatever decision she made." Incredulous, the interviewer pressed on: "If the decision was abortion you'd support her?" The vice president stood firm: "I'd support my daughter."

A few days later, President Bush, also a staunch opponent of abortion, was asked what he'd do if one of his granddaughters told him she was considering an abortion. He'd try to talk her out of it, he said, but would support her decision. "So in the end the decision would be hers?" the interviewer asked. "Well, who else's—who else's could it be?" said this president, who has spoken out frequently and forcefully against allowing other women to make that choice.

Even more interesting than what these politicians-turned-father-and-grandfather said is what they *didn't* say. Neither ruled out the question as absurd, a product of some wild fantasy, of the fevered imagination of the media in an election year. Neither said: *My teenage daughter sexually active? Impossible! My granddaughter pregnant and unmarried? Never!* Nor did anyone else, not even Marilyn Quayle, who disagreed with her husband and insisted that she'd force her daughter to carry the child to term.

This ambivalence, this simultaneous holding of two seemingly contradictory sets of beliefs shouldn't surprise us. Changing cultures mean stormy times. The interaction between new norms and values and the people who must live them out is never tranquil and easy. The old consciousness doesn't go quietly into the night. Instead, it fusses and fumes, drags its feet, goads us with reminders of its existence, and foments an internal struggle that leaves us anxious and bewildered, wondering what we believe, how we feel.

It's not uncommon to find ourselves doing new things, even wanting to do them, while at the same time feeling uneasy about them. Many of the women who were in the forefront of the sexual revolution, for example, were surprised at the internal conflict their new behaviors stirred. Observing this contest between the old and the new, some researchers concluded that the sexual constraints of the past were "natural," that women couldn't or didn't want to shed them. But those pundits misread the data. Partly they misunderstood

what they saw because their vision was blurred by their deeply internalized traditional beliefs about the nature of female sexuality. But it was also because they didn't appreciate the messiness inherent in the process of cultural change, didn't understand that the internalization and integration of new cultural mores often lags well behind behavioral changes.

Indeed, the internal resistance to new ways of being generally has nothing to do with whether we can or want to change. Psychologists see this all the time—people who come into psychotherapy wanting to change, yet, when faced with the possibility, they retreat in fear. We call it "resistance," but in fact it's a normal human response. The old ways worked, perhaps imperfectly, perhaps with more pain than was necessary, but we accommodated and survived. Psychologically, therefore, it's hard to give them up even when we know there's a better way.

In our struggle to make sense of our rapidly changing world, to define rules for living that meet today's needs, old values are forced into a confrontation with the new realities of family and social life. The result is the emergence of values that are different—different and not always as firm and clear as we'd like them to be. Therefore, we become edgy and confused, wanting to reach back to the past, to a time when everything seemed more certain. But it's well to remember what historians of the family have been telling us for some time now: The golden age of the family for which we yearn with such intensity never really existed. Instead, families have always been a "haven in a heartless world" and a breeding ground for pain, sorrow, disappointment, and discontent. Everyone who has ever lived in a family knows both sides. But our longing for what seems from this distance to be the simplicity and certainty of earlier times has blinded us to this complex reality of family life.

Yes, there are real problems in the family today, problems as large or larger than any we have ever known. Yes, we live in what one family scholar has called an "embattled paradise." Yes, the changing cultural norms often leave parents and children without a blueprint for caring and responsible social and personal behavior. These are issues that deserve our serious attention and our considered thought. But the transformation of family life will not be reversed with endless discussions about the state of our moral culture. Instead, they serve to turn our attention away from the central problems families face today—problems wrought at least in part by a government and an economy that long ago stopped working for all but the most privileged. □

Violence and De-meaning

(Continued from p. 28)

aims at nothing, that makes nothing of the world. The economic and social conditions in our cities (and elsewhere) destroy the bases for reasonable hope, without which there is nothing extreme about violence.

While we must strive to combat these social and economic conditions, we must also recognize that much of the violence in our polity has had the insidious effect of de-meaning our world.

In such a world, private pursuits are still possible insofar as they aim at particular satisfactions. Private pursuits, even the most grandiose, require no shared legitimation. Without this component of shared legitimation, however, we remain capable only of ironically undermining the meaning others find in the world. Having learned the negative lessons of violence, having become "realistic" and "sophisticated," even the nonviolent intellectual can ironically continue the demeaning of our life in common.

In a world demeaned by pointless violence and the narrow-minded or nihilistic tough-guy responses to it, ongoing participatory community life becomes less possible and less thinkable. That is why we must see the rising tide of violence as a threat not only to our national health but to our potential for ever becoming a true participatory democracy. Part of our response to senseless violence must be an affirmation and reinvigoration of the connections among us that can give our public lives meaning and direction, even in conditions of deep uncertainty and instability.

In thinking about these conditions in the Los Angeles area where I live, my thoughts turned to Eric Weil and the conditions in which he worked. I don't know how Weil found the strength and determination when returning from a Nazi prison camp to begin his *Logic of Philosophy*. But in acknowledging the radical threat that violence posed to our capacity to make sense of the world, he pointed to the continually present choices we face for making meaning and direction out of our lives.

Bill Clinton reminded us how stirred we were, how deeply we were moved when Martin Luther King, Jr. told us that he had seen the promised land. Can we remember our capacity to be so moved, or have fear, privatism, and the sophistication that joins so well with knee-jerk irony eradicated our openness to inspiration? For even if we no longer can believe someone who tells us he or she sees where "we as a people" (Dr. King's words) will arrive, we do need to remember that the true refusal of violence is also an affirmation of our shared attempts to find meaning and direction in our lives in common. □

Between the "Handshake" and the Troop Withdrawals

(Continued from p. 26)

Talking about the film as we headed for my car, a jeep with three Israeli soldiers drove by. Seeing us, the soldiers slowed down and opened a side door. One soldier stuck out his leg, as all three began jeering at us, grinning salaciously as they made obscene hand gestures and pointed their guns directly our way. I wouldn't have believed this scene if I hadn't seen it with my own eyes. And so, when Shawa says to me of the Israelis, "O.K., O.K., they couldn't withdraw today, but couldn't they show some respect or good manners?" I know the very attitude he's describing.

Although I don't begin to share Shawa's worldview, I see the convoluted but inexorable route through which he cannot resist it; his growing certainty that the powerful Israelis' only aim is to shame and diminish his people (a serious crime in itself here in the macho Middle East). For the Palestinians, it's hard to see into the intricacies of the negotiations.

It's difficult for *any* of us to know what's going on behind closed doors, and so today the fantasies run wild. Some are sure that Rabin's focus on the dangers of Hamas and other Palestinian extremists serves to empower the tiny minority of fanatic killers while emasculating Arafat and Fatah. The prevalent Israeli view is that Arafat is at fault, is a poor negotiator who keeps shifting the boundaries that were agreed upon in Oslo, that he is asking for too much, too soon, and that is why his people are so frustrated today.

Of course, Rabin must be very careful now. He must not be rushed into giving away what he cannot later retrieve. Yet how can he recognize a people and then refuse to follow up with even minimal symbolic gestures of good will?

The Palestinians watch the Israeli intransigence and angrily ask: If Rabin is so resistant and small-mindedly militaristic even in Gaza—a burden that everyone knows he wants to be free of—how will he ever let go of the West Bank, with so many settlers, so many blurred boundaries? They fear that if and when the Israelis do leave, it will be Jericho and Gaza only, not first.

But the Israelis' fears are also extreme. As a people, they need a slow, careful process, just as the Palestinians need clear signs of change. Since no one truly knows the course of the current negotiations, each group's most embedded biases and fantasies about the "other" side are intensified by the current delays.

These are the thoughts that stream through me as I walk with Suher in the darkening streets of Jericho. A storm is coming up; we agree to head back to Jerusalem. Just then, a Palestinian friend of hers, Khaled, sees us on the street and calls out for us to join him. We enter the small shop where he's hanging out, surrounded by others I assume are Palestinians. But as I look more carefully, I see that this "shop" is actually the makeshift Reuters television office, crowded with both Palestinians and Israelis (five of each, distinguishable as Jew or Arab only by their language of choice). Some of them are in a collective frenzy, rushing to get the day's tape ("December 13 in Jericho") completed.

The atmosphere here is wild with the pressure of unfinished work for the editors, and the giddy relief of work completed for the others, all contributing to a general hysteria, punctuated by loud, free-flowing banter. This is a room free of any posturing or formality, a group long habituated to working together. Khaled offers Suher and me tea as the Hebrew and Arabic sprinkled with English fly around us. Two women are editing the tape as others relax, joke with each other, or sit chatting amiably on the couch. I settle into my chair and watch the screen.

The first scene: Palestinians on the main street of Jericho shouting in Arabic, "We are not terrorists; Rabin is a terrorist." Cut to a settler speaking from a near-by synagogue. He says "Send the mass murderer Arafat to hell. Then we can live with the local Arabs in peace."

Apparently, it is difficult to synchronize these words with the images, and so in the next hour I hear these phrases twenty-six times (I jot a note on my pad each time) as the editor replays the tape over and over. It's surreal. On the one hand, here in this room is a group which has, through working relations, leapt into the next millennium, complete ease among Arabs and Jews, who pay no attention to the old script replaying on the television monitor. Cut, replay, cut, replay—mirroring exactly the perseveration "playing" in the world all around us: Jew, Arab, hate, terror, murder. Yet I'm sitting in an oasis where the consciousness has moved so far beyond those brute simplicities of venom and fear that no one except me is paying any attention to the "text."

This schism between Arab and Jew on the screen is what people all over the world will see tonight on the news, while the atmosphere in this room among Palestinians and Israelis will remain a well-kept secret. The comraderie and cross-cultural ease I am witnessing is a living illustration of the best outcome of the now-delayed peace process. But on December 13 in Jericho, this scene of essential "mutual recognitions" is unfolding only behind the camera, not yet in front of it. □

WHO "OWNS" THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT?

(Continued from p. 32)

religionists share this disdain for those who are not affiliated with "regular" churches, synagogues, or mosques. They are not eager to celebrate the religious freedom of crystal worshipers or Branch Davidians, or to find spiritual meaning in works of great art and literature, music, and dance.

This barrier must be surmounted if our culture is ever going to recover a sense of unity and common purpose. It is no longer enough to say that we are a people because we all affirm the Constitution and Bill of Rights, important as they are. It is not enough for us to collectively endorse a fair procedural framework for religious liberty. This is the civil libertarian conceit: that a fair, nonpartisan *legal process* is all that is the sole necessary and sufficient condition for an ethos of mutual respect.

The truth is, Americans in the late twentieth century need more than the First Amendment and its case law to bind them together. They need a new cultural covenant with each other that can begin frankly to address the spiritual void in modern secular society. Call it the politics of meaning, call it a revolt against modernism and scientism; the point is that our humanness has fallen into a disunity, one that today's organized religions have not really succeeded in dispelling.

The current policy debates on church/state separation implicitly assume that religionists alone are capable of talking about our culture's great hunger for spiritual meaning. Only full-fledged "believers" with established theologies and an institutional berth are perceived as having the credentials to comment knowledgeably. Furthermore, these believers must comment from their confessional pigeon-holes; their pronouncements are expected to be recognizably "Protestant," "Catholic," "Jewish," etc.

Typical of this sort of bias is the commentary of neoconservatives such as Charles Krauthammer, who has railed that the "Newfangled new age, new spirituality [of liberals] is a guilty and pitiful substitute for what they have wantonly dismantled"—namely, that Old Time Religion. "Spare us the group hug rediscovery of the inner-self-cum-the-meaning-of-life," he snorts. Such rhetoric lays bare the real intolerance that often lies behind public piety: Instead of a vehicle for healing and reconciliation, religion is a moralistic cudgel for beating up on one's political opponents.

There are varying degrees of this perspective, of course, and there is no evidence that Stephen Carter or President Clinton want to claim an exclusive copyright on "religious values," as do Krauthammer and his neoconservative cohorts. Carter and Clinton aim at inclusion, yet they fail to propose a common ground upon which our pluralistic and often irreligious citizenry could gather. Yet this is precisely what our society needs: a common vision of human fulfillment and meaning for our secular age that can transcend and encompass particular religious traditions.

It is time for religionists to admit that the life of the spirit is not "owned" by them alone. It belongs to everyone. A great body of Americans may not go to regular worship services or believe in some formal creed, yet they take their spiritual lives quite seriously. Indeed, the religious experience itself is arguably more profound than the outward trappings of religiosity, which are so often mistaken as the essence of religion.

The best way for church/state commentators to recognize this fact is to welcome that broad, heterogeneous constituency of forgotten Americans to the table: the skeptical, the curious, the iconoclastic, and others whose spiritual needs and capacities are also valuable and not to be denigrated.

The religious impulse could be said to be an inherent capacity of the species. We need a new language that can take account of this fact. We need a new ecumenical consensus of the most expansive sort, one that reaches out to people who may not go to synagogue or church but for whom spiritual experience and development are nonetheless important. We need to feel in our hearts that the conscience of our neighbors, however alien from our own, is worth respecting, and not just because the Supreme Court said so. Without such an attempt at cultural reconciliation, America's religious pluralism may well degenerate into a balkanized mess of warring faiths. And it may further erode the civility that a democratic culture needs.

The basis for a new consensus around which all Americans might gather might be the spiritual capacity itself, arguably the most distinctive trait of the human species. The same ocean washes up on many different shores. It is worth trying to imagine that the world's rich diversity of religious creeds and experiences may similarly have one source. Or, as the mystic Evelyn Underhill put it, "To say that God is Infinite is to say that He may be apprehended and described in an infinity of ways."

If such declarations are too big a leap for some people, it will suffice to recognize the pragmatic truth that living in a pluralistic culture requires a basic religious civility. This cultural challenge—and not just the constitutional legalisms—will require our most ardent attention in the years ahead. □

FREUD'S PHONOGRAPHIC MEMORY

(Continued from p. 76)

> understanding my curious behavior with regard to the Kiddush cups. The recognition that the cups were to be photographed triggered the primal anxiety of the all-powerful and possessive father observing the consummation of one's erotic desires toward one's mother. The cups had to be removed in order to protect the maternal object of desire from the view of the punitive father, thereby permitting the forbidden possession without fear of paternal detection and retribution. I now believe that these features of our Oedipal phantasies, and the ways in which they manifested themselves in the idiosyncratic particulars of my life, better serve to explain my strange actions than does any assumed solicitousness on my part to my fellow Hebrews.

This remarkable self-analysis not only sheds light on the discrepancy in Engelman's photographs, but also decisively discredits Casanova y Casanova's revisionist interpretation of Freud's "phonographic" memory. For we can now identify the traumatic events, those "idiosyncratic particulars" of his life, that explain Freud's Freudian slip. Reflecting years later on the delivery and composition of the *Introductory Lectures*, his complex, unconscious associations would naturally dispose him to substitute for photography a reference to phonographs. In doing so, he was recapitulating his flight from the blinding gaze of the father and to the comforting maternal voice, which, like a record, kept "repeating over and over that all was well."[13]

That the affair of the Kiddush cups lies at the heart of Freud's "phonographic" memory remains, of course, a matter of hermeneutic conjecture—as does all psycho-analytic interpretation. As Freud demonstrated on countless occasions, psychic material remains "overdetermined": so capable of sponsoring multiple readings that the concept of *the* correct interpretation threatens to be emptied of application. Indeed, the very metaphor that Freud offers to capture this insight is as telling as the insight itself. Every reading, he argues in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, eventually confronts a "navel [...] its point of contact with the unknown."[14]

The overdetermination of psychic effects, the underdetermination of interpretation: For Freud, these are the scars of the severed connection to the mother. Perhaps not coincidentally, it was Marie Bonaparte who first drew attention to this curious metaphor. Writing to Lou Andreas-Salomé a few months after Freud's death, she recalls:

> It was at his great lecture to the Viennese hypnotists that F. confessed, "My greatest fear in analysis is butting up against the navel." The phrase was so comic that the audience immediately burst into laughter. F. looked perplexed, truly baffled, but at last he too heard his words. He laughed openly, the only occasion I have seen him do so in public.[15]

In the above, we have tried to "hear" the echoes of Freud's disconcerted laugh in his vaunting of his "phonographic" memory. Whether we have succeeded, or merely recorded our own aural fixations, is itself a matter that passes into Freud's interpretive navel, soundlessly.

[1] *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (London: the Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1964), Volume XXII, p. 5.

[2] Yet as Hermes Stenostes has shown, given the primitive state of the technology, the phrase originally was used ironically, to convey the *absence* of fidelity—both aural and otherwise (e.g., the Victorian ditty: "Departed Lover, echoes of your laugh,/Empty, fickle, faithful as a phonograph"). See his *Parlances of the Machine: Technologies of Linguistic Usage in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (unpublished monograph, Sterling Library, Yale University, 1958), p. 714.

[3] *Neue Folge der Vorlesungen zur Einführung in die Psychoanalyse*, in *Gesammelte Werke* (London: Imago Publishing Co., 1940), Volume XV, p. 3.

[4] Though one might recall that in a letter to Fliess, Freud suggested that smoking was ultimately a substitution for the "primal addiction"—masturbation. Freud to Fliess, December 22, 1897, in *The Complete Letters of Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess*, J. Masson ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985), pp. 312-313.

[5] See, for example, "The Mammary of Things Past: What is Beneath Freud's Slip?," Father Terence McFeely, S.J., *The Journal of Genital Theory*, Volume II, Number 2, Spring 1990.

[6] *Standard Edition*, Volume XXII, p. 15.

[7] New York: Traumer & Son, 1992. The book won last year's prestigious Yakataka Prize whose judges declared the work "seductive, bound to become seminal, and by far the most exciting challenge in decades to traditional doctrinal rigidity."

[8] Freud to Stefan Zweig, April 24, 1925 in *Freud as a*

Writer, Patrick J. Mahony (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), p. 164.

[9]The story of the discovery of this letter is not without interest itself. This extraordinary missive to Bonaparte was found amongst a packet of correspondences that was passed down to Bonaparte's grandniece, Natasha Poivre, who operates a taxidermy studio in Rue du Labyrinthe, Paris (20^{ome} arr.). The authors learned of these documents serendipitously while conducting an interview of Poivre for an unrelated study of penile representation in fin de siècle Parisian architecture (*The Palace of Phallus*, Douglas and George, in preparation).

[10]For a helpful overview of the literature on this subject, see "The Anxiety of Evacuation: Infant Bladder Control and the Disappearance of the Kiddush Cups," Sanus Vice and Canny Pick, *Freud Folios*, Volume XIII, Number 4, Fall 1988.

[11]"Screen Memories," *Standard Edition*, Volume III, pp. 312-313.

[12]*Berggasse 19: Sigmund Freud's Home and Offices, Vienna 1938*, Edmund Engelman (New York: Basic Books, 1976).

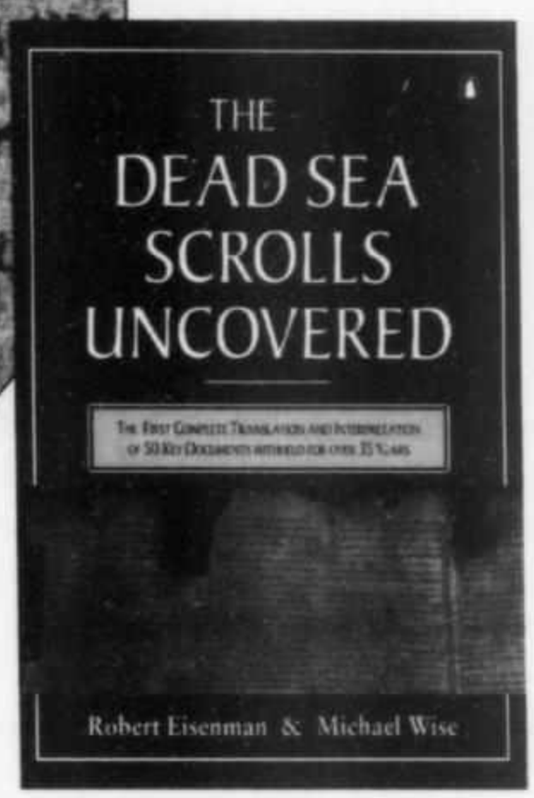
[13]We see here the grain of truth in the quip that to commit a Freudian slip is to say one thing but mean one's mother.

[14]*The Interpretation of Dreams* (New York: Basic Books, 1955), p. 111; see also p. 525.

[15]This letter was also discovered in the Poivre collection. An edited volume of these correspondences is in preparation: *Slouching Toward Amor: The Letters of Sigmund Freud and Marie Bonaparte*, Douglas and George eds. (London: Libido Press, forthcoming). □



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READ IT. IT'S A PENGUIN.

MARKUS WOLF

(Continued from p. 52)

population which has been subjected to anti-Semitic ideas for thirteen years. But there wasn't any systematic attempt to educate people about why anti-Semitism was wrong.

Wolf: You are partly right. In literature and the arts there were activities and books and artistic works that opposed Nazism and anti-Semitism. But the political leadership of the GDR underestimated the continuing influence of the Nazi ideology in the population.

Let me be clear that there were no open anti-Semitic publications in the GDR. In later years there were exhibitions about Jewish art,culture and history—but there was not enough.

TIKKUN : Didn't the Jews in the Communist Party to appear to be internationalist and show how little they cared about their national identity as Jews because the whole theme of the CP was to overcome national identities, and their whole analysis was focussed on trying to overcome all forms of nationalism.

Wolf: The problem of Jewish national identity was complicated for a communist, because the greatest part of German Jews were assimilated and felt like Germans. The Nazis turned us back to our Jewishness.

TIKKUN: After the war, when you learned that all these Jews had been killed not because they were German but because they were Jewish...

Wolf: So we wanted to build a new kind of Germany with the hope that this racist history would not come back. I had been educated with the great culture of Germany, and I returned to Germany as a German communist hoping to build on the humanitarian themes in German culture. Maybe we were too idealistic, but we hoped that the German people could be reeducated (we failed).

TIKKUN: But if your goal was reeducation, why didn't you spend more time and resources on educating them about what was wrong with anti-Semitism?

Wolf: Well, we did try to do it in intellectual and cultural circles—but we didn't really give this a serious focus for mass public education. And then there was the fact that some German Jews tried to show that they were German and not close to a special Jewish ideology, particularly not close to Zionism. So they may have not wanted to press too hard to bring the Jewish issue into the center of public education. Of course, in some communist countries, Jews were tried as Zionists, something we did not do in East Germany.

TIKKUN: What can you say about your conviction?

Wolf: I did the same work as any state intelligence operative did, like the CIA. The Stasi or German State Security had an internal security division, roughly equivalent to your FBI, to which I had no connection, and an external intelligence gathering division, roughly equivalent to your CIA, which I headed.

TIKKUN: But the CIA, the KGB and other such operations are notoriously vicious organizations. You can't pretend that you don't have blood on your hands.

Wolf: The court did not find any instance in which I was involved in murder, repression or anything of the sort.

I was not involved in any such things, nor were people who worked for me. With all the archives open, with endless material at their disposal, and with a prosecutor desperate to paint me in a bad light, believe me that if there would have been any serious allegations of violence they would have made that a centerpiece of their trial. But they couldn't, because there was no such behavior.

TIKKUN: But you had knowledge of the repression in other branches of the Stasi.

Wolf: I began to recognize that there was something wrong in the Stasi only in the 1970s when repression was directed against intellectuals, writers, actors, and dissidents. My brother, who was an internationally known director of films, and I were appalled at the repression and began to suspect that there was something deeply wrong (though, frankly, it wasn't until 1989 that we understood quite how deeply wrong). We were, of course, not the people in control of the state. We had to figure out a way to voice our opposition. We began to conceive of a book that we would write together that would expose some of the problems, and I sought early retirement from my job to work on that book. In that book, I described the repression in the Soviet Union in the 1930s, something rarely discussed in public in East Germany. And through the book I sought to raise questions about the repression. As a former general of Stasi, this was a unique moment of protest against the existing system.

TIKKUN: Why did it take until the late 1970s for you to recognize that there was something wrong in the system?

Wolf: The first break in my consciousness occurred in 1956 and Khrushchev's revelations about the problems. I was concerned about the use of Soviet troops to put down rebellions in various countries, but I saw these problems as a result of the conflicts of the Cold War, and in that struggle I took the communist side, given my understanding of the role of former Nazis in West Germany.

But I realized that the repression against dissidents was not necessary. However, I couldn't see a possibility to do anything.

TIKKUN: Do you still agree with some parts of communism?

Wolf: Yes, I do. Communist ideas are not the same as the reality that existed in our countries. The realities had nothing to do with the ideas in which we believed. The ideas were the outcome of a long struggle of millions of people for freedom, social and economic rights, and for a recognition of their fundamental humanity. The capitalist system has no answers to the great problems. I still believe in these ideas and I'm sure they will come back.

TIKKUN: So why weren't you saying that "this is not communism."

Wolf: Eventually I came to recognize that it was a deformed system. It was not democratic, though we spoke about socialist democracy. It was only after I retired that I understood that the whole system couldn't work because it wasn't a system of socialist democracy and didn't correspond to our ideals. Many people came to the same conclusion, and this is the reason why people didn't fight to keep it alive.

It's never too late to learn. Don't forget that people like me, Jews and non-Jews, gave our youth and much of our life to fight the Nazis. We wanted to change the world for the better. This is also a Jewish message. But unfortunately, we used the wrong means for the right goals. There is always hope, and there will be new generations who will learn from the rich history of our efforts.

It's only now, when I'm in my seventies, that I've come to learn about Jewish history, how much it has to teach us about changing the world. □

Thoughts on *Shalom Bayis*

A Fresh and Ancient Philosophy

Sherry Suib Cohen

A politics of meaning for family life has to include an explicit tilt in favor of helping couples stay together and preserve relationships, thus resisting the pressures to treat love like another of the economy's discardable commodities—easily replaced by a newer model once there are any indications of problems in the old model.

I suggest we revive the notion of *shalom bayis*, the Jewish concept of peaceful relationships in the home as an element in a politics of meaning. A peaceful home is the matrix of tenderness; you go there—no one's waiting to best you with cleverness, no one's waiting to get even, no one's waiting to get you, at all. A home with *shalom bayis* rests the heart.

In my recent book, *Secrets of a Very Good Marriage: Lessons from the Sea*, one of the elements that has made my marriage true and passionate and, above all else, peaceful is opting for fidelity. It's monogamy, or I'm out of here. How can you be exquisitely intimate with someone who's being exquisitely intimate with someone else?

Bad-name calling is not allowed. We become what we name each other. Call me Rascal and watch how cute and rascally I get. Call me Stubborn, and watch. Name a boat Top Gun or the Codfather and it will surely get even with you one day.

Lying is not allowed either. Even the smallest lie damages a landmark; you can't get your bearings if the landmark shifts.

The politics of meaning in our family often rests in trying to see the beauty in what the other loves—even if it looks for a minute like ground-up fish bait. You have to stand near each other, be able to grab each other in moments of heart-stopping excitement but also in moments of unendurable boredom. It's not enough hearing the story of how the other caught the shark; you have to be there *in* the story.

Shalom bayis implies unconditional support, especially in public, even if you're scared, even if you have to bluff it. One should feel he wants to die before he'll let the other be embarrassed, be scared.

A home with *shalom bayis* is a safe harbor. It has the dearest familiarity—and that is the spur for the deepest passion. There is something in the scientific literature called love-blindness, a condition caused by hormonal deficiencies. People who have love-blindness can form friendships but are constitutionally unable to fall crazy in love. They cannot experience intense, mutual passion any more than the color-blind can perceive certain hues.

Give me anything, oh Lord, but love-blindness. Give me locusts, hail, darkness, boils—any old plague you can dream up. Only let me keep passion.

Let me have *shalom bayis* in my house. □

Sherry Suib Cohen's book is published by Carol Southern Books/Crown Publishers.

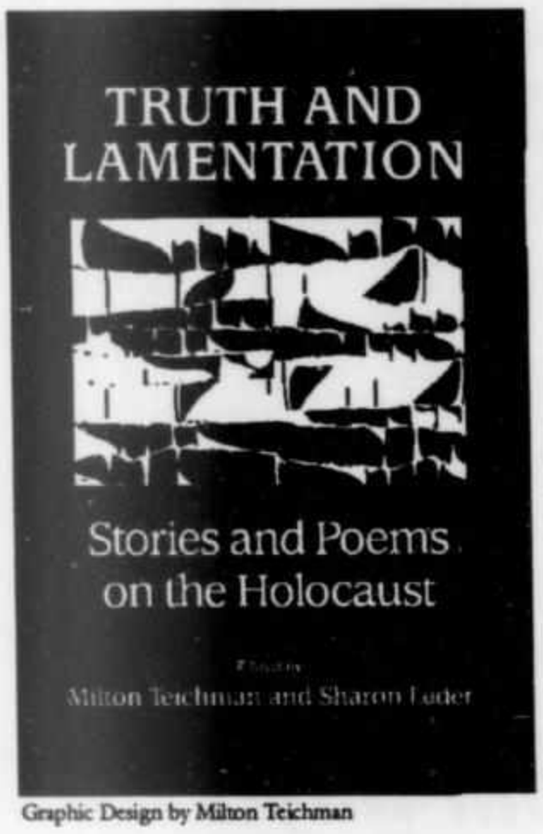
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Wealth, Torah, and Morality

(Continued from p. 58)

corruption as private business. Even more than in private business, such questionable funding practices for Jewish institutions promote *khilul ha-Shem*, distort the educational process, and lower sensitivity to moral issues.

Restoring peer pressure through social punishment, as was done in halachic communities, is perhaps the major need today. Peer pressure is a potent weapon in preserving economic morality, especially where legal punishment is impractical or impossible.

The halachic obligation for one Jew to take another before a *Bet Din* (Jewish court) to resolve financial disputes must be reenforced if we are to heal the economic/religious split personality. Such resolutions are becoming more common, with the *Bet Din* serving as an arbitration forum. Voluntary compliance with this obligation should be a major focus of communal life, both in Israel and the Diaspora.

The existence of an economic/religious split personality in which religious mitzvot are emphasized to the exclusion of those concerning money and the marketplace is a striking feature of contemporary Judaism. This division, which stands in opposition to Jewish thought through the ages, results from a lack of emphasis in our educational system on economic morality and on the need to pursue "righteous paths" by acting beyond the letter of the law.

But even in the open societies in which we live, Jews can correct these shortcomings, drawing upon the resources and vision the tradition provides. □

JUDAISM AND A JUST ECONOMY

(Continued from p. 56)

> The soup kitchen (*tamhui*) is open every day; the charity or cash fund (*quppah*) is distributed every Friday. The soup kitchen is open to all; the charity fund for the poor of the town only. The townspeople, however, are at liberty to use the soup kitchen like the charity fund and to apply them to whatever purpose they choose. The townspeople are also at liberty to fix weights and measures, prices and wages, and to inflict penalties for the infringement of their rules. (*Baba Batra,* 8b)

And:

> Produce and things which are life's necessities, such as wine, oil, and flour, must not be hoarded. One must not export from Israel produce and things which are life's necessities. . . . In Israel it is not permitted to make a profit [as middleman] in things which are life's necessities. (*Baba Batra,* 90b and 91a)

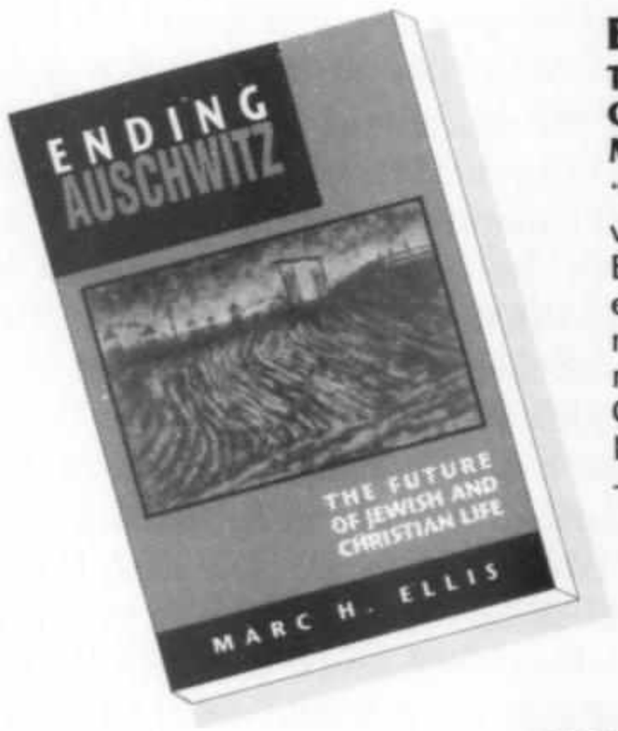
We thus see that extensive regulatory power is given to the town officials to guarantee wide distribution of scarce resources and to establish an economic system that protects the poorer classes from exploitation. But the first point is that each town cares for its poor itself.

The implications of this system for public policy are that depersonalization of the recipient will adversely affect the delivery of social and economic services. The larger the caregiving network, be it health, or welfare, or job counseling, or education, the less likely it is to meet the needs of the recipient and the less likely it is to be effective and efficient. The Jewish model of each group caring for its own, whether that group is defined geographically, by religion, ethnically, or in another way, could benefit recipients both materially and psychologically and ultimately, therefore, benefit the entire caregiving network.

As we move our economy to ever higher levels of production and embrace new policies of international economic cooperation, we are likely to see an increase in net national wealth. That will be a desirable outcome, for if there is more to distribute, then those who have less are likely to get more. But the downside of creating global mega-structures is that the individual, and in particular the poor individual, can easily be overlooked. One message of Judaism for our times is to tirelessly re-evaluate and modify economic options, so that the supporting social networks may maintain their focus on the individual, while holding onto the larger vision of our values as a community. □

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Sexual Harassment

(Continued from p.54)

dicta, let alone curricular foci, was foreign to them. For all practical purposes, I felt as if I had been abandoned.

Today, thanks to resolute feminist toil, young women are, I hope, somewhat better equipped than I was to face sexually abusive acts. In Jewish schools, however, the subject of women's empowerment in this area remains in the shadows. Until sexual harassment and other related offenses are Judaically presented and discussed, most female members of our community, regardless of their religious training, will be as ignorant of their tradition's power to support them in a sexist world as I had been.

Would it not be important for young Jewish women, as they move out into the broader culture, to command a perspective on sexual harassment that derives from an intrinsically Jewish dialogue? Would they not then feel that Judaism, as an *orach chayim* (way of life), bolsters and embraces them in the volatile sexual atmosphere beyond the classroom walls? Relaying this truth to our daughters would enfold them in a circle of communal caring and pride in heritage. *tikkun olam*, the repair of the world—as the antithesis of an ethics of resignation—could re-emerge in fresh feminist garb. Judaically empowered to combat sexual harassment, our young women might more passionately close ranks in the campaign to end it.

A Judaic sexual harassment curriculum would permit students to explore the psychosocial contiguity of classic anti-Semitism and the persecution of women. Jews know well the danger of unconsciously internalizing the negative stereotypes others have of us. Historically, Jews, like women, have struggled to combat the odium of objectification. We still collectively battle the labels of parasite, Shylock, international conspirator, and imperialist. A critical function of Jewish education should be raising the consciousness of Jewish students, enabling them to recognize and reject these stereotypes, just as women have had to learn that, despite what society tells them, they have not brought all their problems upon themselves. The comparison effectively conveys that no oppressed group "asks for it."

An analysis of the biases maligning both Jews and women would prime students for the following critical questions: How has the JAP stereotype evolved as a recent anti-Semitic construct? To what extent has America's toleration of sexual harassment fueled this distortion? How has it affected Jewish male/female relationships? Instructors could introduce corroborating points that are rarely, if ever, raised in secular educational settings—the casually cruel sexual baiting layered into JAP jokes about the "frigidity" of Jewish women, as well as these jokes' frequent inversion of Jewish male stereotypes in Nazi propaganda. It is now the Jewish woman who is defamed as exploitative and vile. Students may grasp that no comparable genre of insults has been as blatantly targeted at other female groups in society, particularly on university campuses.

Young Jewish women and men deserve to hear a multifaceted exposé of the JAP myth, Judaic texts in hand. We can, in an authentically Jewish way, reinstate the traditional equation of Jewish femininity with beauty and worth.

Examining the JAP phenomenon in light of Dr. Spock's lament over the lost spiritual content of male/female relationships can spur classroom discussion about the confused state of Jewish male/female interaction. Significant numbers of Jewish men have accepted the JAP canard—sometimes actively, eschewing relationships with Jewish women, or passively, tolerating the stereotype. Confounded and embattled, many Jewish women downplay or deny their identity in silence, alienated from their community.

Young Jewish women and men deserve to hear a multifaceted exposé of the JAP myth, Judaic texts in hand. Echoing the educational techniques of "Black pride," we can, in an authentically Jewish way, reinstate the traditional equation of Jewish femininity with beauty and worth. All our youth should be taught from puberty to combat the dehumanization of Jewish women and to uphold their sexual integrity and human dignity as exemplified in the tradition.

Moving toward a more meaningful dynamic in Jewish education demands a renewed understanding of the precious truth, *Lo Bashamayim He* (The Torah is not in heaven). Our traditional teachings, far from hovering in remote transcendence, pose a vital challenge to Jewish educators of the nineties. A Judaic sexual harassment curriculum would garner tremendous rewards for our sons and daughters, steering them through a disturbing facet of American culture while drawing them closer to their Jewish roots. □

EDITORIAL

(Continued from p. 12)

safe to discuss their work lives and personal lives, and group leaders encouraged people to be as visionary as possible about how they would want to restructure both arenas in accord with their highest moral ideals.

A politics of meaning group in New York recently asked participants to reflect on an incident in their work lives during the past week in which the assumption of "bottom-line" selfishness had shaped a workplace decision they had participated in or which had been forced upon them. Another group watched election returns together and analyzed them, and the pundits' analyses, from a politics of meaning perspective.

If we can overcome the tendency of some to see these as "merely consciousness raising," or to dismiss them as "group therapy," these groups could have a profound effect. But to reassure people that they are *real politics* and not merely self-indulgent self-involvement, people will need to feel that they are part of a movement. One means to accomplish this is if you, the reader, form your own group, get people together once a week to discuss relevant issues, and then send us a report of things that worked, your insights, etc. We will try to circulate this material to other groups.

Needless to say, this kind of activity will face as much resistance from the Left (with its insistence that all that people really care about is economic self-interest and political rights) as from the Right.

Consciousness-raising gets re-enforced when people see that the ideas they are dealing with are also being discussed in the larger society. And since the media won't let us get our message across directly, we have to try other techniques. In December 1993, TIKKUN bought ads in the subways of New York City with a headline that read: "Tired of the selfishness and cynicism in American society? So are we!" The notion that selfishness and cynicism could be publicly challenged is a brand new idea for American life. Unlike the narrow focused struggles for inclusion that have been at the center of many of the multicultural and identity-politics movements that proliferate on the Left, the politics of meaning challenges the nature of the society that the Left seeks to be included within. This is a more transformative challenge—one that emerges from TIKKUN's commitment to healing, repair, and transformation of the world.

2. Create the consciousness of a movement. There are literally millions of people who are already committed to ethically and spiritually sensitive lives, and who are engaged in local projects that embody those principles. Whether it be as a volunteer at a homeless shelter, a volunteer for an AIDS assistance program, an activist in a religious or communal nonprofit, a lawyer engaged in defending the poor, a health-care deliverer who chooses to serve in the central city, a teacher or social worker making personal sacrifices to serve an oppressed community, a foundation officer who is trying to award grants aimed at community empowerment, a business person who has decided to put resources back into the community, or a government employee who is trying to buck "the way things are normally done" and make her agency truly responsive to community needs, there are large numbers of people whose lives reflect a real-world commitment to a politics of meaning.

But most of these people don't see themselves as part of a larger movement, viewing themselves or their local projects as relatively isolated. And as a result, they tend to narrow the scope of their activities to what can be accomplished in the local community, and that often means abandoning some of the more utopian and idealistic elements of their vision. So Step 2 in our strategy is to help bring these people together in local communities, regions, and on the national level, to help them see themselves as part of a larger politics of meaning-oriented community and to encourage them to go for their highest visions.

In the next several years we will seek to create regional and national gatherings at which these people can meet, come to recognize themselves as part of something larger, and transform their sense of what they can accomplish on the local level by virtue of seeing themselves as part of this larger movement.

3. Creation of a national movement that shapes public debate. We will insist that politicians of all parties address our concerns, and in the 1996 presidential primaries we will ask candidates to defend their campaigns by politics of meaning criteria. We will challenge the cynicism in the media. By the end of 1995 or the beginning of 1996 we will have a national convention of this movement that will develop a strategy for how to make the politics of meaning the center of national debate by the year 2000.

Each stage takes time, money, and committed activists. The discussion of all this takes place here in TIKKUN—so get people to subscribe! Come to our conference in New York City, January 16-17. And write to us to let us know that you want to be involved in the Campaign for a Politics of Meaning, and in what ways (starting a local consciousness-raising group, fund-raising, building a local conference, brainstorming?).

Meanwhile, don't worry about us fading from public view. Every week Rush Limbaugh launches another attack on us! With enemies like that.... □

Tikkun (tē-kün) ...to heal, repair and transform the world. All the rest is commentary

תיקון

THE TIKKUN CONFERENCE OF LIBERAL AND PROGRESSIVE JEWS

at Columbia University and Congregation Ansche Chesed
January 16-17, 1994

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TIKKUN was founded to support the struggles for social justice in the Jewish world in the U.S. and Israel and to help shift the dominant paradigm of liberal and progressive thought to a politics of meaning. This past year, we've experienced significant progress on both fronts. Mutual recognition between Israel and the Palestinians has dramatically altered the realities in the Middle East and in the American Jewish community. The Clintons' adoption of TIKKUN's politics of meaning has set the framework for a whole new way of thinking about politics.

We want to get our community together to think out the new situation—and to analyze some of the serious and troublesome issues that face progressives in the U.S. today. You don't have to be Jewish to come to this conference—it will be an exciting gathering of some of the best minds in America.

And it's more than just ideas.
It's a perfect place to meet new people, make new friendships, or renew old connections.
Don't miss this conference!

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