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

Passover Seder Supplement

TIKKUN

EDITORIALS:
Farrakhan's Pathology
Schindler's List

A BIMONTHLY JEWISH CRITIQUE OF POLITICS, CULTURE & SOCIETY MARCH/APRIL 1994 $6.00

Victims & Victimizers

Memory of Suffering
Michael S. Roth

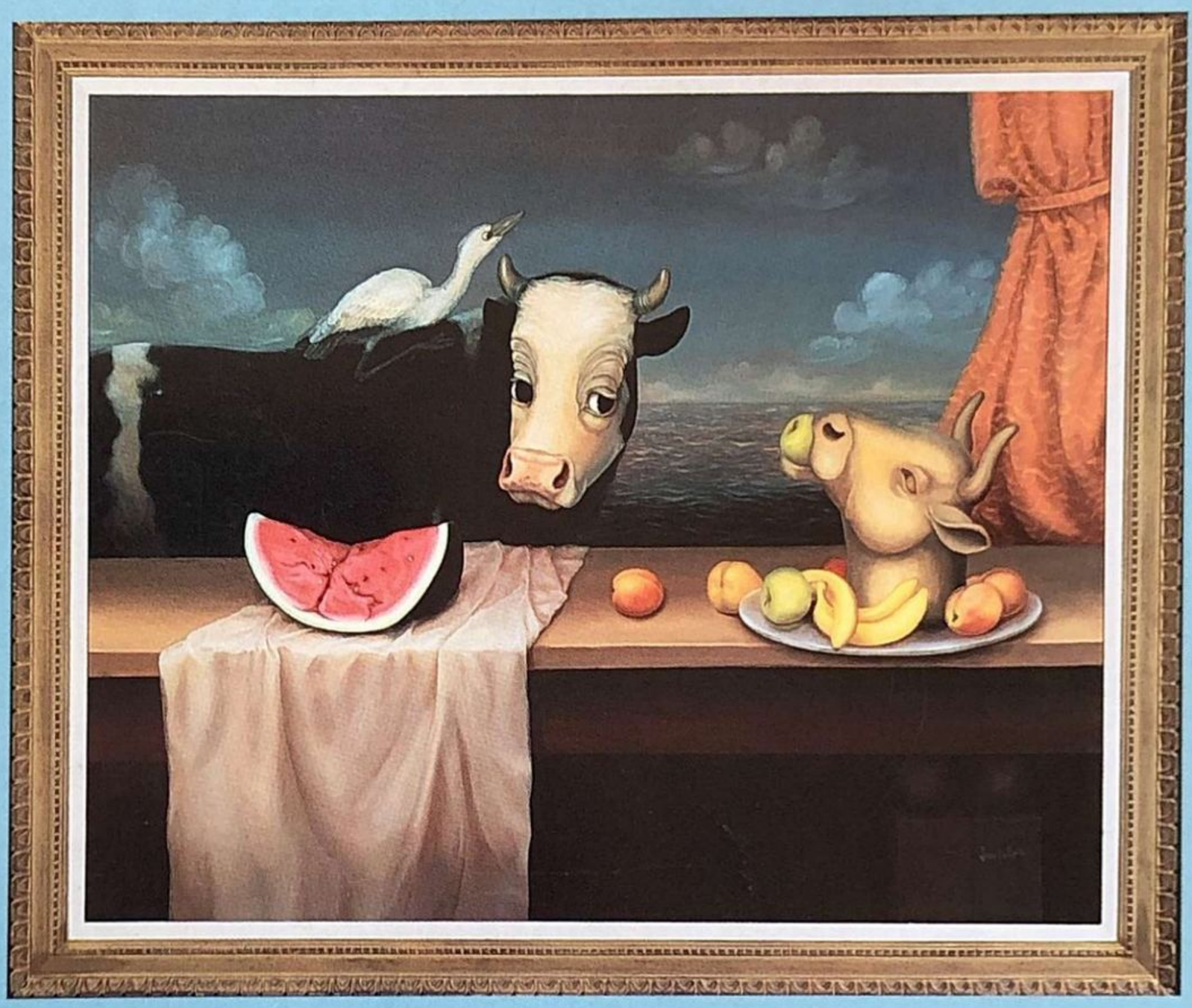
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Eva Fogelman

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TIKKUN CONFERENCE (I)

Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, Cornel West, Peter Gabel, Allen Ginsberg, Zalman Schachter, & Michael Lerner

Rabbi Marshall Meyer

A Tribute in Memoriam

Marshall Meyer was the unsung hero of American Jewish liberalism. At the time of his death in December 1993, he was known by tens of thousands of people around the world for his courage, his wisdom, and his warmth, yet he had never been adequately acknowledged by the official institutions of Jewish life.

A student of Abraham Joshua Heschel, Marshall Meyer enlivened the intellectually dull, spirit-stultifying atmosphere of the Jewish Theological Seminary. The Seminary was supposed to be the center of a movement paving a new course in Judaism, but by the time Marshall was a rabbinical student, it had long since abandoned the spirit of "movement" and become a place that used Abraham Heschel for fundraising but gave him little influence in shaping its inner life. A story is told of Marshall Meyer suddenly jumping up in the Seminary dining room and yelling at the top of his lungs, "There's no life in this place." When people, stunned, pretended that it hadn't happened, Marshall again lifted up his voice and proclaimed the same message.

After ordination, Marshall and his wife, Naomi, moved to Buenos Aires, where Marshall became a pulpit rabbi and founded a theological seminary to train South American rabbis in Conservative Judaism.

Marshall became an international hero of human rights activists and people of good will in the 1970s when, serving as a rabbi of a congregation in Buenos Aires, he publicly challenged the military junta and championed "the disappeared." In a Jewish community terrorized into silence and complicity with the military, Marshall Meyer risked his life to speak up loudly and repeatedly. He was the rabbi for Jacobo Timmerman, and the champion of countless others. He organized a freedom trail to smuggle out of Argentina people at risk of "being disappeared."

When he returned to this country in the 1980s, the Seminary should have made him chancellor, and the Rabbinical Assembly should have made him its president. But Marshall was far too principled to play the kind of games necessary to gain these positions, so he ended up instead as pulpit rabbi of B'nai Jeshurun, an old and somewhat fading Conservative synagogue in New York.

Under Marshall's leadership, and with the able help of Rabbi Rolando Matalon, who had been Marshall's student in Argentina, B'nai Jeshurun was revived and became one of America's most vital synagogues. On a typical Friday night or Saturday morning, there might be close to a thousand people davvening, singing, dancing, and listening to Marshall and Roly discuss the Torah portion, contemporary issues facing the Jewish community, readings from the works of Abraham Joshua Heschel, or a recent article from TIKKUN. The prayer services pulsated with Marshall's energy, warmth, and irreverent honesty.

Marshall powerfully critiqued Conservative Judaism for its refusal to ordain gays and lesbians and for its prohibition on commitment ceremonies between homosexuals. He made changes in the liturgy to insist that it be non-sexist and non-chauvinistic. For example, he added "*ve-al kol yoshvey tevel*" to the last line of the Kaddish: *Oseh shalom beemromav, hu ya'aseh shalom aleynu, ve'al kol yisra'el, ve'al kol yoshvey tevel, ve-eemru amen* (Maker of peace in heaven, you make peace on us, on all Israel and *on all of humanity*, and let us say, amen).

Not surprisingly, Marshall was a founding member of the TIKKUN editorial board and a guiding spirit through its past eight years of existence. His judgment and guidance were central to many of our decisions, and he and B'nai Jeshurun welcomed TIKKUN with an open heart and generosity of spirit when we moved our offices to New York in 1992. At least once a month during a Friday night service, he urged his congregants to subscribe to TIKKUN, or to become active in our projects, just as he urged them to become involved in other social action projects. For Marshall, there was never an artificial distinction between what was spiritually appropriate and what was appropriate for *tikkun olam*.

Together, Marshall and Naomi were full of life, love, humor, audacity, kindness, and caring for others.

Marshall was one of the great human beings of our time. We needed him. He should not have been taken from us. May his soul be bound up in the bonds of eternal life and his memory be a blessing for all humanity.

Michael Lerner

THE NEW YORK TIMES **OP-ED** SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 1994

Disarm the West Bank Settlers

By Michael Lerner

The murder of more than 40 Palestinians at Ramadan prayer in a mosque in the West Bank town of Hebron yesterday cannot be dismissed as the action of a psychopath and nothing more. Yes, Dr. Baruch Goldstein, a religiously observant Yeshiva University graduate who was armed with an automatic rifle, was crazy. But his craziness mirrors a climate of hatred nurtured by right-wing Jews.

Threatened with the possibility of peace, a growing number of right-wing Jews in America and Israel have talked as if a new Holocaust might occur unless the Israeli-Palestinian peace accord was scrapped.

Last month, many Orthodox congregations in New York held a rally to "support the settlers," precisely when settlers called for violent acts and civil war to subvert the peace process. And the Likud Party says that if it wins the next election, it won't honor accords exchanging land for peace reached by Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's Government.

We in the Jewish religious peace movement are often called traitors; our lives have been threatened, our motives demeaned. Bombs have been placed near Peace Now and the New Israel Fund offices, and my magazine, Tikkun, has received bomb threats.

The climate of hatred and violence directed at the peacemakers and peace supporters has virtually silenced those in the religious community who believe that the accords should be enthusiastically embraced.

We frequently hear violent language from some in the Orthodox community and from like-minded non-Orthodox — language that insists that Palestinians in particular and Arabs in general can never be trusted, are not fully human and don't deserve the same right of national self-determination that the Jews fought for in creating Israel.

Attending a Purim celebration in an Orthodox synagogue Thursday night, I overheard congregants discussing how they were financing a project in West Bank settlements whose aim was to strengthen the resolve to resist the peace process. Some Orthodox Jews have cheered West Bank terrorism against Palestinian civilians and some call Dr. Goldstein a martyr.

> The massacre was predictable.

Many right-wing Jews, raised on a steady diet of Holocaust stories and anti-Arab racism, are determined to show that Jews can be powerful — even if that power can be exercised only against an unarmed and essentially defenseless Palestinian population. They don't recognize that the Palestinians have been the victims of a 27-year harsh military occupation.

President Clinton acted wisely in inviting the Israelis and Palestinians to resume negotiations in Washington; to their credit, they immediately accepted. Unless Mr. Rabin acts quickly to extend Palestinian self-rule throughout the West Bank and quarantines West Bank settlers, he will give the settlers hope that they can derail the peace process through further murderous actions.

American Jews who wish to dissociate themselves from the extremists who consistently ignore Torah teachings about empathy must insist that the Israeli Army disarm all West Bank and Gaza settlers. It is, alas, imaginable that those arms, if not used against Palestinian civilians, might be aimed at the Israeli Army as it enforces the peace accords.

Religious Jews should press settlers to leave the West Bank or prepare to live as a minority in another people's country, reconciling themselves with a population that is properly indignant at the violence and oppression it has suffered.

American Jews can join with Mr. Rabin in expressing shame, as he did to Yasir Arafat. We need to feel shame not only over this massacre but also over the systematic misuse of Judaism and Jewish suffering to justify racist and oppressive treatment of another people. □

Michael Lerner is editor of Tikkun, a Jewish journal of opinion.

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The article above appeared in The New York Times *the day after the massacre in Hebron, and the day after this issue of the magazine had gone to press. Although the magazine cannot reflect each event as it happens, we want you to know that* TIKKUN*'s voice has been very much at the center of the public debate in the aftermath of the massacre, both here and in Israel.* TIKKUN *co-sponsored a public prayer service in New York City on March 1 to mourn the killings. Michael Lerner and other members of our editorial board have been prominently quoted in the media representing our perspective.*

The Settlements

Time Bombs Ready to Explode

Michael Lerner

Israelis were encouraged to settle on the West Bank by Ariel Sharon, Menachem Begin, and Yitzhak Shamir precisely to guarantee that there could never be a meaningful exchange of land for peace. So it's more than a bit disingenuous for people today to defend the settlements' existence by arguing that "no place on Earth should be *judenrein*," or that asking settlers to move out constitutes "ethnic cleansing."

We would not accept any arrangement for the creation of a Palestinian state that prohibited Jews from living in it as full citizens. But that is not the issue we face today on the West Bank.

To be sure, the majority of those living on the West Bank went there because the Likud offered them cheap and attractive housing that they would never have been able to afford inside the pre-1967 borders of the State

of Israel. Many of these people would return to Israel proper were they given an opportunity to purchase reasonably similar housing at reasonably similar prices. But we must also face a difficult reality: There are tens of thousands of other Israeli settlers who live in the territories for ideological or religious reasons. Although few of them would have engaged in the barbarous act of murdering Arabs while at prayer, most have the intention of thwarting the will of the Israeli government in its efforts to exchange land for peace, reconcile with Palestinians, and end the struggle.

Some of these people have gone so far as to proclaim their willingness to wage civil war against the people of Israel and against the Israel Defense Forces should the army ever be ordered to evacuate them. Far too many of them attended Dr. Baruch Goldstein's funeral and saw his act as "a sanctification of God's name." Most of them participate in the discourse of violence and demeaning of the Other that created conditions which made the massacre possible—a discourse that is all too prevalent among many in the "modern Orthodox" world and among many secular right-wingers.

Even after the massacre, the Israeli government has been far too accommodating to the settlers. The government should present them with an explicit choice: Either commit yourselves to acting in support of the peace process and reconciling with your Palestinian neighbors in word and deed, or get out of the territories.

By hiding behind legalistic arguments ("The accord doesn't require us to deal with this issue until the end of the five years of autonomy," for example), the Israeli government imagines that it will buy itself time. But instead, the problem is festering and growing worse. Inevitably, there will be more acts of provocation on both sides, and this will only make it more difficult in the future to secure popular support for a full disengagement.

The Palestinians understand this dynamic too, and so they rightfully wonder how meaningful any peace process can be that does not entail the dismantlement of at least some of the most provocative settlements (e.g., those in Gaza and those in and around Hebron). That question is not mere posturing. Imagine that although the Israeli government has the best of intentions, it believes that it doesn't have the public support to dismantle settlements, even those that have been chronic sources of anti-Palestinian activity. Fine, say Palestinians, but then what's the rest of the peace process about? If at this moment, when you have the greatest amount of local and international outrage at settler terrorism, you don't feel free to deal with the territories or the settlers in a strong and definitive manner, then why should we believe that you *would* be prepared to deal with the issue years from now?

"But don't scrap the peace process," some Israelis respond. "At least here you are going to get something real!"

"Yes and no," a Palestinian might react. "Sure, we are glad to have the process begin, but meanwhile, even if you implemented the disengagement from Gaza and Jericho, we will have close to a million of us who will continue to live under Israeli military domination and next to settlements that are continually engaged in provocations. The Israeli army can't protect us, because many of those engaged in these acts are themselves involved directly with the army. So it's not grandstanding but survival that makes us demand that you deal with the settlements *now*, not at the end of the peace process."

When faced with this argument, we realize that Palestinian hesitations about the peace process cannot be reduced to mere political posturing or strategies to counter the growth of Hamas and other Islamic fundamentalists.

We urge Israel to take steps now to deal with settlements and settlers. So far, the Israeli government's response has been far too weak. We hope that by the time you read this insert, its message will be outdated, and that we will be able to celebrate Israel's wisdom in having taken more definitive steps.

Meanwhile, we condemn the attack on Lubavitcher Hasidim in Brooklyn in early March, as we condemn all acts of violence against Jews. Just as anti-Jewish terrorism can never be an excuse for Jewish terrorism, so also Jewish terrorism can never be an excuse for violence against Jews.

As Passover approaches, we urge our readers to use their Seders to discuss these issues. We call your attention, as well, to the Seder insert between pages 32 and 33, which may be detached and brought to any Seder you attend. □

Wendy Orange's article in this issue, "Waiting for Autonomy: Scenes from the Middle East" (p. 21), ironically ends with an incident that unfolded last January in Hebron, in which the Israeli army converged on one elderly Jew who had come to make peace, exerting great effort to "rescue" him from among the Palestinians. Six weeks later, in the same town, that army failed shamefully to protect hundreds of Palestinians from a Jew who came among them in a murderous rage.

TIKKUN

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Passover Haggadah Supplements

TIKKUN's fresh interpretations and timely additions to the traditional Passover readings will enliven and enrich your Seder—a guaranteed conversation-starter (between pages 32-33). In addition, this year we include a "Seder of Rebirth" designed for the second night of Passover by Arthur Waskow and Phyllis Berman (pages 72-75).

Tribute to Marshall Meyer Inside front cover

Poetry Inside back cover: **Alan Kaufman**

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Letters

BABY-SITTERS CLUB

To the Editor:

Jill Goodman's critique of the Baby-sitters Club books buys into a pervasive and destructive American individualist ideology. Ms. Goodman has contempt for "acts of sensitivity and caring" which she sees as so "ordinary" that the girls who do these acts are "nothing special except maybe to each other."

Instead, Ms. Goodman wants ordinary girls to have heroines like Marie Curie or Mary Queen of Scots (two of Goodman's examples). But most people in the world are interested in engaging in acts of sensitivity and caring with those around them. Most people mean "nothing special" except to those with whom they're involved. Ms. Goodman wants girls to buy into the ideology which creates in individuals a chronic sense of personal failure by regaling them to "Be all that you can be..."

The Baby-sitters Club books, while not ideal, show girls acting together. This is a preferred method for many girls and women (and men too)—acting along with others, acting with the support of others. (You remember, like when people joined unions.) These books also portray girls together earning money and creating a small but viable community institution. These are laudable goals, and actually goals which are not often in evidence in children's or other literature.

Myself, I'd rather my two daughters act boldly and with others. It seems to me to be, one, more realistic, and two, more likely to change the world.

Michele Clark
Plainfield, Vermont

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Jill Goodman responds:

Michele Clark ought to consider reading a piece (or perhaps reading it caringly and sensitively) before commenting on it publicly. If she had, perhaps she would not have bothered to launch an attack on an enemy of her "own invention." (See Chapter VIII of *Alice Through the Looking Glass*, a book I am now enjoying reading to one of my daughters even though its very solitary heroine does not engage in anything like the "laudable" pursuit of making money.)

The article is in large part a paeon to reading, and, myself, I'd rather my children learn to read intelligently and critically. And yes, I would rather they become the Marie Curies of the twentieth century than the Staceys, Kristys, and Mary Annes of Stoneybrook.

BOSNIA

To the Editor:

TIKKUN has gone to a great deal of trouble to promote its view that the atrocities in Bosnia can be ended with military action against the Serbs.

It seems almost second nature to our government to resort to military intervention as a response to foreign policy problems. Over the course of U.S. history our military has probably intervened in more foreign nations than any military power in world history with the possible exception of the British Empire. In recent years we have seen disaster in Lebanon, an illegal invasion of Panama, an ill-considered intervention in Somalia, and the great military massacre known as Desert Storm.

The Pentagon is especially desperate now to find a raison d'être for its huge piece of the budget pie. Naturally its "experts" are claiming they can solve any and all problems if only the political sector would let them.

However, the realities of the situation are such that military action is not likely to be very useful and could easily make matters worse. Stephen Walker, the State Department expert on Croatia who left his job over what he sees as a failure of American foreign policy, favors lifting the arms embargo to allow the Bosnian military to arm itself. At this writing the Bosnians have had some success in arming themselves and the immediate result has been an escalation of the conflict in the form of direct participation of the Serbian military in the Bosnian conflict. Air strikes are not nearly as "surgical" or risk-free as its proponents claim, especially in such rugged terrain as that around Sarajevo. As for ground troops, sensible people ought to know better. Even the Wehrmacht, at the height of its powers, was not able to pacify the region. Invasions from outside tend to stiffen resolve, not weaken it. The war in Vietnam should have taught us that if nothing else. Besides, even if any of these methods were to stop the atrocities, how long would outsiders have to stay in effective force before anyone could be sure they would not soon start up again? It could be centuries.

We have strong reasons to be distressed by what is taking place. As Jews we have special reason to find inaction unacceptable. The purposes of the Serbs and other nationalities is not true genocide. They want to move these populations from what they regard as their lands, not necessarily exterminate them. However, what is taking place is truly evil and ought to be brought to an end.

Are there alternatives to military action? There are. Numerous groups committed to non-violence are working at the causes of the conflict. These groups include Bosnian, Croatian, Slovenian and, yes, Serbian peace movements. They also include all kinds of projects, mostly based in Europe, which support exiles, do community work at the centers of the conflict. These organizations and projects get virtually no coverage in the American press, even the progressive press, but there are thousands of people involved with the support of major political figures in Europe. We should be supporting these efforts. There ought to be a Jewish presence there.

The military is so seductive. It offers quick and easy solutions to complex, disturbing problems. TIKKUN should be more skeptical in this area. Have we forgotten that it was "the best and the brightest" of liberals who took us into Vietnam? Didn't we learn anything?

Rabbi Philip J. Bentley
Floral Park, New York

Editor responds:

The U.S. intervention in Vietnam was designed to send a message to liberation movements around the world

Biweekly TIKKUN NYC Shabbat Salon

Saturdays, 1 1/2 hours before sunset through Havdalah. Call 864-8253 for next date. Analysis of a Jewish text, vegetarian pot-luck, Havdalah, and political discussion.

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If you are interested, submit a self-revealing letter to Michael Lerner describing your own background and how you think you can contribute to TIKKUN.

that they would not be allowed to set up regimes that restricted American economic interests—and it is on behalf of those interests that the American military can be quickly mobilized. But counter to Rabbi Bentley's assertion, the U.S. military has been very reluctant to get involved in Bosnia, precisely because in this instance it would only be moral rather than self-interest reasons that could reasonably be construed as the basis of intervention.

Systematic air strikes against Serbian military targets in both Bosnia and Serbia might not end the conflict, but this response would give a clear message that one cannot engage in ethnic cleansing without paying some price. And the retreats that Serbs made in face of threatened NATO intervention suggest that many lives could be saved if NATO and the U.S. were ever to become seriously involved in attempting to end the struggle.

It would be tragic indeed if a suspicion of the military, developed in the days of opposition to the war in Vietnam, prevented us from using American power in the one instance in recent memory where it could have been used for liberatory rather than repressive purposes.

Politics of Meaning

To the Editor:

You suggest that the Clintons abandoned the politics of meaning because no one leapt to their defense after they were viciously attacked for articulating those ideas. Supposedly he was following a practical path in so doing.

But Clinton's retreat on principles is not so very practical. How can the Clintons expect their supporters to rally behind them in public when the Clintons themselves lack the conviction in their own beliefs to stand by those beliefs when they are under attack?

The Clintons have used the politics of meaning like a convenient Trojan horse, utilizing the deprivation of meaning and the starvation for empathy in order to manipulate consent for their own rather rigid, technocratic and bureaucratic "solutions." And this makes others suspect that the whole venture of the politics of meaning is nothing more than a soapbox from which retreaded liberals proclaim their moral superiority, all the while without personal risk or consequence. So, the Clintons profess a nobility of heart but meanwhile inflame class envy and resentment in order to sell their budget proposal; call for an elevation of reason and debate, and then brazenly buy congressional votes; exhort people to care but then justify their programs in technocratic terms. Perhaps the Clintons "believe" in the politics of meaning—but given the inconsistency between the beliefs they profess and the difficult terms that such demanding beliefs require, how seriously do they take their own beliefs?

Clinton won the White House in no small part by associating himself with the legacy of John F. Kennedy more self-consciously and more frequently than it was ever done in a presidential campaign. That does not oblige Clinton to implement any particular ideals or program, but it does oblige him to demonstrate moral courage. Kennedy's newly vigorous support for civil rights in 1963 caused his popularity to drop more sharply than it ever had before. Kennedy tried to mitigate the political danger—including by making a visit to the region where he was most hated, the deep South, that fateful November. But once committed, Kennedy did not waver in his support or his efforts. With nearly every cabinet member and adviser urging him to back-pedal, Kennedy said privately, "I don't care if it costs us the [presidential] election, we're going to do what is right on this thing."

For Clinton to cloak himself in the mantle of JFK, for him to appropriate words and symbols consecrated by the blood of martyrs as if they were handy little projectiles of manipulation, and for him to then suggest that it is too inexpedient or inconvenient to say what he himself truly believes—that might make Clinton the most reprehensible profiteer in that most squalid of industries, the exploit-a-Kennedy-for-profit industry.

Neal Goodwin
New York, New York

To the Editor:

Congratulations on not letting your relationship with the Clintons keep you from offering a forthright criticism of their administration. Both in your editorial and in the fine pieces by Tom Hayden, Gar Alperovitz, Charles Derber, and Martin Carnoy, Tikkun has managed to strike exactly the right tone: vigorously critiquing his failures, yet treating him as an ally who is making mistakes, and not, as the old and tired voices on the Left have done, as an enemy who is living up to "just what we expected anyway." I have heard from many sources that people in and around the White House keep reading Tikkun, and I'm sure that your tone is part of the reason. That's important to do, because I think it is likely that Tikkun's voice is the only one that reflects a serious and thoughtful progressivism that Clinton is likely to get exposed to in a consistent way. Keep up the good work.

Roland Sorel
Washington, D.C.

To the Editor:

Your explanation of why the Clintons sometimes disappoint us makes a great deal of sense, and makes me feel that I still want to trust them. Frankly, I don't understand why other liberals don't do more to rally around them—do they imagine that if the Clintons are discredited in popular opinion that we will get someone more Left? I bet that it will be someone more Right! So I wish other liberals would read Tikkun and see why it's far too early to give up on them.

Sandy Schwemmer
Los Angeles, California

To the Editor:

I just finished reading California state Senator Tom Hayden's critique of the mystique of the market ("Running in Place: Pushing Past the Market in the Clinton Era", Tikkun, January-/February 1994) when I heard on television that Hayden will be running for the Democratic nomination for governor in California. I'm in college in Boston, so I can't drop out right now to work on the campaign. But I do hope college students in California will donate lots of time to the first "politics of meaning" candidacy I've read about in a long time. To me, this seems like a perfect opportunity for all those people who've been sitting around saying that they would get involved in politics, but that there's nobody they can really believe in. Hayden should be their person—someone whose courageous opposi-

tion to the War in Vietnam was matched by early advocacy for ecology when it wasn't really popular and now by an astute embrace of some of the politics of meaning. Isn't it time for liberals to finally put up or shut up?

Judy Rosen
Boston, Massachusetts

To the Editor:

I can't understand why our first real president in twelve years has such divided loyalty in his own party. Not everyone likes him, but he does listen to all sides.

Timothy H. Justice
Chesapeake, Virginia

To the Editor:

Why the criticism of President Clinton in the January/February issue of TIKKUN ("What Happened to Our Hopes?"). Your writers should appreciate the fact that Clinton is our President. Or did they already forget the Reagan-Bush era? Criticizing him can only facilitate a return to that period.

Allan Metz
Springfield, Missouri

JEWISH SPY

To the Editor:

Your Markus Wolf interview is brilliantly done and raises issues that you have hinted at in previous pieces but never fully dared to say. While capitalist states played footsie with Hitler, and nationalist forces in Europe openly courted fascism, only the communists and socialists resisted the Nazis. So naturally Jews would be attracted to the moral courage and intellectual smarts of the communist and socialist movements after the Second World War, even if we detested the distortions in those movements created by their slavish subordination to Stalin's conception of the best interests of the Soviet Union.

The real puzzle is how Jews in the United States could have joined the Cold War, so transparently aimed at re-crediting Western capitalism and hence necessarily of hiding the close connections between that capitalism and the previous triumphs of fascism. I know of Stalin's perfidy in his two-year alliance with Hitler, but I also know that that did not flow from the necessities of socialist or communist theory or practice, but only from the perversity of the people who ruled in the name of those ideals. But alliances with fascism did flow from the necessities of the capitalist order, which is why they were so quick to sweep all this stuff under the rug after World War II and reconstruct Germany with its Nazi industrialists still in power.

No wonder, then, that no Jew could possibly have risen to power in the CIA in the U.S., aimed as it was at recrediting previous fascists, whereas a Jew could end up as the director of the East German intelligence organization.

TIKKUN has been similarly reluctant to draw the obvious conclusions about the fall of communism—that it has been bad for the Jews. Terrible as the communist regimes were, they managed to repress the vicious anti-Semitism that is now reappearing in Eastern Europe. You correctly note that the failures of the market to generate an alternative system of meaning necessarily creates a crisis of meaning that the Right will tend to fill. But what you ignore is that this crisis of meaning was answered by communist forms of meaning, and it was only the defeat of communism that created the vacuum in which anti-Semitism reappears. Because TIKKUN does not want to appear to be too distant from those who think that every attack on capitalism is "ideological bullshit" or "a remnant from a discredited past," it avoids the obvious conclusion: that only the communists had the moral courage to suppress reactionary nationalism and anti-Semitism in Eastern Europe. Though you seem to notice that Markus Wolf is being made a scapegoat, and really ought not to be going to jail, you won't allow yourself to draw the more radical conclusions about the ways that the Cold War was a disservice to the Jews. I understand why *Commentary* would reject this conclusion—they were explicitly serving those Jews who, in your own words, "sought to cuddle up to America's ruling elites." But I don't understand why TIKKUN isn't more explicit in its condemnation of capitalism.

Joseph Rosen
New York, New York

Editor responds:

Though our politics of meaning is, in fact, a strong critique of the consequences of the competitive market, we are strongly wary of any history of the twentieth century that seeks to announce in simple ways that socialists or communists have been the best allies of the Jews. As I demonstrate in my book *The Socialism of Fools: Anti-Semitism on the Left* (TIKKUN Books, 1992), the Left has often been insensitive to Jewish needs and concerns and has frequently betrayed the Jews. The use of anti-Semitism in the communist parties and regimes of Eastern Europe is well documented and acknowledged by Wolf.

Moreover, there is little to be said for suppression of racist or anti-Semitic views as a strategy for dealing with them. Had communists brought these views out into the open, struggled against them, helped people understand exactly what was distorted in them, there might have been a change in consciousness. Instead, the communists simply declared these views to be nonexistent, having supposedly been swept away by the socialist society the communists were supposedly constructing. They were never seriously challenged or grappled with by the Left, and so it is no surprise that they reemerge today in Eastern Europe.

Similarly, the Left in the United States continues to ignore the issues I raised in my book about anti-Semitism on the Left, and then acts shocked when Jews charge insensitivity or worse.

JEWS AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE

To the Editor:

Thanks for the articles on Jews and economic justice by Judith Hauptman and Meir Tamari. Strange that these issues were never discussed in Hebrew school or in the wealthy reform synagogue that I attended, where all the talk about "*tikkun olam*" usually meant helping out the

poor or the Blacks but was never consciously linked to injunctions about how to conduct our lives as businesspeople or professionals.

Sandra Jamieson
Saint Louis, Missouri

PSYCHOANALYSIS

To the Editor:

Michael J. Bader, in "That Old Psychoanalysis Just Ain't What It Used to Be" (July/August 1993) writes that "psychoanalysis reproduces certain relationships of authority within the clinical setting that mirror social asymmetries involving gender, power, and science expertise" and that "historically analysts tend to lack awareness about these authority dynamics." He expounds on that statement in a manner which reflects a profound misunderstanding of the fundamental hypotheses of psychoanalytic theory and technique. As a result, Bader dismisses the value of classical psychoanalysis and praises object relations theory, stressing the importance of Steven Mitchell.

Of course, relationships of authority are reproduced during a psychoanalysis. But not because the psychoanalyst is authoritarian, as Bader implies. Relationships of authority are reproduced during analytic work because of the nature of mental life. Conflicted conscious and unconscious memories and fantasies about childhood interactions with one's parents, siblings, and significant others continue to play an active role throughout everyone's life. These persistent memories and fantasies affect one's relationships to people in one's current life, especially to those with whom one has intimate involvements: teacher, student, colleague, supervisor, friend, lover, spouse, child, etc. The psychoanalytic procedure, which involves an intensity of visits four or five times a week (and usually the recumbent position in adults), fosters such an intimate involvement between patient and analyst. As in other special relationships, the patient has perceptions of the analyst which are not only based on "realistic" qualities of the analyst but are also influenced by conflicted memories and fantasies about earlier important relationships. The analyst, too, will have perceptions of the patient that are influenced by his or her own conflicted personal memories and fantasies.

In usual day-to-day relationships, the parties interact so that one or the other or both feel gratified and/or rejected. The analytic relationship is very different. The analyst has to have done sufficient personal analytic work so he or she can understand the influence of persistent conflicted childhood memories and fantasies on his or her perceptions of the patient. Personal analysis as part of training enables the analyst to listen to the patient in a neutral manner, limit gratifications of the patient's desires, and understand and control his or her own personally motivated counter-reactions to the patient. This special setting facilitates the patient's freedom to disclose the most intimate details of his or her life and analyst's ability to understand the meaning of the patient's verbal and non-verbal communications, including the repetition with the analyst of "real" or fantasied childhood interactions. Male analysts will have feelings transferred onto them from mother as well as from father, and female analysts from father as well as from mother. The analyst may be imputed with traits similar and/or opposite to those of the parents. These feelings and fantasies are not constant and vary throughout the analytic process. The analyst conveys to the patient his or her understanding of the patient's conflicts in order to broaden the patient's view of him or herself, to relieve psychological distress, and promote greater freedom in making life choices.

Thus, it is plain to see why "psychoanalysis reproduces certain relationships of authority within the clinical setting that mirror social asymmetries involving gender, power and science expertise." To the child, the parent figure is the one with authority, the one who labels gender role behavior, the one who knows what is right and wrong, and the one who knows and teaches the facts of the world. These relationships are reproduced in all psychological treatments. In psychoanalysis the nature of these relationships and their origin is examined. Therefore, analysts have always been aware of the importance of "authority dynamics" by virtue of the observation of the repetition of parental relationships in analysis. Psychoanalysis helps patients recognize and master the pathogenic influence in the present of persistent conflicted conscious and unconscious childhood memories and fantasies. The patient gains greater personal autonomy.

Leon Hoffman, M.D.
New York, New York

Michael Bader responds:

Dr. Hoffman does an admirable job spelling out the classical theory of the psychoanalytic process. However, in Steven Mitchell's and my opinion, this theory is self-deceptive and biased and has been powerfully challenged over the past three decades by innumerable analytic theorists of almost every persuasion, including many in Hoffman's own mainstream camp. Most analysts no longer believe in the possibility or value of the kind of simplistic notions of neutrality/abstinence described in Hoffman's letter, nor of the possibility of controlling or otherwise rooting out the contribution of the analyst's own unconscious biases in the clinical situation. Mitchell's book elegantly describes and thematizes the most important voices advocating those important paradigm changes in psychoanalytic theory. One would never know from Hoffman's letter that such controversy and debate exists, nor that the dozens of authors that Mitchell and I cite and describe actually believe that they too speak for true psychoanalysis! And yet, Hoffman does, in fact, know all of this and so his claim that I misunderstand the basic tenets of psychoanalysis has to be read as an attempt to make a politically embattled and highly controversial position appear to be widely accepted canon. The value of Mitchell's book is that it demonstrates how much psychoanalytic canon has changed. □

CHRISTOPHER LASCH
IN MEMORIAM

We honor the memory of one of America's most creative and controversial intellectuals. Christopher Lasch was a member of the TIKKUN editorial board; he wrote for our first issue and many subsequent issues. He was always stimulating and provocative, forcing the discussion to deeper levels. His works *Haven in a Heartless World* and *The Culture of Narcissism* remain central to our ongoing dialogue about a politics of meaning.

EDITORIAL

Victims and Victimizers

Two Cheers for Schindler

I'm delighted that Steven Spielberg made *Schindler's List* and I believe that it will play a useful role in discrediting the Holocaust deniers. It likely will win many Academy Awards because the movie industry—increasingly under attack for its role in fostering a societal ethos of selfishness, materialism, and violence—loves to celebrate its own moments of virtue. *Schindler* is one of the very few films that even attempt to present a true account of any aspect of the contemporary world. That in itself distinguishes *Schindler* from the majority of products from the movie industry, which typically insists that most Americans are too stupid or shallow to provide a market for this kind of serious movie, and, after all, movie makers are in business to make money. The commercial success of *Schindler* shows the bankruptcy of this kind of argument; there exists a market for serious movies if they are well made and adequately financed.

So why only *two* cheers for *Schindler's List*? Why not join the celebration?

Here are three reasons.

First, *Schindler* will undoubtedly become the *primary* vehicle for most people in the world to learn about the Holocaust. Backed by the considerable power of MCA, the corporate conglomerate which owns Universal Studios, *Schindler* is being released in seventy-six countries, as well as to every school in the United States. As such, the film's particular take on the Holocaust becomes far more significant than it would be if judged on its own merit, as one of many means by which people learn about the Jews and the genocide we faced. Thus, the distortions in *Schindler's List* must be engaged and countered.

First, we have the film's premise: The good Gentile saves Jewish lives. Yet Schindler's actions were hardly the norm. Most Germans (or citizens of Nazi-occupied countries) did nothing of the sort, and most Jews' lives weren't saved. The film does little to give us a sense of how much of an aberration Oskar Schindler was. So it's a perfect Hollywood ending to a story that, in the real world, had a terrible ending for most Jews. Nor does the film give us any sense of the level of suffering people experienced in the concentration camps quite apart from their ultimate extermination. Jews often starved to death; but the camp residents we meet throughout *Schindler's List* are neither emaciated nor without energy.

In the film's simplistic moral dualism, the sadistic camp commandant Amon Goeth serves as Schindler's antipode. Goeth, the other S.S. officers, and the camp guards are addicted to cruelty and suffused with subhuman traits; in contrast, Schindler's veneer of Nazism melts away in the unfolding of his empathic attachment to the Jews he initially views as a cheap source of labor in a get-rich-quick scheme. Yet it is precisely the banality of evil, as Hannah Arendt described it, that forms the Holocaust's profoundly disturbing moral legacy. Ordinary people betrayed Jews to the Nazis; good Germans became camp guards who herded Jews to the gas chambers; camp commandants were also loving husbands and fathers. The psychotic, debauched Amon Goeth is too easy a target of our loathing. He provides the moviegoer with an emotional outlet but little understanding of the complex ways in which an entire society cooperated with and at times actively engaged in a sadistic orientation toward the Jewish people.

Second, *Schindler's List* re-enforces the mistaken tendency of Jews to focus on the aspect of the Holocaust concerned with the actual murder of Jews or their survival, rather than on the phenomena that would help understand how Nazism's program could have taken root in the first place. This focus, in turn, prevents us from identifying and understanding the social and political conditions that make it possible for racist and ultra-nationalist forces to triumph. What political climate allowed Oskar Schindler, a person who could become humane enough to save Jews, to join the Nazi party in the first place? At the end of the film, Schindler regrets that he didn't save more Jews. But why did he not equally regret that he and others like him facilitated the Nazi hegemony? If we could focus more on that set of questions, we'd begin to understand how human beings get caught up in destructive ideologies, and thus how to deter those

forces in the future. If we take the adage "Never again" seriously, we must shift our focus from the results of the process—the point at which the Jews were being murdered—to the process itself, by which evil forces gained momentum and took power. It was Wilhelm Reich's willingness to ask that question about Germany (in his *The Mass Psychology of Fascism)*, despite the fact that in my estimation he came up with an inadequate answer (namely, that fascism's triumph could be explained in terms of the suppression of sexuality) that eventually inspired us at TIKKUN to ask these same kinds of questions about contemporary right-wing politics and to develop our politics of meaning as part of the answer.

Third, while this film plays an important role in countering the willful forgetting of history shared not only by Holocaust deniers but by many on the Left and in third-world movements, it nevertheless can also be used in less salutary ways. To the extent that the film re-enforces Jewish self-perception as embattled and precarious, it adds fuel to the underlying psychology of desperation that bolsters Israeli right-wing politics. Spielberg shows us the homeless Jews, refugees at the war's end, and at that very moment we hear the music of Naomi Shemer's triumphalist "Jerusalem of Gold," a song that became popular in the aftermath of the 1967 military victory of the Israeli army which began the Israeli occupation of the lands inhabited by 1.7 million Palestinians. The truth is more complex, and the systematic denial of the needs of Holocaust survivors by the leaders of Israeli society has recently been well documented by Israeli journalist Tom Segev.

Today, we need a Holocaust film that can relate Jewish suffering to the tragic aftermath in which our suffering, because it was so much greater than the suffering we unintentionally inflicted on Palestinians, became our excuse to refuse to acknowledge the import of our actions. I categorically reject all attempts to portray Zionists as Nazis, or the suffering of Palestinians as comparable to the suffering of the Jews, but I do think that we have to explore the connection between the way we were oppressed and hurt and the way that we then inflicted pain on others. Ironically, it was *not* the survivors who were the victimizers of others, but rather those who identified with the survivors, heard their stories, and then were filled with a massive rage and distrust of "the other" that turned Israel into a society so filled with intolerance that eventually that intolerance became the dominant motif inside the Jewish world as well, manifested in struggles between religious and secular Jews, Oriental and Ashkenazic Jews, peace-oriented and settler-oriented Israelis. The Jewish people need healing from the Holocaust, rather than just a repetition of the martyrology.

Although some people would argue that Jewish life is obsessed with the Holocaust and would do well to move on to other concerns, I believe that such a "moving on" is impossible as long as the pain and humiliation have never been fully dealt with. By avoiding the real pain and humiliation, by prettifying events so that we never see the ways that being in concentration camps or ghettoes often brought out *the worst* in people, by focusing on our survival rather than our murder, *Schindler's List* contributes to the avoidance even as it seems to intensify our knowledge and involvement. All our museums and Holocaust remembrance days are actually exercises in denial that never allow us to re-experience the pain and humiliation, to recognize that the Nazis got to us in ways that dirtied us, that we were not all innocent survivors but rather complicated and complex human beings facing an extraordinarily distorted and ugly reality, and that we did not all come out so healthy or pure from this encounter.

Israel never let us fully grieve—it always insisted that memory should be for "*Shoah* and *Gevurah*," for holocaust and acts of courage/strength, the latter a constant reminder that Jews were engaged in struggle and resistance and were not just victims. But that insistence, while historically true for some, was not true for many more. It is time to desist from demanding that our story be fashioned into a heroic narrative and begin to grapple with it in its complex and sometimes unpleasant forms. Until we can allow ourselves to fully understand the ways that Jews were not *just* beautiful and holy—that some Jews were collaborators; some survivors were also oppressors and betrayers of others; some Jews clawed their way to life by turning off their moral sensitivities; and some Jews, after the Holocaust, have at times been morally insensitive or even ruthless to others and have used the Holocaust as their justification—then we can never really understand the depths of our oppression. And until we can fully mourn, we will never be able to get beyond the Holocaust. So what is needed is not avoidance, but a fuller and more honest immersion in the complex psychological truths of that genocide. From that immersion we will have a better idea of how it is that people get distorted by social circumstances, and perhaps a wee bit more reluctant to jump on the bandwagon of Jewish neoconservatives in *Commentary* and The *New Republic* who like to scold African Americans for not taking more responsibility for the depravity that exists in the ghettoes of contemporary America. Today's Holocaust fascination is in the service of avoidance and denial of these complex realities.

There is another distortion that sometimes

accompanies contemporary forms of Holocaust fascination—one exemplified by Leon Wieseltier of The *New Republic*—which I call the ontologization of evil. Instead of talking about the evil manifested in the Holocaust, Wieseltier talks about Radical Evil, as though it were an independent force in the universe. Yet the ontologization of Evil is itself an evil, a rendering of victory to Hitler over the God of the Bible. Jews in the ancient world knew about genocide—that was precisely what Pharaoh tried to do to us in Egypt. Yet the Jewish worldview denies to evil the status of Evil, instead insisting that evil can be overcome, that it is not the governing force in the universe, a force with which God has to contend. As Isaiah puts it, God is the creator of light and darkness, maker of peace and creator of evil. Ontologizers of evil into Evil like Wieseltier are the key cheerleaders for contemporary cynicism and political conservatism. Since people will always be distorted by Evil, which is seen as an existing and powerful force, there can be no hope for fundamental transformation of the world. At best we can hope for the slightest amelioration of problems, and we must be cynical and rejecting of those who hope for larger transformations. From this standpoint, the hopes for *tikkun olam* begin to sound ludicrous, and those who articulate them must either be cynical manipulators or psychobabblers or religious fanatics. This is the worldview that leads people to reject the politics of meaning and to cling to the mildly reformist versions of liberalism that have proved so ineffective and flawed. In this argument, the Holocaust becomes the ultimate trump-card, the proof that there is Radical Evil.

Spielberg's film does not participate in this distortion, which is why Wieseltier finds it disturbing.

If anything, Spielberg's film is empowering because it shows that people *can* change, that even someone involved in the quintessential evil of the twentieth century could move beyond his previous self-understanding and do acts of decency and compassion. Had Spielberg actually sought to explore what it was in Schindler that made this transformation possible, he would have won my third cheer. Unfortunately, he does not. We are left with the positive message that an individual can act on his own to counter the effects of a massively evil force, that he can in fact succeed in making an impact. But what makes all this possible is left a mystery.

But all this is said from the standpoint of someone whose first response is to give the films two cheers. The work is an important, if flawed, contribution to our collective memories. And it is proof that serious films can have mass audiences. I cried through much of the film, came away ever more deeply committed to fighting against the resurgent forces of fascism, racism, anti-Semitism, and ultra-nationalist chauvinism, and hence to a politics of meaning. For this, I thank and congratulate Spielberg and wish the film well. Compared to most of the film industry's offerings in the past few decades, *Schindler's List* is indeed a masterpiece.

Farrakhan's Jewish Problem

The failure of many Black leaders to condemn Louis Farrakhan's defense of the "truths" in Khalid Abdul Muhammad's anti-Semitic diatribe at New Jersey's Kean College is unacceptable. As Cornel West points out, Farrakhan's claim that Jews owned 75 percent of enslaved Africans reveals his obsession with connecting black social misery to Jewish power. The reality is that Jews constituted .3 percent of slaveholders—5,000 out of 1,937,625). Yet there has been far too little effort by other African-American community leaders to counter the lies and distortions that Farrakhan and his Black Muslim followers are spreading among Black youth.

It is wrong for the NAACP to give Farrakhan a stamp of legitimacy by inviting him to participate in its national convocation of Black leaders. Just as we publicly called upon the Democratic Party to expel racists such as George Wallace, Lester Maddox, and Senator Ernest Hollings, we should be equally insistent that African Americans publicly and unequivocally repudiate Farrakhan and those of his ilk.

Yet we should also recognize that the Jewish community does not approach these issues with "clean hands." For two dozen years, Jewish leaders remained relatively quiet while other Jews uttered racist baloney about "the Arab mentality" and spewed hate toward Palestinians. Jewish newspapers were filled with attempts to label as "self-hating" those Jews who dared criticize Israeli torture of Palestininans, or the morality of the West Bank occupation.

The reality is that in every community of oppressed people there is an unwritten law that you should not air your dirty laundry in public, for fear that this will give aid and comfort to one's enemies. We at TIKKUN didn't buy that in the Jewish world, and we won't buy it from African Americans either.

Nor will we buy excuses that talk about the good work Farrakhan's minions are doing at inner-city housing projects. If the cost for that good work is anti-Semitic rhetoric, it is no more acceptable than it would have been for Jews to justify the late Rabbi Meir Kahane's anti-Black racism by talking about the valuable protection from crime he was offering to elderly Jews in the inner cities who were terrified of crime.

Jewish neocons should understand that their attempts to blame the persistence of racist patterns in employment and wealth on the pathologies of the Black underclass are as offensive to many Blacks as Blacks blaming German anti-Semitism on Jewish economic power is to many Jews. Jewish communal memory is all too short—it was less than a hundred years ago that anti-Semites looked upon Jewish poverty and, yes, Jewish crime in Eastern Europe and in the slums of the United States and attributed it to Jewish cultural depravity!

Similarly, anyone reading *Commentary* magazine or The *New Republic* can feel the simmering hatred toward Blacks concealed beneath the surface as one writer after another can barely contain their joy at the prospects of throwing Black women and children off welfare or find another excuse to reduce social programs benefiting the Black community! And who among us can deny that the Jewish world was simmering with anti-Black racism long before Blacks abandoned the Black-Jewish alliance for "Black power" in the late 1960s?

Yet no amount of Jewish racism can ever justify Black anti-Semitism. It is morally wrong under any circumstances. And it is politically self-destructive. After all, Jewish majorities have consistently voted for social justice-oriented candidates and sought to end Black oppression.

We demand a systematic campaign within the Black community to confront and uproot anti-Semitic assumptions and prejudices—not empty, pious statements, but a systematic reeducation campaign, to be led not only by Black clergy and political leaders, but by Black radio stations and newspapers, Black intellectuals, musicians, entertainers, sports and cultural heroes. To be even-handed, we at TIKKUN are writing to Black leaders and to Jewish leaders as well and proposing a joint campaign that would also target anti-Black feelings in the Jewish world. To make the campaign serious, Black leaders should supervise Jews developing the anti-racism campaign in the Jewish world, and Jews should supervise Blacks developing the campaign against anti-Semitism in the Black world.

One place Blacks might start is to challenge the idea that Jews are whites. In current discourse, who gets labeled "white" and who gets labeled "person of color" derives not from the color of one's skin (Jews come in many different colors, some indistinguishable from East Europeans, some as black as the Ethiopians recently airlifted to Israel), but from the degree to which one has been a victim of Western colonialist oppression. By that measure, Jews have been the greatest victim of Western societies throughout the past two thousand years and must certainly be understood to be one of the "peoples of color." Our literature was systematically excluded from the academic canon and so deserves to be part of the multicultural corpus. And our history ought to be studied as a prime example of oppression.

But how can we still be oppressed if we are doing well financially? Becuase the *form* of Jewish oppression in the Christian world, starting in Eastern European peasant societies but continuing into western European and American capitalist societies, has followed a consistent dynamic. Jews are set up in positions in which we become the public face of ruling economic and political elites, mediating between those elites and those underneath. In Eastern Europe we were the tax-collectors and foremen for the large landowners; in the West, we became the teachers, social workers, doctors, small businessmen, and lawyers in the large cities where poor people mistook us for the ruling elites we chose to serve. Jews were similary "privileged" in Weimar Germany, but when economic times turn rough ruling elites manipulate popular anger against the Jews, helping to foster a dynamic described in *The Socialism of Fools: Anti-Semitism on the Left* (TIKKUN BOOKS, 1992).

Black anti-Semitism won't go away as long as there is oppression of Blacks and Black despair persists. Nor will oppression of Blacks cease as long as racism remains a convenient mechanism for concentrating the worst impact of the business cycle on some group whose problems can be dismissed as belonging to some "Other" that is not "us," as long as this Other can be blamed when nationalistic or racist communities are unable to provide the compensation they promise for the alienation most people experience in work and the loneliness in family life, and as long as people can use their distaste of the Other as an excuse to seek lower taxes rather than to pay for needed social programs. Racism serves as a communal expression of the same selfishness that is societal "common sense" on the individual level. Unless a politics of meaning can succeed in shifting the dominant ethos of the society and provide a framework of meaning that does not depend on demonizing the Other, don't expect American majorities to be open to undermining racism. And unless the worst excesses of American racism are curbed, don't expect Black anti-Semitism or other pathologies of the oppressed to disappear too quickly. □

Pulling Together for Single-Payer

Paul Wellstone

"I want to make this very clear: I am open… to the best ideas of concerned members of both parties. I have no special brief for any specific approach, even in our own bill, except this: If you send me legislation that does not guarantee every American private health insurance that can never be taken away, you will force me to take this pen, veto the legislation, and we'll come right back here and start all over again."

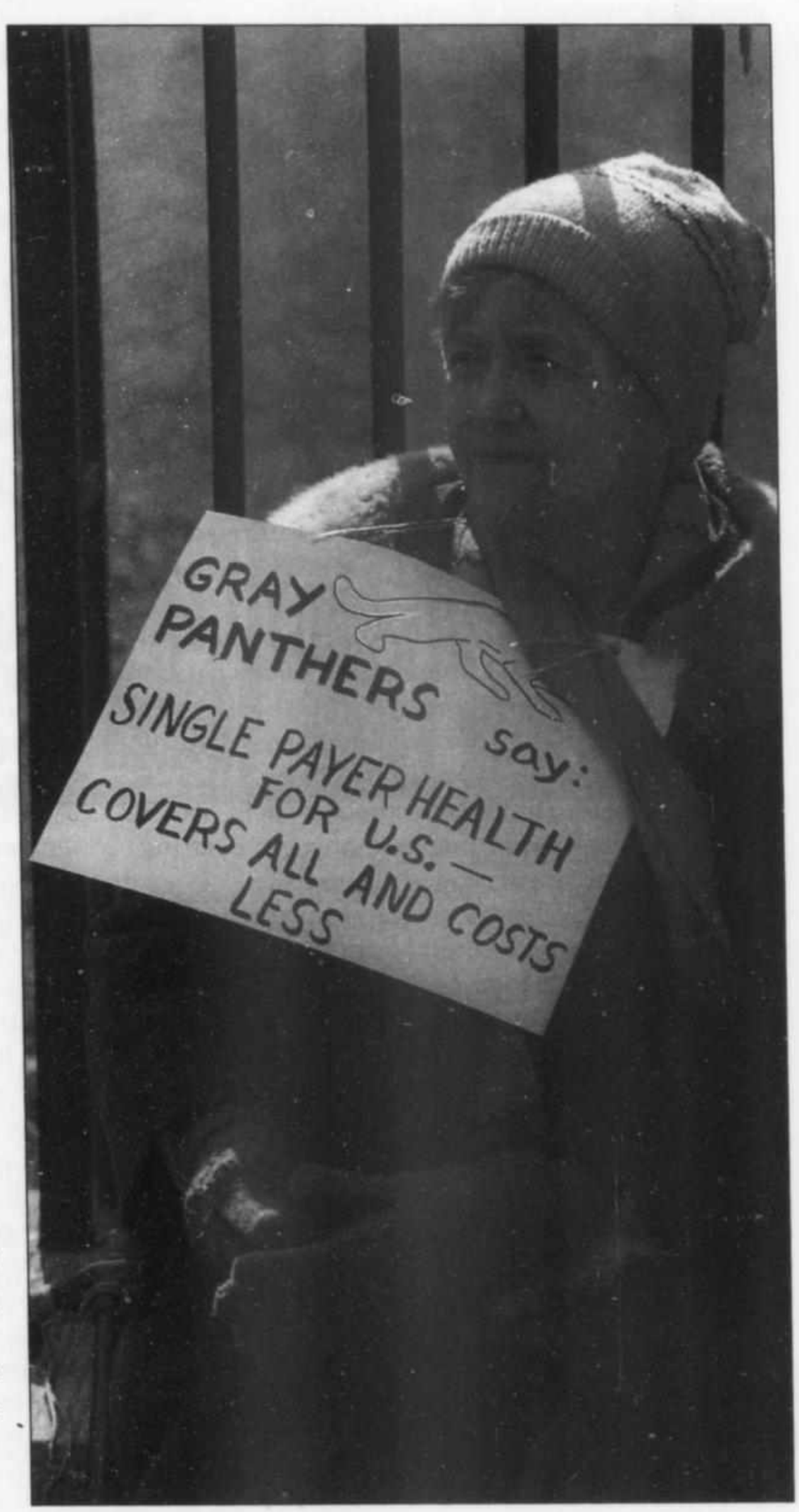
President Bill Clinton
State of the Union Address
January 25, 1994

With that stirring line in the State of the Union address, President Clinton told the American people that universal coverage will be guaranteed when health-care reform becomes law.

Thus, the President signaled that the upcoming debate in Congress will not be between those of us who support universal coverage and those who do not, but between a single-payer plan and those few other plans that provide universal coverage. For focusing the discussion in this way, President Clinton deserves a great deal of credit.

President Clinton was right in establishing universal coverage as an absolute standard of reform, because it is a primary—if not *the* primary—concern I hear. Wherever I go—from the taxicabs of Washington, D.C. to the airports in Chicago or L.A.—when it comes to health-care reform, people want the answers to a few basic questions: Will my family and I be covered? Will there be a good package of benefits? Will we have a choice of doctor? Can we afford it?

With a single-payer health-care system, like the



Senator Paul Wellstone is a Democrat from Minnesota. His American Health Security Act, 5491, was introduced on March 3, 1993.

American Health Security Act I introduced in the Senate, the answer to all four questions is a resounding yes.

Under a single-payer system, everyone would be covered by the same health-care system, with the same broad range of benefits, and there would be no other insurance outside the system for covered benefits. Additional insurance would be sold only for services that are not covered, such as cosmetic surgery. Everyone would have a health security card. Better than any other proposal, single-payer clearly meets the President's standard of universal coverage.

By President Clinton's own standards, single-payer is the best health-care reform proposal. So why do we keep hearing that it isn't politically feasible?

President Clinton also has asserted that besides universal coverage, the health-care reform package must include a good package of benefits. Single-payer also meets this standard.

The comprehensive package of benefits would cover a full range of primary and preventive care, including in-patient services, long-term care, mental health and substance-abuse care, rehabilitative services, prescription drugs, and hospital and health professional care. Health-care coverage could not be denied or terminated because of a preexisting condition, or because of a lost or changed job.

Everyone would have a choice of doctor, because there would be no difference in price to the consumer among or between managed-care plans such as HMOs and fee-for-service plans. You would choose your own doctor or select an HMO or other managed-care plan. And since all plans would charge the same, the patient's satisfaction with the quality of care and the level of services would be the primary reason a plan does well.

A single-payer system is affordable for several reasons. First, it eliminates bureaucratic waste, profiteering, and the tons of paperwork required by the fifteen hundred insurance companies with different forms. Administrative waste will drain 10 percent of our health-care dollars, or about $100 billion, in 1993. Simply looking at other countries—or at Medicare—shows that administrative savings are assured.

Second, single-payer is affordable because it effectively controls what we spend on health care. Delivery of care would operate under the discipline of a budget. (And we *can* continue to provide the world's best technological care within a budget.) Indeed, the impartial General Accounting Office and Congressional Budget Office have found single-payer far more effective at controlling costs than any other proposal.

Finally, health care would be affordable under the single-payer system because it's financed fairly. Health-care coverage would be financed by replacing private premiums with public premiums. Instead of large, bureaucratic insurance plans that charge individuals and businesses according to how sick they are—despite income or profits—the public plan would be progressively financed by a payroll tax or deduction on employers and employees. These funds would go into a health-care trust fund, similar to Social Security. A tobacco tax would also be imposed to offset the cost of comprehensive long-term care and to discourage the use of a product that generates high health care costs.

Under my proposed system, the vast majority of people and businesses would pay far less for health care than they do now. The link between health care and employment would be broken, and every American would receive the security of comprehensive health-care services for life—services that would be available whenever needed. In fact, the average American family would pay at least $1,000 less and get better health coverage than under the current system by the year 2003.

The American Health Security Act would take the universal coverage, fair and affordable financing, administrative efficiency, and public accountability of the Canadian system and combine it with distinctly American medicine. The United States will continue to pay more per person for health care than any other country, but shift the extra dollars to personal health care by community caregivers as well as high-tech medical care.

We would encourage innovations in the delivery system such as managed care and give incentive to health care professionals and consumers to collaborate on improving quality.

Under the single-payer system, the federal government's role would be to collect the money used for health care—something most people agree the government does well. We would have the same system of private and public hospitals and doctors' offices we do today. Single-payer is far different from a

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In Defense of Unions

Michael Zweig



Among liberals and progressives of the 1930s, '40s, and '50s, support for the labor movement was an essence of political life. But among those who have come to political consciousness in the past thirty years, a pro-labor stance can no longer be assumed. The AFL-CIO has been on the wrong side of too many questions to be a reliable ally. Organized labor supported the Vietnam War and has since been implicated in all manner of Cold War adventures. Racist and sexist practices in the building trades and other unions are all too recent. Unions have battled environmentalists in highly publicized conflicts over jobs and environmental standards. Even when it comes to organizing workers into unions, the AFL-CIO has had a lackadaisical attitude and a meager record.

So as issues of race and gender, peace and environment have shaped the Left's agenda over the years, labor's concerns have lost legitimacy and fallen out of focus. All the while, management has intensified anti-union tactics, encouraged by the Reagan and Bush administrations, from their destruction of the air traffic controllers' union (PATCO) to the unrelenting characterization of labor as a "special interest."

Now the Clinton administration is considering ways to increase productivity and foster worker empowerment by encouraging labor-management cooperation rather than confrontation. Whether through total quality management, enterprise councils, or some other formulation, the administration is promoting worker involvement to secure a "win-win" result in which worker skills and morale improve and the company becomes more competitive.

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But there's a problem. Courts have ruled twice recently that companies may not take the initiative to establish labor-management committees to deal with work-related issues. Such committees have been found to be company unions, in violation of section 8(a)(2) of the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA), which prohibits an employer from forming or contributing to the support of any labor organization. Both recent challenges were brought by independent unions seeking to represent the workers involved. In response to these decisions, the Clinton administration is seriously contemplating a proposal to change the law.

Unions, the critics tell us, are stuck in an anachronistic antagonism toward employers, an "us versus them" mentality that undermines competitiveness through rigid work rules.

On its face, union opposition to company-initiated labor-management committees may seem like just another turf battle, tired old organizational self-interest at the expense of the workers who might be well served by increased participation and all the rest of us who would benefit from the greater productivity real worker empowerment often helps to generate. But before we get on the anti-union bandwagon, we should consider that unions and the workers they seek to represent may have good reason for concern about the Clinton administration's proposals. The politics of meaning helps focus the issues and enables us to see why a change in section 8(a)(2) of the NLRA would be a mistake, in both practical and ethical terms.

Labor Secretary Robert B. Reich and Commerce Secretary Ron Brown have set up a Commission on the Future of Worker-Management Relations, chaired by Harvard Professor John Dunlop, Jimmy Carter's Secretary of Labor. High on the list of priorities for the Dunlop Commission is a review of labor law with the goal of recommending changes to facilitate greater labor-management cooperation. When the Dunlop Commission issues its findings later this year, it will almost certainly call for weakening the prohibition on company unions by either amending or repealing section 8(a)(2) of the NLRA.

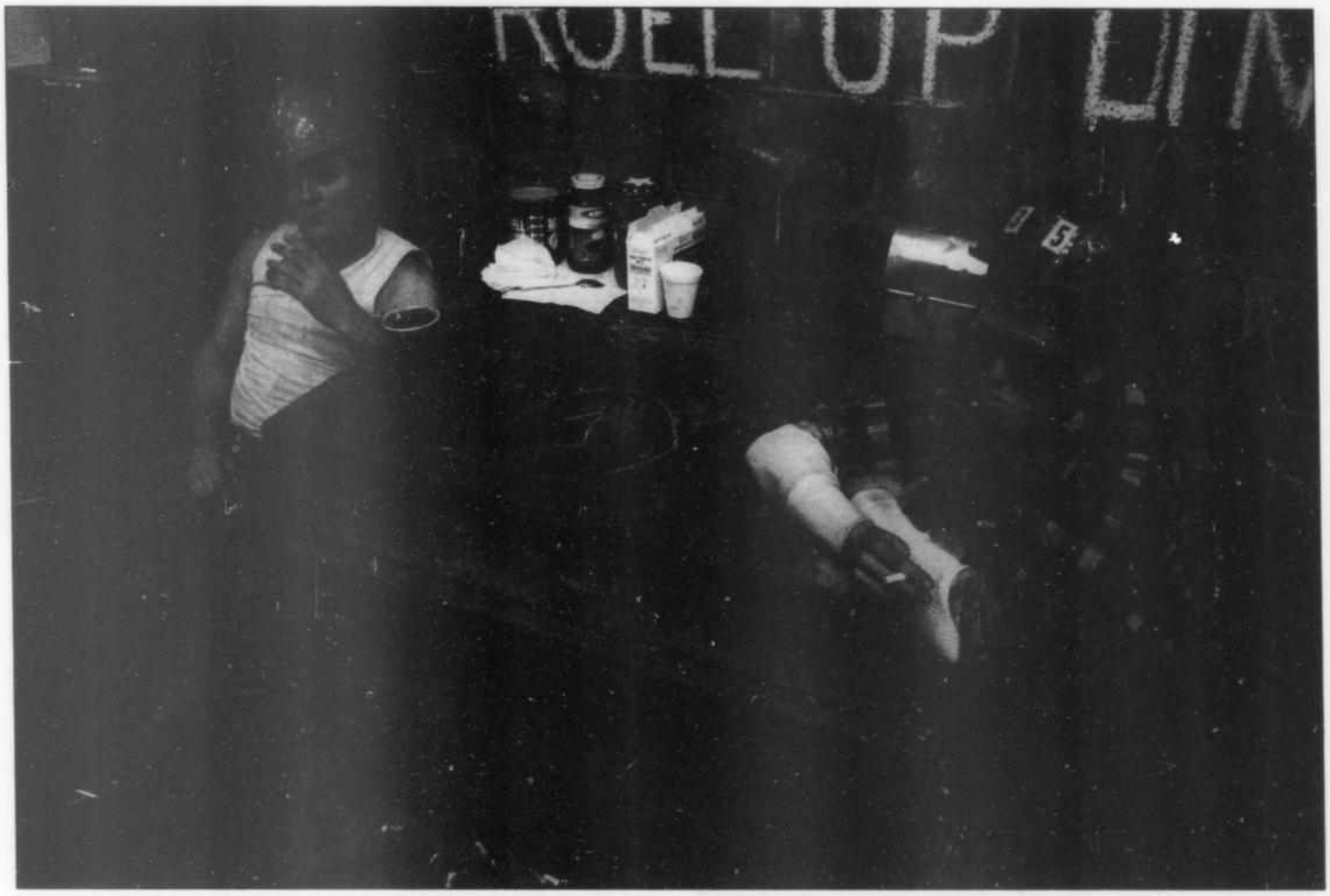
The NLRA, known as the Wagner Act, after its main architect, New York Senator Robert Wagner, became law in 1935. In it, Congress set up machinery to guarantee workers the right to organize into unions for collective bargaining, and for the first time required their employers to recognize duly elected union representatives and negotiate with them. One of the most hotly contested parts of the law, fiercely opposed by management, was the prohibition on company unions.

In the early years of the New Deal, employers by the hundreds set up "employee representation plans," ostensibly to provide a voice for their workers. These company unions were management's often-successful means to thwart organizing drives by independent trade unions, which were seen as threats to company authority and dismissed as the work of "outside agitators." The Wagner Act put a stop to these blatantly anti-union practices and so helped make possible the organization of over nine million workers into unions in the last half of the Depression years. (The two recent cases in which section 8(a)(2) prevented company-sponsored worker participation plans show the continued importance of this protection. At Electromation, the company was trying to defeat a union organizing drive; at DuPont, the company was trying to circumvent an existing union contract.)

Over the past thirty years, unions have increasingly been put on the defensive, especially during the Reagan-Bush administrations. Legal protections have been steadily eroded, and the labor law reform now under consideration threatens to continue the process, albeit in the name of worker rights. But now, no less than in 1935, workers need a voice in shaping the conditions of their work. And, as Cornell University Professor James Gross recently said, that voice cannot rightfully belong to a ventriloquist employer. Yet the prospect is strong that, in the name of labor-management cooperation, the Clinton administration will try to open the door again to company unions.

Proponents of this change claim that the Wagner Act is hopelessly outdated, a relic of an earlier era unsuited to the competitive needs of the current and future U.S. economy. Critics of the Wagner Act usually extend their objections to the labor unions the act encourages. Traditional unions, the critics tell us, are stuck in an anachronistic antagonism toward employers, an "us versus them" mentality that undermines competitiveness through rigid work rules and an unwillingness to take responsibility for the success of the enterprise which, after all, is providing jobs and income to union members.

Many changes in the economy and the industrial



relations system have indeed occurred, accelerating in the last two decades. But it remains as true as ever that labor and management have distinct and conflicting interests, much as they may be united in a common desire for survival. Even in a generally cooperative setting, workers still require independent representation when dealing with management. Anything less is paternalistic and incapable of providing a secure voice for workers in conflict with their employer. The principle of independent self-organization by workers, free from management interference, remains as important and relevant today as it was sixty years ago.

Why should we defend unions? It is indicative of the strategically weakened position of labor in the U.S. economy that this question arises again and must be answered again in the 1990s. Now, as during the New Deal, there are both technical and ethical reasons for coming to the unions' defense.

During the Depression, technical plans for economic recovery were associated with high wages and the jobs that would be created in response to greater demand for goods and services. Unions therefore won support as an instrument to force greater income from employers.

In the 1990s, few people believe that economic recovery hangs on higher wages. The conventional wisdom holds that high wages have weakened our competitiveness in world markets, and unions are part of the problem, not the solution. But our competitiveness has withered in the very decades when wages in Japan and Europe rose *faster* than our own. There is lots of evidence that high wages spur management to use labor more productively, so that a high-wage strategy, to which unions have much to contribute, can promote competitiveness, not undermine it.

But the Reagan and Bush administrations were hell-bent on blaming labor for our problem with competitiveness. The Clinton administration has dropped this line of attack and proclaimed a high-wage strategy. Recent studies, such as *What Do Unions Do?*, by Richard Freeman and James Medoff, and *Unions and Economic Competitiveness*, edited by Lawrence Mishel and Paula Voos, provide evidence that unions promote rather than hinder technological change, are not responsible for the U.S. trade deficit, and contribute to the competitive strength of the U.S. economy. Their findings are important correctives to widespread misconceptions about unions. They should appeal to President Clinton and the "new Democrats" who claim to value hard analysis and technical

pragmatism.

But the arguments in defense of unions transcend solely technical rationales. It remains true, as Senator Wagner argued sixty years ago, that "the right to bargain collectively is at the bottom of social justice for the worker, as well as the sensible conduct of business affairs." Economic justice is an ethical concern, embodied in fair treatment, dignity, and democracy. Far more than wages, these are the concerns that draw workers to unions. They are also central goals of a politics of meaning applied to the workplace.



In the climate created by the Reagan-Bush administration's unrelieved attacks on labor and unions, technical arguments alone will not recapture what David Brody has called "the spirit of legitimacy" that the Wagner Act conferred on unions and collective bargaining. To do that, we need to reexamine and reaffirm the ethical defenses of labor which historically have played a decisive role in the United States. For it is still true, as it was in 1935, that unions contribute to fairness, dignity, and democracy in the workplace and in the larger society. These goals, which the American people value, are central to the politics of meaning so urgently needed in this country.

No less than during the Depression, the ethical foundation for labor's agenda today rests on the outrages of everyday life experienced by millions of working people. Now is the time to make the case for social justice again.

There is nothing fair about the dramatic changes in the distributions of income and wealth in the United States we have seen over the past twenty years. The decline in most workers' living standards compared with the strong advances of the corporate elite calls out for redress. There is nothing fair about recent dramatic increases in productivity in U.S. manufacturing while real earnings of manufacturing workers have fallen.

What happens to human dignity—to the eloquent cry, "I am a man" and "I am a woman"—when workers lose their jobs and face the reality of long-term unemployment? Where is the dignity in contract concessions driven by fear of joblessness and personal ruin? Does it enhance human dignity to force workers to compete against one another in a contest to see who will take the biggest reductions in standard of living, who can throw whom overboard?

These and many other insults to workers' dignity and violations of fairness in the workplace are routinely reported features of U.S. workplace culture, coinciding with and as a partial consequence of the decline of union strength in the United States. Technical arguments showing that labor is not responsible for the country's economic problems need to buttress the *moral* claim that what is happening to working people is simply not *right*, and that strong unions are necessary to secure economic justice.

There is also an important relation between labor's strength and a strong democracy. Two-thirds of the U.S. population is in the working class. Policies that give working people a position of authority in economic life are policies that promote democracy, not just because workers are the majority of the population but because the disposition of economic resources so profoundly shapes our personal life histories.

When discussing industrial relations, President Clinton and Labor Secretary Reich say they care deeply for working people. In particular, they present worker participation in enterprise management as a route to worker dignity, higher income, and fairer business decisions. But unions seem at best an incidental element of the new industrial-relations system envisioned by the Clinton administration.

As we consider labor law reform now, it is important to remember that many U.S. managers, almost all of whom supported Reagan-Bush policies, have harbored deep-seated hostility toward unions over the decades since the Wagner Act. But the new industrial relations system of employee involvement rests on the assumption of cooperative relations between labor and management, and cooperation rests on mutual trust. In particular, management asks workers to have confidence in the company's concern for the workers' welfare. In our historical context, what prospect is there of sustaining enough trust to justify workers surrendering independent representation for a

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Auschwitz and Sarajevo

Jack Miles

"The lesson of Auschwitz is that you can get away with it," a survivor once said. I want to object, but when I think of Sarajevo, the objection catches in my throat. And because it does, I dread the prospect of catharsis held out to me by Steven Spielberg's new film, *Schindler's List*.

I dread and crave it at once, or dread it because I crave it, for I am just the sort of American moviegoer of whom The *New Republic*'s Leon Wieseltier, speaking of the public reception of *Schindler's List*, wrote recently and bitterly:

> Americans are quickly moved. There is something a little exhilarating about all these tears. I'd prefer a bit more stunning into silence. Americans escape easily from reality and they are not easily returned to it; and *Schindler's List* dispatches them in both directions. It transports its audience to the basest moment in history and calls it a wrap.

I know too well that, in Spielberg's hands, I would easily be transported to the basest moment in history and easily, gratefully brought back, hot-eyed and emotionally exhausted, glad to call it a wrap whenever he did. But I wouldn't quite be able to forget, as I passed through the emotional stages Spielberg has planned for me, that a real-life, off-screen version of what he portrays is taking place: An entire, distinct people is being wiped off the map of Europe, NATO airstrikes notwithstanding.

Suppose that Spielberg's quasi-documentary were a real documentary; that, when we left the theater, we would know that Jews were still dying by the thousands, some hundreds of them during the time we were inside blinking at the screen. Suppose further that the power of the film were such that when we finished seeing it, we would feel purged, exhausted, and beyond further exertions on behalf of the dying Jews. Well, just possibly we might not want to see it under those circumstances. We might prefer to maintain the dry-eyed attentiveness of a nurse in an emergency room rather than yield to the wet-eyed emotions of a mourner.

The Nazi slaughter of the Jews is over, of course; nothing is to be lost now by yielding to those emotions where the Jews are concerned. But what about the Bosnians? Do they or do they not come under the rubric, "Never again"? If they do, then the analogy is more than an analogy: While we weep for slaughtered innocents, innocents are being slaughtered. Again, they are non-Christians in Christian Europe. Again, they are slain in the name of ethnic purity.

There are differences between Auschwitz and Sarajevo, I realize. The United Nations did not bring relief to Auschwitz. But then history never repeats itself exactly, and the horror of Sarajevo fully deserves to be called genocidal.

Imagine a city ringed by mountains, like the half of Los Angeles that lies in the San Fernando Valley. Imagine that the inhabitants are unarmed but for the small weapons that might be found in San Fernando Valley homes. Imagine, now, that up in the Hollywood Hills, the Santa Monica Mountains, the Verdugo Hills, etc., an enemy has placed heavy artillery and that he is shelling the neighborhoods. Every day five, ten, twenty or more men, women, and children are blown to bits. There is no fuel for the cars. All the trees have been cut down and burnt in the fireplaces for cooking and heat. There is not nearly enough food. Everyone has lost weight, a lot of weight. Much of the time there is no water or electrical power. There is little medicine, even in the hospitals. And there is nowhere to run. The enemy controls nearly all of Southern California beyond the mountains and will kill you if you try to escape. No country in the world has any intention of airlifting you to safety. Imagine, in brief, that the San Fernando Valley has been turned into a slow-motion death camp, another kind of Auschwitz and that, yes, they are getting away with it.

We are told, and who can disagree, that the United States has no overriding national interest in the Balkans. As the ugly but apt saying goes, we have no dog in this

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fight. Britain has no dog in this fight either. Neither does France. Neither does Germany. The conclusion is inescapable: The Balkan dogs will be left to fight it out among themselves, and one of those dogs is going to die.

As an editorial writer for the *Los Angeles Times*, I exhausted myself during 1992 trying to find arguments for just the sort of military intervention that NATO seemed to announce on February 9, 1994. The war could spread, I said back then, bringing Turkey and Greece, two NATO allies, into conflict with each other. Or the spectacle of a fascist like Slobodan Milosevic proceeding with impunity could inspire imitation in Russia by the likes of (though he was yet to emerge) Vladimir Zhirinovsky. Or NATO would disintegrate into irrelevance if it could not respond to this crisis, leaving the United States vulnerable at some future date. I did my best, and my newspaper nominated my editorials for a Pulitzer Prize. But that was the year, 1992, when the Pulitzer judges saw fit to award no prize for editorial writing; they were right in their decision, given American journalism's collective performance on this issue.



There were those, of course, who mocked Bosnia as a "journalist's war," the plaything of armchair warriors. But on February 9, as the NATO ultimatum was announced, President Clinton seemed to concede the basic point that many journalists had been trying to make. He stated then with seeming boldness: "Our nation has clear interests at stake in this conflict." And he went on to list four of them: preventing a broader conflict; preserving NATO credibility; stemming the flow of refugees; and preventing "the continuing slaughter of innocents in Bosnia."

But with regard to the first three items on that list, the President's cautionary note—"Our contribution to resolving the Bosnian conflict will be proportionate to our interests, no more and no less"—is decisive. Even a much broader conflict will not touch the United States, NATO's credibility at this point affects European security vastly more than American, and few refugees from the Balkans will make it across the Atlantic. Only the fourth item on the President's list escapes national interest cost/benefit analysis. But like the nation's editorial writers, he shrinks at that point from making the moral argument that is the heart of the matter.

Think back to the 1940s, to the first reports about the Nazi death camps, and to the let's-not-lose-our-heads-over-this reaction on the part of the allied powers. Was it, in fact, ever in anyone's national interest to rescue the Jews of Europe? Most of those Jews are gone now, and what difference does it make in Britain or the United States? Life goes on. Kristallnacht and what immediately followed from it were, at the time, a German domestic affair, were they not? Regrettable, to be sure, but no more American business than, say, Jim Crow segregation was German business. Anyone arguing for a rescue effort on the grounds that the Jews were, collectively, a priceless human asset to the world, above all to Europe itself, would have been smiled off as if he were barmy Leopold Bloom counting up Jewish geniuses in James Joyce's *Ulysses*. My dear boy, we don't send our army into the field because your pals are clever in school.

What makes a vicarious experience of genocide of the sort offered in the film version of *Schindler's List* emotionally tolerable is the viewers' knowledge that Hitler lost. But Hitler did not lose because the world ever set out to stop his race murder. The story of the camps was not told until well after the war, and the first attempts to tell it were resisted. Georges Borchardt, the literary agent who sold Elie Wiesel's memoir *Night*, in the late 1950s, found it a hard sell. Wiesel's vision fit in, back then, with no one's understanding of what World War II had been all about. This was not why our boys had fought and died. This was a sick-making sideshow.

When American soldiers entered the death camps in the last stages of Germany's retreat, they were appalled but, more to the point, they were completely surprised. No one had told them that they might come upon such an operation in progress. No one had sent them into battle to stop any such operation. No one ever would have. And no set of intermediate measures, no international pressure, no economic sanctions, etc., would have deflected the Nazis from their murderous and wildly irrational course. Only force would have worked, and force would never have been applied.

As victims, the Bosnian Muslims—along with the remaining loyal Croats and Serbs of Bosnia, and the thousands of Yugoslav "mestizos" of that nation—are neither as powerless nor as innocent as were the Jews. As I write, Bosnian government troops are besieging the Bosnian Croat town of Vitez. Obviously, nothing

comparable was ever attempted against the Axis by the Jews. Nor is the recent murder of two priests in a Bosnian Croat monastery the only outright crime of which the Bosnian Muslims may be accused. But if the Bosnians were in fact as helpless and thereby as innocent as the Jews of the 1940s, it would not matter. Europe would still not come to their rescue, and neither would America. The justification tacitly offered is: *Because not all of you are innocent, none of you will be spared.*

The role played by the United Nations in the slow death of Bosnia is particularly repugnant. On the one hand, the U.N. proposes to try certain Balkan leaders, notably Radovan Karadzic of the unrecognized Serb Republic of Bosnia, for war crimes. On the other hand, the international body requires official Bosnia to negotiate a peace treaty with this very leader, who has sworn, by the way, that Serb artillery will not move an inch in response to the NATO ultimatum and that NATO aircraft will be shot down. It is as if the United Nations, with Adolf Eichmann in custody, were to say to the Jews: "We intend to try this man for genocide, but first you and he must come to an agreement as to how many of you will die. If you will but do that, then, supposing, of course, the cooperation of our more important constituents, we promise to enforce the agreement and in due course to bring him to justice." On the pretext of controlling the war, the United Nations has imposed an arms embargo on all the Yugoslav successor states. But the former Yugoslavia, a communist police state, was well armed, and the Serbian successor to that state inherited Yugoslavia's arsenal. The effect of the embargo has thus been to leave Bosnia essentially unarmed against its principal foe. And even this is only the beginning of the tilt. The U.N. has turned its "Protective Force" into a hostage for the aggressors by blocking every proposal to use force to guarantee relief deliveries on the grounds that doing so would provoke retaliation against the U.N. forces themselves. Moreover, since the relief deliveries that do occur go through Serb- or Croat-controlled territory en route to Bosnian areas, and the forces controlling these areas frequently exact tribute in the form of a portion of the supplies, the self-emasculated U.N. has ended up as assistant quartermaster to the aggressors. This is worse than passivity. This is complicity, and the NATO ultimatum approved on February 9 was not designed to have even a minimal effect on Serb harassment of U.N. relief convoys.

Whenever the no-national-interest argument seems to be tottering under the load placed upon it, the we-can't-do-everything argument is offered up. Nasty civil wars are raging all around the world. Why is intervention in the Balkans morally imperative when intervention in, say, the Southern Sudan is not? And would you send your son to die for this country? The reply to the first argument is in the words of a Jewish sage, "You need not complete the work, but you are not excused from beginning it." But beyond that, it is difficult to find a second case, anywhere in the world, of a secular, democratic, multi-ethnic culture about to suffer a true and final elimination from history. Bosnia is unique, and it takes a sustained effort at self-deception to obscure its uniqueness.



No one's son should be sent involuntarily into war, but the United States has an all-volunteer army from which, given an even moderately eloquent call from the President, sub-volunteers for a Bosnia intervention might be raised. The certainty that the will to defend the innocent is dead in the United States rests more on the will of political leaders who would have it dead than on any empirical inquiry into the matter. We are not talking, after all, about a general mobilization. Fifty-one senators, including Minority Leader Robert Dole, have called on the President to take the lead in seeking an end to the arms embargo against Bosnia.

That vote suggests strongly that many across the American political spectrum are distressed that the Western European powers and the United States, in being even relatively "even-handed" with Serbia-Montenegro (Yugoslavia), Croatia, and Bosnia, are being even-handed with, respectively, a fascist dictatorship with elements of religious fanaticism, a far right-wing democracy with elements of the same, and a secular democracy like their own whose "Muslim" character has been forced upon it from the outside. This even-handedness can be overstated, of course. Only Serbia has been punished with economic sanctions and diplomatic ostracism. And yet in the diplomatic negotiations it is as if, at the dawn of World War II, the United States were to have dealt even-handedly with Britain and Germany, insisting that there was blood on all hands, or done the same, after the war, with Britain and the Soviet Union: After all, both were our allies against Hitler. This time, the very pox-on-both-houses, they've-been-at-it-for-centuries

obscurantism that twice nearly handed victory to tyranny is likely to succeed. The stakes are smaller, to be sure, but the moral character of the neutrality on display is very much the same.

Of all the considerations that stop me outside the *Schindler's List* ticket box, however, the strongest must be the fact that we know so much about the slaughter that is taking place. I happen to believe the protestation of many Germans that they did not know at the time what their country was doing to the Jews. Many knew, of course, but the elaborate lengths to which the Germans went to preserve secrecy, conceal by euphemism, and construct stagefront camps for international observers, give plausibility to at least some of the denials. And if not all Germans knew, certainly most non-Germans did not know.



Not so for Bosnia. The press has given us an ample if, in the nature of the case, not a full accounting. *The Diary of Zlata Filipovic*, by the young girl already dubbed the Anne Frank of Sarajevo, appeared on the Parisian bestseller list just as *Schindler's List* was opening and was published in the United States on March 7, 1994. In short, we have all been told what is happening while it is still happening, but we seem to have learned the lesson of Auschwitz. Behind the rhetoric and behind an action intended mainly to conceal inaction, we are letting them get away with it.

There is as much disagreement about Bosnia on editorial boards around the country as there appears to be in the U.S. State Department, and doubtless for the same reasons. Last September, when I returned to the *Times* after a short leave, I asked to be excused from writing again about Bosnia. My situation was, I suspect, not unlike that of some of the State Department officers who have resigned over Bosnia. Personally, I believe that military intervention is wholly appropriate. I cannot believe that NATO, an alliance capable of defeating a military juggernaut like the Soviet Union of old, could not restore peace to this little country. Yes, the terrain is ideal for guerrilla warfare, but half the potential guerrillas would be fighting with, not against, the NATO troops. Overland supply routes to Serb forces in the field are few and easily interdicted. Air supply is even more easily interdicted. Radovan Karadzic, no Saddam Hussein, doesn't have an atomic bomb, he doesn't even have an air force.

I believe that the French, British, and Germans have inflicted a wound on their own future polity by ratifying in the Balkans the thesis that Muslims and Christians cannot live together in a secular state. I further believe that by failing to check Serb expansionism, Europe has re-established, to its peril, the principle that borders may be changed by force. If Europe cannot stop little Serbia from claiming its piece of Bosnia, then surely it cannot stop Russia from claiming its piece of Ukraine. Or, a little closer to NATO's home, if Serbia need not stop at the Drina, why must Germany stop at the Oder-Neisse?

On such questions mine is a minority view, however, and even if it becomes a majority view, it will then constitute a national-interest argument for European but not necessarily for American action. It is this that makes me sympathize with President Clinton. Like him, I long to be done with Bosnia or, as I might better say, to be shut of it. But after a hiatus of some months I have started writing on Bosnia again. Forced to grope for the reason, I discover that I fear Wieseltier's stunned silence as much as I fear Spielberg's managed tears.

Stunned silence can be a wrap, too. It too can function as an excuse to stop writing editorials. A monstrous, cosmic, all-silencing evil is blessedly easy to deal with precisely because there is nothing you can say to it, much less do about it. You are excused, shriven, dismissed. A merely human evil is worse, for though it may leave you with nothing adequate to say, it does not leave you with nothing at all to say. And then, having said your inadequate something, you are open to challenge: "Yeah, fine, and just what do you propose that we do about it? How many lives are you willing to lose?" And there you are, dragged into the realm of doing, likely in that realm to lose, but to lose slowly—when you could have made your quietus with a quick, clean, brutal defeat, beautiful in its very finality.

In October 1993, Wieseltier wrote about Bosnia with something close to this mood of beautiful finality:

> Fifty years ago there was no room for Jews in Europe. Now there is no room for Muslims in Europe. Those who are shocked by the indolence of the Europeans in the Balkans are forgetting history, and I do not mean the history of the fifteenth or sixteenth or seventeenth century. I mean the history of the twentieth

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Waiting for Autonomy
Scenes from the Middle East

Wendy Orange

As this issue of TIKKUN goes to press, the Cairo Document has just been signed, indicating that Palestinian self-rule in Gaza and Jericho will soon be implemented. "No date is sacred," Rabin has once again reiterated. The following scenes illustrate, among other things, why movement on that accord is so necessary.

Bethlehem

I'm in the office of Hamdi Saraj, a freelance Palestinian journalist. We're talking politics; about the "delay." I say: "I don't really understand what's going on." Hamdi says: "If *you* don't, if *I* don't, how do we expect the ordinary Palestinians to understand?"

As we talk, we hear shouting beneath his office window, accompanied by a volley of gunshots. Rella, his sister, interrupts us, says "Army," as I follow them running down the stairs. Halfway up the small street I see kids' arms outstretched, throwing stones, and although I can't see the soldiers around the corner, we continue to hear gunshots from only a few feet away.

The streets are now choked with people as everyone runs toward the action. There's a mood of excited anticipation as if this outbreak of violence is essentially festive. *Everyone*, I notice with surprise, is smiling or laughing as they instinctively move toward the fight, just as I instinctively insist in staying put until there's a lull.

Fifteen minutes later, Hamdi and I are driving away in his car, talking about cameras. I show him mine, made of cardboard, the kind you throw away after you're done with the film. He's never seen one and pulls into a gas station to take a better look, when suddenly there are two guys, dressed in black t-shirts and jeans, brandishing huge machine guns and blocking our way. Instantly Hamdi takes my camera, holds it outside his window, aiming it aggressively at them.

Wendy Orange, Ph.D., is a journalist. She is TIKKUN*'s correspondent in Israel and the West Bank.*

The sight of the camera drives these guys to extreme emotion; their guns are now pointed almost inside the car; one is an inch or two from Hamdi's head. My heart is pounding and in the suddenness of this scene there rises in me a numbing panic: "This is IT." For it's a scene you read about here every day which ends in death, with little certainty (or suspiciously conflicting stories) about who provoked the "action."

At this point I don't know who these gunmen are: whether Palestinians with some grievance against Hamdi, or Israeli settlers. All I know is that they aren't soldiers and aren't kidding around. To my amazement, Hamdi is still furiously trying to take their pictures, even with a gun poised at his head. He's shouting in Arabic as the guys scream at him; they seem ready to shoot.

I grab Hamdi's arm, plead with him to put the camera down, to stop provoking them. He'll have none of it and pushes my hand off his arm. "This area isn't closed," he's shouting at them now in English—his whole body shaking, alive with fearless rage. He's screaming, "I can shoot any photograph I want" (as if these guys will be deterred by a mere technicality). The gunmen shout back in Hebrew, which convinces me they're settlers looking for Palestinian revenge victims, a certainty which adds to my panic.

There are now five or six soldiers approaching our car. We are ordered not to move. I don't know whether to jump out of the car or stay put. I'm about to yell, "I'm Jewish," but sensing that's ludicrous, on immediate second thought I shout: "I'm a journalist, American" to a young soldier who is leaning into my side of the car. "I hate guns," I scream, which gives everyone pause. I look into this soldier's young, vulnerable face. His expression mirrors mine. Only about nineteen, he too seems trapped in this ugliness.

Hamdi is now stalled in his rage, suffering "fighting interruptus" as the soldiers talk among themselves; he's not at all happy about my role in this ceasefire. "I only stopped because of you," he says between gritted teeth, as the guns disperse as suddenly as they appeared.

"But we could have been killed," I say as we drive away. Hamdi shrugs, still pissed that my panic and screaming interrupted the fight. "They had no right. You have to show them you know your rights," he insists. These men in black, I later learn, were Shin Beit, the secret Israeli force, whose anonymity is critical. Hamdi's camera was a weapon that could have blown their cover. Savvy journalists assure me his show of power certainly could have provoked them to use those guns.

I had a front-row seat on the choreography of war, that testosterone magnetism of the fight that has a life of its own. Inside the dance of hate, every participant colludes to keep the hostilities going.

Sitting next to Hamdi as the Shin Beit approached and watching the earlier confrontation in Bethlehem, I had a front-row seat on the choreography of war, that testosterone magnetism of the fight that has a life of its own. What I saw was that inside the compulsion to show face, to meet violence with violence, *inside* those encounters no one is victim or victimizer, oppressed or oppressor. Inside the dance of hate, every participant colludes to keep the hostilities going.

Daheisha Refugee Camp

The oppressive sameness of the camp's sprawling cement cages is punctuated by the occasional dignified house; the walls are swathed in graffiti; the rubble-strewn alleyways are filled with men and boys who sneer and freeze today as six Israeli soldiers on patrol march into their houses, stalk their rooftops.

Inside Suher Ismael's house, she's waiting for me with her mother-in-law and aunts, sisters and their kids. We sit down on futons thrown on the floor as Suher pops the tape into her VCR. She's one of three Palestinians who've studied filmmaking and have put together a daily journal of their lives during the Gulf War and since. There's a companion Israeli segment of settlers' filming their reality, which I've not yet seen.

Suher's family is cursorily welcoming to me, but I sense a diffuse anger—not typical of Palestinians greeting strangers—that I suspect before long will be directed my way.

We watch for sixty minutes: a professional tape of three Palestinian lives, their daily surroundings and routines, highlighting key personal events each has lived through. They've been given the freedom to choose what's most important about their lives and these images are riveting. One guy films from the Raffa camp in Gaza, another shoots his life in Nablus. Suher's scenes are from Khader, a small village near Daheisha where she lived before she got married.

I'm both in the film and in the room, sitting amidst the quiet, long-suffering rage of this Palestinian family who have, I've learned from Suher, had more than the usual share of deaths (Suher's father and brother) and deportations (her husband's three brothers). The context in which I watch the film intensifies what I see on the screen. Yet my primary emotion is not compassion even as I cry.

Revulsion at violence is more prominent as I watch these well-executed scenes of masked Palestinians on the run, battles with soldiers, rallies where hatred for occupation and Israel is laced with wild grief over men and children who've died: a window onto Palestinian rage, suffering, social structure.

The most vivid portraits are of peasant women consumed by their never-ending physical labors: feeding chickens, cutting grapes, preparing meals, their faces hardened and miserable, telling stories of sons long ago deported or recently killed. Suher interviews her mother about her brother's death. He was going to help a wounded friend when he was "accidentally" shot in the chest just outside their home three years ago, at age twenty-one.

In every frame of the film, Suher's mother is depressed; her face doesn't brighten even at Suher's joyful engagement party. Toward the end, she sits at a table in her sewing shop, her head in her hands, her face ashen and cold: "It was the biggest shock of my life, my son's death. I became a nervous wreck. I hate this life, this world. I hate the Israelis. They leave us nothing. My husband was deported and killed. Then my son was killed...Life is really miserable," she says stonily as her three younger children from her second marriage listen, looking sad. "Well, what is there left in this life?" she asks as her twelve-year-old son looks sideways at her, obviously hurt.

Then Suher focuses her camera on this half-brother who describes the day his older brother was shot, right outside this very window. His lips tremble as he tries unsuccessfully to hold back tears. He's sobbing as this segment of the film ends.

The focus then switches to men in Nablus, violent and fierce in their warrior rhetoric, always shadowed

by the soldiers glimpsed through the curtains outside the windows, sitting near their homes or perched on surrounding rooftops, soldiers whose presence both contains and enrages the Palestinian protagonists.

In another scene, the adults are teaching a five-year-old boy how to fight. He's given a stick and shown how to kill a soldier, which he practices by running wildly up against a steel door, slamming into it with his whole small body as the family shouts encouragement, initiating him into life as they live it.

As the film ends, I'm thinking what a strong stomach all this takes, to stare down into the cesspool of hate which is lived in Daheisha, and Nablus, and Gaza in such a raw way, while in Israel proper—the complementary part of the war, although equally fierce—it's less visible. Compartmentalized by the army, the Shin Beit, the settlers, it's less pervasive because more organized, yet fueled continually by the same fear, hate, and racial slurs.

As soon as the T.V. is turned off, the older women immediately turn on me with hostile questions. Suher translates: "Why are you Americans always coming here? You come here year after year, yet you do nothing. Why don't you help us? Why come if you never help us?"

Although their anger is directed at me right now, it's not personal. Yet they're more right than they know, as images of my parents' and grandparents' uncritical devotion and support for Israel (our family religion) are flickering all about me. I don't answer, turning my attention to the children.

The five children in the room are emotionally tuned in to the adults as American kids I know would rarely be. They are like the kids I've seen in Gaza, lit by a strange radiance, not at all like children I've known in other poor areas around the globe—Jamaica, Guatemala, Harlem. They seem serious yet happy, old before their time. There's nothing grabby or spoiled about them. As the women bark at me in Arabic, I pick up Anna, a three-year-old, whose warm body and wide, responsive eyes and smiles suddenly make her seem the softest, most wonderful creature in the world. The imprint of her sweet plumpness stays with me for days.

Hebron

By January, Hebron is the West Bank's hot spot; the place where settlers and Palestinians are having it out, the newest killing field. It's a quiet morning, no settlers about. After fifteen minutes of sitting and drinking soda outside a small Palestinian shop in the light rain, a group of photographers look up to see an old Orthodox Jew, dressed in black, with *payes* (sidecurls) and a white beard, walking down the main street all alone, a sight so rare he seems like an apparition.

Walking purposefully into the Palestinian shop, the old Jew speaks in English to two old Arabs drinking coffee in the corner. They're on instant alert. In a high voice he announces, "I'm Dr. Belligheimer," enunciating his name with pride. "I've come to meet with Sheik Jabine. I hope you can bring me to his house right away." The Palestinians are shocked. "Sheik Jabine," the shopkeeper whispers hoarsely, "is from the oldest family in Hebron. They've ruled this city for centuries."

"I'm a professor of mathematics from Hebrew Union College in Canada," the old man continues. "I'm here to make peace. I must see the Sheik." Everyone is stunned. "I know how to make peace," he continues. "That's why I'm here. I'm going to start a college for you Arabs, a special school, where I'll teach you mathematics, science, how to use computers. You'll also learn Jewish history so this fighting will stop. There's no need for this war. Take me to the Sheik."

"A crack-pot," one photographer whispers. They look at each other. This old Jew doesn't realize how dangerous and volatile the situation is in Hebron. Yet since it's almost impossible to get photographs of aging Palestinians and Jews in any conversation, within minutes six photographers are aiming their cameras at this scene, shooting away. Only one photographer refuses to join in. "This must be staged," he says, dismissively. The old Arab is looking at the old Jew with awe: The name Sheik Jabine elicits immediate respect.

These photographers may know Dr. Belligheimer is a nut, but the Arabs are welcoming and smiling; they seem to see him as a harbinger of hope as they crowd around him in friendly curiosity.

"Our God is the same God," says Dr. Belligheimer in his high-pitched voice. "We don't need violence." Since it's a coup for the photographers to get such shots, they're now jostling each other, trying to get the best angle, everyone shooting film rapidly.

Within minutes the streets are crowded with Palestinians of all ages: What started as four in this small shop turns to fifteen, forty; well over a hundred soon crowd into the marketplace. The "doctor" and the aging Arab he originally buttonholed are now out on the street. It's obvious the old Jew is getting nervous. He didn't expect this audience.

Five minutes of crowd-building are interrupted by Israeli soldiers who, in English, tell everyone to step aside. "This could be a flashpoint," one photographer says to another. Yet the crowds are only curious; there's no anger at all. The "doctor," however, is getting



frantic; he's shouting: "I have an appointment with Sheik Jabine; I don't want soldiers, I don't want your guns; I'm a man of peace."

"I'm Dr. Belligheimer," the old man says. "I know how to make peace. Take me to the Sheik."

As an army jeep heads down the road, Dr. Belligheimer slips into a vegetable stand, amazing three old keffiyah-clad Arabs. Immediately the soldiers, now armed with rifles, try to clear the area of the men who own this shop. "Don't touch me; I'll speak to your commander," the old Jew shouts, as soldiers elbow their way onto either side of him, with Palestinians still pouring into the street to see what's going on and the photographers still angling for shots.

Now Dr. Belligheimer is running away from the soldiers, screaming: "I'm an old man. My heart is not too good. I can't run anymore." He stops suddenly, lies down on the ground, very still, as the soldiers also stop, the Palestinian crowds stop, and the photographers stoop to the ground, shutters clicking as they lay beside him.

The old man runs; he stops; he runs; he stops. Huge crowds now accompany his every movement: He's become the metronome of the morning. Obviously out of his element with the commotion he's caused—especially as the whole crowd is now meticulously miming his quirky, staccato rhythms back and forth in the Hebron market—the old man is frenzied. Each time he runs, the crowds make way for him, as he takes to darting into different Palestinian shops to dodge the soldiers.

The army jeep is approaching. The old Jew turns to an old Arab and says: "I must pray for peace on Arab fruit. There, I'll take that orange. Sorry," he shrugs. "No money." The Arab, smiling, hands him the orange, as he *davvens* (prays), saying a short Hebrew prayer very slowly. Obviously he's crazy, but somehow he's connecting with the Palestinian crowd, because everyone is laughing.

Over the loudspeaker a soldier in a near-by jeep calls to him in English: "Enough. Come with us now"—a barking command that sets the whole crowded marketplace on edge. One photographer says to

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Under the Hat

Leslie Epstein

New Year's eve. The temperature on the rise. To Victor and Greta, driving west on Sunset, it felt ten or fifteen degrees warmer than it had been of late. Something, the warm air and cool ocean water—or maybe the reverse, the winter air and the reservoir of the summer's heat stored up in the sea—had created a fog over the nighttime boulevard. The further west they traveled the thicker it got. When they took the bend around the polo fields, they couldn't see twenty feet up Mandeville Canyon; half way along the upgrade, the air cleared, so that the fields themselves looked wrapped in gauze. It was like flying above a cloud in an airplane. Oddly, at the top of the hill, they ducked into the peasoup again.

"Here is San Remo," said Victor, and took the hard right.

Greta looked at her wristwatch. "I'm worried about the time."

"Why? Von Beckmann's not going anywhere. He'll wait."

"Because of the fog. We'll have to drive slowly. And you want to get back in time to pick up Giselle."

Victor leaned forward, peering, so that his hat brim nearly touched the wet windshield. "If I have to, I'll call and tell her to meet me at Manfred's. Or I'll skip the party altogether. Anyway, we're only going to drop in at Mary's. She promised to have Thomas Mann. He lives up the street. Look—" he pointed to a Southern colonial mansion, set well back from from the road. "That's Mary's new place."

Greta said, "It looks like something from *Gone with the Wind*."

Victor pulled up against the opposite curb. Before he switched off the ignition a roadster turned left off San Remo onto Mary Astor's curving drive. The yellow headlamps cut through the mist, lighting up the cork trees, the vines full of figs, and the row of white, stately columns.

"Who's that?" asked Greta. "It's not Errol Flynn?" She leaned across the bench seat, pressing against Victor's shoulder and arm.

He was not looking out the window. He was looking at her. Their own headlight beams, reflected from the bank of fog, lit up the interior of the vehicle. Her pale face was too close to his to focus. "Not unless he bought a new car," he said.

Two couples, walking down from Romany Drive, cut across the lawn. The ladies lifted their dresses off the damp grass. From inside the Buick Greta and Victor watched as the Negro butler opened the front door and ushered the guests inside. Victor said, "That was Marion Cooper. He lives around the corner. I couldn't make out the others."

"I suppose," said Garbo, "we'd better go in ourselves."

Still Victor did not shut off the engine. Instead he took his hand off the steering wheel and rubbed his knuckles against the skin of her cheek. "Greta, listen to me. This will sound pompous. It's the last day of the year. One more year for us. Who knows what will happen by next December? Chances are we will be in the war. It won't be like the last war, far off from the cities. Everyone will be involved. Our lives will be different. I warned you that I was going to be grandiose. Let's not go in to Mary's. Why don't you forget Von Beckmann? Just as we are we can drive out Sunset and turn north, up the beach. We can spend the night in Santa Barbara. And all day tomorrow. And the next night, too. Isn't it time? It's nonsensical, the way we are together. The way we treat each other. No one should have to go through it! If it were someone else, I'd weep for pity. Day after day, Greta: now year after year, and here I am, as you well know, hopelessly in love."

Garbo reached just above his bony knee and removed the keys. The car went silent and dark. But a street lamp with an acorn bulb drizzled enough light into their closed compartment to reveal the line of her jaw, the line of her cheek, the thin eyebrows, the thin lips. She said, "You are repeating yourself."

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"That's why I am suggesting we go north. To end this dance: two steps forward, two steps back, round and round and round."

"You know what you say ends nothing. Oh, very well: I'll repeat myself, too. I would go to Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara doesn't matter—I'd willingly, with pleasure, go to a fleabag, they call it? in Pershing Square. I might prefer it, for the sinfulness. But no matter how long we stay away, we have to drive back. Yes? South on Pacific Coast Highway. What happens then? You leave me at my door, you switch from this car, my Buick, back to your Packard I think it is, and drive home to Giselle. So what has changed, my darling? Instead of two steps so it's three steps: and then three back."

Victor's face, because of his silly hat, was entirely in shadow. He said, "But we have been over this and over this. Even if there were not Valentina and her feelings and her life still unformed, there is the fact that we cannot build together on—"

Here the actress interrupted—or rather, chimed in, to say the words, half mockingly, along with her friend:

"*On the ruins of someone else's pain.*"

A silence. Undoubtedly a familiar one. Then she said, in an oddly matter of fact tone. "Victor, I do love you. What am I asking? That you love me back."

He was spared the difficult reply. Across the street, across the lawn, someone threw open a downstairs window of the Astor estate. The party, even at the early hour, was well underway. There were two chords on a piano, then a burst of laughter, two male voices cackling together. Garbo smiled. She said, "The Epstein twins."

He asked, "Did you ever hear them at work? I have. At Granite. Through a closed door. One of them says something, the first part of some joke, you know, like this, with a rising inflection: *yattity, yattity, yattity*. Then the other comes in with the punch line, *Yattity, yattity, yattity!* Then they both laugh and you can't tell which one is which."

There was another burst of laughter, and three more piano chords. Victor, because of the warm night, rolled down the driver's side window. The two of them watched as, in the private driveway, two cars did a little ballet. That is, a large dark limousine, coming round from behind the house, where the drive made a circle, met a small, light-colored coupe. The two cars stopped, at the spot where the headlight beams intersected. Then each backed up a few feet, and halted. Then, embarrassed, both started forward. It was like two people doing an Alphonse-Gaston on the sidewalk. It even went on. Both vehicles simultaneously gave an encouraging beep of the horn and stood, more or less grill to grill. Then the coupe dashed sideways and forward, two wheels up on the lawn. The windows went down. The Goldwyns, Sam and Frances, recognizable even through the mist, leaned out of the back of the limousine. There was a flurry of greetings, of conversation, then both cars passed each other, so that the big one turned down San Remo and the little one darted back to the paving and disappeared behind the house.

Victor, meanwhile, had lit a cigarette. The sparks were already falling into his lap. "I gather," he said, in his accented voice, "that we are not going in?"

"You know what you look like?" she answered, in hers. "Like that firefall in Yosemite. Remember? When they push the embers over the cliff." She brushed at the flickering shreds of tobacco and paper.

Now a man, certainly the driver of the coupe, trudged around the corner of the mansion. "There's Errol," Victor said. "I wonder who that is? I hope she's over sixteen." He nodded toward the girl who, in a tight dress, in high heels, was doing her best to keep up with the actor's pace.

But Garbo was looking the other way, to the right, where the thick fog was playing tricks with the headlights of the traffic, as it moved along the boulevard, a hundred and fifty feet below. The bright beams were bent upwards, through the crosshatching of the mist; they danced in the air, like the reflection of a swimming pool on the ceiling of a room. Victor, looking about, took note of the haphazard dimples of light. "Tomorrow's headlines," he said. "Flying Saucers Invade Filmland." That's in the *Examiner*. And in the *Times:* "Foreign Visitors Feel Right at Home."

The actress turned to face him. She was not smiling. "It's not the war, Victor. The threat of bombs dropping from the sky. And I do not believe you are so sentimental to worry about the end of the year. You are jealous, my dear. That's why you asked me to Santa Barbara. That's the reason you wanted to stop off at Mary's. And it is why we are sitting here. Anything but to drive me to Venice. You know he promised to take me to the beach."

"Jealous? Of Von Beckmann? You know his tastes, I hope. As a matter of fact, Alfred has been getting hints already that the studio has been lax in not providing a selection of pretty boys."

Now Greta was grinning. In the lamplight her eyes lit up. She held out the two silver keys.

Victor not-quite-snatched them; he started the engine. "There would be no picture business," he said, beginning his three-point turn, "without the myth that love conquers all."

Nonetheless he was happy to discover that he and

Greta were, in their unusual fashion, about to start making love. Or so he assumed when, just a few moments later, she asked him to turn down Amalfi to Channel, instead of following Sunset to the beach. "Amalfi is impossible enough in broad daylight," he said, though his heart, as the poets say, was already leaping. "It's like a road in the Alps. Look at this fog. I don't know if that's a truck ahead of us or not. Are those taillights? I'm just a lemming following another lemming. For all I know he'll take us over the cliff."

Greta said, "Please take Amalfi. I like the twists and turns. You'll keep your eyes on the road."

It was just that—the way he was distracted, the way his eyes, his thoughts were elsewhere, that seemed to excite her. He had never forgotten the first time—not that they'd met, since they had been introduced by Thalberg some years before, but that they'd had physical contact. He had been having lunch with Mayer and some others when Garbo and Gilbert had swept into the room. Of course she'd made a beeline for L.B. and fussed over him in the usual manner. She even pretended to straighten his necktie from the back. Like a genie from a jug a photographer materialized to take their picture. All grins. All smiles. Then the actress had come round the table, with a word for everyone. Where was her love of solitude? Her dourness? The reputation, already budding, as a recluse? Victor couldn't see it, though in fact his attention was devoted to cutting what the menu called a minute steak into precise cubes. The next thing he knew he felt the actress's warm breath, the touch of her lips, as she whispered something into his ear. What had she said? Was it in code? In Swedish? No matter. He knew for a certainty that the real message was in the warm wash of her breath, the nibbling lips, and even—could he have imagined it?—the quick poke from the tip of her tongue.

Naturally enough, he called her that night. Here was the coolness. The ice. She would not see him for dinner, for lunch, for a drink. Then what was that—what else to call it—that caress about? Or was she making fun, for Gilbert's pleasure, of this stick of a man, of his batwing ears? For all he knew it was some Scandinavian custom, like Eskimos rubbing noses. He didn't call back.

Then, some months later, he was asked to Metro for a screening of the *Wild Orchids* rushes. He sat alone in the back. Ten minutes into the feature, Garbo came in and sat down on his right. He could make out the scent, surely Chanel, that had wafted over him at the table. What happened next was not from *Nanook of the North*: She pressed the length of her thigh against his. He turned to her. There, lit by the shifting beams of the projection lamp, was the very profile that was blown up to quadruple life size at the front of the room. Not only that, around her neck were the same fake pearls that the smartly-dressed woman wore in what he already recognized as the standard triangle: husband, mistress, lover. Disaster: she pulled her leg away. But when he returned his gaze to the screen, her leg, in her creased slacks, resumed the pressure.

A quick learner, Victor. He did not take his eyes off the screen. As a result, she slipped her left hand into his. He put his right arm over the back of her seat and stroked her neck beneath her hair. Like teenagers, they leaned together in the dark. She slid her hand up his sleeve, raking, though gently, the skin of his forearm with her nails. He groped for her throat and when, sighing, she tilted her head back, he extended his fingers beneath her blouse, scissoring open the first and second buttons. Straining, he reached under her brassiere. She mewed. She moaned. He felt three longish hairs by her nipple, which, as he grazed it, rose quick, hard, and determined from its bed of tapioca. Victor was amazed by the demonstration, which reminded him of a magician popping open a tiny collapsible tophat.

"We're not sure of this scene. Victor—" it was Thalberg, sitting next to Mayer in the second row. "Look where she's arm in arm with him. With Asther. She's taller than he is. In a minute they're going indoors to start the love scene. I say we get him lifts."

Mayer also turned round, squinting toward the back of the darkened room. "Or do we get a whole new leading man? We can't get a new leading man. We're committed."

"What's he called?" asked Thalberg. "The Prince de Grace? Coup de grace is more like it."

Both men were twisted round in their seats, waiting for a response. Victor said, "I like them together and so will the public. He is suave, he is exotic, and it's a good idea to let her fall in love with her countryman. If you ask me for criticism I have a bigger problem with the husband, Lewis Stone. I admire him. I think he will eventually have more success on the screen than he has had on the stage. But not for the part of Sterling." He wasn't done. He prattled on. Not because he had anything to say, he hadn't, but because the movie star was pressing the flat of his hand against her uncovered breast and by now he knew that she would drop it the minute the flow of his lecture stopped. Could they see him? Apparently not, even though he could see them: Thalberg's shining hair and wrinkled brow, the neat knot of his cravat; and L.B.'s glasses whitewashed by the oncoming light. Just for an instant he felt something of what she did: the thrill of looking

through the one-way mirror. Her hot, dry nipple forced its way through his ring and little fingers. She moaned, murmuring something. Once more the words were meaningless, unintelligible. Greta Garbled, he thought. Only later, when the lights came on, and they sat circumspectly apart, did he realize she had been saying, *Moje. My Moje. His poor heart.* He knew, too, that she had been talking about the death of her mentor, the famous Stiller.

Not long after that, on a hot summer day on the Granite lot, she'd walked into his office while he'd been on the line to New York. He motioned her to take his chair, while he paced up and down, holding the receiver in one hand, pointing at his invisible interlocutor with the other. Greta took off her hat. She took off her shoes. Then she began to pull on the stretched out cord. Victor had enough wit to go on talking—about weekly grosses, about an advertising campaign, about anything he could dredge to mind. Slowly she reeled him in, until he stood beside her. She took the loose end of his belt in her teeth, tugging. He took hold of her hair. She began to kiss him, through his pants. Still his voice, crossing the continent, did not waver. On that occasion she had been wearing a summer dress, covered with black and white figures, half-hieroglyphics, an incomprehensible script. It was cut low at the shoulder, so that he saw how, as she panted, her pointed, somewhat African breasts fell free at each exhalation. Still talking, he reached down and slid his hand under the lacy frill. She gasped, loud enough, apparently, for the party on the island of Manhattan to hear.

"No, Jerry. Not a thing," Victor said into the receiver. "It must have been something on the line."

Greta giggled, smothering the sound schoolgirlishly, beneath both hands. Then she reached up for the handset and put the receiver by her ear. Jerry's voice came out like a cricket. They both laughed this time. Quickly she thrust the phone upward, so that poor Victor could explain. While he did so—*No, of course I'm alone. Are you sure there's no one listening in on your end?*—she raised one of her legs, smooth-shaven, without nylons, and used it to separate both of his own. As soon as Jerry started to reply, she reached eagerly upward for the receiver and listened, with a toothsome grin, to his reply. They were now in a three-way conversation. Whenever Victor spoke, she moved her shinbone, from ankle to knee, like a churn at his crotch. When she held the receiver, he strove to undress her. He slid the straps of her dress off her shoulders and worked it down, past her diaphragm, over her belly. Then he hiked the material upward, off her thighs, around her hips. Finally the whole of the dress circled her waist in a band of black and white, like a wadded-up newspaper. Sweat pooled in her throat and ran over her breasts. Her kneecaps glistened. The silk of her underpants was dark with the stain. Her bent legs swung slowly back and forth, the way a resting butterfly will work its wings. Here Victor leaned down to kiss her. His full lips encircled her thin ones. She grasped his narrow hips with her knees. As it happened, Jerry in New York was just then telling a funny story. Victor, bending lower, licking her neck, lapping at her salty throat, heard him laughing at his own joke. Something about the moment chilled him. He glanced up, under his ubiquitous hat brim, toward Greta. Her head was thrown back, her eyes half closed, her mouth half open. She was as rapt as a medium at a seance. It was as if she had summoned the ghost of a dead man, surely Stiller, to be present at their encounter. A pulse beat mightily in the flesh of her throat. The tinny voice, like a voice from the underworld, barked at her ear.

No need to describe the decade of near scandal that followed. Everyone in Hollywood knew whatever there was to know. It was one of the ongoing gags in town. People used to take their meals at Chasens, just to catch a glimpse of the couple at their table. They always sat side by side at the banquette. Over time they mastered the art of eating one-handed, the way Wittgenstein, the famed Austrian pianist, made a career out of a commissioned repertoire, after losing his right arm in World War One. It's fair to assume that if the activity under the table wasn't identical to what went on between Brando and Schneider in *Last Tango in Paris,* it wasn't footsie either. One persistent story had it that one night the lovers became so carried away they threw themselves to the carpet and, in evening dress, began to copulate behind the protective curtain of their quickly assembled friends.

False. False without question. The same rumors went round about Chaplin and Goddard. The very humor of their predicament lay in the fact that while Victor begged, cajoled, threatened—"bloody bitch," he always called her—Greta never gave in. Her reasons had little to do with the ghost of Mauritz Stiller. After a time Victor took a more commonsensical view of why she desired his mind to be elsewhere. It was to make it impossible to consummate his passion or look directly, without distractions, at her. She never had to return his gaze. That was the key to how she managed simultaneously to conduct a public affair and maintain, even enhance, her reputation as a recluse. It was as if everyone's eyes glanced off her, as light does from a polished surface; as if, as Tolstoy says of one of his countesses, the look of too many men—and she had

been stared at by millions, from the security of the dark—had left a kind of lacquer upon her features.

The fog, if anything, had grown even thicker by the time Victor made the turn onto Amalfi. Corsica, Toulon, and Napoli Drives were indiscernible on the left. That meant, he realized, that their Buick was no less masked to anyone running the intersection. The black macadam ahead was turned into a buttery syrup by their incandescent lights. Slowly they slid along it. Greta moved closer. The earrings she wore—or maybe it was her bracelets? her pocketbook chain?—made a faint tinkle. She reached under his arm, under his tie, and undid the buttons on his shirt. With her fingertips she circled the shallow depression at the center of his breastbone. Then, with a little nip of her teeth, she sucked on the flat gristle of his paper-thin ear. Up ahead the road suddenly fell away, so that for an instant their headlights hung in midair, in a crazy crosseyed glare. He swung the wheel hard, before they left the paved surface. "*Gott!* he said, a word from childhood. "We almost went over."

Greta did not answer. But he savored, beneath the familiar Chanel, the startling tang of her perspiration. There was plenty to be frightened of. By now they had passed Spoleto and begun to descend, in a series of dizzying hairpin turns. Craning his head, with his chin above the steering wheel rim, he peered at the five feet of illuminated roadway. It was like oozing through the phosphorescent wake of some invisible vessel that churned the waves ahead—except that, as the fog bank thickened, even that path became obscured. There was nothing to do but plunge into the golden haze, like a cloud of frantic fireflies, of their own headlight beams.

It was at that moment that his companion chose to grasp the zipper of his trousers and work it down. She parted the clothing and freed his member, long and thin, from the elastic of his underwear. This was, of course, nothing new. The difference was that, instead of moving at this snail's pace, they were usually barreling at eighty miles per hour up the Pacific Coast Highway, or hurtling along the divided part of San Vicente. The crucial thing, which was the danger, the demands upon his concentration, remained the same. As they wound downward, he hugged the landward side of the road, even if the right of way belonged to any car foolish enough to be coming up in the opposite direction. He nearly scraped the fender on the bluff wall of rock. He honked the horn at the turns.

Greta was attached to him like a sea anemone to a rock. Her lips sucked hard at his right nipple. Her left arm was curled round his neck so that her fingertips could flick at the nipple on the left. With her free hand she reached into his crotch. The underside of his penis strained against her wrist and forearm. She cradled his testicles, manipulating one against the other, the way stainless steel bearings would be fondled by Bogart, as the mad Captain Queeg.

"Tell me," she said, lifting her head for a moment, "how he does it. Tell me what he says to Annie."

"Who? Von Beckmann? How he sets up the scene? What he says to our little redhead? I'll do it gladly. But you have to do something for me first. I don't mean Santa Barbara. I mean now. I'm going to pull over. This isn't a moment of madness. To be the laughing stock of the industry, that has been madness. My God, Greta! Not to be able to look at each other: it's making me bleed inside. The taste of the blood is in my mouth."

Here Victor twisted the wheel to the right, so that the Buick veered to the proper half of the road. And further: the front bumper nudged the single strand of cable that was stretched along the edge of the precipice. The car came to a halt. He turned off the ignition and slid along the leather seat, away from the wheel. But the actress had shrunk from him. With her hand at her neck, clutching the top of her full-length gown, she was huddled by the door. He knew she could not open it without the risk of falling. He looked past her. On an ordinary night one could see through the gap in the canyon, to the coast highway traffic, to the lights of the fishing fleet plying the sea. But the ocean, the whole of the Pacific, might have been nothing more than a vast vat, bubbling and boiling, filling the canyons with impenetrable steam.

From force of habit he struck a match for a cigarette. In the flare he saw her face, with the eyes wide, the mouth pulled back in fear. The tendons stood out on her throat. The sight so shook him that the match went out. Was she acting? She looked like Gish in *Broken Blossoms*. It was as if she expected a door to be broken down, to be attacked in her hiding place. Or had she seen his own face in the puny flame? Was it so frightening? He said he tasted blood. It was only talk. Except he did feel the heat in his cheeks, the pounding in his head.

"All right," Victor said. "All right, Greta. I'll tell you about Von Beckmann. Whatever you have heard is true. It is a spectacle. Everyone on the set—I mean everyone: the extras, the electricians, the accountants, all gather around to hear him. The entire lot comes to a halt when he shows some has-been actor the way he wants him to pour a shot of whiskey or lectures some kid, a soda jerk in real life, how to pronounce his lines. Yes, it is wizardry. Yes, it is genius. Are you content? Is that what you want to hear?"

Greta, gasping: "Don't. Stop. Don't do this, Victor."

What she meant is that he had climbed onto her,

with his legs straddling her lap. He held her head to the seat by the strands of her hair. He leaned toward her face, without missing the beat of a word:

"I'll tell you a thing that will amaze you. It is almost supernatural. When they go to Griffith Park, for the chase scenes, the shoot-outs, even the horses come crowding around. Don't laugh! It is no joke. You'd swear the animals were there to listen. They are alert. They are solemn. No neighing. No stamping. They don't dare move a muscle to scare off the flies. You don't believe me? You will soon see for yourself."

"No. Oh, no. This can't be. Victor: Do you want to force me?"

He did not hear her. Perhaps he did not know what she was talking about. All he heard was his own words. But her head was in a vise. He reached under her dress and pulled at her panties. They gave way without a sound. He kept on speaking. He hadn't told her the most astounding thing of all—stranger than the spellbound extras or the horses. "I'm in the crowd, too. I stand gaping. It's as if I have never seen a film being made, never dealt with an actor, never been aware of the forces involved. I am like a tourist in my own industry. It's humbling. Humiliating."

The actress did not answer. She was twisting her shoulders left and right to escape his grasp. At last he fell silent, while pressing himself against her legs. With a quick wrenching movement she lashed out with her elbows. At the same time she managed to knock him askew with her knee. Off balance, he toppled against the locked door. At once she lurched up and around, as if to climb into the back seat. He caught her. He thrust her dress up and over her head. He wound his arms around her hips. He started to mount her from behind. Lucky for Greta she weighed almost as much as he did. By pushing against the leather she managed to ride him backward, against the dash. Once more she moved to escape, this time grappling with the latch on the door. They both knew it led nowhere. Deliberately he drew her the length of the seat. He spread his body over hers. He hooked one arm under her leg, hauling it upward, over the back of the seat. The other leg he straightened out, until her ankle was entangled in the hollow of the steering wheel. She was pinned. Still she struggled, using her teeth, her nails. She beat at him with her fists. Hopeless. All the while the shaft of his member rubbed against her belly, her thighs, and into the curls of her pubic hair, as tight as a pickaninny's.

"What have you done?" he suddenly cried, releasing the pressure. "You have knocked off my hat!"

He rolled away. He was groping over the floor rugs. She could just make out the narrow wedge of his skull, with its mat of fine black hair. The whites of his eyes flashed as he looked left and right. Silently, she pointed. The hat, as wide, almost as a ten-gallon, was upside down in the dashboard corner. He snatched it up. He settled it upon his head.

"Ha! Ha! Ha!" Greta laughed.

Sheepishly, he grinned. Greta laughed on, louder still.

"Sh-hh," he said, to calm her. "I have some idea of what happened. I'm not completely certain. Was I in a trance?"

At that the actress whooped uproariously. Her shoulders, one of them bare beneath the rip in her evening gown, shook. Rather, they went up and down as if jointed like a puppet's. Victor reached out—you could tell he meant it tenderly—and adjusted the strap of the dress. He pulled the hem over her knees. "It is all right. It's over. Something came over me. A fit of some kind. I am myself again. Greta. Please. Don't cry."

He was right: If the sounds she made were ever laughter, they were not any more. She sobbed. She moaned. He moved to comfort her. Her body was stiff, unmoving. It was as if she had been flash-frozen. "You see," he said. "I could not do it. I suppose it is against my principles. They're stronger than I am. You know better than anyone I would fire any writer who said it, but it's your spell I am under. I am in your power. We'll just go on, Greta darling. One day after another. Like before."

Garbo was sitting upright. She seemed to be listening. So he continued. "Sometimes I think everything is fated. Do you ever feel that? We're in a tide, like a swimmer at the beach. What's the most we can do? Thrash, that's all. And curse the day we ever met." He said that, and what followed, with a smile: "Ah, you are a bloody bitch."

But her head was not tilted to catch his words. She held up her hand. "Listen. Listen. I think I hear them. Yes. No. Yes. Yes. Yes. *Die Syrsanen!*"

Victor moved back behind the wheel. He adjusted his clothing. "What is it? I can't hear anything. Maybe it's the foghorn."

There was just enough light, it must have come from the houses that clung precariously to various cliff-side perches, to make out the look she cast upon him: one of disgust, of scorn.

"Foghorn!" she echoed. "You fool. Don't you hear them? *Syrsanen!*"

It was, he knew, a Swedish word. He shrugged. More mystification. Greta, meanwhile, had begun to roll down the window. "Don't do that," he admonished.

(Continued on p. 88)

Lesbian and Gay Rights
Asking the Right Questions

Judith Plaskow

As virtually every religious group in the United States finds itself deeply divided over issues of gay and lesbian rights, a liberal consensus is emerging that crosses traditional denominational boundaries. The liberal position—one supported by many lesbian and gay organizations—is that since homosexuality is not chosen, it cannot be immoral. This view is rooted in the conviction that God would not demand of human beings something they cannot possibly obey, and that therefore people with an innate and unchangeable predisposition to homosexuality cannot be blamed for not marrying, nor should they be expected to renounce the possibility of intimate relationships and loving sexual expression.

To those who support acceptance of gays and lesbians, the merits of this position are obvious: It enables individuals or groups to welcome gays into religious communities, to support their ordination, to entertain the possibility of gay and lesbian commitment ceremonies—in other words, to affirm a full range of lesbian and gay rights, religious and otherwise. Especially in the context of religious traditions that have to grapple with Scriptural warrants against homosexuality, this is no small thing. But I would suggest that this stance is nonetheless seriously problematic for several reasons, and that it is not in the interest of lesbians, gays, or our allies to stake our claims for equal rights on these grounds.

First, although proponents of biological arguments concerning homosexuality tend to presuppose a direct connection between lack of choice and social toleration of gays and lesbians, the situation of Blacks in the United States makes clear the absurdity of this assumption. The genetic basis of skin color has hardly ended racism in American society. In the case of homosexuality, the quest for biological causes may simply lead to scenarios of biological manipulation and "cure." The chief rabbi of England, for example, has already announced that if a gene for homosexuality can be found, there would be a halakhic basis for Jews to seek genetic counseling and engineering.

Second, while its intent may be to lay the groundwork for acceptance, the argument that homosexuality is innate still sets up lesbians and gays as "others." It assumes that heterosexuality is inborn for the vast majority of the population and needs no gene or special hormonal (im)balance to account for it. Gays and lesbians, on the other hand, have a special constitution that requires explanation.

Third, the most significant problem with the notion of the innateness of homosexuality is that it ignores a rich and growing literature on the social construction of sexuality. Indeed, it is ironic—but probably not coincidental—that biological arguments about homosexuality are gaining legitimacy precisely at the moment when the biological basis of *all* sexuality is increasingly being questioned and attacked.

According to the late Michel Foucault, the premier social constructionist, the notion of a human sexual constitution or of sexuality as a distinct aspect or dimension of the self is very much a modern invention. The Greeks, for example, had no general term for sexuality (neither does the Talmud), and they recognized no homosexual nature, only a desire that could attach itself to anything desirable.

If one looks at the contemporary discussion of gay rights from the social constructionist perspective, to whom shall a "gay gene" be attributed? The 30 percent of all American men who have a homosexual experience at some point in their lives? People who engage in "situational homosexuality" in the military or in prison? The seemingly happy family man who just happens to have an occasional affair with another of his kind? The many people who never have a gay or lesbian relationship but who fantasize or dream about one? Surely, even if "homosexuality" is not entirely a social construct, our definition of who fits the category is.

It seems that arguments for lesbian and gay rights based on the presumed givenness of homosexuality are attractive precisely because they disrupt as little as

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possible the culture's deeper assumptions about sexuality. They allow us to see gays and lesbians as a "them" who are in some way different from the general population. They allow us to focus on the "causes" of homosexuality to the neglect of the "causes" of heterosexuality. They allow us to debate the religious and social acceptance of gays and lesbians, but to avoid the question of *how heterosexuality comes to be constructed and accepted as normative.*

This, it seems to me, is the question we need to be asking, yet it is receiving remarkably little attention, even from social constructionists. Psychoanalytic theory on the construction of "normal" sexual identity, anthropological studies of marriage and sex/gender systems, examination of the workings of "compulsory heterosexuality" (Adrienne Rich's phrase) in everyday life, detailed historical studies of the nature and meaning of heterosexuality in particular times and places can all provide clues to the complex construction of heterosexuality on the social and individual levels.

In applying this approach to the struggle for gay and lesbian rights in the religious context, we can read biblical prohibitions of homosexual behavior not as isolated injunctions but as part of the process of the construction of heterosexual marriage as normative. Thus Gary Comstock, in his recent book, *Gay Theology Without Apology*, points out that the legislation on sexuality in Leviticus was written at a time when Israel's ruling elites were faced with diminishing national autonomy and power. Allowed to return to Judah after the Exile only as political dependents on Persian rule, former royalty, state officials, and priests could now hope to exercise authority only in the religious realm. Comstock suggests that the whole range of Levitical rules tightly regulating personal behavior and emphasizing divine threats and punishments may have represented an effort on the part of these elites to hold onto power in the one sphere where they still had some influence. Such a reading places biblical attitudes toward homosexuality in the framework of the broader construction of sexuality, a construction that is itself influenced by larger historical movements and patterns.

Shifting our scrutiny from homosexuality to the construction of (hetero)sexuality in this way serves a number of purposes. It frees lesbians and gays from having to adopt a particular interpretation of our own experience and allows us to acknowledge and speak about the full range of coming-out processes. It restores the radical potential of the gay and lesbian movement to shake up cultural assumptions about sexuality and gender roles and to generate broad discussion of the nature and meaning of human sexuality. It relocates the conversation about sexuality from "others" to everyone and places issues of values firmly at the center of discussion. If all sexuality is socially constructed, what are the values we want to express in our sexual lives, and what are the (many) ways in which we might go about exploring and realizing them?

The resulting conversation will certainly not be simpler or less heated than discussion of the "causes" of homosexuality, but it may be more illuminating and fruitful. And while questioning the innateness of gay and lesbian identity may undermine one basis for gay and lesbian rights, ultimately, only such questioning will make room for the full range of human experiences and choices. □

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The Tikkun Conference of Liberal and Progressive Jews

Constituting the Tikkun Community

The Tikkun *staff is often asked why we take time away from the magazine to create* Tikkun *conferences. The answer is simple: to give concrete embodiment to a community and hence to make it possible for people to see that there are thousands of others who share the same concerns and interests as they. On one level, you know this. You've heard about* Tikkun*'s remarkable success story—how, since we launched the magazine in 1986, we have become one of the largest-circulation Jewish publications and one of the most influential American intellectual magazines. On the other hand, unless you've joined or helped form a* Tikkun *salon or discussion group in your own community, you may well be reading* Tikkun *by yourself, unaware of how many other people are excited by these ideas, not really believing that there are thousands of others who share in* Tikkun*'s particular conception of Jewish renewal and politics of meaning, or that there could be such an open and pluralistic progressive social change movement. So we hold our conferences to make our community manifest, to show that it exists not as a public relations fantasy but as a vibrant, committed group of people. Each of us needs the other, and* Tikkun *provides the vehicle for our continued connection.*

The conference, held on January 16–17 at Columbia University, brought together more than a thousand people, participating in more than forty workshops and plenary sessions, with such speakers as Shulamit Aloni, Cornel West, Peter Gabel, Allen Ginsberg, Senator Carl Levin, Tom Hayden, Nan Fink, and Wendy Orange. In this issue and the next we reproduce some of the conference's memorable presentations, although there are many more of equal importance and value.

The level of excitement and sense of community were extraordinary. The biggest problem we faced was that because we had no corporate or Jewish communal sponsors we had to charge more money than some of our constituents could afford. And there were many people who found out about it too late for us to accommodate them. Had they subscribed to Tikkun *and read our announcements, they would have known months in advance and been able to register. We will be having another* Tikkun *conference in New York in the fall of this year—this one devoted to Jewish renewal. And we will be urging people around the country to set up what we are calling "Ethics Summits"—conferences on the politics of meaning to bring people together who share an understanding of our society's ethical crisis and will push for a change in the dominant discourse informed by an ethos of selfishness to a discourse based on an ethos of caring and community. If you'd like to help create such an ethics summit in your community, or to work on the Jewish renewal conference, drop us a note at 251 W. 100th St., New York, NY 10025.*

The following selections from the conference offer some of the flavor of the event; there will be more to follow in the May/June issue of Tikkun.

Strategies for Healing and Repair

Michael Lerner

We are at a unique moment in the history of the Jewish people and also in the history of the struggle of all peoples for *tikkun*—healing and repair and transformation of the world. It is a time of danger and of opportunity.

It is a moment when the superficial solutions and ready-made answers of the past few hundred years are not working. Neither capitalism nor anything remotely like what has paraded as communism or socialism is adequate to deal with our problems in all their dimensions. Nor is the kind of Judaism that has paraded as Judaism in the last several decades adequate..

We were told by the champions of modernism that our principal problem was that individuals did not have enough freedom or opportunity. Traditional societies told you what to do and what to think, restricted your choices, and prohibited you from following your bliss. The modern world, on the other hand, would free you to follow your choices. No longer subject to the constraints of authoritative communities, we would each be free to become whatever we desired.

This was an illusion. The socialists and communists saw only one level of the illusion: namely, that the ideology of freedom was actually a cover for ruling elites to accumulate as much as possible, to master the means of production and communication, and to begin to shape our desires.

Marcuse and the critical theorists talked about the ways that a commodity society begins to dominate consciousness, so that each of us learns to want, even to ache for, those material items that can be advertised into mass consciousness as the indispensable products of the good life. Everything becomes a subject for commodification—even ourselves. We learn to shape ourselves with the latest diets and the latest growth groups and new approaches to psychology and mental health, so that we can fit into the available jobs, have the personalities that sell in the marketplace, or the

lifestyles that will make us popular consumption items in the marketplace of relationships. They argued that the "freedom" we are getting is far less real than we might have imagined—because it is a freedom manipulated and dominated.

In a commodity society, the economy is structured so that those who have the most power to shape what is produced and how it is produced are those with the most money. The bottom line is always money. Each of us learns that "in the real world" it is money that counts, power that counts, and that if you take time away from the pursuit of money and power, you will be disadvantaged. You get rewarded for the degree to which you learn how to manipulate and control other people, get them to do what you want them to do. And this produces a societal pathology—the narcissistic personality of our time.

The illusions of the Left are sometimes as powerful as the illusions of the Right. Because yes, people need power, but the ultimate crises they are facing are crises of love, spirituality, ethics, and meaning. And the reason that the Left can't fully address these crises is because the Left has often taken the same materialistic, one-dimensional view of human reality.

So the freedom that was promised by the champions of modernism becomes the freedom to compete, the freedom to choose which of a set of predetermined options will be our lifestyle. But our ability to shape the economic and political realities themselves is severely restricted. This is real powerlessness.

There is also what I have described as surplus powerlessness. We learn to internalize our situation, to blame ourselves for not having made it, for not being better at manipulating or controlling others, and eventually people come to feel that their real powerlessness is deserved, a function of our inadequacy, so we blame ourselves, feel terrible, and begin to act as though the world of alienation and limited community and limited possibility is the world that we deserve. We come to accept the alienation—because we cannot imagine that it could be otherwise. And we come to accept a set of ideas that tell us, that the world that we inhabit is the only possible world—that it is fixed and inevitable, and that to be mature and realistic is to accept its limitations.

And we begin to choose that surplus powerlessness, to impose it on each other, to teach our children that they too must be realistic. Thus, when someone comes along and says that it is possible to change the world, that *tikkun* is really possible, that selfishness does not have to be the bottom line, that we can build a world of caring, we see that person as a fool, a psychobabbler, or a charlatan. So the freedom the modernists brought us is filled with real and surplus powerlessness—and the tremendous power of the modern world is that we have been shaped and conditioned to such a point that we freely choose the means of our own imprisonment in the ideologies that justify powerlessness and oppression.

The illusion of modernism is that it freed us to make choices—but the reality is that we are free to choose between making it and learning how to be effective manipulators, or to be relatively powerless, discounted, ineffective in shaping our world, and subject to domination by the market in goods and the market in human beings.

The Left came along and critiqued the realities of modernism in the name of a new humanity. We now know that in Eastern Europe the ideas of equality and collective ownership of the means of production were appropriated by newly emerging elites who tried to mobilize the society for rapid industrialization under a banner of socialism and communism. The totalitarian system that they imposed could not survive because it had no recognition of the dignity of human life and was in no sense a real attempt at socialism or communism, defined as real control of economic life by the people who work.

In the West, a Left emerged that insisted on the centrality of participatory democracy. Our New Left was as critical of the Soviet Union as it was of the capitalist market. We insisted on substantive democracy, and we were right to do that.

But we never came to grips with the fact that most people in America were not willing to buy our notion of the problem, not because they disagreed with us, but because they understood that there was a still deeper level of problem. The Left had bought into the notion that the main problem was how to achieve more power for the individual or for the working class or, later, for various oppressed groups.

For most Americans, however, that is only one part of the problem. Yes, people need more power, substantive, real power. And that is why the economic and political programs of the Left must remain a central commitment

of anyone who hopes to heal and repair the world. But when people tell me that the key is to keep on doing what the democratic Left, the democratic socialists or New Leftists, have been doing for the past several decades, repeating the old ideas in prettier forms, I say that this too is an illusion. The democratic socialists refuse to acknowledge that the people of the world will not buy their medicine, not because it is not part of the solution, but because it is too limited, too shallow. The democratic Left thought that people would respond to the promise of individual rights and more democracy and then were stunned when Reagan and Bush were elected. The illusions of the Left are sometimes as powerful as the illusions of the Right.

While people need power, the ultimate crises they are facing are crises of love, spirituality, ethics, and meaning. And the reason that the Left can't fully address these crises is because the Left has often accepted the materialistic, one-dimensional view of human reality. It has assumed, along with the capitalists, that the ultimate good is the freedom of each individual to stand by his or her self, to make individual choices, to be free of external constraints. Don't get me wrong: I want that freedom too, when faced with some community that tells me I can't get divorced, I can't choose to be gay if I want to, I can't practice my religion, or I can't withdraw from public life and have a private sphere free from the intrusion of community. But that kind of negative freedom only gets us part of the way there.

The Left has the wrong ontology—the wrong view of what it is to be a human being. Human beings are not isolated monads seeking self-realization—that is the way that the capitalist market has taught us to see ourselves, typified by Thomas Hobbes's view of the human being in the state of nature, which is really a description of the emerging relations of the market economy. Nor are we the autonomous egos described by Immanuel Kant. Rather, as the Torah teaches, we are fundamentally in connection, in need of each other. We are born into relationship—and it is those relationships that are critical for our survival and our well-being.

We live in a world in which those relationships are being systematically destroyed. So we pay a fortune for therapists or healers to try to repair the damage, but they can succeed only partially, because the logic of the competitive marketplace and the fabric of contemporary thought and social organization are designed to convince us that our health lies in our ability to stand alone, independent, apart from each other, and to compete effectively with each other. This dynamic dominates in the world of intellectuals who are always trying to show how much smarter they are than everyone else, rather than using their minds to figure out how we can build a more supportive and caring world; and among artists and writers and creative people, who are constantly competing for recognition as the most creative and most outstanding; and among therapists who jockey for the latest, best intervention or technique; in every sphere, it's the same baloney of endless competition for power and recognition, because we live in a world in which mutual recognition has been systematically thwarted and denied.

But this is not what we need because it is not who we are. Human beings are fundamentally in need of mutual recognition, of caring, of community, and of the ability to develop our ethical and spiritual sensitivities. Most people need to transcend the individualism of the competitive marketplace, to root themselves in a community of higher purpose, a community that shares a story of our origins—how we came to be who we are and a vision of how, together, we might move closer to our highest ethical and spiritual ideals—in short, a community of meaning. It is the breakdown of these communities of meaning and purpose that has created the central crisis of the twentieth century.

So hungry are people to reestablish those communities that they will follow reactionary leaders who offer pseudo-communities. I say pseudo-communities—a term developed by Peter Gabel—because in fact the right-wing solutions to our crises of meaning and purpose usually turn out to be illusory. They preserve the competitive marketplace and the individualism built into our current economic and political arrangements—and then they pretend that all this can be overcome if we feel ourselves to be part of some larger whole—"the nation," "the white race," the saved religious community. This approach works for a while, because it is satisfying and provides a sense of power to belong to a community of equals—where you are all equally American, or equally white, or Christian. When people's daily lives remain unchanged, however, the initial exhilaration of the pseudo-community quickly disappears.

But the Right has an explanation: It blames some Other, and says if it weren't for the existence of this Other, our community wouldn't feel alienated, but they are keeping us from having the kinds of families and the kinds of workplaces and the kind of society that would be truly fulfilling. In most Western Christian societies, the Other of choice has been the Jews—and it is for that reason, not because of some intrinsic anti-Semitism that the *goyim* can't overcome, but because anti-Semitism serves as a way to preserve the social status quo, that Jews have been the target. But in the United States, particularly in the past few decades, the Other of choice has been extended—to communists when the Cold War was going on; to

Blacks ever since we needed a justification for having enslaved them; to gays and lesbians; to assertive women and the women's movement; and now, if the Right is successful, even to liberals.

The Left thinks it can respond to xenophobic nationalism by pointing out how these fascistic movements limit individual freedom. But it is precisely because the prevailing model of individual freedom, the freedom of the marketplace, wasn't working for people that they embraced the fascist alternative.

The liberals' answers to the crisis of meaning are superficial and have not worked. Throughout the twentieth century, liberals have talked about individual rights and economic entitlements—and they have not been able to stop the growth of powerful right-wing movements, because they don't understand that people are hungering not merely for jobs, but for meaning. Many liberals think that the twentieth century has been a problem of too much meaning—that the totalitarian regimes all offer systems of meaning, so that what people really need is less meaning, more freedom. But that way of thinking misses the point; people follow totalitarian religious or political movements because they hunger for meaning, and the only ones addressing that need are on the Right, because the Left is in the wrong ball park. Witness the current developments in Germany or Russia. The old system of meaning, communism, broke down precisely because people saw that it was phony, that there was no higher purpose, that the people calling for sacrifice in terms of some higher goal were disingenuous, using those ideals to advance their own power. If the people at the center, the communist bureaucrats, are merely using the language of community as a cover for self-interest, then why shouldn't everyone go for self-interest?

With the breakdown of so-called communism came the sudden valorization of the competitive marketplace. Francis Fukiyama and others proclaimed that we had reached the end of history, because now we had achieved a worldwide triumph of capitalism. But guess what, history isn't over, and suddenly people in East Germany or Russia discover that if their worth is to be judged by the marketplace, then most of them are going to be judged worthless, because they aren't going to "make it" in economic terms, they are going to be unemployed, or employed at very low wages, and they are going to be in deep economic problems. Having rejected communism or socialism and denied their previous identities, they now find themselves identified as losers or failures. No wonder that fascists in East Germany or Russia have garnered considerable and growing support with the message that they have a way to make their people feel good about their lives, being part of the German nation or the Russian nation. They promise equality and importance to all their fellow East Germans or Russians—once the Jews, or the Turks, or the Arabs, or some other non-German or non-Russian is out of the way.

The Left thinks it can respond to this xenophobic nationalism by pointing out how these fascistic movements limit individual freedom. But it is precisely because the prevailing model of individual freedom, the freedom of the marketplace, wasn't working for people that they embraced the fascist alternative. The only effective response to the fascist appeal is to offer an alternative view of a community of meaning and purpose, one that does not have external scapegoats and one that does not support sexism, homophobia, anti-Semitism, or racism.

This dynamic cannot be countered by a new highway program or even a new health-care program. The liberals and the Left must speak to the underlying hunger for meaning and purpose—and recognize that it is the systematic frustration of our meaning needs, the undermining of loving families and communities, the undermining of friendships and committed relationships, the creation of a marketplace in human relations and the elevation of extreme individualism, that is at the center of the problem.

For us as liberals, this is going to require some rethinking. It's going to mean refusing to think that our own individual wants are the only thing that counts. Because when you are in a relationship or a family, the wants of others become our obligations. Our fullest realization can only be accomplished when other human beings also get their needs realized—and this is very different from the New Age consciousness that tells us to follow our own bliss. We are fundamentally in need of each other. Who is healthy? Not the autonomous individual, but the person who can recognize that he or she needs others, does not fear being dependent on others, welcomes that mutual dependence and vulnerability, and recognizes herself as part of some larger whole.

And that larger whole is not just a community of people, it is a world that has spiritual and ethical dimensions as well. Because it emerged out of the rebellion against feudalism, the Left has never been able to address these dimensions; since feudalism had

appropriated spiritual categories, the Left latched on to an anti-spiritual consciousness that assumed that every religious community or spiritual worldview must necessarily be oppressive. But it is that view that has become oppressive, forcing people to choose between politics and spirituality.

Yet Judaism came into the world to challenge this very dichotomy, to teach us that the force that is the spiritual power of the universe is also the power that makes for the possibility of transformation. That is what the *Sh'ma* is about—and that is the message of Torah: The God of the universe is not a static force, not a repetitive or cyclical process, but rather the force that makes for transformation from that which is to that which ought to be. The great problem with religious systems has been that they have been appropriated by systems of oppression—so that spirituality has too often been consistent with or accommodated to existing social realities of class domination, caste systems, or radical inequalities of power. No wonder that many people distrust spirituality, so often has it been harnessed to systems of oppression.

The Jewish message, however, was that existing systems of oppression could be dismantled and overthrown. Judaism was built upon weekly readings of portions of the Torah, four of whose five books are dedicated to telling the story of the Exodus from Egypt. Our story of origin demonstrates that systems of oppression can be dismantled—not by individual achievement, but by being part of a people, a community whose self-definition involves transformation of the world. No wonder, then, that ruling elites have always found us a danger—because our message is inherently revolutionary. No wonder, too, that Jews themselves ran away from this message. The Judaism that they developed often abandoned the radical implication of the Torah message as interpreted by the Prophets. People immersed themselves in ritual details; it was too frightening to bear witness to the existence of a God who made it possible for everything to be radically transformed.

Yet it is that kind of spirituality that the world needs today—not a return to forms of spirituality, including various variants of Jewish spirituality, that have accommodated sexism, homophobia, or other forms of oppression. The sexist and homophobic elements of the Jewish community and of Torah itself can be critiqued from the standpoint of values that emerge directly from Torah. The Jewish tradition offers a basis for the kind of spirituality that is deeply committed to transforming the world.

Central to that transformative spirit is one of the most frequently repeated injunctions of Torah: When you come into your land, do not oppress the stranger. Remember that you were a stranger in the Land of Egypt. That is, the repetition compulsion, the tendency to act out on others what was done to you, can be transcended. You are going to have a tendency to do to others what they did to you—as, for example, when they enslaved you in Egypt. But you don't have to do it, you can break that repetition compulsion.



I have seen fresh evidence for this in the current agreement between Israel and the Palestinians. Israel was born in pain and suffering some forty-six years ago. We jumped from the burning buildings of Europe and we landed on the backs of Palestinians. We didn't want to hurt them, and we didn't come to Israel to be supporters of Western colonialism. Because we were running from oppression, when we landed on the backs of Palestinians, although we hurt them, we couldn't focus on that; our pain seemed so much greater. Unconsciously, we knew we had hurt someone else, but our pain was such that we couldn't acknowledge the hurt we had caused, so we refused to acknowledge the Palestinians' existence. Time has passed, some of the pain has gradually receded, and a few months ago we saw a rebirth of Israel—because for the first time the Jewish people felt strong enough, secure enough, healthy enough to be able to acknowledge the existence of the Palestinians. I applaud the State of Israel for that move and for that courage.

I've watched in the United States as one group after another claims its own individual identity by asserting a history of greater oppression than everyone else. This constant fight for legitimation through oppression, this valorization of victimization, can lead in a very destructive direction. So it is a great moment when the Jewish people, one of the supreme victims of the twentieth century, can summon the moral courage to recognize another group it has unintentionally hurt

and victimized.

I know all the forces of fear that are mobilizing now in Israel. Right-wing settlers and Palestinian extremists have combined to do all they can to create mutual provocations and to undermine trust and hopefulness. It seems at times as if the moment of hope has been lost and that we are back into the moment of fear and distrust. But I also understand this, because I know how hard it is for any of us to trust.

When Hillary Rodham Clinton invited me to the White House this year to discuss a politics of meaning, the press went wild trying to discredit these ideas—and most of the people who read TIKKUN sat back, waiting to see what would happen. We talked about transcending the *New Republic* consciousness, the instinct toward cynicism that is so often central to the media, and instead to insist on the possibility of a world based on caring, love, and community, a world committed to ethical and spiritual sensitivity. Yet few people felt secure enough to support us publicly in this endeavor.

I understand why people are reluctant and cynical in reaction. Too many people have used these terms in ways that are destructive and manipulative. But we can no longer afford to cede these categories to the Christian Right or to the charlatans or to New Age psychobabblers. Our need for a world based on caring and concern for others is central. Without that, we get the worst distortions of multiculturalism—namely, a kind of chauvinistic particularism. It happens among Jews, who then appropriate the words of Judaism to support the most disgusting forms of selfishness and insensitivity to others. And it is happening in Bosnia, in Eastern Europe—everywhere, because self-interest leads to these kinds of insensitivities toward the needs of others. A politics of meaning, a politics seeking to create a world that is safe for love and caring, is as much concerned about Bosnia, or about mutual recognition between Israelis and Palestinians, as it is about creating a world in which a loving relationship between two people is sustained rather than undermined by the society in which it exists.

The struggle about whether to trust others, whether it's really possible to transcend self-interest and care about others, is as much at the center of what's going on in Israel today as it is at the center of American politics. When Clinton abandons a politics of meaning and instead frames his programs in terms of America's competitiveness, or having the most effective health-care system, or the most technologically sophisticated society, he thinks he is being smart and pragmatic, because he is skirting the tough issue of the dominant ethos of selfishness. But unless he projects a vision of a different way of being, people will reject his programs. If selfishness is the dominant ethos, then why should I pay for health care for you, or for national service, or for welfare reform? Try to sell it to me in terms of economic self-interest and it won't work. If that's the bottom line, liberal programs will find themselves being so narrow that they will never address fundamental problems. The bottom line must be changed. And so Clinton undermines his future and the future of liberalism if he does not begin to explicitly fight for a politics of meaning. Thus, the struggle here parallels the struggle in Israel—both societies must develop a new dominant paradigm of how to relate to others, a new bottom line consciousness, where the bottom line must become the development of loving and ethically sensitive and spiritually aware human beings.

All this coalesces in the ecological crisis. If we continue to treat the Earth as another commodity to be exploited, rather than as a living being whose needs must also be respected, we will soon destroy the life support system of the planet. Yet the very terms of support for the Earth cannot arise from the language of the Left—but rather from a deeper spiritual tradition that insists on stewardship and recognizes that the whole Earth is full of God's glory.

The challenge for liberal Jews is to reclaim the excitement and power of the Jewish tradition—a tradition that helps us combine ethical and spiritual sensitivity. Unlike some distorted spiritual communities, we insist that we cannot find spiritual fulfillment while the homeless remain homeless, the hungry remain hungry, while bombs fall on Sarajevo. Our spirituality cannot be separated from political practice. Simultaneously, we insist that our politics cannot remain free of spirituality—one-dimensional and based on merely individual rights and economic entitlements, although we support these goals as well. That is why the Jewish renewal that we are developing and expanding through TIKKUN magazine holds such promise. Jewish renewal is exciting because it affirms our Jewishness and our tradition and uses it as part of the basis to change the world, while simultaneously challenging those parts of the tradition that have been mired in the distortions of limited human beings.

We seek to embody our ideals. But we also know that we need much compassion for each other—because we are not the full embodiments of those ideals. We know that our psychological and social inheritance includes a legacy of cruelty and pain—and that we will never be all that we ought to be. We have no intention of using that as an excuse for not taking individual responsibility to change ourselves and our world. We reject the victimology that blames everything on someone else; we

intend to do our best to overcome the pain and distortions of the past. But at the same time, we know that the key is to recognize limitations, to have compassion for each other. To treat each other with gentleness and kindness, to accept our own flaws, the flaws of our parents, and yes, even the flaws of the Jewish people. We have a remarkable challenge put to us by the Jewish tradition—to be partners with God in the healing and repair of the world. We recognize that that is a dual process, because we must simultaneously be involved with healing ourselves, yet we know that healing cannot be completed without simultaneous social and economic transformations. We have made mistakes in TIKKUN, and we will make more—and we will find each other inadequate in various ways, and we will be right. The key is to refrain from using those failures and those inadequacies as our excuse to retreat into private life, distraught that when we enter the public sphere we encounter people who talk too much, or people who are on ego trips, or people we just don't like. Inevitably, these disappointments will happen. The key to our success in healing the planet is going to be the degree to which we can accept each other despite our limitations, the degree to which we can love each other despite our flaws. The Jewish people together, and we as individuals, the community of TIKKUN, is a community of wounded healers. We have been wounded, and yet we are O.K. We have been sustained by our faith in the possibility of possibility, the force in the universe that we call God, YHWH, the transformative force that is not only outside us but also within us, and within every ounce of creation.

We have seen the conformists and conservatives in the Jewish world, and they refuse to testify to the existence of this God, because they are too busy serving the God of power of the existing social order. So it is we, the liberal and progressive Jews, who must accept the responsibility of being the inheritors of the Jewish tradition, the current embodiment of the People of Israel—with all our limitations, we are the Jewish people in this generation, committed to healing and transforming and repairing the world, and we take on this responsibility with humility, and also with the great joy and fun and excitement and happiness that comes with this awesome responsibility. Playfully, humorously, and seriously—we will accept our place within the chain of obligation and responsibility to healing and repair that links the generations one to another and makes us part of a people and part of a common humanity whose future we celebrate today. □



THE POLITICS OF MEANING AS EMBODIED CONNECTION

Peter Gabel

We are all animated by a desire for social connectedness. A desire for mutual recognition. A desire to be confirmed by one another and validated by one another in our being. It's an embodiment that we seek of feeling whole where we feel partial and small, of feeling strong, validated, and seen by others in a life-giving and empowering way.

In the world that we live in, that desire for social confirmation or social connectedness is systematically denied. Instead, our experience is dominated by an experience of alienation. By virtue of not being fundamentally recognized in our full humanity, we find ourselves split into an outer and inner self. The outer self is shaped by the artificiality of the role performances that we all feel compelled to engage in, and that we feel

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surround us and isolate us. Within we feel a smallness, as though we were an inner core peering out against this apparently infinitely expanded alienated facade.

This phenomenon of alienation is the central *social* basis for our struggle to transform the world. Of course, hunger, shelter, and the need for fundamental material safety are central elements in that struggle. But to the extent that previous movements have been successful in mobilizing people around economic issues, they have done so in part because they have also spoken to people's need for solidarity; for workplace democracy; for personal power that comes through being experienced as equal by others, and the experience of being validated by others in one's political activity. That's what a movement actually is because, of course, it doesn't actually move anywhere—except down the street, if you're demonstrating.

A movement is a movement of being, in which the passive, fragile part of us that is normally under-recognized, unconfirmed, turns into a powerful force because it begins to feel the possibility of real recognition, and very suddenly—if you think of the few years that the Sixties actually were—very conservative environments can be transformed. We assent to the notion that the world can be radically changed, and we discover within ourselves and within one another capacities for love, happiness, playfulness, fun, and a radical spirit transforming everything in ways that seem virtually unimaginable at the times of our life when we are dispirited and withdrawn, when the alienated facade seems to extend everywhere and we ebb away from each other, peering out from isolated plateaus at a world that seems immune to change. At those times, we feel ourselves "going through the motions," which is the very opposite of social movement.

The politics of meaning seeks to speak to that desire for social connectedness and confirmation by creating a culture of meaning and purpose through which each of us can have the experience of being recognized and confirmed. But this means whatever we create must actually *embody* the connection rather than simply talk about it in utopian terms. It is not enough to say that the politics of meaning is about "values" because values suggest too much that we are talking about verbal formulas—like saying we are against individualism and for caring for others, for example. We do support this shift in values but a politics of meaning must also be linked to an embodiment of the experience of confirmation that I'm speaking of, or the words are cut off from the underlying reality in being.

The struggle, in other words, is to develop an alternative to the alienated processes that I was describing, so that where people experienced emptiness and distance they can now experience fullness and presence to one another.

When people believe that in order to feel recognized or confirmed by others they must adopt an outer self that's kind of a half-second behind, like the newscaster on television, then what occurs is a splitting between the artificial outer self and the under-confirmed or invalidated inner self. Because they lack anchorage in connection to others, many people develop a dependency on external authority and seek the recognition of someone higher who has "more" in order to feel worthwhile themselves. The lack that is experienced inside is compensated for in an unsuccessful way by an attempt to inflate one's image in the presence of an external authority.

Sometimes this self-inflation is called narcissistic self-grandiosity. But its roots are in our desperate attempt to compensate for the pain of non-recognition and to compensate for the emotional falsity of daily life. The only way to counter these dynamics is to build a movement like this movement, among Jews and non-Jews who are trying to move forward behind the evocation of the politics of meaning and connect that up to our previous experiences of validation and insight.

In order to develop this kind of movement, we need an experience of social connection. We need to discover ways of being together that break the artificiality of the distinctions in our own lives between the isolated family unit where intimacy can become too much a mere refuge from work based on functional behavior that feels largely like meaningless routines, and larger friendship circles and communities. The only way to challenge this dichotomy is to be part of groups that slowly, over time, develop our capacity to mutually confirm each other in wider and wider circles. The rituals of Judaism, which I personally don't practice, but which Michael Lerner and others in the Tikkun community do practice, are one way—a religious way—of trying to widen this experience of connection. Including close friends in lifetime financial planning is another way—a secular way—of spreading confirmation beyond isolated family units; it can reduce reliance on individualistic pensions and widen the community of those to whom we feel indispensable.

I'm the president of a college in San Francisco. I regularly get mail advocating "Total Quality Management," or TQM, and it often uses the kind of language that I sometimes hear coming from communitarians and from the Clinton administration. But it uses this language in the service of more efficient management, not in the service of deepening human connection. If you watched on C-Span when the Vice President met with employees in the federal government to talk about improving how the bureaucracy works, there was a strongly hierarchical and deferential quality to that supposedly caring group process meeting that was taking place. It was *not* the experience of mutual solidarity, it was

not the experience of mutual validation, but rather a new kind of way of participating in the capitalist marketplace, ostensibly in a happy, more sensitive, more caring fashion.

Quality circles is another example of the development within the workplace of new forms of worker cooperation that challenge the old assembly-line, atomized, hyper-individualistic model in favor of people performing tasks together. There are possibilities in quality circles for building a true politics of meaning and for figuring out how to make that a basis for workplace organizing and expanding the power of unions to include more issues than the bread-and-butter issues that unions have typically focused on. But there are also possibilities for greater manipulation of workers without giving them greater power, opportunity to actualize their deepest capacities, or occasion for real connection and mutual recognition with others. So the language of a politics of meaning could be co-opted to a new, psychologically oriented mode of control at the workplace, leading to the institutionalization of new forms of hierarchy—a more humane version of the alienated and empty capitalist process that I criticized earlier.

Consider the Clinton welfare reform and its promise of retraining workers to work at computer terminals. The Clinton plan doesn't address the loss of meaning that workers have had to face through the disintegration of crafts that were characteristic of much traditional blue-collar work. Retraining is done without regard to the kind of work that will be offered—as long as people can fit into the job market. The argument for getting people off welfare, the challenge to the traditional liberalism of welfare and the emphasis on people's responsibilities to the community, while having a positive element of truth, may also become a new form of caring that actually is oppressive and seeks to integrate people within the alienated system rather than seeking to transform that system. So a politics of meaning approach must critique this manipulation of language and always focus on the nature of the experience being offered to people, and to what extent it provides possibilities for real human connection. At the moment, gang membership offers a greater sense of embodied connection and social meaning and purpose than does President Clinton's call for us to roll up our sleeves and retrain ourselves to operate high-tech machines so that we can "compete and win in the world market."

The task of a politics of meaning is to build forms of social connectedness that would enhance empowerment, mutual confirmation, and recognition, thus helping rid us of the split between the false outer self and the weak, impoverished, under-confirmed or under-recognized inner self—so that people can become present to each other as equals. That's a radical politics of meaning. It has, in my opinion, strong correspondences with the radical aspect of socialist movements of the last two hundred years.

To emphasize this goal doesn't require that we reject the Clintons' qualities of openness, the sense of genuine caring that I believe characterizes aspects of this administration. But it does mean keeping our eye on the ball and figuring out how we, not they, are going to develop communities of meaning and purpose that are strong and that can strengthen whatever hopeful possibilities there are in the current political moment. □

America's Three-Fold Crisis

Cornel West

America today faces a three-fold crisis: a crisis of vision, of motivation, and of meaning.

The crisis of vision is real. Most persons who think seriously about progressive politics are trying to examine what it means to expand the scope of democracy and democratic institutions. The fundamental challenge against powers that be, whatever set of elites, is insuring mechanisms of accountability for those below. Ordinary people ought to live lives of decency and dignity, and their voices ought to be heard. Basic decisions made by elites, representatives, spokespersons, and institutions that guide and regulate their lives must be made accountable. The most crucial issue for progressive politics is the meaning and interpretation of democracy. I don't care if you're a radical democrat, deliberative democrat, direct democrat, associational democrat, socialist democrat—democracy is about ensuring that ordinary people live lives of dignity. That's the bottom line for me. Which means you're going to question any form of authority—kings, queens, white supremacists, homophobes, male supremacists, corporate elites, bank elites, cultural elites—anybody who is getting in the way of the fact

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that ordinary people are not here that long, because none of us are, and they ought to live lives of decency and dignity.

And the question then becomes: What are the possibilities of democratization, in a moment in which more and more fellow citizens are reaching the conclusion that the very conditions for democracy are being undermined? Order, rule of law, community, bonds, citizenship—substantive, meaningful notions of citizenship. There conditions for democracy are simply sliding down the slippery slope to chaos.

Bonds of trust are forged by coming together in struggle. That's why when I hear some of the older Jewish brothers and sisters talk about what the civil rights movement meant to them, they're talking about something deeply existential and experiential. There was the example of a movement with a vision broad enough that it brought persons together.

Deindustrialization and deregulation have resulted in relative economic decline; downward mobility for the majority of Americans, cultural decay, unregulated markets now create market cultures, market moralities, market mentalities, shattering community, eroding civil society, undermining the nurturing system for children—the market culture that we're dealing with at this very moment. That's a long story, but that's the short cut to it.

All this reinforces the balkanization, the separation, the segmentation, and the fragmentation of a body politic. And of course in American society, with its vicious history of white supremacy, its racial lines of demarcation, that's still the most explosive issue. There can be no serious talk about expanding democratic possibilities when public life is so barren and vacuous and emptied and hollowed out; when persons do feel as if they live in privatistic cocoons that reinforce their hedonistic and narcissistic ways of being in the world; in which young people do not conceive of themselves as having a future—not simply as individuals, but with somebody else, in community.

Looking at Jewish tradition, what is distinctive about the Hebrew Bible, as opposed to so many other cultural expressions, especially that of ancient Greece, is that when it turns to ordinary people, their lives are the subject matter of tragedy. That epic significance is found in the lives of everyday people, as Sly Stone would put it: That's a breakthrough. That your David can command the same kind of complex portrait that the Greek tragedians or Shakespeare reserved for kings and queens. Or that Christians, like myself, can take seriously a Palestinian Jewish artisan brother. These are the real roots of democracy.

Understanding and identifying with the ordinary, the down-and-out is crucial. I like the depiction in The *New York Times* today, many of you may have seen it. The Coalition for the Homeless went up to Christian citizens of this nation and said, "How can you worship a homeless person on Sunday and then turn away from the homeless on Monday?" That's a democratic sensibility. It's not a Democratic politics, it's a democratic sensibility. And the best of the Jewish tradition, the best of the Christian tradition, the best of the Buddhist tradition, the best of the secular brothers and sisters, the best of any tradition, for me in part is, "Are you keeping track of the plight and predicament of these ordinary folk?" You're not romanticizing them, you're not idealizing them—every democracy that we know needs constitutional, legal constraints to insure the conditions of markets are in place for democracy to flourish. There can be no democracy without insuring freedom of association and movement and expression. There can be no democracy without including separation of powers so that we know that even our legal elites must, themselves, be subject to law; that even elected elites must, themselves, be subject to law.

How do you set up the conditions for democracy, to insure that you can then expand it? The crisis of vision, for me at this particular moment, is we've all tended to remain within our various cubbyholes or our single-issue orientations, scrutinizing a particular illegitimate form of authority. I'm going to specialize in white supremacy, and I'm going to specialize in corporate elites, and I'm going to specialize in bank elites, and I'm going to specialize in ecological abuse, and I'm going to specialize in Gentile authority, and I'm going to specialize in vicious male supremacist authority. And yet no public space is created to strengthen the links and bonds of these various progressives to one another, to bring more significant power and pressure to bear on the society as a whole. It doesn't happen too often in American life because, of course, we live in a deeply conservative society in which economic growth by means of corporate priorities, and the various xenophobias that run through our history, tend to truncate the possibilities for progressive politics. And yet we've been able to sustain over time a liberal rule of

law precisely because ordinary citizens organized to insure it. And so if we meet the challenge of the crisis of vision, how then do we project a vision that allows different kinds of progressives to come together, not to reach some unanimity, but to work together so that we can bring some power and pressure to bear?

It's a fundamental challenge, and we're far from meeting it, in part because of levels of distrust, as a result of the balkanization that I mentioned before. How do we forge bonds of trust (and you don't form bonds of trust just by exchanging arguments, or even dancing together). Bonds of trust are forged by coming together in struggle. That's why when I hear some of the older Jewish brothers and sisters talk about what the civil rights movement meant to them, they're talking about something deeply existential and experiential. There was the example of a movement with a vision broad enough that it brought persons together. Even though they recognized the tensions and frictions were always there, they had their eye on something bigger than themselves. And so they subordinated that tension and that friction just long enough to shatter the racial caste system in this nation. It's a major triumph.

The crisis of motivation is inseparable from the problem of organization. People will not organize, or remain organized, if they're not motivated enough or feel a sense of obligation to sustain those organizations. I'm one of the chairpersons of Democratic Socialists of America. I spend my time, as well, working for the New Party. Why? Because there's an organizational crisis among progressives. We don't have the kind of organizations that can project a vision to bring different kinds of progressives together. And that's a prerequisite for regenerating democratic possibilities. There are not enough people around who are articulating a broad vision with power and passion and trying to insure that issues of integrity, character, mutual respect, and civility unite progressives when they occupy that public space.

This crisis of vision, this crisis of motivation, also has much to do with the crisis of meaning. And here I think I do have some very basic agreements with Brother Lerner. I do believe it has something to do with an existential crisis, and by existential crisis, what I mean is dealing with meaninglessness. It's not just meaninglessness, but it's hopelessness; it's not just hopelessness, but it's lovelessness; for some folks, it's touchlessness; loss of tenderness and kindness and gentleness in people's lives. They're results of the creeping zeitgeist of cold-heartedness and mean-spiritedness—the gangsterization of American culture, which is the ultimate logic of a market culture in which people feel as if the only meaning in life is to gain access to power and pleasure and property by any method. That's existential crisis. Deep existential crisis.

There is no absolute or ultimate solution to the problem or crisis of meaning. I just want people to be involved in the quest. That quest for meaning means that they're trying to break out of these market conceptions of a good life, and they're trying to deal with non-market values—love, and caring, and concern, and service to others, and solidarity, and justice, and community, and loyalty, and trust, and commitment, and conviction. That's what the quest for meaning means.

And it has to do with despair. It has to do with dread, with giving up on any other conception of the good life. And so the crisis of meaning and the politics of meaning that Brother Lerner's talking about, for me, is a fundamental dimension of trying to talk about progressive politics. But for me, meaning is inseparable from community and organization. And community and organization are inseparable from motion. Show me somebody who feels as if the world has closed in, who feels as if all possibilities are ossified and petrified, and I'll show you somebody who's dealing with a crisis of meaning. Show me somebody who's on the move, who has a sense of momentum, a sense of possibility, who feels the presence of effective bonds, supportive networks, and empathetic linkages, and I'll show you somebody involved in a quest for meaning. And keep in mind that, for me, there is no absolute or ultimate solution to the problem or crisis of meaning. I just want people to be involved in the quest.

That quest for meaning means that they're trying to break out of these market conceptions of a good life, and they're trying to deal with non-market values—love, and caring, and concern, and service to others, and solidarity, and justice, and community, and loyalty, and trust, and commitment, and conviction. That's what the quest for meaning means. It can come through a variety of different traditions, no doubt. No tradition has a monopoly. But we must appeal to our respective traditions because none of us is thoroughly traditionless, even though American myth likes to cast

it in that way. In truth, we all have traditions. Judaism needs to reconstruct itself in such a way that the best of the prophetic possibilities are kept alive in that tradition. Christianity must do the same, as must the secular traditions.

I very much applaud what we're doing here. I think it's a sign that people are hungry and thirsty for a broader vision—hungry and thirsty to know that there are other persons around who are similarly motivated. They're not afraid to move toward being part of the quest for meaning, one in which we make a difference in changing this society and world.

Looking the cynicism in the face and going beyond it is a tremendous challenge, given the pain, the anguish, and the agony that we see in this city and around this country and the world. But it seems to me that we can do no less. □

THE MEANING OF *TIKKUN*

Zalman Schachter

I invite you to follow me in your imagination. I'm putting on a *tallis* and I am picking up a *lulav* and an *etrog,* a palm branch and a citron, and here I go and wave them, thrusting to the right, the left, forward, and up, downward and back, to make *tikkun*.

Do you recall seeing that done, often accompanied with a melody? For me this has always been a very mysterious and awe-inspiring rite. I had the feeling that the person with the *lulav* and the *etrog* represented a kind of world caring ministry, the kind we keep in mind when we think of Malki Tzedek, King of JeruSalem, Priest to God most high, the sacred mentor and initiator of Abraham our father. There because he had served freedom and justice he offered him bread and wine.

I have a conviction that here is such a being, a Malki Tzedek, a High Priest of the World, and when I ask myself how does the High Priest of the World sanctify, purify, fix, and make *tikkun,* I can almost see that one priestess with the *lulav*, in all six directions.

I feel that you, Michael Lerner, gave a shukkle about the Right, and what *tikkun* was needed there, and then you talked about labor, and you gave a shukkle about the Left, and then you talked about the need for our tradition, and you did the shukkle back. I want to make three shukkles; I want to make a shukkle forward, I want to make a shukkle upward, and a shukkle downward.

So I will start to further our evolving toward the better future with the forward shukkle.

The Zeitgeist of the nineteenth century had notions of causality, of motivation, about causes creating effects. Whatever I did was because somebody or something was always at our back, pushing. It's the cause that's pushing me, and so I am going to be an effect, from the cause that pushes me.

Is the source pushing the river? Or is the lower-lying sea attracting the flow? We need to understand the flow and cooperate with it.

In Hebrew we have two wonderful words for "why." One is *lamah*, and the other is *madu'a*. *Madu'a* is the etiological why. How come we do this? *Mah—du'a*, I want to know about it. Tell me, what was the cause. *Madu'a* is the backward shukkle. But if I want to say, to what end am I doing it, to what purpose, I say: *Lamah? L'mah*—What for? The forward shukkle is *Lamah*.

I am looking into the future. I ask myself what is the telos, the end, the goal, the direction in which we are moving. Why are we moving there? Something in the future is attracting me.

It is that same nineteenth-century heresy to think that time only has only one dimension. There are times when the future reaches back to us. In the early '80s, when you sat down to meditate, do you remember what happened to you? You got quiet, all still, and then all of a sudden, Alarm! Wake up! because the arms race is going to end the world if you don't do something about peace. What we got in our meditation was a call to stop war before it is too late.

When we sat down to meditate in the mid '80s, the alarm from the future was the ecological outcry. *Gevalt, Gevalt*! Wake up! You must do something about pollution, or you won't have air to breathe, and water to drink. Where did that outcry come from? We heard it from the future. Something about our souls is not limited to only this time and to merely this space. The higher and the deeper we go, the less localized is our being, the more we transcend this place and this time.

When I ask myself to reflect on why the old solutions are not working I realize, it is partly because they were inadequate. Much of the leftist vision, the secularized version of Isaiah, the Marxist hope for the peaceable kingdom was inadequate, but it generated a lot of

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improvements for workers; alas, it had a low ceiling. But there is also another, more powerful factor. Process and time are always flowing. When we look for why our world isn't working, we blame ourselves, concluding that it must be our fault. But in truth, it's not working because we have grown past the old conditions because the time for its working is over.

Right now we find ourselves in the midst of a paradigm shift, and very few people understand what this means for Judaism. When we talk about what the past can teach us, we also confront what the past cannot teach us. Some of the things that the past cannot teach us, we are being taught from the future. There is a Torah waiting for us, not yet received by us. It is the Torah of after Auschwitz, Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and the Moon walk and the fifth-generation computer, and the information highway. The pull to the better future is very strong, wreaking havoc with our anchors to the status quo.

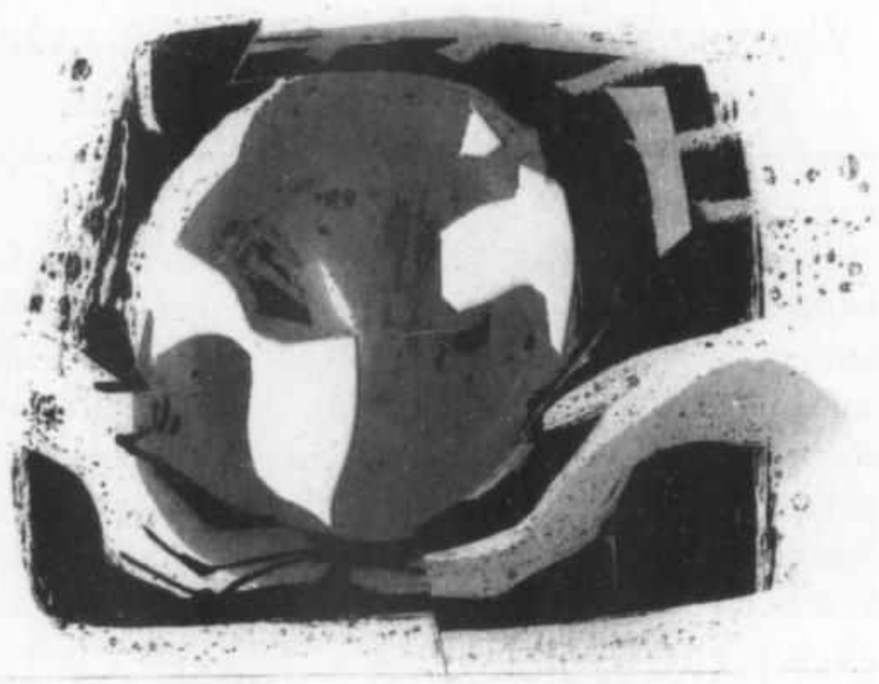
There is something going on and there is something growing, yeasting. And who is growing that? And I get to make a simple blessing: *Baruch ata hashem, elohaynu*, and then I say the next two words: *Melech Ha'olam*. I don't mean a king with power over the world when I say *Melech Ha'olam*, king of the universe. I mean the governing organismic being, of *Ha'olam*, of Earth. And since I read about the Gaia principle, this blessing has taken an altogether different meaning for me. Earth is waking up. We are the brain cells of the planet. She is waking into consciousness.

There was this wonderful teaching that was given by the Apter Rebbe, the *Ohev Yisrael*, the lover of Israel, Reb Avraham Yeshua Heschel, the great-grandfather of Professor Heschel, in which he said: What was it about the sanctuary in the desert. The *Mishkan*, the *Shekhinah* dwelling was put together, assembled by Bezalel but it was not alive until Aaron, the High Priest, took the *shemen hamishcha*, the anointing oil, and with it anointed all of the surfaces, and that's how, he says, it came alive. When they lit the menorah, the sanctuary became conscious.

Can you imagine walking into a conscious *shul*, into a *shul* that's really built to be a *shul*, a sanctuary, a safe and sacred space, designated in this way, clearly a God dwelling to invite and attract whatever one can bring down of God into this space.

As I say these words, *Melech Ha'olam*, and I see that this is Earth coming to life, and as we meditate and contemplate that vision that we first had when people first saw Earth from outer space. Has this not become the most powerful logo, the icon of our day? Nothing moves me as much as when I see the picture of Earth from outer space. No national boundaries, an organic wholeness, a completeness. That's the Torah of the future. As Earth learns to understand and be aware of herself, she has her *Matan Torah*. The Earth is waking up to consciousness. And in the view of this totality, you and I and all of our little egos melt into the higher state of being conscious cells of that *Melech Ha'olam*. That vast life being that there is there. So the ethics that derive from that are such different ethics. How could my right hand hit the left hand in retaliation? Do I not hurt doubly?

Once one gets to see the organicity of all of



planetary life, the politics of meaning can work. This is not just because we have gone away from hierarchical systems to democratic systems. Because democratic systems don't seem to work either. What seems to work is organismic. We are an organism. My toe tells my head when it pinches. And we are connected with each other. It's not just that my head tells my toe to go walk. It is not that hierarchical. It is organismic. It is interactive. It is total in this way. Can you imagine an ethic that comes from that? *Mitzvot* and *halachot* that come from that, and one begins to think differently taking all of other life into considerate consideration. The message that reaches toward us from the future is saying, "you don't know yet the *mitzvot* of this coming paradigm—how they're going to be. You don't know yet what kind of a minyan it will be when you'll start counting women as integral and necessary to have at minyan." At this point we are barely saying they may help us make a minyan.

In this new alchemical kabbalah one begins to say, "Do you want to know about *Shekhinah* manifestation—how the Divine presence comes and takes up Her space here?" You have to have five men and five women, in a focused mind holding the field to create sacred space.

I am thinking about such a Torah coming from the

future. About a way in which Kabbalat-Shabbat might begin with relaxation exercises, to have a kind of yogic mikvah to wash off the week. And then to get into Shabbat. To make that wonderful flip. To let the deep longing that we have for God out. *Y'did Nefesh Av-Harachaman*. How much we long for God—but not for that old icon, the one who sits on the throne who is going to hit you because you tore toilet paper on *Shabbas*.

How much we long for God—but not for that old icon, the one who sits on the throne who is going to hit you because you tore toilet paper on Shabbas.

I want now to give a shukkle in this dimension. We know so little, we have such a small vocabulary for feelings. If we talk about our feelings, we translate the vocabulary into mental vocabulary that could talk about feelings. What would it be if feeling could talk directly? The closest we come to that is what we do in *davennen*. It doesn't make so much of a difference whether you understand or don't understand, but when it goes "*Oy! Nishmat kol chay t'varech et shim'cha. YAH Elobeynu.*" You go into that which doesn't have anything to do with the head. It's not the cortex, the pre-frontal lobes, that gets involved with this. It has to do with the thalamus. It has to do with kishkes. It has to do with guts, it has to do with all that.

There is also another thing reaching us from the future. It deals with the expansion of our intellectual and intuitive capacities. We use only up to 15 percent of our brain capacity. This is because the rest has not yet been formatted and is not yet available for our use. The old brain capacity made us so smart and technological that we can now wreak global destruction. But we don't yet have the extended mind capacity needed to heal ourselves and the planet. The contemplative and meditative tool which we inherited from the mystical traditions of the whole world, can help us with this maturing and so can the brain-mind tools that are now being developed from the early bio-feedback origins. We need to avail ourselves of these and grow to the capacity which the world needs to heal herself and which we need in order to see ourselves fully as parts of the whole.

So now we shukkle upwards.

Who is this vast consciousness of which we are only a particle? What does that Being want us to know? How does that Being want us to be? We have such a deep sense, that if it were clear to us what the core of the Universe is saying to us, this is how I want you to be. This is how I want you to be harmonious. This is my purpose. Who of us who would hear such a thing, who would have such a deep peak experience of hearing from the Universe, "You are integral, you are not an oops. It wasn't a mistake that brought you into the world. You have a right to be here. You are a child of the Universe." That sense is that sense to which we want to give a face. And the face-inter-face of that next Jewish God connection, that root metaphor, that *partzuf* is for us to design. If we aren't talking about the old man in the sky, and if we want to transcend what people call personal, and what people call impersonal, we go to that place where that organism, Gaia, is. Whom does she adore? If we have heard from that source of the Universe how it wants us to be, I can't imagine anyone saying no to that. When we get that sense, that integral feeling, that's what the new revelation, the new *Matan Torah* is. You can't help but say *Na'assehsah v'nishma'* to that to promise to further that aim in the world. I want to invite your dreaming, mything, midrashing, myth-rush-ing experiencing, and your thinking to help shape that next phase of our evolution.

This conference is timely—needed. There are rumblings underfoot, an unease, a disquiet. We need to do something and it is not yet really clear what it is. We see the "others" gaining strength, chaos, and violence increasing. And at the same time there is for the first time in years an administration in Washington that looks as if we now have a window of opportunity to really do something that will make a difference.

So where and why is there a disquiet among us? How may it be addressed? What are its causes? What are the remedies and beyond remedy, the hopes?

Have we not, as we see it, the best vision? The most encompassing, inclusive, good for us, good for others, outlook? Given the means to do what we know needs doing, would it not be the most beneficial thing for an ailing planet and its people? So what is not together for us? We feel weak, a little hollow. We are more than a little envious of the people to the right of us. They seem to have access to the means, the popular support, the support personnel, the media, and they speak in ways that appear to deal with crime, lawlessness, the quiet terror that grips us all issuing from the dark—shadow-stuff we don't like to touch. And damn it, they are so one-sidedly cocksure and we so evenhanded, vague, and tentative.

We work with reason, and are weak in faith. They work with volcanic seething feelings and hold to adamantine beliefs. We are *shvach*—weak about our connection with the God/Goddess, that politically correct divine immanence in us which does not much

inform our morals, and they are *shtark* with their transcendent power over God Almighty who determines for them right to life and family values. And we won't buy what they sell because the God within us is taking us through the paradigm shift into a new cosmology and with it into uncharted territories. That new cosmology that sets forth Gaian - Earth is alive - green - eco-kosher - *shomrey adamah* - egalitarian - feminist - meaning-oriented ground has not yet created the institutions that can manifest and embody that vision, that cosmology. And as Jews we have yet to conceive, format, receive the Torah for the next era. We have yet to make the current covenant to agree on the *mitzvot* that are to claim our fulfillment in the face of inconvenience, and our own severely limited time and energy.

The fact that as liberal-progressives we do not accept the icons of God that come to us from the past and pull us back to fixate us there—in the now-obsolete reality map does not mean that we have to give up our vertical connection.

We make an act of faith that the universe has purpose and meaning. And that it is of vital concern to keep alive and active our connection with that purpose.

In every paradigm people had icons, what kabbalists call *partzufim*, to connect them with the transmundane source. This is what placed them in a vital relation with the evolving, emerging process that guided the world and kept it in the homeostasis, the self-regulating system that we now understand as the hypothesis of Gaia, the living planet.

To cooperate with that process is what we mean as doing the Will of God. To stay in the flow of the flow, the *Shefa* of the evolving, emerging process which in our tradition we call the *Tzror Hachayim*, the bundle of life.

In every age and place people dreamed the *partzufim*, these icons, and from these there flowed the *Shefa* that energized them as the myth, the story, the meaning, the motivation, the covenant with the root metaphors, the icons that they invested in prayer, ritual, custom, and tradition.

This involved not only their mind but also their bodies, their hearts and feelings and most essentially their spiritual being. Thus empowered, the living *partzufim* made the people forceful and effective. They found the right action directives—*mitzvot,* liturgies, and rituals, the social connectivity that made for mutual support and gave them focus and endurance. We need to be made forceful and effective or else we are just producing words increasing the pollution of noise around us. Where there is *Shefa* there is energy and ecstasy, there is *Simchah shel Mitzvah*, not grimness and the edge of despair.

Somehow we are deeply aware that we are called by the living God, that One, holy, wholeness, caring, knowing, nurturing, guiding, and loving us daily, morning, noon, and night—like the siddur says— into life, awareness, and growth. And we want to and feel we must respond with *Tikkun Olam*. I like to translate l'*takken olam b'malkhut shaddai* [the kingdom that is enough], as *malkhut sh'da-i*, *sh'dayenu*, a realm in which we have sufficiency for all on this planet. There are some answers available when we are willing to see that there is more to us than the left brain, the cortex, than reason and ideology.



We need to bring our God into our political work. Let those who speak for choice speak so in the name of the *Shekhinah*, which gives women power and control over their bodies. We need to witness to the real presence of the *Shekhinah* in gay and lesbian commitments and households.

We need to become impeccable in our observance of eco-kashrut.

We as liberal Jews need to overcome our technophobia and put out our message on the information highway.

For those of us who have not experienced these spontaneous spiritual validations we need to create contemplative experiences in social and virtual reality that will help us in our spiritual unfoldment.

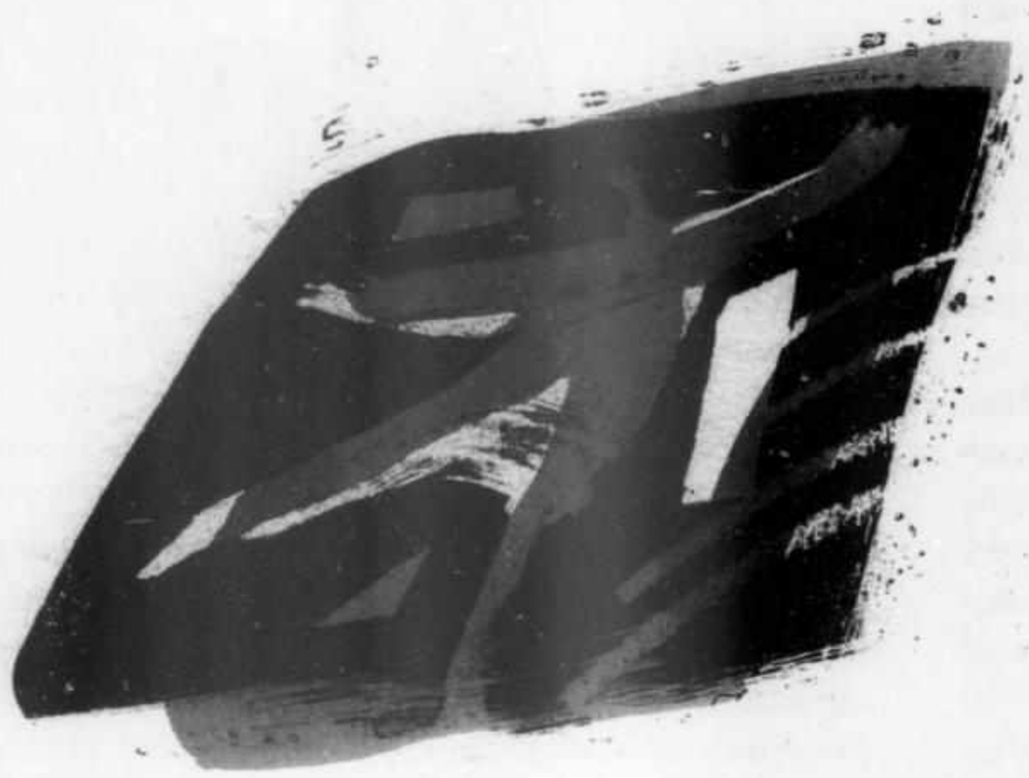
Now to shukkle downward. On the other side of the spectrum we need to find better ways to celebrate our *haggim* in nature, a seder around a campfire, an outdoor Shavuot, a camping experience in a *succah* so we become rooted again in the life of our planet.

We need to learn the basics of self-maintenance and care of our spiritual side and set real time and energy aside to foster it. Voting for the soul will not help us if we won't make the appropriations, budgets, and the necessary infrastructure for that maintenance.

We need to research and develop family rituals, socialized meditation, quality time celebrations, and

awareness fostering, shared being instead of doing. To renew the *Tish*, the sacred banquet of the celebration with our loved ones—and to invite the hungry, the homeless—and I am not only speaking of those who lack the physical food and shelter but also invite our friends and associates to taste and see that God is good.

Beyond teaching about condoms and AIDS we need to promote the *kiddush* of sacred sexuality and sensuality, to invite the *Shekhinah* into our intimacy and yield to Her gifts of delight and ecstasy. We need to recapture the healing, sacred anointing of the blessed ways of massage and the ministry of healing touch, the ways to effect mood shifts and to enter other states of consciousness so that when these special mysteries are celebrated in the presence of the *Shekhinah* we gratefully offer our delight and thanks to the living God.



We need to become creative in sacred dance and enhance and enlarge our liturgical repertoire for year and life-cycle celebrations. We can't be effective when we are grim. We need to dance our ideology, and others will dance it with us. We need to sing our credo in a joyous way, and others will sing along with us.

So we need to affirm and strengthen our connection with God, spend quality time with that connection so God can support and nurture us, and become clearer to us in what we are called to do and we need to adjust our priorities in this direction.

We need to sharpen our psycho-spiritual skills to be real and precise so that our prayer life will be awake. We need to open ourselves to become more expert in meditation and contemplation so we will have clarity and not burn out.

We will not succeed unless we will develop a new *mussar*, a moral ethical operating system, that is based on the affirmation of the primacy of all life on this planet, an affirmation of our sensual nature along with an asceticism of voluntary simplicity.

We need to rework our theology that it not remain triumphalist but become one that sees us as partners with other faith communities.

We need to keep awareness of the shadow energies in the world and, without yielding to paranoia, encounter them and channel their huge and volatile energies to be used in the service of the planet.

Among progressives and liberals we have not yet enough training to do this. Liberals and progressives have to begin to own the realms of shamanic transformative energy, feelings both light and dark—along with shadow, spirituality and the growth to an integral complexity. In the past we progressives and liberals wanted to inhabit only the reasonable universe of discourse and high moral ground. And we have lost our credibility because of the things we did not want to address. The reactionaries picked up what we dropped and thus established their credentials—credibility—with the masses. So we entered the territory of meaning. Once we have asked the questions concerning meaning, we need to bring in the non-verbal worlds of energy, commitment—*Kavannah*, loyalty, values, feelings, experience, spirituality, responsibility, myth —the light has gone out. But there has to be a *shiv'ah* on the past.

So I call on TIKKUN, its editors and readers, to open this conversation in its pages. To talk about God, soul, awareness feeling, and to open the conversation about the *partzufim*, the templates for our further development to give our politics a heart, a soul, a God, and to light that fire in our belly that will generate the updraft of energy that will attract people who will feel that there is Life in our camp. To design or re-design the template for the *tikkun* we want to accomplish we need some deep learning in which the tradition has much to offer. I say much, but not raw tradition, it needs to be cooked in prayer, in contemplation, and reformatted to continue and replicate some important processes from the past and to install them into the present environment.

All this we will have to work on and we are getting help. We are not alone, we are not just here because we wanted to come. We are here because we were deployed by a minding that is larger than our egos. Let us embrace that minding and as lovers make it fruitful and ecstatic.

We'll never solve all the problems of the world in a final solution in a once and for all way. This is the blessing that we are given to serve as the organ of Jewry in the organism of the planet, hopefully as an instrument for healing and wholeness and as an agent for holiness. □



detach here

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר בָּנוּ מִכָּל

TIKKUN

PASSOVER HAGGADAH SUPPLEMENT 1994

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

KIDDUSH

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

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

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

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

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

We celebrate tonight the courageous steps taken by the State of Israel to begin a process that will culminate in freeing the Palestinian people from occupation and oppression. The Jewish people jumped from the burning buildings of Europe and unintentionally landed on the backs of Palestinians. We did not intend to hurt them, and when we did hurt them we couldn't hear their cry of pain because our pain was so much greater. For the next forty-six years, we denied their existence because we had such trouble recognizing that we had unintentionally hurt them, and because our own pain still remained central in our consciousness. But now, finally, the State of Israel has taken the courageous step of recognizing the existence of the Palestinian people and its legitimate rights.

עַם, וְרוֹמְמוּ מִכָּל הַגְּבָעוֹת, וְקִדְּשׁוּ בְּמִכָּל הַתּוֹעֵבוֹת וּמִכָּל הַשְּׁקָצִים,

יְהוֹשֻׁעַ, וְשִׁבְּתוּ מִכָּל הַמְּלָאכָה מִכָּל הַמְּלָאכָה

יְהוֹשֻׁעַ, וְשִׁבְּתוּ מִכָּל הַמְּלָאכָה מִכָּל הַמְּלָאכָה

We understand that the process ahead will be complicated and full of moments of retreat. If the process drags on, Palestinian despair about substantive change in the conditions of the occupation may lead to terrorist provocations. Some Israeli settlers have vowed to wage war not only against Palestinians but also against any Israeli government that exchanges land for peace. Pessimists on both sides will contribute to the problem by exaggerating every act of violence as proof that reconciliation will be impossible.

But we, gathered here tonight, commit ourselves to supporting the State of Israel as it carries forward its task of reconciliation with the Palestinian people. We cannot support any solution to the problem that would endanger the existence of the State of Israel. But neither can we remain silent year after year as the Palestinian people continue to live under conditions of harsh occupation in the West Bank or refugee camps in the Arab world, yearning for a homeland just as we Jews once yearned for our own return to Zion. Their liberation and freedom can and must be achieved without harm to the safety, security, and freedom of the Jewish people—but we cannot close our ears to their cries and their pain.

Nor can we shut our ears to the cries of pain from Bosnia. We Jews have often shouted "Never Again." Although there are relevant differences between the Holocaust and ethnic cleansing in Bosnia, the slaughter there is outrageous and a violation of the image of God implanted in each person. We commit ourselves to going beyond ritual condemnations of the slaughter and to involve ourselves in practical political activity aimed at getting our government and the U.N. to immediately and forcefully end the slaughter.

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

After decades of selfishly squandering the resources of our society, we now find ourselves without the will or the resources to eradicate the vast inequalities that the past years have deepened. We are glad that the United States has the military power to challenge expansionist dictators; but we still know that the military budget could be decisively cut and tens of billions of dollars could be redirected to fight hunger and homelessness. Any celebration of our own freedom is incomplete unless we use this occasion to rededicate ourselves to redistributing the world's resources—and to remedying the inequalities that allow many of us in the United States to live in luxury and self-satisfaction while turning our backs on and shutting our ears to the thirty million children who will die of hunger this year. We are mindful that the very international economic arrangements that have brought comfort and wealth to the United States have simultaneously brought increasing poverty and suffering to peoples in the Third World.

This year we commit ourselves to actively and consciously struggling against the alienation, fragmentation, and meaninglessness in American life, and to support a change in American society from an ethos of selfishness and cynicism to an ethos of caring and idealism. We intend to widen the circle of our caring, so that it encompasses the poor and the oppressed, not only in the United States but also in Haiti, Mexico, El Salvador, Eastern Europe, Africa, and wherever else there is human suffering.

Passover, then, is not just a celebration of our own freedom—it is a moment in which we rededicate ourselves to the struggles for peace, justice, equality and meaningful lives for all peoples.

Bless the Vegetation of the Earth in Times of Ecological Crisis

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

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

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

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

As Jews, however, we recognize that our own fate is closely connected to the fate of others. The peasant in Brazil who has no other way to make a living but to cut down the rain forest, the Japanese fisherman who has no way to live but to

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

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

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

Drops from Our Cup of Joy

Before reciting the Ten Plagues.

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

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

Even though we are hopeful that Israel and the Palestinians will make progress towards peace this year, and even though we are proud of the courageous steps Israel has taken, we nevertheless cannot leave our cup of joy full as long as millions of Palestinians live in refugee camps or under Israel military rule.

We are particularly saddened by the continued economic oppression and spiritual suffering of African Americans. As people and corporations move from our inner cities, leaving them without a tax-base or employment possibilities, as social services deteriorate in the face of a mean-spirited backlash that defunds local and state governments, and as despair and meaninglessness yields drug abuse, alcoholism and a surge in acts of violence, the conditions of many African Americans deteriorates. Black Muslim demagogues and other rappers of despair and hate manipulate those feelings in racist, anti-Semitic and misogynist directions. We are furious at the anti-Semitism—and commit ourselves to fighting it wherever it rears its ugly head. But we also identify with the pain of those who have been subjected to systematic humiliation and discrimination. Remembering how less than a century ago it was Jews who were being blamed for having a culture that produced the sloth and ugliness of Eastern European ghetto life, we reject all attempts to blame the long history of oppression of Blacks on a "culture of poverty." Instead, even as we actively demand that Blacks repudiate and marginalize all anti-Semitic forces within their own communities, we simultaneously affirm our solidarity with them, and spill a drop of wine from our cups for the suffering and continued oppression of African Americans.

In Every Generation

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Pour Out Thy Wrath

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

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

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

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

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

Written by Michael Lerner, editor of Tikkun, *born in 1943 and shaped by the experiences of the Jewish people in that year.* *Please copy this Haggadah supplement, use it, and encourage its readers to subscribe to* Tikkun *magazine, in which the themes developed here are debated, refined, and developed into a Judaism for the contemporary age.*
Subscriptions: $31 to Tikkun, P.O. Box 460926, Escondido, CA 92046-9914.



Cosmopolitan Greetings

Allen Ginsberg

Research

Research has shown that black people have inferiority complexes regarding white folks
Research has shown that Jews are exclusively concerned with financial lasciviousness
Research has shown Socialism to be a universal failure wherever practiced by secret police
Research has shown that Earth was created 4004 B.C., a Divine Bang
Research has shown that sparrows, bees, lizards, chickens, pigs & cows exhibit signs of homosexual behavior when in prison
Research has shown Southern Baptist Inerrancy Confession the most virulent form of Christian Truth
Research has shown that 90% of people going to Dentists have bad teeth
brush your teeth violently 3 times a day after meals wear away the roots
Research has shown that Hollywood makes the best films ever, though sexually degenerate
that the U.N. is Good [ ] Bad [ ] Indifferent [ ] for American interests Check One
Research has shown that Christian Reconstructionist homosexuality is Sin, Lesbianism crime against nature, AIDS a plague sent to punish gay Angelmakers
bisexuality disapproved by 51% Americans
Research has shown that teen headshakers watching TV get more IQ tests than natives of Amazon & Ucayali rivers who have no antennae
Research has shown whales & porpoises to subscribe to a Higher Intelligence
Research has shown that Elitist Individualism Spiritual Corruption & Degenerate Art caused Dictatorships in Soviet Union China and Germany
that possession of pornography by American Family Institute has resulted in 35% increase in sex crimes among institute librarians
viewing murderous behavior on TV sitcoms resulted in 100% increased violent language behavior by intercontinental Heads of State
To conclude research has shown that the material universe does not exist May 20, 1992

Calm Panic Campaign Promise

End of Millennium
Earth's decay—
Fire Air Water tainted
We're the Great Beast—
Dark bed thoughts,
Can't do anything to stop it—
Denial in Government, in Newspapers of Record—
Like watching gum disease & not brushing teeth
Getting heart failure, no rest much stress
Putting salt on your greasy Pork
Putting sugar in coffee you're diabetic
Disaesthesia on foot soles
Poor circulation, smoke more cigarettes
Kick your son under the table have another beer
Need President who'll reverse the denial
The Calm Panic Party
to restore nature's balance. 7/9/92 12:55 a.m.

Allen Ginsberg is an internationally renowned poet and world citizen. His signal poem, "Howl," published in 1956, became one of the most widely read and translated poems of the century. These poems will appear in his new collection, Cosmopolitan Greetings, *to be published by HarperCollins in May.*
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Grandma Earth's Song

I started down Capitol Hill side along unfamiliar
black central avenues
warily uncertain which streets thru Fillmore district
to City Hall valley center,
and as I passed a block or two I saw a fragile crone
marching towards me
up hill, Grandma Bag-lady ragged dressed with firm
ancient steps Old Ma Earth
dragging a shopping cart filled with bottles &
plastic newspapers tied
with silk stockings wandering alone singing out loud
on way to Civic Center

When dull roots write Laws
Jerusalem to New York
Poor Jews break Arab Jaws
Blacks eat greasy pork

What's the Planet News?
Wall Street's poison pill
Palestinians stone Jews
Water runs downhill

Young soldiers gonna die
Old presidents get AIDS
They bankrupted the sky
The ozone layer fades

Crazy people got money
I own State Capitols
Sheriff calls me honey
The army's a bunch of fools

I want my welfare stamps
I want my movie show
I got ten kerosene lamps
I'm 99 years old

This town's already dead
This country's on the skids
This state's made out of lead
I can't feed my kids

My name is Gaia ah ha ha
Put me in jail I screw the sky
Nothing to win or lose Poppa
Born your gonna die.

Adam bombs & newsboy hoaxes
Fakers yak the oval room
I live in cardboard boxes
They killed the ocean's womb.

Tear up your welfare check
I'll eat my way to Heaven
Throw me in Walnut Creek
I'll vomit Pacific Ocean

Wakening as she passed by I thought, she's
improvising street doggerel
epic popular song cackling in everyone's Immortal
brain
Anything that comes to mind's the right politics to
ruin Police State.

2/13/88, 7:30 - 9 a.m.

The State of Contemporary Politics and Culture

Elizabeth Fox-Genovese

Since the 1960s, progressive politics and culture have developed under the shadow of the movements for what is called human liberation, from which they have never broken. Predicated upon an unflinching opposition to authority—regularly depicted as illegitimate—that cripples the opportunities and potential of individuals and groups, those movements have focused upon the destruction of practices, institutions, and, most portentously, attitudes deemed hostile to the flowering of human freedom. The civil rights movement established the basic pattern and rhetoric, which were in turn adopted by the women's movement and then a succession of movements notably for gay liberation, but also for the handicapped and those of various ethnici-

Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, who publishes widely on women's issues, is author of Feminism Without Illusions: A Critique of Individualism, *and a professor of history and women's studies at Emory University.*

ties. Significantly, each of these movements preeminently grounded their claims in individual rights.

To be sure, the attentive might have noticed that confusion was brewing, if only because individuals claimed rights through their membership in specific groups rather than their status as individuals. But initially few noticed. Fresh with the disquieting recognition that, as individuals, Black Americans did not enjoy the same rights as white Americans, progressives were open to the claims that numerous other Americans, notably women, had been systematically excluded from those rights as well. Having been convinced that reigning pieties about the equality of individual rights had been exposed as a swindle, they guiltily and uncritically embraced each fresh claim for liberation as it appeared. All members of the polity demonstrably did not enjoy equal rights independent of their sex, race, religion, or national origin. And since the playing field was not level, it must be leveled by whatever means necessary.

Since well before Marx, claims for liberation have invariably had a utopian cast, which is to say, they have drawn upon the fantasy that each of us should be free to express our own naturally wholesome nature. In practice, utopian movements have, more often than not, tended to end in a new, and frequently draconian, authoritarianism. As we know from the experience of the post-colonial world in our own time, movements for national liberation frequently require strict military discipline, which usually end in one or another form of political tyranny. The sad truth remains that human beings cannot always be counted upon to do as their liberators believe they should.

It has been characteristic of various progressive movements, especially those that openly call for liberation, to reject the "traditional" morality of those they are opposing as at best hypocritical and at worst oppressive. It has also been characteristic of such movements to claim that they serve and will implement a higher morality. The liberation movements of our time started out in the same vein, although it is significant that Dr. Martin Luther King, at his finest in the March on Washington, expanded his movement from Black people to poor people. But with the passage of time, progressive evocations of morality have tended to falter in the face of mounting claims for individual liberation from authority.

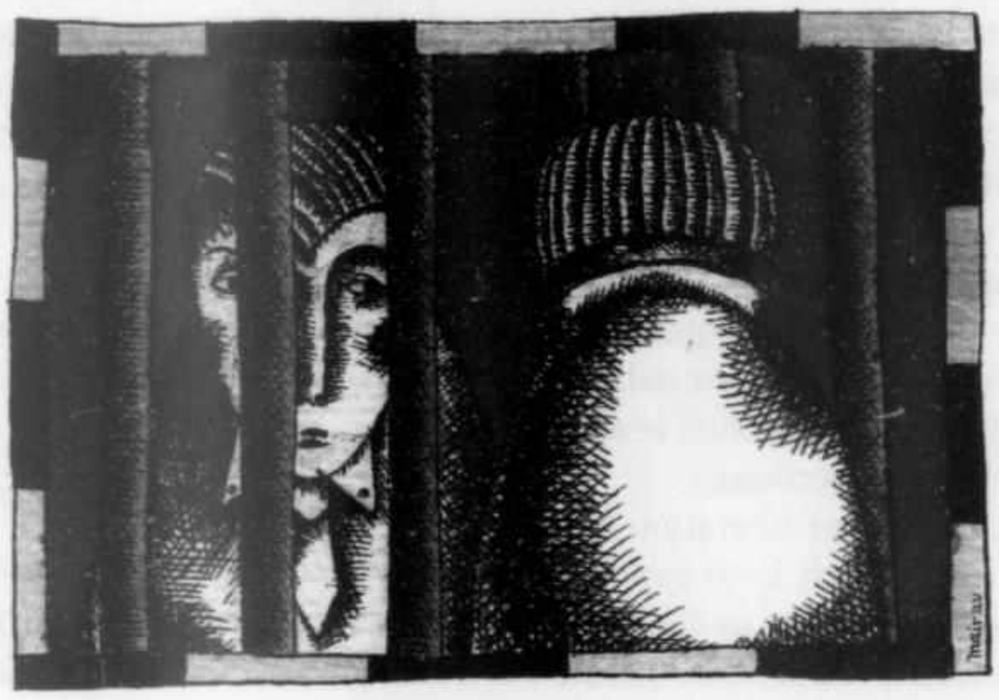
Progressive politics and, even more, progressive culture in our day have yet to confront squarely the difficult truth that morality is inherently authoritarian and discriminatory. For the essence of morality is to establish and enforce boundaries between the permissible and the impermissible. Oh, you pick up hints that people recognize the problem. Many of those who rebel against "traditional" morality claim to be opposing its illegitimate authority; many of those who support codes and regulations to control those who violate their standards of correct behavior claim to be acting in the name of morality. But, as a rule, we hear few open admissions that human liberation requires either that no one ever tell anyone else what to do, or that a few impose their specific moral program upon the rest. Presumably, we do not engage in those discussions because they too clearly reveal the contradiction at the heart of progressive politics as the struggle for liberation, to say nothing of the extraordinary vagueness of just what we wish to be liberated from.

Since women tend to be less physically strong than men, they should not be required to play by the same rules—or, more accurately, they should not be penalized for not playing by the rules.

Progressive politics and culture have poor prospects if they do not engage the problem of morality directly, not least because, to the best of my knowledge, no society has ever survived without a moral standard that commands a broad consensus. More immediately, morality inescapably raises the issue that most seriously cripples progressive politics in our time, namely the relation between the individual and the collectivity. At least in the Western tradition, morality has always depended upon a notion of individual responsibility or accountability, but it has always been established collectively by the group. In the strict sense, individual morality in isolation is meaningless. An individual is moral only in the measure that he or she conforms to the prevailing standards of a community, which means in the measure that he or she observes some fundamental rules, which means in the measure that he or she accepts some authority beyond the individual. "I want," or even "I believe," much less, "I feel," does not morality make. Yes, the Western (Judeo-Christian) tradition has always included space for the individual who refuses to conform to the standards of the group in the name of a higher morality, but such righteous rebellions have been launched in the name of a higher authority, not personal convenience.

You may well wonder about my insistence upon morality when we are here to discuss politics and

culture. Or, to paraphrase Tertullian, what has morality to do with culture and politics? Today, we, not to mention the American people, have become understandably cynical about the relation between morality and politics. And serious engagement with morality has long since disappeared from most of the academy and the cultural elite. Have we not come to accept that even culture is predominantly a matter of power—of who has the power to impose his, or more rarely her, views upon others? We have all become experts in the inequalities of power, which many easily equate with the discrediting of morality. And from college sex and speech codes, to redrawn voting districts, to affirmative action, many embrace ways to counteract those inequalities. Each of those initiatives, and others as well, embodies the assumption that specific groups are disadvantaged relative to others—normally the white men who have proverbially run the world and enjoyed its spoils. Each of these initiatives also serves to advance the prospects of individuals who identify their cause with the cause of the group, or, less candidly, the reverse. These are not questions of morality, they are questions of power.



Cynicism notwithstanding, morality remains the central issue, if only because it imposes limits upon the exercise of power. More to the point, morality establishes the limits within which our power struggles unfold. Morality defines some things as literally beyond the pale, which means sanctionable. Without a minimal moral consensus, we lose the will and the ability to repudiate or punish any action, however egregious. It is no secret that the Right has frequently evoked morality in this punitive sense, which has led the Left to reject morality as the most efficient way of combating the Right. At the moment most Americans, including those on the Left, favor stronger measures against crime, not because they regard killing as immoral—although many still do—but because they are afraid. And should that fear prevail or increase, we may well find ourselves supporting measures that under ordinary conditions would make us wince. The reasons for this state of affairs are numerous and complex, but surely among them ranks many people's reluctance simply to label killing as morally unacceptable and to hold less fortunate people to the same standards to which they hold themselves. And the real danger, should unpalatably severe measures not be implemented, would be many people's growing reluctance to hold even themselves to the standards they would once have regarded as moral imperatives.

We see the signs in the Bobbitt and Menendez cases and others like them, not to mention the increasing number of Americans who carry guns in case they might have to defend themselves. Lethal weapons offer a way to redress imbalances of power. Since women tend to be less physically strong than men, they should not be required to play by the same rules—or, more accurately, they should not be penalized for not playing by the rules. Women are at a physical, and some would add psychological, disadvantage in dealing with male abusers. The police and the courts have not proved as successful as most of us would like in preventing men from battering and raping wives and girlfriends. But does it necessarily follow that women should be exonerated for actions for which men would be punished? And on what grounds? At the moment, the grounds seem to be that since women are less powerful they must be licensed to equalize the imbalance of power in any way they see fit. It matters not at all that in any specific case, most or all of us would sympathize with the woman. The inescapable consequence of such attitudes is to move morality from an ideal to a utilitarian or instrumental realm, from a standard that applies to the community to one that serves the individual's convenience. And it is worth recalling, in the Bobbitt case, that for at least the last three hundred years, Western societies have waged a resolute campaign against physical maiming as beyond the pale of any civilized society.

These attitudes do not necessarily differentiate progressives from those on the right, except perhaps in the exceptions to general standards that each side favors. But that hardly exonerates progressives of the responsibility to reclaim some moral ground. Many on the Left no doubt believe that Hegel, Marx, and

Freud have taught us to expose the hypocrisy of bourgeois morality and even the "false consciousness" of those who naively take its prescriptions at face value. And postmodern Leftists have absorbed a heavy dose of Nietzschean recognition of the modern "destruction of the *moral* interpretation of the world." In our power-driven, secular age, the Nietszchean assumption apparently prevails that "the goal is lacking; the answer is lacking to our 'Why?'."

Even as the collapse of the world socialist movement seems to have discredited Marx and the sexual revolution seems to have marginalized Freud, many progressives continue to draw the wrong lessons from both—preeminently the exposure of so-called morality as the bad faith attempt of some to control others. In fairness, in the measure that Marx never repudiated the utopianism of his youth, he did bequeath the deceptive legacy of a world in which each would, without struggle, suffering, or sacrifice, receive what he or she needed. That his historical writings told a different—and incompatible—story has too frequently been brushed aside. Marx did understand that economic issues have always been moral issues and that the individualist logic of "to them that hath shall be given" fell short of optimal social justice. But even Marx did not foresee the portentous intermingling of economic and moral issues in our time, doubtless because he foresaw an endless expansion of material resources.

Progressive politics and culture have yet to come to terms with that intermingling, nor will they be able to do so as long as they persist in identifying themselves with liberation. The logic of our times is precisely the reverse. In advanced—post-capitalist, if you will—modern economies, each of us, from the wealthiest to the poorest, depends in some measure upon public resources, notably in matters of education, health, and the environment. Economic issues are moral issues. But they cannot begin to be seriously discussed if we proceed on the tacit assumption that each of us is struggling for a larger slice of the pie. Redistribution of resources alone will solve nothing. If economic issues are moral issues, then we must have a moral code or baseline that governs their resolution and that subjects each of us to the same principles or rules.

The problems of sexual morality are no less acute. Freud taught us to recognize the cauldron of drives and emotions that seethes within each of us. He never suggested that they should all be acted out. To the contrary, he normally assumed that knowledge of unconscious drives provided the best basis for conscious mastery of them. He did not assume that just because sexual morality contained, shaped, and suppressed drives it could be dispensed with. The worst of the inner cities are giving us some harbinger of what a world of unbridled ids might look like. And progressives have yet to explain satisfactorily how that sinister world is to be distinguished from individual liberation.

During the last thirty years, Western societies, especially our own, have effectively severed the ties between morality and sexuality. Why should consenting adults not do as they choose, provided no one—or no one who does not willingly consent—gets hurt? The problem of who may get hurt is proving more complex than initially suspected, but the yet more serious probems concern our attitudes toward reproduction, which we are also tending to divorce from morality. Progressive politics and culture today take as axiomatic that women must be liberated from all of the constraints that prevented their attaining equality with men. And should liberation from constraints fail to effect the desired sexual equality as rapidly as we had hoped, then the playing field must be leveled by whatever means necessary. As the Bobbitt case suggests, this scenario carries portentous consequences, and beyond the legal issues, it normally entails a significant increase in state power that may not be compatible with all strands of progressive political thought. But those are other matters for another day.

Here, I simply wish to suggest that the campaign to liberate women has increasingly pointed toward a liberation from responsibility for children in particular and the moral work of society in general. On what grounds may women be held to standards and responsibilities from which men are exempt? In a world in which most women must work for wages, the question is eminently fair. But even its fairness cannot disguise the inevitable, if unintended, consequence that the liberation of women is effectively resulting in all of our liberation from the moral responsibility for children. Make no mistake. I am not falling into the trap of those on the Right who claim that if women would only return to the nursery and the kitchen everything would return to "normal." It is not morally acceptable to require women to embrace their own impoverishment or destruction—and frequently that of their children as well. But no righteous protests about the exploitation of women can obscure what is emerging as the most pressing problem of our time, namely the fate and prospects of our children. For children do embody the future of the collectivity, and no individual right to personal liberation can cancel our collective moral responsibility to them. □

Transforming Victimization

Martha T. McCluskey

Violence against women by middle- or upper-class white men traditionally has been invisible in the public eye. Systematic public denial is the foundation of many of the horrors of modern times. Yet how can we reveal and heal previously hidden injustices, such as domestic violence, acquaintance rape, and sexual harassment, without contributing to the dominant story, which casts women as inevitably damaged and vulnerable to male control? And how can we publicly validate previously silenced personal pain without institutionalizing new forms of unproductive silence?

Instead of dismissing victim stories as individual whining that breeds division and cynicism at worst or paternalistic protection at best, I am interested in how stories of personal suffering can be used as a means of building public empathy.

Recently, media attention has focused on the "feminist victimization" problem on college campuses in the context of date-rape education programs and rules governing hate speech and sexual conduct. In this discussion, heterosexual white men at elite colleges are often presented as newly silenced victims of feminist excess and repression. And some people worry that such a focus on women college students as victims of sexual violence will perpetuate antifeminist stereotypes of white, economically privileged women as sexually passive and helpless.

My view is that narratives of women's sexual victimization *can* in some circumstances be used to establish women as empowered and responsible agents. After all, those who identify with privileged male authority have always had it both ways: Our legal system is testament to their success at positioning themselves as both victims and agents. Clarence Thomas, for example, achieved his position of supreme public authority through a story of his personal suffering as "high-tech lynching" victim. It is not the subject matter of one's story—victimization—but rather one's position as authoritative subject that determines whether or not narratives of harm bolster or undermine one's power and autonomy. As an example, I'm going to talk about victim stories in one dispute about "political correctness" on college campuses—a lawsuit challenging Colby College's decision to prohibit students from belonging to fraternities.

Colby (a small, selective liberal arts school in Maine) banned fraternities and sororities in 1984 as a response to the fraternities' history of sexism, harassment, vandalism, and other problems. In 1990, after six years of continuing problems with fraternities that continued to flourish underground despite the ban, the college punished a group of students for participating in the initiation rituals of a fraternity called Lambda Chi Alpha. The college barred the Lambda Chi seniors from marching in graduation ceremonies and suspended the other members for one semester.

The Maine Civil Liberties Union then initiated a lawsuit on behalf of the punished fraternity members under a new state human rights law. The Civil Liberties Union claimed that the college violated the fraternity members' First Amendment freedom of association rights. In media stories about the lawsuit, the Civil Liberties Union and national fraternity leaders portrayed the fraternity ban as part of a dangerous new wave of intolerance sweeping the country, as colleges force "politically correct" views on students as a result of feminist complaints.

In response, I wrote several essays for local media raising the question of whether some Colby College fraternities might possibly be hate groups in which membership might in some circumstances have the effect of limiting others' equally important freedoms. My essays about the fraternity case were in part a story of my own victimization as a student at Colby. I'm going to repeat a part of my victim story here as an example of the feminist victimization problem. By telling this story, I'm acting out the victim/agency contradiction which I want to transform: I'm positioning myself as silenced victim of misogynist violence and at the same time as speaking author attempting to rewrite the framework within which my victimization is told.

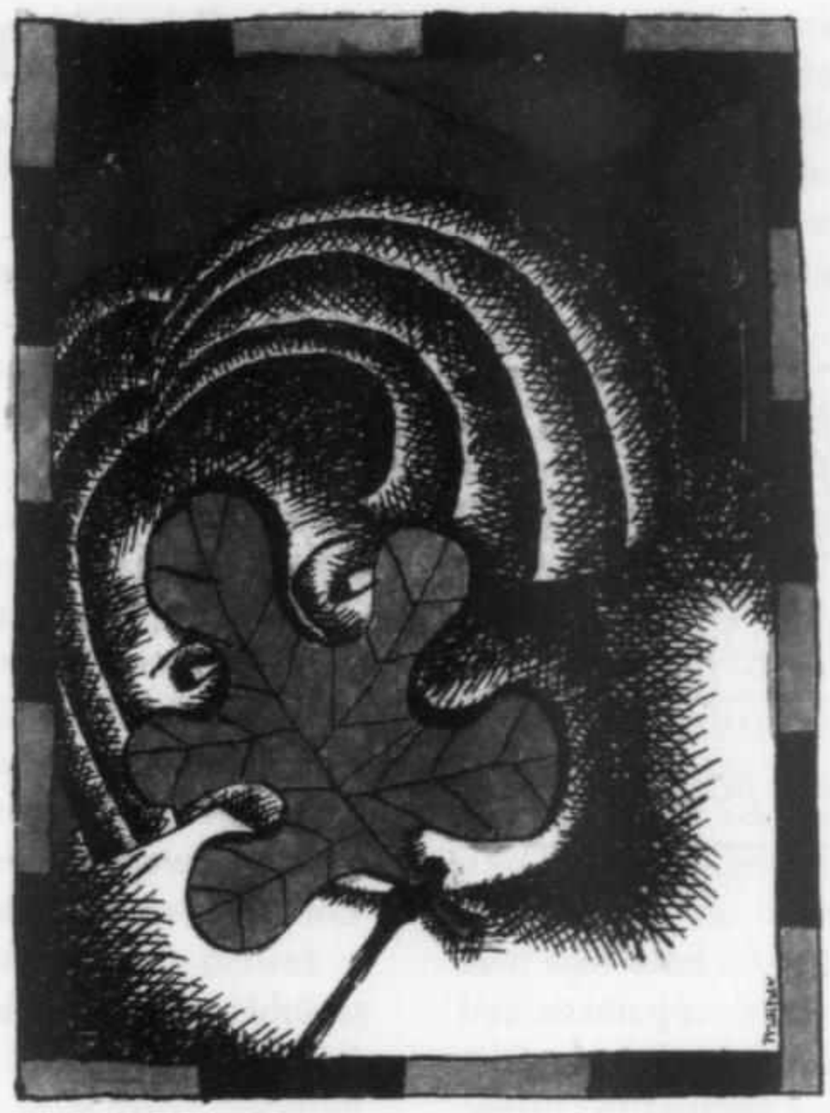
It is 1977 at Colby College. I'm a student living on Third Floor Dana. Most of the guys on our hall are pledging Lambda Chi and KDR, rumored to be the worst fraternities on campus—and the most prestigious.

It's the beginning of a vacation and my dorm is quiet and nearly empty. I am standing in the hallway looking out the window for my ride home. I turn around and

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my suitcase is gone; Joe and Bill from down the hall are laughing as they carry it away. I follow them. I hear a door lock behind me. They let go of my suitcase and grab me.

I am lying on the bare linoleum floor of Joe's bedroom. In the room are a group of Lambda Chi and KDR pledges who live on my hall; several of them are football players. Some are sitting on the bed, laughing. Two others are pinning my arms and my legs to the floor. Joe is touching me while the others cheer.



I am a friendly fellow-classmate as I reasonably explain that I'm in a rush to catch a ride; that I'm not in the mood to joke around; that I'd really like them to please cut it out. It takes a few long upside-down seconds before things look different. As I start to scream and fight, they let me go.

Later I don't talk about this, not even to myself. I sit near Joe and Bill in sociology and English classes. I don't talk in class.

I used this and other stories of misogynist victimization by Colby fraternity members to try to raise the question of harm to women and other students caused by fraternity membership, a question that had been until then completely left out of the media discussion of the fraternity lawsuit. But the critics of "victim feminism" are right that, interpreted as a confession of my victimization in itself, my story is risky.

The traditional stereotype of certain women as passive sexual victims is inseparable from the traditional stereotype about "other" women as sinister sexual agents. To the extent my victim story is compelling, it reveals my exercise of authority as illegitimately powerful emotional manipulation, while at the same time it shows that I am an emotional, vulnerable female who needs protection from responsible, rigorous debate. Placed within the dominant civil libertarian framework, when I speak about fraternity violence against women, I'm talking about emotional personal experience. In contrast, those who speak about college restrictions on men's right to associate as fraternity brothers are invoking rational universal principles.

Victim narratives starring privileged heterosexual men are central to establishing the legitimacy of their demands for protection. Reporting on Colby's decision to enforce its ban on fraternities by suspending (not expelling) the members for one semester, a national fraternity leader complained that Colby's president "and his hand-picked thought police regiment have advanced repression to new heights ... making it a crime punishable by expulsion to be a heterosexual male who chooses to formalize his friendship with other like-minded friends away from campus." Reaching even further, one fraternity member's letter printed in the campus newspaper declared that the college's ban on fraternities was a "form of genocide" comparable to the Holocaust and the Cambodian killing fields.

There's been a flurry of books and media discussions recently which have widely questioned whether feminists' efforts to stop public denial of sexual violence has led to careless use of the terms "rape" and "sexual harassment." Why isn't there a similarly hot market for books and talk shows urging a heterosexual white male audience to be scrupulously self-critical when they talk about their concerns about feminist tactics?

Indeed, victim narratives by those with social privilege often work to deny responsibility for the social agency that results from that privilege, cleverly making the most privileged people deserving of the greatest legal protection for their suffering. A law journal article cited by fraternity lawyers in the Colby case pointed to evidence of widespread fraternity violence against women as proof that fraternity men suffer from lower self-confidence than college women—suggesting that as a result fraternity men are more disadvantaged and more in need of special legal rights than the women they assault.

Critics of "victim feminism" argue that many women shrink from identifying with feminism because of the indignity of the victim role that

feminists present. *Newsweek*'s cover story on "Sexual Correctness" on campus acknowledges statistics showing college women are at high risk of sexual assault but then comments: "You want to talk victimization? Talk to the mothers all over America whose children have been slaughtered in urban cross-fire."

Speaking out about personal pain should be viewed not as an unquestionable revelation of authentic inner experience, but as one honorable way of asserting public power, carrying with it the responsibilities and dangers of such power.

Such criticisms tend not to challenge the identification of victims of oppression as pathetic and impotent, but instead aim to simply displace the traditional negative victim image from elite college women onto "others" supposedly distant in terms of race, class, religion, ethnicity, or mental ability. Instead of drawing lines between authentic helpless "victims" and tough empowered "agents," we need to question this dichotomy and recognize that we each share a complicated and contextual mixture of identities of privilege and oppression.

Victim stories alone are not transformative, just as they are not in themselves victimizing. Speaking out about personal pain should be viewed not as an unquestionable revelation of authentic inner experience, but as one honorable way of asserting public power, carrying with it the responsibilities and dangers of such power. By telling my victim story publicly, my goal is not to claim an absolute status as oppressed, nor to inspire apologetic expressions of sympathy or affirmation, but to provoke a rigorous and respectful debate about the line between speech and conduct and to examine the ways perceptions of harm are socially constructed. In order to shape more compassionate and responsible communities with less pain and more pleasure, victim narratives should be a starting point for questioning our assumptions about when we need to accept our fears and our pain as part of giving up privilege and learning to recognize others' sometimes conflicting needs, and when instead we can responsibly demand a community response to our pain as a matter of public principle. □

My Generation

Akiba Lerner

A few weeks ago, my father asked me if there was any way to mobilize students on my campus and campuses across this country to take some course of action in response to the atrocities committed in Bosnia. I thought about it for awhile and then shamefully shook my head and said, "Most likely no. Not the kind of action that would be necessary." I then went on to describe to him just such an attempt at my campus during the spring of last year.

Jewish and Muslim students had finally gotten together to stage a joint protest against the atrocities in Bosnia. It was held at lunchtime in Sproul Plaza at U.C. Berkeley. There were posters up displaying the horrors that had become a daily occurrence for many Bosnians. There was also a number of speakers ready to wake up the crowd to the daily pain of the Bosnian people. I'll never forget this moment. About twenty of us stood holding our signs. Most students just walked by instead of listening to a Muslim who had just returned from Sarajevo describe soldiers raping pregnant women, then making bets on the babies' gender and proceeding to cut the women open to see who had won.

As I stood there in horror and disgust, I was suddenly shocked out of my haze of Holocaust imagery by the sound of distant drumming. Boom-ba-ba-boom-ba-boom-ba-boom-boom. It got louder, approaching us. Boom-ba-ba-boom-ba-boom-ba-boom-boom. Then, as if from nowhere, a parade of Koreans come marching down, playing their drums and dancing around with their dragon in celebration of some holiday of which we were all clearly ignorant. As soon as they came, they circled Sproul Fountain and were gone.

The speaker, who was forced to stop, and the demonstrators, all twenty of us, were stunned, not sure what to do next. The speaker decided to go on with his tales of terror and his plea for action. It was at this moment that I got it. What a circus!

Now don't get me wrong, I'm all for Koreans or any other group claiming a public space for celebration that had been reserved for protest. After all, who am I to

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claim a hierarchy of importance? I don't think this group of celebrants intended to disrupt the rally. In fact, considering the pitiful attendance at the rally, I'm sure the they didn't even know about its existence. Nevertheless, I couldn't help but to feel in my heart that there was something wrong with what I had just witnessed.

Like a good college student, I immediately began to dissect and analyze what had bothered me so much about the minor interruption of a college campus protest. What I concluded is that what really bothers me is my generation. When we are referred to as "Generation X" or the "lost generation," the media and the critics can get away with it, because we have failed to name ourselves through a purpose or mission. As a friend of mine who is into cultural studies puts it, "It is the naming of the nameless." Maybe there is a mystical message in all this. But politically, it's been devastating.

Of course, I understand that the whole construction of such categories of generational consciousness may itself be a media hype. People are encouraged to identify with the generation because they are looking for a radical subject, a subject that can be a moving historical force. Many people find it hard to identify with categories like "the international working class," or to think in class terms at all. There is the fragmentation of identities that is pervasive throughout society. So even the construction of a phenomenon such as "the Sixties," tends to create a certain cohesion and sense of social location that gives people some degree of power, allowing them to lift themselves outside of their individual place and to connect with a larger reality.

You, the generation that went before us, unintentionally made it hard for us. The problem is not what you did, but your lack of intellectual coherence. You rightly protested the war in Vietnam, you rightly supported and involved yourselves in the struggles for Black liberation, women's liberation, and sexual liberation. What became lost in the social struggle, however, was a totalizing of theories and passions of the sort that provided the intellectual tools for you to construct proper paths of action. Instead of developing a framework by which all of the various forms of struggle could be integrated into a sustainable vision for the good and for the future, the generation of the Sixties fell prey to valorizing each and every form of localized resistance without providing a universal understanding of how specific forms of oppression and resistance could be integrated into constructive forms of growth and unity. The generation of the Sixties fell prey to thinkers such as Foucault and others whose main message was, "Forget about changing the fundamental structures of society, it can never really happen." Instead, most focused in on a specific group with which they could identify. Adorno put it best when he said, "It's all about messages in bottles on the flood of barbarism."

The generation of the sixties fell prey to valorizing each and every form of localized resistance without providing an understanding of how specific forms of repression and resistance could be integrated into constructive forms of growth and unity.

So many of you fled to the universities to develop the proper discourse that could be placed in such bottles with the understanding that in reality, speech and the realm of linguistics was most likely the only realm left in which notions of universals could be talked about, and even there, only through the constant problemization of the signifiers to the signified. In Jewish history, we can find a very painful lesson about the benefits of unified revolt over that of this integrated resistance. A month ago, we celebrated Hanukkah, a holiday that celebrated the collective efforts of a people throwing off the yoke of imperialist oppression. Later, however, under the Romans, when Jews tried once again to stage a national liberation struggle, they failed. Rabbis later told us that it was because Jews were fighting amongst themselves. They were unable or unwilling to put up a collective struggle. From this result, we get the image of Masada: alone, noble, willing to die for the cause except truly impotent to challenge the might of Rome. Maybe, just maybe, a collective effort could have vanquished the Roman presence in ancient Israel. I relay to you this bit of history for its metaphorical content and its applicability to contemporary America.

As a result of the inability of the generation of the Sixties to construct a unified front against the forces of "Rome," or as Bob Marley would put it, "Babylon consciousness," my generation is faced with the "masadization" of politics. Each group sees itself alone, stuck on a rock, surrounded by a sea of people dominated by bad consciousness. At the same time it is unable to traverse these treacherous waters that make Afro-Americans, Mexican-Americans, or simply the Others seem as if they belong to a separate island community of resistance. Unfortunately, my generation has become comfortable with this "masadization" of resistance. From our fortified positions, we cheer as

Blacks, gays, women, Asians, Jews, when people like George Bush are brought down.

But the notion of acting as a unified force is not only utopian, but some would even say treacherous. The suicidal, self-cannibalizing presence that engulfed Masada, I fear, is very much alive within the fortresses those who consider themselves "socially aware" have constructed for themselves. There is a line from an REM song that goes, "It's the end of the world as we know it, and I feel fine." The cynicism and pessimism caused by the failures of the liberation struggles over the last twenty years because of their reluctance to act in unison has had a crippling effect on my generation.

My generation is far more sophisticated at its age than you were at a comparable age. We absorb the scandal, the outrage, and the disillusionment, and we know how much things stink in America. But we've also learned that nothing can be done.

My generation grew up into a world in which there has been no universal vision of a "good." Not from the mainstream, and not from the Left. Instead we have been taught that even thinking in these terms must necessarily lead to the imposition of somebody's hegemony over someone else, and that there is nothing but particularistic identities shattering all universals. I don't think you realize how disempowering this has become.

Multiculturalism as a demand to respect difference is entirely legitimate. Multiculturalism as a demand to validate everything equally, a demand to reject universal standards, moral ideals, a demand to respect every specific tradition, regardless of its content, ends up paralyzing us. As a result, no one feels that she or he has the right to speak out in moral outrage, because that moral outrage might only be the result of a specific and limited perspective. But without the ability to articulate moral outrage, there can be no Left consciousness.

My generation is far more sophisticated at its age than you were at a comparable age. We absorb the scandal, the outrage, and the disillusionment, and we know how much things stink in America. But we've also learned that nothing can be done. That you are foolish or worse if you even try. And then, of course, there are the media. The media that also see through everything, but understand nothing. The media that fragment all experience. That break down all comprehension of history. That promote historical amnesia. It seems as if the media played a more ambiguous role in your generation, giving you a sense of having shared some formative cultural and political experiences and providing a common language. Today, the media do all they can to undermine any common language, leaving us without any particular framework with which to communicate.

You who are over forty may underestimate the level of alienation and fragmentation that exists for those of us in our twenties. You doubt me? Take a walk on any college campus and just look around. What I've discovered is that the Left is good at putting things down, but it's really not very good at supporting things, building things, providing alternatives. I don't know if they notice this or not, but they haven't gotten very far with my generation, and they won't. Because they don't understand the terms or the issues we face. I believe the politics of meaning is the only approach that begins to understand and speak a relevant language. I don't yet know how to implement this in my own generation.

I don't see these issues that I've raised as specifically Jewish issues, but they are complicated for Jewish progressives because so many Jews who have progressive politics and are under thirty have a particularly difficult identity crisis. A few of us have learned a great deal about our Jewish heritage. But those of us who find it exciting find that we have few allies. We are forced to choose between Orthodox young people who are "into it" but are identified with the worst right-wing politics, and progressive Jews who sometimes have no direction other than to follow every other oppressed group.

It's time for us to embrace our Jewishness. And it's also time to embrace a politics of meaning, precisely because a politics of meaning unashamedly embraces ideas like objective ethics and insists that we have common interests that transcend our particular identities and yet doesn't ask us to reject those identities. I don't pretend to know how to actualize these ideas, but I do think that a national campaign for a politics of meaning could get a lot of support on college campuses. As a person in his twenties, however, I am well aware of the difficult struggle ahead of us, especially with our peers. So I end here by saying only this: As Rabbi Tarfon said, "It is not incumbent upon you to complete the work, and neither are you free to desist from it." Taking on the dominant discourse is no small task. It's huge and seemingly impossible. But the power of the people is stronger than the man's technology, and yes, the TV generation shall overcome. Keep the faith. □

Victims, Memory, History

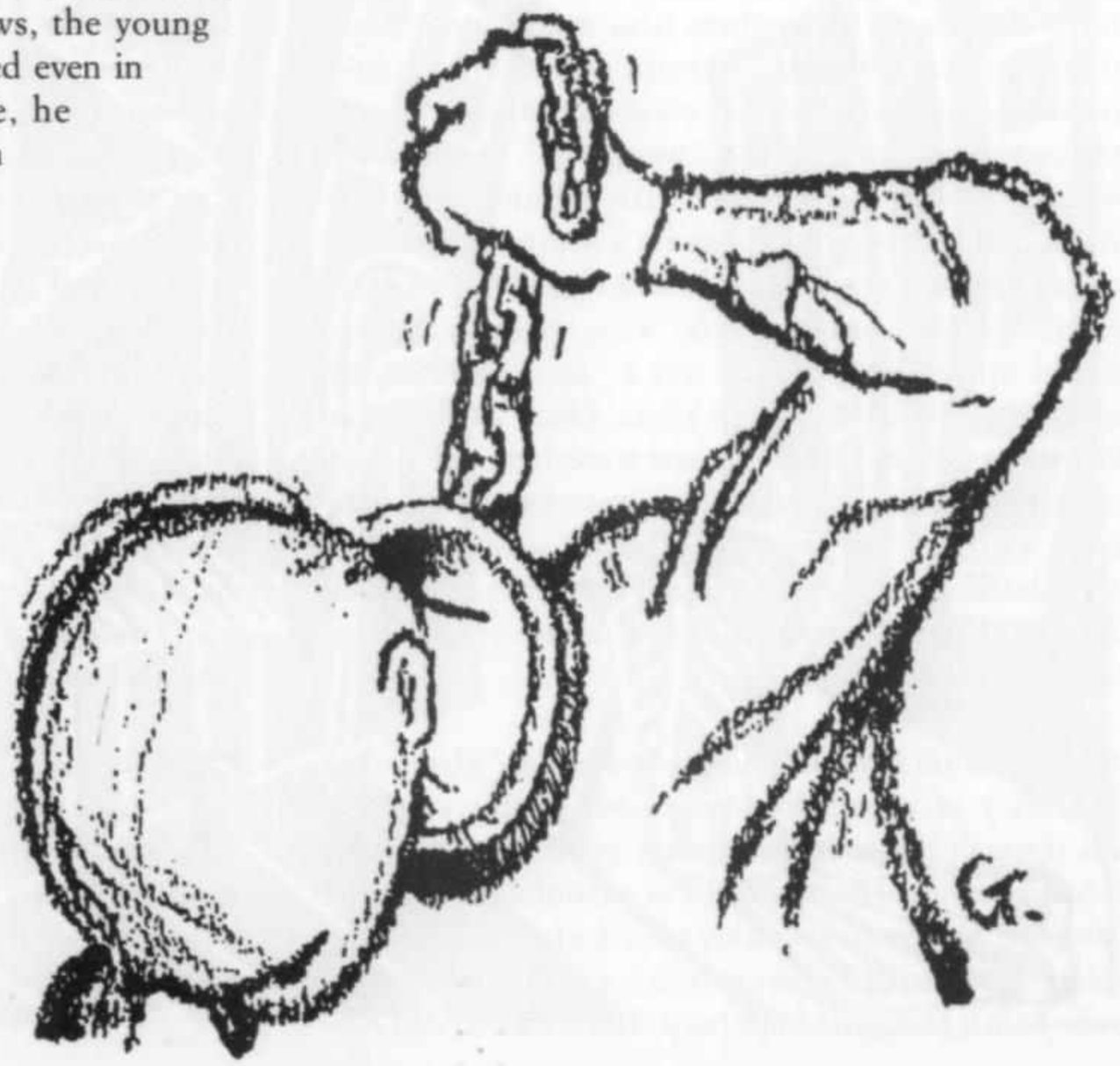
Michael S. Roth

Two articles in The *Los Angeles Times* recently offered "Jewish responses" to Steven Spielberg's film, *Schindler's List*. The first accused the director of raising a horrible hooligan to heights of hero worship. Why celebrate Schindler when there are so many other noble and virtuous people about whom we can construct stories and films? The good rabbi who wrote this first essay went on to bemoan the concentration on the Holocaust among those who do tell stories about Jews. Why should we focus on this catastrophic event when there were so many positive things about Judaism worth recounting?

The second article, by a high school senior about to head off for the Ivy League, expressed outrage that Spielberg had told the story of the Holocaust by focusing on a Gentile. Why was Schindler so important in the narrative, when the Holocaust is quintessentially a Jewish event? Jews, the young author admonished, were marginalized even in this, our own persecution. Where, he asked, were the strong Jewish characters?

I refer to these two essays not because they shed any light on Spielberg's powerful film but because they are typical symptoms of the ambivalent attitudes currently circulating about the status of the victim. On the one hand, marginalized groups are now at the discursive center of things—especially in the universities and in the media. Real economic and political power continues to be kept away from traditionally oppressed groups, but in certain circles, cultural clout can come with the status of having been oppressed by "white," "anglo," or "European" dominating forces. On the other hand, to be defined only or essentially as a victim is to be deprived of any agency, and of any history that is not already infected by a dominant group's invasive presence. The position of victim can be powerful when making a claim for justice or redress; the position of victim can be painfully empty when attempting to establish a cultural identity.

These issues became clearer to me in a conversation with a group of my students (in this group, all women) who were discussing their feelings of solidarity with other women. The Asian-American and African-American women revealed that they felt more



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comfortable with other people of color when there was a political crisis on campus or in the region. The white women (who were a minority in this class) nodded affirmingly, but one of them asked with real intensity, "Are Jews white?" She wanted to know if she could gain entry into the circle of solidarity. Was being a Jew enough to grant her access to those who believed they "knew how it felt to be oppressed?"

If we reject claims for moral superiority, or rationales for the abdication of personal responsibility based on an identification with an oppressed group, we are not thereby freed from the burden of dealing with legitimate legacies of oppression and victimization.

At stake in this student's question was what it meant to claim a legacy of oppression and who was entitled to do so. Why would one want to make such a claim? The students explained that this self-identification enabled them to connect with others who would understand them and on whom they could count. Claiming a legacy of oppression thus established what moral philosophers like to call a "we-group," people with whom one identifies and with whom one feels connected. A "we-group" can be a source of comfort, of defense, and of pleasure. In this regard my students reminded me of my parents, who, when traveling, would immediately search out a "*landsmann*" with whom they could sit, eat, or kibitz. Once identified as fellow Jews, these people became something other than perfect strangers. When my Jewish student asked, "are Jews white?" she was asking the others if they considered her a stranger. She wanted acceptance in the group, and claiming a Jewish legacy might have been just the ticket.

In addition to establishing a "we-group," claiming a legacy of oppression can enable people to work through the traumas of their collective and individual histories. The avoidance of a painful past, or the failure to recognize its lasting effects often creates disabling patterns of behavior which cause only further pain. Judith Herman's important study, *Trauma and Recovery*, (reviewed on p.84 of this issue) argues convincingly that an escape from these patterns is dependent on recognizing them as part of one's history. Herman shows in very powerful and often subtle ways that recognizing and giving voice to one's suffering is a necessary stage in moving past that suffering.

Claiming a legacy of oppression has come to be used not only as a tool to escape from the past, however, but as a vehicle for maintaining one's connection to, and even identification with, the past. In attaching oneself to a legacy of oppression, one may reach for a moral superiority that our culture often awards to acknowledged victims. This designation of moral superiority is no real substitute for justice, but it can be a powerful balm in a world of continued economic, social, and political inequality. Universities and the media have become specialists in providing feelings of moral superiority to people instead of intelligent responses to demands for real social change. In these cultural arenas, recognized marginality has become a fake moral high ground, the latest opiate of the people.

In some ways this may be perfectly reasonable. After all, victims do have a different claim on our moral and political responsibilities than do those who profit from victimizing others. But this claim can be easily abused by individuals, groups, or institutions who appropriate a legacy of oppression to legitimate irresponsibility and violence.

The most dramatic contemporary example is Serbia. The construction of a historical memory that portrays the Serbs as victims of history allows for genocidal policies without obvious guilt. No matter what the victims do, they are only defending themselves, or at least aiming for justice through the destruction of (even potential) oppressors.

Serbia may be the most obvious case of this dynamic at the level of international relations, but we can all too easily find many examples of the same phenomenon: from Bensonhurst to Jerusalem to Belfast to our own family rooms. Memory of trauma in the past is constructed in the present as a cause of abhorrent behavior (so argued lawyers for Lorena Bobbitt and the Menendez brothers), or as a rationale for strategies that would otherwise be clearly morally illegitimate (terrorism, military occupation).

The use of traumatic memory as an escape clause from moral and political judgment creates the conditions for the repetition of suffering and impedes our ability as a society to exercise such judgment in the future. And so it is not surprising that we have already seen a backlash against the use of memory to

(Continued on p. 95)

Rescuers of Jews During the Holocaust
A Model for a Caring Community

Eva Fogelman

"There are stars whose radiance is visible on earth though they have long been extinct. There are people whose brilliance continues to light the world though they are no longer among the living.
— Hannah Senesh



In my neighborhood, the Upper West Side of Manhattan, I cannot walk more than a few blocks without confronting a homeless beggar *panim el panim*, face to face. I am inconsistent in opening my purse for this or that disheveled young man with a cup in his hand asking for a quarter, or loose change, or money for a cup of coffee, particularly after working a fourteen-hour day. My numbness to the dire social conditions that have led to the degradation and humiliation of a homeless beggar is a defense against the helplessness I feel in making a real difference in society. A quarter here and a dollar there will not change the basic social conditions that

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allow such suffering now and in the future.

Those of us who would like to think of ourselves as basically caring, good, charitable people are amazed at our numbness to the plight of very needy people. Some of us rationalize that poverty, homelessness, and crumbling families are the system's fault for not providing adequate housing and jobs for all its citizens; others blame the victims for their plight; everyone feels helpless about a more comprehensive solution to these social ills.

While most people saw Jews as pariahs, rescuers saw them as human beings. They were grounded in a value system emphasizing altruism and tolerance for those who are "different."

Looking at the faces of homeless men in particular, but also women and children, on the streets of New York, triggers thoughts of my father. After miraculously surviving the German Gestapo mass killing, on Purim of 1942, of the 1,000 Jews of Illya, a Byelorussian town a hundred miles east of Vilna, he was homeless and without resources. Among those who were stripped of their clothes, crowded into the square and shot were my father's aunt, uncle, and cousins, with whom he had been living after he survived an earlier massacre in his home town, Vilna.

For six months, my father lived in the woods of Byelorussia with another escapee and depended on the kindness of strangers for a loaf of bread and a bottle of milk every few days. No one dared give my father shelter, since those caught harboring a Jew earned a death sentence for themselves and their entire family. Nevertheless, Ivan Safanov, a local farmer who had been a customer at my father's comrade's flour mill, sent his children out to the ditch my father dug in the woods, brought him food, took his lice-infested clothes to wash, and brought him ointment to remove the vermin from his head and body. My father had to change his hiding place several times because he was warned that suspicious neighbors had reported him to Gestapo who roamed the forests anxious to kill prey. He lived like an animal until Safanov introduced him to the local partisans, who took my father because of his previous training as a soldier in the Polish army.

I have spent more than a decade trying to understand what made people like the Safanovs risk their lives to help Jews survive, while most of their neighbors refused to share a piece of bread with a starving Jew, and a few denounced the hideout to the Gestapo. After interviewing more than 300 non-Jews who risked their lives to save Jews during the Nazi occupation, those deemed *Hasidei Umot Haolam*, Righteous Among the Nations of the World by Yad Vashem (Israel's Holocaust Martyrs and Heroes Memorial Authority), I have come to some conclusions about those individuals.

While they were flesh-and-blood human beings with strengths and faults, these rare men, women, and children saw people who were in trouble and responded, not to the things that made them different, but to the points of commonality. While most people saw Jews as pariahs, rescuers saw them as human beings. Their humanitarian response sprang from a core of firmly held inner values, which included an acceptance of people who were different. And central to these beliefs was the conviction that what an individual did, or failed to do, mattered. The rescuers recognized that for many Jews, the choice made by a bystander could mean life or death.

The factors that transformed bystanders into rescuers were grounded in a value system instilled and internalized in childhood that emphasized altruism and tolerance for those who are "different" and empathy to stimulate direct action consistent with these values in situations where, unless one acted, the helpless victims would die.

It took a certain kind of environment, however, for such lessons to take hold. Most Holocaust rescuers came from loving families that fostered a sense of self-worth and love; parents reasoned rather than punished when disciplining. As children, many rescuers suffered separation, loss, or illness combined with exposure to a nurturing guardian, which later encouraged identification with an altruistic caretaker and increased sensitivity to the suffering of others.

For example, Miep Gies, who helped Anne Frank's family and acquaintances in hiding, grew up sickly and undernourished in post-World War I Vienna. When she was eleven, her parents sent her to Amsterdam as part of an international program to help hungry Austrian children. With that one well-meaning parental decision, the young girl lost her home, her family, and everything that was dear and familiar. Gies never forgot the consideration shown to her by her adopted Dutch family of seven:

> Despite the language problem, all children were kind to me. Kindness, in my depleted condition, was very important to me. It was

> medicine as much as the bread, the marmalade, the good Dutch milk and butter and cheese, the toasty temperature of the warm rooms.

An early education in values, particularly tolerance, along with exposure to altruistic role-models and involvement in helping others made virtue a habit. Evidence of the importance of such an education repeatedly emerged from interviews I conducted with teachers, nurses, doctors, aristocrats, laborers, peasants, farmers, housewives, nannies, diplomats, soldiers, and students.

Thus, when confronted with Jewish refugees knocking at their doors, said Magda Trocme of the French village of Le Chambon, they "did not think twice—they said 'Come in, Come in.'" It was not (as the myth about the village has it) a charismatic leader that mobilized the men, women, and children of the village to act altruistically and save more than 5,000 Jews, but their internal value system.

The courageous response of villagers in the Haute-Loire region of southwestern France, with Le Chambon in its center, illustrates the strength of group effort in rescue. Sociologists generally acknowledge that ideology can be defeated only by group effort; individual attempts to counteract prevailing beliefs are generally limited. Oskar Schindler, of course, is one of the exceptions. (He had the internal resources to outwit the Nazi bureaucracy and work on his own to save more than 1,000 Jews destined for extermination.)

Jews and non-Jews for whom Nazism was anathema instinctively sought out others who saw the world as they did, felt the way they did about Nazism, and wanted to take action. They gathered in political halls, university fraternity and sorority houses, church basements, and public school classrooms; they met in social welfare offices and in hospital staff rooms; they rallied in churches that had reputations for humanitarian endeavors, such as Holland's Anti-Revolutionary Church and Germany's Confessional Church. In France's Le Mazet, Fay, Tence, La Suchère, Montbuzat, and Le Chambon, and Italy's Assisi—towns with traditions of harboring the religiously persecuted—they worked together to shelter strangers. They became what the sociologist George Simmel calls "secret societies."

Anti-Nazi rage was the tie that bound network rescuers together. Initially, network rescuers became involved because Nazism, the antithesis of the deeply held beliefs and humanitarian values, made them feel personally violated. Freud noted that a psychological group is formed when individuals have a common interest or a similar emotional bias in a particular situation. The higher this "mental homogeneity," the more readily people band together.

An early education in values, particularly tolerance, along with exposure to altruistic role-models and involvement in helping others made virtue a habit for the rescuers.

Even today, network rescuer Hetty Dutihl Voûte, who found shelter, food, and false identification for Jewish children in Holland and was deported to Ravensbrück for her illegal humanitarian acts, can barely contain her anger as she recalls her feelings about the German takeover of Holland:

> Right from the first day, I (was bursting with) rage towards the Nazis. They lied to us about not invading our country, they occupied our land, shot our soldiers, humiliated us, stole our provisions, arrested those who were our best men. Even now when I am writing this to you, I can feel my rage rise again!

Resistance to Hitler came first. Many rescuers had begun by ignoring the racial laws that prohibited non-Jews from having any sexual, social, or business contacts with Jews. Then they moved to passing out anti-Nazi literature, organizing protest strikes, and eventually undertaking acts of sabotage. Later, at the urging of Jewish network friends as the plight of the Jews became more desperate, rescue of Jews became part of their general resistance efforts.

Anti-Nazi networks followed Hitler's conquests across Western Europe. In Holland, networks were organized to resist the German occupation and to protect endangered resisters and Dutch men and boys in their efforts to escape the German draft work force. These fugitives needed hideouts, false identification, and food ration cards; the networks raised money to support these underground activities. Thus, when Jews began to be deported, the systems were in place to help hide them or to arrange for their escape.

These loosely coupled networks did not arise *ex nihilo*. Charles Kadushin, a sociologist at the Graduate Center of City University of New York, explains that social circles such as these grow out of existing formal

structures. In Holland, for instance, they emerged from individual Protestant or Catholic church groups, political groups, and liberal or anarchistic intellectual circles in universities.

We are not today in a holocaust. We can, however, draw upon lessons from the past and not wait for an extreme circumstance to develop. We are in a situation in which resistance is needed to improve the lives of many in our society.

Most Western European resistance networks eventually expanded to include rescue operations. Some rescuers (religious or otherwise) who started their rescuing in isolation began to join networks. Backed by a group, network rescuers felt what Freud describes as "an unlimited power," which in some cases gave them permission to step outside their normal morality and lie, steal, and do whatever had to be done to save lives.

In Belgium, the networks formed to rescue children developed a sophisticated system, with Jews and non-Jews working cooperatively. Jews fetched children from their parents, and non-Jews would escort the children to their hideouts without the parents' knowledge of the hiding place—in a private home, a boarding school, convent, or orphanage. Three sets of notebooks were kept on the children's whereabouts: One notebook listed a number and next to it the child's Jewish name and Christian name; the second had a number with the address; and the third recorded ongoing visitation to the child next to his or her identification number.

Mutual assistance enabled network members to survive dangerous situations. For example, Marion van Binsbergen Pritchard, who was hiding three children in the outskirts of Amsterdam, was interrogated by four Germans and a Dutch policeman. Although the intruders did not find her hiding place, the policeman returned when he heard a baby cry. Marion, who had a small revolver, felt "I had no choice except to kill him. There should have been another way but there wasn't." The local undertaker, a network member, put the body in a coffin with someone else. The family never knew that another body was buried with it.

Working with a group gave solitary rescuers the necessary resources to continue. Networks provided extra ration cards, money, counterintelligence, safe hideouts, medical help, false identifications, and information. Members of networks would warn each other if house searches were imminent. If a house was suspected as a hideout by denouncers, network members would find a new refuge for the charges. They also helped to mitigate the terror of a complex and dangerous life. Rescuers were outlaws in a Nazi no-man's-land. A careless word, a forgotten detail—one wrong move could lead to death. The knowledge that they belonged to a group strengthened individual rescuers' resolve and gave them immeasurable psychological support.

Finally, and most important, being part of a rescuing community provided the experience of cooperation in a worthy endeavor. Years later, rescuers recalled the experience as their greatest accomplishment either before or after the Holocaust. Because of the need for secrecy, network rescuers often knew only the person who solicited their help and others they may have recruited. Nevertheless, there was a strong sense of identification with a group.

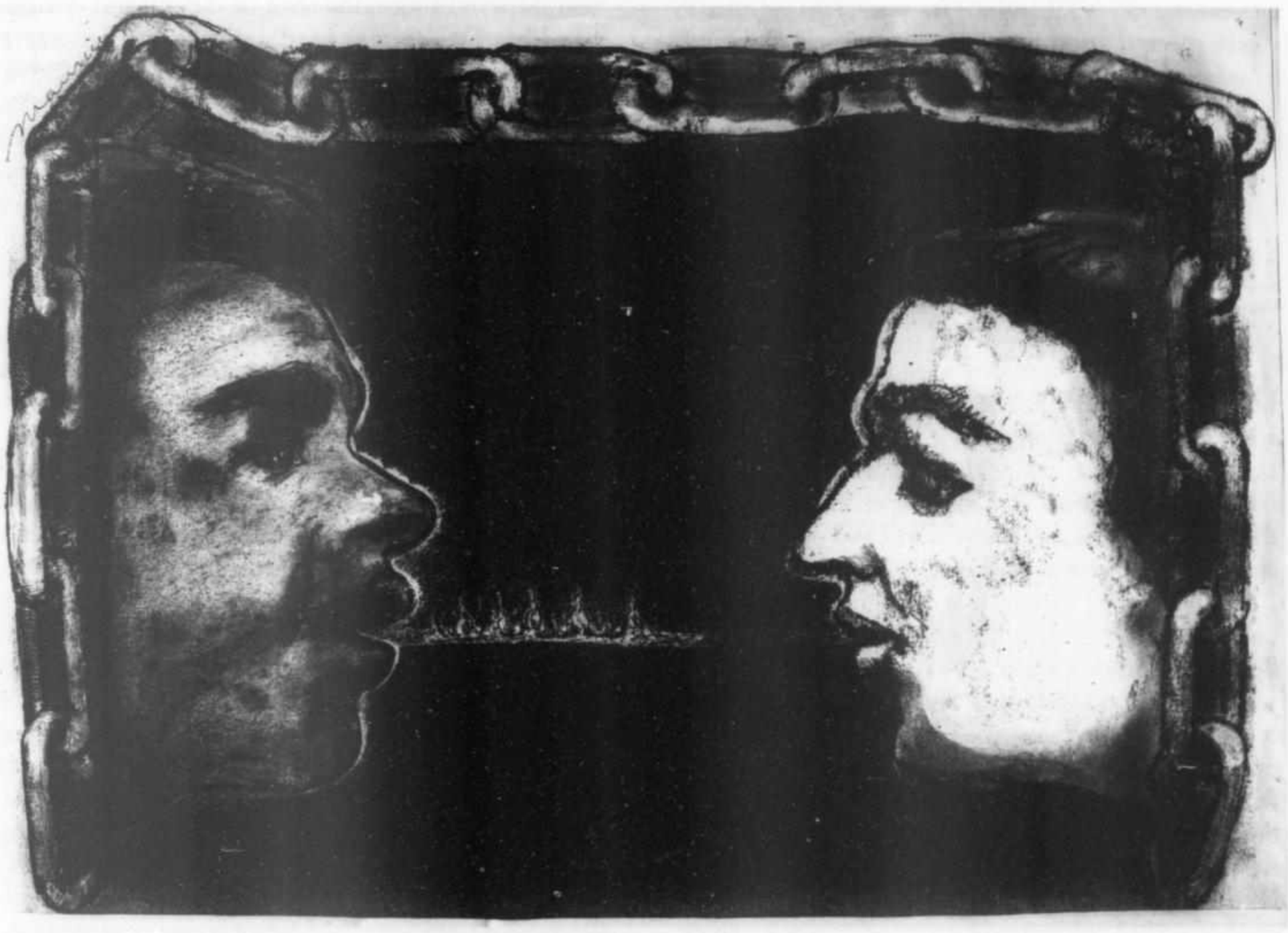
After the war, network rescuers searched for other moral causes, such as pursuit of Nazi war criminals, activity in the peace or anti-nuclear movements, opposition to communism, and protest against the lack of religious freedom in the Eastern bloc countries. While the emotional wounds they carried, the terror they endured, and the losses they suffered continued to haunt them for years, most rescuers shared the assessment of Danish rescuer Svend Aage Holm-Sorensen, who asserted that he would do it again because "without freedom, life is nothing."

An understanding of what motivated and sustained rescuers of the Jews may provide a model for mobilizing social action in our own communities. The problems of contemporary American society sometimes seem insurmountable and make us feel powerless to solve them or even reduce their scope. To begin to address them, we need to examine our value system to determine if it includes respect for those who are "different" from ourselves—not only in race, ethnicity, lifestyle, gender, and class, but also in social circumstance. We need to begin to see the homeless, the repeat offender, the orphaned ghetto child, the teenage mother, the person with AIDS, the illegal immigrant, and the drug addict as flesh-and-blood human beings and to realize that unless we extend them a helping hand, these people are doomed to a slow death. But, as in the case

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The Uncomfortable Relationship
African Enslavement in the Common History of Blacks and Jews

Ralph A. Austen



In 1978, I attended a faculty luncheon at the University of Chicago Hillel House, where the distinguished African-American historian, John Hope Franklin, was giving a talk on the Jewish community in the nineteenth-century Southern United States. After the formal presentation, a member of the audience asked a question about Southern Jewish participation in the debate on slavery. As I remember it, Franklin replied that he did not know too much about the subject. I recall very clearly one of the Hillel regulars remarking that since many of the early Southern Jews were Sephardim who had fled Spanish and Portuguese persecution, they must have been sympathetic to the plight of Black slaves.

I remember this statement because it was allowed to pass without comment, although John Hope Franklin and I (we discussed it afterwards) were both aware that Sephardi Jews in the New World had been heavily involved in the African slave trade. Why did two professional historians in a university setting hesitate to provide our colleagues with such an important piece of information? I cannot answer for Franklin but I, as a

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Jew sitting in a Jewish institution that was entertaining an African-American guest, felt that pointing out the role of Jews in the history of Black slavery would, in this context, have constituted something of a betrayal. I did not want to undermine the sense of solidarity between the two communities which had been reinforced by Franklin's very presence, as well as through his references to our common confrontation with white Gentile Southern bigots.

The authors of
The Secret Relationship
underestimate the structural importance of Jews in the early stages of the New World slave trade.

Franklin and I, in effect, were condoning a benign historical myth: that the shared liberal agenda of twentieth-century Blacks and Jews has a pedigree going back through the entire remembered past. *Avodim hayinu!* We, the Jews, had also experienced history on the side of the enslaved and always cried out in anguish against the oppression of the enslavers.

For better or worse, it is no longer possible to maintain that this myth has any but the most abstract bearing on the facts of our pre-emancipation relationship with Africans and their New World descendants. Jewish students of Jewish history have known it was untrue and, over several decades, have produced a significant body of scholarship detailing the involvement of our ancestors in the Atlantic slave trade and Pan-American slavery. Until recently, this work remained buried in scholarly journals, read only by other specialists. It had never been synthesized in a publication for a non-scholarly audience. A book of this sort has now appeared, however, written not by Jews but by an anonymous group of African Americans associated with the Reverend Louis Farrakhan's Nation of Islam.

Since its publication in 1991, *The Secret Relationship between Blacks and Jews* has become the subject of considerable furor, although little serious analysis. It was cited by Professor Leonard Jeffries in his infamous speech in July 1991 at the Empire State Black Arts and Cultural Festival that led to his removal from the chairmanship of the Black Studies Department at the City University of New York. (He was subsequently reinstated as chairman and awarded damages in a suit he brought against the university.) The book was also the topic of an even more publicized and virulently anti-Semitic speech by Farrakhan's representative, Khalid Abdul Muhammad, at Kean College in New Jersey in November 1993.

Early in 1993, a furor arose at Wellesley College when Tony Martin, a Black Studies professor, assigned the book in one of his African-American history courses, causing vociferous protest from Jewish groups. During a long, stormy discussion in Wellesley's Academic Council about the ethics of teaching such a text, Selwyn Cudjoe, the chair of the college's Africana Studies Department, denounced *The Secret Relationship* as anti-Semitic and deplored Martin's uncritical presentation of the text. Martin has subsequently chronicled and defended his and Jeffries's position in two broadside publications, *Blacks and Jews at Wellesley News* (a play on the name of the campus newspaper) and *Blacks and Jews News* (published by the Nation of Islam). Martin has now published a book of his own, *The Jewish Onslaught: Despatches from the Wellesley Battlefront*, which elicited a public denunciation by Wellesley's president. Martin has also announced the imminent publication of Volumes II and III of *The Secret Relationship*.

Among Martin's arguments in support of *The Secret Relationship*, there is at least one which Jewish intellectuals need to take seriously: that few of the Jewish leaders who have attacked the book have actually read it. Martin is apparently unaware (as, it appears, are many Jewish critics) of a carefully researched, if somewhat polemical, report on the book by Harold Brackman published in 1992 under the auspices of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, titled *Farrakhan's Reign of Historical Error: the Truth Behind the Secret Relationship between Blacks and Jews*. Indeed, the fact that the present article is appearing more than two years after the publication of *The Secret Relationship* in a journal very much concerned with Black-Jewish relations itself requires some explanation.

One can understand the hesitation of Jews to buy *The Secret Relationship* and thus put $19.95 (plus $3 for shipping and handling) into the coffers of an organization notorious for its anti-Semitic pronouncements (I bought my copy in a Black bookstore in Chicago which also sells such classic anti-Semitic tracts as *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and Henry Ford's *The International Jew*). *The Secret Relationship's* association with the rantings of Leonard Jeffries, and its denunciation in a *New York Times* op-ed piece on Black anti-Semitism by the very prominent and widely respected African-American scholar Henry Louis Gates, Jr., have made it easier for Jewish critics

to dispense with examining the book themselves.

But none of these facts really excuses Jews from the obligation of opening up this notorious tome and seeing what is actually inside it. We might even be somewhat comforted if we never go past the prefatory "Editor's Note":

> This study is structured as a presentation of historical evidence regarding the relationship of one people with another. The facts, *as established by highly respected scholars of the Jewish community* [emphasis added] are here established and linked by as sparse a narrative as is journalistically permitted for review by those interested in the subject... Those who would use this material as a basis for the violation of the human rights of another are abusing the knowledge herein. The wise will benefit to see this as an opportunity to develop a more equitable relationship between the families of man.

The text which follows remains faithful to at least one of the goals set out here. It relies for its information almost entirely upon Jewish scholarship most, but not all, of it quite respectable and extremely little falling into the category which a "Note on Sources" proscribes as "anti-Semitic and/or anti-Jewish." (Brackman, in his study of *The Secret Relationship*, notes a number of references to three authors hostile to Jews—Frederick Law Olmsted, Werner Sombart, and Fyodor Dostoyevsky—but these play a very minor role in a book with 1,275 footnotes.) The easy accessibility of such material of course contradicts the assertion of the book's title, that Jewish participation in the slave trade was hitherto a *secret*. Nonetheless the contents of this book will come as a surprise to many—perhaps most—readers for reasons already discussed.

The anti-Semitic character of *The Secret Relationship* emerges not from its substantive content—which seems fairly accurate—or even the aura of conspiracy conveyed by its title. It comes out rather in the tone of the narrative, which binds together the sources and fosters, without any evidence, a stereotype of Jews as a uniquely greedy and untrustworthy population. Brackman treats the content of the book as a series of "Big Lies" but, as the details of his well-documented critique indicate, distortions are produced almost entirely by selective citation rather than explicit falsehood. Sometimes the attack is simply appended to the story of the slave trade by the authors/editors, as in the opening paragraph, which links "the blanket expulsion of Jews from so many places around the world" to charges of "economic exploitation of Gentile communities."

More frequently, there are innuendos imbedded in the accounts of Jewish involvement in the slave trade which "incited the moral indignation of Europe's Gentile population." Jews in the slave-trading Dutch West India Company "remained internationalists without the patriotic fervor of their Gentile countrymen." In the British West Indies, Jews who owned no plantations and relatively few slaves and were excluded from public office are presented (through local government pleas to place a special tax upon them) as enjoying "civic advantages." Here as elsewhere the text revels in citations of anti-Jewish charges from historical documents but then, when discussing the failure of Jews to play a significant role in the United States abolitionist movement (a truth which very directly undermines the "benign myth"), insists that fear of persecution could have nothing to do with this reticence since Jews were, even before 1860, better off in America than they had ever been in any Diaspora situation.

The anti-Semitic character of The Secret Relationship *emerges in the tone of the narrative, which binds together the sources and fosters, without any evidence, a stereotype of Jews as a uniquely greedy and untrustworthy population.*

Along with African enslavement, Jews are given special blame here (again with little evidence or logic) for many other crimes of European expansion, beginning with the voyages of Columbus (the authors manage to cover their insinuations with some acknowledgement of scholarly doubts by heading a sub-chapter "Columbus the Slave-dealing Jew?"), the selling of poisoned blankets to North American Indians by a British general, loyalist opposition to the American Revolution, the opium trade to China, the operations of the New Orleans pirate Jean Lafitte, and even the conversion of slaves in colonial Georgia to Christianity "to pacify and subdue the Black African."

Unpleasant as this book is to read (although occasionally long quotes from the Jewish sources are used to offset the authors' own voices) it does raise a serious historical question: How significant were the Jews in the slave trade? The authors' primary method, for which they have been attacked by Gates and Brackman, is the crude use of statistics. Thus Jews are said to have "used kidnapped Black Africans disproportionately more than

any other ethnic or religious group in New World history." This may possibly be true, since there were not very many Jews in the Americas between 1492 and the 1860s, and quite a few had been involved in the slave trade. The authors do not undertake any systematic count or comparison with other groups (e.g., Portuguese, Scots, Huguenots), however, and in any case such a statistic does not have much meaning. The vast majority of New World slaves were captured, bought, traded, and forced into labor by non-Jews. Nor is there much analytic (as opposed to polemical) sense in the book's various counts of slaves owned by Jews and the alphabetical list, occupying the last 100 pages, of various Jews or Jewish families known to have been associated with slavery.

Jews are given special blame for many other crimes beginning with the voyages of Columbus, the selling of poisoned blankets to North American Indians by a British general, loyalist opposition to the American Revolution, the opium trade to China, the operations of the New Orleans pirate Jean Lafitte, and even the conversion of slaves in colonial Georgia to Christianity "to pacify and subdue the Black African."

None of this data is placed in any context which would indicate its statistical, not to say broader historical, significance. As the authors correctly note, the role in the slave trade of Gentile Europeans, Muslims, and even African "tribal traitors" has been studied more extensively than that of the Jews. But the team responsible for *The Secret Relationship* does not seem to have examined much of this vast literature and misreads some of that which they do use (on pp. 177-78, they inaccurately cite historian Philip Curtin's statistics on the trade and ignore entirely the debate on this issue among various American, European, and African scholars).

In fact, because of their poor grasp of the historical economy of slavery, the authors *underestimate* the structural, as opposed to statistical, importance of the Jews in the early stages of the New World slave trade. Rather than toying with the rumors of Columbus's "secret" identity, the book might better have focused on the coincidence of the Jewish expulsion from Spain with the establishment of triangular links between Europe, Africa, and the Americas. As a result of this situation, the Sephardim found themselves dispersed over the critical nodes of the new system, especially Amsterdam and Brazil. It was not the material wealth of the Jews that made them so crucial to this emerging South Atlantic economy but rather (as with other ethnic-commercial diasporas such as the Huguenots, the Quakers, the overseas Chinese, Muslims in Africa) their ability to transfer assets and information among themselves across the entire economic network.

As even this book notes, Jews owned a small minority of shares in the Dutch West India Company (an unsuccessful commercial enterprise in any case). Their value to the Dutch lay instead in the fact that many of them, seeking to escape the Iberian Inquisition, had migrated to Brazil where they helped found the first major New World sugar plantations. When the Dutch first conquered northern Brazil from Portugal and were in turn driven out by a Portuguese reconquest, most local Jews left with them to disseminate the sugar production system to the Dutch and later British Islands. The only places where Jews really came close to dominating a New World plantation system were the Dutch colonies of Curacao and Surinam (the language of the escaped slave communities in the Surinam interior still refers to prohibited foods as "*mi trefu*").

But the Dutch territories were small, and their importance was shortlived. By the time the slave trade and European sugar-growing reached its peak in the 1700s, Jewish participation was dwarfed by the enterprise of British and French planters who did not allow Jews among their number. During the nineteenth century, Jews owned some cotton plantations in the southern United States but not in any meaningful numbers. (*The Secret Relationship,* to its credit, is not the basis for Farrakhan's recent statement that three-quarters of all southern slaves belonged to Jews.) Jews of Portuguese Brazilian origin did play a significant (but by no means dominant) role in the eighteenth-century slave trade of Rhode Island, but this sector accounted for only a very tiny portion of the total human exports from Africa.

For all its shortcomings, *The Secret Relationship* does force us to confront the history which John Hope Franklin and I avoided discussing publicly in 1978. The fact that our forefathers were generally, and at times quite significantly, on the side of the slavers in the cruel world of the Atlantic economy may also help call into question the whole image of Diaspora Jews as "victims" in medieval-to-modern world history. Indeed, some of the very terms associated with this

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Grieving

Nessa Rapoport

Three Years Later

Basking in the simplest things, silky feet of the children, the way the morning light, let in, flings itself, anointing everything, rich sleep, no dreams, language for forgotten things, order and grace satisfying, music exultant, hope, shy at the door, not yet daring to come in, acrid taste of bitterness an amulet in my pocket, warding off cowardice, memory's assault defused, no longer lethal at first blast, the future tense, giving without exacting vengeance, less impatience, real hunger, fists unclenched, believable devotion making a return appearance: I, in my own name, assemble the shards into a clumsy pot, a vessel once exclusively for priests more suited now to daily transportation, taking me from here to there, useful confirmation that even when buried deep enough to resist all salvation, harder than elemental substance, not yielding to the most delicate solicitation, I can be found, fragment by fragment, uncovered by the tiny brushes of your kindness and attention, able after time to resurrect my voice, the world atoning for bereavement, delivering secret gifts, allowing me to make this declaration.

Sanctuary

Light

All living things lean into light, the luster of summer, winter's clarity. Even under a mocking heaven, we raise mute faces for that celestial kiss.

Name

The baby bears an old name, of one who lived for almost a hundred years. That one is gone, this one will grow, nourished by sepia photographs and books, hungry to partake of what was treasured by her namesake. In the mysterious chemistry of love, the child takes on the attributes of the one who's gone, and bestows upon the rest of us an arduous happiness.

Touch

No longer too proud to allow that which is most human, skin to skin, the clumsy embrace, the hesitant approach by friends who do not know exactly what to say and so take your hand, or sort your hair, acknowledging that even after the most unfair circumstance life could devise, you are worthy of the love that lights their eyes.

Music

Sunday morning, enmeshed in the chaos of night, immersed, laden, you turn on the radio. A song of your youth, when small losses assumed such magnitude, a sweet, perpetual keening, infiltrates. The mist of sorrow, hovering over everything, briefly evaporates. Your spine grows fluid, you become she who you once were, within your heavy body the dancer stretches in graceful languor: For a second, lovely, hopeful, she'll emerge.

Library

The words of another who's been there and knows, or someone quite other, a life unsuspected, or stories invented, tender and longing, or tales of praise, even heartache, wrongdoing. Centuries of wisdom or yesterday's news, trite verse that comforts or wormwood that soothes. The phrase that intuits that you, too, are part of the bitter adventure, sentences gripping until, at the end, you reluctantly part from someone who's translated her life into yours, and has dared to sacrifice silence in favor of words.

Ceremony

Light a candle, bless the new moon, walk in white gardens at the hour you used to, draw a filling breath when the air is mild, retrieve early stories to offer a rapt child, remember ancestors, mark the turning year, celebrate festivals that once you could not bear, honor ties of blood and affinity, return what you were lent, hallow the ordinary meal that, shared with the same friend in every season, becomes a sacrament.

Water

Something about looking at water, the expanse of it, the way its skin can reflect a sheltering sky or repel like an old gray sheet, wrinkled from countless bodies, something about its depths and constancy, and the sound it makes at the edge, licking the old wood of the pier rhythmically, something about its auguring motion and turmoil and an intuition of the sea, something about its mirroring impermanence, and eternity. □

From A Woman's Book of Grieving *by Nessa Rapoport, to be published in May by William Morrow & Company ©1994 Nessa Rapoport. Nessa Rapoport is the author of a novel,* Preparing for Sabbath, *and co-editor of* Writing Our Way Home.

A Hidden Genre
Twentieth-Century Midrashic Poetry

David Curzon



God speaks:
"I am not always fond of what I create.
For instance, this man?"
Alain Bosquet

Many poems written in the twentieth century offer a contemporary version of an old and serious Jewish pleasure, the name of which is "midrash." Whether the poets knew it or not, and many did, their reactions to biblical texts are in a rabbinic genre conceived at least 1,500 years ago. Their poems on sacrifice and murder, and love and the lack of love, combine modernity with the resonance and depth of the ancient texts and constitute the hidden genre of twentieth-century midrashic poetry.

"My brother invented murder," says the Israeli poet Dan Pagis in the name of Abel. Such engagement with biblical material, like all living traditions, assists the free imagination in avoiding solipsism. It can permit the type of seriousness and wit only possible in relation to known stories and propositions, the fundamental wit of variance from what is established, of originality grounded in the familiar.

The Midrashic Techniques of Twentieth-Century Poets

A typical midrash has three basic characteristics: It is a response to a specific and very short biblical text, the response is imaginative, and it makes a point. Both the ancient rabbis and the modern poets fill in details of settings, thoughts, and motives not given in the terse biblical narrative. And both respond with speculation, argument, and wit to the psalms, proverbs, commandments, and prophecies of biblical passages and books that are not narratives.

Why did Lot's wife look back while fleeing from Sodom? The text is silent on her motivations. The rabbis of the Midrash thought "Her mother love made her look behind," to see if her daughters were following. In Wislawa Szymborska's poem, "Lot's Wife," however, the wife speaks and hints at quite different motives, such as "Not to look any more at the righteous nape/Of my husband, Lot." Both the rabbis and the poets have their agenda and bring them blatantly and fruitfully to the text.

What did the biblical characters do outside their moments in the narrative? Jorge Luis Borges apparently asked himself what Adam thought about in his old age—he lived to be 930—when, in a reflective mood, he mused on his salad days in the Garden and his subsequent disappointments after such a promising beginning. In Borges's poem, "Adam Cast Forth," Adam speaks and, after allowing himself some bitterness concerning "the incestuous wars/of Cains

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and Abels and their progeny," is led to this conclusion:

Nevertheless, it means much to have loved,
To have been happy, to have touched upon
The living Garden, even for a day.

The emblematic situations of the biblical stories invite not only elaboration but also application to the contemporary self. Louise Glück, in "The Gift," looks at her young son (after he has just begun to talk) standing at the screen door "welcoming each beast/in love's name." And by this allusion to Adam naming the beasts in Genesis 2:18-20, a small domestic scene in late twentieth-century America is made universal.

In responding to the non-narrative parts of the Bible, even more than with narrative, the need for midrash comes from the historic development of new circumstances, ideas, and values which, from at least the Hellenistic period onward, have appeared incompatible with much of the ancient biblical writings. The continued vitality of the text requires new interpretations every generation or so.

One way of responding to text as proposition is to ask: How could this apply to a contemporary such as myself? John Hollander's poem, "As the Sparks Fly Upward," for example, is a meditation in a contemporary suburban setting on the great proposition in Job 5:7 that "Man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward." Anthony Hecht's poem, "Destinations," has as its epigraph Jeremiah's proposition "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved;" the poem is on the break-up of a marriage. And Dahlia Ravikovitch, in her "Poem of Explanations," picks up the Shulammite's warning in Song of Songs 2:7 to be careful about stirring up love and comments:

Some people know how to love,
for others it's just not right....
I think it's a talent like any other.

The story of the creation can, of course, be treated as a narrative, as is done by Alain Bosquet in his poem, "God's Torment," quoted at the beginning of this article. But the opening of Genesis can also be treated as a proposition about the origins of the universe. This is how Primo Levi responded in his poem, "In the Beginning," using the biblical conception of a Creator:

Twenty billion years before now,
Brilliant, soaring in space and time,
there was a ball of flame, solitary, eternal,
Our common father and our executioner.
It exploded, and every change began.

In Primo Levi's poem, and in poems by Eugenio Montale ("Big Bang or Whatever") and Robinson



Jeffers ("The Great Explosion"), the proposition "God created heaven and earth" has been imaginatively connected with current scientific understanding.

A common rabbinic response to a difficult passage is to ask "To what may this be compared?" For example, Psalm 11:5 states "The Lord trieth the righteous." Rabbi Jonathan explained (in the Midrash): "A potter does not test defective vessels." For the rabbis, the biblical text is central and, where puzzling, in need of explanation by comparisons and parables drawn from daily life. But for contemporary poets it is usually daily life that is troubling, and the biblical text that provides useful figurative language. Dan Pagis, for example, has written a modern parable based on an implicit comparison with a biblical text, Ezekiel's vision of the Valley of Dry Bones. In Ezekiel's vision, after sinews and flesh and skin have been restored to

(Continued on p. 95)

The Seder of Rebirth

Phyllis Berman and Arthur Waskow



Responding to a great crisis of the Jewish people about two thousand years ago, the rabbis transformed the ways in which Pesach had been celebrated up until then and shaped what we know as the traditional Pesach Haggadah. It teaches explicitly that in every generation, every human being should look upon himself or herself as if we ourselves have gone forth from slavery into freedom. Yet until the Freedom Seder *appeared twenty-five years ago, few American Jews wrote into the Haggadah or spoke into the seder our own experience of our own freedom. For thousands of us, the* Freedom Seder *opened up new possibilities of freely drawing on the traditional seder framework, in order to remake the Festival of Freedom for our own generation.*

During the last decade, a new midrash has been circulating in the Jewish world: an interpretation of the Exodus from Egypt as a birthing. Many elements of the ancient Torah story lend themselves to this midrash: the birth of lambs and the sprouting of barley in springtime; "Mitzraim," Hebrew for "Narrow Place/Egypt," as the narrow birth canal; midwives as the first liberators; Israel as "God's firstborn"; the splitting of the Reed Sea as the breaking of the birth-waters.

Yet not until our generation could this midrash be born. For now women are drawing on the Pesach-teaching of liberation to free themselves from their subjugation. Now both women and men have begun to free themselves from the role-rigidities of the past. Now women are becoming deeply involved in Torah study, and men are becoming present in the birthing room. So we can now draw anew on ancient stories, and a new Pesach-teaching of rebirth can itself be born. This new teaching need not contradict or reject the older understanding of Pesach as the Festival of Freedom; for birth is the emergence of someone, or some community, or some idea, that is new, unknown, mysterious—free. The question is whether we can see better with two eyes than with one: whether this new midrash can give us a richer and deeper perspective on the festival of Pesach.

Last year, the two of us decided to give this concept a real-life seder with our friends: a womb to grow in, on a journey toward new life.

In keeping with the transformation of Judaism that underlies this new Haggadah, we have in the blessings reached toward God as "ruach ha'olam," "breath of the world," rather than "melech ha'olam," "ruler of the world." We voice "YHWH" as "Yahh," a breathing sound, rather than "Adonai," "Lord." We translate "mitzvot" as "connections," not "commandments." Some of the blessings are in feminine, some in masculine form.

We view this text as only the next stage of growth toward a living Haggadah of rebirth. It needs gesture and dance; it needs new music. We recommend that this Haggadah complement, not replace, one that is rooted in the rabbis' seder. It could well be used for the second night or the seventh, when the waters of the sea broke and the Israelites were born.

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A Pesach Haggadah to Come Forth From Narrow Places

• 1 •

After lighting the candles, do Kiddush over matzah rather than wine. First say these blessings: Blessed are you, YAHH our Creator, Breath of the world, who brings forth bread from the earth. Blessed are you, YAHH our Creator, Breath of the world, who makes us holy through connections, and connects us by unleavened bread. *Baruch attah YAHH eloheynu ruach ha'olam hamotzi lechem min ha'aretz. Brucha aht YAHH eloheynu ruach ha'olam asher kidshatnu b'mitzvot vitzivatnu al achilat matzah.* Blessed are you, Breath of Life, who has taught us to celebrate solemn days for joy and festivals of gladness, including this day of the Season of our Freedom, a day to call ourselves together to remember the going-forth from Mitzraim/Narrows/Egypt, the birthing of our people and our freedom. Blessed are you, YAHH our Creator, Breath of the world, who has kept us alive, lifted us up, and brought us to focus on this very moment. *Baruch attah YAHH eloheynu ruach ha'olam sheh-hechianu vikimanu v'higianu lazman hazeh.* Then break a piece of matzah, share the smaller part for all at the table to eat, and hide the larger part—the *Afikoman*.

• 2 •

The youngest chants four questions: *Mah nishtana halailah hazeh mikol haleilot?* Why is this night different from all other nights? On all other festival nights, we make kiddush over wine; tonight, over matzah. On all other nights, we eat eggs in many ways; tonight, in salt water. On all other nights, we drink wine red or white; tonight, we mix red with white. On all other nights, there is no fruit upon the Seder plate; tonight, there is an orange.

• 3 •

Another chants: "Because—When we first entered Mitzraim, The Narrows, we were few in number and small in consciousness. Yet we multiplied and flourished till we grew many and strong to live through bitterness and danger. Then we passed through the broken waters of the Sea to become God's first-born. And we look toward the prophet Elijah who comes to turn the hearts of the children to the parents and the hearts of parents to children, and the Prophet Miriam who comes to dance our way into the future."

• 4 •

First Journey: Conception. How do we conceive ourselves?

Say blessing ("Blessed are You YAHH our Creator, Breath of the World, Who makes all come to be through Your word. *Brucha aht YAHH, elohenu ruach ha'olam, sheh-hakol nihyeh b'dvarech*,") before eating hard-boiled eggs in salt water. Invite celebrants to experience themselves as an egg in utero, being fertilized, and/or as an individual person in process of reconception, coming to a new self-understanding, and/or as a member of a community that is reconceiving itself.

For the first passage, read one traditional text: "Now these are the names of the children of Israel coming to Mitzraim/Narrows/Egypt with Jacob, coming each with his household: Reuben, Shimon, Levi, and Judah; Issachar, Zevulun, and Benjamin; Dan and Naftali; Gad and Asher. So all the breathing souls who came forth from Jacob's loins were seventy breathing-souls; Joseph was already in Mitzraim." (Exod. I: 1-5)

Invite discussion, with these and other questions: How do we usually think of ourselves: as those who conceive something beyond ourselves, or as those who are conceived by something beyond ourselves, or those who are both because we conceive and reconceive ourselves? How is conceiving different from giving birth? What new self—individual and communal—do we want to bring into the world? How can a seder that itself celebrates the birth of freedom help us conceive a new community with new values?

Prepare a cup of wine—red with a drop or two of

white—as a symbol of conception, when semen enters into the egg. Say the blessing over wine: "Blessed are You, YAHH our Creator, Breath of the world, who shapes the fruit of the vine. *Baruch attah YAHH eloheynu ruach ha'olam borey pri ha'gafen*," and drink.

• 5 •

Second Journey: Gestation. How do we grow through sweet and bitter, through broad and narrow spaces?

Say two blessings: "Blessed are you, YAHH our Creator, Breath of the world, who shapes the fruit of the earth" and "... who makes us holy through connection and connects us through the eating of bitter herbs. *Brucha aht YAHH eloheynu ruach ha'olam boreyt pri ha'adamah* and *Baruch attah YAHH eloheynu ruach ha'olam asher kidshanu b'mitzvot vitzivanu al achilat maror*." Eat mixture of *maror* (horseradish root or other bitter herb) and sweet growing vegetables: peppers, carrots, spring onions, etc. (These stay on table, available for noshing to prevent hunger and irascibility.)

For the second journey, two texts:

"Now the children of Israel bore fruit, they swarmed, they multiplied, they stood very much on their own feet—yes, very much, until the land filled up with them." (Exod I:7)

"Now the king of Narrow Places said to the birthgivers of the Hebrews—one named Shifra, the other Puah—he said, 'When you help the Hebrew women give birth, see the stones. If it be a boy, kill him; if a girl, let her live.' But the birthgivers had awe for The Creator, and they did not do as the king of Narrows had said to them. They let the newborn boys live. So the king of Narrows called for the birthgivers and said to them, 'Why have you done this thing, letting the newborn boys live?' The birthgivers said to Pharaoh, 'Because not like Narrows/Egyptian women are Hebrew women: because they are lively; before the birthgiver comes to them, they give birth!' So the Creator was good to the birthgivers, and the people multiplied, they stood very much on their own feet." (Exod I: 15-20)

Invite discussion, with these and other questions: During gestation, how do we nourish ourselves from what is healthy while screening out what is toxic? When does the womb change from being open growing-space to being "the narrow place"?

Prepare cups of wine—of any color that each celebrant chooses, as a symbol that during gestation, each new identity must choose its own best nourishment. Say the blessing over wine, and drink.

• 6 •

Third Journey: Birth and Separation. How do we give birth to our free and separate selves?

Tell the story and then say the blessing over the orange. The story: "When Susannah Heschel spoke of equality for Jewish women, a man arose angry to say: 'A woman has no more place in leading prayer than an orange has a place upon the Seder table!' So now we make a place for an orange on the Seder table—a fruit that bears the seeds of a growing future. Say the blessing: "*Brucha aht YAHH eloheynu ruach ha'olam boreyt pri ha'eytz*. Blessed are you, YAHH our Creator, Breath of the world, who shapes the fruit of the tree." Then eat from the orange.

For the third journey, three texts:

"Now a man from the house of Levi went and married a woman of Levi. The woman conceived and gave birth to a child." (Exod II:1-2)

"Thus says YHWH, 'My child, my firstborn, is Israel. Send free my child!'" (Exod. IV:22-23)

"The Children of Israel came through the midst of the sea upon the dry-land, the waters a wall for them on their right and on their left." (Exod XIV:22)

Invite discussion, with these and other questions: Would we want the Jewish people to look upon Mitzraim as "Mother Egypt"? How does the smallest, poorest, and weakest of peoples become "God's first-born," and what does that mean for the smallest, weakest, and poorest of persons, communities, and species today? What have we learned from our parents, and what must we unlearn? What have we learned from our parental traditions (Jewish, American, Western), and what must we unlearn?

Sing "*Min hameytzar, karati Yah; anani, hamerkhav Yah*. Out of the Narrow Place I call to you; answer me with open space, O Breath of Life."

Prepare a cup of wine—red for the blood of birth. Say the blessing over wine, and drink.

• 7 •

Eat dinner.

• 8 •

Hunt for the *afikoman*, the hidden piece of matzah that represents all that is hidden and mysterious. Whoever finds the *afikoman* brings it to the table, holds it high for everyone to see, and says: "We began by dividing this bread and hiding part of it; for if we hold tight to what we have, we keep ourselves in tight

and narrow spaces. Only if we send forth part of ourselves into the unknown can we give birth to freedom." Everyone shares the *afikoman*. Then all chant four times the special Grace after Meals that means: "Blessed is the womb that shapes the world and grows this bread": *Brich rachmana, malka d'alma, marei d'hai pita.*

• 9 •

Fourth Journey: Adulthood and Reconciliation. How do I come face to face, heart to heart, with the place from which I come?

Say the blessing " *. . . sheh hakol nihyeh b'dvarech*—

. . . Who makes all come to be through Your word"—over *charoset*, a paste made from chopped nuts, apples, raisins, and spices—the foods of the Song of Songs, in which the fruits of life are joined into one whole self. Then eat the *charoset*.

For the fourth journey, four texts:

"High above shores and times,
I on the shore
forever and ever.
Moses my brother
has crossed over
to milk, honey,
that holy land.
Building Jerusalem.
I sing forever
on the seashore.
I do remember
horseman and horses,
waves of passage
poured into war,
all poured into journey.
My unseen brothers
have gone over;
chariots
deep seas under.
I alone stand here
ankle-deep
and I sing, I sing,
until the lands
sing to each other."
(Muriel Rukeyser, "Miriam: The Red Sea")

"Rise with me, my love, rise with me! For now the winter is past, the rains are over and gone, blossoms can be seen on the earth, the time of song has come. From the fig trees bud the tender figs, from the vines come tender fragrance. Rise with me, my love, rise with me! . . . I will lead you, I will bring you, to my mother's house, to her who gave me birth. . . . O daughters of Jerusalem, swear by the wild gazelle: Do not wake or rouse love until it please." (Song of Songs II:10-13; VIII:2-4.)

"In that day shall Israel be a third with Mitzraim/Narrows and with Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth; for YHWH of Hosts has blessed them, saying 'Blessed be Mitzraim My people and Assyria the work of My hands and Israel My inheritance.'" (Isaiah 19:24-25)

"Look! I will send the Prophet Elijah to you before the coming of the great and terrible day of YHWH. He will turn the hearts of the parents to the children and the hearts of the children to the parents, lest I come and strike the earth with desolation. He will turn the hearts of the parents to the children and the hearts of the children to the parents." (Malachi 3:23)

Invite discussion. Questions to keep in mind, among others: What is the relationship between opening our hearts to our parents and opening our hearts to our children? In creating new movements and communities, what relationships do we make with our "parent" society? What does it mean that in the Song of Songs, God is not mentioned? Finally, do we experience these four journeys separately, at different times of life? —or at the same time in different aspects of our lives?

Prepare a cup of wine—white with a drop of red, the white that includes all colors with a drop of the red to give new life. Say the blessing over wine, and drink.

• 10 •

All pour from their glasses into Eliyahu's Cup and Miriam's Bowl. Sing "*Eliyahu haNavi*" and "*Miriam haNevia*":

Eliyahu haNavi, Eliyahu haTishbi,
Eliyahu, Eliyahu, Eliyahu haGiladi.
Bimheyra b'yamenu, yavo elenu,
Im mashiach ben Daveed, im mashiach baht Daveed.
Miriam haNevia, oz v'zimra b'yada,
Miriam rikdi itanu l'takeyn et-ha'olam.
Bimheyra b'yamenu, tavo elenu
El mei ha'yeshua, el mei ha'yeshua.

[O Prophet Elijah, come to us in our own day with the Messiah, child of David; O Prophet Miriam, strength and music in your hand, come dance with us to heal the world; come to us in our own day with the waters that transform us.] □

MUSIC REVIEW

Lauding Byron

Ira Steingroot



There's not a string attuned to mirth
But has its chord in melancholy—
Thomas Hood

The anomaly of the recent album, "Don Byron Plays the Music of Mickey Katz" (Elektra Nonesuch 79313-2), has generated a tremendous amount of comment in the musical press. What would prompt a thirty-four-year-old African-American avant-garde jazz clarinetist to form a nine-piece klezmer orchestra celebrating the all-but-forgotten music of Mickey Katz, the Yiddish song parodist of the post-swing, pre-rock era and the father of entertainer Joel Grey? Conversely, we may as wel' ask what prompted Jewish musicians and composers to become interested in Black music long before George Gershwin wrote *Rhapsody in Blue* for Paul Whiteman in 1924. Gershwin's later *Porgy and Bess* was merely the ultimate apotheosis of all the Black-influenced songs of Jewish Tin Pan Alley. The three great clarinetists of the swing era—Benny Goodman, Artie Shaw, and Woody Herman—could have become master klezmer musicians if their bent had been in that direction. Instead, like hundreds of other Jewish instrumentalists and songwriters, from Irving Berlin to Leiber and Stoller, from trumpeter Manny Klein to saxophonist Peter Apfelbaum, they were drawn to African-American music.

For any immigrant group in America, there are many possible strategies of survival. Each of these strategies can express itself through the whole range of cultural selection: food, clothing, music, etc. Immigrants, whether arriving here by free choice, as refugees, or forced into slavery, can opt to retain as much of their native culture as possi-

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ble, like the Amish or Hasidim. Or they can reject the whole foreign package and embrace total assimilation. Usually they strike a bargain with America, becoming Yankees and reserving the original culture for specific times and places. Most American Jews have chosen this middle path in which being Jewish is replaced by being Americans whose religion, a fragment of our culture, is Judaism.

In Europe, being a Jew was difficult, but knowing how to be Jewish was easy. In America, being a Jew is easy, but knowing how to be Jewish is difficult. All choices are available to us: eating cheeseburgers or keeping kosher, observing Shabbat or taking a drive on Saturday, speaking Yiddish or forgetting it. We can pick and choose not only from our own culture, but from any one of a hundred other cultures and lifestyles. We can study Chinese, follow professional sports, learn how to make enchiladas, or vote Republican. For most Jews, who don't make the easy either/or choice between cultural isolationism and assimilation, there is a painful tension whose effects run the gamut from self-hatred to creativity.

For African-Americans, there have been fewer choices. In America, racial differences have been less assimilable than religious differences. Black skin cannot be removed like a caftan and *shtreimel*. While stripped of most of their original culture, no longer able to remain completely African, African Americans have never been allowed to immerse themselves freely in the melting pot. The result is a painful tension. When Jews contemplate the Black American experience, they feel the shock of identity, the realization that our people's experience before coming to America was analogous to the Black experience here. When Jewish musicians overwhelmingly choose to become involved in Black musical forms, as opposed to Irish fiddling or mariachi bands, they are expressing this realization. Assimilation and resistance to it are expressed simultaneously. It is no coincidence that the old Negro spiritual "Let My People Go" has become a part of many Passover haggadot, or that the cantor's son, Asa Yoelson, goes on to become *The Jazz Singer*, in blackface.

Don Byron, who has studied, listened to, transcribed, and performed klezmer music brilliantly for the last dozen years, claims a corresponding entitlement to play this Jewish folk-music of weddings, bar mitzvahs, and brisses. But in an article on Byron in the January 16 edition of The *New York Times Magazine*, Stephen Sherrill argues that although Byron is a clarinet virtuoso, technically capable of performing in any musical genre he chooses, he lacks the credentials of authenticity. Sherrill quotes Henry Sapoznik, a musicologist at YIVO, the Institute for Jewish Research, questioning not only whether Byron can play klezmer, but whether Mickey Katz himself was playing klezmer.

Both klezmer and jazz are music of good times, yet each draws its strength from a well of sadness. As the Hasidim say, "God loves a broken heart," and anyone who plays the blues would agree.

Sapoznik has done yeoman's service for Yiddishkeit by authoring a fine introductory book on klezmer, transcribing acoustic recordings, interviewing old masters such as Dave Tarras, and performing in his own klezmer group. He has played a major role in the klezmer renaissance of the last fifteen years. But he speaks as a purist who wants to convince us that a certain kind of klezmer, that of admittedly great players such as Tarras and Naftule Brandwine, is the epitome of klezmer. Such a purist approach in jazz—deification of the past and the replication of styles and performances—led to the soulless knock-offs of New Orleans polyphony called Dixieland: pleasantly nostalgic, but missing something essential.

In truth, as Sapoznik himself has said elsewhere, klezmer musicians in America, far from being purists, have always allowed diverse musical influences, popular material, and tongue-in-cheek attitudes about the *goldene medina* (America, literally the golden land) to flow into their work. Don Byron, in choosing to present the post-classical phase of klezmer as expressed in the work of Mickey Katz, reveals that aspect of klezmer. In Walter Benjamin's words, "He regards it as his task to brush history against the grain." He looks at something we ignored, took for granted, didn't value and presents it anew. He throws a light on Katz and the klezmer pioneers that gives us a fresh and enlarged view of both. Perhaps we hear more of the thrill of their music in Katz and Byron than we do in any number of dry reconstructions.

Sherrill refers twice in his *New York Times Magazine* article to the "public face" of music, first of klezmer and then of jazz, as if there were only one public and one face to either of these evolving musics. Wynton Marsalis and his stuffy, ho-hum pedestrian Jazz at Lincoln Center concerts are presented as the public face of jazz. The shoe seems to be on the wrong foot here. Marsalis epitomizes the virtuoso instumentalist who believes he can play any music he chooses. His reactionary, even slavish jazz work has always smelled of the academy. He presents us with the outer shell of jazz, but lacks the inner kernel. Byron, on the other hand, while changing the external form of jazz (in the pattern of Louis Armstrong, Charlie Parker, and Ornette Coleman), achieves the same effect as the jazz masters of the past. Indeed, like every true jazz artist, he knows that he must change jazz in order to continue playing it. Before rising from its own ashes, the phoenix must first ignite its own pyre.

By focusing too much on a type of critical *pilpul*—hair-splitting, after the fact, academic definitions of klezmer and jazz—Sherrill thus blinds himself to the real questions raised by Byron's musical predilections. By worrying so much about how to categorize and label Byron, he misses the provocative implications suggested by his specific musical choices.

Klezmer began in Eastern Europe, but had decades of development in the New World. In America, it had its "ragtime" period with the big Sousa-like bands of Abe Schwartz and Harry Kandel, and its "swing" period,

when trumpeter Ziggy Elman turned a classic klezmer *freylekh* into "And the Angels Sing," and Sholom Secunda's "*Bei Mir Bist Du Schon*" in Sammy Cahn's English version became the Andrews Sisters' biggest hit.

In the late 1940s, following a two-year tenure as clarinetist, musical director, and performer with Spike Jones's Dadaist comedy band, Mickey Katz began to chart a new course for klezmer. America was drifting rudderless musically during this post-war period. All ethnic Americans were eager to appear homogenized. An innocuous music came into being: squeaky clean, kitsch, stripped of ethnicity—we called it plastic in the Sixties. This music had an appeal for Jews moving to the suburbs, working out a new balance with assimilation, but it was also ripe for satire.

Mickey Katz attacked these songs with Yiddish wit and brilliant musicianship. Katz was himself a great clarinetist, composer, lyricist, and arranger as well as a natural comic. His band included such all-around talents as trumpeters Manny Klein and Ziggy Elman and trombonist Si Zentner. In their hands, "C'est Si Bon" became a ridiculous pastiche of trite French and irrelevant Yiddish, while "Kiss of Fire" became "Kiss of Meyer." They could shift musical gears effortlessly, moving from klezmer to mambo to swing to Dixieland.

What they did to these songs was exactly what Mel Brooks and Sid Caesar were doing on "Your Show of Shows" or Harvéy Kurtzman at EC Comics' *Mad*. Yet, in the same way that the jazz musician takes schmaltzy songs and liposuctions out the fat, leaving behind a beauty of sentiment without sentimentality, Katz had his own drastic methods for resuscitating musical candidates for quadruple bypass surgery. When he finished his destruction of a song, it could be reborn to enjoyment, listened to repeatedly as both great music and great humor.

Along came rock and roll, another strategy for attacking what was normal, and klezmer went into hibernation for a quarter of a century. Certain masters continued to play it, but mostly it degenerated into mere nostalgia. In the late 1970s, just in the nick of time, a revival began. One of its centers was the New England Conservatory of Music, where Hankus Netsky formed the Klezmer Conservatory Orchestra. The group's star soloist was Bronx-born virtuoso clarinetist Don Byron, a player with incredible chops, insight, feeling, and imagination.

Byron grew up listening to everything from his father's calypso band to Dizzy Gillespie at the Village Gate to Leonard Bernstein's Young People's Concerts at Lincoln Center. When he got to the New England Conservatory, he was already centered in jazz, but the Third Stream-oriented school pushed him toward some other musical genre. Why klezmer? In the most immediate way, existentially and without meaning, because that was what was happening at school that day. Chance is the fool's name for fate. Byron turned out to have an incredible knack for klezmer.

In Byron's work, we hear the shared ridicule for normative culture.

Then, there is the supposed resemblance between klezmer and jazz: Klezmer is Jewish jazz and jazz is Black klezmer. The resemblance would include a pentatonic, Lydian modal, blues, or minor scale (true in many folk musics); a vocal approach to instrumental timbre (that opening wailing clarinet glissando at the beginning of "Rhapsody in Blue" could as well have come from Dave Tarras as Sidney Bechet); and improvisational and rhythmic elements (far more sophisticated and evolved in jazz). Klezmer musicians saw the similarities and milked them in tunes such as Harry Kandel's "Jakie Jazz 'Em Up" as early as 1926.

Of course, on the next level, Byron's performance of Mickey Katz's music is funny, whimsical, outrageous, with intent to *épater le bourgeois*. We don't object to white musicians colonizing anyone else's music from anywhere in the world, but we're startled when a boat lands in densely populated Manhattan and a Black Columbus jumps out and plants a flag. But is that all there is—just a joke, a Whoopie Goldbergism, a *nechtiker tog* (a paradoxical event), camp?

The initial sense of absurdity leads not to the shock of recognition between two musics, but between two despised minorities and their treatment by their respective cultural majorities. The Jew in Europe fulfills the role of the African American in the United States and vice versa. That sense of identity, constantly tested and at risk and constantly reaffirmed by both groups, can be seen almost peripherally: in the sects of Black Hebrews; in the personal Judaism expressed by such varied African Americans as Sammy Davis, Jr., Julius Lester, Willie "the Lion" Smith, and Josephine Baker; in the cantorial scatting of Cab Calloway; and in the Rastafarians' belief in their descent from King Solomon. It can be seen face to face in the immediate way in which the Old Testament stories of bondage, strangers in a strange land, and a return to a promised land have been resonant with meaning for African Americans since slave days. As paraphrased by the Melodions, a reggae group, the ancient verses of the psalmist become absolutely contemporary and relevant: "But the wicked carried us away captivity, require from us a song, how can we sing King Alfa song in a strange land?"

Klezmer, when played by Don Byron, becomes an objective correlative for the experience of the Black jazz musician in America. For him it is that thing which is at once familiar, *haimish*, and uncanny, *unheimlich*. It comes forward to meet him out of the mirror. For the rest of us to understand this, Jews, Blacks and whites, we must realize that in Europe the people who played this music were not white, no matter how they are seen today.

In Byron's klezmer work we hear the shared ridicule for normative culture; the deflation of pomposity; the remarkable musicianship; the sense of humans bursting into song as birds do; the same descent into the foul rag-and-bone shop of the heart; the freedom and abandon that occur internally because they cannot occur in the world outside of music; the same wild laughter and heartbreaking poignancy. Both klezmer and jazz are music of good times, yet each draws its strength from a well of sadness. As the Hasidim say, "God loves a broken heart," and anyone who plays the blues would agree. □

BOOK REVIEW

The Gray Mystique

Alice Kessler-Harris



The Fountain of Age, by Betty Friedan. Simon and Schuster, 1993. 671 pages.

As I write, the newspapers report that a fifty-nine-year-old British woman has just given birth to twins. The *New York Times* prints a photograph of a pregnant sixty-one-year-old. These miracles of in-vitro fertilization leave me with mixed feelings. I should be delighted. After all, the biological clock has been one of the most effective weapons aimed at women's determination to have it all. Women may live longer than men, but their reproductive systems age faster. Now that may be irrelevant: Women can continue to reproduce long past the onset of menopause. Shouldn't a feminist celebrate this extension of women's choices?

But I confess to a certain amount of squeamishness. I am consumed by the negative possibilities inherent in continuing to value only women who can—or will—produce children. I fear that the pro-natalism that shapes women's lives into their forties will continue, indefinitely, to be the measure of their worth. Whatever happened to the search for personhood, to the quest to find the authentic, independent self that was a minimal goal of women's liberation—and, for that matter, of human liberation?

Birthing and rearing children into old age is one of the few solutions Betty Friedan does not advocate in *The Fountain of Age.*

But in the course of this long, often rambling, and gutsy volume, she does propose a panoply of ways to think about the golden years. Rejecting the obsession with youth, she wants us to pay attention to the fountain of new possibilities offered by a healthy, longer life.

Clearly, Betty Friedan has embarked on another crusade. The structure of her argument is meant to remind us of her earlier best-seller, *The Feminine Mystique.* Published in 1963, that influential book described what Friedan called "the problem that had no name." Housewives and mothers of young children, confined to

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their comfortable suburban homes, were starved of meaningful purpose. Considered significant only as mothers and wives, they slowly withered into a frustrated, desperate, and unacknowledged misery. Giving the problem a name, she also provided women with license to search for solutions.

Whether or not we acknowledge *The Feminine Mystique* as the clarion call of the women's movement that emerged in the Sixties, the book certainly spoke to the lives of millions of women who read it and felt empowered in large and small ways. Friedan followed *The Feminine Mystique* with an active career in politics and punditry. Together with a dozen other women, she founded the National Organization for Women, and helped to start the National Women's Political Caucus. Over a thirty-year period, she has lectured tirelessly, appeared on countless talk shows and television programs, and carried her message of equality for women around the world.

The message has not always been uncontested. At times, Friedan has differed dramatically about political strategy with other movement leaders such as Gloria Steinem and Bella Abzug. In her third book, *The Second Stage*, she argued that feminists had gone too far in rejecting the love and nurture of traditional family life. Her apparent new rigidity angered a generation of young women struggling to combine work and family and alienated many, including mothers both gay and straight, who were struggling to develop nurturing relationships in non-traditional ways. Nevertheless, Friedan's capacity to remain in the center of the debate deserves admiration and respect.

In 1963, Friedan identified herself as a housewife in her early forties, a victim of the feminine mystique. Now she draws on her experiences as an aging person to explore ways of escaping the bonds of a different type of attributed role. She sees the problems as comparable, seeking to persuade readers that aging poses a dilemma equally susceptible to analysis and solution.

Friedan argues that harmful myths have obfuscated the process of aging. The media have convinced us, she writes, that aging spells the decline of all positive qualities—physical strength, sexual energy, and smooth skin. The old are either ignored or publicly denigrated; they are humiliated and laughed at; they are derided for behaving in child-like ways; their dignity is assaulted by the assumption that they are incapable of effective activity. These stereotypes, Friedan believes, result in something of a self-fulfilling prophecy: In an effort to reclaim the energies and appearances of lost youth, older people rely heavily on drugs and cosmetic surgery. Failing in their efforts, they wall themselves into enclaves designed for senior citizens and succumb to depression, memory loss, and sexual dysfunction.

The media have convinced us, she writes, that aging spells the decline of all positive qualities—physical strength, sexual energy, and smooth skin.

But, she suggests, aging can more fruitfully be seen as a time of growth, when new and positive attributes emerge. The challenge is to "risk a new stage in life, where there are no prescribed role models to follow, no guideposts, no rigid rules or visible rewards, to step out into the true existential unknown of these new years of life now open to us, and to find our own terms for living it." *The Fountain of Age* draws on a range of biological and psychological studies which demonstrate that, given a choice, older people can and will function at far higher levels than have traditionally been expected. For example, "crystallized" intelligence—which measures such things as experience, knowledge, wisdom, and professional expertise—actually increases throughout adulthood. Memory loss is present largely in the unpracticed mind. Any declines come later than people think—probably not until the eighties—and even then they are not inevitable. Nor, she suggests, drawing on her own experience in a taxing Outward Bound wilderness survival expedition, is physical decline inevitable for most of the so-called "young-old."

Brave words, indeed, but what, in practice, do they mean? When Betty Friedan called for women's liberation, she criticized the economy of male power with its tendency to isolate and segregate women into household service units. Following through, she advocated political and social strategies that would enhance women's independence. Political consciousness and collective action would ensure that women's interests were publicly represented. Jobs for women would provide a modicum of financial security, and an identity as well. But the situation with older people is hardly parallel, and Friedan's solutions reflect some confusion about the differences. Assuming that Friedan is correct—and I think she is—that age contains the seeds of new growth, this book begs the question of how those seeds can be nurtured and encouraged to thrive.

Friedan offers us largely individual solutions. Quoting extensively from interviews with an enormous number of friends and strangers who testify to their own experiences in such arenas as building up muscular strength, learning new languages, and engaging in fresh careers, she intends both to debunk old myths of helplessness and provide incentives to face new challenges. But even the most inspirational and moving examples (and many of these certainly fit that description) are not enough. In the end, a series of repetitively optimistic quotes feels more like a wall designed to hide the precipice of fragility and death that lies beyond than a path to opportunity. We understand how so many people have rejuvenated themselves. But we search in vain for the entry point that will make their route accessible to others.

Facing the issues posed by the expanding population of old people demands harder political and collective solutions. In *The Feminine Mystique*, Friedan transcended the personal by identifying common ground around which women could unify. Here she provides a vision of hope, but little direction toward its realization. The housewives to whom Betty Friedan appealed in the 1960s discovered political and economic agendas by making their way into the labor market, where they proved to be able competitors. But most of the older people who are

the subject of this book no longer have that option. *New York Times* reporter Esther B. Fein, writing about the frustrations faced by older workers seeking jobs, recently commented, "they can actually feel themselves dissolve from vital individuals into antique stereotypes as they sit before interviewers who, careful not to run afoul of discrimination laws, try surreptitiously to find out applicants' ages and couch their biases in the most deferential terms."

With due regard for the numerous exceptions Friedan cites, most older people have been discarded by the marketplace and have little chance of returning to it. In a world in which the multitude of aging workers (male and female) lose their jobs as a result of the flight of capital and of a shifting occupational structure over which they have no control, men and women are left not searching for a fountain that will revitalize the aging process but coping with a loss of self-esteem and of value. How does this group find a voice? Friedan ducks the question by focusing on the lives of a minority—the relatively privileged, those with intellectual and financial resources and options.

When most old people, out of choice or necessity, decide not to retire, they want and retain jobs that young people might otherwise hold. When old people insist on adequate retirement incomes, they rely on the willingness of young workers to tax themselves to provide them. When old people face the debate over national health care, they wonder if dollars spent for the poor will reduce those available in the existing Medicare program.

These problems are exacerbated by the absence of either gender or class unity among the old. There is a dramatic drop in the trajectory of men's and women's careers after the age of sixty. When *The Feminine Mystique* came out, four-fifths of men between sixty and sixty-five were still in the work force. That figure now is less than two-thirds and dropping. And for every man who is forced out of a job, another chooses to leave unsatisfying work.

But the retreat of older men from work is not matched by women. Only 35 percent of women aged sixty to sixty-five were in the work force in 1963. Now nearly 40 percent of women in that age group work for wages, and the figure is rising. What we are seeing may, to some extent, be caused by poverty and the absence of pensions for women. But if the surveys are correct, older women, inspired by new opportunities, are also choosing to work because of the gratification it provides. Their attitudes toward retirement will therefore differ dramatically from those of men. Similarly, when professionals with property and wealth retire, they can choose among a range of options that are often closed to workers forced out of low-paying jobs at age sixty-one or sixty-two, with only their Social Security to support them.

Friedan shows us individuals who have rejuvenated themselves. But we search in vain for the entry point that will make their route accessible to others.

Age, then, is not simply another problem that has no name. Nor is the way old people live necessarily a product of society's insistence on denigrating the value of the old. Rather, as anyone who knows the work of the powerful American Association for Retired Persons (AARP) will testify, the difficulty is not so much in naming the problems as in constructing solutions. Calling attention to the problem posed by confining women to housewifery was effective in the Sixties because there was an obvious remedy: Include women in existing (male) institutions. But such a remedy doesn't exist for the old, because it is not access to existing institutions that is required so much as the creation of new ones. Otherwise we will create a world where solutions for the old lie in repeating the activities of youth by continuing to have technologically produced or natural babies, or forcing ourselves to compete endlessly for work.

If we accept Friedan's call to replace a cult of youthfulness with faith in the continuing generativity of the human mind and spirit, we are also accepting an invitation to work for the social and political changes necessary to effectively incorporate a new generation of old people. Otherwise, representing age as the fountain of opportunity will create yet another myth. For just as individual will and ideology were not enough to resolve the Feminine Mystique, so they will not be enough to deal with the mystique of aging.

For most of the elderly whose resources are limited, opportunity must come from outside the market economy—from voluntary associations such as AARP and government bodies that can reconcile the conflicting interests of young and old, of men and women. We will have to create new structures that might empower older people to develop confidence and a political voice. Without such efforts, it is hard to imagine solutions for the increasing numbers of people who seek and deserve as rich a life in their seventies as they led in their youth. □

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BOOK REVIEW

That New-Time Religion

James Davison Hunter

Christianity in the 21st Century, by Robert Wuthnow. Oxford University Press, 1993, 251 pp. $25.

As the second millennium comes to a close, speculation about the next will undoubtedly proliferate. Given the rare symbolism, much of this speculation is likely to be apocalyptic in character. Pundits on the Right and the Left can already be heard declaring that the end is nigh; that the barbarians have stormed the gates of civilization; that a new dark age is upon us. For some, these declarations are sincere and well-reasoned. For others they are merely a form of posturing, a prelude to the hucksterism that trades on fear. (The name "Limbaugh" pops to mind.)

The symbolism of a new millennium is not the only reason apocalyptic visions of the future will increase. The intransigence of urban poverty, the decay of the public infrastructure, the growing brutality and openness of criminal violence, the deepening fragmentation of our political culture, the flagging confidence of the public in democratic institutions and civic leadership, all contribute to a general sense of alarm; a feeling that the problems we face can no longer be solved much less controlled or even adequately addressed. Add to this the massive changes technological innovation brings: For all of the social good technology generates, it also promises a social order that is fluid and unfamiliar. Perhaps most problematic is the collapse of the credibility—even in popular culture—of the idea of progress; the notion that the swirl of change around us represents a moving forward and an improvement.

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One doesn't have to be a Jean-François Lyotard or a Christopher Lasch to see that the mythic power of this "grand narrative" has been greatly depleted and its plausibility undermined. Unlike the mood at the end of the nineteenth century, we greet a new age and its challenges not so much with confidence and hope as with ambivalence. Apocalyptic visions are a measure of our collective uncertainties.

How the next millennium actually unfolds, of course, will depend upon a multiplicity of factors. Scholars tend to focus upon economic and political considerations because their effect on our daily lives is so tangible. Despite a well-established inclination to dismiss the religious factor it too will be central to the manner and course of future developments. As historian Sydney Ahlstrom put it many years ago, America is "a nation with the soul of a church." It remains so today in many ways. Christianity, of course, remains a central part of this phenomenon. In the growing cast of American faiths, Christianity still occupies center stage and will for the foreseeable future. Of the non-indigenous religions in the United States, its roots are deepest, its cultural symbols are the most widely recognized (the year 2000 is, after all, Anno Domini), its institutional resources and clout are the most expansive, and it still evokes the loyalties (however thin) of a majority of the people. Thus, the effort to track the course of religion (and Christianity in particular) has great merit. Not only are these institutions and ideals significant in their own right, but they provide a window into the life (and "soul") of the nation.

Among the many scholars charting the currents of change in the realm of faith is Robert Wuthnow, a sociologist at Princeton University. Wuthnow is known for his careful, versatile, empirically rich, and insightful scholarship. All this talent is present in his most recent book—a thoughtful, sympathetic examination of Christianity in America today and its prospects in the next century. What Wuthnow finds applies with almost equal force to American Judaism.

It should be emphasized that Wuthnow's chief concern is not to gaze into the crystal ball. *Christianity in the 21st Century* is not a book of predictions. His focus is on assessing the challenges Christianity presently faces and the cultural and institutional resources it has at its disposal for meeting them. The future, as he puts it, can be imagined in the realities of the present. His method is to address the question of identity: In what ways is Christian identity—in its communal, ethical, theological, political, and personal dimensions—sustainable in the future?

Consider, first, Christianity as a moral community. In the past, congregations provided relatively stable links to the wider community, networks of support during time of need, and opportunities for service to others. While churchgoers are still community-oriented, social conditions in the late twentieth century have greatly undermined the capacity of the church to fulfill these functions. The weakening of denominational loyalties, the instability generated by a mobile and transient population, the competition of new institutions outside the church (such as twelve-step groups) in addressing spiritual needs, and a ubiquitous individualism all make difficult the maintenance and generational transmission of Christian identity.

How, too, can the ethical core of Christianity—the witness of compassion—be communicated and cultivated in the coming generation? The specifics of Christian teaching on compassion tend to ring hollow in an increasingly fragmented society. The lives of saints and saintly people, and the stories told about them, all remain powerful role models to this end. Yet

even here, people tend to translate those stories to suit their idiosyncratic tastes. While people may be inspired by Mother Teresa's life, her Catholicism becomes irrelevant. In the process, the particularities of theological commitment that motivate these heroes tend to be neutralized.

Doctrinally, Christian belief continues to fragment; as a result, fewer and fewer people agree about what it means to be a Christian. Out of this ambiguity has emerged a struggle to define the faith's true meaning. Fundamentalism remains the most important agenda-setting force in American religion because all other religious commitments must define themselves in opposition to it. The various strands of liberalism have thus far failed to define their own agenda except as an alternative for those uncomfortable with the austere supernaturalism of fundamentalism. The likelihood that liberal churches can, in the future, steer an alternative course between fundamentalism and secularism is rather low, not least because its moral vision is often too opaque for lay people to understand, live by, and transmit. As a consequence, membership and attendance in the liberal churches will continue to decline.

Some of these dynamics play out as well in the struggle to define Christianity's public identity. Those who hoped that the Christian Right would disappear with the end of the Cold War were sadly mistaken. The vast financial, technological, and manpower resources of this political movement ensure that it will be on the scene for a long time to come (although its political strategies will likely be tied more closely to local churches). Here again, its existence tends to set the agenda for liberal Christians insofar as liberals can only react in a stridency equal to that of their conservative counterparts. Polarization in the public witness of the churches remains deeply entrenched and shows little sign of diminishing.

Individual Christians will also find it difficult to maintain their identity as Christians because of the overwhelming and ever-changing number of factors that make up their personal identity. Christian faith is just one source and, in the practical world of everyday life, by no means the dominant one. The prevailing materialism of American society will also continue to compromise the Christian's commitment to higher values, making Christian faith a struggle indeed.

As the hard details of Wuthnow's analysis accumulate, the final conclusion about the fate of Christianity in America seems anything but sanguine. Christianity will certainly survive and will adapt, yet it faces nearly insurmountable obstacles in maintaining any communal, ethical, and doctrinal integrity. Christianity in its public witness is likely to remain sharply polarized and politicized, and lay Christians will likely find themselves even more beleaguered in living out their faith than they are today. The brutal implications of Wuthnow's analysis are softened by the soothing flow of his prose and by his own indefatigable hopefulness for the faith that he shares. But the evidence he amasses cannot be wished away.

Indeed, it is possible that the future of Christianity is even darker than what Wuthnow describes. It is likely that public culture and the secular state will become increasingly hostile to the public expression of Christian faith. Challenges to the tax-exempt status of the church and clergy, to the predominance of Christian symbols in law and public policy, to the role of religious institutions in the shaping of public affairs are not far off. It may be premature for Christians to reconsider life in the catacombs, but their faith is likely to become more, not less, marginalized.

Wuthnow's treatise shows how the fate of Christianity in the twenty-first century is inextricably tied to the national culture in which it finds itself. But one might also consider the reverse. Is the fate of America tied up in the faith that for so long gave its public institutions identity and purpose?

At the end of his 1939 essay, "Notes toward the Definition of Culture," T.S. Eliot ominously concluded that he did not believe the culture of Europe (and we could add America) could survive the complete disappearance of the Christian faith (by which he meant the common cultural elements reflected in law, art, education and so on, spawned by Christian traditions). "If Christianity goes," he said, "the whole of our culture goes. Then you must start painfully again, and you cannot put on a new culture ready made. You must wait for the grass to grow to feed the sheep to give the wool out of which your new coat will be made. You must pass through many centuries of barbarism."

Such a stark and sweeping pronouncement is provocative precisely because it is apocalyptic. Our natural reaction is to scoff: "Civilization seems to be surviving the breakup of Christianity quite well, thank you. In fact, we have made great strides toward the goals of greater equity and justice as the power of this patriarchal religion has declined."

Yet the question remains intriguing. We know that the articulation and maintenance of the idea of civil society in the West owes much to biblical faiths. For all of its problems and foibles, Christianity did contribute indispensably to a common moral formulation that could reconcile diverse private interests with the public order. It provided a key source of solidarity that made democratic pluralism possible. We now know just how unique and historically contingent that formulation was. As the political sociologist Adam Seligman put it recently, these beliefs "are no longer ours to share, and we can no longer use them to construct our models of the social order." Concern about the relative fragility of civil society quickly becomes more than academic. Can it exist without the common culture provided by Christianity? What could possibly provide for a new unum in the midst of the ever-fragmenting pluribus of our postmodern circumstances? One can hear, in response, a great deal of pompous pontificating as well as wishful thinking, but the truth is that these are empirical questions to which no one yet knows the answers.

Christianity, it will be recalled, is an eschatological faith whose story ends (literally) in apocalypse. Yet short of a miraculous second coming of the messiah, Christianity in the coming century will muddle on. As it faces the future, it will create its share of moral exemplars capable of inspiring acts of goodness and compassion. It will also spawn its share of hucksters who know how to exploit fear for personal gain. Its institutions will provide a place of spiritual solace and refuge. They will also issue forth the means for the oppressive use of power. So it has always been. But as a shared moral discourse and thus a foundation for civil society, its influence will undoubtedly erode still further. This occasion will keep speculation about the future open, but it will certainly not ease our sense of urgency and uncertainty. □

BOOK REVIEW

Psychiatry's Stepchild

Ghislaine Boulanger



Trauma and Recovery by Judith Lewis Herman. Basic Books, 1992, 276 pp.

When Freud directed the gaze of psychiatric investigation to the unconscious, real-life events became an unfashionable focus for mental health professionals. Instead, psychoanalysts turned their attention to their patients' internal battles that found expression in dreams, daydreams, and associations.

Thus for nearly eighty years, psychological reactions to real-life catastrophes languished as psychiatry's stepchildren. When the troops returned home after each world war, their stress reactions briefly elicited interest among psychiatrists. But the reactions were soon returned to their peace-time position as diagnostic epiphenomena. In general, the psychoanalytic imperative required that patients who remembered being molested as children be told that they had lively fantasy lives. Psychic maturity presupposed emotional immunity to catastrophic blows from the outside world. Concentration camps, combat, rape, the destruction of home and family—the healthy mind, we were told, should rapidly digest such assaults. Survivors who continued to be preoccupied with these horrors were said to be dealing with an earlier, unresolved internal conflict. Their very preoccupation with what had happened to them was an indication of "another mental disorder," as the official diagnostic manual of the American Psychiatric Association argued until 1980. Mental health professionals who took such traumas seriously incurred the disapproval of their colleagues.

For the most part, we no longer unquestioningly accept this "doublethink," as Judith Herman refers to it in *Trauma and Recovery*. Few literate adults today fail to recognize the term Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. In fact, the phenomenon has become a media event. No longer the stepchild of psychiatry, trauma is the star. This is indeed a Cinderella story, except that with each headline, each docudrama and talk show, each telling of the tawdry tale, we may be getting closer to the stroke of midnight.

The media blitz threatens to undermine the credibility of the concept of a post-traumatic disorder. Those who fought to gain acceptance for the diagnosis cringe as they watch talk show "experts" urging women who are afraid of the dark to think seriously about the incest of which they are undoubtedly victims. Each time employees win judgments against employers on the grounds that their failure to gain

Ghislaine Boulanger, a clinical psychologist in private practice in New York City, began researching Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder among Vietnam veterans in the seventies. She is co-author of The Vietnam Veteran Redefined: Fact and Fiction.

promotion caused "P.T.S.D," the diagnosis suffers a further dilution of meaning, inching closer to absurdity.

Few literate adults today fail to recognize the term Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. In fact, the phenomenon has become a media event.

In *Trauma and Recovery*, Herman provides a voice of clarity and reason that contributes substantially to reversing this sensational trend. Her book, which makes political, social, and phenomenological sense of an experience that has driven many psychiatric patients empty-handed from treatment and sown confusion among those professionals who have had the courage to pursue this line of inquiry, signals that at last the investigation and treatment of stress have come of age.

Trauma and Recovery is an indictment not only of the doublethink of psychiatry, but of a society that considers rape and combat to be the "complementary social rites of initiation into the coercive violence at the foundation of adult society." Since the diagnosis of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder became official in 1980, the topic has generated thousands of professional articles, hundreds of conferences and books, and created a "self-help" industry. Until now, however, little has been published for a more general audience concerned with the increasing incidence of violence and the psychological consequences of experiencing directly or bearing witness to that violence.

Herman, a feminist psychiatrist, writes in accessible and elegant prose. Her work in a women's mental health clinic leads her to draw striking parallels between political prisoners and women and children who are de facto prisoners of abusive husbands and fathers. Yet her vision is informed rather than restricted by the feminist perspective. Observing changes in the political and social climate that supported the suppression of trauma for so long and events that now encourage its emergence, Herman maintains that the collective amnesia afflicting mainstream psychiatry after each world war finally yielded to the social movements of the sixties and the clinical observations of the seventies. "War trauma becomes legitimate only in a context that challenges the sacrifice of young men in war. . . . The study of trauma in sexual and domestic life becomes legitimate only in a context that challenges the subordination of women and children."

Politics make strange bedfellows, and psychiatric politics are no exception. It is a little-known fact that in the early 1980s mental health workers treating Vietnam veterans and those working within the women's movement, strengthened by others working with Holocaust survivors, forged an informal alliance to promote the understanding and acceptance of their common cause. These disparate groups had observed that many survivors, regardless of their previous level of functioning, as a result of having lived for a few moments or for months in the fear of immediate destruction develop symptoms that wear away at the fabric of their lives, alienating them from their families, impairing their performance at work, intruding into their sleep and their waking hours. Every moment of their lives becomes a reminder not of their survival but of their frailty, of the fact they almost did not survive.

Herman refers to the dialectic of trauma, in which the psyche repeatedly maneuvers to correct for recurrent, unbidden memories and dreams about the trauma with conscious and unconscious efforts to deny its significance. Paradoxically, in an attempt to belong and to forget, the survivor becomes increasingly disenfranchised. Until the unlikely alliance of feminists and Vietnam veterans insisted on being heard, the survivor's best ally in her unsuccessful attempt to forget was the psychiatric establishment. Her greatest enemy to recovery was that same establishment, which insisted either that the memories were fabricated or insignificant.

Trauma and Recovery contains compelling descriptions and prescriptions for the period of recovery that demands so much from therapist and patient as they alternate in each other's eyes in the roles of persecutor and persecuted. In this most wrenching work, the therapist must resist the comfortable role of rescuer if she is to engage the patient's entire personality in the work of recovery, rather than settling for the patient's gratitude and continuing dependency.

But today the greatest danger to the ongoing acceptance and respectability of the concept of psychological trauma comes from within the profession. Now that the use and misuse of the diagnosis have assumed epidemic proportions, we are faced with too many situations in which naive or unscrupulous therapists prematurely seize on the notion of abuse to explain phenomena in their patients' lives that had previously defied understanding, at best reifying and at worst capitalizing on an inchoate despair instead of allowing the painstaking unfolding of memory. If I have one reservation about *Trauma and Recovery*, it is that Herman fails to take a sufficiently strong stand against this "false memory syndrome." Despite her warnings throughout the book about the tremendous difficulty of the work, her own closing case histories begin to sound a little too linear, a little too easily resolved.

In the early 1980s mental health workers treating Vietnam veterans and those working within the women's movement, strengthened by others working with Holocaust survivors, forged an informal alliance.

Nonetheless, this thought-provoking book provides powerful incentive to think seriously about the psychological prison to which those who have experienced individual or collective trauma are frequently condemned. The publication of *Trauma and Recovery* reduces the likelihood that such reactions will slip into obsurity. □

THE UNCOMFORTABLE RELATIONSHIP

(Continued from p. 68)

status, such as "Diaspora," "ghetto," and, in several chapter headings of *The Secret Relationship,* "Holocaust," have been appropriated by African Americans to define a trajectory of suffering which ultimately has placed them in a far more disadvantaged position than that of Jews.

One response to such a new understanding of our history is to take the path of neoconservatism, identifying with the white Gentile establishment and perceiving all proponents of "Third Worldism" (including militant African Americans) as our enemies. The rhetoric of *The Secret Relationship* along with the use made of it by Professors Jeffries and Martin certainly encourages such a move on the part of Jews. The book—to say nothing of Khalid Abdul Muhammad and Louis Farrakhan's gratuitous fantasies about Jewish crimes against Blacks—may indeed have been intended, despite its opening disclaimers, to push African Americans into the same kind of polarization. Looking at the examples of the former Yugoslavia and extremist groups on both sides of the Arab-Israeli conflict, one might easily conclude that the memorialization of past sufferings must inevitably stoke the fires of contemporary hate. Even a historian is thus tempted to prefer forgetfulness or the comfort of benign myths.

We Jews, however, even liberal ones, who justifiably insist that the history of the Nazi Holocaust not be denied, can hardly urge African Americans to suppress the record of the slave trade and the involvement of our own ancestors in it. It also does not help to accompany all discussions of Jewish slave trading with indictments of Christians and Arab Muslims as the true villains of the African slave trade. (Brackman, for example, provides a somewhat lurid catalogue of "Arab slave raids" using, among other sources, my own research. In fact, the Muslim or Oriental slave trade out of Africa involved mainly Berber, Swahili, and other Black African raiders and merchants rather than Arabs.) Thus while we should not ignore the anti-Semitism of *The Secret Relationship* (limited at least to accusations of avarice rather than blood libels or plots to rule the world), we must recognize the legitimacy of the stated aim of examining fully and directly even the most uncomfortable elements in our common past. There are certainly better ways than those of this book, from both a scholarly and moral perspective, to carry out such an examination. But carried out it must be, not to apportion or remove guilt but rather to learn who we are through what we were and to incorporate this knowledge into the struggle to become something better. □

PULLING TOGETHER FOR SINGLE-PAYER

(Continued from p. 12)

"government-run" system that hires caregivers and runs day-to-day operations.

Full-time publicly accountable national and state boards would oversee the standards and see that the bills got paid. Each state would receive an annual health-care budget based on size, population, geographic distribution, and any special health-care needs of the state. States would be encouraged to collaborate on funding regional centers of excellence, so that internationally renowned models such as the Mayo Clinic would continue to grow.

Health-care providers would be paid fair and reasonable rates negotiated with the state board and advisory committees. As in all other industrialized countries that similarly regulate health care, U.S. physicians would continue to earn several times the national average income.

Rates could be adjusted to encourage doctors to practice as family doctors rather than specialists, and to draw doctors to rural areas or inner cities. Public policy initiatives would aim to improve service in these areas, by training more nurse practitioners and physician assistants, expanding community clinics, and building on models such as the University of Minnesota at Duluth, which has led the nation in finding ways that medical school training can encourage students to practice in underserved rural areas and to stick with primary-care medicine. By recruiting from rural areas and offering students the chance to practice in those areas early in their training, the school leads the nation in the percent of graduates who follow through on their commitment to provide rural primary care.

Doctors, nurses, hospitals, and other health caregivers could practice medicine and provide quality health-care—without the micro-management of an insurance company—or a voice at the end of an 800 number—approving or disapproving every medical decision.

So the single-payer system would cover everyone for a broad range of high quality health-care services, and allow free choice of caregivers, at a price all of us can afford. It's a standard—a yardstick—any health-care reform plan should be required to match.

How does President Clinton's plan measure up? The goals of the Clinton proposal are generally on the mark. We are finally talking nationally about what kind of comprehensive reform we should have. The President's proposal would cover everyone by 1997 and aims to offer a full package of benefits by 2001.

The plan envisions incorporating a health-care budget to control costs. And, crucially, it would allow states to choose to implement a single-payer system.

Clinton's plan is far superior to Republican proposals that rely on old formulas we know won't work and do not include universal coverage. In its current form, however, I doubt the proposal will make good care and choice of caregiver truly affordable to everyone. The proposal would not provide everyone with a high standard of quality care at an affordable price. Health insurance plans would charge different prices. For the average American, your employer would pay 80 percent of the average price plan, and you would pay 20 percent of that premium. If you weren't satisfied with the average-priced plans, it could cost you a lot more money to "buy up" to a better quality health plan that would ensure that your lab tests are read correctly or get a doctor's appointment when you need one.

To improve the Clinton proposal, no plan should be able to charge more than 10 percent above the average priced plan. And we should adopt the amendment I introduced to make whatever plan is used by members of Congress affordable to everyone. Having Congress enroll in the same plan used by other Americans is one way to assure high quality. The President echoed a similar sentiment in his State of the Union address when he pointed out that those in government service already have a terrific, totally secure program provided at reasonable costs. I just want to take this one step further.

Under the Clinton plan, you won't have real choices. Clinton's proposal is designed so that you pay more for a fee-for-service plan that lets you pick your own doctor, than for managed care/HMO plans with a limited network of providers. In rural areas, with one (or no) doctors, and no managed care plans, you could pay part of your paycheck to cover the premium for a fee-for-service plan, only to find you can't afford the additional $400 deductibles and 20 percent co-payments when you need care. In cities, all health plans set at the average price or lower could be managed care plans with no choice of doctor.

Insurance companies, not consumers and caregivers, would call the shots under the Clinton plan. It sets up incentives for large insurance companies to develop networks of doctors and other caregivers. Like any for-profit business, insurance companies' first goal is to make money. The amount insurance companies save on your health care becomes profits for them, with no guarantee that your premium won't continue to skyrocket while your quality of health care plummets.

The President's plan won't control costs. Clinton's proposal would have trouble meeting its budget. It is administratively complex, projecting the same 12 percent for administration that most Blue Cross plans now charge, instead of Medicare's 3 percent—or Canada's 2 percent. And it allows large employers of 5,000+ nationally to run their own health plans—an open invitation to caregivers to continue "charge-shifting" or whipsawing prices ever upward, so that one year prices go up on large employer plans to make up for losses in the public plan, the next year prices go up in the public plan. And it's set up for employers to discriminate based on health status.

Finally, in the Clinton plan, benefits are not guaranteed soon enough. It skimps on or delays important services for mental health and substance abuse, long-term nursing home care, and adult dental services.

In the State of the Union Address, President Clinton said that he is open to the best ideas of the competing health-care proposals now being discussed in Congress. Clearly, even by the standards laid down by the President, single-payer is the best policy proposal, the best for people, and the most popular. So, why do we keep hearing that single-payer isn't politically feasible?

The answer lies in the influence of big ticket special interests over the political process. The health industry alone gave $41 million to candidates for the 1992 federal elections. Millions of lobbying dollars, and many more millions in misleading public relations campaigns, are pouring in to keep every cent of the one trillion health care dollars we spend each year lining industry pockets.

Health-care reform is the test of whether there will be democracy for the few or the many. Simply put, Congress is on trial. For my part as a sponsor of a single-payer plan, I pledge to continue fighting in Congress for a health-care system that provides affordable quality care for all Americans, and I invite you to work with me in that fight.

All around the country, people have organized health-care accountability days to reach members of Congress, media, and the public at large with one message: Decent, affordable health care is an idea whose time has come. These accountability days took place February 12-20 during the congressional recess for President's Day. Call the Campaign for Health Security for more information at (202) 775-1580—or organize your own accountability days. The League of Women Voters, the United Health Care Action Network, and many other groups will be carrying out public activities throughout the spring.

We deserve comprehensive affordable health coverage, and if you hold your elected officials accountable, we'll have it. □

Under the Hat

(Continued from p. 30)

She paused. "But I want to hear."

Victor hesitated. Should he stop her? The whole world was muffled in layers of fog: there wasn't the slightest sound. For some reason he thought of Yosemite. Because she had mentioned it earlier that evening? Undoubtedly: and also because of the time both of them had been locked in the car when two grizzlies were prowling. One leaned, rather like a bored mechanic, on the hood. But the other cuffed the frame of the sedan. This, the fog, was the way it had been then: like looking out the window at the mass of matted fur.

"Now," said Greta, as she rolled down the glass. "Listen."

"Greta. There's nothing. It's quiet out there."

"Shhhh!" she hissed, fiercely. She thrust her head out into the mist.

He sat back. He relit his cigarette. Sure enough, the damp gray paw of the fog reached inside the car. It smelled more of fish than of fur. Wherever he looked, forward, back, down toward the ocean, everything was erased. It was like being in a special classroom, no, in a great university, where every blackboard was smeared.

Greta pulled her head back in. She rolled up the window. He took that as his cue to reach for the keys. But she stopped him.

"When I was a girl of nine, very ugly and freckle-faced, with teeth like this, horse teeth, buck teeth you say: at this age we spent a month of the summer on Gotland. That is an island, you know. I learned to swim. I made fortresses in the sand. I imagined animals and monsters and hump-backed men in the clouds. My skin turned dark, the color of tobacco, and my hair was as white as: yes, the paper of your cigarette. As blazing as that tip. Ha, ha, ha: you could have smoked me! That little girl!"

Victor might have been one of Regal-Titanic's curious horses: not a muscle moved. Her voice was like a nine-year-old's! It chilled him through. There was no way on Earth—not even if she were Bernhardt, Duse—that this could be an act.

"One day, a hot day, I was playing—not at the edge of the sea, but behind our cabin. The grass there was taller than my head. The game was to trample it. To make circles in it, and boxes and x's. Then you could look at your work—foot painting we called it—from up on the roof. The first thing I noticed was that I had started to shiver. The grass was waving. A cold wind had sprung up. Next I heard a rustling sound. A flapping. I thought that Mama must have put her linens on the line. But the ropes were bare. The noise came from that direction—" Here Greta pointed out the window, toward the invisible Pacific. "From the west. From the sea. Do you know what I did? I ran indoors and up the staircase and up the ladder and onto the roof. There they were: birds! Thousands and millions of birds! The darlings! They were trying to outrun the shadow that was rolling up behind them. You know, don't you, that it was a hopeless task? Later, that fall, no, that winter, the schoolmistress explained: in an hour the moon travels more than three thousand kilometers. That's almost a kilometer every second. Poor birds! For just an instant it seemed that the flock was carrying a great black blanket in their beaks. Off it billowed to the rear! But do you know what happened? In an instant? All of them were swallowed by the penumbra, and then the umbra, of the moon. The white wings all turned to black. It was as if these sea birds—the thousands of gulls, the pelicans, the terns—had been transformed into crows."

"An eclipse," Victor murmured.

"Yes, a total eclipse. But I didn't know. I was only a girl! My heart: how it beat and beat! From excitement! From fear! Up above the edge of the moon was cutting like a scythe through the circle of the sun. Everything around me was divided into darkness and day. The sea was half gleaming glass, half sticky tar. Even the sky was cracked: alight in the east, black in the west. And, oh, there was a roaring sound. Like angry people. Like the turning of the ferry boat screws. It was the sound of the shadow drawing near. It was trampling everything before it. It was a giant. A giant! He was making a foot painting out of all of the world. I wanted to run. To hide. But it was like a dream. My feet would not move. I tried to cover my eyes. But something made me look up. What did I see? At noontime? High noon? Don't you know? Can't you guess? The whole sky was filled with stars."

The actress paused. Her head was thrown back, as if she could look through the roof of the Buick, through the damp coils of the mist, to the heavens. Her chest, beneath the folds of her gown, was heaving. When she spoke again it was in a whisper:

"What could I think? I thought I had gone mad. And that is when I heard it. From behind the cabin. In the grass. In the woods farther off. From all over the island. It was like singing. *Die Syrsanen!*"

"Crickets," said Victor.

"Yes," said Greta. Again she started to sob. "They thought it was night."

A moment passed. Victor blew the smoke from his cigarette from his mouth and nose. "It's funny how they do it. They don't sing with their mouths. They rub their legs together."

"Oh, yes!" she said, in a high-pitched girlish squeal. "I know that!"

He started the engine. He put the gear in reverse. Sure, he said to himself, we saw *Pinnochio* together. Just last year. That's how you know. But his thoughts were interrupted by the voice of the mature woman:

"I wish I heard them now. They saved me from going insane."

Victor backed away from the cliff. Then he let the car roll. Was it his imagination, or was the road somewhat clearer? He started down the hill toward the sea. In an instant, from nowhere, a wave of cynicism had gripped him. Not from nowhere: he was intelligent enough to recognize that such bitterness deflected his thoughts, and his judgment, away from himself. Nonetheless, he calculated the odds. No better than fifty-fifty. He'd be willing to take the bet himself: that there had been no eclipse of the sun in Gotland, in Sweden, or anywhere in Scandinavia, when Greta Garbo was a girl.

Ten minutes later Victor dropped the actress off at Von Beckmann's apartment only a block from the Venice beach. He hadn't the nerve to ask to accompany her, but he told her he'd return in an hour to drive her home. She didn't say a word, only gathered her gown about her and walked up the steps to the flat. He parked her Buick on Ozone Avenue and walked past the dilapidated buildings on Speedway, toward the noise and the lights of Ocean Park Pier. He could hear snatches of merry-go-round music; the squeal of the kids on the roller coaster, the roar of its double wheels; even the laugh, close to hysteria, of the mannequin in front of the house of mirrors. The honky-tonk atmosphere extended the length of Speedway. Strolling past him, the patrons of the amusement park, of the Rosemary Theater, or the Dome, dropped the sticks and cores of their candy apples, the caramelized popcorn, the tag ends of their—a hot dog in dough, this, like a full-scale version of a cocktail wiener—Pronto Pups. There was a sheen on every surface, part pulp, part windblown spray. Everything in the neighborhood was sticky, as if the curbstones, the steps, the lampposts and lamps were covered by a layer of salt water taffy.

Victor wandered from one side of the street to the other. He was surprised to see how much the sagging buildings—with stoops at the bottom and a cornice at the roof—resembled New York tenements. Also in the style of Hell's Kitchen, there was cheap lace at the parlor windows. After an hour he retraced his steps and knocked on Von Beckmann's door. There was no answer. He rapped with his knuckles, he pounded with his fist. Then he leaned across the railing of the steps and peered through the open window. The flat was empty. Then Victor remembered what Greta had told him: that the director had promised to take her to the beach. At once he trotted back across Speedway, down the first narrow alley, and onto the warped and rickety slats of the boardwalk. The beach was deserted. He swung down onto the sand.

There wasn't a trace of the earlier fog. The sky above was filled with stars. A full moon tugged at the incoming tide. Seaward, a line of light, like a line of chalk, marked the breaking waves. He could feel the concussion beneath his leather soles. Which way to go? Off to the right, he could make out the hurlyburly, the music and machines, of the Pier. He turned left. Sand, as he walked, poured into his slightly oversized shoes. Dark strands of seaweed tangled about his ankles. The breeze, more than a breeze now, whipped at the brim of his hat. He thought he heard a shout. He thought he saw the dark silhouettes of men moving along the shore. A strange metallic light seemed to come from under their very feet. He broke into a run.

He hadn't been mistaken. There were people ahead. They were dashing in and out of the swirling foam. Victor stumbled to a halt. What made his breath catch in his throat was the way their legs seemed to be lost in puddles of molten metal. It was as if some giant, a great philanthropist, had strewn the beach with silver dollars; or as if the ocean itself, like an enormous gaming machine, was disgorging a fortune in coins. The men, the shadows of men, were bending, standing, bending again: greedily they stuffed their pockets, their shirtfronts, the very sleeves of their coats. Flakes of silver, like silver plating, rubbed off onto their clothing. These anonymous figures were beginning to glow in the night.

Then, further up the beach, Victor recognized the unmistakable shape of Rudolph Von Beckmann. Greta was with him, holding onto his arm. He trudged toward them, halting only a few feet away. There he remained, a stick figure, legs scissored, one arm up to keep his hat on his head. In no time the waves advanced around him. Soon his own feet were surrounded by the gasping fish. Flopping and squirming, they burrowed into the sand. There was a faint clicking from their gills. He wasn't quite sure what, beneath the brine, the seaweed, he smelled: it might be the eggs, the sperm, of the spawning grunion. Then Greta turned. She saw her friend.

"Look, Victor," she said. She pointed—away from the beach, away from the heaving silvery lava, and up to the sky. There the moon had inched itself further into the heavens. How large it loomed. There was the etching of a face upon it. Victor understood what Greta meant to say: this was the goddess that had driven them into their frenzy. □

(Continued from p. 64)

of Holocaust rescuers, individual efforts are practically and psychologically less effective than collective ones.

At the Passover seder, Jews say, "Let all who are hungry come and eat with us." But how many of us would actually invite a homeless person to eat at our table?

The annihilation of European Jewry has no redemptive meaning. But it has important lessons about the evil—and the goodness—of which our species is capable. Those who ignored the mass murders—the millions of bystanders—were unable to transcend their narrow self-interest and see others as human beings like themselves.

The late Rabbi Marshall Meyer understood this disjunction between our ideals and our actions and, through his personal example, demonstrated how it could be overcome. For Rabbi Meyer, the sanctification of God meant asking the question: Am I my brother's and sister's keeper? When he was a rabbi in Argentina under the brutal regime of the juntas (1976-1983), he went beyond the risky work of counseling individual prisoners such as Jacobo Timerman. He and the late Israeli Consul Ram Nirgad organized an "underground railroad" to smuggle Jewish and non-Jewish Argentines at risk for being "disappeared" (i.e., murdered in secret concentration camps) to safety out of the country.

After relocating to New York City and assuming the pulpit of Congregation B'nai Jeshurun in 1985, Rabbi Meyer realized that giving a few cents or even a dollar to every homeless beggar one encountered daily on New York's streets was not going to solve the problem of the homeless. It required a communal effort. B'nai Jeshurun became the community through which Meyer could channel the moral responsibility he and his congregants felt for those whom society had written off as pariahs. He organized a community shelter for the homeless and conducted special Passover seders for people with AIDS.

We are not today in a holocaust. No one helping a homeless person is risking his or her life. We can, however, draw upon lessons from the past and not wait for an extreme circumstance to develop. We are in a situation in which resistance—the first stage of rescue—is needed to improve the lives of many in our society. Banding together in groups to protest, to make others aware of the dire conditions certain people are subjected to in our society, is a first step.

The mere provision of shelter for a night is not a solution. For those of us who are aware of the impending doom of certain segments of society, the time to speak up and change the fiber of society is now. Alternatives exist for the prevention of homelessness, hunger, drug abuse, disintegration of family life, and crime. The answers cannot just come from governmental institutions. If we each do what we can in our own communities and refrain from separating ourselves as "us" and "them," we can find solutions rather than Band-Aids.

Caring communities can also play a vital role in the education of the young, offering them role models to emulate and the possibility of participating in altruistic activities. Time and time again, Holocaust rescuers told me how important such childhood activities had been in molding their character.

The social environment of children growing up amidst violence, poverty, ethnic discrimination, and crumbling family structures needs to be changed. To make society more humane, we must develop alternative communities where children learn that treating others fairly, kindly, and responsibly is what matters—not whether they have completed one or another task. An example of the creation of such a caring community, the Leak and Watts Children's Home in the Bronx, New York, is the brainchild of social psychologist Michael Schulman, author of *Bringing Up a Moral Child*. Its success is measured by how humanely the adolescent residents treat one another.

The annihilation of European Jewry has no redemptive meaning. But it has important lessons about the evil—and the goodness—of which our species is capable. Those who ignored the mass murders—the millions of bystanders—were unable to transcend their narrow self-interest and see others as human beings like themselves. Those who are able to become what Robert J. Lifton calls "species selves"—people who can reach beyond their own ethnic groups or nationalities and embrace others, even at great risk are, indeed, in Hannah Senesh's words, "...particularly bright when the night is dark. They light the way for [humanity]." □

AUSCHWITZ AND SARAJEVO

(Continued from p. 20)

> century. . . . How, then, expect the Europeans to confront Serbia? They would have first to confront themselves. . . . There were many [in the Clinton Administration] who believed that something should be done [about Bosnia], but that the Europeans should do it; but they may as well have believed that nothing should be done. And so nothing was done. An American, I am not at all proud. A Jew, I am not at all surprised.

Wieseltier's move is to fuse Sarajevo with Auschwitz and then repair to the stunned and almost reverential silence that only an evil of that magnitude can call forth. Nothing was done, he says. Nothing will be done, he infers. Little was said. Little need be said. Wieseltier speaks so nearly my own mind about Bosnia that his arguments are, for me, unavoidable. Unfortunately, his despair is, in the end, a seduction, an easeful death, the suicide for which a reason is never lacking.

A French novelist/philosopher, René Daumal, has written:

> I swear to you that I have to force myself to write or to pronounce this word: God. It is a noise I make with my mouth or a movement of the fingers that hold my pen. To pronounce or to write this word makes me ashamed. What is real here is that shame. . . . Must I never speak of the Unknowable because it would be a lie? Must I speak of the Unknowable because I know that I proceed from it and am bound to bear witness to it? This contradiction is the prime mover of my best thoughts.

It is strange but true that the word Auschwitz could be substituted for the word God in this paragraph with scarcely any need for adjustment. Wieseltier complains "of the complete absence from *Schindler's List* of any humility before its subject." He wants Spielberg to struggle with shame as Daumal does: "Traces of difficulty. . . are signs of seriousness. But there are no traces of difficulty in *Schindler's List*. Very robustly Spielberg just barrels through."

I understand the objection, I think, but there are artists—Paul Celan, Primo Levi, and many lesser figures—who have had that shame. There are also artists who have found a way to place at the very heart of their work the contradiction that Daumal called the prime mover of his best thoughts. In his *Disfiguring: Art, Architecture, Religion*, Mark C. Taylor finds a remarkable common characteristic in the work of a number of such artists: They know the shame, but they are resourceful in ways that do not betray the shame (Spielberg's mistake, according to Wieseltier) and yet do not succumb to despair (Wieseltier's mistake, as I read him).

Shame provokes, as few other emotions, a powerful desire either to hide or to atone. The greatest novel in the English language on shame—a novel with a flight "movement" and an atonement "movement"—begins with the betrayal of a group of helpless Muslims by a European Christian. I speak of course of Joseph Conrad's *Lord Jim*. And sometimes, in my mind's eye, I see the Muslims of Sarajevo as travelers on a doomed ship like the sinking Muslim pilgrim ship in that novel. Jim, in a moment of cowardice, abandons the ship, leaving its passengers to die, but he spends the rest of his life first in shame-faced flight, then in shame-driven atonement.

John Major, François Mitterrand, and Bill Clinton seem to me like Lord Jim without the shame. They are aware of their Bosnian sin of omission, aware of what its consequence will be, but adamant in claiming that hard-choice morality is on their side. Their defenders, needless to say, are aggressive in attaching the opprobrium of puerile self-righteousness to anyone who would dare to criticize them: A political adult should know better, they say, than to call for Bosnian intervention. If he does not, then he is not just wrong but shamefully wrong for postponing Bosnian acceptance of the painful truth.

The Muslims of Sarajevo, however, like the Muslims on Conrad's slave ship, have seemed lately at the point of attempting their own deliverance. Arms and other help have been arriving from several Muslim nations, and some noteworthy battlefield successes have followed. The visit to Sarajevo, during the week before the ultimatum, of Prime Ministers Tansu Ciller of Turkey and Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan was linked to this potentially fateful development.

Until recently, it was assumed that Bosnia would become a Vietnam for any Western power that intervened. But if Muslim help continues to arrive, the role of the Vietcong, rather than being played by the Serbs against some Western intervenor, could be played by the Bosnians against the Serbs. This prospect—Muslim guerrillas on European soil—is as repugnant to Europe's residually Christian leadership in the 1990s as the prospect of Jewish guerrillas would have been in the 1930s. It is transparently to prevent this disturbing reversal of roles and bring about that intended closure that the NATO ultimatum—a risky and not entirely controllable action, to be sure—has been issued. The Europeans have joined the Americans in a face-saving but extremely limited military action, one that will appease American public opinion without impeding a Serb victory. In exchange, the Clinton administration has joined the Europeans in pressuring official Bosnia to capitulate.

If and when this happens, and official Bosnia accepts the ghettoization of the country's Muslims, nothing will prevent

the Serbs—and the Croats too—from continuing ethnic cleansing, rejecting as inadequate the very conquests that the "peace treaty" will have ratified. It will then fall to the West to protect the Muslims and enforce the treaty. But will NATO or the U.N. show any greater willingness to do this than they now show toward enforcement of relief deliveries? The United States has already sharply reduced its commitment of ground troops for future treaty enforcement. The Bosnians have every reason to believe that closure for them will not bring peace but only—with most of the journalists gone home—a more secret slaughter. And with the onset of secrecy, the most inconvenient difference between the slaughter of the Jews and the slaughter of the Muslims will be eliminated. It is because the Bosnian leadership knows this that it has been intransigent at the bargaining table.

Those of us who babble on about Bosnia may help at least here. We may refuse to ratify a closure that would have only the finality of death. We may refuse to declare this a tragedy complete but for its closing lines (and kindly remain in your seats). Wieseltier objects that "for Spielberg, there is a power in the world that is greater than good and greater than evil, and it is the movies." The critic in him rightly refuses to allow the director to bring a major ethical issue to a bogus aesthetic closure. But the ethical must not be allowed to bring the practical to a bogus closure either. The key question about Sarajevo, the Auschwitz of our day, is neither how we feel about it or what we judge about it but what we are going to do about it. □

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IN DEFENSE OF UNIONS

(Continued from p. 16)

company union?

Once before, in the era of 1920s welfare capitalism, employers undertook to provide increasing income and benefits to their work force as a shield against unionism. But in the end, employers were not able to secure labor's well being and the whole scheme crashed in the Depression.

Today, reform-minded employers again express willingness to assume responsibility for labor's welfare. They offer job security in exchange for wage, benefit, and work-rule concessions which workers are supposed to accept as a show of good will in the move to cooperation. But IBM is laying off, as is almost every major employer in the country. Hard times have even ended job security in Japan. The inability of capitalism to provide full employment is the fatal weakness of welfare capitalism today.

Many employers have no animosity toward their work force and would make congenial and intelligent partners, if labor would send representatives to work through the agenda of a labor-management council. But workers can't secure their interests by limiting their attention to the company where they work. Without industry-wide bargaining over labor standards, workers at each company in the industry face intense pressure from management to accept a wage lower than what is paid at other companies in order to protect the competitive position of their own employer. That is what we have experienced in the last fifteen years of concession after concession by unionized workers pitted against each other.

There can be no industry-wide bargaining through company unions. It seems reasonable to say that workers and their employer should sit down and set rules that promote the health of the firm and share the gains that come from cooperation. But whatever gains we might expect within the firm will be overwhelmed by the fierce competition that operates *among* firms if there is no coordination of wages and working conditions among them.

That is why unions fought for and won industry-wide bargaining during and after World War II, contributing to a period of increasing living standards and business prosperity. We need independent unions with enough moral and political power to protect workers from the indignities and unfairness that the unrestricted market imposes on the vast majority of people in the country. It may look like company unions benefit workers, but the reality is just the opposite.

Enterprise councils or other forms of company union also promise industrial democracy through worker participation in management functions, from the shop floor to long-term strategic decisions. But how can workers sustain opposition to management desires and protect themselves from management retribution if they are found "uncooperative" unless they have independent representation? Company unions, operating necessarily at management discretion, cannot possibly provide workplace democracy.

Further, if workers are unorganized beyond the company, they have no effective means to participate as a social force in the wider economy or in the political arena. They have no way to engage in electoral politics or influence legislative or other government policy and action, some of which influence the circumstances and operations of the enterprise, and all of which are the subject of massive business influence. What appears to be an instrument for democracy at the workplace is in fact a serious erosion of democratic capacity in the larger society.

The promise of economic justice and individual empowerment through enterprise councils is an illusion. What appears to promote fairness, dignity, and democracy in the single plant accomplishes the opposite on a social scale, and even within the enterprise.

The U.S. Catholic bishops have emphasized the importance of independent unions in the new industrial relations system. In their 1986 pastoral letter on the economy, they wrote:

> Partnerships between labor and management are possible only when both groups possess real freedom and power to influence decisions. This means that unions ought to continue to play an important role in moving toward greater economic participation within firms and industries. Workers rightly reject calls for less-adversarial relations when they are a smokescreen for demands that labor make all the concessions.

It is as true today as it was in 1935, when company unions were outlawed, that workers organized by management cannot effectively represent their own interests. It remains a matter of social justice to protect independent unionism.

The participation of labor at all levels of enterprise policy *can* contribute to economic efficiency and social justice and embody important elements of a politics of meaning. But for these results, worker participation requires two contextual conditions. First, employee involvement must be associated with collective bargaining by independent unions that take up all aspects of company policy and give workers a basis of equality in bargaining. Second, worker involvement at the level of the enterprise needs to be coordinated with worker participation in industry-wide bargaining and the formulation of broader national economic policy. Unions are indispensable at these levels as well.

In 1990, Harvard law professor Paul Weiler, a specialist in industrial relations sympathetic to labor, proposed that every workplace with more than fifty employees be required to have an employee representation mechanism. Weiler is on the Dunlop Commission, and his willingness, however reluctant, to promote company unions in place of independent labor organization is another sign of the policy direction the Clinton administration is about to take.

But if we agree that worker participation is an important goal, why not mandate it through unions and collective bargaining rather than company-dominated councils? Reform should require that every work force larger than ten be in an independent union of the workers' choosing and under their democratic control.

Unions would be forced to compete for representational responsibility by presenting their ideas for securing economic justice, at the level of the firm and in the larger society. All issues, from wages to work rules to health and safety to investment decisions, would be subject to negotiation and require mutual agreement through collective bargaining. Workers would have to consider carefully which union offered realistic ideas.

Unions would have to take responsibility for thinking through the business plan, but unlike company unions, independent unions could retain industry-wide strength and propose individual business plans as part of a larger strategy, as the miners, garment workers, and other unions once did. Associations of unions would try to develop and coordinate regional and national plans, and coordinate political and economic bargaining in the interests of labor.

It is tempting to seek new forms of employee representation when the unions we have represent only a small fraction of workers and have difficulty organizing new workplaces. To be sure, existing U.S. unions are imperfect instruments of justice. But independent unions are indispensable institutions in the pursuit of economic justice for working people. Rather than circumvent them, public policy and civic action should seek their revitalization. □

Waiting For Autonomy

(Continued from p. 24)

another: "What a *mishiginah*." A Palestinian nearby asks, "What's that?" "*Majoon*," the photographer translates into Arabic. The Palestinian takes offense: "You only say he's crazy because he wants peace."

Small, animated discussions are now igniting among photographers and Palestinians. "He's come for peace; why does the army want to take him away?" one Palestinian asks.

"Because they're afraid you'll put a knife in his back," an Israeli photographer answers forthrightly.

"But we don't knife peace lovers; he's safe with us," the offended Palestinian replies.

Another Palestinian teenager, who speaks perfect English, asks: "What's with this guy?" The Israeli answers: "He says he wants to make peace." And then in what sounds like typical Jewish intonation, the boy responds intimately, "He wants to make peace and they want to take him away. Isn't that *typical*?"

The soldiers are losing patience. They keep trying but fail to grab the old man as he nimbly pulls away from them, drops to the ground, just as quickly runs a bit, wraps his arm and head with *tefillin* (phylacteries), and starts praying aloud again. Some photographers begin to laugh.

The Palestinians, whose bafflement has grown, now catch the mood, start laughing as well, when a tough Israeli commando succeeds in pushing toward the old Jew. As if with one face, the onlookers watch in wide-eyed amazement, their mouths hanging open. These Palestinians have never seen the Israeli army hassling any Jew. This is something new.

The "doctor" is now screaming at the officer: "Let me go" and saying in Hebrew "*Koom Chef*" (All Rise) as if in a synagogue. "This is straight out of Peter Sellers's *Being There*," one photographer observes: "Where's Woody Allen?" another quips.

"We're doing this for your own good," says the army officer. "We're only tying to protect you."

"Only my wife cares about me," Dr. Belligheimer snaps at them. "You want to use me, you don't care about me," he says, "*Koom Chef*; *Koom Chef*."

The soldiers intensify their determination to grab the old Jew as the Palestinians disperse into the shops and down side streets to get out of the way.

At that moment, down the hill from the Jewish settlements come the settlers with their guns—Orthodox yuppies in *kippot*, L.L. Bean shoes, and jeans. They're accompanied by Rabbi Moshe Levinger, the chief rabbi in the Hebron settler community, an extremist.

Rabbi Levinger, who's known as persuasive and potent in igniting settler rage, approaches the old Jew as if to protect one of his own. Dr. Belligheimer sees him coming, wails: "No, No, No, No. No guns. Go away with your guns," humiliating the rabbi in front of the astounded Palestinian crowds.

The sight of the settlers is the final straw for the soldiers; they will put up with no more of this commotion. They grab the aging, deranged Jewish peacenik, and the last anyone sees of him this morning he's lying prostrate in the back of their open jeep. His pants have accidentally been yanked down in the fracas. The crowds see only his naked legs splayed out on the back of the jeep as he's hoisted away, shouting: "I don't want soldiers. I want to make peace with the Arabs," his last words as the army jeep pulls out of sight. □

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STK394

Victims, Memory, History

(Continued from p. 60)

construct one's identity as a victim. The popular culture's current fascination with so-called "false memory syndrome," however, is an example of the denial of bad news rather than a thoughtful criticism of the misuse of the past. The fact that some people or groups claim legacies of oppression and attempt to use them in ways that can be rejected on empirical, moral, or political grounds should not blind us to those legacies whose effects are genuine. If we reject claims for moral superiority, or rationales for the abdication of personal responsibility based on an identification with an oppressed group, we are not thereby freed from the burden of dealing with legitimate legacies of oppression and victimization.

Outraged complaints about the "culture of victimhood" are not a substitute for careful differentiation between claims for justice and demands for "special treatment." In a democracy, there can be no pat formula for making these moral and political judgments. In trying to understand how we make them, it would be helpful to examine memory historically and to understand why claims to remember how one has been oppressed have extraordinary power at particular times for particular purposes. This holds true whether those claiming oppressive pasts do so to validate their ethnic, religious, or gender identity, or to protest against the continued exploitation of this identity.

The cultivation of traumatic memory can lead to a harvest of hatred and violence in which demands for justice and the desire for vengeance become inextricably entwined. But memory—even of the most painful kind—can also be used to expand that group of people who count for us, those we consider as more than strangers. The difficulty lies in seeing how these two offspring of memory are related and have developed together over time; how the irresponsibility and violence that are legitimated by appeal to the past are linked to the solidarity that the invocation of a common past can foster.

The stronger our we-group, the more vulnerable nonmembers may be in our midst. Thus, the effort to create social justice requires forms of solidarity and connections to the past that nurture impulses for social change and concern for the stranger as well as a strong sense of identity. If we are to build networks for political transformation, we must not demand an authentic tradition that effectively sets us apart from others. Rather, we must create connections to the past that can be reconfigured, made usable by diverse groups of people in the present, and sometimes even left behind. □

A Hidden Genre

(Continued from p. 71)

the bones and breath has entered them and they have stood up and been identified as "the whole House of Israel," God tells Ezekiel (37:12) to say: "I am going to open your graves, and lift you out of the graves, O My people, and bring you to the land of Israel." Dan Pagis, a Holocaust survivor who emigrated to Israel after World War II, in his poem, "Draft of a Reparations Agreement," has God agree to perform a miracle, like the one shown to Ezekiel, for those who perished in the Holocaust:

> Everything will be returned to its place,
> paragraph after paragraph.
> The scream back into the throat.
> The gold teeth back into the gums.
> The terror.
> The smoke back to the tin chimney and further
> on inside back to the hollow of the bones,
> and already you will be covered with skin and
> sinews and you will live,
> look, you will have your lives back,
> sit in the living room, read the evening paper.

The Importance and Pleasures of Contemporary Midrash

Midrash has assumed importance in literary criticism in recent years because of its resemblance to deconstruction and related currents in literary theory. But in fact a radical reworking of traditional material has been one of the great literary projects throughout the twentieth century, undertaken by Joyce and Mann and Rilke and the poets quoted above. For these writers, and others like them, a conscious appropriation of tradition is not only compatible with personal expression but may often be the means by which it is most fully realized, as T. S. Eliot argued early in the century in his essay, "Tradition and the Individual Talent."

The genre of midrash gives readers the pleasure of a necessary and feasible participation by requiring them to know the biblical stories and propositions it plays against. By the same token, modern midrash gives its readers a precise expectation of reward in the form of a surprising and contemporary addition to a permanent foundation—something easily memorable, since it fits into the known, and individual, since it is new. Imaginative works of this nature add to the common culture. And they have potentially larger and more grateful audiences than works of idiosyncratic vision which emphasize our alienation from each other. □

Sikkum

In Signs of Life: The Language and Meanings of DNA, by Robert Pollack, Houghton Mifflin, 1994.

Pollack argues for a new understanding of DNA as a text to be read, interpreted, and perhaps even partially understood. But just as we cannot ever determine the canon of Great Books, so must we understand that we ought never to try to develop the perfect human genome. Pollack reminds us that. In fact, the phenomenon has become a media event. advances in DNA research have heightened the risk of not recognizing that there are moral limits to the uses of knowledge. As the search continues for a complete human genetic map, ill-intentioned purists could isolate a new "genetic underclass." Robert Pollack gives us new tools with which to ensure that the future of our scientific heritage is as concerned with our souls as it is with our bodies.

Shawn Landres

The Blue Mountain, by Meir Shalev, HarperCollins, 1991.

Shalev's novel is a fabulist chronicle of the lives and hard times of the forefathers of the Second Aliya from the Pale to Palestine. Mirkin, Tsirkin, and Liberson, inspired and maddened by socialist millenarian fantasies, founded the Feyge Levinson Workingman's Circle. One adores Feyge; another marries her. Their children and grandchildren drift apart, yet remain spiritual Siamese twins connected at the soul.

Shalev's expansive literary canvas aspires to and accomplishes on a grand scale, legitimately compared by Robert Alter to *One Hundred Years of Solitude.*

Melvin Bukiet

Judaism Faces the Twentieth Century: A Biography of Mordechai Kaplan, by Mel Scult, Wayne State University Press, 1993.

For anyone who wants to understand American Jewry, Scult's biography of Kaplan is not only a good read but a necessary book. Kaplan was a dominant figure in American Jewish life in the twenties and thirties and was the founder of Reconstructionism. Scult offers us not only a biography but a cultural history of Jewish New York at the beginning of the twentieth century. His observations on the history of the Jewish Theological Seminary and the development of the Conservative movement, alone, are worth the price of the book.

Edward Feld

A Book of Psalms: Selected & Adapted from the Hebrew, by Stephen Mitchell, HarperCollins, 1993.

Stephen Mitchell, the noted translator of classic spiritual literature, has given us a poetic gem. Mitchell helps us see and hear fifty psalms in a new cadence and rhythm, removed from the prayerbook and speaking to us with a personal intensity and uniquely contemporary relevance. We are startled to rediscover the psalms addressing some of our most urgent concerns: loneliness, oppression, homelessness, our relationship to the environment. Mitchell's rendition of the psalms shakes us with its intensity and then calms us with its gentleness.

Michael Paley

Mourning and Mitzvah: A Guided Journal for Walking the Mourner's Path Through Grief to Healing, by Anne Brener, Jewish Lights Publishing, 1993.

Rather than focusing on the laws and rituals related to death and mourning, Brener gives us a thoughtful and sensitive guide for doing the grief-work needed to emerge from the blackness of a profound loss. Brener provides more than sixty guided experiential exercises that take us through the various stages and feelings evoked by the death of a loved one: from loss and disbelief to putting together the shattered pieces of our lives toward finally achieving some form of healing.

Michael Strassfeld

Walking Humbly with God: The Life and Writings of Rabbi Heschel Jonah Matt, Daniel C. Matt, ed., KTAV, 1993.

Instead of the usual boring assemblage of papers that this kind of book typically presents, we have here the life "Torah" of a visionary rabbi who agonized, struggled, and taught his way through the last generation. Modest to a fault, ethical beyond common sense, spiritual before Jews used the word, politically radical before the Sixties and theologically both reactionary and daring within the same breath. Hershel Matt argued for gay rights, the Havurah movement before it existed, daily spiritual exercises, and orthodox ethics. This book provides an extraordinary window on the congregational rabbinate and the excruciating compromises it requires. We understand the self-doubt, resentment, and even despair which drive some rabbis out of business, others out of their minds, and not a few out of Judaism.

Lawrence Kushner

The Hungry God: Hindu Tales of Filicide and Devotion, by David Shulman. University of Chicago Press, 1993.

A world-class Indologist who is deeply grounded in biblical and post-biblical Hebrew texts, David Shulman has produced a short masterpiece. His study contrasts the motif of Akedah, the non-utilitarian sacrifice of the son by the father as recorded in Genesis 22, with its Hindu analogues. Shulman leads his reader to draw out the implications of the biblical tale's refusal "to opt for finality or closure on the level of conciousness." Jewish skepticism stands out starkly when compared with Hindu absolutism.

James Ponet

Who Are We?

Into the past
I go like a stranger
to discover why at night
I lay alone as a child
waiting for the front door
to slam, my father gone
to night-shift work,
and my mother, Marie, to enter,
unable to sleep, and tell me
tales of childhood
war, pursued by those
who, as she spoke,
seemed to enter the room,
Gestapo men in leather coats
who ordered me to pack
and descend to a waiting truck,
for I am still going to Auschwitz
though a grown man in 1993
I am still boarding the freight,
crushed against numbed, frightened
Jews and Gypsies and Russian
soldiers and homosexuals
crossing frontiers to be gassed

I am her, in my heart,
though I am six feet two
and two hundred and ten pounds
and have played college football
and served as a soldier
and have scars from fights
with knives and jagged
bottles smashed on bars

I am still her, little girl,
hiding in chicken coops
and forests, asleep on dynamite
among partisans
I am still her, brushing teeth
with ashes
from the ruins of nations
gutted in war

I am still her brown eyes
and black hair of persecution
foraging scraps of thistle soup,
a star-shaped patch
sewn to my shirt

I am still my mother
every day in the streets
of New York or San Francisco,
the chimney skies glow and swirl
with soot like night above
a crematorium, or the Bronx
incinerator chute where I
threw out trash in a brick
darkness shooting sparks

I am still her in the streets
of Berkeley, walking among
sparechangers, dyed-hair punkers,
gays in stud leather, Blacks,
Mexicans and Asians

I am still her rounded up
among poets and thieves
and politically incorrect
social deviants
on sun-drenched sidewalks
in the Mission and the Haight,
Greenwich Village, the Lower
East Side, or anywhere the weird
congregate in tolerance

And every day in this age
of greed,
in a mental ghetto
affirmed by the homeless,
I pass the dying
with the loud ring of my boots,
ashamed to think that perhaps
my heels are the last thing
they heard
Every day I am a
survivor of AIDS and poverty

Every day I sit in cafes
watching tattoos turn to numbers
and I grow angry
I want America back
I want America to be
the home I never had

And you, who are you
if you hear my voice?
Who are you, stranger
if you read these words?
Who are we
who stand threatened
in these times of darkness?
Who are we, condemned to die,
who do not know ourselves
at all?

Alan Kaufman

Tikkun (tē-kün) . . . to heal, repair and transform the world. All the rest is commentary



The Socialism of Fools

ANTI-SEMITISM ON THE LEFT

by Michael Lerner



This is a powerful and provocative book.

Michael Lerner is a major progressive Jewish intellectual who has been an **outspoken critic of the conservativism** in the American-Jewish community and of the Israeli occupation of the **West Bank. His critique** should not be dismissed as an attempt to set Israel above criticism or to conceal **conservative interests in the** Jewish world.

Lerner's text goes far beyond the issue of anti-Semitism to put forward a **creative and challenging** interpretation of Jewish history and Jewish destiny.

—Cornel West, Professor of Religion and Director of African-American Studies at Princeton University

Anti-Semitism Even Pervades the Culturally Hip, the Psychologically Sensitive, and the Progressively Intellectual

Even Jews sometimes internalize the pervasive anti-Semitic attitudes of our culture and legitimate these attitudes in culturally hip circles. Jews often try to show that they are not "too" Jewish—by altering our noses, our hair, our bodies, our clothes, our manner of speaking—and we often put down others for being too intellectual or pushy or attention-seeking because we think these traits might identify us as fitting dominant negative stereotypes of Jews.

The need to disidentify with Jewishness even leads some Jews to be reluctant about subscribing to TIKKUN although they know it's the best intellectual/cultural magazine in the U.S.

Many Jewish artists, writers, intellectuals, therapists, and social change activists are invested in playing down their Jewishness, certain that if they don't, they will be "marginalized" and not taken seriously by others (many of whom, in turn, are also Jews trying to assimilate).

Lerner is aware of the Right's tendency to accuse anyone who critiques Israeli policy of being an anti-Semite or a self-hating Jew. As a leading critic of Israeli policy toward Palestinians, Lerner analyzes the difference between legitimate and anti-Semitic criticisms. He also spells out a strategy to combat anti-Semitism in Third World communities. Lerner insists that the main problem of anti-Semitism still comes from the Right, not the Left—but he also insists that there is a real problem among culturally hip and liberal intellectuals.

This book is invaluable—for college students, for writers and thinkers, for therapists and teachers, intellectuals and social change activists.

To order: Send $12 to TIKKUN at P.O. Box 460926, Escondido, CA 92046-9914 or call 1-800-846-8575 for Visa, Mastercard, or American Express orders. Or get your bookstore to order from Publisher's Group West, 1-510-658-3453.

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